

NEWSLETTER

Church of Scotland
Kingussie Linked with
Laggan and Newtonmore

www.stbrides-newtonmore.org.uk www.kingussieparishchurch.org.uk

MAY 2021

FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

This is the last time I will be writing for this newsletter, as my time as your minister will come to an end in the middle of June. As most of you know already, my last Sunday with you will be June 13th.

The decision to leave here and move on has not been an easy one to make, nor was it made quickly. But as your minister I have been forever encouraging every one of you to listen for God's guidance in your lives, and so I could not do less myself. As I have prayed and listened, it has become clear that it is time for me to move on, not only from this place, but from working in formal ministry as I have been doing one way or another for the best part of 25 years. What God has for the future I don't yet know, but I will look forward to discovering. Where we are going to is clearer: we have bought a house in Cullen on the Moray coast, one with a room large enough for all Alan's organs and organ-related archives, which are extensive!

I want to use this newsletter to thank you for allowing me to minister among you. I have been in Laggan and Newtonmore for almost 12 years and Kingussie for just over 2, and in that time I have been privileged to be in the happiest and saddest moments of peoples lives; I have had tremendous fun with so many of you in the various projects we have undertaken – who can forget the stalls at the Highland Games, the Laggan picnics, or the time that we took news from Laggan and Newtonmore to the Heart and Soul event at the General Assembly? I have had superb elders to work with, and other wonderful people within the congregations who have been willing to use their gifts to help us do the work of the church: telling others about Jesus and reaching out with God's love in practical ways.

Now that I am moving on, these great elders and others are still here, still very able, still full of ideas and skills and although it is called "going into a vacancy" I know you better than to think that you will find yourselves running on empty. As you look to God for guidance, you will be led forward in God's way. For the practical running of the churches an Interim Moderator has been appointed: Mrs Mary Stewart,

a capable elder from Aviemore who has been trained in this work. I know that she will find churches willing to help her and work with her as she takes you through the various stages of finding the future.

Finally I want to pay tribute to Alan, who has helped to keep me on a fairly even keel during these years, as well as playing the organ so well and faithfully, and giving invaluable advice to Kingussie over their organ project. I know that none of us is indispensable, but I wonder if you may not miss him more than you miss me!

Your minister,
Catherine Buchan

Badenoch Choral

It would be nice to think that live music can return to our lives in the not too distant future, and members of the Choral are looking forward to a return to work! The Choral are obviously very sorry to be losing their brilliant accompanist and organ soloist Alan Buchan and are hoping to arrange an opportunity to thank him in person for his wonderful contribution to everyone's enjoyment. Fortunately, conductor John Crombie has been able to sign up Paul Allan as the future accompanist and hopefully he will be able to work with the Choral when we are able to meet again and sing!

Newsletter By E-mail

If you would prefer to get your Newsletter (and any other communications) by e-mail please contact your Session Clerk – Alison Armstrong or Sandy Peebles with your e-mail address. This would be more eco-friendly and save delivery time.



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



Kingussie Craft

Sales from the craft table continue. Items remaining for sale can be found on the Craft Group Facebook page.

The first collection of Raggy Bag items since before lockdown has been uplifted. Thanks for all the donations of wearable clothes, shoes, hats, scarves and gloves.

They all help to make a difference to the church coffers.

Kingussie – Organ

Our organist John Crombie is very pleased with the retuning of the organ and the fixing of minor gremlins in the workings carried out by Mr Macdonald from Glasgow. There are one or two outstanding items still to receive attention in due course.

Kingussie Parish Church – Virtual Pilgrimage to Bethlehem

The miles are accruing thus enabling the journey to commence. Taking the first steps down the church drive was Rev Catherine Buchan, bearing the poster “Bethlehem or Bust”. We are now well on our way having passed Laggan and Ardverikie and covered the length of Loch Linnhe towards Lochaline before utilising two ferry crossings as we head for the Isle of Iona.



You can follow the journey on the Pilgrimage Facebook page and the church web page – Kingussie Parish Church SC021546 Virtual Pilgrimage to Bethlehem

www.kingussieparishchurch.org.uk

Your help would be welcome to ensure we reach Bethlehem. Full details can be found on our Facebook and web pages or by contacting the minister.

Donations can be made directly via the following link

www.justgiving.com/campaign/Bethlehem

A Reflection on Figures

Following the news that Catherine was going to be leaving us, I was prompted to find my copy of the Parish Profile of 2008 which encouraged Catherine to come to be our minister. Reading this is a good reminder of how life has changed in our communities in the last thirteen years, and reflecting on the figures certainly makes interesting reading!

Here are a few of the figures.

