

to glorify God ... to proclaim Christ ... and to serve others

APRIL 2020

No. 819



Ordination and Induction of the Rev Fergus Cook to Blackhall St Columba's Church

Things had moved quickly following the surprise announcement at the January Kirk Session meeting that Fergus Cook was to preach as nominee for our vacancy. He did so on 16 February and the congregation, unanimous in their decision, invited him to be our Minister.

With our own church being refurbished and our hall deemed not to have the capacity for expected numbers, Cramond Kirk was offered as the venue for Fergus's ordination and induction. Plans were made for the service and the social to follow. Then came coronavirus - and the news that Church services were cancelled for the foreseeable future. Only a very small group would take part in the service. (For details of the service see pages 3 to 5)

So, a bit of a non-event? I am assured by Eddie Thorn our Session Clerk that it was anything but. Rev Dr Richard Frazer, Moderator of Edinburgh Presbytery led the service and Rev Dr Martin Ritchie, Minister of Greenbank Church, did a reflection. Both, he said, were inspiring. Eddie left Cramond Kirk really uplifted and proud to be a member of The Church of Scotland.

Fergus, we welcome you as our Minister and look forward to your leading us into the future with normality resumed and back in our refurbished church. Meanwhile the congregation should know that you are already hard at work.

Minister

Rev Fergus Cook
5 Blinkbony Crescent
Edinburgh EH4 3NB
Tel. 466 7503

Session Clerk

Mr Eddie Thorn
Tel. 332 5702

Church Secretary

Mrs Joy McGonigal-Paget
In Church Office from
Mon-Fri, 9.00-12.30pm
Tel. 332 4431

secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Easter blessings to you all



Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing;
For her Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting.



No more we doubt thee, Glorious Prince of life;
Life is naught without Thee; aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.



Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.





Church of Scotland

PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH
THE ORDINATION AND INDUCTION OF
MR FERGUS COOK
TO THE CHURCH AND PARISH OF
BLACKHALL ST COLUMBA'S

CRAMOND KIRK
SUNDAY 22 MARCH 2020 6.30PM

Leading the Service:

Rev Dr Richard Frazer, Moderator of the Presbytery
Rev Dr Martin Ritchie, Greenbank
Rev Marjory McPherson, Presbytery Clerk

Also present the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, Cramond Kirk
Eddie Thorn Session Clerk, Blackhall St Columba's
Mrs Shona Cook

/ continued

/ continued

Let us worship God

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,
In the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
(from The Taize Community)

Prayer: Marjory McPherson

Reading Matthew 17: 1-8: Eddie Thorn

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." ⁸ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

Hymn 694 Brother, sister, let me serve you

- 1 Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.
- 2 We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

Reflection on the Text: Martin Ritchie

The Narrative Marjory McPherson

Preamble Richard Frazer

Questions to the Ordinand

The Signing of the Formula/

/ continued

The Signing of the Formula

(The Formula reads: I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church. I acknowledge the Presbyterian government of this Church to be agreeable to the Word of God, and promise that I will submit thereto and concur therewith.

I promise to observe the order of worship and the administration of all public ordinances as the same are, or may be, allowed in this Church.)

Prayer of Ordination and Induction

The Lord's Prayer

Declaration of Ordination and Induction

- 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear ;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.
- 4 I will weep when you are weeping ;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you ;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.

Charge to the Minister

Prayer

- 5 When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.
- 6 Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you ;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Richard A. M. Gillard (b. 1953)

Benediction

From the Minister



Greetings Friends,

These are strange and unusual times! I am reminded of the expression 'the only constant in life is change!'

