



**Chrystal Chronicle
Newsletter
August/September 2022**



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

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www.stmarysgreyfriars.org.uk

Scottish charity no. SC009432

Locum Minister's Message

With the words “parting is such sweet sorrow,” William Shakespeare’s character Juliet bids her farewell to Romeo in Shakespeare’s tragedy “Romeo and Juliet”. We too as a congregation of Jesus’ people will experience the sweet sorrow of parting, and more, as memories are shared and looked fondly upon as we separate one from the other in the forthcoming “Dissolution” of the Congregation.

The parting of the ways for us comes nearer into frame as we follow the chosen recommendation of our Kirk Session, under our Interim Moderator Rev Fiona Wilson, for dissolution of the congregation of Dumfries: St Mary’s Greyfriars’, with the buildings and assets being made over to “HQ” at 121 George Street, Edinburgh. This recommendation, according to my understanding, still awaits the agreement of the congregation in a duly convened meeting, to be later confirmed and acted upon by Presbytery. Following such dissolution, it will be for each member, on receipt of his/her certificate of transference of membership, to make a decision as to which other congregation, or none, they elect to join.

It is now three years since your last minister Rev David Logan died so prematurely and tragically in August 2019. Before then, I had already provided months of cover for David in 2019 and 2018 during times of his incapacity. Since then I have been privileged to be your Locum Minister on a continuing basis, serving also your sister congregation of Caerlaverock. All this since my retirement as Parish Minister of Kirkcudbright from 1998 – 2016.

When COVID struck in March 2020, Government restrictions, including Lockdown, came into force and during the ensuing months of enforced cessation of public worship gatherings, the option was pursued to keep sharing God’s Word weekly with both congregations through online YouTube Sunday broadcasts, all thanks to the invaluable assistance given me by son Roan. Thereby, a wider congregation too was reached in the purposes of our God.

One way or another, not a few bonds of fellowship and friendship have been forged in the two parishes through almost five years of my association with and work in the charges on both preaching and pastoral ministry fronts, all this following my retirement from full-time ordained ministry in September 2016. “All good things come to an end” it is said! Shortly, I will indeed become more fully retired.

We note that our sister congregation, Caerlaverock, in terms of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright Presbytery’s recently agreed Plan, is to continue under Presbytery Guardianship (as has been agreed too for Dumfries Northwest) with Presbytery – the new Presbytery of the South West to have direct oversight.

Many Church of Scotland church buildings across the country are now facing closure. My own former congregations of Stranraer: St Andrew’s, later Trinity, later Town Church, now in union with Stranraer: High Kirk, and Inch Church, Castle Kennedy, now in union with Luce Valley, face seeing closure of the former St Andrew’s and Inch Church Buildings. So does my first charge of Kilbirnie: Auld, with its pre-Reformation Church having been in continuous use for the worship of God since 1490, set to see the other church building in the town, St Columba’s, become Kilbirnie’s sole Church of Scotland church building. The building closure news has all come as quite a personal shock.

But the God we trust in is bigger than any church closure or failure. God reigns and endures forever, as the history of Jesus’ Church bears witness to through the centuries. In truth, held in God’s power and purposes, He upon whom all our hope is founded, and looking to Him in trust, safe through change and chance He guides us. “Though with care and toil we build them, tower and temple fall to dust, but God’s power, hour by hour, is our temple and our power.” Also, we take comfort in the words, “Be still my soul, the Lord is on your side; bear patiently the cross of grief or pain; leave to your God to order and provide, in every change He faithful will remain.”

On 10 July 2022, we celebrated the faithful long Kingdom service of faithful brothers and sisters in Christ of our time through times of change. We noted that the longest serving among them, Tom Evans, had served under five ministers, Ian Knox (1957-1986) whose son from Australia was in church the other Sunday, Graham Deans

(1987- 2002), Jamie Milliken (2005-2009), Gordon McCracken (2010- 2012) and David Logan (2016-2019). In their time, they took their leave of us, leaving their imprint upon our lives.

Soon too, I will take my leave of you, as you and I are set for the parting of our ways. On such occasion in prospect, I am reminded of Paul's parting words to Christians at Philippi, in Philippians 2. 12 ff:

“My dear friends, as you have always obeyed - not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil His good purpose.” God is not finished with any of us. We are a work in progress. God works within us, as we shown willing, and the more so. Perhaps his real work in us is only now beginning! Our Heavenly Father's challenge to us is to let His Holy Spirit Person bring to completion that which He has already begun in us, in you and me. The work of Jesus Christ, the Hope of Glory in us, continues until the draw of our latest breath.”

