

The Parishioner

Summer Issue 2019



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From the Manse

Dear Friends,

In Luke Chapter 12 we read these words;

'Are not five sparrows sold for a couple of pence? Yet God does not overlook a single one of them. Believe me, the very hairs of your head are numbered. Never fear, then, for you mean even more to him than many sparrows'



I believe we live in a society that is becoming more and more impersonal, a society in which we are increasingly treated as if we were numbers rather than as human beings. We are identified by a reference number on a tax form, a policy number with an insurance company, a national health service number on a waiting list or a telephone number for call centres to try and persuade us to buy whatever it is they have to offer!

Answering machines, texts, emails and social media have, for many, become the order of the day with personal contact sometimes reduced to the barest minimum.

While I use modern means of communication and appreciate the advantages it presents, I still value face to face contact with people and in my opinion there is nothing that comes remotely close to it for good and meaningful conversation.

Disturbingly, however, there is evidence that many people now prefer to communicate through social media and it would seem an increasing number of young people relate more easily to a computer screen than to their fellow human beings. This surely inhibits their overall personal development and must be detrimental to their mental health.

In such a society as ours has become, it is reassuring to know and remember that God sees us as real people with hearts to love and minds to think and that each one of us is valued by him. The Prophet Isaiah captures God's love and care beautifully in these words;

'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine'.

I find these words wonderfully reassuring. Not only does God know us by name, he looks upon us as his own and seeks through Jesus to have a personal relationship with us, a relationship based on his redeeming love and care.

I recently came across this quote;

'God has no phone, but I talk to him. He has no Facebook, but he is still my friend. He does not have a Twitter account, but I still follow him'.

By all means, let us use modern means of communication and social media but in the process, let us not forget to enjoy one another and to treat one another with respect, for made in the image of God, we are all of intrinsic value and greatly loved.

I send you my best wishes for a good summer!

Every blessing,

Your friend and minister,

Gary J McIntyre

“Prayer for Protection”

The Light of God surrounds me.
The Love of God enfolds me.
The Power of God protects me.
The Presence of God watches over me.
The Mind of God guides me.
The Life of God flows through me.
The Laws of God direct me.
The Power of God abides within me.
The Joy of God uplifts me.
The Strength of God renews me.
The Beauty of God inspires me.
Wherever I am, God is!

*This prayer was written by James Freeman
for all soldiers during World War II.
It is as powerful today as it was then.

Services in June, July and August

June

- 2nd 10:30am Morning Worship, Creche and Sunday Club
The Rev Gordon Mathew (Mr McIntyre will be at St Columba's Church)
- 9th 10:30am Morning Worship, Creche and Sunday Club
The Sacrament of Holy Communion
6:30pm Thanksgiving Service
- 16th 10:30am Morning Worship incorporating the Sunday Club Prizegiving.
Followed by Fellowship Tea
- 23rd 10:30am Morning Worship
1pm Service in Eccles Court
1:30pm Service in Westerlands Care Home
- 30th 10:30am Morning Worship

July

- 7th 10:30am Morning Worship
- 14th 10:30am Morning Worship followed by a short celebration of Holy Communion
- 21st 10:30am Morning Worship followed by Fellowship Tea
The Rev Jim Landels
- 28th 10:30am Morning Worship

August

- 4th 10am Morning Worship
12 noon Open air service at Kirk O'Muir
- 11th 10:30am Morning Worship
The Rev Ray Gaston
- 18th 10:30am Morning Worship followed by Fellowship Tea
The Rev Jim Landels
- 25th 10:30am Morning Worship
The Rev Jim Landels

Minister's Holiday

Mr McIntyre will be on holiday from 5th-27th August. During his absence pastoral cover will be provided by the Rev Scott McInnes of the North Church.

The Kirk Session

The Business Committee will meet on Tuesday 11th June at 10am.

The Hall Management Committee will meet on Tuesday 18th June at 12:30pm.

The Kirk Session will meet on Tuesday 18th June at 7:30pm.

The Bible Study Group

The group will meet at the Church on Wednesday 12th June at 7:30pm. The group will begin the new session on Wednesday 11th September at 7:30pm.

Joint Church Friendship Lunches

These will be held from 12 to 1:30pm in St Columba's Church Hall, Park Terrace, Stirling on Monday 10th June, Monday 8th July and Monday 12th August. A warm welcome and tasty lunch awaits you!

The Boys' Brigade

It was wonderful to welcome Companies from Stirling and District Battalion of the Boys' Brigade to St Ninians Old Parish Church for their annual service on the 24th of March. The service was conducted by Mr McIntyre and Jean Porter, Battalion Chaplain. The praise was accompanied by Mr Tony Baldwin on the organ and the 25th Stirling (Dunblane) Boys' Brigade band. A further time of fellowship was enjoyed in the Parish Halls.

