

April 2020

The Parishioner

The magazine of the Portland Parish Church of Scotland: Troon



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

With God's support we are developing Portland as a dynamic, Spirit-led Church impacting on our town and beyond through encouragement, nurture and service

MESSAGE FROM THE SESSION CLERK

Dear members and friends of Portland

As Easter approaches, none of us could ever have imagined that all places of worship would be closed. During this exceptionally difficult time, we need to look out for one another. We are not allowed to keep in contact with personal visits, but we can keep in contact by telephone and social media. We are blessed with gifted individuals who can post messages on our website and social media to keep us all informed and keep us all in touch with our church community. Please get involved and share your thoughts and stories with us.

Our vacancy continues. The Troon Church of Scotland Working Group have now met on seven occasions since October 2019 (as directed by Presbytery).

The remit given to the three Troon Churches of Scotland by Ayr Presbytery was to jointly discuss and formulate a plan for a future sustainable mission-based ministry for Troon.

The group are considering possibilities.

The Troon Church of Scotland Working Group propose to present these possibilities to a joint meeting of all three Kirk Sessions. Time would be given for Elders to consider the possibilities. Each Kirk Session would then meet separately to discuss and vote on the possibilities.

The possibilities for the future shape of Ministry in Troon would be presented to each Congregation and a vote collected.

Everything has now been put on hold and the progress we were making has ground to a halt. We will need to wait until this covid-19 crisis has passed before planning the next stages.

Show support for one another and keep the future of the Church in your prayers. Pray for our Interim Moderator, Bill Duncan and our Locum Minister, Rev Mary Elizabeth Prentice-Hyers. Pray for the isolated members of our community and help those you can.

May God's peace be with You,

John Reid
Session Clerk

**DEADLINE FOR THE MAY ISSUE OF THE PARISHIONER—
SUNDAY, 26th APRIL
FOR POSTING ON WEBSITE ON THURSDAY, 30th APRIL
(assuming we are still on lock down)**

As I am sure you will have already discovered in these times it is important to share and stay in touch so please submit something for the Parishioner—about your experiences, the kindnesses you have received, a poem, an article, a prayer—I for one will be very grateful! Margaret

Written 24 March 2020 Day 1 of 'Lockdown'

12 April 2020 is Easter for the majority of Protestant and Catholic Christians around the world. 19 April 2020 is Easter for our sisters and brothers of the Orthodox tradition. The date of Easter or Pascha is just a date, but the event of Easter, that is already happening in our midst. Pascha is the Greek word meaning 'Resurrection.' We understand that Resurrection, that Easter has always and already taken place. It certainly may not seem like it right now, especially as I write this letter, and we enter into 'Lockdown Life,' but we are Easter People.



The thing about God's love is you can 'crucify God's love, but you cannot keep it dead and buried.' William Sloane Coffin, a former pastor at Riverside Church in New York City, is credited with this saying. You can crucify God's love. You can wallow in the darkness that seems to sneak into our lives. You can isolate yourself in the loneliness that Social Distancing can cause. You can feel like the world is out to get you, but that will not have the final word.

We have seen 'resurrection' in our midst every day since this Pandemic started.

There are plenty of stories already about artists and musicians, PE coaches and neighbourhood friends, helping one another. Joe Wicks of *The Body Coach*, holds 30 minute free sessions of PE for kids every day that school is not in session. Lin Manuel Miranda, writer, author, director and actor of the hit Broadway series *Hamilton*, challenged Andrew Lloyd Weber, composer and producer of *Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats*, and *School of Rock* (just to name a few), to a sing-off. We the public get to listen to amazing music in the midst of separation. Neighbours are checking in with one another at appropriate distances, provide food deliveries, loo roll, etc. Friends are hosting cocktail hours over Zoom so as to be able to talk to someone outside your immediate family. In the midst of all of this – Love is winning. Humanity is suffering, no doubt, there are still troubled times ahead, but Love, and I would argue it is the love of God, has the final word.

We can crucify God's love, but we cannot keep it dead and buried. Resurrection will happen. Resurrection has already happened. Resurrection will continue to happen.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA (We will be sure to dig these up the next time we are together!!!)

Amen.

*Rev. Mary Elizabeth Prentice-Hyers
Locum, Portland Parish Church*

HOUSEGROUP

Fascinating.....

quite, quite absorbing. The fact that a group of us round a table can still learn, can still look at a Bible reading in a new light, in a different way.

