

Columba News



April
2021
No. 239



Easter at St Columba



Holy
Week
services
were
screened
through-
out the
week

Waiting to welcome you

Sundays	Team	Leader
May 2	Team 6	Mr M. Whiteford
May 9	Team 7	Mr N. Reid
May 16	Team 8	Mrs L. Sharp
May 23	Team 9	Mr D. Campbell
May 30	Team 10	Mr I Campbell
June 6	Team 11	Mrs A. Cuthbert
June 13	Team 12	Ms K. Lee
June 20	Team 1	Dr. H. Hunter
June 27	Team 2	Mr J. McConnachie
July 4	Team 3	Mrs M. Howie
July 11	Team 4	Mr I. McFadzean

From the manse

April 2021

Dear Friends,

Easter is behind us, while Ascension and Pentecost are upon us. At the time of writing, the vaccines are having a very considerable impact and the infection rate of the virus is falling rapidly: long may that continue.

I am acutely aware that this recent extended lockdown has been much more difficult to live through than the first one ever was. It is no surprise that tensions across the country are rising and that there are outbreaks of civil unrest; mental health too is under strain. Many of us in this church community have a lot on our plates; a great many burdens of love to carry. Be assured of my support, concern and prayers. On a wider note, by the time you read this, in Scotland we will have a newly-elected government and a new parliament. Let us pray for statecraft: integrity, honesty, justice and compassion.



There are many sources of spirituality, medicine for the soul, that we can access. Delving more deeply into our Scriptures has always been at the heart of Christianity and, not least, in our Reformed and Presbyterian tradition. In the Jewish tradition, rabbis speak of 'digging for God'. Weekly worship (in church or online) is another medical prescription that, at best, leads us gently into the Divine. Our inner journey is enhanced by our own spiritual reading, meditation and contemplation.

Am I becoming 'Victor Meldrew' or is it the case that the world seems to be an increasingly dysfunctional place? Too often I hear myself say, 'I don't believe it!'

The Church of Scotland is also enduring financial and human resource shortages which it seems unable to manage effectively: these are challenging times. I do find it a comfort to draw upon the experiences and rich wisdom of the saints and mystics. The anchorite, Mother Julian of Norwich, lived through the Hundred Years' War, the Black Death (bubonic plague), and the Peasants' revolt. It is estimated that between 25% and 50% of the population died of the plague. In the midst of these immense and unimaginable trials, Mother Julian wrote movingly of God's Presence and overwhelming love. She wrote:

During our lives here on earth, we experience a wondrous mixture of well and woe. We hold inside us both the glory of the Risen Christ and the misery of the Fallen Adam. Christ protects us in our dying and, through his gracious touch, uplifts us and reassures us that **all will be well** ... We are so fragmented, afflicted in our feelings in so many ways, that we hardly know where to turn for comfort. The various pains and transgressions of this life fill our hearts with sorrow and cloud the eyes of our souls.

Yet, again and again, she affirmed, 'All will be well'. In her cell, she felt God's Presence and a true sense of being held by God. She trusted that, through life and death, God loves us, encircles us, and will be our Companion and Guardian forever. It is like trusting our favourite chair to support us; or the comfort we feel when hearing the voice of a good and faithful friend; or the joy we feel in our hearts on seeing the glorious orange/red sun slowly set in the evening sky. Blessings and peace to you.

Scott

Rev'd Dr Scott S McKenna

SUNDAY SERVICES the Kirk Session is pleased to intimate the return to public Worship Services at Ayr St Columba. There will be services at **10am and 11.15am**, these services will last for approximately 30 minutes.

BOOKING It is **essential** that **everyone**, members and non-members, wishing to attend Church registers a place by phoning the secretary, Irene, 01292 265794 on **Tuesday** or **Thursday** morning between 9.30am and 12 noon; or email on irene@ayrstcolumba.co.uk. All email messages received will be acknowledged. **PLEASE NOTE** If you are unable to secure a place for the forthcoming Sunday, we will guarantee you a place on the following Sunday.

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.

Church is still blooming

Throughout the pandemic the sanctuary has been decorated with fresh flowers, and the flower team is very grateful for all your support. Now that we are able to resume limited services a 2021 calendar is in place. If you would like to make a donation please contact Anne Drennan with your preferred date and she will add your name to the calendar.

Telephone 01292 441493 or email drennananne@hotmail.com

Any donation should be put in an envelope with your name and marked "flower fund" and either handed in to the church on any Sunday or posted to the office.

