

Columba News



December
2020
No .237



Christmas 2019



What a difference a year makes, from what was a packed church throughout Advent, this year, sadly restrictions due to the pandemic will see limited numbers attending.

Waiting to welcome you

Sundays	Team	Leader
December 13	Team 10	Mr I. Campbell
December 20	Team 11	Mrs A. Cuthbert
December 27	Team 12	Mrs E. Kerr
January 3	Team 1	Dr H. Hunter
January 10	Team 2	Mr J. McConnachie
January 17	Team 3	Mrs M. Howie
January 24	Team 4	Mr H. Peters
January 31	Team 5	Mrs J. Murnin

From the manse

December 2020

Dear Friends,

Christmas

Government census, taxation, a journey of hardship and danger, the scramble for accommodation, shepherds working at night in their fields, choirs of angels, a cave and manger for a birth, wisemen (Magi) from the east bearing gifts, and the flight to Egypt evading the slaughter of Bethlehemite children. Not mentioned in the Gospels of Mark and John, the earliest and latest Gospels to be written, the Christmas or Birth narratives of Matthew and Luke are an overture, a dramatic opening, to this most sacred Scriptural symphony!

The German poet of the nineteenth century, Heinrich Heine, wrote eloquently of the wise men:

*'Dear children', they asked in every town
Three kings from the land of the sun,
'Which is the road to Bethlehem?'
But neither the old nor the young*

*Could tell, and the kings rode on;
Their guide was a star in the air
Of gold, which glittered ahead of them,
So clear, so clear.*

*The star stood still over Joseph's house.
They all of them stepped in;
The good ox lowed and the little child cried,
And the kings began to sing.*

In the time of Jesus, there were many stories of virgin or miraculous births. In Judaism, the birth of Isaac was accompanied by a visitation to Abraham; for her part, Sarah is very old, well beyond the age of conception. In Roman storytelling, Emperor Augustus was the divine son of the



god, Apollo; a virgin birth. In one account, the Roman Senate ordered the killing of young children because they feared the birth of a new Roman king. Alongside Augustus, divine heritage was attributed to Alexander the Great and the Roman General Scipio Africanus.

What matters most is the meaning in the metaphor. For me, the Birth narratives of Jesus might make more sense if they were placed at the end of the Gospels as an affirmation of all that has gone before. Placed at the end, they would more easily encapsulate the spirituality and ethical teaching of Jesus: His repeated emphasis that God is within us, born within us, and His cherishing of every human being. For me, the Christmas narrative is a meditative text. In silence, in the soul, amidst the politics and trials of everyday life, including the trauma of the virus and restrictions, we may hear the angels sing, begin anew our own journey – inner pilgrimage - towards Jesus and, in moments alone, realise that the Word of God, the essence of God, is born afresh in us.

Every blessing,

Scott

Revd Dr Scott S McKenna

At the time of writing, government restrictions on visiting homes may become more limited but, hopefully, that will ease. Going forward, if you would like a visit from me or our Associate Minister, David Ness, please don't hesitate to be in touch. We will follow guidelines and visit you when we are permitted to do so. Simply call the manse (01292 226075) or email me (scottsmckenna@aol.com). David's telephone number is 01292 471625. The purpose of the visit may be a pastoral matter or simply an opportunity for a chat.

The Guild



I cannot believe that we are nearing the end of 2020 after what has been to most of us a horrendous year and full of challenges that we did not want to experience.

Let us hope that 2021 allows us to pick up the threads when it is safe to do so and meet again in our usual surroundings in friendship and fellowship. We have all missed the joy of working together, worshipping together and sharing each other's joys and woes!

As we approach Christmas, let us all concentrate on what Christmas means to us and consider what it is all about, namely, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have missed our Annual Coffee Morning and the camaraderie prior to, and on that particular day. Let us all enjoy Christmas, albeit in a different way from usual, and hope that a new year brings us closer to being able, eventually, to meet again.

On behalf of the Committee I thank our members for their generosity in supporting the Guild financially and for their generous donations to St Columba Guild. This will enable us to send the annual fees to the Guild Office in Edinburgh to support the administration of our work at home and abroad. Not only will the annual contribution to Edinburgh be covered but they have been so generous, in lieu of a Coffee Morning, that we will be able to support our Guild Projects this year to some extent. Be assured the Committee will consider the situation carefully before allocating any funds. On their behalf I thank our members most sincerely for their generosity to, and in support of the Guild, in difficult times.

We wish our members, and the Congregation of St Columba, a very peaceful Christmas time and Good Health in 2021.

