

THE PARISHIONER

November 2023



LEST WE FORGET

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,

I was recently on holiday in Rome, and thoroughly enjoyed seeing all the sights and experiencing life as a tourist in the city. We were fortunate enough to visit the Vatican, the Colosseum, Pompeii, Vesuvius, the Trevi Fountain, and many more of the historic places all over that part of Italy. Of course, many of these sights and places are rightly busy with all the visitors who have travelled some distance to see them, but sometimes we can encounter a place that speaks to us in a way we hadn't anticipated.



That's what happened to me when I visited Ostia Antica, an ancient Roman city and the port of Rome which was located at the mouth of the Tiber River. Pirates, fires, civil war: it was all witnessed by the residents of this town which was in use from the 7th Century BC until around 500 AD. The remains of this once magnificent place are fascinating and wonderful to see, and there were wonderful floor mosaics in many of the surviving buildings.

I was struck by the similarities of our life as we experience it today to how it was lived all those years ago. People are just trying to get by, making their living as best they can, spending time with their families, friends and loved ones where possible, and trying to make meaning of the world in which they find themselves. Many large and small temples are found all over the town and stop the visitor short when we realise how important faith practices were to these people in their everyday lives.

When we consider our own patterns and practices in how we relate to the mystery we call God, it does us good to ask questions about why we attend church, what we are doing when we join together to worship and how we can remain relevant in a world that changes much more quickly today than it ever has done in the past. We may be fortunate not to have to deal with

pirate attacks or civil war as the residents of Ostia Antica did, but we still have many questions about our world and the terrible things that sometimes happen in it.

Richard Rohr, Franciscan Priest writes:

‘The Christian vision is that the whole world is a sacred temple. If that is true, then our enemies are sacred, too. Who else created them but God? The ability to respect the outsider is probably the litmus test of true seeing. And it doesn’t stop with human beings and enemies and the “least of these.” It moves to frogs and water and weeds. Everything becomes enchanting once we have full sight. One God, one world, one truth, one suffering, and one love (see Ephesians 4:4–6). All we can do is participate and enjoy.’

I like the idea of our whole world being completely sacred and speaking to us of the wondrous joy of God. When we truly see and participate in the enjoyment of God, then perhaps we can truly be witnesses to God in our town of Troon. May our little sacred town of Troon and our lives in it bring us all some joy!

Much love to you all, Gillean xx

We pray for all whose lives have been touched by tragedy, whether by accident or a deliberate act.



For those who mourn, immerse them in your love and lead them through this darkness into your arms, and light.

For those who comfort, be in both the words they use and all that's left unspoken; fill each heart with love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, whose own suffering brought us life, here and for eternity. *Amen*

HOUSEGROUP

Do we feel gratitude to God?

And so this gave us some pause for thought.....having agreed we had all had a great many good things in life...

Was that down to Luck? Or Faith? Or God?

In which case what about the bad things which we had all experienced to a greater or lesser extent? Do we have free will?

So we trawled not without difficulty through Ephesians 1: 3-14. Then slighter better through part of Romans 1 and Colossians 2: 6-8

We discussed ‘Influencers’; how does that affect our lives; well probably not to an advanced degree but social media does touch us all. And affects those younger than us much, much more.

How do we as a Church embrace this; and without upsetting those who will not embrace it.

Our final discussion centred on the huge support we felt we received by trusting in God and in the words of the hymn: God will find a way, where there seems to be no way, he will find a way for us.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart .

Next meeting will be on

Wednesday 22nd November, 7.30pm

All are welcome

contact office@troonportlandchurch.org.uk

Barbie Short

FOODBANK TIME- after all it's nearly Christmas

Have a think please, next time you are food shopping. We are short of soups, SMALL toiletries, small coffee/tea packets and its good to throw in some kind of sweets or choccie bars. Life is a bit miserable without treats.

The contributions have dropped recently, unsurprisingly, as we are all aware of the cost of food. The voucher for the bank is meant for the person(s) to cover 3 days to get them to their next benefits or wage. Hence the need for small packets/jars. It is increasingly difficult for everyone on a low income.

Items can be left on the trolley by the cafe in Morrisons, or put in either church, or given to me. Thanks to all who contribute, good on you, it is all too easy to forget, as we rush round shopping .

Barbie Short

ORGAN RECITAL

The final recital in the "Music at Portland" series for 2023 is on Sunday 19th November at 3 pm and will be given by a very talented young organist, Peter Shepherd. When Peter first accepted our invitation he was Assistant at Paisley Abbey. Shortly afterwards he moved to become Director of Music at Chesterfield Parish Church but was very keen to come back to Scotland to play for us.



As Peter is travelling a considerable distance to be at Portland, it would be great to have a good turnout of audience members to welcome him. Admission is £5 (children free) with refreshments afterwards.

Andrew McConnell

Christian Aid

‘We didn’t sleep last night. We are all so scared. Many people have been killed or injured, and families are living on the streets.’

Christian Aid Partner Organisation in Gaza

Their long established partners in the region are responding to the need as much as possible. The impact is huge especially on the poorest and most vulnerable.

People have lost everything.

If you feel able to support Christian Aid, who work with all religions, faiths and cultures wherever the need is felt, by prayer or financially, you can contact them on:

www.christianaid.org.uk

or give to either myself Barbie Short, Lesley Macinnes, or Sheila Smith

It was great to meet up with Lorna Auld after the St Meddans service. She has returned to Troon from her teaching job in Moray. Lorna loved drama, history and Portland church. Her family’s long association with Portland will, I’m sure, be continued by Lorna in the new Troon Church. Welcome home Lorna!



Avril McDonald



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday Services for the church families of Portland and Troon Old during November will be in Troon Old starting at 10.30am:

Remembrance Sunday, 12th November – Troon Church of Scotland joint service with Portland, Troon Old and St. Meddan's held in Troon Old.

