

November 2020

# The Parishioner



The magazine of the Portland Parish Church of Scotland: Troon



**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them.**

## **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

We continue to provide a Sunday morning service starting at 10.30am. We are restricted to a maximum of 50 people within the building and so far, we have an attendance which ranges from the mid-twenties to the high thirties. We will continue to provide an online worship service which can be accessed via Portland Church's website or via Facebook. You can also listen to the worship service by telephone. We owe our Locum Minister, Mel, a huge thanks for all the extra hard work she puts in to make all the services so meaningful.

Now that we are into November, we can start to look forward to the season of Advent and the promise of hope that Advent brings. We are God's children, and we can look after each other. If you need extra help, please contact your Elder or the church office and we will be only too happy to help in any way we can.

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)*

**Housegroup** has taken to Zooming, and is back discussing the Bible and Life in a way we all find helps us understand Jesus better and relate it to how we are now. We have to make our own tea but apart from that.....

Feel free to join us, next session is:

Wednesday 18th November at 7.30pm

Just send your email to me, Barbie Short  
byshort00@gmail.com



Many congratulations to  
Jean Meiklejohn who  
celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday  
on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October

# PRAYER

Merciful God, there is much that we'd do well to forget - and yet with elephant-like qualities, we have mastered the art of remembering those moments when we felt ourselves to have been:

mistreated  
overlooked  
slighted  
wronged  
disrespected



These causes of personal grievances burn within us, often lingering for years, and yet these are the very things you would have us dismiss lest they become malignant, blackening our hearts.

Forgive us, Merciful God, when we refuse to let go - when we insist on carrying the past around with us, as a trophy cabinet of hurts.

Might we, instead, devote ourselves to remembering that which builds us up and which is helpful to us in navigating the choppy waters of the present day. And to that end, might we begin with the encouragement of the Psalmist to 'Let all that I am praise the LORD; **may I never forget the good things he does for me.**'

Loving Lord, there is no end to the good things that you have done for us. Especially in this season of Remembrance, we remind ourselves that you have been 'our help in ages past, our shelter from the many, you carried us 'through many a day of darkness, through many a scene of strife.'

Loving Lord, there is no end to the good things that you have done for us. Especially in this season of Remembrance, we remind ourselves that you have been 'our help in ages past, our shelter from the stormy blast.' By the courage and sacrifice of so many, you carried us 'through many a day of darkness, through many a scene of strife.'

This, we will remember.

And in our remembering, we will find 'strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow' - despite the darkness and brokenness of our world and, yes, in the face of the pandemic through which we are battling. For as we remember, we see the truth of your promise that, in Christ, you will 'never leave us nor forsake us.'

You are faithful, o God. This we remember because we must not forget, In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen

**The Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair**, Moderator of the General Assembly in 2020/21.

## Services for November

Sunday Services in November start at 10.30am

1 November All Saints  
8 November Remembrance Sunday  
15 November 24th Sunday after Pentecost  
22 November 25th Sunday after Pentecost  
22 November - Reign of Christ Sunday  
29 November First Sunday of Advent



Jim holding old starter



New starter box on wall with Jim and John



Starter Box Wiring!

### THE ORGAN IS REPAIRED

Returning to church services has been a very different experience but among the best things have been the virtual choir and the organ. On my first Sunday back Dorothy played “Gabriel’s Oboe” and it was like a lovely echo of the “old normal”. However, we soon learned that the organ had become inoperative and could not be used to enhance the service.

Jim Vernon traced the fault to the motor of the blower which forces air through the organ pipes. The motor was removed and taken to a firm in Glasgow which he had found. Unfortunately, it still did not work after the motor had been reinstalled. Jim then discovered that the starter switch box had also failed. A new one was sourced. The old one was disconnected and removed. The new one was installed and wired with considerable effort due to the confined space involved.

Feeling like one of the Famous Five in a dark tunnel on Kyrin Island I descended into the bowels of the church. I took a photo of the old starter and watched the final connections of the new one.

We were not present on All Saints Day when Dorothy pressed the started button and proceeded to fill the sanctuary with the glorious organ sound which Portland has come to love.

