



The Mustard Seed

Autumn 2023

The Interim Time of Interim Ministry

From Stewart McPherson



There are those who love the colours and crispness and lower-lying sun of Autumn, and some who appreciate the peaceful melancholy nature of the season, while others sense the '*nights drawing in*' lowering their spirits as the curtains are drawn and the fire is lit.

The seasons do affect our inner order. The time between summer past and spiring to come is difficult for some, even if we all know it is necessary. The trees need to shed last year's leaves and the earth needs to rest as underneath the soil and the bark a nurturing of new growth is prepared. This interim time is necessary for new life to emerge.

Yet it is not all darkness. We anticipate the fun of Hallow'een, the flying and sparkling colours of fireworks, the expectation and then the wonder of the Christmas season all the way to Epiphany and the wonderful story of Jesus' journey on earth and his feet treading the soil.

In this period of Interim time as we look towards the spring of a new church emerging it is evident there are events and moments which make us feel like lowering our heads, to look back at the summer, and lock the door and stay inside. But we are also to look for and recognise those moments of light, peace and hope that sparkle in the dark, or the life that is born in unsuspecting places, and those things that make us smile unexpectedly. We journey together through this interim time and discover along the way things we often miss in the bright light of day when our minds and spirits are distracted, and with faith we will emerge into the light blossoming with new life.

.... The poet John O'Donohue says it better ...

.....read on

"For the interim time"

When near the end of day, life has drained
out of light and it is too soon
for the mind of night to have darkened things,
No place looks like itself, loss of outline
makes everything look strangely in-between,
unsure of what has been, or what might come.

In this wan light, even trees seem groundless.
In a while it will be night, but nothing
here seems to believe the relief of dark.

You are in this time of the interim
where everything seems withheld.

The path you took to get here has washed out;
the way forward is still concealed from you.
"The old is not old enough to have died away;
the new is still too young to be born."

You cannot lay claim to anything;
in this place of dusk, your eyes are blurred;
and there is no mirror.
Everyone else has lost sight of your heart
and you can see nowhere to put your trust;
you know you have to make your own way through.

As far as you can, hold your confidence.
Do not allow your confusion to squander
this call which is loosening
your roots in false ground,
that you might come free
from all you have outgrown.

What is being transfigured here is your mind,
and it is difficult and slow to become new.
The more faithfully you can endure here,
the more refined your heart will become
for your arrival in the new dawn.



Dear Friends,

Journeys always have their starting points, but sometimes the destination is not always what we expect. Over the past couple of weeks on a Sunday morning, we have been singing the song “Come with me for the journey is long” – a South African traditional song arranged by Wild Goose Publications.

Journey

I like it. I like it because it speaks of journeys – and we’re all on a journey. Each of our individual journeys will be different and unique. I like it, too, because it speaks of having companionship on that journey. We travel together this thing called life, and with this thing called faith. And we are also accompanied by God who loves us and never leaves us, no matter what twists and turns may unfold in the road ahead of us.

Journey

It has been a privilege to walk together in this small part of your journey since July. It has been special to be back amongst friends here in St Bryce Kirk and in Kirkcaldy, to be part of your worship and to share in the stories that make up life.

Journey

Many of you will be aware that I will be moving on soon to become the Minister of a church in Argyll. I do not know yet an exact date when this will be – by the time you read this I may know more! But until that time, I am still here and available for any pastoral support or a listening ear. Thank you for welcoming me to be part of your journey once again. My prayers continue for you in all that lies ahead.

Blessings,

Trudi

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## **Counting our Blessings**

I guess we’ve all heard that Practising Gratitude is a great tool to help our emotional wellbeing in a positive way, but is that still true when we face some of life’s toughest challenges?

Almost eleven years ago my sister passed away and not long after her death, I came across an article about Gratitude. It suggested :-

*At the end of each day we should think of three things to be grateful for.*

That was a tough one, I was grieving for my younger sister, and missing her terribly. However, I gave it a go and found it actually helped. I was grateful for her beautiful smile, her infectious laugh, the mischievous twinkle in her eyes, her love, support and so much more.

Six months after her passing, I found a beautiful, almost heart shaped stone on a beach in Skye, an island she loved !



Since then, each night I hold my Gratitude Stone and reflect on what I'm grateful for. It often amazes me how one thing leads to another.

