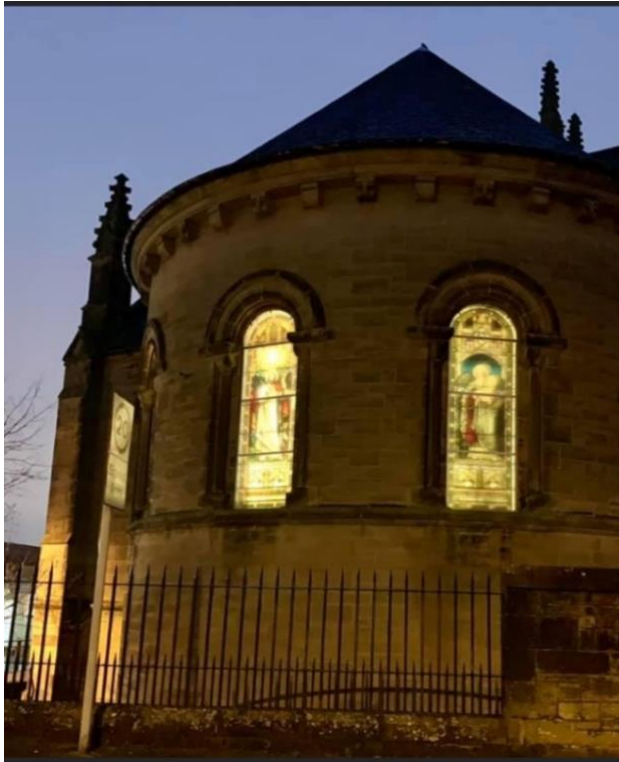


**THE LINK MAGAZINE
BATHGATE HIGH PARISH CHURCH
FEBRUARY 2021**



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
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Hell

Hello again. I must admit it is a pleasure to be able to talk to you once more through the pages of the Link . It has been a bit of an enforced silence a by-product of these difficult and challenging times .

I don't know about you but I have most certainly missed my church family and friends very much and wish for a return soon to some kind of normality, what ever that may be , at least to the relationships that we once knew and were comfortable with .

I have been following the various online worshipping offerings and , innovative and a clever use of available technology though they have been I miss greatly the personal contact and interaction of our group worship in the familiar confines of our own sanctuary . I have loved most of the praise items but nothing compares to joining with your friends and fellow travellers in giving these wonderful words the full attention that they deserve , it is so meaningful and satisfying to pour all your feelings into your worship led by your own organist and music group .

I am sure that you like myself have missed the simple things like coffee mornings , thrift shops even meetings as well as the group worship , oh for a speedy return in the future .

I also have no doubt in my own mind that the church community will be really needed to help repair the considerable damage that has been done to the economy and to general health and wellbeing in our wider community .

This I fear is a challenge that is not going to be overcome anytime soon and is going to need a great deal of faith and hard work .

So here's to better days and I hope that you keep well and stay safe .
John Binnie .

Locum's Message

As I prepared this article the sun is shining over a light covering of snow in the garden , I see in my pots and in the borders strong shoots breaking through the soil with the promise of spring flowers in a few weeks time .

The vaccination programme is up and running with a steady stream of folks receiving at least their first vaccine against the Corona Virus with the promise that protection from infection and spreading will soon come into effect .

The days are lengthening and soon , hopefully soon , we will be able to get out of our homes to spend time in the garden in time for fresh growth all around .

Spring is just around the corner .

It is almost a year since the Covid pandemic took hold in Scotland , many lives have been lost , others left suffering long term limitations from the infection , folks with loved ones in care and nursing homes have been unable to visit and hug their husbands/wives , mums/dads in a loving and caring way .

Church services , meetings , funerals and much more have been greatly restricted with church closures , restrictions in the numbers able to attend services in church , as well as services at crematoriums.

Life has in the past year , been far from normal , but let us move forward knowing that God is in control and nothing is too difficult for Him , have faith and trust Him in all circumstances.

Move forward with thankful hearts for all in our Health Service, Medical Research , Carers in their many forms who have worked bravely and tirelessly through this unprecedented period .

