

Bennoch Parish Church of Scotland Kirkcaldy

Registered Scottish Charity SC 005628

(01592) 643518 Minister
(01592) 200179 Session Clerk
(01592) 201723 Church

Website: www.bennochparishchurch.org.uk

FEBRUARY 2021

NEWSLETTER

From the manse

Over the next 12-18 months, the Kirkcaldy Town Centre Churches (Abbotshall, Bennoch, Linktown and St Bryce Kirk), along with Auchtertool, and in collaboration with Kirkcaldy Congregational, will be undertaking what is known as a community Audit. It is about 'looking' at our parish areas, and learning by *conversation, observation, and information*. It is about identifying the needs of the community, and how the mission of the church is to be enabled in the future. It is about working in partnership with others, even if our motivation to do so, is different.

Each team has been asked to walk their parish, and in looking, ask, *where are the signs of the Kingdom*, of hope, justice, and compassion? Where are they expressed? And who has power? How is it demonstrated? And who is powerless?

Next time you are out for a walk, if the weather ever improves, have a look around you. What do you see? Who should we be working in partnership with, seeking Kingdom values, and where are the needs of people to be met?

As we seek to work in partnership with other local churches, Bennoch is also part of other teams. Our Session Clerks are meeting together with myself and Justin Taylor, minister at Abbotshall. There is a planning and communications team being set up, and using *the General Trustees: Presbytery Planning Toolkit, Land, and buildings – minimum standards for churches and halls*, we have a Buildings Review Group, looking at our future building's needs. How flexible are our buildings for multipurpose use? Can any of our buildings be "re-purposed"? And we need to have appropriate 'income generation', to support our building (s) in the medium to long term.

The national churches finances have been badly hit by the pandemic, and locally, we need to have a realistic discussion about what we can actually afford, both in terms of buildings and staff. At the moment our Presbytery plan, for the five churches, indicates "three full time equivalent ministries", but in the future, that might be reduced.

It is about joined up thinking. The community audit needs to feed into the discussions about what building (s) will best serve us in the future, and what skill set, the future ministry team will need. What about first steps? On a very practical level, what about setting up a joint office, to serve all the churches?

It is a conversation we all need to have, and I am happy to chat with anyone, who wishes to feed into any of these conversations.

None of this will be easy. Change will bring loss. Cherished things of the past we will need to let go of and using again the analogy of the American explorers Lewis and Clark, *the world ahead of us, is very different from the world behind*. What has got us to this point, no longer works. They had to leave their canoes and climb the mountains.

The people of God have been here before; deserts were crossed and out of exile people returned home. Promises were given and held onto. God had not, and has not, gone away. That is our hope for the future. Stay connected. Stay safe. Till the next time.

Robin

Streaming

The installation of equipment to enable services to be streamed live on the internet is very nearly complete. It is intended that the services will be viewable on Zoom and on Facebook. Please keep an eye on the website and the Fife Free Press for notification of when this is operational.

Deaths

25.11.20	Mrs Jean Aird
14.01.21	James Dunsire
25.01.21	Mrs Barbara MacKay
26.01.21	Mrs Margaret Balfour

Our thoughts and prayers are with all those who have lost loved ones during this difficult time.

Mary Sherrard 1923 - 2020

Many members will fondly remember Mary. She had been an active elder and Guild member in St John's and Bennochry churches for many years before moving to Duns not many years ago. Her daughter, as it happens, had audited our accounts for us. Sadly Mary passed away in December, aged 97. Her obituary in The Times described her as a "woman who responded to opportunity and challenge". Her first job on leaving school was as a cub reporter in Glasgow. Her family had taken in a German refugee doctor. She took the opportunity to improve her schoolgirl German, and when old enough she joined the Wrens.

This led to her being selected to work at Bletchley Park, helping to crack the German Enigma codes - a fact she kept secret for 30 years, even from her three children. She married John, an engineer, at the end of the war and in the early '50s they moved to Dundee where he initially became a manager at NCR. After attending a Billy Graham rally he decided to become a minister. He was fully supported by Mary in achieving his qualifications and he became a minister at Newtyle, north of Dundee.

She became involved in establishing the Scottish Pre-school Playgroups Association of which she became president. Later they moved to Galashiels where she identified the need for a Citizen's Advice Bureau outside the large cities - and organised the Central Borders CAB, for which she was awarded an MBE. Meanwhile she was one of the first to graduate from the Open University. She later served as president of the Church of Scotland's Women's Guild helping it through major changes including opening the Guild to men.

