



# Old Parish and St Paul's Church, Galashiels

Old Parish and St Paul's Church of Scotland, Galashiels, is a Charity, SC010389, regulated by OSCR  
 ~ Linked with St John's Church, Hawthorn Road, Langlee, Galashiels TD1 2JZ ~

## Newsletter ♦ June 2019

[www.oldparishandstpauls.org.uk/newsletters.htm](http://www.oldparishandstpauls.org.uk/newsletters.htm)

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### Dates for your Diary

(details of some of these events are in this Newsletter or the Sunday Bulletin)

#### Regular Events

- ♦ **Sunday Morning Worship:** 11.30  
♦ Next Communion: September 1st
- ♦ **Sunday Evening Worship:** 18.30  
♦ Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct & Dec in St Paul's; alternate months in St John's  
♦ Communion: last Sunday each month
- ♦ **Bible Study:** Tuesdays at 10.00 at 2 Abbotsview Gardens
- ♦ **Badminton for Seniors:** Wednesdays at 10.00
- ♦ **Guild:** Wednesdays at 14.15
- ♦ **Lunch Club:** Thursdays at 12.30
- ♦ **Music Makers:** Thursdays at 19.30
- ♦ **Boys' Brigade:** Fridays from 18.00 (during school term)

#### Other Events

- ♦ **Church Annual Clean:** Monday 10th June from 09.30-11.30 and 19.00-21.00, and on Wednesday 12th June from 09.30 -11.30
- ♦ **Christian Aid "Big Brekkie":** Sunday 16th June at 09.30
- ♦ **Local Congregations Meeting:** Sunday 16th June at 13.00
- ♦ **Dumfries Baptist Church Visit:** Saturday 22nd June at 12.00
- ♦ **Braw Lads Day Coffee Morning:** Saturday 29th June

### Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength

One of the basic truths of the universe is that God is loving. In fact, the Bible even goes so far as to say, 'God is love' (1 John 4:16).

God demonstrates His love for us in many ways. But His supreme act of love was giving His Son, Jesus Christ, the God-Man, to deal with human sin (Rom. 5:8).

#### Imitating God's love

So God is love. But it is not as if we are supposed to just stand at a distance admiring that. In Eph. 5:1 the apostle Paul writes, 'Be imitators of God.' What Paul means is that we are to imitate His moral qualities including His love.

#### The most important commandment

The importance of love is also shown by what Jesus says in Mark 12:28-34. In this passage we read about an occasion when He was asked what the most important commandment in the law of Moses was. Quoting Deut. 6:5, He replied:

'You must Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Given how God is love and how He wants us to imitate His moral qualities, it isn't a surprise that Jesus would give this as the greatest commandment.

Today, Christians are not under obligation to follow the law of Moses. Instead, we are under the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).

However, the law of Christ is a fulfilment of the law of Moses. It is a kind of out-growth from that law and has a lot in common with it.

Even though the command that Jesus quoted is part of the law of Moses, there is no doubt that the law of Christ overlaps with the law of Moses as far as this command is concerned. As people who are under the law of Christ, then, we must set ourselves the goal of loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

#### Using our wills

It is important to understand that the command to love God is not a command to try to manufacture some sort of emotional feeling within ourselves. We should never try to create emotions. Instead, loving God is first and foremost about using our wills. We choose to do what pleases Him to the best of our ability.

Of course, we will never succeed in loving Him with all our heart this side of death. But the command to love Him in this way is similar to the one in Matt. 5:48, 'Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' God commands us to be perfect not because we will manage to do that before we die, but because it is a goal we must strive towards.

#### Radical living

There are many passages in the Bible which make it clear that the normal Christian life is a radical thing (e.g., Matt. 16:24-25; 18:8-9; John 12:25). It is an extreme thing,

not in an uncontrolled or unreasonable way, but in how we are to love God. We are to give our lives for His service. We are to be people who have one supreme, overarching goal, which is to do His will.

To love God in this way doesn't mean that life should become a misery. It is not as if we let God rule over our lives, and then He only asks us to do things we don't want to do. The will of God for us is bound to be a mixture of things we want and don't want to do. But the key thing is to submit to Him and let Him rule over all our actions.

#### Knowing the will of God

Of course, even after we have set ourselves to do the will of God, it is still often difficult to know exactly what His will is. But if we seek Him seriously about this, we will make good progress towards knowing His will for our lives.

