

THE LINK MAGAZINE
BATHGATE HIGH CHURCH
APRIL 2022



Scottish Charity No. SC007418

Our Mission statement -*We seek to share the love of Jesus by worship, faith and fellowship with all ages.*

Church office – info@bathgatehigh.com

From the Editor

Welcome to this Easter edition of the Link.

Inside, you will find details of upcoming services for Holy Week, important congregational updates, an Easter message from our locum, David Wilkie, and news from parish organisations.

Easter is a beautiful time of year. The clocks have 'sprung forward', the days are very gradually lengthening, there are distinct hints of sunlight and warmth, and nature begins to flourish anew. The Church journeys through the solemnity of Lent and Holy Week into the glory and joy of the Resurrection.

The music for our worship also changes from reflection to rejoicing. I have, over these past few weeks, been giving thought to the musicians who have composed the music we sing and play, and how the sheer beauty of their compositions tumble from their minds onto a page and into our lives! From the old traditional favourites to contemporary praise, their creativity can lift us, comfort us, and give us hope, reflecting every human emotion. As I listen to the amazing Music Group before and during the service on a Sunday morning, the sheer beauty of the instruments and harmonies floating through the church instil in me a renewed sense of calm and, for that hour of worship, the stresses and worries of the constant 'to-dos' fade away into the background.

I am looking forward to playing and singing some of our Easter favourites!

What is your favourite Easter hymn?

Alison Paul



Locum's Message

As we near the end of the Season of Lent and approach the Passion of Easter I am reminded of God's unending and unchanging love for His creation.

As I shared in church the other Sunday I feel as I reflect on my Christian life compared with our Lord Jesus as my measure I seem to be further away the closer I get.

Our God is so gracious and accepts and knows the trials and temptations we as His sons and daughter face in the world we live day by day, until Jesus returns in glory we have work to do in sharing the Good News to a dark and lost world.

We may inhabit this dark world but we are not part of it, we are visitors waiting to enter the glorious Kingdom where Jesus has prepared a place for us.

We in the meantime must be the hands, the feet and mouth of Jesus being guided by the Holy Spirit which lives in us. This same Holy Spirit who is constantly with us as we strive to live lives pleasing to Jesus and His Heavenly Father.

God accepted, adopted us into His family as His sons and daughters when we accepted we were sinners and needed Jesus in our lives.

God gave His only son Jesus at a time of his choosing to bring the Good News to this world and through His love for all humankind allow Jesus to die a slow and painful death on the cross for the sins of the world that Good Friday.

Jesus shared with His apostles shortly before he was arrested, tried and sentenced to death that:

Locum's Message Continued

'I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love...' Romans 15 vv 9-10.

Jesus obeyed His Father's commands to death on the cross at Calvary carrying the sins of the world on His shoulders, separated from His loving Father whilst in that sinful state.

'The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for him...' Romans 15 vv 13.

What love Jesus showed for us when He hung on that cross for our sins knowing as he died to save us and reconcile us with our Heavenly Father we became friend with God through God's grace.

As Jesus died and rose again that first Easter Sunday we who accept Jesus as our Saviour must be born again. Dying to the world's ways and be born into new creation pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

Jesus lives, He has risen from the dead and is seated by His Father's side in Heaven.

Bring your prayers to Jesus, our intercessor, a living Saviour who longs to hear and answer our prayers

May you find joy, true joy that can only come through knowing Jesus in a personal way, with the Holy Spirit living in your heart today and everyday until Jesus returns.

God bless you all this Easter

David Wilkie (Locum)



Congregation Update

As intimated in previous articles in the Link, Bathgate High Church and St John's Church are on a pathway leading towards a union in the near future.

The issue needs to be looked at with three different points of focus; National, local and from our own perspective.

