

FERINTOSH FOCUS

CHURCH NEWSLETTER
SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF CONON BRIDGE & MARYBURGH



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

As we exit the pandemic, life and activities at Ferintosh Parish Church are slowly resuming. Such has been the impact of the pandemic that getting back to 'normal' may be a long way off yet.

It is important that we maintain contact where possible and this has been done through Worship at Home, recorded sermons, Zoom services, the Ferintosh Focus, phone calls and socially distanced contact.

This edition of the Ferintosh Focus reflects on the activities which have resumed and the continued worship of God's Word.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

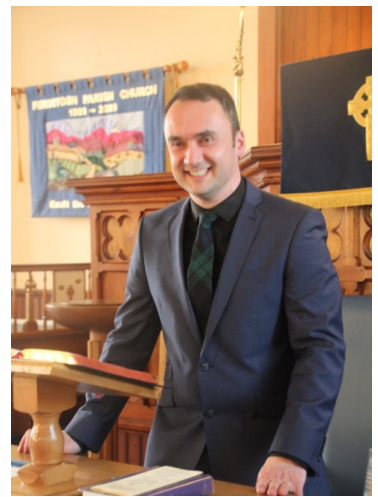
Simon Peter is well known for his prominence among the Apostles and for being the first of the original disciples of Jesus to recognise that He is the Messiah (Matt. 16:13-20). There is one title, however, that Peter has enjoyed in church history but which many people today might not know. Many Christians over the centuries have regarded Peter as the "Apostle of Hope."

When we read 1 Peter 1 it helps explain why Peter has been given this title. In the opening of his first epistle, Peter emphasises the great mercy of God in causing us "to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). In this verse, Peter refers to several important biblical concepts, including the sovereign regenerating power of God and the resurrection of our Saviour. But it is this concept of "living hope" that captures our attention.

First, we must recognise that Scripture often uses the word "hope" differently from the way we use it in our era. Typically, we use the word "hope" when we are referring to uncertainties. We might say that we "hope" our favourite sports team wins a game in order to express our desire while also conveying that we know a win is not certain. However, when the Apostles speak of our "hope" in Christ, they do not mean that our hope is uncertain. In Scripture, "hope" has reference to the confidence God's people have in the fulfilment of His promises.

Biblical hope refers to certainties, for the Lord is incapable of breaking His promises to us (Heb. 6:18). So, when the Apostles speak of the "hope of salvation" promised to us (1 Thess. 5:8), they speak of a surety. No "hope" that we may have is more secure than the hope of salvation promised to everyone who trusts in Christ alone.

Furthermore, Peter tells us that our hope is a "living hope" (1 Peter 1:3). This is another way of communicating its certainty to us.



The hope of salvation is not dead and inert but alive and active. It has a sustaining power that manifests itself in faith, since "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). There are many evidences that the objects of our faith are true, and our act of trusting in Christ is one of them. Our faith is the manifestation in the present of what we will enjoy in our glorified state. The reality of our future hope serves to generate and sustain faith in our hearts. We believe because what God has revealed is true.

Our Bible translations enable us to read God's Word in our own languages so that we might grow in faith. Yet in reading these translations, we must take care that we understand what the biblical authors meant and that we don't read into their words connotations from our own language that do not match their meaning. To do this, we must study God's Word carefully, taking time to meditate on and understand the context of each passage.

This 'living hope' is what led to the writing of this modern-day hymn:

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe

This gift of love and righteousness
 Scorned by the ones He came to save
 Till on that cross as Jesus died
 The wrath of God was satisfied
 For every sin on Him was laid
 Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
 Light of the world by darkness slain
 Then bursting forth in glorious day
 Up from the grave He rose again
 And as He stands in victory
 Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
 For I am His and He is mine
 Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
 This is the power of Christ in me
 From life's first cry to final breath
 Jesus commands my destiny
 No power of hell, no scheme of man
 Can ever pluck me from His hand
 Till He returns or calls me home
 Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

May God grant to each and everyone of us the
 grace to turn by faith to Christ alone where our
 only true and living hope is found.

Kind Regards, your Minister and friend,
 Stephen

We recently had a sermon which included Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus. This always reminds me of a poem I have on the kitchen notice-board called:

"Kitchen Prayer" by Klara Munkres.

