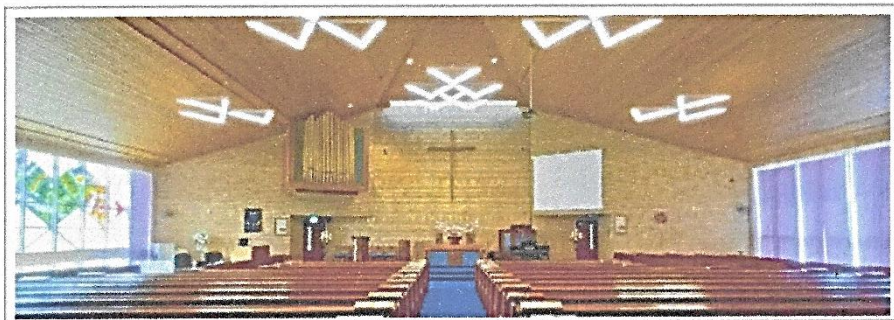


Bennochty Parish Church of Scotland

# Newsletter

October 2023



We hope all our members and families are well and have had an enjoyable summer.

The merging of the four town centre congregations remains in limbo awaiting re-assessment by the Presbytery. An update from the joint Interim Minister is enclosed.

Joint services continue to be held at the end of every month, using the four churches in turn, and we have been able to hold normal services on the other Sundays. Hall use is back to normal. We also have an Interim Moderator for Bennochty Church, namely Rev. Adriaan van Tonder - his introductory article is enclosed.

On-line viewing of services has proved popular for those who are unable to attend. (See notes overleaf)

Interim Moderator: Rev. Adriaan van Tonder 07565 289852

Session Clerk: 200179

Church Office: 07483 162346

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

Registered Scottish Charity SC005628

OCTOBER 2023

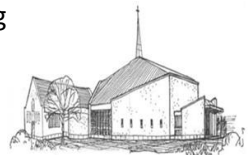
*From the Interim Moderator & his family*

Dear friends, let me introduce ourselves and tell you more about why we came to Scotland. As a family from South Africa, the one question we get asked most is: “Why Scotland?” And rightly so. Someone once told me that our answer should surely be: “Well, we came because of the good weather!” Yeah right!

The reason why we came to Scotland as a family and for me to serve in the Church of Scotland as a minister is simple, it is a calling. If it wasn't for receiving confirmation of our calling in a very clear way, after a long discernment process, we wouldn't have been here. As a family of three (now four), we lived and worked very happily in our previous hometown in South Africa called Aliwal North. I served as an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church for seven years.

Ever since Sanelle and I got married we have been thinking and dreaming of the possibility of going overseas to work and live there, and it all started at the end of 2020. A friend of mine, who is also a minister in the Church of Scotland, suggested that I should investigate ministry in the Church of Scotland. After many conversations, prayer and research, I finally decided to submit my application in April 2021.

Thankfully, my application was accepted, and I was invited for a thorough interview on the 5th of November 2021. Long story short, I received the good news that the interview panel was happy with my interview, and I was admitted to coming to Scotland, along with my family, to come and live and work in this beautiful country. Together with the painstakingly long Visa application process and having to sell and give up everything in South Africa, we travelled to Scotland. After having to say goodbye to our congregation, family, and friends, we left our beloved country on the 3rd of July 2022 to arrive in Edinburgh on the 4th of July. After having done my familiarization placement with St. Columba's church, I am now working as an Assistant Minister with



the churches in the Glenrothes area. It is by God's Grace that I can say that I feel called to specifically serve in the Church of Scotland.

Just something we want to share with you, that you might find encouraging. What are the three most important lessons we learned in this process?

The first lesson we learned is the power of prayer but praying with eyes open. Yes, praying in silence and in isolation is necessary, but once you start praying to God about something, be sure that God can respond using anyone or anything to reveal something of His love, grace, and plans.

The second lesson we learned is that when you are at your weakest, most vulnerable, know that it is during those times that God will make His presence most known to you. When you find yourself in such a space in your life, know that there is a power with you, the same power that resurrected Christ from the dead, and that absolutely nothing is impossible for those who sincerely try to reflect Christ's light, those who really try to follow Him and love Him.

The third and last lesson: Never underestimate how adaptable you are, but when you want to take on a challenge where you will be taken outside of your comfort zone, do not try to do it alone. You will not succeed. And if you are out of your comfort zone, know that isn't always a bad place to be in. It can be an incredible opportunity for your faith and character to be tested and strengthened. Stay teachable. And always trust in the Lord no matter what. He is in control, always.

Thank you for having us and I look forward to journeying and serving with you.

***With love from Adriaan, Sanelle, Albert and Lukas van Tonder.***



## **Interim Ministry Update *from Stewart McPherson***

This is an update on this period of Interim Ministry with some recent developments as well as a reminder of some things from my update at the end of August.