Avril McDonald

# Scottish Poppy Appeal 2020

The Scottish Poppy Appeal is facing an unprecedented crisis as thousands of their volunteers are forced to stay at home because of the Coronavirus pandemic. This comes at a time when the demand on Poppyscotland's vital, life-changing services for the Armed Forces community is increasing rapidly.



That is why they are asking the public to donate differently this year, and support them like never before. Donations can be made through their website [poppyscotland.org.uk](http://poppyscotland.org.uk).

**Troon Rotary will be collecting in Morrison's during week ending 7th November**

## **TROON REMEMBRANCE DAY ARRANGEMENTS 8TH NOVEMBER 2020**

Under the current restrictions gathering at war memorials is not advised. However the Royal British Legion has arranged for wreaths to be laid at the Cenotaph on both Remembrance Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> November and Remembrance Day Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> November.

The Royal British Legion are also asking that the people of Troon mark the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour with two minutes silence on the Sunday and Wednesday in the same way we supported the NHS in lockdown by standing at our door.

As well as Portland's service, there will be a pre recorded service of Remembrance at Troon Old Parish Church for transmission on Remembrance Sunday and again on Remembrance Day.

### Deaths of Portland Members

*"I am the resurrection and the life"*

Sheena Graham      3rd October 2020

Graham Spence      4th October 2020

## Christmas this year might feel very different to what we're used to due to ongoing global pandemic challenges

Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, convener of the Faith Impact Forum, reflects on how the true meaning of the Christmas story will never change and it is principally about hope for a better tomorrow.

"This coming Christmas could be seen as an opportunity to give everyone the perfect 'excuse' to reassess how we mark the celebrations whether as a faith festival or simply as a 'holiday'." Very Rev Dr Susan Brown



"Yesterday's announcement from Scotland's National Clinical Director, Professor Jason Leitch, has already given rise to a flurry of wise-crack responses doing the rounds, such as: "the only way to 'do' Christmas this year is to kill the Turkey and have 20 round for the funeral." Sadly, even that would not necessarily mean people could sit down to eat together since the 20 refers to the number allowed to attend the suitably distanced, mask-wearing service. Wakes, like every other social gathering in restaurants and hotels, are subject to the current hospitality restrictions. But you get the point.

### Hope

Part of what Christmas is about, is getting together with family or with friends to share food and exchange presents. It is one of the reasons why so many people who live on their own, dread the season. Without being a part of a larger gathering, those on their own, somehow feel excluded from the 'real' Christmas – even although Christmas has its roots in a tiny gathering of just two people and a baby without any of the table-groaning excesses we have come to associate with it. I am not at all sure how Christmas, especially in Scotland, grew to be associated with bigger numbers, more gifts and enough food to satisfy an army after exercise. The celebration of Christmas was abolished for us in 1640 and only became a public holiday for Scots in 1958. That means that until relatively recently, our 'tradition' was for Christmas day to be a working day when children might receive a stocking with an orange, an apple, a 'penny' and a book. And that is within the living memory of many of our older people. Now, however, Professor Leitch is telling us that in 2020, Christmas will not be 'normal' – that is it will not have all the people trimmings. And I confess, I love having everyone coming for dinner, I love the midnight service too, on Christmas Eve, when everyone and their auntie weaves their way to church (some able to do so in more of a straight line than others!). I love having only a few hours' sleep before getting up to get the turkey in the oven before the Christmas day service when the children are so excited and we have an impromptu nativity where they tell the story. I love sharing a cuppa and cake with people before everyone goes home to do what they do at Christmas. For us, it means present opening and then dinner, Usually for around 12-15 of us. Sometimes more, sometimes less. This year it looks like less. A lot less, it may possibly even be just the two of us.