The 8th Stirling (St Ninians) Boys' Brigade would like to thank everyone who attended the fundraising lunch in the Parish Halls on Saturday 6th April. A number of people who were unable to attend the lunch gave a financial donation for which the Company is most grateful.

Kirk O'Muir

Dr Murray Cook, Stirling's archaeologist, wrote an article about Kirk O'Muir in a recent edition of the 'Stirling Observer'. He stated that 'the medieval cemetery dates to the 14th century and was abandoned in the 17th century when the area was used for illegal Conventicles. The latter were gatherings for Christian worship of a type the authorities did not like and were actively repressed with soldiers.

In the 19th century the cemetery was the site of Scotland's smallest school, of which foundations still remain'.

A service is held at Kirk O'Muir in Carron Valley every year on the first Sunday of August at 12 noon.



Kirk o' Muir Churchyard

Maire Blackhall

'You can't go back and change the beginning but you can start where you are and change the ending'.

C S Lewis. (British writer and lay theologian).

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2019

The Rt Rev Colin Sinclair, who is minister of Palmerston Place Church in Edinburgh, was installed as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May.



He succeeded the Very Rev Susan Brown, minister of Dornoch Cathedral.

Colin said 'I am honoured to be selected for this opportunity to represent the Church of Scotland nationally and internationally. It will be a pleasure to encourage church members in their faith and to see the impact of their faith in communities across the country. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a parish minister and despite the challenges we face I believe the Christian faith is still relevant to Scotland. Our message is Good News and it still changes lives.'

Easter Holiday Club

Paper plates flying through the air, standing in jelly or cooked spaghetti, blowing paper cups down a string line, being bopped with a blown-up plastic mallet, making paper houses - what else could this be but our Easter Holiday Club!

This year our annual Easter Holiday Club with St Columba's church was held at the beginning of April for three mornings in St Columba's Anderson Hall. The title of our club was 'Streetwise' and each day the children heard a different story about houses that Jesus visited. These were Simon Peter's house where Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law, Zacchaeus's house where Jesus changed Zacchaeus's whole personality and a crowded house where some good friends helped their lame friend by lowering him through the roof and where he was healed by Jesus.

There was a wonderful atmosphere at the club and everyone, children and adult helpers, had good fun and a chance to share the Gospel. Some parts of the club were serious - the Bible stories and the prayers, but there were also some fun games, activities and craft as have already been mentioned. We had a great team from three churches - St Columba's, St Ninians Old and St Ninians UF who worked together well to make the club a success.

Thank you to everyone who helped with our Holiday Club and thanks also to those who prayed for the success of it. I can definitely say that your prayers were answered.

Moira Parry

Easter Code

Although Easter will be over by the time this article appears in the Summer edition of the Parishioner we thought that you would like to hear about the collaboration between St Ninians Old and St. Columba's in presenting the story of Easter to the 3 primary schools in our combined parishes.

Primary 7 of Allan's, Borestone and St. Ninians schools attended on 3 separate mornings. Luckily, they were all blessed with dry weather for the walk from school to St. Columba's where the events took place. As the title above suggests, the activities address the events leading up to the Crucifixion and reveal the code at the end of the morning. Quizzes, games, singing, crafts and dramas are designed to encourage the children to think about Easter and its meaning for all of our lives.

A lot of planning and preparation goes into the programme which requires volunteers from the churches involved.

The schools are also invited to attend Popcorn and Cake for Pentecost and Bubblegum and Fluff for Christmas. By the end of the 3 mornings, we think it's true to say we were all in need of a rest but it is good to work with other Christian people to bring the story of the life of Jesus children.

Margaret Sibbald
Freda Smart
Lorna Waddell

Refugees

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

(Now read from bottom to top)

Brian Bilston

God's Gift of Time

"There is a time to every purpose under the heaven" Ecclesiastes CH.3, v.1

The Hit Song on the airways during the scorching summer of 1955 was "Unchained Melody", the 1955 version sung by no less than Jimmy Young. It contains the haunting line *"Time goes by so slowly and time can do so much."* Never was there a more appropriate song to fit the circumstances that I was in during that summer. I was working as a 15year old during my school holidays at Shanks Pottery in Kilmarnock doing an absolutely boring job under the scorching sun, and how time dragged! Every time I hear that song, and it is still played from time to time, I am reminded of that scorching summer working at Shanks Pottery.

How fast or slow time seems to pass can depend very much on the circumstances. Time passes so quickly of course when you are enjoying yourself, summed up beautifully in Burns' famous poem, Tam o' Shanter. Our hero Tam is having a great time socialising with his buddie Souter Johnnie, but the time comes when he has to go,

*"As bees flee hame wi lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi pleasure"*

Another occasion when time flies or drags depending on circumstances can be when you want or don't want something to happen. For example, if Kilmarnock are up 1-0 going into 4 minutes of stoppage time, for us Killie fans that 4 minutes can seem an eternity! But if they are 1-0 down, the 4 minutes seem to fly in.

