



St. Bride's Parish Church Newtonmore

NEWSLETTER



www.stbrides-newtonmore.org.uk

MAY 2018

FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

As many of you will be aware, there are changes afoot at this end of the presbytery. (At the other end too, but let's concentrate on here!) There is a growing shortage of ministers in the Church of Scotland (and other denominations as well, but let's concentrate on here!). In addition, many congregations in the church are at best holding steady, numerically. Because of this, the way that a minister's work is shared out is having to change.

The plan for how we will arrange ministry in this area, as agreed by Presbytery, asks the Laggan and St. Bride's congregations to move from being a linkage to a union, and then to prepare to be linked with Kingussie church, with one minister and a part time person overseeing the churches. In the normal scheme of things, preparing for a union would all happen over a period of time, maybe a year or two initially. Linking with Kingussie would only happen when one of the two current ministers moves on.

However, it now looks very likely that the Rev. Alison Burnside in Kingussie will be moving on this summer; and so, although there are still the requisite consultations (meetings!) and agreements to put in place, the time scale for all of this may be more accelerated than we might have expected. Changes are coming quite soon!

Now, change is not a bad word, or at least I don't think so. Change means a chance to do things differently – better, even, but I know that the idea of change, especially in the church, alarms people. There is enough that changes in the rest of life, or so it can seem, and the church is the one place where there should be eternal verities. And so it is and so there are. The letter to the Hebrews assures us the “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8) That is the eternal verity. But how we do church is not so set in stone, and indeed has changed a lot over even the last

century, never mind since the days of the first Christians.

Some of the coming changes are things with which we are already becoming familiar. For instance, if the minister has three churches to cover, she can only realistically do two of them on any given Sunday morning and therefore the churches will have to take turns at having someone else – maybe people from the congregations - lead the service. That is not strange; it has been happening already, if not so frequently. (In fact, I like this idea and would want to grow it even if there was no necessity, because already I see people in the congregation finding that they have gifts to share which they did not know they possessed. Seeing others serving in this way reminds us that we all have something to contribute.)

What is not planned is for any of the churches to close or to have less frequent services; we just have to be a bit more creative in what we do and how we do it. Moreover, I would hope that all of us will try to remember that being a Christian and part of the church is about being a blessing every day, not just about the Sunday service.

The Kirk Sessions of our churches have had a little more warning that these forthcoming changes, and in discussion we can see ways that, working together, we can help each other better serve as disciples of Christ. My hope is that you will bring these matters to your prayers and find God's inspiration and peace in it all.

Your minister, Catherine



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



COMMUNION

The next quarterly Communion is on Sunday 3rd June 2018 at 11.15a.m. The retiring collection will be for Christian Aid.

MEMORIAL BOOK

In an effort to make the Newtonmore Memorial Book known to a wider audience, the local undertakers who themselves were unaware of the book, now have a supply of forms which they will issue in appropriate circumstances. The forms themselves have been updated and are available in the church porch. The cost for each entry is now £20 to cover the cost of the calligraphy.

CONCERTS

On Sunday 20th May at 3.00pm in St Bride's Church there will be a joint concert featuring the Strathendrick Singers and the Badenoch Chorale.

On 8th July at 3.00pm in St Bride's Church we will have a visit from a Canadian Choir, The Men of Note, who will be staying in Newtonmore.

The Konevets from St Petersburg were in the process of arranging to come back at the beginning of June, but in view of recent events relating to our relationship with Russia, the possibility of obtaining visas has proved to be too much of a challenge for the second time in recent years!

NEPAL

The Church of Scotland collected £310,000 for their Build a House initiative following the earthquake in Nepal nearly three years ago, where our Mission Partner Joel Hafvenstein and his wife Fiona continue to work. The initial target was just £25,000. Recently an eighteen person delegation visited Nepal to see some of the work undertaken. St Bride's contributed £500 to this initiative, the cost of one house. In the meantime, however, it was found that there were problems using the money to build houses, as doing so would have meant that the people using church money would not be eligible for Government grants, and so, after consultation, the money is being used to re-build schools and so set communities on a forward-looking path again.

MEMBER OR ADHERENT

In St Bride's some of our congregation are classed as 'adherents' because they have not been able to confirm that they have in the past been members of the Church of Scotland, and often because of the passage of time, it is not possible to get documentary proof. The Session Clerk has recently been made aware of two of our congregation in this position. You can be 'restored' as a member by resolution of the Kirk Session, so please feel free to talk to Catherine about this if it applies to you.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This takes place in May. The Council of Assembly report states "We live in an era of unprecedented change, rapid and unabating. For an organisation such as the Church of Scotland that changes very slowly, this leads to nervousness and a sense of uncertainty." The report introduces a new 10 year strategic plan for the church but it had its beginnings in 2016, an indication of how slowly things move with so many to be canvassed for their views!

The plan sets out the challenges – shrinking membership and ministry numbers, too many inadequate buildings, falling income and ineffective structures. This all comes as no surprise for it has long been the position. The revised budget for 2018 indicates a deficit of 4 million with more than half of this due to social care.

ELDER VISITING

Changes are currently being made. Elder visits will continue for those members/adherents who have requested or require a visit. The quarterly newsletter will continue to be delivered to all.

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