

Musical Maestro: Many friends and family were present to see Jim Colvin presented with a certificate to commemorate sixty years as organist in Ayrshire at a joint service of Fisherton linked with Kirkoswald held in Kirkoswald Parish Church on Sunday 7 July. The congregation then went over to the church hall for tea, home baking and a chat.



From left to right in the picture Elspeth Carter, Jim Colvin, Rev Ian Stirling and Elizabeth Veitch.

The Good Morning Service is being delivered within South Ayrshire free of charge to residents aged 60+. The Good Morning Service provides telephone befriending and alert calls to older people. Every morning, 365 days a year, Telephone Befrienders call out to members at a pre-arranged time to check that all is well and for a good blether.

For further information and referral procedure please see link below.

<https://www.goodmorningservice.co.uk/index.html>

Shaping Ministry with Children and Young People in the Church of Scotland

The Mission and Discipleship Council provides information, resources and events for church leaders, Kirk Sessions, as well as those directly working with younger people. We are aware that ministry with children and young people is an area of concern for many congregations.

1. We would invite you to be kept up to date with useful resources and events by subscribing to the Children, Youth and Families Newsletter

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/newsletters

You can also request to join the Now You're Talking Facebook group.

2. There is lots of information in the Children and Youth section of the Church of Scotland website

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/childrenandyouth

3. The Learn publication Children and Young People has a wide range of information that you can draw on to review and develop your ministry with children and young people.

This is available from

standrewpress.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9780715209851/children-and-young-people

This edition of Presbytery Newslines was designed and printed by Jamie at Minuteman Press Ayr.

**Minuteman
Press AYR**
WE DESIGN, PRINT & PROMOTE...YOU

4. The Aspirations for Children and Young People booklet was sent to all Session Clerks in January. We would encourage you to promote this in your presbytery, use this to have discussions in your Kirk Session to explore some new ideas to strengthen and build your connections and engagement with younger people in your community.

Posters can be sent on request.

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/children_and_youth/aspirations_for_ministry

5. A conference on equipping the church to support parents and young children. This day conference will take place in Dunblane on Saturday September 14th. This is very useful for those whose church already has some engagement in this area or would like to consider starting a parent and toddler group, so please encourage people to attend <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/early-years-conference-roots-wings-tickets>

Please share this throughout your presbytery, particularly those involved in children, youth and family ministry.

Best wishes

Isobel and Suzi

Children and Youth Development Workers Mission and Discipleship Council
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Prayer: Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer utters itself. So, a woman will lift her head from the sieve of her hands and stare at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift. Some nights, although we are faithless, the truth enters our hearts, that small familiar pain; then a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth in the distant Latin chanting of a train. Pray for us now. Grade 1 piano scales console the lodger looking out across a Midlands town. Then dusk, and someone calls a child's name as though they named their loss. Darkness outside. Inside, the radio's prayer - Rockall. Malin. Dogger. Finisterre.

CarolAnn Duffy

Presbytery Newslines hopes to capture the new, innovative and exciting things that are happening all over Ayrshire. The gifts and the griefs of faith. The light and the shadows of faith. The twists and turns of faith. Please put your pen to paper and send in articles and as you write them have a think about these trigger questions which may help give you some direction:

- Are you providing people with new, valuable knowledge?
- Does the article make the lives of the readers better?
- What knowledge or advice are you imparting?
- A clear call-to-action?

What do you want the readers to do after reading the article?

Please email articles to IStirling@churchofscotland.org.uk



The Church of Scotland Presbytery of Ayr

*you will need to know
who you are, to walk
by the solemn lochs*

Thomas Clark, The Hundred Thousand Places

I am curious, and I tend to probe deep to know who I am, and to know who others are. Even in casual conversations. So, beware! This curiosity has emerged ever since I read Ewan Kelly's book **Personhood and Presence**, which explores the therapeutic use of self in pastoral care. His core argument is that 'an awareness of who we are' - how we accept our vulnerability, or mortality? how we embrace our sexuality, how we relate to others? where we find meaning or a sense of being beloved? - matters. An awareness of what lies at the heart of who we are as individuals or the church, is crucial as we journey into the unknown.

So, I'm ever wondering, 'What makes people tick?' What lifts their spirits in the morning? What dampens their souls? Where do they turn to for inspiration - is it literature, or music, or art, or nature, or faith, or food? What are the key and critical moments that have caused faith to emerge, fade, or grow deeply? It's not surprising then that I am fascinated by people's blogs. Because blogs often reveal what really matters to folk. I'm also interested in the titles that folk give to their blogs, cos this seems to be their mantra, their treasure.

Just recently I have come across the Rev Whitney Rice's blog, 'roof crashers & hem grabbers'. The title comes from two gospel stories. **Roof Crashers** comes from Mark 2: 1-5, 10-12:

"When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' ... He said to the paralytic - 'I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.' And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'"

What moves her so deeply about this story, she says, is the love of this group of friends. They are so determined to help the one of them who is in need, and they will do whatever it takes to bring him before Jesus - up to and including property damage! And the trust that the paralyzed man has to have in his friends - to allow himself to be manhandled up onto a roof and lowered through it into an agitated crowd before a stranger - is equally as powerful.

My favourite phrase, she says is "when Jesus saw their faith." Jesus saw the love this group of friends had for each other, their commitment to each other no matter what they were facing, the risk and challenge and work they were willing to

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put in to reach his presence, and Jesus himself was moved by it. To Whitney, this group of friends models how we should live in community, and hence be inspired the name Roof Crashers.

