



**Chrystal Chronicle
Newsletter
June/July 2021**



**St Mary's-Greyfriars' Parish Church
Locum Minister: Rev Douglas Irving**

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Scottish charity no. SC009432

From the Locum Minister

Over 54 Sunday YouTube messages have gone out to SMG and Caerlaverock, without a break, over the last year, my son and messages weekly editor, Roan, tells me. The first message went live on 19 April 2020, with Roan currently working on the next message due out on Sunday coming, 23 May 2021, Pentecost.

As for subject matter, I follow the Revised Common Lectionary published by Saint Andrew Press with Scriptural readings, arranged on a three-year cycle, following in sequence the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. John's Gospel is read each year, especially round Christmas, and in the year of Mark (the present year's selected Gospel) as Mark is the shortest Gospel. This pattern of the Christian Year Scripture readings can be viewed by clicking on the Worship Section link of the Church of Scotland website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/home.

The Gospel readings are supplemented each Sunday by Old Testament material and further teaching from the New Testament, from Acts and the Epistles. The wide choice of chosen material offers the potential for us all to look in a wholesome way at Scripture, taking in the total biblical landscape from Genesis to Revelation, helping us to put a stay on any decline in biblical literacy. For the preacher, there is the weekly discipline of studying the given biblical passages and at the same time follow the Christian Year from Lent, Advent, Easter and Pentecost through the post-Pentecost to the start of the new Christian Year.

During the early years of my twelve years in Edinburgh as a qualified solicitor, and later as a student for the ministry at New College, my Minister at St Cuthbert's was the late Rev Dr Leonard Small. He once in the course of a sermon referred to having been asked once by a church member how he found something different to say each Sunday to which he had replied "The Source is inexhaustible." I aim to ensure that the message or sermon, like the COOP's bread, is fresh each morning. The sermon content, I believe, should be the Lord's own, made one's own through study of the Scriptural and delivered on the Sunday with the Holy Spirit's unction.

It's a privilege preparing each week and during the weeks of lockdown the process has provided particular purpose and structure to my week. Recently lockdown restrictions have been eased, with churches re-opening, affording opportunity for me to preach "live" to the congregation again and with real faces before me to better gauge audience interest in the faces in front of me. So different from speaking only to a computer screen!

Further, on content, I recall on one occasion in Charlotte, North Carolina, America, hearing the famous American United Methodist Church preacher, William Henry Willimon, address an audience which included not a few ministers of the Church of Scotland. Willimon described the dynamic of his preaching - to step aside and let Jesus stroll among the congregation during the sermon and let Him say what He wills to say to members individually, not apologising or seeking to defend Jesus, but to let each receive Jesus' speaking to them. We are here not to share our own word, but Jesus'. Thus, potentially, in our audience's receiving of His word, which has the promise over it that it will not return to Him void but accomplish the purpose for which it is sent (Isaiah 55.11), we provide our people with essential biblical truth, the building bricks with which, with the Holy Spirit's help, preacher and congregation alike come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

My earnest prayer in these times of God's giving of us to each other is that I, for my part, have not failed you, nor you me.

Your Locum Minister and friend, Douglas

Cover picture

The picture on the cover of this edition of the newsletter was posted on the Old Dumfries page on Facebook. We do not know who the artist was. We thought it was an interesting image of the church – and it looks quite Lowry-esque.

“Thy Kingdom Come” Initiative

Primarily the short season between Ascension Day and Pentecost
“Thy Kingdom Come”: <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

Scottish Church Leaders, including Rev Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the Church of Scotland 2021/2022, speak on “The Kingdom Come 2021” initiative: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fklnVfRTdXE>

Also, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in conversation with Pastor Agu Irukwu:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUvbF9QHEFA>

Archbishop Justin and Nicky Gumble in conversation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e2lwHm1RxM>

Interview with Archbishop of Canterbury:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTCUggL3a0Q>

The prayer called for is “Come Holy Spirit, let your Kingdom come during this time” over named people and situations.

Plea to let the Initiative continue during our Summer months

Over the Summer, a continuation of the Initiative during the Summer of 2021 is commended to all, with prayer to God the Holy Spirit for specific people that during the coming Summer months they come to faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Prayer preceded the first Pentecost and precedes every **Pentecost!**

Church Register

Please let me know of any changes of address: **Marion Bennett**, 2 Wolfgill Drive Dumfries DG1 4XY. Tel: 263106

Congratulations

Congratulations to Trevor and Maureen Wilson on the birth of their grandson, Jayden.

