

September 2021

The Parishioner



The magazine of the Portland Parish Church of Scotland: Troon



*In our lives plant seeds of hope,
in our homes plant seeds of love
in our church plant seeds of joy.
Tell the world about God's love,
tell the world about God's love.*

Hymn 349

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

The images of children being handed over razor wire at the security checkpoints in Afghanistan haunt me right now. I like to think that I understand what it means to be that desperate. But I don't. I live a privileged life in a country whose safety net, while not 100% without holes, provides and cares for everyone. I cannot imagine handing a child over razor wire fences, hoping that they might have a better shot without their family than staying in your home country. I cannot imagine the desperation, the exhaustion, the anxiety, the hopelessness, the other lack of control that the people, especially the women and children, of Afghanistan must feel right now. And my heart breaks. So many people do not feel safe in their own homes. Those that made it out might never be able to go back 'home' and if they ever do go back, will they be accepted?



I had the privilege of returning to my hometown this summer while in Texas visiting my mum. Midland, Texas, is in far West Texas and is conveniently located 6 hours from everywhere: Lake – 6 hours, Mountains – 6 hours, Big City – 6 hours, Skiing – 6 hours, Mexico – 6 hours. I was used to long car journeys to play football, see family and go shopping. That was the norm for me. I was used to the small town feel where I knew the gossip, understood the politics, and could navigate without using SatNav, but things have changed. Twenty-three years later, 6 moves, a marriage, two kids, and countless adventures, there is still a part of me that remains in Midland. I enjoyed showing my sons and husband my hometown, but I knew it is not where I belong. I have changed as much, if not more than my hometown. My home is here, in Scotland.

There is a story of Jesus in Luke's gospel where he returns to Nazareth after growing up and beginning his ministry. He returns, but he is not accepted. He is not Mary and Joseph's wee boy anymore. Jesus has changed and so has Nazareth and the two seem not to be able to accept one another. Yet, Jesus does not give up on his ministry just because he is no longer Mary and Joseph's wee boy. Jesus continues his ministry formed by the people of Nazareth and transformed by the life he has established.

Portland Parish Church in the last 100 years has done good ministry. If the walls of the sanctuary could talk, the stories of weddings, baptisms, funerals, would only be a beginning of the what the building holds. But over the last 100 years, life has changed. Portland's future is not in the past. Portland's future lies ahead. There will always be a desire to have the pews full, so much so, that you had to 'purchase' your pew so that you would have a seat. There will always be a desire to return to the 'good old days,' but we cannot go back. What lies ahead is not certain, but whatever the future, Portland Parish Church continues to do good ministry.

When I say at the beginning of the service 'Welcome Home' I mean it. Welcome to a place that is safe enough for all our questions, hurts, concerns, and joys. Welcome to a place that will welcome you if you have been every Sunday or have not been in a long time. Welcome if you have changed or if you feel the church has changed. Welcome. And Welcome home. Home is not a building or a place, Home is a space where God's loving presence is known to us all, and whatever Portland's future is, God will be present.

Thanks be to God.

Rev. Mary Elizabeth Prentice-Hyers

THANK YOU.....



On Sunday, 29th August, the congregation were led by Mel offering our heartfelt thanks once again for Dorothy's many years leading the choir and congregation in the singing of hymns and anthems with her magnificent organ playing, and particularly for stepping up when needed. The applause of thanks was warm and was added to by many good wishes.



This is the last season that Ian McManus will provide us with his usual beautiful display of bedding plants which has for many years graced our church grounds.

Thank you Ian for all your work against the elements to put on such a lovely show, so often commented on and admired.



AYRSHIRE CANCER SUPPORT “AYRSHIRE TO BEATSON CYCLING CHALLENGE”

I hate Skype and I hate the internet. I hate Skype, because Skype is the means by which my little brother, 6 years my junior, told me about his latest exercise endeavours just before a depressingly COVID Christmas, and how he had tramped, treadled and push-me-pull-you'd his way to an ideal Body Mass Index(BMI) of 22.5. You know what a BMI is; it's another of those TLAs which is supposed to be the real credo for our lives. Oh, sorry, TLA? Three Letter Acronym. I hate the internet, because the internet is the means by which I learned that my own BMI was not as I expected. You enter your height and weight, using multiple conversion tables to make it easy for the technology, and are told “You have a healthy BMI...” and then, yes, here comes the conjunction used to introduce a phrase or clause contrasting what has already been mentioned ...**but!** Aaaarggh! Re-enter the figures; surely I was 5 cm taller than that? surely the scales are lying like a Maltese clock? (with apologies to all my Maltese friends) – no, my own BMI had the needle firmly buried in that orange sector and SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE.

