

Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald

June 2021

I am John, your brother, and as a follower of Jesus I am your partner in patiently enduring the suffering that comes to those who belong to his kingdom. I was put on the island of Patmos because I had proclaimed God's word and the truth that Jesus revealed I had a vision and saw an open door in heaven. And the voice that sounded like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must happen.' At once, the Spirit took control of me. There in heaven was a throne with someone sitting on it ... in a circle were twenty-four other thrones, on each were seated twenty-four elders dressed in white and wearing crowns of gold. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Surrounding the throne were four living creatures. The first looked like a lion; the second a bull; the third had a man's face and the fourth looked like an eagle in flight. Day and night they never stop singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was, and is, and who is to come." The creatures sing songs of glory and honour and thanks to the one who sits on the throne, who lives for ever and ever. The elders worship him also, saying, "Our Lord and God! You are worthy to receive glory, honour and power. For you created all things, and by your will they were given existence and life." (Adapted. Revelation 1:9-11; 4: 1-8).

As I write, national leaders at Westminster and in Edinburgh are gradually releasing the lockdown and restrictions enforced because of the Covid pandemic. The past year has brought us all an experience none of us would wish to live through ever again. For those living in high-rise flats without ready access to garden facilities and, especially when young families have been involved, these restrictions must have seemed at times, like a form of imprisonment with the internees wondering what crime they had committed. Politicians must be wondering too. No matter how authoritative and/or empathetic they try to be, the media ensures that some form of criticism or rebuke is ever-present. Little wonder that the steps being offered towards the nation's freedom are almost hesitantly made. Throughout these times the recurring political mantra has been "We must follow the data" placing the need for lockdown and social-distancing firmly on the professional advice

received from government advisers. Now these advisers are making clear that decisions taken are a 'political' matter alone. The balance which needs to be struck, in order to enable people to get back to work so that the nation's economy can successfully re-boot and for us all to regain some semblance of normality, must be a mind-blowingly difficult one. No-one wants a regression. But now we must try to navigate our way through the mine-fields of uncertainty to regain some form of whatever it maybe we regard as our 'normality'. Within the Abbey, a strategy leading us out of our Covid limitations is eagerly being implemented and, our hope is, before long we will be back in a much stronger position to minister to the people of Paisley and beyond.

By the time these words are read, we will have entered the season of Trinity. A time when, within the Church, we are asked to give thought to what we actually mean when we address God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how that impacts on our faith and life.

I wonder if my choice of Scripture (above) surprises you? It relates the story of one living in just as confused and dangerous an era as ours. One who was himself imprisoned. Exiled from his family like so many in our day. Yet, it would seem that it was from the barren rocks of Patmos that, for him, the heavens opened and he heard the angels sing. I believe that gives us a strong clue about the meaning of the Trinity. Essentially, it is a song. From the beginnings of the Church, beliefs were never carefully written down, they were sung as hymns of praise. To this day, we continue to express of faith in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit far more often in music than ever we do in words.

The writer of the Book of Revelation was an early-Christian leader condemned to the quarries on this little, backwater island. Day after day hearing nothing other than tales of persecution and distant wars. Until something unexpected happened. For him, it was as though the skies opened, allowing him to hear this song emanating from the very heart of the universe: 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty'. Centuries later, here we are. In a world that can often seem in danger of slipping out of control; where skills once used to promise new life

to so many are used to threaten the extinction of all; where overnight one can become a refugee, a hostage, a victim of the gun, the knife or, even, the internet – and where there seems such little music.

As the nations of the globe struggle to defeat or, at least, control this unseen coronavirus and our political leaders seek a way for us to break loose from confinement, what has our faith to say? Is it any less possible for us, both metaphorically and experientially, to ‘see the skies open’ and to ‘hear the voice of God’?

Perhaps our future lies in our history.

Another Scripture reading suggested for this time of year is Psalm 8: *“When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their courses, what are mortals that you should be mindful of them? Mere human beings, that you should seek them out? You have made them little lower than angels; and you adorn them with glory and honour”*.