Dorothy Bone,
Convener

Notes from Session

Meetings of the Kirk Session, chaired by the Moderator, The Revd Dr Scott McKenna, were held on 11th February 2020 and on 22nd September 2020 (by Zoom). A summary of issues discussed at these meetings is given below:

11th February 2020

Persons Unwell in Church: Many who felt faint in church were wearing too many clothes. The advice was that outdoor clothing be removed in church and care should be taken when standing up.

Eco-Congregation: Dr Andrew Muirhead reported that a committee had been set up and the first event would take place on February 17. This would take the form of a Climate Conversation and members were encouraged to attend.

Children's Ministry: The Moderator referred to a paper outlining his

proposals for the 9.30am services. Under the proposals, children and their parents would attend the Family Service at 9.30am, with the children leaving at around 9.48am to attend St Columba Kids activities. Following the conclusion of the Service at around 10.08am, the parents of young children would share coffee together until they collected their children from St Columba Kids at 10.30am. The Kirk Session gave their approval for the Moderator's proposals.

Holy Communion: Following discussion it was agreed that grape juice only should be used at all services of Holy Communion.

Flower Deliveries: The Clerk had received a letter from Mrs Elizabeth Shaw in which she had indicated that she was stepping down from her role in organising the delivery of flowers to members following the Sunday services. The Clerk spoke warmly of the work Mrs Shaw had done over the years and thanked her for this.

Free Will Offerings: The Clerk had received a letter from Mr Alan Hawthorn indicating that he wished to step down from his role as FWO Convenor. The Clerk expressed the gratitude of Session for the excellent work Mr Hawthorn had done in the role for many years and members indicated their warm appreciation of this. Mr Graeme Savage had agreed to take over the position of FWO Convenor and members warmly approved his appointment.

Review and Planning Committee: The Clerk said that the R&P Committee had a continuing role in the management of activities at Lochside and he proposed that Mrs Helen Greig, convenor of the WMO Committee, which has responsibility to oversee outreach work at Lochside, should join the R&P Committee. This was approved.

22nd September 2020

Welcome: The Moderator welcomed members to the first meeting of the Kirk Session to take place on Zoom and to the first meeting since lockdown restrictions were imposed on March 19, 2020.

Services provided during lockdown: The Moderator informed Elders of the ways in which the Church had continued to provide worship services and to keep in touch with members at a time when significant restrictions were in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These included: Written Sermons, Audio Sermons, Private Prayer Sessions, Dial-a-Sermon, Written Wednesday Reflections, Audio Wednesday Reflections, Wednesday Services, Sunday Services, Recorded Services, Notices in Church, Intimations, two issues of the Church Magazine and now a Session meeting conducted via Zoom. The Moderator expressed his gratitude to all involved in

making the recordings, making special mention of Mrs Anne Mills, who had quickly developed impressive skills in editing. He also thanked Norman Reid and Irene Bartholomew for producing the recent issues of Columba News in-house.

Lochside: The Moderator referred to the fact that Presbytery was currently considering the future structure of churches north of the river.

Following lengthy discussion members agreed that Presbytery would be asked to consider Lochside Church as part of the ministry and mission of churches in north Ayr.

Review and Planning Committee: During lockdown it had been necessary for the R&P committee to take decisions on behalf of the Kirk Session. Among the actions of the Committee were:

- *The decision to close Church buildings at Midton Road and at Lochside for all worship services and all activities from March 19, 2020. An exception to this had been made for the Foodbank at Lochside, as it continued to provide an essential service to the local community.

- *The decision to ask the Church Secretary to work from home and thus keep the church community active and enable information to be distributed.

- *The decisions taken regarding the furloughing of the Director of Music and the church cleaners. The Clerk said that no member of staff had experienced a reduction in their income during the crisis.

- *The ongoing management of matters at Lochside.

- *The analysis and interpretation of the Church of Scotland guidance document, of which there had been seven versions, with the latest running to 64 pages.

- *The completion of a Buildings Checklist and a Covid-19 Risk Assessment, which were prerequisites for obtaining permission from Presbytery to re-open the Church. The Clerk expressed his gratitude to John Stewart for his work on this.

- *Decisions relating to the re-opening of the Church for private prayer and for the resumption of services.

- *Establishing the availability of members to form Duty Teams and devising appropriate instructions for Duty Team members. The Clerk expressed his gratitude to all the team leaders and duty team members for their work in enabling Services to be resumed.

- *Ensuring that requirements relating to social distancing, hygiene, face coverings and signage were implemented.

- *The decision to source equipment and training to allow services to be

recorded and made available via the website.

