



# ADVENT 2020 NEWSLETTER



*Hi my name is :- Justin*

There is always an awkward moment when you walk into a room full of strangers, especially if you're the only new person in the room. There is an anxiety about whether you will be accepted or not, a fear that you'll mess up your first impression, and the universal insecurity of "what if they don't like me and I don't make any new friends". It's even more daunting when you walk in that room and you find yourself stepping into the shoes of a beloved minister who has been there for over 40 years.

*Where do you even start? Pleased to meet you all.*

I am married to Lesley, have a teenage daughter named Emily, a toddler called Francis and a baby girl on the way. I am originally from South Africa (you'll get tired of hearing this) and I love cricket and rugby (you also get tired of hearing how great the Springboks are). I have a background in terrible dad jokes, an ability to remember the most random songs and facts, and seem to be able to embarrass myself with the odd comment here and there. Don't worry - I don't take myself too seriously!

I have been the minister at Abbotshall Parish Church since July 2018 and I have had the privilege of working with some of the most talented and caring people since I started there. I am really excited for you to meet my friends!

What makes me tick? Like any discerning gentleman, I love Piña colada and getting caught in the rain but, what I am really passionate about is people. Seeing real people, with real stories, hearing who they are behind the masks and understanding what makes them tick. I have a passion for social justice and learning from the good news from those often neglected by our church and society.

If there is one thing I want you to remember from my introduction it is that I am never too busy to speak to someone. So please if you need anything, big or small, please do not hesitate to contact me. My hope and prayer is that when COVID 19 is over we will share a variety of beverages together as we listen to each other's stories.

I look forward to our working together.

Yours in Christ.

*Justin.*

## **Pastoral Care.**

Things are different ... **so very** different ... things **have** changed !

**NO CAROL TEA !**

"We always enjoy it"                    "Love singing the Carols"

"Enjoy meeting up with our friends"    "The Christmas Food is always great"

All these things have been said enthusiastically in the past but not this year.

Next year will be also be very different **and** :-

**THE CAROL TEA WILL BE EVEN BETTER !!!**

Meanwhile, please be assured that the Pastoral Care Team has not stopped caring. Included with this Newsletter is a Questionnaire which we would be very pleased if you would take a few minutes to fill in. We need to find out just what is important to all of you so that we are in the best possible position to do everything we can to make our Church as caring as possible.

We have also included on the Questionnaire, a request from the Telephone Team who are needing a few more volunteers to assist in keeping in contact with members by phone throughout the year. If you like to chat, here is a really good , caring way to serve the Church!

From the Pastoral Care Team, we wish you all a peaceful and safe Christmas.  
May the joy of this very special season - which will never change - be with you.

*Dorothy Murray*    (Pastoral Care Team Convener)

# **The Future is here and it's coming.**

Many of you will know that I am now the new Interim Moderator at St Bryce. It is a bitter sweet feeling to be doing this, because I am taking over from a good friend, Ken Froude, who is now enjoying his well earned retirement. I have said to Ken many times that his timing couldn't be more lousy because Ken and I could have done a lot of good work together. However, while we share the grief of Ken's retirement we also realise that the greatest tribute to any person's legacy is what happens after they are gone. Ken has been an inspirational leader for over 40 years and our journey is now starting with us asking what kind of Church do we need to be? In an attempt to guide our thoughts on this question, I want to give you some statistics about the current situation in the Church of Scotland.

Church attendance has been on the decline for many decades in the Church of Scotland. Current estimates suggest the national church has somewhere between 300 000 and 350 000 members. Not only are we seeing a steady decline in numbers in the adult population, we have also seen the mass exodus of people under forty from the Church. This coupled with over 200 vacancies, and a third of ministers eligible for retiral means we are more stretched than ever.

Elders are struggling to meet the ever growing needs in their congregations across the nation. We have not been spared from this decline. Our churches are in decline, we have just two ministers serving the local community, large proportions of our congregations are missing the under 40s and so we have fewer elders taking on more and more responsibility. We now have a situation locally that is simply unsustainable! There is much to be fearful about and there are many reasons to be numbed into inaction.

However, I see this as a once in a lifetime opportunity to re-form our Kirk. To re-form our churches into one purpose built for our community. We still have many able people, we still have competent people who have the skills to renew our Kirk, we still have a community hungry for the

gospel and most importantly we are still partnering with God to bring the kingdom on earth.

**But it needs us all** to buy in to it! It needs young and old, male and female, St Bryce, Abbotshall, Linktown & Auchtertool, and Bennoch, and all those in our community to buy into this new church. We don't want a forced union that leaves people wounded and disenfranchised, we want a church that is a blessing to the community, meeting the needs of all it serves, a place where people find sanctuary, where they are encouraged to find God in their daily lives. We want to rediscover the purpose of our Christian community.

It will require sacrifice, it will require tears, it will require tension, but most importantly it will require you. It will require all of us working together. To put it into the words of Jesus in order to gain your life you need to loose for His sake. Luke 9: 24 With all this in mind, this letter is an invitation to join us as we work together in the coming months to plan for the future. It is an exciting time, and more news will follow as we define our mission and vision for the future. I look forward to our future together.