Hem Grabbers comes from a story that is told in the gospels of Mark, Luke, and Matthew. Here is the version in Mark 5:24-34:

"And a large crowd followed Jesus and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all round to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'"

So many of us worry, Whitney says, that we are not worthy to be in the presence of God, that our mistakes and regrets and weaknesses disqualify us from grace. But the woman in this story personifies the place we all reach at some point when we have done all we can in our own strength and finally bring our wounded and hurting selves into the presence of Christ. This woman's heart is a maelstrom of faith, courage, exhaustion and utter desperation. Who would have thought that this is the mental and spiritual state that electrifies Jesus into a blazing conduit of healing? He loves us the most when we come to him at our worst, no longer hiding because we no longer have the strength to hide, at last honest, at last ready, at last...Hem Grabbers.

So here you have it. The title of a blog revealing what matters to this lady of faith. I'm just wondering then what would the title of my blog be: "**don't talk unless you can improve the silence**"; or "**stranger in a strange land**". Mmmh, I think I need to think more on this. I hope that you enjoy the articles in this edition of Presbytery Newslines, and that in time you will consider contributing an article yourself

Ian Stirling (editor).



Piglet jumped up onto the log with Winnie the Pooh. "Morning Pooh-bear", whispered Piglet, "I've been thinking!" "Oh dear, ... not too hard, I hope". "No, I'm just wondering, 'what makes a good article for Presbytery Newslines?' "MMMH, not too long, not too clever, something that makes me smile, something with pictures in it, and something that brightens up my day!"

From the Moderator

Dear Friends,

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have written or emailed me to commend me on how I'm faring as Moderator. Thank you for your words of encouragement. At times it's been a challenging task, but I've always been someone who has relished a challenge ... seeking opportunities to move out of my comfort zone. I'm still very aware of my strengths and weaknesses though, and would crave your patience for a few more months!

Let me share with you some words from a book called "Jesus with Dirty Feet" by Don Everts.

*Jesus was not a Christian,
He never asked anyone to become a Christian,
never built a steeped building,
never drew up a theological treatise,
never took an offering,*

*never wore religious garments,
never incorporated for tax purposes.*

*He simply called people to follow him.
That's it.*

That, despite its simplicity, is it.

He called people to follow him ...

*It is never more than Jesus' call: 'Follow me'
and a response: dropping familiar nets
and following, in faith,*

*this sandalled Jewish man.
It is never more than that.*

*Two thousand years of words can do nothing
to the simple, basic reality of Christianity:*

Those first steps

taken by two brothers.

*Peter and Andrew's theology
was as pure as it gets:*

Jesus said, 'Follow me.' And they did.

*The question for us is this ... what 'familiar nets' must
we drop to follow more nearly?*

Sincerely

Brian



A Radical Assembly

- Up to £25m to be spent on projects aimed at church growth, with particular emphasis on church planting
- 100 new worshipping communities to be established
- focus on engaging with people under 40
- costs of central administration to be cut by 30%: four councils to be merged into two
- Number of Scottish presbyteries to be reduced from 43 to about 12, focusing on supporting local congregations in their ministry and mission
- Networks, hubs and other new local structures to be developed
- Kirk Sessions to be reduced in size and focused on 'leadership and strategic decision-making'.
- Decision-making and resources to be devolved from the central administration to regional and local levels
- No congregation to pay more to the centre after next year until new arrangements are agreed
- Land and buildings plans to focus on 'well equipped spaces in the right places'. Money from the sale of redundant buildings to be shared between congregations
- Improved training and support for all ministry and leadership roles.

Ever wonder if there is more that can be done to recycle the stuff you put in the landfill bin?

Come and join us for a Zero Waste Scotland workshop on how to

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Thursday 19th of September 2019

Fullarton Connexions

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Irvine

KA12 8PE

Speakers:
Miriam Adcock, Zero Waste Scotland
Judith Macleod, Eco-Congregation Scotland.



A Poem: The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
And I wake in the night at the least sound
In fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
Rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron
feeds.

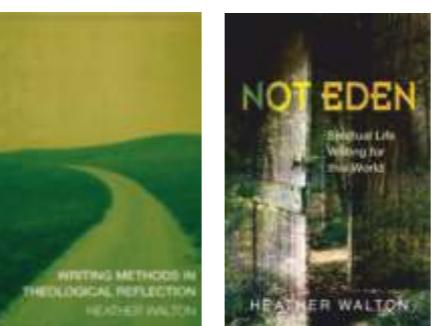
I come into the peace of wild things
Who do not tax their lives with forethought
Of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
Waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.
@ Wendell Berry in Berry W (2018): The Peace of Wild Things (London: penguin books), p25.



Bargeney Pond.

Worth a Read

If you are feeling creative? If you are tempted to begin journaling but don't know where to start? if you are wondering about how to express your faith journey in new ways? If you long to discover the latest theological insights? Then two recent books by Heather Walton, Professor in Theology and Creative Practice at the University of Glasgow are well worth a read.



Writing Methods in Theological Reflection offers a stimulating, provocative and accessible book that will be of use to practitioners who are seeking ways to use their own experience in the work of spiritual and theological reflection.

Not Eden: Spiritual Life Writing sets out various ways of reflecting upon spiritual experience when writing from everyday life. It draws upon the history of spiritual autobiography as well as more recent forms of creative nonfiction and provides a worked example drawn from the author's own spiritual life writing.