To summarise, sometimes we complain because time goes by too slowly and sometimes because it goes by too quickly. Let us never forget, however, that one of God's greatest gifts to us is time itself. Let us think about it and thank him for it. For it is a gift which, because it is so commonplace and essential to life, we may very often take for granted.

Anxious forebodings of what is to come is a waste of the gift of time. It was to adults that Jesus said, *"Take no anxious thought for to-morrow"*. Children have little or no concern for the day that lies before them. To a child, time is endless. It is not something to become worried about, as if it might run out. If we as adults lacked like children the acute sense of time passing, we would rest far more easily at night.

Quite distinct from children, the adult attitude to time is more wary. We, unlike children, realise that to achieve certain objectives, there is only a limited time at our disposal. And here the great danger lurks that we begin to see time not as an ally but as an enemy. We speak about 'beating the clock', and 'fighting against time'. We find ourselves at odds with the reality which we cannot change and yet which we are unwilling to accept that time is marching on and will not wait for us.

Remember the White Rabbit with pink eyes on the first page of 'Alice in Wonderland' who ran close by Alice, muttering to itself "*Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!*" And then the Rabbit took a watch out of its waistcoat pocket, looked at it and hurried on. That story was written in the late 19th century but is typical of adults today. We all get harassed by the passing of time; it happens to us all but shouldn't. People sitting in traffic jams, looking at their watches, irritation and impatience boiling up, that's another example of time becoming our enemy and not an ally.

Often we feel there is much we would like to do, so much to learn, so much to see, so much to read, so many good intentions to fill. But there is not enough time!!

What about God's attitude to time?

Someone, I think it was an Austrian poet once wrote:-

"Time is a very strange thing

Nevertheless we are not to shrink from it

For it, too, is a creature of the Father who created us"

If we can grasp God's attitude to time, then perhaps we shall have a better idea of what our attitude as Christians should be. But what do we know of God's attitude? In at least three occasions in the Bible we learn of God's attitude to time.

Firstly, I opened by a quote from the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, "*There is a time for every purpose under the heaven.*"

What a contrast to OUR understanding. Here we are told that there is time, enough time, for everything that has to happen. Perhaps we are being warned here that it is the purposes under heaven for which there is enough time, these are the purposes with which we should primarily be concerned. For example, coming to church, taking time to pray, worshipping God, reading our Bible, helping others less fortunate than ourselves. Perhaps we are being told that our frustration with time is a result of our misplaced priorities, our obsession with purposes which are, or should be, of secondary importance.

If God gives us time, he also gives us enough time for us to be concerned with his purposes under heaven.

Secondly, in Peter's second letter, we learn how patient God can be. "*With the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. It is not that the Lord is slow but that he is very patient with you, for it is not his will that any should be lost.*"

Oh, that we might learn some of his patience, knowing that even his delays are intentional. Do you recall that when Jesus learned of the illness of Lazarus, he waited for two days in the place where he heard the news? How his absence was felt! But how

also his delay was intentional! He wanted to show that death does not have the last word by raising Lazarus from the dead.

Oh, that we might learn some of his patience, knowing also that his timing is perfect. In the fields of acting, dancing, performing music, comedy, and in the field of sport such as cricket, football, tennis, golf, perfect timing is one of the great skills to be worked at. How much more should we therefore expect God who is master over the universe to be perfect in his timing? He it is who has made a time for silence and a time for speech. Let us pray for his wisdom to know the right occasion on which to do these and all things.

Thirdly, we come back to Christ's own words to his followers, *"Do not be anxious about to-morrow; to-morrow will look after itself"*

What Jesus is saying to us is not that the only time that matters is now. Every moment matters, but we are to make the most of the NOW'. There are some opportunities which, when past, will never occur again. *"Carpe diem"* as the Romans would have said, "seize the moment".

There is of course nothing wrong with a trip down memory lane, remembering joyous times in the past or looking forward with relish to holidays or some coming event like a wedding or a new arrival into the world. But do not let us waste time on vain regret about what is behind us or with anxious forebodings about what is to come.

Some years ago I read some of the novels of Rafael Sabatini, whose stories are mostly swashbuckling historical novels. I'll never forget this quote from one of his heroes:- *"There is nothing so idle in this world as wondering what it would be like if things in the past had been different"*.

My mother, towards the end of her life was a very ill lady, chair-bound and with little to look forward to. By the side of her chair she kept a quotation from somewhere, printed out quite beautifully on her request by her son-in law:-

"Think not of the future

Think not of the past

But only the present as long as it lasts."

