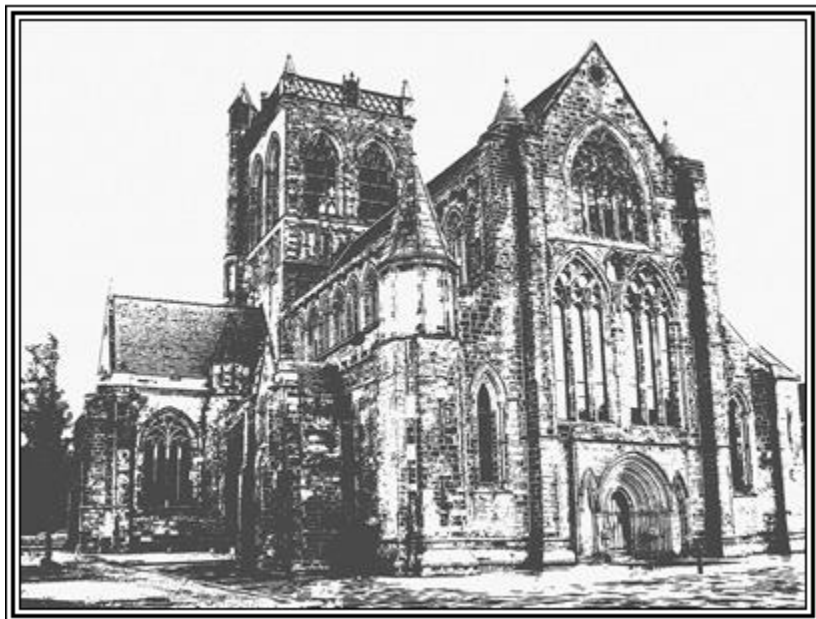


Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald

May 2021

At some point in our lives, we find ourselves asking deep questions about our identity, our purpose and our mortality. The need for answers becomes more urgent the older we become and try to make sense out of our years, our relationships and our work.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Christians believe that every human being is made in the image of God and is loved deeply by God. We believe that each individual is of immeasurable worth, despite our shortcomings and failings, our flaws and inadequacies. We also believe that God created us to know God in a way that is fulfilling, liberating and challenging.

Throughout the ages, God has invited us to this life of trust and faith by showing us what kind of God he is through the beauty of creation, through the way of life (the Law) he gave to the Jews and through prophets: most particularly, Jesus of Nazareth, whose whole life and death shows us something of who God is and what God is like.

The beginning of faith is to trust in this loving God who knows us more profoundly than we know ourselves. And from that initial step, a journey begins that will last a lifetime. As we travel, we believe the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen us, leading us to discover more and more of God's love and a place of beauty, wholeness and peace.

A place of beauty, wholeness and peace within our life's experience. That must be the dream of every human being -even if they may never consider using such words.

For a great many people, such a dream ought to be the consequence of political activity and Government action. Sadly, for many people that is not reality. Day after day, countless numbers of our fellow citizens, of whatever age, endure situations at work or within their home more akin to 'nightmare' than 'dream'; and a far cry from any beauty, wholeness or peace.

As I write, I am aware that we are in the middle of the campaign to elect the next Scottish Government. Political leaders have been traversing the country indulging in all manner of activities both meaningful and fun. This is their ‘meet the people’ time. It is a time for the electorate to meet them and congratulate what has been successfully achieved whilst ensuring that the candidates fully realise where they have fallen short of past promises; and understand what people really need improved in their lives.

The ministry of the Church rightly embraces all political affiliations and allegiances. However, all my ministry, while I may hold strong personal political opinions, it has been my habit to refrain from promoting any ‘party’ line either in my preaching or my writing. That said, I also profoundly believe the Church has a primary and fundamental responsibility to speak up and out for those unable to do so for themselves. Society simply does not recognise an alternative voice of conscience.

One particular issue on which I would like to hear the Churches speak more loudly (and there are a number of others!) is the continuing scandal of child poverty in Scotland. Today, more than 1 in 5 (approx. 210,000) children are officially classified as living in poverty. This is a significantly higher number than in many other European countries. What is really worrying about such statistics is that the respected Institute of Fiscal Studies expects a massive increase in child poverty in Scotland in years to come.

