

**BATHGATE HIGH PARISH CHURCH**  
**THE LINK MAGAZINE**  
**JULY 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](mailto:info@bathgatehigh.com)**

Hello once more my friend and a warm welcome to our July issue of your Link magazine.

Because of my recent enforced inactivity due to an injury caused by my own foolishness , I have been giving some thought to the history of the Christian church in our small town .

To be perfectly frank I was astonished to realise ( even though I basically already had some knowledge of the history that there has been a church building in our town for well over 1000 years .

I had not really appreciated that fact before .

I genuinely hope and pray that sooner rather than later we will all be able to meet freely once again , I can honestly say that I have never missed so many weel kent faces in all of my days .

Roll on to the end of all of these wearisome lockdown restrictions .

The only upside is that as I am writing this I have been sitting outside in my garden , not a usual habit of mine , enjoying the luxury of a really welcome summer sun on these weary old bones sharing a Greggs chicken sandwich with my big cat Gizmo . He really is quite a scrounger, whatever I eat he will try a bit . Chicken sandwich , crisps anything that is on offer but no salad .Anyhow I am going to sign off now and I hope you enjoy your Link and I hope that you keep safe , stay well and be kind to all that you come into contact with .

John Binnie

*Thought for this month .*

*Everyone makes mistakes .*

*The trick is to make mistakes when nobody is looking .*

*Bessie*

Large print editions of the Link will continue to be available via the Church Office :- phone : 01506 650517 email: [info@bathgatehigh.com](mailto:info@bathgatehigh.com)

**Locum's Message**

**Allow me to start with a prayer**

**Living God,**

**help us to remember that you are a God who never sleeps,  
a God on whom we can depend in any and every situation.**

**When we feel lost and alone, teach us that you are there.**

**When we feel overwhelmed by trouble,  
unsure of our ability to get through,**

**help us to remember that you are close by.**

**When we feel uncertain of the way ahead,  
fearful of what the future may hold,**

**teach us that you are watching over us.**

**Help us to understand that, whatever we may face,  
you will guide and guard us,**

**protecting us from evil and enfolding us in your everlasting arms,  
and in that knowledge may we meet every day with quiet trust**

**and glad thanksgiving. In Christ's name. Amen**

**Remember, God loves you and chose you as his son or daughter.  
He created each of us for a purpose and never feel you are  
worthless, In God's eyes you are precious, unique and loved by  
He who created you in His image.**

His love for you and I was so great, that He not sparing His own son Jesus who He offered as a living sacrifice that we who were once far from Him are now adopted into His family and we will share in the Kingdom when Jesus returns.

Know with your heart, whose you are and who it is you are called to serve.

God is faithful.

God keeps His promises.

God loves you as a loving caring father loves their child.

These last fifteen or so months have been extremely difficult for us all but God has been faithful, He has never left us nor forsaken us, always there by our side even when we were unable to get out and about as normal and meet as a family of God.

We continue to meet Sunday by Sunday, still in the Church Hall, where we are now allowed to sing our praises albeit through our facemasks, as well as on Facebook and on the Church's Website.

Please continue to support our congregation by joining us in worship on Sunday in the Sanctuary or on line.

A BIG thanks for all your support for one another through this difficult time and God's blessing to you all.

David Wilkie (Locum)

### **Re-adjustment and vacancy**

**Discussions are still underway regarding West Lothian's plans for the future, led by the Planning Group from West Lothian Presbytery.**

**As was outlined last month, the Church of Scotland is facing tough decisions due to falling rolls and attendance, reduced giving and a shortage of ministers. West Lothian is faced with the prospect of reducing its number of ministry posts from 28 to 17. With two churches in Bathgate currently in vacancy, the picture for the town is complex.**

**A meeting has taken place of representatives of different areas within the Presbytery, and following this, a further meeting of Bathgate only churches has also taken place. The Bathgate discussions are still at an early stage. There are a number of possible ways forward still being evaluated and the next meeting is scheduled for the last week in July.**

**There is, as yet, nothing concrete for the congregation to consider, but we remain committed to keeping folks as fully informed as we can and, as always, there is a reminder that no decision can be made without discussion and agreement by the congregation in a formal vote.**

### **Fabric matters**

**We are in a situation where we are currently unable to use the sanctuary for safety reasons.**

**At Easter, just as we were preparing to reopen, a small, ornamental piece of plaster fell from the ceiling of the church under the glass cupola. Though the piece of plaster was small, it had come from a considerable height, and for safety reasons we decided to close the sanctuary while the cause of the possible causes were investigated.**

**There has now been considerable work done investigating possible water ingress from the roof. A complete survey of the roof area of the church has been carried out and a programme of maintenance issues proposed to ensure that the building remains water tight for the future.**

**The investigations have, however, also highlighted other areas of concern**

with some unstable plaster in the main roof area. These issues are being investigated further and we have engaged the services of an architect with a great deal of experience in working on listed buildings to coordinate the different services involved, quotes for work and to help submit applications for grants.