She knew that it was the NOW that was important, and that's what sustained her.

With regard to the turning hands of the clock and the turning pages of the diary, we do well to realise that the passing of time does not matter as much as we think. Our thoughts are not God's thoughts, but the closer we are to him the more we can share his attitude to time.

PASTORAL CARE GROUP

The Pastoral Care Group of St Ninians Old Parish Church, which consists of 5 elders and 4 others, will be very pleased to visit anyone in our congregation who would appreciate a visit over and above those received from the minister and the district elders.

If you or if you know of anyone who would enjoy a visit or telephone contact for chats please let me or the minister know. At present we are visiting 18 people.

On Friday 22 March 2019 four members of our group attended a seminar which was held in Allan Park South Church. The seminar was organised by the Presbytery of Stirling and the Church of Scotland Society Council. The topic was “Learning Together” – Dementia Friendly Developments in our Communities. We learned that there are many “Dementia Hubs” being set up all around our country where families can obtain help and advice.

There is a website called Playlist for Life which is a charity founded by writer and broadcaster Sally Magnusson. www.playlistforlife.org.uk

Music is wonderful for people with dementia and everyone should have a play list set up. More help and information can be found on the website and we also have some booklets in the vestibule of the Church.

Grace McIntosh
Pastoral Care Group Convener

The Slippy Stane

Ca' canny thro' this weary world and pick yer steps wi' care,
And never dae yer neebour wrang but aye dae whit is fair.
Men fa' and never rise again wha never fell before,
There's aye a muckle slippy stane at ilka body's door!

An' gin yer neebour chance to fa' ye maunna let him lie,
But gie a hand tae help him up as ye are passin' by.
The case may be yer ain some day, tho' guids ye hae in store.
There's aye a muckle slippy stane at ilka body's door!

There's slippy stanes where'er ye gang, by cottage, hut or ha'
And ye maun pick yer steps wi' care, or ower them ye may fa'.
For Emperors and Kings hae fa'en, forbye there's mony a score.
There's aye a muckle slippy stane at ilka body's door!

{Believed to have been first published in People's Friend in 1875 and to be written by either Hamilton Nimmo 1836-1892 or by James Hendrie}

Marion Jackson

About the World Mission Council.

The aim of the World Mission Council is to enable the Church of Scotland, as part of the holy catholic or universal Church, to participate effectively in the Mission of God in the world, following the example and priorities of Jesus Christ and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The World Mission Council seeks to fulfil that aim by:



- Engaging in a process of attentive accompaniment with the Church of Scotland's partners worldwide. (That is, listening to and walking with our partners on our shared journey of faith)
- Developing flexible models of partner-relationships and service opportunities with the world church
- Maximising the available human and financial resources
- Maximising the benefits to the Church in Scotland of involvement in the world church and communicating these benefits to the members and congregations of the Church of Scotland

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. Luke 4: 18-19, NIV

Prayer



Loving God, creator of all times and places,
we thank you for the gift of summertime,
the days of light, warmth and leisure.

Thank you for the beauty that surrounds us everywhere we look,
the multi-coloured flowers, the deep blue of the sky,
the tranquil surfaces of rivers and lochs,
the laughter of children at play, people strolling in the parks,
families gathering around picnic tables, and the increased time to spend
with friends and family.

As we open our eyes and ears, the landscape of nature and people open our
hearts to receive all as your gifts to us.

Give us that insight to see you as the divine artist.

Help us to realise and appreciate that you are labouring to keep all
in existence, and warm our souls with the awareness of your presence.

Let all the gifts we enjoy this summer deepen our awareness of your love,
so that we may share this with others and enjoy a summertime of recreation.

In your name always.

Amen.

What Are We Saying??

I wonder how many of us can remember the posters which used to be put outside almost every Church, to “give a word” to passersby? My father was a United Free Church minister, and as his children we had to help him post these Wayside Pulpits. The poster which said “When in doubtDON’T” seemed particularly at odds with our 1960’s teenage vibe!

While we paid no attention to it, the words have stayed with me...

There is another wayside pulpit poster which I still remember after almost 50 years!! My elder brother volunteered 2 weeks of his university holidays to help with Montrose Seaside Mission. There was a popular game they played every second last day of the Mission, called Hunt the Worker. The children (in twos or threes) roamed the centre of Montrose trying to spot the workers and secure their autographs. The workers hid in plain sight, wearing different disguises. My brother posed on the steps of a church with four other workers, as a bridal party plus photographer. Two men were dressed and made up as bride and bridesmaid, and two (tall) women posed in suits and false beards, and I have no idea what the photographer wore! David brought the photograph home to show us. Till they saw the photo, no one had noticed the wayside pulpit above their heads – it said simply, “With God all things are possible.” That was well in advance of the current social movement towards “gender fluidity”!!!

