

Columba News

April
2022
No. 245



*Spring is
in the air
with
summer
just
round
the
corner*



Waiting to welcome you

Sundays	Team	Leader
April 17	Team 9	Mrs C. McLaughlin
April 24	Team 10	Mrs A. Swan
May 1	Team 11	Mr A. Muirhead
May 8	Team 12	Mr W. Muir
May 15	Team 1	Mr R. White
May 22	Team 2	Mrs F. Taylor
May 29	Team 3	Mrs A. Hope
June 5	Team 4	Mrs A. Drennan
June 12	Team 5	Mrs S. Mills
June 19	Team 6	Mr J. Hunter
June 26	Team 7	Mrs N. Mortimer



From the manse

April 2022

Dear Friends,

It is always a delight to welcome the Sunday School to worship at the early service. There is no doubt that they enrich the community and change the dynamic of the service. Gillean and I do our best to choose an opening hymn which might be more inclusive of the young people.

Recently, I spoke to the children and the 'older' members of the congregation about the number of stars in our galaxy and the number of galaxies in our universe. After a few guesses, I said that there are over 100 billion stars in the galaxy and, incredibly, over 100 billion galaxies in our universe. That makes for quite a lot of stars! In the first chapter of the book of Genesis, the poet, as if in passing, wrote, 'God made ... the stars.'

For me, the stars have always been magical and spoken to me of Mystery and God and spirituality, and they so easily convey a deep sense of peacefulness and calm. I also find it striking that almost all the elements that make up a human body comes from the centre of stars. Not only were the elements of our body made in a star but that they have come through several supernovas (luminous stellar explosions!).

At funerals, I often say that the nature of this universe is that life, new life, comes out of death. It is only with the 'death' of a star that human life has been physically possible. The way in which new life is manifested is often quite far removed from where life first began, not only in distance but also in form.

This is a powerful metaphor of the Easter story: death and resurrection. We may experience 'little deaths' through the course of our life; times when we have to let go of something, but that new opportunities and joys emerge. Sadly, the death of a loved one may be a death and loss that we cannot overcome in this lifetime. In the Christian tradition, St Paul wrote of our gaining our spiritual body in life beyond death. Like all world re-



ligions, Christianity is reaching beyond what our intuitions, concepts, poetry, and metaphors can truly express. It's been said that every word and metaphor about God is made to be broken, like through glasses into a fire after drinking a fine wine!

For me, faith is trusting in the nature of the universe and trusting also in the nature and love of God. We are to trust the God we believe to have walked with us, and walks with us still. Happy Easter!

Blessings and peace to you.

Scott

Revd Dr Scott S McKenna

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated in the church on Sunday, April 24.

There will be two services at 10am and 11.15am and as was introduced during the pandemic, the small capsules will be used for the bread and wine.

The evening service that day will not be a Communion service.

Many thanks from Martha

Martha McKellar would like to thank the Church family at Ayr St Columba for cards, flowers and kind expressions of sympathy on the passing of a loving husband, dad and grandad – Ramsay. Every message was most appreciated.

Support from the knitters

Thank you to all the knitters from St Columba who supported the request for needles and wool for the knitting project at Lochside. All of your donations have been delivered.

Our thanks to Jennifer Lennon for organising this group. And best wishes to Jennifer as she recuperates from recent surgery.





Ayr St. Columba Church Services for Holy Week and Easter

Joint Services will be held with Ayr St Columba, Ayr Auld Kirk and Ayr St Andrew's Church, our Presbytery Partners

**13th April – 15th April
at 7.00 pm**

Wednesday	13th April Ayr St Columba
Thursday	14th April Ayr Auld Kirk - Service of Holy Communion
Friday	15th April Ayr St Andrew's

During Holy Week the Church will be open for quiet reflection
Tuesday - Friday
11.00am – 12 noon

**EASTER SUNDAY
17th April 2022**

8.30 am

Early Morning Service - Low Green

9.00am

Followed by Breakfast in the Midton Road Hall

10.00 am

All Age Service

11.15 am

Morning Worship

**ST COLUMBA KIDS
SUNDAY SCHOOL**

3rd April – No Classes

10th April – No Classes

17th April – Easter Sunday – No classes

SUNDAY 24th APRIL

Sunday School resumes

Services of Holy Communion

10.00am and 11.15am



Christian Aid Week

15th - 22nd May



Due to Covid restrictions it has been two years now since we, as a church, have been able to participate in Christian Aid Week.

This year the focus of the charity will be on the plight of drought which many countries around the world face.

