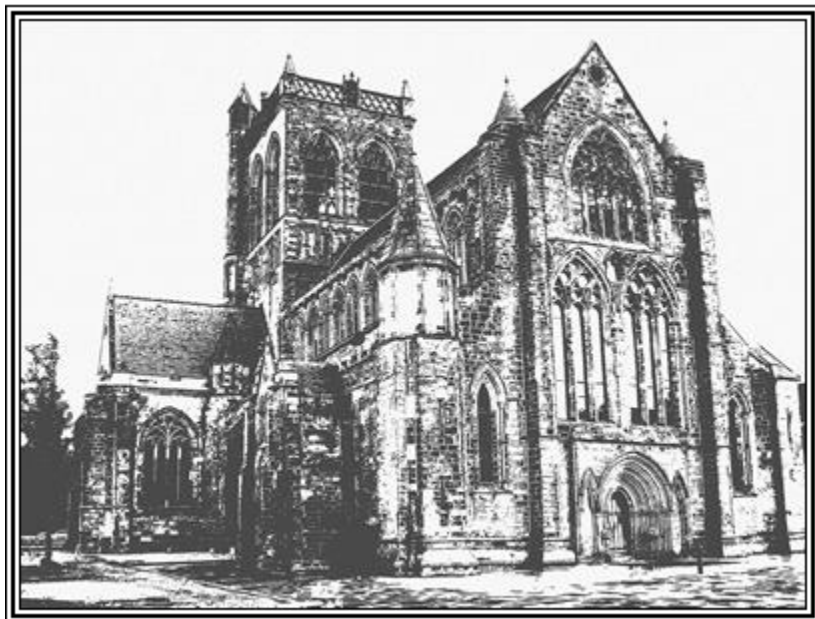


Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald

December 2021

Looking back over the past eighteen months, it is very difficult to believe what we have lived through. We have lived in isolation, with very few opportunities to go out; we have not been able to see our families; there have been births but also sadly, losses of family and friends and the churches were closed, amongst other difficulties and hardships. Our behaviour has also changed since March 2020. I was watching a quiz show on television the other day which was filmed before lockdown. I was appalled that people were standing so closely together, but then remembered that was what we did back then. It is amazing how we have adapted to the new rules and regulations.

Since we have been able to open churches, we have had to rethink how we do things and had to ask ourselves what can we do within the regulations? Improvising and coming up with solutions to what seemed to be unsurmountable obstacles is the order of the day.

At the first Christmas, Mary and Joseph were also having to work around what seemed to be unsurmountable problems. The doors were closed to them when they were looking for a place to stay and for their son to be born. But they found a place to stay somewhere which would seem, at first glance, not to be suitable: a cold and drafty stable around the back of an Inn. Sometimes, although the future feels bleak and there appear to be no answers to unsurmountable problems, good can shine through just as it did that first Christmas when the light of the world, Jesus Christ, was born in a stable in Bethlehem.

I know many were disappointed last year that we were not able to have the Christmas services that would normally be held in the Abbey. This year, we can have services, but not as many as we would have had, due to remaining COVID restrictions. We will have the opportunity to hear our wonderful choir at the traditional Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at 7.30pm on Christmas Eve; there will be a Christmas Day celebration of Holy Communion at

10.30am with orchestra and choir and, as Boxing Day is a Sunday, there will also be a celebration of Holy Communion at 11am on Boxing Day. Everyone is welcome at all or some of these services as we celebrate the birth of Christ.

If I do not see you before, please do have a peaceful Christmas.

Elsbeth



GIVING DAY – A BIG THANK YOU

Giving Day was an innovation by the Church of Scotland and the Abbey has ‘come up trumps’ with a lot of new money raised for our general funds.

The idea was that at some time in October or November, congregations would be asked to dig deep to raise additional funds and any money raised would not be ‘taxed’ by the Church of Scotland. In other words, and in our case, every penny raised would go straight to Abbey funds.

So far, a fantastic total just over £13,000 has been given and with Gift Aid tax being reclaimed from the Government, the overall total will be well over £15,000 – A Great Effort!

A few of you might still want to boost this total so just put your donation in an envelope marked Giving Day and leave it in the collection plate on a Sunday or in the Abbey office.