As I sit here writing this introductory article amongst the unopened packing cases, the half assembled furniture and the incomplete kitchen, I think about some of the changes that have come about in my life recently. By the time the 'Kirk News' is produced and you read this, I shall be your new minister (God willing). However, as I sit in the room I propose to be my study surrounded by my half sorted theology books and biblical commentaries, I am thinking about the service for my ordination and induction on Sunday 22nd March. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, many things have already changed and are continuing to change. The social function planned for after the service has already fallen victim to the crisis and been cancelled. The service has already been changed in format in order to account for the latest and, ever changing, advice from the medical authorities, the Government and, of course, 121 George Street. Instead of welcoming friends and family as well as members of the congregation and the wider Edinburgh Presbytery, we are having to ask people to stay away.

Change for many can be disturbing, unsettling and a cause of anxiety in itself. For others, it can be welcome, exciting and give a sense of opportunity and hope.

During Easter, the disciples were going through an unprecedented change in their lives. It must have been an absolute roller coaster of emotions and feelings. First, they experienced the happiness of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem that we celebrate on Palm Sunday. Everything was going well as they came to celebrate Passover in the holy city. Within a week, everything had changed. Their teacher and friend, the man they had left everything to follow, had fallen foul of the Jewish authorities, been arrested, tried and handed over to the Roman authorities to be crucified. The disciples and other followers of Jesus suffered all the fear and anxiety of an uncertain future, just as we do now. For the disciples, the next change was only three days away. Three days away from an empty tomb and the joy of the message of the risen Christ - an event that continues to give hope and joy to us today. For us today, I believe we shall have to wait a lot longer. / continued

From the Minister continued

I said at the beginning of my message that the only constant in life is change. Well that's not strictly accurate. As I sit amongst my half unpacked theology books, I am reminded about the 'immutability' of God. This is one of the fancy words we learnt at university to describe the unchanging nature of God. There is ample evidence in our bibles of the unchanging nature and the constancy of God but I find it best expressed in the psalms. The psalms are littered with every human emotion we all share - happiness, joy and rejoicing alongside anger, frustration and fear. Whether you are self-isolating or free to go about your business, whether you are rushed off your feet with extra things to do or are finding yourself at a loose end, you will find whatever you are feeling expressed in the psalms.

On Sunday the 22nd March, the Psalm from the lectionary was that most well known of psalms, Psalm 23. The Hebrew language is complex and often a word has multiple layers of meaning depending on its context. These additional layers of meaning are evident in verse 4 when the psalmist refers to "the darkest valley". Although the expression "the darkest valley" includes death, it is not only about that. It could just as easily refer to the times that some people are having right now because of the coronavirus outbreak.

For me, at this moment in time, the expression "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord" is much more than a desire to 'go to church'. As you will no doubt know, worship services in church buildings are suspended for the time being. Churches have not closed. It is only the buildings that are shut. The church has never been a building, it has always been about people. And, wherever people meet with the Lord, be they in a large group, in a small group or even individually, then they are the church. Psalm 23 is a reassurance about the constant nature of God's love and support to all who follow him.

Why not take a moment during this period of particular change and uncertainty to search the psalms for just how you are feeling? For me at this moment, I am drawn to Psalm 25, entitled 'Prayer for Guidance and for Deliverance. It begins: *To you O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust.*

With all my prayers and best wishes at this time.

Fergus Cook, Minister

A message from The Very Rev Dr Russell Barr



It has been a pleasure to support the congregation of Blackhall St Columba's during the vacancy and with Fergus' appointment I am delighted we have come to such an excellent outcome.

Unfortunately the coronavirus circumstances meant that his ordination and induction happened with just a few people present but when life has returned to normal I am sure a great celebration will be arranged to welcome Fergus and his family.

Like everyone else I am looking forward to seeing the renovated sanctuary and all the indications suggest it will be quite superb.

As you know Cramond Kirk was the mother church to Blackhall St Columba's and suffice to say as a new ministry dawns mother is very proud of her daughter and promises to keep her in her love and prayers.

With best wishes

Russell Barr



CORONA VIRUS UPDATE

(17 03 20)

As you are aware, Fresh Start looks after those in need but following Government advice issued yesterday, we have taken the difficult decision to STOP accepting donations from members of the public. This is to minimise contact with others and to ensure donations are not being handled which may be carrying the virus.