Please make any cheque payable to "Ayr St Columba Flower Fund".

Polling comes to Ayr St Columba

South Ayrshire Council have been granted permission to use the Midton Road hall and Struthers Room as a polling station in the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary elections on Thursday, May 6.

The council will undertake to do a full deep clean of the halls, corridor and toilets before setting up for the event.

After the election the same procedure of cleaning will take place.

The church was asked for the use of our premises since the traditional polling station at Ayr Grammar has now closed due to relocation.

Chancel floor is looking smart

With the new layout in the church chancel introduced early last year the floor required to be re-stained due to wear and tear over the years.

With the heavy pews moved out of the way John Ferguson our Men's Club secretary got to work on his hands and knees to stain the wooden floorboards.

Our Director of Music, Matthew, has said the new chancel layout has enhanced the acoustics for the choir and organ.

Boots are made for walking

During recent months, several of us have been walking, in pairs, and have enjoyed it so much that the Worship Mission and Outreach Committee have decided to start a St Columba walking group.

At the time of writing it seems that up to 15 people can exercise together outdoors, but if that should change we can split into smaller, socially distanced groups.

We see this as something that will evolve according to the preferences - and ability- of walkers, but this is our initial plan:

The group will meet at a predetermined point at 10.30 on the last Friday in the month. We will begin with fairly easy local walks, with options for individuals to shorten or extend as they choose. It will be an informal group with no need to book or send apologies.

Walkers will be responsible for their own safety but we will provide phone numbers in case of mishaps, and will carry a first aid kit.

The first three walks are as follows:

Friday, April 30- a circular walk around Prestwick golf club from the soft play car park on Prestwick sea front. This walk is 3.5 miles long on flat, mainly hard surfaces.

Friday, May 28- a circular walk through Belleisle from Ayr India car park on Ayr seafront. This walk is 3 miles long on flat, mainly hard surfaces.

Friday, June 25- a linear walk on the Ayrshire coastal path from Dunure harbour. This walk is 3 miles in total and is best described as 'undulating' with one fairly steep section.

All walks will begin at 10.30 prompt at the stated starting point.

We will probably stop for coffee breaks, so bring a flask. We are friendly folk so don't be afraid to come alone - everyone is more than welcome!

Future walks will be advertised via the church magazine, and on the website.

Helen Greig
Convenor, WMO committee



Tribute to Johnnie Kean ordained elder of Ayr St Columba

Johnnie was born in Ayr to Minnie and John Kean. He was the youngest of three. Helen and Dorothy were his sisters and he was close to them and their families throughout his life. Kay told me that Helen was thrilled with her baby brother, but Dorothy thought he was nothing but a nuisance – hated baby sitting him and he was always playing pranks on both sisters. I don't think Dorothy was amused by his antics. But truthfully they did love each other, especially when they got older. He used visit Dorothy in London. Sadly Dorothy died recently.

Johnnie was educated at Ayr Grammar and Carrick Academy. After schooling he was expected to take on the family business, James T Kean who were well known jewellers in Ayr. He did this and achieved great success, ably helped of course by Kay. But before this he lived in Bentfield Avenue and I know had many happy childhood memories of that time especially playing with all the boys in the Seafield area. According to all accounts they had a whale of a time getting into all sorts of scrapes and being chased by angry parents. One of these boys was Alan McHarg – who was to become a life long friend. They were best men to each other at their weddings. – I would have loved to have heard their Best Man speeches. Alan and Lynne had many wonderful holidays with Johnnie and Kay over the years.

Alan and Johnnie had a great passion for sports cars and owned many. I believe they were often in trouble for speeding. Kay claimed Johnnie had a mid-life crisis when he bought a red Mustang. The boys loved it but Kay hated the attention it drew due to the noise made by its powerful engine. When his 60th birthday came along Kay and Drew Sloan organized a surprise gift for him – a trip to the Monaco Grand Prix. He loved every minute of it – the noise the excitement and of course, being in Monaco.

Johnnie did have many interests - was a very good canoeist and competed all over the country. He just missed out on trials for the Olympics but enjoyed training with Alistair and Marion Wilson, who took part in several Olympics. His business interests somewhat curtailed his ability to train. He also enjoyed shooting – both Game and Clay and I believe had quite a few unmentionable incidents with his brother-in-law Robin. In his latter years Curling became an enjoyable pastime for him. He joined St Columba Church Curling Club, the 40 Club – they didn't take the game too seriously - and Ayr Rotary Curling Club. He loved the fun and camaraderie of the game. Kay and Johnnie especially enjoyed their weekends

away teaching others to curl and joining in the fun and friendship that Curling brings.

