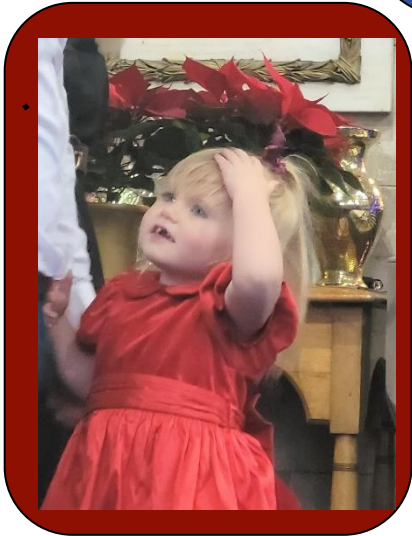


St. Cuthbert's Church Magazine

"Suffer little children to come unto me"

*Just
Baptised*

*Lareina
Coia
Jackson*



*Me
too!*

*Sophie
Violet Gillies*

February 2023

Website: www.saltcoats-stcuthberts.org.uk
Email: webmaster@saltcoats-stcuthberts.org.uk
Scottish Charity Number: SC002905

Dates for your Diary

- Friday, 10th February, evening Quiz in church hall
- Friday, 3rd March, evening. Ceilidh
- Sunday, 23rd April: afternoon City of Glasgow Chorus
- Sunday 14th May - Start of Christian EOD week.
Soup and sandwich lunch after church
- Saturday 10th June: barbecue at church 3 to 6pm.

Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

Sometimes people talk about the January “blues” when the days are short, the weather can be bleak, and the excitement of Christmas is behind us. However, even in January we find each day lengthening by a few minutes as we eagerly look for the green shoots of snowdrops and crocuses appearing through the frosty, saturated soil. Spring is coming, even though we are just at the start of February.

As a manse family, we have the joy of a wedding in February, so that has brightened our days and kept us busy in January with finalising arrangements for the happy day. A big “Thank you” to our church family in St. Cuthbert's for helping with church preparations to make this a special day for Deborah and Fraser and our families.

Over the last month or two we have worshipped through the special Christian Festivals of Christmas and Epiphany, and taken the opportunity to worship on one Sunday with brothers and sisters in Park Church and to welcome them into our sanctuary on another Sunday.

We have celebrated with joy the Sacrament of Baptism, welcoming family and friends of Sophie and Lareina to a family service affirming the welcome of all ages into the fellowship of the Church.

Despite the uncertainty brought about by the Presbytery Mission Plan (PMP) with its projected unions and consequent building closures being at the back of our minds, we are continuing to make plans for the coming months. Elsewhere in the magazine you will see details of various social events and fund-raising activities planned for our congregation. Please come along and invite friends to some or all of these.

As you know, the Kirk Session made an appeal against the decision to close our building, as did several other congregations in North Ayrshire, but we still await the decision by the national committee on this appeal.

This uncertainty is not just affecting St. Cuthbert's, but is having an impact right across Scotland as the Kirk tries to rationalise buildings and pool resources of personnel and property.

The intention behind this process is to ‘relieve’ some of the pressures arising through falling membership, clergy numbers and congregational income, so that we can co-operatively continue our mission and outreach to the people of Scotland with fewer anxieties.

However, at grassroots level, for members and ministers alike, this has resulted in different anxieties as we experience feelings akin to bereavement, facing the loss of much-loved places of worship and fellowship.

Even before the PMP's proposal about the four Church of Scotland congregations in Saltcoats and Ardrossan becoming one parish with two places of worship and two ministers, I knew that my “Reviewable Tenure” was coming to an end in July. The impact of the PMP has made the search for a retirement home more urgent. Some of you know that I have been looking for a house in Fife. After viewing over twenty houses, I put in an offer for a house which appealed to my heart as well as my head. That offer has been accepted, and I have shared with the Kirk Session my intention to retire in April. Easter Sunday is likely to be my last Sunday in the pulpit, using the following week's holiday to pack, clean the manse behind me, and move to be nearer Deborah.

It has been a privilege to be part of the St. Cuthbert's Church family, and I will treasure special memories of your kindness and support over the last five years. It has been an unusual and challenging time for all of us, with Covid, Lockdown and the PMP affecting us individually and as a congregation.

As I move into a new phase of my life, I know you face significant changes, too. I hope that my retiral will enable the church in Saltcoats and Ardrossan to progress more quickly to your search for someone who can serve as part of a new team to lead you forward in worship and service.

May God bless you all on the path ahead and in the choices you make together!

With every blessing,

Sarah Nicol.

Church Register

Baptism

Jesus said, "Let the children come to Me ..."

18 December Sophie Violet Gillies, daughter of Elizabeth and Ian, Saltcoats

22 January Lareina Coia Jackson, daughter of Kirsty and Craig, Ardrossan

Deaths

Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions ..."

4 December 2022 Mr Fulton Stewart, Saltcoats

17 January 2023 Mr John Gallagher, Saltcoats

Readers' Rota

February 5 Tom Sommerville 19 Tom Macintyre

12 Raymond Montgomerie 26 Graeme Sutherland

March 5 Marian Macintyre

Notes from Kirk Session

From February as another step towards returning to pre covid procedure the collection will be uplifted during the service.

The celebration of Holy Communion has been delayed until Sunday 12th February at 10.45am.

Rev. Alan Ward will conduct the service on Sunday 5th February.

Holy Week. Joint services by the Ardrossan and Saltcoats Churches

- Maundy Thursday Service in Saltcoats North Parish Church
- Good Friday Service in Saltcoats St. Cuthbert's Parish Church

Appreciation was recorded to Bea Nicholson who has retired as Safeguarding Convenor and to Anne Riddell who has taken on the role.