Her husband John died in 1999. One of their sons, Dane, was also a minister, their daughter Olive was a retired accountancy lecturer, and their other son Scott was a strategist and business consultant. She loved travelling and entertaining company.

(Partly based on her obituary in The Times)



PARTNERPLAN

Jenny Featherstone - Zambia January 2021

Chodort Training Centre, Choma
PO Box 630451
Kitwe
Zambia

Dear church friends,

Warm greetings from Zambia in this unusual Christmas season. Despite the constraints we all feel about the usual activities, and not being able to see families and have all the expectations of a normal Christmas, we can still take comfort in that the central message of this season, Emmanuel-God with us, is there no matter what our circumstances.

Zambia is still relatively free of covid, but, although restrictions are still in place, they are generally neglected, so we may experience an upswing soon.

With the dramatic fall in the kwacha (from 15 to 28 to the pound) some of our volunteers at Play4all in Kitwe, are struggling and find it very difficult to make ends meet. We are supporting them each month with enough to buy some basics. Hans, who was abandoned by his mum, and Sana, who's mum died suddenly, also continue to receive a small cash sum for support. Jane is managing the project well and keeps up the feeding programme despite play4all not running as normal. She visits the homes of the children who are on the feeding programme each week with food parcels, and this helps her to check on the kids at home to see how they are doing.



Jane oversaw the completion of the new wall around play4all. The builders used the hand moulded mud bricks common in Zambia



Kabutu and friends farming by hand to help feed vulnerable elderly people in Kandabwe

A little of the money donated via Torbain Church Kirkcaldy earlier this year for PPE, went to support Nathan, the young boy who needs dialysis. I spoke with his doctor recently because we had learned one of the major providers of medical supplies to the government had withdrawn from Zambia because there are \$7,200,000 of unpaid bills. (You may have heard on the news, Zambia is in a seriously unsustainable situation and unable to pay the interest on most of their debts.) We managed to buy Nathan 2 lines for emergencies, and are hoping that he will be able to pull through with

some medication Bridget managed to find from a private hospital, and a strict diet.

121 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4YN
T: +44 (0)131 225 5722 E: world@churchofscotland.org.uk
Scottish Charity Number: SCO11353

PARTNERPLAN

Something to be thankful for is the good rain we are having this year. After such a prolonged drought which caused a serious price rise in basic foods, people are digging up every spare meter of land in an effort to plant enough grain to help them through the year. They are cultivating along the railway lines and roadside verges, in fact any piece of land that isn't fenced in!

The main thing that has kept me busy through the outbreak has been working with CADRO (Choma Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Organisation). I have been involved in training and planning, and have done some local radio programmes. Last week I was part of a team attending a holiday programme for 80 vulnerable youths to sensitise them about the dangers of alcohol. This month marks 2 years of CADRO's existence and we have an active WhatsApp group, an informative Facebook page as well as regular weekly meetings for recovering alcoholics and counselling / advice for them and their families.

Matemola, a clinical nurse on the Choma hospital mental health ward is another active supporter of CADRO, and he estimates that 70 – 80% of all admissions are for alcohol detox. As previously mentioned, there is now an issue of the hospital not being able to supply the drugs needed to ease people through detox, but they are available to buy privately from a chemist on prescription. Those who cannot afford the medication, can be helped through a grant given to me in 2019 by the Methodist Women in Britain for local community work. Incidentally Matemola is the only other person in the picture wearing a mask!



The CADRO team pose for a photo with a member of Choma council responsible for vulnerable children (far left)

Items for prayer

- For Marita as she struggles with cancer and elephantitis.
- For the many Zambians who will feel the pinch due to the fall of the kwacha against the dollar.
- For Zambian hospitals as they care for their patients despite the government's fiscal difficulties.
- For play4all as we hope to restart our main programme in 2021.

Items for praise

- For the good rains this year.
- For the faithfulness of Kabutu, a former student, and his hard work planting maize to feed the poor in the Kandabwe community.
- For Laurenz' continued support for the Play4all feeding programme.
- For the growth of the CADRO initiative in Choma and beyond.
- For Hans, who is settling in well with one of our play4all volunteers.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and good health and joy in 2021.

Jenny

Email jenny.featherstone@gmail.com Skype Jenny Featherstone 1 whatsapp +260976633366

Open Door Project

Although recent times have been frustrating for the Open Door Projects, with the Olive Branch Cafe closure (temporary), Community Garden work suspended and our Development Worker furloughed for most of the time, the Open Door Team still meet monthly via the wonders of on-line internet technology. We continue to have faith that all our activities will be resurrected as soon as it is deemed safe to do so.