It is a timely reminder for us to remember how small and weak in our own strength we are but accepted as sons and daughters in God's family we know the love of our Heavenly Father , who cares for all his children as a loving and caring Dad .

Wednesday 17th March is Ash Wednesday , the start of the Season of Lent , a period of 40 days (doesn't include Sunday's) until Easter Day .

Lent for many Christians is a time of reflection as the walk with Jesus to the cross at Calvary where he died for a sinful world and for those who accept Jesus as their Saviour , the promise of reconciliation with God and accepted as His children .

In this Season of Lent I invite you to undertake a spiritual health check be honest with yourself as you consider how faithful you are in your prayer life , the study of God's word , your Christian witness to others . It is important that you do not compare yourself with fellow believers but you use Jesus as your marker , don't become despondent with the results of your spiritual health check , know that you serve a loyal and caring Father , a God of second chances .

Today , it is important for Christians to demonstrate faithful and loving Christian lives , we are called to be a light to the world , so let us all allow the love of Jesus in our hearts to shine radiantly so that the lost might be attracted and seek to know the hope , joy and love we have in Jesus .

Hopefully we will be back in church praising and glorifying God , supporting and encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ .

God bless

David Wilkie

Finance Report

The accounts for 2020 have now been independently examined and show a surplus for the year of £4,336 (2019 ;£6,358) . Unfortunately there was a deficit of £ 1208 related to unrestricted funds (mainly the general day to day account) ; however , there was a surplus of £ 5,267 in the restricted funds (mainly fabric funds) .

Our total income has fallen by £9,065 , mainly because of the Covid -19 pandemic . This has resulted in donations falling by £ 6,636 and no fundraising activities such as Coffee Mornings and the Thrift Shop not being held . The situation would have been much worse had we not received £ 6,516 from the Job retention Scheme and £11,267 from the manse rental .

In previous lockdowns , many members brought their envelopes and donations to monthly visits by Ian McLean to the Food bank , usually on the last Tuesday of the month . Ian is happy to continue this as long as the church is closed for public worship and will be there again on 23rd February from 10.30am until 12 noon.

During the first lockdown , several folks signed up to give regularly by bank standing order . It's still possible to do this and requests for information to do so can be emailed or telephoned to the church office . Another way to give is just to post a cheque to the church and it will be collected from there (if you have WFO envelopes , please enclose one with the cheque) .

Thank you

The Finance Team

I recently I received a birthday card from a friend and the picture on the front is of nine geese flying over the water .

This is from a painting entitled "And Breathe " by Baptist minister and artist Chris Duffett .

He explains that near where he lives lots of geese gather . When he ventures on prayer walks , he usually sees them and hears them flying in . This painting has 9 of them , symbolising the Holy Spirit and the gifts and fruit that He gives . The painting carries an invitation to breathe in the fruit of the Spirit and breathe out the opposite . The artist was inspired at the time of painting by the powerful breath prayer that has been written by Sheridan Voysey .

You can pray the words in bold slowly breathing in and the following Words slowly breathing out .

Lord God , fill me with ur Holy Spirit

I receive your love , and release my insecurity

I receive your joy , and release my unhappiness

I receive your peace , and release my anxiety

I receive your patience , and release my impulsiveness

I receive your kindness , and release my indifference

I receive your goodness , and release my ungodliness

I receive your faithfulness , and release my disloyalty

I receive your gentleness , and release my severity

I receive your self control , and release my self-indulgence

Just as we breathe in and out as a sign of our physical well-being , then this prayer is a powerful exercise for our spiritual well-being .

Certainly worth the discipline of praying these words each morning and being filled with the Spirit !

You can see the painting if you google www.chrisduffettART.com

May you be blessed .

Liz Orr

Property Update

Church

Taylor Roofs have completed the requested cleaning of the gutters around the Church . It is anticipated that this will be an annual task .

Large Hall

The Security Panel for the Large Hall he's been upgraded .

The access ladder for the storage area under the stage has been replaced .

Dyno-rod has been contacted to unblock the downpipe , near to the rear kitchen door . This was due to happen on Thursday 11th February , but due to the bad weather was cancelled and has been rescheduled for Thursday 18th February .