Until further notice any Guild enquiries should be directed to Tom Macintyre during Bea Nicholson's convalescence.

William Parker Session Clerk

THE TRAIN OF LIFE

Life is like a journey on a train

With it's station, changes of routes and with accidents!

At birth we boarded the train and met our parents,
and we believe they will always travel on our side

However, at some station our parents will step down
from the train leaving us on this journey alone.

As time goes by other people will board the train
and they will be significant.

i.e. our siblings, friends, children, and even the love of our life.

Many will step down and leave a permanent vacuum.
Others will go so unnoticed that we don't realise
that they vacated their seats!

Which is very sad when you think about it.

This train ride will be full of joy, sorrow, fantasy,
expectations, hellos, goodbyes and farewells.

Success consists of having a good relationship
with all the passengers - requiring that we give the best of ourselves.

The mystery to everyone is:

we do not know at which station we ourselves will step down.

So we must live in the best way –

love, forgive, and offer the best of who we are.

It is important to do this because when the time comes for us
to step down and leave our seat empty –

we should leave behind beautiful memories

for those who will continue to travel on the train of life.

Have a joyful journey this year on the train of life.

Reaping success and giving lots of love.

Thank the passengers you have been happy to have on your train.

More importantly give thanks for the journey that you've shared.

Guild

Thank you to those who joined us for Christmas lunch. We hope you enjoyed the food, fun and fellowship.

The next few meetings in our 2023 programme is below and we would be delighted to welcome anyone along to any of our meetings.

Wed 01 Feb Lesley Boyle "Music and Poetry"

Wed 15 Feb To be arranged

Wed 01 Mar Tom Sommerville "North Sea and beyond – a Medics story"

Wed 15 Mar End of season party "Preparing for the future"

Tom Macintyre

Plant Sale

There will be a plant sale this year, but it will probably be on the same basis as the last two years.

Running the sale in this way reduces the work for myself (and others).

Some plants may be available at the church after the sale.

The list of available plants will be in the April magazine and orders will be accepted from then on, a first come first served basis.

Ann Turner

Church flowers

Many thanks for contributions towards the purchase of the poinsettias in December.

As in previous years dates are available for anyone who wishes to put flowers into church to commemorate a special occasion or loved one . I can arrange access to the church for anyone who wishes to purchase and arrange the flowers themselves .

Alternatively a donation can be made to the flower fund .

Book Stall

We now have a wide selection of books available for our Spring Sale .

3 Books for £1

Annita Gillespie Flower convenor

Noah

The Lord came to Noah in 2022. The earth was wicked and over populated and the Lord instructed Noah to build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans.

"Here are the plans" said the Lord "but hurry for in 6 months I will start the rain, and the rain will continue for forty days and forty nights flooding everything."

Six months later the rains started. The Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping, standing ankle deep in water but there was no Ark.

" Noah" he asked "Where is the Ark?"

"Forgive me Lord" begged Noah " but things have changed since I built the first Ark. First I needed outline planning consent and then I had to resubmit your plans so that they complied with current Building Regulations. I was told to get a structural engineer's report to calculate the stresses and also to draw up a Health and Safety Report to cover the building project. Then my neighbours complained that I would be violating local bylaws by carrying out a boat building business in a residential area and, in any case, I was exceeding the height limitations for this rural district. I had to go to the Development Appeal Board in order to get things moving. By then, getting enough wood was a problem. You cant go sawing down trees like in the old days. All growing timber in the district is subject to Tree Preservation orders. Eventually I did a deal with B&Q. Have you seen the price of wood since Brexit? They weren't too keen on giving me credit when someone told them I might not be around in six months time.

Then I received a Notice from the Highways Agency informing me that I would need special clearance for transporting the Ark to the sea, together with a letter from the National Power Authority wanting six months notice for the temporary removal of power lines along the route. I tried to point out that I wasn't going to take the Ark to the sea, but the sea was coming to my Ark!

Should any of my workers test positive for Covid I would require to carry out a Workplace Risk Assessment.

Somehow the Ministry for the Environment got wind of this and told me that I could not continue building the Ark without submitting a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment on my proposed flood.

I had to get help building the Ark, but I'm still trying to resolve a complaint from the Human Right Commission as to how many ethnic minority workers I'm supposed to have in the building team.. And then, of course, the Trade Unions want me to hire only union members who have Ark building experience and you can guess, Lord, there aren't many of them around these days. How the Inland Revenue got to hear about all this I don't know. They got a court order to freeze my bank account because they claim that I intend leaving the country illegally halfway through the tax year and may avoid any outstanding tax.

When I started getting a few animals together, the Animal Rights group sued me. They insisted that I would be confining wild animals against their will, even although I argued strongly that I was in fact trying to save them. And when they learned that I was planning to cram hundreds of animals into my Ark for forty days and nights they just went bananas. They immediately got a Court Injunction on the grounds of cruelty. Even with just a few animals, the neighbours got a Noise Abatement Order slapped on me and then another official turned up about the smell. I don't know what will happen when the laughing hyenas arrive!

Finally, in today's post there's a letter from the tax man informing me that if I use the boat for personal use I'll get assessed for benefits in kind, and another letter from Customs and Excise claiming that as a zoo proprietor I have to register for VAT.

So, Lord, please forgive me, but you can see that with all this legislation it will be some years before I can finish the Ark."

Suddenly the skies cleared and the sun began to shine. A rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder.

"Does this mean Lord that you're not going to destroy the world?" He asked.

"No," said the Lord,

"Your Government has already beaten me to it!"

Following the service on Sunday 29th January Sarah will be on holiday up to and including 5th February the day after Deborah's wedding.

Anyone requiring the services of a minister during that time should contact either their elder or the Session Clerk.