

Presbytery News



Welcome to the 4th 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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The Moderator of the Church of Scotland visits Shetland



Lord Wallace visited Brae in Shetland on Thursday 12th August where Elders and church members gathered from across Shetland and were served at tables by the Ministry Team.

The Moderator spoke warmly about the vital importance of elders to the Kirk, and encouraged them to keep faith through the changes facing the whole Church of Scotland. He spent time chatting to as many people gathered in Brae Hall. It was the selected central venue on the mainland to enable people to travel from different parts of Shetland.

He spent time with church members and ministers, Rev Dr Fran Henderson, Transition minister for Shetland, Rev Irene Charlton, Parish Minister and Rev Lynn Brady, Interim Minister.

Speaking after the meeting Lord Wallace said, "I appreciated both the opportunity to speak to the gathering as a whole, as well as talk and listen to individuals.

"No one minimised the scale of the challenge and sometimes difficult decisions were involved in reaching where we are today but I was encouraged by the universal resolve to make the new arrangements work and to see this as a fresh opportunity for mission. One other welcome feature of the evening was hearing

Lord Wallace in Brae Hall, Shetland
Photo by Penelope Smith

how pleased people were simply to be able to come together again and socially enjoy each other's company."

This was a whistlestop tour including a visit to the Crossreach Care Home, 'The Walter and Joan Gray' in Scalloway. The name originates from the man who received the fateful mayday call from the RMS Titanic. Mr Gray was born in Scalloway and was working as a radio operator for Marconi on the east coast of Canada when he received a mayday call from RMS Titanic, the passenger liner which sank in the north Atlantic Ocean after hitting an iceberg in 1912. He returned to the village on 1962 after he retired and the property that he bought was turned into a care home after he and his wife, Joan, died.

Continued on page 2

The care home, which offers accommodation to 16 residents and additional day care for older people, is run by CrossReach, the operating name of the Church's social care council. It is one of the largest and most diverse voluntary sector social care organisations in Scotland.



The Moderator chats
with resident Mildred Thomson



The Moderator chats
with care home manager Jennie

Jennie Gunn, manager of The Walter and Joan Gray care home, said: "It was a lovely afternoon and our residents enjoyed the Moderator's visit. Everyone was in good form and he joined them for afternoon tea and asked how we had all coped during the pandemic and discussed some of the challenges. The Moderator praised staff for their work to keep all the residents safe and asked them if they were enjoying spending time with their families and getting out in to community again. We assured him that it had been a team effort and I told him that I am very proud of the staff who worked long hours during the pandemic to ensure that the needs of our residents were met."



Lord Wallace at his Induction Ceremony

This was Lord Jim Wallace's first visit to Shetland following his induction as moderator of the General Assembly, for the Church of Scotland. Lord Wallace, represented Orkney and Shetland in the House of Commons between 1983-2001. He said: "My welcome couldn't have been warmer, and it was a real joy to meet up again with old acquaintances as well as meeting new ones," he said. "It was also inspiring to hear how people locally are adapting the Church to better fit the needs of the 21st century, as well as being able to congratulate the ministry team in person for their hard work, just over a year since they officially became part of the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland."

The Ministry Team were hugely grateful that Lord Wallace was able to take time out of his busy schedule and make this trip to Shetland and encourage everyone in their tasks.

Read more on the Church of Scotland Website

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/articles/moderator-praises-dedicated-crossreach-staff-during-visit-to-shetland>



**Lord, we thank you for our church leaders
and pray for their vision and wisdom to
inspire us through your Holy Spirit**

Aberdeen West Churches formally become a Parish Grouping

As part of the Presbytery plans, the ministry teams from Craigiebuckler, Cults, Kingswells, Mannofield and Peterculter churches have come together to form a parish grouping known as 'Aberdeen West Churches.'

Rev Shuna Dicks, Minister at Cults Parish Church said,

'The Aberdeen West Cluster group has for a number of years worked really well. The ministers and office bearers have worked together on a number of projects. But this last 18 months have brought us even more closer together and we look forward to formalising our relationship as a Parish Grouping.

From my perspective working together with the other ministers on our weekly online services has been great. Not only has it been a great way for our congregations to get used to the different faces it has also brought us closer together as colleagues. We have met weekly on Zoom to plan the services but also to support each other. We have found a safe space in which to share the highs and lows, the joys and frustrations of ministry in a pandemic. I am delighted that although our weekly joint online services are coming to an end that we are committed to continue to have a weekly time together. I am looking forward to working on the identified priorities for our Parish Grouping and seeing how the work of the church can reach into our communities.'