Right. New year's resolution. You've always been fit and active. OK, so Anno Domini put paid to my running days, but until the time I retired, now 5 years ago (who pushed “fast forward on that one”?), I had been a determined cycle commuter on a daily round trip of 14 miles. Alors, (I hate the beginning of a sentence with “So,”), cycling it had to be to a) Get Fitter b) Get Even with Little Bro and c) Get out and About for Exercise without looking like Dick Turpin. When? 1 January of course, as part of my fiendish plan to invite an early spring to Ayrshire. How often? Oh, how I wish I had said to myself anything other than “every day of course”.

While some were maybe enjoying an aperitif before the time honoured steak pie, I was pulling on my long lost commuting cycle gear, complete with multiple layers and the shorts with the burst elastic, and after a few routine checks like tyres, chain, bus pass, defib, or that sort of thing, I was off and managed 5 miles before succumbing to the steak pie. I recorded the weather as “clear/cold” that day, as I did the next day; 6 miles, and 3 January 6 miles, -2degC/clear. A pattern emerged, more miles, day by day, frozen fingers, toes, any sticky out bits in fact, and the sheer discomfort of those early miles shrouded the fact that it was actually getting easier. By 15 January I was regularly achieving double figures and the mountainous conditions within Troon did not seem quite so formidable. I'd learned my first lesson; ride to the conditions.

On 1 February, my rolling 7 day total topped 100 miles. By now I had become a fraction more adjusted to the “every single day” thing, and with my commuting never having been more than 70 miles a week it was time to up the anti. I know; Dry February! That'll see off those pounds – with those of us who imbibe reportedly getting about 10% of our calories from alcohol, why, I would virtually disappear in no time (to this day Charlotte believes I was trying to escape ounce by ounce). To avoid accusations of choosing the shortest month to go without, I added 4 days, so no jibes please. Things were also beginning to get quite serious on my old Claud Butler penny farthing, which weighs about half a ton, so I dusted off my Bianchi road bike as I realised I wanted more speeeeeeeed. Having bought the Bianchi when I retired, it had been that lovely spring of 2020 when I did do a few miles on it, only to find it was probably like flying a Spitfire having been piloting Lancasters. Nevertheless I had to persevere, and having equipped myself with a modicum of decent kit (like shorts with good elastic and aahh, gel padding), the Bianchi was rolling. And what was this? the bike computer says this bike is doing over 20 mph, and I happen to be on it! OK, onward and upward.

It was about this point I started to think in terms of a personal target, and plucked from the air a figure that I thought I could achieve by, say, Christmas 2021. 4000 miles. Yes, that sounds about right; I was cycling up to 2500 miles a year on my commute, and doing a long working day in between, so 4000 should be a breeze. Hold that thought, I thought, and while holding that thought I also began to wonder if my miles were of any use or interest in any other way. Wait a minute, Ayrshire Cancer Support (ACS) might help if I try to raise a little funding for them. Having driven for them as a volunteer since Autumn 2020 it was worth a shot. Well worth it as it turns out, as blow me down, this would help lead them into their September 2021 “Ayrshire to Beatson Cycling Challenge” as well as bringing in much needed donations, they said.

The miles were still building up, and 1000 came and went on 10 March. Still no let up on the generally cold weather, but I was at least riding dry for the most part. A new target was required, and with September as now a deadline, and weighing up all the variables, recollections of which now vary, I set myself the final target of 5250 miles or 150 Troon to Beatson journeys by the end of August. At this point, whatever my daily target had originally been, it surged to over 24 miles per day and a little over 170 days in which to do it. ACS were great in helping me with a “Justgiving” page, we got the word around to everyone we could in various ways, and at the time of writing the total raised for ACS and their invaluable services has been £1220. This is a great credit to many of you who will read this, to whom huge thanks are due, and any further donations at any time will always be promptly passed in to ACS.

In terms of finishing the challenge, May (which didn't break +14degC until the 29th, and June (warmer – hooray) became the months where I broke the back of the thing. At one point, and still wondering if I'd bitten off more than I could chew, my rolling 7 day and 30 day totals mileages topped 250 and 1000 miles respectively, and although my daily total never exceeded 40.75 miles, I found that 2¼ hours on the bike, while being good for the total, good for a rendition of Willie Nelson's “On The Road Again” and good “thinking time” in places, was a significant chunk of the day, and had to be planned for with other things sacrificed. Charlotte also had to make adjustments and, bless her, probably worried more about my safety as I came home ranting about nearly coming a cropper by careless motorists, sleepy pedestrians glued to mobile phones, and dare I say it some bike riders (there are cyclists, there are bike riders). Don't start me off about any of these in detail!