I wonder if you can remember any wayside pulpits from the past (or the present)? Perhaps more interesting would be if you could say what would be a good poster for today? I think maybe “Kindness trumps Indifference” or “Humanity (and God’s love) unites us all.” Let us know if you have suggestions!

My friend Peter Millar has written in one of his books “This is God’s day – make the most of it”. I am sure that people hear/see/learn about our faith by how we live – and that is how we are God’s word for the world. It’s worthwhile asking ourselves what it is we want to “say” to those we meet every day.

Peter also wrote a blessing which I offer for us all:

May God write a message in your heart,
Bless and direct you,
And send you out,
Living Letters of the Lord.

Helen Cook

St Patrick

St Patrick (372-466) was born in Britain into a Romanized family. When he was 16 he was kidnapped by Irish raiders from his home and was subject to slavery in Ireland. After six years he escaped and managed to return to Britain where he endured a second but short time in captivity before being reunited with his family. It is thought that he visited the continent but it is not known whether for travel or education.

As his faith grew he received a letter begging him to return to Ireland where he travelled widely baptising those he met into Christianity. St Patrick's life in Ireland is summed up well in the verse from his hymn St Patrick's Breastplate (639 - I bind unto myself today).

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

On a recent visit to Northern Ireland Margaret Cahoon visited his Church and grave which are shown here.



Scotland's Crosses

In the last issue of *The Parishioner* Mr McIntyre recalls his visit to St Ninians chapel and the roots of the Christian faith in Galloway. This theme was the basis of an article, which appeared in the *Life and Work* magazine by John R Hume who highlighted some of Scotland's oldest Christian symbols and is reproduced here by permission.



Photo: iStock / Rural Scottish Cross

SUMMER is a good time to visit and reflect on the land of Scotland and the cultural and spiritual influences which infuse it.

Churches often seem to embody that sense of different places that tugs at the heart-strings, and communicates a feeling of continuity with the past. We know, or think we know, what a church is for, and in churchyards we know the meaning of tombstones. The early Christian crosses found all over Scotland are in many cases much more enigmatic: people are still arguing about the meanings of the sculptured motifs on Pictish stones. Whatever their meanings they are well worth seeking out, both in their original settings, and indoors in churches and museums.

The earliest stone crosses are in the extreme south-west of Scotland, in the Rhinns and Machars of Dumfries and Galloway. At Kirkmadrine, near the Mull of Galloway, and at

Whithorn and Glasserton there are crosses inscribed on stone, some of them as grave markers and at St Ninian's Cave on native rock.

The association of the pioneering missionary St Ninian with this area is a powerful one; the presence of natural crosses (formed by veins of quartz in masses of grey stone) on the foreshore at St Ninian's Cave may well have led the saint to choose this area for his mission. Whithorn remained an important religious centre until the Reformation, a place of pilgrimage for many. Peculiar to the area is a number of curious 'disc-headed' crosses to be seen in the Whithorn Priory Museum (including the tall Monreith Cross) and in the parish church of Kirkinner, (north of Whithorn) in which the cross form is only hinted at. Almost human in their appearance, they linger in the mind. Galloway is a lovely and lovable part of Scotland, and its crosses are a very profound part of it.

Of very different character are the crosses of the western seaboard, of Argyll and the isles, and of other parts of western Scotland influenced by Viking and Gaelic- Celtic immigrants. Here the grandest early Christian crosses are in Iona and at the south end of the Isle of Islay, at Kildalton, where there is a High Cross, on an Irish model, with its arms linked by a ring of stone, a masterpiece of stone-carving. To come across this cross in an otherwise fairly typical churchyard is something which lingers in the mind. There are substantial remains of a similar cross at Iona Abbey, but the finest cross on Iona is that of St Martin, very tall, with short arms and with a lighter ring. It is recognised as one of the supreme works of art in Scotland.

The tradition of making free-standing crosses persisted in Argyll until the late middle ages, though their form changed. The local availability of a type of stone – chloritic schist – which could easily be split into thin slabs, and was soft when quarried, led to the carving of flat, thin crosses with ornamentation all over their surfaces. Some, if not all, of these had representations of the Crucifixion in a central panel, but there was a tendency for these to be excised after the Reformation, as in the fine crosses to be seen in the centres of Inveraray and Campbeltown. There are unaltered ones in the little chapel at Kilmory Knap, on Loch Sween, on the island of Oronsay and at Kilchoman on Islay. The ornamentation on the shafts and arms of crosses of this type often takes the form of flowers and leaves – 'floriation'. Other crosses in this area were made as markers, to be placed flat on top of graves.