Lord of pots and pans and things, since I've not
 time to be
 A saint by doing lovely things or watching late
 with Thee
 Or dreaming in the dawn light or storming
 Heaven's gates,
 Make me a saint by getting meals and washing
 up the plates.
 Although I must have Martha's hands I have a
 Mary mind
 And when I black the boots and shoes, Thy
 sandals, Lord, I find.
 I think of how they trod the earth, what time I
 scrub the floor,
 Accept this meditation Lord, I haven't time for
 more.

Janet Murray

Since the last newsletter we have continued to keep contact with Seaforth House either by outdoor services, or services at the open door. In between lockdowns we were only able to conduct one service in person indoors. The residents, with staff member helping were very interactive and the manager and staff are always very appreciative of our input there. Unfortunately we were not able to conduct an Easter service as another lockdown occurred but some prayer cards and seasonal chocolate were delivered.



GUILD

After a year or more of phone calls, e-mails, cards, gifts, doorstep meetings and Zoom meetings for those who were able, the Guild was delighted to meet in person in August last year for afternoon tea outdoors at the Museum Cafe, Strathpeffer Station. What a joyous occasion, as some people saw each other for the first time in 18 months, and everyone "caught up" energetically!

We managed three meetings in the Church hall, doors and windows open, jackets on, faces covered, hands sanitized, seated at tables a regulation distance apart, tea in our own cups and no home baking – before the Delta strain of Covid forced us to postpone our planned Christmas lunch. We were delighted to welcome four new members, though sad to have lost one long standing and loyal member in Isabel Mackenzie during "lock down"

We heard from our minister on the year's theme of "Lights and Bushels", one of three under the banner of "Look forward in Faith".

We were introduced to six new projects which we can choose to support over the three year cycle (more later on the one we have chosen for this year). And we heard the incredible success story of the Dingwall Men's Shed.

Once we were allowed to meet again in February, we had three more meetings, starting with an exploration of the year's discussion topic: the challenge of change; then we had an excellent presentation on the work of Mission Aviation Fellowship; and finally our AGM, when two members reported on Guild events they had recently attended.

On 14th March we enjoyed our postponed "Christmas meal" at the Cottage Bar. There was even turkey on the menu, and several delicious desserts in place of the Christmas pud! It was another happy occasion, underlining the importance of the fellowship aspect of the Guild's aim.



Regular monthly meetings have stopped now for the summer, but we look forward to meeting again from September, and we would love to welcome even more new members, women and men, any age, any interest.

GUILD PROJECT - STARCHILD

The aim of the project is "Finding the Light in EVERY CHILD". Six Ferintosh Guild members attended the meeting and were pleased to have the actual founder of the project to address us. What a joy it was to listen to this vibrant, engaging young woman, Michaela Foster Marsh, whose father had been a Church of Scotland minister in Glasgow. When Michaela was two years of age her parents decided to adopt a child, possibly with special needs. They were given a Ugandan boy the same age as Michaela and they immediately bonded. She used to tell her teachers and classmates that they were TWINS! Unfortunately when he was 18 years of age he died in a fire. She still mourns his loss 20 years later.

Michaela's desire to find any relatives of his took her to Uganda and out of the millions there she found some of his mother's family. (God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform!)

That is where STARCHILD starts. She saw how people, especially children with physical or intellectual disabilities were being treated. Out of that arose STARCHILD. That led to aims to build a HOLISTIC CENTRE called the SUNFLOWER SANCTUARY which will offer support, training and guidance to the most marginalised and help to prevent future generations of disabled people from being hidden in their communities. Not only was the disabled (or autistic) child disowned but the MOTHER ALSO by the father.

So this sanctuary is for mothers as much as for children.

Michaela has written a book about STARCHILD and we look forward to reading it.

Margaret Mackinnon



LADIES BIBLE STUDY

This group meets each week in the Church Hall on a Wednesday at 1.30pm. The meeting usually last for an hour. Mostly, we take a closer look at one of the Books of the Bible but sometimes different areas of Church life such as the Apostles Creed or Ten Commandments.

Throughout the pandemic, the group was able to meet, initially virtually via Zoom, then in the beautiful summer weather in the open air and now, at last, in person.

