



KINGSWELLS PARISH CHURCH NEWSLETTER

July 2021

View from the Manse

I hope you are keeping well during this time of transition. I know you are wondering when we will be starting to have 'in person' worship services again at Kingswells Church. We will probably be hearing from the Scottish Government this week regarding the reduction of social distancing to one metre or its elimination. There continues to be significant concern regarding the spread of the Delta variant, but the good news is that the numbers seem to be headed in the right direction.

The Kirk Session will meet on Tuesday 3 August to discuss the plans for the re-opening of the church building for 'in person' worship. Those plans will include making sure all the mitigations are in place, that the re-opening will be well publicised throughout the congregation and the Kingswells community, and perhaps even a special welcoming event can be planned. It would be great to open with the appropriate fanfare on **Sunday, the 5th of September**. This is what I will be proposing to the Kirk Session at our meeting.

You might be wondering why the Kirk Session meeting is in August, and not now. This is because I will be taking three weeks of annual leave beginning Monday, 12 July. My recovery from the shingles has been slow at best. I don't think I have ever felt so poorly for such a long period of time as I usually bounce back from illness quite quickly. Getting away to the Moray Coast, Iona, and Gourock will provide me a time of total disengagement, rest, spiritual renewal, and restoration. My guess is these past 483 days of social isolation, national lockdown, slight easing, then back into lockdown, and now the gradual easing into a 'new normal' has taken its toll not only on me, but all of us.

Life is different now; we cannot go back to a pre-Covid world. As a community of faith, this is an opportunity to be honest and upfront with one another as each of us ascertain our own individual well-being, including our spiritual, mental, and emotional needs as well as social needs for the future. To have an effective ministry together, I believe it will be important that every member

and friend of Kingswells responds to a congregation wide survey about pastoral care needs, thoughts about worship, fellowship, and outreach. Believe me when I say ministers and elders are not mind readers, so your input is vital.

For example, we know that some want 'in person' worship, whilst others prefer an online worship service. To plan accordingly, I and the Kirk Session will develop a survey which will help solicit this information. Of course, some are saying that this should have happened months ago, hindsight is always 20-20: but there is no time like the present!

We will also be asking about your willingness to be engaged and involved in church leadership. Currently, there is a growing need for Kirk Session members, pastoral visitors, and other volunteers. As a mature and aging congregation, we are limited in our leadership capacity. Almost every church in the country is experiencing a similar dynamic. Once we complete this congregational audit, we will have a better idea of what is needed so that we can plan and prioritise our ministry accordingly. As I said, life is different, it has changed and will continue to change. Our church life is different as well, so we will need to evaluate, pray, and seek God's guidance as we determine how best to be church together.

I look forward to returning from holiday full of energy and renewed vigour. I look forward to catching up with you over a cuppa.



Meanwhile, enjoy my photographs of an arctic tern and a dolphin as they feast on their fish suppers. May God continue to bless you and yours.

Peace,
Laurene

Session Clerk

At the end of May I set down my note pad and pencil and typed up my last set of minutes as Session Clerk.

Having been Clerk to the Congregational Board since 1992 until 2006 when we moved to a Unitary Constitution, and then Session Clerk from 2006 until 2021 I feel that now is an appropriate time to step down from the role and for someone else to take over. There are interesting times ahead, with a Community Audit to be undertaken, the development of our Parish Grouping and the re-opening the church buildings in line with current restrictions.

It has been a privilege to serve as Session Clerk over the last 15 years. The work has been made so much easier because of the wonderful support and encouragement of the elders on the Kirk Session, and I know that this support will be offered to my successor.

Lorna Graham

Our Appreciation

It will be no surprise to you that the Kirk Session while accepting Lorna's wish to stand down, was indeed saddened that Lorna will be leaving this vital role in the affairs of our congregation. She has been a corner stone of our church for many years; she has served it diligently and professionally in her capacity, first as Clerk to the Congregational Board and then as Session Clerk and Roll Keeper. But more than that she has given so much of herself in practical ways, organising things so efficiently, keeping in personal contact with so many in the congregation and generally 'being there', willingly, and committed to the work of the Church. She has done much in recent times to foster relations with our sister churches in the Cluster Group and represents the Church on Presbytery. Her Christian commitment and devotion have always been evident in all she has done for the local and wider church. Thankfully she will continue to contribute to the work of the Kirk Session in which her wise and patient counsel will continue to be appreciated by her colleagues.

