

St. Columba's Congregational Magazine



Summer 2021

**St Columba's Parish Church
Old Aisle Road
Kirkintilloch
G66 3HQ**

Minister: Rev. Philip Wright

Telephone: 07427 623393
E-mail: PWright@churchofscotland.org.uk

Due to coronavirus the Church Office is currently not staffed.
However contact can be made via the Minister's details
above or the Secretary's email below.

Secretary: Miss Janet Brown

Telephone: Currently not monitored.
E-mail: stcolumbassecretary@outlook.com

Charity No. SC008735

From the Manse

With the easing of some restrictions over recent weeks, many of us have been grateful to return to something closer to 'normal life'. For some of us this has meant getting back to the exercise class or the gym. Others of us have enjoyed meeting friends for a coffee at the garden centre or a café. Still others have welcomed the chance to get away for a few days.

It has been great to once again open the doors of the Church building for public worship on a Sunday morning – and to see Sunday Club, Bible Class, The Boys' Brigade, Little Fishes, Friendship Club and one of our Bible Study Groups meeting face to face once again. We are so grateful to all those who have worked so hard to make that possible. Above all, we thank God for these new beginnings. And yet, some of us may be left with a sneaking sense of disappointment that things are just not the same as before. Often, with physical distancing and reduced numbers, they are on a smaller scale.

Recently, we have been studying the book of Ezra on Sunday mornings. Much of that book concerns the rebuilding of the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem after it had been destroyed 50 years earlier. When the Temple foundations were laid, many of the older folks who had seen the grandeur of the former Temple wept aloud because they realised the new Temple would look less impressive. But God had a message for His people about that. In the prophecy of Zechariah, he said, "*Who dares despise the day of small things...?*" (Zechariah 4:10). The important thing wasn't the size of the Temple. It was the size of their God.

Just so today, we are not to look down on anything that has restarted here at St Columba's, simply because it is a smaller thing than before. God can work wonders through small things. Indeed, he often chooses to.

Just think of Gideon's army (Judges 7) or the little boy's lunch that fed five thousand (John 6).

The important thing, as we look forward to singing again one day with our young people, is that,

“Our God is a great big God, and He holds us in His hands!”

Your minister and friend,
Philip

The Church Family



Deaths

We are saddened by the deaths of Ann Stewart and Lucy Douglas and extend our sympathy, love and prayers to their families.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants. Psalm 116:15.

Thank You

On the 14th of April my brother Carl French died in his sleep peacefully at home. We would wish to thank the Pastoral Group, members of the church and others who sent cards of sympathy and friends who sent messages on Facebook. We would also wish to thank our minister Philip and his wife Gill for the beautiful bunch of flowers.

Jim Ferguson and family would like to thank the church family for their thoughts, prayers and cards during Betsy's long illness and her subsequent death.

The support meant so much to her and she appreciated it deeply.

Church Membership

We are delighted to have Rena Broadfoot re-join us in membership here at St Columba's.

If you would like to discuss membership here at St Columba's please do contact the Minister.

The Church at Prayer

Each month, we produce a prayer diary and make this available to download from the church website. This has a different prayer topic for us to bring before God each day. These prayer topics relate to our church family, our wider community, our nation and our world at large. Please do consider making regular use of the prayer diary in your prayers. If you have difficulty accessing the prayer diary, please contact Janet Brown our church secretary and we will do our best to help find a solution.

It was great to have 31 people or households signing up to take part in the Day of Prayer on Saturday 8th May. Thank you to all who took part in that effort. This meant that – apart from one 15-minute break - we had at least one person from the congregation committing to pray for a period of 15 minutes from 8 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon.

Small Group Bible Studies

We now have over 30 people taking part in the current series of Bible Studies on ‘Seven Psalms’ using material produced by the Scottish Bible Society. Four groups are meeting by Zoom, two are meeting by phone, and it has been great to see a new garden group coming together in recent weeks. Please pray for good weather for that group!

As well as being a great way of studying the Bible together, these small groups are a real source of support and encouragement as we follow Jesus and an ideal way of getting to know other folks in the church.

