

Bennochy Parish Church of Scotland

# Newsletter

May 2022



We hope all our readers are in good health and enjoying the explosion of colour in our parks and gardens as we approach mid-summer.

Restrictions have largely been removed so that services are more or less back to normal. Live streaming of the services continues and we are currently awaiting new microphones to improve the sound quality for those at home.

In our March Newsletter we noted that substantial changes are being considered which will affect each and every one of the four Town Centre Churches very soon. The latest information on these proposals is included herein and we would encourage you to have a look at this.

Minister: 643518

Session Clerk: 200179

Church Office: 201723

Website: [www.bennochyparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.bennochyparishchurch.org.uk)

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### *From the manse*

I have just read some articles on the importance of stories, and how they help us to make sense of the world around us. I wonder, if asked, what stories we would share about Bennochy Church, and in sharing those stories, what would they say about our culture, '*the way we do things around here*', and our values, '*why we do things the way we do*'.

Jesus was a great storyteller. He painted a picture of how God wanted his people to live. They didn't always get it right, but in images of shepherds, vines, gates, and bread, they were able to recall what Jesus said.

Stories are ancient, going back to the time when words were first formed, and people had a means to share what they understood about the world with future generations. In the Old Testament the prophets used image to good effect. Amos spoke of locusts, fire and plumb lines. Have a read of Amos chapter seven. God does not just speak in words, but in powerful images.

Today storytelling is having a revival. Where once word was king, people are now sharing stories. Ancient tales retold to new generations. The power of stories speaking into new situations. Think of it. How many people have retold the ancient stories of scripture over thousands of years? *Of shepherds leading their sheep to green pastures*. In that longevity is power, and today we continue to share in that legacy. We stand in a long line of story tellers.

I hope the story of the church that we pass on, is not just one of its struggles and of its decline, but in looking at the ancient stories of the past, we see it has been here before, and trusting in God, has been reborn. Let that be the story for future generations. A story we are part of.

We are living through so much change; it is easy to get disorientated. May God's story offer us stability that allows us to move forward. Ancient stories from God, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Yet in their re-reading, new words are heard. New stories, for a new future.

**Robin**



The following two articles relate to the Annual Stated Meeting of the congregation held on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May after morning worship. The Kirk Session report was not read out.

The second is the statement made by the minister to the congregation to clarify the current state of discussions regarding potential major changes affecting the four town centre churches.

## **Kirk Session Report for year ending December 2021**

The Session consists of our Moderator Robin McAlpine and 27 Elders who met 10 times throughout 2021 (4 x Zoom, 4 x e-meetings, 2 x in person). Our minutes are taken by Sandra Wemyss and I would like to record my thanks to her at this moment for her clarity and presentation of the minutes.

Due to COVID restrictions, no organisations were available to visit.

- \* The Worship suspension introduced at the end of 2020 was extended beyond January 2021
- \* Employees placed on Furlough
- \* During the suspended period we attempted to communicate to our members by e-mailed newsletters. We still need a number of contact details to improve this facility going forward.
- \* Worship commenced on 4th April (Easter Sunday), which was a challenge as we were restricted to 50 people maximum. No singing allowed.
- \* Furlough was ceased from April 2021
- \* Pastoral Care team commenced the sending of Easter cards and other communications.
- \* We trialled our Livestream services on April 2021
- \* June 2021 singing was re-introduced subject to wearing masks. Newsletters delivered by hand to those who were not on e-mail
- \* July 2021 – social distance eased from 2 metres to 1 metre.
- \* August 2021 – Sunday Teas re-introduced and pew cushions re-instated
- \* October 2021 – Communion re-introduced
- \* December 2021 – Decision to introduce a firebreak during Christmas and New Year services.

Stewardship – Our Financial Contributions from our members were highlighted through promotional material communicated through our newsletter in conjunction to our successful Gift Days.