## Isolation

And while for me and for many others that might be disappointing – in some cases deeply disappointing – it may actually transpire that it helps to take just a little of the load off families who find Christmas difficult at the best of times and who would face even greater pressures this year thanks to job losses or the reduction in their income as a result of the current pandemic. This coming Christmas could be seen as an opportunity to give everyone the perfect ‘excuse’ to reassess how we mark the celebrations whether as a faith festival or simply as a ‘holiday’. That said, this year has been so psychologically tough for so many that the thought of Christmas too, being restricted, could be for some, the straw that breaks the camel’s back. People need things to look forward to – especially perhaps those who have been in isolation and who have missed significant events such as the birth of a grandchild or important birthdays, a family wedding, or who have even had to forgo attending the funerals of people they have loved. To have now, such a major event in their lives, one they have been looking forward to, taken from them, could have devastating consequences on their mental health. We cannot underestimate that impact. If we do, it may well be one of the greatest mistakes we ever make. We need, as a society and as communities, to look out for those around us. We need to ensure that we take people’s mental health seriously – so seriously that we actively look for ways of reaching out to those who feel so isolated, so abandoned, so swept to one side that they are in danger of losing a sense of their own worth and of the worth of life itself. Bridge gaps between people and God Professor Leitch is giving us due warning here. In his call to prepare for a digital Christmas he is saying we need to find other ways of drawing people together. In this respect we are better off than our Muslim sisters and brothers who found restrictions suddenly being introduced around one of their major festivals the night before that festival - literally as families had begun gathering and as they were preparing the food. Those who had arrived from a distance, simply had to turn around and go back to their own homes again. From a faith perspective, churches the length and breadth of the land are already beginning to think digitally and to shape ideas to help people hear the Christmas story across all sorts of digital platforms and social media – as we have been doing since March. For us, the Christmas message, even in a time of pandemic, is one that is principally about hope. The child who was born in a manger, came not so that some could feast. He came to build bridges and to bridge gaps between people and God and between people and people. The baby’s birth is a challenge to the whole of humanity to dare to look beyond ourselves to the needs of those around us, in the knowledge that God thought everyone was worth sending his Son for.

This Christmas may not be like Christmases past, but it will still be Christmas. And we can help it to be good in a different way by caring beyond our own.

For all."

## Messy Christmas

Plans are under way for a Messy Church Christmas Celebration by providing 'Carry Out' bags full of themed craft activities and a book with the Christmas Story. The craft team are already working on making up kits and there will be videos, hopefully made by children, demonstrating how to make these. Exact details of how and when these will be ready and delivered will be published later, including on social media.



For more information on Christmas Messy Church activities visit [www.messychurchtroon.com](http://www.messychurchtroon.com)

*Sandra McCallum*

## Messy Church Troon presents the 'Messy Advent Trail'

We have at least 24 stained glass windows ready to reveal for each day of Advent throughout the town. We are asking people to join us in co-creating the trail by decorating their window with a Christmas design using paint, spray snow, or black paper and tissue paper. Hop onto the 'Messy Church Troon' facebook page to see each window and post pictures of your own window for people to look out for. You can use, snow spray, paint on the window or good old fashioned black card with tissue paper. Anything goes! The more the merrier joining our community art project-old and young together to create an amazing Advent Trail for us to all enjoy!

*Lesley McFarlane*





## Waiting

What he said, I am absolutely clear about this, what he said was that in his father's house were many TV channels. And he did that thing with his eyes, narrowed them a bit. He said, 'If it were not so I would have told you.' I remember that very well because it was quite heavy, like we had to pay attention. He was going to get the place ready and then come back for us. That is definitely what he said. The funny thing was he insisted we knew the house, and how to get there too. Well, we didn't. If we did, why would he have to come back for us? We could just turn up, maybe pick up some pretzels and beer en route. And Tom said, 'No, we don't know the way,' and he suddenly went all weird, going on about how *he* was the way and the truth and if we knew him we must know his dad, and from now on we *did* know his dad because we'd seen him. Well, we hadn't. So Phil said, 'Have you got a picture of him on your phone?' And it got a bit unpleasant. He said, 'After all this time, Philip, and you say you don't know me.' Which wasn't what Phil had said in fact, but he wouldn't let it go. 'If you know me you know my father,' he said, 'so what's this about showing you his picture?' He doesn't like being challenged, that's the problem. There's two ways of doing things, his way and the wrong way. But once he calmed down he was dead nice again. His place was our place, anything you want just ask, all that stuff. Which probably means we don't have to bring anything. And then he was off. I'd wanted to ask how many T V channels there actually were. And which ones, because a lot of them are crap and we're going to be there a long time. But because of the way he'd had a go at Phil I didn't think I could. Anyway, he's been away ages. He never gave a time of course, but it's getting cold out here.

<https://three-six-five.net/Stories-And-Music>



On World Communion Day Portland celebrated a "reverse" Communion by giving donations for the local Foodbank. We must however remember that there is an on-going, and increasing need for this service and 90% of the food distributed by foodbanks is donated by the public.

