

# THE PARISHIONER

April 2023



## 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**

## Dear friends,

It seems like no time since Christmas was upon us and already we are racing towards Easter. The end of February marked 6 months of my being with the people of Troon and goodness me, we have had a lot of wonderful experiences to look back on already!

I'm very aware that the congregations of Troon: Old, Portland and St Meddans have an exciting but challenging time ahead of them as they seek to plan their future for the church of Scotland in Troon. With that in mind, we have seen some small new activities which are proving fruitful already. We hope to continue with activities like creative worship, prayer and book groups which enable us to discuss our faith in open and meaningful ways.

One Sunday in February, with the help of our young church, we created prayers for a magnificent prayer tree. These prayers were given to God as they were hung on the branches, and serve as a reminder that God is always present in our lives. Similarly, during worship service in March, we reflected upon what it is to be church and what we



would like to see for our future church in Troon. Whilst we can sometimes find these different ways of being together a bit challenging, it is always good to remind ourselves of what we are actually doing when we come to church, and how we can grow in faith as a community.

We are very much looking forward to gathering as a community, sharing services with Troon Churches Together in Portland Church during Holy Week, and then meeting early on Easter Morning at the beach. It will be wonderful to see everyone who is able to come together as a community this Passion and Easter season, and our thoughts will be with those who are joining us in spirit.

May you all have a blessed and peaceful Easter.

Much love to you all,

Gilleen xx

## Troon Churches Together Easter Services.

All the Christian Churches in Troon are getting together during Easter week to hold a series of united services led by a different church each year. The host church rotates and this year it is Portland Church, KA10 6JU (except where stated) Please come and join in, everyone welcome.



Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm in Portland Church

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm in Portland Church

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 10.30am Short reflective service in St Meddan's Church

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm in Portland Church including Communion.

Good Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm in Portland Church

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April 8pm in St Ninians Easter Vigil.

Easter Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 6.30am. Dawn Communion on the beach in front of Cenotaph followed by breakfast in Seagate Church.

On Easter Sunday all churches will also be holding their own services to which anyone will be welcome.

“I am the Resurrection  
and the Life.”

Mrs Jean Harding died in Suncourt  
Nursing Home on 12th March.



## Forming a church union

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met in May of 2021 and decided that all Presbyteries in the Church of Scotland should produce a Mission Plan, to be approved, at the latest, by 31st December 2022.

After considerable consultation involving all three of the Churches of Scotland in Troon, a union of all three Troon Churches with two Ministry posts allocated was proposed and accepted by Ayr Presbytery.

Ayr Presbytery's Mission Plan stated, after a building review, that the Church of Scotland in Troon can retain two sanctuaries with the sanctuary of Troon Old to close due to extensive fabric deficiencies. A feasibility study will be carried out to determine how the sanctuary and halls of Troon Old can be separated.

The Presbytery of the South West was formed on the first day of October 2022 which includes the former Ayr Presbytery. An historical moment, the forming of a new Presbytery after over 400 years of Ayr Presbytery (1581 – 2022) serving the good people of Ayrshire.

We now start preparing for a three-church union and the formation of a team ministry to serve the new Troon Church of Scotland.

All three Churches of Scotland in Troon nominated six representatives to join with the Interim Moderators to form a Troon Church Union Meeting Group. The group have now met three times to date (monthly). We are making progress, although it feels like very slow progress due to circumstances outwith our control.

The Ayr Presbytery Plan has been put on hold because some churches (not from our town) have lodged an appeal against the decisions reached in the plan. This will affect our progress because we will not be allowed to call a minister, or in our case, two ministers until the Presbytery Plan is accepted. We were not happy with this situation and have contacted the new Presbytery of the South West (of which Ayr Presbytery is now a part) requesting that they appoint a facilitator (usually two people at least) to allow us to make progress in forming the "Basis of Union".

The Basis of Union is the legal (Church) document required when churches form a union. We wait in anticipation that we will get appointed facilitators soon.

move forward together to form this exciting new Troon Church of Scotland to serve the community of Troon. We may be moving slowly but we are moving.

Meanwhile we move slowly forward in faith. We are exploring ways that all three congregations can meet, mix and

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John Reid  
Session Clerk

## Dates for your diary



### GARDEN DAY 2023

We are planning a plant sale and café in the Church Halls on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May.

If you are dividing perennials or bringing on seeds, bring on a few extra. We will be very pleased if you would like to help on the day.

If you need pots or need further details, contact Jane Potts on 07711943257.



### Organ Recital

The next Organ recital will be in Portland Church on 28th May. The organist will be Andrew Forbes, Director of Music at Glasgow Cathedral.

## Christian Aid Week 14th—20th May

It is nearly May and Christian Aid Week is almost upon us.

Once we are organised in Troon, look out for lunches/coffee mornings and please do support the people who need us so much. Many are suffering hugely from drought, crop failures and high energy prices.

Their struggles are easy to turn away from, but here is one story of what we can achieve!

### The impact has been incredible

Families across these regions are now armed with practical knowledge on nutrition, and the vital importance of breastfeeding for babies, and a varied diet for children.



Families, like Adut Anet Achen's (pictured), are also more able to make better diets a reality – for example, through growing a wider and more nourishing range of crops like sesame and sorghum.