You can also give directly into the Abbey’s bank account
Sort Code:.82 54 04 Account No:.40318018

My heartfelt thanks go to all those who have contributed to this great total which will help us in the constant battle of keeping the Abbey open as a place of Christian worship

Stewart McDougall
Abbey Treasurer

PARISH REGISTER – NOVEMBER 2021

Funeral

12 November Jean Byars

Death

January 2021 William Watson

November 2021 Captain Kenneth MacKenzie

Wedding

13 November Karen McKenzie McDonald & Craig Paterson

New Members

Catherine Moore

Elsbeth McKay

David Smith

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

The minister in her letter mentioned the Christmas services which are going to be held in the Abbey this year. They are listed below for ease in seeing them.

24 December Christmas Eve

Festival of 9 Lessons and Carols at 7.30pm

25 December Christmas Day

Service of Holy Communion at 10.30am

26 December Boxing Day

Morning Service with Holy Communion at 11.00am

PRESBYTERY REPORT

Presbytery conducted a wonderful Induction Service in the Abbey for Rev Elspeth McKay as our Minister on Monday 25th October. At that meeting thanks for the service during our vacancy were given to The Very Rev Dr Lorna Hood as Interim Moderator and Rev Jim Gibson as Locum Minister.

At the recent meeting held on 9th November the following matters of interest were discussed.

Two Overtures from The Church of Scotland were presented

- 1.A reform of the General Assembly to reduce the numbers of Commissioners from around 700 to around 550
- 2.The solemnisation of same sex marriage within the Church of Scotland.

Both Overtures were passed and the results will be submitted to the Principal Clerk of the Church of Scotland. All Presbyteries will be submitting their results and the collated results will be announced at the 2022 General Assembly.

A Mission Planning Tool Kit has been sent to all Congregations to gather information on what actions and planning is being undertaken throughout the Presbytery. This work is being undertaken by the Abbey and we are fortunate the recent update of our Parish Profile required for the vacancy will assist with our response. If anyone wishes to contribute points to be considered for including in this exercise, please send them to the Minister as soon as possible.

A Mission Officer has been appointed by the Presbytery and will work across the whole of Clyde Presbytery to assist and help develop Mission amongst the congregations.

John Kitson
Presbytery Elder

SUNDAY AFTER SERVICE COFFEES

Many in the congregation have been wondering when the After Service Coffees will resume.

The Pastoral Committee is now happy to report that it is HOPED that by early January we will once again be able to serve teas and coffees on Sundays – not in the Cloisters Cafe, as in the past, but in the North Transept. This hope is subject, of course, to the Risk Assessment being carried out at present and to the situation regarding Covid at the time of re-opening.

However, all going well (and with thanks to our amazing Risk Management team for all their input) it is certainly our intention to “open for business” in January so that we can resume the friendly chats and delicious teas and coffees provided by Aileen Livingstone and her team. They have been sadly missed.

S.G.C.

RENFREWSHIRE FOODBANK

As this will be our last collection before Christmas items for Christmas can be included (nothing that includes alcohol). General shortages are jam, spreads, UHT milk, juice, sweets, cleaning items and laundry detergent.

The next collections will be on the last Sundays in December and January.

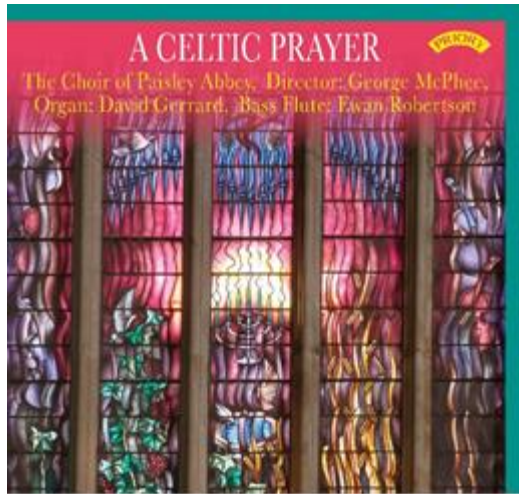
Thanks to all who donate.

Margaret Sharp

ABBEY CALENDAR AND UPDATED CLOISTER CAFÉ RECIPE BOOK

Unfortunately, they will not be ready in time for Christmas as they are both still a work in progress. We hope to launch then in 2022.

THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS PRESENT!
THE CHOIR CD RELEASED LAST YEAR



AVAILABLE IN THE ABBEY SHOP £11.99

SPECIAL OFFER: BUY ONE GET A DIFFERENT CD HALF
PRICE!

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Edna Muncie wishes her friends at the Abbey a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

The Very Revd. Dr. John Chalmers explains why kindness – and the counselling and support work of CrossReach – is needed now more than ever.

Last year I wrote an article which highlighted the alarming levels of anxiety, depression and stress which were taking their toll on people across the generations. That piece appeared in the April 2020 edition of Life and Work, but it had been written six weeks earlier without any idea that we were about to enter a period which would test the mental health resilience of every one of us.

In the early days of the Covid 19 pandemic we were optimistic that a period of lockdown would put the virus in its place and by the summer we would begin to see normal life return to normal. That article also promoted a CrossReach Golf Day which would be a fundraiser for the work that CrossReach was doing to promote wellbeing and good mental health. At that time, it never crossed my mind that the Golf Day would have to be postponed, but it was moved from June to September, further postponed to summer 2021 and then abandoned in the hope that it might happen sometime in 2022.

It was not until this time last year, when we hailed the approval of vaccines, that we enjoyed the first rays of hope that life might eventually return to some semblance of normality. The vaccines; however, did not appear in time to save our Christmas services, celebrations and gatherings. Now, almost two years since the first case of Covid - 19 was reported in Wuhan it is clear that this pandemic has led to a further escalation in the levels of anxiety, depression and stress being experienced by people in all walks of life.

It was one thing to cancel a golf outing but the accumulation of cancelled events, postponed weddings, curtailed funerals, periods of

self isolation and separation are quite another. The truth is that most of us have ways of coping with “one-off disappointments and difficulties but repeated blows are harder to measure and harder to dissipate.

Some years ago, when the decision was made to replace the Forth Road Bridge with the new Queensferry Crossing it was because the old bridge was suffering from stress. It had not been overtaken by one single traumatic incident. It was that day after day, month after month and year after year it had been placed under repetitive strain. It was the accumulated effect that led to the need for renewal.

Interestingly, the Forth Bridge, the rail crossing built in the wake of the Tay Bridge disaster, was made so robust that it hasn't suffered in the same way. People living under the demands of the present day are more like the old road bridge and that has been highlighted by the repeated blows to life under the hammer of a pandemic.

At the forefront of the Church of Scotland's work to help people cope with mental illness and breakdown is the work of CrossReach. For many people CrossReach counselling and residential services are where the grace of God meets the need of vulnerable people. It is where people are listened to and encouraged, where people discover their place in a caring community and where they find the deep inner resources to turn their lives around. I think that the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews was onto this formula a long time ago; he recommended the medicine of being kind to one another, being sure to meet together and taking time to encourage one another (chap 10 24-25). These are core elements that you will find in the work of CrossReach and they are core elements that are needed now as never before.

This article was first published in the December 2021 issue of Life and Work.

MUSIC FOR DECEMBER

5 December

Advent 2

11.00am

Morning Service

Psalm 27

Te Deum

Gibbons (Short Service)

Laetentur coeli

Byrd

4.00pm

Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent

12 December

Advent 3

11.am

Morning Service

Psalm 45

Benedictus

Gibbons (Short Service)

This is the record of John

Gibbons

19 December

Advent 4

11 am

Morning Service

Psalm 60 1-7

Magnificat (Short Service)

Weelkes

Hymn to the Virgin

Britten

24 December

Christmas Eve

7.30pm

Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

25 December

Christmas Day

10.30am

Holy Communion Service

Messe de Minuit

Charpentier

(With a small orchestra)

Hodi Christus natus est

Sweenlink

ABBEY DIRECTORY

Locum Minister:	Rev. Elspeth McKay	0141 889 7654
Director of Music:	Dr. George McPhee	
Assistant Organist:	Mr Peter Shepherd	
Church Manager	Linda Barrett	0141 889 7654
Church Secretary:	Mrs Karen Kerr	0141 889 7654
Session Clerk:	Mrs Marion Sommerville	
Treasurer:	Mr Stewart McDougall	

The Abbey office is not manned every day just now so if you need to contact any of the above people leave a message on the office answering machine (0141 889 7654) and it will be passed on to the appropriate person. Thank you.