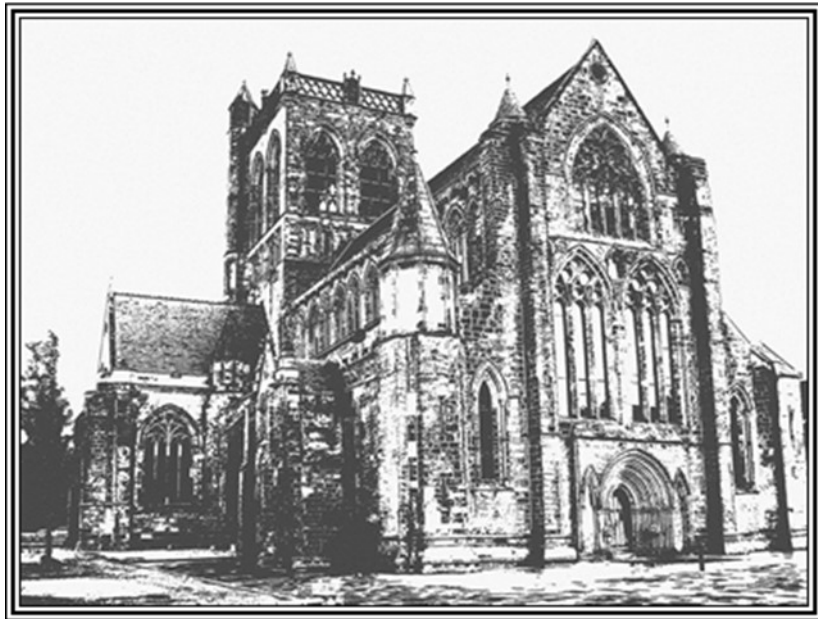


# Paisley Abbey



# Abbey Herald

April 2023

The poet Edwin Muir once wrote a lovely autobiography in which he described his happy childhood in the Orkney Islands, his life in a Glasgow slum where most of his family lived and died, his time in Europe when the Nazis were flexing their ugly muscles and his period in Prague, after the war, when the communists were taking over. At the end of this story, in summing up all his varied experiences, he writes: *“Now and then, during these years, I fell into the dumps for short and prolonged periods ... and passed through stretches of blankness and deprivation. From these, I learned things which I could not otherwise have learned so, that, I cannot regard them as mere loss. Yet, I believe that I would have been better without them.”*

I have always liked those words. They seem to me to be so well balanced, and moderate: so honest and real. He knows he has learned something from his periods of depression but, in the end, he concludes – and one can almost feel the intensity of his words – *“I believe that I would have been better without them.”*

## TEST OF FAITH ?

What Edwin Muir says is important because it's very easy for people of faith to suppose that unhappiness must always serve some good purpose; and to think of misfortune or tragedy as sent by God to test our faith.

But, such a view won't hold. We wouldn't think much of a friend who deliberately made life as uncomfortable as possible for us to strengthen our character; a friend who tripped us up or broke our leg in order to see how we would react is a strange kind of friend. I certainly can't believe in a God who wishes misfortune or tragedy upon any human being. That's not my God. Nor is it the God of Jesus.

**“IN TRYING TO ASSESS THE DARK PERIODS OF OUR LIVES  
THERE IS A PARADOX THAT CAN'T BE RESOLVED.”**

Yet, having said that, it is an undoubted fact that, when things go badly wrong for us, we sometimes learn things we couldn't otherwise have learned. It is often only because we ourselves have experienced bleak moments that we can begin to understand how others feel. It is then that we are likely to develop a greater sensitivity, a deeper awareness of other's pain and through it all we might then discover that the purpose of life is to meet one another in love and care.

