



Baljaffray Bulletin

Autumn 2020



“You crown the year with a bountiful harvest: even the hard pathways overflow with abundance.”

Psalms 65:11



Harvest field 2020: Carnbee, Fife



A Message From Ben

One of the consequences of lockdown has been the increased amount of introspection that has been undertaken by both individuals and groups. Why are we here? Why do we do things the way that we do them? Will we be able to continue as we were, or will things never be the same?

As we come to our Autumn series looking at the early chapters of the book of Acts, we find ourselves plunged into the life of the early Christians, who also had much cause to ask themselves some of these same questions. When we read Acts, we need to be careful that we don't fall into one of 2 errors - either reading it as a prescriptive text that outlines exactly what we should do, or reading it purely as an historical story with no influence on how we act.

To avoid the first, we need to recognise that Acts is a narrative book; its writing is primarily descriptive, and not prescriptive - it is telling us what happened, not what must always happen. Which is not to say that we should ignore what they did, but rather we must look for the principles that God is seeking to set in our own lives and church.

To avoid the second, we need to recognise that these early Christians took seriously their call to live as Jesus lived, were fearless in their faith, and believed in a God that would do great things through them. We too need to become fearless in our faith, and believe in a God that can do great things through us.

Often the question that is asked about church, is “what makes a successful church?”. Everyone is very clear, it would seem, that it’s not about “bums on seats” nor is it about financial security, nor just about being a good community centre. My favourite definition of success is that a successful church is one that “makes disciples who make disciples for the transformation of their community.” That is, we become a people who bring others to know Jesus, and that the test of our discipleship is whether or not the community that is around us is transformed. This is what the church in Acts was like, and this is what we are called to be.

So - as we embark on this new adventure in Acts, let’s be encouraged to be Spirit-filled disciples who make disciples in order that our community is transformed.

Ben Thorp

Probationary Minister



Letters from Ian

Ian sent two congregational letters by email in August and September. They are being attached to the print version of this magazine for people who didn’t receive them previously. They are offered here as a clickable link for anyone who may have missed the original emails and is looking at the e-version of the Bulletin.

Ian’s Congregational Letters

<https://tinyurl.com/yyznkvbw>

Sunday School

With the schools returning we wanted to find a way of continuing to connect with the younger members of our congregation.

For those aged 3-7 we asked them to join us on a Zoom call at 9.30am each Sunday. Nine families have been joining us each week. We all say hello, have an introductory activity or chat and then we listen to some of Jesus' parables along with a picture book. We break into the same groups each week to chat about the story and what God might be saying to us through that story. We then return to the big group to be shown a craft. Craft materials had been delivered to everyone physically at the start of the session. It's been great to receive the photos of these crafts and some have appeared on our church Facebook page. We end with a song.

Carol, Sheila, Linda and I have loved meeting up every week and have been really encouraged by the enthusiasm, laughter and participation.



We plan to record ourselves as part of the Harvest Service so hopefully you get a flavour of our wee Zoomday school.

For those children in **Primary 4 – Primary 6** we have managed to start up four small groups which allow the children in each group to feel safe and to feel that they are with friends. We have managed to do this because some of our older teens have been willing to lead. Lewis McLeod and Rachel Scott take the older ones, Olivia Seabeck and Ana Martin the middle, and Ali Neill and Kirsty Clark oversee our younger group. Another group continues with parents as they had got going throughout Lockdown.

In these groups we have been thinking about prayer, how we talk to God, what we might talk to him about, and when we might pray. We meet at 11.15am after the service and this has also been fun and relational. We have had good feedback from both parents and children.

These groups also plan to participate in the Harvest service.

Virtual Sunday School is working for our young people! As we move into next session, we might try to look at the same passages in Acts that are being covered on the live stream. We appreciate your prayers as we navigate new ways of doing and try to keep our young people linking in with God and their church family.

Edith



News from the Kirk Session

The Kirk Session continues to meet during the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic albeit the way we meet has had to be by Zoom conference. Like most of us, we miss the ability to meet personally as it is always difficult to gauge people's real feelings remotely.