Johnnie was always interested in Local Politics and looking after this old town of Ayr. He became one of the youngest councillors serving in Ayr Burgh. He resigned when Strathclyde took over.

He loved his church and his Lord and was honoured when Rev Bill Christman asked him to become an elder. He was a faithful, diligent and extremely popular elder. He took the role of elder seriously and always gave his best in fulfilling his duties. He did this until illness took over. I know he will be very sadly missed in St Columba Church.

I love the story of how Kay and he got together. In the 60's there was not a lot to do on a Sunday evening. Johnnie knew some of the girls who attended the Youth Fellowship – at this stage he was too old to be a member himself. But he did run some of them to the Airport in his sports car to get a coffee. He had spotted Kay and no doubt was interested in getting to know her – but she didn't go in his sports car – her mum and dad might not have approved!! But his moment came when she was with her family at the old Marine Court Hotel. He walked her home. Two years later at his cousin's wedding he summoned up the courage to propose. She was only 19 and not ready to settle. So she said "No". Johnnie actually had the ring in his pocket. However persistence won the day and 2 years later they got engaged in front of her friends – it was her 21st birthday. They were married in 1969 in what was then Trinity Church – went on honeymoon in Johnnie's sports car and toured Europe. They moved into a new Ecrepont bungalow in Willow Park. Kay gave up her job and joined the family business where she learned about jewellery, how to dress a window, and of course sell. Her secretarial skills were also put to good use. You know, not many couples have worked together through thick and thin throughout their marriage, but they did, in an almost exemplary way.

In the fullness of time Jason and Richard arrived on the scene – Johnnie was immensely proud of them and their achievements and when they married Marie and Lisa, and Josh, Bruce and Clark, the grandchildren, arrived, Johnnie's family was complete. He loved them all to the uttermost – would do anything for his family and at this happiest when they were all around and they to be with loved him. Josh is a first class tennis player and Johnnie would support him in every way attending many of his tournaments. Bruce and Johnnie used to talk about the Planets, and on the day Johnnie died, young Clark did a picture for him. Johnnie had a wonderful relationship with his family. In 1977, the family moved to Broomfield Rd to take in Johnnie's mum who was not expected to live too long – she actually lasted 20 years. They also helped out with Kay's dad who had can-

cer. He and Kay were a remarkable couple – they were that in a whole lot of other ways as well. As you know that after the Jewellers business, they became involved in running the Nursing Home next door – they did that for 20 years. He also loved his dogs and had 4 rescue ones.

They didn't have many holidays – partly as a result of his business. They did enjoy a few days from time to time in the Lake District, and of course gourmet pub lunches. Their first proper holiday was on their 30th Wedding Anniversary – which was a cruise in the Mediterranean.

Johnnie was a founder member of Kyle Round Table – Kay was in the Lady's Circle, so the house in Broomfield was the ideal party place. Johnnie was in his element entertaining members and friends. Many memorable parties, with a lot of dressing up, and fund raising events were hosted. Kay was brilliant, hosting countless birthday, anniversary and surprise parties. It was a labour of love for both of them – Johnnie in his pinnie at the barbecue and Kay dishing up copious amounts of food. In fact there is a well know room in their house, which has a sign on the door which reads "Open to non residents". It is the bar, where countless bottles of rare whiskies and other fascinating drinks are kept. Jason told me that although his dad had all these expensive and delightful whiskies, he himself only drank the cheap stuff. That room was a favourite haunt of Drew Sloan and even some visiting Canadian Curlers knew about it. He was also a member of the Ayr Club – which was a club for gentlemen, where he indulged in playing snooker and perhaps the odd wee dram.

Johnnie was a fantastic fun loving gentleman who lived life to the full and gave so much to others in so many different ways. He loved a laugh and really was a bit of a prankster. He loved telling jokes. He was kind and generous almost to a fault. He had time for people and would do anything to help them if he could. He was greatly loved. You know, many past Tablers and friends in Rotary have been in touch with Kay conveying their sadness at losing such a character. He would have loved to have all of them here today and have a party.

Their house is a much quieter place now and been that unfortunately for a few years due to Johnnie's deteriorating health, but as Kay says, the happy times will never be extinguished.

Johnnie fought his illness with immense courage and fortitude and Kay has asked me to thank everyone for all their support over the years. I know the whole family feel blest by all your support and love.

