



Parish Press

Special Edition

South Holburn Church Spring/Summer 2021

From the Manse...

Welcome to this 'special edition' of our magazine.

As I write this today, the First Minister has just indicated that the signs of recovery from Covid-19 are very positive and it seems likely that restrictions will continue to reduce. Many have commented that this is great news and marks the move to a return to normal.

As we emerge from these dark days of pandemic, many are asking questions about how society will have changed. The phrase 'a new normal' has been much bandied about. What is this 'new normal'?

The new normal is about the way we live.

It is likely that masks will be with us for some time, as will some form of social distancing. The places where people work will also change as many have indicated

that they wish to continue to work from home at least part of the time, and, as a result, the daily commute might look very different as less people are trying to get to the same place at the same time.

The way that we treat each other might also change. Isolation and lock down have reminded us of the importance of relationships and the importance of spending time with loved ones. But we are reminded too that so many people in our land and so many more across the world are grieving the loss of dear ones because of Covid-19.

The economic consequences of Covid will be with us for some time. National debt is at its highest for many generations. Many companies have closed, many jobs have been lost.

The 'new normal' will also reflect the effect of the pandemic upon

children, young people and education, the effect on NHS staff, the effect upon care homes and upon vulnerable people, the mental health consequences on us all of these months and months of lockdown.

Over the next period of time we will see these and many more factors impacting upon what we consider to be normal life.

I am also writing these words during a break in the General Assembly. There is much that is familiar at this year's Assembly, not least the Church Committees seeming policy of not using one word when ten will do! But there is also much that is far from normal. However, every report at this year's General Assembly refers to the deep impact of Covid on the work and life of the Church. Church finances are in crisis. Every single congregation in the Church of Scotland has experienced a decline in income this year and most are in deficit. There are questions about how many members will be able to return to Churches when we do reopen. The Assembly will be asked to approve a further reduction in the number of ministers and congregations across Scotland, which will mean that our Presbytery plan in Aberdeen and Shetland Presbytery will once again have to be redrawn, despite all the hard

work done in recent years and current ongoing work to develop parish groupings. As I write, it is not yet clear what this level will be, but the Faith Nature Forum is proposing that Aberdeen and Shetland will be reduced from 41 staff members (ministers and mission development staff) to 24 staff members. Across Scotland, the Forum is proposing that there will be 600 full time posts in Scotland (ministers and mission development staff).

There are positives too.

While it is wonderful to be back in our Church sanctuary for Sunday services (albeit in a limited form for now), online worship has opened up a new way of reaching all sorts of people who would not or cannot come along to Sunday services. Several people have told me in phone calls that they have been able to enjoy worship and even celebrate communion for the first time in years. We have also seen folk joining our services from all over the world, including some who used to be part of the congregation, but who have moved to other places. While this form of worship has been a necessary feature of lockdown, I hope, it will also play a part in our future, even if that means some technical changes in our building.

Meetings too have moved online. While this has not suited every-

one, it has many advantages, not least being able to stay home and still attend a meeting. And I wonder if I will ever travel out of Aberdeen to attend a meeting ever again.

Alongside our neighbouring congregations, we have shared discussion groups, fellowship times, Lent and Easter services, all in an online setting. Our Virtual Vestry over these months has been a chance to keep connected to one another as well. And these developments too should not be lost as we move forward.

Just as in society, so too in the church we must ask what will the Church be like post-pandemic? As we return to normal, what is going to be normal for the Church?

To be honest, I don't think I can answer that question. But there are certain elements which have always been part of our church, which must be part of our future too.

a) *Our fellowship and care for one another* – this has always defined the church from Jesus' command to "love one another" to the life of the early church where outsiders commented "See how these Christians love on another!"

b) *Reaching out to the community around us* – we are called to be a parish church, caring not simply for the people who come to services,

but also all the people who live around the church.

c) *Worshipping and celebrating* – how we have enjoyed getting back to church to worship together, how we have valued online services, how we long to be back again together in worship and praise, celebrating God at work!

d) *Working together with our fellow churches* – in the past our church has always worked closely with neighbouring churches. Those relationships have certainly been important in the pandemic. And our neighbouring churches will increasingly be a part of our future too.