Statistical Return: Bennochy Roll as of 1/1/21 365

Admitted by Profession 0

Admitted by Certificate 0

Admitted by Resolution

Removed by Death 16

Removed by Certificate

Removed by Otherwise

Bennochy Roll as of 31/12/21 349

Weddings - 0

Funerals – 33

Baptisms - 2

I feel it appropriate to thank a number of people at this point who work tirelessly week on week;

Alan Morton – updates web-site with news and photographs

Tea and Coffee teams

Computer Operators

Flower arrangers

Jim & Ragnar on sound control and livestream delivery

Charlie Low for arranging the readers on Sunday Mornings and to the readers who participate

Liz – Admin support & producing intimations each week

Peter for his work as Church officer

I would also like to thank Robin, the Session, and you our members for the continued support during the very challenging year.

I meet regularly with Robin to discuss future plans and I continue to receive inspiration and encouragement from these meetings.

There's no doubt that the past 2 years have been difficult and challenging but we managed our way through these times and it's time now for us to focus on our growth and I am confident that we have a bright future under the leadership of our Minister, Session, and the commitment of our members as we continue God's work here at Bennochy

***George Drummond,  
Session Clerk***

## Presbytery Mission Plan

During the last two years of Kirkcaldy presbytery, they sisted all vacancies, while a new Presbytery plan was to be put in place. However, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021, Kirkcaldy Presbytery ceased to exist, as the Presbyteries of Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and St Andrews came together to form the Presbytery of Fife. The agreed Kirkcaldy plan was carried forward into the new Presbytery and became known as legacy plan.

Things changed again at the 2021 General Assembly. Again, vacancies were sisted, this time, the length and breadth of the country, and each Presbytery had to come with new plan. In other words, events overtook the work done previously by Kirkcaldy Presbytery.

The new plan is based on 3 things:

1. How churches are to come together – a readjustment model
2. How many ministries the church can afford
3. To have the right buildings in the right places.

In this process there is only one fixed number, and that is the number of ministries allocated to each Presbytery. Fife was given an allocation of 44.5. To put that number into some context the town centre of Kirkcaldy originally had 4 ministries. In the old legacy plan this was reduced to 3, and in the new proposed Mission plan, it is further reduced to 2.5.

Over the past year many meetings have taken place. Kirk Sessions have looked at what mission is about, because the new plans are to be mission based. It is not just about finance and fabric. Representatives of the 4 Town centre churches (TCC) met with facilitators, appointed by Presbytery, from *Place for Hope*. The outcome of these meetings to ‘influence’ and to make recommendations to Presbytery, about readjustment, ministries, and buildings.

**This group agreed, and Sessions have concurred, that the 4 TCC should become one charge, to happen within the next year. That means, one parish, with one Kirk Session. We also agreed with presbytery on the 2.5 Full Time Equivalent ministries allocation. On that we had little choice.**

Where we have not agreed with Presbytery is on our Buildings allocation. Each building in the plan, excluding manses, after examination, using a process called AMBA, led by the General Trustees of the church, were categorised either ‘A’ or ‘B’. Basically, A is a keeper, and B is disposal over the next 5

years. Each of the TCC buildings were categorised as A. So why are we objecting?

Let me read from the letter sent to Presbytery.

We believe this will be detrimental to the new united charge in the following ways:

1. The financial responsibility of the upkeep of all buildings. This is not good stewardship and a poor use of limited resources
2. At a time of ageing office bearers, the number of people (property conveners) required to maintain all sanctuary and hall buildings. This is a drain on human resources.
3. The assumption and expectations of many members that worship will take place in each building retained on a regular basis. This will be a challenge, with a small staff team.
4. Some monies to be allocated to fund local staff will now be needed for buildings.
5. It will 'diffuse' people's energy, commitment and time across more buildings than are required, instead of focusing on the purpose and use of a smaller number of buildings
6. As the ultimate arbiter in the PMP process, is Presbytery, we believe this is a decision that Presbytery should make now. It is then up to local parties to make it work.
7. It simply 'kicks the can' further down the road, when the same reduction in the number of buildings will have to be made anyway.