We are going to continue to deliver services as far as practicably possible and we are working with staff to come up with ideas on how to support people at this concerning time.

We may have to purchase goods in order to continue to deliver our services. If you would like to support us during this difficult time in a different way than donating goods, you can do so by visiting our **Just Giving** page:

<https://www.freshstartweb.org.uk/donate>

Kirk Session Report

The Kirk Session met on 19 February and 18 March. In light of the Covid 19 pandemic attendance on 18 March was, by arrangement, limited.

Coronavirus

The virus has played havoc with all our lives creating an almost surreal existence. The health and safety of all is paramount especially our older members and those with underlying health issues.

It is The Church of Scotland policy that all places of worship be closed for normal Services. However it is allowable to open up church premises for limited attendance to allow members and non members the opportunity for prayer and reflection in a peaceful environment. [In light of more recent developments this facility has been withdrawn.]

The Kirk Session takes a very serious view of the threat from this virus outbreak and has undertaken 'Resilience Planning'.

Meantime please watch out for further announcements regarding what we are doing to be of service to your good selves at this difficult and stressful time. Please stay safe.

Resilience Planning

The Clerk advised that, following advice from the Church of Scotland to cancel public worship, a group was being established to consider how we continue to reach out to our Parish during this period. Terms of Reference were being established and contact would be made with those suggested to be members of this group. It was noted that the Group would link in with Jacquie Lowe on Safeguarding matters. A further communication will be circulated to Elders as soon as it is available. There was discussion on the opportunity to open the Main Hall for prayer on Sunday mornings, and Session agreed to implement this, starting Sunday 22 March. The Clerk will make arrangements for that date in consultation with the Moderator, and Elders will be advised. [As indicated above this has been overtaken.]

Ordination and Induction of Mr Fergus Cook

Sadly because of Coronavirus the Ordination and Induction of Mr Cook required to take place at Cramond Kirk on Sunday 22 March with only a very limited attendance. (See Order of Service, Page 3)

Once we get back to normality there will be a Service of Celebration in our refurbished Sanctuary and that will more or less replicate the Service conducted at Cramond Kirk. /continued

Thanks to the Interim Moderator

The Clerk thanked Dr Barr for his services as Interim Moderator during the Vacancy period, and acknowledged the support provided by the wider team at Cramond Kirk. He noted that we had been extremely fortunate to have someone of Dr Barr's calibre leading us through this period. A more formal recognition of Dr Barr will take place at an appropriate moment in the future.

Rev Gordon Farquharson

It has been of considerable disappointment that we have been unable to thank Gordon formally for his unstinting service to the Congregation as our Locum Minister for the past 12 months. It was planned to make a presentation to him during morning worship on 22 March but events overtook us. The presentation speech prepared by the writer follows this report.

Building for the Future

It was noted that, following a review of remaining works, the contractor was of the opinion that the handover date of 24 April was still achievable. In a follow up to discussions at Session last month, Mr Cook had been consulted regarding the tea preparation area in the Sanctuary, and, as a result, Session approved the proposal to serve refreshments in the Sanctuary after Services. The logistics of this should be worked through by the appropriate teams.

Alpha Course

It was noted that the away day had been held in the Holiday Inn on Saturday 14 March. Overall it was considered to have been successful with a good number attending on the day. On average the evening sessions had attracted between 25 to 30 attendees with positive feedback. Unfortunately, due to a change of staffing at the venue, Costa Coffee in Craighleith Retail Park was not able to accommodate the course after the end of February. However, alternative accommodation was provided by the Northcare Suite in Telford Road.

Church Publications

Following a review of costs and after positive discussions with our printer it was agreed that in future both the Blackhall Bulletin and Kirk News will be printed in colour.

