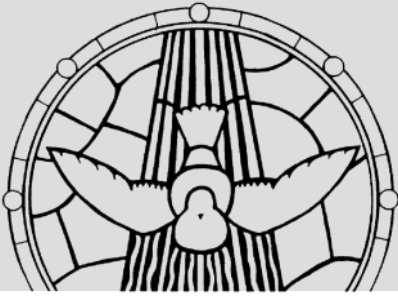


Newport-on-Tay

Church of Scotland Journal

November 2020



MINISTER'S MESSAGE - Standing Together in Love!

On the 16th October 2020, a French high school teacher who had shown caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad to his class was beheaded by an 18-year-old Muslim refugee in what President Emmanuel Macron judged to be an "Islamist terrorist attack". The killing was the latest high-profile attack by a Muslim extremist in France, coming after the 2015 massacre at Charlie Hebdo magazine and the 2016 truck attack in Nice. It also occurred two weeks after Macron gave a controversial speech defining Islam as "a religion that is in crisis today all over the world". France, which colonised many Muslim-majority territories in Africa and the Levant in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Algeria and Mali, has Western Europe's largest Muslim minority - 6 million Muslims or 9% of its population. Commentators have suggested that the beheading in France could support President Macron's claim that Islam is in

'crisis', but so is French secularism and/or western secularism as a whole!

On Saturday 24th October 2020, six children were shot dead on the spot at Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy, in the restive town of Kumba, in Cameroon's South West Anglophone region. The heinous act was committed by unknown gunmen who stormed the school premises, early that morning, and opened fire on over a dozen children. An unspecified number of children have been listed to have sustained injuries and some are in intensive care in the hospital in Kumba. These innocent children left their homes for school to study towards a better future, but their dreams have sadly been cut short.

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) has affected day to day life and is slowing down the global economy. Thousands of people are either sick or are dying as a result of the disease and families have been separated because of social distancing rules intended to curb the spread of the disease. The consequences are far reaching, ranging from poverty to mental health and a deep sense of frustration in a world that now seems to be completely unrecognisable.

Aaron B. Powel has made a very sobering comment which encapsulates our fears and feelings at this time of great uncertainty. This is what he wrote: "The world is a goddamned evil place, the strong prey on the weak, the rich on the poor; I've given up hope that there is a God that will save us all. How am I supposed to believe that there's a heaven and a hell when all I see now is hell?" Powel is seemingly right, or is he not? The world and the world system of values and standards seems to be crumbling into dust and advanced political systems that were hitherto admired by many have now become a mockery to civilisation. Are we supposed to expect anything new and helpful out of a world like that? Pessimists continue to wonder! But without pain, without sacrifice, we would have nothing. I think what we need is something more than what we already possess, probably true fellowship and the strength that comes from our mutual support for one another to meet the challenges of our time. Maybe we even need an outside influence to assist us recognise our common enemy and promote our common goals. John Dewey might have been right when he suggested that, 'the best way to unite all nations on this globe would be an attack from some other planet. In the face of such an alien enemy, people would respond with a sense of their unity of interest and purpose.' Dewey speaks of an alien enemy, but I think Christian people need a friend who can help us to influence the world positively. That friend in my opinion is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit because we learn from scripture that after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the lives of the first disciples of Jesus, their community was transformed into a new community of fellowship and love. N. T. Wright makes much of this in his book, *Simple Christianity: Why Christianity Makes Sense*, when he comments that "those in whom the Spirit comes to live are God's new Temple. They are, individually and corporately, places where heaven and earth meet". Therefore, the church of God and all of us individually who have come to Christ ought to be places and people where and through whom heaven and earth meet to produce an environment that looks more like heaven and where our pains and tragedies are lessened.

Continued overleaf...

Minister's Letter cont...

In Acts 2, Luke begins by describing what happened on the day of Pentecost and explains it through Peter's Christ-centred sermon. He then goes on to show us the effects of Pentecost, by giving us the characteristics of the spirit-filled church. They spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread and prayed together. All the Lord's followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God. Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved.

Those are the characteristics of a Spirit-filled people. What we need as a church is to foster love among ourselves and in the world, promote fellowship and sharing according to each other's needs, and bear one another's burden as we learn from the apostles and from Jesus Christ through scripture.

Every Blessing,

Rev Dr Amos Chewachong

Update on Church Services

'Stand firm when trials happen because they will happen.' (Ecclesiastes 11:8)

The current pandemic has certainly tested both the resilience and the creativity of Church leadership and congregations within the Church of Scotland. They have been encouraged to 'think outside the box' and resolve different ways to conduct worship, by embracing new approaches and evolving technologies.

