

# **BATHGATE HIGH PARISH CHURCH**

## **THE LINK MAGAZINE**

**AUGUST 2021**

**Please Pray  
For guidance  
On the  
Future of the  
Church  
In our  
Town**



**Bathgate !**

### **Our Mission Statement**

**We seek to share the love of Jesus by ,  
Worship , Faith and Fellowship with all ages.**

**Scottish Charity No. SC007418**

**Church Office :- [info@bathgatehigh.com](mailto:info@bathgatehigh.com)**

**August Link Editorial.**

**Welcome back my fellow travellers and I hope that you are all feeling well and keeping safe in these uncertain times .**

**It is now beginning to look as if , as a nation , with all our diverse communities , we are getting on top of the dreadful situation brought about by the COVID- 19 Global Pandemic .**

**The events and consequences of the past two years have been very divisive and for the life of me I cannot quite get my head around the attitudes of the many people who have convinced themselves that the whole situation is all lies and mismanagement by those who govern us . Really , I believe that no government or international organisation were even remotely in any position to cope adequately with the sudden affliction of COVID , let's just put our faith in the Lord that we can now begin to get back to whatever has passed for normal in the dim and distant past .**

**By the time you are reading this we will have had one of our best loved social events , a Thrift Shop , I feel that this is a most positive indicator that we are indeed getting back to our very welcome community lifestyle and you will see that we are doing the Blythswood Care ShoeBox Appeal this year .**

**Happy Days indeed .**

**John Binnie**

***Church Bloopers. " For those of you who have children and don't know it , we have a nursery downstairs " . Bessie.***

### **Locum's Message**

**The youngsters are now back to school, pray that this session will not be disrupted like last year's.**

**The COVID restrictions are gradually being lifted but great care, co-operation and understanding is needed as the virus is still around. Pray this nightmare is behind us and we came step forward and look forward to returning to a degree of normality.**

**Pray that soon, very soon we will see the children back in our fellowship on Sundays and in their groups that meet during the week.**

**Pray also for our adult groups that they too will start again soon and folks will have the confidence to come and share fellowship, socialise and support one another in these times together.**

**Since the start of August the nights have fare drawn in with shorter days and longer nights, we can however look forward knowing come the end of December the days with lengthen again.**

**If nothing else these events should encourage us to make the best use of each and every hour our Heavenly Father has given us. God's love for us unlike the length of the days or nights is unchanging and unending and through this knowledge we can move forward in faith knowing He is always by our side.**

**The love, God's love, He placed in our hearts when we accepted Jesus as our Saviour is a love that needs to be shared not as a chore but through joy, knowing the difference that God's love has made to us.**

**Jesus, during his earthly ministry reach out to all who were in need, be it a bodily, a spiritual or a mental need, he changed**

many a life bringing them from despair, hopelessness, unloved and feeling unworthy to joy, belonging and accepted in the eyes of their Heavenly Father.

Remember, God loves all of His creation, we were created for a purpose before we took our first breath.

But how will folks who walk in darkness know of His love and believe if they don't hear the message of this love. How can they hear the message that 'Jesus loves them', if it is not proclaimed, how can it be proclaimed if messengers are not sent out with this Good News.

At this time of year we look at the fields of golden crops awaiting harvest. The same applies to the fields of those seeking to know Jesus and the promise of Eternal Life. The farmers don't leave the crops in the fields to rot and die, we should all in our own way share in the harvesting the crop of those seeking God.

Let us all today play our part in gathering in the harvest of the seekers. Pray through Jesus that the Holy Spirit will give you the opportunities, take these knowing that God is with you.

Pray, pray earnestly for your loved ones that they might come to Jesus and share in the love and promise of eternal life.

Pray for the prodigals who have wandered away from the fellowship and the faith that they will come home to their loving Father, a warm welcome awaits them.

In God's love we pray we can be faithful in our prayer time, in the reading of the scriptures knowing Jesus is there through the Holy Spirit.

