

October 2020

The Parishioner



The magazine of the Portland Parish Church of Scotland: Tron



*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven
above;
then thank the Lord, O
thank the Lord
for all his love.*

Hymn 229

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

It is well and truly autumn now. When you start writing October, you really do begin to think about thicker jumpers, wool socks, and vests for the kids. The sun is setting earlier and rising later. The weather is getting cooler if not a bit more 'driech' more often. There are already things in the shops that are being sold for the Christmas season. (Too soon, I say!)



If you drive out of Troon and into the farmland, you will notice that the harvest is in already. The birds come to eat any leftover food that the farmers leave in the fields. The worms continue their work of eating food and producing soil. The butternut squash and autumnal vegetables appear in the supermarkets. For the next few months, however, the fields will lay fallow. It is important that the fields lay fallow. It is important that the fields take a break from providing in order to then be planted again in the spring. Biblically we see the importance of laying fallow. Every 7 years a farmer is to allow a field to lay fallow for an entire year. It is important that the ground and soil rest.

As we enter into autumn and head towards the end of the year, we may have to let some of the things that we are accustomed to lay fallow, take a rest, this year. There is no doubt in my mind that Halloween, Remembrance Day, American Thanksgiving, and Christmas will look different. Does that change the meaningfulness of the autumnal celebrations? I hope not. The God that was with us last year is the same God that delights in the harvest this year. The God that mourns with every tear we shed for our dead or dying loved ones is the same one that sits with us in our grief months and years later. The God that breaks forth into creation as a baby is the same God that calls forth goodness in the midst of evil.

This is the same God that names and claims each one of us as God's own. May we remember that promise, even when things around us continually change and look different. May we remember that laying fallow and taking a rest, does not mean that God has abandoned us. May we remember that despite the brokenness of the world, God's love is high and wide and deep and long enough for all.

Thanks be to God.
Alleluia
Amen.

Rev M E Prentice-Hyers

Message from the Session Clerk

Dear members and friends of Portland,

I am happy to report that we successfully re-opened the church building for Sunday worship. We have followed the advice given to us by the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Government and made the church as safe as possible for people to enjoy worship together. We are restricted to a maximum of 50 people within the building and so far, we have averaged 30 to 36 worshipers on a Sunday morning. It is a short service lasting no longer than 30 minutes without any singing! We do get a treat when the combined Portland and Troon Old Choirs give us a virtual hymn to enjoy. We owe our Locum Minister, Mel, a huge thanks for making the service so meaningful. It is nice to see and talk to friends again.

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 fully understand that returning to a worship service in the church building is a personal decision and we are all asked to be cautious and careful. We are all God's children and we will look after each other. Worship God in a place that you feel safe.

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)

We bless you, God of Seed and Harvest,
And we bless each other,
That the beauty of this world,
And the love that created it,
Might be expressed though our lives
And be a blessing to others,
Now and always
Amen



Blessings upon you, upon those you
love and those you shall never know.

Blessings upon your steps
and upon the vision of your eyes.

Blessings upon you in all
circumstances;
joy and sorrow, for wisdom rests in
them, twin experiences with different
faces.

Blessings be upon what lies before
you, the challenges and decisions,
the pain and the relief.

Blessings upon you, friends in Christ.

TRIBUTE TO MR ALASTAIR MACDONALD

20th May 1936 – 7th September 2020, aged 86

Teacher, Mathematician, Educational Adviser, Ordained Elder, Rotarian, Model Train Enthusiast, Gardener, Amateur Photographer, Foodie, Golfer, Husband, Father, Papa – just a few of the roles which Alastair fulfilled over many years, with complete dedication to each. Enthusiastic in everything he undertook, Alastair has left his mark in each of the spheres where folk knew him, both professionally and privately.



Having been ordained to the Eldership in Portland Church in March 1975, at Kirk Session meetings, he would often express his opinion in no uncertain terms. You did not need to wonder what his thoughts were on a particular topic! Such was his commitment to the Church, that he served as Sunday School Superintendent, Session Clerk from March 1989 to March 1995, as well as a period as Representative Elder to the Presbytery of Ayr, before retiring from the Session in 2006. Alastair worked tirelessly on the production of 'The Portland Story', a very successful two-day pageant which was held in the sanctuary to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the congregation in 1843. Alastair was elected to several vacancy committees and which included a time of service as Convener of the Vacancy Committee when his gifts of administration and leadership were to the fore.

Completing his schooling at Jordanhill College School in 1954, Alastair went up to Gilmorehill to study Mathematics. During vacation times, he worked as a Conductor on the buses and as a postman, signing the Official Secrets Act in that capacity!

When he graduated in November 1958, he went on to complete his Teaching Certificate and began his teaching career, which included returning to his old school as a young teacher, aged 25, in 1961.

And it was the evening of his graduation that Alastair met the young lady who was to become his life's partner. He and Maureen were married on 4th July 1964, setting up their first family home in leafy Bearsden. By and by Neil was born in 1968 and Shona completed the family circle when she arrived in 1972.