If you’ve never taken part in a Small Group Bible Study before, why not give it a try when the next series starts in the autumn?

Daily Prayer and Bible Readings

The current issue of “The Upper Room” is being used in the homes of a record number of 22 members of St Columba’s, with 5 new starts having joined in May. In addition, we also have other church members using different, but equally good, publications to assist in their daily bible reading and quiet prayer time. This is all of real encouragement to our minister and augers well for our continued and increasing Christian witness at St. Columba’s.

Most of us are familiar with the Two Ronnies’ famous “Four Candles” comedy sketch. This tale, however, features a different set of Four Candles which, although now freely available online, first came to our attention in an email from our late, good friend, Stuart Bruce, who sadly passed away unexpectedly last year. Stuart and Ann brought many gifts in their time as locum at St Columba’s, but Stuart continued a silent ministry thereafter by sending out regular uplifting emails, prayers, amusing stories and videos – ask about the one featuring a toddler eating his ice cream, or the one where an older teenager is trying to work out how to use one of the old black telephones with which so many of us were brought up! This video was the last one we received from Stuart before his untimely passing and, thus, has a special meaning to us.

So, to our tale, which for anyone who has struggled throughout the past difficult months, felt despair, suffered tragedy or generally gone through the harshness of life, this is a special story – a powerful story of hope - which might lift one’s spirits.....

The Four Candles



There were Four Candles burning slowly. Their ambience was so soft that, if one listened carefully, you could hear them speak.

The **First Candle** said “I am *Peace*, but nobody wants to keep me lit.” Then Peace’s flame slowly diminished and went out.

The **Second Candle** said “I am *Faith*, but, these days, I am no longer indispensable.” So Faith’s flame also dwindled and went out completely.

The **Third Candle** spoke softly and sadly, “I am *Love* but I haven’t the strength to stay lit any longer. People put me aside and don’t understand my importance. They even forget to love those who are nearest to them.” Waiting no longer, Love also went out completely.

Suddenly . . . A child enters the room and sees the three candles which are no longer burning. The child begins to cry. “Why are you not still burning? You are supposed to stay lit until the end!”

Then the **Fourth Candle** speaks gently to the little child, “Don’t be afraid, for I am **Hope**, and, while I still burn, *you* can help me to re-light the other candles!”

With shining eyes, the child took the **Candle of Hope** and gently and carefully lit the other three candles.

Never let the Flame of Hope go out of your life. With **Hope**, no matter how bad things look and might be..... may **Peace, Faith** and **Love** always continue to shine brightly in your life.

Marilyn and Ian Gibb

Sunday Morning Services at St Columba's

We're really keen to help people connect with Sunday morning services here at St Columba's! There are three different ways you can do this.

First of all, you can come in person. And we would love to see you! Numbers are restricted these days, so you do need to book in advance. Please text or phone Anne Inglis on her mobile or email between 9 and 12 on the Thursday or Friday morning before the Sunday Service to book a place (Anne's contact details are on the back page of the magazine). If we are over-subscribed for any given Sunday, then we'll just allocate places as fairly as we can. Over the summer months, we're planning to set out seats in the car park when the weather allows so there is the opportunity to chat after the service. We're unfortunately not yet set up for serving tea/coffee/juice after the service but if you like just bring your own tea/coffee/juice in a flask for the time being.

Secondly, you can watch – or listen – online. Videos of all the services are released on YouTube for 10:30am each Sunday morning and can also be accessed via the home page of the church website, kirkintillochstcolumbas.org.uk. Please do be aware there is also an audio only version available on the church website. If you are struggling for a good internet connection, then the audio only version can be a good option.

Thirdly, if you don't have access to the web and so long as you live in or around Kirkintilloch, we would be glad to deliver a CD of the Sunday morning service to you each week. Although we'd also be happy to talk to you about how to get web access at home so you can get the video version of the service! Please speak to the Minister if you'd like to receive CDs of the Sunday morning service – or to get some advice about getting online at home.

