



LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

I am writing this letter for the Bulletin on Easter Monday. I have taken time to look to the past week of Holy Week and the services which took place. It was lovely that we all joined in fellowship one with another. Christian fellowship is a very special kind of fellowship.

There is a closeness that we are one in Christ. This made me think of what is going to be happening with regard to our three churches in Largs, being cut down to one church, and of course I recognise the deep feelings held by all with regard to what church shall be used. When the decision has been made by Presbytery there shall be many feeling sad of heart if their church is not chosen, and human nature being what it is, there may be disappointment for some, and anger from others. Some hearts shall be sore, and my prayer is that in time healing takes place.

Regarding myself this is not a new situation for me. When I began my probationary period of 18 months after University. The people in 121 in Edinburgh asked me if I would be willing to go into a new union that had taken place, between Wellpark Church and Mid-kirk church. That church is now Wellpark Midkirk Church in Greenock. It was well known by all that it had been a very bitter coming together, each church wanting to hold their Church Building. I worked alongside Rev. Ron Lawson, and yes there were some difficult times, and changes to be made, but in the end the people themselves came together and began working as one body of believing people, and I loved my time with them, working alongside Rev. Ron Lawson.

Secondly. When I finished my probationary training and being open to where God would call me as minister of a charge. More or less immediately I was called to ministry of word and sacrament in Sherwood Greenlaw Church in Paisley. It also had a new union between Sherwood Church and Greenlaw Church. The minister was Rev. Alistair Cameron, but due to the large number in the congregation and roll it was necessary for them to appoint another minister of Word and Sacrament to work together. And this we did. This was also a very special time due to the new union. Each congregation had their own way of working and serving in their former church. Now compromises had to be made that all work together in love and in union with one another. Now I am not saying it was like a magic wand all made perfect. There was a number of areas that needed ironing out. And that was done through open speaking and sharing with one another the strengths and weaknesses we

had to look at together. In time what we had was a body of people not working against each other, but working with each other, and being honest with each other. Again it was a joy for me to serve the people of Sherwood Greenlaw Church.

Why did I share this with you in the Bulletin? Simply because I felt led by God to write what I have written. This is a hard and difficult time for the three congregations at the moment, not knowing what the future holds for each congregation. I completely understand. Who wants change? Change can be so hard to deal with, it can even be painful. I would say to you all. When decisions have been made, decisions that we cannot change, we are left to go forward trusting in God's plan for the life of His Church in Largs. I am honest to say, all will not be perfect during this change, and as I have said human nature being what it is, there could be many cross words shared with each other.

I point to the churches I have been part of. They came through the changes they had to deal with, and found that in the end it was all about people working together Serving Jesus Christ in His House. Caring for one another. Loving one another. Willing to make compromises with each other. I will close with this thought: The devil himself does not want to see growth in Church life. So what we must be aware of is this. We must be an example to others from the outside looking into what is happening in the churches. Do we want them to see bitter division among us or the flame of love and unity burning, that it shines in our town from we Christians who live in Largs and the surrounding areas. For this, let us pray.....

Love to you all. Your friend. Rev. May Bell.

SUNDAY DUTY TEAM ROTA

If you are unable to be present on your allocated week, please try to find a substitute and let the team leader know who to expect.

May 1st & 29th Team A: Chris Reekie, Janie McKenzie, Helen Crawford, Richard Cain (Leader, Tel 670187)

May 8th & June 5th

Team B: Sheila Morrow, Susan Stevenson, Gordon Law, Ashley Shedden, Christine Hitter (Leader Tel 675796)

May 15th Team D: Rae Head, Fiona Williamson, Allister McGregor, Richard Williamson (Leader, Tel 568323)

May 22nd Team E: Margaret Roberts, Irene Livingstone, Iain Marshall, Duncan MacArthur, Jim Anderson (Leader, Tel 673854)

UNITED GUILD

The United Guild Tea and Chat will start on Monday 25th April at 2pm. This will continue every Monday till the 13th June. We will meet in the Dunn Memorial Hall. This is a great opportunity to come along and share in a time of fellowship. Look forward to seeing you all there! *Rae Head*



Lent Lunches, in only five Wednesdays, realised the sum of £1847 this year. Your support, through giving time, hard work, donations, encouragement, and coming along to eat and be sociable, was much appreciated and Christian Aid benefited.