In practical terms, the most important way for us to learn what He wants us to do is by becoming serious students of the Bible. Every Christian should make it a practice to regularly study and meditate on Scripture.

Also, as we seek God in prayer, we will become more able to hear the voice of His Spirit directing our lives.

Max Aplin

# General Assembly 2019 - Day by Day

## Saturday 18th May

- ◆ **The outgoing Moderator of the General Assembly, the Very Rev Susan Brown, criticised the UK Government for its refusal to grant asylum to a Pakistani Christian family living in Glasgow.** The Church of Scotland has campaigned for the past year on behalf of the Bakhsh family, who say they would be in danger if they were sent back to Pakistan.
- ◆ **She also criticised the implementation of the Universal Credit benefits system,** saying delayed payments 'are hurting families'. She said that every Presbytery that she had visited during her year as Moderator was involved in running foodbanks, and many with feeding children during the school holidays – "Children who would otherwise not get a hot meal. This in 21st century Scotland."

## Monday 20th May

- ◆ **The Church of Scotland is to embark on a radical reform of its central structures, reducing the size of the organisation and cutting costs by up to 30%.**  
As part of the reforms a new body of trustees will be set up shortly after the General Assembly. The group of 12, which will replace the existing Council of Assembly, will be responsible for overseeing the work of the central charity and its finances, and ensuring the other parts of the organisation are working in accordance with the strategic priorities of the Church. They will be tasked with delivering a reduction in the cost of the central organisation of about 20-30%, the merging of 4 Councils into 2, and the transition of CrossReach (the Church's Social Care operation) into a more arm's-length, self-sustaining organisation.
- ◆ **The report of the Social Care Council,** which this year is marking 150 years of Social Care in the Church of Scotland, concluded the day's proceedings. Convener Bill Steele told the Assembly: "The world around us may have changed in the past 150 years, but there is no doubt that there remains an urgent need to address the social challenges most prevalent today".

## Tuesday 21st May

- ◆ **The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has approved the Radical Action Plan which will mean a significant shake-up of the whole organisation aimed at making the church fit for the 21st century.** The far-reaching changes will include:
  - ◆ an investment of £20-25m over six years in projects which will 'encourage greater faith-sharing, innovation and creativity at local and regional levels'
  - ◆ initiatives to help the Church to engage with young people
  - ◆ a reduction in the number of presbyteries in Scotland to around 12 (from the current 45)
  - ◆ work to encourage networks, hub ministries and other responses to the shortage of parish ministers
  - ◆ a review of the role of Kirk Sessions
  - ◆ increased co-operation with other denominations
  - ◆ a training and support programme for all leadership roles in the Church Of Scotland
  - ◆ a new platform of faith and nurture resources
  - ◆ professional support at local or regional level on buildings expertise, safeguarding, finance, employment and partnerships.
- ◆ **The convener of the World Mission Council has attacked 'the pernicious xenophobia which has crept into the culture in too many developed nations' and called on churches to speak for the poor and persecuted, particularly refugees.**  
The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers said that he could 'hardly believe' that since 2015, when there was recognition of the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, 'there has been such a populist backlash against migration that it is more difficult now than it was then to find safe passage and a safe destination'.
- ◆ **The Guild:** The General Assembly approved a revised version of the Church of Scotland Guild's constitution, reflecting an increase in the number of vice-conveners, a move from standing committees to task-based groups and a change in regional groupings from 'Presbyterial Councils to 'Guilds Together'.

## Wednesday 22nd May

- ◆ **Assembly Rejects Divestment Call:** The General Assembly today narrowly rejected a proposal for the Church of Scotland to disinvest from fossil fuels. It is the second year in a row that the Assembly has rejected a call for the Church's Investors Trust to withdraw its holdings in oil and gas companies, and is despite the Assembly also passing a motion recognising 'that we are experiencing a climate and ecological emergency'.
- ◆ **Church of Scotland Property:** The chairman of the General Trustees, Raymond Young, told the Assembly it was time for the Church to 'get real' about its land and buildings. Introducing a consultation on the Trustees' 'Well Equipped Spaces in the Right Places' strategy, which will be finalised next year, Mr Young said: "There are some very good spaces in the Church, but we have too many, and many are not fit for purpose. Neither is the Church a building preservation organisation. "Church buildings should be managed, changed and developed in such a way that they are not a distraction from the call 'follow me'.
- ◆ **Environment:** The Church and Society Council agreed to engage with the Scottish Government to encourage reduction in single-use plastics, and also to encourage churches to reduce the amount of single-use plastic in their buildings. There was a slightly awkward moment when a youth delegate pointed out that there were a lot of single-use plastic bottles on the top table (which was later replaced by a jug of water!).
- ◆ **Arms Sales:** The Assembly called on the UK Government to impose a moratorium on UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia, 'given the humanitarian catastrophe and suffering that the people of Yemen are going through... fuelled by the Saudi-led involvement in the conflict'.