Correspondence

The following have been received:-

- A Note from Colin O'Flaherty thanking the Congregation for again supporting the Edinburgh Prison Christmas Gift Collection;
- Letter of thanks from Scottish Bible Society for the donation of £534.19 – 50% of the Christmas Collections. /continued

Kirk Session Report continued

- A note of thanks had been received from the Beach Wheelchair charity for the sum received from the WATCH Committee's fundraising efforts

Easter Services Retiring Offering

Elders were asked for nominations to receive the Retiring Offering monies. Two charities were put forward:

- Kids Love Clothes – Based in Edinburgh and providing second hand quality clothes to children that do not have any from referrals received from Social Work and other areas; and
- Grassmarket Project – This project is known to the Church as many of our old pews were passed on to them and they make wooden items from these and other recyclable wood. They train unskilled homeless people and have done so for several years.

Session agreed both of these as worthy causes and the Retiring offering will be split between them. [As church services have now been suspended these will be held over to a later date.]

Fabric

It was noted that the works at the Manse in the kitchen were well underway; decoration and the garage electrical work were complete, and the installations of the security system and the shower were programmed for the weeks ahead.

Jim Bishop, Fabric Convener, raised the possibility of replacing the existing sign board outside the Church with something more eye-catching to coincide with the completion of the refurbishment works in the Sanctuary. This will be passed to the Building for the Future Steering Group to consider, meanwhile a temporary change to the existing board to reflect Mr Cook commencing as our Minister, and the change to morning worship timing will be progressed by the Fabric Convener.

Sunday Car Parking

There have been issues on Sunday mornings with drivers parking right up close to the entrance to the Hall Area on Queensferry Road. This has caused problems for our volunteer drivers who arrive only to find that there is a car already dropping members off and they then have to wait in the middle lane of the major road before managing to get into the small space left for this purpose. It will be appreciated that this is dangerous and has the potential to cause a serious accident. A request for consideration has been made during Sunday morning announcements. However some of our members do require to park as close as possible to the entrance and they should continue to do. It is not necessary for them to park elsewhere.

Eddie Thorn
Session Clerk

Presentation Speech for Rev Gordon Farquharson



Gordon, you have been our Locum Minister for the past 12 months and have got off a lot lighter than Tom Cuthell, our last Locum, who was with us for 2 years.

Gordon, we were indeed fortunate that you were already part of the ministerial team here when Benjamin left last April and we became vacant. You were already well known to the Congregation and settled straight into the role.

You also had to adjust to the move from the Sanctuary to here in the Large Hall. You have taken it all in your stride when we had a spell with little or no heating, the sun was in your eyes and the blind behind you flapping away during the Sermon - we men from Dumfries and Galloway are made of strong stuff!

In addition to your Locum duties you have continued to give dedicated pastoral care to the ill and housebound members of this Congregation. Nothing has ever been a chore to you even when Elizabeth has been in hospital.

Gordon, you have been a good man to work with and you can look back on your time here as our Locum with real satisfaction and see this as a 'job well done'. We have enjoyed listening to your reminiscences and your good humour.

Gordon, on behalf of the Kirk Session and Congregation I would thank you for the sterling service that you have given to St Columba's.

Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk

Family News



Deaths in March

Patsy Gordon

Anne Smith

In some ways this is a strange update to have to write on the progress of the work being done in the Sanctuary. Until yesterday, 23 March, the work was on time and on budget. This meant that we expected the contractors to have finished and cleared the site by about the end of April followed by a short period while we continued to work with them on the usual snagging issues. We would then have been able to begin the process of readying the Sanctuary for worship. Planning for this is well under way and it involves retrieving everything currently in off-site storage and putting it back or into its new position and also working through the implications of any new procedures which might be necessary, for example with beadling or the welcome teams.



Now, of course, the contractors have suspended their work in line with the national response to Covid - 19. Everything has, as it were, been put into cold storage until the crisis is over. Issues such as heating and security have been addressed and now we can but wait. This is very disappointing but, of course, it is as nothing compared to the difficulties which others are facing.

When the contractors are able to resume we can expect them to take about five or six weeks to complete the contract and we will need another three or four weeks to get everything out of storage and to ready the Sanctuary for worship.