Johnnie is no longer with us in the flesh but he will live on in our hearts and minds. We will never forget such a lovely, amazing gentleman whom we were privileged to call our friend.

Revd David Ness

Scott's sermon preached from St Mark 11:1-11

Palm Sunday

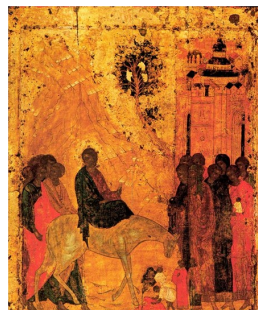
Today is Palm Sunday. We remember and celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. If you had been in Jerusalem, in the holy city, on that day, what might you have seen?

Jerusalem, the City of David, sits on a high plain or plateau surrounded by valleys. In the time of Jesus, forests of almond, olive and pine trees were all around. Picture it: under the scorching heat of the Mediterranean sun the triumphant procession weaved its way through the vast, cheering crowds. If you were in Jerusalem that day, if you saw the procession, *the* procession, what would you have seen?

Perhaps, 'a panoply of imperial power'; a splendid display of 'cavalry on horses, foot soldiers, leather armour, helmets, weapons, banners, golden eagles mounted on poles, sun glinting on metal and gold.' What would you have heard? 'The marching of feet, the creaking of leather, the clinking of bridles, the beating of drums.' In your eyes, will you have felt the 'swirling of dust'? If you were in Jerusalem on that day, on the day of the procession, *the* procession, that surely is what you would have seen. If you were asked by a visitor who had arrived late, that surely is the description you would have given.

You see, on the day we call Palm Sunday, the day on which we remember and celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, into the *City of Shalem*, there was in fact another procession, a truly grand and triumphal entry. It was the beginning of the week of the Jewish festival of Pass-over. Many thousands of people, Jews and Gentiles, had journeyed from all corners of the Roman empire: Jerusalem was buzzing. In order to reinforce the garrison, the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, had made his way from the coast, from Caesarea Maritima, the provincial capital of Roman Judea, to take up residence in Jerusalem. He brought with him thousands of soldiers. Pilate was welcomed into the city through the west gate.

On the opposite side of the city, along the road that led through the east gate, Jesus came with His disciples. I daresay that Jesus and His disciples



Triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Russian icon. Cathedral of the Annunciation, Moscow.

will almost certainly have heard the cheers of the Jerusalem crowds in the distance. The details in the story of Jesus making His way to Jerusalem are full of symbolism. With His disciples, He reached the town of Bethany and passed by the Mount of Olives. To the early Christian community, the name 'Bethany' was suggestive of resurrection: it was the home of Lazarus. In ancient Jewish prophecy, it was believed that God would appear, break into history and stand on the Mount of Olives, and from there defeat the nations that oppressed Israel. For the early Christian community, God had appeared, had broken into history, and was seen in Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus rode into the city on a colt. From the Old Testament, the colt is a symbol of kingship and so too the garments, the cloaks, that were laid down to carpet the road. The disciples sang, 'Blessed is the kingdom of our father David.' Jesus was being hailed as the Davidic Messiah, the new 'King David'. The contrast between Pilate and Jesus, governor and messiah, could not be starker.

Pontius Pilate represented the Emperor. Since the days of Augustus, the Emperor was believed to be divine: he was said to be 'the son of God, the Lord and Saviour'. The Roman Emperor brought peace on earth. Augustus had been fathered by the god Apollo and, on death, he ascended into heaven to take his permanent seat among the gods. The day on which the Roman Governor processed from the west into Jerusalem displaying the might and theology of Rome Jesus rode into Jerusalem from the east on a colt. Jesus stage-managed His entry. Jesus entered the city as the son of David: the justice of God's Kingdom was on display.



***Caesar Augustus
Tiberius, son of the
Divine Augustus.***

For me, the Christian faith is an invitation to journey ever more deeply into the Mystery of God. It calls for a continual change of heart: a repentance, a return to God. As we open ourselves more fully to the Presence and Silence of the Eternal, the more we will reflect the light of God in our lives and, in ways we cannot know, change the world around us. For me, one way of interpreting the story of two triumphal entries into Jerusalem is to see that, within the human heart, we find both Pilate and Christ. At times, we are drawn to the seductions of the world, such as power, wealth, status and self-interest. At times, we are drawn to the beauty of God's world, such as self-sacrifice, humility, peacefulness and tender compassion. The triumphal entries are not historical events of two thousand years ago: the horses and the colt run through our souls.

