

Presbytery News



Welcome to the 3rd Issue of Presbytery News

This is a bimonthly ezine of news from across the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland, compiled by your Communications Officer, Dr. Sundari Joseph
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Congratulations to our new Moderator for 2021-2023 Rev. Maggie Whyte



What do we know about our Moderator?

Maggie has lived in Aberdeen since 1979 when she moved here via Edinburgh from Lanarkshire. Her two daughters, Heather and Ruthie, are Aberdonians.

Maggie was educated at Elmwood Senior Secondary School in Bothwell. She began working in Edinburgh at Lady Mary Residential School for Maladjusted Children as an untrained Residential Social Worker. Her move to Aberdeen brought her to work at Cordyce Residential School in Dyce while she completed her Social Work training at RGIT now RGU.

She lived in Torry for 25 years and it was there that she became a Member of the Church of Scotland at Torry St Fittick's Church during the ministry of Rev David Hutchison. She worked in various roles in the congregation including

Safeguarding, Christian Aid Convener, Brownie Guider and Youth Leader, and was Ordained as an Elder.

After her daughters started school Maggie worked for a number of years in Community Work with young families in the Torry area of Aberdeen. A change of career saw her train as a Remedial and Sports Massage Therapist and she set up her business in Huntly Street in the City Centre, never expecting that another call would be made on her life.

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**Hear the call of the Kingdom, Lift your eyes to the King,
Let His song rise within you, As a fragrant offering,
Of how God rich in mercy, Came in Christ to redeem,
All who trust in His unfailing grace—
Keith and Kristen Getty**

The return to education, to Aberdeen University to study for a Degree in Divinity at the age of 46, followed a Church of Scotland Assessment Conference where she was accepted to train for Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Maggie completed her training and placements in Aberdeen in 2008 and spent 15 months at Rubislaw Church as a Probationer under the excellent guidance of Rev Andrew Wilson.



In February 2010 Maggie was called to serve the congregation and Parish of Aberdeen St Stephen's Church where she had previously completed a Student Attachment. With the support of this hard-working and welcoming congregation Maggie has enjoyed 11 years of Ministry including work in her own areas of special interest - with young people in Holiday Clubs, Girls' Brigade and local schools. Along with members of the congregation Maggie set up a Drop In for people who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health – the Y-Knot Drop In has run successfully for over 9 years

Maggie says, 'I feel honoured to have been asked to take on the role of Moderator of the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland and hope you will join me in praying that I don't cause too much havoc during my time in office'.

We will hear much more from Maggie in her time of office and we wish her every blessing as she undertakes her new role

We say farewell and a huge 'thank you' to our Presbytery Treasurer- Alan Morrison



Mr. Alan Morrison has been the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland's treasurer for ten and a half years and is retiring from this position as he is planning to leave Aberdeen.

He says, 'I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to be involved, at church and Presbytery level, in the changing church scenario in Aberdeen over the past 55 years'.

Managing church finances has been a key feature of his church involvement since 1966 when he was elected onto the Congregational Board at John Knox's church, Mounthooly. He served as treasurer here and also elder and Presbytery Elder. He moved to Beechgrove church in 1977 and as an elder he focused on finances and auditing and Church Treasurer. Beechgrove and St, Ninian Churches United to become Midstocket Parish Church in 2005 where Alan continued the role as treasurer. Alan was elected onto Presbytery in Oct 2009 became the Presbytery treasurer from Jan 2011.

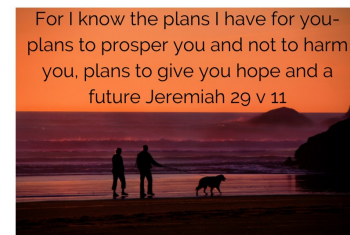
Alan Morrison celebrates 55 years of church work and retires as Treasurer of the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland

<https://www.aberdeenshetlandpresbytery.org.uk/latest-news/alan-morrison-celebrates-55-years-of-church-work-and-retires-as-treasurer-of-the-presbytery-of-aberdeen-and-shetland/>

He says, 'I have thoroughly enjoyed my ten and a half years as Presbytery Treasurer and am so glad that Alan Sharp, the previous Treasurer, who had served in that position for 20 years, approached me to become his successor. I have learned so much, as a member of the Business & Finance Committee, of how the local tier of governance of the Church of Scotland operates'. In 2016 Alan received a 50 year Long Service Certificate.

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The highlights of his exceptional management of church finances include meeting the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on their visits to Aberdeen. He says, 'I have attended the General Assembly three times; at the last in 2015 it was my honour to be invited to be a Steward at the Communion Service that preceded the business on the Monday morning. That would have to rank as a highlight'.



The Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland will be uniting with other local Presbyteries (Buchan; Gordon; Kincardine & Deeside; Moray and Orkney) by 2023 to form the Presbytery of the North East and Northern Isles. Alan says, 'Although I am retiring from Presbytery, and most likely leaving Aberdeen, I will be watching how the Presbytery Plan and the North East Presbyteries Reform work out, hopefully for the benefit of both churches and the Presbyteries.'

At a recent meeting of Presbytery, Alan was thanked for his tremendous service as Treasurer. We wish Alan every blessing as he moves onto new pastures and exciting new beginnings.

We are pleased to announce that the role of Presbytery treasurer will be taken up by William Anderson, elder and treasurer at Peterculter Parish Church.

The first Church of Scotland building to be purchased by a Community Group.....

Fetlar Kirk is one of the Shetland churches that was advertised for sale. It is a Category B listed building on one of the Northern Isles. Fetlar is the fourth-largest island of Shetland and has an area of just over 15 square miles and had a resident population of 61 at the time of the 2011 census. Its main settlement is Houbie on the south coast.



Fetlar Kirk is the first Church of Scotland building to be purchased by a community group. The building was sold as part of the Presbytery Plan to reduce to eleven the number of church buildings in Shetland. The recently-formed charity, The Friends of Fetlar Kirk will take over the 230 year old building when the legal processes are completed.

Rev Fran Henderson, Transition Minister from the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland said, 'We are really pleased that their hard work has paid off, and wish the whole Fetlar community every joy in their continued use of the church building.'

Ruth Booth Secretary of the Charity said, 'We are delighted that the Friends of Fetlar Kirk offer has been accepted and the building can be kept for community uses as a Kirk and for other activities'. Here is the link to the announcement on BBC Radio Shetland on 2nd June 2021:

https://www.mixcloud.com/BBCShetland/good-evening-shetland-wednesday-2nd-june-2021/?fbclid=IwAR2OAn4axSdag6KEGe-0abxIse8TNNhKp3Kn-J-ZbjlxD_cdFqj3x96S9tw

Janet Kelly, Elder at the church speaks of the 'wonderful Christian presence in the area since the time of the Vikings'.

We continue to pray for all the plans for Church buildings in Shetland and other parts of the Presbytery and for everyone involved in the work to sustain a Christian presence in these local communities

Presbytery Snippets



One of Rev Maggie Whyte's first tasks as Moderator was to conduct a service of appointment at Torry St. Fitticks church for Rev. Dr. Joseph Somevi.

Joe will work within the ministry team for the Aberdeen South Churches, namely South St Nicholas Kincorth and Torry St. Fitticks churches as an Ordained Local Minister (OLM).

He has already been involved in the online services and his sermons have focused on each of us being ready to reach out with the gospel message to the people who have yet to hear.

Joe and his family have received a warm welcome from the church community in Kincorth, Cove and Torry.

On Sunday 13th June, Rev Irene Charlton, Minister, conducted a re-dedication service for the newly restored bell at Aith Church in West Mainland, Shetland.

It has been beautifully crafted and restored and moved to its new home. The bell was removed from its original location in the belfry in the 1950s due to safety reasons and only in recent times was discovered by Peter Laurence Fraser, an elder in Aith church.

Peter was born in Uphouse Aith in June 1933 and had many years of devoted service to the church, being baptised and ordained as an elder. It was during his duties as an elder he discovered the bell looking somewhat worse for wear. It was Peter's desire to restore the bell to its former glory, but he sadly passed away earlier this year.



Rev Irene Charlton said,

'The family of Peter Fraser have been so glad to make Peter's dream a reality. They and all of us, I'm sure regard it as a fitting memorial to a much loved and valued son of this parish'.

The bell was originally gifted to the church by Rev W.A. Gillies of Kenmore, Perth and Kinross, Minister at the Kirk of Kenmore in Perthshire from 1912-1949. The bell he donated is thought to date back to 1736 or 1836. His association with Aith Church remains a mystery. The addition of the newly restored bell 'ringing in good times' as we move out of the Covid pandemic, will hopefully attract new members and visitors to Aith church. The bell will be rung before church services providing a clear invitation to all the community.

<https://www.aberdeenshetlandpresbytery.org.uk/latest-news/ringing-in-good-times-at-aith-church/>



Canada Calling for Former Presbytery Moderator

The Rev. Dr Nigel Parker has been Minister at Bucksburn Stoneywood, Church of Scotland for almost 27 years. He made a decision recently to move to work with the Presbyterian Church in Quebec Canada. He says, 'I go because it is the Call of God'.