God bless

David Wilkie (Locum)

### **Fabric matters**

There are – as always – things on the go with the High Church buildings. Looking after buildings is a frustrating business, but Jean has kept things moving on all fronts in her usual tireless fashion.

The biggest questions at the moment are around the condition of the sanctuary. There are issues that we know about and have plans and costings for, but because we have been in vacancy and interim ministry for so long over the last few years, Presbytery has not allowed us to carry these out. It has now reached the stage that things like the stonework are deteriorating, and the Board and Session, as trustees of a listed building are starting to push for some of these programmes of work to start moving.

As you will be aware, a small, ornamental piece of plaster fell from the ceiling at Easter time. This has prompted a whole progression of checks to make sure that the building is safe. This is now being coordinated by an architect who specialises in the preservation and development of listed buildings.

Firstly, a roof inspection was carried out. This identified a programme of work which is maintenance work rather than repair, and though, at present, the roof is watertight, there are some issues which have been identified as an immediate concern to keep it in that condition.

Checks on the plasterwork by a plaster consultant and a structural engineer suggested that there was no indication of water ingress and that any visible cracking was due to historical movement, so did not seem to be of immediate concern. Indications are that some concerns about the condition of the plaster can be explained by previous work carried out on the building. We are awaiting a final report from the structural engineer and there is one final plaster check to have confirmed and if these come back as clear, we are likely to be in a position to move back into the sanctuary. This may take a week or two after we get the 'all clear' as cleaning will need to take place and we will have to check seating arrangements due to changes in social distancing advice.

With the return to the sanctuary, we hope that this step towards normality will encourage worshippers to return in greater numbers in the knowledge that we have their safety as an utmost priority, both in terms of the building and also our Covid arrangements.

### **Church life**

As restrictions continue to ease, church life is slowly returning to its 'new normal'.

In worship, we continue to use the Hall, but will look to return to the sanctuary as soon as we are given the all clear to do so. Currently the Hall is set out with a 2m distancing zone and a 1m distancing zone so that people are able to sit wherever they are most comfortable. Following our successful Communion last month, we will be celebrating Communion again later in September, with the service likely to be taken by our new Interim Moderator, Rev. Nelu Balaj from Livingston Old Church.

Organisations are starting to look at how they can restart safely. The Sunday School will restart from the second Sunday in September and this week also sees the resumption of the Pre-school midweek provision. Further details regarding Pre-school are available on their Facebook page, from the church Facebook page. The Friday Club will not be restarting in the immediate future as current Covid restrictions would impact on the kinds of activities they do. The BBs are aiming to contact parents within the coming week to look at potential numbers. Other organisations are also looking at Covid guidelines to see how and when they can restart safely. The most up to date information will be available on the church website and Facebook page.

Many of you will have visited the highly successful Thrift Shop over the past week. We used this as a 'trial run' to see how successful our new guidelines for hospitality were. These seemed to work very effectively, giving a lead to other organisations and also opening up the restarting of the church Coffee Mornings which have been a vital link in establishing a sense of fellowship

and inviting other congregations and the community to meet us in an informal setting.

It should be noted, though, that with organisations restarting, members are asked to consider if they could come forward to help in any way. The Pre-school, BB's and Coffee Morning teams would be glad to hear from anyone who could help in any way. Similarly, Jean would value any help folks could give on cleaning and setting up for the organisations. Please consider if you could make any of these opportunities part of your service to the church. Nor should you feel restricted to these examples whatever you wish to offer – Art work, Welcome Team, contributing to worship, Choir, Music Group – don't feel that you need to wait to be asked!

### **Vacancy matters**

Again, the report reflects what is very much a work in progress. There are time constraints, as Presbytery would like to have the allocation of ministry posts – and therefore charges – agreed by December 2021. This is the first stage of reorganisation. The second stage will involve looking at the future of buildings and this will be overseen by the new Joint West Lothian and Edinburgh Presbyteries.

What is clear, from the Church of Scotland Assembly decisions and the plan following on from this from Presbytery, is that everyone is going to be affected to some extent. With Bathgate and St John's both vacant, it is clear that these churches in particular are the focus for attention.