Christian Aid Week (15th – 21st May): Our minister, Rev May Bell, will preside over the opening service in St John's at 6.30pm on Sunday 15th May. Derek will be our musician.

Christian Aid Envelopes can be put in the Offering Plates on Sundays, or given to Irene or Evie.

A Quiz Night: Thursday 19th at 7.30pm in Largs Bowling Club (top of Douglas St) with Eila Handyside as MC. Tickets priced £5 each will be on sale early in May but can be bought at the door. Teams of four will show their mettle... and get prizes! Drinks and crisps will be on sale.

The Christian Aid Coffee Morning will be 10am – noon on Saturday 21st May. It's an inter-church jamboree and St John's always comes up trumps with support – baking, waiting, kitchen staff. Please don't be shy about coming forward! It's another good 'churches together' opportunity. There will be two stalls: Home-baking and Tombola.

Clever Cryptic Quiz: Nothing to do with our Quiz Night, Christian Aid have devised a Food & Drink cryptic quiz sheet, and these are available for a £1 donation (cheap at the price!). There are no prizes, just a self-satisfied grin when you get all the answers (which are printed on the back of each sheet if you get desperate to see that grin).

Irene Livingstone & Evie Corkill (Christian Aid Reps)

LOOKING BACK: DESMOND TUTU AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2009 FROM LIFE AND WORK

When it was announced to Commissioners that the Most Reverend Desmond Tutu was due to attend the last day of the General Assembly, there was a spontaneous 'Oooh', like the noise a game show audience makes when prizes are announced, followed by laughter. "You won't be leaving early, then," said the Business Convener, the Rev David Arnott.

It was a funny moment, but also spoke of the esteem in which Tutu – Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, famed anti-Apartheid campaigner – is held. The General Assembly is not easily impressed, and had barely raised a collective eyebrow when it was

announced that Scotland's First Minister would also be addressing it, but for Tutu there was not a spare seat.

The star guest did not disappoint, treating the Commissioners to a masterpiece of oratory: arms waving, voice swooping and diving around the rafters, loud proclamation one second and tiny squeak the next.

Flattery and praise of his hosts combined with gentle teasing at Scottish reserve, and heartfelt thanks for the Kirk's support during the anti-Apartheid campaign and its record more generally in Africa.

He appealed on behalf of the marginalised, and made an impassioned plea for unity.

"We are family," he said, "We have only one who we call father. And this one who is our Lord, speaking about his coming and the blessing on the cross, said 'I, finally lifted up, will draw not some, will draw all - an incredibly revolutionary, radical, assertion - will draw all, all, into an embrace that will not let us go'. For in this family there are no outsiders. All, all are insiders, all are children, all are held up..."

"We are family. We are sisters and brothers. How in the name of everything that is good can we justify going on spending obscene amounts on death and destruction, when we know that just a minute fraction of those so-called defence budgets will make sure that God's children everywhere will have clean water to drink, will have enough food to eat, a decent home, affordable healthcare? How can it be that we representing this God can look on while there are those who go to bed hungry? Who can spend only one dollar a day? How can we? How can we? How can we?"

"Our God says 'I have no-one, I have no-one except you. Help me, help me, help me to make this a more compassionate world. Help me please, help me so that we can make it more generous, caring. I have no-one except you. Help me, help me, help me, help me'."

The Commissioners were putty in his hands. It was the undisputed highlight of the 2009 gathering: in fact, one seasoned Assembly-goer described it as 'the moment of the decade'.

