

Bonkle Church of Scotland Magazine

August 2021

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From the Manse

Given that there is enough information already contained within this issue of our magazine, you may be relieved to hear that I will keep this edition's pastoral letter brief! These last months have seen an upheaval to everyday life unlike anything most of us have lived through. It has undoubtedly left its scars, loved ones who succumbed to Covid, restrictions placed upon our freedoms, uncertainty and anxiety, fear and loneliness. It has been a difficult time and it has taken its toll upon us. It will take us some time to return to normal (whatever that means). It is so good to be able to worship God in person now, and I hope and pray that you will feel that church is a safe environment for you to enter, we have taken great care to provide such a safe place for you.

Unfortunately Covid has exposed, within the church at large, issues that we have either been unaware of, or more likely, unwilling to address. We have no such luxury now. The next 5 years will be crucial to the Church of Scotland, and will bring many changes to us. But these changes are essential, albeit painful ones for us, if we are to not only survive but thrive in the decades to come.

Whatever lies before us, we have the assurance that we do not go through this alone. In one of the favourite passage in the whole of the Bible the psalmist writes "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Ps 23:4&6 NIV) Growing up in church we used to sing a hymn that sadly I can only remember fragments of, but the lyrics went something like this "Look to the future and face it without fear, almighty God has promised to be near" Surely these are wise words for us to hold in our hearts. Whatever lies before us, God is with us.

Wishing you every blessing

Graham

Cover photos – our new kitchen.

Covid-19 Update

The following information is taken from a recent briefing that ministers and Session Clerks received from the Church offices. As you will doubtless be aware Scotland moved beyond Level 0 on the 9th of August. During her announcement the First Minister emphasised that the virus is still a threat and that care still needs to be taken.

In the light of her statement, the Church of Scotland Covid-19 Group met and would make the follow points.

Physical Distancing

The First Minister said, “Even though the law will not stipulate physical distancing from Monday, we will continue to advise the public that - especially indoors - keeping a safe distance from people in other households and avoiding crowded places will minimise risk.”

In light of this our suggestion is that for the next few weeks we stick with the 1-metre distancing regime which was so recently put in place, as it may be simpler and more reassuring for those attending if that is what happens.

Face Coverings

The First Minister also said, “It will continue to be the law, subject to existing exemptions, that face coverings must be worn in all the same indoor settings as is the case now.” So that means little change from what we have been doing when we come into the church building.

We are aware that there are some glaring anomalies in what the Government says about face coverings and continue to argue for an even playing field.

Continuing Good Practice

We ask everyone to note that recommendations on cleaning and disinfecting regimes, hand hygiene, good ventilation, maintaining Risk Assessments and complying with Test & Protect all remain in place. We have not yet beaten this virus and some of these measures may be in place for some time to come.

Hall Lets

In the meantime we hope to resume all hall lets at the beginning of September, however, we would advise all hall users that new Letting Agreements will require to be completed, detailing the requirements that we have to comply with ie the appointment within each group to elect a Covid officer who will be responsible for Risk Assessments and compliance with all legal requirements. All halls will be cleaned and sanitised before use, however, every hall user group will be responsible for cleaning and sanitising the areas they have used at the end of each session.

Funerals/Weddings

Whilst there is no longer a cap on numbers attending these life events, we are legally obliged to limit admission to the physical distance based capacity (PDBC) of each building.

Looking Ahead

We understand that there will be further changes in Government regulations and guidance on 30th August and that there may be announcements in the next week or so about how things might be into September. We will try to keep everyone up to date with how the shifting pattern of regulation and guidance affects the life of the Church and how we might best respond to this new setting beyond the Levels where the Government imposes few regulations but continues to offer guidance.