There are a number of scenarios, and these are, at present, speculation. Presbytery is unlikely to support a linkage of churches as this does nothing to diminish the upkeep costs of large, old buildings, but spreads ministry more thinly. The most likely scenario therefore involves a union of St John's and the High. How far this extends is also speculative – there seem to be two ministry posts allocated to Bathgate and Boghall, but Boghall already has a minister in place. If Boghall were to become formally involved with the town

centre churches, this opens up the possibility of a team ministry model, with one minister and one other post based around family outreach, youth work or IT based ministry. If Boghall remains as is, it is hard to see how anything but one ministry post for a united St John's and High would be the only realistic option.

Looking at such a union is sure to stir up huge emotions, but it is important to be clear about what a union means. Both the High Church and St John's would no longer exist as Church of Scotland charges. There would, instead, be one totally new charge – Bathgate Church of Scotland (or whatever the new congregation decides). This new charge would have a single congregation, a single Board and a single Session. If the two congregations chose to unite, all members of both churches would become members of the new, united congregation unless they chose to worship elsewhere. The new charge would, importantly, be able to choose and call a minister.

While many will feel uncomfortable at the idea of a union it is important to stress that this cannot come about unless the congregation votes for it. Despite the misgivings some may feel, a union offers many advantages. The increased numbers in the congregation and the increase in giving would give a strong sense of collective Fellowship and the capacity to fill and develop all the posts and areas of responsibility within a charge. Increased giving may be able to fund new initiatives or development posts. The increased congregation is also likely to increase the capacity and stability of the organisations which would now be part of the united charge.

The buildings issue is possibly the most emotive aspect of a union, as memories and family history mean a strong sense of ownership. The decision whether or not to unite would be taken before any decision on where the worship centre in Bathgate town would be. There is a very real sense in which we have to be prepared to worship wherever God is rather than only in 'our' building. The Church of Scotland three years ago produced a report titled 'Well equipped spaces, in the right places' where it looked at what 'church' might look at in the future – an on-line presence, flexibility, adaptability and the ability to be used more than once a week and



commercially viable. Held against this document, it is clear that no churches in Bathgate fit the pattern of what a modern place of worship requires. Whichever church were to be chosen, extensive refurbishment would be needed to approach what the Church of Scotland sees as a 'Well equipped space'. The sale of unused buildings would hopefully be able to go a long way in funding this redevelopment. Some churches have even taken the decision to look at repurposed modern buildings as an alternative to a traditional church building.

It seems to me that now is the time to examine our feelings – heart and mind – as to what we see 'church' as being. Whatever step we take next it is a first step, and there is long journey to go. We do need to examine, though, why we feel the way we do to help us decide what we need to fight for and what is not a priority. We will be looking at ways to collect and collate peoples' views in the near future as whole church meetings are probably still not advisable.

I would therefore encourage folks to examine their feelings, motivations and the reasons behind them so that views can be expressed effectively and discussed fully. Think of what you feel church needs to be, as the current model is resulting in dwindling and ageing congregations with fewer and fewer people taking on more and more tasks just to keep things working. We need to build vision for the future, or our memories may ultimately get in the way of us being able to create new memories.

### **Pre-School**

With the relaxation in the restrictions we are restarting our Pre-School activities on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September .

We will be meeting on Tuesdays from 1.00 pm until 2.15 pm and on Thursdays from 10.00 am until 11.15 am and we look forward to welcoming any pre-school children .

We would also appreciate any assistance from adults that are available on either or both of these days .

Please contact the church office if you can assist . Tel. 01506 650517 or by email : [info@bathgatehigh.com](mailto:info@bathgatehigh.com)

Church Officer

### **Finance Report**

Dear Friends , As you can imagine , the finances of the Church have been hard hit over the last 18 months or so .

Luckily the donations are largely at the same level as last year , however , due to the manse not being rented for a couple of months at the start of the year and a slight decrease in Fabric Fund income , our income is down £ 4,000 .Our outgoings are down about £ 900 compared to last year .

