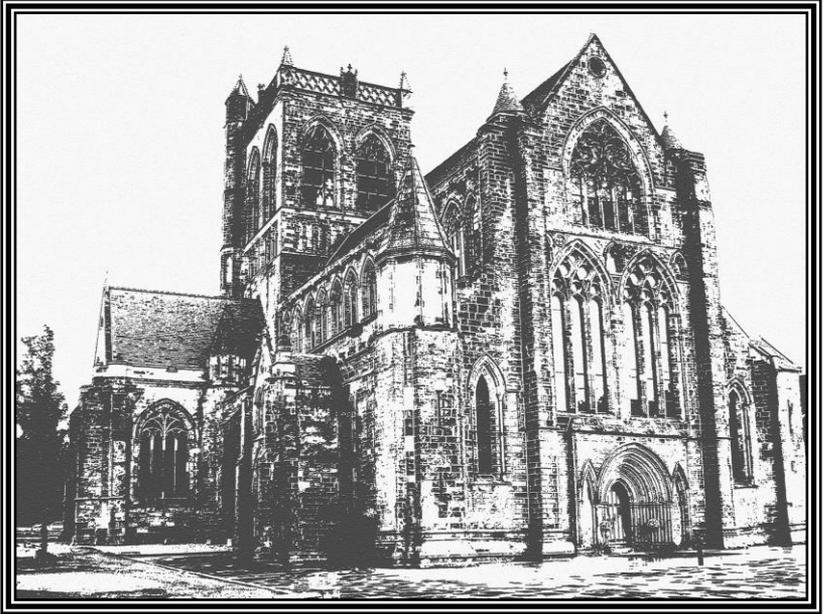


# **Paisley Abbey**



## **Abbey Herald**

**September 2020**

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Just over forty years ago, I was fortunate enough to spend a tremendous year at the Abbey as the probationer assistant. During that time, not only was I able to make friendships that stood the test of time, but I was to meet a particular young lady chorister who was to become my wife. The Abbey; its building, music and people have therefore meant much to me. Now, it's a privilege to once again serve the Abbey family and surrounding community by fulfilling the role of Locum during the current vacancy.

For some months past we have been living in rather strange times. Thankfully, with lockdown being lifted and people encouraged back to work, worship within the Abbey can be restored - though, sadly, not in the format with which we are familiar. Already, so many people have kindly come to my assistance. From organists and cantors to readers and beadles - all eager that the Abbey should offer worship that is dignified, personal and thoughtful. I have been particularly grateful to the office staff, session clerk and church treasurer for their welcome and support. Working alongside my friend, Dr Lorna Hood the interim moderator, I know the ongoing life of the Abbey is in the good hands of people who are faith-filled and competent.

This matter because we continue to live through challenging times. Throughout society, values we hold dear are being systematically eroded, principles which have served generations well are being cast aside and there is an increasing determination to push the Church and what it stands for to the margins. Though the Church can be fallible, its message of love, hope, peace, justice and forgiveness is still as vital for people to hear and consider as ever. Jesus never promised that being true to his way of life would be easy. Signs of the enormous challenges which the Church faces today are evident. But not for a second does it cause me to despair.

I've often heard it said, *'If the Church was of man, we would have every reason to be pessimistic. But the Church is of God*

*and, therefore, we have every reason to be optimistic*'. I believe that to be true. These may indeed be challenging times, but for the Church and for us at the Abbey, they are also times of great excitement and opportunity. Pessimism and complacency have no place in the Church. We look to whatever the future may hold for the Abbey with confidence, eager to expand its faithful witness to the people of Paisley, and beyond. There is a place for you both at our worship and in our reaching out to touch the lives of others. I look forward to meeting you soon.

Jim Gibson  
Locum Minister

## **NOW A SHORT CV ABOUT OUR LOCUM MINISTER WHOM WE ARE DELIGHTED TO WELCOME BACK TO THE ABBEY**

Educated at Daniel Stewart's College Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Speech and Drama and Glasgow University. After studies, I became the Probationer Assistant at Paisley Abbey before becoming Minister of Grangemouth Old Parish Church from 1978 -1989. Thereafter, I was Minister of Bothwell Parish Church from 1989-2019.

From 1984 – 2004, I served as a Territorial Army Chaplain, being mobilised for the Gulf Conflict in 1991 and the Bosnian/Croatian War in 1999-2000. Following these I was awarded the Territorial Decoration.

I served as Convener of the General Assembly's Board of National Mission, 2000-2004 and as Convener of the General Assembly's Committee on Military Chaplaincy, 2006-2010.

I was appointed Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen in Scotland and installed as a member of the Chapel Royal in Scotland in 2004 and as an Extra Chaplain to the Queen in 2018.