There are fine collections of these at Kilmartin, Kilberry Saddell and Keills, as well as at Kilmory Knap. Apart from the elaborate crosses to be seen in these places there are also many simpler representations. Visiting some of the places I have mentioned involves longdistance travel, but it is very worthwhile, to experience some of the best coastal scenery in Scotland and to begin to feel in tune with areas of ancient spirituality. There is one more important group of crosses in western Scotland. These are in the Clyde valley, and are particularly associated with the early Christian centre of Govan, now part of Glasgow. In workmanship and design these are simpler than the Argyll crosses, but they

are also probably earlier. The stone from which they are carved is also less tractable than that of the Argyll monuments. There are no complete crosses in the otherwise marvellous Govan Stones collection in Govan Old Church, but the shaft of the Jordanhill Cross is very fine. There is another collection of fragments of Govan- School carving at Inchinnan Parish Church, moved from their original site to make way for Glasgow Airport. Other crosses of this character are the Barochan Cross, moved from a hill-top site near Houston into Paisley Abbey Church, and the Netherton or Cadzow Cross, now outside the north entrance to Hamilton Old Parish Church. Of these my favourite is the Netherton Cross, which is delightfully gawky, and all the more moving for that. All these sites can be visited in a day from anywhere in central Scotland, and both Govan Old and Paisley Abbey are well worth visiting on their own accounts.



Kilchoman Cross, Islay

Before leaving the west of Scotland I should mention two Dumfriesshire crosses of remarkable beauty and significance. The smaller and simpler is the Merkland Cross, north of Kirkpatrick Fleming. This is a 'wayside' cross, placed on a route, before formal roads

were made, as a focus for the devotions of travellers. There must have been many of these in Scotland before the Reformation. The Merkland Cross has a very beautiful cross head on a plain shaft. The other Dumfriesshire cross is in the parish church at Ruthwell, east of Dumfries. The Ruthwell Cross is unique in Scotland, and dates from a period when the south west was under Northumbrian rule. The cross was broken up after the Reformation, but the pieces survived and have been reassembled and set in a pit in the church, so that its very beautiful 'high-relief' sculpture can be appreciated. This shows a wide variety of figurative panels, with floriated decoration on the sides, and inscriptions both in Latin and in Ogham (an early script).

North and east of the central belt were the kingdoms of the northern and southern Picts, eventually part of the kingdom of the Scots. Most of what we know about the Picts is derived from their sculpture, which includes many crosses of the highest quality of design and workmanship. Before Christianity arrived in Pictland a tradition had emerged of carving largely abstract symbols on boulders and exposed rock surfaces. It has been suggested that these symbols, enigmatic to us, may have been representations of personal names, perhaps? These symbols persisted after the coming of Christianity, and are to be found on many crosses. Other common motifs are animals, birds, fish and human beings, often men on horseback. On two crosses (Sueno's Stone in Forres and the Aberlemno Churchyard Stone) there appear to be representations of important battles, which may have been a primary reason for their creation. It is worth pointing out that with few exceptions Pictish crosses are flat representations on stones that are not cross-shaped. Their designs parallel representations of crosses in illuminated manuscripts being produced in Scotland at the same time, which may be a reason for the flat, usually stylised carved crosses.

There are so many fine Pictish cross stones, and they are so varied in treatment that I can only include a selection here. I will begin by mentioning some which are in or near their original locations. These include the exceptional Sueno's and Shandwick stones, the latter on a hillside in the Nigg peninsula of Easter Ross. Both are now protected by glazed enclosures. The Dunfallandy Stone near Pitlochry has a protective shelter, as has the Eassie Stone in rural Angus. The Aberlemno Churchyard Stone, the Glamis Stone and a little cross at Logierait, Perthshire can still be seen in the open. The superb Nigg Stone is now in the former parish church, not far north of Shandwick, and the unusual Dupplin Cross is in St Serf's Church, Dunning, in Strathearn. There are site museums with collections of stones, including crosses, at Meigle, Perthshire and St Vigean's, just north of Arbroath. Many of these stones are in the care of Historic Environment Scotland. Other museums in Pictland with Pictish stones are the Groam House Museum at Rosemarkie in Ross and Cromarty, Inverness Museum, and the Meffan Museum in Forfar. Further afield there are fine stones in Dundee and Perth museums, and in the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, which houses the splendid Hilton of Cadboll Stone from Easter Ross. Some good stones are in private hands and are not accessible to the public.

I can only begin to suggest routes to visit important groups of Pictish crosses. Moving north east from the central belt, one could visit the Dupplin Cross at Dunning, then Perth Museum, moving east to Meigle, then taking in Dundee Museum, the Aberlemno Churchyard Stone and the St Vigean's Museum. Another fine group is in Easter Ross, taking in on the way north the little Logierait stone (pictured right), the Dunfallandy Stone, and Sueno's Stone at Forres on the way to Inverness, where one could visit the museum. Once in Easter Ross one could start with the Groam House Museum in Rosemarkie before visiting the Shandwick and Nigg stones, the visitor centre at Tarbat, near Portmahomack, and the chapel site of the Hilton of Cadboll Stone, before returning to Edinburgh to see the stone itself.