Examples of items required are 750 ml diluting juice, tinned potatoes, tinned vegetables, 1 litre UHT milk and tinned hot meals (stew, mince, chilli, Bolognese, curry.

There are a number of donation points in Troon including the Co-op on Dundonald Road, Troon Old Parish Church (Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12 noon to 2 pm), and Morrison's

*"For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me... Matthew 25:35*



# Malawi Partnership Update

In last month's Parishioner I was pleased to report on the allocation of financial assistance which was being given by our members to our partner congregation in Malawi. Since then we have received feedback reports on each of these areas of support together with some photographs as follows:

## 1. The Rev. Asayiwe Mwenitete

*My words are not enough to appreciate what your kirk session has offered towards the education of my children. I, my wife Tabitha and the entire family, we thank God for the offer. We really see the great love of God ,we don't take this for granted. May the good Lord continue blessing you all, I am very grateful indeed. Here are pictures of my three children*

1. *Alinafe ( Emmanuel)- our first born. She is 22 years old and at Teachers training college.*

2. *Ipyana ( Grace) - our second born .She is 19 years old. She is at a secondary school.*

3. *Reuben is our third born. He is a 17 year old boy who is at a secondary school*



## 2. Limphasa Church

Donations from Portland members have helped to finance the installation of electric lighting in the church and to make a start with the laying of a smooth concrete floor which can be kept clean. As can be seen from the pictures the floor has been in a rough state since it was built and is very dusty following recent plastering activities. The need for cleanliness, which is next to Godliness, is now being addressed.



While all of the electrical work for the church has been completed it is still on a waiting list for connection to the nearby public power supply.

### 3. COVID prevention in the community

The team at the ReJoin Art Community have used our funding to manufacture a further 2,300 face masks which they have donated as follows:

500 masks to the Mpamba Community Clinic  
800 masks to Mpamba Community Secondary School  
1,000 masks to Mpamba Primary School



They now have plans to continue this outreach with the manufacture of a further 7,700 masks for use by the 11 prayer house congregations under Limphasa. On average they will each be allocated 700 masks as it is recommended that masks are changed often.

In addition, they wish to extend the availability of plastic buckets, along with soap and hand sanitisers for use in public places and then to provide a minimum of 300 households with very basic locally built hand wash facilities.

These ambitious projects which would greatly help to prevent the spread of COVID will cost approximately £2,500 for which help with further donations will be most welcome.

In response to the assistance provided to date Alick Banda, the project leader, says:

***We are so thankful for the support you give us. ReJoin has become a vehicle that God is using through you and the entire Church of Scotland to transform the lives of the youths and the entire community. ReJoin runs every step of the project with total transparency and accountability. Our church leaders (the executive), the village chiefs and representatives from the community are involved right from the planning to the implementation stage of the project.***

*Bill Weir*

**THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF THE PARISHIONER WILL BE POSTED AT  
THE BEGINNING OF THAT MONTH  
PLEASE THINK OF  
CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR MAGAZINE—parishioner45@gmail.com**

## Life .....

So, Auld Bob starts thinking that his wife's hearing is deteriorating as she never seems to answer him when he calls on her. Bob decides to ask the doctor for advice.

'There's a simple trick you can try,' explains the doc.' Simply ask her a question at a distance and if she doesn't hear, move closer and ask again, until she does.'

That night, Bob arrives home and sees his wife in the kitchen, cooking. He thinks to himself, ' what a perfect opportunity to test her hearing.'

He stands in the doorway of the kitchen , and asks,  
'What's for dinner , sweetheart?'

No answer. He moves a bit closer.

'What's for dinner, sweetheart?'

Still no answer. He moves even closer.

'What's for dinner, sweetheart?'

Still his wife doesn't answer. He now sees how serious her hearing problem is. So at this point , he stands right next to his wife.

'What's for dinner , sweetheart?'

His wife turns round and says,

"BOB, FOR THE FOURTH TIME, WE'RE HAVING CHICKEN ....."



Contributed by Barbie Short



Visit the Troon Portland web page for our Weekly Sunday Service—Choir anthem, prayer, bible reading, sermon and hymn singing—JOIN US.

**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

**Website:**

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