## ONE STEP IN EDEN

Edwin Muir, himself, puts it like this very beautifully in one of his poems in which he dreams of paradise, a Garden of Eden in which life is wholly perfect. He contrasts this perfection with our very human and often painful world. This life of ours can be bleak, he says. It is like a famished field and a blackened tree. Then, comes this thought:

*‘The famished field and blackened tree  
Bear flowers in Eden never known.  
Blossoms of grief and charity  
Bloom in these darkened fields alone.  
What had Eden ever to say  
Of hope and faith and pity and love?’*

In trying to assess the dark periods of our lives, there is a paradox that can't ever be resolved. God did not wish such times upon us. We would, indeed, have been better without them. Yet, through such experiences we may learn to live with more sensitivity and kindness; and, also, more profoundly, for we begin to sense what life is for and what it is that truly matters. We can't say God wishes such hurt and pain and sorrow, but it is not a total loss. Some good, either for ourselves or others, has been gained from it.

In the darkened field there may yet bloom blossoms of grief and charity that had not been seen or experienced before.

As you struggle to make sense of Christian faith in your life and daily living, especially during those periods of bleakness and worry that can effect us all, may the worship and hope of our Easter Celebration bring you joy and strength in your believing.

Jim Gibson  
Interim Moderator and Locum Minister.

## Just a few Tips on Welcoming

Have you noticed them too? Strangers appearing at the Abbey on Sunday mornings for worship. Maybe you have. I hope it has been an encouragement to you that, when there is so much talk around about churches closing and congregations uniting, we at the Abbey have been slowly but increasingly witnessing individuals seeking a new spiritual home worshipping with us.

However, our ministry of welcome does not end when someone walks in the door. That's just the beginning. From experience, here are just a few tips for responding to new people in church:

- First, notice. Notice who is here and who isn't. Notice who you know and who you don't know. Notice people who might be new. Then, introduce yourself. (I know: 'what if they've been around for years and I don't remember them?' Well: just say something like, "Hello, my name is ..... and I don't know your name.").
- Next, pay attention to the person. Be sure they have an Order of Service. If they seem a bit uncertain, ask if its okay to sit near them, but don't 'crowd' their space.
- Visitors are generally a wee bit nervous about what may be expected of them at worship and, so, its usually a bad idea to ask them to sit at the front. They need to be able to watch people in front of them to know the motions.
- If they have an 'active' child with them, children's activity packs are available for the child to use and enjoy.\*
- If it's a service of Holy Communion, mention they are very welcome to participate.
- After the service, don't just invite them to join us in the Cloister Café for coffee, bring them round and introduce them to the Minister and others who are there.
- Be sure they pick up a 'Welcome Pack' with information about the Abbey and congregational events \*\*

These tips are small things to do, but they are the sort of small things that can make a big difference to a visitor or newcomer. They are part of what it means to be an inviting, welcoming and inclusive congregation. Just remember, it is part of our mission to respect the dignity and privacy of every human being.

\*available from an Elder on duty

\*\*available from end of April

Jim Gibson

## Society of Friends of Paisley Abbey

The Society of Friends was founded in 1952 and exists to maintain and enhance the fabric of the Abbey and to support its music. Regular contributions are made to the Kirk Session for these purposes. Evidence of numerous projects undertaken by the Society can be seen all around the Abbey but, perhaps, the most recent notable projects are the magnificent stained-glass window commissioned from Glasgow born artist John Clark and the historical exhibition in the Sacristy.

Membership of the Society is open to anyone who would like to help advance the aims of the Society. Applications for Annual or Life Membership are welcomed and can be addressed via the Abbey office.

### Giving with a Will

#### *(A legacy to your Church)*

Did you know that Paisley Abbey is a registered charity?  
Did you know that giving a LEGACY is one very important way by which you can continue to support the ministry and work and outreach of the Abbey after your death?

A legacy may be a specific sum of money, a property, share in a company or the residue of your estate.

Legacies are exempt from Inheritance Tax and may provide vital funds for a particular project of the Abbey; or may be invested to produce annual income for ongoing work.

