



FREE CHURCH of SCOTLAND



Portree and Bracadale Newsletter 2

Contributions to PortreeandBracadaleNewsletter@outlook.com

A great day out

The young people in the congregation were delighted to get back together for an outing on Saturday 2 October on the high seas at Loch Mealt.

On a beautiful day for the time of year 16 amateur canoeists joined forces under the watchful eye of the Whitewave team ably assisted by Bill Edgar. This was the first time many of the young people had been together in well over 18 months and it was great to see them enjoying themselves whilst learning new skills. The parents watching on couldn't believe how much they had grown!



We asked Daniel Cazacu (9) and his younger brother Alex (6) for their feedback on the outing.

Neither had been canoeing before but quickly settled into the activity. They both identified their favourite part as going through the tunnel.

Daniel enjoys coming to Church in Portree as he gets to be with his friends and Alex really likes the Bible stories that he gets to hear. Both of them would recommend coming to Church to their friends.

The young people would like to thank Chris Crichton for organising the activity and Bill Edgar for his advice and encouragement.

We look forward to many more fun events and with in-person services now having resumed at Portree Primary School there is no better time to encourage others to come to Sunday school and Bible class.

A Special Occasion

There have been a couple of special events made known to the newsletter team and first up we would like to congratulate Lachie and Isabel MacLeod on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Married on 5th November 1971 at Portree Parish Church the couple are using their special day to help raise funds for the new church building project and if you would like to contribute please visit <https://gofund.me/448f30f9> to donate. So far over £1400 has been raised.



Lifelong learning

The imposing Edinburgh Theological Seminary situated on the world famous Mound has been the training ground for many of those holding ministerial positions throughout the Free Church of Scotland. It's not however a place reserved solely for aspiring Ministers and with increased distance learning opportunities available there is something for everyone on the college prospectus.

I was recently delighted to be part of the impressive graduation ceremony from the comfort of my own living room with Alison by my side to celebrate completion of the Access to Theology course. Running from September to May the course provides students with expert tuition in Old and New Testament, church history and both systematic and practical theology. Under the watchful eye of course leader, Rev Dr Bob Akroyd we met online for two hours every Tuesday night to learn, discuss and share knowledge. Essays and exams followed to ensure Bob was able to make good use of his red pen.

Courses such as the Diploma in Christian Youth, Deacon and Elder training, the ever-popular Saturday courses and even a Masters in Theology are all available. For those keen to undertake specific study options an individual study programme is possible too. More information on the courses available can be found at ets.ac.uk/courses and not all involve exams!

We asked Bob to provide some encouragement to those considering further development and he said, "The study of theology in all of its many forms is really the chance to learn more about who God is, what God has done and to consider his ongoing work in our lives and in this world. All Christians are theologians just as we are all witnesses and ambassadors to mention just a few of our privileged titles. In Romans 8:31, Paul asks a profound question, 'What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?'



Theology is our poor effort to say something in response to what God has done for us. We want to sound a clear note of praise and thanks while making sure to invite others to share in this wonderful truth.

You might not feel up to the task spiritually or intellectually. If that is the case, you are exactly the kind of student we are looking for. Together we can come to better appreciate the good news concerning Jesus Christ so that we can better convey this message in word and deed. I am reminded of the great evangelist, George Whitefield who once said, 'Other men may preach the gospel better than I, but no man can preach a better gospel.' Amen and I look forward to seeing you at ETS

We will Remember them

On Sunday 14 November 2021 the Portree and Bracadale Free Church congregation were well represented at the Portree remembrance parade.

Duncan Mackinnon laid the wreath on behalf of the Free Church whilst Kevin McGilvary carried out piping duties.

A return to the larger crowd seen in previous parades before Covid restrictions and also being the 100th year of the Royal British Legion made this a real poignant event.



It was also heartening to see so many young people involved in the parade helping to keep the memory of those who gave their tomorrow so that we could have our today alive

David's Devotional – (in (almost) 100 words or less.)



Dear friends, what a surprise and privilege to find myself the interim moderator of Portree Free Church.