The business of the church still goes on and we have been busy making some really difficult decisions during the past number of months. The meetings have been fruitful and at times emotionally charged as we look for what is best for the church during these unprecedented times. We are always thinking of the safest way for our church to reopen once we have digested the advice/information from many agencies, from the Scottish Government to the Church of Scotland hierarchy.

Recently, the greatest area of debate at each meeting has been whether we should/could open our church building for Sunday worship. We closely monitor the rules from the Scottish Government that in turn are interpreted by the Church of Scotland Head Office in Edinburgh and I must say that they have been very diligent. Their help has been invaluable in relation to the interpretation of the legislation on the opening of buildings, what needs to be done in relation to health and safety. Their focus, like ours, is on ensuring that every measure possible is taken to prevent the spread of the virus and to keep everyone safe. It is the decision of individual Kirk Sessions as to whether they believe their buildings are 'ready' for Sunday worship.

We are blessed in having Ian and Ben leading our worship every Sunday by means of some amazing information technology but we are also aware that we aren't able to capture all our treasured congregation and we are truly sorry for this. We discuss this at every meeting but have, as yet, not managed to come up with a solution and this is so frustrating. So, if anyone out there has any ideas how we can capture everyone please let us know.

Even before the pandemic the Foyer Project team had been planning for substantial alterations to the church access and some internal areas, as well as the creation of a children's outdoor play area. I am happy to confirm that the works commenced on 17th August with an estimated completion timeframe of 10 – 12 weeks subject to the availability of materials. Supplies have been interrupted due to Covid. Before the pandemic we had anticipated there would be some disruption to our normal Sunday services and had plans to mitigate this. Covid has meant that we have had to review this approach.

At the Kirk Session meeting on the 1 September 2020, it was decided, taking in all the advice from the Church of Scotland HQ, the Scottish Government, our property group and the fact that we had started the building works, that we are not in a position to open our church building for worship on Sundays. This was a difficult decision but we are satisfied it is the right one and hope that you will understand and support us.

Also, at the meeting we spent time considering how our church services may look once we open up and it was agreed that we should continue with the remote live stream services as this has proved to be a great success. This form of worship has been successful in reaching other people outwith the congregation. However, to try to stream a live service with a full congregation would be very challenging so there was a suggestion that we might introduce two services. This has not been fully explored but we felt it worthy of sharing.

As the Covid pandemic rules and regulations are so fluid and unpredictable it is impossible to be definitive. Therefore, as a Kirk Session we are continually reviewing the situation. We ask that you continue to pray for the Kirk Session and our church.

Bob Munn

I LOVE TO WORSHIP GOD

I love to go to church each week
I love the meet and greet
I love to chat and take my seat
Before the service starts
Oh how I love to worship!

I love to see my family arrive
It makes me feel all warm inside
I love the wave I get from them
And now it's time to start at ten
Oh how I love to worship!

I love to sing our gathering song
Old or new, it isn't wrong
To fill my lungs and belt it out
Oh how I love to worship!

I love to see the surge of kids
Who leave us later to do their bits
In their own way
How blessed are we,
Oh how I love to worship!

I love God's word being read
By someone else each week.
I take my turn, and I don't mind
I hope I'm being meek
Oh how I love to worship

I love to hear the prayers being
said
They touch my heart so often
We can of course pray anywhere
That's something not forgotten
Oh how I love to worship.

And now the climax of the day
The challenge and the message,
Come from we know not where
But oh we're glad they've come.
Oh how I love to worship

One final Hymn we sing out loud
Before our tea and chat
Gathering here is quite a crowd
Around the trolley cart
Oh how I love to worship!

But for now these days are gone
Live stream keeps us going
We will return there is no doubt
So let us keep on hoping
A vaccine soon and we'll be out (at
church)
Oh how I love to worship!