On behalf of us all 'thank you Lorna' for all you have done for us as Session Clerk; you will be missed in this capacity but treasured as a friend and colleague as together we administer the affairs of our Church.

Jeff Maxwell, Editor

BALLOT ON PARISH GROUPING

Church Law demands that the move to a Parish Grouping must be approved formally by each congregation. Normally this would take place in a specially convened congregational meeting following Sunday worship, but current circumstances meant that we had to undertake a remote ballot and a voting paper was sent out to all members.

Thank you to everyone who returned their voting paper, and the Kingswells ballot returned a vote of 67 for and 16 against. Over the five churches in the Grouping the overall results were 670 for and 48 against. The Basis for the Parish Grouping was approved at Presbytery on 19th June. This Basis formalises what has already been happening with the five congregations and Ministry Team working closely together. It will not in any way change the individual churches structures, finances, and buildings. In the longer term the plan will be to eventually link the five congregations together and ultimately unite them. However, this change is some time away, even with the decisions taken at this year's General Assembly to reduce the number of ministers in our Presbytery.

Meantime the weekly online worship services produced by the five churches continues to be available each Sunday on YouTube, and we are thankful to have this resource while we wait for our church buildings to re-open.

Lorna Graham

Pastoral Care

We are pleased, at long last, to see that there appears to be the proverbial “glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel” as we continue to endure the effects that the pandemic has been having on us all. It has been extremely challenging, and we hope that things can only get better as we move into the summer months.

Surprisingly the demand for pastoral care over the last 18 months or so has been unexpectedly very low. Our network of Visitors supported by Area Co-ordinators has been there to support us all and please remember that we are here to help in whatever way we can, members of the Pastoral Care Team included. Each of us have an assigned Visitor/Area Co-ordinator and if you have

the need to contact them and have lost their details, please contact Audrey or Mike (see below).

Currently pastoral care is provided through a network of “visitors” assigned to each member and each “visitor” works closely in the background with their own designated Area Co-ordinator. Several of them, after many years of service and dedication to pastoral care, have sadly reached the time to retire and pass the roles onto others. In respect of this it is with great thanks and appreciation that we mention Marjorie Birkmyre, Val Henderson, Jennifer Trevis, Anne Carmichael and John Booth who have represented us in various capacities, and we wish them well into their retirement from the Pastoral Care Team.

To this end, we currently have vacancies for 3 Area Co-ordinators and 5 Visitors. Without finding replacements, it is going to be very challenging to continue to provide a “visitor” who can physically visit each member. This could be for pastoral care purposes or simply hand delivery of the regular Church Newsletter.

If you feel you can step into the shoes of our retiring members to offer future assistance or would like to know more about the role of a “visitor”, please feel free to contact your named “visitor” or failing that, Audrey or Mike. Rest assured, if your Visitor has retired, you will not be neglected, and Audrey and Mike and other members of the Team will temporarily fill the gap.

We are hoping that physically meeting up with members again, in particular during Sunday worship services, will resume very soon. Hopefully in September at the very latest, services will start once plans have been put in place to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of everyone who would be attending the Church.

In the meantime, we hope you are as well as you can possibly be under the circumstances, take care and remain as safe as possible especially during the ‘opening up’ of society again after the awful restrictions placed upon us all over the last year and a bit.

***Audrey Paterson, 07912 752 776 and Michael Gall, 01224 742910
Pastoral Care Team Co- convenors***

Bible Study



Over the last eight weeks we have been enjoying studying the Bible using material from the Scottish Bible Society small groups studies. This time we have been using the Encountering the God who Speaks study and looking at how God guided and empowered Moses, Samuel, Josiah, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and John. Some of the characters were better known to us than others and it was very interesting to see how God guides and is in control in all sorts of circumstances and at very different times in the lives of his people.

The 'conversations' have encouraged us to actively engage with the Bible and learn how we can apply it to our own lives. It was very heartening to discover how God's word is personal and speaks to humanity, walking and talking with us in our everyday lives.

The Bible Study group are having a break during July but are looking forward to meeting up again on Zoom, at the beginning of August with a new study. If you are interested in joining the group, we would be delighted. If you want any more information, **contact Anne at annerodger48@gmail.com.**

Prayer Chain



Although the church buildings have been closed for a while now, the Prayer Chain is still operating and being used by some of our members. We **FIRMLY** believe that prayer makes a difference in our lives and in the lives of those we support in prayer. We have been asked to pray over many different situations, nothing is too great or too small.

GOD LISTENS: GOD HEARS: GOD ACTS.

