

The **Lych Gate**

The Newsletter of St Machar's Ranfurly Church



December 2020

Volume 22 Issue 6



MINISTER'S LETTER

Looking back on 2020:

Well, it's nearly Advent – as I'm writing the first Sunday of Advent is 3 days away. Somehow, we've gone from Lent to Advent and Christmas all under the cloud of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has certainly shed a different light on a lot of our normal religious festivals and, I have also found, on many Bible stories. It is not over yet and though we rejoice with 'a thrill of hope' at the news of effective vaccines, there is still more waiting ahead.

During the initial lockdown, while we were still in Lent, the Lent practice of abstaining from certain things gained a new dimension as we had to 'give up' on touch and physical closeness, freedom of movement and even gathering for worship in our churches. We celebrated Easter online and although we proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ, we were very conscious that we are still looking forward to the full realisation of God's new creation, and final doing away with death. Pentecost was celebrated by tying red ribbons to our trees and hedges as a sign of the Holy Spirit scattering us into our communities. The restrictions on gathering in the building has forced us to think how

we can be church where we are and how we can share the good news outside of the building. We now have a stronger presence online through our website, Facebook Page and YouTube channel, and have set up for livestreaming services from September. Those of us that have been able to regather for in-person worship in limited capacity during the past few months have been grateful for it, in spite of all the restrictions. Being able to livestream has helped all our members to stay connected and it has also enabled a wider audience to access our services. Those not online have received a weekly printed service script. Members and elders have tried to keep in touch with one another in different ways and the Kirk Session have got used to having meetings by Zoom with improving efficacy. So there have been some gains, but there are also many losses that we cannot ignore. We have missed opportunities for joyful and relaxed gathering before during and after services, at Junior Church, Guild, the Terrace Lunches, Masqueraders and so on. We have missed opportunities for fundraising, and for concerts and choir rehearsals. We have not

been able to host the Summer Drop-In, or go into the schools for Christmas Unwrapped or school assemblies and worship. And we have sadly lost a number of our loyal church members and have on the whole been unable to attend their funerals.

All this is on my mind as we end the church year and move into the next. More than ever we have been forced to ask ourselves what is core of being the church and what needs to be 'reimagined' in new circumstances.

Advent and Christmas are also requiring reimagining and yet provide continuity in terms of content. I hope you've signed up to receive our online advent calendar via the email sent out last week – if not email me and I'll add your name to the list. Christmas services are planned, but will require booking and we will try to allocate places in a fair way. It is possible to attend as an extended Christmas bubble but please do make sure there is space for all of you.

If your Christmas will not involve the usual gatherings, know that Jesus is Immanuel – God with us – you are not alone!

Hanneke



Front Cover Photograph by Rev Hanneke Marshall

CONGRATULATIONS

During November, in recognition of the long service they have given to the Church, the following elders were presented with long service certificates signed by the Moderator of the Church of Scotland:

Ronald Aitchison (48 years)
Bobby Hart (44 years)
Philip McCulloch (38 years)
Ann McPhail (36 years)
Ian Hales (33 years)
Anne Allen (33 years)
Carlo Porrelli (32 years)
William Robb (31 years)



Stanley Chalmers (46 years)
Michael Hepburn (44 years)
Pat Chalmers (36 years)
Bill Christie (34 years)
Elizabeth Lyle (33 years)
Norma Hancock (32 years)
Donald Robb (32 years)



**Onset of Winter near
Lochwinnoch**

ACCESS TO OUR ONLINE SERVICES

If you are unable to attend Church, then any of the following ways will let you gain access to the services, which will be livestreamed to our YouTube channel from the church.

Go to our YouTube channel (Google: St Machar's Ranfurly Church YouTube) – if you click subscribe then it will be easier to find each week.

Via the Sunday Morning e-mail.

Within the e-mail there is a link to click which will take you directly to our YouTube channel.

If it is at the same time as the service (10:30 am), you will see the live service

Some time after the service, you will be able to see a recording of the latest service.

If you would prefer a printed copy of the Service please let your Elder know.



**Rainbow over Ranfurly Castle
Golf Course**

1ST BRIDGE OF WEIR GUIDES

We received some welcome news over the summer that when we started our new term in September we could meet outdoors. This would be the first time we would see the girls in person since March. Of course we would have to work within new Covid-19 guidelines, but we started to plan to meet together again and kept our fingers and toes crossed that the weather would be kind to us.



Our first Wednesday back together was on the 2nd September. Unfortunately, the Scottish weather wasn't kind - in fact the

rain was torrential - so it was back to Zoom for the evening. We had a show and tell about what the girls did over the summer. We met new family pets, heard all about staycations and saw newly decorated bedrooms.

Since then the weather on a Wednesday evening has been much better and it has been great to see the girls face to face again in the local park of course at a social distance. Over the next few weeks, until it gets too cold and dark, we will be using nature as the focus for our programme as much as we can, and making good use of being out in the great outdoors.

We have also been adapting our games to make them Covid-19 friendly. We've had good fun trying out games that are hands free such as football rounders, wink murder, statues etc. We've also managed last week to make smores individually over tea lights on individual tin foil plates. Over the



next couple of weeks as it starts to get darker we plan to have an evening learning morse code to allow us to send each other messages using torches. We also plan to have a glo-stick games evening.