Moira May





Guild News

The Guild held a virtual tea party on Monday August 17th. Every member received a written invitation and a tea bag and was asked to think about good times with the Guild. Many members managed to meet up in groups of two or three and all reports tell how much everyone enjoyed their afternoon and the thought that the Guild was still remembering them. Ian suggested that we have a monthly group activity, the committee agreed, so in September every member will receive a newsletter and a very clever cryptic puzzle, devised by Margaret Sinclair. We must keep our grey cells active! A wordsearch is planned for October.



Our members try to keep in touch as much as possible, usually by phone (at least 11 members are not on line), and now that house visiting is banned, this becomes more important than ever. I am always happy to chat, my number is on our syllabus, so, members, please feel free to get in touch if you just want to natter.

*Stay safe,
Morag McGowan.*

Appeal for Kirk Session Nominations

You may recall that in September 2019 the Kirk Session at Baljaffray Parish Church underwent a substantial restructuring, reducing our membership from twenty-two to seven. During this restructuring it was agreed to introduce a tenure of service and it was decided that any new members of the Kirk Session will serve for a period of up to three years.

The membership of the current Kirk Session was drawn from the existing members, as it was felt we needed some stability after such a transformation. It was always our hope that further down the road we would be able to invite 'new' members into the restructured session. As part of the restructuring it was agreed that two of the members, Mrs Joyce McNae and Mrs Evelyn Hart would serve for only one year. How time flies and their year is almost complete. This new approach to governance and leadership means that the appointment of two new trustee elders will now take place annually.

Therefore, I am asking you to give real thought and prayer about people you feel God might be calling to serve on the Session. We are seeking to appoint two new trustee elders who will serve for a three-year term. We propose to do this by inviting you to **'bring forward names'** of people you believe have the gifts to serve the church by becoming members of the Kirk Session. For the avoidance of doubt, it doesn't matter whether the person(s) has served on the Session before.

The intention is that, if the person is willing to go forward, training and further information will be provided before any decisions are made or expected. This should allow an opportunity for individuals to listen to God, to each other, and for us as a church to discern who God is calling. Obviously, our present circumstances and restrictions may well have some bearing on exactly how and when we do this, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

Here is a brief summary of what Trustee Eldership will entail:

- Having missional leadership qualities and fresh vision
- Being an ordained elder with spiritual responsibility in the church
- Using your gifts in the Church by taking an active role in the life of our congregation
- Responsibilities of being a member of a board of charity trustees (charitable purposes, finance, maintenance of buildings and health and safety)
- Attending regular monthly meetings
- Collective responsibility for salaried staff
- Overseeing safeguarding matters

The above list is not exhaustive but is an overview of the commitment a Trustee Elder will be making. There is also scope for folk to take responsibility in inspiring particular areas of congregational life in order to help the church evolve and grow. This is a new way of working and it may take time for it to bed in, but there is now greater scope in our structure to support and encourage a missional outlook.

Process and Timescales

It was our intention to introduce this new process at our AGM in March. As we all know, Covid restrictions prohibited such meetings; however having waited out the summer the Session recognise we can't put this process on hold indefinitely. The best way forward now appears to be to invite your participation via the Baljaffray Bulletin.

Could I ask that you bring forward the name of the person you wish to nominate by email to me at sc@baljaffraychurch.org.uk or surface mail for my attention to Baljaffray Parish Church, Grampian Way, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 4RN. Please make sure the person nominated is aware.

Could you please do this by Friday 9th October 2020. Thank you.

Bob Munn

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal

Looking ahead it seems that we might not be able to fill Shoeboxes together this year. However, Blythswood are still planning to collect and deliver Shoeboxes.



Their website reminds you of what they like in each shoebox. This year you can also fill a drawstring bag – not plastic and no bigger than 500mm x 300mm. If you would like to fill a Shoebox or a bag we will inform you of the local collection once the details have been published.

Please do consider this as a way of sharing God's love in our wider world. Check out their website at www.blythswood.org.uk.

Edith

Thanks to Gordon Cubie for the cartoon.



Birthday Congratulations

Happy Birthday wishes to Jimmy Lawrence who celebrates his 90th birthday in September.



