



FREE CHURCH of SCOTLAND

Portree and Bracadale Newsletter 4

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Dig for Victory!

Twenty years in the making, countless meetings of the committee, hours of prayer and more than one planning hurdle have proven worthwhile as work on the new church building at Shepherd's Way has now commenced.

Thanks to Dr Crichton for the following article.

On 26th February, a typically wet and windy Saturday morning, a group from the congregation along with minister the Rev Donnie G MacDonald met to cut the first turf at the building site.

It was probably our first congregational outing for two years, and what's more, a once-in-a-lifetime reason to have one.

Having come through 20 years of prayerful preparation, we're now glad to be able to officially start the project. We



Courtesy of Willie Urquhart/WHFP

were particularly grateful that our Donnie and Debbie were able to be present, and to do the essential business of cutting the first turf.

As we know, the unprecedented rise in building costs throughout 2021 means that we still need to raise £350,000, taking the final total to £2.1 million. However, we are constantly encouraged by the regular

contributions from the congregation itself, and amazed by frequent donations from all over the country – **total donations in January and February were over £24,000.**



Our very own Donald Morrison on the front line of the building project.



Courtesy of Willie Urquhart/WHFP

Above all, we give thanks to God for his guidance on this project, and for stimulating the hearts of so many people to give generously. It is no accident that the new building is on Shepherd's Way, and we trust that it will be used to enable many people in our community to come to know for themselves the Way of the Good Shepherd.

Ladies Bible Study

The Portree and Bracadale Ladies Bible Study Group was started many years ago by Debbie, as an opportunity for the ladies of the congregation to meet together to study a part of the Bible and share fellowship together.

Then, and still today, there are no limitations on who can attend, either in relation to age or biblical knowledge. We usually have eight to ten people.



Over the years we have used a number of different Study books covering subjects like Women of the Bible, Paul's travels, Nehemiah, Ecclesiastes and currently Romans Chapters 1 to 7 by Tim Keller which is proving challenging.

Two ladies currently share leading the group and although neither would claim to be an expert they are willing to share any knowledge and experience they have and, hopefully, support anyone new to studying the Bible. Nobody is pressurised into contributing to discussion and some are just happy to listen.

We meet fortnightly on a Thursday morning for an hour from 11am on Zoom but all being well hope to resume in person sessions after the Easter holiday. Zoom has been a blessing during the pandemic but we are looking forward to getting back together in person.

If anyone thinks they might like to join or even try a few meetings we would be pleased to hear from them and they can contact me at any time by email s.armstrong181@btinternet.com or by phone 07719914452.

David's Devotional in (exactly) 100 words



Dear friends

These are tough days. Wars and rumours of wars have followed a global pandemic. Many in the congregation are suffering in body, some have experienced that dark night of the soul.

Let's keep it simple. Paul says, 'in all things God works for the good of those who love him'. Let's take it at face value, the bad stuff will not prevail. Our faith had its worst day when our leader, Jesus, was crucified. However, it's not Bad Friday, but Good Friday. God takes the worst and turns it into the best. He is Risen!

Warmest regards,

David

Down Under Reunion

After a very long flight across the world we were delighted to hear that Rolf and Katherine Napoli arrived safely in Australia where they met Sullivan Jude Napoli-Turner in person for the first time and where Katherine celebrated a very special birthday!

Lydia and Anna stay in Port Stephen, New South Wales about 2.5 hours north of Sydney.



Six in Sixty with...Ewen Maclean

Next up to face six questions that would have Michael Parkinson quaking in his boots is Ewen MacLean.



Favourite band or singer?

I love listening to music, and I like songs with good lyrics, but can't say I have a favourite band or singer.

Best shinty memory?

The Ladies Camanachd cup final in 2019 between Skye ladies and Badenoch ladies. The best game I've seen. Having my daughter Caitlin and nieces Abby, Holly and Christina all in the team made it extra special.

Favourite Bible story and why?

Jonah. You can think you have turned your back on God and are running away from him, but he is still with you and pulls you back.

Last place you visited on a family holiday?

We went to Seahouses near Bamburgh in Northumberland last summer in our caravan. Lovely place with amazing beaches and the weather was great.

Thing you love most about Maureen?

Her sense of humour, she needed one to marry me.

If you could be the star of any movie which one would it be?

James Bond. I think my chances, (if there ever were any), of that happening have passed though!

We are really grateful to Ewen and all of those who have so far agreed to feature in our six in sixty section. We are now on the lookout for a willing participant for the June 2022 edition!