In days when teachers were more than happy to undertake extracurricular activities, Alastair enjoyed assisting with rugby coaching, allowing his pupils to see a totally different side to the man whom they saw in front of the chalkboard.

With a little persuasion, Alastair was encouraged to develop and introduce the closed-circuit school's TV programmes in Glasgow.

And it was in 1973 that the decision was made to move to Troon, to Victoria Drive, when Alastair accepted the post of Educational Adviser for Audio Visual Aids with the former Strathclyde Regional Council, the move to Berriedale Road in Barassie taking place in 1980.

Away from a busy family and professional life, and his active involvement with Portland Church, Alastair was a keen member of the Rotary Club in Troon, being awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship in recognition of all the work he did to enhance that organisation. It was in Rotary that many good and lasting friendships were forged.

If you visited Berriedale Road, you would be taken upstairs to see his latest model railway layout, and ever the perfectionist, he never quite attained the finished one that he sought. And, as a member of Ayr Model Railway Club, he would so enjoy their days away to various Model Railway Shows, travelling on a variety of trains, steam trains being his supreme passion, and when the opportunity arose, travelling the length and breadth of the UK and Europe to experience more and more steam locomotives.

Alastair was passionate about his garden and tending it, and proud of the plants he had brought on in his greenhouse. He knew all the Latin names of the various plants.

Having played golf at Royal Troon for 44 years, these past years, though unable to play because of issues with his hips, he still enjoyed going along to meet friends for a catch up.

Retirement in 1991 gave Alastair a new lease for living, and these past 29 years have accorded him wonderful holidays in France and California.

None of us will ever know fully the depth of Alastair's sorrow when Motor Neuron Disease took Maureen in 2005 after forty years of marriage. With his typical resolve and determination, he got on with life and his involvement in so many of his favourite pastimes.

Alastair's life has been full and packed with a wealth of experiences and friendships. People were his greatest treasure and now, he is content, together again with Maureen. We must not grudge him that.

We remember with thanksgiving and gratitude the loyal and unwavering service Alastair gave to the Church and to our Lord and the inspiration that he has been for others. We commemorate the life and witness of Mr Alastair MacDonald and to him we attribute the words found in the Gospel, "Well done, good and faithful servant – enter thou into the joy of your Lord". He was a remarkable person and we give thanks for his deep convictions and strong faith. We salute his memory. We entrust Alastair into the loving hands of God and continue to hold his family and friends in our hearts and prayers. Many lives have been enhanced with the knowing of Alastair MacDonald and we thank God for this and entrust him to His eternal care.

John Reid
Session Clerk, Portland Parish Church

UPDATE ON THE PHILP FAMILY

This year has been exceptionally difficult for everyone and times are still tough, but I thought folks might be cheered up a little looking at the lovely smile on our new granddaughter's face. Isabella Rose Philp was born on 25th August. As you can see, she, and her mum and dad, Ian and Danni are all doing well. She is now the wee cousin having taken over that responsibility from her "big" cousin Maisie Evelyn Julia Philp (Harry's wee sister) who was born on 29th June. As many folks will have read in the July issue of Parishioner these 2 cousins were preceded by their bigger cousin Joshua Allan Philp who was born on 26th May. All the grandchildren are doing well and hopefully we will have a vaccine for Covid and we can all start to enjoy our lives together.

Stay Safe

Colin & Evelyn



And happy Zooming to one an all

*I am the way , the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.
John.14v6*

We discussed this and much, much more at House Group. We all felt we could gain a great deal from reading the passages, thinking through suggested questions, and veering happily off track to work our way through what this means to us. At a time where we are all, just a wee bit stressed, and missing company of family, the family of House Group means we can join together.

Unfortunately we all had to make our own tea!

If any of you would like to join us, you are very welcome. Just send me your email and I will give you the link. It is always a Wednesday evening at 7.30pm. Next one is :

Wednesday 21st October 7.30pm

email me on byshortoo@gmail.com to join the group

Barbie Short



Anne Wright has died at the age of 103. She lived in Wilson Avenue until a few years ago when very poor eyesight forced her to enter a nursing home. She lost her eyesight but never her keen mind.

Ian and Nanette McLean were married in Portland church 50 years ago by Gordon Grant. They celebrated their anniversary by visiting Troon and asked to be photographed in front of the church. Nanette (nee Grant) was very involved in Portland life and has kept up her Portland connections.



An invitation to Communion

This is the Table of the Lord;
Come, not because you are strong but because you are weak.
Come, not because of any goodness of your own but because you need mercy and help.
Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more.
Come, because he loves you and gave himself for you.

(George McLeod, Iona)

Submitted by Sandra McCallum

WORLD COMMUNION DAY 2020

In the early centuries, Christians brought to the Lord's Day assembly gifts of bread and wine from their own tables. A place to receive such gifts was designated near the entrance to the room where the congregation assembled for worship. During the service, deacons would set apart the amount of bread and wine needed for the Lord's Supper and after the service of the Word, they would bring the bread and wine forward to the Table. At the completion of the meal and worship service, church officers distributed whatever bread and wine was left over to those who needed them for sustenance.