All ways were useful and we enjoyed being together and reading God's Word and discussing the meaning for us today.

For now we have been looking at the Book of Joshua with some exceedingly difficult themes which have been so pertinent to the conflicts in the world today. Whilst we enjoy discussing with each other and sharing insights, there is absolutely no pressure to read aloud or voice your opinions.

If you'd like to know more about the Bible, do try to come along to one of the meetings to see if it is something you'd like to join. We'd love more ladies to meet with us.

We have been staying on after the meeting recently for a time of prayer for the World, our Communities and those we have on our hearts. This lasts about half an hour from 2.45pm. All are welcome to come to this, even men!

Janette Steele

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

There is a change to the Team in that the Coordinators are now Pamela and Allan Lemon.

There is no change in the remit of the Team in that we are here to help in any way we can. Helping people at home, getting to appointment, visits to Care Homes are some of the things we can do.

Please keep the Team in your prayers as they seek to do the Lord's work in our parish.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN



Fellowship of the Least Coin is a world-wide ecumenical movement of prayer for peace and reconciliation. It was founded in India by Shanti Solomon in 1956.

Each time a prayer is made a gift of a "least coin" of the currency is made as an expression of solidarity with suffering humanity and with women of every nation. This ministry of intercession and reconciliation is so important in the current situation world-wide, post- Covid.

Grants are given in three categories;

Grassroots Projects to promote women's literacy, health and leadership development. Promote justice, peace and reconciliation in families and communities.

Post-Secondary Education and Training for women of all ages.

Emergency Relief due to natural or human made disasters.

One such was post Hurricane Doris in the Bahamas, women were able to be helped who had lost their homes and joined the feeding groups in local churches. In the first week 2000 meals were served and the numbers grew. The breakfast programme still continues due to Covid and loss of jobs because of it.

Do keep collecting over the year. A donation of £110 from Ferintosh Parish Church has been sent this time which is an increase from last year. Thank you all for supporting this charity giving out macro- loans to women.

USED STAMPS

Please keep saving your used stamps, if possible trimmed with a half inch margin and divided into foreign and UK. There should be an opportunity to hand over what we have collected in September at the Guild National Gathering.

The money raised in 2022 will go towards paying the salary of a pastor in Syria or Lebanon, where because of war and economic crisis, the Churches are struggling to meet their commitment to their pastors.

SUNDAY TEAS

Following our Easter Morning Service, 20 people enjoyed meeting together for a cup of tea in the church hall for the first time since the start of the Covid Pandemic. It was lovely to hear the chatter once again at this important part of our church life. It is hoped that we can resume this activity, although initially it will be on a limited basis (possibly once or twice a month). Hopefully, as more people feel more confident in volunteering again and taking part in church activities, the frequency can be increased. It cannot be left to the "willing few".

If you feel you could assist with the serving of tea following Morning Worship, please speak with Janet Murray so that a rota can be put in place. Your support in this would be greatly appreciated. Many thanks.

Janet Murray.

HIV/AIDS

It is a couple of years since we last held the ever popular Souper Sundae lunch, in support of the Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS Programme. The Programme, however continues its work, both overseas and here in Scotland, providing financial support to projects working with people infected with and affected by the virus. From awareness raising and preventative work, through treatment and nutrition programmes, income generating schemes and care at home, tackling isolation and stigma, to palliative care and beyond to the support of orphaned children and the often elderly relatives left to look after them, these projects continue their work, even when Covid has pushed HIV/AIDS out of the headlines.

This year, therefore, although a soup and sweet lunch was not possible in January due to Covid restrictions, the Kirk Session agreed that a retiring offering could be held, and this yielded £138.



Highland Hospice Inverness are urgently seeking volunteers. These volunteers are needed to visit people who attend the Hospice but who still live in their own home. Please ring the Hospice on 01463 243132 if you can help.

For further first hand information please contact Tom Thomas on 01349 861942.

CrossReach is the Social Work arm of the Church of Scotland. It has the reputation of being an excellent provider in this difficult sector.

The service areas which are covered are Children and Families; Counselling and Support; Criminal Justice; Homelessness; Learning Disabilities; Mental Health; Older People and Substance Use. Person-centred support is at the heart of CrossReach services.