The effect of this should never be underestimated. Poverty can so easily undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of a child. Not even to mention the wider cost for Society by way of long term

losses to the economy. The fact that child poverty exists at all in 21st century Scotland is a national disgrace.

Politicians throwing money at school budgets that is not targeted at spending on Early Years will make little impact other than gain a cheap headline or two. Nor does much good come from discussion

papers that lack strategic priorities or actions. Political cross-party cooperation, working in partnership, and taking heed of those who suffer most (charity professionals being their voice, if need be) is urgently needed. For one thing is certain; unless people in poverty are included, all attempts to develop a better and fairer Scotland will fail.

The Church in Scotland has a long history of campaigning against poverty and injustice. Given its vocation, how could it be otherwise? The Church in Scotland must not fail the people of Scotland now. It must be diligent and unrelenting in holding the newly elected Parliament to account. Only then will it be true to its calling and its beliefs.

Jim Gibson
Locum Minister.

FUNERAL

April 8 Mrs May Bell



FOOD BANK

The monthly collections for the Food bank can now resume.
The next collection will be on Sunday May 30.
Thank you for your very generous donations.

CHRISTIAN AID

Christian Aid week is May 10-16.

Last year, as the Abbey was closed,
we could not make a contribution.

This year there will be a retiring collection after the services on
Sunday 16 May.

Donation envelopes will be available with a form if you wish to
Giftaid.

There will also be a Zoom Quiz on Wednesday May 12 with a
suggested donation of £5 to enter which will be our donation to
Christian Aid.

You will receive a letter with the Zoom link and how to donate.

This should be fun. Please join in.

Margaret Sharp



THE KILT WALK

On a cold, bright morning three Abbey members set off on the Kiltwalk, they had set themselves the challenge of walking 20 miles from Barrhead to Bridge of Weir and back to raise funds for the church. The 2021 event was a Virtual Kiltwalk which meant that instead of taking part in a massed walk, people could organise their own challenges within the current covid rules. Any sponsor money raised will be increased by 50% by The Tom Hunter Foundation. It was too good an opportunity to be missed.



Jan, Sylvia and I were blessed with beautiful weather and the kindness of friends. After only 4 miles at a surprise rendezvous, we received fresh scones and tablet. A little further on satsumas, flapjacks and the use of toilet facilities were offered.



Once on the cycle track, we made good time out to our destination up the hill into Bridge of Weir, where a welcome sit down and lavish lunch in the sunshine restored us.



There was a spring in our steps on the return after we had deviated from our route into Brookfield and enjoyed a glass of fizz! Our final stop in Stanely Avenue for a cup of tea was much needed before we wearily trudged the final five miles uphill back to Barrhead.



How grateful we all are for the generous hospitality which certainly made the day so much easier. Grateful too for the sponsorship from Abbey members and friends which will have raised a useful sum to support the Abbey finances.

The final total will not be known until the donation from The Tom Hunter Foundation is received, we should be able to announce it in next month's Abbey Herald.

PAISLEY ABBEY TAPESTRY

I am sure that many of you will have passed and glanced at the tapestry hanging in the St. Mirin Chapel and wondered why it was hanging there.

The tapestry was the idea of Anne Carmichael, an art teacher at Paisley Grammar School who wanted to do something to celebrate Paisley Abbey. In 1981 she had pupils create images which symbolised Paisley Abbey and they were then replicated in weaving. She got the Technical Department to make lots of mini looms and then after each pupil created their section and it was all sewn together included their names around the edges.

Mrs Carmichael passed away recently and her daughter said that her mother never imagined that it would still be hanging in the Abbey forty years later.

A fitting legacy to Mrs Carmichael.



Mrs Carmichael with the tapestry in 1981

Here is another anonymous contribution to the Abbey Herald which arrived too late for the April Herald so I am including it this month. Thank you to whoever sent it.

Dear God,

It's good to talk to you again. I hope that you are all right. How are you coping? It must be terrible for you having to deal with all this sadness, anxiety and grief. They say that there's going to be a big problem with mental health soon, and you will have to listen to everyone.

When I spoke to you before, it was with a deep sense of shame, because I realised that I was totally wrapped up in myself, and not really interested in anyone else's problems. Honestly, God, I have tried to do better. I have kept in touch with others – especially people living on their own – I have offered to help those who are sick and I have increased my contribution to the church.