Afterwards, rapturous standing ovation still ringing in everyone's ears, the Archbishop relaxed in the Moderator's Rooms with a coffee while various former Moderators and Church of Scotland bigwigs clustered around like star-struck teenagers, all hoping to get a word, a photograph and a handshake.

Tutu had stayed in Edinburgh for one night, and would later receive an honorary doctorate from Edinburgh University before flying out again. It was an itinerary that would tax anyone, never mind a 77 year old, yet he was vivacious, mischievously amusing, and never far from a throaty laugh.

He explained that this had been his first time at the General Assembly but far from his first time in Scotland.

"My first visit to Scotland was in 1965. I was driving with my wife and we visited Glasgow, which we thought was not

the prettiest city but had what we believe to be the friendliest human beings we have ever encountered anywhere. They were just amazing.

“We were out on a drive and we got lost, and we met up with a young guy, who was somewhat under the weather, and asked him if by any chance he knew this address, and he said [switching to a passable impression of a drunk Glaswegian] ‘yeah, yeah, I know that street very well, I used to have a girlfriend who lived there but she married another man’.” And he laughs uproariously.

“Before we got to Glasgow we were in the countryside. We drove into a farmyard and asked them whether it would be alright for us to park our car and sleep in the farmyard, and they said ‘of course’.

“The following morning, we were still snoring away in the car when there was a ‘tap tap tap’ on our window, and we looked and lo and behold it was the owner carrying a of tray piping hot coffee. Then they said we were free to use their bathroom and to have a shower, which was just amazing.

“We didn’t know him from a bar of soap. He would have said the same about us. Yet there was this incredible open, warm welcome and hospitality. That was our first and lasting impression of Scotland.”

WHY DO WE PRAY?

We pray because God loves us, wants us to seek him, and promises to respond to us (Matthew 7.7-11). We may pray because we have an inner yearning. We pray because we are not complete without God. We pray because we are concerned for people in need, and we want God to help them. We pray because we want to give thanks to God.

Perhaps most importantly we pray because we relate to God - or want to. Some people relate to God mostly in their head, others in their heart. That may affect how we address God - whether we focus on the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit.

Some are strongly influenced by the Old Testament, so may focus on God as Creator, Almighty, maybe a bit distant, awesome. Yet the Old Testament also mentions frequently God’s steadfast love for us, points forward to the coming of Christ, and from Genesis on speaks of the Spirit of God involved in creation, inspiring scripture and bringing new life to the people of God.

More often people focus on the New Testament, with Jesus as its centre point. Especially after Easter, we see him as Saviour, but also as Servant or Shepherd. We may be in awe of his holiness, at his being one with the Father, but we may also be aware of his closeness to us, his looking after us.

At intervals over the years there has been renewed emphasis on the Holy Spirit as moving among us like breath or wind, stirring up our faith, enabling us to serve. Jesus spoke of it as our being “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24.49) - power to be witnesses to Jesus, equipped for service. It has been said that there should be “an arresting quality in believers’ lives”, that speaks to people of God. Is that true of us?

Whether we pray primarily to Father, Son or Holy Spirit, might we try seeing how it might feel to shift our focus, and address another person of the Trinity?

Morag Fowler

THANKS

We stood down from the positions of Clerk to the Congregational Board and Session Clerks to St. John’s at the end of March. With increased work and family commitments we felt that the time was right to do this. We are grateful for the support and encouragement we have been given while undertaking these roles during a time of significant transition for St John’s.

We wish Allister and Jim all the best as they take on these responsibilities.

Thank you for the very kind gifts presented to us on Sunday and to all those who have spoken with us or sent messages.

With our very best wishes, Morna and Douglas Rae

Join the AV team

The Audio Visual Team is looking for volunteers to join their duty rota. No experience required.

The work the AV do proved to be invaluable during covid and is now established as an essential service for those unable to attend Church.

To find out more about this rewarding opportunity please contact Simon Morrow on 07515 284038.