Messy Church – Friday 3rd November in St Meddan's at 3.30pm.

Book Group – Every Monday in November in Portland Church Millennium Room at 7pm.

Story and Song - Free weekly sessions of songs, stories and a snack every Thursday morning, at St Ninian's Church halls on Bentick Drive, 10am till 11:15am for children from birth to school age. For more information, please contact Gillean.

Messy Vintage – Wednesday 1st November in the Suncourt Nursing Home at 2.30pm.

Coffee, Cake and Chat – Thursday 16th November in Sandhill Gardens at 1pm.

Home Service - a short service will be held in Sanderling View on 22nd November starting at 4pm.

Sunday, 19th November 3 pm—Organ Recital (see article)



Shoe Box Appeal

By filling a shoebox with simple things you can bring joy this Christmas!

In fact, since 1993, Christian charity Blythswood Care has distributed more than 2.5 million gift boxes through its annual Shoe Box Appeal – each one different, each one personal, each one an expression of your care and kindness towards a stranger in need.

This year, shoeboxes will be distributed to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

To participate, find an average-sized shoebox; wrap the box and lid separately; fill it with small, practical items such as toiletries, stationery, and clothing; complete the checklist and attach it outside the box lid with sticky tape; consider including a donation towards transport costs; **take your filled box to Troon Old any morning before Tuesday 7th November.**

You can find full instructions, including the all-important checklist, in the Shoe Box Appeal leaflet. And if you're looking for a bit of guidance what to include in your shoebox, there is a sheet with helpful Filler Ideas.

The Shoe Box Appeal leaflet and Filler Ideas sheet are available from Troon Old Office, or download from www.blythswood.org/shoobox.



Roofbreakers: Opening Up Church to Disabled People

Roofbreaker Network (Edinburgh and Lothians)

Are you interested in making your church more inclusive? Do you want services that support everyone and worship that values those with disabilities? Then please join us at our next Roofbreaker Network meeting.

Next meeting: Saturday 4th November 2023, 12.30 – 4.00pm

Community Church Edinburgh, The King's Hall, 41a South Clerk Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9NZ

<https://www.cce.community/contact/>

Buses: 2,3,5,7,8,29,30,31,33,37,47,49,51

Presentation: Love Released

Guest speaker: 'Kate Sainsbury from The Appletree Community (<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/appletree-autism-care/>)

Discussion topic: Roofbreakers in Advent- How to break the barriers? With help from Jess Poole (Roofbreaker Co-ordinator for Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland)

Lunch: A light lunch will be provided from 12:30 with the meeting starting at 1:30. Please let us know if you have any special dietary needs or feel free to bring your own food along

Music: Worship will be provided by Graeme McDonald

Contact: Jacquie Knox
jacquie.knox.jk@gmail.com

Roofbreakers is affiliated to Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd, a UK Registered Company number 04201510 / Registered Charity Number 1087788.



Extract from the work of Kevin Timpe,
author of *Inclusive Hymns, Exclusive Language* and
You want me to sing what?

<https://kevintimpe.com/>



Throughout my life there have been some hymns that have made a profound impression on me, and some hymn writers whose stories have touched and inspired me. And in researching these hymn writers, I have found that a number of them are disabled, and have left a wonderful legacy in the words they have written – people like Frances Ridley Havergal, Fanny Crosby, William Cowper, Anne Steele and George Matheson. George Matheson is a great example of how it is not a physical condition that disables, but the attitudes of those around us. And he is also a great example of how, no matter what life throws at us, we can always find all we need in Jesus.

George Matheson was born in Glasgow in 1842, the eldest of eight siblings. He was an exceptionally bright student, and when he left school he gained a place at Glasgow University, where he studied Classics, Philosophy and Logic. He was just nineteen years old when he graduated with first class honours, but at the same time he was rapidly losing his sight.

He had always had poor vision, and in school he had worn strong glasses and had always sat near a window to benefit from the daylight. But in his final year at university he lost the remainder of his sight and from then on he was only able to make out faint shadows, and was functionally blind.

Matheson did not allow any of this to hold him back from his chosen career path of becoming a church minister. In fact, it is said that many of his congregation did not even know that he was blind. He would stand up and “read” the passage of Scripture, presumably from memory, so that most of those who heard had no idea that he was not reading from the page. He continued to study and write theological works, dictating them to his sister who transcribed them for him [...]

George Matheson’s most famous hymn was written in the space of five minutes one evening when he was forty years old. He has chosen not to disclose exactly what was passing through his mind when he picked up his pen to write it. [...]

He wrote later that, unlike all his other hymns and verses, he did not have to work at the rhythm or metre of this hymn, but that it came to him in the space of five minutes; he scribbled it down and never edited or retouched it. It came to him, he said, “like a day-spring from on high”.

During his lifetime, George Matheson was honoured in several different ways. He was made an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Edinburgh University, became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and was invited by Queen Victoria to preach in front of her at Balmoral. [...]

Many of his writings still exist and are available to read in books and on the Internet. But the piece of writing for which he will always be remembered is that one hymn in which he expresses so profoundly how the love of Jesus, which never let him go, had become the mainstay of his life. And in writing it, he brought encouragement and hope to countless others down the decades – a hundred and thirty-one years later we still sing it in our churches, and in polls conducted by Songs of Praise it remains one of the nation’s favourite hymns.

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine’s blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life’s glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

Sandra McCallum

**OUR NEXT ISSUE OF THE
PARISHIONER WILL BE FOR
DECEMBER
PLEASE SEND ANY
CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUR
MAGAZINE TO —mcdonald386@btinternet.com
By TUESDAY 21ST NOVEMBER
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