

Bennochy Parish Church of Scotland

Newsletter

June 2024



We hope all our readers are looking forward to the warmer days of summer, and enjoying the recent burst of colour in our parks and gardens. All around are the signs of new life, new creations.

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JUNE 2024

A message from our Interim Moderator

Summer has come around again – though as I write this, I am lying on the couch with a duvet over my legs, and there’s a cold edge to the weather. At least I’m inside, though. I got rather soggy yesterday when I was across at Assembly.

The General Assembly can sometimes feel like an indulgence, and is full of traditions that can seem very strange to outsiders – and even first-time Commissioners – as I discovered when a South African friend attended Wednesday’s sessions, and was full of questions about things I had never really thought twice about.

However, the Assembly is also a reminder that we are a national Church. It’s easy to get caught up in our own parish and presbytery, and everything we have going on, it’s good to be reminded that there are others across the country doing amazing things in their own communities – and some that are going through similar processes as us, with similar issues.

As you may be aware, we had hoped to have a congregational vote at the end of May that would bring us another step forward towards our union with the other Kirkcaldy town centre churches. You can find out more about the union situation in Stewart’s updates.

We are still moving forward, though. Even if it’s three steps forward and two steps back, that still comes out as a net move forward. We’ll get there. As the writer to the Hebrews says, we must run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

I hope you have a good summer. I’m heading away for a week on Iona at the beginning of July – getting



away from it all and enjoying the peace of that thin place. We will keep moving toward the goal of achieving the union in the late summer or early autumn. The uncertainty and in-between-ness of the current situation will hopefully soon be resolved, and the new united charge can move forward into the business of calling a ministry team.

Believe in that – let's keep moving towards that goal, running our race as it is marked out for us.

With many blessings for a wonderful summer,

Morag

A message from Stewart McPherson.

A former colleague, John, recently retired and decided to sign up to do a course on building dry stone walls. Like myself, he is a walker who has grown to appreciate them when walking the hills, however, he always had a notion to learn how to build them. Also, he promised his son that he would build one at his family's new home.

My fascination with dry stone dykes – as we know them – is really because wherever you go they will always look a little bit different. Each builder certainly has his or her own personal style and technique, but whenever they are being built they traditionally use local stone. So, a wall in Yorkshire looks different to one in Shetland to one in Wiltshire to that in the Scottish Borders. Local stone that has formed the local landscape, or stone recycled from ruins of cottages in the islands, or hewn from local quarries.

The stones are gathered then scattered along the grass where the building is to take place.

Stone of assorted sizes and shapes, smooth and rugged, forged by the earth over the centuries. The expert builder scans his eye across the stones,

selects one at a time that will fit next to the one before, finding a place for them all as the wall grows knowing there will be a place for each and every one will have its purpose. The structure grows without any cement and, in fact, is left with a significant number of 'holes' in its form. It needs the holes. For these spaces are neither an error nor a weakness, but a necessary part of the strength of the structure to let the winter winds blow through rather than blow it down.

The local church is created through the gathering of local people. Some larger than life, some smooth, some sharp, some rough, some beautiful, some small and apparently of less significance. But each is called to play her or his part. Each is chosen by the Maker to create a community from the local to minister in the locale. There is a thread of church history where the local model has been created as a smaller version of the cathedral model, both in its architecture and its functioning. But surely a church in the rural is different to that in the city centre to that in the suburbs to that in a South American shanty town or in an African village.

What we are doing is building a local church, using the resources we have a to hand and the people who are around, serving the community within which we are set. It is built on the faith of the past, the people who shaped and formed all that we inherit, but with the responsibility to build a church for our day in our time. We each have a place and a purpose, while we can each cast our eye around and recognise the gifts in others and the part they can play, while affirming that we build on the cornerstone rejected by the world but chosen by God.

But it must still have some holes in it. Spaces of seeming incompleteness which allow the spirit to blow through as this is also part of our very being.