Christine Haddock
1st Bridge of Weir Guides

Editorial Note:

The editorial team wish to apologise for the delay in publishing this article which was submitted in time for the last issue.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

I attended the "virtual" General Assembly which was held over the weekend of 2/3 October via a combination of zoom and support technology to allow presentation of the motions and allow voting. With over 700 commissioners it went remarkably well.

My highlights are:-

The Assembly agreed to reduce Ministry and Mission contributions for 2021 by 18%.

Various administrative protocols were passed to keep things legal: notably, no need for a SAM but the Trustees (Kirk Session) must still approve the accounts and make them available to the congregation

The following debates were of

special interest

1. **"Black Lives Matter and racism is a sin"**. We had a lively debate after a counter-motion called for the words "Black Lives Matter" to be substituted by **"All lives Matter"**. The Assembly felt that this would dilute the message and reaffirmed that **"black lives matter and racism is a sin"**.

2. Great concern was expressed concerning the number of church buildings which we have and the cost of their upkeep. It is important to have the right buildings in the right places. The convenor of the GA Trustees suggested that there were three stages, each involving the letter "P".

(i) Planning and Pruning

(ii) Planting and (iii) Partnership with other congregations, other denominations and community groups.

3. There was a lack of clarity on the number of charges for which we should be aiming in the current presbytery planning. The aim of the current 2020 plan was to reduce to 850, but in fact the number throughout Scotland stands around 900 with only 700 ministers available. As to the future, the required reduction is likely to be between 20% and 30%. It is hoped to have greater clarity by early next year.

Dennis Taylor
Commissioner No. 365.

HARVEST



The Harvest Thanksgiving Service for 2020 was held in the Church on Sunday October 11th. Bags of groceries were donated and a retiring collection was taken for the Renfrewshire Foodbank.



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E info@renfrewshire.foodbank.org.uk
www.renfrewshire.foodbank.org.uk

Mr Francis Hancock
Treasurer, St Machar's Rarifurly Church
18 Glendontan Road
Bridge of Weir
PA11 3HE

27 October 2020

Dear Mr Hancock

Thank you so much for the kind donation to Renfrewshire Foodbank of £135 from the retiring collection at your Harvest Festival Service. Your support is very much appreciated especially just now when so many families are finding it so difficult to make ends meet and provide the food their families need.

In addition to providing emergency food for people, we are now able to help to top up gas and electricity for our foodbank visitors. This means they can cook the food we provide and do not have to sit in a cold dark house. We can also provide a bus ticket to get the food provisions home. This is only possible because of the kindness of our local community.

Thank you so much once again.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Alexander
Senior Manager
Renfrewshire Foodbank



Registered Charity in Scotland (SC046028)



DECEMBER QUIZ (ITEMS ASSOCIATED WITH CHRISTMAS)

		Answer
1	A country for dinner	
2	Fog, the French go east	
3	Hoy! 2Ls go inside	
4	Wager hotel on the French garment edge	
5	Expensive precipitation?	
6	Confuse as a lust can	
7	Sic-piemen made them?	
8	A penny chimney	
9	Sounds as if a pound is missing	
10	One goes with safe breakers?	
11	Back-facing rats	
12	Chief is female with no penny?	

October Quiz Answers: 1. Lemur 2. Leopard 3. Hippopotamus 4. Lion 5. Llama 6. Fox
7. Cat 8. Panda 9. Dormouse 10. Stag 11. Carthorse 12. Chamois

CHURCHES OF THE WORLD



St Stephen Cathedral Passau Germany

They hold midday concerts during the summer and winter. Mozart wrote music for this and played this organ.



We visited this church on our journey down the Danube when we stopped at Passau.

The Cathedral is unbelievably beautiful and elegant inside. The frescos painted on the ceiling are incredible. But it is the organ which dominates and captivates you inside. It is truly magnificent.

It is a very impressive structure and it has the largest Cathedral organ in the world with a total of over 17,000 pipes and 200 registers! It also has a five-manual general console.

Helen Bullen



BOYS BRIGADE

These are difficult times with churches and church organisations not functioning as normal. There are twenty-four Boys Brigade companies in the Paisley Battalion and so far, six have resumed face-to-face meetings. This number is slowly growing and many companies are also providing meetings on Zoom and/or activities at home.

Since May the Bridge of Weir Company has had Zoom meetings for boys in the age group primary 4 to age eighteen. The older boys from primary 7 upwards have also enjoyed meeting outside with activities in a local park. They were rotated in three groups playing games like rounders, touch rugby and frisbee and we continued to enjoy ourselves outdoors until we

ran out of daylight.

On 8 October we resumed meetings for the older boys in the Freeland Church halls and we have made those evenings as varied and interesting as possible. It is not easy wearing masks and socially distancing but we are adapting a whole lot of games and activities. We also have to take a relaxed view about uniforms as with all windows open, jackets and jumpers are essential.