'Zoom', once a multi-coloured ice lolly enjoyed in my childhood, became the name of the preferred method of collaborative communication within our Church in Newport, allowing Kirk Session, the Worship Team, Sunday Club and Youth Seekers to meet 'virtually' and Sunday Services to be conducted online.

This methodology has proven to be an effective solution and we are indebted to Catherine and Neil Merrylees along with Claire Owen, for their commitment in initially familiarising themselves with the functionality of this platform, and then, acting as 'hosts' by releasing invitations and managing the live transmission of the Services.

As the Scottish Government 'Lockdown' restrictions eased, we were permitted to re-open the Church having satisfied Presbytery that our buildings were safe to do so and the appropriate risk assessments and mitigation measures e.g. safe distancing, one-way access/egress and hand sanitisers were established and evidenced. So, after Session discussion and a 'majority' vote, we re-opened with a 'physical' Church Service on the morning of Sunday 20th September. The re-opening was to form part of a four-week trial which would also involve a Zoom evening Service.

The Government restriction of 50 Worshippers (including the officiating Minister, Organist, Stewards, and Technicians) meant that a 'Booking' system was necessary to regulate the number of attendees and generate the obligatory 'Test and Protect' list. A two-fold booking process was employed utilising the telephone and an online registration platform (Doodle). We are indebted to Philip Owen for dutifully undertaking this role each Friday.

This trial was duly reviewed at the Session meeting on 12th October and it was agreed to rationalise our Service provision by conducting a further four-week trial which would see 'Morning only Services' alternating between the Church and Zoom. The schedule was arranged to accommodate both our October Holy Communion and Remembrance Day Services within the Church building. This trial will in turn be reviewed at our next Session meeting on 11th November.

In the meantime, I would like to express my thanks to all who have joined us either in person, or virtually online, over the past few months, and in particular for your strict adherence to our guidance and regulations when attending Church.

"Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Francis B. Robertson, Session Clerk

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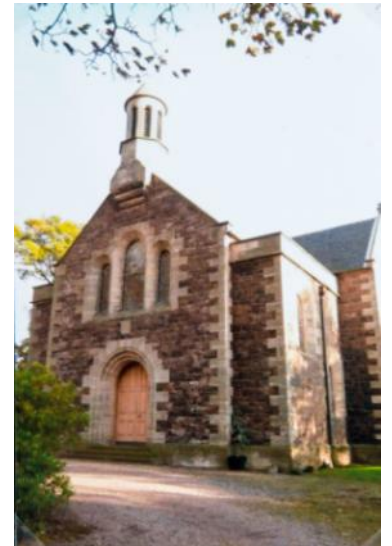
If times were normal, today I would be writing an article for the magazine giving details of all the events we had planned in celebration of 150 wonderful years of our church building. However, times are not normal, and these planned events have been put on hold for the time being. We won't be mounting a flower festival just yet, attending a special Christmas concert, visiting a church history exhibition, attending a commemorative service, or indeed doing any of the other exciting things we had hoped for.

Instead we must just remind ourselves of the massive achievements of our predecessors, without whose efforts we would have nothing to celebrate. I refer not just those to those of 150 years ago, but also to all those who had gone before as well as those who followed on, and who continued to improve upon and add to what was started in 1870.



We need to remember of course that this year we are celebrating 150 years of our church building only, and not of the actual church. The church in Forgan parish dates back much further than 150 years, and by 1870 there was already a rich and diverse pattern of church

life in the area. Newport was in the old parish of Forgan. The original church of Forgan was founded in 1124. The church was dedicated to St. Phyllan and thereafter the parish sometimes bore that name too. The old Forgan Kirk (above), now ruined, is situated on the back road to Tayport, and probably dates back to the fourteenth century. In 1842 a 'new' Forgan church (right) was opened, more conveniently situated on the Newport-Leuchars road, close to the Forgan smiddy. The appropriately named Kirk Road is a present-day reminder of the old path taken by villagers from the



Woodhaven end of the village on their way out to both the old and the new Forgan churches.



The Disruption of 1843 led to the new St Phyllan's Free Church (left) being built in William Street, and for 30 years until Newport School was built in Blyth Street, the Free Church school in the hall next door to the church was generally accepted as the village school.

Just along the road from St Thomas', at the bottom of Kilnburn was the Congregational Church (right). The Newport Congregational Church was one of the oldest Independent churches in Scotland. First formed in 1801 their new church in Kilnburn had been opened in 1868.



So it was among these more elderly neighbours that a new young church would have to fit in. How did this come about in an area already so well 'churched'? As most of you are probably aware, our church opened its doors for the first time in November 1870. Prior to that, the parish church had been the one at Forgan. However, as the village of Newport developed through the 19th century, it became increasingly clear that a new Established church was needed within the village itself.