This means that there will be a period of two to three months after we get the all-clear and before we can use the Sanctuary again. During this period we should expect to be able to meet again for worship and we will continue to use the Large Hall.

We can't know when we will be able to hold the re-dedication service but there will be one and we can plan for it. In addition, a leaflet will be prepared for the first Sunday back which will explain in some detail what the refurbishment has involved - both the seen and the unseen bits. It will also explain any changes to the way in which the Sanctuary will be used.

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Building for the Future continued

In the meantime all we can do is follow advice if and when it comes from the medical experts and the government and to pray for everyone affected. What we can be sure of is that the pandemic will run its course eventually and that things will return to normal. And we can also be sure that when that happens we will have the new Sanctuary fully completed and ready for use and that it will all have been worth it!

A Week in the Life of a Project Manager

When I took early retirement I knew I would need something to “keep me busy”. I’m not sure I anticipated moving to an almost full time voluntary job! My role as Project Manager for the church in the Building for the Future project is extremely varied, very interesting and good fun. I thought I’d share what this week has looked like so you get a feel for what’s all involved in making sure our project is successful. So here’s what the diary looked like week commencing 24 Feb.....



Monday - worked at home

Consulted our AV sub group on the configuration of the new sound desk, and how we will keep it protected.

Prepared for the Steering Group meeting

- drew up the agenda
- Reviewed our risk log and updated open risks, also closed a couple off
- Reviewed the actions from the last meeting and chased up a few
- Set up a new area in our shared One Drive so all members can submit and review papers

Organised meetings for later in the week and booked hall space to hold the meetings

Tuesday - worked at home and visited the church in the afternoon

Met Frank Morrice who is co-ordinating the return of the church office, so we could review storage requirements and office space

Reviewed and confirmed chosen options for finishes in the Tea Prep area

Reviewed inputs from the AV group to the AV suppliers

Reviewed instructions from the Mechanical and Electrical consultant to the contractors

Checked invoicing position with contractors

Read papers for Monthly meeting tomorrow

Wednesday - at the church all morning

Monthly meeting today with the design team and contractors to review progress and deal with any issues / continued

A Week in the Life of a Project Manager continued

Followed by a walk round in the church with the architect to agree detail on a couple of items and discuss options for others

Afternoon of emails dealing with queries from the meeting this morning.

Discussions on..

- Paint colours
- Access requirements for maintenance of emergency lighting
- Configuration of fitted cupboards in the office
- Lights for the lecterns and AV desk
- Ironmongery for doors
- Carpets and many more

Updated other Steering Group members as required

Prepared for briefing with Fergus Cook tomorrow

Thursday - at the church all afternoon

Project briefing with Jim Bishop and Ruth Laidlaw for Fergus and Shona Cook

- review of plans and artist impressions
- Discussion on questions Fergus had
- Discussion on items where we were looking for input from Fergus
- Full walk round of the campus including all areas of the Sanctuary

Follow up to project briefing meeting including

- checking some AV details
- Instructing ironmongery requirements
- Updating Steering Group members as required
- Checking internet availability
- Responding to Fergus on the queries he'd raised

Reviewing details of queries being raised with our Quantity Surveyor

Friday - trying to have a day off!

Call with AV supplier as follow up to yesterday's queries

Updates to other SG members

Review of options provided by AV supplier

Visit to AV supplier in Perth to register new projector and save £700 on replacement bulbs!

Further Response to Fergus on queries

Saturday – definitely day off!

Sunday - Steering Group meeting, followed by updates to risk, action and decision logs and completion of actions I pick up.

Phew.....

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A Week in the Life of a Project Manager continued

Alongside this typical week, I've been involved in detail I never thought I would need to know, on such things as phasing of electrical circuits, strength of different ceiling boards and why they can't support certain lights, (then having to agree alterations), replacement of lead piping and reconnection of water supplies, mitre joints around pillars....and so the list goes on.