Presbytery representatives have been fully informed of our situation, have been involved in our discussions and are supporting us in the process.

It is, however, difficult to see how the situation can be resolved quickly, as various reports have to be collated and considered and then quotes for work obtained. Our plan of action would then have to be approved by Presbytery and possibly the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland if the work is extensive.

The situation is challenging, but is being tackled one step at a time. A Board meeting is scheduled for mid July to consider ways forward and longer term planning for different eventualities.

### **Stewardship**

Though there are issues with the sanctuary at the moment, we are fortunate that we have the Large Hall available to us for worship. We now have a well-rehearsed and well understood series of measures in place to make sure that our services take place as safely as possible. The capacity of the Hall in terms of social distancing is actually the same as the sanctuary as the flexibility of seating makes things easier than working with fixed pews.

We are now able to sing as a congregation, though with some restrictions. We are also continuing to stream the service live on our Facebook page, and the video is also available on the church website for folks not on Facebook later in the day.

We are extremely fortunate to have David Wilkie conducting our services weekly and he is also doing a power of work in pastoral support around in the parish. We were also able celebrate our first service of Holy Communion in two years, though again, with some changes to the way things are done.

**So, despite all our difficulties we continue to support worship for our members and the community.**

**Though it is important to make our service available electronically, the most meaningful way to take part in worship is to be physically part of a fellowship. We would like to encourage all our members back to join in worship and, as with the rest of life, this will become more and more what we remember as restrictions ease and change.**

**There will be some who are understandably worried about joining as part of a gathering in a public space.**

**We would encourage the congregation to talk and to support each other; talk to someone who has been attending worship to see how they found it, or contact a friend you are missing and personally invite them back to worship. There are many who may have simply gotten 'out of the habit' of church, and may be feeling less involved or part of the fellowship with organisations not currently running.**

**This is where we need to be supportive of each other in rebuilding our worship base and sense of fellowship. Our aim is to restart the bulk of our organisations in late August or September, though we await confirmation of how restrictions are to be eased. Organisation leaders are looking carefully at how programmes can be delivered as safely as possible and according to all Scottish Government and Church of Scotland advice. Please take time over the summer to talk to others in the congregation and community who attend organisations and discuss any concerns that they might have.**

**It is also fair to say that as we work to rebuild the fellowship, our financial situation is also in need of some refocussing. This is particularly important with the prospect of work needing to be done on our buildings.**

**Our aim is not to have sufficient funds to maintain our buildings, but to develop them to make a more effective base for our worship and mission to the town. Please support the fabric fund by using the brown envelopes which are distributed with the Link and Ian McLean makes himself available at least**

one Tuesday morning per month for people to hand in either WFO envelopes or donations to the church, including the Fabric Fund. We are also looking to restart fundraising activities with a Thrift shop in August and may look to other ways of making giving easier specifically for the Fabric Fund.

Stewardship is big; it involves our giving to the church, but it has other elements too. It is about our energy, our time, our commitment and our talents. All of these build together to become our service to the High Church and our mission and commitment to the wider community. It cannot be viewed as someone else's job – stewardship is for all of us to consider as individuals.

### **Changes to Covid restrictions**

At the time of writing, we are waiting for confirmation that the country is to move to Level 0. This will affect our Sunday worship in that the social distancing required is reduced to 1 metre rather than 2 metres. We will start off with the Hall set up to have both 1m and 2m distancing zones.

The Welcome Team will be less directive in seating people, meaning that you can choose to sit closer to someone for a chat or further apart if you are more comfortable maintaining the 2 metre distance.

The capacity of the Hall is likely to increase slightly, though we have still to make the detailed measurement and calculations.

Other restrictions, though, remain. Masks must still be worn, including while singing, you will still be asked to sanitise your hands on entering the building and we will continue to register attendance for 'Track and Trace' purposes.



