



Formartine Parish Church

26th April 2024 Newsletter



I am privileged to walk in nature at least twice a day, rain or shine. I'm usually quite observant – especially on Thursdays when I'm looking for material for the newsletter! – but it is easy to start taking what I can see, hear, smell and feel for granted. If I watch the BBC program *Escape to the Country*, about city-dwellers hoping to relocate to a more rural home, I am often struck by their delight in the sort of landscape that I can take for granted.

This week, as I let my dog out late at night, I looked up at the tree by my back door, something I do regularly at this time of year, to check on the buds' progress and remind myself that spring *will* come. Looked at against the black sky, illuminated from below, gives a very particular perspective, so different from the daytime view.

Barbara Mahany writes this week in Richard Rohr's daily meditation:

"Sometimes, in nature ...the profoundest of lessons are learned from the quietest, most

quotidian of happenstance. Suddenly seeing what you might have walked past countless dozens of times. Being awake to gospel in the plainest of wrappers. A buck-naked tree, perhaps. A tree whose very nakedness suddenly offers *aha!*


Brother Lawrence [1611–1691], the seventeenth-century barefoot friar who found God in the pots and pans of his monastery kitchen in Paris, told one such story. In his one published work...he wrote how a tree in winter, stripped of its leaves, played the pivotal role in his uncanny conversion. It seems the good brother absorbed the tree's stark emptiness, and, in that way that saints and wise souls do, he saw beyond it. He imagined the possible. As it's recorded in his little book's preface, the soon-to-be-friar stood before the naked tree picturing its branches soon filled with tiny leaves as if clasped in prayer. And thus, he was hit, head-on. The surging sense of the immensity of the Holy One all but knocked him down, realising the life force, the beautiful that would burst from the barren. In his little book's preface, I was struck most of all by how strange it is that divine attributes can sometimes be seen in something so common. And how we'll miss the whole of it if we refuse to be stopped in our tracks."

Mahany describes some of the sermons offered by the Book of Nature:

"What *are* the sermons that the woods—those places of betweenness, repositories of ancient stories—might impart from their fretwork of branches and twigs, their columnar trunks and the boughs that hold up the sky? Certainly, there are tales of resilience, the way they stand against

whatever time and the weather gods hurl their way, tornado or drought, ice storm or Noah-like rains. And lessons to be learned of holy communion, the way the woods and the birds and the scampering critters all keep watch, share food, warn each other of danger, create ecosystems that moderate heat and cold, store water, and generate necessary humidity. What else of the time-tested truths, laid down like the rings revealed in a fallen tree's stump?...

My temple, my mosque, my church of the woods, where the centre aisle is earth rubbed raw, threadbare, not unlike a great aunt's mothballed Persian rugs, where the vaulted halls are awash in shifting shadow and numinous light, bathed in a mystical halo, it is the holy place to which I return and return. It is the woods that preach to me, fill me with wordless wisdoms. It is the place where I behold the awe-inspiring mystery of how I hope heaven will someday be."

You might like to try 'Pause',  an App designed to help you do just that and take a minute or two each day to rest in God's presence.

Please send in anything for the newsletter that you think deserves a wider audience – diary items [including services/events in Formartine Parish], information, good news, a short article, offers of assistance, requests, prayer points. What do you want us to include? elainemoff@aol.com

We are in the process of preparing information about the Parish as we get ready to seek a new minister. Danny Ross, one of our elders on the Parish Profile team, would like to take some photographs of "a lively congregation and a full church" which we will have this Sunday! There will be some shots from the front of the sanctuary looking back and also from the gallery looking down. These will be taken after the Benediction and before coffee, so please stay in your seat – this should take no more than 10 minutes.

Elders' photos for the website will be taken at coffee time

SUNDAY'S SERVICE 28th April

The united worship service on Sunday includes the celebration of Communion and is at 10am in Pitmedden Kirk, followed by coffee. Rev Alastair Bruce, our Interim Moderator, will be worshipping with us in person, and the readings are Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 and Matthew 22:34-40

For the foreseeable future, it is likely that only one service will be available via Zoom, and the venue will change depending on which Kirk the preacher is in. Both links are provided below. **Please use the Pitmedden Kirk link this week.**

Formartine Parish: Pitmedden Kirk is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Pitmedden Kirk Sunday Service

Time: This is a recurring meeting – 9.50am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2186977011?pwd=OUJYQnNoUjhNVk1qMkhtT0FvMThPd09&omn=81768295781>

