

St. Cuthbert's Church Magazine



Deborah Nicol, Andrew Hay and Christopher Bennett following their service of admission to full church membership with minister Rev. Sarah Nicol and Session Clerk William Parker

June 2022

Website: www.saltcoats-stcuthberts.org.uk

Email: webmaster@saltcoats-stcuthberts.org.uk

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From our Minister

Dear friends,

As June begins, many people in our part of the world start to think about summer holidays. Our thoughts may be of relaxation and refreshment, and we all need times like that!

However, as I write for the magazine, relaxation and refreshment seem far from our congregational life and our personal lives! The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has just begun, and at Presbytery and Kirk Session levels, we are deeply involved in discussions and decisions on the Presbytery Mission Plan (PMP) with its implications on the future number of congregations, church buildings and full-time ministers. The Presbytery meets on 14th June, but the debate may continue on beyond that date until we can finally agree on the PMP.

Within the Reports of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland we see an acknowledgement of the difficulties of these times and procedures in the words, "We are in the perfect storm – Pandemic, Presbytery restructuring and Presbytery Mission Planning." They and we acknowledge that there has been a lot happening over the last two to three years in our own lives, in the life of the church and in the life of the world. These experiences have surely taken their toll upon everyone in different ways.

While we may not feel there will be much relaxation and refreshment this summer, for our own well-being we need to find some space to draw breath, to realise we cannot alleviate every concern and solve every problem, and to acknowledge our dependence on God's strength to carry us through the storms of life.

In our weariness and insecurity may we find comfort and strength in the words of the prophet Isaiah as found in chapter 40:

“Why do you say, O Jacob,
 and assert, O Israel,
 ‘My way is hidden from the Lord,
 and my right is disregarded by my God’?
 Have you not known? Have you not heard?
 The Lord is the everlasting God,
 the Creator of the ends of the earth.
 He does not faint or grow weary;
 his understanding is unsearchable.
 He gives power to the faint
 and strengthens the powerless.
 Even youths will faint and be weary,
 and the young will fall exhausted,
 but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
 they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
 they shall run and not be weary;
 they shall walk and not faint.”

Over the summer months, let us pray for the renewing Spirit of God
 bringing us refreshment even in the midst of the “perfect storm”
 through which we are travelling.

With every blessing,

Sarah Nicol.

Church Register

Baptism

Jesus said,

“Go to all people, making them My disciples, baptising them ...”

15th May Mr Andrew Hay, Saltcoats

Admission of New Communicants by Profession of Faith

“Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord ...”

15th May Mr Christopher Bennett, Ardrossan
 Mr Andrew Hay, Saltcoats
 Miss Deborah Nicol. Saltcoats

Readers’ Rota

June	5	Maureen Crilley	July	3	Ena Grove
	12	Simon Hales		10	Elizabeth Barclay
	19	Ann Turner		17	Marian Macintyre
	26	Lesley Boyle		24	Raymond Montgomerie
				31	Tom Macintyre
August	7	Bea Nicholson			
	14	Tom Sommerville			
	21	William Parker	September	4	Annita Gillespie
	28	Graeme Sutherland			

With many thanks to all who volunteer. If the date proves unsuitable,
 please arrange a swap from this list and please let me know.

Sarah.

Church Flowers

Many thanks to all who have donated to the flower fund enabling me
 to put flowers into the church.

Anyone wishing to make a small donation to the fund can give it either
 to myself or Ann Turner .

Annita Gillespie (flower convenor)

Plant Sale

Despite “cutting back” and some germination issues Ann Turner has
 generated almost £1900 from the sale of bedding plants. A huge
 thank you again to Ann for all of the hard work involved in the biggest
 fundraising event in our church calendar.

Sunday School

A big thanks to everyone who collected small change for this year's
 charity we have a great total of £60 plus a donation of £10 from a
 member of the congregation. I'm delighted with this amount and will
 make arrangements for it to be sent to aid the people of Ukraine in
 these sad times! Thanks to all for your support of the Sunday school in
 this!

Margaret, Helen, Amy and Megan Hymn

Reflections

“Come down, O love Divine” – CH4 489

Hymns have always been a fascination of mine. Since starting out at 15, playing the organ in church, hymns have been a staple diet of my weekly life. Over this time (*I am now 39*) I have learnt so many hymns that it is difficult to start off with a favourite. However, as we enter the season of Pentecost a perfect hymn to start with is “Come down, O Love Divine”.....

This hymn is a translation of a medieval poem originally written in Italian. It owes much of its popularity to the tune composed for it in the early years of this century by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958).