The circumstances of the last few weeks have not been as any of us would have wanted and yet they have not caught God by surprise. We know 'in all things God works for the good of those who love him.' These are days of recycling but God takes even the rubbish of our lives and transforms them into experiences of beauty. God's exchange policy is unfair and grace laden, He replaces a pile of ashes with beauty, the oil of joy takes over from mourning and he gives us a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

This is the message we proclaim! Warmest regards, David.

The Big Meal

As you sit down to your festive meal this year, it's highly likely you will at some point consider those less fortunate across the world who so often go hungry.

For the past few years the people of Portree and Bracadale Free Church have contributed thousands to Mission International's annual effort to feed as many children as possible at Christmas for less than the price of a takeaway coffee.

Our very own Hannah Macleod, who recently completed the virtual Skye Half Marathon to raise funds for Mission International (and almost escaped being photographed by diving into a bush) has been at the forefront of the fundraising locally and we spent some time with her to find out some more.

Hannah explained that she first encountered Mission International's founder Hugh Henderson at St Peter's Church in Dundee and following completion of her GP training knew that she wanted to serve internationally. A hoped for trip to her mum's birthland of Peru did not materialise but when the opportunity arose to join Mission International in Burundi she did not need to think twice.



During her subsequent deployments to Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia and with the NHS to Sierra Leone she has painted toilets, built schools, visited prisons, honed her singing and dancing skills and even dosed the odd tup or two (although not at the same time!)

Emotionally and physically challenging, a spiritual wake-up call and deeply impactful are just some of the ways Hannah describes the sights she saw. The work of Mission International alongside local Christians goes some way to helping alleviate the pain and suffering caused by war, genocide and poverty and it is here, in the form of the Big Meal that we can help make a massive difference.

All that it takes this year to help Mission International put smiles on faces and food in bellies is £3. To support this the Sunday school have decorated envelopes available at the church door and the Bible class have advertised the fundraising efforts on social media.



If you feel able to contribute to this cause please pray for those involved and donate what you can. This can be done at the church door or bank transfer to the Portree & Bracadale Free Church account number 20060613 sort code 82-67-18 – please mark your donation "The Big Meal".

Fraud Awareness

(Now that we've just asked you for money – here's some advice to stop criminals taking it from you!)

When Jesus sent out his twelve disciples, amongst the instructions he gave them, he told them to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matthew ch 10 v 16). They were called for a specific task, but this is good advice to always keep in the forefront of your mind in all the dealings we have with the world.

We want to live generously, to help those in need and always think the best of others. When it comes to financial affairs, it's important to be sure that our money is being used how we intended, for the good of ourselves, our loved ones and those in genuine need. Sadly those who are controlled by greed and personal gain seek to get you to part with your money. In our ever more technical world, there are myriad ways fraudsters will use to steal, but there are some simple things we can all do to reduce our vulnerability. This is not an exhaustive list by any means, however some key points to bear in mind:

- 1. If you receive an email or phone call you were not expecting or did not request, always check that they are who they claim to be.** It is vital to remain aware when dealing with people over the phone or internet. As a general rule, always **stop and think twice** if you receive a call or contact from someone you are not expecting. If it is a genuine bank or company then they will be happy for you to ring them back. Hang up the phone and use a number that you have checked yourself. Make sure you hear the dial tone before calling back, as some fraudsters will wait on the line after you have hung up.
- 2. Never reveal your password or number to anyone else.** Banks will never ask you to reveal a full password or number. Passwords are private to you and are there to protect you.

- 3. Never be pressurised into making quick decisions.** It is in the interest of fraudsters to encourage you to make quick decisions. Perhaps they might suggest this is a limited time offer, or that your account is at risk if you don't respond immediately. It is your money and you should take the time to make sure you know where it is going. Banks will never set up a 'safe account' for you to move money to that you have not asked for. For special offers, although it is often said, never forget that if something seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- 4. If you think you may have been scammed, contact your bank immediately.** All banks have specialist departments for dealing with fraud, and the sooner you speak to them, the more likely you are to recover any lost funds. Unfortunately people of all ages and from all walks of life fall for clever scams, so don't feel embarrassed to get help. They may encourage you report suspicious activity to the police, which you can do by calling 101.