Each of us is called to do what we can on our own spiritual journey, and

each of us is invited to change gently the world around us in whatever ways we can. Mark Carney, the former Governor of the Bank of England, tells the story of attending a conference at the Vatican a few years ago. Together with a range of policymakers, business leaders, academics, union leaders and charity workers, the governor was in Rome to discuss the future of the market system. Pope Francis surprised the gathering by joining the conference delegates for lunch. At lunch, he told a parable. The Pope said:

Our meal will be accompanied by wine. Now, wine is many things. It has a bouquet, colour and richness of taste that all complement the food. It has alcohol that can enliven the mind. Wine enriches all our senses.

At the end of the feast, we will have grappa. Grappa is one thing: alcohol. Grappa is wine distilled.

Humanity is many things – passionate, curious, rational, altruistic, creative, self-interested. But the market is one thing: self-interest. The market is humanity distilled.

Your job is to turn the grappa back into wine, to turn the market back into humanity. This isn't theology. This is reality. This is the truth.



The Palm Cross we carry from the church today is a tangible reminder of the conflict inside each of us. Now, let yourself return to Jerusalem, to that day of processions, and this time let yourself walk beside Jesus. You have entered a quite different world. Amen.

Notes from Session

A meeting of the Kirk Session, chaired by the Moderator, The Revd Dr Scott McKenna, was held on 27th October 2020. A summary of issues discussed at this meeting is given below:

The Moderator asked Elders to let him know of any pastoral care issues or concerns they were aware of relating to members in their districts.

The Moderator thanked members of the recording team for their excellent work in making services available to members online.

Presbytery had noted that the Architectural Quinquennial Visitations for this year could recommence for the nine churches involved, including Ayr St Columba.

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

The Moderator said that Presbytery were taking forward our request that Lochside be included in the grouping of churches in North Ayr.

The Moderator informed the meeting that he had resumed the role of Interim Moderator for Ochiltree and Stair Parish Churches as the Minister, Revd Morag Garrett, was off work .

The Clerk reminded Elders that Ayr Presbytery was looking for churches in the different areas of the town to come up with plans to reduce the overall number of charges. Ayr St Columba were in the Central Ayr group along with the Auld Kirk, St Leonard's, St Andrew's and Castlehill churches and an initial target of a reduction of one Minister amongst these charges had been set by Presbytery. The Review and Planning Committee proposed that an ad hoc Committee be set up with the following remit: (a) to consider matters relating to future groupings of churches in the Presbytery; (b) to liaise with Presbytery and other churches in Central Ayr; (c) to report back to the Kirk Session. This was approved.

The Treasurer presented a financial report for the quarter to 30th September. The overall drop in our cash at bank position for the six-month period since lockdown was almost £39,000 or £6,500 per month on average.

Mrs Linda Sharp reported that Elaine Kerr was continuing to send cards and flowers to the over eighties and with the resumption of Sunday services, the ladies who arrange the bouquets for delivery were back doing a sterling job.

The Time to Remember service would form part of the 11.15am service on Sunday 1st November.

The Moderator sought approval to set up a Committee to look at Pastoral Care and District Eldership in the 21st century. The Committee would include the Minister, the Session Clerk, Mrs Sharp and two or three others. It would report back to Session in April. This was approved.

Mrs Helen Greig reminded Elders that last year the congregation had filled boxes for 'The Night Before Christmas' charity. This year the WMO had decided to support an overseas charity - Abba's Rest in Malawi..

Mr Keith Fullerton reported that St Columba Kids started up again on Sunday 25th October. This was the first time they had all been together since 22nd March. Mr Fullerton thanked Stuart McKinlay and his dedicated band of helpers: Jennifer Gray, Millie McNish, Valerie Holland, Lynsey Cameron, Sue Christie and Sophie Hart for all their hard work to get St Columba Kids off the ground again.

R A Bartholomew, Session Clerk



Revd David Gemmell conducted the Tuesday service

Each Holy Week service was recorded and put on-line through the church website every morning at 9am. Taking part were Revd Scott, Revd David, Revd Roddy, Deacon Muriel and our neighbour from the Auld Kirk, Revd David Gemmell, with music and singing from Matthew and Rachel. The services were recorded in Ayr St Columba except for Maundy Thursday with Scott preaching at the historic Auld Kirk



Scott preached on the Monday and Roddy conducted the Saturday service



Scott recorded the Thursday service at the Auld Kirk



David delivered the Friday service



Deacon Muriel Wilson conducted our Wednesday service



Music at all the services came from Matthew and Rachel



Scott conducted the Easter Sunday service



The Guild reports

'Whose we are and Whom we Serve'

As I write this it is hard to believe that it is a year since the government introduced the first lockdown and here we are still locked down. I do hope you are all coping in your own way and can now see a way out to a more normal life with the introduction of vaccination. It is good to see how quickly this is happening.