Letters to the Editor

The editor welcomes letters which inspire, provoke reflection, and inspire debate within presbytery.

It needs a proper reformation

Another Church of Scotland General Assembly has passed with its accompanying parsimonious pageantry reinforcing how small and poor Scotland is considered compared with London's majestic pomp. Mediaeval court language sets the tone of every Assembly. The Church of Scotland is bound up with monarchy, the inherited class system, the military, with deference, preferments, empire honours, knighthoods and distinctions, given mostly but not exclusively to the clergy. There is much obsequiousness among the socially ambitious. No wonder the Church of Scotland feigned neutrality before the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. The erstwhile politically loud National Church was silent on the major issue of the time.

This recent General Assembly was described as radical having taken decisions to concentrate central management on fewer people, down-size the vastly overstaffed 121 George Street bureaucracy and reduce the number of presbyteries from 43 to 12. A clearer command structure is to be modelled on the businesses and professions whose offices are all along George Street and this to be implemented by elders and ministers who want to run the Church of Scotland as a corporation. Contrast Canterbury and Rome with their personal and pastoral Christian identities. Little will change except that congregations and people will feel further distanced from these regional centres and from 121 George Street. The Church of Scotland is its people, not its institutions.

There are deeper issues which members of the Church of Scotland require to consider. What is the message that the Church of Scotland wants to communicate? Is it core Christianity? What is its relationship to Jesus of Nazareth? How detrimental are the historical associations of the Church of Scotland, the nature of its 16th century Chexit, the Covenanting battles, the 1707 Union, the highland clearances, British imperialism, late 20th century left wing politics, recent social liberalism?

The Church of Scotland has no clear identity or purpose. It has made a significant contribution to Scotland and far beyond. But it is not set for the future. It needs a proper reformation. But can the Church of Scotland which is old enter its mother's womb and be born again?

Rev Dr Robert Anderson





My name is Gillian Rooney I am a candidate in training for full time Ministry of Word and Sacrament. I am about to embark on my third and final year studying theology at Highland Theological College. I attend the base at Paisley rather than heading to Dingwall which is slightly handier as I live in Kilmarnock with my husband and three young daughters. Prior to responding to the call to ministry I worked as an Occupational Therapist within NHS Ayrshire and Arran for 20 years. My home church is St. Kentigern's Church in Kilmarnock.

In the course of my training I have to complete three placements. The term time placements are for 10 hours including a Sunday and usually run from October until Pentecost. There is one full time placement that runs over the long summer break from university. I completed the first term time placement at Cathcart Old Church of Scotland in the south side of Glasgow and am currently on my full-time placement at Fisherton l/w Kirkoswald with the Rev. Dr Ian Stirling.

Coming from a busy Glasgow church to a rural linked charge, I wasn't sure what to expect. My last placement was busy with activities and different types of services and focussed heavily on the role of the minister in the leading of worship. When I met with Ian before starting this placement, I had expressed a desire to be more involved with the pastoral care side of ministry as I had identified this as being a gap in my experience.

The two churches are different in some ways and this has taken me by surprise. I had believed prior to the placement that linked charges would naturally be similar in style and outlook. Despite this initial impression of difference, it is becoming apparent to me that **both church communities at their heart are about relationships**.

Fisherton is a beautiful church with a friendly and welcoming group of worshippers. They have an active worship group which works together to lead services. They also have a choir who meet regularly to practice songs for worship. They are a tightknit group of people with a real concern for each other.

Fisherton Church stands in lovely grounds with an amazing view, they have an inviting peace garden which is looked after by members of the congregation and the local primary school have also been to visit to help and build bug hotels!

Kirkoswald Church is also a striking building and the congregation have worked hard to develop previously unused land into 'Kirkwood' a peaceful space to walk and to reflect.

There are some lovely groups that have been developed by some members of the congregation and are important ways to keep in touch, to build friendships and support networks. These groups - the tea club, knit and natter, stepping stones bereavement group and the mindfulness group have all been welcoming and supportive to a trainee minister.

In both places I have met lovely people who have been generous with their time and shown me wonderful hospitality. I have been privileged to be able to meet with people as they seek to live out their Christian faith in the real and messy world that we live in.

For me a large part of this placement has been about meeting different people and listening to their stories, observing and learning to work out what is happening and then reflecting on what I would do. Ministry is hard to define, and people have a variety of expectations on what you will do. As part of our training as candidates for the ministry, it is a real luxury to have these placement experiences - as a time to think, to try and better understand and to become skilled at listening. There is a real temptation to do things and to be seen to be busy, but this is not always the best way to learn.

The Ayrshire coast is a beautiful part of the world and I have really enjoyed getting to know the area and the people here a bit better. My first experience of a linked charge has been positive although the tight turn around between services has proved to be a bit of challenge!

I have enjoyed reading a variety of books on pastoral care and discussing them with Ian. Ian has also encouraged me to prepare a service every week which has been challenging and sobering as I come to terms with the realities of fulltime ministry and reflect on how this will impact on my family and my life!

Next steps

I want to complete this placement and, hopefully, pass it! I return to university in September to complete my third and final year of studies. My term time placement is in Kilmaurs with the Rev. John Urquhart. Next summer will be a time of rest (or as much rest as is possible with three children!) before embarking on probation which will last for 15 months. At the end of this time I will be able to seek my own charge which is both an exciting and scary proposition.



