

# Fossoway Church

## News



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**Easter Edition**

**March 2021**



## **Minister's Musings 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021**

This report was sent out by email at the beginning of February, so my apologies to those of you who have already seen it.

I think I could be speaking for just about everybody if I said that we were very glad that January is now passed. Always a difficult time of year because of the 'post-Christmas blues', it was made immeasurably more so by the news regarding the Coronavirus pandemic, the rising numbers of hospital admissions and deaths, the lockdown and the weather. I always think that once we get past January we begin to look more hopefully to the year ahead. There are certainly positive things happening with several vaccines now, new treatments available and a rapid roll out of the vaccination programme. The number of hospital admissions is levelling off and beginning to fall as are the number of new cases. We pray that the trends continue and hold in our prayers all those who are suffering from the effects of the disease and all those grieving for their loved ones who have died.

It was this time last year that I started back at work after being off due to having a knee replacement operation. As I look back through my diary I see that it was on 15<sup>th</sup> March that, due to advice received regarding Coronavirus, we decided to cancel Refresh, House Group and Film Night and paper towel dispensers were put in the church and we decided it was too risky to hand out printed copies of the Order of service on Sundays. On the 17<sup>th</sup> March we received our first Coronavirus Guidance from the Church of Scotland National Office asking for all worship services to cease and on the Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> March the church was only opened for a short time for Personal Prayer and Reflection. On the 24<sup>th</sup> March I sent out information advising that our church building would be closed from 29<sup>th</sup> March onwards and it wasn't until the 17<sup>th</sup> Sept that we re-opened for a Time of Personal Prayer.

I was only back at work for one week full-time when we began to enter lockdown. Sometimes, looking back, it feels as if I have been in lockdown since Oct 2019!

2020 was a year of many challenges and much suffering and I think that most of us would like to forget it, yet, I think it will haunt our memories for a very long time. 2021 has had a more difficult start and yet we can see light at the end of the tunnel.

### **Advent and Christmas**

Our Church opened again for Sunday worship during Advent with worship services alternating with a Time for Personal Prayer (with the appropriate Covid restrictions in place to keep everybody safe), and of course, we were advised to close again by 10<sup>th</sup> Jan. It took a lot of organising to re-open the church with all the safety restrictions in place and my thanks go to all who acquired and installed the equipment necessary and arranged the seating etc. My thanks as well to all the welcome team who took the risks and were there to help and guide. My thanks as well to Ian Boe who personally chose the material and arranged the PowerPoint and music for the Time of Prayer and Ian and the A/V team who provided the usual A/V along with the music for worship.

The church was beautifully decorated inside for Christmas as usual with a Christmas tree and flowers and candles. My thanks to Carrie Watson for this and her 'team' which was probably Nigel! The outside of the church also looked very good this year with a special back lit cross and Christmas tree.



Our thanks to David Chisholm, our Property Convenor, for all his work sourcing and installing the cross and also the outside electrical connections that were needed. Our thanks go as well to the Kilted Christmas Tree Company and Glendevon Energy for their generous sponsorship of the lovely Christmas tree, base and cluster lights and to all those who helped erect, decorate and dismantle the tree and to Willie Black who put up the outside Nativity scene.

Over the months of 2020 some ongoing maintenance work was carried out on the roof, painting the doors, electrical connections etc. Thanks to all our Property Group members for all their ongoing work to keep our church in good condition.

### **Christmas Afternoon Tea**

Some folks from the church took round some goodies in a bag so that some of the more isolated folks in our community could have a Christmas Afternoon Tea and a wee chat on the doorstep, with appropriate distancing of course. Thanks to all the organisers, bakers and deliverers. Here is an excerpt from a card I received at Christmas:

“A thousand thanks to the Fossoway Afternoon Tea ladies for the wonderful surprise bag of cheer delivered by Helena. I had forgotten about the 5\* bakers, the melting shortbread, feather-light pastry, cupcakes like no other, and addictive chocolate. I have not tasted cloutie dumpling like that since my mother made it ... Thank you all for such a wonderful surprise and delight.”

### **Light up Fossoway, Nativity Trail and Christmas Carol anagram quiz**

It was a great delight to see the response to the Light up Fossoway Initiative, it was lovely to drive through the village and see all the lights, it made it all quite magical. Many thanks to all who took part in bringing some light to the darkness of those winter nights and thanks to Janet for organising it. The Nativity Trail was enjoyed by all and many of you also had some fun completing the Christmas Anagram Quiz. Many thanks to all those who planned and encouraged these events.