I have tuned into lockdown by looking at some of the positive things to come from it. The many 'phone calls, emails and text from friends and family, keeping in touch and making sure you are well and coping, especially if you are living alone. During my daily walk, weather permitting, I have met many people to chat to and I am amazed by the kindness shown by so many of them. This I will never forget. In my daily 'phone call with my friend to make sure all was well, who would have thought we could manage to have a half hour conversation every day since March last year!

As we slowly come out of lockdown, I hope to keep tuned in to all the positive things and perhaps a slower pace of life. I am sure everyone will have their own thoughts and ways of moving on.

We are all looking forward to Spring and Summer, the longer evenings, meeting up with friends and family and enjoying some warmer weather. Things should improve and when it is safe to do so we will all meet up again for the friendship and fellowship of The Guild.

On behalf of Dorothy and the Committee we send our best wishes to you all and will keep you in our thoughts and prayers for many more happy times to come.

Maureen Fullerton, Secretary

Remember your Consent Form

Ayr St Columba has now compiled details of members through the recently issued consent forms, but we are still short of reaching a 100% return from the congregation.

If you still have a **Consent Form** we are appealing for you to fill it in and send it to the roll keeper as soon as possible. If you have misplaced your consent form please contact your elder or the church office to request a new one.

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.

The Kirk Session has appointed Mrs Margaret Doncaster as the roll keeper for the church and any changes to members' details should be conveyed to her.

Many thanks

Did You Know?

To re-open for worship services, the church had to get permission from the Presbytery of Ayr.

Before this permission could be granted, we had to complete risk assessments for the buildings at Midton Road and at Lochside. In addition to that it was necessary to provide evidence that both buildings had been inspected on a weekly basis for any faults that may have arisen.

No fewer than 25 items regarding safety and security had to be checked and signed off each week and it is good to record that John Stewart and Michael Hall were both fully up to speed with this important work. Finally, a buildings safety declaration had to be completed. Following all this we were given permission to re-open for worship services.

However, it is still necessary to ensure that safety and hygiene measures are in place. This means that the numbers attending a service must be limited to 50 people, socially distanced pews have to be clearly marked and face masks and hand sanitisers must be made available.

During the lockdown period the life and work of the church has continued.

Worship Services have been recorded each week and made available online each Sunday morning.

We have made a significant effort to establish better communication links with all our members.

We have encouraged greater use of Standing Orders and of Gift Aid.

The South Ayrshire Foodbank has operated twice weekly in the Lochside building.

Copies of Columba News have been posted to all members.

The Kirk Session has met via Zoom and the Trustees' meeting, at which the annual accounts were approved, was also held on Zoom.

Zoom has allowed Sunday School to be held each week, Organisations and Committees to meet and the Minister to lead discussion groups.

The Minister and the Associate Minister have been in touch with members who have experienced loss or difficulty or isolation in these unusual times.

Careful with cotton?

Singapore has done better during the pandemic than many countries. It is now even possible to open art galleries. A new exhibition is called 'R for repair'. The public was asked to supply broken or worn-out items with sentimental value. A group of young designers repurposed them to give them added life.

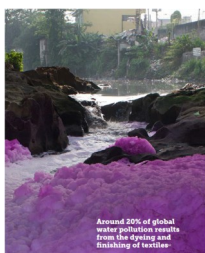
This is a Casio watch. Over time the plastic strap broke and it has now been put into a walnut frame to be used as a clock.

The designers make the point that built in obsolescence and disposable items fits the current economic model. Unfortunately, this model is not sustainable and must change. Artists and craftspeople such as these, have frequently been in the forefront of social change from the 18th century onwards.



When a developing country tries to pull itself out of poverty, clothing manufacture is often chosen as a starting point. Clothes are exported to richer nations. In the UK, a substantial proportion of clothes are discarded after very little use, often within a year of purchase. Cotton is commonly used for clothes and furnishings. Cotton accounts for more than a third of all textile production.