All legacies are only used in accordance with the donor's wishes. So, why not speak with your solicitor and 'give with a will'? Alternatively, you might consider donating your legacy while you can still enjoy witnessing the benefits your generosity makes.

## PAISLEY ABBEY - THE WAY FORWARD ACCORDING TO CLYDE PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN.

Over recent months the Kirk Session has been involved in discussions with Clyde Presbytery's Mission Committee regarding the future of our congregation and church building. This has been in common with every congregation of the Church throughout Scotland and as a consequence of a mandate from the General Assembly.

These discussions have not proved easy. The Presbytery was allocated a finite number of ministers to serve within its bounds and tasked to plan the best way in which these ministers could serve their communities. As a result, congregations will have to unite or link, and a number of churches close.

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

On 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023 the Presbytery gave approval to the following with regard to the Abbey:

- The building of Paisley Abbey will be classed 'A', meaning that the Abbey will continue to be a place of Christian worship.
- The congregation will be served by a full-time Transition Minister. This will be for a period of five years, the appointment to be reviewed annually, with the possibility of the Transition Minister applying for the position of Minister of Paisley Abbey come the end of the five year period.

### WHILE IT IS GOOD NEWS THAT THE ABBEY WILL CONTINUE AS A PLACE OF WORSHIP, WHY A TRANSITION MINISTER?

- With the departure of our recent Minister in November 2022, we are once again in vacancy.
- As in so many other instances, the Covid Pandemic was not kind to us at the Abbey. All activities had to cease other than pre-recorded worship broadcast on YouTube. Consequently, for almost two years, our income stopped. This resulted in our accruing debt of over £100,000. This is not surprising given that the Abbey is an ancient building of national and historic significance needing constant expenditure on heating, maintenance and security. This debt must be paid as soon as is possible.
- There are not sufficient numbers of clergy to serve every congregation due to large numbers reaching retiral age.

## NEXT STEPS:

Although the Plan was approved by Clyde Presbytery on March 18<sup>th</sup>, it must now receive the approval of the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland, the Presbytery Plan Implementation Group (PMPIG) and, then, the General Assembly in May. Only then, will it officially become the Clyde Presbytery Plan.

## IN SUMMARY:

The Kirk Session has worked hard and long to ensure the best possible outcome for the congregation and Abbey. While reservations are held regarding some technical aspects of the appointment of the Transition Minister and the Minister's supervision, the agreement reached with Presbytery is the best possible.

Meantime, we continue to progress as a congregation led by our Interim Moderator. Comprehensive plans are being worked out regarding our congregational finances, properties and activities. Members of the congregation should be reassured that the Kirk Session will continue to work for a better future for the Abbey so that it may remain a living beacon of Christian worship, witness and outreach to Paisley and beyond.

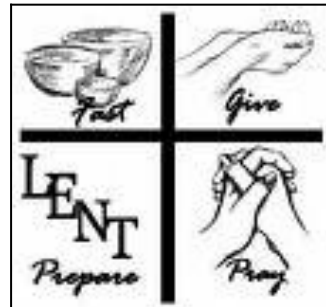
Marion Sommerville Session Clerk

## LENT APPEAL 2023

*The Lent Appeal will run until Easter Day, 9 April.*

Every little bit of money, no matter how small, will be really appreciated and put to good use in supporting Paisley Abbey, a community and building that is close to all of our hearts.

Many Thanks  
Stewart McDougall  
Treasurer



## PARISH REGISTER – March 2023

<b>Funeral</b>	4 March	Rachel Paterson
<b>Wedding</b>	18 March	Karen Gallagher & Kevin Beattie
<b>Baptism</b>	19 March	Rory McPherson

**Transference from another church** - John Anderson & Michael Rooney

## RENFREWSHIRE FOODBANK

The congregation of Paisley Abbey generously supports the Foodbank set up to serve our local community in Paisley. By doing so we are trying to assist the most vulnerable people for whom life can prove the most difficult. The Foodbank distributes to those for whom the need is most urgent. If you would like to contribute, please bring along your donations to the Abbey on the last Sunday of the month. Anything you may be able to donate will be much appreciated. A suggested list from which to choose includes the following:

Milk (UHT/powdered), Sugar (500g), Fruit Juice (carton), Pasta, Sauces, Cereals, Sponge Pudding (tinned), Tomatoes (tinned), Rice pudding (tinned) Teabags, Instant coffee, Instant Mashed Potato, Rice, Tinned meat, Jam, Biscuits/snack bars.