Bible Class Update

Due to covid and availability of leaders it has been challenging over the past few weeks to get together as much as we would have hoped. It has however been really encouraging to have so many young people attending and engaging when it has been possible to have a session – and we've plenty room for more!

In addition to in person sessions during Church time we have also been able to use Zoom to host evening inputs and were very grateful to Jennifer Shaw for giving up her time to speak to the group about her life

growing up in Portree, her faith and her life now as she studies



Law at Glasgow University. The strength of Jennifer's faith shone through as she explained how she coped with challenges and distractions growing up. We wish Jennifer the very best with her studies.

Our next evening session features a Q&A with local Christian athlete Hugh Campbell and we hope to host many more sessions in the coming months.

The bible class are also gearing up for an outing to Ace Target Sports on Friday 8 April for some axe throwing, archery and fellowship.

Please pray for all of the young people in the congregation that they will continue to be part of the group and that they will continue to grow as Christians whilst being a positive example to others in the community. With more volunteers to lead the youth groups we can do so much more and we would welcome anyone who feels they can contribute their time and experience to helping develop the creche, Sunday school and bible class.

Back over the sea to Skye

Nigel and Janice's Return to Skye

Ourselves

Nigel: I was born in Edinburgh and spent the first 9 years of my life in the capital before moving to Perth. It was in Perth, under the late Rev. David Paterson's ministry, that I was converted, aged 13.

Although I was brought up in the city, island life has been so integral to me. My first job was on the Isle of Barra where I lived for 4 years. I learned to appreciate the beauty and community that that life offered. From Barra I moved to Benbecula to teach in the new school – Sgoil Lionacleit – where I met Janice. We were married in 1989 and for a short time lived in Griminish, Benbecula and attended North Uist Free Church before moving to Skye in early 1990 when I was appointed Head of History at Portree High School.

Janice: I was born in Stornoway. During our previous time in Skye, I was busy bringing up our two daughters who are now aged 30 and 27 respectively. I also worked part time in the Resource Centre at Tigh na Drochaid. I really enjoyed being part of Portree Free Church. Returning to visit it after 20 years, it has been amazing to see what the Lord has done in the intervening years. As a congregation, you have been blessed. It is so encouraging to see a new generation growing up - and also to see so many new faces of all ages.

Our Family

We have two daughters: Cathryn and Seona. Cathryn is married to Gareth and they have two children – Rory (aged 3) and Eilidh (aged 16 months). Cathryn is a Primary teacher in Edinburgh and lives in Winchburgh, West Lothian. Cathryn and Gareth are part of the core team of the new (Free Church) church plant in



Winchburgh. Seona is a Business Studies teacher in Crieff. Both Cathryn and Seona loved their time in Skye and are desperate to come up when holidays come!

Past Life on Skye

Our time in Skye focussed largely on church and school. We became members of Portree Free Church on our arrival from Uist and were particularly blessed by the ministry and preaching of the late Kenny Macdonald.

Where We've Been

Since leaving Skye in 2002, we spent three years in Edinburgh where Nigel trained at the Free Church College before moving to Ayr where he was minister of Ayr Free Church from 2005-2009. From Ayr we moved to Livingston where we served from 2009-2022. Janice had a variety of teaching posts in these places.

Returning to Island Life and Plans

It has been a joy to return to Skye after 20 years. We had never expected this to happen but in God's providence he called us back to the island that has been so formative in our lives. We are so grateful to God for his opening this door for us to continue to serve him here. Our hearts' desire is to see a healthy church in Trotternish and the Lord Jesus proclaimed across the whole island.

We give thanks to Nigel and Janice for their time in compiling this article and pray that they will quickly find their feet in their new community.

Fundraising Committee



It's no secret that there is still much to be done to raise funds for the completion of the new building but your time, ideas and prayers are just as important. If you feel you can assist in any way please contact Gillie who is chairing a meeting on Monday 4 April for anyone who would like to get more involved.

Getting to know the team

Each edition we are getting to know a member of the church team – this time it's Peter Moller's turn.

Peter Moller was born in Truro, Cornwall in 1976 (in the same hospital where Dr Julian Toms was a doctor). His family moved to Kintyre, Argyll two years later where he spent all of his childhood and into his twenties.



His dad was a fisherman and mum a home help. The youngest of four, one sister and two brothers, he was raised in a Christian family. He attended the local Baptist church in Lochgilphead, often mixing with kids from Christian families.

