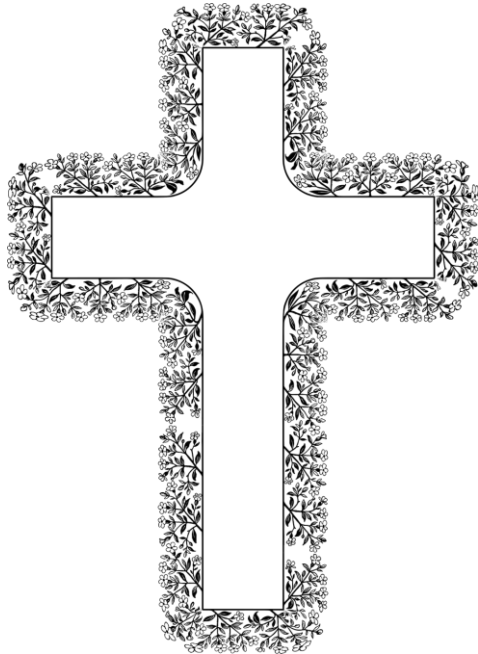


Connected



SUMMER 2024

From the Editor

Welcome to this summer edition of *Connected*, our quarterly parish magazine.

It has been a very busy time in church and in our wider community of Bathgate. The Procession Day was enjoyed by all, basked in glorious sunshine that lasted the whole day long! It is incredible to see the spectacular results of months and months of careful preparations and a tremendous amount of work by all involved to make this day so special.

At church, we have just participated in the Service of Union on Wednesday 12th June with singing to raise the rafters! As I listened to the beautiful selection of praise from the Music Group: reflective, harmonious, rousing, inspiring – (when I was able to resist the urge to sing along in full voice to the music!) I was filled with peace and gratitude. Gratitude for the chance to be a part of “Team Music,” gratitude for the amazing Choir that I have the privilege of working alongside and gratitude for the fellowship that is to be found each and every Sunday in church.

Alison





Scottish Charity No. SC007418

Locum's Summer Message

Towards the end of May the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met in Edinburgh when the Right Rev Dr Shaw Paterson was installed as the Moderator for 2024/25.

The Moderator's theme for his Moderatorial Year is 'Building Together'.

The National Church recognises the hurt, the loss, sadness and possibly betrayal in some folks that their Radical Plan has caused in reducing the number of charges in the Church of Scotland.

We at Bathgate Parish Church, I am sure, hold some if not all of these feelings but we must move on as this new congregation carries on the Great Commission our Lord Jesus left for us to do.

God, our Heavenly Father wants no one lost to the world's ways and He stands there in Heaven with His arms wide open longing for the lost and wayward to come home.

On Wednesday 12th of June the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian held in our church a Service of Union. The service was led by the Presbytery Moderator Rev Andrea Price who spoke eloquently and with sensitivity of the union.

It was a lovely service and I believe widely accepted by those there.

The mission of our church is to share the good news of Jesus, dying for our sins, reconciling us with God the Father and being accepted, with open arms, as His sons and daughters.

Continued...

Locum's Summer Message Continued

The task to share the good news is not easy, certainly not on our own strength but with the Holy Spirit in our hearts it is doable, but you and I need to take that step of faith knowing the Spirit will give us the opening, the words, but you and I need to be the hands, feet and mouth of Jesus.

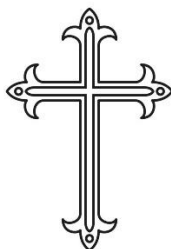
There is nothing to be gained by looking back, yes, treasure our memories of our past lives in other congregations but we must give our all to growing the church for tomorrow.

In my daily bible reading on Tuesday this week, I was reading of sharply declining church rolls, binge drinking and gambling and that the UK had descended into decadence and immorality but, it changed through the preaching of folks like John Wesley and George Whitfield.

God needs you, yes, you and me today to turn society around to a loving, caring world.

God Bless

David Wilkie (Locum)



Café Church

While writing, we are in the middle of preparation for our second Café Church. But why?