Taylor Roofs have reviewed the work required for the gutters and roof work and will attend during March to carry out the necessary work .

The alarm system has been serviced .

The smoke detectors have been updated to meet current legislative requirements .

Taylor Roofs have been contacted and will attend in March to address an issue with a leak 8n the roof .

Jean Logie

Worship – where now ?

Since January , with the second lockdown , we have returned to our pattern of an on – line service , with David providing the prayers and reflection , Jennifer the All Age Talk and using music video clips , with words , so that you can frighten your pets in the privacy of your own homes . The service is presented on the church website

(<https://www.bathgatehigh.com/worship/this-week-s-service>) with a link from the church Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/Bathgate-HighChurch/>)

The history of our patterns of worship over the last year is meandering full of compromises and sticky tape solutions . It is worth noting , though, that the Word of God has been preached under the banner of Bathgate High Church every single week since last March . While everybody misses the closeness of worship , there is a sense of fellowship and community with our services being presented by our “ Ain folk ” , and being followed by most at the time they would normally be meeting together . Though there have been some huge disappointments ; the movement of our special services at Christmas on-line , for example , Bathgate High continues to invite you , encourage you , support you and challenge you through all our different patterns of worship . We hope and pray that you can engage with our worship and have a real sense of God’s presence in these strange and difficult times . We hope and pray for the time when we can worship God again together in the sanctuary .

Our thanks to the team keeping worship going – David , Jennifer , Shona and John – but also to all those who have joined in and offered their advice , feedback and comments . We hope that you will continue to use the on – line services that we offer , but also to bear in mind that there are some who do not have access to the internet , so please offer a hand of fellowship to them if you are aware of people in this situation .

God Bless

The Scott Monument

The Scott Monument is a Victorian Gothic monument to the Scottish author Sir Walter Scott . It stands in Princess Street Gardens in Edinburgh ,near the Edinburgh Waverley Railway Station so named after Scott's Waverley novels .

The tower is 200 feet 6 inches high , and has a series of viewing platforms reached by a series of narrow spiral staircases giving panoramic views of central Edinburgh and it's surroundings .

The highest platform is reached by a total of 288 steps .

It is built from Binny sandstone quarried near Ecchlesmachan in West Lothian .

Following Scott's death in 1832 , a competition was held to design a monument to him .

The successful design was by a self taught architect GM Kemp who entered his design under a pseudonym as he feared his lack of a qualification would disqualify him , however in 1838 Kemp was awarded the contract to construct the monument .

John Steel was commissioned to design a statue of Scott to rest in the space between the towers four columns . Steell's statue , made from white Carrara marble , shows Scott seated , resting from writing one of his works with a quill pen and his dog Maida by his side .

The monument carries 64 figures (carried out in 3 phases) of characters from Scott's novels by a variety of Scottish sculptors .

The foundation stone was laid in 1840 , construction began in 1841 and was completed in autumn 1844 with Kemp's son placing the finial on top . Total cost was £16,154 .

Kemp himself was absent from the inauguration in August 1846 having fallen into the Union Canal while walking home from the site on a foggy night and was drowned .

Excerpts from an article found by regular contributor Jim Jack .

A wee footnote Waverley Street and Marion Road in our parish were named after a couple of Scott's novels .

Communion Tokens

A Communion Token was a metal token issued to members of Reformed churches to provide them with entrance to The Lord's Supper . There were many types issued in Scotland in the 18th and 19th centuries , but they were largely superceded by the communion card . Communion Tokens were first suggested by John Calvin first in Geneva in 1860 .

However the most use of these Tokens were in Scotland where over 5,000 types have been recorded and were also used in many other countries such as Australia , New Zealand ,Canada and the United States .

Most tokens are from the 19th century but it is recorded that they were still used by a few congregations in Eastern Australia in 1964 .

Communion Tokens were also used in Scottish Episcopal churches . The issuing of these Tokens was dependant on the practice of Closed Communion , in which only members of the particular church are allowed to participate .