With thankfulness to God and appreciation of all who have helped and supported us through the pandemic, we move to the future. We do not know what the future holds, though we can recognise that it will be different than what has been before. And whatever our new Church 'normal' looks like, it is a normal where we live with the certainty of God's loving presence and care.

Keep safe and well.

Your friend and minister,

David

Diary of a Lockdown Kid

By

Katie Woodhead

I know it was necessary but not fun. To begin with it was kind of exciting as nothing had ever happened like that before and I thought we would have less school work to do (spoiler alert...NOT true!). The first lockdown wasn't so bad – it was summer and you could go outside more. Mum set up our caravan and contacted some suppliers so they could deliver to the caravan and local people would collect from there – we have daily deliveries of bread, fruit and veg, meat, fish and other things. For the second lockdown it was during winter so you couldn't go out so much and people kept saying you would go back soon and it never seemed to happen. I had lots of zoom calls which wasn't so bad but reminded me of what I was missing. I had teaching on zoom for tap, musical theatre, piano and violin. The teaching on zoom for dancing worked well but it was harder for my instruments because, where I live, the internet isn't so good.

Our school is small (30 kids) so our teachers did not skimp on the school work! I worked from 9.30 – 3 or 4 every day and our class got

ahead of the curriculum. I was luckily as Mum and Dad were able to rearrange things so I always had one of them at home but they were pretty strict about making sure I did my work. I didn't mind too much as it gave me something to do. Right now we are just going over things because we were so far ahead. I missed going on the P7 residential week away, and we didn't have a Christmas show (we did it on line but it's not the same) but most of all I missed my friends. I also missed netball – Midmar have a good netball team and we win a lot (we are the team to beat!) but we just couldn't do this and still can't as tournaments have not started again!

I was still able to do the fundraising I love to do. I did some baking for the Macmillian Coffee Morning (which we couldn't do during lockdown) and Mum sold them at work. Mum, Dad and I made wooden snowmen to sell at school but instead of our Christmas Fair family members had to order. At Christmas we did have our Christmas party at school but still had to socially distance from adults including Santa! Recently we had to virtually 'walk' to Midmar

in South Africa to raise money for school funds as we couldn't have our May Fun Day or our Duck Race. Thank you to everyone who was very generous and we raised over £1000.

I had two birthdays in lockdown: Mum and Dad made it as exciting as they could with a treasure hunt and decorating the house but I missed having my friends round. I did go to the park a lot to meet up with my friends when we were allowed. We were not able to go on our Ski holiday this year but with the snow we had I was able to ski in the garden and make some jumps. Thankfully we were able to

go to Clachtoll in the west coast for our usual summer holiday with friends – it would have been a disaster if that didn't happen! It was tough and go though as Aberdeen City went into lockdown and our bubbled friends had to move in with us for a while so we could all go! I couldn't go to church but I did do the odd church thing like readings, the on line services like at Christmas and Easter and this! I kind of miss it though – mainly the community.

So, what have I learned over the past year: how much we rely and need people, how much we do that is not really necessary like shop so much, how important mental health is (at times I got really low and tearful), how much the environment has thrived when we don't put emissions into the air or water, how much I relied on my teachers and family and how sad it was, and is, that people are dying of this virus.



*This is a picture I recently drew in art.
We had to dawn something about our emotions during
lockdown.*

Meet the new Moderator by Lynne McNeil (Life and Work)

As an elder for almost 40 years, it is no surprise that the Moderator-Designate to this month's General Assembly hopes to encourage those holding the office to serve more widely within the Church of Scotland.

"I would hope that by having an elder as moderator again that I can encourage elders who have not yet thought about it to contribute talents and expertise to the Church, but also to recognise that the numbers of ministers is decreasing and that more and more will fall on the shoulders of elders and members of the congregation. And in turn, the Kirk should reflect on how it can use better the reservoir of talent within the eldership.

"I hope I can give them encouragement to take on these responsibili-

ties. It shows that the Church does appreciate and value its eldership," says the Rt Hon Baron Wallace of Tankerness QC (the name is taken from a peninsula a few miles south of Kirkwall in Orkney), better known as Jim Wallace, the former Deputy First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, the former Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats for 13 years and a Liberal Democrat MP and MSP for Orkney and Shetland for many years before taking his seat in the House of Lords in 2007.