New Faces



Rev Dr Alwyn Landman Coylton l/w Drongan

'We all like a coffee', says Alwyn, as he sinks into the settee in the manse at Kirkoswald. I've invited him for a cuppa and a chat to glean the story which has brought Alwyn and his family Hennelien, Wynand, and Werner to Ayrshire from their home in South Africa. A beautiful country where amongst other thing he would enjoy surfing at Billabong Bay. What have been the triggers I wonder, and the moments, which have led to them all feeling so welcomed and 'just so comfortable to be here' as they set up home in Coylton and Drongan.

Alwyn reveals that they have visited Scotland many times, and that they like the weather, so the period between the casual invitation to come and minister in Scotland to the time of his arrival seems a natural progression; as if 'it's meant to be'. However, delving a bit deeper I discover a fascinating story.

Alwyn's first career was in the police force where he became a Lt. Colonel, and worked away in what were some turbulent times in South Africa. In this role he found himself meeting people when they were hurting, and sometimes even 'on the worst day of their lives'. Experiences that would stay with him and shape him forever.

Following changes in the political scene, senior officers in the police force were replaced, and Alwyn spent a few years setting up a business. However, he wasn't expecting what came next. Alwyn describes driving along in his car and sensing God speaking to him: 'What are you doing with your life?' to which he replied 'Not much'. This was the moment he first considered becoming a minister. He was discovering faith on a more personal level. And he knew the implication that decision would have on the family; and in wrestling with his call to a vocation he whispered to Hennelien 'once we post this (the application) our lives will be very different'.

Another big moment, when Alwyn had a 'big conversation with God', though he was never angry with God, was when he fell and fractured neck vertebrae. What this meant was being confined to bed for many months; lying on his side, only able to see the tops of the

trees from his window. During this traumatic time Psalm30 became a source of inspiration. This psalm contains the familiar words 'O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me'; 'weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning'; and 'you have turned my mourning into dancing'. This testing time, and his slow recovery, was a time when faith became strong. Gradually he overcame his anxiety and trusted more in God; let your love flow through me & your peace flow through me.

Since then Alwyn has not looked back. On finishing his theological studies his interest in why young folk don't come to church any more led to him completing a doctorate at Fuller Seminary in the USA. He examined the 'systematic abandonment' that children feel at various levels. And now responding to the invitation to come to Scotland, Alwyn recounts of the way he walked the streets of all the five charges that the national church encouraged him to apply for, and the way in which there was a strong resonance with the communities of Coylton and Drongan. Perhaps this linked back to his time of living in South Africa in communities that had once enjoyed an affluence brought to them by diamond and gold mines; which sadly went into decline. The boom period was over. Whatever, Alwyn talks warmly about feeling 'I can identify with the mining community ... I feel I can do some good here'. And so, one of the first things that Alwyn is doing is to have open door surgeries, where people from the local community can just come and blether, about whatever. And he is trying to build relationships; by getting his feet on the pavement: **your feet need to hit the sidewalk in ministry**'.

It has been a long journey, in distance and spiritually which has brought Alwyn to Ayrshire; we wish him and his family well, and look forward to many more conversations over a coffee.



Rev Morag Garrett offers Pastoral Supervision

This is open to anyone, not only those in ministry, but please note that this is not counselling but focuses on the worker in their work place. This includes volunteers and office bearers in the church. (Continue over)

Pastoral Supervision

Over the past 6 months I was privileged to attend and successfully pass, with commendation, an accredited course on Pastoral Supervision which was offered through Ascend. Having done so I am able to offer Pastoral Supervision (free of charge) as part of the Ascend initiative and would highly recommend this to help anyone reflect on their current practice to inform the future in a professional way.

If you are now thinking how Pastoral Supervision might be beneficial for you or even if you are wondering what Pastoral Supervision is, please find below my definition of what this practice is and what you can expect if you decide to engage in this marvellously helpful space of reflective time.

Although there are many biblical passages that support the ideology of pastoral supervision, the following passage is a simple example of Jesus interaction with people in which He provides a spiritually rich illustration of how pastoral supervision focuses on the worker in their work situation and how Jesus helps this man to reflect in order to get in touch with what matters.

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and 'your neighbour as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." (Luke 10.25-28) In this passage, Jesus helps a lawyer to reflect on an issue of the law as it was defined in a biblical context. Although brief, this becomes a relational exchange as Jesus receives the man by making an intentional space for discussion. Then Jesus asks sincere yet open questions, which help refocus the lawyer away from his initial attitude, inspiring him to reflect deeply. Consequently, this enables him to reframe his understanding of the issue, through personal insight. Then Jesus provides a bridge to help the lawyer move his reflection into action with a fresh worldview, saying, 'do this and you will live'.

Developing from this example, **pastoral supervision provides an opportunity to recover a sense of what you need to be in touch with to energise the soul, revive the spirit and enhance the capacity for greater achievements within your work context.** Pastoral supervision helps you discover a renewed sense of purpose and meaning in the work you do, and those you work with. This emerges as your story is shared and explored with the pastoral supervisor in a gracious, collaborative way within a confidential, safe space. Here you will be invited to reflect openly on what happened, and how that has led you to where you are. This reflective environment between pastoral supervisor and supervisee becomes a catalyst for learning, helping you to make sense of the situation. However, by expanding your awareness through this reflective exchange, you are empowered to reframe your understanding, providing the potential for you to discern alternative options to put into practice on your return to work. This transformation in understanding, resources you with renewed motivation for possibilities of what can be done and how this can be achieved. Therefore, reconnecting you to the inspiration for giving your best in service to those you work with.