He attended Teen Ranch Outdoor Christian Centre near Dundee on several occasions in the late 80s and early 90s, also many evangelistic meetings including the Faith Mission and Kintyre Christian Fellowship Meetings.

There was never a time when he wasn't conscious of God or didn't believe in him and was in the main happy to attend church whilst growing up. His parents always encouraged him to read the bible and seek God.

However, mere belief in God is poles apart from a relational faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour from sin, which is Gods' gift through the Holy Spirit. This understanding and knowledge, this faith, developed over many years and so it is very difficult to put a date on when he became a Christian.

He began attending Campbeltown Free Church in the late 90s and greatly benefitted from the preaching of Rev Angus J Howat.

It was this church that Shona Ferguson began attending in the summer of 2000. They were married the following year and have two children. Joe 19 and Anna 15. They moved to Skye in 2008.

Pete is currently serving as a Deacon and sometimes Precentor. He is also on the New Building Sub Committee and is Probationary Clerk of the Deacons Court.

He is a self- employed roofer and Joiner.

Thus far has the Lord helped (1 Samuel Ch7v12).

Congratulations

Catriona and Andrew Banks would like to thank everyone all of the kind cards and gifts received following the birth of baby Angus on 24 January 2022.

Angus is getting on just fine with bigger brother Donald and sister Isla.



Time Team!

As the new build progresses the Bible class have suggested that a time capsule be installed somewhere in the build for future generations to uncover. Planning is at the early stages but we would love to hear your suggestions on what should be in the time capsule.



Situations Vacant

There are so many opportunities to serve God in our congregation and without the time of volunteers very little would ever happen. If you would like to help run the creche, operate the live stream, support the young people in Sunday school or anything else. **PLEASE** get in touch!

Accommodation Wanted

A request has been received from two female fourth year education students at Sabhal Mor Ostaig who are seeking accommodation in the Portree area whilst on placement at Portree Gaelic Primary School.

Their placement runs from May 9th to June 10th and they would be happy to share a twin room Monday to Friday each week before returning to Sleat at the weekends.

If you are able to help or know of someone who can please contact Debbie or email her via debbie@budhmor.plus.com

Down Memory Lane

The picture below featuring Carbost Free Church recently featured on the Skye and Lochalsh Memories Facebook Page. We know nothing of who could be featured in the picture but if you have any information please do let us know.



We would love to see any other church related photos from years gone by for inclusion in future editions. It could be a church outing, a special occasion or just something that will make others smile.

Your newsletter needs you



If you have ideas for the time capsule, suggestions for future articles, photographs, prayer points

or anything else that you think others would be interested to read then please do get in touch via

PortreeandBracadaleNewsletter@outlook.com

A letter from Donnie G

We are ending this edition of the newsletter with a copy of the letter written by Donnie G in March to the congregation ahead of his ongoing treatment in Aberdeen.

Dear all, It has been six months now since my treatment for Myeloma started; I am very thankful to God that he has kept and carried me through it all, and although it has been difficult at times, I continue to respond well to the treatment. On Monday (14th March,) I will be admitted to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary for my stem cell transplant. I anticipate being in hospital for a month and then, if all goes well, there will be at least a three month recovery period. After which, God willing, I will begin a phased return to work. I would value your prayers, especially for my family during this time. Hitherto the Lord has helped us.

There have been many times over these past six months when I have not had the words to express my praise to God, or the words to pray to God. Each time I have turned to the Psalms and they allow me to express both my pain and my praise to my Father in heaven. And now I find myself, again, unable to find words; this time I am at a loss as how to say to you what I am feeling in my heart in order to express my indebtedness to you all for the support you have given to me and my family, and also at a loss to know how to thank you for the humbling generosity you have shown to us in the recent

collection to help with the additional costs we have had during my time of illness. So again, I turn to my Bible, and I use the words of the Apostle Paul when he wrote to the church in Philippi; his words express all that my heart is feeling.

Donnie G, a servant of Christ Jesus, to all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Portree and Bracadale Free Church, together with the elders and deacons:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you since I have you in my heart. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel, for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will be used by God for his glory. I eagerly expect and hope that I will have sufficient courage for what lies ahead, so that now as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In

your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

My brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord, dear friends. Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

It was so good of you to share in my troubles and provide for me. However, this is nothing new, you have sent me aid more than once when I was in need. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Dr Crichton the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

It is my privilege to be a child of God, a servant of Christ, and your minister in the gospel.

Thank you for your kindness.

All my love in Christ Jesus, Donnie G