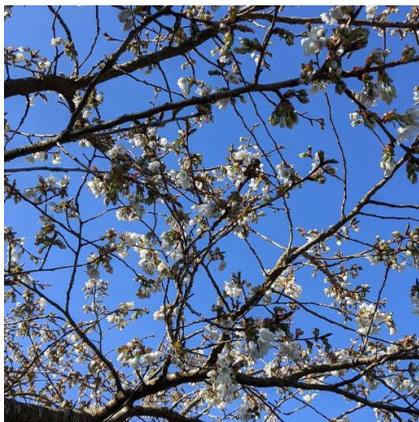


to glorify God ... to proclaim Christ ... and to serve others

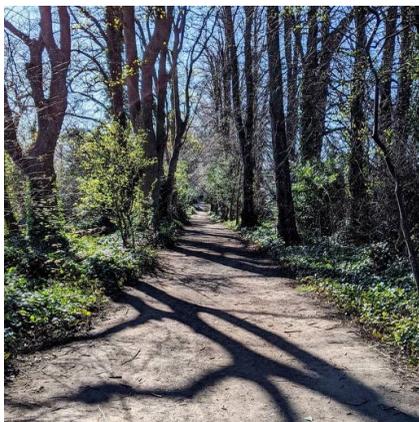
MAY 2021

No. 827



For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies:
Christ, our God, to you we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

Folliott S. Pierpont



Minister

Rev Fergus Cook
5 Blinkbonny Crescent
Edinburgh EH4 3NB
Tel. 466 7503

Session Clerk

Mr Eddie Thorn
Tel. 332 5702

Church Secretary

Mrs Joy McGonigal-Paget
In Church Office from
Mon-Fri, 9.00-12.30pm
Tel. 332 4431
secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Back to Church for Easter



Easing of Covid restrictions allowed access to the Church Sanctuary, albeit limited, in time for Easter services.



From the Minister



'The merry month of May.....'

The month of May is significant for a lot of reasons. It brings with it the gifts of Spring and even a few hints of Summer. It comes with flowers, better weather and the assurance that, after every storm, comes the sunshine.

The month of May has caused numerous authors to write effusively about it. Ernest Agyemang Yeboah penned the words, "*Make hay in May for you may never know what June is coming with and you may never know what July will present! When you see May, make hay!*" whilst Jenna Danchuk wrote, "*May . . . it's full of all the things that make spring and the brighter part of the year so special. Flowers bud, the sun shines, and new seeds are sown into the fabric of our lives. May is awesome.*"

There are many different ways in which people have marked what for many is 'the merry month of May'. 'The Merry Month of May' is a novel by James Jones, written in 1971, a 16th/17th century poem by Thomas Decker, a 1955 film featuring Lee Hoi-chuen, an Irish folk song and a memorable line from the song "The Fountain in the Park". Lastly, in my list, it is a regimental march of the 10th Royal Hussars.

May has a lot of meaning for different people throughout the world. Several countries and regions, including Scandinavia and various parts of Europe, engage in a Maypole dance which is a ceremonial folk dance performed around a tall pole garlanded with greenery or flowers and often hung with ribbons that are woven into complex patterns by the dancers. This is probably best known here in the United Kingdom where 'Morris Dancers' in England do a Maypole Dance.

In America, the last Monday in May is used to mark Memorial Day (previously, but now seldom, called Decoration Day). It is a federal, that is national, holiday in the United States and is a day used for honouring and mourning personnel who have died in the performance of their duties while serving in the United States Military. Many people visit cemeteries and memorials on Memorial Day and volunteers place an American flag on the graves of military personnel in national cemeteries. Memorial Day is distinguished from Armed Forces Day which is also held in May and is an unofficial U.S. holiday for honouring those currently serving in the armed forces. In America, Remembrance Day, November the 11th is called Veterans Day. /continued

From the Minister continued

This May, we, at Blackhall St Columba's, shall be embarking on what is a new form of remembrance for us. On Saturday 15 May, at 1600hrs, we shall be hosting, and live-streaming, a service of worship as an Act of Remembrance on behalf of the Monte Cassino Society. The Monte Cassino Society service has been set up to "Remember all who fought, and in the memory of those who died, in the capture of Monte Cassino during The Italian Campaign 1943-45."