I could not do all of this without the excellent support of the rest of the Steering Group. I need to call out Jim Bishop in particular, whose expertise and attention to detail is unsurpassed. But many others, both in the Steering Group and across the church are making a huge contribution to the success of this project. And of course the support of Donald at home has been great!

Fay Stirling

Alpha Course

While our previous minister was still with us we carried out a Local Church Review. The Edinburgh Presbytery supported the three main elements which were proposed as essential to the development of the church in Blackhall.

- The refurbishment of the main meeting room in the church including new heating, A/V capabilities and modern seating.
- The intention to seek to appoint a family worker to aid us in attracting families to the church with the development of youth work that would result.
- Running an Alpha Course to which non-church attenders could come to learn about the faith in a non-threatening environment.

We formed a small team of 5 who organised the evening events. Each evening we had some food from Costa before watching an Alpha video about some aspect of the Christian Faith then discussed it for 30 minutes. Between 22 and 27 people attended the sessions, which is a great number and at the end of the course a number of folk felt they would appreciate seeing the videos again and discussing afresh.

So starting Tuesday 31 March we are holding an on-line discussion using Zoom video conferencing software which can be done on the phone or on a PC or iPad. If anyone wants to join us then send your email address to me (donaldcameron2010@gmail.com) and I'll send you a note of how to watch the video for each evening and then how to join in the discussion at 8.00pm.

Of course, Alpha was really intended to enable non-church goers to enquire about the faith without having to attend church. So if you have friends who might be interested but don't want to get too close then they could join the course along with us. We shall review the whole of the course at some future date but meantime we look forward to learning more about our shared faith.

National Day of Prayer

Last month The Church of Scotland joined with other religious groups across the country to sign a letter commending the Call for a National Day of Prayer in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Taking place on Sunday 22 March, people of faith were encouraged to light a candle and place it in their window at 7pm. They were asked to 'join in prayerful solidarity with this witness', describing the candle as 'a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, the source of hope in this life.'

The following prayer was suggested for use when lighting the candle:

For all that is good in life, thank you,
For the love of family and friends, thank you,
For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger,
thank you.
May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless,
experience support,
May those who are sick, know healing,
May those who are anxious or bereaved, sense comfort.
Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers, with
wisdom,
Bless and guide health workers and key workers, with
strength and well-being,
Bless and guide each one of us, as we adapt to a new way
of living.
And may the light shining from our windows, across road
and wynd, glen and ben, kyle and isle, be reflected in our
hearts and hands and hopes.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The National Day of Prayer may have passed but the need for our prayers goes on.

Music@St.Columba's



Greetings to you all from an effectively redundant organist. I trust you are keeping safe and not going too crazy at this early stage of confinement.

I am sure, like me, that one of the things you miss with church meetings being cancelled is the joy of music and particularly hymns and songs which help us worship God with words and melodies that we could not construct ourselves. There is something mysterious about music and its place in worship.

In 2 Chronicles Chapter 5, it says **“The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: “He is good; his love endures forever.” Then the temple of the LORD was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God.”**

It is interesting that when the glory of the Lord filled the temple there was no need for the priests to do their preaching and that the glory of God seemed to accompany the praises of God’s people. I don’t think we should extend the parallel further than to say music has a significant part to play in worship of God and at this time we all miss that element of our worship.

You may find it helpful to look up this resource from the Church of Scotland.

<https://music.churchofscotland.org.uk/home>

On the page you will find a search box for all of CH4 and you can search for any hymn or just browse through the list till you bump into something with which you are familiar. You can enter a word or phrase and it will search for matches so you may get more than one result. For example, entering the phrase “Glory be to God” brings up “Glory be to God the Father”, “To God be the Glory Great Things He Hath Done”, “From Heaven You Came” and “All My Hope on God is Founded”. Then you can play the tune by pressing the sideways triangle beside the hymn number. That plays the music provided by one of the Scottish congregations who did this work, singing the first verse of the hymn. If you love the tune you can click on the title and it will offer you various versions (played and/or sung) for you to listen to. The resource also has a tab called “Inspire Me” with a few hymns on one theme. Particularly useful in our current situation is a “Weekly Worship” tab which gives hymns for the each dated week. You can work through that during the week.