We discussed spiritual gifts this week and knowledge is one of them. How can you not love the words of : 1 Corinthians 13...Love never fails....these three remain, faith, hope, love. But the greatest of these is love.

How does knowledge - of the Bible, of Christ, of the Church, affect our faith and our love for each other? As Paul wrote to the various peoples he very much stresses that knowledge is important, that we need to know Jesus. But he also says in Colossians 2 that in Christ is hidden all the treasures of mystery and knowledge - I tell you this so that no-one may deceive you with fine sounding arguments.

We need the knowledge and the love and faith and hope.

Please note that there will be no further Housegroups until May at the earliest. The April date has been cancelled.

Barbie Short

HYMNS FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Dentists | Crown Him with many crowns |
| Contractors | The Church's one foundation |
| Obstetricians | Go labour on |
| Golfers | There is a green hill far away |
| Politicians | O Jesus I have promised |
| Librarians | Let all mortal flesh keep silent |
| Dry cleaners | O for a faith that will not shrink |
| Census officers | All people that on earth do dwell |
| Tax officers | We give thee but thine own |
| Crossing wardens | There's a friend for little children |
| Window cleaners | One more step along the way |
| Car valeters | Shine Jesus shine |
| Man from the Pru | Blessed assurance |
| Agony Aunt | Tell out my soul |
| Weatherman | Lo He comes with clouds ascending |
| Electoral Roll Keeper | When the roll is called up yonder |
| Guide Dog trainer | Lead us heavenly father, lead us |
| Boxer | Fight the good fight |
| Bride | O happy day that fixed my choice |



Web Worship

Try the Church of Scotland weekly worship tab
Every Sunday has its own playlist of hymns all from the Church Hymnary 4
There is a good mix of sources, soloists, congregational singing, bands
You can also search by **title, hymn number, author, tune, and topic**

<https://music.churchofscotland.org.uk/weekly-worship>

Messy Church Up-date March 2020

Plant Seeds of Faith

The last two events of the session, our regular meeting which was scheduled to take place in St Ninians and our Eastertainment day both had to be cancelled, like so many other features of our lives at present. We now have extra time to reflect on Messy Church in general and plan for the future.



Many ways of measuring 'success' or 'failure' are hard to apply to Messy Church. Most Messy Churches are run by a single church. *Life and Work* last year carried an article on new research which highlights the impact of Messy Church. We know of none quite like ours, drawing on the talents of different churches and denominations. This year in particular numbers have varied so greatly that any 'average' figure is meaningless.

What we can say is that we have consistently planted the seeds of faith and have tried to do it in a fun way, which we hope the children will remember and that it will help them, their parents and all the Messy Church helpers on their faith journey through life.

Sandra McCallum

Musings of the moment

COVID

As someone in the 'over 70' group whose family lives some miles away I have been touched by the thoughtfulness and kindness of so many neighbours and friends asking if I needed anything and stressing their willingness to help now, or in the future. It has underlined for me the essential goodness of so many people.

People of my generation have been very blessed. Unlike our parents we were not caught up in a world war. Cod liver oil, orange juice, free school milk, educational and employment opportunities have helped so many of us to live good lives. Add to that the blessing of a church upbringing and firm faith and we have much to be thankful for.

As well as being grateful to be on the receiving end of so much thoughtfulness it might be the moment to share and pool our talents and ideas. If we have to keep our distance perhaps *Opportunities In Retirement* could start outdoor semaphore classes. Learning signalling when I was in the Brownies will at last pay off! Could we use our keyboard, computing and other abilities to help? If we do have to be at home more could we contribute in other ways? Amidst all the hand-washing advice there was a useful tip about how to avoid touching our faces, a habit that is even observed in babies still in the womb. The advice was to keep hands clasped together. Does that sound familiar?

Sandra McCallum



OUR WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PLAQUE

We will remember them.

Parishioners will have noticed in the recent past that our memorial plaque for the fallen of World War 1, which is wall mounted behind the font, had become very tarnished and dull. It was decided to restore the plaque if at all possible, and the Church Officer and property team set about seeking professional advice to do this.