TEA ROTA

May

- 1 Susan Stevenson, Margaret Neil, Evie Corkill
- 8 Margaret Roberts, Helen Blair, Catherine Shedden
- 15 Carol Harrison, Morag Gilchrist, Irene Livingstone
- 22 Sandra Gillespie, Grace Gilchrist, Helen Crawford
- 29 Hilda May, Morna Rae, Douglas Rae

June

- 5 Freeway
- 12 Catherine Shedden, Janie McKenzie, Chris Reekie
- 19 Carol Harrison, Helen Crawford, Sandra Gillespie
- 26 Hilda May, Morna Rae, Irene Livingstone

July

- 3 Margaret Neil, Evie Corkill, Susan Stevenson
- 10 Helen Blair, Grace Gilchrist, Margaret Roberts

The first person named supplies 2 litres of milk and takes the cost of milk from the donations and any money collected should be handed over to Chris Reekie.



CHURCH ROLL CHANGES

Deaths Mrs Elizabeth Dearie,
Mrs Catherine Milligan
Mr Edward McKenzie

RETURN OF St John's Summer Fete

St John's Summer Fete will be held in The Dunn Memorial Hall
on Saturday 11th June from 10am to 12 noon

It is proposed to have the following stalls:

Baking Stall

Bottle Stall

Toiletries Stall

Book Stall

Sweet Stall

Woodturning crafts

Lucky Dip Stall

Gift Stall

Plant Stall

Gift Card Stall

Any contributions from members will be greatly appreciated. We are sorry but we cannot accept any electrical items.

Donations can be handed in on Friday 10th June from 10am to 12 noon and from 2 to 4pm. Contributions can also be handed in on the Saturday morning.

If you are unable to deliver your contributions please contact Jim Welsh on 674714 who will arrange for them to be picked up.

It is proposed to set up the tables etc. on the Thursday evening and again any help would be appreciated.

Rev. May Bell has agreed to act as Fete Convenor and she will no doubt keep us up to date with any further news or information from the pulpit.

St. John's has had a Summer Fete each year for over 50 years, the only interruption being due to covid.

This is the first one we have been able to organise since 2019 and we look forward to the congregation's support.

Material inclusion for June 2022 edition of the Bulletin to be with the editor no later than Friday 27th May.

Email stjohnsbulletin@outlook.com or hand into Largs Printing Company.

Helpful information - also check online at www.stjohnslargs.co.uk

Interim Moderator:	Rev. Dr. Graham McWilliams	07853 774 383	GMcWilliams@churchofscotland.org.uk
Locum Minister:	Rev. May Bell	01475 529312	revmaybell22@gmail.com
Parish Assistant:	Angus McKay		07999 772795 gus@stjohnslargs.co.uk
Clerks to Board and Session:	Allister McGregor	01475 686729	allister.mcgregor30@gmail.com
	Jim Welsh	152 Greenock Road	674714 / 07769 648340 jim.welsh@sky.com
Congregational Treasurer:	David Noble	147 Glen Avenue, Largs	treasurer@stjohnslargs.co.uk
Roll Keeper:	Richard Cain	4 Pencil View	670187 richardcain@hotmail.co.uk
Pastoral Care Convenor:	Christine Hitter	69 Irvine Road	675796 ceh50@icloud.com
Bulletin Editor:	Alison Struthers		stjohnsbulletin@outlook.com
Fabric Convenor:	Jim Welsh	152 Greenock Road	674714 / 07769 648340 jim.welsh@sky.com
Africa Committee Convenor:	Vacant (applicants welcome)		
Sunday School:	Elaine McMillan		675771
Freeway (P7 - S6):	Scott McGregor	Flat 2, 39 Gogo Street	675203/686156 scott@lpcprint.co.uk



St. John's Church
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Heritage Lottery Fund

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of St John's Church, Largs is to be a church which seeks to inspire the people of Largs and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ – to share His teaching and His message of God's unconditional love, through word and action.

WATCHWORD: Following Jesus