Full details of what is permitted within our church buildings can be access here <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice/reshaping-church-life>

Gift Day 2021

In each of our churches we have an annual gift day, an opportunity for you to thoughtfully and thankfully bring to God an offering to express your gratitude for all that he has done in your lives throughout the past year. Because of the pandemic we have been unable to have such a day this year. Whilst it would be a stretch for us to give thanks to God for the pandemic, we can however give thanks that He who promises that “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.” (Is 43:2). Even though Governments were caught unawares by the scale and nature of the pandemic, and that by their own admission mistakes were sadly made due to this being a medical emergency on an unparalleled scale of the infection, we give thanks that they tried their best to deal with things as best they could. I know that might be a controversial thing to hear for some of us, but we didn’t have the responsibility upon our shoulders that our leaders did. Despite our grief at the magnitude of the number who lost their lives in the pandemic, we give thanks, knowing that it could have been so very much worse. We can give thanks too for the scientific community coming together across the globe to provide us with vaccines to protect us from the worst ravages of the infection. There are so many other things to give thanks for, for medical staff and

essential workers, for family, friends and community, for the opportunity to stop and to think about what really matters in life.

As a church we can give thanks that through new technologies we have been able to worship together week by week, we have also been able to reach folks outwith our own church family, to offer then hope and support.

I am truly grateful to all who continued to make their offerings by Standing Order, and for those who popped their envelopes through my door or the treasurers' door. Your support enabled us to weather the storm. However, we have lost a significant amount of income through loss of hall rental fees, were this to continue we would really struggle to meet all of our commitments this year.

In gratitude to our heavenly Father, who has blessed us abundantly through his son Jesus Christ, I would ask you to prayerfully consider how you might support our Gift Day this year.

Online/recorded services.

The Coltness service is available live at the usual service time at www.facebook.com/coltnessbonkle and recorded on this site thereafter and on www.bonkle.org.uk

The service is available on a CD, DVD or phone (01698 602250)

If you know of anyone that requires any of the above methods, please let us know via Graham, Ian (01698 386028) Matthew, Marion or an Elder.

Closure of church clubs/activities

Due to the closure of the Ladies Fellowship and the Thursday Club we will have no day activity for people in the area which has a high percentage of elderly people. Perhaps we should consider a club suitable for their needs when COVID restrictions are eased.

You must, contact us before reopening. See later article (page 10) on precautions required as risk assessment, new contracts and certain precautions will likely be required.

Renovation work in the church hall

Although many of us haven't managed to see all this work yet, we have a lovely new kitchen and toilets, thanks partly to a grant from the Environmental Key Fund (the wind turbines). The units in the kitchen and toilets look fresh and modern and there is a new fridge-freezer, microwave, dishwasher and urn in the kitchen. When we get back to using the halls, please help us to keep the kitchen and toilets clean and tidy and in good condition.

Looking After Our World

We should all be trying to do our bit for the planet and climate change. God gave us a wonderful world to live in and look after! You may say that you don't drop litter, that you can't do anything to help the environment or climate change or it's not your responsibility, but the truth is that we can all do something. The smallest steps can make a big difference. When you look around at some of our streets and roadsides, it's easy to see that we are not looking after our environment as we should.

Although the church does not have a blue paper bin or a bin for recyclable items, we all have recycling facilities on our doorsteps, so we can take stuff home and recycle it in our own bins. Two black recycling boxes were put in the halls and these can be used for clean card and paper, empty cans, glass and plastic bottles. These are not always used or not always used properly. Please rinse empty cans and bottles and put them into the black boxes, or take your stuff home and recycle it yourself! It is the responsibility of all group leaders to make sure that their members are following these guidelines and we are all doing our best to reduce waste and recycle as much as possible.