*Moderator: The Rt Hon
Baron Wallace of Tankerness QC*

His nomination for Moderator-Designate came as a surprise last year, via an initial phone call from former Life and Work columnist, Ron Ferguson. After prayer and some reflection he agreed to allow his name to go to the Committee to Nominate the Moderator and the rest is history.

Jim, 66, is a lifelong Christian, growing up initially within Annan Old Parish Church. He is the eldest son of John and Grace Wallace and his earliest memories of the church, where his father served as an elder for over 60 years until his death, involve the baptism of his younger brother Neil when Jim was just two-and-a-half.

He grew up attending Sunday School and has fond memories of a teacher, Mrs Walker, “a kind, gentle lady” and of being part of the local Boys’ Brigade.

At the age of 18, he took up a place at Cambridge University to study economics and law, but although a faithful and regular attendee at services, chose not to become a member of the Church of Scotland at that point.

Instead he was very involved with many Christian societies at University and chose to be confirmed within the local United Reformed Church, where the minister the Rev Ronald Spiers introduced him to a book, *Only One Way Left*, by Lord MacLeod of Fuinary, founder of the Iona Community.

From Cambridge, Jim moved to Edinburgh to study law and joined the Methodist Society – “I had become accustomed, at Cambridge, to not being within the ‘establishment’” – but also started to worship at Mayfield Parish Church,

the closest church to his student home.

From there, he moved to the city’s Stockbridge and worshipped at St Bernard’s Church, where he was ordained to the eldership in 1981 and where he served as treasurer.

It was during this time that his ‘fascination’ for politics developed into something more concrete.

“I had a certain fascination for politics from an early age. At the 1966 general election when I was only 11 I remember hanging around outside the primary school gates to try and get the autographs of the candidates.

Jim eventually settled on the Liberals (later the Liberal Democrat party) and stood as a candidate for Dumfries in 1979, increasing the party’s share of the vote.

In 1983 he was elected to Westminster as MP for Orkney and Shetland, succeeding Jo Grimond, who had served the island communities for many years.

A month after his election, he married his wife Rosie and the couple moved to Orkney, which has been their home for almost 38 years and where he has served as an elder and member of the Kirk Session at St Magnus Cathedral since 1990. Their two daughters, Helen and Clare, were both born in Orkney. At the time of writing Helen, a solicitor was on maternity leave after

the birth of her second daughter Ella (a sister for three-year-old Ca-triona) and Clare, who is newly-engaged, is a midwife in New Zealand. Like many grandparents they have kept in touch through technology, but are missing family because of the travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

Jim's political career is well documented: he was the first person to hold a Liberal held seat at Westminster general election since the Second World War and served as leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats from 1992 to 2005. He served as Deputy First Minister from 1999 to 2005, stepping up to become acting First Minister following the death of Donald Dewar in 2000 and the resignation of Henry McLeish in 2001. He was Minister for Justice and Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning in the first coalition Scottish Parliament before moving to the House of Lords in 2007, taking the title of Baron Wallace of Tankerness, where he served as Advocate General for Scotland from 2010 to 2015.

He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and holds honorary doctorates from the University of Edinburgh, Heriot Watt and the Open University. Jim is also a member of the choir at St Magnus Cathedral and says during our conversation how much he

has missed being part of the choir during the Covid-19 pandemic.

His nomination as Moderator has temporarily halted political business. He will not be taking part in this month's election campaign for the Scottish Parliament – the first campaign he has missed since 1973. He moved to the non-affiliated benches of the House of Lords in January and has scaled back his work for his year of service as Moderator. But he has received many messages of congratulations from Christians across the political spectrum and has been heartened by them.

The Assembly over which he will preside will not be a traditional one. The decision was taken earlier this year to hold the Assembly online amid the resurgence of Covid-19.

Looking ahead to the third week in May, he says: "It is pretty daunting, but also exciting."

He has attended a few General Assemblies, the first, notably, as a spectator in the public gallery in 1977 during the Queen's Silver Jubilee when she attended the Assembly, but also on several occasions as a guest of the Lord High Commissioner.

He served as a commissioner on two occasions in the 1990s.

“On my first time as a commissioner I thought it was a very impressive body. There was serious debate and like so many conferences a lot of things happened off the floor with fellowship, commitment, compassion and ideas.”