### **Vaccination Thanksgiving**

The Moderator of the General Assembly , Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC , has launched a joint initiative between the Church of Scotland and Christian Aid encouraging members to give a financial gift in thanksgiving once they had received full vaccination for Covid-19 . In a recent letter he comments how fortunate he has been to have received his two vaccinations , unlike many people living in poorer parts of the world . He plans to visit Lebanon and Malawi where the percentage of population vaccinated with only one vaccine is 4% and 0.8% respectively .

The World Health Organisation have said , no-one is protected until all are protected . By supporting Christian Aid in their efforts to provide basics such as soap, water and food , we can ensure that vulnerable communities stay safer as they wait for vaccination . In this very tangible way , as we seek global justice , here is a practical opportunity to give real expression in 2021 to loving our global neighbours .

Later in the summer , the High Church will organise a retiring collection as a token of our thanksgiving . Anyone wishing to give a donation in the meantime please click on the following link :

<https://giving.give-star.com/online/christian-aid/cos-just-vaccine-rollout>

*A prayer from Christian Aid.*

*God of Hope , sustainer of all life ,*

*We give you thanks for the Coronavirus vaccines , for the skill and wisdom of scientists , NHS staff and Key Workers .*

*By the power of Your Spirit , may we overflow with hope and joy as we see our friends , families and neighbours protected .*

*God of Justice , Protector of the vulnerable , may we be your well-washed hands and willing feet .*

*Move us to give and to act , to challenge the injustices that anger You .*

*May we seek to protect all Your children , particularly those for whom the vaccine is out of reach .*

*With hope and trust we pray .*

**Amen**

## **THRIFT SHOP**

**With the relaxation in the social distancing down to 1 metre, from the 19<sup>th</sup> July and hopefully this will be further relaxed; we have decided to hold our Autumn Thrift shops.**

**The chosen dates for these are opening on the 16<sup>th</sup> August and closing on the 21<sup>st</sup> August with a further week in October from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>.**

**The setting up will take place on the Sunday's prior to opening at 2.00 pm with the tidying up and clearing away on the Saturday afternoon at 12.00 noon following the closing of the morning opening of the shop.**

**We have amassed a tremendous amount of stock over the period of the shut down and would appreciate a great deal of assistance to set up our normal displays.**

**If you are available and willing to assist to set up and man the shop during the week please add your name to the rota that is available at the church or alternatively please give me a call.**

**A decision has yet to be made as to whether we will consider having teas / coffees but will advise the people that are normally involved in this activity nearer the date of the first thrift shop.**

**Jean Logie**

**Tel: 077100 57034**

*Names in a Book*

Earlier this year I was given a present of a little book called :

'A BOOK OF SPECIAL DAYS ' and throughout the months there are days when the birth of death of someone famous throughout history , who did something special , is mentioned . Below is a sample for the months of January – July .

**January** . Born 4<sup>th</sup> Jan . 1809 , Louis Braille , the blind Frenchman , who devised the touch system of reading and writing for the blind .

Died 13<sup>th</sup> Jan . 1915 , Mary Slessor , the Scots missionary who worked among the people of the African forest .

**February** : Died 21<sup>st</sup> Feb .1945 in a prisoner - of - war camp , Eric Liddell , Scots missionary and Olympic Gold Medallist . ( Hero of the film : *Chariots of Fire*.)

Died 25<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1723 , Christopher Wren , British architect and designer of St. Paul's Cathedral , London

Born 28<sup>th</sup> Feb . 1911 , Denis Burkitt , Irish doctor and proponent of the High fibre diet , who first found a cure for a form of childhood cancer .

**March** . Born 6<sup>th</sup> March 1475 , Michelangelo Buonarroti , Italian sculptor , painter , architect and poet , whose amazing output includes the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome .

20<sup>th</sup> March . The feast day of Cuthbert , pioneer of the Celtic church in Britain who lived on the island of Lindisfarne , and died in 687 after devoting his life to the needs of others .

**April** . Died on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1811 , Robert Raikes , printer who , in 1780 , pioneered the Sunday School movement .

Born 10<sup>th</sup> April 1829 , William Booth , English founder and first General of the Salvation Army .

Died 20<sup>th</sup> April 1759 , George Frederick Handel , German born composer famous for his oratorio ' The Messiah ' .

**May.** Born 12<sup>th</sup> May 1820 , Florence Nightingale , English nurse famous for her work during the Crimean War and founder of modern nursing .

On 15<sup>th</sup> May 1919 Eglantine Jebb was fined for trying to help the starving children of the world , resulting in the founding of the Save the Children Fund .

