

Bonkle Church of Scotland Magazine

Christmas 2021

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Next issue March 2022

Closing date for material – Sunday 27 February 2022

March Communion 20 March

Easter Sunday 17 April

Communion – Sunday - 5th December

*In the present day, when the “Winter Festival” cards show
“Seasons Greetings”, let us not forget whose birthday it is.*

CHRISTmas Greetings to all our readers



As I have posted a fairly major COVID 19 update, I have decided to post a fairly short pastoral letter this month. Like many others, the big blue envelope from the NHS has just popped through my door, to inform me that my appointment for my booster jab is scheduled for 13.02 (very precise) next Sunday. I shouldn't really complain, despite these times of increasing infection rates once more, I am grateful that most who are unfortunate enough to contract the virus, are suffering fairly mild symptoms because they have been vaccinated. I dread to think what it might have looked like for them had they been infected in March or April last year. As we get older when the question is asked, "what do you want for your birthday/Christmas/Anniversary present" our response is often "I don't know or there is nothing that I need" And that's true for most of us; we've more "stuff" than we need, and the things we really want are beyond price – health, happiness, friendship, contentment, love. Maybe that's why many of us are grateful for our vaccinations, the gift of good health, cannot be bought at any price. At Christmas, perhaps more than any other time we recognise that the best gift of all is God's gift to us of his Son, our healer, saviour and friend. May you know Him and receive Him into your heart this Christmas time.

On behalf of Doris, Emma, Iain, Emma and myself, can we wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas, and a healthy 2022.

COVID update November 2021

Over the first few months of the COVID pandemic, we were accustomed to daily updates from the First Minster, with regard to the current level of restrictions in place in Scotland, and what that meant to us in a church setting. As these updates seem to be few and far between these days, you might feel COVID is a thing of the past, or, that in the midst of things our needs as a church have been forgotten. Rest assured that is not the case; representatives from Church of Scotland and the other main faith groups in Scotland meet regularly with the Scot Government to discuss where we are with regard to the current restrictions. As we know from experience there is often a feeling in some sectors that they have been forgotten and that the rules seem to be inconsistent, and to be honest sometimes they are. That has led to accusations (and if I am honest, suspect that it will be until we are fully free from restrictions) that some sectors are being discriminated

against, for example the nightclub sector which was closed for far longer than churches.

So where are we now? We need to recognise that each and every one of us will have our own attitude toward risk. As Kirk Sessions we have tried to balance that with the restrictions we have. In a worship setting social distancing has been discontinued, however, we recognise that some people will want to sit with their friends, whilst others would feel safer sitting 1m or 2m apart from one another - that's absolutely fine to do that there is space for all of us. To be honest churches practised social distancing long before it was a requirement! If you go to your local supermarket you will see that one way systems are no longer in place, however, we do still have one way systems in place in church. Masks or visors still require to be worn, unless a person is medically exempt from wearing one. Singing or saying the Lord's Prayer together is permitted as long as face coverings are in place. Hand sanitising on entry and exit are also necessary. The burden of additional cleaning means that some areas of our buildings are still not being used every week

All in all things are looking much closer to what they did prior to the pandemic, and hopefully will continue to get even closer to normality in the weeks and months to come. However we need to remember that COVID has not gone, thankfully due to vaccinations and mitigations the number of people dying from it is far less than it was at the height of the pandemic, but infection rates remain stubbornly high.

We want you to be safe, whilst at the same time having a worship experience as near as possible to the type you enjoyed before the pandemic. Hopefully the current restrictions in place allow for that to happen as much as we can just now.

Computer Club

This still meets at 10.30 on Monday mornings. The members at present remain in their homes and use a video internet "chat line". At present we have not reinstalled the broadband connection in the hall which we disconnected during the COVID lockdown. The room we used is too small for distancing so we will probably require to use a hall.

As our funds would require to cover this and the cost of use of the hall we applied for a grant. The result of this will not be known until December so we await this before we set a date for restarting.

Ian Glen

Wishaw CAP Debt Centre

I hope you are all keeping safe and well. Due to the relaxation of Covid -19 restrictions, home visits to clients have resumed (with appropriate safety measures in place). The system of phone/video call consultations is still in place at all stages for those clients who prefer it. At present we are supporting 18 clients and their families. Two people have had their cases closed as they were not engaging with us and/or providing required paperwork, but most people are participating well with the process. 2 new clients have booked in during the past week. The callback diary with Motherwell Jobcentre continues each Monday morning This began at the start of March. This allows me to contact people who have been identified by the work coaches as possibly requiring our service.

The great news is that 3 people have gone debt free in the last month, with another having found their own route out of debt!! In addition, one client (a couple) have moved over to the Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS) and so their CAP Plan has been closed. It is very satisfying to see people complete the process and resolve their money issues. Each will have a 'debt free budget' which will help them stick to good budgeting practices going forward. We pray that all these clients will be able to enjoy their freedom from financial worry and stress and can look forward to the future with hope. Every centre depends on the local church and volunteers to operate effectively. We simply can't do it without you! If you would like to volunteer as a befriender and come along on the visits, to provide support to our clients, or join our prayer meetings, please let me know.