We are really grateful to our IT Team of John Scott, David Muir, Fraser McCallum, Graham Inglis, George Kidd – and, more recently, Maureen Fleming and Graeme White - for all they do in enabling us to worship together online, on CD, and also in the church building. We continue to very much appreciate Jean Green and members of the Singing Group for their ongoing effort helping us to praise God together in music and song.

Contributing to Online Services

There are a number of ways to contribute to the online and on-CD services here at St Columba's. We're very grateful to all those who record their singing on their device at home week by week. We also appreciate everyone who records the Bible reading, again on their device at home. It has been great have folks sharing their photos, often from walking in and around Kirkintilloch, to be displayed during the prayers.

If you would like to help with any of the above then please contact the Minister.



1st Kirkintilloch Company

Anchor Boys

After a long year on zoom our section finished up for the session at Easter. OR SO WE THOUGHT.....

With the easing of lockdown and being permitted to meet face to face we decided to run some extra nights outdoors. This was quite fortuitous as the boys were still short of some items for their badges which really had to be completed outside or as a group in person.

We organised a safari in Merkland Nature Reserve whereby we trekked across the park capturing the animals. We managed to capture some deer, hedgehog, badger, otter, rabbits, squirrels and a few others. OK they didn't give up much of a fight as they were all statues and couldn't escape. Sadly there were no tadpoles in any of the ponds so we did not manage to bring any home.

Our second trip was to "capture" the Fort at Peel Park. The boys had an enjoyable time in the new play area after a few run around games in the park beforehand,

Our final outdoor event was to the Luggie water for some games and outdoor crafts. This meant that the boys had managed to complete all the elements to enable them to achieve their badges for this year so well done boys.

At the end of our last night we had a presentation of badges to the boys and this year because all the boys who took part in the zoom meetings were seen as being equal in their efforts we decided not to award any best boy shields. Instead every boy was awarded a #BBatHome medal for their commitment and effort throughout the year.

Hopefully we will resume back to normal on the first Friday in September back in the Church halls. If you know of anyone in the primary 1-3 age group please get in touch with any of the BB officers and we will contact them nearer our start up. Alternatively details can be found on our Facebook page.

We hope everyone has an enjoyable summer and perhaps even manage a wee holiday or at least a trip to the seaside.

David, Margaret & Fraser

Junior Section

We have continued to meet once a week since the last magazine.

Rather excitingly the Boys Brigade gave the go ahead to resume face to face meetings outside from 19th March. However being hardy Scots we decided to wait till after Easter to resume our face to face meetings.

It was with great excitement that we finally met up on Friday April 23rd, in Peel park. Any worries we had soon evaporated when we saw how much enjoyment the boys had playing in the new play park. It was also lovely to see boys back who hadn't been at zoom meetings.

Since then we have visited Merkland Reserve and Luggie Park.

Normally our parents evening would bring an end to the session about this time, however this year the Junior Section will be continuing until the 19th June with more outside meetings.

Lorna, David, Ross and Matthew

Company Section

The Company continued to meet via Zoom during February and March with a wide variety of games, quizzes, discussions and creative activities. We had a Knock, Knock joke challenge for Red Nose Day, some were even quite funny!

In April when the restrictions were relaxed, we were able to meet face to face outdoors. This required us to complete risk assessments and to ensure that controls were put in place to minimise the risk of infection. However the effort was worthwhile and our outdoor meetings have proved popular with attendance numbers increasing as three boys who hadn't been participating in Zoom were happy to come back in person.

Meeting outdoors has meant we can have much more energetic activities. So far we have had footgolf, a "what3words" challenge, capture the flag, a mini hill walk on Barr Hill, Twechar and ultimate frisbee.

Once again, thanks are due to all the staff for their effort and ingenuity ensuring that we have been able to run an interesting and diverse programme. Thanks also to the boys who have encouraged the leaders by participating enthusiastically in everything we have organised.

Callum, one of the senior boys, has now gained level 4 in each of the three badges and successfully completed his Building the Skills Course which qualifies him for his President's Badge. Congratulations Callum, when restrictions have eased further we will organise a presentation ceremony for you.

This extraordinary session is drawing to a close. It has been a challenge but we have come through it in good heart. Hopefully next session will be much closer to normality but we will cope with whatever is thrown at us and ensure that the 1st Kirkintilloch Company continues to thrive.