*The forming of a 'Recording Team'. The Clerk thanked Keith Fullerton, Brian McKinlay, Alastair Swan, Irene Bartholomew, John Stewart and Anne Mills for their contributions to the recordings. Without previous experience, the team had quickly become proficient in camera work and Anne Mills had added great editing skills to her ability behind the camera.

*Discussion of matters related to the Central Mission Focus Group and the plans for the future structure of churches in Ayr.

*The development of a Hygiene Protocol for the resumption of food provision at Lochside, when this eventually occurs. The Clerk thanked Mrs Laraine Christian for her help with this.

*The in-house production of two issues of Columba News. The Clerk thanked Norman Reid and Irene Bartholomew for their extensive work on this

Discussion of various financial matters.

The Clerk said that it should be noted that there had been a great deal of pressure on the members of the Review and Planning Committee over the past six months. He was extremely grateful to each member of the Committee for their invaluable work in helping to ensure that Ayr St Columba had remained strong, responsive and forward looking during this difficult time in its life.

Communication: In discussion, it was agreed that there was a need to be in better contact with members as the Covid-19 restrictions were likely to be in place for a considerable time. It was therefore agreed that we should seek the permission of all members to retain phone numbers and, where available, email addresses. This would facilitate communications and the distribution of information.

Memorial Plaques: The Clerk informed members that the brass plaques recording the service of our former Ministers had been received and would be dedicated at a time still to be decided. Mr Alastair Swan had prepared and framed the pictures of Revd Bill Christman and Revd Fraser Aitken, which were to be placed in the Carrick Park Vestibule.

R A Bartholomew

Session Clerk

Copy deadline for the New Year issue will be

Sunday, January 24

Copy should be emailed to editor.columbanews@gmail.com

New advertisers should also send their copy to the editor Norman Reid

Season's Greetings from the Hospitality Team

The Hospitality team would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy and Peaceful 2021. Hopefully each of us receive the best present of allTHE GIFT OF TIME with family and friends on Christmas Day.

Best wishes Jane

Men's Association

As time marches on and the disruption caused by the Corona Virus appears not to be abating, it is beginning to look rather like our next meeting may well be in September 2021. Watch this space!

Our 'young' membership is in the bracket of a vulnerable age-group and we are all missing the meetings, talks, fellowship and friendships that we normally have every other Monday as well as our Olympic Gamesmanship on a Thursday afternoon.

Some of our members have had health problems since we last met and it is our fervent wish that they all make a speedy recovery - our best wishes to you and your families.

With Christmas just around the corner and a season that will be different from those that have gone before we would like to extend our best wishes to all the Congregation and hope that families can somehow meet and celebrate together.

On a lighter side, for the Men's Association members, just remember that a Level 4 lock-down means the shops are shut!!!!

Merry Christmas.

John Ferguson, Secretary

Thanks from Robin Doncaster's family

Margaret, Craig, Stuart and family would like to thank everyone for the lovely flowers, messages and cards received. Thanks are also given for the many donations to the JustGiving page opened in Robin's memory in aid of Blood Cancer UK, the total of which is standing at over £1,000 at present. This will help greatly towards research into future treatments. We have been overwhelmed with the generosity of the donations given and the kindness extended to us and want everyone to know how much this has meant and is very much appreciated. Thank you!!

Ayr: St Columba Church Christmas and New Year

SUNDAY – 6th DECEMBER

Recorded Service available on the website
and Church Facebook page

Second Sunday of Advent

Restrictions permitting

SUNDAY – 13th DECEMBER

Services at 10am and 11.15am

Third Sunday of Advent

SUNDAY 20th DECEMBER

Services at 10am and 11.15am

Fourth Sunday of Advent

CHRISTMAS EVE

THURSDAY 24th DECEMBER

No Services

CHRISTMAS DAY

FRIDAY 25th DECEMBER

No Services

SUNDAY 27th DECEMBER

Services at 10am and 11.15am

“At the close of the year”

SUNDAY 3rd JANUARY 2021

Services at 10am and 11.15am

“At the Gate of the Year”

“O COME, LET US ADORE HIM, CHRIST THE LORD!”

Waste not - Want not!

We hope that all those ladies who knitted poppies for the 2018 Armistice Centenary display will be pleased to know that they were recycled to decorate the balcony and War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

They once again gave us the opportunity to mark the sacrifice of those who "gave their tomorrow for our today".

Many Poppy Scotland volunteers were unable to sell poppies this year but donations can still be made online at www.poppyscotland.org.uk

It gives the flower team great pleasure to arrange flowers in the chancel each week which are then distributed to members of the congregation. If you know of anyone who would appreciate some flowers, please let either the ministers or Irene know.