Challenge Poverty Week 4-10 October 2021

The Poverty Alliance organised a week-long event, 'Challenge Poverty' and as part of the event we invited local MSPs Clare Adamson (Motherwell & Wishaw) and Neil Gray (Airdrie & Shotts) along to our debt centre to discuss how debt, poverty & poor mental health affect their constituents. Throughout Challenge Poverty Week CAP Scotland were raising awareness about the impact that poverty and problem debt can have on mental health as over a quarter (28%) of CAP clients have attempted or considered suicide as way out of debt. With 45% of people in Scotland not knowing where to turn to get free debt help this is a growing concern.

Following his visit to CAP Scotland's Debt Centre in Wishaw, which covers a large section of his constituency, Neil Gray, who is also the Convener for the Social Justice and Social Security Committee, said: "I really appreciated the opportunity to visit the local Christians Against Poverty team and hear more about their fantastic work. They have supported so many of my constituents with debt issues and the support they have provided has saved so many people from incredibly challenging situations. Debt, poverty and mental health problems are all interlinked and can lead to a vicious cycle where all three get worse. By sharing their issues with organisations like Christians Against Poverty people can get the help they need to escape that spiral of debt, poverty and mental health problems."



SNP MSP, Clare Adamson, added: "So many people have been up against it these last 18 months. There has been a greater focus on mental health with people experiencing isolation, uncertainty and anxiety over the immensely challenging times we have faced. Debt and mental health are unquestionably linked. Building debt leads to mounting anxiety and people in that position have to face twin stigmas in getting necessary help. There still exists stigma around both accruing debt and mental health issues. "No one should feel trepidation in seeking support and it is our collective obligation to empower

people to seek help when it is needed. It was a privilege visiting the team at Christians Against Poverty. Their dedicated staff and volunteers are working tirelessly to erode that stigma and providing lifeline support for people facing poverty. Please, if you are facing debt, or if you are struggling with your mental health, do not suffer in silence; reach out."

LiveWell Foodbank

Recently we received a very generous donation from Coltness Memorial & Bonkle Churches, following the joint Harvest Thanksgiving service; this is truly appreciated, and thank you to all who donated. We also received donations from Cambusnethan North Parish Church following their Harvest Service on October 24th.

The demand has remained steady and we have been able to help those in need in the local community. We are making deliveries to those who are shielding, ill or otherwise unable to attend when we are open, so that no-one who needs help is left out.

It is open every Wednesday between 1pm and 2.30pm at Coltness Memorial Church in Newmains. Referrals can be obtained via the Scottish Welfare Fund (0300 555 0405 crisis grant option).

Financial Review 2021

As Christmas approaches my thoughts turn to the past year. I think the word for me is survival with God's strength and His hand on my shoulder keeping me on the right road.

He has also kept our finances in good order, thanks to your generous donations through Standing Orders, Weekly Freewill Offering envelopes and donations on National Giving Day. Our Gift Aid Recovered is also on track.

We have met our Ministry and Missions total of £19480 utility bills Insurance and Fabric commitments.

No event fundraising was held but Every Penny Counts has contributed.

Income is down but Covid 19 is the main factor again. Please accept my sincere thanks for all your support through prayer and donations. As I have stated before you are an amazing congregation kind and thoughtful. Hopefully more of us can meet again on Sundays as the restrictions lift.

I read this quote recently and would like to share it as I found it quite relevant to me and I hope you do as well.

"God always gives his very best to those who leave the choice with Him" - James Hudson Taylor.

I wish you and yours a Merry and Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Laureen

Accounts for Bonkle Parish Church as at 6th November 2021

General Fund

Balance brought forward from 31/12/2020	£ 19866
Income	£ 29527
	£ 49393
Expenditure	£ 26559
Balance in General Fund	£ 22834

Fund Raising Special Purposes	£ 6165
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Young/Parkin/Forsyth	£ 1537
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Total Bank Balanc	<u>£ 30536</u>
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Balances held in Church of Scotland Investors Trust

Investors Trust	Smith Bequest	£ 309
	Fabric	

Special Purposes	£ 1068
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Filling station @ home

When I was at Refuel this year one of the main talks was a new initiative by the the filling station trust called filling station @ home. So I asked Graham if we could start it within our two churches.

The filling station @ home is small group setting with a gathering of folks getting together with other groups around the U.K.

A typical night we have start with some fellowship with a cup of tea or coffee with some biscuits. Then through zoom platform live we have a time of worship and hear a talk from a different speaker about a bible passage. We then break up into our our group to discuss some questions about the talk after that we have a time of prayer and then go home.

We meet every fortnight on a Wednesday night in the small hall in Coltness Memorial Church at 7.30pm.

On Wednesday the 15th of December we are having a comedy night with Andy Kind through the zoom platform on the large screen in the large hall in Coltness Memorial Church at 7.30pm.