Prayer Ministry

Prayer Ministry continues to meet by zoom every Tuesday morning. We pray for individuals, families, groups, our church, and for areas in the world which badly need to be prayed for. We also give thanks for good news within our church family and elsewhere.

If you would like a prayer you can phone Liz or June

Prayer requests are, as always, confidential.

June and Liz

Pastoral Care

Just when we were thinking things were becoming a bit more safe, we seem to have taken a step back the way. All the more important now to please keep phoning. If you haven't phoned for a wee while, please phone again and check if people are okay.

A phone call really lifts people. I know because I have been at the end of two phone calls asking for me this week, and it is just so lovely to know people care. Thank you for all the phone calls that you have been making. Honestly, these phone calls mean so much to people, the feedback has been great and the calls are really appreciated.

June



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

‘Open Doors’ has been standing strong throughout the Covid crisis, providing aid, food, shelter, medical assistance to persecuted Christians in many countries all over the world, such as India, Syria, Columbia.

Very often Christians are blamed for the crisis and are refused food and aid, making life even harder. But they are still standing strong and not denying their faith. They are part of our Christian family. Often they are sharing their little amount of food with others who do not know Christ. This is happening in North Korea and Syria.

To find out more you can join our Prayer Group which at the moment meets via email once a month and monthly webinars. Also in October there will be an evening gathering, advertised below, and with more information from the organisers on the next page.

Please contact me - Liz Findlay



Dear Friend,

Because of the current pandemic, **Open Doors** is sadly unable to host this year's annual **Standing Strong** event, where we invite members of our persecuted family to come to the UK to share stories of the reality of persecution in their countries. However, we are excited to tell you that, instead, we are planning to host a special UK-wide **Standing Strong** online event on Saturday 3 October at 7:45pm.

You and your church family are invited to join us – and hundreds of believers from across the UK and Ireland - for an evening of inspiration, encouragement, and stories of courageous faith from persecuted Christians around the world.

During the evening, we will bring you the latest news on what's happening in Syria, Nigeria and China through interviews with church leaders and footage direct from our partners around the world. We would love for as many people as possible to experience what is always an inspiring, encouraging and challenging event.

Below, you will find a link to the page where you can both register and also download a short (45 second) promotional video .

(clicking the Vimeo link on the video will take you to the download page)

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/standing-strong-2020/standing-strong-online/>

If you have any further questions, please contact our Inspire Team on inspire@opendoorsuk.org or call 01993460015.

Thank you! Be blessed!

Mark & Sharon

Scotland Church Relations Manager
Open Doors UK & Ireland

The Tree of Eternity

The Fortingall Yew

At any time of year, you can make your way to the geographical heart of Scotland to visit the oldest living organism in Europe. Opinions on its age vary: is it 3000, 5000 or even 9000 years old? In spite of claims of greater longevity, documentary evidence authenticates an age of only (!) 3000 years, confirming that it is indeed the oldest in Europe.

The Fortingall Yew. The Tree of Eternity.



You'll find this Yew tree beside the Parish Church in the conservation village of Fortingall in Perthshire (now Perth and Kinross). At one end of remote Glen Lyon, the longest – and arguably the most beautiful – enclosed glen in Scotland, Fortingall is a picturesque village of cottages with thatched or slated roofs. Starting in the 1880s, the existing settlement and its Church were transformed by Sir Donald Currie of Garth, Glenlyon and Chesthill, a shipping magnate originally from Greenock, into the village it is today. In recognition of the enormous contribution he made to the village, he was buried behind the Yew tree in a secluded enclosure, where he is commemorated by an imposing gravestone.

Since prehistoric times, a place of worship has existed beside the Yew tree. One meaning given to the name Fortingall is 'holy place beside the wood or tree'.

There is evidence that the Yew and the building beside it were used for Druid worship, and it appears that early Christians had no difficulty in taking over the site and using it to construct their own Church. Throughout the centuries, successive places of worship were built beside the Yew tree, and by the time of the Reformation in 1560, there was a Church roughly the shape of Fortingall Church today.