If you are in need of prayer support contact Barbara Bruce 01224741558 or if you prefer, Laurene our minister.

Barbara Bruce

*God of the storm and of safe harbour,
God in the rapids and meandering streams,
Be with us in the ebb and flow of life this day.*

Instant Neighbour Food Donations And Continuing

Following a recent delivery of our contributions to Instant Neighbour, Joyce Taylor received the following response and thanks. We are grateful for all the support received and especially those who are there to receive **donations each Tuesday morning at the Church Door between 10.00am and 10.30am.**

From Instant Neighbour: 'Since the start of lockdown, the foodbank at Instant Neighbour has seen an obvious upward curve in usage and requests. At one point in 2020 we were handing out almost as much food in a week as we were in a month prior to Covid. Whilst the lifting of restrictions has seen a plateau in the numbers coming to our doors, we are still way up on pre-Covid figures with people still struggling to meet the cost of living in these times.

Only through the generous donations by companies, individuals, and churches like yourselves have we been able to keep our doors open and keep handing out emergency food parcels. All the money we receive in donations goes towards buying enough staple items to fill a food parcel whether it be canned and dried goods, tea, and coffee or even just towards milk.

Our basic parcels contain the following items: Pasta/rice and sauce, Canned soup, Canned meat/fish, Tinned meals, Beans, Canned fruit/puddings, Tea/Coffee, Cereal, Bread, Milk, Biscuits

Donations of any of these items helps feed a person for a few days and alleviate food poverty in Aberdeen.

Thanks again for your continued support.'

Evan Adamson, Community Connector

Buildings and Fabric



Since my last report we have managed to complete two projects that have been on our 'to-do list' for some time.

The first was to purchase and install a new exterior noticeboard which you may have seen is now in place. The noticeboard gives general contact information and allows for adding other announcement details too. If you wish to post anything on the noticeboard, please contact Laurene.

The second project was to install an internet link and wi-fi system to the church and halls, this also has been successfully completed. A big thanks to Donald Grassie for making this happen. This will facilitate both communications within the building and the potential to relay some of our activities over the internet. There are three wireless points - in the Vestry, in the Sanctuary, and in the Session Room. They look like this.



After some years as the Fabric and Finance convener, I feel the time is now right to stand down from this role and give someone else the opportunity to take this rewarding position on. I would like to thank everyone in the team that has assisted me over the years.

Mike Reid

Our Appreciation

Mike Reid has convened our Fabric and Finance Committee for some years. He has done so with commitment and careful planning and organisation; balancing the needs of the congregation with financial prudence, foresight, and practicality. He has been largely responsible for the maintenance and development of our sound and communication systems for which we are grateful. Mike will continue as a member of the committee but for his service as Convenor we thank him most sincerely.

We must also express our appreciation and thanks to **Charles Skene** who is standing down from his role in maintaining the fabric of the church buildings and manse. Charles has been responsible for this for many years. This has been no mean task. The age of our buildings has required constant attention and Charles has done his best to organise the necessary maintenance that this has required. This he has done without fuss, just getting on with the job. We should not take for granted the service he has given in ensuring the fabric of the church meets the necessary standards. We are grateful to him and thank him most sincerely. Charles will also continue as a member the fabric committee and will be responsible for Hall Bookings.

These are two posts that we urgently need to fill. Please consider whether these are roles that you might help us with by contacting the Minister or a member of the Kirk Session.

Editor

Money Matters

It will come as no surprise to learn that our financial position for the 6 months to the end of June has deteriorated yet further to the extent that our general fund balance - for the first time for many a year - is now less than £20,000.

In the absence of income from the use of the halls we therefore rely even more on the contributions from the congregation.

As mentioned before many members have switched their method of giving from freewill envelopes to standing orders which is very much appreciated.

May I now look for help especially from the following members –

- Those who have previously given only by Freewill envelope but who have not switched their method of giving to standing order and who do not wish to do so.
- Those who in the past have supplemented their ongoing standing order with additional contributions either by way of freewill envelope or contributions directly into the open plate.
- Those who previously contributed only to the open plate but who, in the absence of the church being open for worship, have had no opportunity to do so.

In all such cases a regular cheque is the best option, at least until such times as our income from the halls improves. This obviously depends on further relaxation of the Covid regulations which is now threatened by the recent dramatic increase in cases.

In the light of the limited access to the church buildings such cheques should be sent or delivered to my home at 3 Kingswood Avenue AB15 8AE.

Thank you for your help.