What is that if not a love poem? An ancient insight into the essential nature of the Christian God whom we worship which, through time, has come to be understood as the love God expressed in the act of creation. The love Jesus demonstrated time and again reaching out, touching and healing hearts and minds. The love active throughout the world by means of the Holy Spirit’s irrepressible energy, bringing good out of evil, beauty out of ugliness and offering hope to those despairing. It’s through such love that we recognise our common humanity and interdependence. If we can discover new ways to share that love perhaps the angels will sing and God’s pleasure given voice.

Let’s hope for a summer that is free, warm and promising.

Jim Gibson
Locum Minister

FUNERALS

Myrna Spence

Cath McCord

Iris Adams



PRESBYTERY REPORT

A service of Union took place on 18th May when there was a union of Paisley Sandyford and Paisley Wallneuk to form Paisley North Church and also a union of Paisley Martyrs' and Paisley St Columba Foxbar to form Paisley West Church.

Our Presbytery Moderator sent the following message regarding the General Assembly

The 2021 General Assembly begins on Saturday 22nd, and for the second time an Assembly will be gathered together online. A couple of major factors will influence much of the discussion, and decisions to be taken: progressing the Radical Action Plan, which seeks to adapt the church to its size and role in the 2020s and beyond, enabling it to focus more on 'mission'

the impact of the global pandemic, which has affected finances, but also created new and unexpected opportunities (how many congregations have started streaming services over the last year? How many of us had never even heard of Zoom before last Spring?)

Copies of the Reports from Trustees, Fora, Committees etc – plus the Convener’s reports – are available on the Church of Scotland website (www.churchofscotland.org.uk). Though there is a lot of material to read in them, Presbyters are encouraged to make time to read them (perhaps especially the Reports from the Assembly Trustees, General Trustees and Faith Nurture Forum). Pray each day for the Assembly, its Moderator, Jim Wallace, and all commissioners and delegates.

Sometimes General Assembly debates can be wearying, and sometimes it can feel a bit like discussion on how to re-arrange the deckchairs on the Titanic. Next Sunday makes us think again. It is the Feast of Pentecost, the day when – according to the author of the Book of Acts – God poured out his Spirit on the disciples, and they became the Apostles, who took the Good News of Jesus to the world. Probably within a decade there were followers of Jesus in Rome, and within a generation they could be found across the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.

The Prophet Joel spoke of God pouring out his Spirit so that young men would see visions and old men dream dreams. Not the sort of dreams that fade as soon as you waken up, but the kind that inspire you to go and turn them into reality. Through the Spirit God doesn’t just give us a vision, but empowers us to achieve it, to discover and hone the gifts we have, to find how our gifts complement those of other members of the team that God has put together to achieve his vision.

As we pray for the General Assembly, let’s remember Pentecost, and pray that God will inspire us to both see his vision, and discover how working together provides all the gifts and skills needed to achieve it.

John Kitson
Presbytery Elder

SAFEGUARDING IN PAISLEY ABBEY

Scam Awareness

121 George Street Edinburgh have asked the Safeguarding teams to address the issue of telephone and online scams with the community. Scammers are clever folks and have persuasive ways of parting you from your money be it by emails from them masquerading as the GPO requesting “extra” delivery payments for letters or parcels (usually non existent) to demands from HMRC – whom we all fear anyway!! – for thousand of pounds or they will send the police round to arrest us and take us off to court (that isn’t going to happen but to an elderly person this is a frightening experience) My elder daughter is a police force call handler in the USA and recently took a call from an elderly gentleman in tears begging her not to send the police to arrest him as he could not stand the embarrassment and had never had an unpaid bill in his life. I don’t know who was more upset, Gail, or the gentleman. The most recent scam was to an elderly person to tell them the family had reported their email not working and if she installed a programme called Anydesk they would resolve problems for her in minutes and she could tell the family she had resolved the issue without bothering them. Anydesk is a perfectly legitimate IT programme used to resolve problems but as we see – in the wrong hands- it can take over your computer after you have given the correct codes, issued by Anydesk to the caller, they have complete control of your computer. Do not use it unless with a trusted IT person – and inform a family member of your intention to use this. Another new scam is the delivery company who need more money to re-deliver your order. Just fill in the form with your credit card details and all will be arranged – Just **DON’T!!** Like the banks say “they will never ask for card details or pin numbers” don’t provide personal details online or over the phone or mobile. These calls and emails are intended to harass and frighten you into doing whatever they ask right away. Sure, you can do this yourself! There’s no need to involve your kids, family friends etc. BUT please stop and check that you are doing the correct thing.