With a lifespan going back thousands of years, this ancient tree could have featured in many historical events. Inevitably, the very antiquity of the Yew has given rise to myths as well as true stories in Scottish history.

Perhaps the most controversial figure connected with the Fortingall Yew is the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate. He is reputed to have been born in the village around the beginning of the 1st century AD, in the shade of the Yew tree. 'Evidence' of his living in Fortingall was found in Caesaria in Palestine: a stone slab, called the Pilate Stone with the inscription 'Hiberieum Pontius Pilatus'. In Latin, the north of Scotland and Ireland were known as Hibernia. Some say he returned to Fortingall to die. A

gravestone, inscribed with the letters 'PP', was unearthed, giving credence to the story.

There are, however, stories based on more solid evidence. In 1687, Iain MacGregor the older brother of Rob Roy MacGregor was married in Fortingall Church to Christian, the daughter of Campbell of Duneaves. Rob Roy attended his brother's wedding, no doubt with Mary, who was later to become his bride.

Although it's not recorded that wedding groups made special use of the Yew tree, it is reported that, throughout the years, funeral parties made their way *through* the tree. A gap had formed in the middle of the trunk, offering an archway to lend additional significance to any ceremonial occasion.

In the Church, you will find information about an ancestor of Rob Roy Macgregor. In 1569, Gregor Macgregor, with the Campbells in hot pursuit, leapt across the Pass of Lyon Gorge and managed to evade capture. The spot, *MacGregor's Leap*, is not far from the Yew tree. Attempts to leap across the gorge by others trying to re-enact this legendary feat have frequently resulted in failure – and even in death.

By 1769, the girth of the tree was measured as 65.5 feet by Sir Thomas Pennant, a respected botanist of his day. Today, posts mark the

circumference of the outer dimensions of the trunk at that time. The over-enthusiastic attention of souvenir-hunting visitors has, over time, led to the deterioration of the tree. As a result, the twin trunks and surrounding new growth are now protected by a fence – to ensure the Fortingall Yew’s life for the years ahead.

On his first tour of Scotland, Sir Thomas reported:

‘I had the hardiness to venture on a journey to the remotest part of North Britain, a country almost as little known to its southern brethren as Kamtschatka. I brought home a favourable account of the land. Whether it will thank me or no I cannot say ... but it has ever since been ‘inondee’ with southern visitants.’

Today, the legendary Fortingall Yew offers a special glimpse of eternity to all its visitors, be they from south, north, east or west.

Joan Fleming

Images by
Joan Fleming



Trading Fairly and Ethically - In Spite of Covid



I'm really missing our Fairtrade stalls and I must remember to extract the last few bags of our Kilombero rice from the church building before it's completely out of date! Holding the stalls gives us a good excuse to remember the people who grow the food and drink products and make the crafts, but of course, during lockdown, we have not been able to do that together.

That doesn't mean that the producers have stopped work, though. Some are having difficulty sourcing raw materials for crafts, others are trying to gather their harvests in without the migrant workers who normally join them to help with the work. Many are having major problems transporting their goods to ports and shipping them out. The result, of course, is that some goods are in short supply. With all these problems and the virus itself getting in the way, it's all the more important to buy fair trade products and support the producers and the companies who import the goods.



Just Trading Scotland (JTS) have reopened their appeal for donations to help the rice farmers in Malawi, following a spike in cases and the news that further equipment and awareness-raising is needed especially in country districts like Karonga.

You can donate at

<https://www.jts.co.uk/re-opening-of-covid-19-appeal-for-producers>

Gavin's Mill News - It's Our Mill!

It's actually true! On 1st July 2020 Gavin's Mill Community Project became the owner of Gavin's Mill! The Trustees are grateful for all the donations towards the purchase, from individuals as well as from large funding organisations – every penny counted as we pulled together enough to buy it. There's a sizeable monthly mortgage payment to be found, but it's charity ownership at last.



There was a socially distanced, very low-key celebration on the day, and we're looking forward to being able to have a proper "do" when circumstances permit...