You might ask why are we, at Blackhall St Columba's, marking this occasion? The story of how the service came about begins with the recent sanctuary refurbishment. As you will be aware, we generated a lot of publicity on its completion and part of that included an article in the magazine *Life and Work*. The article in *Life and Work* made mention of the Monte Cassino Cross which the Rev Watson Mathewson brought to the Church in 1952 when he became the minister here. This article was read by a



Church of Scotland elder in a neighbouring parish who is the son of a veteran of Monte Cassino and a member of the Monte Cassino Society. When this elder contacted me, he indicated that neither he nor the society had ever heard of this particular cross. Largely, because of the book written by the late Margaret McArthur, we were able to tell the story of how the Rev Watson Mathewson had had the cross made when he was serving as a chaplain at Monte Cassino during the war. This has sparked interest from all over the world with telephone calls, letters and emails which culminated in an offer from Blackhall St Columba's to host the aforementioned remembrance service.

There are two thoughts that come to mind when I think about this upcoming service. The first thing is the importance of remembrance not just for really big events, like a war but for all the events that have come to shape us as a world, as a country, as a community and even as individuals. The second thing that comes to mind is a reminder of what I preached about on Sunday 18 April regarding the unforeseen consequences of our actions. Then, I referred to the actions of the unknown people who daily laid the crippled man at the gates of the temple to beg. Little did they know that action that day would lead to the man being seen by Peter and John and being made able to walk again.

This Monte Cassino remembrance service has come about because of a number of people who carried out / continued

From the Minister continued

and are still carrying out different actions in God's service, for example, the Pioneers who made the cross back in 1943, the Rev Watson Mathewson who brought the cross here to Blackhall and Margaret McArthur who recorded the story for others to read. None of these people are here now to see the consequences of those actions but God can do wonders with small things.

What are you doing at the moment that God will use later to further His plans? Who are you speaking to and influencing that God will use later to progress His kingdom here on earth?

When I think of all that God is capable of through our small actions of faith and love, I think that it is indeed a merry, merry time whether it is May or not.

God bless all

Fergus.

Family News

Deaths

13 April Mrs Marjorie Easton

24 April Mr Murray Easton



It is with sadness that we intimate the deaths of Marjorie and Murray Easton. Marjorie died on 13 April and Murray died on 24 April, the day following Marjorie's funeral.

Our thoughts are with their family and friends at this sad time.

Marriage

24 April Christine McGowan Smyth to John Campbell.

We are delighted to offer our congratulations and best wishes to Christine and John on the occasion of their marriage.

Kirk Session Report

The Kirk Session met on Tuesday 6 April and Tuesday 13 April 2021 (Special meeting to approve the 2020 Accounts). These were again virtual meetings conducted via the Zoom conferencing facility as permitted by the Commission of the General Assembly.

Elder Retiral

It was noted that Hamish Stears had decided to retire from active Eldership. Hamish was ordained an Elder in March 1982 and in the following years he gave faithful and committed service to the Church and this Congregation including, for a long period, the management of our website. Hamish was thanked for his dedicated service.

Mission

The Moderator reported that mission work was ongoing but that progress was slow due to Covid restrictions and was mainly in an outreach capacity. The Cluster Group, as part of the Presbytery planning, is considered a positive move and should assist all congregations going forward. A video was sent to Blackhall Primary School for Easter, and the Moderator attended the School's Service.

An article in *Life & Work* regarding the Monte Cassino Cross (located on the baptismal font in the North Aisle) attracted the attention of the Monte Cassino Society and our Moderator has agreed to live stream a Service commemorating the 1944 Battle of Monte Cassino. This would be viewed by many veterans of different nationalities when it takes place on Saturday 15 May at 1600 hours.

Presbytery Plan

It was noted that the stage had now been reached when the Cluster (the congregations of Cramond, Davidson's Mains, Old Kirk Muirhouse, Drylaw, Granton and ourselves) requires to submit its plan to Presbytery covering the next five years. All six congregations face a similar issue of ageing membership while meeting Presbytery's aim of extending mission across our various communities may present a challenge. All six Church buildings were regarded as being in the right location while some would benefit from some work to ensure that they were also well-equipped spaces.

There was a discussion on the resourcing model which might be used across the Cluster which centred on a partnership between what is referred to as a "Resourcing Church" and another (resourced) Church which is regarded as requiring some additional resourcing - not necessarily financial but more probably human resource. / continued

Kirk Session Report continued

There are of course a number of historical links and existing relationships between all six congregations in the Cluster. Such links would be encouraged to continue while, at the same time, joint ventures could take place across the Cluster or between congregations.