Café Church is definitely different, but is certainly still ‘church’ and you will find all the familiar elements within the service – singing, prayer readings and reflections, but it takes place in a less formal setting and also produces a bit of space for three important things to happen –

Fellowship – as we start with a cup of tea or coffee, there is an opportunity to just sit and chat before, during and after the service. This helps people with different backgrounds and journeys to the church meet and share with one another to promote the feelings of togetherness in our newly united charge

Space for talk – with a newly united congregation, we have to manage a way forward in our worship, service, development and mission. Café Church allows time for structured discussion to try and find these ways forward; to listen to one another’s point of view and try and reach a consensus. This involves the whole congregation, giving them a voice, rather than discussions just taking place at Session level. These discussions also have a product which is a source of information that can be used by a Nominating Committee or the Session as they seek to make decisions relating to our future. The findings of the first set of discussions; your feelings about our strengths and areas for future development, have been collated as a short video which is available on the church website.

Involving others in worship – one of the key drivers of the Church of Scotland’s push towards mission is finding new ways of ‘being church’. This means that the Café Church format is important to explore, as it presents worship in a way that some feel is more accessible. It also

Continued...

Café Church Continued

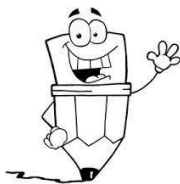
creates space for involving others in worship. Again, in our Basis of Union, one of our aims is to establish a leadership core in worship, with people participating in different ways.

For some, Café Church will be a less formal and more accessible way to worship. For others, the opposite is true. Café Church is only one of a variety of formats for worship that we may choose to try, but the traditional and formal worship service will always have its place. We are listening to your voice!

JW

Bessie's Quote

When everything's coming your way – you're in the wrong lane!



Bathgate Churches Together

Update on Bathgate Churches Together [BCT] and Christian Aid [CA].

Since Easter, the representatives of BCT have had two meetings: April and June. Following discussions, arrangements were made for Christian Aid Week in May and the following events took place:

A BCT coffee morning for CA was held in Bathgate Parish Church on Sat. 18th May. This was well supported and raised the sum of £720.

Donations from congregation. A donor Cheque for £100 was received. Donations from envelopes amounted to £586 and the Gift Aid claims totaled £390. Along with the amount raised from last year's coffee morning, a cheque for £ 1716 has been sent to the Christian Aid office in Edinburgh.

A service for CA was held in St. Columba's Episcopal Church on the evening of Sunday 19th May. An Address was given by Calum Martin from CA and the focus was on the situation in Burundi. The service was well attended and much appreciated.

Upcoming Events:

A BCT stall at Bathgate Market on Sat. 6th July with all proceeds going to Christian Aid. This is an opportunity, yet again, for people to collect bric-a-brac, and other suitable items to bring along. Costume jewellery sells well. If possible, items for sale should be priced beforehand. Anyone willing to help out for a little while on the day please speak to Liz Orr. [I will be away on holiday from 27th June to 4th July.]

Arrangements are progressing for a **CA book sale to be held in Linlithgow** in September, with support from BCT. Details will be communicated when they have been finalised.

Continued...

Bathgate Churches Together Continued

Other issues:

Planter

The planter in the precinct, which is maintained by BCT, has now been restored to its proper location following the filming which took place in Bathgate and fresh plants have been planted for the summer months. To help cover the cost of plants and compost for the year a quiz sheet will be produced, on behalf of BCT, with a prize of £10.

Heritage assets of former St John's Church.

Arrangements for the conservation and display of two rare, historic bibles formerly owned by St John's are still ongoing. This also applies to the re-location of the tile tableau commemorating the association of the Lindsay High School with the church.

Inter-faith forum/ events. More about this in the Autumn issue of 'Connected'.

For prayer and further discussion. It was felt that BCT should be considering new ways of promoting joint activities of the Bathgate Churches, including informal meetings or social events, which might heal divisions and attract newcomers to our churches. Please speak to me if you have any thoughts or suggestions that I may take to our next meeting on August 12th.

Blessings

Liz Orr

Reflections From the Pew

Resistant to change?	Options	Unity
What is the reason for change? Will change; change me? I am anxious about the unknown. How will I be supported and continue to have trust in my leader? Will I feel excluded from decision-making?	“In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety.” Abraham Mazlow (Hierarchy of Needs)	“You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.” C.S. Lewis

Resistance to Change

The one thing we can guarantee in our lives is that we face constant change. We reach milestones and with each milestone there are expectations just like our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And who are you I hear you ask. Well, my name is Isabel and I usually sit as far back as I can to the rear of the church because, believe it or not, I am actually quite shy. I have returned to the faith after a very long period of time. (A lady never gives her age away).

Why return to the faith? I guess, in reality, Jesus never left me. Sure, He let me make my mistakes and oh boy, I have made a few in my lifetime. Despite the errors or should I say sins, I have had a relatively good life, children, grandchild and another on the way, and a career. All have been fulfilling and I truly have been blessed and I am grateful.