James reminds us (ch 1 v 27) that true religion is shown by looking after widows and orphans. To put it another way, we should care for the vulnerable in society. As a church we have a responsibility to look out for one another. Harder still for many of us: we should also be looking to others when we are in need of help. That's a healthy church.



So if you have any doubts whatsoever:

**STOP. THINK TWICE.
TAKE ADVICE.**

Thank you to PC David Mockett from Kyle Police Station for this article. Dave is an active member of the Christian Police Association.

Green fingers

During October a team of volunteers gathered to assist with a spot of gardening at the manse in Portree. Whilst not quite to the high standards of the Chelsea Flower Show the group, led by Robert "Titchmarsh" Macrae, enjoyed the warm autumn sunshine and cut, mowed, strimmed and brushed for a total of 42 hours.



Free Church Camps and Big Free Rally

Although the camps didn't happen this summer in their traditional format the young people in the Church were still able to get together virtually during a week long series of events on Zoom. The participants undertook a daily challenge whilst studying the Armour of God.

Daily activities such as scavenger hunts, keepy-up's with a toilet roll, lip syncing to a favourite tune and even re-creating baby photos for extra embarrassment at future birthdays were just some of the challenges set. This was followed up by a virtual Big Free Rally held online where the young people were able to reconnect, hear

personal testimony and learn from notable speakers including Suraj Kashula from Nepal and Marsali Campbell.

Finlay Crawford, aged 10, who attended both events agreed to be interviewed about his involvement.

What was the best part of the events?

The challenges like doing keepy-ups, Kahoot challenges and the scavenger hunt.



What did you learn about God?

We learned about the armour of God and how each part of the armour can relate to my own life.

Would you recommend other people to take part?

Yes, because it was very fun and it makes me want to go to my first camp.

What are your plans for Camp in 2022?-

I've decided that I want to go to the football camp (if my mum and dad let me!).

Calendars



Once again Dr Crichton has been snapping the best that Skye has to offer and has produced a fantastic calendar

to raise funds for the new building. These sold out last year so get in quick! Contact Anne and Gillie on john.gillies@mowi.com, or mobile 07900050473 to purchase. Payments can be made to the New building account – Virgin Money account no. 00413162 sort code 82-67-18.

Six in sixty with.....David Emmerson

Each edition we will be asking one member of the congregation 6 Mastermind-worthy questions in 60 seconds.



Favourite place on Skye: The Cuillins when I was rock climbing but now it's the Storr Lochs for fly fishing.

Happiest memory: My conversion at the Kishorn oil yard.

Enjoyed most about childhood: Having been raised in Preston I enjoyed fishing on the local canal.

Best piece of advice ever given to you: Do not worry about tomorrow for that will take care of itself.

Favourite film: The Dambusters – I've watched it many times.

Is pineapple acceptable on a pizza?: No way – it's a waste of good pizza!

New Building Update

The Kirk Session and the Deacons' Court are glad to report that R K Joinery Ltd (RKJ) are to build the new church. They are noted to be a quality building company, with their tender the more competitive of the two tenders submitted (out of 8 invited companies). The final decision was made by the Deacons' Court on 12th November and a build start date has been identified as 31st January 2022.

With expected costs of £2.05 million we still need to raise £400,000 over the next 15 months or so.

But, as we said before, our God has given us many tokens of encouragement to date, and we have a quiet confidence that the work will be fully financed and completed.

And, at the end of the day, it's not really about a building and its costs, it's about our desire to worship God in a secure and identifiable situation in the community that we seek to serve. As our minister has so often reminded us, we worship the Good Shepherd who wants his kingdom to include everyone in Portree and Bracadale. It's our privilege to be a small part of that kingdom-building.

Dr Charles L Crichton
Chairman, New Building Committee

Another Special Occasion

We are delighted to congratulate Donald Angus and Barbara Campbell on their recent Ruby Wedding Anniversary. They were married at



Portree Church of Scotland on 23rd October 1981 by the Rev. John Ferguson. We wish them many more happy years together.

Your Newsletter Needs You

Thanks to all who have taken part in this edition. Without your contribution this would just be six empty



pages. If you have anything you would like included please let us know. The newsletter can be contacted on PortreeandBracadaleNewsletter@outlook.com