Have a good summer.

Allan Geekie

Christian Aid Report Summer 2021

Due to the Corona Virus restrictions still in place there is not much to report regarding local Christian Aid events since the Spring Newsletter.

The annual Christian Aid Service took place on Zoom on 2nd May and was conducted by Christian Aid representatives from some of the Lenzie and Kirkintilloch churches.

Christian Aid Week took place from 10th to 16th May 2021 but due to the restrictions at St. Columba's we were not in a position to distribute envelopes as usual for donations from our church. We are hoping that as restrictions are eased and more people can return to attending Sunday morning services in person we can organise an envelope collection for Christian Aid at St. Columba's later in the Summer or possibly the Autumn.

This year the theme for Christian Aid Week has been the continuing adverse effects of climate change on many poor communities throughout the world - in particular the continuation of the drought that has affected parts of Kenya and Ethiopia. The UK Chief Executive of Christian Aid took part in the Ascension Day Service on Thursday, 13th May broadcast at 8.00 p.m. on Radio 4 and she spoke very eloquently on how the climate crisis has impacted on the life of a 68-year-old grandmother called Rose.

More information about Rose and her life can be found in the Spring issue of the Christian Aid magazine which is available on the CA website. I will keep the paper copy of the Spring issue, which will be available in the church when circumstances allow.

In the meantime I hope you all have a safe and enjoyable Summer and that we can all get to visit our families and friends as the restrictions are gradually lifted.

Geraldine Fox.

The Leprosy Mission

I am regularly finding jars of money in the church, which have been left by members for the leprosy mission. At the beginning of April I was able to send a cheque for £200.00 to the leprosy mission.

Following a discussion with Phillip it was decided to have a collection for the leprosy mission as a lot of these charities hadn't received their normal donations as the church has been closed. An appeal was launched on Sunday 27th April until Sunday 9th May. The magnificent sum of £850.00 was raised which was superb. A cheque for this amount has now been sent away.

Your donations have been greatly appreciated and I'm sure will be well used. There are still plenty of small blue boxes at the back of the church so please feel free to take one if you would like to start collecting for this worthwhile cause.

Margaret McCallum

Sunday Club and Bible Class

The Sunday Club and Bible Class have enjoyed meeting in person recently to play games and go for walks, which has been a welcome relief to weekly Zoom calls. It is great to see one another in person again and just have some fun.

Hopefully over the coming weeks the Bible Class will go on a few cycle rides and meet in the park to play frisbee and the Sunday Club can continue to go on walks and do some crafts in the garden.

Scott Inglis

The Craft Group

All being well, we will recommence early Autumn. Anyone who is interested in coming along will get a warm welcome. Do bring your project along and enjoy a companionable time.

A date will be decided in due course.

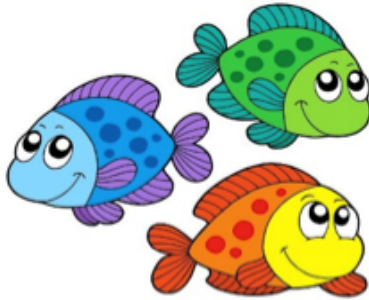
Margaret Rogerson

Summer Maintenance

We are looking for volunteers to help with some maintenance jobs in the church building and the church halls during June/July. These include cleaning (outside and inside) and painting (outside and inside). In previous years, we've held summer work evenings. However, this year, with the ongoing need for social distancing and with reduced numbers of people being able to gather together, we're doing things a little bit differently.

If you think you might be able to help, please phone Moira Lang from the Fabric Team (see the back page for Moira's number). Moira can then discuss with you what you're comfortable doing and set you up with a job that's right for you and a time that suits you to do it. Any tools or materials you'll need will be set out for when you arrive and someone (usually a member of the Fabric Team) will be there to meet you and go over what needs to be done.

We'd be very grateful for whatever help you may be able to offer.