## **Church Bell and Cross**

Just before we went into lockdown our church bell was modified and is now operated electronically and can be programmed. Many people have mentioned to me that they find the sound of the bell on a Sunday morning to be very comforting and that it is a reminder that even though the church is not open we are still there for our community. The bell was rung for the NHS carers on Thursdays, for Remembrance Day and on Christmas Eve. Our thanks to David Chisholm once again for organising this.

The cross that is usually put up for Easter played a large role in our community presence as well this year. It was put up for Easter Sunday, and was changed for Pentecost and Harvest and Remembrance Sunday another symbolic presence. It was very beautiful and out thanks to Carrie and Nigel Watson for doing this for us.

## **Cleaning**

Never before has the cleaning of the church been as important as it was last year so I want to thank Heather Robertson our Church Officer for all her work deep cleaning the church and keeping it a safe place for us all to be in.

## **ZOOM**

Throughout this time of pandemic and closure we have continued to worship by Zoom on Sunday mornings and to celebrate Holy Communion once a month by Zoom as well. Our first Zoom service took place on Easter Sunday. It was a very steep learning curve for me so my thanks to you all for your patience and persistence. It became much easier once Ian joined me in hosting the services and I think we have a very good set up now. My thanks to Ian for taking up this challenge so well. If anybody would like help to use Zoom please let me know and we I can book a private meeting on Zoom.

## **Weekly Programme**

I began what I call my 'Weekly Programme' on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020, sending out almost daily emails each week, and have continued this throughout all these months hoping that it has been of help to some folks and has been a way of keeping in touch. Over Christmas I received several emails and notes in Christmas cards thanking me and 'my team' for all the work that we do on this, so I pass these thanks on now, and my own, to Ian and Debbie, and to all who have contributed a Thought on Thursday or an item to share for helping to keep us all going.

## **Website**

During this time as well we have updated our website. It is now a joint website with Cleish Church it went 'live' at the end of September and is updated regularly. My thanks to Ian Boe and the website team for all their work on this and my thanks to Ian for taking up his new role as website editor and his continued maintenance of the website. Our website has become a precious source of information and contact during these days of social distancing. The website can be found at <https://cleishandfossowaychurches.org.uk>.

## **Newsletter and Letters**

We managed to produce two newsletters last year thanks to the efforts of Ian Boe, our former Newsletter editor, and Donna McBain, our present Newsletter Editor. Our thanks to them both for doing this task and the handover both of which were made much more difficult due to pandemic restrictions. Our thanks as well to elders and newsletter delivery people who have distributed not just the newsletter but other letters and the Christmas card too. All doing the vital work of keeping us in touch with one another.

## **Virtual Meetings**

The Kirk Session has continued to administer the church affairs and meet through Zoom and make decisions either at our meetings or through email. One of our Elders Betty Stirling decided this was the time to resign from being an active elder (one can never resign from being an elder, eldership is a lifelong office!). Normally we would have thanked Betty during the service on a Sunday morning however, in these difficult days that has not been possible but the Kirk session did arrange for some flowers and a thankyou card to be delivered via Tom our Treasurer. I take this opportunity to record the Kirk Session's, and my own thanks to Betty for all her hard work and diligence over the years of her active eldership on behalf of the Kirk Session. The Kirk Session has been dedicated in working through all the issues this past year and my thanks to all of them and especially Janet our Session Clerk who does so much that nobody else really sees. She is a precious treasure for our church.

## **Finances**

As can be imagined due to the closure of our churches, and not being able to do any fundraising, our finances took a bit of a dip. Tom, our Treasurer, very diligently contacted people to arrange for folks to give by Standing Order rather than using the weekly donation envelopes and even collected some envelopes personally. If you would like to give by Standing Order you will find details on the website or just get in touch with Tom or myself and we can send them to you. A letter was sent out with the Christmas card advising about our finances and some of you very generously responded and we managed to raise £4,500 which will help us in what might again be a difficult year ahead. Many thanks to all of you who are remembering to support us at this time because even although the church building is closed we still need to cover maintenance and many other issues.

Finally. I'd like to thank you all for your kind words and support of me over these last months and for all the kind messages you sent in cards and emails at Christmas time. I really appreciated them all.

