

# Closeburn Newsletter

AUTUMN 2021



We are happy to include both Community and Church information in this latest Autumn Newsletter.

We are pleased to return to delivering these from door to door but will also be lodging them on the Church Website and on the local Facebook Pages.

We have lived through very troubled and troubling times but hope that by working as a Community and a Church within the Community, we have made 'getting through it' a wee bit easier. The Vaccine arrived and took us a step closer to some normality, but that normality is quite different from the 'Old Normal'.

We hope and pray that you all keep safe and well as we continue to take small steps towards normal life.

**This Newsletter is produced in collaboration between Closeburn Parish Church of Scotland (Scottish Charity No. SC005624, Cong. No 080436) and Closeburn Community Council.**

**Items for future inclusion should be passed to**

**Janis Dick 01848 330067 [janis@rhinspark.plus.com](mailto:janis@rhinspark.plus.com) or Carol Currie, [carolnicol68@live.co.uk](mailto:carolnicol68@live.co.uk)**

# CHURCH NEWS

MESSAGE FROM REV BILL MCKENZIE

Dear Friends, Greetings to you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For many, life has changed radically over the course of the Covid19 pandemic. For those at the heart of the suffering: bereavement; anxiety; uncertainty; overwork; and tiredness, are the order of the day. For others: workers put on furlough with possible future loss of employment; working from home which demands a new discipline in use of time; zooming and conferencing instead of meeting colleagues or family; re-allocating household duties and responsibilities.

All of these have positive aspects, most of which can be a cause for some level of gratitude. The loss of loved ones or of colleagues and friends, gives a new awareness of how precious each one is; anxiety and uncertainty prompt us to re-evaluate how fortunate we really are, pointing to how we should cope in the crisis; overwork and tiredness demand a fresh balance of physical activity and creative leisure; loss of employment can give us an opportunity to follow a new vision, or interest, or skill for service; working from home, and being together at home, can draw family closer, or present a challenge. (Sad to hear that there is an increase in abuse); health does steadily improve by walking, cycling, greeting neighbours in the passing, and enjoying the outdoors.

This of course brings us to COP26. Basically, I'm more of an optimist than I am a pessimist...but...human nature hasn't a good track record vis-a-vis nature itself. Across the globe it has been exploited for human gain and self-interest, rather than recognising that there is a Maker's Handbook, not just a User's Handbook. In fact, I find it rather pathetic that I should use such an analogy, when I believe that God is not just a maker, but the Creator whose Handbook is the Bible. His creation is unique and works on the principle of love in relationship with Him and with each other, shown in Jesus. Human nature, on the other hand, is on a massive drive towards individualism which is quite blinkered. There is one form of prayer that I really hesitate to use: It is addressed to God, "*world without end, Amen*" We have destroyed a multiplicity of species and environments. Escaping in a fleet of spacecraft won't save ours. Do the obscenely rich think that they will succeed like Noah? "The meek shall inherit the earth." COP26 is immensely important. We better start praying, No Call for a National Day of Prayer, for COP26 or Covid19 as in past crises.

Christmas is approaching when a special child was born. "Unless we become like little children, we cannot inherit the Kingdom."

"Peace on earth, goodwill to all."

Reverend Bill.

## **CHURCH SERVICES**

The Church resumed Services in the building at 10.00am and will hold Services on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month until 7<sup>th</sup> November when a Holy Communion will be held, and Services will then be weekly. (On-line Services will continue to be available See below). Remembrance Sunday falls on 14<sup>th</sup> November and the War Memorial Service and wreath laying will take place.

While Rules have relaxed, we still need to respect each other's personal space and wear masks in the Church and while singing.

## **CHURCH GIVING DAY**

Every Year the Church makes an appeal for financial support from our Parish Community. This Giving Day results in approximately 25% of the Annual Income and it is no exaggeration that these donations go a long way to making the Church a viable proposition.

The Treasurer previously pointed out that despite the Church Building being closed the Congregation's financial obligations remained almost unchanged. With financial commitments to the Church Nationally as well as maintaining our building.

The loss of the Sunday Offering during lockdowns equated to another 25% of the Congregational Income. However, we are slowly returning to weekly Services. Everything that could be done to reduce expenditure has been done.

The Treasurer makes a plea that if you consider the Church a part of your community and would like it there for your use at some stage, that you consider making a donation on Giving Day 2021.

Every penny raised will be used to maintain its presence.

Giving day this year is on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October and the hall is open at 2 – 4 pm and 6 – 7 pm to safely accept envelopes. The times are on the envelope.