The author of the devotional verses about the Holy Spirit and its descent on man which forms the basis of the hymn was Bianco Da Siena (c. 1350-1434). Born in Tuscany, he spent his boyhood as an apprentice in the wool trade in Siena and at the age of 17 joined an order of mystics. Although he wrote a number of lyrics and hymns little more is known about him, other than that he spent the last part of his life in Venice.

Bianco's poem, which began '*Discendi, amor santo*' and ran to eight verses, was little known until 1851 when it was copied by an Italian from an ancient manuscript. Some years after this rediscovery, four of the verses were translated by Dr Richard Littledale (1833-90). They appear in our hymn book from his *People's Hymnal*, published in 1867.

Littledale's translation retains much of the spirit of the original Italian verses. In particular it preserves Bianco Da Siena's allusion to the monastic vocation, especially in the lines in the third stanza which talk of the vesture of holy charity and the inner clothing of lowliness.

It was rarely sung in Britain until it was chosen as one of the entries for the *English Hymnal* in 1906. Percy Dearmer, the editor, chose the young and virtually unknown Vaughan Williams to be responsible for the musical side of the new hymnal. On the whole where existing tunes were lacking or inadequate, Vaughan Williams tended to prefer settings of English Folksongs to new tunes. But 'Come down, O Love Divine' was an exception. He wrote a new tune especially for it: 'Down Ampney', after his birthplace in Gloucestershire. Thanks largely to this tune, the hymn has become popular especially at weddings and Pentecost.

©The Hymn Society of Great Britain & Ireland Peter Livingstone



Pentecost

Church Cleaning



We are very grateful to the volunteers who clean the church every week. The arrival of Covid meant that to comply with all the regulations this became a much heavier load but their commitment to the task enabled the church to be open for Sunday worship as soon as it became possible. As the halls have minimal use through the summer the contract cleaners currently keeping these premises in tip top condition should transfer their attention to the church for the next few months. A new rota will be start in September and anyone willing to join it should let the Session Clerk know by mid August.

A big thank you to Ann, Anne, Annita, Eileen, Ena, Graeme, John, Julie, Liz, Margaret K, Muriel, Nan, Sheena and Shona.



Communion Service

The Kirk Session has decided that the recent practice of bringing your own elements to represent the bread and wine should continue for Communion on Sunday 5th June. It is hoped that the situation will continue to improve sufficiently over the summer months to allow a return to the normal procedure of being served by the elders in October.

Plant a tree for the Jubilee

Also on Communion Sunday we will acknowledge the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by having a new pear tree blessed prior to it being planted alongside the apple and plum trees already in the grounds. A cake will be available for the congregation to share in the hall during the usual tea and coffee hospitality after the morning service.



The following is the section of the latest draft of the Presbytery Mission Plan which directly affects St. Cuthbert's. Unless there are any changes this is the version that will be voted on at the Presbytery meeting on 14 June.

Proposed: Parish Grouping:

.	Ardrossan and Saltcoats	2.0 MWS
	Stevenston	1.0 MWS
	West Kilbride	1.0 MWS
Post to support Priority Areas:		0.5 MDS
	(+)	1.0 OLM)

MWS Minister of Word and Sacrament

Rationale

In Mission Group 2, we initially envisaged a team ministry with 4.5 FTE posts with multiple places of worship and one Kirk Session. However, after feedback from Kirk Sessions, this was felt to be too great a first step and so we are now suggesting a plan with the Ardrossan and Saltcoats congregations uniting (2 MWS, 2 buildings); the Stevenston congregations uniting (1 MWS, 1 building) and then both united charges forming a Parish Grouping¹ with West Kilbride (1 MWS, 1 building). There would also be a 0.5 MDS who would work specifically to support Priority Areas as there are two in this Mission Group. The hope is that after a time of consolidation, that the Parish Grouping may move towards a team ministry following this first step. The Appraisal Committee would see there being one worshipping community per town (Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston and West Kilbride) but held together in a Parish Grouping to allow working together and to encourage teamwork and support. However, trying to work out how to implement this has been tricky. Currently in Ardrossan and Saltcoats there are parish boundaries that make little sense. There is also only one congregation based in Ardrossan with three based in Saltcoats (though Ardrossan and Saltcoats Kirkgate does have a parish that extends into Ardrossan).

We wanted to make sure that each church is properly resourced, but in this particular scenario, it is difficult to work out who should unite with whom. As is outlined below, it is envisaged that we keep the Ardrossan Park and Ardrossan and Saltcoats Kirkgate buildings as being the most suitable for mission - so to unite these two churches doesn't make sense as it would leave the Saltcoats churches without a building.

We considered uniting Ardrossan Park and Saltcoats North - but this has the disadvantage of crossing town boundaries.

Our solution is that all four churches in Ardrossan and Saltcoats would unite with two places of worship, one Kirk Session and a team ministry of 2 MWS.