We believe four buildings is too many, and we are now asking the Presbytery to make the decision, and reduce the number of buildings from 4 to 2. We meet with the Strategy group of Presbytery on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

It is hoped that the draft Presbytery plan will be agreed by Fife Presbytery in June. It then has to be concurred by FNF. If that happens, the plan should be passed in September and agreed congregational vacancies released. Plans to be implemented by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

There is lots of other detail I could have gone into, but I think that is enough for the moment.

## **Louisa Turner - Development Worker**

The saying 'every day is a school day' resonated with me recently as I attended the Fife Equalities Forum where the concept of Language Nests was shared.

A Language Nest is a concept whereby a person's native language is kept alive by conversing in the language with a learner of that language or a younger person. The richness of the language is exchanged and the culture, along with folklore associated with it, is also shared. A richness of relationships is formed, and people can identify more with their origins, have a sense of belonging and self-assuredness.

Language Nests is a national campaign with many benefits for individuals and communities alike. The phrase which is being used to promote the campaign is: 'If you can't speak to me in my first language, how do you know who I am?'

In Fife there is a designated Fife Scots Champion who also holds the role of Gaelic Project Worker and encourages the use of indigenous languages.

The Fife Council Gaelic Plan promotes the equity of Gaelic with other languages which are spoken in Fife. Many activities take place across the Kingdom, exploring and sharing the historical language of Fife. Parks and buildings are being accredited with Gaelic Friendly Status after meeting certain criteria.

It has been proven that learning a new language as an adult is very beneficial. It is especially beneficial for those who have dementia. Presently the STAND (Striving Towards A New Day) group (a Fife wide group for individuals with early years onset of dementia) are learning Gaelic. The learning process is stimulating and keeping the neuron connections alive. It also raises the individual's self-esteem, knowing that they are learning a new language rather than losing their language skills, which for some might develop as their condition negatively progresses.

If you would like to see a language nest at Bennochy Church, please do get in touch with myself Louisa Turner, Development Worker, 07856 940177

## **Deaths**

30.03.22

Mrs Janet Ritchie



## Parable for the Course?

Mr and Mrs Brown were lifelong members of their church. They used to joke they had been born into the church and first met at Sunday School! From the Youth Club they had progressed to Communicants class and joined the Church the year they turned 18. And three years later they were married in the same church and settled down to live happily ever after.

Two children arrived - a boy and girl - both were christened and life was good. There was the Young Mothers Group and Men's Club and there was a whisper of eldership. But then they found the Kingdom Club and everything changed.

The local Kingdom Golf Club was just what they wanted at that time of life: the always new challenge of the game, against yourself, partners, the weather, and different courses. And if the weather was too bad, you retired to the Clubhouse to wait until it improved and had a lovely lunch or afternoon tea. Then there were the people you met there. Everyone was friendly... and successful too. So many useful contacts and lots of friends for the children, with shared interests, like rugby and tennis. And you met folk from all backgrounds, all faiths and none. Yes it was expensive, but worth every penny in the ultimate rewards it promised.



There was only one drawback: Sunday morning was the time for members only, the best time for aspiring couples to be seen and heard. So they had to choose.

The Browns didn't leave the church. They paid by standing order and kept Good Friday and Christmas Eve in the traditional way. True, as years went by they began to think at these events longingly, of the old hymns nobody seemed to sing any more, of the good old days when the church would be full for the midnight, candle-lit Watchnight Service. But, when it mattered - weddings, christenings and funerals - they were there - and so was the church.

Sadly, when the Browns were killed in a car crash on their way to the Open Golf, it was a local tragedy: they had both just retired and were uniquely Captain and Ladies Captain of the Golf Club that year! There had even been whispers of MBEs for their charitable fundraising for the R & A.