Never answer email requests for details via junk Mail or Trash (been there) fortunately halfway through the questions the “light went on” and I called my bank! Always go into a legitimate banking site, your online bank app for instance, or your inbox and check there what is required, I just bet it’s nothing.

Doing games or puzzles online?

What’s the make of your first car? Your Mum’s maiden name. Your date of birth. Where you were born.

Sounds familiar? Check your banking recognition information. This game will be amazingly familiar!

It’s a good idea to have an “alternative person” for your online work, a person who will be asked to check your input or that your credit card spend is correct. I use my youngest – she’s an IT person and knows I panic regularly. She has linked her iphone to mine and she checks what I am doing, it is very reassuring.

So, I guess if it doesn’t feel or look right, if you are being asked to do something you don’t feel comfortable with **STOP!!** Ask a family member or close friend for assistance – Just switch off your phone, mobile or computer until they can get to you.

Protecting our community’s vulnerable and less able

Co-ordinator Linda Neilson

Contact us through the Church Office 0141 889 7654

Through the Church of Scotland:

safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk

Through the Police at Mill St 01786 289070

Or if the need is for urgent help, please dial 999

If you suspect “something is wrong” do not delay contact us straight away

Thank you for your support

Linda Neilson

KILTWALK

Many thanks to all who supported the Kiltwalkers.
A grand total of £6052 has been raised to support the Abbey.

FOODBANK

The Foodbank collections have resumed on the last Sunday of each month.

They are always happy to receive tinned potatoes, toiletries (shaving gel, shampoo, deodorant), cleaning items and small boxes of washing powder, and pet food, especially dogfood.

The June collection will be at the service on Sunday 27th.

Thank you

CHRISTIAN AID

The total collected for Christian Aid through the retiring collection and the quiz was £679. Thank you to everyone who donated.

Margaret Sharp

PAISLEY ABBEY CALENDAR

The Events and Fund-Raising Committee are planning to produce a 2022 Calendar with photographs of the Abbey throughout the year and are looking for photographs from which we can choose the ones to include. If you have any suitable photographs which would be suitable, could you contact the committee via the Abbey office (0141 889 7654) and your contact details will be passed on to a member of the committee. Digital images are obviously ideal but actual photographs can be scanned for inclusion.

The sooner we can get the material the sooner we can progress with the calendar. So have a look through your photographs and see what you can find.

Thank you for your help.

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.



GATE-CRASHED BY JESUS

In his series considering the theme of hospitality, the Very Rev. Dr Derek Browning looks at the story of Zacchaeus.

I wonder how much of our understanding of the Zacchaeus story is shaped by Christopher Idle's Sunday School chorus:

Zacchaeus was a very little man
And a very little man was he.
He climbed up into a sycamore tree
For the saviour he wanted to see.
And when Jesus passed that way
he looked into the tree
And said "Now Zacchaeus you come down,
For I'm coming to your house for tea".

Are you struck in the Bible passages (Luke 19 1-10) that Jesus invites Himself into Zacchaeus' home? What a thing to be gate-crashed by Jesus! Zacchaeus was not a poor man, but did he have anything the larder fit for guests? Had he been out shopping? Was it his day for using up left-overs?