"As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood." 1st Peter 2. 4-5

Open Door Project

The Olive Branch Community café continues to attract our regular customers every Thursday but recently we've been delighted to see a few new faces. Everyone enjoys the very reasonably priced food and, in particular, the socialising on a Thursday. If you haven't been yet, do come along, you'll be given a warm welcome.

We continue to be indebted to our loyal, hardworking volunteers and recently, 7 of them successfully completed (or updated) the Food Hygiene Certificate. If you have a few hours to spare some Thursdays, we would welcome new volunteers to join our friendly team.

Our Community Choir has been rehearsing for our end of Session performance for family and friends which would have taken place on 3rd June. Unfortunately, it has had to be cancelled because of illness. However, after Ella and Graeme (our leader and accompanist) have had a well-earned break, rehearsals will start again in mid-August. All new members are very welcome, but it would be particularly good to see a few more men to swell the ranks of the baritones! Please check the Church website for details.



Lots of local residents pop in to the Community Garden throughout the year. However, with the arrival of warmer weather (sometimes), it's good to see more folk, including children from local nurseries enjoying the flowers and the fresh air. We are very grateful to our very small band of volunteers who keep the garden looking lovely. Once again, we'd be delighted to get help from anyone who enjoys pottering around outdoors (no great gardening expertise necessary!).

Alison Hamilton
(Chair)

Celebrating International Organ Day at Bennochy Church



International
Organ Day



As part of my personal commitment to playing the organ, I'm a member of the SCOTS organ training scheme run by the Royal College of Organists. So, when their communications mentioned International Organ Day, I wondered what might be done at Bennochy Church. No sooner than I had mentioned the idea, a whole team from the Church had gathered round to help. I also managed to secure a commitment from 10 of my piano students and their parents to take part in the event as a kind of experiment to see if we could transfer music that we had learned on the piano across to the pipe organ.

So, International Organ Day was celebrated on 20 April and over 80 children and adults gathered to listen and take part. As well as enjoying the students' performances, the afternoon also gave us a chance to appreciate the history of our organ: how it was originally commissioned and built for St Peter's Episcopal Church in the early 1900s, and finding its way up to St John's Church in the mid-seventies. There was also an opportunity for folks to make a donation towards the running costs of the organ.

It was a delight to see how the event was enjoyed, and how the conversation has continued since then: for example, what are we going to do for International Organ Day next year? The Royal College of Organists has earmarked 26 April 2025 as the next International Organ Day, but in the meantime, thank you for your ongoing interest and support for this aspect of the musical life of the church.

Stuart Watson

General Assembly 2024

I had the privilege of attending the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as a Commissioner, which ran from Saturday 18th May until Thursday 23rd May.

The Assembly recognised that The Church of Scotland had been well served over the past 12 months by the Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton as their Moderator. From preaching at the presentation of the Honours of Scotland to His Majesty King Charles III, to meeting Pope Francis in Rome, Sally has represented the Church in high profile places. She has also been present to local congregations across the breadth of our denomination, listening to their hopes and fears about their church in the months and years ahead. At all times, she has been a powerful voice and witness, offering welcome words of wisdom, comfort and of inspiration.

Taking up the role of Moderator required Sally to step away from her leadership of Christian Aid Scotland. As Sally prepares to pass on the duties and tasks of the office, she was thanked for all she has done on behalf of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Sally welcomed her successor, Rev Dr Shaw Paterson from Strathaven Trinity Parish Church, where he has served loyally for the past 33 years, to take on the role for the next 12 months as the Kirk's ambassador. Shaw was destined to become a brick layer before receiving his ministerial call and initially discouraged from going to university as he was told that his Lanarkshire accent would hamper his life prospects, which have clearly been discarded as he has been announced as the next Moderator.

Acknowledging that *"there is a lot of upset"* currently across the Church of Scotland, particularly due to the planned closure of Kirk buildings in order to safeguard the future of the organisation, Shaw says that *"one of the themes I'd like to have for my year as Moderator is 'Building Together' – it goes back to my roots"*.

"As a Church we have strong foundations and it might not be my building or your building that's kept, but our foundations are in Christ."

"We need to build together and we need to come together – we need to realise almost everyone is losing something."