If you need more information about any of the above please speak to myself. M. Gray

Adult groups

At present it looks as if the Ladies Fellowship, Thursday Club and Men's/Ladies club will not restart. The art class hope to start in the new year. The Computer Club awaits the decision on a grant.

This leaves only the Badminton Club.

Can we encourage the formation of a club suitable for the older people preferably during the day?

The Computer Club hope to use the large hall on a Monday morning but there is plenty of space for other activities at the same time.

How about rolling out a bowling carpet? How about board or card games? Or get the paintbrushes out or other forms of arts and crafts?

Try you hand at something new, e.g. marquetry?

How about a tea club?

Please let me have your thoughts and suggestions.

Ian Glen. 01698386028, ianglen.jg@gmail.com

Let us Live Christmas Every Day

*Christmas is more than a day at the end of a year,
More than a season of joy and good cheer,
Christmas is really God's pattern of living,
To be followed all year by unselfish giving...
for the holiday season awakens good cheer
And draws us closer to those we hold dear
And we open our hearts and find it is GOOD
To live among men AS WE ALWAYS SHOULD...
But as soon as the tinsel is stripped from the tree
The spirit of Christmas fades silently
into the background of daily routine.
And is lost in the whirl of life's busy scene
And all unawares we miss and forgo
The greatest blessing that mankind can know..
For if we lived Christmas each day as we should
And made it our aim to always be good,
We'd find the key of meaningful living
That comes NOT from GETTING""
And we would know the great joy of PEACE UPON EARTH
Which was the real purpose of our Saviour's birth,
For in the GLAD TIDINGS of the first Christmas night
God shows us THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIGHT.*

Brownies

The Brownies are absolutely delighted to have resumed meetings in the church hall after over a year of online and then outdoor meetings. I'm sure the residents of Bonkle are also pleased we're now back indoors! We've done a lot in that time, including welcoming 10 new girls bringing our numbers to 21. We've done our Camp badge, which involved building tents and learning to use matches, our Archaeology badge, had a sausage sizzle, and did an outdoor 'Wee Beasties Challenge' badge, which involved looking for bugs around the church grounds and lots more. On Bonfire Night we had sparklers and a campfire with lots of campfire songs as well. The girls painted Remembrance Stones and will displaying these somewhere around the church as well as attending the Remembrance Service. We'll also be having a pyjama party in the church hall before we finish up in December. Myra, our Eagle Owl, left the Brownies in June and we welcomed Lauren, our Snowy Owl, as our new leader when we met outdoors in May. We're currently looking for another leader to join us, so if you or someone you know would be interested in helping out, please contact me on 07596446509 for more info, or register via the Girlguiding website.





Sarah-Jane

Did you know this?

The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ.

Two turtle doves are the old and new testament.

Three French hens stands for faith, hope and love.

The four calling birds are the four gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The five gold rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the old testament.

The six geese a-laying stand for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represent the sevenfold of the Holy Spirit—

Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy.

The eight maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-- Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control.

The 10 lords a-leaping are the ten commandments.

The eleven pipers a-piping stand for the eleven faithful disciples.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolizes the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

So there is your history for today!

MERRY CHRISTMAS because Christmas is no Christmas without
CHRIST!

Live Well Charity Shop

Even if COP26 in Glasgow is over, fighting climate change and looking after our world are still major issues and we can all do something to go greener and look after the planet. Why not come to the charity shop and browse the fantastic bargains in good quality clothing, footwear, homeware and much more! Thanks to Izzie, who runs the shop, and the other folk who volunteer, the charity shop goes from strength to strength. It's great to see so many things being recycled instead of going to landfill. What you don't need anymore, might be the very thing someone else is looking for! With Christmas just round the corner, Izzie is gearing up with great offers on new and second-hand items. You can have a pre-Christmas clearout and take your unwanted items to be sold and do your Christmas shopping early at Live Well, just across the road from Asda.

Food Bank

I expect many of you are planing your Christmas dinner and may have already ordered the turkey, steak pie, Christmas pudding and all the trimmings.

Unfortunately many are not so lucky and may well be sitting down to empty plates.

This is where the food bank comes in. You can help provide them with a good meal on Christmas and other days. Please donate non-perishable food items or money. These can be handed to the person on duty at the church door.

Christmas Services

Although we are much closer to “normality” than we were, the cleaning requirements that we need adhere to keep you safe, coupled with the way Christmas works out this year, mean that, as they were last year, a couple of our services will be on-line only

28 November	Advent 1
7 December	Advent 2
14 December	Advent 3 GIFT SERVICE – gifts will be collected for distribution to the neediest of families in our area by the Local Health Visitors Team. Please put gifts in a gift bag, or else leave unwrapped.
21 December	Advent 4
24 December	Watchnight Service On web* from 7.00
25 December	Christmas Day Service - On Web* from 10.00am
26 December	Sunday - Joint Service - Bonkle - 11.00am
2 January	Sunday - Joint Service - Coltness Memorial - 11.00am
From 9 th Jan.	Normal morning services resume at Noon.

*** Services are available on www.facebook.com/coltnessbonkle
They will also be available on CD/DVD a day or so later.**