Alternatively, please feel free to hand an envelope to the Minister or any Church Member.

## **GIVE AS YOU LIVE**

For those who buy "on-line" there is a way to support the Church **at no cost to you.** Many on-line retailers will contribute to a charity, such as the Church when you purchase from them. To give in this way you would need to register at <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/> and follow the registration process. You will be given a chance to choose a Charity in a search box and if you type Closeburn Parish Church this will find it.

Once registered if you log in to Give as you live and go to your selected store, any purchases you make will be recognised and the retailer will make a donation to the Church.

## **ON-LINE CHURCH SERVICE**

Since Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 the Church has had an On-line Church Service available, initially through a link being emailed out and subsequently through an updated website –

[www.closeburn.kirkmahoe.churches.org](http://www.closeburn.kirkmahoe.churches.org)

In the near future as Closeburn and Kirkmahoe, with whom we are linked, return to weekly Services, these on-line Services will be recorded in one of the two Churches and put online later the same day.

To find it go to the website and scroll down where you will find the current, and previous Services available.

These have continued even after the Church Building reopened.

If you would rather be emailed the link, contact Janis Dick by the contact details shown on the front page.

## **CHURCH GUILD**

The Guild is not meeting and will not meet until further notice.

## **CHURCH REFORM**

On the next page you will see that the Church across Scotland and the Church of Scotland across the World is undergoing radical change to make it fit for the present and more importantly, the future.

Closeburn will not be unaffected by this, and they are taking part in the review.

It is important to know that everything is on the table.

Closeburn is a beautiful Church Building that is maintained to a high standard, and it is intended to continue to do that but in the short-term major work, other than necessary maintenance, is embargoed.

Fortunately, it does not need any major work having recently replaced the central heating boiler and had the outside railings repaired and repainted to a high standard. Fair to say the Church looks well.

Long may that continue.

## **The Dalgarnock Conventicle and the Nithsdale Covenantors**

On 12<sup>th</sup> September 2021, a Conventicle was held at Dalgarnock graveyard, Kirkbog. This was a very inspiring and well attended gathering, on a very pleasant afternoon.

In the 17th. century this area saw the stand by Presbyterians who rejected the introduction of bishops into the government of the Church of Scotland.

These Presbyterians were adherents of the National Covenant which swore to uphold the original principles of the Kirk, and included ministers who had been removed, but who continued to conduct open air services. These conventicles were well attended in this area. The Stuart Kings instigated measures to root them out, with Grierson of Lag as their local agent.

Many were killed without trial or right of reply. This savagery reached its height during the Killing Times of the 1680's.

In the graveyard at Kirkbog stands a monument to the 57 Nithsdale Martyrs, 3 women and 54 men, 2 of whom were ministers, who were victims of these times. It was erected by the descendants of exiles who settled in New Zealand.

## **The Future of the Church in Scotland**

Scots used to be known as the "People of the Book." who worshipped God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We observed the Lord's Day. No more!

A prominent Christian organisation recently stated, "There is huge spiritual poverty in Scotland and disbelief in Jesus."

The Church of Scotland is short of ordained ministers of the Gospel of salvation through Christ Jesus. Church attendance, pre-Covid19, is at an all-time low; and the process of amalgamating Presbyteries has already begun. There may be a resultant closure of church buildings.

- In 2019 the General Assembly decided that Presbyteries would be reduced from around 46 to around 12. Wigton and Stranraer, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, and Annandale and Eskdale Presbyteries began formal conversations.
- When it became apparent that a new Presbytery would require around 100 charges to make it viable, the Ayrshire Presbyteries and the Dumfries and Galloway Presbyteries began to consider options together. During this time a Steering Group comprised of 3 from each presbytery met and with Presbytery backing agreed to work towards what would be named the "Presbytery of the South West of Scotland"
- At the General Assembly of May 2021 an overture was passed which would cause the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer to be united into the Presbytery of the South West of Scotland by the 30 September 2022.

In 2022, following a whole range of adjustments, our Presbytery of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright will then be in the *Presbytery of the South West of Scotland*. It is possible that the Presbytery office will be in Kilmarnock, but this has not yet been confirmed.

Our sole concern at this time should be to rebuild our congregation by calling on those within our parish, to come to know Jesus and the Good News, and so discover the joy and blessings of worship in His Church.