The two main challenges were removing the plaque from the wall, as it is solid brass, extremely heavy and weighs in at nearly 50 kg, or 110 lbs, and then finding a company who would carry out the cleaning. After making various enquiries, Ian Hitchman Fabrications of Troon removed the plaque, which is held to the wall by 6 very large “mirror” type screws, and after careful packing and transportation courtesy of the property team and Church Officer, Lindsay and Sons of Glasgow refinished the plaque with a high speed polishing gun process that burnished all the detail back into brilliant life. The whole polishing process took just one hour! The plaque was remounted by Hitchmans before the following Sunday service, and both companies have declined to take any payment for their work.

As the pictures show, the result is a superb transformation of one of the centrepieces of our sanctuary, and everyone is invited to take a more detailed look at this wonderful piece of craftsmanship, originally by “Archd. (Archibald) Hamilton, Glasgow”, whose inscription is on the bottom of the plaque. Attempts were made to uncover more information about this company, and it was found that they were a company specialising in brass engraving and stencil cutting based in Ann Street in Glasgow. The three streets in Glasgow with that name have all been retitled over the years.

Bob Faulks





BEFORE.....

.....AND AFTER



230 ADVERTISEMENTS.

HARVIE'S PATENT SHIP SIGNAL LAMPS,

According to the Published Official Reports of the recent Ship Lamp Competition, were used as Standard or Test Lamps (See *Professional Reports*, 1904, March, 1873), and were the only Lights which met all the requirements of the Merchants' Shipping Act, and they otherwise excelled in:

BRILLIANCY OF COLOUR, RANGE, & DISTANCE.

They are now used by the principal Ship Companies, and Owners are entering HARVIE'S LAMPS in the Specifications for New Vessels. All kinds of Cabin Lamps and Non-Explosive Mineral Oil Lamps especially made for Ships' use.

WILLIAM HARVIE & CO.,
220 BROOMIELAW.

ARCHIBALD HAMILTON,
34 ANN STREET,
BRASS ENGRAVER, STENCIL CUTTER,
And Maker of Brass Name Plates for Shop Windows, Doors, Offices, Warehouses, &c.

STEEL Punches, Letters, Figures, and Trade Marks.
Iron Brands and Burn Marks for Casks, Boxes, &c.
Moulders' Letters for Casting—variety in Stock.
Stencil Plates for Architects, and for Boxes, Bales, Bags, &c.
Stenciling Inks and Brushes. Hand Stamps and Ink Pads.
Endorsing Presses (Self-Inking), Made, Engraved, and Repaired.
Brass Plates (all Sizes), Rough, or Made up, and Polished.
Wax in Cake, all Colours, for Engravers.
Metal Labels Stamped to any Pattern.
Most Articles kept in Stock, that will admit of doing so.

ROBERT WHYTE & SONS,
CABINETMAKERS, UPHOLSTERERS, AND CARPET WAREHOUSEMEN.
FRENCH & GERMAN BUHL & MARQUETRIE FURNITURE.
DAMASKS, REPS, SILKS, TAPESTRIES, MUSLIN & LACE CURTAINS, BRASS AND IRON BEDSTADS, AND BEDDING.
111 ST. VINCENT STREET,
GLASGOW.
Steam-Power Works and West End Branch,—
260 NORTH WOODSIDE ROAD.



Many of you will remember Edward Thompson from his time as Minister of Portland Church—so thanks go to Jean Hart for passing on this interesting article, with his permission, which brings us up to date with his life.

Courtesy of the Presbyterian News Service 21st February 2020

The Reverend Dr. Edward J. Thompson recently celebrated 25 years with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Raised in Northern Ireland and a graduate of Durham and Edinburgh Universities, he was ordained by Edinburgh Presbytery, Scotland, in 1982.

After serving several years with the Church of Scotland, Thompson came to the PC(USA) where he pastored Presbyterian churches in Kansas City and Naples. He joined the Board of Pensions in 2013 and recently moved to a newly created position with the board as director of interagency relations based in Louisville.

Thompson has shared his reflections of a quarter of a century in the Presbyterian church.



A good number of yesterdays ago, I grew up amidst fathomless harbors and fantastic castles. I now celebrate 25 years living amidst wide horizons and waves of wheat. I think of my faith journey and life pilgrimage as one shaped by harbors and horizons. Harbors, if they are doing their job, offer shelter and a place to prepare for a journey that will take you to wide majestic horizons. Horizons beckon and invite us to venture beyond what is known. Jesus' call, "Follow me," is a call with no end date. It is as fresh as the morning sun and as comforting as the setting sun. It's a call from harbor to horizon.