## Thursday 23rd May

- ◆ **Silent Protest:** During the morning break, a group of youth representatives and supporters made a silent protest against yesterday's decision of the Assembly not to divest from fossil fuels, and there was another brief protest at the beginning of the report of the Investors Trust, when a group of Commissioners sang an alternative version of 'All Things Bright and Beautiful'.

## Friday 24th May

- ◆ **The General Assembly passed changes to the Church's engagement with young people, including the end of the National Youth Assembly in its current form after this year.** Instead a series of smaller regional events will be held, separately for young adults (18-30) and young people (11-18). However, there was considerable disquiet in the hall about the loss of the NYA, particularly the decision-making element which reports to the General Assembly. A youth committee has been suggested to replace that, but the proposals have not been finalised.

Adapted with kind permission from the "News" pages of [Life and Work Magazine](#), where further details and reports may be read. BBC Scotland reported on the General Assembly in 2 programmes, currently available to view on the BBC iPlayer: on [19/05](#), which covers the youth delegates as well as a lengthy report about Tabeetha School in Jaffa, the Church of Scotland's only school, and on [26/05](#) (the week's proceedings).

## A Community Hub for the 21st Century

In the third of our series about how churches have developed in different ways, we focus on Greyfriars Parish Church in Lanark, which re-opened in September 2017 after a £100,000 refurbishment to transform it into a community hub fit for the 21st century.

The interior of Greyfriars Parish Church has been modernised to create a versatile and flexible space to enable the congregation to worship in more imaginative ways.

Replacing the pews with chairs and installing remote controlled blackout window blinds means the building is suitable for a range of activities like theatre productions, film screenings and fitness classes.



The new look church has been redecorated, rewired and fitted with new carpets and heating system.

Minister, Rev. Bryan Kerr, said he was "absolutely delighted" with the result of the work, which started in June 2017.

"Everything just looks fresh, clean, loved and cared for which is what we aimed for," he added.

"Members have reacted positively and we have managed to retain the building's character so it still feels like church.

"The congregation have always used the church in creative ways for the community and this allows us to take it the next level.

"They are really open to new ideas and exploring what it means for us in terms of developing our own faith."

Rev. Kerr said audio-visual equipment had been relocated to the balcony to free up space and round tables had been bought to hold informal cafe-style services. He added that plans were underway to create a Labyrinth on the floor and bookings to hold Clubbercise fitness classes, complete with disco music and glow sticks, and a production of a comedy called A Monk's Tale had been secured.

"We feel that the building we now have will serve our needs and enable us to serve the community better. "We hope that people will be able to see the real possibilities for Greyfriars going forward." Members held joint services with nearby St Nicholas Church, other Christian denominations and used the church hall while the work was carried out. The refurbishment project was funded by grants and donations.



The Church recently held its first ever Sunday service at nearby Beechgrove Care Home to bring the Greyfriars experience directly to elderly residents "lock, stock and barrel". Residents of Beechgrove thoroughly enjoyed the experience of having church come to them. Around 90 people of all ages, including relatives of residents, attended the service which was aimed at reconnecting people with the community that they may feel more isolated from.

Rev. Kerr described it as a very positive experience for all and said the "smiles on resident's faces were as wide as could be". "We regularly go to nursing homes to lead worship during the week, but to intentionally go on a Sunday morning with the whole congregation is an incredible experience," he added. "It would be easy to organise a bus and bring resi-

dents to church but care homes often struggle with staff numbers on a Sunday to accompany them.

"But more than that, there is something Biblical about following Jesus command to 'go and make disciples'.

"It's not just about welcoming people to our church, it's also about Greyfriars being welcoming, meeting people where they are and actively including them."

Rev. Kerr said some residents have been gathering on a Sunday morning in the 70-bed care home's cinema room to watch Greyfriars services streamed live.

"They have spoken of how connected they feel with the church family so it was wonderful for them to meet the children they see running around the church on camera in person," he added.