Planning for this new church started at a meeting held in September 1866 and a committee was appointed to oversee the raising of the necessary finances. An energetic fund-raising campaign followed, and by 1869 approximately £2000 had been raised, an amazing achievement 150 years ago. Work started at the beginning of 1870. By the autumn work was complete, and the first service was held on Sunday 6th November 1870. The church was named St. Thomas' as a reminder of the Chapel of St. Thomas of Seamylnes, which in earlier times had stood in the area of the present-day Boat Road.

The first minister, Rev Thomas Fraser, was appointed in 1871 and he would lead the congregation for 43 years until his death in 1913. For the first 30 years he lived at Woodstock, 59 Cupar Road. He lived with his sister Mary, who devoted herself to looking after him. He referred to her as 'my companion, counsellor and friend'. The huge west window in our church was gifted by him and dedicated to Mary when she died in 1911.





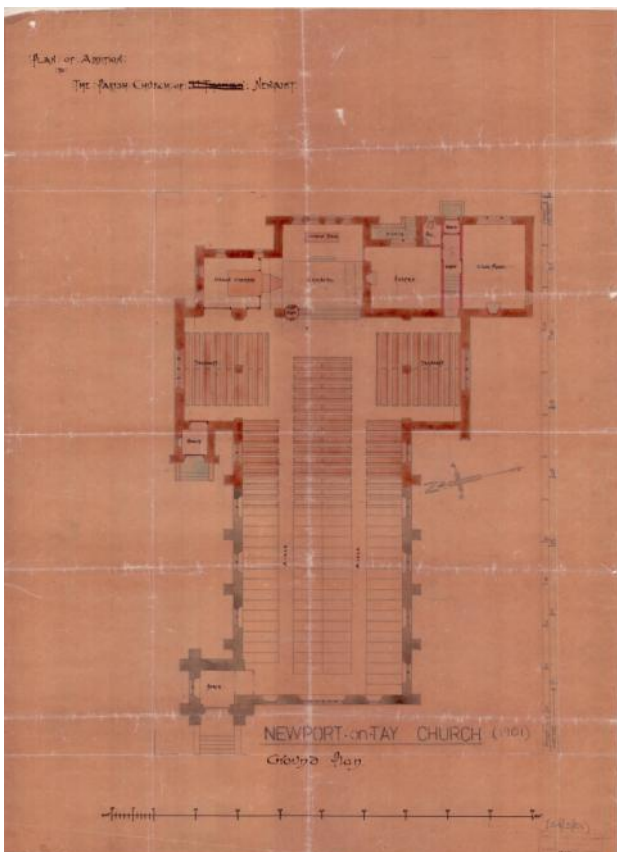
That original church building bore little resemblance to our church today. Indeed it was less than half the size, being only the rectangular nave section, the area currently filled with our pews. There was of course no organ, and beyond the church walls there was no manse and certainly no hall.

In 1900-01 therefore, another huge fund-raising drive was organised to raise money to extend the church. A total of £4500 was raised and substantial alterations were made (see plan below). Now the nave was extended by

one bay and a new chancel and transepts were added at the east end of the building. The red sandstone used for the internal arches in these areas came from the Locharbriggs quarry in Dumfriesshire. In addition, an organ was installed. This is rather special: it's a Father Willis organ, made by Henry Willis and Sons of London, one of the most renowned organ-builders in the country. Recent refurbishment work on this organ should ensure its lifespan for another hundred years. While all these alterations were being made to the church, members were invited to worship in the nearby



Congregational Church. At the same time the manse was built next door. All this work took about ten months and the church was re-opened in November 1902.



Another generation forward and members addressed the need for hall accommodation. Just across Cupar Road from the church was the Unionist Hall, upstairs from the Cupar Road shops. In the mid-1920s the Church was able to buy this block, acquiring the much needed hall accommodation and also the four shops below which over the years have accommodated a variety of businesses, including our own manna coffee shop. The hall became known as Kirk House, and was used until construction of the new hall behind the manse in 1992.

The next big milestone as far as our church building was concerned came with the church centenary in 1970. Ambitious plans were made to upgrade and completely redecorate the church, and by the end of the year these plans had been realised. Clearly members didn't have a global pandemic and all its associated problems to deal with in 1970! All the woodwork in the church had been brought back to the original pine, the church had been re-decorated, carpeting had been laid throughout and improved lighting installed.

In 1978 St Fillan's and St Thomas' Churches united, and from then until the new hall was built in 1992, the united churches had the advantage of the extra St Fillan's hall accommodation on William Street. In 1981, Forgan Church also joined the union, thus bringing the three congregations together.