In Stevenston, a Basis of Dissolution is being negotiated with Stevenston Ardeer as its building is in an unsatisfactory state and there is a significant shortfall. The General Trustees have agreed to take on full responsibility for the Ardeer building when any form of adjustment has been enacted. However, this does not mean that ministry in Ardeer will cease. A union between Stevenston High Kirk and Stevenston Livingstone will incorporate the former parish of Ardeer to form one Stevenston church. The 0.5 MDS in this Mission Group acknowledges the fact that Ardeer and the parish of Ardrossan and Saltcoats Kirkgate are Priority Areas and we would see the MDS working mainly in this area.

It is clear that West Kilbride has more links with Mission Group 2 than other Mission Groups. One of the advantages in having West Kilbride as part of this Mission Group is that it allows an increased total of FTE posts in this area which would offer an enriched approach which would be of benefit to the whole grouping.

Though each parish would function with their own Kirk Session, the Parish Grouping will encourage working together between congregations. It is hoped that any Basis of Parish Grouping would include FTE working together to support one another in pastoral work and mission initiatives and encourage congregations to work together.

As in other areas, the use of non-stipendiary ministries would enhance this Parish Grouping (OLM and Readers).

There are good mission initiatives happening across the whole area including Messy Church, supporting the Foodbank, Care and Share for the homeless and more. There are also existing links between the churches and some ecumenical working (particularly in Ardrossan).

Buildings

Category²

Ardrossan and Saltcoats: Kirkgate	A
Ardrossan: Park	A
Saltcoats: North	B
Saltcoats: St. Cuthbert's	B
Stevenston: Livingstone	A
Stevenston: High Kirk	B
West Kilbride Parish Church	A

Buildings Rationale

In considering the utilisation of buildings throughout the area we recognise that congregations have expressed the strong desire to have both a clearly identifiable minister and building for worship, mission and outreach suitable for the 21st Century.

Ardrossan Park church is now the only church building physically located in the town of Ardrossan. There has been significant new building to the northeast of the former A78 High Road that is likely to continue as the whole conurbation expands towards the new A78 bypass road. We consider that the Ardrossan Park church building is in the right place in an area of huge potential for missional development. The building scores well in the AMBA Audit and should be retained.

In Saltcoats, the North church has suffered gradual decline and lack of investment clearly contributing to its lower score in the AMBA audit and this building should be disposed of.

St. Cuthbert's scores well in the AMBA Audit, but it is clear that a large amount of money needs to be spent on the tower. We are firmly of the view that the potential for development of missional activity across the wider area needs to be prioritised over any large scale spending that might be likely to become necessary to maintain a building, however attractive.

Ardrossan and Saltcoats: Kirkgate scores well in the AMBA Audit and has recently completed a large scale restoration and refurbishment inside and outside which allows it to be used in multiple ways. It is located nearer to the town centre of Saltcoats than any other church building and is therefore very visible.

Whilst there is work needing to be done on the church halls, additional resources from the union in this area would help develop them to allow a building that is suitable for mission.

In Stevenston, both remaining buildings are challenging in terms of maintenance and upkeep, but the AMBA audit shows up the greater difficulties that would be faced by basing the new church for Stevenston in the High Kirk.

A new build was expressed by those in the High Kirk as the preferred option, possibly by developing the land surrounding the High Kirk - though there could be planning constraints on what could be done in a largely green space and getting funding may be challenging. What might be more possible would be the development of a missional outreach station in the Hayocks area where considerable activity has already been undertaken by the High Kirk.

Whilst a new build may be an aspiration for the future, considering all the evidence from AMBA audits and trying to encourage mission and service to the community, it is proposed that the current Livingstone Church would be the best suited to achieving this aim.

West Kilbride has a building which is well suited to purpose being recently refurbished in 2014 and being the only church building in the town. It scores well in the AMBA audit and should be retained.

² Category A = Retained / Category B = Disposed of.

Thank you

A big thank you to Peter Livingstone for his "Hymn Reflections" article in this issue of our church magazine.

Thanks also to those who respond positively and faithfully on a regular basis to my requests for news material.

We are grateful to those who are happy to receive their copy by email as it saves on the printing time and costs. The next issue will be the September magazine and if anyone else is able to receive it electronically please send a message to the email address on the front cover.

DREAMS

*If you would have your dreams come true
In bed you must not stay,
For dreams that never see the light
Are apt to fade away.
They need hard work and effort and
Foundations strong and deep,
And that will never happen if
You choose to oversleep.
So up and at 'em – rise and shine,
Attack those plans with zest.
It's when your dream has been fulfilled
It's time to take your rest!*

Margaret Ingall