Thank you to all who faithfully donate each month and to those who now give support. Your donations show the community that the congregation of the Abbey care for others and actively contribute to the wellbeing of all.



## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2023



Begins May 14<sup>th</sup> Help give people a future without fear.

Your contribution this Christian Aid Week could help farmers in Malawi plant better seeds, secure a fairer price for their crops and build happier futures for their children. Soaring costs are affecting people here and around the world. People in the world's poorest countries are paying the heaviest price for this global crisis. Food, fuel, fertiliser and school fees have doubled in price this last twelve months. Hard-working farmers are seeing their harvests fail as the climate crisis brings increasingly erratic weather. Please give as generously as you can to give their families a brighter future.

Opportunity to contribute to the work of Christian Aid will be given at the Abbey during the month of May.

### GIFT AID

Calling all UK Tax Payers who is donating to the Abbey today, or on a regular basis. Please consider completing a Gift Aid Yellow Envelope. This will allow the Abbey to claim an extra 25% from HMRC for the donation you are making. Collection baskets are available on entry to the service, and also at the door as you exit. If you wish further details regarding Gift Aid or the Small Donations Scheme, please speak to Jan Norris, our Gift Aid co-ordinator, or contact the Abbey Office.

### CAFÉ

The Café is now open Tuesday to Saturday from 10.30 am - 3.30 pm on a self serve basis. The café will serve tea, coffee & home baking from 10.30 am—12.30 pm on the Saturday mornings when the Lunch Hour Concerts take place. The next lunchtime concert will be on Saturday 22 April with the Abbey Strings.



## The Coronation of The King and The Queen Consort

*The dust, the golden dust of royalty,*

*Is held within its consecrated bound;*

*Parents of kings too – Walter and Marjory*

*Have long since there a place of slumber found.*

### **The Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort will take place on Saturday 6 May 2023.**

For many of us, this will be a fascinating and unmissable historical event. Procession, pomp, and pageantry will each contribute to a feast of compulsive and absorbing spectacle. What has become the iconic Buckingham Palace balcony appearance will follow, and a special Coronation Concert will be broadcast live from Windsor Castle on the next day.

In contrast to the revelation that our late Queen Elizabeth's Coronation seventy years ago was - the first major world event to be broadcast internationally on television - there can be no such novelty in the anticipated immersive media coverage of today. In 1953, twenty seven million people were said to have watched the Coronation live on television, and many rented or purchased their first TV sets for the occasion. I suspect few of us will feel any need to update our televisions specially for the 2023 experience!

Grand, magnificent and dazzling as all the celebrations promise to be, let us not forget that it is the Coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey that takes centre stage on the day. It is a solemn Christian service rooted in a tradition that can be traced back to 973 A.D. and the coronation of King Edgar of England. Following biblical tradition, King Charles will be anointed with oil by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby. The Right Reverend Dr Iain Greenshields, the Moderator of the General Assembly, will represent the Church of Scotland along with the Dean of the Chapel Royal, the Very Reverend Professor David Fergusson.

If for some, this coronation appears to be a remote event happening in another country, I would like to lead them, at least metaphorically, to the wonderful stained glass window in the west wall of the north transept in Paisley Abbey. Designed by Lewis Davis, in the blue and purple colours of Scotland, it depicts scenes from the life of Saint Margaret of Scotland, a woman of great Christian piety who was the great, great grand-daughter of King Edgar mentioned above.