Did I get fitter? – yes for sure, for cycling! The barriers of lactic acid in my older muscles now limit far sooner than breathlessness but you can't ride all those miles without some dividend. Did I get even with little brother? – yes, my BMI tumbled to under 21 (healthy range is 20 – 25) and I lost 10 kg or about 1½ stone in old money. Any other down sides? Well, my left leg now resembles an Alpine pass road map (don't look, please), and my little fingers go numb inexplicably at the oddest times. I have had blepharitis due to the wind. I have helmet hair. However, despite 3 chains and 3 sets of tyres between the 2 bikes, plus the cost of various survival aids that I gathered as the risks increased, I never suffered either physical or mechanical break-down of any kind, not even a puncture. The Good Lord was just keeping an eye on my foolishness, no doubt just wondering what in His name I was up to. Where did I go? – inter alia my longer rides would take me onto the back roads from twice round the loop of Troon to Monkton, then to Symington, Dundonald, then (once permitted) Drybridge and Dreghorn (also twice round). Did I climb Dundonald Hill on the bike? – yes both ways, just to say I was “roi de la coline”. Would I do it all again? – well, only if you can guarantee I won't get a puncture... sssshhhh! (was that air escaping?)...

Bob Faulks

Latest Update— the total raised has now reached £1240—very well done Bob!



Messy Church Moves On

A banner unfurled Ps 60:4

When we could no longer meet in person, Messy Church activities were switched to take-away bags and on-line contact, involving many local children. Plans are underway for Messy Church Harvest and Christmas, but these are still not firmed up so please check the website and facebook pages for more details.



Since lockdown Messy Church Troon has acquired a new banner to add to the one that is always put outside to welcome people to Messy Church. We trust that it will not be long before both banners are unfurled

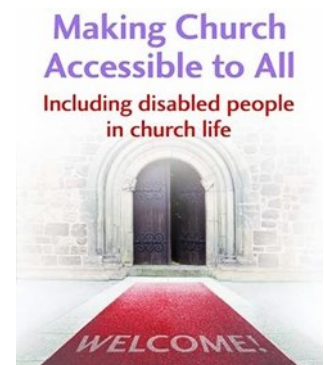
<https://www.messychurchtroon.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/messychurchtroon/>

Friends of SCDG visited Dumfries House, near Auchinleck in Ayrshire. This mansion and estate were saved for the nation when Prince Charles stepped in to set up Dumfries House Trust. As well as improving the estate, The Prince's Foundation offers training opportunities for people to learn traditional skills in construction, textiles and horticulture.

Our Friends spoke to the Educational Gardener in the Queen Elizabeth II Garden. She hosts discovery sessions for children and for adults with dementia and learning disabilities in the vegetable and flower gardens.

<https://dumfries-house.org.uk/>

or contact 01290 425959. To arrange a group tour of the house or gardens.



<http://scdg.org.uk/finding-help/>

6th September, 2021

Welcome back
GIRL'S BRIGADE

gbtroon@btinternet.com



1st TROON BOYS' BRIGADE
Junior Section & Anchor Boys start Friday 3rd September 2021



Anchor Boys (P2 – 4):
St. Meddans Church Hall

Enrolment – Electronic
To request an information pack & forms to enrol please send your email address to: arranherveys@talktalk.net

New Session Starts Friday 3rd September 7-8.10pm

Junior Section (P5 – 7):
Portland Church Hall

New Session Starts Friday 3rd September 7-8.30pm

THE BOYS' BRIGADE
The adventure begins here

juniors P5 - P7 **anchors** P2 - P4

Contacts: Anchors – Douglas Hervey (07827 895915) Juniors - Ian Nicoll (311258)

Housegroup

A pause to enjoy the sun, then a regroup in the house of one member, (with doors open wide).

We had a truly lovely afternoon tea, and it was so good to meet up with everyone, exchange all our news, and feel much more ready for the approaching autumn.

Being a little over excited, I am afraid the photo was forgotten!

We will meet again, hopefully in person, and after a year of Zoom, be better able to discuss the Bible and our Christian approaches to life.

**Wednesday 15th September, 7.30pm—9pm at
33 Beach Road**

If the virus spikes again, we will meet by Zoom .
Everyone welcome, please do email or phone me to join, or just arrive.

Barbie Short 01292 315784

byshortoo@gmail.com

Seonaid McKellar is going to be taking part in the KILTWALK in Glasgow on Sunday, 26th September in aid of 'Cash for Kids' walking 16 and a half miles. If you would like to sponsor her, the link for her 'Justgiving' page is below.