I understand that there are many very worthy causes seeking our help just now but if you feel able to donate to Christian Aid this year it would be greatly appreciated.

You will find a traditional Christian Aid Week envelope inside your Columba News which you can return to the church either by placing in one of the offering plates at either of the church doors on Sunday, by handing them in to the church office or by contacting Mo (Howie) on 07963513620.

Table Talk is launched

Our talk group was a victim of the omicron variant earlier this year but I am pleased to say that we are going to launch it again after Easter. It will begin on Tuesday, April 19 at 10.30 in the Orr Room and will run until the May 31 with NO meeting on the May 3. There are two more spaces available so if you are interested in joining us to chat or just to listen please get in touch.

Helen Greig



Celebrate the Platinum Jubilee at our street party



Get the bunting out and get ready to celebrate with a special street party at Ayr St Columba on Sunday, June 5.

Our minister Scott is planning to hold a special service to commemorate H.M. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee followed by the street party in Carrick Park immediately after the service.

There will be only one service on the day from 10.30 until 11.30am.

The Hospitality team will be serving hot dogs and old fashioned ice cream courtesy of the church but members are invited to bring a picnic if they wish.

Table and chairs will be set out in Carrick Park and paper plates, napkins and paper cups provided.

It is planned to decorate Carrick Park with Union Jack Bunting and red, white and blue balloons and the residents of Carrick Park will also be advised of the event and invited to join with us in the celebrations.

Authorisation from SAC and Roads Alliance has been granted and a public notice will appear in local newspaper in May for the road closure.

***Please "Save the Date" for this historic event
in the life of our Church and join in this
amazing day***

Should the weather not be kind to us the celebrations would transfer to the church but hopefully we won't need Plan B.

The Hospitality Team are looking forward to once again sharing in Fun and Fellowship at this occasion with all the members of Ayr St Columba Church

***Jane Hunter
Hospitality***

Chat in the aisles



Hot water is back in the church after a new instant electric hot water boiler was installed in the kitchen. This new impressive piece of kit replaces the old gas boiler that failed last year and after failing to get replacement parts the new electric one was fitted recently.

A new smart meter has been fitted to the church gas supply. This will help regulate usage in the years ahead.

The Kirk Session is set to meet again on Tuesday, April 26 although a decision has still to be made if the meeting will be in the church sanctuary or the hall.

Once again the election circus comes to the church hall. It has been agreed to allow South Ayrshire Council the use of the premises for the local South Ayrshire Council elections on Thursday, May 5.

The Church Flower Calendar still has some weeks available if any member of the congregation wishes to help support this part of the life of the church.

All the new eco friendly LED lights have been fitted to the church hall ceiling. These replace the old florescent tubes which are now obsolete.

The next two evening services will be held in the church on Sunday, April 24 and Sunday, May 29.

A Prayer for Safety?

A nearsighted minister glanced at the note that Mrs. Jones had sent to him.

The note read:

"Bill Jones having gone to sea, his wife asks for the prayers of the congregation for his safety."

Failing to observe the punctuation, he startled the congregation by announcing:

"Bill Jones, having gone to see his wife, asks for the prayers of the congregation for his safety."



Changes at the Men's Association

Since the January issue of the Columba News, we have had very interesting talks from one of our chosen charities, Ayrshire Housing Aid, Geogrie Marshall of Blackthorn Salt, a local business, talking about the Ayrshire Salt Industry and George Ballinger with a talk and discussion on The Millenium Link and the Forth & Clyde Canal.

We recently held our AGM which was followed on the March 23 with our end of session lunch attended by 29 members and guests who all enjoyed the lunch and fellowship at the Kylestrome Hotel. Our Probationer, Gillean, said Grace with the Minister, Scott, having the enormous task of delivering the Vote of Thanks on behalf of the guests!

The history of the Men's Association, within Trinity Church, later St. Columba, stretches back to the first meeting held on Wednesday, November 21, 1956 at 7.45pm.

Times have changed over the years and the meetings are now held every second Monday at 7.30pm from October to March.

This year is no exception to change. With our membership growing in years, but not in numbers, we are facing a future which has to be addressed.

At the AGM it was decided that as a Christian Fellowship group our name should reflect modern times, so we have decided to re-name the Association as the "Monday Fellowship". The meetings are open to all of the congregation, not only here in St. Columba but also across the rest of the Church family and those who have an interest in a particular talk, from whatever walk of life they come .