My wife Doreen (a retired Headteacher) and I married in 1978 and rejoice in our son, Niall, and his wife Heather, as well as our daughter Valerie and our two grandchildren, Matilda and Forbes. In my 'retirement' I am delighted to return to Paisley as Locum minister

September 2020

Dear Friends,

A vacancy is always an uncertain time for any congregation, especially after a long ministry such as Alan's. Congregations usually complain that the wheels of bureaucracy in the Courts of the Church turn very slowly and there can be a long spell when you are without a minister or indeed can even begin the process to find a new minister. In almost all situations this is viewed as being an extremely negative time, and the vacancy itself just an unpleasant interval until a new minister is found. A vacancy however should also be seen as a time for you as a congregation to reassess your mission, seeing an opportunity to take stock of what the congregation has done, is doing and, most importantly, should be doing in the future.

This time should be a time of challenge, a time of new beginnings and of renewed commitment and drive. Unless there is some "vision" of what the congregation is, where it is going and what it hopes to do, then the task of finding a way forward will be much more difficult.

The situation of course in the present Covid-19 circumstances is much more complicated, with meetings of the Kirk Session, and hopefully soon a nominating committee, conducted virtually. However, we have made progress and are taking the first steps in following the vacancy procedure. Please keep a close eye on the Abbey website for all updated information.

For those of you who don't know me I was minister in Renfrew North for 37 years and Moderator of the General Assembly from 2013-2014. I have lovely memories of my installation as a Queen's Chaplain in the Abbey in 2008 and have preached there on a number of occasions.

I have been appointed by Presbytery as your Interim Moderator to guide you through the various procedures and to take an overall responsibility for the work of the congregation.

However, I am more than delighted that Rev Jim Gibson has agreed to be your locum during this period. Recently retired from Bothwell Parish Church, Jim is no stranger to you in the Abbey and I know he is looking forward to being back with you.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lorna', written in a cursive style.

Very Rev Dr E. Lorna Hood OBE  
Interim Moderator.

The Abbey during one of the present “new normal” services

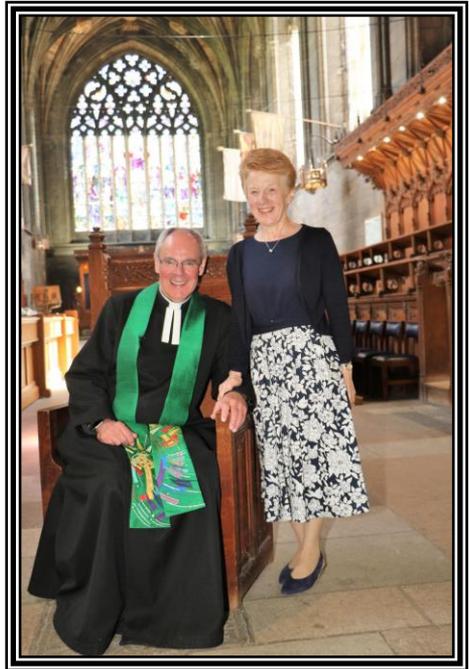


36 Marquis Drive  
Aboyne  
Aberdeenshire  
AB34 5FD

Dear Abbey friends,

We have made the move to Aboyne and have just about succeeded in squeezing a quart into a pint pot! As everyone said we would, we have brought far too much 'stuff' despite thinking we had been ruthless in clearing out in preparation for down-sizing! We have succeeded in finding a home for all the books we brought even if the bookcases are two rows deep in places! It is beginning to feel like home with items reminding us of the manse, of the Abbey and of Paisley providing a reassuring familiar look to our new home.

Carol and I are so very grateful for all the cards and messages of good wishes that so many of you have sent us. It really has meant so much to us to receive these and to read the very kind words contained therein. The Abbey has played such a huge part in our lives and we are so grateful for the privilege that has been ours to be involved in the life of the Abbey these past 32+ years. Marion has kindly suggested we return for a 'final' service once the present restrictions on church attendance etc have been eased and we look forward very much to that and to being with you all again. In the meantime, we simply want to emphasise how much we appreciate the love that has been shown to us both recently as we have made the move to Aboyne and throughout our time at the Abbey. We have been truly blessed and thank you all most sincerely.



With our love and best wishes

Carol and Alan

## **PARISH REGISTER**

2 September Elizabeth (Betty) Wilson

## **FOODBANK**

Donations for the Foodbank will resume from the last Sunday in September (27<sup>th</sup>) and from then on collections will be on the last Sunday of each month as before.

Current shortages are for household cleaning products (bleach, washing up liquid, cloths, surface cleaner etc.), toiletries for men and women and tinned potatoes.

Due to problems with storage we can only accept donations on the last Sunday of the month.