Having served as a commissioner to the General Assembly, he has also been a member of the former Church and Society Council and has also served two terms with the Church’s judicial commission.

Looking ahead to the year and the emergence of Scotland from the pandemic, he is particularly keen to acknowledge and encourage those serving as chaplains.

“Many of the places where we have chaplains – schools, hospitals, college, universities, prisons – they are all places which have been at the sharp end of the Covid-19 pandemic and have kept supporting people. I would like to recognise the work that they have done and encourage them in their work.”

Despite the uncertainty and restrictions of the global pandemic, he is hopeful that some Moderatorial visits may still be able to take place.

“There are a number of things already in the diary – presbytery visits to Edinburgh, Angus, Sutherland and Irvine and Kilmarnock. I am hoping some, and possibly all,

will be in person, depending on restrictions.

“These are important in two ways. It is important that people in communities in these presbyteries are recognised by the Moderator of the General Assembly. It is a recognition of what they are doing particularly in these Covid months for how they have responded. It is also important for the Moderator to get feedback from them.

“The visits are important, not just for the people in the church and not just the congregation, but for the local communities. It is an opportunity for the Church to engage with local communities.”

Overseas visits have also been tentatively pencilled in: “I’m looking forward to those and I hope to be able to visit Malawi and Lebanon. I’m also looking forward to the days visiting with CrossReach (the Church’s Social Care Council).”

I raise the question of what he might wear and, given the restrictions of Covid, he suggests it will be a modest outfit of suit and academic gown. (He has been offered the use of the late Very Rev Dr David Steel’s Moderatorial gown).

He will be accompanied by two chaplains during his year – his minister at St Magnus Cathedral, the Rev Fraser Macnaughton and the Rev Dr Marjory MacLean, a former Depute Clerk to the Gener-

al Assembly who has recently returned to Orkney to minister at South Ronaldsay and Burray.

But as only the second elder in modern times to be nominated to the office of Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (Dr Alison Elliot served as the first elder and woman in 2004/05), he is keen to restate the importance of the eldership to the Church: "One thing I hope to focus on is the fact that I am an elder and the importance of the eldership. It is historically a very cherished part of the Church's tradition.

"The nomination of an elder, albeit only for the second time in modern times should serve as encouragement. When you think of the range of the eldership, there is a huge reservoir of experience and talent out there, which, too often is an untapped resource and elders should be given more encouragement to play their part in the life of the Church."

His passion for politics, however, remains undimmed and he plans to focus on issues of justice during his year in office. "It is about following Jesus who offers us 'life in its fullness' – yes that means spiritual fulfilment, but must surely also be a challenge to us to meet the needs of others in body and mind. My background in justice issues means I want to focus on it in so many ways – there is the criminal

justice system, economic justice and social justice. We will be well reminded that there is the whole question of environmental justice in November (when the COP26 climate conference will be held in Glasgow) and moving to a green future I think will be important. The Church must be seen to care for God's creation."

He is hopeful the Church will learn lessons from its experience during the pandemic and is emphatic that the Church has a wider part to play in moving forward into a post-Covid-19 world.

"When we get together for the General Assembly we will be hopefully looking at a country that is emerging from months and months of a pandemic. During that time families will have lost loved ones and lost livelihoods. There will be uncertainty about jobs and tremendous pressure on the health service. There is a job of healing and renewal, not just for the Church but for the country.

"I would like to see the Church of Scotland not only play a part in the country that is to come but to help shape it."

This article first appeared in the May 2021 edition of "Life and Work", the Church of Scotland's magazine. More details here: <https://www.lifeandwork.org/>

Easy Sudoku

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Not So Easy Sudoku

Solutions on the back inside page

The Hope of Spring

It has been such a blessing to see the daffodils in full bloom in recent weeks! I love the different colours the trees take on as they burst into spring as well. We still have a way to go but the hope of spring is now so evident! Spring is one of my favourite times of year because it is the reminder of new opportunities, new blessings and new hope.

If you have been feeling a bit down this winter, you are not alone. It was a very long winter and the lockdown of course made it seem much longer. Now is the time to begin thinking about and praying for all that God is doing in the months ahead. I imagine it was quite like the disciples must have felt that spring after Jesus' death. The tension had been building for months with the religious leaders, and Jesus' death had brought them so much grief. Then there was the amazing hope of the resurrection that burst onto the scene.