Thankfully the Church has been able to take advantage of the Job Retention Scheme and this has ensured that the deficit has been at about £ 2,500 compared to £ 6,800 had this Scheme not been in place .

However this ends at the end of next month .

Please pray for the finances of the Church , and hopefully as we exit lockdown our income can increase .

Yours in Christ

The Finance Team

### **Vaccination Thanksgiving**

Following the letter printed in the July issue of the Link , there will now be a retrai collection on **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September ..**

This is a joint initiative between the Church of Scotland and Christian Aid .

It is an opportunity to give thanks for the vaccines available in the UK , the roll-out of the vaccine programme and to help those in poorer countries who are desperately in need of the vaccines for their protection .

Liz Orr

## **Getting back to more normal Church activities?**

### **1. Office**

The office will reopen, run by volunteers , from week beginning 30<sup>th</sup> August . It will be open Monday to Friday between 10 am until 12 noon . We need more volunteers to cover illness or holidays . If you think you can help in any way , please email the church office or [sessionclerk@bathgatehigh.com](mailto:sessionclerk@bathgatehigh.com) or make contact through the church Facebook page . The task is not onerous , it's more a case of someone to answer the telephone , check emails and speak to anyone who visits .

### **2 .Coffee Morning**

Monthly coffee mornings will resume again on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September . Then the October one will be on 23<sup>rd</sup> October . These are , of course , subject to no further changes being made to the current Covid regulations .

### **3 . Thrift Shop**

This past week we have had an extremely successful Thrift Shop -- the first since October 2019 !!

The amount raised for Church funds was an amazing £2736 . This is in no small measure due to the dedication and hard work of our little army of volunteers made up of both members and non-members alike .the week of 11-16October has been booked for the next one.

More volunteers are required . So , nearer the time , please consider putting your name forward to help out for a few hours during that week . It is very unfair to expect the same folks to do all day , every day during this forthcoming week .

Thank you , Ian McLean

**Shoe Box Appeal 2021**

Last year was a bit of a disaster due to COVID .

This year it is all systems go .



Here is a list of goods set out by Blythswood Care

**Toiletries / No Talcum.**

Shampoo

Soap

Face Cloth

Moisturising Cream

Comb / Brush

Sanitary Products

Shaving Foam / Razors

Underwear

Socks / Tights

Hats / Scarfs / Gloves

**Stationery.**

Pens / Pencils / Sharpeners

Notepads / Colouring Books

Rulers / Rubbers

**Clothes and other Items**

T . Shirts / Pyjamas

Jumpers

Shirts

Small Toys

If you would like to donate either goods or money please contact

Mrs June Wilson or Mrs Anne Graham

**Thank you**

## A LOOK BACK IN TIME

***You will be thinking, what nonsense is Duncan going to talk about this month. Firstly, an article I found amusing from the 1960s.***

***( In the 60s ) 1 Water came out of a tap.***

***If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more for it than the cost of petrol, they would have become a laughingstock.***

***2 Curry was a surname***

***3 Surprisingly ,muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed.***

***4 A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining outside.***

***5 People who did not peel potatoes were considered lazy.***

***6 Crisps were plain, the only choice we had was whether to put salt on them or not.***

***7 Brown bread was something only poor people ate***

***8 Pasta was not eaten.***

***9 Oil was for lubricating and fat was for cooking.***

***10 And finally, Tea was made in a pot with tea leaves and never green, happy days!***

***Kathleen and myself have managed to get out a bit more than we have been since this Covid 19 thing started, it has really frightened me big style and I tend to be very much more careful now than I have ever been in my life before, in meeting people. I never imagined that I would have to live through a world pandemic never in a million years.***

***This week's been a strange one, I feel that not much has been achieved .I was always told as a youngster that if you achieve something every day, no matter how small, then your day has not been a waste of time ! I'm still trying to think of any achievements for today, but I can't !***