The Flower Team



Remember your Consent Form

When the October edition of Columba News was delivered by your elder, members of the congregation also received a Consent Form and other forms for Giving.

If you have not already returned the **Consent Form** we are appealing for you to do so as soon as possible.

The details you give us will be kept confidential and will only be used by the church and ministers to make it easier to make contact with **YOU** especially during this pandemic.

If you have mislaid the form please ask your elder for another copy or contact the office and one will be sent out.

Many thanks

ABBAS REST

Last year the WMO committee chose “The Night Before Christmas” for St Columba’s Christmas Appeal. Due to the generosity of the congregation we were able to give 80 shoe boxes, filled with goodies, to the charity to be distributed to families in need.

When the WMO committee agreed that Abbas Rest would be the 2020 Christmas Charity, the Scottish Trustees, Madge and Malcolm from Allo-way Church, Ian from Irvine and myself, were really delighted. We have been coordinating the charity’s work in one of the poorest areas of south Malawi since it was founded in 2000.

We work with the project manager, Chikondi, and the Malawi Trustees to improve the lives of those in need of extra help and support. AND recently we’ve been holding regular zoom meetings which Chikondi is able to attend, all the way from Malawi! Modern technology is marvellous!

Most of Abbas’ income originates from regular donations from generous folk, with occasional fund raising events, which of course have not been possible this year.

Also, we’ve been very grateful to Iain McFadzean and Fiona Boyd who have helped boost our funds through Gift Aid.

What is wonderful about our “wee” charity is that there are no administrative overheads- all our income goes directly to support Abbas’ work in the villages in south Malawi.

On the back page of Columba News you will see details of the various projects with which Abbas is involved and you can find out more by looking at our website- abbasrest.org

We hope you will feel inspired to help our important work to continue!

Every penny counts!

Thank you!

Muriel Wilson

From the Satellite Office

From the Satellite Office window I have been watching autumn giving way to winter. Storm Aiden has stripped the last remaining leaves from the trees and there is a definite chill in the air.

It is almost 40 weeks since the door of the main office was closed. We have had our ups and downs. Opening for private prayer, working hard to

make the Sanctuary safe for worship for our limited number of 50 per service, and now back to square one! However, the doors will open again just as soon as possible. The booking system for places at Worship generally worked very well, with requests by email, text, messenger and phone. I really enjoyed chatting to everyone who called.

The online Worship and the Facebook pages continue to see a healthy level of engagement and I know lots of you are now able to watch the recorded Service. I have a small group of folks to whom I send out the sermon and intimations as they are unable to access them on social media and the cards and messages they send are also very much appreciated.

Our Columba News in October was well received and once more I am deeply indebted to elders who not only delivered their own districts but willingly covered for the elders unable to make deliveries – each one a star.

The office will be a very different place this Christmas without the frantic rush to make deadlines for the thousands of orders of service we normally print. Sometimes calm is good, but we will all miss the buzz and the good cheer; the mince pies and mulled wine; the singing of carols and the wonder and mystery of the midnight service. Christmas will be different, but it will not be cancelled. Pandemic permitting there will be services back in the Sanctuary and online – so keep watching the intimations.

I have ordered all my cards and there is no excuse this year not to get them written in time. One of our members told me this past week (remember I am writing this in mid-November) - that she has already sent her overseas cards – I was so impressed!

I have baked my Christmas cake but there is much still to be done. I wonder how many we will have around the table this Christmas – I do hope that you will be able to be with your families, and make memories we will never forget. God bless each and every one and very best wishes for Christmas 2020 from the Satellite Office!

Irene

Church Book group

On October 26, the book group held its first meeting by Zoom. As an experiment, each of us had read a different book by Deborah Moggach and it proved to be a very successful format which we will definitely repeat. We meet again on December 14 when we will be discussing *Driving over Lemons* by Chris Stewart. We are truly grateful to Andrew Muirhead for facilitating this.

Kids were back but gone again

St Columba's Kids started back at the start of September with a series of St Columba's Kids Online videos until we were eventually able to meet again in person after the October holidays. For the past several weeks, despite all the procedures and rules in place to keep us safe, it has been wonderful to be able to share in fellowship again together and learn about our faith.

This year rather than following a curriculum we have been following along with the stories in the lectionary for each week so that there is a link between what is going on in the services and in St Columba's Kids. We have still been able to create crafts, explore the story, pray, do challenges, play some individual games, look at memory verses and share our news despite the restrictions in place. (We are desperately missing the songs though!)