The disciples likely did not know what to make of it at first. Remember what happened when they first found out about Jesus not being in the tomb?

Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned

to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb.

(John 20:8-11 NRSV)

The disciples were afraid, uncertain, and tearful. They wanted to believe, but after so much grief it was hard to find their way.

Some of the disciples had stopped gathering and were isolating. Thomas struggled to believe what he had not seen.

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

(John 20:24, 25 NRSV)



When Jesus came and had breakfast with the disciples, Peter struggled to fully yield his life to his Master. Perhaps Peter felt shame for the denials he had made against Jesus. Instead of rejecting him, Jesus patiently talked to him about caring for, tending, and loving the people who would need to hear about Jesus and had not seen him rise from the dead. Peter was called to look past his feelings and still follow Jesus.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.'

(John 21:15-17)

I imagine we have had many emotions over this last year. We have grieved, we have lost, and we have struggled. We have also found encouragement with one another and strength to go on in trying times.

Now is the time to sing a new song and to remember that, despite our losses, life is blossoming all around us. There will be new opportunities to come and worship together. We will be reaching out to our community in new ways and considering the youth, families, and students in our midst.

Nothing will stay the same after the pandemic has ended. I can remember returning home after I had lived abroad for a year or so and realizing so many buildings and so much of the landscape had changed while I was away. Yet the people and relationships I had built mostly stayed the same. There was growth and new signs of life all around, but familiar and traditional relationships and ideas still stood the test of time.

We might feel the same way after the pandemic. I am not sure how long we will need masks and distancing, but I imagine they won't be going away any time soon. I know those of us who have lost loved ones, jobs, and opportunities will grieve those losses for some time to come. But the new shoots on the trees of caring for one another in different ways and of looking to the community and how we can help it will continue.

I pray this spring when you see the flowers blossoming, the new animals being born and the trees

growing, you will see the hope all around us.

**Jesus is not dead, he has risen!
The Church has not died,
it is alive!**

We all have a part to play as we seek to hold on to the hope of Easter, as we seek to live into the spring that is before us!

There will be times ahead of sharing ideas, new hopes and dreams, and I pray you will consider sharing your opinions. In coming weeks, I will be meeting with people who are interested in reaching out to our community to meet with me to

share their ideas on how we might share God's love with families, students, children, and youth. Is that you? If so, please send me an email:

jpizzuto-pomaco@churchofscotland.org.

I hope you will consider joining me! Watch this space for new shoots, leaves and flowers!!! Always feel free to send me an email if you wish to chat.

In Christ's love and resurrection hope,

Julia

What do you think will happen after Covid?

You can take your choice: a recent survey has found that a third of us think that society may *never* go back to the old ways, a third of us think we will go back to *exactly* as we were before, and a third of us think that we will be *keener than ever* to stay together.

The Together Coalition, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, has been working for the past year on a piece of research to track just what has happened to communities during lockdown.

The new research has found that "people feel a stronger sense of connection to their neighbours and community. ...We found a clear public appetite for a society in which we are more connected to each other, and the community spirit of 2020 is kept alive."

It also found that around 12.4million people have volunteered during the pandemic, 4.6million of them for the first time. And 75 per cent of those volunteers would be happy to do so again.

Moving Forward Looking Back

I am a creature of habit I don't like change.

I am happy with routine and being with who I know where I know doing things the way I know. Boring perhaps and not forward thinking but that's me. Even to the point of where I sit on a Sunday and who is behind me in the pews. Pews of course not chairs I know what I am doing in a pew an office chair is for something entirely different. And this Riverside grouping is not what I am used to at all. I know where I am with my own minister in my own church. I don't mind sharing groups and joining in, but I'm not happy having things pushed at me when I don't see the need.

Speaking about the Riverside Parish Grouping brought to mind when Holburn Central had to close and we merged with Ruthrieston South. We didn't have to close when we did, but we would have to one day, so we were told.

Looking back at that how did I feel? Wary, unsure and strange and not at all comfy. I have a public face which exudes confidence but inside there is a 'panicking beastie'. What if I didn't find anyone to talk to? What if I was in a space alone and they did everything differently? This new Riverside will be the same won't it?