Keeping in touch with our volunteers and supporters is crucial, and so for the 25th January an on-line Burns night was organised. This mode of communication has its challenges and only works well with engagement from the participants (as with any Burns night), so a programme was laid out to try and mimic the real event, and have contributions from various attendees.

We were grateful to have Bruce Davis's permission to use a video clip of one of his renowned addresses to the Haggis to get us started. The Selkirk Grace was recited by myself, which brought back my childhood memories of family gatherings, a present-day experience that is sadly missed. The toast to the lassies seemed very appropriate as the majority of Team members and volunteers are indeed lassies (of varying experience) without whom our project work could not be accomplished.

With a music track of "Ae fond kiss" playing in the background we tucked into our drinks and snacks and haggis. Our first guest recitation started with William McGonagall's tribute to Burns written in his peculiar style, followed by "The Wan That Got Awa", a frightening tale of havoc caused by a wee sleekit cowrin tim'rous beastie in a family parlour. Completing the first round in the Scots dialect was a contribution entitled "Social Dancin" by Anne Kelly, a view on dancing lessons from schooldays!

Fortunately, at Bennoch we are blessed to have our resident quizmaster (Bob Docherty) who was pressed (willingly) into service to test our Burns knowledge with twenty questions. Most of us were happy to get at least half right but one of our party excelled with all correctly answered and as an extra test also gave a correct response to what would have been a tie breaker question. Impressive.

Some Burns related memories were shared. Ragnar spent his youth in Burns' country and often visited the bridge and kirk featured in the tale of Tam o'Shanter. I was amazed that these really existed. He also recalled the magical experience of hearing the poem recited by a gifted speaker, late one night, with a small group of friends gathered round a blazing fire.

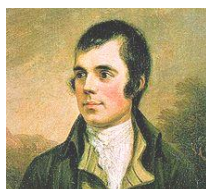
Personally, over the years I have not been someone imbued in the talents of Burns, but the one poem of his that was studied in my schooldays for exams was Tam o'Shanter, so I attempted to portray that vivid tale for the 'benefit' of a captive audience. It's one of Burns' longest poems.

Another tranche of readings followed. "Address to the Toothache" by Burns a tortured tale of early dentistry, performed by our own minister who admits to being a dentist in previous life. This was followed by a verse of topical content in "Tae a Virus" by Willie Sinclair, adeptly given by Mary - (Denis Lawson performs this to good effect on YouTube, well worth a peek!)

The evening was concluded with the full rendition of Auld Lang Syne, sweetly sung by one of our Community Choir members with the assembly joining in on 'mute'.

Up to date information on the Open Door Project and other activities and worship including contacts at Bennoch, can be found on the Church web-site <https://bennochparishchurch.org.co.uk>

Phil Reeves
Open Door Team



Coffee, Book and Chat

We are trying something different for lockdown - a morning gathering with the title, Coffee, book & chat (in any order you like). You bring your own coffee and chat, and we can think about something to read together. I am thinking about something that helps us reflect on faith in daily life. How long will we meet? Maybe about an hour, but let's wait and see.

If this is of interest to you, please let Robin know. The next gathering, hosted by Robin, will be on Wednesday 17th February at 10.30 a.m.

You will need to bring your own coffee and chat!



Finance Matters

As we step into another year which will hopefully be better than last year, it's time to prepare our Church year end accounts.

Whilst I don't have the final figures, I thought I would let our members know how we managed some of the challenges in 2020 -

- During both lockdowns all our employees were placed on the Government Furlough scheme which has allowed us to keep them employed - great news story
- Our December Gift Day produced a record £4,200 with a Gift Aid claim waiting to be sent - great news story and thanks to all who contributed.
- Many of our members have signed up for Standing Order to keep their contributions consistent during our Church's closure - thanks to those who have converted from Free Will Offering to Standing Order.
- Many members made additional payments on top of their regular giving - thank you all for your generosity.
- We paid all our bills on time during 2020

On behalf of the Kirk Session I would like to thank you for your support during the past year and look forward to sharing worship together soon.

Best wishes

George Drummond
Session Clerk

- ❖ Due to current Covid restrictions this Newsletter cannot be delivered personally, but is being emailed to all those on our 'emailing list'. If you know of any member who has not received one and would like to please ask them to contact the session clerk so this can be arranged. Meanwhile, please keep visiting our website for news updates, worship, articles and, of course, Bob's Quiz.