I pray to God that He has through our togetherness times written more of Himself and His purposes into your life's story and mine. As far as the words and promises He has led me to share, I hold to the promise of Isaiah 55. 10 & 11:

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

May the Holy Spirit, God at work within us, bring to remembrance for us, each one, the important words Our Heavenly Father has shared in our times of fellowship over the years. May we thus, friends, be blessed in times remaining, in your looking and mine to God, the everlasting Lord. May we, in times still afforded us, make Him the Lord and Master of all our futures, that we be held in His holding.

Your Locum Minister and friend,
Douglas

From the Session Clerk

Dear SMG Members,

As is customary in the church, we relax a little over the summer. Meetings are not usually held until we have all had a welcome break from the business of running a church.

As you all know by now, our church will probably close by the end of this year. This has been a very hard decision, made by Kirk Session over two years ago, and nothing has improved, allowing us to reverse that decision. In June Presbytery approved our decision, which was the first step in the process. Next, Ministries and Resources Committee of Presbytery have to draw up a Basis of Dissolution which has to be approved by your Kirk Session. Then a Congregational Meeting will be called, when members have the chance to vote Yes or No on closure of the church. This will be intimated over two prior Sundays to allow maximum attendance.

Once the congregational vote is taken, and depending on the result, we will proceed.

I will do my best to keep you informed of any changes as we travel this sad journey. We all love our church, but things cannot continue as they are, and we need to face the future with courage and trust in the Lord to help carry us through.

Anne Mackie
Session Clerk.

Long Service certificates



On Sunday 10th July Long Service Awards were presented to Sunday School teachers Janet McSherry, 15 years, Lyn Kuehnel, 30 years, and Isobel Evans, 38 years.

And to Elders Isobel Evans, 30 years, Bill Gillis, 30 years and Tom Evans, 50 years.

Missing from the photo is Marion Bennett, who was presented with her certificate for 20 years as an Elder on Sunday 17th July.

Church Register

Deaths – “I am the resurrection and the life”

4/6/22 Mrs A Fraser

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

From our partner church in Debrecen

This article, sent by Liz Tanner, was published in the recent magazine at Arpad Ter Church.

HÍREK SKÓCIÁBÓL

Summer greetings from St Mary's Greyfriars

In the south of the UK the temperature reached 30 C last week – here in Dumfries we reached 22C and felt really hot!

As a nation we celebrated Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee at the beginning of the month. Suitable decorations were put up in the church with lots of flags and red, white and blue flowers.



We continue to give weekly to our local food bank by donating food items and also toiletries to those in need. Often hotels and guest houses provide little bottles of shampoo, shower gel and moisturiser to guests and these are donated by returning holiday makers. Unfortunately there is an ever increasing need for the food bank donations as even wage earning families are finding it difficult to 'make ends meet' with the ever increasing prices of gas, electricity, fuel and food.

The closure of our church has not really moved on during the last few months as it is now in the hands of Presbytery. Our own Presbytery is being dissolved at the end of this month to make way for a bigger



one incorporating the whole of south west Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway including one church just over the border into England) and part of South Ayrshire. Before this dissolution we fervently pray that our own closure will be ratified by Presbytery and passed onto Edinburgh to take action..

Just last Sunday we had the pleasure of welcoming Douglas Knox from Australia whose father had been Minister of SMG from 1953 to 1987. We were pleased to give him the picture of his father which was hanging in the vestry along with those of other previous Ministers.

When my husband (Stan) and I joined SMG in 1978 there was a roll of over 1,000 people and 150 children in the Sunday School, now the roll is at 280 and no children - changed times indeed. We ask you to pray for the people of our church and parish as we go through the difficult and heart wrenching process of closure. We greatly value your friendship and support and pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will be with us all.

Elizabeth Tanner

Flower rota

August	14	M Dalrymple
	21	J Swan
	28	Vacant
September	4	J Train
	11	L Jardine
	18	H Edgar
	25	Harvest
October	2	J McSherry

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

Thanks

Thanks for flowers have been received from Anna and Robert Fisher, May Fraser, Pat Sharp, Carol Gordon, Marion Bennett and Alan Franks, who also wanted to thank Douglas Irving for his visit to Margaret on her birthday – and the impromptu mini birthday party.