Laggan and Dalwhinnie

Gergask Primary -	29 pupils
Dalwhinnie -	11 pupils
Parish residents -	circa 300
Houses -	circa 200 of which circa 70 are second homes
Church members -	36
Church adherents -	39
Average church attendance -	25
Elders – 5 Board – 5	

Newtonmore

Newtonmore Primary -	69 pupils
Parish residents -	circa 1,000
Houses -	circa 650 of which circa 180 are second homes
Church members -	84
Church adherents -	17
Average church attendance -	60
Elders – 15 Board – 11	

Recently the Church of Scotland has published figures of population estimated for 2019 for our parishes and these show.

Laggan and Newtonmore

Estimated population -	1,398
Age	0-4 4.4%
	5-15 10.9%
	45-64 29.6%
	65+ 27.7%

Kingussie

Estimated population -	1,998
Age	0-4 2.9%
	5-15 10.7%
	45-64 32.6%
	65+ 25.1%

So what does all this mean for the church?

Given our current rolls, there is absolutely no doubt that interest in the church has generally diminished over the last thirteen years as members/adherents have dropped off the top end they have not been replaced by the younger age groups. The general statistics show that the two local communities both have over 57% of the community over the age of 45 (Grantown and Aviemore are the only parishes of Abernethy Presbytery where the percentage is less than 50%). There is undoubtedly a big challenge facing us as time moves forward, and given how with Catherine, we have tried to build up Messy Church and Rhyme Time, we have still failed to involve younger people in our congregations and Covid-19 has brought an untimely break in these activities.



To those of us for whom church has been a major part of our lives, the current situation is a big disappointment and as we grow older, it does become more difficult to find the energy to challenge this situation. With Catherine leaving us there is no guarantee that we will be able to obtain another minister, so we are going to have to think differently, summon up all our energies and pray for God to help us in his work. If we can think in new ways without a minister, perhaps be more community focused in the future, we may be able to attract new followers for Jesus Christ and the future could yet be exciting as we move away from what could be called 'conventional behaviour'. We are all in this together so let us all continue to pray for our future and give support to each other as we are able.

Contributed by Roy Alexander

Abernethy Presbytery

As discussions still continue for the possible formation of a Highland Presbytery, the impending demissions of Rev Catherine Buchan and Rev Gordon Strang from Inverallan, Cromdale and Dulnain Bridge have caused a bit of a crisis as basically this compounds the fact that the presbytery is too small to function effectively.

From 1st August, the presbytery will only have two full time ministers and one 0.5 pastoral assistant. There will be two vacant charges and one charge in Guardianship. Fortunately, presbytery has been given clearance to advertise for two Ministry Development Staff, one for each end of the presbytery but this in itself does not guarantee appointments. Presbytery was meeting on 18th May to consider the current predicament and attempt to seek a temporary solution to the problem.

Thank You!

Roy Alexander who was the secretary of the Vacancy Committee was the first to meet Catherine when she walked off the train at Kingussie Station to come for her interview on Friday 26th September 2008 (and if his memory is correct, she still carries the same briefcase!). The Vacancy Committee went to Stirling to hear her preach in December and on 11th December the committee agreed that we should ask Catherine to preach for the vacancy. Due to the fact that Catherine was moderator in her presbytery, it was the summer before she came among us as our minister. We give thanks that Catherine was sent to minister in Badenoch in what started as two congregations, now subsequently united as Laggan and Newtonmore and more recently linked with Kingussie.

In many ways a lot of water has gone under the bridge in nearly twelve years of service and on behalf of us all, it is a big THANK YOU to Catherine for all her work for and with us and the community at large. It is also a similar THANK YOU to Alan for playing the organ in St Bride's week by week. We wish them both a happy retirement though there is no doubt time will tell whether this turns out to be reality!

Catherine, Alan, Jennifer and Andrew will leave Newtonmore with memories and our best wishes for the future.

Badenoch and Strathspey Therapy Garden News

After a long and cold Winter and Spring we are back up and running and looking forward to an increasingly busy year.

The Caberfeidh Horizons gardeners hope to return to the Growing Spaces allotments at Am Fasgadh within the next month or so and our volunteer gardeners are hard at work getting the raised beds ready.



Face to face sessions at the Wade Centre are not possible just yet but residents were able to get their green fingers warmed up by taking part in a sweet pea planting activity provided by Jen as their first 'Project in a Poke'.