We plan to have a Saturday afternoon outdoor event at least once a month and the first of these was a great success. In blustery weather we had a sponsored walk from Bridge of Weir to Kilmacolm and back and have raised about £1100 to be shared

equally between Boys Brigade and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. We were fortunate in having fund matching by a generous donor and it is a very pleasing result.

With many BB staff furloughed, badges and awards were seriously delayed but it was good to start this session by giving out two BB Queen's Badges, three BB President's Badges, two Duke of Edinburgh Silver Awards and six Bronze Awards. Well done all the boys who worked so hard to earn these. Boys Brigade was also pleased to be represented at the Service of Remembrance at St Machar's Ranfurly Church.

Paul Birch
Company Captain.

GUILD NEWS

It is a long time since we met as a Guild in February and we are now heading for Christmas and a New Year. All the usual events, which we have throughout the year have not been allowed, the annual meeting in Dundee, Guild week, the Big Sing in Glasgow, the Presbytery carol service in Paisley and our own community

lunch in the church hall.

As we have not been able to meet or have our sale of work, funds are low, so we have decided not to allocate funds for the moment, as we usually do in December.

Life at the moment is a bit of a mystery, so we do not know when the Guild will resume, but we shall keep in

touch and hopefully be back together soon.

To all the committee and members may you have a Christmas that is full of hope and love and go forward in the footsteps of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to a calmer, happier New Year.

Ann Hart

NOTICES

Face Masks

Homemade washable facemasks available in Christmas materials.

Phone Coral on 690450 to order.

A donation to Church Funds will be requested.



Volunteers Wanted

Being in Church at the present time brings with it many challenges.

Extra help is always welcome for a variety of tasks.

e.g. stewarding, cleaning, sound and vision, and live streaming

Please contact Norma Hancock if you can help:

norma.hancock48@gmail.com

or

01505-61494



FUNERALS

Jesus said "I am the Resurrection and the Life"

Alistair Smith

8th October 2020

John Charles Wilson

11th November 2020



Welcome to our Bridge of Weir Village Advent Calendar!

Sign up for a daily reminder at

<https://mailchi.mp/af0928fd4c73/sign-up-for-daily-link-to-bow-village-advent-calendar>



Christmas Tree Baubles



Our Christmas tree will be outside rather than inside the church this year so more people can enjoy it!

We want to invite you to come and collect a fillable plastic bauble and bring it back filled to tie it to the tree.

Some ideas for fillings:

- ◆ The (first!) **name** of a person you want to remember on a small strip of paper
- ◆ A **word** that you want to share as a prayer for the village
- ◆ Something that represents something you're **grateful** for this year
- ◆ Just something **colourful** and joyous!
- ◆ Something to represent the **Christmas story**

Baubles will be available from a tub by the tree and during our services. You can take it home to fill it and bring it back in your own time to hang in the tree.

CONTACTS

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Session Clerk: Dennis Taylor
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PA11 3HT

Tel: 01505 **612417**

ROTAS

Date	Stewards	Cleaning	Registration
13th	Fred Schellekens Morven McLeod	Norma Hancock Morven McLeod	Dennis Taylor
20th	Coral McLaughlin Judy Evans	Naomi Butterworth Judy Evans	Dick Hughes
24th	Mary Taylor Dennis Taylor	Mary Taylor Dennis Taylor	Dennis Taylor
27th	Margaret Richardson Jennie Durward	Margaret Richardson Jennie Durward	Dennis Taylor
January 3rd	Norma Hancock Philip McCulloch	Norma Hancock Rosemary Taylor	Dick Hughes
10th	Jane Shepherd Marion Reid	Jane Shepherd Pamela Wilson	Dennis Taylor
17th	Mary Taylor Dennis Taylor	Mary Taylor Dennis Taylor	Dick Hughes
24th	Agnes McKechan Bill Robb	Agnes McKechan Anne Yeaman	Dennis Taylor
31st	Sarah McNaught Fred Schellekens	Sarah McNaught Fred Schellekens	Dick Hughes
February 7th	Morven McLeod Coral McLaughlin	Morven McLeod Naomi Butterworth	Dennis Taylor

SOUND AND VISION

VOCALIST

13th	Drew Richardson	Lois Marshall	Alex Bullen
20th	Harrison Butterworth	Lukas Marshall	Margaret Richardson
24th	4.00 Lukas & Lois Marshall	11.30 Naomi & Harrison Butterworth	Fred Schellekens
27th	Greg Miller	Naomi Butterworth	n/a
January 3rd	Drew Richardson	Beth Robertson	Archie Butter
10th	Lois Marshall	Lukas Marshall	Fred Schellekens
17th	Harrison Butterworth	Naomi Butterworth	Helen Bullen
24th	Beth Robertson	Greg Miller	Alex Bullen
31st	Lukas Marshall	Drew Richardson	Margaret Richardson
February 7th	Greg Miller	Lois Marshall	Archie Butter

Editorial Team

Dennis Taylor
Mary Taylor Marion Reid

Contributions for the next issue of *The Lych Gate* should be with the Editor by **Tuesday 19th January 2021**.
Please E-mail to: dennis1taylor@msn.com or pass memory sticks or paper copies to Dennis Taylor.