

Bathgate High Church

The Link



November 2021

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 –

Greetings to all, from a temporary visitor. As you will know, we sadly lost the editor of our monthly magazine, who had been in the post for a number of years. While we have a huge appreciation of the work that John put in and the quality of what he produced each month, we are now in the situation where the post of editor sits vacant. Callum stepped in to do last month, and I am putting myself forward to cover November and December, but at the moment, there seem to be too many jobs falling on too few people.

It would be of huge benefit to the High if someone – or a team of people – felt able to take on the editing of the magazine. This would involve collecting and collating materials into a master copy. From there, teams of people look after printing, collating, sorting and delivering.

This is a really important service for our congregation and community, and in these times of change and uncertainty, maintaining effective communication is key.

Anyone wishing further information or to discuss the post, please contact anyone on the Session Clerk Team.

John Wood

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Bessie's wisdoms –

I may not be an organ donor, but I once gave a piano to the Salvation Army.

Locum's Message

Firstly, on a personal note, I offer a big thank-you for your cards and kind wishes on my 70th birthday which I celebrated at the end of October.

Over these last twenty or so months we have all been challenged like it or not through the COVID Pandemic. Still we face restrictions being unable to sing and praise God in church without a facemask, shortages on some of the supermarket shelves, and continued vaccination programme.

The COP 26 is taking place in Glasgow where political leaders, scientists and many other experts meet to discuss Global Warning and impact it is having on all our lives, on some nations more than others. Scary statements are banded about 'our last chance to save our world'

Nearer to home, many meetings having been taking place in Kirk Sessions and Congregational Boards on how we can continue to serve our parishes with fewer ministers. Eleven fewer ministers in our own Presbytery of West Lothian, no congregation has escaped this examination.

I feel all these issues need to be taken to Heavenly Father, the Creator of this world in prayer.

God who loves this world and all who inhabit it showed His love by sending His son Jesus to save us, bring us back into His fellowship as His sons and daughters. Let us step forward in faith knowing that we are all precious in God's site.

Let him lead us day by day through our faith and not our sight.

In Psalm 119 verse 105 we read these familiar words

'Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path.'

I am not suggesting that we ignore these situations we all have a part to play in changing things and protecting our environment for our children and grandchildren, but know God is in control, nothing absolutely happens without his agreement.

One of the problems of worrying about and focussing on things we can do little or nothing to change is that we are failing to share the Good News that Jesus brought into this world.

Our trust and faith in God should fill our hearts with joy knowing that He loves us, cares for us and wants the best for all his children. We must not be like those who walk in darkness, in doing so we are showing we lack faith.

Our hearts should be filled with JOY despite what this world throws at us, our thoughts must be firstly on Jesus, our saviour, on others who might be struggling and need our word of hope and lastly on our selves.

JOY, Jesus first, others second and yourself last.

Soon we will celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus who brought light into a dark world as a tiny baby, not a mighty warrior, and brought tremendous love, hope, faith and light.

Be faithful in your times of prayer, the study of God's word and your quiet times with God. He hears our prayers brought to Him through Jesus and answers them.

We need this spiritual filling to be effective in this dark world.

God bless

David Wilkie (Locum)

Worship matters –

We are now firmly established back in the sanctuary for our morning worship each week, and are delighted to have been joined by the Sunday School again. The Choir is back practising, and we look forward to them taking a fuller part in worship nearer Christmas. We continue to be well served by our locum, David Wilkie, and we offer him our thanks for his dedication. We also continue to stream our services live every Sunday, with the video posted on the church website later in the day. Feedback on peoples' use of the on-line provision would be very helpful – either via Facebook or to info@bathgatehigh.com

There are a number of special services planned, though some may have already taken place by the time the magazine is distributed.

14th November – Remembrance Sunday (10.50)

14th November – Rise up! This is a special service on the theme of Climate Change and the COP26 Summit. It has been jointly planned by representatives of the High, St John's and Boghall. It takes place at 7PM in Boghall Church

12th December – Advent Celebrations, led by the Sunday School

19th December – Christmas praise, led by the Choir

24th December – Christingle Service at 7PM

The two Sundays following Christmas will be united services, planned jointly by the High and St Johns. One service will take place in each of the churches. Further details will be in next month's Link and on the website when they are finalised.

Vacancy matters

At the October Session meeting, we considered the proposal from the Presbytery Planning Group that we consider a Linkage with St John's, leading to a future union.

Following lengthy discussion, the Session voted not to accept the proposal, but requested that the Presbytery Planning Group consider a move straight to union.

It was felt that a period of linkage would create a further period of instability and uncertainty, and that this would be compounded by the fact that we would be likely to back in vacancy within a few years. The pattern of worship in a linkage was seen as less than ideal, and it was felt that with the slow pick up in attendance at both the High and St John's, the financial drain of keeping two sets of buildings maintained would be difficult in the long term and would not create a financial position where either congregation was able to thrive.