If you have been following discussions and decisions at the Church of Scotland General Assembly over the past few years, you will be aware of the problems that the national church faces and some of the directions of travel that they have decided upon. The main driver is the fall in church membership over many years and the subsequent effect that this has had on the energy in churches and the state of national and local church finances. There are demographic issues, meaning that more congregations face a higher proportion of older members which leads to more prominent decline in the numbers for youth and children involved in church life. The church also faces a shortage of ministers and candidates for the ministry. With so many of the current clergy approaching retirement, there are simply too few ministers to address the number of churches in vacancy. The national church therefore proposed a 'Radical Action Plan' which tried to maintain the church's core purposes of worship, teaching, mission and service to the community while addressing the issues of declining rolls and finances, an ageing, costly and often outdated estate of buildings.

This 'Radical Action Plan' then fed down to a more local level, with each presbytery being asked to re-assess how a reduced number of ministry

Congregation Update Continued

posts might be allocated and how the estate of current buildings might be rationalised. This was to be encompassed in a Presbytery Mission Plan, stating how the new shape of the distribution of local churches best supports our mission to the community.

In terms of Bathgate, with both Bathgate High and St John's both in vacancy and Boghall with an established minister, the Presbytery Mission Plan suggested an allocation of two ministry posts to Bathgate, meaning that one would be allocated to Bathgate and St John's together. A great deal of discussion went into how this could be best achieved and a union of the two churches rather than a Linkage, where the two churches would share a minister, was favoured by both sessions.

A union would result in a new charge, with a new name and all members of each of the two congregations would become members of the new charge unless they choose not to.

The proposed union is seen as the best options for the churches as –

- It provides a pool of experience and energy to best support our mission to the community. There would be a single set of office bearers to drive this forward.
- It requires a single set of buildings and a single manse. This hugely reduces the costs of upkeep on two ageing buildings, but certainly gives the capacity and flexibility for the numbers currently attending.
- It gives a single minister focussing on a single charge, rather than having to spread their time between two charges.
- The sale of one set of buildings would produce sufficient funding to develop the buildings being used to make them more adaptable and flexible.

Congregation Update Continued

The issue of buildings is always one that stirs strong feelings. Quite simply, neither congregation is likely to be able to survive in the long term given the current trend in numbers attending worship, the current levels of giving, the maintenance costs of the existing buildings, and the costs of funding commitments to a ministry post, Presbytery and the national church. Attendance at worship and involvement in wider church life have both been thrown into sharper focus by the effects of Covid restrictions. We currently have around 50 members from a roll of around 400 attending worship in a building and financially supporting a building with a capacity of around 1000.

It is important that the advantages of a union are seen as just that. It is not a competition between two congregations to see whose building should be kept. We are therefore keen that the issue of the union should be settled before any decision is taken about buildings and should not be dependent on it. Neither church survives a union – the end result is a single new charge, leaner and fitter to address our mission to the community. There is no ‘winner’, but a new charge with a stable long term future.

Though the Sessions have discussed the proposed union at length and have decided that, on balance’ it is the best way forward, the decision, ultimately lies with the congregations of the two churches involved. For a union to take place, each congregation would have to vote in favour of the proposed Basis of Union – a statement of how the union would take place.

There are still discussions to take place between and with the two sessions; discussion which will be coordinated and supported by the presbytery, to work on a Basis of Union which will be brought before the congregation. This Basis of Union is a formal agreement outlining

Congregation Update Continued

the vision of the new congregation and outlining the detail of how the union is to be achieved.

Meanwhile please keep in your prayer all the office bearers, the session, the board members and every church member, along with our brothers and sisters at St Johns, so that we will be guided by God's Spirit in this important task ahead of us.



Services for Holy Week

Bathgate Churches together have produced the following schedule for Holy Week

Sunday 10th April [Palm Sunday]: Service in Boghall Church at 7pm.

Monday 11th April: Holy Week Reflections in Boghall [Hall] at 7pm.

Tuesday 12th April: Choral Evensong in St. Columba's Episcopal at 7-30pm. [There will be light refreshments after this service. Rev. Christine Barclay retires at Easter].

Wednesday 13th April: Holy Week Reflections in Boghall Church at 7pm.

Thursday 14th April: United Maundy Thursday Communion Service in St. John's Church at 7pm.