- Perishable foodstuff such as milk should not be left in the fridge. You can take it home or pour it out, rinse and recycle the container.
- Waste food should never be put into the general waste bin. It can be put into the brown garden waste bins in the car park.
- Used batteries should never go into household waste. Take them home and pop them into the used battery container at the supermarket. Nearly every supermarket offers this service.
- Second-hand clothing, bedding, shoes and household goods can be handed into the Live Well charity shop in Newmains. Please make sure that items are clean and in reasonable condition.
- ***Let's all work together to reuse, recycle, reduce waste and improve our environment.***

Refuel 2021

Some of you might remember that I have been attending Refuel since it started in 2017. Due to covid19 Refuel was cancelled last year so I am glad to say that Refuel was on this year but with a limited number attending.



Once again it took place in Gordon Castle Estate in Fochabers near Elgin, from 19th to 23rd of July,

Due to Covid 19 the number of speakers and talks had to be scale back. I left on the Sunday afternoon and met up with some of my friends from South Wishaw Parish Church. They were five adults, four kids and one dog with them. We had to camp off site due to the restrictions so we were staying at Spey Bay about four miles from the Gordon Castle Estate. We set up our tents and then I had a fish supper for my dinner.

On Monday we had to choose of three activity to do off site, so I went up to climb Ben Rinnes which at 2733 feet which is the highest mountain in Moray. It took me about 3 hours to climb up it.

On Tuesday we again had to choose from three off-site activities so I went to Hopeman East beach for a paddle in the sea and some folks went swimming.

On Wednesday through to Friday normal activities resumed on the main site We all went to the main speaker in the morning and had lunch together. We then split up and went to different afternoon talks. After some free time we had dinner and then met up for the main speaker at night.

On the Thursday night we got a preview what a filling station@home would look like. The main speaker was Bruxy Cavey from Canada who spoke to us on line as he couldn't travel this year.

We are hoping to start the filling station@home on the 22nd of September , meeting every fortnight. We are looking for some folks to host it and get a few friends round for a time of fellowship and worship. We will use Zoom on TV to present the guest speaker, which will be followed by questions and discussion and prayer together.

If you are interested in this please speak to myself or Graham before the 1st of September so we can register with them.

If you want to know more about Refuel, please don't hesitate to speak to me. The proposal dates for next year is 22nd to 29th of July 2022. You can either come camping either in a tent or caravan with me or find a local b&b or hire a house in the local area.

Thanks be to God

Matthew Gray

Financial Statement Bonkle Parish Church	23 July 2021
Balance b/fwd General Fund 31/12/2020	£19866
Income to date	£17920
	£37786
Less Expenditure to date	£17517
Balance in General Fund	£20269
Fund Raising Special Purposes	£ 6015
Young Parkin Forsyth	£ 1537
Bank Balance	£27821
Church of Scotland Investors Trust Accounts Total	£12417

As you can see from the above Statement we continue to meet all our commitments at present and retain the same reserves. Income is slightly down on this time last year, (approximately £1000).

As the situation continues to improve, more of the Congregation will feel they can join us again on a Sunday Morning.

Again my thanks for your continued support during these difficult times.

Laureen

Food for thought Cafe and Wellbeing Centre

This is an exciting new venture which is now open in Wishaw by Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health.

Our aim is to create a community space where mental health is not only valued but supported. Our cafe will run alongside several wellbeing services and aims to provide healthy, well priced meals for those in our community. We are located in the old Classic Cinema building at 57-59 Kirk Road.

Wellbeing Centre

Our wellbeing centre is offering various activities.

The opening times are 10 - 4 Monday to Saturday

Please see the schedule below for our classes throughout August - which are all FREE! During August. After that there will be a nominal charge for these activities.

Wellbeing Classes Currently Scheduled are

Tuesday - Beginners Yoga - 10-11am

Wednesday - Keep Fit - 1-2pm

Thursday - Mindfulness – 11-12pm

Friday - Beginners Acrylic Painting Art Class - 3-4pm

You can email wishawwellbeing@lamh.org.uk to book.

If you would like any further information with any aspect of this notice please free to contact me.