The building and opening in 1992 of our purpose built hall behind the manse has been the latest major step in our church building story. The hall's construction, the creation of the link passage, and the incorporation of all the rooms and facilities in what was then the manse into an overall hall complex, meant an enormous investment of money, time and faith, and was every bit as challenging as the earlier endeavours had been.



In this milestone year it's unfortunate that we have spent so little time actually within our church walls. Perhaps the events of the last few months have reminded us that of course the church is not just a building, it's the people and their faith who make the church. Taking that as read, there's still no doubt that we would all have enjoyed being able to celebrate the tremendous achievements of all those who have gone before us throughout the last 150 years. Without their vision, hard work, determination and, of course, most of all their faith, we would not have the beautiful building which will welcome us back again in more normal times. Let us salute them and thank God for their efforts.

Mairi Shiels 2020

To view pictures in colour, please go to our website www.notchurch.co.uk

manna matters



We have been open since the beginning of August and the team in the shop are working hard to do everything to keep everyone safe while they visit manna. We have reduced each day's hours and staff. We still have wonderful home baking and are doing sandwiches each day. We also saw the welcome return to soup daily as the weather becomes colder.

It's lovely to see our customers return. It's also wonderful that friends can still meet for a coffee and a chat as at present we can't visit each other's houses.

We are still open Tuesday - Saturday however we open at 10am and close at 3pm. We really need your support with gift sales and encourage you to shop local. We have Christmas cards and gifts including Shampoos, conditioners and hand soaps. Tea pots, plates and mugs in lovely rainbow ceramics. Cushions, hats, gloves and socks. We hope when the weather is fair to have a stall outside the shop for people to safely see our items.

Please pray for the protection of manna and all who come there every day.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Diane & the manna team

manna is open Tuesday - Saturday 10am-3pm

manna (01382) 542781

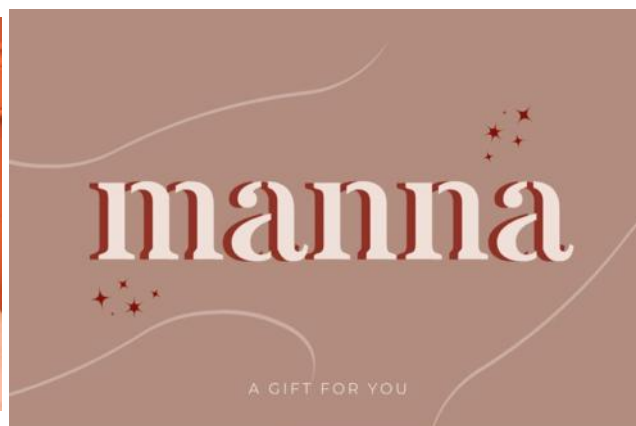
Diane Miller (01382) 541141 & dianemillermanna@gmail.com

Morag Rowley (01382) 541157 & rowley.4@btinternet.com

As mentioned above, manna has many gift options for Christmas.

Here are a few pictures for inspiration.

If you can't decide what to buy, or want to give someone else the choice, why not buy a Gift Card for a present? Now in stock with a new design!



Old Newport

I know that many of you have always enjoyed our Old Newport exhibitions, and all the other events such as evening talks and guided walks that the Newport History Group have organised. Sadly all these events are forbidden at the moment, but we have the next best thing for you!

By the time you read this the new Old Newport website will be up and running at www.newportontayhistory.org.uk It's packed full of information about every aspect of life in the past in Newport and Wormit. In addition there's a wonderful online archive where you can browse through hundreds and hundreds of photographs. We hope that the website will provide hours of interest and enjoyment for all who have the slightest interest in Newport and Wormit, and even for those who don't! Browsing the website will be the perfect way to while away these long Covid winter evenings. I do hope you all enjoy it!

Mairi Shiels

Next Edition

We hope to produce another edition of the Journal for the start of December. If you would like a festive message to the Church family put in, please email newportcos@btinternet.com by Sunday 22nd November 2020. Christmas celebrations will be very different this year but it is important we continue to look out for others.



Young People's Update

Activities for all our young people have been continuing online over the past few months looking at a wide range of topics. In these uncertain times it is encouraging to still be able to minister to our young people and help them continue on their faith journey.

Parish Register

Deaths

- 2nd Sept Mrs Mary (May) Paul
Newport-on-Tay Dist 33
- 3rd Sept Mrs Jeana Scott
Cupar
(formerly Newport-on-Tay) Dist 98
- 29th Sept Mrs Isabella (Ella) Scott
Newport-on-Tay Dist 33

New Members by Certificate

Mrs Winifred (Winnie) Whyte and
Miss Angela Whyte
Tayport Dist 28
From:- Tayport Parish Church

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