# Church Register

## Deaths:

9 December 2020

Miss Mary Notman, Blackrigg, Thornhill

30 December 2020

Mrs. Agnes Notman, Barrasgate, Kirkton

25 January 2021

Mrs. Barbara Kennedy, Nether Rigg, Closeburn

25 March 2021

Mr. David Bee, Smithy Cottage, Closeburn

5 April 2021

Mrs. Sally Murphy, Closeburn Village, Closeburn

## Deaths:

25 April 2021

Mrs. Margaret Hunter, Shawsholm Road, Closeburn

28 April 2021

Mrs. Maimie Clements, New Court, Thornhill

10 July 2021

Mrs. Mary Stitt, Firmuir Avenue, Closeburn

11 July 2021

Mrs. Margaret Templeton, Limebank, Shotts, Closeburn

21 August 2021

Mrs. Hilda Douglas, Firmuir Avenue, Closeburn

## Wedding

28<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Andrew Graham Walker to Lucie Abigail Alker

## Church Service (10.00am unless otherwise shown)

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2021  | Holy Communion   |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2021 | Remembrance Service, (9.30am at War Memorial, 10am Church Service) |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 | Christmas Family Service   |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 | Watchnight Service, (11.30pm)                                      |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2022    | Easter Sunday  |

## CHURCH CONTACTS

Interim Moderator Rev. William M McKenzie, MBE, D.A., 41 Kingholm Road, Dumfries DG1 4SR Tel; 01387 253688, [mckenzie.dumfries@btinternet.com](mailto:mckenzie.dumfries@btinternet.com)

Session Clerk Jack Tait, Lilac Cottage, Park, DG3 5JP Tel; 01848 331700, [jack.tait1941@gmail.com](mailto:jack.tait1941@gmail.com)

# COMMUNITY NEWS

## **CLOSEBURN RESILIENCE GROUP**

The Resilience Group continues to operate. During the last year they have embarked on many projects. One of the most noteworthy was the freshening of the War Memorial and anyone who has been past it recently will see what they have achieved.

They have also been involved in tidying up the Main Street and road down to the Church as well as many other praiseworthy jobs.

Help is always appreciated and please, don't be shy if you have time and talent.

Main contact; - Sarah Currie      Tel;  
07921525296

## **GALA**

Sadly, the Committee had to cancel the 2021 Gala, Fundraising has continued and hopefully 2022 will see the return of the Gala.

## **SWI**

The SWI restarted on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021, meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month and now meet at 2.00pm in the Village Hall. Everyone is welcome.

## **COMMUNITY ORCHARD**

Volunteers wanted

Like most projects the Orchard has been slower to develop than was planned.

A small group of people, 3, have tried to maintain the ground within the walls and made sure the fruit trees and soft fruit bushes continued to thrive.

Funding was obtained for two wooden buildings, and these are now at the stage that the bases are in place and the building needs to be erected.

Anyone with the skills to erect these wooden structures is asked to contact Jakob on

[jakob.nvlt@yahoo.com](mailto:jakob.nvlt@yahoo.com) or 0775 714 4369

Just a reminder that this Orchard has been obtained for the benefit of the Community and needs input from the Community to thrive.

The same 3 people who have maintained it for 2 years cannot continue to do so without your help.

## **COMMUNITY BUS**

The Community Bus has restarted its scheduled runs on alternative Fridays from Thornhill to Dumfries, (Morrisons).

One Friday via Park, the other via Penpont/ Keir/ Glenmidge.

It also goes to Castle Douglas on the first Wednesday of each month.

Although the capacity is limited 15 there is plenty capacity, particularly on the Park Run.

This is an ideal service for those less mobile as the service is door to door.

Bus passes are welcomed.

If you wish to use the Service contact Janis Dick on the details show on the front page.

**DRIVERS WANTED** – All drivers are unpaid volunteers, and the bus Committee are always on the lookout for new volunteer drivers. Drivers need to have a D1 classification on their Drivers Licence. Anyone interested please contact Janis as above.

## **VILLAGE HALL**

The Hall Committee are happy to announce that they have reopened the Village Hall for regular use.

Contact details are as before.

## **BENCH AT PARK**

The Community Council used funding available to it from Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Fund, (Hairstaines Wind Farm), to purchase a bench which was located at the southern end of Park Village.

It appears to have been welcomed by walkers during the summer and provides a quiet place to rest weary legs and a good view across the hills.

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Clyde Wind Farm Dumfries and Galloway Community Fund** is open for applications for funding.

[www.foundationscotland.org.uk/programmes/clydedumfriesandgalloway](http://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/programmes/clydedumfriesandgalloway)

Funding is also available to this area from the **Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Funds, (ANCBC).**

Their website for information and applications is <https://ancbc.co.uk/>