The church is going to be open again soon, and the first thing I'll do is say a special prayer for Sophie and her Mum – my neighbours. Sophie is ten years of age, and last week, she lost her daddy to Covid.

God. How do you reach out to people torn apart with grief? What can I say or do to help? Two people have lost a husband and father – someone they loved dearly – and nothing is going to bring him back. Where is the justice in this? How can you allow this to happen? Is there a reason? You are a God of love, yet there is so much suffering in the world. There are so many unanswered questions, and hard sometimes, to accept that this is God's plan.

As I speak there is a wonderful sunset. Little wisps of cloud scurry across the sky, and the tall green trees are majestic in their splendour.

I look at my daffodils, resplendent and proud, taking pride of place in my best vase. They are gleaming in the sunlight, and beside them, there is a little card which I shall keep for as long as I live. The message is simple: “With love at Easter, from Mum and Sophie”.

God, in the midst of their grief, they had time to think about others, to show courage in the midst of sadness, and to shine a ray of hope for the future.

Dad will surely live on and, in time, happy memories will replace grief.

At Easter, can we all look forward to Spring, knowing that winter will soon be far behind.



PAISLEY ABBEY SCOUT GROUP



Group Scout Leader, Richard Murray, would like to extend congratulations to Louise Moore and Chris Wilkie on receiving an Award of Merit.

The award implies keen, conscientious, imaginative and dedicated service over a sustained period.

We cannot thank Louise and Chris enough for everything they do to ensure young people gain Skills for Life within Paisley.

I am sure members of the Abbey family would agree with Richard.

BAKING FOR ABBEY AID

During lockdown some of the ladies of the congregation have been baking and selling to order cakes, traybakes etc. to earn some much-needed cash for the Abbey. Cakes such as:

Paradise Cake
Gingerbread
Fruit Loaves etc.

Lemon Drizzle Cake
Tray Bakes

If you are interested in ordering something please let us know. You can order and collect the following Sunday after the services.

To order contact one of the following and they will pass it on to the appropriate person.

Jan Norris	jann7@hotmail.co.uk	0141 881 9840
Cathy Craig	cathycraig73@gmail.com	01505 323532

We are also hoping to update the Cloister Café Recipe Book. It will contain many of the old favourites but we would like to include some new recipes and some healthy, vegetarian and vegan cakes if possible.

If you have a new recipe and would like it to be included speak to Jan Norris or Cathy Craig or contact them by phone or email.



A “PETER-TYPE CHURCH”

The Very Rev. Dr. John Chalmers explains why the Church should strive to be more like Peter in future.

“You are Peter and, on this rock, I will build my church”

If ever there was a text that changed the world this, is it! if you have ever visited the Vatican City, stood in awe of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or wondered at the scale of St. Peter’s Basilica, then you will know what this verse means to around 40% of the world’s 2.8 billion Christians. The striking thing about this verse (Matthew 16:18) is the way in which it announces the establishment of the Church of God. Of course, for many scholars this passage about the founding of the Church forces some searching questions about its content and origin, but, whether or not this text has been sharpened by the pens of the church it tells us three things: that the Church is Christ’s Church, that it is built on a Peter and that the power of “shadowy places cannot prevail against it.

Sometimes we act as if it is our church. Ministers talk about my pulpit and members talk about my church. We put endless effort into preserving the institution and sometimes we act as though we did not believe in a Gospel of grace: instead, we act as if the future of the church depended on us working our passage rather than living our faith. It is good for us to remember that it is Christ’s Church.

Think too, of the implication that Jesus should choose to build his Church on the likes of the Peter that you know from the New Testament. Peter, the hot-headed, impulsive, “think before you speak” disciple. The risk-taker who steps out of boats, who one minute enjoys the deepest insights into the identity of Christ, and the next is condemned as a friend of the dark one. The bravado disciple who will never let his master down-yet crumbles like a hero with feet of clay. He chooses Peter and on the big fisherman Jesus trusts the future.

You could have understood if Jesus had chosen John-a spiritual giant of a man or if he had chosen Matthew -you would have understood our peoccupation with balancing the books. But it was Peter and as we approach another General Assembly, we should remember that it is a Peter type Church that we are called to be. A Church that takes risks, a Church that has the vision to abandon some of the old rules so that new things can happen (Acts 10) and a Church that doesn't always get things right but can admit to iits failures and try again. A Peter-type is not afraid to show its vulnerability, to journey with the broken and to repent and begin again and again and again. It is the kind of Church-which the gates of hell cannot prevail against.