Having fled from England after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, Margaret arrived in Scotland and married Malcolm III “Canmore,” King of Scotland. Their daughter Matilda, “Good Queen Maud,” became Queen Consort of England by marrying King Henry I, and all subsequent English monarchs were thereby descended from her line. Three of Malcolm and Margaret’s sons became Kings of Scotland, and it was the youngest of these, King David I, who granted the lands of Strathgryfe and the area around Renfrew to his steward, Walter FitzAlan who, in turn, founded Paisley Abbey in 1163.

King Robert I of Scotland, “Robert the Bruce,” was the fourth great-grandson of King David I, and it was Bruce’s daughter Marjory who married Walter FitzAlan’s third great-grandson, Walter Stewart, the 6<sup>th</sup> High Steward of Scotland. Walter and Marjorie’s son - by legend born in Paisley Abbey - became King Robert II of Scotland, the first of the Stewart Dynasty, from whom King Charles III is doubly descended. That “double” descent is through both his maternal grandparents. In addition to her father, King George VI’s lineage, our late Queen’s mother, born Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, could trace her ancestry back through generations of Scottish nobility to Sir John Lyon, Thane of Glamis, who married Robert II's daughter in 1376.

As tangled a web of genealogical strands as this may be, surely Paisley Abbey represents one constant anchor point.

Paisley Abbey is the burial place of King Robert II’s parents, his two wives, and all the preceding High Stewards of Scotland, along with his son, King Robert III. It is also, as I have outlined, the “Cradle of the Stewarts” - birth-place of King Robert II, the first of the fourteen Stewart kings and queens who reigned until 1714 not just in Scotland but, after the Union of the Crowns in 1603, throughout Great Britain.

Following that Union, James VI moved his court to London and returned to Scotland only once, in 1617. Like so many of his kingly forebears, he chose specially to visit Paisley Abbey and, while staying in the Place, was pleased to receive the hospitality of his old friend, Lord Claud Hamilton. Perhaps it would be harsh to describe his descendants as neglectful of their family escutcheon, but none again graced the Abbey with their royal presence until Queen Victoria in 1888, an event presaged by her youngest son, Prince Leopold, having visited Paisley in 1875. It was his interest that inspired the gift of the Sicilian marble memorial now situated in the Choir “to the memory of the members of the Royal House of Stewart who are buried in Paisley Abbey.”

Ahead of the King’s Coronation, it fell to the Right Reverend Dr Iain Greenshields, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to deliver a Loyal Address. In doing so, he referenced “the legacy and shining example of dedicated service given to us all by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth throughout all the days of her life.”

Continuing, he ventured: "This life of service to others was an outstanding witness by Her Late Majesty to the One whom she served faithfully in Her daily life. We recall the prayer of Her Late Majesty for the wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises she went on to make on the occasion of Her Coronation and trust that this recollection will offer continuing inspiration and example to Your Majesty and us all."

While associating ourselves with the Moderator’s expectation so stated, perhaps we might indulge ourselves in a little pride in our Abbey church’s historical connections to and continuing relationship with our royal family. Then, with a greater sense of ownership we can, in sentiment at least, echo the Westminster Scholars’ chorus: “Vivat!” “Vivat!”

**GOD SAVE THE KING!**

David C Davidson



## HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April to Good Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> April.

For Christians, Holy Week is never a comfortable time. It is not an easy week in which to worship and say that we believe in God.

During Holy Week we accompany Jesus on his way to the Cross. As we reflect on the torture, suffering and humiliation he had to endure, we find that we also have to confront the experience of powerlessness and pain that are still the daily reality of life for so many people across the globe.

This year, the Minister will speak about some of the characters and events central to the whole drama and will try to show their relevance for our own life's experience.

Services begin at 7.30pm Monday to Maundy Thursday and will be accompanied by Abbey choristers.

Holy Communion will be celebrated at the Maundy Thursday service.

On **Good Friday** – the Three Hours Devotion will be held between 12noon and 3.00pm.