Born 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1749 , Edward Jenner , the English physician who was the first to establish the principle of vaccination with his studies on Smallpox .

**June.** Born 1<sup>st</sup> June 1793 , Henry Francis Lyte , the hymnwriter who , shortly before his death , wrote the famous hymn ' Abide With Me ' .

9<sup>th</sup> June 1801 – The Feast Day of Columba of Iona , the abbot and missionary who preached and taught among the Picts , and died in 597 .

Born 10<sup>th</sup> June 1801 , Joseph Rowntree , English Quaker businessman who worked to improve the education system and the life of the mentally handicapped .

**July.** Born 4<sup>th</sup> July 1845 , Thomas Barnardo , Irish founder of homes for destitute children .

Died 9<sup>th</sup> July 1228 , Stephen Langton , who divided the books of the Bible into the chapters which are still used today .

On the 21<sup>st</sup> July 1969 , American astronaut Neil Armstrong took the first steps on the moon .

Some of these names will be known to us and some probably not , but it is fascinating to read what is said about them .

As Christians , we may not be famous but there is one book where all believers names are written and that is the 'Book of Life ' , ( the Lambs Book of Life ) , -- the Book recording all who have been marked for salvation through their faith in Christ .This book symbolises God's knowledge of who

belongs to him ---a registration of our heavenly citizenship , ( our greatest honour ) .

Old Testament references to the Book of Life can be found at Psalm 69:28 , Daniel 7:10 , 12 :1 and in the N.T. at Luke. 10:20, Philipplians 4:3, Rev. 3:5,20:12, 21:27.

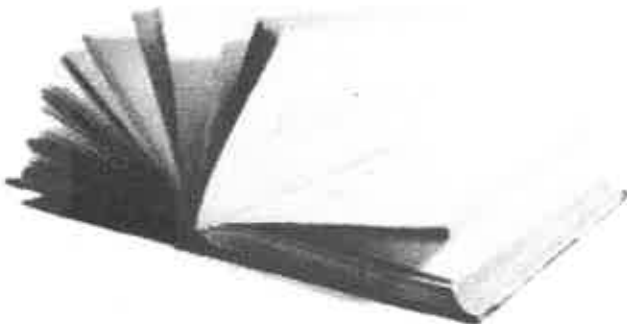
There are books which record the deeds of everyone , good or evil , and these will be opened on Judgement Day when all lives will be reviewed and evaluated . We cannot earn our salvation through work or deeds but they are clear evidence of a person's actual relationship with God .

Jesus will look at how we have handled gifts , opportunities and responsibilities and reward us accordingly . Have we been faithful and obedient servants ? Each of us must serve Christ in the best way we know and live each day knowing the books I'll one day be opened .

' So let us learn how to serve , and in our lives enthrone Him ; Each other's needs to prefer , for It is Christ we're serving .'

**( The Servant King )**

Liz Orr



## Senior version of 'Jesus Loves Me'

Here is a new version just for us who have white hair or no hair at all. For us over middle age (or even those almost there) and all you others, check out this newest version of 'Jesus Loves Me'.

### JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me, this I know,  
 Though my hair is white as snow  
 Though my sight is growing dim,  
 Still He bids me trust in Him.

Chorus: Yes, Jesus loves me,  
 Yes Jesus loves me,  
 Yes Jesus loves me,  
 For the Bible tells me so.

Though my steps are oh, so slow,  
 With my hand in His I'll go  
 On through life, let come what may,  
 He'll be there to lead the way.

When the nights are dark and long,  
 In my heart He puts a song.  
 Telling me in words so clear,  
 "Have no fear, for I am near."

When my work on earth is done,  
 And life's victories have been won.  
 He will take me home above,  
 Then I'll understand His love

I love Jesus, does He know?  
 Have I ever told Him so?  
 Jesus loves to hear me say,  
 That I love Him every day.

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN BATHGATE

In these uncertain times I felt the need to know more about the origins of the Christian places of worship in my home town .

I have been trawling through the internet looking for information and I thought that I would share with you some of the facts and I have no doubt suppositions that have come to light .



Old Bathgate Parish Church



Inside the Shell of the Church, Looking West

The old parish church stands opposite Kirkton Park about a mile east of Bathgate town centre . The church is on a slight grassy knoll but because it is surrounded by a large wall with only a small entry gate it can be easily missed . Most of the surviving ruin dates back to around 1220 but there are records of a church being there in the reign of Malcolm IV WHEN IN 1160 he granted the income from the church in Bathgate to the monks of Holyrood Abbey . All that is left today is a long narrow set of walls and the surrounding graveyard which was abandoned in the year 1739 after the building became unusable after the roof fell in .