It was said that to avoid profanation of the Eucharist , the church elders in the role of moral watchdogs , distributed these entry counters to those members of the faithful whom they deemed qualified by virtue of correct belief and proper conduct .

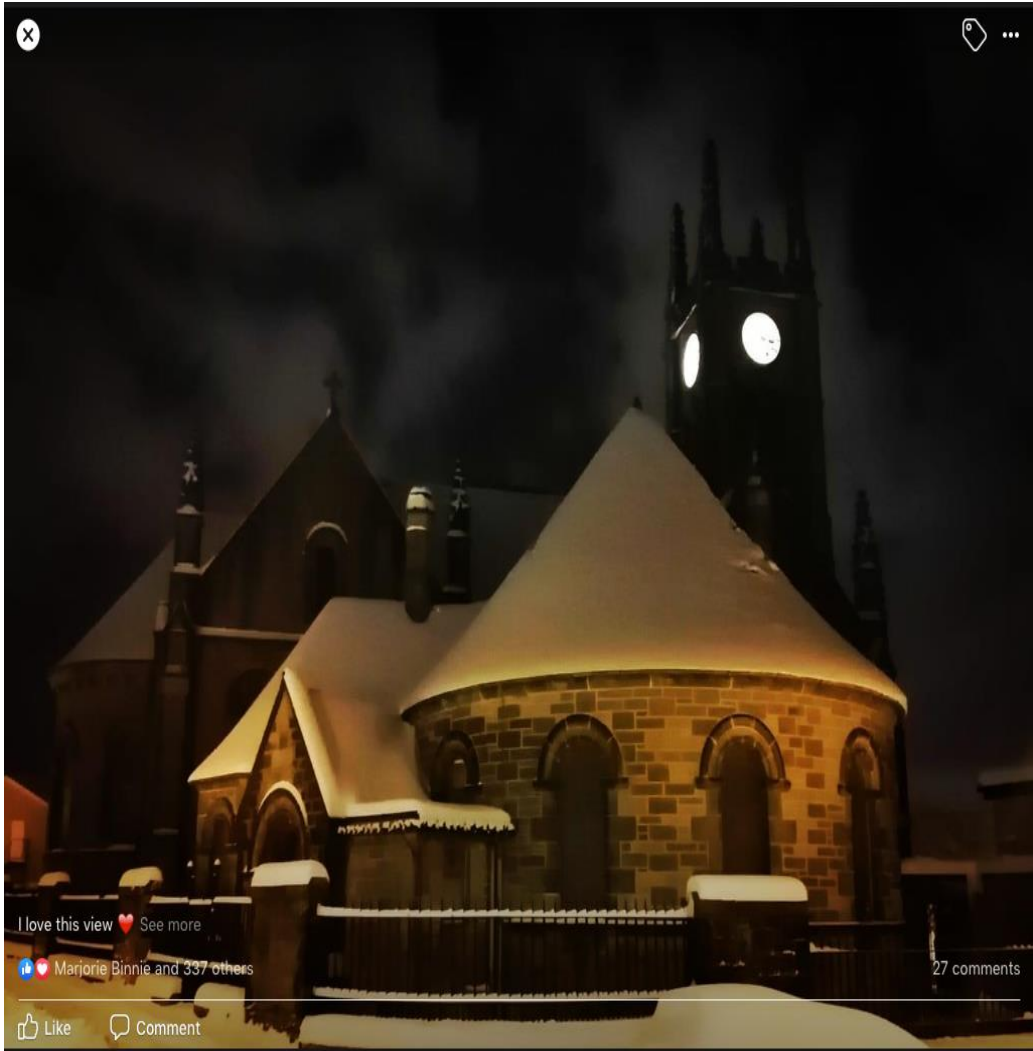
The distribution of the tokens would normally be preceded by a visit by the minister and or the elders to give Catechism instruction and be questioned in matters of faith it is a matter of record that from the end of the 19th century these metal token were gradually replaced by Communion Cards and the rule regarding admission to the Lord's Table were eased thus allowing members of other denominations , on profession of faith to communicate .

Many Tokens had verses on them i.e. " this do in remembrance of me " and were made of lead or other base metal and came in a variety of shapes , round , oval or square .