He will be missed by his congregation at Bucksburn Stoneywood who speak fondly of him and his work in the church. Mr. Mike Hepburn session clerk said, 'Nigel always led from the front and as Moderator of the Presbytery in 2010-2011 he was at the forefront of all developments'.

He will probably best be remembered for reaching out to the deaf community in the North East of Scotland as he mentored and pioneered the work of the first deaf minister, the Rev Mary Whittaker at St. John's for Deaf People, Aberdeen. He supported the church during Mary's time away for Ministry training and

learnt British Sign Language to communicate with the hearing-impaired congregation.

During a recent Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland meeting Mary expressed her own heartfelt thanks to Nigel for all his support.

He says, 'Sherbrooke is a city smaller than Aberdeen about 110 miles from Montreal and just north of the US border at Vermont. Yet like Aberdeen it has two universities and they also used to make paper there. It is also 90% French speaking. Fortunately, my modest congregation is English speaking, but it has been my lockdown skill to improve the quality of my French courtesy of the Open University. The pandemic regulations means that there can be no large farewell gathering and there are many people I would have like to have said farewell to whom I have not seen for more than a year.'

His new post is already becoming busy with his first funeral service in July and a bilingual wedding booked. <https://www.aberdeenshetlandpresbytery.org.uk/latest-news/former-presbytery-moderator->

The church community send their blessings and good wishes for Nigel's new beginning in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Sherbrooke Quebec.

Aberdeen's Port Chaplain Retires after 20 years service



Rev. Howard Drysdale, Corresponding Member of our Presbytery and Port Chaplain and Seafarer Centre Manager has retired after 20 years service. His seafaring life is not over however, as Howard will continue as Chaplain to the local RNLI and he recently received their long service medal for 20 years service. In his own blog page Howard describes himself as 'A Christian who has had a rich and varied life'. He was born in Blackburn, West Lothian and grew up in a mining village as the youngest of three children. After a childhood of 'not so happy times' he says, he left school at 15yrs and completed a course in engineering and

worked at Ferranti's in Edinburgh in 1971. He flourished here and was awarded apprentice of the year. At the age of 20yrs he joined the Royal Navy and served on HMS Hermes. **Continued on page 6**



He describes this experience as life changing. He left the Royal Navy as a Christian and trained to become a minister. He married Anne in 1984. They have five children, He has been the minister and pastor in four churches. Since 2012 he has been the Superintendent of Aberdeen Seafarers Centre and Port Chaplain from 2001.

He says, 'I enjoyed my ministry to seafarers. Many happy memories have been made, I have met some phenomenal seafarers, men and women, onboard vessels, in offices and in hospital beds or their homes. Every one of them have confirmed my view that these individuals are worthy of the greatest respect and honour of all. They do an amazing job, go way beyond what folks on shore would put up with and are treated poorly by so many, yet just get on with the job!

Howard's beloved wife, Anne, died January 2018 after 25 years of various illnesses. He describes her faith in Christ as unswerving. She is missed by her family and friends. Howard says, 'she is in glory with the host of witnesses and enjoying life without disability, illness or pain'.

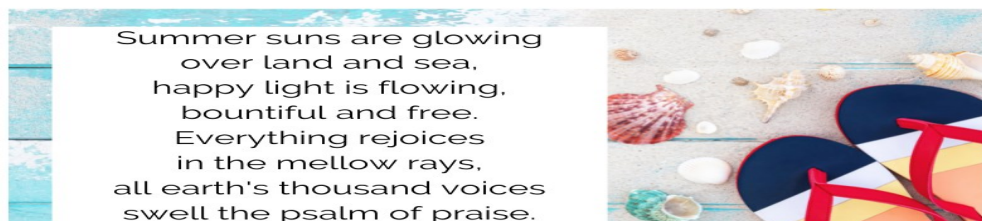
Howard will continue with the RNLI and 'Grampian SeaShed' for retired and unemployed seafarers. They meet weekly on Fridays – currently via Zoom, but as restrictions ease in person. Howard says there are 'big changes ahead for me... looking forward to new opportunities to serve others... and do a bit more relaxing!'



All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full. To the
place the streams come from,
there they return again.

Ecclesiastes 1 v7

We thank Howard for his diligent service to the seafaring community especially in the Port of Aberdeen over the years and we wish Howard every blessing as he retires and continues in God's service in many different ways.



**This is your ezine
Please send your stories for the September edition
by 3rd September 2021
to**

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