The things we feel grateful for don't have to be big things, especially if we aren't feeling very positive. It can simply be for food to eat, a roof over our heads or a stranger smiling as we pass them.

During a recent night of heavy rain, I was grateful for a warm, dry and comfortable flat, that led to being grateful for having the finances to keep it wind and watertight, for tradesmen to do any work, for drinking water, water to shower in, a flushing toilet..... I said "thank you" for around a dozen things by the time I had finished.

*What are you grateful for?*

*Rae Walker*

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## Centre Update

The Centre is picking up again after the summer break, with some large bookings over the weeks before Christmas, including a variety of **Concerts**, plus an **Antiques Fair** on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November. The **Fife College Graduations** will be taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> of November. We would really appreciate volunteers on these days, if you would be interested in helping out please get in touch with the office.

The kitchen is getting busier week on week, with lunchtime snacks for the Coffee Bar, Monday – Thursday and meals for the Day Centre all week. Kaye has joined the St Bryce Kirk Team and will be working between the kitchen and the coffee bar. Karen is now working as Care-taker in the evenings. So look out for new faces in the Centre.

The Coffee Bar has continued to grow in popularity and has recently won an award – “Recommended by **Restaurant Guru** 2023”. We hope to offer some **specials** during Autumn and run **Christmas Lunches** again this year. Keep an eye out on our social media and in the foyer for menus and booking information.



There was a break-in recently and some damage was done. Our building insurance will cover the cost of the damaged window and doors. A new Coffee Bar till had to be purchased as the old one was also damaged in the break-in. The scaffolding has now been removed as the window repairs are completed. The GP room carpet has been cleaned and looks great! It is proposed that the dais carpet upstairs will be cleaned after the Christmas holiday.

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*As your Interim Moderator, I wish to share the following reflection by the Revd. James Laurence, Albemarle, North Carolina, because I believe that it speaks to us as members within the Church of Scotland. It certainly spoke to me during this period of uncertainty for all our churches not to mention RAAC concrete inspections!*

*Jesus said, "On this rock I will build my church,  
and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."*

Matt. 16:18

## *The church's one foundation*

Dr. Bonnie Thurston

Unable to see verdant forests  
for mangled, ecclesial trees,  
most of my companions  
have abandoned the church,  
not rats, but certainly escapees  
from a rusty old ship,  
with a treasure in her hold  
undiminished by its often ugly,  
always precarious, commanders.

To the sailors who remain,  
not confident, but at least  
hopeful she isn't going down,  
who still stoke old boilers,  
and swab slimy decks,  
by the foundling Love in her hold.

St. Benedict offers counsel:  
Be prudent in your cleaning.  
In scraping off the rust,  
don't break the fragile vessel.

Appreciating mature beauty,  
long faithful seaworthiness,  
old sailors, like astrolabes,  
still chart direction by the stars.

Their night watches taught them  
the sun will rise from the sea.  
They show their shipmates how  
to be held in a crumbling conveyance  
by the foundling Love in her hold.

I have been thinking about this poem quite a lot since  
I came across it in "*Christian Century*."

Perhaps I have been pondering this poem because I see myself as one of the "old sailors" that she mentions, serving on this "rusty old ship" called the church. She describes her companions leaving the church as "escapees," which sounds a bit harsh. And she describes those who pilot the ship in pretty harsh terms, too. This is not an easy poem. It is even a little angry in tone. But also faithful. Because this poet is clearly not leaving the church. She loves it too much to leave it. Criticize it? Yes. Abandon it? Never.

And for those who remain with her, the poet goes on to encourage them (us) not to be too hasty in "scraping off the rust." Don't make changes to the church too hastily, or in desperation. Don't "break the fragile vessel," as she puts it, while trying to save her. After all, there is a priceless treasure on board this ship, undiminished in beauty, the "foundling Love in her hold." And all my fellow Christians who still feel called to be this ship's sailors are entrusted with this treasure. We are now, as always, stewards of the great and mysterious gospel - the good news of God's saving love in Jesus. And as long as we remain faithful to this vocation, the world will go on being reminded of this mysterious, wondrous, essential treasure.

As I have been pondering this poem, a recent conversation that I had has been cross-pollinating with it. Not long ago, I happened to run into a church member who has not been active for a couple of years now. He apologized for that, and confessed that he didn't really have a good reason. But then he looked at our church, visible in the distance from where we stood, and said, "You know, Pastor, I may not be coming to church right now. That may change, of course. But in the meantime, I know that the church is there. I know that you are there. And that brings me great comfort."

