

# Bulletin



No. 881 September 2023

Sc009048

Interim Moderator: Rev. Dr. Graham McWilliams Tel. 07853 774383 Email: GMcWilliams@churchofscotland.org.uk [www.stjohnslargs.co.uk](http://www.stjohnslargs.co.uk)



On Sunday 2nd July the five congregations of Cumbrae, Fairlie, St John's, St Columba's and Clark Memorial agreed the Basis of Union and voted for Rev Dr Graham McWilliams and myself to be the ministers in the new congregation.

The next step in the process will be for the Presbytery of the South West to agree to this when they meet in

September. This is highly likely as they asked us to do it in the first place! We anticipate that the union of the five congregations will take place at the beginning of October.

From the first Sunday in October the service in Largs will be held at 11am, in Fairlie at 9.30am and in Millport at 11am.

The process of union will take some time to complete as there are many moving parts. There will be contracts for the employees of the new congregation. We hope that Mr Gus McKay will continue to work part time to help with various aspects of ministry in the new parish. The process of

bringing the congregations together will require patience and understanding from everyone.

Making others welcome is a Christian duty. This struck me forcibly the first time I went to Malawi. I stayed with a minister and his family, who slept on the hard floor of their living room so that I could have a bed for the night. Not only that, but they got up at four a.m. to light a fire so that I could have warm water for a wash when I woke up in the morning. I was deeply touched by their thoughtfulness and kindness.

When the churches come together a similar mindset will be required. A willingness to adapt and to accept change. I'm at an age myself where adapting to change is becoming more challenging! We all prefer to stay in our comfort zone. Being forced to do a new thing could be the best thing that has happened to us. Accepting new ideas, interacting with different people is what has energised the church in the past and it is what will energise it in the future. It requires patience and generosity from all of us.

*Fraternally, David Watson  
dwatson@churchofscotland.org.uk*



## ST. JOHN'S CHURCH – 1843 to 2023

The origins of the congregation of St John's, Largs lie in the formation of the free Church of Scotland following the disruption of 1843. Immediately after this historic event Rev John Dow of the Parish Church in Largs, along with two hundred members of his congregation, established the Free Church in Largs.

Ever since then St. John's has stood proudly on the seafront as a symbol of Christ's care and well-being for us.

Now, a 180 years on, the church is to close and a new congregation taking in Cumbrae, Fairlie and Largs is to be formed with three places of worship: Cumbrae, Fairlie and Largs with the use of Clark Memorial buildings and has been re-named Largs Community Church.

As we all know the church is not a building but a "church is the people" and with that in mind we wish to thank all of those who have helped look after the congregation for those 180 years.

Since the retirement of the Rev. Andrew McGurk in 2011 St. John's has gone through turbulent times with two short ministries of Rev. Markus Thane and Rev. Jonathan Fleming and during the times of vacancy we have had a number of Interim Moderators and Locum Preachers and of course Covid-19 intervened.

During the past few years the members of St. John's have been very supportive in running the church and making sure that services and pastoral care of the members carried on as normal.

The Dunn Memorial Hall, Small Hall and ToCH Hall will remain open for the time being and be available for use by church organisations and the wider Largs community.

As the time draws near for the final regular Sunday service to take place we give thanks to all who have maintained the ongoing Christian work in our parish, town and with our missionary partners. We look forward to a fresh beginning with the newly formed Parish of Cumbrae, Fairlie and Largs, working together to bring the Word of God to our parish.

*Allister McGregor, Jim Welsh  
Joint Clerks to Kirk Session and Congregational Board.*

## THE REPAIR SHOP

In a popular TV programme people bring treasured but damaged items for repair. The Japanese have an ancient way of repairing broken pottery, called Kintsugi. When the broken pieces are aligned properly with each other, the breaks are then fixed with lacquers of powdered gold. The result is beautiful, maybe even better than before the pottery was broken.

As individuals and as churches we have our brokenness. Fiona Barnard, in "Day by day with God", says we can have "sharp edges and uncertain potential and use." We are supposed to be a holy people, set apart for God. God knows where our sharp edges are, where we are broken and in need of repair. Yet he can transform each and every one of us. God can transform the church we are about to be together. We can be beautiful for God if we let him repair us by his Holy Spirit. Wounds can be healed, differences softened, fears let go. He has a purpose for each one of us, a way we can serve Him.

Do we bring our sin, our brokenness to God and let him make repairs? Do we mean it when we confess our sin? He can make us who we are meant to be, not just for ourselves, but for the community, for the world. One broken area in our church is a matter for concern. Unruly tongues, critical words. James, Jesus' brother, warns against this (James 3.5-12). He describes the tongue as fire, speaking of a small spark setting alight a whole forest. This summer we have seen the devastation fire can bring when it is not controlled and used for a positive purpose. What of us? Can we so speak as to draw people into the church, not drive them away? Can we play a positive part in the new parish? Can we let the Holy Spirit be free to move us?

We don't yet know what God has in mind for the new parish, or what he will ask of us. Yes, we are anxious about the unknown. As the theologian Martin Buber said, "All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveller is unaware." In the Bible and in churches we have seen God do mighty things. Are we on the lookout for what he will do through us? Will we let him? The Moderator wrote of meeting the youth delegates to the General Assembly. She picked out three positive words which rang out from what they said, "hope, optimism, community". Will those be keynotes of what we say and do in our life together as we move forward as one church?

*Morag Fowler*

## BETHESDA HOME CHURCH, LAGOS, NIGERIA

Isaiah 29 v 18 'And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness'.