My journey "across the pond" has been completed by so many before me. Although life-altering, my journey could be likened more to a Sunday afternoon walk when compared with those who generations earlier risked everything to venture into an unknown. As a young boy I remember Sunday afternoon family walks. Down past the railway station and on through large iron gates into the town park. It was a park for Sunday walking and not a lot else as ball games were "prohibited" and the swings were padlocked on Saturday nights in fear that any child should dare enjoy the Sabbath! Through the park you exited through more iron gates onto the waterfront with the horizon dotted with sail boats and the occasional large freight tanker making its way to and from the city of Belfast, some 10 nautical miles due south. The calm waters of the lough gave no indication of the crossing beyond out into the Irish Sea. On a clear day you could believe that you could see the southwest tip of Scotland to your left, and to your right the tall yellow crane known affectionately throughout Northern Ireland as "Goliath" towering over the distant city landscape. This mammoth crane bore testimony to the muscle and might through years of shipbuilding. Earlier that very muscle and might mixed with the music of wood and metal being fashioned into the Titanic. As that ship got its toes wet on its way to the Irish Sea, those on board looking to the port side enjoyed the majestic site of my place of birth, Carrickfergus, known for its deep harbor and towering castle. The Norman castle is in as good a shape today as it was when it first had overnight guests, some 900 years earlier.

As we walked closer to the castle and harbor my parents' grip on my hands became tighter! As close as I could get to the harbor edge was my goal! It was over the edge where all the music was. Some 10 feet below, if the tide was out, one could find folks busy on their boats, sweeping and sorting, fussing and fixing, preparing and planning for a sail, but still firmly tied to land. Sunday by Sunday I would hear the same music, see the same folks, see the same boats, which never looked that they had been anywhere since last week!

Continued

The Sunday afternoon walk continued, this time past St. Nicholas Church that seemed as old as the castle. We would walk through the graveyard and peep through the long, narrow window of the church, the only one not composed of stained glass. This one window had an amazing story. It was so angled that looking through from the outside one had a view of the Lord's Table. The window was known as "The Lepers' Window," through which the sacrament of Holy Communion was passed to those of the town's leper colony who gathered outside. In its own beautiful way, this window was both a harbor and a horizon, a harbor of grace and mercy and a horizon of hope and holiness, as bread and wine were passed through.

Carrickfergus, with its tall castle and deep harbor, was also a place that, in the 1970s, offered those fleeing the violence and terrorism of Belfast a safe place to rest a while, a harbor of peace from the war of bigotry raging just miles and minutes away.

As a teenager I sat upstairs in church close to the windows that offered a good view outside toward that lepers' window of the neighboring church and beyond to castle and harbor and to the park where, it being Sunday, the swings would be padlocked so no innocent child could scrape a knee or stir the wrath of God. Those rules were drafted and posted by the town council, some of whom taught me in Sunday school! My window view offered glimpses of elders on duty, whose task was to keep vigil on the outside to prevent us becoming prey to a bomb attack while responding to the call "Let us pray." This window, so very different from that Leper's window of grace and hope, of harbor and horizon centuries earlier.

As teenage years gave way to adult life, my journey of life continued to be marked by places of harbors and castles. To castle and cathedral of Durham University, then to New College Edinburgh University in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle. The gates of my childhood park were now replaced by the gates of New College. High on The Mound in Edinburgh, these gates offered a harbor of learning in the reformed faith and as I exited each day through those iron gates, I passed the tall statue not of Goliath but of John Knox with his arm outstretched to the world beyond. This view through the gates was breathtaking across the cityscape, and across the "Firth of Forth" and the wide horizon beyond. From there I exited to serve first a highland parish in Sutherland on the east coast in the shadow of Dunrobin Castle, and then a parish on the west coast, in Troon, with its harbor and horizon.

In 1995 I left harbor to venture forth to fresh horizons on the edge of the Kansas prairie. Yes, this journey could not have been any more different from those who years earlier had crossed by ship and become homesteaders, tilling the baked soil of summer and wrestling the frozen soil of winter. Replaced was the "red sky at night a shepherd's delight and a red sky in the morning a sailor's warning" with a sky lighting up with the firework of thunder and lightning storm. Torrential rain was now replaced with tornadoes, castles were now replaced with storm shelters. Fields of sheep were replaced by waves of wheat.