Rev. Dr. John Ferguson, Minister at Peterculter Parish Church said,

'For me, working in a team has been very important and it really helped with the isolation that came when the Lock-down started and the role of ministers changed suddenly and considerably. Of course, meeting by Zoom is not the same as meeting in person, but having regular Zoom meetings, especially when there was no in person worship at all, was really beneficial.

The fact that we all come from similar theological backgrounds was a bonus and that we simply get on well with each other meant a lot.

We have had a lot of very good discussions about the state of the Church and we've had plenty of laughs as well.

I hope that in the future we can continue to share Ministry even more and perhaps look to a situation where our parish boundaries are no longer so relevant. I am sure we will engage in pulpit exchanges, organise joint activities and work on the most important aspect together, which is mission, the reaching out to our communities with the Good News of Christ.'



Preparing services together– from L-R

Rev John Ferguson (Peterculter Church)

Rev. Keith Blackwood (Mannofield Church)

Rev. Kenneth Petrie (Craigiebuckler Church)

Rev. Laurene Lafontaine (Kingswells Church)

Rev. Shuna Dicks (Cults Church)

The grouping was launched at a special service on Sunday 29th August
We continue to pray for all churches that will progress through to
formal parish groupings in the next few years.

Worship Leader Training

A number of opportunities to train as a 'worship leader' have arisen as a result of an innovative new course, launched on Tuesday 1st September and developed in partnership with the University of Aberdeen and the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland.



Rev. Dr. Edmond Gatima

Rev. Dr. Edmond Gatima, convenor of the Ministries and Resourcing Mission and Discipleship committee (MRMDC) and Rev. Dr. Ken Jeffrey from the Centre for Ministry Studies at the University of Aberdeen have worked together to bring this about. Ken said, 'There has been a vision to strengthen the relationship between the academy and the church and the need to equip worship leaders with the knowledge and skills to lead worship in churches was identified through the Presbytery plan.'



Rev. Dr. Ken Jeffrey

This course is being piloted with the support of the Church of Scotland and will be extended to other denominations following evaluation of this pilot. Courses on 'preaching' and 'pastoral care' are also being developed.

Edmond said, 'The Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland has been always keen to see such training taken place within the Presbytery. That is why at the very heart of the proposed presbytery plan was the necessity of MRMDC and Planning & Deployment Committee (PDC) to recognise that "Presbytery must urgently consider how to organise and invest in training of lay people in our churches to share in the leadership and task of mission and ministry and organise such training at a local level rather than depend on the national agencies of the Church." Today we are delighted to say that such training has already been set up. We wish all our students the blessing of God as they undertake this training and their future service to the Presbytery and indeed, to God and his Church'.

The course consists of six x 2hr evening sessions and will include lectures, group discussion and the opportunity to participate in the preparation of worship services. It will be delivered in a 'hybrid' manner with some students coming into the MacRobert building and others studying online from home. The assessment will consist of a 500 word reflective piece and students will be asked to keep a reflective journal.

One of the students said after the first session, 'This course, encouraging as it does, wider participation of members in worship leading and ultimately, preaching, is vital to the future health of the Church of Scotland' (George McLeod).

We thank everyone who has volunteered to take part in this course wish them every blessing. We especially pray for:

Sarah Aitken (Stockethill Church); Kathryn Buchan (Newhills Parish Church) Elizabeth Gatima (Torry St Fitticks); Kathleen Kennedy (Oldmachar); Morag Ledgerwood (Stockethill Church) George McLeod (Oldmachar); Richard Neilson (Oldmachar); Vanda Noble (Stockethill Church); Helen M Cruddis (Whalsay Church); Deborah Lamb (Shetland); Katherine Morrison (St Columba's Church, Lerwick); Michele Simms (Parish Planning Worker– Shetland)

Are you interested to learn more about opportunities at the University of Aberdeen?

The Aberdeen Academy of Theology- 'Unveiling Scripture' Led by Prof John Behr:

- ⇒ Saturday 2 October: From the Bible to Scripture: Lifting the Veil;
- ⇒ Saturday 6 November: John, Genesis, and Irenaeus: Becoming Human;
- ⇒ Saturday 4 December: Mother and Bride: The Church

Contact joel.pierce@abdn.ac.uk 01224 272138 for more details and registration

Presbytery Snippets

As society starts opening up again Churches are reaching out to their communities

Through their cafes.....



The Hub Café at Cults Church

L-R June Gilchrist, Carolyn Stevenson, Hazel Kenworthy and Jan Johnson.