As a Pastoral Supervisor I aim to provide a safe space that will facilitate the discussions with dignity and with grace, to reach past diversity of thought and follow the way of God's love, as we

ought, therefore, differences in theology are not an issue in pastoral supervision sessions, due to the emphasis on reflection within your own context. Sessions last for one hour and during that time we covenant to use the time wisely, to hold emphasis on you, the worker, in your work situation to encourage courageous discussion as we communicate openly and honestly, cultivating an environment for learning through this reflective practice.

Pastoral supervision may make you feel challenged in your thinking and plans for the future, but as you work with the challenges and allow this space to host a courageous discussion, God enables a broadening of thoughts in any given situation or circumstances. It is okay to ask for clarification on anything that takes place during supervision, however it is important that you come to the session prepared with work related topics that you would like to explore further to gain the most benefit out of the time.

During my time on the course, I wrote a poem that helped me to focus on what pastoral supervision offers to the supervisee, so for those already familiar with the peaceful space of reflective practice or would like to find out, please consider and enjoy this short poem:

'This time'

(A poem from the perspective of a supervisee)

In this time:
I am present.
Bringing my story.
Trusting.
Welcomed by another.
A safe presence.
Trustworthy.

Together in this time:
Sense the space.
Focus.
Name the issue.
Honest reflection.
A courageous exchange.
Rich with grace.

Progression of this time:
Risking.
Exploring, imagining.
Discovering.
Transforming the past.
Informing the future.
Energising my soul.

From this time:
Recovering.
Equipping.
The future emerging.
Realising my way forward.
Flourishing.
Ready to return.

This time and beyond:
Renewed vision.
Deepened insight.
Enriched.
Future focused.
Time for service.
Until next time!

Morag Garrett, February 2019

If you are interested in pastoral supervision or would simply like to find out more about the practice, please feel free to call me to discuss further on 01290 700365.

God bless, Morag.

The way being part of a worship team has enriched faith and a sense of community is expressed by Elspeth, who often takes the lead in developing reflections, "The worship@fisherton team has filled a space in my life that I hadn't realised was there. Whenever we prepare a service we gather in my home, and have a cuppa and catch up before we start planning the hymns that fit the bible passage, the prayers that capture how we are feeling, and a sermon that very often builds on the way we experience God in our own life. Putting services together has drawn us closer as friends and has deepened our understanding of the Bible. Sharing our thoughts about our faith and beliefs when we meet to prepare a service, has enriched my life and helped me focus on what my own faith really entails.



New Faces

Congratulations to the Rev Theo Corney who was inducted into the linked charges of Ballantrae and St Colmon on Tuesday 13th August 2019.

Driving down the Ayrshire coastline, I glance at Dowhill's fertile fields, and lazy herds of Black Aberdeen Angus cattle, grazing the shoreline. A moody Ailsa Craig casts her eye over my speeding car. I think that it's a long and windy road towards Ballantrae. Here I am on a road trip to meet up with Theo Corney. And I think, "What does it take to be a minister in rural Scotland?" All these vast distances and the challenges of social isolation. Yet such beauty and a long history of faithful communities living close to land and sea.

Passing the garden centre, I slow down at the church and turn into the Vennel where the manse nestles in. And I am welcomed in the driveway by Theo, Rachel and young Reuben. I reckon the other members of the Corney family, Eryn and Nathaniel, are hiding away. Theo leads me into a light spacious room with the evidence of a recent flitting all around me. Paintings waiting to be hung and boxes waiting to be opened, including says Theo a considerable number of theological books for the study, including Willie Barclays commentaries on the NT. I have caught Theo some days prior to his induction to Ballantrae and St Colmon. I know the locals are excited. And I'm enjoying the chance to first meet someone who will soon be a close neighbour in the Presbytery.

"While I had a strong call to minister within the Church of Scotland, he says Ballantrae and St Colmon was 'off my radar'". But meeting up with Marjory McLean in Edinburgh and going through the vacancy list, the very first charge we looked at just ticked all the boxes; near the sea, a rural community; a mixed bag of faithful expressions; the liturgy of Glennapp, the café church at St Colmon; the hub of Ballantrae. Variety; the spice of life and congruent with my vision of ministry.

Theo describes to me his own mixed background of faith. Born in Yeadon, W. Yorkshire; he first enjoyed an evangelical Anglican background with its set diet of liturgy and communion; he made a commitment to faith in his early years, and it was while studying law at St Martin's Lancaster that he felt himself asking "What next?" At that time, he encountered some Methodist influences but it was his grandmother's Baptist funeral that nudged him towards being a minister in the Baptist tradition.

Following his BA in Christian ministry at Lancaster, he trained at the South Wales Baptist College in Cardiff; successfully completing a MTh under the watchful eye of Paul Ballard and Stephen Pattison. **His thesis asking: 'What does it mean to be an effective minister of the Word today?'** And with references to amongst others, Henri Nouwen and Don Browning, he examined how far ministers should use other disciplines, such as psychology or social sciences, to inform their ministry. Worth a further chat. But clearly, this study is shaping a ministry which includes a balanced, well rounded service, embracing liturgical influences and expository preaching, which relates the Bible to serious questions in life.