The other change we are making is to the times of our meetings. They remain as every other Monday of our session, but the timings are to be as follows:

In October, November and December the time will remain at 7.30pm. In January, February and March our meetings will take place at 2pm. This allows for members who come from a distance to not have to drive in the depth of a winter night. These changes are temporary in nature and may change according to the feedback we receive.

Planning for our 2022/23 season of speakers is well underway and we look forward to our first meeting on October 10 this year.

We think of our members who are not keeping the best of health just now and pray for better days for them and their families. May we all have a wonderful summer.

John Ferguson, Secretary

BOOK GROUP

The book group has been meeting regularly over the last few months, progressing from Zoom to get together in person.

For a few meetings we gathered at Morag Bryden's home where we enjoyed her hospitality and helpful, intelligent contributions to our discussions.

Since the group first started in 2015, she's been a regular and treasured member and we'll miss her very much.

In February our book of choice was Michael Frayn's "Spies" which we all enjoyed very much. (There is a copy in the church library if anyone would like to read it)

"Cutting for Stone" by Abraham Verghese is our current book which follows the lives of twins born in Ethiopia. " Love, betrayal and redemption are the main themes.

We usually meet every six weeks but we may decide to give each other an extra two weeks to read the books and meet every two months!

We would be delighted to welcome new members and if anyone is interested or has any questions about the group do please contact Helen Greig. 01292 520288

Walking group still stepping out

We continue to walk on the last Friday of each month, and all enjoy the opportunity to chat as well as some fairly gentle exercise!

On the April 29 we will walk from the car park at the Burns Centre on Murdoch's Lone. Leaving at 10.30.

On May 27 the walk will be at Straiton. We will meet outside Halfords at Heathfield at 10am in order to share cars. As Straiton is some distance you might want to bring a picnic lunch.

We know that a Friday morning doesn't suit everyone so we propose to repeat the walk on an evening during the summer months. If you are interested in this please contact me so that we can choose a suitable evening.

Helen Greig 07922 059368 or hcgreig@icloud.com.



*Scott's sermon preached from St Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
on Sunday, March 27, 2022*

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is potentially a difficult text for a preacher because the story is so well-known. The Good News Bible as well as the New King James Version provide the title, 'The Parable of the Lost Son.' Dissatisfied with his life, the younger son asks his father for his share of the inheritance. The father divides his property and the young man journeys to a far country where he spends his inheritance with 'prodigal living.' Finally, broken by life, he comes to his senses and returns home. Having seen his son from a great way off, the father runs to meet him and, says the Scripture, 'fell on his neck and kissed him.'



The final part of the parable is the anger, the fury of the older brother. The older brother refuses to join the feast which his father laid on for the prodigal.

The father says, 'It [is] right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' The parable is a masterpiece but, incredibly, there is considerable breadth in the way it is interpreted. What do you hear in these verses?

We know it best as 'The Parable of the Prodigal Son' or, in more modern language, the 'Parable of the Lost Son.' Is the prodigal son the point of the story? Perhaps it is best understood as 'The Parable of the Forgiving Father.' Right at the heart of the parable we have the striking and scandalous response of the father towards his returning son. In asking for his share of the inheritance in the first place, the younger son insulted his father as if asking for his father's death. The ethical code demanded that, had they seen the young man returning, the village elders would be required to break an earthen vessel over his head as a sign that the young man had shattered his covenant with the community and would be offered no succour, food, or water. In running out to meet his son, the father prevents the elders from carrying out their obligation. The Gospel says that the father 'saw him and had compassion.'

In Hebrew and Aramaic, 'compassion' is the plural of a noun the singular form of which is 'womb'. Compassion means feeling for another human being from the very deepest part of ourselves. The father ran out, fell on his neck, and kissed him. Of a different father, it might have been written that, 'his father saw him, ran at him, and kicked him.' The Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon says, instead we read, "He fell on his neck,

and kissed him'; kissed him eagerly, kissed him much." Is this the Parable of the Prodigal Son or the Forgiving Father? There is still a final section to come.

In the closing verses, we are told of the rage of the older son. Furious that the fatted calf has been killed in celebration that his younger brother has returned, that the 'waster' has returned, the older brother will not enter the house. The Greek text literally says that what the older brother hears when he returns to the house is 'symphony and choirs.' The forgiving father comes out this time to greet his older son. He tells him, 'Everything I have is yours. Your brother was dead and is alive.' We are left to assume that the older brother remains outside. Is this a parable concerning the older brother? This entire story is a masterpiece, but how are we to interpret it?

Benedict XVI, the Pontiff Emeritus, says that it is best understood as the Parable of the Two Brothers. Benedict takes us right back to the opening verses in chapter 15. We read:

Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.'