Meanwhile, the team are looking at all the things that need doing to repair, preserve and develop the building. We had another flood on 4 August, but it was nowhere near as dramatic as the one in February. The Allander Water came close to visiting us again overnight on 12-13 September. Flood defences are at the top of our list of improvements!

'Are You Open?'

The big question for the last 6 months has been "Are you open?", and the answer has changed as time went on. We began by thinking that we might survive the 3 - week lockdown with a grant from the government, but it quickly became apparent that 3 weeks was just the start. So we took steps...

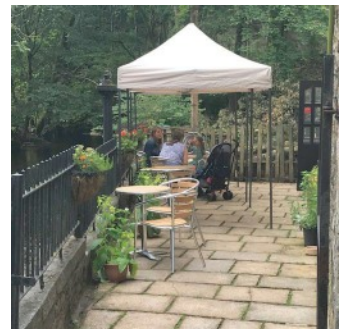
Some of you have ordered from the Gavin's Mill online shop at <https://www.gavinsmill.org/> which opened during lockdown as a way of keeping the Mill going and supporting fair trade while we couldn't open the shop and café. It has been a worthwhile exercise – though hard work at times – and it's still doing well. The online shop is currently operational from Friday 9am to Tuesday 12 noon, giving us a couple of days to process and pack the orders and replenish stock.



Many people are now using the online shop as a way to ensure that they get the lovely breads and pastries from Freedom Bakery, which was set up to train inmates of Lowmoss Prison so that they have a trade when they are released, hopefully deterring them from going back to offending. We put in the order on Tuesday afternoon when the online shop has closed, and the goodies are delivered on Thursday morning, when online orders are ready for collection from the shop or delivery by volunteer drivers.

The shop at Gavin's Mill reopened on 1 July! It was great to tell customers that the Charity had bought the Mill, and to see so many loyal customers return within the first few days. In August the opening times expanded from four days to five, and in September the hours increased to 10am to 4pm. Being closed on Mondays gives the maintenance team time to do running repairs and plan the next stages of the refurbishment.

Gavin's Mill café opened again in early September, after a month or so of al fresco eating. There are lots of different seating options. The café is open inside with fewer tables, you can sit out front with brollies to protect you from rain and sun, and we have put up some gazebos on the terrace for those wanting shelter but not quite ready to



take the step to move inside. Our Fairtrade coffee is as delicious as ever as are our homemade cakes and lunches, made in the Mill kitchen by our volunteer bakers and chefs.

However, many of our older volunteers have retired during lockdown and the young volunteers are now heading off back to school or college too, so we are even more in need of helpers than usual! Please contact the Mill if you can give a hand – there are many different ways to get involved. There's a contact form on the website, or you can use the message facility on Facebook, or simply phone 0141 956 0437 or email office@gavinsmill.org. Otherwise, get in touch with Sue Milne.

Zero Waste

The refills for cleaning products and toiletries are already very popular, and the next stage for zero waste at Gavin's Mill is planned to appear in late October 2020, with rice, lentils, oats, etc. dispensed from hoppers, scoop bins for raisins and larger beans, and smaller jars for spices. The fragrance will be glorious and customers will be able to put their purchases in their own containers or paper bags.



Sue Milne

Overseas Missionary Partner
Lorna Ferguson
Japan 2020



March

Coronavirus takes hold in Japan while Lorna is on leave in Scotland. Meanwhile eight new staff arrive and OMF leaders form a taskforce to keep up with events and to give advice.

April

Lorna and her son Alistair return to Japan early. A second coronavirus wave of hits Japan. Lorna resumes role as Sector Leader for Personnel.

May

OMF people on leave are not able to return to Japan. Lorna is playing piano online for church services and involved in emailing daily devotions to church members.

June

Lockdown easing but OMF members still cannot enter the country and there are no home assignments. Church services restart, but numbers in Japan are much smaller than in Scotland. Lorna shares a lockdown conversation in Baljaffray online service.

August

Devotions continue by email, helping Lorna to become closer to members.