The forthcoming General Assembly will agree ministerial numbers for each Presbytery and that will trickle down to the number of positions across each Cluster. Currently Cramond and Old Kirk Muirhouse are in vacancy while the Transition Minister's time in Drylaw completes in June 2022. Whatever is decided upon, team working would be essential with lay people and other paid staff in key roles to support those ministers in the clusters across the whole Presbytery area.

Approval of Congregational Accounts

Elders met on Tuesday 13 April and formally approved the Congregation Accounts for the twelve months ended 31 December 2020. Adrian Johnston, our Congregational Treasurer was thanked by the Moderator for all his work during the period.

Eddie Thorn
Session Clerk

Gift Aid - thanks, but don't forget

It's about this time of year that the annual claim for tax rebate on Gift Aided donations starts to be prepared. So to those of you who can donate under this scheme thanks for the work! Seriously. Without the money from this source the church would be in severe financial difficulty.

To allow a reclaim of tax, which adds 25% to your giving, you must sign a certificate for the church confirming you pay income or capital gains taxes (directly to the taxman but more commonly as a deduction from salaries, pensions, dividends, annuities etc.).

If you stop paying tax you need to let the church know as soon as you can so that no further claims are made on your gifts. So don't forget.

Sandy Weir
Gift Aid Convenor

Christian Aid Week: 10 - 16 May 2021

The climate emergency is one of the greatest injustices we face. Together we stop this climate crisis.



Rose Katanu Jonathan sitting on the dry land caused by extreme drought in Dili Village, Kitui. Adam Finch/Christian Aid

Rose fights hunger every day. This is her climate crisis. This is her story.

Rose is caught in a cycle of climate chaos. From severe drought to flooding, extreme weather robs her of what she needs to survive: a reliable source of water.

When she was a child, Rose remembers how often the rains would fall, giving fruit to the baobab trees and providing plenty of nutritious food to eat.

‘When I was a young girl, there was plenty of food,’ Rose says. Now, the rains are totally unreliable. The climate crisis has galvanised extreme weather and Rose’s community are feeling the brunt of it. **For months at a time, Rose and her family live with drought.** ‘Because of climate change, I worry a lot about food. I pray to God that the rainfall will become normal like it used to be.’

Rose strives to provide for her grandchildren who live with her. She does all she can to give them happy childhoods, like the times she remembers when there was plenty of food. But the climate crisis is driving her to the brink.



Rose has to go on a long journey to collect water.

Adam Finch/Christian Aid

In times of drought, Rose sets out on a long and dangerous journey every morning to collect water for her family. She walks on an empty stomach.

‘Because I am old, I can’t walk very fast. When I get home I just rest in the evening. I have no energy to do anything else,’ Rose says.

Even when the rains do come, relief for Rose is often short lived.

/ continued

Christian Aid Week continued

There is a nearby earth dam just minutes away from Rose's home. It should be a lifeline. But it's not wide enough or deep enough for everyone's needs. It runs out of water too quickly. Imagine how dispirited Rose must feel watching the rain fall for days, only to find the dam empty just a short while later. What's more, the rains are much heavier than they should be, putting Rose's community at risk of flooding.

Rose is over 60 years old and simply won't have the strength to fetch water from further afield for much longer. **We need to fight this climate crisis together.** 'I believe God gives me strength and helps me persevere. I pray that God will help people to help me.'

With a reliable source of water, people like Rose would be free from long, painful journeys. They would be able to grow fresh vegetables to eat. And they would be able to protect themselves from the dangers of coronavirus. With such dire need, every last drop of water that falls in Rose's community is precious.

This Christian Aid Week, will you stand with people like Rose for every last drop and help them fight the climate crisis?

Your gifts could help communities build better earth dams to harvest more water; sow drought-tolerant crops that grow even with the fewest of drops; or set up an advocacy group to demand change at the highest level and put a stop to this climate crisis.



Rose is part of the Itukysia earth dam project. Rose and her community are working together to clear the weeds and rubbish from the Itukysia dam.

Adam Finch/ Christian Aid

People like Rose need every last drop to survive this climate crisis. Your gifts will help ensure they can. Give today and help ensure people like Rose have the water they need to live.

donate.christianaid.org.uk

Christian Aid Scotland
Registered Scottish Charity
SC039150

If you would like to donate but prefer not to do so online contact Sheila Macintosh on 0131 336 1357.