Some of the services have had to be suspended during the pandemic. However, the latest edition of the Newsletter tells us that the Perth Visitors Support and Advice Centre is reopening. It helps family members affected by incarceration to get additional support. It offers all-important times of play for children in an environment that is fun, feels safe and where they can build trust.

Another service just getting going again is Little Marvels. These are groups where parents and carers with children who have additional or complex needs and are under five come together to chat, to play and to seek advice and support from CrossReach experienced team.

Please pray for the work of CrossReach as it seeks to carry out help to the most vulnerable in our name and to glory God.



The Foodbank helps those who don't know where their next meal is coming from. This is not necessarily those who are unemployed or homeless but very often, people in work find themselves unable to make ends meet and have to turn to the Foodbank for help.

People are referred by various agencies and are given enough food to last for three days. Non-perishable food can be brought to the Church on a Sunday and placed in the box in the vestibule.

Whilst pasta and rice are excellent in bulking up, they do need some meat to make a proper, nutritious meal. So the Foodbank really needs tinned meat such as corned beef or Frae Bentos pies. UHT milk and long-life juice is another staple required.

We also have to remember that the recipients may not have access to a range of cooking facilities and things which don't take long to cook are best, such as cook in sauces which just take about 15 minutes.

If you are unable to put food on the table, it is unlikely that you can afford things like toiletries and cleaning materials. These too are very welcome.

Please think about the Foodbank each time you shop and add a little to donate.

Thank you so much for your past generosity and keep donating.



A LIGHT FOR MY PATH

Books that are filled with knowledge and sound advice might fill our library shelves, but if we cannot understand what they are saying, this wisdom will do us no good. Whether the problem is that the text is written in a language that we do not know or the prose is too complex, all of the understanding found in a book that promises wisdom is useless to us as long as we cannot actually read and comprehend the work.

That is precisely what we do not find in the case of the Scriptures. Psalm 119:97-104 praises God's law for its ability to grant wisdom and understanding to those who will read and meditate upon it. Verse 105, in particular, talks about how Scripture's revelation is a lamp to our feet. We use lights and lamps to illumine the darkness and help us find our way in a dark room, on a road at night, and in similar settings. Scripture functions in the same way when it comes to spiritual and ethical matters. It shows us the way to go, not because leaders and teachers can make it do so but because the capacity of Scripture to give clear direction is inherent in the text itself.

Consequently, the teaching that the Bible is a lamp to our feet contradicts any individual or system that would say that God's Word is too complicated for the ordinary person to figure out. John Calvin comments, "Were there such obscurity in God's word . . . the commendation with which the prophet here honours the law would be altogether undeserved. Let us, then, be assured that an unerring light is to be found there, provided we open our eyes to behold it." Rightly understanding and applying divine revelation requires a desire to do what Scripture says. Paul makes this point in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 when he writes that the Lord will blind those who refuse to love the truth.

Psalm 119:112 makes essentially the same point. The wisdom-granting capacity of God's Word is realised only in those whom God has regenerated and given a desire to love and serve Him. After all, the psalmist's praise of Scripture's ability to grant him wisdom cannot be separated from his inclination to do what our Creator has said "forever, to the end" (v. 112).

Such a resolve means determining to do what the Word of God teaches even when it is difficult. The psalmist wrote Psalm 119 when he was under great duress, but he would not buckle under his enemies' demands. He was determined to remain faithful to the Lord (vv. 106-111). May we all do the same.

By the Spirit's work in our hearts, we should regularly renew our commitment to remain faithful to our Creator. As we seek to understand the Lord's ways as they are revealed in His Word, He will grant us clarity as we determine to do what He says. We will not be perfect in this, of course, but we should see a general determination to do all that the Lord has commanded us to do throughout our lives. May God grant us the grace to do what He commands.

CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

Thank You God

Thank you God for little things, that often come my way.

The things I take for granted, but don't mention when I pray.

The unexpected courtesies, the thoughtful kindly deeds,

The hand reached out to help us in times of sudden need.

Oh make us more aware dear God, of little daily graces,

That come to us with sweet surprise, from never dreamed of places.