We would love to welcome more people to enjoy our Growing Spaces with us:

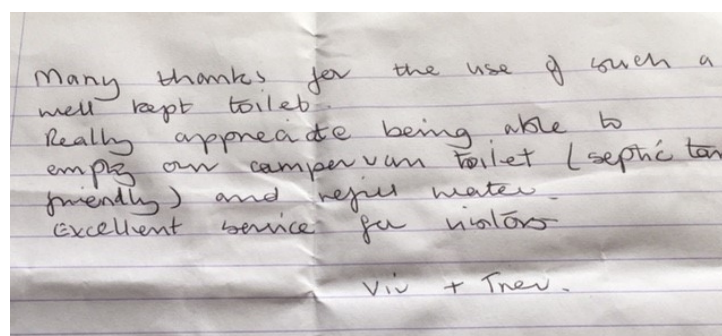
- We have a sensory garden with seating for those who want to relax and watch what's going on around them.
- We have a variety of beds suitable for seated gardening if necessary and can make gardening accessible for all.
- We need volunteers (advice available for novice gardeners!)

For more information about how you can get involved or to find out how the Therapy Gardens can be used by a relative or friend please contact:

Jen Barrett by email: bstherapygarden@gmail.com or Mobile: 07501 723673



Appreciation of Laggan Toilet !



This note was left in Laggan Toilet by a satisfied customer!



REV. JAMES GRANT (1785–1801)

Rev. James Grant was the Chaplain at Fort Augustus barracks, when he met and married Anne MacVicar, daughter of the barrack—master. In 1785 they came over the Corrieyairick, he to be the minister of the Parish of Laggan. The new church was being built at the time. There being no Manse, they stayed in what is now the farm of Gaskbeg which was also the Glebe.

Mrs Grant describes how she had been up since 4 a.m. preparing for the girls on their weekly trip with butter and cheese from the shielings and getting ready baking, wool for knitting and also expecting a boy from a different corrie looking after horses and sheep. All the time James is pacing about impatient to go for a walk in the meadow!

James died suddenly in 1801, aged 60 and on his gravestone, which stands in Laggan Kirkyard, it states “His mind was pure and elegant, whose manners were gentle and amiable, whose life was exemplary, whose doctrine was evangelical.”

Also on the Gravestone are three of his 12 children, Peter aged 4 years 2 months, Petrina aged 2 years 4 months and a son Duncan, who died early in infancy.

Anne was to become famous as “Mrs Grant of Laggan” as a poet and author. She was a friend of Sir Walter Scott, who contrived to obtain a pension for her that gave her a comfortable retirement. She is buried in St Cuthbert’s Parish Church in Edinburgh, dying at the age of 83 in 1838. Only one of her 12 children survived her.

Laggan Heritage are at present renovating the gravestone and memorial stone to Anne in Laggan kirkyard that has been affected by frost and rain.

Contributed by Campbell Slimon

Christian Aid

Christian Aid is the churches' aid organisation, supported by the Church of Scotland, the Church of England and other denominations in the UK. Founded to relieve the poverty in Europe after WW2, they now work overseas in development, emergency aid, and increasingly in education and advocacy on behalf of impoverished communities. While fundraising goes on

all year, each May there’s a big effort during Christian Aid week.

This year Christian Aid week was May 9-16th. During that week, the churches along the River Spey were asked to undertake sponsored walks along the whole of the Speyside Way, each church taking on the bit near their parish. To that end people from Kingussie church walked the section to Kincaig, and some of them, living in Kincaig, walked the section to Aviemore. People from Newtonmore walked the section from the start of the way to Kingussie. The Speyside Way begins in Newtonmore, but of course the river's source is in in Laggan parish. So people from our congregations undertook to walk from the source to Garva Bridge, and another party took over and walked from Garva Bridge to Laggan Church. There is no footpath all the way between Laggan and Newtonmore, so the minister undertook to walk by the river side for that section.

While we walked we were asked to pray for those who need aid of one kind or another and to reflect about the river of life, which is God's love as we walked by a flowing river. If you were not able to walk, but would like to make a donation the direct way to give is by going to the webpage: www.justgiving.com/team/Spey-Challenge But if you find this hard, you can give a donation to either of our treasurers and they will be pleased to pass it on to Christian Aid for you.

Our Interim Moderator Mary Stewart.

Mary was born in Inverness and grew up on a farm at Dalcross near the airport. She studied and lived in Edinburgh where she met her husband Gavin. She moved to Stonehaven where she became an elder and following several years in Orkney moved to Aviemore. Many will know Mary for her membership of Newtonmore and District Floral Art Club or through Badenoch and Strathspey Therapy Gardens of which she was the founder (formerly St Vincent's Therapy Garden).

Mary has been involved in St Andrews Church, Aviemore since moving to live there and was Moderator of Abernethy Presbytery for 2019/20. Gavin is treasurer of the church and is well known for his commitment to the foodbank in Aviemore.

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