Zacchaeus -the tax gatherer, Zacchaeus- the collaborator with the Roman authorities; Zacchaeus- the sinner. But to him Jesus says "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for I must stay at your house today." It is one of the many astonishing moments of hospitality in the Bible. This radical assertion, as Desmond Tutu said to the General Assembly in his electric address in 2009, that all will be embraced by God. That in the family of God, all find a place at the table; that there are no outsiders any more. Jesus doesn't wait for Zacchaeus to sort his life out; Jesus merely gate-crashes the little man's home. Nobody on the outside, everybody on the inside. All means all. The people we like, the people don't like. Different colour of skin. Different lifestyle choices. Different genders. Different ages. Different faith traditions. Every single person, broken and bad,

uncertain and suspect, believing and doubting, all welcomed by our generous Lord.

Who is at the table in the life of our Church? Who is kept away, and why? Where is the radical welcome?

In the hospitality Jesus showed towards Zacchaeus, what we are being told about our Church and our community?

Who are in the sycamore trees around our cities, towns and villages just waiting to be called down and invited in? None so broken they can't be mended. None so wicked they can't be forgiven. None so sick they can't be healed. None so lost they can't be found. None so unable to keep their promises that they can't be given another chance. None so unclean on the inside that they can't be purified. None so narrow minded that they can't be enlightened. None so stuck in their ways that they can't be moved. None so hard-hearted that they can't be softened. None so invisible that they can't be seen. Jesus will come and share table fellowship with everyone.

The story of Zacchaeus is a little story (no pun intended) but its shattering implications for who we welcome and how we welcome speaks to every theological persuasion of our rainbow church.

The story of hospitality reveals to us the heart and practice of God. Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, body and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself.

There's Jesus, there's Zacchaeus, putting it all into practice before our very eyes.

The Very Rev Derek Browning is minister at Edinburgh: Morningside.

This article first appeared in the June 2021 edition of Life and Work.

THE GARDENERS HYMN

Chorus

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

Chorus

But what we never mention, though gardeners know it's true,
Is when he made the goodies, he made the baddies too.

Chorus

All things spray and swatable, disasters great and small,
All things paraquatable, the Lord Gode made them all.

Chorus

The greenfly on the roses, the maggots in the peas,
Manure that fills our noses, he also gave us these

Chorus

The fungus on the goose-gogs, the clubroot on the greens,
The slugs that eat the lettuce and chew the aubergines.

Chorus

The drought that kills the fuchsias, the frost that nips the buds,
The rain that drowns the seedlings, the blight that hits the spuds.

Chorus

The midges and mosquitos, the nettles and the weeds,
The pigeons in the green stuff, the sparrows on the seeds.

Chorus

The fly that gets the carrots, the wasp that eat the plums,
How black the gardener's outlook though green may be his thumbs.

Chorus

But still the gardeners labour, midst vegetables and flowers,
And pray what hits our neighbours, will somehow pass by us.

Chorus



I came across this poem some time ago in the church magazine from the former St. Luke's Church.

It had been contributed by Kate Smith.

I thought you could sing along to it at home as we are not allowed to sing in church yet!!

PAISLEY ABBEY MUSIC FOR JUNE

6 June 2021

11.00 am
Psalm 138
Te Deum
Anthem

Trinity 1

Morning Service
(Turle)
Ireland in F
Like as the hart desireth the
waterbrooks
Howells

13 June 2021

11.00 am
Psalm 92 1-4, 12-15
Jubilate Deo
Anthem

Trinity 2

Morning Service
(Elvey)
Howells (Collegium Regale)
Sing joyfully
Byrd

20 June 2021

11.00 am
Psalm 103 1-3, 23-32
Benedictus
Anthem

Trinity 3

Morning Service
(Attwood)
Gibbons (Short Service)
Rejoice in the Lord alway
Anon

27 June 2021

11.00 am
Communion Setting
Psalm 30
Anthem

Trinity 4

Holy Communion
Byrd (Mass for Four Voices)
(South)
O Lord, increase our faith
Loosemore