*Justin Taylor.* (Interim Moderator for St Bryce Kirk)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Contact Details

Rev. Justin Taylor - 01592 267915 - [jtaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:jtaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Anne Hunter (Session Clerk - St Bryce)  
01592 265927 - [mannehunter@hotmail.com](mailto:mannehunter@hotmail.com)

Isobel Greenaway - Editor - [isobelg300@gmail.com](mailto:isobelg300@gmail.com)

## Websites & Charity Numbers

[www.stbrycekirk.org.uk](http://www.stbrycekirk.org.uk)

[www.abbotshallchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbotshallchurch.org.uk)

SCO 31064

SCO 11363

## **FOR UNTO US A CHILD HAS BEEN GIVEN !**

I remember my pre-baby days. I could go where I wanted to, do what I wanted to, I could put my expensive objects within easy reach, I even had the luxury of waking up when I wanted to. Those were the days! It seems like just yesterday I used to set my alarm in case I overslept. Then Francis was born and my whole life was turned upside down. Those simple pleasures were gone, and I could no longer do what I wanted to, no longer have my object that mattered to me at a reachable height and a lie in became a luxury that I hardly have the opportunity to partake in.



Having a toddler changed everything, and sometimes I grieve those self-centred moments I took for granted. However, what I lost was minuscule compared to what I gained. I gained smiles, morning cuddles, and the joy of being called “daddy”.

The best part of the day is picking Francis up from nursery and watching his joy when he sees me (I am actually crying while I write this). When I met Lesley and Emily, I thought my heart was full and I had no more space for anyone else; but then Francis was born, and I never realised that I could love anybody as much as I love that little boy.

Christmas will be different this year because of COVID 19. Gatherings will be smaller (if at all), people will be more isolated, and it may be a long way off until we can say “it’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas”. For many Christmas will be a write off because it will not smell, sound, look and feel like the season we so love.

However, this year I am looking forward to Christmas, because I feel COVID has offered us a gift (this is not to undermine the deep destruction and hurt this pandemic has caused). For the last 50 years in the Western World, we have been spoilt, families could travel from anywhere in the world to be with us, we had an abundance of food, we had churches brimming with carols, life was far easier than the centuries that preceded it. I think we took so many things for granted and in so doing we overlooked what was really important. COVID inadvertently asked the question, what do you/we value? The answer is not the latest and greatest gadget but being among the people we love.



Mary and Joseph grew up in a world that was volatile. They had been rejected by their families, they were poor, they lived in an oppressed society and the birthing room was not a super host on Airbnb. All they had was their little family and that's all that mattered. This family held together in love in the midst of a world divided and imploding on itself. I love that Jesus is called Emmanuel, which means “God is with us”, because that is exactly where the sacred is born. Not out there in lavish palaces or idyllic settings but among the simple, every day, forgotten, places and moments.

There is no VIP club or membership to experiencing this, just an open heart. But there is a warning to those who are religious - *be careful not to miss the whole event*. Maybe in the midst of all the chaos that surrounds us, the question needs to be, “*where is the Christ child being born in our world right now?*”

From all in the Taylor Family and our new addition . **J.T.**

# Our Christmas Donations

We usually have special offerings donated at our ‘Gift Service’ and our Christmas Eve Service. Since these events will be taking different forms this year, we have made our donations early. The Fellowship Team “kitty” has given £200 to the **Cottage Community Appeal** to help with provision of toys and gifts for children, plus it added £100 to the donations given by you, the congregation, in the Christmas Appeal envelopes over the last three Sundays. So we have donated £525 to **Kirkcaldy Foodbank** to enable the provision of more fresh food to the families who need it over the festive season. Your generosity is heart-warming, considering the current constraints we are all living under.

Thank you! **Beryl Luke** - Fellowship Team Convener

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

This year there will be more empty chairs around our tables, not only because of COVID-19 but also because many have lost loved ones in 2020



To mark the lives of those we have loved and lost there be

### **A Blue Christmas Service**

at 18:00 on 16<sup>th</sup> December

A Christmas tree will be placed outside the Abbotshall Kirk entrance from the 14<sup>th</sup> December and folk can place a wooden Christmas decoration on it in remembrance of a loved one. This is open to all in our community.

And

on 24<sup>th</sup> December At 18:00

### **A Joint Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols**

Shared by Abbotshall, Auchtertool, Bennochy, Linktown and St Bryce

**27<sup>th</sup> December Sunday Service** from Kirkcaldy Congregational Church  
**3<sup>rd</sup> January Sunday Service** (online)

These services will be available on YouTube and Facebook  
Check the websites or FFP for more details

In January, services in St Bryce Kirk will begin at 10.00

# Greetings from the Pastoral Care Team

We would really like to know how we can be of more help to you and so we would ask you to fill in this form to let us know if any of the following would be useful to you.