Thank you

Margaret Sharp



## **ELECTORAL REGISTER**

Notice is hereby given that in view of the vacancy in this congregation of Paisley Abbey, the Kirk Session is about to make up an Electoral Register. This Electoral Register is a list of those who will be eligible to vote when the time comes to elect a Nominating Committee, and subsequently in the election of a new minister.

If your name and current address are already on the Communion Roll, then you will automatically be placed upon the Electoral Register. You will need to take no further action.

If you are a regular worshipper here, but are still a member of another congregation, and you wish to participate in the election of a minister to this congregation of Paisley Abbey then you should arrange to hand in to the Session Clerk a valid Certificate of Transference before the Kirk Session meets.

If you are a regular worshipper here, and not a member of this or any other congregation, then the Kirk Session can add your name to the Electoral Register as an “adherent”. If you wish the Kirk Session to consider this, you should obtain a form from the Session Clerk, complete it and return it to her before the Kirk Session meets.

Following that meeting the Electoral Register of this congregation of Paisley Abbey will have been prepared.

If you believe that your name should be on the Register, you can ask for confirmation that it has been included by contacting the Session Clerk.

If when seeking confirmation, you find that your name is not on the proposed Electoral Register, and you believe it should be, you should inform the Session Clerk in writing before the Kirk Session meets to finalise the register virtually.



Interim Moderator

Very Rev Dr E. Lorna Hood

## **DONATIONS FOR ALAN AND CAROL**

On 31 August Alan and Carol retired from the Abbey and, after moving out of the Abbey Manse after more than 32 years, they are now settling into their new home in Aboyne. They carry with them the love and best wishes of the Abbey Congregation and of all those there and in the wider community whose lives they have touched over the years.

Their final services on 9 August – with restricted numbers and social distancing and no hymns - were not the send off we were planning BUT when circumstances allow, they will return to us for a farewell service, presentation and reception to which all Abbey members and friends will be invited.

We now ask that anyone who would like to mark their many years of dedication to the Abbey and community by donating to their presentation should do so by **Sunday 4 October** by one of the following methods:

- by **cheque** payable to “**Paisley Abbey**” and sent to,  
  
**The Treasurer, Paisley Abbey, Abbey Close, Paisley PA1 1JG**
- by paying directly to the bank account, **Kirk Session of Paisley Abbey**,  
sort code **82 54 04**; account number **40318018**; reference **Presentation**
- by making a **cash donation** which should be placed in an envelope addressed to the **Treasurer** and put with the offering at a Sunday service.

Marion Sommerville  
Session Clerk

## MUSIC FOR SEPTEMBER 2020

### 6 September

10.30 am and 12.30 pm  
Organist: Peter Shepherd  
Kyrie

Psalm 95  
Anthem

Trinity 13  
Morning Service  
Cantor: Valerie Turnbull  
MacMillan (St. Anne's  
Mass)  
Responsorial  
Jesu, unser Trost und Leben  
J.S. Bach

### 13 September

10.30 am and 12.30 pm  
Cantor: Flora Ritchie  
Kyrie

Psalm 103  
Anthem

Trinity 14  
Morning Service  
  
McPhee (Scottish Church  
Society Service)  
Responsorial  
Dir, dir, Jehova, will ich  
singen J.S. Bach

### 20 September

10.30 am and 12.30 pm  
Cantor: Euan McDonald  
Kyrie

Psalm 145  
Anthem

Trinity 15  
Morning Service  
  
MacMillan (St. Anne's  
Mass)  
Responsorial  
Litany to the Holy Spirit  
Hurford

### 27 September

10.30 am and 12.30 pm  
Cantor: Joshua Stutter  
Kyrie

Psalm 25  
Anthem

Trinity 16  
Morning Service  
  
Langlais (Messe  
d'Escalquens)  
Responsorial  
Lift up to heav'n  
Peerson

## ABBEY GIFT SHOP

We are very pleased to be able to open the Abbey Gift Shop again, if only for a couple of afternoons a week. It will be great to see our volunteers back and hopefully everyone will soon get used to the new way we have to operate. Margaret Craig is organising the shop rota and has been welcoming volunteers back to the shop.

To tempt visitors back to the gift shop we have reductions on some scarves and cards, and plan to feature more special offers in the weeks ahead.



As far as possible we are asking customers to pay by card, but we will still happily accept cash as well. Screens are fitted round the counter to keep everyone safe, and as is normal these days, anyone working in the shop or coming into the shop is required to wear a face mask. We also have a very smart hand sanitiser unit at the front door. Although we all must adapt to new ways of shopping, there will still be the same warm welcome to all our customers, new and old.



The Abbey Gift shop is open 1pm – 3.30pm Wednesdays and Fridays.

For the moment the café remains closed.