Thanks for flowers

We are once again able to distribute the church flowers after the Sunday service. Thanks have been received from Mrs Edgar, Mrs Gourlie and Miss Lossius.

Flower rota

June	6	B Jardine	July	4	M Wilson
	13	R Brown		11	G Boyes
	20	D Edwards		18	D Edwards
	27	M Watson		25	R McEwan
			August	1	E Haining

Flower Team contacts: Maureen Wilson (255008), Moira Cannon (720394), Betty Jardine (257691) and Margaret Thomson (253484).

Christian Aid

Christian Aid Week ran from 10th to 16th May. In addition to donations which will have been made direct to Christian Aid we collected £302.65 at church.

There is such need in the world and all donations will be used to further the work of Christian Aid worldwide.

For anyone still wishing to donate information can be found at: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

General Assembly 2021

Several months ago I was asked if I would like to be a Commissioner at this year's General Assembly as it was St Mary's-Greyfriars' turn to nominate a Commissioner. I had had the honour before and had attended in person. This year was very different.

Two weeks before the Assembly I logged on for an online training session and had the chance to familiarise myself with the GA Hub which enabled me to see how to request to speak, how to send an amendment, how to vote etc.

The first live session was [on Saturday morning](#) May 22. With not a few prayers I logged into the hub and then onto Zoom. It all worked and that was me for the next five hours or so among with at least 600 others. The retiring Moderator, Martin Fair, delivered an impassioned message declaring "There is much still to be done". His moderatorial year had been unique in that it was 95% done online but was no less impressive than his predecessors.

The new Moderator, Lord Wallace of Tankerness, hails from Annan but has lived for 35 years on Orkney. He is only the 2nd lay Moderator. He spoke of his hopes for the next year and then welcomed Prince William who was the Lord High Commissioner representing the Queen. Prince William spoke very sincerely and told of his love for Scotland, not least as it was where he met his wife 20 years ago. He attended the opening session on his own but returned for the final session [on Thursday afternoon](#) with his wife. A 30 minute break for lunch and then it was 'down to business'.

The Moderator opened each session with worship and recordings of hymns were shown from previous years. There was no business on Sunday but four very full afternoons the following week. The sessions all started [at 1pm](#) and were scheduled to [finish at 6pm](#). The latest we finished was after [7.30pm](#) as some of the reports caused much debate with motions and counter motions, for and against, and the Moderator was very fair, allowing both sides to be heard.

There were touches of humour - when a speaker was interrupted by his dog barking and on one occasion [at 6.30pm](#) the speaker announced that he would be brief as his wife had just told him that his tea was on the table!

There were Commissioners from all over Scotland, representatives from many faiths in Scotland and people from all over the world connected to the Church of Scotland attending by Zoom. Obviously there were very few people actually in the Assembly Hall but from my own interest it was good to see the National Convenor of the Guild giving her report on the [Tuesday afternoon](#). The Convenors of all the various committees of the Church were present in the hall to speak to their reports and answer questions as we went through the reports. I am full of admiration for these people, for their knowledge, patience and stamina in dealing with the questions and particularly the clerk whose knowledge of church law and procedure is immense. He would keep the Moderator on the right track! Everyone showed their fellow man or woman respect and it was all very orderly.

One very poignant moment was hearing David Logan's name read out in the list of Ministers, associate Ministers, OLMs and mission partners who have passed away over the last two years.

Changes are afoot and I feel privileged to have been present when these were passed. More will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Liz Tanner

Pentecost in Arpad Ter

Here are a few photos from the Pentecost service in Arpad Ter. The doves were made by a member of the congregation.





Gardening

How does your garden grow, this unreliable springtime? Silver bells and cockle shells all shipshape? Pretty maids lined up neatly? Lucky you, if that's the case. Or you might share Dylan Thomas's rather jaundiced view of his garden when he complained, "Nothing grows in our garden, only washing. And babies." Over the centuries writers have shown whether they have the hearts and souls of gardeners. Or not. Here are a few examples.

Firstly, Francis Bacon. "God Almighty first planted a Garden and indeed it is the Purest of Humane pleasure. It is the Greatest Refreshment to the Spirit of Man." 1561

"Eternal gardening is the price of liberty." Dudley Warner 1871

"For me, a ten-minute engagement with a robin and the dead-heading and the watering - puts out of my head a tiresome decision to be made, chores to be done, that nagging worry." Penelope Lively 2017

"Who can endure a cabbage bed in October?" Jane Austen

"When visitors exclaim, 'What a year it is for weeds!' (Which they do every year), I'm apt to point out that if the weeds won't grow, nothing else will." Christopher Lloyd 1970

"A lawn, a lily and a lilac tree; they take a lot of beating wherever they might be." Reginald Arkell

"The best way to get real enjoyment out of the garden is to put on a wide straw hat, hold a little trowel in one hand and a cool drink in the other, and tell the man where to dig." Charles Barr

And lastly, Sa' Di, 13th cent.