Meeting ID: 218 697 7011

Passcode: 2024

Dial by your location: 0131 460 1196

Formartine Parish: Tarves Kirk is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Tarves Kirk Sunday Service

Time: This is a recurring meeting – 9.50am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87168112624?pwd=TVlybkJhMGtwdXlWcnJ2RXpCWFRPd09>

Meeting ID: 871 6811 2624

Passcode: 191245

Dial by your location: 0131 460 1196



Would you like to be part of the team that plans worship, or do the readings in church each Sunday? Would you like to be involved in some other way in the life of the church? There are many areas where you and your unique gifts could really contribute to our services and life as a church family. Please speak to Elaine elainemoff@aol.com (Pitmedden) or Susanna smbichard@aol.com (Tarves)

From Caroline - Formartine Youth Project

Thank you to everyone who supported Sean in the London Marathon this year. We are incredibly grateful that he chose to raise money for Formartine Youth Project. He has so far raised an amazing £1300. It's not too late to donate and please do complete a gift aid form if you are a UK tax payer. We can claim an extra 25p per £1 donated at no extra cost to yourself!. Forms are available from Caroline: carolinefyp@outlook.com



[Sean's fundraiser for Formartine Youth Project](#)

Help Sean Swindells raise money to support Formartine Parish Church

www.justgiving.com

We are collecting clean jam jars with labels removed for a school activity. Please leave at the church or contact Caroline to arrange collection. Thankyou.

Its exam time for our young people - a stressful and challenging time for many. Formartine Youth Project (with generous donations from Coop & Meldrum and District Rotary Club) have put together some 'Study leave support kits' containing some little treats, resources and tips to manage exam anxiety. Do you know a young person with exams looming or feeling worried? Bags are available to pick-up from Pitmedden Coop, Methlick Shop (just inside the door), Tarves Spar (next to the book exchange) and Methlick, Pitmedden and Tarves kirks, please help yourself.

Our **website and Facebook** pages have been renamed! You should be automatically redirected if you try to visit the old pages, but please go to formartineparishchurch.org.uk and on Facebook, **Formartine Parish Church**

ELDERS: Joan Ross will be taking photos for the website this week at coffee time.

EVERYONE: We want our website to be interesting and attractive, and connect with the wider community. This will be increasingly important as we start the process of seeking a new minister. Please send Joan information about your events, and photographs – check the current advice about getting permission from subjects in your pics. Do you have any historic photographs, of the church or events? It would be great to have a gallery of Tarves, Barthol Chapel and Udney & Pitmedden in past times.

The Giving Table in Pitmedden will be happy to receive anything that can be 'sold' and spare produce – veg, fruit, baking, flowers, eggs, etc. – that you may have. Donations will go to church funds. Don't forget to 'buy' items, too! Thanks to all the bakers and contributors.

Both Kirks have a plate at the door should you wish to make an **offering** as you enter. Setting up a **Standing Order** is an easy way to give to the work of the church, and if you pay tax, then **gift-aid** allows the church to benefit from additional funding. Please ask your elder for a Gift Aid form or contact formartinechurchtreasurer@outlook.com You can give regularly or as a one-off directly into the church bank account: **82-63-10 80485504**

Formartine Parish Church Teams

Various teams with specific remits have been set up to take care of the practical and spiritual aspects of our united congregation as we move forward together into a shared future.

These are:

- Worship
- Pastoral care
- Communication and IT
- Administration – Data protection, Safeguarding, Rolls, etc.
- Property
- Finance

We have identified team leaders and some members, but would be delighted if you wanted to serve on a team. We need people with an interest or a skill, but mostly with a willingness to get involved. Please contact our Session Clerk, Susanna Bichard smbichard@aol.com

Opportunity for Service - An upgrade to the IT system has been installed to ensure compatibility between Tarves and Pitmedden. We are looking for volunteers to join the team. Full training will be given, and there will be ongoing support. If you can serve in this way, even on an occasional basis, speak to Susanna or Elaine

Have you moved house recently? Got a new phone? Changed your email address? We are trying to **update the information** we hold on members and adherents, so that we can keep you informed and get in touch if we need to. If you think we might be behind the times, please contact our Roll Keeper, Alison Bruce as soon as possible alisonbruce10@gmail.com

April 2024

28th United worship at Pitmedden Kirk – with Alastair Bruce

May 2024

5th Tarves / Pitmedden Kirks – with Alan Doak in Pitmedden

12th Tarves / Pitmedden Kirks – with Patricia Findlay in Tarves

19th United worship at Pitmedden Kirk – Pentecost, with Susanna Bichard

26th United worship at Tarves Kirk – with Alan Doak

For united worship we join together in one Kirk.