## **A NEW HABIT**

The Very Rev. Dr. John Chalmers says the Church has to be prepared for the possibility that the church-going patterns have been changed for good by Covid 19

These days more and more people are turning to Alexa for her brands are available for advice. Alexa is just one of a number of artificial intelligence devices which are powered by cloud computing. Sometimes referred to as visual associates, these devices get more complicated by the day and they can do much more than set a timer for your soft-boiled eggs or keep your shopping list up-to-date.

If you ask Alexa to say a prayer for you, she replies “I have a few skills that can help you with that” and from there you can open a link to the Church of England or you can hear passages from the Koran or the Bible.

Credit goes to the Church of England for the development of an Alexa Skills App. which was launched in 2018. In the first year of its use the Church of England received over 75,000 questions, ranging from people wanting to know more about the Christian faith to those wanting directions to their nearest Church, in a typical week 40% of the requests are for prayer, evening prayer is the most popular and while I was writing this column I enjoyed the Archbishop of Canterbury leading a service with canticles, Scripture lessons or prayers and responses.

We know that during lockdown many more people accessed spiritual nourishment and worship online and these virtual associates have played their part in this revolution. Search a little further with Alexa and you will find that you can the daily meditations provided by Sanctuary First-the Church of Scotland’s online congregation Alexa could do with some voice training for public worship but all credit to those who have made the church’s presence known in this environment which has become so much part of the new normal.

Now that our churches are being swung open again, there are big questions about how quickly our pews will be repopulated. Did you miss your Sunday morning outing to the church? If not – why? Did online worship work for you? Is it possible that you may have lost the habit of a lifetime? And if the local church is to be a worthwhile choice in today’s spiritual market place what should be in its unique marque? These and many more big questions are facing congregations across the land.

It has been said that for many sections of society life after Covid 19 will never be the same again, and this is certainly true for our churches. Back in the 1960s nearly every congregation in the Church of Scotland had well -attended evening services, then from January to July 1967 the BBC screened the Forsyte Saga on Sunday night episodes, 26 weeks was more than enough to change the Sunday evening habits of families across the nation, we should not be blind to the possibility that the lockdown associated with Covid 19 could do our Sunday morning habits what the Forsyte Saga did to our evening habits.

That is why with some alacrity we have quickly to reorganise the structure of our church life so that across Scotland there are strong vibrant and viable congregations capable of meeting the spiritual needs of the communities they serve.

Alexa may have the answer to the burning question of what our unique marque should be. When asked to pray she says “I have a few skills that can help you with that”. Organised in multidisciplinary themes and working out of far fewer but well-equipped buildings and to grow in their relationships. We may well have a job on our hands encouraging people (when it is safe for them) to return to their pew but the greater challenge still is reaching out to those whose lives could be enriched by developing a new habit.

*This article first appeared in the September 2020 issue of Life and Work.*

## SCOUT GROUP NOTES

One of our young scouts Alex McCracken wrote a really nice press release about scouting during lockdown.

It is as follows:

“Local scout group thrives during lockdown despite being miles apart.

Since March, Paisley Abbey Scouts have been meeting online for their weekly live sessions. Approximately 25 of the group’s members have worked together to achieve an altogether, grand total of over 250 badges and an extra 6 nights away all from the comfort of their living rooms, bedrooms and sometimes even bathrooms. The leaders of the troop, despite having their families to look after, pledged to keep the scouts busy during lockdown and all throughout the summer. During this time there have been countless games, activities and camps to take part in, some of which include the worldwide Blair Atholl Jamborette, The UK’s Great Indoors Weekender as well as the troop’s annual camp at Scout Adventures Lochgoilhead which featured a number of virtual activities.

Also, on the group’s agenda were many collaborative projects including a Scotland wide mental health project, a Care for Care homes initiative, V.E. day celebrations, a virtual climb up Ben Nevis as well as a hike to the moon!

When asked about the troop’s success, patrol leader Alex McCracken, age 13 said “I think its great that the troop has continued to offer so many activities amid the global crisis, I think that it shows the determination of many of our members to continue having fun and working together. It certainly proves that Paisley Abbey is a troop like no other.”

Adults working in Scouting contribute in excess of 364 million hours of voluntary work each year to their local communities and at Paisley Abbey this year has been no exception, while sessions

have been cut down to an hour, the leaders have stayed persistent in making sure the troop carries on. The scouts still look forward to chat with their friends each week and are keen to earn their badges.

Scouting is Creating opportunities for young people to develop social skills, independence and form friendships is central to scouting philosophy and has long term positive impact on young people lives.

Scouting is shaped by young people in partnership with adults and we are always looking for new volunteers and if you fancy a go at Paisley Abbey Scout Group why not join the adventure.”



Whilst in the middle of a Zoom Scout meeting Alan and Carol were presented with some farewell gifts from the Scouts which came as a complete surprise to them.