It is in the definition of Church of Scotland that we are a small part of that Church which was founded by Christ. And the future does not depend on us finding the right structure, the right hashtag. Instead, it depends on us finding where God is already active in our communities and joining in. That's a very different thing from working to save a building, guarding a congregational identity or defending a peculiar dogma.

Even before this ghastly pandemic we knew that change was in the air and we devised a radical action plan to take us to a new place. The experience of this past year has hastened the need for change. It is time to tear up the old maps of church life and plan like we have never planned before to paticipate in the mission of God.

Like Peter we will have to be risk takers, for that is the kind of Church that the gates of hell cannot prevail against.

This article first appeared in the May 2021 issue of Life and Work.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CHOIR AND DR MCPHEE REVIEWS OF THE CD, 'A CELTIC PRAYER'

Many congratulations to the choir and Dr McPhee for wonderful reviews of their CD, 'A Celtic Prayer'. This is a remarkable achievement particularly given that the album was reviewed alongside the likes of recordings from the choir of King's College, Cambridge.

'A Celtic Prayer' will be available to buy in the Abbey shop when it re-opens:

SPECIAL OFFER – BUY 'A CELTIC PRAYER' £11.99 AND GET A DIFFERENT CD HALF PRICE!

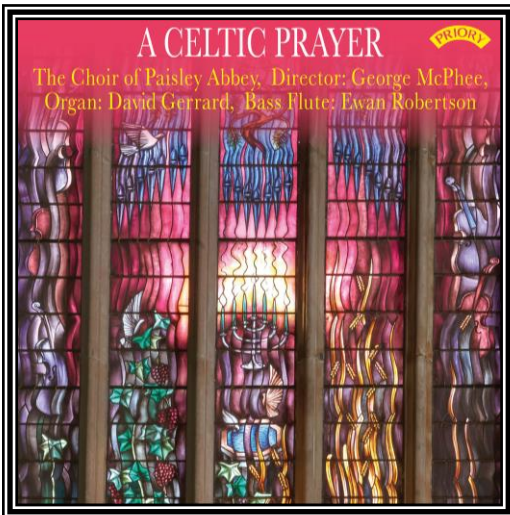
"This disc is a wonderful selection of Scottish church music from the Renaissance to the present day." Ian Munro, Church Music Quarterly
"With church choirs effectively silenced this year due to Covid, the release of a new album by Paisley Abbey Choir is definitely something to celebrate." Ken Walton, VoxCarnyx

"I really enjoyed this attractive selection of music by 20th and 21st century Scottish composers." Clare Stevens, Choir and Organ

"This is a finely imaginative programme and rightly a celebration of McPhee's work at the abbey with his choir." Robert Hugill, Planet

Hugill – A world of classical music

"It is beautifully sung by the Paisley Abbey Choir, with an important input from the organist, David Gerrard and Ewan Robertson on the bass flute. The whole recital is presided over by the redoubtable George McPhee who has been Organist and Musical Director at the Abbey since 1963." John France, MusicWeb International
ER



MUSIC FOR MAY

9th May the Sixth Sunday of Easter

Services 10.30am and 12.00pm

Kyrie elson MacMillan (St. Anne's Mass)

Cantor Valerie Turnbull

Psalm 98 Responsorial

Anthem Jesus, under Trot und Leben

J.S. Bach

16 May Sunday after Ascension Day

Services 10.30am and 12.00pm

Kyrie elson Langlais (Messe d'Escalquens)

Cantor Joshua Stutter

Psalm 47 Responsorial

23 May Pentecost

Services 10.30am and 12.00pm

Kyrie elson MacMillan (St. Anne's Mass)

Cantor Flora Ritchie

Psalm 104 24-34 Responsorial

30 May Trinity Sunday

Services 10.30am and 12.00pm

Kyrie elson MacMillan (St. Anne's Mass)

Cantor Euan McDonald

Psalm 29 Responsorial

6 June Trinity 1

Services 10.30am and 12.00pm

Kyrie elson MacMillan (St. Anne's Mass)

Cantor Samuel Leggett

Psalm 138 Plainsong

Anthem

We can't have the choir singing just now so here is a little cartoon to make you smile.