There is a more recent grave marker to the South of the church known as the Covenanters Stone and commemorates one James Davie who was killed in 1673 as a result of his religious beliefs , he was apparently part of an " illegal" gathering worshipping in a field to the west of the town when the service was broken up by a squadron of dragoons and they shot Davie . The Covenanters Stone is still on view although it may not be the original one as there have been references to its restoration



The inscription on the stone reads  
' Here lies the body of James Davie  
Who was shot at Blackdub April 1673  
by HERON for his adhering to the word  
of God and Scotland's Covenanted  
work of Reformation in Opposition to  
POPERY PRELACY PERJURY and  
TYRANNY .

Repaired by a Few Men in this Parish .  
( IMAGINE THESE WORDS BEING USED TO-  
DAY , WOULD START A WAR )

I seem to remember that I read somewhere many years ago that during this period , some two years the parishioners either worshipped in the open air ( nearer my God to Thee springs to mind ) or in inclement weather held their services in a disused ale house near the top of Cochrane Street .

A new church was built , a simple whitewashed church in the traditional Scottish style on the site of the present High Church and was opened for worship in 1739 .

This church was demolished in 1882 and the present High Church was built and opened in 1884 .



## ***How the other half lives !***

***Well, that is another month just gone. I feel the older I get the faster the time goes or is that just me ?***

***During my life I have been many things, but between being a Nightclub Bouncer and a Taxi owner, I have also seen many things,infact to many things, you do not really want to see. I have thought often that the people that get up at 7am and go to bed at 11pm do not know how the other half lives! In fact, if you were to let it, you could become very cynical indeed!***

***As a youngster I was taught to be always courteous in life as that would gain you more Brownie Points than being the other way and that is the way I have always tried to lead my life! I do not know how many brownie points it gained me, but I would rather be that way anyway.***

***The following is a short passage I read this week on the internet, but so true I had to borrow it and let you read it for yourselves :***

***Things in life can happen so quickly and without warning. You might miss that opportunity to say sorry, I love you or thank you. Treat loved ones as well as strangers with love and kindness. Life is far too short to do anything else! Very profound words.***

***I also remember this old saying: It is just as well you do not know what is round the corner. There were so many sayings in days gone by ,most of them true.***

***Lately I have been spending a lot of the nice days we have had lately outside in the back garden, putting in flowers and plants for instance, busy***

***Lizzies,lobelia,pansies,lillies,oxide daisies, and also hanging baskets. If someone had told me 10 years ago that I would end up at 63 growing flowers, I would have said,theres no chance that will ever happen to me.Its funny in life things that were once important to me, now seem very much less so, at the very top of my list of important things are my family and they will always be my number one concern. My daughters and sons are spread far and wide in Scotland, but I always keep in contact with them all***

***Well, it reached that time again where we must part till August, that's scary as it does not seem a minute since last Christmas and sitting down to Christmas dinner, at our daughters.***

***So, till the next time we meet, always try and show love to all family, friends and neighbours.***

***Duncan MacPherson.***

## **BEREAVEMENTS**

<b>January :-</b>	<b>Mr. Alan Brown.</b> <b>Mr . James Love</b> <b>Mrs. Margaret Louden</b> <b>Mr . James Jappy</b>
<b>February :-</b>	<b>Mr . Ian Anderson</b>
<b>March :-</b>	<b>Mr . Jack Steele</b> <b>Mr . Bill Walker</b>
<b>April :-</b>	<b>Mr . Richard Saunders</b>
<b>May :-</b>	<b>Mrs . Jessie Taylor</b> <b>Mr . John Millar</b>
<b>June :-</b>	<b>Mr . Alex Watson</b> <b>Mr . James Walker MBE</b>

### ***How Did They Live***

**Not how did they die , but how did they live ?**

**Not what did they gain , but what did they give ?**

**These are the units to measure the worth**

**Of a person as a person , regardless of birth .**

**Not what was their Church , not what was their creed ?**

**But had they befriended those really in need ?**

**Were they ever ready , with a word of good cheer .**

**To bring back a smile , to banish a year .**

**Not , what did the sketch in the newspaper say .**

**But how many were sorry when they passed away .**