Unfortunately, as I write this, we prepare to go into level 4 tomorrow, so we won't be meeting in person again for a few weeks, however we won't let this stop us! After a one week break to



work out how to adapt, St Columba's Kids will return with an interactive virtual meeting using video conferencing with all safeguards in place.

We have begun planning how we can still do some form of telling of the Nativity and aim to try and share this with you all.

We ask as you read this that you pray for all our families, the team at St Columba's Kids, the teachers in our children's schools, our Junior leaders and for those who are not currently able to join us due to members of their household shielding.

If you have any questions about St Columba's Kids or would like to find out more or would like to arrange for your child to join us as we begin to meet online or once we are back in person then please contact me on stuartmckinlay@icloud.com

Stuart McKinlay
Sunday School Co-Ordinator



Worship Mission and Outreach

Last year our congregation filled over 80 boxes for the local charity The Night Before Christmas.

This year our committee proposes that we support an overseas charity - Abba's Rest in Malawi.

There is more information about the charity elsewhere in the magazine. With your copy you will have received an envelope, and you are invited, if you so wish, to return this with your donation to the church.

We had hoped to have a Christingle service at Midton Road on December 23 but sadly we have had to cancel due to the regulations.

*Helen Greig WMO
convenor*



Tribute to Robin Doncaster elder of **Ayr St Columba**

We have come here today to give thanks to God and to celebrate Robin's life. We all have our special memories of him. The times we were in his company - the laughs we had – the conversations – the things we did together, and when we think of these, our own special personal memories, we realise just what a lovely man Robin was – what a great character he was – what he meant to us – and just how much our knowing him enriched our lives – and he truly did that.

He was born in Seafeld Maternity Hospital. His mum and dad were Roberta and Bert. He was actually named Robert but in order to avoid confusion, he became known as Robin. He had one brother William who sadly died in infancy, and of course a sister Helen. They were a close family and Robin remained close to Helen and her family all his life. He was brought up in Irvine and attended Irvine Royal Academy. He left school at 15 to begin an apprenticeship as a Monumental Letter Cutter. He finished his apprenticeship and was with the company for another five years. You know, he restored the lettering on the gravestone of one of Robert Burns close friends – Davie Sillars. I love the story of when he was courting Margaret, he would take her to cemeteries, show her grave-stones and said, "I did that one." How is that for romance and winning the heart of an 18-year-old young girl?

When he was 25, he changed profession and became a salesman for what was then known as McVitie and Price – they eventually became United Biscuits., He naturally enough was promoted and began looking after the accounts of the big supermarkets , Wm Low, Safeway, Prestos., Food Giant – these are all names from the past, as well as Tesco and ones we are all familiar with now. You know his biggest sale was 100 cases of Jaffa Cakes to Tesco's in Ayr. The folk in Ayr who shop at Tesco must love Jaffa Cakes. He was an excellent salesman and known for his splendid displays of biscuits in the various shops. Countless stories abound of his exploits in the biscuit trade and he was extremely popular with all his customers and with everyone he met. I love the story when United Biscuits brought out the biscuit TAXI. They gave Robin a vintage car with TAXI written on the side when he was promoting this new biscuit. One day he took his boys to the school in this ancient car, which naturally aroused the interest of their fellow pupils. As Craig and Stuart alighted, Robin produced a box of Taxi biscuits, threw them into the playground , thus pro-

ducing a massive scramble. He took early retirement from United Biscuits and was asked to join Ianotti's Cash and Carry where he worked for 3 days a week. He finally retired in 2014.

He met Margaret through Prestwick Amateur Opera Society. I am led to believe that they eyed each other up during rehearsals and then eventually Robin summoned up the courage to ask her out. Their first date, was not to a cemetery to admire his handiwork, but for a walk – they walked from Prestwick to Ayr. He put on new shoes for this auspicious occasion and they just about destroyed his feet. Love blossomed – they were engaged six months later and married in Castlehill Church on 10th August 1968. It would be true to say that they were utterly devoted to each other. Who do you think was the boss?

They set up home in Portland St., Troon - have had various dwellings over the years ending up in their present home in 1992. In the fullness of time the family came along. Sadly a son George was stillborn which was a devastating blow to both Robin and Margaret. But in 1971 Craig was born, to be followed three years later by Stuart. When they married Kirsty and Tracy respectively, they produced the grandchildren Hollie and Emily, Adam and Abbie. Robin's family was complete and he was utterly devoted to them all. He truly was a fantastic husband, father, and grandpa. There was nothing he would not do for them. He loved them all to the uttermost and at his happiest when they were around. He loved playing golf with the boys, football and flying kites with them, as well as long walks with the family. First and foremost Robin was a family man. He lived for them.