In Lagos, Nigeria's largest city, there is a place of worship called Bethesda Home Church. It was established three years ago by Mr Chioma Ohakwe and is where people who were once socially-excluded because of blindness are welcome, and the church is thriving. In Nigeria a cultural and traditional stigma of being physically handicapped still

lingers, even if it's only at the back of people's minds; however musical talent at Bethesda Home Church is nurtured and celebrated. On Sundays the congregation sings and dances to the music of hymns, with a special backing of keyboard, drums, guitars, and a choir. All musicians and many of the congregation are visually impaired. This is remarkable.

In that African country roughly twenty-five million people live with physical disabilities including blindness, and before 2018 they were marginalised and considered to be 'cursed'. In 2018 a Nigerian law overturned these age-old misconceptions, and severe penalties are now imposed for contravention of what is a breakthrough legislation.

Mr Ohakwe's Bethesda Home Church demonstrates that when people start seeing Ability instead of disabilities, it produces a positive experience. One choir member, and he is no shrinking violet, has a message for handicapped people everywhere (and we are all handicapped in some way). Mr Nathaniel Ndukwe, with his bleached blond hair and diamanté shoes, is blind but he sparkles in the choir's front row. He says, 'I want everybody out there to have in his mind that there is a lot you can do - if you believe in yourself!'

*Evie Corkill*

*(Adapted from an article published in The Independent)*

## SAFEGUARDING

Please can I remind all volunteers working with children and young people that the Introductory Safeguarding course needs to be completed every 3-5 years. If you are unsure if you require to update your training please do not hesitate to contact me and I can direct you to upcoming training. (vickymcgregor@gmail.com)

## LARGS UNITED GUILD



Hello everyone! It seems no time since we started our summer break and here we are looking forward to another session of Largs United Guild. We will start on Monday 2nd October at 2pm in the Dunn Memorial Hall where the Rev David Watson will lead us in Communion and speak on the new theme, "New Wine. New Wineskins." We have a very varied syllabus for you and we look forward to welcoming you all back. If you would like to come along and find out what the Guild is about we would love to have you come along and share with us. Look forward to seeing you all there.

*Rae Head*

## THANK YOU

Thank you to all my friends and members for their prayers, good wishes and cards during my recent illness. Thanks also to Rev. May Bell, Rev. David Watson and Gus McKay for their visits and prayers during my time in hospital.

*Alison Dick*



*Some of the ladies have continued to meet up over the summer months until Community Coffee and Chat can resume in the autumn. There is no official restart date yet, but it will be in October.*

### TEA ROTA



Sep	3	Clark Mem: Lorna McLean, Catherine Shedden, Margaret Roberts
	10	Penny Spencer, Evie Corkill, Hilda May
	17	Extra milk required: Carol Harrison, Susan Stevenson, Sandra Gillespie
	24	Grace Gilchrist, Margaret Neil, Irene Livingstone
Oct	1	Clark Mem: Catherine Shedden, Margaret Roberts, Lorna McLean
	8	Janie McKenzie, Helen Blair, Chris Reekie

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

### THE BULLETIN

Once the five congregations come together to form the one, many challenges will be faced and decisions made.

One of these decisions will be about the future of The Bulletin that is published monthly and the other current publications from the other congregations that are published quarterly.

In the meantime we would like to thank everyone for their contributions and support over the many years that has resulted in this being the 881st edition! Ten are published each year which would mean the first one came out in 1935!

### SUNDAY DUTY TEAMS

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.

**Sept 3rd and Oct 1st** (both at Clark Memorial)

**Team D:** Rae Head, Alison Dick, Fiona Williamson, Allister McGregor, Richard Williamson (Leader, Tel 568323)

**Sept 10th**

**Team E:** Margaret Roberts, Irene Livingstone, Iain Marshall, Vicky McGregor, Jim Anderson (Leader, Tel 673854)

**Sept 17th**

**Team A:** Chris Reekie, Janie McKenzie, Helen Crawford, Isobel Purves, Richard Cain (Leader Tel 670187)

**Sept 24th**

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

### ROLL CHANGES

New Members: George McCree

Deaths: Mrs Avril Margaret Rae

Mrs Celia Walker

Mr Harry O'Neill

Mr Donald Stewart



# THE BOYS' BRIGADE

> the adventure begins here



**ANCHORS**

P1 – P3

**Juniors**

P4 - P6

**Company**

P7 – S2

**Seniors**

S3 - S6

FIND OUR MORE AT  
**FACEBOOK: @LargsBB**

## MEETING TIMES AND PLACES

**Anchors: Friday 5:30 - 6:30pm**  
Clark Memorial Church Hall

**Juniors: Friday 6:45 - 8.15pm**  
Clark Memorial Church Hall

**Company: Friday 7 - 9:30pm**  
Dunn Memorial, St John's Church

**Seniors: Friday 7 - 9:30pm**  
Dunn Memorial, St John's Church



Open to girls of school age and new members are very welcome to come along and see what happens on a Tuesday evening.

## MEETING TIMES AND PLACES

**EXPLORERS (P1-P3):**

**Tuesday 6:00 - 7:15pm**  
Dunn Memorial, St John's Church

**JUNIORS/BRIGADERS (P4-S5):**

**Tuesday 7:00 - 8.30pm**  
Dunn Memorial, St John's Church

FOR MORE INFO EMAIL  
**vickymcgregor@gmail.com**

## Helpful information - also check online at [www.stjohnslargs.co.uk](http://www.stjohnslargs.co.uk)

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Africa Committee Convener:	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  
Restoration supported by  
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