Benedict says here at the outset are two groups or 'brothers': the tax collectors and sinners *and* the Pharisees and scribes.

Throughout the Bible, there are stories of two brothers: Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob. This parable of Jesus adopts that genre of story-telling. The tax collectors and sinners *are* the prodigal son, while those who never break the commandments, the Pharisees and scribes, *are* the older brother. In the parable, Jesus is exposing the self-righteousness of the pious, their failure to be human and compassionate. In the parable, God is the father who is compassionate towards all His children and, in His life, Jesus embodies the Spirit of the Father.

I said that compassion means a 'womblike' love; it is love which comes from the deepest place within us. In the Old Testament book of Jeremiah, the prophet depicts the compassion of God. In one version, we are told of the 'tender mercies' of God. In another version, we read:

*Thus says Yahweh:
Is Ephraim [Israel] my dear son? my darling child?
For the more I speak of him,
the more I do remember him.*



*Therefore my womb trembles for him;
I will truly show motherly-compassion upon him.*

Compassion has overtones of giving birth, giving life, nourishing, caring, embracing, and encompassing. This is the image of God which fills the soul of Jesus. For Jesus, this is what God is like; the Holy is the One who embraces and forgives *both* brothers. In his letter to the church at Corinth, St Paul says that God's work in Christ is reconciliation. God does not impute our trespasses against us, but reconciles us, all of us. We are to see one another as brothers/sisters, all of us in need of forgiveness, healing, wholeness.

There is so much in this masterpiece to be unlocked. Going deeper into the story, with imagination and spiritual insight, the early Church Fathers understood the 'far country' to which the Lost Son fled not as a physical place but an interior state of being. The 'far country' is interior estrangement: we have forgotten who we are, we have failed to discover who we are, our relationship with the Father is ruptured and we seek our satisfaction and fulfilment in what this material world offers. We are told that the Lost Son wasted all his possessions. The Greek word used in this parable for property means 'essence'. In other words, the young man dissipates his essence, his very self. He has become an empty shell; his life has no meaning, purpose, or direction. In spiritual terms, he is broken. In the Jewish context, working as a swineherd is *the* expression of humanity's most extreme alienation and destitution. The early Church Fathers say that this parable is about you, me, all of us.

In the story, the prodigal came to himself. Spiritually at the very bottom, he turned his face and headed home. Pope Benedict said that, once he turned his face homewards, 'He [was] on a pilgrimage toward the truth of his existence....'. Once in his father's arms, his father listens to his son's confession and perceives the inner journey he has made. The father calls for the best robe to be put on his son which the Church Fathers say is the robe of grace, which he has lost. The feast prepared is the feast of faith, the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Bread and Wine, the Table of wholeness and reconciliation where all are welcome. The second century saint, Irenaeus, saw the Trinity in this parable: he said that the Son and Spirit were the outstretched arms of the Father. How do you understand this exquisite parable? Where are you in the story?



Since the start of the year Ayr St Columba Kids have had lots of fun, listening to lots of stories, playing games, and collecting every week for the Foodbank as our kind and helpful children care for people less fortunate than ourselves. We now have not one but two enthusiastic Young Leaders Sophie and James who come along every week to help and it is just wonderful to have them as part of the team.

The topic of Baptism was embraced with great enjoyment when the children brought in a variety of unusual baby dolls on which Keith duly sprinkled water from a basin and this helped our children learn that God is always with us.

In February the children took communion in the church, and then gathered together for stories craft and games. We have heard the story of Joseph and all his brothers and made peg people with cloth tunics and wool hair, and then we all joined together and made a huge collage of Jesus



in a boat with lots of fishes, as we learned how Jesus called the fishermen to be disciples.

The children loved the story of Jesus shining at the top of the mountain and enthusiastically tackled a superb craft of a mountain with a large plastic cup and brown felt with cotton wool clouds and glitter and the figure of Jesus shining at the top, with the children learning that God's glory is seen in Jesus.

We have welcomed yet another new recruit—Suzy-- and would love to see some more children join us as we grow and grow.

After the Easter Holidays we hope if the weather is nice to be outside on the grass for some of our activities and we are also planning our end of term trip to the Ayr Farm Park and hoping for some good weather.

If you want to find out anything about St Columba Kids please drop by one Sunday and we shall be delighted to welcome you.

Sue Christie

Admin -Ayr St Columba Kids





ST COLUMBA KIDS
HAVING GREAT FUN

24 hours of prayer for Ukraine

At the time of going to print the WMO committee is planning that Ayr St Columba commit 24 hours to continuous prayer for the people of Ukraine.