<https://fundraising.thekiltwalk.co.uk/fundraising/ScotlandsKiltwalk2021-SeonaidMcKellar?fbclid=IwAR0hCGXzsXID2ldjuAIA2i1KpuARz69oXa7t3fD1FCT0WhkitKWivDScRQg>

**OUR NEXT ISSUE OF THE
PARISHIONER WILL BE IN
OCTOBER 2021 POSTED AT THE
BEGINNING OF THAT MONTH
PLEASE SEND ANY
CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUR
MAGAZINE TO —parishioner45@gmail.com**

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SEMINAR

Saturday 4th September, 2021 11am - 3pm

Riverside Church, John Street, Ayr KA8 0BS

For many people, the last 18 months have been an extremely challenging and difficult time but, in various ways, local churches have sought to serve the needs of those most affected. Indeed, one of the more heartening aspects of this time has been the way various communities have pulled together to care for those in need. As we move forward into the 'new normal', it is particularly important that we don't forget those who have been bereaved and who often have been unable to access the support that would have normally been available to them.

A small group of us from various local churches have been considering how we might work together to offer support to those who have suffered (and are suffering from) a bereavement. As a first step we have organised a Seminar Day which we hope will raise awareness of the issues around bereavement and help people like yourself feel better equipped to support those going through bereavement.

We are delighted that Tom Gordon has agreed to lead our seminar day. Tom worked in parish ministry for 20 years before serving as chaplain at the Edinburgh Marie Curie Hospice for 15 years. He co-facilitated the hospice's bereavement support service, participated in education programmes on aspects of bereavement and spiritual-care, and contributed regularly to professional journals on bereavement and chaplaincy issues. He wrote two books during this time – A Need for Living, about his chaplaincy work, and New Journeys Now Begin, on loss, grief and bereavement. He continues to offer bereavement and spiritual-care training and support and assists local churches in the development of their bereavement support work.

This day will also provide an opportunity to discuss plans to establish a local bereavement support group.

There is no charge for the day and lunch will be provided.

To facilitate safe interaction, numbers will be restricted. To reserve your place (or for more information) please contact Diane Lamprell: diane.lamprell@gmail.com

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Recent Deaths

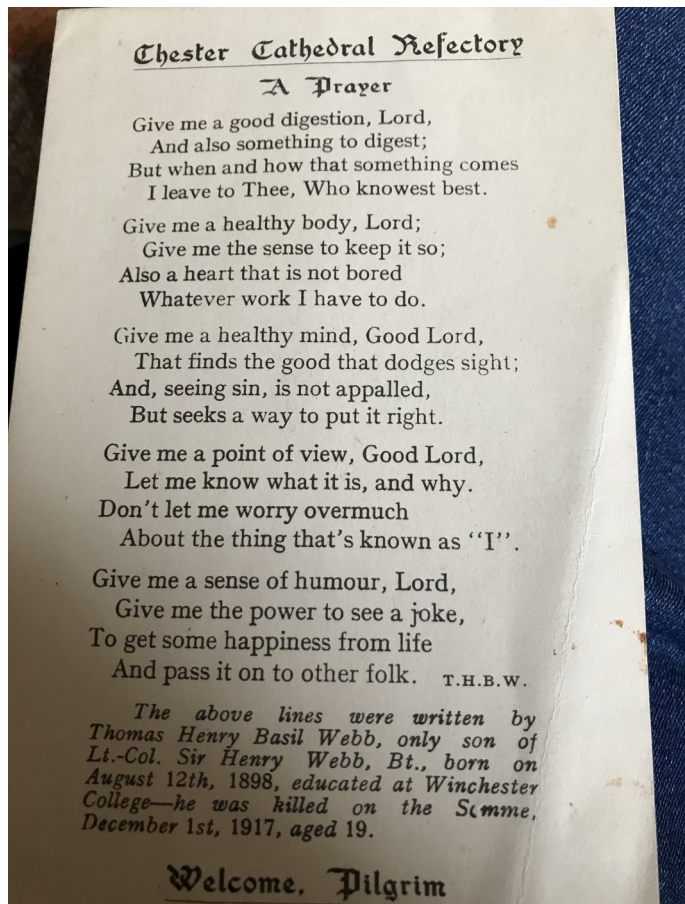
Marion Brown	Tuesday, 27th July 2021
Sadie Stevenson	Sunday, 15th August 2021
Scott Trewern	Friday, 27th August 2021

The Plant sale which was held in the Church grounds on 12th June was a great success. It was a happy day and we were all relieved to be “allowed out” after months of no activities. We were delighted to raise a remarkable £844, which will be shared between a new church computer and Crossreach, the Church of Scotland Social Care charity.



Thank you to everyone who brought on plants, who helped on the day and most of all to those who came on a windy day, bought plants and shared gardening tips.

Jane Potts



Submitted by Jane Potts

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Treasurer: Catriona McKellar	01292 318602	treasurer@troonportlandchurch.org.uk
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Church Office:	01292 317929	office@troonportlandchurch.org.uk
Organist/Music Convener:		
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The Parishioner: Margaret Short	01292 314791	parishioner@troonportlandchurch.org.uk Articles to parishioner45@gmail.com
Website:		www.troonportlandchurch.org.uk