Friday 15th April - Good Friday

Stations of the Cross: 2-3pm St Columba's Episcopal Church

Stations of the cross and quiet prayer: St. Mary's R.C. Church: 7-10pm.

United Service in E. U. URC Church at 7pm

These services are open to all and anyone wishing to go along would be made most welcome.



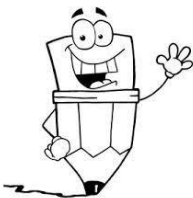
Opportunities for Service

With organisations and activities restarting, some are now looking for any help that the congregation can give. Three organisations in particular looking for volunteers to share in helping, are the Foodbank, the Welcome Team and the Preschool Activities. If you have time that you could give to help with these activities, please see Jean Logie in the first instance. The foodbank is also needing to build up stocks of some items and there is a list of what would be most helpful in their Link article.



Bessie's Quote

Everyone is entitled to be stupid, but some people abuse the privilege!



Foodbank Update

Our small team of foodbank volunteers have been kept busy on a Tuesday morning helping individuals, couples and families in Bathgate and Boghall.

We were very fortunate before Christmas to receive groceries and monetary donations from individuals within our own congregation, Windyknowe Primary School, our local sister churches and the Train Drivers Union. We have since received a generous cheque from Howden Joinery.

Our stock cupboard was full which enabled us to give out a substantial amount of groceries over the festive period which our clients were very grateful to receive.

We have since then used our funds to keep our stock maintained as we have on average about 7 or 8 customers visit us each week. We envisage that our client base may well increase due to the recent rise in the cost of living. This affects everyone but if you would like to make a donation of groceries, our box will be on available in the church vestibule each Sunday.

At the moment we need--

Tinned meat

Tinned tuna

Penne Pasta

Pasta sauce

Powdered potatoes

toilet rolls

biscuits

tea and coffee

sugar

Your generosity is appreciated.

Christine Robertson - Foodbank Volunteer

Church Flowers

Wow! Stop Press! Good News!

Following the easing of Church of Scotland/Government guidelines, we have now been given the go ahead for fresh flowers in church and for distribution/delivery to our housebound members unable to attend church.

Sadly, Covid has not gone away and there are certain precautions still in place. It will take a few weeks before we become fully operational but watch this space for further up to date news.

Beth Anderson



Special Note of Thanks!

A special note of thanks to our fabulous five cantors (Bessie, Liz, Brenda, Edith and Louise) who have been leading the congregational praise every Sunday morning. We are now on Singing Rota 3, and I am very grateful for all your hard work and lovely singing.

Many thanks to you all.

Alison



Congratulations

Belated congratulations to Shona Brownlee on her performance in Team GB at the recent 2022 Winter Paralympics held in Beijing. Despite a fall on her first run, she recovered well to complete the course. Her determination and perseverance made compulsive viewing for coaches, teammates and all family and friends watching TV at home. She finished 9th overall, a truly remarkable achievement especially for someone who only took up skiing four years ago.

Shona has a High Church connection in that she is the elder daughter of Anne and Archie Brownlee, granddaughter of Mrs Betty Campbell and the late Douglas Campbell and granddaughter of the late Elizabeth and Archie Brownlee (former Session Clerk of Bathgate High). Our Church Family offer Shona our heartfelt congratulations and wish her well as we look forward to hearing of further success on the ski slopes and in her RAF career. Well done!

Shona has also been awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours List. A well-deserved honour for a courageously talented young woman of whom her whole family are immensely proud.

Beth Anderson



The Guild

Just a short update before we break for summer. We came back in February and had a lot of interesting speakers. A lovely way to spend two hours on Wednesday afternoon. We are now nearing the end of our session in the middle of May. We will hold our AGM and 'in-house' afternoon tea, which I am really looking forward to. We still have room for new members if you are free.

We meet in the Lesser Hall from 1:30pm – 3pm when you would be most welcome. Hopefully, we will be back late August or early September.

Have a good summer break, stay safe and keep well.

Yours, in His service,

A. Ferris



Easter Egg Hunt

How many Easter eggs can you find?