"We have to try and get over any sense of animosity."

"We're a Church together and we need to go forward together to build on the foundations of all our forebears."

Ironically Shaw also has experience of union negotiations – successfully bringing together four Kirk Sessions and congregations, while sharing in the hurt of a lost building.

During my time at the General Assembly I found Shaw to be inspirational, knowledgeable with a wicked sense of humour and popular in the midst of his peers, visiting guests and fellow Commissioners. I will look forward to his visit to Fife Presbytery and hopefully leading worship in Kirkcaldy.

It was fitting that the opening Hymn at the Assembly was 'Let us build a house where love can dwell', which concludes on every verse 'all are welcome in this place' demonstrating Shaw's theme 'Building Together' for the forthcoming year.

The start of each morning session was a brief time of worship where we were joined by Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, who has been appointed as the Lord High Commissioner to the 2024 General Assembly, a decade after he last took on the role of royal representative at the annual gathering.

Prince Edward spoke with great passion at a few of these services and clearly enjoyed the content, where he smiled, laughed and took notes constantly as our new Moderator delivered his daily messages.

One of the Services was dedicated to the Military Chaplains who were in

attendance, where it was evident that their presence was always appreciated by our Military Forces, as reference was constantly made as to them 'being there' in their time of need.

The business of the Assembly was reading and listening to motions and amendments pertaining to the circa 26 reports from the various committees of the Church of Scotland, some of which required votes to be taken by the Commissioners on their individual voting touch pads. Listening to these committees, it was evident that there was a tremendous amount of great work being done by the Church of Scotland. I was unable to attend the Assembly on the Tuesday due to a friend's funeral which allowed me to listen to the Scottish News at 6.00pm, where there was a report from Gordon Cree on the General Assembly where he stated that the Church of Scotland Assembly has lost its relevance and impact over previous years. Clearly this is his perception (and probably others) to which my response is "Gordon (and others) get yourself over to next year's Assembly to listen this time and see the great work that is being done"

All in all, I found my time at the Assembly, interesting and enjoyable, albeit a very long day. as I set sail on the 6.20 am bus to Edinburgh, and back in the house for 8.00pm. It was worth it, more so when I got text messages from my Grandkids (and others) to say they saw me on the telly. Fame at last!

George Drummond,
Session Clerk
Commissioner Number 284

Gift Day April 2024

Our first Gift Day of 2024 was on 7th April, and raised a total of £1,420.
Thanks to all who contributed.

Handbell Ringers:

A busy Spring session for Bennoch Bells, finishing with a visit to each of Abbeyfield and Marchmont care homes.

We open with a peal of the bells and continue with many an old favourite, such as "Daisy, Daisy", Edelweiss, Amazing Grace, Skye Boat Song and others, ending with "Auld Lang Syne". At times – a good old sing-a-long!

Over the summer months we are to send a few bells to Whitechapel Foundry for repair to handles & caps. Most bells date back 80 years ago and inevitably need attention. Nearly all were struck at Whitechapel, who give a very professional service.

We now have a splendid new wardrobe for storage, with layered shelving, allowing a "nest" for each bell. A heavy load indeed, but happily on strong wheels for easy moving between halls where necessary. We are indebted to Alec Whitehill for this masterpiece. It will be much appreciated over the future sessions.

In September we will have an Open Day for you to come and listen -- try, if you will – and enjoy the reverberations, a very distinct sound!



Dates for far distant travellers: August 12th -17th, 21st International Symposium in Japan

Dates nearer home; July 13th Summer gathering in Llandudno, and many other festivals elsewhere....

It's good to ring!

Margaret Simpson

* **The Women's Group Bunny Drive** on Tuesday 9th April raised the splendid total of £384 for church funds.



Good things come in threes...

First of all, we are blessed to have the talents of Stuart, Sandra and Bruce providing us first class music for worship on Sundays.

Secondly, the Church of Scotland has just launched a supplement- "God Welcomes All", to our hymn book, with over 200 new hymns and songs.