**Would you like :-**

A visit from someone from the Pastoral Care Team( when Covid Rules allow)

Yes / No

A Phone Call, (probably about 3 times a year) from someone in the Telephone Team

Yes / No

A Greeting Card from a Church member - just to help keep in touch

Yes / No

A Copy of Church Newsletter

Yes / No

Delivered

Normal size / Large Print

or

by email

Yes / No

To ensure that our records are up-to-date, we are keen to check that we have a note of your correct contact details :-

Telephone Number. ....

&

Email address ....

You can contact me :-

Dorothy Murray - 01592 264456

or you can

Pop this in an envelope and send it to :-

**The Care Team, St Bryce Kirk, St Brycedale Avenue, Kirkcaldy KY1 1ET**

We would also be pleased to receive any other ideas which you think would help you to feel part of the church fellowship and community.

**Dorothy Murray** (Pastoral Care Team Convener)

## The Telephone Team



Are you stuck at home?

No-one to talk to?

Just fancy a chat with someone with a common interest?

**Why not join the Telephone Team?**

The Telephone Team comes under the umbrella of the Pastoral Care Team,  
Dorothy Murray is the convener.

The team was set up a few years ago as a way of reaching members of the congregation on a regular basis, via a telephone call.

2020 has been a year of change for everyone, and most notably we are aware of those whose circumstances have been altered considerably by the 'lockdown' and the necessary restrictions to our 'normal' way of life. As the winter continues and the days are shorter, we are also conscious of those who are feeling more lonely, and whose day could be brightened by the sound of a friendly voice with a common interest.

Completing the questionnaire over-leaf, will inform us of the support you may need from the Pastoral Care Team.

We anticipate there may be many more people in need of a telephone call, therefore we are looking for more volunteers to make the calls.

I have the privilege of being the new co-ordinator for the 'Telephone Team' so, if you would like to join the Team to make a call to someone please get in touch.

You will be asked to make a call at least three times a year.  
(training will be available)

I look forward to hearing from you. - *Catherine Millar*

Tel 01592 772655 or 07834537942.

email: [catherinemcarthur@btinternet.com](mailto:catherinemcarthur@btinternet.com)



# “Hello, Abbotshall” - “St Bryce - I’m back again”

It's a privilege to write this article to introduce myself a little.

I am in my third year of training for Ministry of Word and Sacrament and am in my final year at St Andrews University. The training takes the form of a university degree and placements. I have been blessed with many special experiences during my placements, which were at St Bryce Kirk, the Church of Scotland in Geneva, Kinghorn Parish Church and a hospital chaplaincy placement. My next placement will be probation which will hopefully start next summer.

I was born and brought up in Orkney as part of a close family, moving away to Edinburgh to study Religious Studies at New College. After this I spent some time in Malawi. After some voluntary work with church and community in one of the South Isles of Orkney, I spent the next 10 years working in children and family ministry with various churches in Perthshire and Fife, before embarking on this exciting journey towards full time ministry!

People and places have always been very important to me. In 'normal' times, before all these restrictions, I would enjoy spending time with family and friends and visiting Orkney is always special - especially in the long days of May and June when the sun doesn't seem to set! Perhaps due to my Orkney heritage, I love the sea. The past couple of years have seen me develop a love for mountains and one of these days I would like to start hill walking.



I appreciate the out-of-doors through wildlife photography and art. I particularly enjoy painting pet portraits. My musical tastes are on the classical line and I play a little piano and clarinet. I enjoy walking, reading, playing tennis and cycling.

I very much look forward to sharing in worship with you all at Abbotshall, and St Bryce and to meeting and getting to know you in the coming months.

*Trudi*

**A**fter three extraordinary weeks it is finally over, the final final Sunday.

I was deeply touched by the generosity of so many of you expressed in your gift cheque for £4,100 and with another £210 since added. It is quite remarkable, thank you all so much. We are presently engaging contractors to re-lay a very tired driveway at our house in Kinghorn and this sum will go a long way to pay for it. That is a long lasting and extremely useful enhancement to our home and I can imagine each brick having a name. The basis of the St Bryce Kirk community was clearly the church members, but there were many more who came around regularly and who I also consider to be part of it. There have been many many cards and bottles of assorted kinds and considerable generosity and other gifts some bought and some hand-made, all really special and valued.

There are many messages left on the St Bryce Kirk web site from members, friends and past contacts, from near and far, the distant past and the very recent, all enormously heartening and humbling. Behind all this there is a small team who have been busy planning, re-planning and working away to bring this to a positive conclusion in these restricted "Covid" days. Your love and commitment, time and energy, mean such a lot and I thank you for that.

I write this in RD1 (Retirement- Day 1) the 1<sup>st</sup> December so it is a bit unreal at the moment. There are still a few odds and ends to tie up, like this letter, so don't anybody ask me how it feels, I don't really know yet. It will be a Sunday or two before it starts to sink in and then a new year.

In the meantime, a huge "Thank You" to you all. You will be missed! There are lots of hugs in the "Hug Bank" waiting to be drawn and maybe a celebration when we really get together and be a warm, worshipping, physical fellowship



**Ken** (Minister of St Bryce Kirk 1979-2020)