The Church of Scotland General Assembly for 2021 will be held online for a second year. It will open on Saturday 22 May with commissioners and other attendees joining together remotely from across Scotland and around the world. Plans are being made by Assembly Business Committee for this online Assembly, which will again be facilitated via Zoom and the "Assembly Hub".

On Saturday 22 May, there will be an opening session at 10am, including the installation of the Moderator, and an afternoon session at 1pm. To limit screen time, business sessions Monday to Thursday will be across two afternoon sessions 1pm and 4pm, with anticipated latest end times of 3.30pm and 6pm respectively. The Assembly will close on Thursday afternoon.

The General Assembly will again be live streamed where those who are not commissioners can view the proceedings.

General Assembly Reports and Publications

Assembly Reports (Blue Book) will be available online from 7 May. Along with the Blue Book, the Order of Proceedings, Annual Report and Accounts, Assembly Papers, and Remits Booklet will also be found here as soon as they are available.

Lord High Commissioner

The Lord High Commissioner is the Sovereign's personal representative to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Lord High Commissioner's role is to maintain the relationship between the State and the Church. The appointee attends the General Assembly as an observer, makes an address, and reports to Her Majesty on its proceedings. The tradition of appointing a Lord High Commissioner began in the late 16th century.

Her Majesty The Queen has appointed Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge and Earl of Strathearn, as the Lord High Commissioner to the 2021 General Assembly. His Royal Highness was supposed to serve in the role at the 2020 General Assembly, but this was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Moderator of the General Assembly 2021

The Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC (Jim Wallace), an elder and former Deputy First Minister in the Scottish Executive, will serve as the Moderator of the General Assembly in 2021-22.

He succeeds the 2020-21 Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair.





Calling all amateur sleuths!

The days are getting longer, the skies are getting bluer, a familiar orange sphere is appearing above us quite often now and, at last, we are emerging from lockdown as restrictions are being lifted. If you feel that you have exhausted all the possible walks in the area in recent months bundled up against the cold and are in desperate need of something new to look at and to do, look no further!

Blackhall St.Columba's Parish Church has just the thing to give your local walk a new lease of life and get your mental juices flowing again. A Treasure Hunt with a difference will be launched in the not too distant future and it can be done in all weathers, at any time that suits you and totally within the current COVID restrictions. Do it alone, with family or with friends and get to know Blackhall even better than before. All you will need is a pen and an eye for detail.

Our treasure hunt takes the form of a Murder Mystery Quest which will have you eliminating suspects and murder weapons until you solve the riddle of the ghost of Ravelston Woods and uncover who carried out the grizzly murder and with what. Once you know those facts you can submit your answers to the church office and perhaps you will be the lucky winner of a £25 Amazon voucher! The hunt will take you just a couple of hours to complete.

So what are you waiting for? Keep an eye on Blackhall St.Columba's Parish Church website for details on how to download the Quest.

Good luck, detectives!

Best wishes, Shona

kiltwalk - Job Done

A favourite local walk which I have traversed over the years with family, friends and Church Walking club is from South Queensferry via the Dalmeny Estate to home (or the other direction too) and never tire of it. Walked in most seasons and weathers but each time I see something new or just truly beautiful.

This year I decided to enter the Kiltwalk (you might remember my Outreach article in last month's Kirk News) and raise funds for FreshStart. Because of Covid-19 restrictions and a ban on thousands walking *en masse* each person signing up this year chose their walk and which day to do it over the weekend of 23 to 25 April. Well, no brainer here and I selected Queensferry to home which is approx 10 miles in length.

It was important to me not just to approach people in the church so tapped into my business network and with reasonable success. I registered on 10 April with Kiltwalk (yes I should of done it earlier) and by "boots on the ground" time had raised £560. The Hunter Foundation (Sir Tom Hunter's Foundation) adds £280 (50p for every £ that I raised) to that sum and I reckon HMRC will hand over £60 too so FreshStart will receive from my adventure **£900**.



I do thank Lilian who also helped spread the request for sponsors, joined me on the walk and was excellent company on this "adventure". All in all a win-win day.

Michael Cockburn
Outreach Team Leader

Well done, Michael. Super result!

With restrictions still in place we have not yet restarted our weekly collection of goods in the halls.