***I'm thinking back at the moment to when I was living on The Isle of Skye, probably back when I was about 13/14 years old at the time. There was a piece of the croft that was much boggier than the rest about a quarter of an acre and in the late summer and early Autumn it was a mass of purple flowers ,Irises I believe, they were beautiful at that time of year, and they came up at the same time each year, nobody to my***

**knowledge had planted them there ,so they must have been wildflowers as far as I'm aware, maybe because they liked the damp conditions on that section of the croft ?**

**The other day a friend from B.H.C and I were talking about mileages we do every year in our cars. He stated that he was doing about 12,000 miles a year and I told him that when I had the taxi business ,I was doing about 150,000 a year minimum myself ,that's why my cars had to be changed every 3 years at the very most, because by that time they were scrape and fit for the dump. That is equal to the average man or woman driving 12 years driving in one year, it's not something I could or would do any more these days. At that time, I never looked on it as anything special ,the milage I was doing but in hindsight it was very much, a young man's game.**

**I read this recently:**

- 1. The older I get the more I realize the value of staying low profile, of cultivating our circle and only letting certain people in. You can be open, honest, and real while still**

***understanding not everyone deserves a seat at your table....What a very true saying !***

***Before I start with this short final section, just let me say, I am not a food or hotel critic. This is just a quick mention of some of our favourite hotels in Skye. Without doubt, one of my favourites is Isle Ormasay on the Sleet Peninsula .Also in Sleat is Kinloch Lodge Hotel. Now heading up to Portree and the Cullin Hills Hotel overlooking Portree Bay. One of my favourite eating places on Skye is the 3 Chimneys Hotel ,near Dunvegan on the Northwest corner of Skye.***

***Well once again time has caught up with me, so time to leave you all till next month my friends.***

***So, take care of all family, friends and neighbours.***

***Duncan MacPherson.***



The following items are all genuine attempts to pass on information . They were sent to our own Murray Altken a former Link Editor by Nancy Whitefield ( Ray Dalling's daughter ) who after marriage moved to the Cayman Islands .

All of these snippets were produced by churches in these Islands and have appeared in church bulletins or were announced during a church service and are credited to the church ladies with typewriters .

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***The Fasting and Prayer Conference , Includes Meals !***

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Scouts are saving aluminium cans , bottles and other items to be recycled .

Proceeds will be used to cripple children !

~~~~~

The Sermon this morning : 'Jesus walks on the water

The Sermon tonight : ' Searching for Jesus ' .

~~~~~

Ladies , don't forget the Rummage Sale .

It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house .

Bring Your Husband's .

~~~~~

Don't let worry kill you off – Let the Church help .

~~~~~

Miss Charlene Mason sang ' I will not pass this way again ' .

Giving obvious pleasure to the congregation .

~~~~~

**Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir .  
They need all the help they can get .**

~~~~~

**Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the Church .  
So ends a friendship that began in their schooldays .**

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**A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the Church hall .  
Music will follow .**

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**At the Evening Service tonight , the sermon topic will be  
'What is Hell ?'.  
come early and listen to our Choir Practice .**

~~~~~

**Eight new Choir Robes are currently needed due to the addition of several  
new members and to the deterioration of some older ones .**

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**Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person  
you want remembered .**

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**The Church will host an evening of fine dining , super entertainment and  
gracious hostility .**

~~~~~

**Pot- luck supper Sunday at 5.00 PM – Prayer and Medication to follow .**

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**The Ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind .  
They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon .**

This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church . Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin .

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The Pastor would appreciate if the Ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday .

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Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM .  
Please use the back door .

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The eighth -graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement , Friday at 7 PM .

The Congregation is invited to attend this tragedy .

Lo~~~~~

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church .  
Please use large double door at the side entrance .

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And this one just about sums them all up ;

The Associate Minister unveiled the Church's new campaign slogan last Sunday :

' I Upped My Pledge ~ Up Yours .'

I must honestly say that when Murray sent these to me I had a right good laugh to myself , It just goes to show how easy it is to make a complete and utter fool of yourself and a situation if you are not too careful .