September

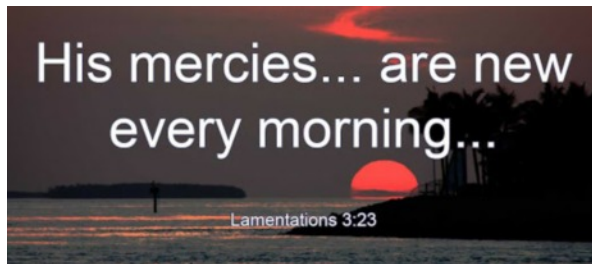
The OMF team have been working on a new prayer booklet, and with the addition of a cover the project will be complete. At the end of September Lorna is taking online child protection training. She will also be working on the OMF budget and also UK tax returns.

Please pray for Lorna for all she is involved in. Pray for her sons Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair and help them make wise decisions in their lives. Pray for OMF members now able to return from home assignments and that they will settle back to life in Japan.

Some words from Lorna's 'Lockdown Conversation':

'At this time I have learned to live in the present. Lamentations tells us God's mercies are new every morning. Every day is a gift from God.'

June



Church Family

I read an article recently about a baby who was baptised in church. The congregation became church family to him and his family. As the baby became a toddler, he had many adopted aunts, uncles, grannies and grandpas who were all very kind to him and he loved going to church. When his church family met him outside church they stopped and spoke to him. A lovely story of a congregation nurturing younger members.

We have amazing young people in our church family and in 'normal' times it is lovely to see so many of them every Sunday. They are such a Blessing to our church family, so let us all continue to make our children feel welcome and loved when we return.

June

Poetry In A Time of Pandemic 1

Since 2014, all graduating medical students in Scotland have been gifted a pocket-sized book '*Tools of the Trade*', a collection of poetry on life and health arranged by the themes:

*looking after yourself; looking after others; beginnings;
being with illness; endings.*

The project was initiated by two GPs who approached the Scottish Poetry Library. Their idea was to have a book of poems which, in the words of retired GP Dr John Gillies, one of the book's editors, would support young doctors in understanding the broader context of people's lives and help them to look after their own health and wellbeing in the first years of practice. Now when the caring professions are under such great pressure these little books can provide words of comfort or affirmation in a few quiet moments.

In the second edition of '*Tools of the Trade*', *Diana Hendry* responds to the desolation of Psalm 88:

Psalm Eighty-Eight Blues

*Lord, when I'm speechless
when something – not just sorrow
but under that – a dull, numb, nameless dreich
about the heart I hardly seem to have,
when this afflicts me,
when hope's been cancelled,
when the pilot light of me's put out,
when every reflex and response
has been extinguished,*

send word, snowdrop, child, light.

Thanks to Diana Hendry for permission to print. First published 2003: Twelve Lilts, Psalms and Responses.

What Will You Do To End Homelessness?



This article is adapted from one on the Church of Scotland website August 28th, 2020:

People who have experienced homelessness must be involved in helping to eradicate the scandal, a minister has said. Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, a former moderator who has long campaigned on this issue, made the remark as the Church of Scotland backed a UK wide campaign spearheaded by the church's Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) calling for people to enter into discussions about how to do things differently.

The Kirk's backing of the campaign comes as new Scottish Government figures showed that there were 36,855 applications for homelessness assistance in 2019-20. There were 31,333 households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness which included 15,711 children.

Churches have played a key role in seeking to end homelessness for decades, with night shelters and drop-in centres among the most common forms of social action.

Campaigners said the COVID-19 lockdown has helped reduce the number of rough sleepers across the UK as people were moved into temporary self-contained accommodation. But they fear there may be a return to street-living when restrictions ease.

“ As we move forward together, we can't just return to the way things were before, with mass rough sleeping across our cities and towns. We

need to reimagine how we respond to homelessness... about what we can do differently to end it. To do this, we need to invite those with lived experiences to the centre of our discussions.”