He wasn't a bad cook either. He loved to try all sorts of things and was an avid watcher of cookery programs on TV. He was the chief soup maker in the household – and the whole family benefitted from and eagerly devoured his efforts with great relish.

His main interest in life was singing. He possessed a rich baritone voice and was an enthusiastic member of the Ayrshire Philharmonic Operatic Society playing many roles in their various productions. His favourite part was Gabriel Von Eisenstein in Die Fledermaus. APOS played a huge part in in both Robin and Margaret's lives, in fact they were members for over 50 years. and it was there that they met people who were to become their best and closest friends. Robin at one time was President and Front of House Manager. He was also a member of the Dreghorn Musical Society and indeed served as their Treasurer for a number of years. That organisation also meant a great deal to him. He also sang at Burns Suppers, Old Folk Homes etc. He loved excursions to see Musicals.

The church meant a lot to him. He loved his church and his Lord. He was an enthusiastic member of our church choir. I have vivid memories of him in his purple gown and he was seldom absent from the choir pews. During lockdown he greatly missed his many friends in the church and the fellowship of the church family.

He was an elder, being ordained in Troon Old Parish Church and then serving here in St Columba. He was an extremely diligent elder, always giving of his best.

When a boy he joined the Boys' Brigade rising up through the ranks to become an Officer as well as gaining his Queens Badge. He was also a fervent supporter of Irvine Meadow Football Club.

He loved his holidays, especially with his friends. They visited Canada, Portugal, Menorca, Crete and France to mention but a few. He was involved in some amusing incidents, which are too numerous to recount here.

Let me mention two. On a Baltic cruise they visited St Petersburg. Robin managed to narrowly escape detention by the KGB when in a market, he clumsily almost demolished a stall of Russian Dolls. In Portugal, on a remote hillside, in a rented villa, he and his friends were sunning themselves by the pool when a car approached and two quite elderly English ladies got out and entered into conversation with them. Robin enquired, "Are you lost?" They turned out to be two Jehovah's Witnesses. Maybe they thought Robin was "lost" and needed salvation.

Robin was a truly lovely man – a gentleman through and through. As you know he did not always enjoy good health, but he never let it get him down. He was always positive, accepting his lot in a way that was an example to us all. He never complained and was always cheerful. He would speak to anyone and folk felt at ease in his company. He loved telling jokes and stories – possessed a great, almost mischievous, sense of humour. Life was never dull in his company. He would do anything to help you. He was genuine – no airs and graces. He had many friends and if it were not for the restrictions imposed because of Covid this church this afternoon would be bursting at the seams.

Margaret has asked me to name two couples to whom she and Robin were exceptionally close and who meant so much to them. They are Bob and Irene and David and Helen. They have been dear friends for many a long year.

I said at the beginning that when we think of Robin and recall our own special memories of him, we realise just how much he enriched our lives and the lives of everyone who knew him and he truly did that. Another

couple who along with their family will most certainly be thinking of us at this time is Margaret's brother Jack and his wife Anne. They live in Canada and sadly cannot be with us this afternoon.

When I visited Robin just a few days before he passed away, he said he knew where he was going. In my mind, and I am sure, in the minds of us all, there is no doubt about that. He always tried his best to live the Christian life and was a faithful servant of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The words of Jesus surely apply to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant"

Revd David Ness

AYR PRESBYTERY UPDATE

The Business and Nomination Committee representing Ayr Presbytery met on line by zoom on September 1, 2020 and agreed the following:

Discretionary Allowance Committee: Applications for consideration should be sent to the Convenor (Rev Gerald Jones) by 31 October 2020. Priority will be given to mission related projects with prospective churches first examining their unrestricted funds prior to making an application.

Lugar Parish Church: Presbytery agreed to approve an application from Lugar Parish Church to create a Heritage Information Centre and Community Hub within the church building through the provision of disable access, toilets, cafe' and exhibition space. The cost is approx £115,790 inclusive of vat.

Pioneer Farming Minister: Presbytery agreed to continue the Pioneer Farming Minister post using 50% FTE MDS post supplemented by 50% funding from the 5% Presbytery Discretionary Fund.

Architectural Quinquennial Visitation: Presbytery noted that the above visitations for this year can recommence for the nine churches involved including Ayr St Columba.

Ochiltree and Stair Parish Churches Manse: Presbytery approved the application from the above churches to carry out a major refurbishment of the manse to eradicate a significant dampness issue, the property presently being vacant and uninhabitable in the current state. The total cost will be approx £120,000.