So what was it like back then? Yes I was wary and I did feel strange but there were lots of people in the same boat. Ruthrieston had a new minister, our minister. Holburn was in a new building, their building. But the people were Ok and did talk and smile, so I smiled too and talked and introduced myself. I was asked to join in by old faces and new faces and it really wasn't so bad - in fact it was good. There were some I knew who didn't like it and didn't like that things were not exactly as they had been, but I wasn't one of them.

How do I feel about that merge now? I have a bigger family than I had before and just like a family I don't always agree with everyone and how everything is done but I am part of the family. The family has changed and members have gone for a variety of reasons and I miss them desperately, but the family is still here for me. I have to remember to smile and talk and they will let me in if I ask just like my birth family.

So, back to the moving forward, I have done it before and had the same doubts and reservations as now, and last time it worked - and sometimes I can't remember who was at my old church and it doesn't matter because I am in my new church. I hope by looking back I

have learned that I can move forward and adjust to what will happen - I know I have to. Life changes, the future is now, not like it was when I was a wee girl. The world is changing, and I have to change with it to be a part of it. So I will move forward and try to help those amongst us who have the same doubts and fears that I have and remind them that we have enough love and faith to come together in an even bigger family - another new family with more new friends and ideas to help us all be

one big family of the future. Welcoming new people into the fold with a smile and showing them that they can join us with an open hand and heart.

Yes, I can do it. I don't feel so scared now. I am smiling. I am glad I wrote this down it makes sense to me. Hope it does to you. I look forward to our joint future together. Say hello to me and introduce yourself and I will do the same.

Alison

The General Assembly 2021

General Assembly 2021 has just finished. It was South Holburn's turn to send commissioners and Rev. Stewart and Mr. Ronnie Johnstone attended. Though this year, attendance meant taking part from home on Zoom (bottom picture).

The Lord High Commissioner was HRH Prince William who addresses the Assembly on the opening day and again on the closing day. (top picture)

There were reports that showed the many ways that churches have helped communities during the Pandemic. While other reports showed the need for great change in the church with reduced numbers of ministers and buildings.



Farewell but not Goodbye

By Ron Taylor

With a heavy heart and not a few regrets, I say farewell, for now, to our Church. The regrets are mainly because I have nothing but fondness for South Holburn Parish Church and, of course, the Church family we all are part of.

I have, also, greatly, enjoyed my, life long, journey with the Church of Scotland, so far.

Baptised at Woodside North Parish Church in 1948, I recall with pleasant nostalgia, my time at Sunday School there. With my Granddad, Gran, Dad, Mum and older brother, we would walk up Queen Street Woodside, dressed in our Sunday best, shoes polished, each Sunday Morning. Then my brother and I would be delivered to the door (under the Church) of the Sunday school. The adults going into their pews. Always the same Pews as they rented them.

My memories from those days include my Gran putting money aside for the Church envelope as the first thing she did when working out how to make her weekly allowance stretch to cover all the family's needs. I also remember how the "best room", in our tenement flat, was kept spotless in case there was a visit from the Minister. I don't remember any such visit, but, boy, were we always prepared.

In the early nineteen-fifties, my Mum, Dad and older brother, moved from the Woodside Tenement, with its outside toilet, to a new modern house in Northfield, leaving my Grandparents behind. They would move to Mastrick, not that much later. My younger brother arrived quite soon after we had moved. Our Dad died a few years later.

We had all joined Northfield Parish Church. Rev Bruce was the Minister. My Mum quickly became an Elder, then Deaconess and Head of the Sunday School. Nearly all children in Northfield, at that time, attended Sunday School. We were spread around many buildings, schools, halls and libraries, due to the sheer number of children (thousands). It seemed that every kid in the area went to Sunday school. I also enjoyed the Life boys, Cubs, Boys Brigade and the Scouts. When a teenager I attended Bible Class.

It was only when engaged to be married that I moved to John Knox (Mounthooly) Church, Joyce's Church. Minister Rev Laurie Y. Gordon, gave us lessons to prepare us for our marriage. That was a memorable experience, keeping a straight face and a serious disposition. This was in the late sixties and Aberdeen was going through

great change. Causewayend was no exception. After the strong new community feel of Northfield Parish Church, John Knox Parish Church had a more City Centre ambience. Sermons had their fair share of fire and fury.

