



KINGUSSIE NEWS

THE ORGAN

While you have no doubt enjoyed listening to the organ played by John Crombie on our recorded services, COVID-19 has even affected the organ! Due to all the restrictions, the organ builders from Germany have not been able to attend to carry out the annual service and retuning! The organ must be maintained in tip top condition so steps have been taken to arrange for a reputable UK company to do this work and fix a couple of minor faults so that we can ensure a sound from the Kingussie organ which we can all enjoy.

CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group is still hard at work and, in spite of the pandemic, are continuing their fundraising efforts for Church funds by making small items to sell through a new Facebook page which has been created to highlight the craft items for sale. So have a look at the site KINGUSSIE PARISH CHURCH CRAFT GROUP and you will see all that is for sale for Church funds.

Collections for Raggy Bag continue! So if you have been clearing out your wardrobe and would like the Church to benefit from funds that can be raised from your clothes, shoes, bags, hats etc e-mail Eppy at rainbow689@btinternet.com

We are obviously looking forward to being able to meet again on a Monday evening or on our 'open' Thursdays which give us the opportunity to welcome back visitors to Kingussie. Our Thursday team have over the years enjoyed meeting and greeting the guests of local hotels and we look forward to being able to do this again. In the meantime, the KGC Craft Group wish you a very Happy Christmas.

COVID-19 in NEPAL

(Extracts from a reflection by Fiona Hafvenstein, Church of Scotland mission partner in Nepal)

About six weeks ago, the Nepali government told its people that they were no longer going to manage Covid risks for them! When the country was locked down, the hundreds of thousands who rely on daily work for money and therefore food, began to starve. When the government ended internal lockdowns, Covid rates began to rise but at least people could work and eat. Either way the government was massively criticised. So they stepped right back and told the people that they now have to manage the risk themselves. Covid rates started to soar and ICU units have been full of Covid patients for a while. We have just had the major Hindu festival of the year when city dwellers return to their villages, Families gather, and everyone mingles in the community with gleeful festivity. In our village we have a wonderful sense of community and a hopeless sense of social distancing. At least here most interactions happen outside as people work in the fields, tend to animals or kids play.

There is a massive stigma to getting Covid. Some medical workers have been evicted from their rented accommodation for fear of transmission. So now people largely hide Covid

diagnosis and symptoms. I suspect our landlord has Covid as I write. I need to gently enquire more, gently keep offering more help and keep on praying. His wife is in the high risk category as her health is bad anyway and she worries a lot at the best of times. This is a dark time for her.

Today the boys and I joined another family to play together at their school. Schools have been closed since March here and there is no sign of them reopening. This is the only playground to which our kids go, not just in Covid times but in general. Playgrounds do not really exist here, other than at private institutions. Only in the last couple of months have the school allowed very controlled access to it. It is a gift! On the way back we stopped off to see friends who will be leaving Nepal in a couple of weeks. Another family going! There are always people who come and go in a setting like this, but Covid has led to so many leaving this year, including my closest friend. So many premature goodbyes. Covid is leading to premature goodbyes worldwide. How much grief it is bringing.

I hold to the knowledge that Jesus is not afraid of grief. It does not shake him. He has walked death. He has walked separation. He knows those places and pains more deeply than we know them. I know he stays with us in grief, in the valley of the shadow of death, as long as we need to be there. And yet when we cannot hope, he is hope. When we cannot see light, he is light. When we do not know the way, he is the way. So that when we are able, falteringly, to start lifting our head just a little, he will be there to meet our eyes. To give us the lift we need. I hold on this Jesus, this Jesus that is enough even for all that 2020 has brought and 2021 will bring.

SPEYSOUND RADIO

Ian Hall from Laggan and Gillian Orr of Alvie and Insh have been given a slot on Speyside Radio on the first Sunday of every month at 5.00pm. Each programme will last for 57 minutes. There will be a lot of varied content in the programmes which Ian will host. The first programme was on 1st November on "Does truth matter?" to be followed on 1st December by "The real Christmas" and on 3rd January by "Them and us – The Refugee situation". Ian has a list of themes for future programmes but is open to suggestions. The programmes will consist of focused short inputs on the topic being considered and Ian is happy to have participation which can be done by recording at home and sending it to Ian.

Ian states in the conclusion to his notes about the programme-

"I think that we have a really exciting opportunity to help people see the relevance of faith in God in everyday life. It is different from 'gospel' programmes, but I think we need to reach out to people in new ways and try to start from where they are rather than from where we are!"

The programme will be broadcast on FM107.1 locally but you can also listen at www.speysound.com. The programme will be repeated on three occasions each week. Tuesday at 3.00pm, Thursday at 1.00pm and during the night at 2.00am on a Saturday. Comments can be sent to ian.hall@speysound.com.