The Dunblane museum has a collection of over 6,000 tokens on display
John Binnie

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A wee picture taken this week of our church , there are so many great pics of our church that I have seen on Facebook over the years and every one has moved me , such an impressive well loved building from every angle and aspect .



Rants of a teuchter

Well that is us into another year , let us hope this year is better for most people than last was . Who would have thought in January 2020 the year would have gone the way it did !

Up till the 10th of February 2021 the death toll worldwide (as far as I am aware) has passed 2.9 million , a totally frightening statistic to comprehend , **let us all pray to God** that this year will be better now that Pfizer and Astra Zeneca and others have found vaccines for Covid . Before the present world situation , I could sit down and have a 4- or 5- page article written out for the Link in an hour , no problem but I am struggling more now , I cannot explain it ! Maybe I have too much on my mind , I do not know ?

When I am writing I write things down as they come into my head , now that may well be , not how a professional writer would do it , but I am not a professional writer nor do I proceed to be !

Being brought up in the west of Scotland 8n what some may consider to be a very Presbyterian home (I would not agree with that statement) as it was always full of love and laughter . The norm for us on the Sabbath was to be in church three times , morning service in English , afternoon service in Gaelic and English service again in evening . Apart from the work of God nothing happened in the home on Sundays . All dishes were cleaned on Saturday evening and all food was prepared on Saturday for the following day too ! Sundays truly were a day of rest for everyone including the animals on the croft .

Talking about animals , the people that **really know me well** , will know my deep love and compassion for animals and dogs and I really dislike people being bad to them . I have had many breeds of dog in my life , German Shepherds , Collies , Dobermans , Giant Schnauzers , Greyhounds , Afghan Hounds , but my last dog broke my heart when I lost him and I said I would never have another one , he was also the smallest dog I ever had , his name was *Bertie the Boston Terrier* .

Going back to the Isle of Skye and my upbringing for a moment or two . My mother always stressed to me that courtesy would achieve more

for me in my life than anything else , so she told me that these were the 3 most important words in the English language , **please** and **thank you** , as always , she was right ! When I hear some people talking to each other nowadays it makes me cringe , what is the problem ! With people being nice and kind to other people , maybe it is me that is being naive , I do not know ?

As a wee boy , I always looked forward to my Auntie Mary coming home to Skye from Glasgow (she always spoiled me rotten) . She worked with the B.B.C. in the days when the B.B.C. offices were in the old Queen Margaret Drive . Auntie Mary always gave me a Ten Shilling Note when she arrived and another one before she left to go back to work (a fortune to me in those days) or ten shillings in old money and 50 pence in today's money . Children nowadays would laugh in your face at getting such a tiny amount , but I really thought I had been given a fortune in these days in the 50s . She worked with some well known directors of the day (who will remain nameless) and did a lot of freelance work for UK film companies of that era . She worked a lot with Ealing Studios , if anyone remembers them ??

I made my heading this month **Rants of a Teuchter** , now if anyone out there takes offence at the word Teuchter , that's their problem , because that 8s what I am and proud to be one , I will not want to be anything else ! Some people out there say of me that I am a hard nose but the people that say that do not know me at all .

I would like through the pages of your magazine to quickly thank each one of you out there for your letters , cards , texts , e-mails and Facebook messages , in fact all kind wishes after my recent stay in St John's Hospital with Pneumonia ,I feel the fellowship I receive from the High Church is second to none .

So , till next month show love to each other and take care of your family friends and neighbours .

Duncan MacPherson .

Well my friends this is our latest attempt to get your Church Magazine into the public domain without contravening any of the current lockdown rules .

You may or may not know that we're we to produce the usual hard copy we would have to use the Royal Mail or some such delivery outfit to deliver the 400 + copies that we produce.

This is why we have decided not to print hard copies.

The only problem is that not everyone has the means to access the online version , so if you are able to help someone get on to the Church website and be able to take part .

We would also welcome any constructive comments for future issues and I am sure that we will get better at this format although one would hope that we might get back to more familiar versions soon .

Take care and keep well

John Binnie