Both our children were baptised there.

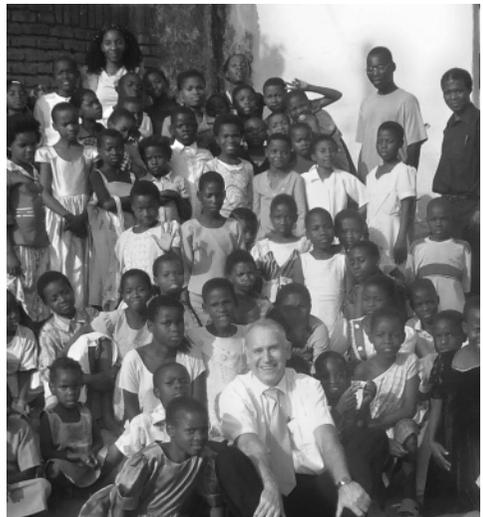
Our Silver Wedding coincided with the very last Church Service at John Knox Church. For us it was a day of celebration of 25 years marriage but as we sat in the congregation we could all feel a sense of sadness. The building had been sold for housing and whilst we could have moved to nearby Greyfriar's Parish Church, we did not. I was working at the University of Aberdeen and we often attended Sunday Services at King's College Chapel. We decided to worship there. King's is a lovely place and the Chaplains, Gillian and then Easter, were wonderful and became good friends. Services were interesting with many guest preachers. We were always made to feel so welcome and we felt we were helping by filling the frequently sparse, pews.

It was only when I retired from the University that we decided to join a local Church. We attended a few different Local Church's services but after we attended Ruthrieston South Parish Church, it was an easy choice. Rev Hugh Kerr was

such a good preacher. We attended on a Sunday and that same afternoon someone had put a note through our door asking us to get in touch with Rev Hugh Kerr. He came round round the next day and we were invited to join.

That was almost twenty years ago and we have been happy at Ruthrieston South and then South Holburn.

Amongst the many highlights for me was to be invited to become an Elder and attend to the business affairs of the Session. I joined the Mission Outreach Committee and took an interest in our Church's links to Malawi. At this time I was in awe of the work of, colleagues at the University, Rev Alan Main and Professor Mike Meston with St Andrews Church in Colombo Sri Lanka. St Andrews Church was at



the epicentre of the region worst hit by the Tsunami and after raising considerable funding in Aberdeen they both went over to Colombo. They worked with the folks of the Church to ensure the monies raised went directly to families who most needed and best used it. Just getting a stove up and running for a household, putting a roof up for shelter or giving fishermen new nets made such a difference on the ground. It gave me an interest in helping folks in the developing world.

The next years, along with many other volunteers at South Holburn we collected so much of what was needed in Malawi and also raised funds to help our Sister Church of Kachere. The youngsters in our Church used a lot of energy and ingenuity raising funds with bike rides while special events, involving so many, also raised funds.

A few years later I volunteered to go to Malawi, on behalf of South Holburn Parish Church and that was an amazing experience. In the example of Alan and Mike, our family covered all the costs involved including as much as we could raise to help the orphans there. On my return I took part in the Presbytery Malawi Committee, now the World Mission Committee.

Quite a few years ago Rev George Cowie asked me to Chair the Finance Committee and I have enjoyed that very much. When our

Treasurer Lorna Cheetham, sadly died, I also acted as Treasurer for a period before Lesley Bills came to the rescue as I am not good with detail. She is a wonderful Treasurer. I will be especially sad to no longer be working with her and all on the Finance Team, especially Shelagh and Dorothy, who have always been so helpful.

I have so enjoyed being part of the South Holborn family, so it is very much farewell, rather than goodbye. Our oldest Granddaughter's wedding is this coming September and I feel I have to be away from the Church of Scotland by the end of August. I must end all my volunteer work for the Church and end our financial contributions.

We will, most likely, worship at King's College Chapel which is ecumenical in approach and where we have worshipped a few times each year. I am busy with the Horizons Trust which is building an international standard hospital in Banjul in The Gambia. My Christian faith and work continues.

So is it farewell and not goodbye, I know for sure that the Church of Scotland will make the changes I and so many others want, and now need, to see. It will just take more time than I am able to allow for our own personal family reasons. We could not be happier or more proud of our Granddaughter. We are delighted with her choice of

marriage partner and are mesmerised and distraught at our Church's (Church of Scotland) confused position on same sex marriage.