On all other Sundays there is worship in both Kirks.

Also on Zoom. www.formartineparishchurch.org.uk

NOTE: The church rolls will be available for inspection in Pitmedden Kirk at the united service on Sunday 28th April

United worship services

These will usually be on the 4th and 5th Sunday of the month and will alternate between Tarves and Pitmedden. The next one is this Sunday 28th April in Pitmedden when Rev Alastair Bruce will share Communion with us.

See posters, our FB page and website for more information. www.formartineparishchurch.org.uk

CHURCH DIARY

The church diary will include events and services scheduled both in Pitmedden and Tarves Kirks. Please let me know if you want anything added, or would like to arrange a lift.

Sun 28 th	10am United worship with communion, Pitmedden Kirk, Rev Alastair Bruce, Interim Moderator
Tues 30 th	9.30am <i>mainly music</i>
Tues 30 th	10-11.30am Coffee morning in Tarves Kirk
Wed 1 st May	7pm onwards, Boys' Brigade sections, in Udny Green Hall
Thurs 2 nd	3.15-5.15pm Youth Café in Pitmedden Kirk
Thurs 2 nd	7pm Mid-Formartine Guild in Tarves Kirk, with Christine Wilkie speaking about her book "From Barbados Banffshire via Guyana". All welcome
Thurs 9 th	7.30pm Session in Pitmedden Kirk

Haddo Chapel

There will be ecumenical services on the first Sunday of the month at 6pm in Haddo Chapel throughout the summer, preceded by tea in the Library at 5pm



Sunday 31st March
Easter Day
Professor Sir Iain Torrance, KCVO Kt FRSE

5 pm Afternoon tea in the Library, Haddo House
6 pm Evening Service

Wednesday 25th December
Christmas Day
Professor Tom Greggs
Marischal Chair of Divinity, University of Aberdeen

10.30 a.m. Christmas Service at Haddo

Evening Services at 6 pm
Tea and Coffee in the Library, Haddo House, 5 pm

5th May
The Rev'd. Dr Dennis Berk, St Mary-on-the-Rock, Ellon, and St. James-the-Less, Cruden Bay

2nd June
Dr Emma Percy, Senior Lecturer at the University of Aberdeen

7th July
The Rev. James R. Clarke, Ellon Baptist Church

4th August
The Rt. Rev. Hugh Edward Gilbert, O.S.B., Bishop of Aberdeen

11th August
The Rev. Dr. Paul McKeown, Belhelvie Parish Church

18th August
The Rev. Jennifer Denniston, (nee Macdonell) Parish priest in Worcester Diocese

25th August
Canon Michael A. Hutson, St Mary's Church, Isle of Benbecula

15th September
Festival Service
The Rev. Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski
Director of Music: Dr. Roger B. Williams, MBE with members of Haddo House Choral and Operatic Society

Haddo House, Aberdeenshire
By arrangement with
 the National Trust for Scotland

News from Presbytery

Life and Work: June 2024 Presbytery Focus - North East and Northern Isles

In 2024 Life and Work magazine launched a series called Presbytery Focus. The forthcoming June issue will feature the Presbytery of North East and Northern Isles. You might be interested in reading about our own Presbytery.

Personal Purchase There is the option for individuals to purchase single copies in print or digital format via the magazine's website www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe Digital issue only £2.99 and print £3.50. Anyone making a personal purchase will pay during the online order process. You can also order a print copy by contacting Muriel Milne as soon as possible Muriel.milne@outlook.com

The regular meeting of NENI (our presbytery) was last Tuesday. These meetings are public, and you can follow live on the NENI Facebook page. Dates at www.nenipresbytery.org.uk

May is also the month of the General Assembly. Details are in Life and Work and on the Church of Scotland's webpage www.churchofscotland.org.uk All sessions are also public, and you can view and download papers, and follow live on the website.

"This Is Alpha" Conference is on in Perth on Saturday June 8th with Nicky and Pippa Gumbel as special guests. See Alun Walker, our Presbytery Elder, for info

We have a **Pastoral Care Team** who are available to contact and/or visit anyone in the parish, on request. Please contact Susanna Bichard 01651 851345 if you know someone who would benefit from this ministry.

INFORMATION

Our Interim Moderator is Rev Alastair Bruce, Minister at Ellon. He can be contacted at abruce@churchofscotland.org.uk or 01358 723787

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