

Bennochty Parish Church of Scotland Kirkcaldy

Registered Scottish Charity SC 005628

(01592) 643518 Minister
(01592) 200179 Session Clerk
(01592) 201723 Church

Website: www.bennochtyparishchurch.org.uk

NOVEMBER 2020

NEWSLETTER

From Bennochty manse,

The American novelist, playwright, poet and activist, James Baldwin said, *"Not everything that is faced can be changed But nothing can be changed until it is faced "* I like that: it is both realistic and hopeful. If we cannot change the world, let us at least have a go!

If these words had been spoken by Jesus, religious commentators would have had a field day, examining them closely and interpreting their meaning for today. These are words about faith which I think could easily be found on the lips of Jesus. It is not realistic to move a mountain, yet, in the midst of a most uncertain world, in God we trust to have a go!

I have to be very honest with you and say that I do not know how Bennochty Church will cope with the challenges that lie ahead of us. Most we will not be able to do anything about, but if we do nothing at all, then the future is bleak indeed.

The word discernment comes to mind. What does God think we can change? No matter how small. And how does Bennochty fit into the bigger picture of church, within Kirkcaldy, and even beyond.

We don't have long to consider our next move. In Kirkcaldy town centre, there will be less full-time ministers and, due to our financial constraints, we will have to review our building needs for the future. But the important thing is this: if we can't do everything, we must never think we can do nothing. It is in trust we face the future, willing to change; even if at this stage, we do not know what that change will be.

God does not make faith easy! It has ever been so. From Abram's (Abraham) first step into the known, to a group of 11 men we know as the disciples, left wondering, *what are we meant to do next?* I suspect, that is exactly how we might be feeling today.

We are asked to take unsure steps in an uncertain world. To face a future, trusting God that we will do that which we are able to do, and maybe, even more! We need to leave room for miracles to happen.

2021 is going to be a pivotal year for Bennochty Church. Maybe some questions will be answered and some decisions made. But I suspect, most will not, and we will be left standing outside our comfort zone. That is faith. It has ever been so, and always will be.

Stay connected. Stay safe. Till the next time.



New Presbytery of Fife - A minister who was previously Chaplain General of the Army has been appointed as Clerk to the new Presbytery of Fife, which will be formally created in January.

Rev Dr David Coulter, who is currently serving as the parish minister of St Andrew's in the Grange on the island of Guernsey, will take up the role at Easter of next year. The new Fife Presbytery will be formed from the Presbyteries of St Andrews, Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline. More details of this can be found on our website.

Covid-19 Services

Over the last two months our modified Sunday services have been well supported despite the restrictions. The recordings have also been enjoyed on YouTube by a significant number of viewers each week. There is an easy link on our website.

The 2 metre rule has been tricky to set up in our fixed pews. After some trials we now have a seating pattern which makes best use of the space available, but unfortunately means that most people have to sit separately. The clearly labelled locations are 2 metres from each other, usually diagonally. A small number of locations at the front can accommodate a partner. Happily we have not yet reached our overall limit of about 46, but we have been quite close.



Streaming

In order to reach out to the congregation at this challenging time, we have been investigating the broadcasting of services live on the internet. The Kirk Session has now approved the installation of a suitable system which we hope to have operating in time for Christmas.

This will also be able to stream to the projector in the Elgin hall thus increasing the potential number who can physically attend. This has been made possible thanks to several generous donations to the church. This should be a great asset in the long term, reaching members who, even in normal times, are unable to come to church.

Sunday School

The Sunday School returned on Sunday 18th November, when 6 children were welcomed into the small hall by Isobel and Brodie. Any children wishing to attend should be dropped off at the kitchen door prior to the service, and parents should then enter the church through the main front door. Unfortunately there can be no Christmas party this year but there will be some festivities for the children - watch this space! We all look forward to the time when we can welcome the children back into the church as part of our Sunday service.