### **Review of Planning Process**

News was shared of the result of the national *Presbytery Plan Review Panel* that some of the questions raised by Linktown Church around the process on the decision to close that building were upheld. The report states: *"The Panel's decision is to uphold the request for review on the basis that there has been a material irregularity of process. This means that the Presbytery should now reconsider the matter of building categorisation."* Presbytery was informed of this on the 16<sup>th</sup> September and by the time you read this conversations will already be underway regarding the next steps in the process and is in the hands of the *Fife Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Team*. Your Session Clerk will keep you updated as news emerges.

### **Role of the Interim Minister**

This obviously impacts on aspects of my own role in progressing towards union, but, in the meantime, I will seek to continue to move things forward where possible until there is an agreed plan. I have enjoyed conducting worship on occasions across the four congregations and leading worship when we come together jointly. I attend all the Kirk Sessions, chair the Strategy Team, and am present at the three working groups, Finance, Property, and Transition.

### **Visioning Day**

The Visioning Day in August drew over 70 people from the four congregations together to explore aspects of how we might begin to shape a church for the future. There was much open conversation and sharing of ideas in our time together including sharing of the good practice within the life of each congregation and what might be our priorities in the future. People spoke of the importance of fellowship for all; of treasuring the traditional while exploring fresh expressions of worship and congregational life for current members and to attract new people; a desire to look at how we best care for each other, especially older people at home or in care, and the need to continue to engage with social issues and people who struggle; how we might make best use of social media in our contemporary world.

## **Capacity**

It is obvious that we cannot do everything so it will be important to prioritise. There is a need to have a realistic balance between our desires and our resources without exhausting the committed while seeking to involve others.

## **New Name**

The opportunity has been given, through the Transition Team, to the membership and beyond to make suggestions for the name of our new united church, and I am already collating those suggestions.

## **Future role of Elders & Kirk Session**

An evening will take place at the end of October gathering all the elders to draw together best practice in shaping future leadership and how the discussing, planning and decision-making processes are best shaped through teams and ministry.

## **Ministry**

We will explore the gifts and talents we are seeking in the ministry team to lead the church into the future. The new congregation has been allocated two full-time and one half-time ministries, with at least one being a minister of word & sacrament. I assure you that this is a good quota in the light of the national situation.

## **Communication**

The editors of the Newsletters met recently to share ideas for future communication both within the church and to those beyond: from Newsletter frequency to a Website to Facebook to online streaming of worship to publicising through newspapers. There was positive comment on the way I have been communicating through email and my bi-monthly Update page, while also looking at how some news might be more frequent. Being transparent in sharing information and news is important so that everyone not only knows what is happening but feel that they share the journey.

## **Christmas**

There will be opportunity to share together in Christmas Eve Worship either at 7pm in St Bryce Kirk with a Candlelit Carol Service, or a Watchnight Service at Linktown taking us through midnight into Christmas Day. Along with the continuation of our monthly Joint Services into the New Year we hope to increase their regularity as we move towards union.

## **Basis of Union**

The main agreement will be our Basis of Union which will go to all church members for a vote when the time comes. This will include the name of the new congregation, the nature of the Team Ministry and organisation of the Kirk Session. Your Strategy Team will shape that, after which Kirk Sessions will vote on it, and then, when agreed, it will go to the congregations when, after worship on the same Sunday, all will be able to vote. The timing of this will be shared well in advance which we can anticipate might be in the Spring, all things being equal and if progress is made in other significant areas.

## **Time to Chat**

Please remember, if you want to ask anything or have a chat with your Interim Minister, then please get in touch. Tel: 07814 901429 or Email: [smcpherson@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:smcpherson@churchofscotland.org.uk)

## **The Interim Time of Interim Ministry - *From Stewart McPherson***

There are those who love the colours and crispness and lower-lying sun of Autumn, and some who appreciate the peaceful melancholy nature of the season, while others sense the '*nights drawing in*' lowering their spirits as the curtains are drawn and the fire is lit. The seasons do affect our inner order. The time between summer past and spring to come is difficult for some, even if we all know it is necessary. The trees need to shed last year's leaves and the earth needs to rest as underneath the soil and the bark a nurturing of new growth is prepared. This interim time is necessary for new life to emerge.

Yet it is not all darkness. We anticipate the fun of Hallow'een, the flying and sparkling colours of fireworks, the expectation and then the wonder of the Christmas season all the way to Epiphany and the wonderful story of Jesus' journey on earth and his feet treading the soil.

In this period of Interim time as we look towards the spring of a new church emerging it is evident there are events and moments which make us feel like lowering our heads, to look back at the summer, and lock the door and stay inside. But we are also to look for and recognise those moments of light, peace and hope that sparkle in the dark, or the life that is born in unsuspecting places, and those things that make us smile unexpectedly. We journey together through this interim time and discover along the way things we often miss in the bright light of day when our minds and spirits are distracted, and with faith we will emerge into the light blossoming with new life. The poet John O'Donohue says it better ...

## **“For the interim time”**

When near the end of day, life has drained  
out of light and it is too soon  
for the mind of night to have darkened things,  
no place looks like itself, loss of outline  
makes everything look strangely in-between,  
unsure of what has been, or what might come.

In this wan light, even trees seem groundless.  
In a while it will be night, but nothing  
here seems to believe the relief of dark.

You are in this time of the interim  
where everything seems withheld.