The minister said it was a pleasure to see relationships between churchgoers and residents rekindled as people connected with old neighbours and those whom they sat beside or behind in church for years.

"The smiles on faces were as wide as could be when people remembered their former days worshiping regularly in our church and other churches around the area," he added.

"The Kirk Session in Greyfriars wants to work hard at fostering these relationships to ensure that people feel less isolated from the community they have given so much to over the years."

Rev. Kerr said feedback from his congregation had been very positive and there was an appetite to meet at the Care Home on a regular basis.

"We feel this is definitely the start of something new and positive and it is a way in which we can work to ensure our church is truly intergenerational," he added.

## Treasurer's Report - April 2019

<b>Budgeted Expenditure for 2019</b>		£77,812
<b>Budget for January-April</b>		<b>£28,543</b>
Income from offerings to date	£12,461	
Gift Aided offerings tax reclaimed to date	£4,448	
Investment income to date	£1,072	
		<u>£17,982</u>
<b>Voluntary income</b>		<b>-£10,562</b>
Income from use of premises	£5,787	
Other donations to date	£3,333	
Legacies to date	£1,000	
		<u>£10,120</u>
<b>Income to date, against budget</b>		<b>-£441</b>

Actual General Fund income to date: £28,111

Actual General Fund expenditure to date: £29,442

**Income to date: -£1331**

Average weekly offerings compared: **£772** (January-April 2018)

**£733** (January-April 2019)

### Lunch Club

To enable Lunch Club to continue functioning after the summer recess we urgently require two drivers to help regularly every four weeks. Also required are drivers to be on a reserve list for emergencies. Can you assist with this worthwhile service? If so, please contact Irene Glenfield or Marion Stirling (01578 730591). Thanking you for any assistance you can give!

### Church Annual Clean

This will take place on Monday 10th June from 09.30-11.30 am and 7.00-9.00 pm, and on Wednesday 12th June from 09.30 - 11.30 am, and will enable the Church and the halls to be cleaned for the Heriot-Watt University Graduation ceremony, which takes place on Friday 14th June. Could those who are able please bring their vacuum cleaner and any extension lead they may have: the more helpers we have, the easier and quicker it will be to get the work done, especially as a number of "regulars" will be away on holiday that week! If you are able to help, please provide details of day/s and time/s on the whiteboard by the pulpit. All help will be greatly appreciated!

### Christian Aid "Big Brekkie"



Liz Jardine is looking for further volunteers to help with this event at 9.30 am on Sunday 16th June in the Church: please contact Liz on 01896 664739 or email [ecjardine@btinternet.com](mailto:ecjardine@btinternet.com) if

you can help out. Those who have already kindly volunteered will meet after the service next Sunday.

### Congregational Meeting

An informal meeting of all four local Church of Scotland congregations - Caddonfoot, Trinity, St. John's, and ourselves - will take place in our Church at 1 pm on Sunday, 16th June. All members and adherents are warmly invited.

We will discuss the way forward for the congregations in Galashiels and Caddonfoot. Rev. Elspeth Harley of Trinity & Caddonfoot and our Interim Moderator, Rev. Dr David Donaldson, hope that everyone who can will come!

Some folk from the other congregations may be bringing packed lunches to eat in the Main Hall before the meeting, so feel free to bring your own. Tea and coffee will be available as usual to have with the packed lunches.

### Tea/Coffee Money update

The Congregational Board has decided to no longer ask for donations to pay for the tea and coffee after our Morning Services. Instead, if you would like to contribute towards the cost of the tea and coffee, there will be envelopes on the hymnbook ledge at the entrance to the Church for voluntary donations. These can be placed in the envelopes and put it into the offering collection any Sunday, and these will be accounted for in a separate fund.

### Congregational visit to Dumfries Baptist Church

We have arranged to visit the new [Baptist Church Centre](#) (featured in the last Newsletter) at 12.00 on Saturday 22nd June. The visit is to look around the Centre and speak to the people there, to give us an idea as to what can be done in terms of church buildings, not only built for worship but also to serve the community. Everyone is invited. We will travel in cars. If you are able to go, please contact Bob McKendrick or David Donaldson.

### Braw Lads Day Coffee Morning

We are looking for volunteers to donate home baking for the coffee morning and to help with serving at it. It will take place on the morning of Saturday 29th June. If you think you will be available to help with this important outreach event, please speak to David Leckey or Jim Tennant.