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Many of the hymns have interesting stories and some of that information is provided on this web site. So have a rummage about and if you are unfamiliar with the use of computers maybe someone can get a phone or iPad set up for you.

In the meantime, here are a few stories behind three popular hymns which I hope you find interesting and inspiring.

Be Thou My Vision *attributed to Dallán Forgaill, (6th cent A.D.)*

Most people have heard of St. Patrick, or at least celebrated his day's namesake. Fewer people, however, have heard of the blind Irish monk, Dallan Forgaill, author of 'Be Thou My Vision'. Forgaill was a 6th-century Irish monk who ministered in the wake of Patrick's evangelization and church planting. He composed the song as he remembered St. Patrick's missionary labours and the zeal that characterized his life. For generations, the poem became part of the Irish monastic tradition, used as a prayer and chanted in the Old Irish language. It wasn't until 1905 that the song was translated by Mary Byrne, and it was 1912 before it was versified. Today, the exalted words and Godward vision of the song are loved by believers just as they were hundreds of years ago by the Irish believers.

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing *Robert Robinson (1757)*

Robert Robinson was what you would call an 'unruly child'. At only eight years old his father died, and he was raised by his loving mother. In spite of Robert's intellectual giftedness, he had a penchant for mischief. Robert's mother sent him off for an apprenticeship when he was only 14, but once he got out of the home his life got worse. Instead of working and learning, Robert chose drinking, gambling, and carousing with the wrong crowd. Caught up in his reckless life, Robert and his friends decided to go to an evangelist meeting one night just to heckle the preacher, George Whitfield. Sitting in that meeting, however, Robert felt as if the preacher's words were meant for him alone. He couldn't shake the feeling that God wanted him to surrender his life and serve him. When he was twenty, Robinson gave his life to Jesus Christ and entered the Christian ministry. At the age of 22, he wrote the song 'Come Thou Fount,' for his church's Pentecost celebration. It was written as his own spiritual story - a story of pursuing pleasure and joy, and only experiencing it when 'Jesus sought me'. Millions of believers can relate to Robinson's testimony - 'Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it', and the glorious testimony, 'O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be'!

A Mighty Fortress is Our God *Martin Luther (c1528)*

It is fitting that this hymn, known as 'The Battle Hymn of the Reformation', speaks of fortresses, strategy, ancient foes, and winning the battle. / continued

In Martin Luther's time, it was an all-out battle for the faith. Martin Luther was a bulldog of a defender, going head-to-head with the established church and her officials. He didn't flinch when challenging the Catholic Church's departure from the true faith. Even Luther, however, had his bouts of depression. He penned the words to the song around 1527 as a paraphrase of Psalm 46. At times of discouragement, Luther would sometimes turn to his young friend Melancthon, saying, "Let's sing the Forty-sixth Psalm. He would pull out his lute, and strum the chords of this triumphant song. "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing." As the Protestant reformation rolled on, believers often experienced the sting of persecution and even death. In their final moments, many were known to sing that inspiring stanza, "Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill; God's truth abideth still; his kingdom is forever."

I trust something in there will help sustain you while we are so isolated. With prayers for God's blessing on you and those whom you love.

Donald Cameron OBE LLCM
Director of Music and Organist Blackhall St Columba's Church

Social Singing Group

This group for people with dementia and their carers launched at the end of January. We were growing in numbers and having fun when unfortunately circumstances have meant that we are unable to meet for the foreseeable future. We discovered a wide range of songs and some really good voices. Keep practising and think what songs you would like added to the repertoire when we restart.

Meanwhile two questions which the group knew the answers to.

1. Name a Scottish song which is sung to the tune of "She'll be coming round the mountain".
2. "Show me the way to go home" was famously used by the three main characters in a popular 1975 thriller film. Which film?