Also not forgetting the Russians who are not being told of the atrocities being committed in their name, nor the few brave folk in Russia who do know and who are risking imprisonment in order to protest.

From midnight on Sunday, April 10 until midnight on Monday, April 11 it will be divided into half hour slots.

'By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace' Luke 1:78-79

Ecumenical Prayers for Ukraine

On Saturday, March 12 over 100 folk gathered in Wellington Square at 11am for a service of prayers, bible readings and hymns for the people of Ukraine.

It was organised by Ayr Presbytery and ministers and pastors from all the local denominations led the service - Baptist, Salvation Army, Riverside Evangelical Church, Catholic, Episcopalian and Church of Scotland.

There were yellow and blue candles lit and as we sang the last hymn "Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace" the Ukrainian flag, held aloft by a member of one of our congregations, fluttered in the wind. It was very moving.

It was also very encouraging for all the local churches to meet together in unity, to support each other, as well as uphold Ukraine in our prayers.

Everyone was keen to repeat the service and it's going to be held monthly while the war goes on.

The organiser, Rev Dr Barbara Suchanek-Seitz, from St James' congregation is originally from Germany and she spoke of her belief that prayer had helped bring down the Berlin war. Who knows what effect our prayers for peace in Ukraine can have? We must live in hope!

Everyone is welcome to attend these services.

Muriel Wilson



Quick update from the Session Clerk

All our members will be aware from listening to news broadcasts that the situation regarding Covid is becoming more positive. As restrictions ease, we need to consider what is best in the church situation. Whilst some members will be anxious to get fully back to normal, others will wish to remain cautious for the time being.

As I write, the expected removal of the requirement to wear masks in church has been delayed and there are reports of higher levels of infection.

It is important that people feel safe and comfortable in church and, for that reason, we are looking at how we can continue to make masks and socially distanced pews available to those who wish to use them, even if the legal requirements are lifted. We will keep members informed as the situation develops.

It is good to note that so much of church life is getting closer to normal. We are very pleased that there will be a series of services with our partner churches during Holy Week and note that the two morning services on Easter Sunday will be preceded by an early service on the Low Green. Sunday School, Church Organisations, Scouts and Brownies are all up and running and no doubt everyone is looking forward to the summer break. The numbers attending Sunday services are steadily increasing and we expect that this trend will continue as restrictions ease.

Members of Ayr St Columba Church have always been very generous in supporting charities and good causes. It is very pleasing to note that this wonderful generosity has been displayed once again in the support given to the Ukrainian appeal. The response has been remarkable and we extend our deep gratitude to everyone who has contributed.

Bob Bartholomew

Thank you for the support

Thank you to all church friends who supported my poppy appeal. £160 was sent to and acknowledged by Combat Stress at Hollybush.

I now have a sales table on the first Thursday of each month at the Oasis Cafe. Elizabeth Macleod has kindly offered to lend a hand.

£200 has been raised from the sale of knitted items and also tasty marmalade.

A cheque for that sum will be mailed to Whitleys in Alloway, our local children's hospice.

Jean Stewart

Guild session comes to an end

Whose we are and Whom we Serve

It is copy deadline day for Columba News and the clocks have moved forward one hour so we all must be looking forward to Spring and Summer. The gardens are beginning to bring us some colour and, hopefully, we will soon have some summer sun. There is an old saying that 'when the day lengthens the cold strengthens' so let's hope that this does not apply this year!

The Guild has managed to survive another year of Covid restrictions and it has been so good to have so many joining this Session and our attendance has also been good which gives us encouragement for the future.

We have been blessed with so many good speakers and entertainers culminating with our Annual Daffodil Tea with the Ayrshire Ukulele Clan which was a great success. Our last meeting of the session, along with our AGM, we again welcomed Mr Alistair Swan who gave a wonderful presentation of his Ugly Duckling Productions. A big thank you to each and every one of them for giving of their time and talents, and for this we are most grateful.

I will be busy in the next few months putting our syllabus together for next session and you will be kept up to date with everything in the Columba News.

In the meantime, on behalf of Dorothy and the committee, I would like to thank everyone for all their support and for coming along to The Guild at our fortnightly meetings.