Thirdly, you have a chance to contribute to how we worship every Sunday: on June 9th, after the service, Stuart would like anyone interested in being part of a singing group taking a regular part in Sunday worship, to have an informal discussion on what we might do, beginning after the summer. This might include exploring music from the new hymn book, and learning new songs and hymns to share with others.

Please consider joining us then, and if you are interested but can't be there that day, then let me know and I'll keep you informed.



Christian Aid Week, 12-18 May 2024

The theme of Christian Aid Week this year was poverty throughout the world and the cost of living crisis. Our service on 12th May was led by our Interim Moderator Morag Wilkinson and our collection in Bennochry raised a generous £221.39, with more donations made through the Christian Aid website.

Prior to that many attended the Soup Lunch, arranged by the town centre churches social group, after the joint service in St Bryce on 28th April. An excellent lunch was enjoyed by all, raising a total of £760 for Christian Aid. Thanks to all concerned.

Deaths

20.03.24	John Fagan
28.03.24	Mrs Margaret Churcher
27.04.24	Eric Evans
09.05.24	Mrs Christine Greig



Eco Thoughts.....

For the last few months, we've had some 'Eco Thoughts' in the orders of service, hoping they'd prompt people to consider doing something small and manageable towards protecting our beautiful, but fragile earth. At Pentecost the Worship Team led the morning service, also on an Eco theme, involving children in discussion around items such as a food waste bin, bamboo toothbrushes, wildflower seeds and a litter picker.



So, we are kind of moving on an environmental protection path, are we not? And there's more....


In February this year, Bennoch Church joined Eco Congregation Scotland, a Christian charity addressing climate and conservation issues. If you log on to www.ecocongregationscotland.org you can see that Bennoch is right there on the map of eco churches. We are hoping to work towards gaining a bronze award, starting with an **ECO Fayre** being planned for **10th August 2024 from 10am – 1pm**. The Green & Quirky Upcycling Project (fondly known as the G & Q) is busy getting the fayre pulled together. We are aiming high! Greener Kirkcaldy is helping to promote the event and lots of church workers are either helping to fund or 'manning' stalls such as The Repair Shop (textiles); The Repair Shop (the Men's Shed); The Growing stall; Compost making; Book table (Swap or donate); Dr Bike will be there to check that bikes are in good condition; Preloved & Jumble sale, with a 'T for free' table; raffle with eco prizes; a G & Q table of upcycled, quirky stuff; and of course there will be Fairtrade teas/coffees being served by our church stalwarts.

And a lot more besides.

Please put this date on your calendar and come along to share the fun of the Fayre!



Summer Calendar

June 16	Communion	
June 30	Monthly joint service at Linktown Church	
July 04	General Election – halls in use – no Olive Branch Café	
July 07	Summer Joint Service at Bennochly Church followed by last walk with Bennochly Walkers	
July 14	Summer joint service at Abbotshall Church	
July 21	Summer joint service at St Bryce Kirk	
July 28	Summer joint service at Linktown Church	
August 10	ECO Fayre	



The Olive Branch Cafe

Our Community Café is open every Thursday from 11am – 2pm serving tea, coffee and home baking from 11am and light lunches from 12 noon.

Why not drop in for a bite to eat and a chat, or join the Knit & Natter Group who meet in the café at 11am.

Car Parking:

Don't forget, Rexel, the electrical wholesalers in Katherine Street, have kindly agreed to allow us the use of their premises for car parking in the evenings and at weekends.

www.bennochyparishchurch.org.uk

Current Activities in Bennochy Church

Girl Guides:	Wednesday
Rainbows	for girls aged 5 - 7 years
Brownies	for girls aged 7 - 10 years
Guides	for girls aged 10 - 14 years
Senior Section.	<u>for girls aged 14 - 25 years</u>

Women's Group	Tuesdays, fortnightly
Community Choir	Monday
Al Anon	Tuesday
<u>Dru</u> Yoga	Tuesday
Hand Bell Ringers	Tuesday
Country Dancers	Tuesday
Indoor Bowling	Monday
<u>Tai</u> Chi	Monday & Wednesday
Zumba	Wednesday

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

More information on these activities can be found on our website.