"A garden is a delight to the eye, and a solace to the soul; it soothes angry passions and produces that pleasure which is a foretaste of Paradise."

And perhaps that Paradise is right outside your back door.

Liz Tanner found this article in the July 1981 church magazine.

Chap Three (or the Third Man) - A True Story

The stage was set for the final onslaught in the last episode of St Mary's Wee Hall Face Lift - the sealing of the floor with varnish. And as a certain painter arranged the tins and brushes against the arrival of his volunteers he smiled with satisfaction. The job was well advanced and things were going to plan. And he went on his way rejoicing..... Now it came to pass his two volunteers were joined by a third man called Anon Y Mous who came from a far country up the Glasgow Road and straightaway offered his services... "The more the merrier" they cried with one voice. Then while he did change his attire they filled their tins from a can of Ronseal and proceeded to attack the job in hand. Now, when he had changed, he said to himself, "These good fellows have filled my tin with Ronseal." And the smell of Ronseal filled his nostrils and he smelt it and it was good.... Then the men said unto him "We have left you the centre section. You will be the middleman"... And he laughed at their sally, and, together, they advanced on all fronts, on all fours, backwards. Then lo and behold Anon overtook the two men. They were amazed and their brushes flew faster and faster but to no avail. And they said one to another "What manner of man is this? If he laps us we will be boxed in..." But he overheard them and reassured them, saying "Fear not, I will leave you an avenue of escape." And they were content and murmured "He must have a wider brush than us...." Now, when he drew near to the end of his section, and the sweat was lashing off his fellow workers in great beads, he said unto them "Hitherto I have always been the first to be last, but now at last I am first." And the two men put their heads together saying "This man talks in riddles. He may be an enemy agent sent by Maggie T to put a spoke in the wheel of progress...." Now, in the fullness of time, from a great distance up the Moffat Road, a member of the hierarchy, known as the Heid Bummer, put on his camel coat and came to examine their work. And the floor shone with a thousand lights; but the middle section outshone all the rest, so that he could see his face in it. Then he said to himself "Yea, my face looks fabulous, yea like after a fortnight on the Costa del Sol, or half an hour walking behind a muck spreader. I will walk across to the centre." And when he

reached the centre his shoes adhered to the floor with such power that he was rooted to the spot saying “I will never see my wife again, and the Fire Brigade is on strike..” Then it came to pass that the painting organiser appeared unto him, crying with a loud voice “Have you seen a tin full of oil in which I kept the varnish brushes supple and moist?” And in the twinkling of an eye the mystery was resolved the sticky floor was no longer a sticky problem. Then the Heid Bummer rocked so much with laughter that his shoes were freed. And so they went their various ways. Then Anon Y Mous continued mightily in his endeavour and it took two men to watch him.

Alexa! Connect me to the Lord

Apparently thousands of Alexa users are reconnecting with God through a new skill (similar to an App) launched by the Church of England. Time, perhaps to update the Lord’s Prayer?

Our Father
Who art online
Googled be Thy name;
Thy Amazon delivery come
Thy shopping be done
On eBay as it is on Etsy
Give us this day our free delivery
And forgive us our Facebook
As we forgive those who Twitter against us
And lead us not to Netflix
But deliver us from the BBC Sounds app
For thine is the Instagram,
The Snapchat and the WhatsApp
For ever and ever
#Amen

For reflection

Most of us love to sing (either out loud or in our heads) and this month the first word (General) is the first line of well known hymns. The second word (Assembly) is the first line of the second (and in one case the third) verse so perhaps a bit of a challenge! Even though we are not yet able to sing in church we do have things to sing about as we journey out of lockdown and we can make a 'joyful noise unto the Lord' Psalm 100.

Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah
Eternal Father, strong to save
Nearer my God to Thee
Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round
Rejoice the Lord is King
All creatures of our God and King
Love Divine all loves excelling



As I travel through the bad and good
See the springs of living waters
Still through the cloven skies they come
Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth
My soul he doth restore again
By his word was all created
Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness
Ye blessed souls at rest.

Next magazine

The deadline for our August/September issue is **Sunday July 18** for items through the church – and 3pm that day for those sent direct. Many thanks as always.

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