Jack Alexander

Cafe

If you are in the town and looking for a bite to eat or just a cuppa why not pop in and try our new cafe, where we offer home made food at reasonable prices. Our cafe has an amazing selection of breakfast, lunches and even desserts for those with a sweet tooth! (Kids meals are also available) .

Pay it Forward

Would you like to help out a local person in need of a meal or a cuppa ? Then please help us to help them by contributing to our **Pay It Forward Scheme.**

Simply donate anything from £1 upwards to help someone in need access a free drink or meal. A donation of £5 will ensure they will get a free meal.

We aim to provide at least 10 free meals per day, please help us to help those in need. **100% of your donations for this scheme will go towards feeding someone that needs our support.**

07740050616 or by email to jack.alexander@btinternet.com

Church Clubs and Activities

Please read the bit about hall let under Covid-19 update (page 3) as all clubs will have to apply for permission to start up and appoint an officer who will be responsible for Risk assessment and compliance with all legal requirements. Please include his/her name in your application. Applications should go the Clerk to the Congregational Board (E. Kean). You must SANITISE the halls etc. after you use them.

At present **facemasks must be worn and this may continue for some time.**

THIS APPLIES TO ALL CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES.

Men's Club

Hopefully this will be able to start early September.

Computer Club

.At present there is no internet connection in the church hall. At the time of writing COVID restrictions are changing but distancing in the computer room is difficult. Only this room is equipped with multiple power points which are required to power the computers so we continue to meet online using Skype until required restrictions are clearer and a new internet connection can be installed.

Problem solving can be a bit difficult as, though we can see them, we cannot see their computer as they are using it but we do our best.

Many people have found the internet a great help during the lockdown. Our food and other requirements were ordered using the internet. (virtually impossible to get through on the phone). Even medical problems were solved by sending photos by email to the doctor!

Friends and family were seen and talked to using Skype, Zoom, Facetime on the computer, even a friend in Canada was contacted.

We can still offer help by Email (ianglen.jg@gmail.com) or by phoning Marion or myself (Ian, 01698 386028).

Badminton Club

The Bonkle Church badminton club will possibly be restarting on Monday 20th of September between 7.30pm to 9.00pm if restrictions are lifted and we are able to use the church hall again.

We are looking for some new members as we currently have a small number attending. It is a bit of fun for all ages.

For any more information please speak to myself or Marion Allison.

Matthew Gray

CAP Wishaw Debt Centre news

We have resumed home visits, which is great news and have made a big difference to the way the service is delivered. Two people recently went debt free and we hope and pray that they continue to enjoy their freedom from debt. The Callback Diary at DWP Motherwell Jobcentre has continued and allows us to get in touch with people who need the service. This is held every Monday morning. I have been promoting the service via several virtual network events e.g. Marion Fellows MP Poverty Action Network, the North Lanarkshire Food Poverty Working Group forum & Lanarkshire Community Partnership Network, organised by Remploy. Many of the local organisations are involved in these networks, so please pray that these opportunities bear fruit and we reach the people who need our help. We continue to hold a monthly prayer meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 2pm. Currently these are held virtually via videocall. If you would like to join in, please let me know; you will be very welcome!

CAP Scotland have some great content on Facebook, look for **Christians Against Poverty Scotland**. The Twitter page is CAP Scotland (@CAPscot). Our Instagram page is **cap_scotland**

CAP recently launched a section of the website devoted exclusively to Scotland. It is well worth a look, and allows people to find out about services in their area, and request a call from CAP. It can be accessed here: <https://capuk.org/i-want-help/our-services/cap-debt-help/help-in-scotland>

CAP Client Report 2021

For CAP, it has never been about the numbers: it has always been about the individual. For 25 years, CAP has existed to help people rewrite their stories. Today, CAP's story is simply the combination of thousands of stories, like a patchwork quilt, made up of thousands of individual squares representing lives changed. You can access and download the report to read some of these stories and get to know the people behind the numbers:

<https://capuk.org/connect/policy-and-government/client-report-21>

Live Well Foodbank

The foodbank has remained open (under government restrictions re social distancing etc) and the numbers have been steady throughout this year and we have been able to help those in need in the local community. We are making deliveries to those who are 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).