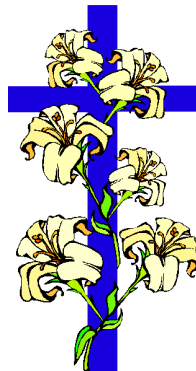
Between 12noon and 1.00pm - Durufle's Requiem will be sung by the Abbey Choir.

Between 1.00pm and 3.00pm – Meditations and prayers; and the Abbey String Group play Haydn's 'The Seven Last Words'

There will be no service on the evening of Good Friday. This helps to heighten the terrible event of the crucifixion itself.

### EASTER SUNDAY

11 am Sacrament of Holy Communion  
The Abbey Choir sing Mozart's 'Coronation Mass'  
accompanied by a small orchestra.



## MUSIC FOR APRIL

### 2 April

11 am  
Introit  
Psalm 118 vv 1-2, 19-29  
Anthem  
Anthem

### 3 - 5 March

7.30 pm

### 6 April

7.30 pm

### 7 April

12 noon - 3 pm

### 9 April

11 am

### 16 April

11 am  
Psalm 16  
Anthem

### 23 April

11 am  
Psalm 116 vv 1-4, 12-19  
Jubilate Deo  
Anthem

### 30 April

11 am  
Communion Setting  
Psalm 23  
Anthem

### Palm/Passion Sunday Morning Service

Open thy gates *Julius Harrison*  
Hosanna to the Son of David *Gibbons*  
Ave verum corpus *Byrd*

### Holy Week Services Services with Sermons & Music from Choristers

### Maundy Thursday Sacrament of Holy Communion

### Good Friday Three Hour Vigil

### Easter Day Sacrament of Holy Communion

### Easter 2 Morning Service

Surgens Jesus *Philips*

### Easter 3 Morning Service

Panis Angelica *Gabrielli à 8*  
*Franck*

### Lent 4 Holy Communion

Palestrina *(Missa Papae Marcelli)*  
The Lord is my Shepherd *Lennox Berkeley*

## EVENTS AT THE ABBEY

### **LONDON CONCERTANTE – Music from the Movies**

Sunday 16 April at 7.30 pm  
Tickets £19-£32  
available from [ticketsource.co.uk/classical](http://ticketsource.co.uk/classical)

### **LUNCH HOUR CONCERT - Abbey Strings**

Saturday 22 April at 12.30 pm  
Tickets £5 payable at the door.

### **GLASGOW PHOENIX CHOIR - IN AID OF ACCORD HOSPICE**

Saturday 13 May at 7.30 pm  
Tickets £15 available from [www.accordhospice.org.uk](http://www.accordhospice.org.uk)

### **LUNCH HOUR CONCERT - Daniella Hathaway**

Saturday 20 May at 12.30 pm  
Tickets £5 payable at the door.

### **NYCOS - Renfrewshire Regional Choir Summer Concert**

Wednesday 31 May time TBC  
More details to follow.

### **LONDON CONCERTANTE – Vivaldi (Four Seasons)**

Sunday 17 June at 7.30 pm  
Tickets £19-£32  
available from [ticketsource.co.uk/classical](http://ticketsource.co.uk/classical)

### **LUNCH HOUR CONCERT - Douglas Lawrence & Maureen Rutherford**

Saturday 24 June at 12.30 pm  
Tickets £5 payable at the door.

## ABBEY CONTACTS

**Minister:** Rev Jim Gibson 0141 889 7654

**Director of Music:** Dr. George McPhee

**Church Manager:** Linda Barrett 0141 889 7654

**Church Secretary:** Karen Kerr 0141 889 7654

**Session Clerk:** Marion Sommerville

**Treasurer:** 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.

*The Abbey, shop & café are open  
Tuesday to Saturday from 10.30 am - 3.30 pm  
Tuesday & Thursday tours are at 2 pm.*

*Paisley Abbey (Church of Scotland) – Registered Charity No SC00763*