You and I share this harbor of Reformed faith. A harbor at its best provides a place of rest and replenishment. In this harbor of faith, we find God's mercy and grace in abundance. May we hear God's gentle whisper and even at times may we hear a loud and disturbing voice in the night. Whisper or shout, may the Holy Spirit move women and men to venture out in faith. The lives of Sarah and Abraham, Ruth and Naomi, Samuel and David, Mary and Joseph, Peter and Paul, St. Joan and St. Teresa, John Knox and John Calvin, Bonhoeffer and Barth, the child with loaves and fish, and the folks lowering a friend down through the roof, all speak of faithfulness and following, lives shaped by harbors and horizons.

Continued

In this, my 25th year working with the church, I find myself now working for the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA) and a major part of my work is a new venture as a director of interagency relations, working in the Presbyterian Center in Louisville alongside the agencies of the denomination. This work depends on collaboration in our deep Presbyterian harbor of reformed tradition joined with energy and imagination as together we respond to Christ's call to venture into new horizons and beyond.

The church is often likened to a ship. Ships were not built to clutter up harbors but to venture out toward the horizon with purpose and possibility, with mission and meaning. I am grateful for those who have helped shape my soul as I continue the never-ending task of following. I am thankful that my "inscape" has been touched by the landscape of harbors and horizons. My challenge is that in the midst of harbors and horizons, can I become a window through which God's grace and holiness reach in and touch me, prompting me to reach out and touch the world with integrity, faith, and hope.

Blue , Blue the world is blueBUT.....



The flowers that bloom in the spring traa laa.... are keeping us all in a much better spirit than otherwise. Need bit more sun though. Doesn't it make you happier just the minute it appears ... (and not just because we can get the washing out).

The bluebells will be out very soon and they are so lovely. Just when the hyacinths and daffodils are going, the crocuses and snowdrops have gone, here we come, proud, rampant and so, so blue. Of course the British ones are best - blue bell, wood blue, fairy flower, wild hyacinth. We droop just a bit but we are proudly blue. Spanish - pah!

Let me tell you something about bluebells.....you CANNOT get rid of them. I love them , to me they are spring, they are colour . Ok carpets of them in a wood are truly wonderful , but to be able to look out at a garden full of them without any effort on my part. Bliss. I have, and you may well be shocked by this, two friends who have spent aeons of their lives getting rid. Why? I cry. But they're wild , they say. Alright in woods but not in MY garden (Hah. As if their gardens are anything to write home about . Boring. Dull - NO Blue). Anyway they won't. Can't. Get rid.

But free plants I cry. Beautiful blue - yes, ok I am a little focused on blue I agree. But it's such lovely colour. And should we not all love the wild, the unusual, the things and people who just give us joy - A weed? No. A flower ... go on , come with me on this - God gave us bluebells , thanks be to God.

Enjoy the Spring and love your inner flower child.

Barbie

A prayer for Easter Day

Lord Jesus Christ,
risen from the dead, we worship you.
on this Day of days
We bless you,
that it was impossible for death to hold you;
that the last word lay not with Caiaphas, or Herod
or Pilate
but with your Father,
and that word was:
that life is stronger than death,
light is stronger than darkness,
and love is stronger than hate.
We rejoice,
that the price has been paid,
the sting of death has been drawn,
the power of death has been broken,
the victory won,
and new life can start now, and eternal life
hereafter.



We thank you,
that for those who had failed you, there was forgiveness,
and there still is;
for those who had doubted, there was found faith,
and there still is;
for those who had hidden behind locked doors, there
was an open door,
and there still is;
and for all, the promise of your presence, your peace
and your power,
and there still is.
Glory be to our God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always.

Amen.

*From the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2019/20, the Rt Rev Colin Sinclair
First published in the Life and Work April 2020*

TOGETHER

On Sunday 5th March with a joint Troon Churches of Scotland service, along with the Boys' Brigade, the numbers of the Sunday School were swelled, and on the theme of the Samaritan woman at the well, after playing some games, the children created some wells out of plasticine—this may have moved on to dinosaurs and monsters, but as you can see they were pretty creative.



Locum Minister: Rev. M. E. Prentice-Hyers

Interim Moderator: Bill Duncan

Session Clerk: John Reid

Treasurer: Catriona McKellar

Church Officer: Ruaridh McKellar

Church Office:

Organist/Music Convener: Dorothy Howden

Hall's Convener: Catriona McKellar

The Parishioner: Margaret Short

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