Our first meeting next Session will be **Monday 3 October 2022 – a date for your diary.**

Maureen Fullerton

Secretary

Notes from the Kirk Session

Meetings of the Kirk Session, chaired by the Moderator, The Revd Dr Scott McKenna, were held on 13th September and on 5th October 2021. A summary of issues discussed at these meetings is given below:

Regarding the Presbytery Mission Plans, the Kirk Session agreed that their preferred option was for Ayr St Columba to unite with Ayr St Andrews and the Auld Kirk with an allocation of 1 Parish Minister and 1 Ordained Local Minister. As the Ministers of Ayr St Columba, Ayr St Andrews and



the Auld Kirk all have unrestricted tenure, this means that the plans are for a time beyond the current ministries.

The preferred option for Lochside Church is that it will become a Local Mission Church and be united with Ayr Newton Wallacetown.

The Minister has introduced a commendable initiative in sending out an email to all members with email addresses on a monthly basis.

Following the application for Lochside to be registered as a Food Service Provider by the Council, an inspection of the Kitchen had taken place. This had gone well and the Council were happy for us to open up at a time of our own choosing. The Clerk expressed thanks to John Stewart who had arranged the installation of the new Kitchen and to Michael Hall who explained the use of the Kitchen to the Council representative.

Muriel Wilson reported that it had been 20 months since the last WMO Committee meeting, but the committee had not been idle. A weekly prayer calendar had been produced, a collection at Christmas had raised over £1300 for Abbas Rest and a monthly walking group had started, with about a dozen people taking part.

Laraine Christian outlined plans for a street party on 5th June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It will be necessary to contact various authorities to obtain permission and she and Jane Hunter will speak to each of our neighbours in the street.

R A Bartholomew

Session Clerk

LIFE AND WORK **APRIL 2022**

Easter Art

Jackie Macadam talks to Christian artists about how the Resurrection story has been represented in art.

'I Knew That I Couldn't Not Follow Jesus'

Interview with artist Iain Campbell.

Marks of Mission: Loving Service

Continuing the series looking at the Marks of Mission, Thomas Baldwin speaks to the convener of CrossReach about how the Church responds to human need by loving service.

Faith in Action

An official monthly update for 2022 from the Faith Action Programme

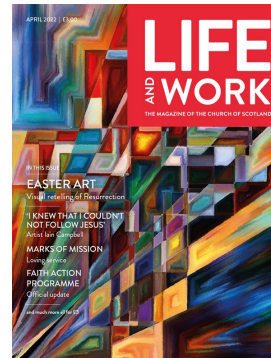
Who Guards the Guards?

In his final column as Moderator, Lord Wallace pays tribute to the work of chaplains

Forgiving Others

Continuing the series on the Lord's Prayer

Buy or subscribe, in print or digital, at www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe, or speak to your church's Life and Work promoter.



TAKING AN ECO LOOK by Andrew Muirhead

Should we start drilling more oil wells and exploiting more coal mines close to home?

In my view the answer is probably not, but I cannot really know. The problem here is that we need decent wise people making these decisions for us.

There has been much in the news about high prices for gas and electricity as a result of war. It is natural to feel distrustful of aggressive leaders and those who seek to dominate others by controlling resources. Perhaps we should rely more on local resources.

We have become used to cheap products and cheap energy based upon the ability to trade with most countries around the world. The world is now dividing up between different blocks once again and markets will be less efficient (that is more expensive).

Are fossil fuels so bad? After all, we need coal to make steel that is then made into wind turbine blades. Mining and oil companies now make huge profits, so surely they would be great investments for pension funds or any other fund, come to that?

Do you remember the upset during COP26 surrounding the Cambo oil and gas field west of Shetland? First Shell pulled out of the deal leaving Siccar Point Energy (a private equity company) with a 70% stake as the sole energy company involved. The Cambo oil field, could provide substantial additions to our energy supply. With rocketing energy costs, the arguments for improving energy security are strong. Here are some quotes from the BBC website:

Britain's industry oil and gas body (OGUK) operations director Katy Heidenreich said "Continued investment will be required to avoid increasing reliance on imported energy, protect security of supply and deliver a homegrown energy transition."

Liam Kerr, Scottish Conservative spokesman for net zero and energy said, "This announcement from Siccar Point Energy is extremely concerning for the oil and gas industry. Without investment in these projects, we risk becoming even more dependent on foreign imports rather than making use of Scotland's domestic reserves of oil and gas."

Gary Smith, general secretary of the GMB union, said "It's meant to be a

transition to a low carbon economy, not a surrender of the national interest. The cheerleaders for Cambo's shutdown aren't just throwing energy workers under the bus, but also our security of supply for the gas we will still need on the road to 2050."