The local paper was full of tributes to a wonderful couple and family. The Crematorium was full, and the Minister was glad to hear the eulogy delivered by their children. The Crimond version of the 23rd psalm had never sounded so good, and afterwards, the Golf Clubhouse provided a wonderful spread.



When the Browns arrived in Heaven, they were delighted to see the most beautiful golf resort ever, waiting for them. St Peter explained: “You see everyone gets the Heaven they value most in life. Heaven for you will be an eternity of Sunday mornings at Green Pastures.”

They walked through a surprisingly empty Clubhouse, but to their horror the door to the greens was shut. There was no handle, no lock: it could not be opened. In their dismay, they turned to St Peter and heard him say. “Oh yes, you can’t play here, of course. You can only watch: you are after all...non-praying members...”

## Good News Corner

**Congratulations** to Elizabeth Martin, who celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on 24<sup>th</sup> April – sharing her birthday with the Queen herself.



**Congratulations** also, from the congregation and the Sunday School, to Callum Bayne, who has been accepted by the Scottish School of Dance in Glasgow as a full time student - a great achievement. We all wish him well when he begins his studies in August.




## Christian Aid Week 15-21 2022

This year we were once again invited to support the vital work of Christian Aid by donating by means of the e-envelope which Robin had set up on our website. There was also a retiring collection at the service on 15<sup>th</sup> May. Our total contributions have well exceeded our target, and will go some way towards helping to ‘turn hunger into hope’ for the many people in the world who are experiencing famine and drought.


**Get Together Club** - The Get Together Club have reluctantly decided that it is no longer feasible to meet each week in the church as the number of active members has dropped since the start of the pandemic. The remaining members still keep in touch, however, and now meet for lunch once a month.

## Summer Calendar

June 2	Platinum Jubilee Celebrations	
June 12	Bereavement Service	
June 19	Communion	
June 26	Sunday School final day	
July 10	Joint service at Abbotshall Church	
<b>July 17</b>	<b>Joint service at Bennochy Church</b>	
July 24	Joint service at St Bryce Kirk	
July 31	Joint service at Linktown Church	

- Sunday School resumes on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September

### Bereavement service 2022

On Sunday afternoon, 12<sup>th</sup> June, we are planning a remembrance service for those who have lost loved ones over the past couple of years. Specific invites have gone out to the family and friends of those whose funeral services Robin has conducted, but it will be open to everyone. 

### Platinum Jubilee Celebrations - *Come and join us ...*

Bennochy Parish Church will be celebrating with the nation on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022, from 2pm – 4.30pm, as we commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The event will consist of a traditional afternoon tea, with musical accompaniment from pupils of Balwearie High School, and tickets for this have been selling well. Even if you aren't able or don't wish to attend the ticketed afternoon tea, please come along at 3.30 to see the Tree Planting in the garden followed by the Community Choir in the sanctuary, singing in public for the first time since the pandemic'. The Sunday School have also been asked to take part in the Queen's Jubilee tree planting.



## Current Activities in Bennochty Church

### Girl Guides:

Rainbows	for girls aged 5 - 7 years
Brownies	for girls aged 7 - 10 years
Guides	for girls aged 10 - 14 years
Senior Section.	for girls aged 14 - 25 years

### Boys Brigade:

Anchor Boys	for boys aged 5 - 7 years
(Junior Section	for boys aged 8 - 11 years - at Pathhead)
(Company Section	for boys aged 12 - 14 years - at Pathhead)
(Senior Section	for boys aged 15 - 18 years - at Pathhead)

### Women's Group

### Handbell Ringers

Walking Group            monthly walks

### Community Choir

### Dru Yoga

### Tai Chi

### Zumba

### Country Dancers

### Sequence Dance Club

### Indoor Bowling

### The Olive Branch

Your community café.  
Internet connection is available.  
Every Thursday 11.00 - 2.00