Barony Campus, Cumnock: Presbytery agreed to apply to the Central

Church for agreement to appoint a Mission Development post to the Barony Campus, Cumnock.

20 October 2020

Ayr Presbytery met online by zoom on October 20, 2020 and agreed the following:

Presbytery Moderator 2021-22: Presbytery agreed that the present Moderator, the Rev David Prentice-Hyers serve for a second year as Moderator due to the impact of Covid-19.

Monkton and Prestwick North Parish Church: The Rev Morag Crossan who was Locum at Monkton and Prestwick North Parish Church has been appointed as Minister Elect of Canonbie and Liddlesdale.

Re-opening of Churches and Halls - Unoccupied Buildings: Presbytery reminded congregations that in order to avoid triggering an unoccupancy condition, relating to insurance, it is necessary to conduct a 'service' or engage in an alternative use of the premises every 45 days. This equally applies to Halls, particularly where Church Hall accommodation is a separate building, potentially on a separate site. Congregations are reminded that in order to reopen any building, Church or Hall, it is necessary to submit to Presbytery a copy of duly completed Buildings Checklists and Covid-19 Assessments, remembering that separate hall accommodation requires a separate return of the appropriate documentation.

Lochside: Presbytery noted the request by Ayr St Columba to include the area of Lochside in the Presbytery planning process for churches in North Ayr, reminding parties that it is in the gift of the Presbytery to consider such a request as planning progresses.

Permission to Call: Presbytery agreed to suspend any new permission to call and any renewals of call for Parish Ministers until May 2021.

George Park

Presbytery Elder



Fireside Puzzles for Christmas

You have 7 identical coins. How can they be placed so that you have 5 rows with 3 coins in each row ?



2. A man is captured and held prisoner in a room. There is a circular hole in the roof which allows him to see outside, but it is far too small to squeeze through. There are two doors which he could use to escape, but outside one is a hungry lion which has not eaten all day and the other door leads into a glass tunnel which magnifies the sun's rays so much it could be fatal to even open the door. How does the man escape ?

3. Forty students are standing in a single row such that after the first boy, there is one girl. After the second boy, there are two girls. After the third boy, there are three girls and so on. How many girls will be in the second half of the row?

Solutions to these puzzles appear on page 25

TAKING AN ECO LOOK by Andrew Muirhead

Sustainable transport, a personal perspective

Our lifestyle in the UK has a large carbon footprint. Most of our emissions are down to personal choices and we can therefore do something to preserve nature for our descendants. Household energy, food, travel and purchase of goods all contribute to our carbon footprints. From a personal perspective, I have been able to make reductions in most areas but travel has proved more difficult than the other categories.

I am more reliant on a car than I care to admit. The Scottish Government expects us to be carbon neutral by 2045. No allowance for emissions from overland transport is built into their calculations. This means that all motor and rail transport will have to be powered by electricity (or perhaps hydrogen fuel cells) by 2045. The EU has required a large drop in the mean emissions from cars sold in the area from April 2021. This new regulation

is behind much of the electric car advertising at present. Should we all go out and buy an electric car to replace our fossil fuel cars in the near future? Will going electric reduce emissions and pollution in general?

I admit I am somewhat of a gadget man. I love clever new machines and am therefore susceptible to advertisers selling shiny new toys. Electric cars take time to recharge and there is concern that a vehicle could run out of power and leave the driver stranded. Batteries have been enlarged in cars over the last few years and this is less of a concern. The electric grid has been nearly decarbonised in Scotland, so charging is nearly carbon neutral in this area. We all know that rechargeable lithium batteries degrade over time. Car batteries are mostly guaranteed for 8 years but may need to be replaced soon after that. Typically, the battery is 30% of the new car cost in electric vehicles. In practice this means that the life span of an electric car manufactured today may be only 8-10 years. This makes me hesitate, particularly as the price is higher than a fossil fuel car.

The reliability of cars has been recently researched by Which? Magazine. Between December 2019 and February 2020, 47,013 owners of 55,833 cars have reported their experiences. Their article was published on 14/8/2020. The most reliable cars by fuel type may surprise you! Petrol hybrid cars were the most reliable and plug in petrol hybrids the least reliable in 2019. In between come, petrol, diesel and electric in that order. When the reliability by price was examined, the least reliable were the most expensive luxury brands! Jaguar, Land Rover and Tesla did particularly poorly.