Jim Henderson - Treasurer

Summer Break

Taking a summer break has become for most people an important opportunity to recharge 'batteries' and take a pause to reflect, and for many, take advantage of summer sunshine and warmth in the countryside or seaside. That is until this year, and last, when the pandemic seriously disrupted such ambitions, particularly for those who wished to go abroad. At least this year it has been possible to take such breaks within the UK even with some restrictions continuing. Discovering the pleasures of our own countryside, hills, mountains, lochs and lakes, and coasts has

been a revelation. It has also provided crucial opportunities for families to gather for the first time for many months.



Chris and I joined our family for a holiday in the Lake District just south of the region of my birth and a place in which I always feel welcome and at home. So, while staying in the village of Thornthwaite just north of Keswick we enjoyed being with our family and the magnificent view of Skidaw across Lake Bassenthwaite. We were surrounded by an

abundance of wildlife; a resident pair of pheasants, tawny owls (that kept us awake at night), redsquirrels and flamboyant Jays to name but a few. Walking along the valley a couple of miles to get my paper was also a novelty; exercise and information being the outcome, the latter not always welcome. Hiking with my son and

grandson is demanding, great

company though; going up is fine but coming down is hard on the knees! We encountered Llama out for their hike but on enquiry I failed to get a lift!



Chris and I took more leisurely nostalgic tours over the passes (Whinlatter and Honister), and visiting my birthplace and childhood Solway coast seaside holiday beaches (Allonby) and finding suitable places for our afternoon ice cream. We visited the Thornthwaite St Mary's Anglican Church with a unique entrance but alas had no services while we were there but one on the Sunday after we left! Recently renovated it was looking good and a sacred space in which to sit and reflect. I find that Graveyards are always interesting. The epitaphs on the grave stones especially. How many of us menfolk are likely to have an epitaph 'A Perfect Gentleman'. Ah, well we can always aspire to greater things!



The local community like others has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic which was reflected in this poem on the church noticeboard.

Challenging Times

Earth's fragile beauties we possess
As pilgrim's gifts from God,
And walk the slow and dangerous way
His wounded feet have trod.
Though faith by tragedy is rocked,
And love with pain is scored,
We sing the pilgrims' song of hope:
'Your kingdom come, O Lord!'

Robert A Willis former Dean of Canterbury Cathedral

And so, our holiday, 'our summer break', came to an end and each of us went our separate ways. It was wonderful, exhilarating, and restful. It left me realising that despite all our difficulties, God finds ways of giving us so much love, so much to be thankful for, and so much to hope for.

Editor

Christian Aid

As the UK government has put a limit on its overseas aid budget to 0.5% of GDP, (a reduction of about £4 billion) having previously agreed to commit 0.7% of GDP towards such support (approximately £18 billion) there is a continuing, desperate need to support the poorest in the world through our Christian Aid donations. It is true that the UK is the third largest donor in the world and like every other country has had to borrow large amounts of money to sustain our country through the Coronavirus pandemic. But not all countries are able to borrow the amounts required even for the essentials of health care, water supplies and food: but we are, and therefore are in a position to help those not so fortunate as ourselves.

Although the UK government's limit will extend into future years until extremely difficult financial domestic criteria are met, Christian Aid will continue its work with its partners to ensure the wellbeing of some of the poorest people in the world is achieved. It is an opportunity for us, regardless of what the UK government decides, to ensure that this happens. Christ's teaching is clear; *'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'* *'Whenever*

you did this for any of my people no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me'. (Matthew 25; 34-36 and v 40)

Christian Aid continues to be effective because it works directly with people at the coalface ensuring that the aid gets to where it is most needed. It works in partnerships with organisations that deal directly with an established need. This is being developed with other international agencies through the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* consortium - Christian Aid, CARE, Tearfund, ActionAid, CAFOD, Oxfam. They work together, to build and promote local leadership and ultimately achieve a more effective humanitarian response. We are privileged in being members of an organisation that takes the lead in delivering humanitarian aid to where it is most needed. Your donations are vital for the continuation of this Christian outreach worldwide. Please give generously.

Editor and Christian Aid Web Site



The Guild

The new 3-year Strategy for the National guild from 2021-2024 is

'Look Forward in Faith'

The themes for the three years are:

Lights and Bushels

Wee seeds, big trees

New wine, new wine skins

Hopefully we will all meet again soon, in the meantime keep in touch with one another and –

'Let your light shine before others,
That they may see your good deeds
And glorify your father in heaven'

Matthew 5

Best wishes to All, Chris

Contacts

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