Cotton is grown in warm countries where water is scarce. Conventionally farmed cotton using fertilisers and pesticides, requires a lot of water. I kilogram of cotton takes up to 20,000 litres of water to produce. Organically grown cotton reduces water consumption by up to 90%. Cotton production uses 2.5% of the world's cultivated land but accounts for 16% of insecticides and 4% of nitrogen fertilisers produced. Dyeing and finishing textiles also uses a lot more water and chemicals which are washed into water courses with harm to human health. When considering the cost of cotton, we should therefore include the environmental cost of cloth.



When the farmer relies on synthetic nitrogen fertilisers, then the topsoil is washed away and much more water is needed for irrigation. Natural fertiliser such as compost or manure helps the land to hold much more water. Rainwater is trapped in the soil making the fields much less reliant on aquifers and diversion from rivers. Genetically modified

cotton seed is expensive and usually requires the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. It is therefore not used in organic farming. Already 19% of cotton is grown sustainably under the following initiatives: “Better cotton initiative”; “Cotton made in Africa”; “Fairtrade” and “Reel”. The gold standard is organically certified cotton badged by a recognised organisation such as “Organic 100”; “Global organic textile standard” or “The soil association”. If an item is badged “organic cotton” without any other kite mark, this means next to nothing.

Stylish organic cotton baby clothes. The baby will grow out of them before they are worn out. These can be passed on.

Do you have a favourite clothing brand? Have you asked your supplier how their cotton is sourced? Do you buy textiles to last? Do you repair clothes and repurpose or recycle old fabrics?

Upcycled fabric can be made to look stylish

The Living Lighter project at the Salisbury centre in Edinburgh runs upcycling workshops aimed at reducing carbon footprints and pollution. This is much more than being thrifty, it is essential to preserve goods for environmental reasons.

A pocket repair is only seen when not being worn.



There is no need to throw the trousers away yet. This chair has been painted. It was not broken, but the owner wanted something that looked new and stylish. Sometimes this can be achieved without a new purchase. Repairing can be sociable



Andrew Muirhead

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

I would welcome contact with anyone interested in promoting eco matters. Please contact me at a.g.muirhead@gmail.com or 07526662044

News from Presbytery

Ayr Presbytery met by Zoom on March 2, 2021

Union of Presbyteries: A special meeting will take place on 16 March to discuss the formation of the Presbytery of the South West of Scotland.

Presbytery Plan: Presbytery adopted the following framework for the development of a new plan: set aside Mission Focus Groups to enable Parish Groupings to develop Mission Plans; postpone any numerical distribution of ministry plans until the current situation is clarified at the 2021 General Assembly and establish a joint Presbytery Planning Team with the other five Presbyteries.

Barony Campus: Presbytery noted that the Head of Education, East Ayrshire Council has denied the appointment of a Mission Development Support post to the Barony Campus, Cumnock. Presbytery agreed to seek a meeting between representatives of East Ayrshire Council and Presbytery to discuss the possibility of such an appointment.

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

Lugar - £6,000 to incorporate a cafe and heritage centre within it.

Prestwick South - £5,000 to assist an upgrade of present AV system.

Prestwick St Nicholas - £4,000 to assist with the building a clinic at Sanje, Malawi.

Ayr St Quivox - £3,000 to assist with urgent and unforeseen repairs at Auchincruive and Dalmilling buildings.

Tarbolton Parish Church - Masonry Repairs Presbytery approved the stonework repairs to the front elevation of the Church at a cost of £28,625 exclusive of VAT.

Christian Aid: Presbytery encourage congregations to begin to look creatively and imaginatively at how they might raise funds for the work of Christian Aid especially when it is unlikely that normal Christian Aid week activities can go ahead for a second year. Excellent information/ideas are available on the Christian Aid website www.christianaid.org.uk including details about a 'virtual' kilt walk from 23 - 25 April 2021.

George Park, Presbytery Elder

No Complaints!

It is very easy to say that the past year has been a difficult one in the life of the Church. It certainly has been, but compared to the problems faced by so many communities worldwide and to the personal suffering and loss

experienced by many, as a Church we are not in a position to complain or to lose heart. I have recorded in previous articles how the Minister and others have been on the front foot in finding ways to support and to give hope to our members throughout the pandemic and I know this will continue in the coming year and beyond.

Following the full lockdown which started after the Christmas and New Year period, we are now permitted to hold Sunday Services once again. It is always a delight to welcome members and friends back into church, but it is so frustrating that we have been limited to fifty people at a Service for so long. We have many hundreds of members and we want to encourage everyone to come when they feel able, but we can only admit fifty until such time as the regulations change. Let us hope this is soon because the joy of being in a busy and vibrant church with room for all is a truly wonderful experience.