Continued...

Reflections From the Pew Continued

Having reached another milestone my life is in a state of flux, change and I don't know about you the reader, but I am resistant to change. Whether that be in the workplace or in my homelife I enjoy and feel comfortable with what I know. However, change was coming, that milestone reached, where suddenly I felt an emptiness. My life was no longer distracted by wordly things such as raising a family, working, paying bills, and dare I say my next appointment with the hairdresser.

One evening I sat cradling a glass of red wine reflecting and I had the inexplicable urge to buy a Bible. It was completley out of the blue. So, no sooner had that idea popped into my head than I was on Amazon and purchased a NKJV. Within a day or two (genuinely I was excited about receiving my Bible) my Bible arrived. Immediatley I tore open the box and dove straight into my deep red-covered Bible and opened it at where the place marker was already placed. Well, you could have slapped my face with a wet kipper. Staring right back at me was Proverbs 20, first line "Wine is a mocker." Who says God doesn't have a sense of humour?

My Bible fired up a hunger in me I needed to learn and know more. To this day my favourite passage is John 4: A Samaritan Woman meets Her Messiah. I continue to read the Bible daily. And I thought that would be enough after all when in V19 – 20 the woman said to Him "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Great so I could just stay home in my wee bubble to study and learn the Bible. Jesus however, had other ideas. Jesus being canny didn't want to elevate the idea of where people should worship, instead He turned the Samaritan woman's question to the One we should worship." God cannot be confined to a particular location, my flat. Check out John 4 V 21- 24. Believe me I tried to find another way out of this conundrum.

Continued...

Reflections From the Pew Continued

Well, what was I going to do? I was in my comfort zone, yet I knew I needed to step out and step up. Tentatively, I undertook my first visit to Bathgate Parish Church (then the High). No sooner had I plucked up the courage to attend church, I learned the Church of Scotland was going through change, closing buildings and merging congregations.

It was still a change I was glad to have taken.

Options

“In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety”

Abraham Mazlow (Hierarchy of Needs)

I reflected on Mazlow’s statement and set out the following questions to help me discern my true motives. Was I being called back to our Lord God? Was I being shepherded?

Q. What’s the reason for the change?

A. I believe The Holy Spirit

Q. Will change; change me?

A. Roman’s 12: 2 “And do not be transformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Okay, I confess I am a work in progress.

Q. Should I be anxious about the unknown?

A. Phillipians 4:6 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God.” Bathgate Parish Church is welcoming and put me at ease.

Continued...

Reflections From the Pew Continued

Q. Will I be supported and continue to have trust in my leader?

A. James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." The Holy Spirit helps me to discern.

Q. Will I be excluded from decision-making?

A. No. I am in a relationship and regular dialogue with the Trinity. The church too is undergoing change, and all are involved with the decision-making process. Again, I am reminded of the Lord's prayer Mt. 6:10 "God's will be done."

Unity

"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." C.S. Lewis

A sentiment we can all agree with. We cannot change the past, but we can influence the future provided God is at the heart of all we do. A sentiment I constantly need to remind myself of.

Matthew 22:37 – 40 Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord God with all your heart, with your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as to yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Do I follow what Jesus said to the letter? No. I am not perfect, but I try every day.

Continued...

Reflections From the Pew Continued

I am fortunate to have witnessed the merging of St John's and the High Church into Bathgate Parish Church, and I can only admire the grace and humility in which members have embraced change. Every Sunday I witness the Christ-like behaviours of the members: the choir, the band, flower committee, welcoming committee, the embracing of live Facebook streams, the sermons, the Sunday School just to name a few.

Thank you, Bathgate Parish Church, for helping me on my journey through the Bible and return to the Christian faith.

Now, where did I place that glass of wine and crossword puzzle?

Isabel Hutton



Notice

Please note that the Bathgate Parish Church office is now open five days a week from Monday to Friday between 10am and 12 noon. The office will be closed for holiday from Monday, 1 July 2024, reopening on Monday, 5 August 2024.

Bathgate Parish Church Foodbank

Our foodbank continues to be busy on Tuesday mornings, not only with customers, but with people wanting to donate. We are finding there is a gathering of about 10-12 customers when we arrive at 9.45 am, so it is all go from the minute we open the door! As the teams have worked together for a while, it doesn't take long to deal with them - and there are no bargains for being first in the queue. In fact some have to wait for the rolls donated from Scotmid every week and delivered by Janet Purdie.