(From Divine World missionaries)

YOUTH MINISTRY

After almost two years of “lock down”, Sunday Club was able to start again in November 2021, and has met continuously during term time since then, with appropriate Covid mitigations of course. Initially only a few children were coming, and not everyone could come every week due to Covid or self-isolation, but over the five months more families have returned or come along for the first time.

We are particularly happy to have had the help of three young leaders, Isla, David and Anna, who have been brilliant at helping the younger children with games and crafts and everything else.



We are also grateful to the parents and other family members who have stepped in to help out when necessary. Special thanks are due to Pat Gillanders, who put her great talent for floral art to good use prior to Christmas, making and selling decorations, thereby raising £260 for the Youth Work fund.

During the time we have been meeting, we have enjoyed a variety of indoor and outdoor games and activities, and have tried our hand at several different crafts. We also made Christingle decorations, Mothers' Day cards and floral decorations, and celebrated Christmas, Pancake Day and Easter with seasonal activities.



YOUTH MINISTRY



We would love to have more children come along to join the fun, so if you know anyone who might be interested, they are most welcome to come along any Sunday morning during term time, meeting for 11 o'clock in the "annexe" at the front of the Church for the first part of the service, then moving to the hall for other activities. We would also be very glad to hear from any older young folk or adults who would be able to help out, either on a regular or on an occasional basis.

Youth Club has not met this school year, partly due to Covid, and partly because the young people involved are very busy preparing for exams. We wish them all well as they study and as they sit the exams.

Bundles of Fun Parent and Baby/Toddler Group has also not re-started, but we wish all the families well. The toddlers of two years ago will all now be seasoned nursery attenders!

The Youth Ministry team

"A Young Person's Prayer"

God of love and mercy, I give you thanks for all the good things I enjoy.

When I feel anxious about the future, calm my fears.

When I doubt myself, give me courage and confidence.

When I feel sad or lonely, remind me that I can always turn to you as a true friend.

Help me to find the path in life that will call forth the best in me.

May your spirit lead and guide me all the days of my life. Amen.

(From Divine World Missionaries)

CHURCH FLOWERS

Since things are more or less getting back to normal we can now, very nearly, revert back to what we used to do before the pandemic. However, we are encouraged to sanitise our hands on entry and exit, and wear a mask (though not legally required). Wearing gloves might be useful in that then there is less of a concern regarding touching things like door handles or light switches. Access to the church can be at any time and our key will be kept by Isabel MacDonald 01349 861767.

The Flower Team would like to thank everyone who is involved with the Flower Rota and should you wish to contribute there are still one or two spaces in the 2022 calendar to be filled.

There are vases available in the annex of the church and if at all possible please try to avoid using lilies as some people can be allergic to them.

Jeannette Cameron 01463 870416



FLOWER ROTA

MAY

- 8 Mrs J Steele
- 15
- 22 Miss M MacKenzie
- 29 Mrs A Smith

JUNE

Organiser – Mrs J Murray – 864024

- 5 Miss S Menzies
- 12 Mrs J Murray
- 19 Mrs J Cameron
- 26 Mrs S McLauchlan

JULY

Organiser – Mrs E Blackburn 861593

- 3 Mrs H Drummond
- 10 Mr T Thomas
- 17 Mrs S Weir
- 24 Mrs E Blackburn
- 31 Mrs P Gillanders

AUGUST

Organiser – Mrs C Parry 864264

- 7 Mrs M MacKay
- 14 Mrs A Smith
- 21 Mrs A McKee
- 28 Mrs C Parry

SEPTEMBER

Organiser – Mrs I MacDonald – 861767

- 4 Mrs I MacDonald
- 11 Mrs D Fraser
- 18 Mrs C Allison
- 25 Harvest Thanksgiving

OCTOBER

Organiser – Mrs J Cameron 01463 870416

- 2 Mrs A MacKay
- 9 Mrs S Mackenzie
- 16 Mrs A McInnes
- 23
- 30 Miss J Winchester

CHURCH CONTACTS

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GET IN TOUCH WITH THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

As always, we welcome any comments, questions or suggestions about the newsletter. Submissions are now invited for the next edition of the Focus - these can be made to members of the editorial team, or sent by email to strathdrynie@gmail.com

A full-colour copy of this newsletter is available on our website.



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