The Connect café at Mannofield Church plus a weekly banking service

Rev Shuna Dicks, Minister at Cults church said, 'The ethos of the Hub Café is to be a friendly place for members of the community to gather. Our staff and volunteers will chat to customers and make them feel welcome. It has been wonderful over the last few months to provide a welcoming, happy place for people to meet up. As our activities start up again the Kirk Centre will be a hive of activity – the missional purpose of the building being fulfilled'.

Rev. Keith Blackwood, Minister at Mannofield Church said, 'Café Connect is an important part of our life in Mannofield, providing a safe and comfortable space. The Café helps Mannofield church sit as a busy hub for community where all are welcome. The closure of the TSB Branch in June was a big loss to the Community. However, working with the MSP, Councillor and the Community Council, the Church is trialling facilitating a weekly non-cash related banking service with the TSB. So far this is proving a very popular service and it again is bringing new people into church.



Cognito at the Cross– The café at Queens Cross Church

Rev Scott Rennie, Minister at Queens Cross Church said, 'the café makes a huge difference to the ways in which the church can engage with the community. People who would never normally enter a church come to the café and we've had people see church activities promoted through the café and then come along to attend'.

Many churches have opened up their cafes and we thank all the willing volunteers and paid staff who run these for the benefit of local communities who rely on them for their physical and mental well being and have missed them so much!



Helping local businesses.....

we know that many small businesses have struggled during the pandemic



Queens Cross and Cults churches have run farmers' market stalls- churches are helping to save local businesses.

Presbytery snippets continued.....Reaching out to the community

Caring for the Environment– through litter picking

Three churches came together to do a litter pick at Aberdeen beach. South Holburn, Ruthrieston West and Ferryhill churches will be forming a grouping and as well as caring for the environment this was an opportunity for them to meet each other.



Caring for families—through Holiday Clubs

A Jungle Adventure holiday club was organised by St. Columba's church. Sue Thomson, Schools Worker said, 'It was a joy to welcome families to take part in our summer holiday club and learn more about the great adventure of following Jesus. We created films introducing the characters (Sir Random-finds and Dr Water-falls) who kept us laughing as they led our jungle adventure. The Guide introduced and explained the Bible stories which whole families watched together at home. We invited the children to face to face outdoor sessions while the parents could enjoy a cuppa in our outdoor tea-room, delivered packs with crafts and challenges to their homes and created trails for them to follow and solve in our community. It was wonderful to see whole families discovering more about Jesus, who is the best guide, as He invites us, cares for us, provides for us and directs us.'

Two highlights of the week were our altogether family events. We invited families to an outdoor church event where we all gathered round the campfire in our PJs for games and worship and s'mores, and a grand finale on Zoom where the losing team captain got Jungle gunged!

We've learnt over the past 18 months that we don't need to be in our building to share the good news of Jesus, that families love to learn and take part together and that people come to things outdoors. It was great to put that learning into action as we planned this holiday club. We preceded the Jungle Adventure week with a month of prayer (daily prayer points in our church family Facebook group) and now we continue to pray, inviting you to do the same, giving thanks to God for his goodness to us and asking that the families we connected with will have an increasing desire to discover more about Jesus and will choose to follow him.



The Cults Guild members have 846 years of service in total between them. Long service certificates were presented at an afternoon tea when 40 ladies came together for the first time in 18 months.

Did you know about the Gloop Disaster in 1881?



Gloop Disaster Memorial



Sixareen boat–
photo Shetland Times

The Gloop disaster was a tragic accident that happened in July 1881 when 58 fisherman had set out to sea off the coast of North Yell, Shetland and never came back. Remembering the Gloop disaster is very important to the community of Cullivoe. On 20th July 2021, 140 years later, a special remembrance service was held by Rev Lynn Brady, Interim Minister, Church of Scotland along with Rev. Dr. David Lees and Aubrey Jamieson of the Fishermen's mission. Members of the community gathered together beside the Gloop Disaster Memorial and a wreath was laid by Charlie Henderson, a distant relative of someone killed in the disaster. Peter Wood a well-known Shetland piper played the pipes.