We are fortunate to get regular donations from Bathgate churches, including our own. This is our "bread and butter" and we rely heavily on it. Thank you to all who donate with goods or money.

Recently we received a large cash donation from the Train Drivers Union and also the ladies of the former St John's Guild. Both were greatly appreciated. I also had the privilege of attending 2nd Bathgate Girls' Brigade award ceremony in May, where I not only received a cheque for the foodbank, but also the girls' parents / carers brought tins, packets etc. for our storage cupboard. They are a talented, committed and generous group of officers and young people. We look forward with enthusiasm to seeing them in the parish church buildings next session.

As we have been so busy this past year, the decision was made to take a short break over the summer, so the foodbank will be closed on Tuesday 9th and 16th July, opening again at the usual time and place on 23rd July.

Thank you for your continuing support with groceries, money and prayers. They are very much needed and appreciated.

I hope you get the opportunity to relax a little over the summer months and enjoy all the warm (?) weather. **Christine Robertson**

Finance and Property Matters

This note provides information on the annual report and accounts for 2023, the Finance and Property Group, the sort code and account number to be used for giving, gift aid, and office contact details.

The Annual Report and Accounts for 2023 for both the previous High Church and St John's Church were presented to the congregation at the annual stated meeting which took place on Sunday, 12 May 2024. The accounts showed the following at 31 December 2023:

- Total receipts - £180,470
- Total payments - £119,433
- Surplus for the year - £61,037
- Fund balances carried forward - £200,287
- Held in a mix of unrestricted, restricted and endowment accounts:
 - Unrestricted Funds - £88,322
 - Restricted funds - £91,873 (e.g. fabric and food bank)
 - Endowment funds - £20,092
- TOTAL FUNDS - £200,287

The Finance and Property Group has 13 members and is now meeting on a roughly two-monthly basis. Meetings were held on 15 February, 23 April and 11 June. The matters discussed at the most recent meeting included the profit and loss and equity reports for January to May 2024, energy use and smart meters, insurance and visits to the unoccupied former St John's church, action to recover possession of the former St John's manse, process for the sale of the former St John's buildings, church security and phasing of property work on Bathgate Parish Church.

Continued...

Finance and Property Matters Continued

Copies of the minutes of these meetings are available on request by contacting the church office, or emailing info@bathgateparish.com

Bathgate Parish Church has two accounts with the Royal Bank of Scotland. The sort code and account numbers are as follows: –

General account - Sort code – 83-16-05 Account number - 00110297

Fabric account - Sort code – 83-16-05 Account number – 00149991

The general account should be used for regular giving. The fabric account should only be used if you wish a proportion of your giving to be earmarked for fabric purposes.

These are the sort codes and account numbers previously used by Bathgate High Church. Consequently, members of the former High Church do not need to amend the sort codes and account number for their giving, however, members of the former St John's Church will need to make amendments to have their giving credited to the Bathgate Parish Church account.

We encourage giving by standing order, which is now used by many members of the congregation. Completed standing order forms should be returned to your bank, or standing orders can be set up online for anyone who does online banking. Anyone still wishing to donate by WFO envelopes, please contact the church office. Please state whether you are a gift aid donor or not.

If you pay income tax the church can claim an extra 25p for each £1 of your giving from HM Government if you sign a gift aid form. We would encourage everyone who is able to do so to complete a gift aid form.

Continued...

Finance and Property Matters Continued

Standing order forms and gift aid forms are available from the church office or can be collected in the church vestibule. It is essential that former St John's church members complete a gift aid form and return it to the church office, even if you have completed a form previously.

The church office is now open again all week Monday to Friday from 10 am until 12 noon and can be contacted on telephone number (01506) 650517. Please note that the office will be closed for holiday from Monday, 1 July 2024 and reopens on Monday, 5 August 2024.

Crawford, Ian and Jean
The Treasury Team



The Guild

Dear Friends,

I hope you are all enjoying your summer break - by the time you read this, we will be a good bit through it.

We have had a good and successful session (I think) and we are preparing for our next session which will start at the beginning of September. I am hoping for a variety of speakers and ideas so if you are free on a Wednesday afternoon, you will be made most welcome to join us in the Lesser Hall at 1:30pm usually finishing by 3pm after an ever-welcome cup of tea or coffee and biscuits. The fellowship and the chatter are wonderful!

Hope to see some new faces along with our usual members.