The path you took to get here has washed out;  
the way forward is still concealed from you.

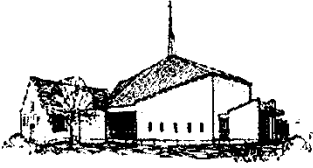
“The old is not old enough to have died away;  
the new is still too young to be born.”

You cannot lay claim to anything;  
in this place of dusk, your eyes are blurred;  
and there is no mirror.

Everyone else has lost sight of your heart  
and you can see nowhere to put your trust;  
you know you have to make your own way through.

As far as you can, hold your confidence.  
Do not allow your confusion to squander  
this call which is loosening  
your roots in false ground,  
that you might come free  
from all you have outgrown.

What is being transfigured here is your mind,  
and it is difficult and slow to become new.  
The more faithfully you can endure here,  
the more refined your heart will become  
for your arrival in the new dawn.



**BENNOCHY PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND  
KIRKCALDY**

Meldrum Road/Elgin Street, Kirkcaldy, KY2 5HR  
Charity Registration Number SC 005628  
(Registered Scottish Charity)

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF BENNOCHY PARISH CHURCH, KIRKCALDY**

**GIFT DAY SUNDAY 5<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

As we can see from the decorations in the shops, the adverts on television and all the other reminders, Christmas is coming. Perhaps you have finished your Christmas shopping and everything is wrapped. Maybe you haven't started yet, but the Christmas season will be here before we know it.

At this time of giving we are asking you to please remember your Church family as you do your own and give a Christmas present to the church at our second Gift Day of 2023. This will take place on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> November.

As usual, a Gift Day envelope will be delivered to you, along with this Newsletter, before the date. These envelopes are printed with a Gift Aid Declaration on the back and so if you are a tax payer and want your donation to be Gift Aided, please make sure you fill in your details, even if you have already signed a Gift Aid Declaration Form. The line at the top of the envelope which says 'Name of Charity' should be filled in saying **Bennochty Parish Church**. No other charity name can be accepted.

If you are unable to come on this Sunday but still wish to contribute to the Gift Day Appeal, please put your donation in the special envelope and put it in the collection plate when you are next at Church.

If you are debating the level of donation for the Gift Day, I would ask you to 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 pray that you continue to have a Church home where your life is enriched by worship and Christian fellowship.

*The Finance Team*



## **Women's Group**

Our 2023/24 session began on 22<sup>nd</sup> August with an early evening walk. We enjoyed fish and chip suppers afterwards in the Elgin Hall. On 5<sup>th</sup> September members celebrated the 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Group, which began in 1970 as the Young Wives and Mothers Group. Alan Crombie, Civic Society, was guest speaker on 19<sup>th</sup> September. On 3<sup>rd</sup> October we welcome Teresa Naylor of the Care and Share Companionship.

A very varied programme of speakers, craft night, quiz night, visits, etc continues until May 2024. Our main fundraiser, the annual Bunny Drive, will be on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April at 6.30 p.m. A date for your diary!

We meet on Tuesday evenings fortnightly at 7.30 p.m. in the Elgin Hall. At present we have 20 members. New members always very welcome. Phone Irene, tel. 01592 267995 or speak to a member of the group for more details.

***Irene Wood***

***Church Liaison member***

## **Harvest Thanksgiving 2023**

This year's Harvest Thanksgiving was celebrated jointly in Abbotshall Church on 24<sup>th</sup> September. The service was taken by Interim Minister, Rev Stewart McPherson with readings and prayers by members of all four town centre churches. Our many harvest gifts went to support the Kirkcaldy Foodbank, as did any cash donations. Thanks to all who contributed in any way.



## **Shoebox Appeal**

Our Shoebox appeal is now well under way, with many boxes having been taken to fill with Christmas gifts for the needy. Please return your filled boxes by mid-October.

We are also filling 10 boxes for elderly women and 10 boxes for teen boys – the groups that are seldom supported. If you wish to provide for these boxes by making a donation we would be most grateful. Envelopes marked 'Blythswood Care' are available at the church.



## Autumn Calendar

October 22	Communion
October 29	Joint service in Linktown Church
November 05	Gift Day
November 26	Joint service in Bennoch Church
December 31	Joint service in St Bryce



## Deaths

16.08.23 Margaret Webster



## Obituary

**Garry Kidd** (Robert Edgar Thomson Kidd)

Died in Manchester with his loving family beside him.

Garry married Sheena Young in St John's, April 1959 or 1960 by Mr Simpson.

They had 2 sons, Callum and Moray - both were baptised in St Johns.

Info regarding Garry's parents -

Father: Edgar Kidd, Session Clerk in St John's.

He was the longest serving Session Clerk in Scotland, for which he received official recognition.

Died 5<sup>th</sup> December 1973.

Mother: Isabella Kidd, President of the Guild.



## The Olive Branch Café

Our Community Café is open every Thursday from 11am – 2pm, serving tea, coffee and home baking from 11am and light lunches from 12 noon. New volunteers always welcome. Please come along on a Thursday and speak to any café member.

[www.bennochparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.bennochparishchurch.org.uk)