"With my farming activities, I am able to pay school fees, buy clothes for my children and also pay for their medical treatment." she says.

Barbie Short

## Retirement

After a long spell on Portland's property committee, Jim Vernon has stepped back from the important position of Property Convenor. His association with church maintenance started in the 80s when Harry Osborne was Convenor. He continued to work with others and was Convenor himself for a spell before returning to the committee and continuing to help. He took up the post again three years ago in addition to being Portland's safety representative, a role which he will maintain. He has spent a long time looking after the fabric of Portland including a recent week totally spent in redecorating the kitchen. He will now have more time to work on the many projects he has in mind for his own house and garden.



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### Going Out

We are very fortunate in Troon to have the opportunity each month to have an article in Troon's Going Out about church activities for the month following the delivery of TGO to every household in Troon. This is an ideal way to reach a wider audience. The dates and deadlines are given below. Please let me know if you wish some activity to be mentioned by these dates.

Sandra McCallum

Monday 17 April, for information about May and June

Monday 19 June, for information about July and August

## Housegroup

No-one could possibly accuse Housegroup of shying from difficult subjects .....

Yes - we tackled EVIL and the DEVIL on our last meeting. We looked at Matthew ch4 v 1-11 , after all it is Lent, and Christ was in the wilderness, and tempted .

So how do we cope with the Devil, since we have all stopped regarding God as sitting on a large white cloud? We cannot therefore imagine a devil with hooves and horns.

So we discussed corruption - regarded as normal in many places and a right, and morality and cultural norms.

Evil as the opposite of Good and therefore within us all, and recognised by us, not as something the early church used as control but something we all need to get grips with.

So for everyone out there, have a think. It's not easy and while we are thinking..... Love your neighbour .

Next Housegroup is **Wednesday April 19th at 7.30pm**  
contact Barbie Short [office@troonportlandchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@troonportlandchurch.org.uk)

You are very welcome



Capernaum on  
the Sea of Galilee



## Book Groups

The Book Group have been meeting on Monday evening (7pm) and Wednesday afternoon (2pm) in Portland's Millennium Room over the past month (March). Both groups have been reading the same book, "The First Christmas" by Borg and Crossan.

In *The First Christmas*, two of today's top Jesus' scholars, Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, join forces to show how history has biased our reading of the nativity story as it appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. They explore the beginning of the life of Christ, peeling away the sentimentalism that has built up over the last 2,000 years around this most well-known of all stories to reveal the truth of what the gospels actually say and mean.

Borg and Crossan help us to



see this well-known narrative afresh by answering the question, "What do these stories mean?" in the context of both the first century and the 21st century. They successfully show that the Christmas story, read in its original context, is far richer and more challenging than people imagine.

Both groups have found this book challenging – in a good way. Discussion has been honest and interesting. This proved to be a safe place to explore opinions and search for answers. The groups have been ably led by our locum minister, Gillean, with everyone encouraged to share opinions without feeling pressured. The group members have enjoyed fellowship while exploring our faith.

We look forward to the Book Groups continuing after Easter with a new book to explore. I would encourage you to come along and enjoy the fellowship.

John Reid

## Rock Choir Concert

We were privileged to be part of Troon Old Parish church's preliminary event for their Bicentenary year celebrations. There was a Rock Choir followed by afternoon tea on the 18th of March. Only a large church could stage such a choir of about 60 ladies, whose enthusiastic and energetic singing rose to the rafters in this old and much loved sanctuary.



We enjoyed the afternoon tea of sausage rolls, scones with jam and cream, homemade cakes and

copious pots of tea. Thank you TOPC for inviting us to be part of your celebration.



Funds raised by the concert and the tombola in the hall during the afternoon tea are intended for a local charity.

Avril McDonald



## Whither the Church?

Last Sunday, in Troon Old, Gillean invited us to write down on post-its what we thought of church, how we would like it to be, and what we could do to make it so. We filled the post-its with our ideas of the evolving church. The church in the community is



many things to many people. A minister in Portland once declared that church should not be a social gathering place but more like a lifeboat station, a place from which to save others. We all have different ideas.



This little church in the Sma Glen near Crieff stands in a village of five houses. Yet it has escaped the Church of Scotland restructuring, retaining one Sunday service per month. It reminded us of the old Scottish Kirk as our grandparents knew it. Alastair Halden, who was a teacher at Marr, described the old Sunday scene in this extract from his poem—“A Highland Testimony”.



*Thus went the ritual of that far off day.  
The creak of bell and bell-rope clanged and jarred.  
The psalms were dignified. The pews were hard.  
The rain was soft. The lowering skies were grey.*

*Faith of my fathers. If it came again,  
I would not change a moment of my youth,  
The grey kirk and the straight unflinching truth,  
Clean as the stones at the burn-side in the glen.*

How many of us can remember the Sundays of our youth in shades of grey—not too fondly perhaps? Can the new church appeal to 21st century Troon and be a shining beacon of light and hope?

Avril McDonald

**OUR NEXT ISSUE OF THE  
PARISHIONER WILL BE FOR  
May  
PLEASE SEND ANY  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUR  
MAGAZINE TO —parishioner45@gmail.com**

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