NEWSLETTER



Church of Scotland
Kingussie Linked with
Laggan and Newtonmore

www.stbrides-newtonmore.org.uk

www.kingussie-parishchurch.org.uk

NOVEMBER 2020

FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

Once we get into November most of us are planning for Christmas, and the church is no different. And even though this year everything is different, Christmas will still come and still be worth celebrating, even if we need to change our expectations of the manner in which we celebrate. But if we never change how we do things we could get stuck in a rut, so maybe we can look on the bright side and embrace the changes for this year at least!

What will Christmas look like in Kingussie, Laggan and Newtonmore churches in the time of Covid 19? Well for one thing, there will be more to see! It will be a visual Christmas. A team of creative people have been working out ways in which we can bring the celebration of Christmas out of the church buildings. For Laggan and, we hope, Kingussie, it will be a matter of light. Laggan's Christmas tree will be outside the church this year and because the Laggan building is one which people drive past, we are hoping to bring the message of the light of Christ shining in the darkness by using lights. The church Christmas tree will be outside this year. And you can expect to see the building lit up with stars of various sorts and doves of peace flying over the walls. In Kingussie there are already large trees, and one Yew in particular can be seen from many parts of the town; so we hope to light up that tree to shine as a beacon of hope. Insh Village church will also have a lit decoration of some kind.

In Newtonmore where the church is in a central position and has a garden we are planning something even more ambitious. Outside the main door of the church there will be a modern nativity scene and beside it a cupboard decorated to look like a present. This will be a reverse Advent Calendar, with the numbers on it changing each day. Everyone in the community will be invited to place things in it, food or other things, but nothing second hand, and these will be distributed as gifts to those in our communities who need a little lift this year: either because they are in financial need or because the year has been particularly hard for them. Everyone is also invited to write the name of a household and place that in the cupboard: you do not need to say who is nominating the household for a gift, but it would help if you could say of whom the household consists – we don't want to be giving inappropriate presents!

On the railings around all of our church buildings there will be hung one-word sermons of the Christmas message of hope and joy. And we will be encouraging the primary school children to write their Christmas prayer on laminated stars and hang them on the trees or the railings.

And what of the services? So long as the 2 metre distancing rule is in force, and we see no hope of it being lifted soon, and so long as we are not supposed to sing in groups, indoors or out, there is no way that we can offer our traditional services, indoors. Instead we are going to branch out into video and record a service of Lessons and Carols for the fourth Sunday of Advent (December 20th) and a service for Christmas Eve. By participating in these services at home you will be able to sing most of your favourite carols in a worship context, and maybe by worshipping at home the message of God's love will speak to you about how God came in Jesus not just for the religious times and settings but for every day and everywhere.

One other thing we are inviting everyone to do is that on Christmas eve at 6 p.m. we will ring the Church bells to usher in the time of rejoicing. Could you at that time put a light in your window – a lamp or a candle in a jam jar or some other safe light, and then go to your door to stand. If you have Christmas music on a portable player take it with you and play it aloud! Maybe sing along! Let's take our joy into the community and if nothing else it will give your neighbours a laugh!

So Christmas is far from cancelled, and who knows, we may find we have started some new traditions.

Your minister,
Catherine Buchan



FOLLOW THE NEWS

If you are unable to attend church and have computer access, you can see all the news and the sermons on www.stbrides-newtonmore.org.uk



AFTER COVID-19 – WHAT FOR THE CHURCH AND YOU?

Some thoughts –

- What have I/we lost that we need to regain in the weeks and months ahead?
- What have I/we lost that needs to remain lost?
- What have I/we gained that we need to retain for the future?
- What have I/we gained recently that was useful for this season but needs to be lost if we are to move forward?

Life will never be the same after Covid-19 whether we like it or not! So as the time moves on it is good to reflect.

REFLECTION

Companion of the faithful – have we forgotten the wonder of each day and the magic of each other, as we speak yet again these strange words about 'the war on this pandemic' in a world attacked by Covid-19.

Yet even while imprisoned in our freedom, our hearts still sing of hope – for we long to laugh again, to dream a dream, to dance in the sun- in a world of love. Let us all pray for this.

(Reflection from the booklet-"Remembering Dorothy-a Few Prayers for Life, Healing, Hope and Laughter" by Peter Millar)

CONCERTS

Unfortunately, all concerts arranged for 2020 had to be cancelled this year due to the pandemic. The Badenoch Chorale had to cancel concerts in Inverness, Dornoch, Aberlour and Kingussie and we were unable to welcome Christina Lawrie (piano) with Harriet Mackenzie (violin) in April, Alice Allen (cello) and Katrina Lee (violin) in October and more recently Karalos with Harriet Mackenzie at the beginning of November.