Little Fishes Toddler Group

We are really excited to have started back with Little Fishes meeting again on Friday mornings. There was lots of interest so we are running 2 groups in the starfish and turtle rooms (often known as the large and small halls). We are aiming for 10 families in each group and also have a waiting list. It has been lovely to see the toddlers again and their families. The babies are now toddling and the toddlers are really big boys and girls. Some have gone to nursery but many have returned, some with a new baby brother or sister too.

The helpers have done a massive job of cleaning toys and surfaces and we are really grateful for their faithful hard work. We can't have tea and coffee yet or sing although hopefully some restrictions will lift quite soon. We started having a story-time which is actually a little easier with a smaller group and planning a bubble machine which will be lovely.

Please do continue to pray for our families. If you know anyone who would like to come to join us at Little Fishes please do ask them to contact Gill (mobile number on back page) or give them the details of the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/littlefishestoddlergroup/>) and we can keep in touch with them about the waiting list and try to get them a place as soon as possible.

<https://www.facebook.com/littlefishestoddlergroup/>

Gill Wright

Back to normal.

Tentatively we are taking our first baby steps out of the pandemic. After the long months of isolation life is beginning to return to normal. We can browse around the shops. We can take time choosing food. We can come to church.

We may see family and friends. In small numbers and still wearing our masks, but what a great privilege it is to contemplate the simple pleasures of everyday life.

For so many decades we took it for granted, then Covid called and hugs were forbidden, danger lurked and we learned just how vulnerable and precious our everyday, normal life really was.

We once found pleasure in going out for a coffee, walking with friends, or playing with our grandchildren in the park. We enjoyed church organisations and the company of people we've known for years.

Lockdown meant we missed our Sunday morning routine of gathering together in church to pray, to read the Bible, to listen and to learn.

As humans we are creatures of habit - and losing those precious habits left a vacuum, which surprised us and sometimes left us feeling vulnerable.

We perhaps hadn't realised how much we missed wandering around the aisles of a bookstore or going to the cinema or being hugged by a friend in the street.

Yes we had online services and that helped but nothing can replace praying, listening and singing together with our church family.

Zoom allowed many people to keep in touch and once a week when our oldest son could speak to us online from Saudi Arabia where he works, I felt tears come to my eyes as we were assured of each other's safety.

I've got the lowest level of knowledge of technology on this planet but what a comfort our computers can be in a pandemic.

We all had to learn a new way of living, adapting, keeping in touch, and looking out for each other. It taught us how fragile our humanity is and how dependent we are on our faith, our Bible, our fellowship and our connection to each other.

Our humanity is as delicate as a butterfly but how blessed we are that learning to care for each other brought us strength, hope and a certainty that God is with us in our vulnerability.

The pandemic is hopefully passing and life is tentatively getting back to normal, but it may be a new normal.

Above all, it's up to each one of us to make it as loving, giving, and blessed a time as it can be.

Margaret Clayton

Church Flowers

We've been pleased in recent weeks to once again have flowers in the sanctuary for both the online and in person services each week. We're very grateful to those who have donated and arranged flowers to make that possible. As things stand, we are not yet able to deliver the church flowers to folks in their own homes but we hope in time this may change.

We are hoping to resume the flower rota in September. If you were on the flower rota before, our church secretary, Janet Brown, will be in touch in due course to ask if you would like to be part of a new rota running from September onwards. It would be our intention to once again deliver the church flowers to folks in their own homes from that point but that will depend on whatever guidance is in place at the time.

Some folks have asked if it is possible to contribute to a general flower fund in the meantime. If you should wish to do that, contributions may be left in a marked envelope and placed on the offering plate at the Sunday Service.



SERVICES

Sunday Morning Service: 10.30am

To book a place in the church building for the 10:30am Sunday morning service please text or phone Anne Inglis on her mobile (07895 437 011) or email Anne.Inglis@ntlworld.com on the previous Thursday or Friday morning between 9 and 12.

A specially recorded Sunday morning service is available each week on the Church YouTube Channel (search for St Columba's Church Kirkintilloch) or via the Church website (www.kirkintillochstcolumbas.org.uk). CDs of the recorded service are also available on request.

Kirkintilloch: St Columba's Parish Church
"To know Him and make Him known"