While we cannot yet gather together around the table for the Lord's Supper to be fed ourselves, I ask this of you on Sunday, 4th October. Celebrating with sisters and brothers in Christ on this day is World Communion Sunday. It is an ecumenical event which celebrates our oneness in Christ with all our brothers and sisters around the world. We will not have a full Harvest Sunday and come to the table to be fed ourselves, but we can bring food to feed others.

Now more than ever our donations to the Food Bank here in Troon will be needed. As Furlough ends for many in October, there will be a real and present need for food right here in Troon. So, next week, I invite you to a reverse "communion."

Instead of coming to be fed at the table, come to worship ready to feed others. The food bank accepts all donations, but they are in particular need of:

Small Jars of Coffee
Jam
Tinned meals (curry, mince, tuna)
Toiletries

If you would like to make a donation but cannot attend worship, feel free to contact your elders for help making those donations.

M.E. Prentice-Hyers

Mornings can be the most beautiful time of day.

So wake up with a smile on your face and make the most of this morning!

Be grateful for the new day. Take a deep breath and relax. Enjoy your coffee!



A new day is a chance to refuel your soul.

It's really nice to wake up in the morning realising that God has given you another day to live.

May God give us relief for every stress, a sweet song for every sigh, an answer for every prayer, and peace for every troubled moment. A blessed day everyone!

Don't wait for someone to bring you flowers.

Plant your own garden and decorate your soul.



Every day may not be good, but there's something good in every day

When God gives you a new beginning, it starts with an ending. Be thankful for closed doors. They often guide us to the right one.

Be thankful for what you have, you'll end up having more.

Don't start your day with broken pieces of yesterday.

Today is a new day, a day to start afresh.

Every day starts with some expectation, but every day ends with some experience.

Hope your day begins with love and ends with beautiful memories.

Every new day is another chance to change your life.

Make the most of this day! Laugh, Love, Dream...
Live every moment!

Every morning starts a new page in your story. Make it a great one today!



MESSAGE FROM MALAWI

At the beginning of September I was very pleased to be able to forward all of the COVID - 19 appeal donations received to date, amounting to £620.00 plus £155.00 of recoverable tax, to Rev. Asayiwe in Limphasa. This sum handily converted into 700,000 MWK.

Following consultation with our Interim Moderator, Bill Duncan, we stipulated how the funds should be allocated, namely:

- MWK 200,000 to Rev. Asayiwe Mwenitete as a contribution towards his own and his family's household needs
- MWK 250,000 to the ReJoin Community team to help in providing the church and wider community with COVID - 19 preventative measures and protection
- MWK 250,000 to Limphasa congregation for use as directed by the kirk session to help in meeting the financial needs of the congregation and in providing support where needed to the glory of God.

I am happy to share these details with you along with Asayiwe's responses:

*I want to thank you for being very clear on the allocation of the donation. That is very good and you have simplified minister the work.
Let me take this opportunity to personally appreciate to the Portland Church under the leadership of Duncan Bill to consider me and my family in this donation. It is of great help to my family. May God bless the Portland church and its leadership.
On the part of the Church we receive this donation with many thanks as it will assist us in the Church activities.
I would like to take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your generous support for our friends in Malawi.*

*To be frank Bill that MK 200,000.00 has assisted very much to pay part payments of school fees for our two children who are sitting for the form 4 exams (Malawi schools certificate of education) this year the other doing her teaching course.
We were completely stranded but that assistance have been able to send our three children back to their schools. It was a relief to us. We really saw the love of God through that assistance. We are so thankful to you and the entire church there.*

Quite a number of additional donations have since been received and the intention is to remit them at the end of September once we receive up to date feedback following a meeting of Limphasa's kirk session on 26th September.

Thankfully there have continued to be relatively few instances of COVID - 19 in Northern Malawi with Asayiwe saying:

On COVID 19 pandemic, we have not received any new case but Church attendance today was lower than last Sunday service. Still many are not able to come and attend Church services but we have hope that little by little they will be coming until everything is settled.

In closing I would also like to record my sincere thanks to all of the knitters who have been extremely productive over recent months. These brightly coloured baby jackets and hats will shortly be shipped out to Limphasa by the Bananabox Trust and will immediately be put to very good use by all of the mothers who are fortunate enough to receive them. I have attached a small selection of photographs to illustrate these.

Bill Weir

17 September 2020



**THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF THE PARISHIONER WILL BE POSTED AT
THE BEGINNING OF THAT MONTH**

**PLEASE THINK OF
CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR MAGAZINE—parishioner45@gmail.com**



Dial-in to our services

If you know someone without internet access who might enjoy our service then they could dial in at any time on 01292 43 97 91* and listen in to our latest service
*normal local call charges apply

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
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