There are few ordinary people who really understand the issues here. If the go ahead for new oil wells is given, it will be at least 10 years until we see large volumes of oil and gas supplied to the domestic market. By then, we should be avoiding most fossil fuels anyway. If we are looking at the longer term, perhaps investing in cleaner energy might be a better bet? The problem is that the oil industry looks out for itself and individual companies are not likely to see the big picture. They will look at profitability of a particular project.



Our government has made promises about net zero but there are many who feel that they are not serious. Recent events in Ukraine probably mean that our leaders may need to live up to their promises. In the meantime, we will have to live with very high energy costs. Longer term, we will need more than renewables and that probably means nuclear. After all, the sun does not shine and the wind blow sufficiently all the time. The Scottish Government is planning to close the one remaining nuclear plant in East Lothian.

What about us ordinary people? We have a duty to future generations and so should minimise our carbon footprint. In Scotland electricity is fairly clean unlike most other places. When electricity is generated from fossil fuel, around 40% is lost in transmission. Generating electricity from fossil fuel is inefficient and dirty. In the short and medium term, it may be most productive to insulate existing homes better and make it easier to install rooftop panels to generate electricity. We will probably all need to tolerate cooler homes and only heat the rooms we are using as well.

Andrew Muirhead

Please contact me if you would like to promote ecological matters in Ayr St Columba. Any contribution of any type will be appreciated. It need not be a big commitment.

Email a.g.muirhead@gmail.com Mobile 07526662044

Check out the Presbytery news

Ayr Presbytery meeting held on 1 March, 2022 with Troon Old Parish Church.

Discretionary Allowance Committee: Presbytery agreed the following reductions in Ministry and Mission contributions:

Ayr Newton Wallacetown: £4000 towards urgent repairs to the Manse

Prestwick South: £2,500 to assist reinstating the Church/ Community garden fence

Dailly: £500 to assist purchase of a video projector

Property Registers and Manse Conditions Schedules: Presbytery agreed that every congregation should now prepare a new Property Register and Manse Conditions Schedule with priority being given to the Manse Condition Schedule. Forms should be completed electronically but a signed paper copy should be presented for attestation this year as in previous years.

Probationers: Presbytery noted the current situation in respect of Probationers continued employment within the church regarding the current costing of calls for ministry. Presbytery agreed that suggestions be considered on how to continue to employ two Probationers within the Presbytery who are near to completing their probation.

Union of Presbyteries: Presbytery agreed the outline proposals for structure, meetings and finance for new Presbytery of the South West which will commence on 30 September, 2022.

George Park, Presbytery Elder

Pay the Church Library a visit

Just a wee reminder to everyone that our church library is open again for borrowing.

The bookcase is now situated in the Centenary Aisle so that if you feel like browsing and borrowing a book you can do so before or after Sunday worship. It's very easy to borrow a book - you just sign the book that's placed on the top shelf.

There really is an excellent selection of books on the shelves and some new additions too. During Lent we were reading one of Henri Nouwen's books in the discussion groups and we've bought a selection for the library.

PLEASE let Muriel Wilson know if there's a particular book you'd like and we'll see what we can do to get it.



Congregation and Parish Register



February – March

“I am with you always to the end of the age”

Matthew 28:20

Deaths:

Marie McCrae	Temple House, Care Home
Hettie Brotherston	12 Edenhall Road, Ayr
Jean Johnston	Dumfries (formerly Carwinshoch View)
Alex Ingram	Dundonald Care Home
Christine McIntyre	2, Seafield Drive, Ayr
Sheena Denham	17 Sandfield Road, Prestwick
Ramsay McKellar	125 Hillfoot Road, Ayr
Morag Bryden	Creggan Bahn Care Home, Ayr
Wilma MacLeod	Glenfairn Care Home, Ayr

Baptism:

“Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Matthew 19:14

Jude Raymond Gray McCaig

Who to contact

Minister:

Revd. Dr. SCOTT S. McKENNA.
scottsmckenna@aol.com
Tel:- 01292 226075

Associate Minister:

Revd. DAVID T. NESS, LTH,
17 Winston Avenue, Prestwick.
Tel:- 471625

Session Clerk:

ROBERT A. BARTHOLOMEW,
30 St Leonard's Road, Ayr. Tel:- 265794

Depute Session Clerk:

WALTER MUIR, 1 Corsehill Place, Ayr
Tel:- 282931

Treasurer: TOM CAIRNS,

15 Longhill Avenue, Ayr KA7 4DY
Tel:- 443271

Director of Music:

MATTHEW HYNES,
20A Academy Street, Ayr KA7 1HS
Tel:- 870449

Gift Aid Convener:

PETER G. MACDONALD,
23 Dongola Road, Ayr. Tel:- 264059

Free Will Offering Convener:

GRAEME SAVAGE,
27 Newark Crescent, Ayr. Tel:- 445347

Roll Keeper:

MARGARET DONCASTER
20 St Cuthbert's Road
Prestwick KA9 2EB
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Beadle and Church Officer:

JOHN STEWART,
6A Ronaldshaw Park, Ayr.
Tel:- 07847639528

Church Office: Carrick Park, Ayr.