Yes, my friend, we are here. I am here. Praying for you and for all this world. Still worshipping our living God, even while more and more doubt this truth. Still serving all people following the example of Jesus.

This rusty old ship that we call "*the church*" is still, and always will be, a tangible and visible reminder to all that there are people in this world who still believe - not just that there is a God who created this world, but that there is a God who loves it still. This is the priceless treasure, hidden in the hold of this rusty ship, that I will care for all of my given days.

*Andrew Donald*



# INTERIM MINISTRY UPDATE

*from Stewart McPherson*

This is an update on this period of Interim Ministry with some recent developments as well as a reminder of some things from my update at the end of August.

## **Review of Planning Process**

News was shared of the result of the national *Presbytery Plan Review Panel* that some of the questions raised by Linktown Church around the process on the decision to close that building were upheld. The report states: *"The Panel's decision is to uphold the request for review on the basis that there has been a material irregularity of process. This means that the Presbytery should now reconsider the matter of building categorisation."* Presbytery was informed of this on the 16<sup>th</sup> September and by the time you read this, conversations will already be underway regarding the next steps in the process and is in the hands of the *Fife Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Team*. Your Session Clerk will keep you updated as news emerges.

## **Role of the Interim Minister**

This obviously impacts on aspects of my own role in progressing towards union, but, in the meantime, I will seek to continue to move things forward where possible until there is an agreed plan. I have enjoyed conducting worship on occasions across the four congregations and leading worship when we come together jointly. I attend all the Kirk Sessions, chair the Strategy Team, and am present at the three working groups, Finance, Property, and Transition.

## **Visioning Day**

The Visioning Day in August drew over 70 people from the four congregations together to explore aspects of how we might begin to shape a church for the future. There was much open conversation and sharing of ideas in our time together including sharing of the good practice within the life of each congregation and what might be our priorities in the future. People spoke of the importance of fellowship for all; of treasuring the traditional while exploring fresh expressions of worship and congregational life for current members and to attract new people; a desire to look at how we best care for each other, especially older people at home or in care, and the need to continue to engage with social issues and people who struggle; how we might make best use of social media in our contemporary world.

## **New Name**

The opportunity has been given, through the Transition Team, to the membership and beyond to make suggestions for the name of our new united church, and I am already collating those suggestions.



## **Future role of Elders & Kirk Session**

An evening will take place at the end of October gathering all the elders to draw together best practice in shaping future leadership and how the discussing, planning and decision-making processes are best shaped through teams and ministry.

## **Ministry**

We will explore the gifts and talents we are seeking in the ministry team to lead the church into the future. The new congregation has been allocated two full-time and one half-time ministries, with at least one being a minister of word & sacrament. I assure you that this is a good quota in the light of the national situation.

## **Communication**

The editors of the Newsletters met recently to share ideas for future communication both within the church and to those beyond : - from Newsletter frequency / Website / Facebook / online streaming of worship and publicising through newspapers. There was positive comment on the way I have been communicating through email and my Update page every second month, while also looking at how some news might be more frequent. Being transparent in sharing information and news is important so that everyone not only knows what is happening but feel that they share the journey.

## **Christmas**

There will be opportunity to share together in Christmas Eve Worship either at 7pm in St Bryce Kirk with a Candlelit Carol Service, or a Watchnight Service at Linktown taking us through midnight into Christmas Day. Along with the continuation of our monthly Joint Services into the New Year we hope to increase their regularity as we move towards union.

## **Basis of Union**

The main agreement will be our Basis of Union which will go to all church members for a vote when the time comes. This will include the name of the new congregation, the nature of the Team Ministry and organisation of the Kirk Session. Your Strategy Team will shape that, after which Kirk Sessions will vote on it, and then, when agreed, it will go to the congregations when, after worship on the same Sunday, all will be able to vote. The timing of this will be shared well in advance which we can anticipate might be in the Spring, all things being equal and if progress is made in other significant areas.