Fiona Cooke



Answers
1. O' ye canny shove yer grammy aff a bus. 2. Jaws

Thank you, Violet



Usually the one to make the bouquets and the cakes for special occasions, it was Violet Troup, herself who, on Sunday 23 February, was on the receiving end of beautiful flowers and a magnificent cake as a thank you for her 27 years as Flower Convener.



Flowers in Church

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the flowers for our services so far this year. They are an excellent example of some of God's gifts to the world. The flowers are all distributed to people whom the Minister, Pastoral Care Committee or Elders have suggested and they are always well received. Thank you also to the people who arranged them and those who distributed them. Everybody's generous donation of time, talent and money is welcomed.

Whilst we have no services but have an opportunity for prayer in the large Hall on Sundays there will be small vases of Flowers on the Hall window sills and the flowers can continue to go to people who need them.

Many of you like to donate flowers to remember particular people at times special to them and while we are not holding services this won't be possible. When we are back to what counts as normal in our Church life (and we should be in the Church by then) I will give these people an opportunity to contribute on a different date if they wish. We may already be holding some money for you and it is in safe hands.

Should anyone else like to contribute money for flowers, please get in touch with me at rajahewat1@btinternet.com or the Church office.

Alison Hewat

Tuesday Topics

Our group has had a very successful year so far. We have enjoyed excellent speakers on a variety of topics. On 28 January Roy Johnstone gave us a very enlightening talk about the life and works of Robert Burns. In February we enjoyed a most entertaining evening with Peter Thomson, musical director of St Georges's School, recounting his musical career. Andrew Thomson, creator of an amazing garden at the Backhouse Rosie Estate, gave a talk and power point presentation of the family's work.

On 3 March many from the group enjoyed a visit to the King's Theatre to the Southern Light Opera's performance of "Anything Goes".

Unfortunately our speaker on 10 March cancelled at the last minute because of initial fears about the Coronavirus. Since then the situation has, as we all know, become more serious and we have been forced to cancel the remainder of our programme.

Hopefully we will resume in the Autumn, but nobody knows!

Very best wishes to all our members and friends. Keep safe and communicate by email and phone meantime!

Eleanor Lowrie, President.

Tel: 0131 332 4827 or eleanorlowrie@yahoo.co.uk

Midweek Services/Lunches

I am sorry to report that these are now **cancelled** due to the current situation. We will hopefully restart in September.

In the meantime I hope everyone stays safe and virus free.

Elsbeth Williamson





‘Although our buildings are shut, the Church is not a building! The Church is the worshipping community and we are as strong as we were before this crisis began’
..... Fergus Cook, Minister

Keep up with news of the Blackhall St Columba’s Church community by regularly checking our website

www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Check out our new Facebook page.

Search for 'Blackhall St Columba's Church'

Follow us on



@BStCC_EH

Deadlines for the May Kirk News and June Blackhall Bulletin have been given below in the usual way but in the current circumstances these could change. Please check online for updates.

DEADLINES

Kirk News - Sunday 19 April

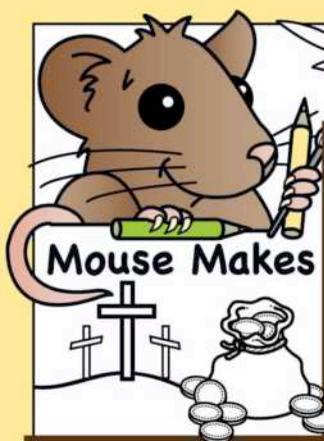
Please send all items to the Editor:
Christine Denham c/o Church Office
Home tel: 336 5943 or email
kirknews@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Blackhall Bulletin - Sunday 3 May

All items should be sent to the Editor:
Barbara Wilson c/o Church Office
Home tel: 312 6035 or email
bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Enquiries about advertisements should be sent to Kay Rich:

8 Queen’s Ave South Tel: 332 8502



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