After training, Theo gained further experience at the Baptist College, and Ebenezer Church, Llanbradach, Caerphilly, then with Hatchbeauchamp and Ashill church in rural Somerset before spending 9 years at Thomas Coates Memorial Baptist in Paisley. In 2018 he felt the call to work in the Church of Scotland and enjoyed nine months of familiarisation with Gillian Paterson in Wellersley parish Church, Methil. There he also engaged in healthcare and prison chaplaincy.

Comparing and contrasting Baptist and Presbyterian traditions Theo identifies, common patterns in preaching and pastoral care, and a shift from independent gathered congregations, to one which is there for the whole parish. It is clear that Theo arrives in Ayrshire with rich and varied experience.

His first tasks are getting to know key people, getting to know the community and promote a nice family church where everyone is valued. A friendly space to allow people to connect in their journey of faith and life. No wonder people are excited.

My final probing is about whether he has a favourite bible passage. After a pause he remembers how he was asked at selection conference; "**if you had a last sermon, what would you preach on?**" and he answered there and again now, the prodigal son, cos that is a welcome for everyone.

Driving back up home I glance across at the ever changing silhouette of Ailsa Craig, content to have welcomed a colleague, a minister and a man who wants to engage in the community, enjoy life with his family, relax in the outdoors and walk Bonnie, his labcollie cross every day.

Breakfast Church Maidens by Connie Bonner



For some time Kirkoswald Parish Church has been exploring different styles of worship, with a view to reaching out to local communities and making more use of Maidens Hall. For many a year, a Holiday Makers Church offered worship, led by other local ministers from 10.00am on Sunday mornings in Maidens Hall. This met with various degrees of success, with the greatest attendance being when the visiting Summer Mission Team from Queens Park in Glasgow led the services. However there was a significant cost in paying for locum ministers and what was felt to be lacking was local ownership of the project.

Therefore, in 2018, many discussion groups met and expressed the hope that families in the area still wanted some Sunday worship but earlier and shorter so they could also spend time visiting friends and family or simply being together for most of the day. The church Session and Board expressed their willingness to experiment and our innovative team was formed to lead a Breakfast Church.

Planning began with Revs Ian Stirling and Connie Bonner. This formed into actions, as team members including elders and volunteers from the congregation began to give of their time and talents. Soon lists appeared showing those who were ordering food from our local Café, cooking and serving food, arranging cleaning-up, putting out orders of service and IT work. And so, with a mix of excitement and trepidation, we set off into the unknown. Our theme in July 2018 was Hospitality. This year it is about the Lord's Prayer.

The team arrives at 8.30 am and prepares breakfast, sets up the breakfast table, art/craft installations and music.

Doors open and breakfast is served from 9.00am till 9.15. We offer choices of breakfast food...bacon rolls seem very popular.

Worship begins at 9.15am and ends at 9.30am. We have learned to introduce the theme in conversations that happen over the food and move gently into a call to worship prayer, hymn, reading and Thought for the Way...closing with the last half of the hymn a shared prayer and The Blessing.

The Breakfast Church is meeting in August this year-our ideas began with the United Reformed Church's Daily Devotions centring round the Lord's prayer which used some thought provoking one-liners and then in the format of Lectio Divina each of our four services reflects on a phrase or word in Matthew 6: 9-13. 'pray in this way', 'Our', 'Hallowed' and 'Kingdom'.

Hymns are from CH4 and currently music is on Kevin Mayhew CD's. Art work, flowers and models display the theme...prayers, reading and conversations all develop our Thought for The Way.

So how do we feel things have gone so far? Cos it is always important to reflect on what is going well, and what needs to be tweaked. It's still early days but here are some thoughts:

We hope to sow seeds people can take away and stick with throughout the coming week... words to stimulate and support our faith journeys.

We aim our Breakfast church to be thoughtful, focused and meaningful. The short format enables people to worship and have the rest of their day free.

Young people tell us they like sitting round the table sharing food and the chairs are comfortable, they feel OK here.

Slowly and gently the team is growing...numbers attending vary - highest last year -25...usually 10 - 12 but interestingly different people each time.

It suits the complex arrangements people juggle in the holiday season.

We are looking forward to improving personal contacts within the local communities of Kirkoswald, Maidens, Fisherton, and Turnberry; to making better use of social media and above all share the excitement and our deep need to follow Jesus in faith and service

the worship@fisherton team



Some of the members of the worship@fisherton team (from L-R, Freddy Matthews, Gillian Rooney(student minister), Margaret McCrae, Elspeth Carter and Marlene Morgans; (unfortunately Catherine McKinlay was on holiday when the photo was taken).

One of the ways forward in the kirk is for local congregations to develop worship teams. This is an exciting and challenging process. It takes time and commitment. However, the benefits are immense. Not only can such teams strengthen local leadership, but engaging in worship enriches personal faith. As described below by Elspeth Carter.

"In 2015 five friends from the congregation attended the worship team training led by Dereck Peat in St Meddans Church, Troon. We were trained in how to put a service together. This was quite a challenge. I had never read in church before, and had resisted the invitation to do so many times. However, this training, with my friends beside me gave me the confidence to eventually stand up in church and lead the congregation through a service, that we had put together."