Take care,  
Keep safe  
God bless  
Lis

## **Prayer**

*God of all blessings,  
source of all life,  
giver of all grace:*

*We thank you for the gift of life:  
for the breath  
that sustains life,  
for the food of this earth  
that nurtures life,  
for the love of family and friends  
without which there would be no life.*

*We thank you for the mystery of creation:  
for the beauty  
that the eye can see,  
for the joy  
that the ear may hear,  
for the unknown  
that we cannot behold filling the universe with wonder,  
for the expanse of space  
that draws us beyond the definitions of our selves.*

*We thank you for setting us in communities:  
for families  
who nurture our becoming,  
for friends  
who love us by choice,  
for companions at work,  
who share our burdens and daily tasks,  
for strangers  
who welcome us into their midst,  
for people from other lands  
who call us to grow in understanding,  
for children  
who lighten our moments with delight,  
for the unborn,  
who offer us hope for the future.*

*We thank you for this day:  
for life  
and one more day to love,  
for opportunity  
and one more day to work for justice and peace,  
for neighbours  
and one more person to love  
and by whom be loved,  
for your grace  
and one more experience of your presence,  
for your promise:  
to be with us,  
to be our God,  
and to give salvation.*

*For these, and all blessings,  
we give you thanks, eternal, loving God,  
through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

*(By Vienna Cobb Anderson)*

## Come and Be

Come and Be

Be...

Be still....

Be still and know....

Be still and know that I Am...

Be still and know that I am God.

Come...

Come and Be...

Come and be held...

Come and be transformed...

Come and be transformed into who?

Into You..

Come...

A poem submitted by Debbie Hill



**“Christianity is a lifestyle - a way of being in the world that is simple, non-violent, shared, and loving. However, we made it into an established "religion" (and all that goes with that) and avoided the lifestyle change itself. One could be warlike, greedy, racist, selfish, and vain in most of Christian history, and still believe that Jesus is one's "personal Lord and Savior" . . . The world has no time for such silliness anymore. The suffering on Earth is too great.”**

~RICHARD ROHR

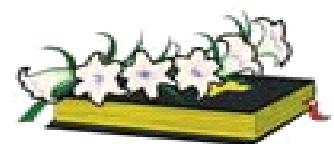


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## Funerals Conducted

Mr Gordon Kendrick - 18<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020

Mr Robert Wilkie - 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021



In Loving Memory

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## Notes from the Session

There was a Kirk Session Meeting held on zoom on Thursday Feb 12<sup>th</sup>

It was noted that

- The reopening of the church during December went well. The church now has all the hygiene equipment ready for next time.
- Flooding in West Crook Way is still an ongoing and serious problem for local residents, so, after some discussion it was agreed that Gillian was to get someone from Scottish Water to come on site with herself, David and hopefully Mike Barnacle, to aim to resolve the issue once and for all.
- The 5 yearly electrical inspection took place in early January. It highlighted 2 issues which need addressed. For both of these issues we, the Trustees of our church, have a duty of care.
  - ◆ The emergency lighting needs upgrading. This will cost approx. £850 and needs done asap. **This work was approved by Session.**
  - ◆ The heaters and their cables in the JC room need assessed. It is thought that there could be cable damage under the floor in the JC room.

The rest of the building passed the inspection.

- Financial appeal. There was a positive response to this with approx. £4500 being raised, including gift aid. However, this is less than half of what is required to keep our finances out of the red for 2021.
- Christmas Review is detailed in our Minister's Report.
- On behalf of the Session, Tom took a card of thanks and a bunch of flowers to Betty as a gesture of our appreciation for all she has done for Fossoway Church and to mark her retirement from Fossoway Kirk Session.

Our Minister asked all elders to give some thought and prayer for names for new elders.

If you have any questions on any of these items or any other church related issues please do not hesitate to call me on 840225.

Janet



# Christian Aid Week 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021



## **Rose's story**

Rose fights hunger every day. This is her climate crisis. This is her story.

Rose is caught in a cycle of climate chaos. From severe drought to flooding, extreme weather robs her of what she needs to survive: a reliable source of water.

When she was a child, Rose remembers how often the rains would fall, giving fruit to the baobab trees and providing plenty of nutritious food to eat.

'When I was a young girl, there was plenty of food,' Rose says. Now, the rains are totally unreliable. The climate crisis has galvanised extreme weather and Rose's community are feeling the brunt of it. **For months at a time, Rose and her family lives with drought.**

Because of climate change, I worry a lot about food. I pray to God that the rainfall will become normal like it used to be.