It was therefore felt that, as a move to a union seems the inevitable long term position, making the move sooner rather than later would be sensible in terms of ending the unsettling period of uncertainty as quickly as possible and creating a stable base which would be more likely to hold out against future reviews of the Presbytery Mission Plan.

While this creates a situation that not everyone will be happy with, the discussions took account of the views expressed in the congregational survey, which showed similar levels of support for linkage and union. Inevitably, this raises the issue of use of buildings, but this is not the first step in the process. The initial step is to consider union as a means of promoting our mission and service to our community. The Session has suggested that the issue of buildings is not addressed until a new minister for the united charge is in place. Union is not 'one church joining in with another' – it is the creation of a new charge, serving the town of Bathgate, which then makes its own decisions regarding finances, buildings and resources.

At the time of writing, we await a response from Presbytery. Should they and St John's be of a view that a union is the best way forward, this would signal the beginning of a formal process including congregational meetings and voting.

The second part of the Presbytery Planning Group proposal was that the three churches in Bathgate enter into a Parish Grouping arrangement. This would involve an agreement as to what areas the churches could work on collaboratively and how this could be done. This is already effectively happening, with areas such as the COP26 service and joint services following Christmas. As a Parish Grouping, this would take place in a more formal way. The Session unanimously supported this aspect of the Presbytery Planning Group proposal.

JW

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Thanks

Sheila Timmins has asked that the Link carry a big thank you to all who sent cards on the occasion of her recent 90th birthday. The good wishes were greatly appreciated.

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Further wisdoms -

Success is relative – the more success, the more relatives!



The Guild

The Guild have been meeting for a few weeks now, although in the afternoons to try to avoid the bad weather and dark nights. We have been lucky to get a series of good speakers for our meetings so far, and only have a few to go, as we plan to stop during the months of December and January.

We meet in the Lesser Hall from 1.30 until 3PM on Wednesdays, and we would be pleased if you were able to join us. We still have a cup of tea and fellowship, with social distancing and hand sanitising in place.

We hope that we might see you in the next month, or the next session.

Agnes Ferris



Boys' Brigade

Our Company resumed on the 28th September, after being closed for eighteen months, with a few changes in times and formats.

We now have a combined Anchor Boys and Junior Section, from 6.30 – 7.30 on a Tuesday evening in the Large Hall, entering by the front door and leaving by the rear fire door. We have around 12 boys attending and they have a great time, mainly with games, organised by Graeme and supported by Lyndsay Stein and newcomers Billy and Lisa Arnott, to whom we are most grateful.

The Company Section meets in the Large Hall from 7.30 – 9PM, entering and leaving by the main door. So far, we have 6 boys returning, doing games, crafts and quizzes organised by Graeme with support from Blair McAlpine, who is completing his Queen's Badge, and from myself. Badge work for the boys starts this week.

If you know of any boys who would be interested in joining us, whatever their age, please let them know about us and encourage them to come along on a Tuesday night.

Dave Robertson

Lieutenant

Sunday School News.

What a joy it was to see a few of our children return on the 4th of September as we met for the first time, after what seemed like an eternity, as a Sunday School.

Since then we have been very busy, learning about Moses through stories, games and crafts. It's a story we are all familiar with, but one with a strong message relevant to us today. As we find ourselves in a world in which we face many kinds of hardship and restrictions, it's good to know that just as God looked after the Israelites, he also looks after us and never leaves us.

We were also glad to take part in the Harvest Thanksgiving Service in October and are now busy dusting down our crowns, straightening our Haloes and warming up our singing voices for our favourite time of the year, dare I say it ?.... **The Nativity on Sunday 12th December**

We would be delighted to see any children from age 3 come along on a Sunday Morning. We meet from 10.45am in the Large Hall before joining the grown ups in Church for the first part of the service. We then return to the hall for fun, games and of course juice and biscuits.

There's also fun and plenty of toys to share for our littlest people in the creche.

Jennifer Hayburn

Bookmark Poems



*Where there is faith,
There is love.*

*Where there is love,
There is peace.*

*Where there is peace,
There is God.*

*Where there is God,
There is no need*

.Anon



*You never will be old
With a twinkle in your eye;
With the springtime in your heart
As you watch the winter fly*

*You never will be old
While you have a smile to share,
While you wonder at mankind,
And you have the time to care*

*While there's magic in your world
And a special dream to hold,
While you still can laugh at life
You never will be old.*

(Both supplied by a surprisingly young *Beth!*)

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Cleaning Teams

A number of the previous members of our cleaning teams have resigned and the response to engage with new members has been disappointing.

This is a further request for new members to join our teams and also for the existing team members to advise me if they no longer wish to re-join the new teams.

It is hoped that we can have enough volunteers to help and create new teams, beginning in January, so that it would only be for one morning every 4 week period.

Please speak to me, or telephone me, if you require more details and are interested in being involved.

Jean Logie

Coffee Morning Update

The TEA / COFFEE, BISCUIT and a CHAT, replacing our normal Coffee Morning, was well attended and our members and friends did appreciate the opportunity to meet and share some fellowship time with each other.

As the restrictions from the General Trustees are still in effect we will have our next Saturday Morning event on the 20th November following the same format and hope to have them on the 3rd Saturday of every month.

Regarding the REHIS Introduction to Food Hygiene course, we are still obtaining details regarding it being conducted within the church and these hopefully will be advised to our home bakers soon and we can get back to our normal coffee mornings with home backing.

If our usual home bakers could speak with me I will explain what will be involved and when an appropriate date and time for this course to take place.

Jean Logie

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Finance Update

Dear Friends,

Donations to the general account are up £600 compared to this time last year, however income across other funds are down £2000 compared to last year, most of this deficit is down to the manse not being let out for parts of the year.

Outgoings are down £3000, however these payments are still more than the income that we have brought in, although the furlough scheme has offset this and gave us an overall surplus of £1100.

Thank you to everyone who helped and came to the thrift shop, the amazing amount raised will be a great help.

The Finance Team

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Duncan's discourse – Hindsight!

This is a very personal journey, which started for me a long time ago. As an ex-smoker, I have always had breathing issues, which I blame no-one for but myself. When I started smoking I was about 15 and most of the boys in my class smoked. It was something that a lot of people back then and no-one really thought much about it. In fact, some scientists even said it was good for you, which is a lot of rubbish!

My problems really started when I was about 47 years of age. The first question my doctor asked was “do you smoke?” I’m sure she knew the answer before she even asked the question! Anyway, between then and now I’ve had 50-60 chest infections, if not more. For me, chest infections are certainly something that really drags people down. It’s very difficult to explain to someone who has never had one what it is like. One day, you feel not too bad, but the next day, you feel terrible – as if someone was trying to suffocate you. You can hardly draw any breath – not a nice experience at all, let me assure you. I this article can help stop one person from starting to smoke, or to give up smoking, then I will have achieved something. Yes, even one person!

Then, lo and behold, what sticks its head above the parapet but COVID-19, as if the world really needed it. To say that we were careful would be an understatement. We were handwashing, sanitising everything we could possibly clean and being ultra-careful when meeting people – 2m distancing etc. No matter what we did, it was not enough and, yes, you know the next bit! We both caught it, even after having both

vaccinations. There is a standing joke in our house that I spent more time in a bed in St John's than in my own bed at home. That might be stretching a point, but you get the idea.

Since Sandra finished her time with us at Bathgate High, I think we sometimes forget how much some members of our church do for us – and do for us on a daily basis.

There is a great number of people behind the scenes to make the church run as smoothly as it does. I asked a young fellow recently what makes the church run, and he said 'magic'! If only that were true, it would make things very easy indeed for everyone, but, unfortunately, it is not, and it takes a great deal of hard work and dedication.

Since John Macfarlane retired as our Session Clerk, and may I say that was after many years of hard work for us all, John's work has been taken over by John Wood, Liz Orr and Ian McLean. Their work is never ending, so all power to their elbows. If I were to thank everybody on an individual basis, this would run to 3 or 4 sheets of A4 paper, but there are too many people to do that, so this is to each one behind the scenes, just to say how much you are all valued.

Can I take this opportunity to thank everyone who filled in their survey paper? In my opinion, it is always better to be honest and say what you think, rather than say nothing, as this does not help anyone!

The other day I was down in border country, and I had forgotten just how beautiful the Scottish Borders are. It's funny when you see something every day, you tend to take it for granted, and when you don't see it for a long time, you realise how beautiful it really is. Well, that's how I feel about Hawick in the Scottish Borders. There are so many things down in that area to go and see and do, but for me, the best bit is the stunning Scottish scenery and the wildlife.

Till next time, take care of your family, friends and neighbours.

Duncan MacPherson

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A box of thanks – Blytheswood Shoebox Appeal

On 25th October, Chris came with a van and loaded black bags filled with shoeboxes and draw-string bags. Boxes with separate lids were hard to get, but Helen and Louise stepped up and made draw-string bags. They were used for both womens' and mens' gifts. Many people brought knitted goods of such a high standard, toiletries, toys, clothing and many other gifts. People were very generous with donations too, with £550 being raised, which can be used for transport costs. £160 of the donations were Gift Aid. We would like to thank all at 'Number 15' . Bill compiled the quiz while Deborah brought 8 boxes, along with the money to cover the carriage costs. Mary and Jean donated 20 boxes for various age groups. Alison and her friends at the EU Church donated 10 boxes and £105. Friends at the High (and friends of friends) gave gifts for 114 people and the quiz brought in £145. The first all-correct response was from Scott Turnbull, who promptly returned the prize to be put towards next year's collection.

With all the sums done, there was £87 left over from this year's appeal, which will be carried over to 2022. Thanks, again, to all who contributed to a better Christmas for 152 people in poorer countries.

God's Blessing on All

June Wilson and Anne Graham

(And a huge thanks from all the congregation to the two ladies at the centre of the storm! *Ed.*)