There is still some real need out there, and we would like to thank our faithful and dedicated volunteers who make the service possible; it simply couldn't operate without them! The foodbank has a Facebook page, 'Live Well Foodbank' and we also have a Twitter account of the same name; @livebonkle is the Twitter handle. We regularly give updates on both the foodbank and CAP on these pages, so please check them out!

Nicky McLaughlin (tel: 07400189398, email: nickymclaughlin@capuk.org)



Growing Young

You may remember that I preached a series of sermons at the start of the year focussed upon the 6 key features of the Growing Young programme. If you missed the sermons (they are still available on the church Facebook page - www.facebook.com/ColtnessBonkle) or would like a recap here goes.

Growing Young was devised by Fuller Theological Seminary. They noticed that bar a few glorious exceptions, the average congregation in mainline denominations, is growing older and growing smaller; a pattern which is replicated in the USA, Scotland, England, and in fact in much of the Western World. But yet Jesus promises in Matt 16:18 “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” If that is, the case they pondered what must we as a church do to reverse the trend we are seeing (before it is too late). Through observation, discussion and reflection the team at Fuller devised the Growing Young programme. This programme has successfully been employed across a number of denominations, in different geographical areas, and amongst rich and poor churches, and different ethnic backgrounds. The team discovered that the programme works well in each of these settings. Now we are part of a cohort of churches pioneering the programme in Scotland. It goes without saying that Scotland and USA are very different, consequently the programme has been tweaked to fit a Scottish setting. The key components of the programme are that we seek to become a Jesus centred church which

- Practices Keychain leadership - involving the next generation in leadership
- Shows Empathy - listens to the hopes and fears of younger people
- Takes Jesus message seriously - doesn't water it down to make it less challenging
- Nurtures Warm relationship across the generations
- Prioritises Young people everywhere - it doesn't just happen unless we make it happen.
- Seeks to Be the best neighbours - locally and globally

You may rightly argue that we have few if any young people in our churches, we are not alone in this, which may mean for us that we reduce our average age from 70 to 50 as a first step. One of the initial pieces of work we carried out was to listen to the voices of young and not so young within our extended church family to hear their hopes and dreams for us as we seek to grow young(er). Thanks to all who participated by providing suggestions. I have listed a summary (by no means exhaustive) of the points that were raised. If you would like to see the full list please just ask. As you will appreciate this is not a silver bullet quick fix, but an ongoing challenge for us to change the church culture within the cohort churches.

We asked a) what do you like about church? b) what challenges do we face? and c) what are your dreams. Here is a summary of the responses.

Likes

Friendship & Fellowship

Being in the sanctuary - Worshipping and praising God

Bible based Teaching, singing and praising God

Both churches together feel like a family

Enjoy social/fun side – social gatherings inc. Tea after service

Being greeted at the door prior on Sunday mornings

Members will proactively go and talk to a stranger attending the service.

Relationships built through social time after service. This is important especially to people who live alone, giving them time to chat rather than rush away.

Churches have a compelling aura about them - give a feeling of peace as you look around.

Challenges

Very few young people/ Ageing congregation/ The dwindling size of congregation

Few folk willing to do the jobs needed to run the church- some folk got 2-3 different roles – perhaps a personal approach more effective

Find new ways to get families and young folk into church

Better communication within and between two churches and/or groups

Not everyone knows each other unless they sit beside each other at the Church service or are in some church group. What about a month or so of shifting your seat, so for several weeks you sit with someone different?

Fear of trying to do things to support the church, leading to discouragement,

and the perception that folks are not being listened to when we suggest things Standing still – we talk about spiritual gifts – let’s use them

Dreams

To see the church flourish filled with folks of all ages praising Jesus That we are United in our faith.