One approach in recent years which has been successful in Scotland is the Housing First Policy, a rapid-rehousing approach to tackling homelessness amongst people with complex needs such as mental health or addiction issues. Pioneered in Europe and the US, it turns conventional practice on its head. Previously people were supported to tackle complex needs in a bid to become "tenancy ready". New thinking concludes that housing should be provided rapidly and be supplemented by intensive support to address wider health issues.

The current campaign features an interview with Tam who was helped back onto his feet by **Fresh Start**. Dr Barr founded the Edinburgh-based charity in 1999 which helps people who have been homeless adapt to having a place of their own, cope with organisational demands and, in general, to achieve a lasting stable tenancy.



To find out more about the campaign follow the link:

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/poverty-and-inequality/endhomelessness/>



The CrossReach Christmas Card and Calendar Collection 2020 will be available from CrossReach from 1st September 2020. With new, exciting, bright cards and ever-popular traditional cards, there really is something for everyone!

From 1st September Christmas Cards and Calendars can be viewed and ordered on-line at <https://shop.crossreach.org.uk/>. You can request a paper copy of the Catalogue by emailing at webshop@crossreach.org.uk, or by phoning 0131 454 4374.



Church Register

We regret to report the following recent deaths and commend the families to the love and mercy of Almighty God.

July Dr Enid Sloan

August Jean Burton

August Bob Mackie

‘For since we believe that Jesus died and then came back to life again, we can also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him all the Christians who have died.’

1 Thessalonians 4:14



Flowers

The last flowers went out on 8th March and after that sadly, for safety reasons, the flowers stopped.

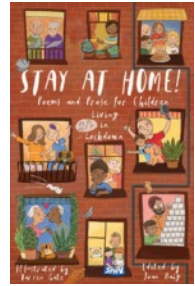
For those of you who should have received flowers and did not, we are sorry, but hopefully when things get back to the 'new normal' we will catch up with you then.

Ian, June, Emma and Caroline.

Poetry In A Time of Pandemic 2

'Stay At Home!' is a free reading resource describing life in lockdown, humorously and movingly.

This e-book collection of poetry and prose for young people by Scottish writers was produced by Cranachan Press and is downloadable :



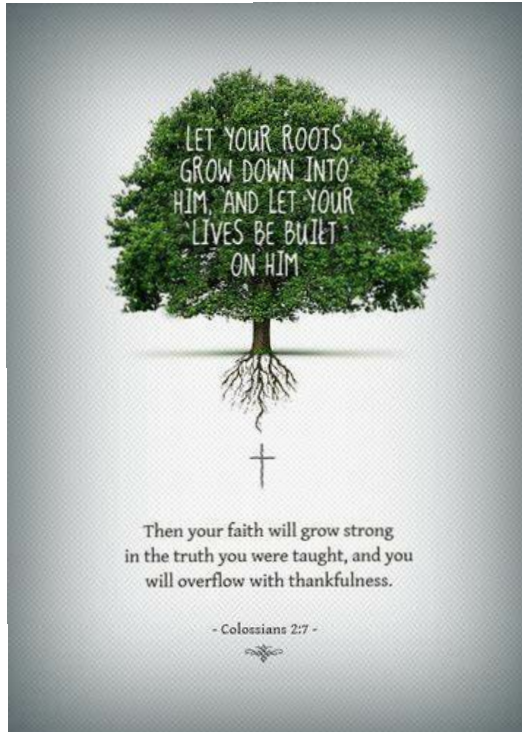
<https://www.cranachanpublishing.co.uk/stay-at-home-2/>

In this poem which Cranachan Press have kindly allowed us to reproduce, Miranda Moore looks at our changed world:

A World Unlocked

*It was better before
So don't tell me
This new world's shoots grow fresh and keen
When lungs and land can breathe
For in truth
We're here to win
And it's false to claim
Soil and soul are more at peace
I know
Life is a race
Nothing can persuade me
Birdsong matters
Because no matter what
We must keep pushing
Don't tell me
While we stand rooted
This vital ground is sown with seeds of vigour
For as I gaze out I consider
Wasn't our way of life right?
(now read from bottom to top)*

Miranda Moore



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