Tel:- 269524 Office hours: 9am-noon, Mon,
Tues, Thurs and Fri

Church Charity Number: SC014338

Church Services (Midton Road):

10am - Family Service;
10am Sunday School,
11.15 - Morning Worship;
6.30pm - Evening Services
(Last Sunday of the month)
2pm: HOLY COMMUNION
(Last Wednesday of Month)

Church Services (Lochside):

10am Morning Worship

Webmaster: Iain Bartholomew,

email: website@ayrstcolumba.co.uk
www.ayrstcolumba.co.uk

What's on in the halls

MONDAY

5.30pm **RAINBOW BROWNIES**

Aynsley Bell, 07914 842118

7.30pm: **THE GUILD** (fortnightly):

Mrs D. Bone, 441651

7.30pm: **MEN'S ASSOCIATION**

(fortnightly):

Mr T. R. Swinn, 441896

WEDNESDAY

2pm: **HOLY COMMUNION** (4th Wed):

Church Office, 269524

2pm: **FITNESS with FRIENDS:**

Mrs Margaret Doncaster, 477381

6.15: **9th AYR BROWNIES,**

Emma Daniels, 07856245801

THURSDAY

10am-noon: **OASIS CAFE**

Mrs M. Doncaster 477381 Mrs P. Naylor
570020

2pm: **MEN'S ASSOCIATION GAMES:**

Mr A. Hawthorn 267688

6.30pm: **CUB SCOUTS:**

Mr Jereon Bolte 07511489755

7.30pm: **SENIOR CHOIR:**

Church Office 269524

FRIDAY

6pm: **BEAVER SCOUTS:**

Fiona Wilson, 290414

7.30pm: **SCOUTS:**

Jereon Bolte, 07511489755

SATURDAY

4pm: **MESSY CHURCH**

(last Saturday of the month):

Irene Bartholomew, 269524



Tuning in to our services

In recent months, St Columba Church has been providing services online:

Website: Full Service (see 'Worship Services' tab) Sermon (script and audio) at www.ayrstcolumba.co.uk

Facebook: Full Service

YouTube: Full Service on our YouTube Channel

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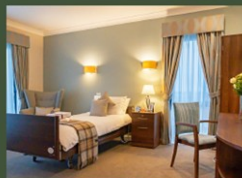
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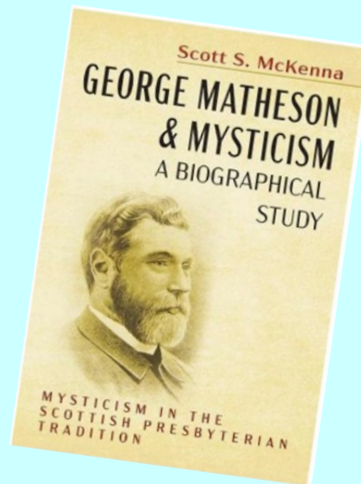
Scott goes into print

This book by our minister is a study on the life and mystical thought of George Matheson.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, Matheson was a Church of Scotland minister at Innellan on the west coast of Scotland. Matheson was of Highland descent and blind from the age of eighteen.

His spiritual journey included a distressing experience of atheism, the attraction of Hegelian idealism, and through the practice of silence and meditation on Scripture, he wrote of the Eternal through mystical union.

Matheson has much to offer those interested in the inner life, not least Christians in the Presbyterian tradition.



This moving and perceptive study of the writings of one of Scotland's spiritual giants locates George Matheson among the classic Christian mystics of the church catholic. It offers an original and timely picture of Presbyterian mysticism as exemplified by the blind seer of Innellan."

—Ian Bradley, University of St Andrews, Emeritus

In this scholarly and accessible work, Scott McKenna provides an engaging portrait of George Matheson, one of the finest preachers and spiritual writers to emerge in Victorian Scotland. By focusing on key mystical elements of Matheson's work, McKenna captures that blend of humane learning, theological breadth, and spiritual intensity that characterized much of Scottish church life of the period. Matheson belongs to a tradition that can still speak to us."

—David Fergusson, University of Cambridge