A music ministry with more new worship songs.

An intergenerational congregation where young and old unite to worship God Greater priority given to evangelism.

Increased focus on prayer including the offering of Personal prayer after Church Service, and a designated personal Prayer Room or space A desire for encouraging discipleship through Christian folk to encourage new believers, Learning and growing with each other.

Youth group at the centre of church life, a busy Sunday School. With a creche that is used because so many young couples and their families coming to church. An Evening Church Cafe for 12 - 16-year-olds approx. 6-9pm, give them somewhere to meet with their pals instead roaming the streets, possibly incorporating Youth Alpha.

Another service apart from Sunday as lots of people seem to be busy with kids’ stuff on Sundays.

Young Parents group with volunteers to allow parents or carers a wee break to get cup of tea/ blether in peace.

Men’s group - why not get men to build toys for gifts or display at Arts and Craft week.

I’m sure you will agree that is a pretty large list! On first look it might appear that some things are contradictory – we like the friendship/fellowship aspect of church life; but we don’t know one another, people enjoy praising God in song, but maybe we want to sing different things from one another. This simply represents the diversity of likes and dislikes between different natured people. There is no easy fix and we have to rely on God’s help. We can’t say we will do x and y and that will immediately provide the solution to the problem. God asks us to love Him and one another. Let us pray earnestly that we will reach out to our community in His love

Arts and Crafts group

Greetings all !

I really wish I could report that our Art/Craft Group has resumed and we're all filled with enthusiasm and ready to produce our "masterpieces" again !

Unfortunately, I can't yet see us being back to normal till next year. Our sessions will hopefully return to Tuesday evenings between mid March till late October ! (New members will be made most welcome)

Let's hope , by then , social distancing, constant hand washing and claustrophobic masks will be a thing of the past, and we can be truly sociable again !

All the best to all of you, and take care till we can return to normal life again .

Carol King

Treasurer.

Funeral List 2020/21

22 nd January 2020	Nan Tenant	CM
23 rd January 2020	David Penrice	P
31 st January 2020	Esther Reardon	P
10 th February 2020	Delia Todd	P
12 th February 2020	Bill Anderson	P
25 th February 2020	Mary Wilson	CM
28 th February 2020	Cathy Cooper	P
2 nd April 2020	Edwina McAlpine	B
21 st April 2020	Nan Hall	CM
1 st May 2020	Annie Forsyth	B
5 th May 2020	Janice Hayton	CM
8 th May 2020	Laia Jenkins	P
18 th May 2020	Jimmy Graham	P
1 st July 2020	Iris Cameron	P
6 th July 2020	Agnes McColl	P
27 th July 2020	Annie Smith	CM
28 th July 2020	Janet Keir	P
28 th August 2020	Anne Kyle	CM
4 th September 2020	Molly Docherty	P
15 th September 2020	Hugh Smith	P
14 th October 2020	John McCrae	P
4 th November 2020	Duncan Gray	CM
12 th November 2020	David Baillie	P
16 th November 2020	Mima Wilson	CM
15 th December 2020	Edith McKellar	P
22 nd February 2021	Alexander Littlejohn	P
12 th March 2021	Agnes Frame	CM
29 th March 2021	Elizabeth McKellar	P
30 th March 2021	Joyce Kean	B
31 st March 2021	Alexander Paton	P
21 st April 2021	Joyce Graham	CM
25 th June 2021	Joan Park	B
30 th June 2021	Jeanette Gray	P
23 rd July 2021	Johnnie Penrice	P
5 th August 2021	Janette Logan	B
Baptisms		
6 th June 2021	Jackson George Booth	B
Weddings		
7 th August 2021	Margaret Fisher & John Callan	CM
8 th September	Iain Raeburn & Emma Buchanan	Seamill Hydro