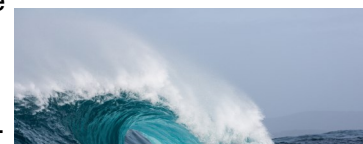
How did so many fishermen die that night? Six of the 10 boats that travelled out were small boats called 'sixareens' which were multi compartment boats with oars and were common from the 1700s for 'haaf' fishing. Haaf fishing was a system whereby land stations processed and salted the fish for export. The entire community were involved, from small children to the very old. These small boats travelled out 40 miles into the fishing grounds but were not suitable for navigating these open seas. For days before their fateful journey strong winds had kept them on-shore but the morning of 20th July looked fine and calm. The crew thought it was a good day and set off. The navigation systems were primitive and relied on recognisable landmarks. They had no way of knowing a storm was brewing from Iceland at a storm force 10. It took them by surprise and they tried to make it back to the shore but sadly many boats overturned. This day was later to be known to locals as the 'day atween wadders'. The skippers who did return to shore searched for their colleagues but could not help them. They kept their own crews safe by demonstrating skilled sailing, negotiating heavy seas, to reach home. The bodies of seven men were found. Over half the fisherman came from the village of Gloop. The name 'gloop' refers to a jet of water penetrating land through a sea cave.



Wreath laid at the Memorial Service on 20th July 2021

Sadly 34 women became widows and 85 children became orphans as a result of this disaster. One hundred years later a fitting memorial was erected by the local community. It is a rock sculpture overlooking Gloop Voe. It depicts a woman looking out to sea with a baby in her arms. Beneath it is a plaque with the names of the men lost at sea.

The memorial- Sadly 34 women became widows and 85 children became orphans as a result of this disaster. One hundred years later a fitting memorial was erected by the local community. It is a rock sculpture overlooking Gloop Voe. It depicts a woman looking out to sea with a baby in her arms. Beneath it is a plaque with the names of the men lost at sea.



All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full. To the
place the streams come from,
there they return again.
Ecclesiastes 1:7

We remember our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan and pray for peace and reconciliation. Rev Louis Kinsey, Minister at St. Columba's Church is also the Armed Forces Champion for the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland. Louis has called us to action.



In a letter to Presbytery Louis said, 'Members of the armed forces community are to be found in our congregations and parishes. There are perhaps 250,000 armed forces veterans living in Scotland. When you add to that figure the number of family members, you quickly realise that the veterans' community forms a sizeable proportion of the population of this country. During the 13 years of combat operations, more than 150,000 UK military personnel deployed as part of the NATO mission in Afghanistan, many of whom are living here in Scotland. It is clear that we have, at the present moment, a significant opportunity to offer pastoral support and help to our armed forces community, serving and retired. As the Armed Forces Champion for the Presbytery of Aberdeen & Shetland, I ask you, please, to reach out to any members of the armed forces community known to you. Is there a veteran in your congregation? How is she or he feeling at this moment? Is there a branch of the Royal British Legion Scotland in your parish? **Continued on page 8**

Could you pick up the phone, make contact, and offer your pastoral friendship? Could you perhaps send a supportive message via your church social media? Members of the armed forces are often reluctant to come forward. Can you see ways in which you might be able to reach them? We have an opportunity in front of us to show the love of the Lord Jesus to our neighbours in the armed forces community. May the Lord bless and guide you'. The Rev Louis Kinsey Armed Forces Champion Presbytery of Aberdeen & Shetland 18th August 2021

Interested in Pastoral Care?

The Church of Scotland is facilitating regional conversations about pastoral care. The 27 September 7:30pm event will be for the Aberdeen and Shetland, Kincardine and Deeside, Gordon, Buchan, and Moray regions. This is an online event that requires registration.



Follow this link to find out more:

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/events/learn-regional-conversations-on-pastoral-care/learn-regional-conversations-on-pastoral-care8>

A Review of the Presbytery Year 2020-2021 is found at this YouTube Link https://youtu.be/owl_WD7L5SU



A Year in the Life of a Presbytery
June 2020-May 2021



It lasts for 14mins and gives an overview of much that has happened.

Our Moderator Rev Maggie Whyte, concludes with her words of encouragement for the future. Please feel free to use the film clip as appropriate. I hope you enjoy this different medium for presenting Presbytery news.

Can you help look after our church buildings? Or know someone who can?

- > Some of our Presbytery church buildings will become vacant in the next few months.
- > To prevent them falling into disrepair and neglect the Presbytery is looking to form a team of people who will assist congregations to keep buildings safe and secure.
- > Skills and talents in the building trades are not required but we do require keen and enthusiastic volunteers to carry out this important task.
- > A small team of able people who will help to keep empty buildings secure and ready for sale will be very valuable to congregations who are struggling to do this on their own.



Can you give up a small amount of your time to help?

Please contact:

Ronnie Johnstone, Convenor of the Finance and Property Committee
Tel: 07741466924 Email: ronniejohnstone@hotmail.com

This is your ezine-if you don't see your church news then please get in touch and make sure you are in the next edition.

Send your stories for the November edition by 5th November 2021 to

Sundari Joseph- Communications Officer



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