I have already mentioned some of the figurative and symbolic features found on Pictish crosses, but these are, on the faces of the crosses, the context within which the crosses themselves are sculpted. Within the outline of the crosses the designs are abstract. The design themes can be categorised under four headings: interlace, key pattern, spirals and bosses. Interlace and bosses are to be found in west of Scotland crosses, but key patterns and spirals are more particular to Pictish ones. In Pictish monuments these features are all constructed with extraordinary geometric accuracy, as in manuscript illumination. With interlace (based on plaiting of hair or textiles) as used on crosses the obvious intention is to take a single line on an endless journey over a whole area, over and under itself in strict sequence. Key patterns are angular, repetitive and intriguingly abstract. Spirals can be seen as lines moving both inwards to a focal point and outward to a defined periphery; they are explicitly dynamic whereas interlace and key patterns are more subtly so. Finally, bosses are comparatively rare, and best seen in the Nigg Stone. They relieve the generally flat appearance of Pictish sculptural art.

In my first draft of this piece I began to speculate on the spiritual meanings of the different types of cross. It is very striking that representation of the crucified Christ common in west Highland crosses is unknown in the Pictish ones, though some may have been destroyed after the Reformation. My feeling is that most of the free-standing crosses were intended as focal points for worship, or at least reminders of the spiritual. They may also have been wayside or landscape markers. The simpler ones have an immediate impact both for their symbolism and for their art. The more complex ones demand more detailed study. The integration of pre-Christian symbolism with an explicitly Christian motif in Pictish stones suggests an easy acceptance of the missionary message. But go and see these amazing

relics of the creators of these stones in the places where they lived, worked and thought about spiritual things; you will not be disappointed, and you will probably be much moved'

Note: Many of these stones and collections are in the care of Historic Environment Scotland, and information about them can be found on their websites. For those not in HES care there are good images on their Canmore website, and on the Scran website, which includes images of museum objects.



This article first appeared in the August 2017 edition of Life and Work.

Start-Up Stirling Update

The AGM was held on 25th April at St Marks Church. The charity shows a considerable deficit of around £65,000 for financial year 2018/2019. Fundraising growth is required for 2019/20. Detailed summary of financial position is not available for the summer issue of The Parishioner but should be published in time for the autumn issue.

In the last financial year, 108539 meals were provided via 1327 referrals. These supported 2420 people including 809 children. Start Up Support Service continues to provide weekly sessions in urban and rural Stirlingshire along with home visits to people unable to access the sessions.

Donations from our congregation for the first fourth months of 2019, January to April, over £613 in cash and around 150kg in supplies has been contributed to Start Up who are extremely grateful and pass on their heartfelt thanks.

Requirements at the time of going to press are for sauces and instant foods plus new or nearly new pots and pans for starter packs. For further information about Start Up please contact either myself, Arthur Walls, or Helen Thomson. Phone numbers are as follows:

Arthur Walls 01786 446899
Helen Thomson 01786 465052

A Night to Remember!

Friday Night is Music Night

Over three hundred people attended the Runway Theatre Company Fundraising concert held in the Church on Friday 22nd March. We were treated to first class performances with songs from the West end and Broadway, Popular Standards and some Scottish favourites.

The artistes, picture below, were Ken Christie, Anne Fraser, Robert Fyfe, Aileen Johnston, J Campbell Kerr, Lewis Kerr, Ross Nicol, Susan B Russell, Tom Russell and Holly Steel.

A word of thanks is extended to Mary Jenkins and Ken Christie for dealing with ticket sales and to Bill Anderson for the magnificent floral arrangements which adorned the Church. A comprehensive vote of thanks was given by The Rev Gary J McIntyre.

As a result of the concert a cheque for £1700 was given to the Church.



The Muir Trophy

This year for the Muir Trophy, our Anchor Boys were put hard to work. On each different parade night, they focussed on a different night of Holy Week. They took part in different activities and crafts during each session. These crafts build a brilliant poster display for each day of Holy Week. During the presentation evening the Anchor boys spoke to their parents and the judges about what they had learned. They did very well in telling everyone the stories about Holy Week.

Our Junior Section also worked hard in the lead up to our Muir Trophy competition night. Most of the p4s worked with Mr Thomson on Palm Sunday, while our P5s worked with Mr Gray on the last supper. Our officers used visual aids during learning, such as palms, toy props and last supper food and drink. As weeks progressed, the Junior Section made canvas posters to further their learning and split up into mini groups to show work completed on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday/Easter Sunday. Boys were able to effectively answer questions regarding their topics on presentation night, and our p4s even did a mini show for judges and parents.