The range of themes covered by the worship@Fisherton team include topics as diverse as eldership, the bible, and prayer. And on each occasion what has delighted them is how their own experiences informs and enriches the content of the service. Above is an image of Marlene reading from her Scots Bible; when choosing a hymn Margaret likes 'new words to familiar tunes'; Freddy remembers being at Aberfan, and hearing Desmond Tutu preach, and not only does Catherine's voice adds a lovely lilt to her readings, and prayers; but often she has the creative eye for prayer trees and Easter crosses.

Ayr Farming Support Farm Walk and Praise Laigh Tarbeg Ochiltree



What a success! In late July, our larger than life pioneer farming minister, Chris Blackshaw, gathered over 300 folk onto Laigh Tarbeg Farm, Ochiltree for his second Farm Walk and Praise evening.

It was a night to remember. People relaxing in the evening sunshine, mingling and enjoying a new way of being church. Not only were the visitors allowed to see Hugh Watson's award winning dairy farm, up close; but visitors were allowed to become a little nostalgic viewing classic Massey Fergusson tractors, or sharing tales about how you milk a cow by hand, and there were 45 litres of Graham's ice cream enjoyed and over 400 burgers devoured. Not surprising, if you appreciate a farmer's appetite.



Chris intended for it to be an evening of praise, education and entertainment. And so it was. We heard about the work of the RSABI, which provides emotional, practical and financial support to individuals and their families across the agricultural sector including farming, crofting and growing; the RHET works alongside teachers to provide the best possible learning experience for children, and in particular to allow them access to farms; and Chris spoke of the Goboka Rwanda Trust, which does some amazing work at bringing reconciliation between the Tutsi and Hutu communities in Rwanda. On the evening with over £1230 raised, moneys were distributed to each of these charities, and a cow bought for the Goboka Rwanda Trust. In addition to all this practical action, the gathering were entertained by some talented musicians, Anna Patrick, Ciara Brady, Chris Blackshaw, Elizabeth Kelly and the Rural Revellers. A great night was had by one and all.



Rural Mission & Outreach

On the 4th May 36 people from Ayr and neighbouring presbyteries were welcomed to the Rural Conference, held in Maybole Church in the Carrick Centre by Gerald Jones. After a time of prayer **Morag Garrett** introduced the topic of **rural mission and outreach** pointing out that no 'one size fits

all'. Individual congregations are made up of members who are unique in identity, spirit and mission. God calls each of us to 'go out into the world and make disciples of all people' and to do so it is essential that the Church is rooted in prayer, listening to God and our communities and addressing their issues. Responsibility for mission lies, not with the minister, kirk session or presbytery, but with the whole congregation and the minister as a catalyst. The Bible is a mission book, guiding us to be rooted in prayer and prepared to accept that pruning may be needed to allow new growth. Kirk Session agendas should include the question "is our Church what it ought to be?"

Chris Blackshaw then introduced Barry Osborne from the Centre for Rural Mission in Market Harborough. Barry's challenge to us is '**Dare to Dream**'.

He outlined the change in the way evangelism is viewed today as it is more often an enabling ministry rather than a specialist team being brought in to deliver mission. If we do nothing about mission there will be further decline, closed churches, fewer services and the Church increasingly seen as irrelevant. Like Nehemiah we need to prioritise prayer in all that we do, moving into the 21st century with the life and passion of the 1st century for Jesus Christ. Turning to 1st Corinthians 12 - he argued that not all are evangelists, but all are expected to be witnesses.

To be more attractive, Barry encouraged us to review our buildings, noticeboards, activities by getting feedback from our congregations and publicising ourselves. Look at the language in our newsletters and the style of Church life. Those who have given up on church need to be shown God's love and those over 65 years want to grow in faith and find God's purpose for their life. We can show we care about our communities by running an event that isn't a fundraising event. Mission should define and motivate our church as we ask ourselves, "How are we getting on with what Jesus asked us to do?" Evangelism is about friendship, sharing with others what God has done in our lives, what we believe about God and introducing others to Jesus.

Barry identified many **causes of decline** including: a widening culture gap - church and betting shop; poor image; Wrong market - Sunday morning in leisure and entertainment business; Once a week church; Building orientated; One person in one-way ministry from the pulpit; Members not empowered - what gifts and skills do we have for God; Inappropriate preaching style; Inappropriate worship style - in a village church think home group not cathedral; Clergy not appropriately trained; Lack of hospitality; Lack of joy - SMILE - the joy of the Lord is our strength; Resistance to change - list what's changed at home in the last 50 years; No definition of purpose - why is the Church here?; Lack of vision and expectations - "dare to dream"; Not evangelistically driven; No, or poor, publicity.

Mission ideas include Alpha; "Grill the minister"; monthly barbecue; house to house survey; Fresh Expressions of Church; Messy Church; weekly coffee morning.

Lessons from Nehemiah show nothing happens if we're comfortable 1:4-11, 2:4, 4:9, 6:9. We say "we don't have the resources" but read Jeremiah 32:27 "I am the Lord, the God of all the peoples of the world. Is anything too hard for me?". God has already given us everything we need, to do what we need to do right now.

To learn more, go to Ruralmissionsolutions.org.uk or see the video recording at <https://youtube/fqj932T0tAg>
Claire Pirrie, St Colmon.

Welcoming the Stranger

SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

Five years ago this summer we saw the height of the Mediterranean refugee emergency. There was catastrophic loss of life around the island of Lampedusa and the situation in the Greek islands was brought to worldwide attention by the photograph of 3-year-old Alan Kurdi, showing the drowned toddler on a Turkish beach.