It is odd to see a year of your life disappear without this activity, when you are getting older and every year matters! The Badenoch Chorale are desperate to get back to work but as yet cannot plan ahead. Christina Lawrie and her husband Marcus have been doing fortnightly Sunday afternoon concerts since March on YouTube from their house in London. Harriet Mackenzie has been living in Greece with her Greek husband Tassos

and has been performing virtually from the lovely island when there has been opportunity. Alice Allen and Katrina Lee who are currently residency group of Chamber Music Scotland live in Glasgow and will definitely be coming to do a concert as soon as it is possible to arrange one. Kosmos (Harriet, Meg and Milos) have a Swedish date coming up and the Swedes are so keen to have them that they have been offered accommodation for isolating before the concert! This is a real indication of a desperation to get back to the normality of enjoying good live music whether of voice or instrument. Hopefully a vaccine in 2021 will resolve this and allow us all to enjoy ourselves once more!

Footnote- The Tunnell Trust have just awarded us a concert with the Freeman String Quartet from the Royal Academy of Music in London for Friday 18th February 2022!



CHURCH FINANCE

Laggan and Newtonmore

In this most unusual year, a big THANK YOU to all who continue to make an effort to support the church when we are unable to act as 'normal'. Some of you voluntarily converted to paying direct into the bank account, some have sent cheques and some have kindly stuffed envelopes through my letter box! All this means that our deficit for 2020 will not be substantial. However, if you have not been able to contribute, you can do so by any of the above methods. The Laggan and Newtonmore bank account details are

Sort code 80-22-60 Account 1865868

Kingussie

Kingussie Kirk Session would also like to thank their congregation for their great efforts to continue to provide financial support by way of standing orders, including new ones, to enable the Church to continue its work both locally and further afield. A Form is available on the church website

www.kingussieparishchurch.org.uk

Cheques and WFO envelopes continue to arrive in the treasurer's letterbox and all your efforts are appreciated during this current 'new norm'. If you would like to donate directly into the church bank account, the details are **Sort code 80-05-40 Account 0050949**

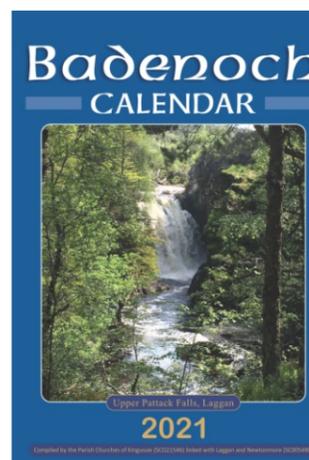


General

Neither congregation has had the income to match expenditure in 2020. We will continue to suffer in 2021 when gift aid will fall due to the absence of collections from visitors and those who give their collections anonymously when they attend church. However, the Church of Scotland is reducing its requirement from each congregation for Ministries and Mission by around £4,000 in their annual assessment for 2021. Presbytery dues will also be reduced as a result of our inactivity in 2020. Overall, there will be gains and losses to our income and expenditure and we will just have to pray that a 'new normal' will bring some normality and allow us to operate in a more recognisable manner and help us both to stabilise our finances.

CHURCH CALENDARS

Calendars are available in the usual format for 2021. They are available from Rev Catherine Buchan or from Roy Alexander directly (see details on this newsletter).



They are also available from Newtonmore Golf Club (Monday to Friday 9.00am to 1.00pm) or from St Bride's Church on Saturday 28th November and 5th December between 10.30am and Noon.

They are £5 each.

PRESBYTERY

The revised Presbytery Plan has now been initially approved by the Church of Scotland. This involves a change from four part time MDS posts (Ministries Development Staff) to two full time posts to work on Fresh Expressions. One would serve the north of the Abernethy Presbytery and the other the South. Presbytery has also given a commitment to reducing the number of church buildings in use. Previously buildings were assessed in three categories based on need so a further review is to be carried out to advance this aspect of the plan.

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

The donations to Inverness Foodbank for our Harvest Thanksgiving this year amounted to an amazing £1,482.50, which was a far greater benefit to them than our normal way of doing Harvest Thanksgiving. To quote their treasurer- "We have served over 10,000 meals since Covid-19 impacted: it has become a military operation!". Food for thought?

BOOKS OF INTEREST

REWILDING THE CHURCH by Steve Aisthorpe available for £14,99 from Norwich Books. An interesting assessment of the church as it was before Covid-19 and of what it might be in the future.

THE NEW TOWNIES OF THE MOOR by Mary Mackenzie. The story of Newtonmore from 1820 to 1913 available by e-mailing badenochheritage@gmail.com. Cost £12.50 plus postage if applicable. This was recently the subject of a very interesting Zoom presentation by Mary.

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