Until then, our booking system will continue to operate and we will try to ensure that everyone who wishes has the opportunity to attend Services. If the current easing of restrictions continues and more and more people receive their vaccinations, then perhaps the road to normality will not be that long.

Remember, you can see the Services each week online, you can contact the Minister or the Office if you need a sympathetic ear or have if you have a question and please be assured that the Church will always be there for you in time of need.

Bob Bartholomew
Session Clerk

From the Satellite Office

It is Easter Day, the sun is shining and new life beckons – the Church was full, as far as we are able, for both services, but we miss singing the rousing hosannahs and alleluias of Easter morning.

Next year – we hope and pray, we will be a complete Church community. The journey through lockdown has been long and for many it has been arduous and fearful ; full of anxiety, doubts and challenges.

The longer it is extended the more and more disconnected we have become.

The Satellite Office continues to serve the Congregation and, with the return to restricted worship, has never been busier.

Not only with Church matters, but the privilege of listening to all the

activities in which you have been engaged, the books you have read, the accidents you have sustained and survived – all life seems to have flowed through the “office”.

During Holy Week it was a delight to watch the recorded reflections and listen to the familiar Easter music – what a debt of gratitude we owe to all the people involved.

We have had a year in which the life we knew has been turned upside down and inside out! How has the Church tried to connect? There have been two superb Faith Discussion groups each with their own dynamic, involving members and friends. It was challenging and inspiring to meet with familiar people and folks we had not met before, all quietly led by our Minister. There have been many Committee meetings on zoom, making sure that we are prepared for the changes ahead.

With the relaxation on travel I will be able to visit and have a demonstration on a possible new photocopier – I am hopeful that this machine will be able to meet the increased demands of the twenty first century and support the creative and innovative ideas as the Church moves forward.

We were able to touch base with all of our members who live in districts without an elder and there has been a wonderful return response. The booking system for Sunday Services was extremely busy over Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday and it was really difficult to have to tell people that there were no spaces left.

Please be assured – if you call or email for a place and there are none available, you will be guaranteed a place the following week. This is the fairest we can be with such a large congregation.

Another innovation is the Congregation email and everyone who let us have contact details will receive an email from time to time.

If you have family, friends or neighbours who do not have access to the internet it would be lovely if you could share the message with them.

If we have learned nothing else during lockdown, it is that we all need each other and above all remember, that if we can be anything, we ought to be kind.

Irene

Copy deadline for the June issue will be

Tuesday, June 1

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

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

Men's Association will meet again

Three months on and we all hope that we are very close to a re-opening of society after over a year of lock-downs and all the angst that has gone along with them.

Our members will all now have had our first 'jags' – maybe some have had both! But I wonder how much of our 'old normal' will be our 'new normal'?

Masks, social distancing etc will more than likely be around for a while but on a very positive note, at least close relatives are getting the chance to see one another again. It must be a terrifying time not being able to see a loved one, for whatever reason. Weddings and funerals have also changed so much – and for how much longer?

Our next session will hopefully take place in the Autumn. Pray that it does.

With apologies to the late, great Dame Vera:

"We'll meet again, we know where, don't know when....."

Stay safe.

John Ferguson, Secretary

Congregation and Parish Register

February – March

"I am with you always to the end of the age"
Matthew 28:20



Dr Isabel Smith	Edinburgh (formerly of Sandgate Church).
John (Jonnie) Kean	1 Broomfield Road, Ayr
Elizabeth Marshall	Creggan Bahn
Willie Forbes	20 Carrick Road, Ayr

Who to contact

Minister:

Revd. Dr. SCOTT S. McKENNA.
scottsmckenna@aol.com
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Tel:- 471625

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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 Services (Midton Road):

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

Tuning in to our services

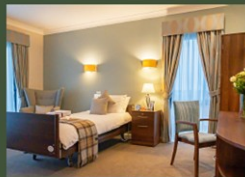
In recent months, St Columba Church has been providing services online:

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

Dial-a-Sermon: Audio 01292 851074



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**Our meetings are held on Wednesday evenings from 7pm to
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For more information, please contact

Susan Christie on 07751219601

or email christie.susan@yahoo.com

**Due to lockdown we meet on zoom every week but are
meeting outside from April at the Old Racecourse for
outdoor activities.**