Tom and Isobel Evans would like to thank the Session Clerk, Anne Mackie, for Long Service Certificates received on 10th July, and to members of the congregation for all their good wishes.

And from Tommy Jardine

The absence of a weel-kent face from our church has been noted by our diminishing flock. It resulted in many forms of communication - personal visits, letters, cards, phone calls and offers of help. All have been a source of comfort and encouragement. A big thank you to all our friends. After 74 days in the care of NHS Dumfries, it's lovely to be back home. The church has been a big miss and a return is keenly anticipated.

Regards, Tommy and Betty Jardine

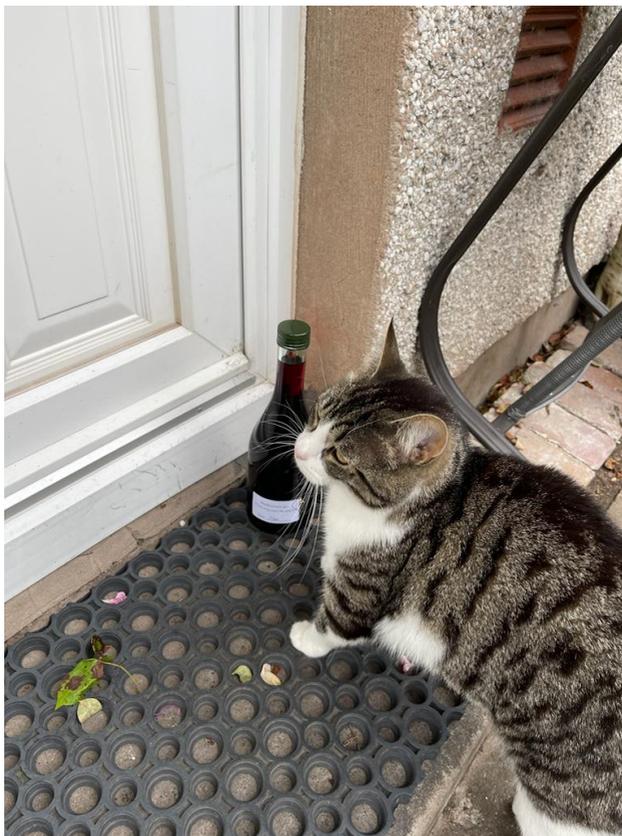
From the Guild:

14 members enjoyed a very pleasant and relaxed outing to Kirkcudbright in June. The main focus was a visit to see the Galloway Hoard exhibition. Broughton House garden was also visited and the variety of shops. The staff of the Belfry tearoom were very efficient and welcoming and the home baking (including exceptional strawberry tarts and millionaires' shortbread) were much appreciated.

Has anyone seen the Guild Secretary? It's rumoured she's somewhere in the blackcurrants – before setting up an illicit still with the Convenor!



And could this be what was made from the blackcurrants?



And finally (or almost.....)

On Sunday 24th July Rev Douglas Irving was able to sit in the body of the church for a change, as our service was led by Andrew Johnstone. Andrew is a member at Caerlaverock Church and has been accepted to train for the ministry with the Church of Scotland. We all enjoyed Andrew's choice of hymns, some of them his personal favourites, his thought-provoking sermon and even a children's address! We wish Andrew every success in his studies.

Marion Bennett

Reflection

We all love to sing and it is a great way to praise our Lord.

Come ye faithful raise the anthem
Oh praise ye the Lord
Morning has broken
Make me a channel of your peace
One more step along the road I go
Now thank we all our God
Who put the colours in the rainbow?
Eternal Father, strong to save
At the name of Jesus
Love, I will love you Lord
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord
Hail to the Lord's anointed

And ones to look up:

Psalm 5
Psalm 36
Psalm 45
Psalm 72
Psalm 33

Summer suns are glowing and we praise your holy name. We ask you Lord to watch over all of us and especially those who are travelling on their holidays. Life is full of challenges but we face these knowing that you are always with us. Amen

Useful contacts

Locum Minister

Rev Douglas Irving: 01556 610156

Session Clerk

Anne Mackie: 266186

Treasurer, Gift Aid and freewill offering envelopes

Rod Williamson: 251876

Next magazine

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

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