Salvation Army Toy Appeal

This year we will not be having our annual Gift Service, when we bring toys to the church for the Salvation Army to distribute to needy children in the district. The appeal, however, is still going ahead but, due to Covid restrictions, instead of bringing your toys to the church they can be dropped off at the new Salvation Army hall at 30 Hayfield Road, Kirkcaldy (new toys only please) where secure procedures are in place, including the ability to quarantine donations for 72 hours. **They are open to receive gifts on Mondays and Tuesdays until 8th December, from 9am - 4pm.** You can also contact them on (01592) 265 928 or email to kirkcaldy@salvationarmy.org.uk

O little town of Bethlehem.-

One of the many things that will be strange this Christmas is not being able to sing Christmas carols. They remind us of treasured moments in our lives perhaps: nativity plays and school concerts; church services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Everyone has their favourite and twenty five years ago, when I visited the Holy Land and of course, Bethlehem, I kept a diary. In it I wrote about my favourite carol: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" will never be the same! How can I ever again sing "how still we see thee lie" when today it is mostly a large, smelly bus station and car park, full of tourist buses, and jammed with noisy people trying their best to avoid the persistent sellers of all things tacky. Anything further from Christmas is hard to imagine. 11

And yet.... that experience made me look closer at what the first Christmas was like, and admit it was probably nearer to reality than the Carol.

First of all, Bethlehem in the time of the census would be chaotic, noisy, and smelly, with the transport and people of the time - full of donkeys and those trying to sell or buy everything they needed. And the turmoil would be scary, especially for a heavily pregnant woman and her husband from Nazareth, from where as everyone knew, nothing good ever came.

It would be frightening too, for its nearness to Jerusalem. It is only minutes away, really a suburb, and so closer to Herod, the ruler who had rebuilt the Temple, but also executed many of his closest family, including three of his sons. And the Romans, the occupying army, would have been much more evident than in Nazareth.



This year of course, for Bethlehem, will be different, with no tourists or pilgrims. Perhaps it will be "still" for the first time in many years!

And yet, whatever the condition of Bethlehem, I find the Carol still has relevance for today. Bethlehem is every town, for in words true for the first Christmas and the coming 2020, the first verse finishes:

"Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."

**BENNOCHY PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
Meldrum Road/Elgin Street,
Kirkcaldy, KY2 5HR**

**TO ALL MEMBERS
BENNOCHY PARISH CHURCH
KIRKCALDY**

GIFT DAY SUNDAY 13th DECEMBER 2020

Our Church services, although resumed, are limited in number due to the legislation in social distancing, no singing and no fellowship after the service. Things have changed. We are socially distanced from each other but not from God, although some may feel they are in these difficult times.

During these challenging times Christmas is quite possibly far from people's minds, as we continue to focus on our own and family and friends' safety.

As in previous years we are asking you to remember your Church family as you do your own and consider supporting our Christmas Gift Day on Sunday 13th December.

We appreciate that, due to the restrictions, it is difficult to attend Church so we would ask that if you are able to make a donation, this is made direct to our Bank Account. Our details are:-

Bennochty Parish Church of Scotland

Account number 06022892

Sort Code 80-16-84

If you have previously signed a Gift Aid declaration there is no need to sign another but, if you haven't and pay income tax, a Gift Aid envelope is attached to this Newsletter. These envelopes are printed with a Gift Aid Declaration on the back so please make sure you fill in your details and either post it to the Church address or ask someone to hand it in on their next Church visit. Please do not post your donation, only the envelope.

Please note: The line at the top of the envelope which says 'Name of Charity' should be filled in saying Bennochty Parish Church.

If you are debating the level of donation for the Gift Day, consider the value of gift that you would give any of your family members or friends as a guide, if your personal circumstances allow.

We wish to thank you once again for your continued support in God's work here at Bennochty and look forward to sharing worship together in 2021.

The Finance Team

Charity Registration Number SC 005628

(Registered Scottish Charity)

Along with this Newsletter you should receive a Gift Aid envelope and, where appropriate, FWO envelopes for 2021. If you require envelopes to be uplifted at any time, now or in the future, please contact your elder. Also, if you would be happy for us to communicate with you via email and have not yet given us your email address, please email this to George Drummond, our Session Clerk at **gdrummond@btinternet.com**. As ever, if you have any concerns or questions please do not hesitate to contact the manse, session clerk or your elder, and keep visiting our website for news.

You can also subscribe for news emails via the website where you will receive messages showing recent updates to the website.

This year you can also share Christmas greetings to one another via our website in place of Christmas cards. Your greetings will be shown on the website over the advent season. Click [Christmas Greetings](#) to send your message.

Website: www.bennochparishchurch.org.uk