- Rose Katanu Jonathan.

***You can give to Christian Aid on line by going to their web site, contact Christian Aid Scotland directly on [edinburgh@christian-aid.org](mailto:edinburgh@christian-aid.org) or phone Janet 840225 for a Christian Aid gift envelope***



Rose has to go on a long journey to collect water. - **Adam Finch/ Christian Aid**

Rose strives to provide for her grandchildren who live with her. She does all she can to give them happy childhoods, like the times she remembers when there was plenty of food. But the climate crisis is driving her to the brink.

In times of drought, Rose sets out on a long and dangerous journey every morning to collect water for her family. She walks on an empty stomach.

'Because I am old, I can't walk very fast. When I get home I just rest in the evening. I have no energy to do anything else,' Rose says.

Even when the rains do come, relief for Rose is often short lived.

There is a nearby earth dam just minutes away from Rose's home. It should be a life-line. But it's not wide enough or deep enough for everyone's needs. It runs out of water too quickly.

Imagine how dispirited Rose must feel watching the rain fall for days, only to find the dam empty just a short while later.

What's more, the rains are much heavier than they should be, putting Rose's community at risk of flooding.

Rose is over 60 years old and simply won't have the strength to fetch water from further afield for much longer. **We need to fight this climate crisis together.**

I believe God gives me strength and helps me persevere. I pray that God will help people to help me.

- Rose Katanu Jonathan.

With a reliable source of water, people like Rose would be free from long, painful journeys. They would be able to grow fresh vegetables to eat. And they would be able to protect themselves from the dangers of coronavirus. With such dire need, every last drop of water that falls in Rose's community is precious.

**This Christian Aid Week, will you stand with people like Rose for every last drop and help them fight the climate crisis?**



Rose and her community are working together to clear the weeds and rubbish from the Itukisya dam. - **Adam Finch/ Christian Aid**

Your gifts could help communities build better earth dams to harvest more water; sow drought-tolerant crops that grow even with the fewest of drops; or set up an advocacy group to demand change at the highest level and put a stop to this climate crisis.

**People like Rose need every last drop to survive this climate crisis. Your gifts will help ensure they can. Give today and help ensure people like Rose have the water they need to live.**

***You can give to Christian Aid on line by going to their web site, contact Christian Aid Scotland directly on [edinburgh@christian-aid.org](mailto:edinburgh@christian-aid.org) or phone Janet 840225 for a Christian Aid gift envelope***

## MONEY NEWS

The accounts for 2020 were approved by Session and then audited by Annika Roberts. We are still hoping that we will be able to hold our Stated Annual Meeting later in the year.

For the year Total Offerings came in at £36,313 compared to £36,995 in 2019. This sum would have been considerably less but due to our Christmas Appeal letter we raised £3,650 and I was able to gift aid a considerable amount of this sum. Tax Recovered on our offerings was £8,870 compared to £9,123 in 2019. Other offerings were at £325 compared to £405 the previous year.

Our Other Income came in at £1,333 compared to £9,431 in 2019. Of this our Regular Fundraising element amounted to £1,099 compared to £8,770 as we had no major events and had only a few film nights, 10 Refresh Thursdays with the largest amount coming from the sale of paintings at £145.

This gave us Total Income of £46,843 compared to £55,954 the previous year, a drop of £9,111.

Under Expenditure the first section is National Ministry and Mission & Wider Work coming in at £27,949 compared to £30,254 in 2019.

The second section is Local Staffing Costs totalling £4,939 compared to £7,335 in 2019. The minister's travelling expenses were down by £788 and the Other Salaries, for organists, was down by £1,540.

The third section is Building Costs totalling £8,598 as against £8,948 in 2019 – nothing of note to report.

The fourth section is Other Local Costs at £7,518 as against £7,632 in 2019 – again nothing of any import here.

This gave us Total Expenditure of £49,063 compared to £54,171 in 2019, a reduction of £5,108.

Thus we spent £2,220 more than our income for the year.

Under the Fabric Fund our only income was the £960 for VAT recovery on items spent in 2019. During the year we spent £970 on a new dehumidifier, £130, PAT testing, £219, items due to Covid, £320, new kettles, £54, and £247 as our share of a new washing machine for the manse.