## **Time to Chat**

Please remember, if you want to ask anything or have a chat with me then please get in touch. :-

Tel: 07814 901429 or

Email: [smcpherson@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:smcpherson@churchofscotland.org.uk)



# Finance Report

## Sunday Offerings

| 2023        | Open           | FWO              | 2022        | Open           | FWO              |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|
| Apr-June:   | <b>£458.42</b> | <b>£1,960.00</b> | Apr-June:   | <b>£620.90</b> | <b>£2,034.10</b> |
| July & Aug: | <b>£212.10</b> | <b>£943.00</b>   | July & Aug: | <b>£314.55</b> | <b>£1,058.00</b> |

## Standing Ord

|                  |                   |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 2023 Apr-June:   | <b>£10,137.00</b> | 2022 Apr-June:   | <b>£10,903.00</b> |
| 2023 July & Aug: | <b>£6,599.00</b>  | 2022 July & Aug: | <b>£7,014.00</b>  |

**Gift Aid:** The tax reclaimed on Gift Aid contributions from Apr. to June 2023 was £2,660.50 plus £363.36 from the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS), making a total of £3,023.86.

We still have not received permission from 121 George Street, Edinburgh to resume handing the Offering Plate round the congregation on a Sunday. There is a bowl for you to place your offering on a table on the left-hand side as you enter the sanctuary next to where someone on duty stands

However, there are other ways you can contribute to help with the upkeep and work of the Church. There is the weekly Freewill Offering envelopes but even better the Monthly Standing Order which comes directly out of your bank account to the church's bank account, meaning you don't have to worry about having the right amount to put in the envelope and ensures that the church is receiving a steady income. You can also contribute by cheque. If you would like more information, please contact me on 01592 265808.

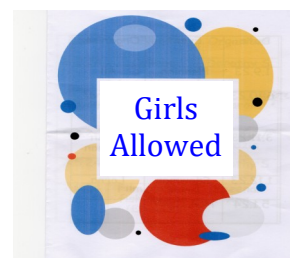
Please remember to advise me of any changes in your circumstances eg. change of address, now paying income tax or if you have completed a Gift Aid Form and are now **NOT** paying income tax.

## **Town Centre Churches Finance Group**

Two meetings of the Finance Group have taken place. The accounts from the 4 churches were collated giving a basis of looking at a potential annual budget for the unionised churches and also an idea of what financial assets we have in total. Further work in collating more information is ongoing. The next meeting is TBA.

*Dorothy Smith* September 2023

| DATE     | Theme                       | Group |
|----------|-----------------------------|-------|
| October  |                             |       |
| 3        | Fun and Games               | F G   |
| 6        | Film & Fish supper          | G A   |
| 10       | Famous women of Fife        | Guild |
| 17       | Craft – Decoupage slate     | F G   |
| 24       | Humorous Scottish Poems     | Guild |
| 31       | Movie                       | F G   |
| November |                             |       |
| 3        | “ Body shop ”               | G A   |
| 7        | Craft – decorating bottles  | F G   |
| 14       | Quiz & Games                | Guild |
| 18       | Coffee Morning 10 am - 12   | Guild |
| 21       | Christmas bingo             | F G   |
| 28       | Walking in Scotland         | Guild |
| December |                             |       |
| 1        | Snowman drive.              | G A   |
| 5        | Christmas through the years | F G   |
| 12       | Entertainment               | Guild |
| 19       | Christmas meal              | F G   |



We welcome any  
**"girls"** to join !



We meet at  
1.30 pm.  
Join us and  
enjoy a nice cup  
of tea / coffee  
and chat,  
**Whose we are  
and Whom we  
serve**



We meet  
at 1:30 pm.  
All are invited,  
join when you can.  
Fun, chat, tea and  
biscuits are always  
available



## Contact Information

St Bryce Kirk, St Brycedale Avenue,  
KIRKCALDY. KY1 1ET

St Bryce Kirk Centre & Church Office

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Kara Ewen - Office Manager

Corrie Carson - Catering Manager

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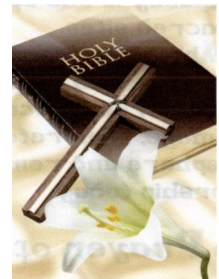
Church Register - Deaths

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish." John 10: 28

May Robertson 28th August 2023

Irene Johnston 13th September 2023

Catherine Couser 24th September 2023



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## **Services**

Communion 5th November  
Remembrance 12th November

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George Luke - Editor :- georgeluke.kdy@gmail.com

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