In 2018 the Church's General Assembly voted 345 votes to 170 votes (more than a two thirds majority) to approve same sex marriage by Church of Scotland Ministers and Deacons. It was, then decided to remit the decision to the legal questions committee to come forward with the legislation. The COVID emergency has not helped that process. I do hope that when these essential changes take place within the Church that I can apply to rejoin, if I wish.

In 2017, the Church of Scotland issued an unreserved and overdue apology for its decades of dubiously legal discrimination against the LGBT community. I confidently predict that the Church will have to issue a similar apology for continuing the, questionably legal, ban on Ministers of the Church, conducting or blessing same-sex marriage.

Before leaving, in August, I will play my role in the production of our financial accounts for the year to the end of December 2020, will register them along with our annual report to the regulator. Our Session will need to select a new Chair to the Finance Committee and responsible person for reporting to the Charity Regulator of the 2021 report and accounts in 2022. I am willing to help whoever is selected at any time, if such help is needed.

I am sorry that I will be unable to help with the amalgamation of the Churches, Charities and finances of the Riverside Parish and my parting advice is that this project is completed as soon as it is possible. The Presbytery Plan, through no fault of anyone, but because of the current emergency, is beginning to drift. Such drift could be, financially, very damaging if allowed to continue.

Above all, I wish all within South Holburn Parish Church my very best wishes.

Ron Taylor

Membership Updates

Jesus said ... "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. (John 11:25-26)

Sadly the following members of our Church passed away:

Beryl Castle
Marjory Fraser
William Gray
Ron Henderson

In our last issue we incorrectly printed the details of one of our members:

"Mr. William Delgano"

Should have been printed as:

Mr. William Dalgarno

Apologies are offered for any offence caused.

Helen and David Strachan would like to thank everyone for the kind messages and cards following the death of Beryl, Helen's Mum.

She died peacefully at home with family around her on 5th March.

We are Just Love Aberdeen.



Our goal is simple: **we want to encourage students in Aberdeen to embrace God's call to do justice, both in our communities and around the world.** We are entering our third year on the University of Aberdeen's campus, and we can't wait to get started!

We believe that knowledge is the first step to living a more just life. To that end, we emphasize education about justice issues. We love talking about justice, whether it is at our book club or Just Lunch. We bring in engaging speakers from charities around Scotland to raise awareness of issues and empower us with ways to help.

But, we don't stop with education. We actively engage in doing justice. What does this mean? **Doing justice is different for everyone, but we believe each kind is equally valid.** We are committed to fundraising for our partner charities, including participating in *Dressember* each year to raise funds and awareness to combat modern day slavery and human trafficking. We encourage our members to get involved in local charities as well, helping them fulfill their missions of justice.

So, that's the basic rundown.

We are a community of Christian students who are passionately pursuing justice for the glory of God, both in Aberdeen and around the world.

We'd love to partner with you in our mission!

If you'd like more information, you can send us an email at justloveaberdeen@gmail.com.

like us on Facebook at [Just Love Aberdeen](#).

or follow us on Instagram at [@justloveabdn](#).

Thanks,

Joshua Pizzuto-Pomaco, Social Media Secretary

Solutions

Easy
Sudoku

5	2	1	7	8	6	3	9	4
3	4	7	1	5	9	2	6	8
6	8	9	2	3	4	5	7	1
8	7	4	6	2	3	1	5	9
9	5	2	4	1	8	6	3	7
1	3	6	9	7	5	8	4	2
4	6	8	3	9	1	7	2	5
2	9	5	8	6	7	4	1	3
7	1	3	5	4	2	9	8	6

4	7	5	9	6	1	2	8	3
2	3	9	7	4	8	1	6	5
1	6	8	3	2	5	4	7	9
7	8	4	1	5	9	3	2	6
9	5	2	6	3	4	7	1	8
6	1	3	2	8	7	5	9	4
3	9	7	5	1	6	8	4	2
5	4	1	8	9	2	6	3	7
8	2	6	4	7	3	9	5	1

Not So
Easy
Sudoku

South Holburn Church is Registered as a charity: SC017516

www.southholburn.org