The Fresh Start Warehouse (22-24 Ferry Road Drive) has reopened and you can drop off your donations there. They are open to receive donations Monday – Thursday 9-4pm. You are asked to adhere to social distancing and wear a mask (unless you are exempt) when dropping off goods.

The list of goods which can be accepted can be found on Fresh Start's website

<https://www.freshstartweb.org.uk/>

Please check this before taking goods as **Fresh Start have to pay from their funds for disposal of items that are not suitable for use.** Some of these would be better placed in local charity shops or at recycling centres.

Recently Fresh Start posted a reminder on their Facebook page of items which they **cannot** take:

Duvets (any type due to covid safety reasons)

Chipped or scratched crockery

Bedding with stains, marks or rips

Pots and pans that are flaking, rusty or dirty

Electrical items that are dirty or rusty

Bric-a-brac of any sorts as it can't be used in their packs

Clothing or shoes

Thank you for helping Fresh Start help people make a home.

Fiona Cooke

Flowers in Church

The Flower Team have started to put flowers into the Church again and they are being delivered to people who could benefit from them as long as they are happy to accept them.

The arrangements may not be as formal as they have been in the past. You may have noticed that vases have been in use recently!

We are looking for Volunteers who would like to join us in doing the flowers.



We do not expect people to pay for the flowers as we have some funds and there are members of the congregation who contribute money to commemorate specific people or occasions. This does not mean they couldn't contribute flowers, just that it is not expected.

Many of us have flowers at home just in a vase and we do these ourselves. We can do the same in the Kirk. You do not need flower arranging skills as you would be putting the flowers into a vase. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

We need you, please help! It's fun, it's rewarding and you may find you enjoy yourself in adding to the beauty of our services.

Alison Hewat
0131 332 4842
or rajahewat1@btinternet.com

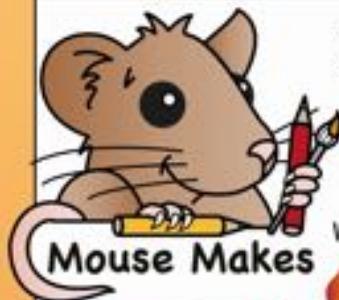
Edinburgh Floral Art Club



We hope that we will be able to open up for our 2021 - 2022 session of the Club in September.

This will depend on Government Guidelines and more information will be given when available.

Isabel Ingram



Mouse Makes

Re arrange the scrambled letters to find the missing words.

The Holy Spirit
VSEIL
with us and in us.

The Holy Spirit
helps us to
WKNO
we belong to God.

The Holy Spirit
HCTSEEA
us about God.

The Holy Spirit
KPESSA
God's word to us.

The Holy Spirit
PHLSE
us to tell others
about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit
helps us when we
AYPR



On the day of **PENTECOST**
the disciples were gathered
together in one place...

What sound did they hear?

Acts 2:2

What did they see?

Acts 2:3

What filled them?

Acts 2:4

How did they speak?

Acts 2:4

What did the crowd hear?

Acts 2:6

Which countries
had they come from?

Acts 2:9

What was
their reaction?

Acts 2:12-13

Who explained
what was
happening?

What did he say?

Acts 2:14-36

How many
people were
baptised
that day?

Acts 2:41

Change each letter to the
letter before it in the
alphabet and see what
the **Holy Spirit**
produces in us:

KPZ
IVNJMJUZ
TFMG DPOUSPM
GBJUIGVMOFTT
LJEOFTT
QBUJFODF
QFBDF
MPWF
HPPEOFTT

22-5 1000000

What is the work of the
Holy Spirit? What does He do?
Fill in the missing letters.

TEAC_ES
COMF_RT_S
REVEA_S

IN_OU

TRAN_FORM_S

HEL_S

GU_DES

GENEWS
CONV_CTS
SANC_IFIES



BLACKHALL
ST. COLUMBA'S
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Keep up with news of
the Blackhall St Columba's Church community,
our public worship and our online services
and the various Zoom meetings
by regularly checking
our website
www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

our Facebook page -
search for 'Blackhall St Columba's Church'

and

Follow us on

twitter 

@BStCC_EH

DEADLINES

Kirk News: Sunday, 11 July (tbc)

Please send all items to the Editor:
Christine Denham c/o Church Office
Home tel: 336 5943 or email
kirknews@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Blackhall Bulletin: Sunday, 2 May

All items, including advertising
enquiries, should be sent to the
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