On 8th June 2020, the South China Morning Post printed an article. “A ‘million mile’ battery from China could power your electric car”. They reported an interview with Zeng Yuqun, chairman of Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd (CATL). He said that his company could now provide much longer lasting batteries and he is waiting for his first order of the new technology. CATL has recently signed a 2-year deal with Tesla motors. It is likely that the first cars that will be fitted with a “million mile battery” will be Tesla series 3 cars assembled in Shanghai. These batteries are 10% more expensive than standard lithium batteries and are likely to last at least 16 years against 8 years for a standard lithium battery. This company supplies batteries to German manufacturers and is planning manufacturing



Model 3 Tesla electric car has a poor record for reliability

plants in Europe but not the USA yet.

It seems that current electric cars are not very reliable and are not durable. They are also expensive. In future, these faults might be rectified and new benefits added to the attraction of an electric vehicle.

At present, the energy supplied by the electric grid is around one third of the energy supplied by the gas grid. As we decarbonise, household heating and cooking is bound to move to electric suppliers. When added to electrification of transport, the demand for electric power could be enormous. Green energy is provided when available and not necessarily at times of peak demand, such as 4pm to 7 pm. A method of storing electricity for peak demand will be required. According to its website, Ovo energy has started a trial in collaboration with the UK Government, “The vehicle to grid” trial. This uses the Kaluza V2G car charger in private driveways. The car is plugged in and a smartphone app controls charging. When demand on the grid is high, the car battery discharges to assist (the car owner is paid for this power). When demand is low, the battery charges up. This scheme is brilliant because it stores renewable electricity without building new infrastructure.

There is of course a problem. The life-span of the car battery will be shortened. This problem should be overcome by the million mile battery.



Brompton folding bike. Bikes are often better than motor transport in cities

What is the message here? If we are environmentally careful, it is of course important to walk, cycle and use public transport where feasible. If you live in a big city and are young, you can probably manage with no more than occasional use of a car club vehicle. If you live in the country or a small town, a car may be unavoidable for many of us. In the future, an electric car will be a reasonable investment. For now, I would want a reliable and durable option. My choice is a petrol hybrid car. If money is tight, a small petrol car from a reliable brand is a reasonable second best.

Andrew Muirhead

Volunteer, Living Lighter project. This project is a Scottish Government funded project designed to gain support for reducing emissions.

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Tues, Thurs and Fri

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9.30am - Family Service;
10am Sunday School,
11.15 - Morning Worship;
6.30pm - Evening Services
(Last Sunday of the 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

7.30pm: **LADIES FELLOWSHIP** (fortnightly):

Linda Sharp, 286951

WEDNESDAY

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

Church Office, 269524

2pm: **FITNESS with FRIENDS:**

Mrs Margaret Doncaster, 477381

5.45pm: **9th AYR BROWNIES,**

Mrs E. MacDonald, 445529

7.30pm: **GIRL GUIDES:**

Susan Christie, 442374

7.30pm: **9th AYR RANGER GUIDES**

(every second Wednesday):

Susan Christie, 442374

THURSDAY

10.30am: **OASIS CAFE:** Mrs Rene Kidd

10.20am: **LADIES BADMINTON:**

Mrs Elizabeth MacDonald 445529

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

Mr R. Park, 268788

6.30pm: **CUB SCOUTS:**

Mr D. Hope, 263376

7.30pm: **SENIOR CHOIR:**

Church Office 269524

FRIDAY

6pm: **BEAVER SCOUTS:**

Fiona Wilson, 290414

7.30pm: **SCOUTS:**

Jereon Bolte, 07511489755

SATURDAY

4pm: **MESSY CH4URCH**

(last Saturday of the month):

Irene Bartholomew, 269524

Church Charity Number: SC014338

Congregation and Parish Register

October - November

*And with the morn those angel faces smile,
which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!*



Robin Doncaster	St Cuthbert's Road, Prestwick
Elizabeth (Betty) Brown	St Leonard's Road, Ayr
Doreen Ward	Edinburgh
Ken MacCallum	Creggan Bahn
Jean Mitchell	Creggan Bahn

Solution to Fireside Puzzles

The coins are arranged as shown, which gives 1 horizontal row of 3, 2 vertical rows of 3 and 2 diagonal rows of 3.

```

O   O
O O O
O   O
    
```

2. He waits until it is night and goes out into the glass tunnel, which is cool as there is no sun at night.

3 The arrangement of boys and girls is
 $B + G + B + 2G + B + 3G + B + 4G + B + 5G$ half-way $B + 6G + B + 7G + B + 5G = 40$
 Students.
 So number of girls in the second half of the row is $6 + 7 + 5 = 18$.

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