Agnes Ferris
(Secretary)

Country Dancing

We have stopped for the “summer” break. We hope to meet again at the beginning of September on Tuesday afternoons. If you are free, you would be made most welcome. We meet in the Lesser Hall at 1:00pm till about 2:30pm. The chat and music are very good even if you don’t dance. Hope to see you all in the new session.

Agnes Ferris



Flower Committee

The Flower Calendar for the remainder of the year is now in situ in the outer vestibule, still restricted to one name per week. Grateful thanks once again to our generous congregation for their support. Any new member wishing to gift flowers for church use, please leave a contact telephone number.

For those fortunate enough to escape on holiday, enjoy the break, hopefully returning refreshed in body, mind and spirit. Happy Summer everyone!

Beth Anderson

Pick me a posy, a promise of summer,
Poppies of scarlet and willowherb, too,
Dog roses plucked from
a sweet-smelling hedgerow,
Harebells and heather and
Speedwells of blue.
Winter must come,
but a posy of summer
Glowe evermore with the kiss of the sun.
Pick me a posy and let it stay always
Fresh in my heart as the day it was done.

Maggie Ingall (Quoted from *The People's Friend*)



Church Flowers

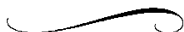
I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the beautiful flower arrangement I received after my hand operation. Only in the church that morning I commented on how lovely they were. Thanks also to Liz and Neil for taking the time to deliver them and have a wee chat.

Jackie Segrott



May I, on behalf of David and myself, say thank you for the beautiful floral arrangement which we received on the occasion of our Golden Wedding and to Beth for delivering them. I enjoyed our wee blether. Many thanks for all the cards, gifts, and good wishes sent by church friends. It is so kind and much appreciated. We had a lovely celebration with family and friends on 8th June.

Liz Orr



Thank you so much for the beautiful flower arrangement Beth Drysdale brought to me. They definitely cheered me up. We are so lucky to have ladies that are very talented. Thank you!

Marion Meikle



Grateful thanks for the beautiful floral arrangement which I received following the peaceful passing of my mum in May. Thanks to Beth Anderson for delivering the arrangement. We were very touched by the many kindnesses shown to us in messages of condolence, cards received and by those who were able to attend the funeral. (With wonderful singing!) **Alison Paul**

THANK YOU SO MUCH

WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT
WITHOUT ALL THE SUPPORT

To everyone at Bathgate Parish Church,

The 2024 Bathgate Procession was truly unforgettable! We are thrilled with our float and grateful for the fantastic turnout from the Simpson Primary families and staff.

This year marked the debut of our new Procession Club team in creating a float, and the first for Simpson since 2019. We reached out for help, learned valuable lessons, and gathered insights that will guide us in the future. The overwhelming support from local businesses and the community amazed us and made it possible to create our award-winning float, which secured the titles of Overall Most Entertaining and 2nd Place Decorated Vehicle.

Once again, a big thank you for the wood from both churches, which was used to build lots of our big elements, and for the use of the church hall for some of our craft sessions. We are so very grateful of your support.

We can't wait for next year!

Huge thanks,

Monique & Shona

ON BEHALF OF
SIMPSON PRIMARY PROCESSION CLUB





CONTACT INFORMATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Interim Moderator: - Rev Nelu Balaj Church Office 01506 650517

Locum:- Mr David Wilkie Mobile 0757 8006922

Session Clerks: - Mrs Anne Noble

Church Officer: - Mrs Jean Logie, Mobile 07710 057034

All other office bearers/ head of groups contact via Church Office

Phone 01506 650517 Email: - info@bathgateparish.com

Treasurer: - Mr Crawford Morgan

Property Convenor: - Mr Dave Robertson

Sunday School and Creche: - Mrs Carolyn McCusker

Safeguarding Officer: - Mrs Carolyn McCusker

Boys Brigade: - Mr Graeme Robertson

Girls Brigade :- Hazel Gallagher

Guild:- Mrs Agnes Ferris

Data Protection Officer:- Mrs Lorna Hutchens

Roll Convener:- Mrs Janette Peel

WFO Convener:- Mrs Anne Graham

Musical Director:- Ms Alison Paul

Pre-School:- Mrs Karen Redmond

Flower Convener:- Miss Beth Anderson

Pastoral Care Team:- Miss Bessie Stein

Country Dancing:- Mrs Agnes Ferris

Food Bank:- Mrs Christine Robertson

The Church Office is open Monday to Friday 10am-12noon