For their Muir Trophy entry, the company section was split into small groups. They looked at Jesus as a leader throughout Holy Week and found examples of Jesus' leadership qualities in others. Each group chose a different example of someone being a leader, Martin Luther King, Alex Ferguson, William Wallace and Barack Obama. The boys then chose different ways of presenting their comparisons. Over a number of weeks, the boys built presentations, large canvas posters, and on the competition night set up a table like the last supper, using bread and wine to help them show the judges how much they had learned.

Everyone's hard work had paid off, the boys built a wealth of knowledge about Holy Week and finished winners of the Muir Trophy, with all three sections winning their individual category. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the boys and officers for all of their hard work, well done.



David Ross
8th Stirling Company Section Officer

A PET'S TEN COMMANDMENTS



1. My life is likely to last 10-15 years. Any separation from you is likely to be painful.
2. Give me time to understand what you want of me.
3. Place your trust in me. It is crucial for my well-being.
4. Don't be angry with me for long and don't lock me up as punishment. You have your work, your friends, your entertainment, but I have only you.
5. Talk to me. Even if I

don't understand your words, I do understand your voice when speaking to me.

6. Be aware that however you treat me, I will never forget it.
7. Before you hit me, before you strike me, remember that I could hurt you, and yet, I choose not to bite you.
8. Before you scold me for being lazy or uncooperative, ask yourself if something might be bothering me. Perhaps I'm not getting the right food, I have been in the sun too long, or my heart might be getting old or weak.
9. Please take care of me when I grow old. You too, will grow old.



10 On the ultimate difficult journey, go with me please. Never say you can't bear to watch. Don't make me face this alone. Everything is easier for me if you are there, because I love you so.



Take a moment today to thank GOD for your pets. Remember that they can't do a lot of things for themselves and that they depend on you to make their life a quality life! Enjoy, and take good care of them.



Photo Corner



Lorraine Reid



Ben Venue from Loch Venacher

Arthur S.Walls

Fund Statement

Fund Statement - January to April 2019

Income

General (incl. General, Pastoral, Sunday Club, Flower & Choir funds)

Offerings	7486
Gift Aid Donations	19498
Other Donations	1375
Income Tax Refund on Gift Aid	0
Legacies	0
Congregational Organisations	70
Use of Premises	2168
Bank Interest	0
Wedding & funeral fees etc.	1133
Life & Work Subs 2019	810
Church Fund Raising	1741
Flower Fund	100
Pastoral Fund	0
Sunday Club Fund	100
(Charity Fund Raising	469) (

Year to date: **34480**

Balance b/f 41786

Sub-total: **76266**

Fabric Fund

Balance b/f 1807

Bank Interest 0

Sub-total: **1807**

Development Fund

Balance b/f 11016

Interest etc. 0

Sub-total: **11016**

Historic Building Fund

Balance b/f 1279

Donations

Sub-total: **1279**

Expenditure

Church of Scotland	18814
Salaries	2993
Manse Expenses/Pulpit Supply	416
Maintenance etc.	1440
Heating & Lighting	0
Insurance & Manse Council Tax	1433
Office expenses, etc.	587
Local Costs	57
Church Choir Fund	0
Sunday Club, Outreach etc.	246
Life & Work	948
Flower Fund	40
Pastoral Fund	0
Sunday Club Fund	0
Donations to Charities	0

Sub-total: **26974**

Balance c/f 49293

Balance c/f 1807

Balance c/f 11016

Balance c/f 1279

Overall Balance of all funds : 63395

Office Bearers Contact Numbers & Email Addresses

Treasurer treasurer@stniniansold.org.uk	Mr Edward Morton	01259 760861
Boys' Brigade	Mr Robbie Forsyth	07446905616
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Communion Convener	Mr James Rintoul	01786 461812
Data Protection Officer dataprotectionofficer@stniniansold.org.uk	Mrs Elaine Ronald	01786 818158
Eco Congregation Group	Mr Tom Pollock	01786 478710
Elders' District Review Committee Convener	Miss Maire Blackhall	01786 475141
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Finance Committee Convener	Mr Jim MacDonald	01786 474191
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Publicity Committee Convener	Mr Peter Kale	01786 586927
Roll Keeper & Freewill Offering Convener rollkeeper@stniniansold.org.uk	Mrs Alison Newman	01786 814984
Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Mrs Pamela Thomson	01786 479028
Social and Fundraising Convener	Mrs Dorothy Walker	01786 814813
Transport Co-ordinator	Mrs Elaine Mackay	01786 475596
Tuesday Group	Mrs Miranda Miller	01786 465836
Youth Committee Convener	Mrs Avril Robertson	01786 474634