The Fabric Fund now stands at £9,253 compared to £9,167 in 2019 – this will be considerably reduced in 2021 due to the 5 year electrical inspection and sundry work associated with the electrics.

Our reserves with Church Head Office now stands at £2,827, having had to withdraw £7,000 more than we credited. This was in line with expectations but is not sustainable again this year where we will have to consider all options. Hopefully we will be able to restart some fundraising and re-open the church as soon as is possible.

**Tom Mechan**

## Cleish and Fossoway Churches Reopening March 28<sup>th</sup> 2021

### Service Arrangements

As you will be aware, the Scottish Government has announced that churches will provisionally be able to reopen from 26<sup>th</sup> March, dependent upon the situation re Covid-19.

The Kirk Sessions of both Cleish and Fossoway Churches have agreed to the following pattern of worship over the next few weeks. This is dependent upon the government continuing with their plans.

The following are important points to be aware of:

- a) Social distancing of 2m and other guidelines e.g. face masks to be worn, hand sanitizer used on entry, no singing in church etc, will still have to be in place meaning there will continue to be reduced seating capacity and safe entry and exit requirements in our church buildings
- b) If attending church, as before, you will have to provide details for Trace and Protect.
- c) Although many of you may have had your first vaccination, most folks will still be trying to keep safe and the guidance given out earlier about being careful if you are in an 'at risk' group, and seriously considering whether you should come to church or not, still remains in place.
- d) We are aware that many of you joining for worship by 'Zoom' would want this to continue.
- e) We know that many of you would really like to worship in church on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. With restricted seating this means that our booking systems will be in operation once again.

To book your seat for Fossoway Church please phone Janet Harper 01577 840225

To book your seat for Cleish Church please phone Margaret McMillan 01506 825641

- f) To be able to provide services at Cleish and Fossoway Church buildings and on Zoom on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, the times have had to change and the service will be shortened to approx. 30 mins so that Rev Lis can travel from place to place.
- g) Following Easter Sunday Rev Lis will be off on annual leave for 2 weeks so both churches will be open for a Time of Prayer and there will be a joint 'Zoom' service afterwards.

We will then revert to the pattern of worship of alternating prayer and services in the churches followed by a joint 'Zoom' service

**Please note the new times.** Some folks felt that 11.30am was too late so we have adjusted the time so that the Zoom service is a little earlier than it was before Christmas.



## Worship Services

March 21<sup>st</sup> - 10.30am joint churches Zoom morning worship

March 28<sup>th</sup> - Palm Sunday

9.45am morning worship service at Fossoway Church

11am morning worship service at Cleish Church

12 noon joint churches Zoom morning worship

April 1<sup>st</sup> - Maundy Thursday

7pm Celebration of Holy Communion by 'Zoom'

April 2<sup>nd</sup> - Good Friday

7pm Good Friday Refection by 'Zoom'

April 4<sup>th</sup> - Easter Sunday

9.45am morning worship service at Fossoway Church

11am morning worship service at Cleish Church

12 noon joint churches Zoom morning worship

April 11<sup>th</sup> - 9.45am - Fossoway Church – Prayer Time

9.45am – Cleish Church – Prayer Time

11am – joint churches Zoom morning worship conducted by Ewen Gilchrist

April 18<sup>th</sup> - 9.45am - Fossoway Church – Prayer Time

9.45am – Cleish Church – Prayer Time

11am - joint churches Zoom morning worship conducted by Ewen Gilchrist

April 25<sup>th</sup> - 9.45am Fossoway Church - morning worship

9.45am Cleish Church – Prayer Time

11am – joint churches Zoom morning worship

May 2<sup>nd</sup> - 9.45am Cleish Church – morning worship

9.45am Fossoway Church - Prayer Time

11am – joint churches Zoom morning worship

The pattern of Apr 25<sup>th</sup> and May 2<sup>nd</sup> to be repeated thereafter until further notice.

The Newsletter is now available on the church website, which can be accessed at <https://cleishandfossowaychurches.org.uk>, and by email from the Minister. If you would rather access the Newsletter via these means and no longer require a printed copy please let us know. This can be done by emailing [fossowaynewslettereditor@cleishandfossowaychurches.org.uk](mailto:fossowaynewslettereditor@cleishandfossowaychurches.org.uk)

## **Contact Numbers**

**Minister: The Rev Lis Stenhouse 01577 842128**

**Session Clerk: Mrs Janet Harper 01577 840225**