Shortly after, the then Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the UK would resettle up to 20,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees plus an additional 3,000 vulnerable children and their families from the wider Middle East and North Africa region.

Unlike asylum seekers, who make their own way to the UK and have to make a claim for refugee status, these refugees from Syria are identified as being in greatest need by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in camps and are brought directly to the UK.

Local authorities and the UK Home Office negotiate details about how people are resettled, and usually families come as a unit. In Scotland, all 32 local authority areas have received Syrian families over the past four years. To date, around 3,000 people have come to Scotland.

While the local authorities and statutory agencies provide accommodation, health and language support, there is often a role for volunteers and community groups to provide assistance with making friends, helping to share interests and for people to feel safe and at home.

For Christian Churches, and for faith groups more generally, this is an important and often critical aspect of belief and belonging to a religious tradition. The commitment to welcome the stranger, to love your neighbour, to remember that Jesus was himself a refugee, that the Bible is full of examples of inclusion of people who were outsiders (the tax collectors and sinners that Jesus ate with), foreigners (Ruth) or strangers (on the road to Emmaus); these stories end up challenging the prejudices of the listener and providing us today with a reminder that difference is nothing to be afraid of, in fact it is the means of growth and understanding.

The work of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is to help

faith groups share their understanding about migration and to support responses which help put these beliefs into practical action. It is a multi-faith project that was set up in 2015, soon after the announcement about the Syrian resettlement programme. Scotland's main Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Interfaith organisations agreed to work together to try to co-ordinate ideas and support joint responses. It is hosted by the Church of Scotland.

On behalf of Scotland's Churches and faith groups, we have been engaging with the Scottish Government in their 'New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022', and are currently delivering a New Scots Integration Programme jointly with the Scottish Refugee Council, part funded by the European Union. We believe that integration is a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation where all parties give and receive. In this sense integration means respect for different cultural identities. This involves a shift in the receiving communities' ways of thinking. We try to encourage practical action as well as reflection and prayer to help people think about what this might mean for them.



Especially important therefore, are our commitments to:

- Prayer and Bible Study
- Seeking to improve our understanding of the situation in the world and at home
- Working in partnership to deliver practical responses, locally to support integration and internationally to support humanitarian work
- Advocacy and campaigning
- Interfaith and intercultural dialogue, action against racism and religious hatred.



Four ways you and your church can respond

Call for change

Contact your elected representatives - MP, MSPs and Councillors - and encourage them engage on asylum, resettlement and integration issues. Most of the policy issues are reserved to Westminster so if you meet your MP you can raise our current campaigning issues, such as detention, destitution, religious freedom and so on.

The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (www.scopo.scot) will be able to help you.

Promote sanctuary

Building a culture of empathy and understanding towards people who have been forced to flee from their homes will help change the culture of society to be more welcoming and building communities which seek the common good. The City of Sanctuary movement is a UK-wide charity which seeks to promote a culture of sanctuary - either as a city wide project, or as a local authority, or a village, town, school or church.

Think about your place of church; What are you doing to remember refugees? What are you doing to build bridges with neighbours from different national, racial and religious backgrounds?

Are you involved in work in schools or community settings? How could you use these opportunities to promote a culture of sanctuary with young people or in wider society.

Give money

Although news about the refugee crisis has largely vanished from our media, there are still desperate situations for millions of people. In fact, the UN High Commission for Refugees now estimates there are more than 70 million worldwide who have been forcibly displaced from their homes, and deaths in the Mediterranean are still occurring at an appalling rate. Since 2014 more than 18,000 people are known to have died. So the most important thing we can continue to do is to give what money we can to support international humanitarian work, and urge political leaders to ensure that the UK's commitment to aid and development continues to help those in greatest need around the world.

If you are able to give money, please consider donating to a charity that works with refugees.

The scale of the situation, at home as well as internationally, is getting larger, and a changing focus by mainstream media and 'donor fatigue' means that projects are continually struggling to meet demand as the extent of humanitarian need continues to grow.

You might also want to fund-raise for a specific cause or charity, perhaps as a sponsored event. This can be a fun way of doing something with other people and you also get the chance to raise awareness of the issue and your support for refugees at the same time.

The World Mission Council continues to have fundraising work to help refugee work in Syria and South Sudan.



Meet refugees

Personal encounter and building friendships is often much more effective at teaching us new understanding than learning knowledge.

As refugee numbers are increasing in Scotland, and people are being settled all across the country, many people who are supportive of refugees would like the chance to offer their own support by volunteering or making friends to new neighbours.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is currently piloting New Scots Holidays, a scheme offering refugees in Scotland some holiday respite, where they are looked after and hosted by church communities in different parts of the country. We hope to roll out the programme to a wider area in 2020, if you'd like to find out more please write to [Sabine Chalmers](mailto:Sabine.Chalmers@churchofscotland.org.uk)

If you want more information about projects and work happening in your area, please contact Aneel Bhopal, South West Regional Integration Co-ordinator from the Scottish Refugee Council.

Aneel.Bhopal@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk



To find out more

Visit our website and sign up to our newsletter www.sfar.org.uk

Find us on Facebook and Twitter @WithRefugees

Part of our current work involves delivering a programme of awareness-raising events through speaking presentations. If your Kirk Session, Churches Together Group or Guild would be interested, please contact us (details on the website www.sfar.org.uk).

David Bradwell is the Building Global Friendships Programme Manager for the Church and Society Council (Church of Scotland) and co-ordinates Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees