
Menstrie Parish Church of Scotland



Winter 2021 Newsletter

Our new Minister

If you have not already heard, we are delighted to let you know that after nearly four years without a Parish Minister the post has now been filled.

The Nominating Committee comprising 13 elected members from both Menstrie and Alva Churches selected the Rev. Mike Goodison B.Sc. (Hons) B.D. as Sole Nominee. Mike preached in both churches on Sunday 3rd October 2021.

The two congregations voting together agreed to call him as the Minister for Menstrie Parish Church in deferred linkage with Alva Parish Church.

Mike is currently an Army Chaplain and he knows this area very well having undertaken training for ministry in the Stirling Presbytery area including Alva.

We are looking forward keenly to his arrival in 2022 once he has left his current post with the Army in Catterick.



From our Interim Moderator:

Well, our long wait is over. In Psalm 40, David writes “I waited patiently for the Lord, he turned his head and heard my cry”. These are words which I am sure will resonate with you all – they certainly do with me! When a congregation is without a minister, any vacancy seems like a long time – and it certainly has been a long time for us here at Menstrie. I have been with you as Interim Moderator for just over 2 years, but I am equally aware that your journey had begun before that.

As you will know, Rev Mike Goodison has accepted the call to the charge here at Menstrie (in deferred linkage with Alva); but you will also know that Mike will not be available to join us until he can be released from his commitments as an Army Chaplain (probably sometime after Easter next year). But I know you will agree that the right Minister is worth waiting for – and I commend you all for waiting patiently, as David did, for the Lord to grant us a new minister. Mike’s experience in military chaplaincy, plus the fact that he trained for ministry right here in this Presbytery, makes him ideally qualified to minister to the congregation and wider population of Menstrie.

So, this all means of course that I will be with you for a while longer as Interim Moderator! But I can genuinely say it’s been a blessing to work with the Nominating Committee, and with the Kirk Session – indeed, with you all. And I will continue to do so until Mike is ready to step in.

Talking of waiting, although I am writing this in November, by the time you read this it will be Advent – the season of waiting. But much, much more than that, Advent is of course the season of perpetual hope. Hope, which is guaranteed in the arrival of our King, Jesus Christ, on Christmas Day. This

Christmas will take on an additional significance for all of us – our first ‘proper’ Christmas for 2 years, after last year’s ‘digital Christmas’. For some, of course, this will be a challenging Christmas; we think of those who have lost loved ones in this last year – indeed, in this last 18 months since we first entered the world of COVID-19. The promise Jesus Christ brings hope in this season of Advent to us all, and especially to those for whom hope is in short supply.

There is a wonderful old American spiritual song called ‘I wonder as I wander’ which contains these lines:

“The promise of ages”. It’s easy for us to forget that, for the shepherds who first heard the song of the angels had been waiting a lifetime for God’s promise to be fulfilled. Generations, many of them, had come and gone and not seen the ‘promise of ages’ fulfilled. We are blessed in comparison; God has kept His promise, and we know how the season of Advent will finish – with the birth of Jesus Christ. We do not need to wait patiently for Him – indeed, He is the one waiting for us to respond to His call.

I wish you all a blessed and joyous Advent and Christmas season.

God bless.

Barry

News about finance

2020 Finance information

Budget forecasts for last year were blown away by the arrival of the Covid pandemic. Income was greatly reduced by the enforced closure of our Church for most of the year for services. Additionally, all fundraising activities from March onwards were cancelled. It was expected therefore that we would reach the end of the year with a very large deficit.

What also happened was that we managed to reduce many outgoing costs such as heating and lighting as well as that of Pulpit Supply ministers as we were in vacancy.

Income had dropped by £29000 but expenditure had gone down by £27000

The generosity of so many members making up their levels of giving during November and December was wonderfully helpful.

Also, with many members giving regularly by Bank Standing Order our Church continued to receive good levels of regular income.

As a result, we finished 2020 with a deficit of only £847.
This was a marvellous result.

Grateful thanks to everyone who gave generously.

2021 Finance information

Once again budget forecasts for this year have been greatly affected by the continued pandemic. In particular, as in 2020, no fundraising activities have been possible.

At the time of starting to prepare this article for the newsletter it looked as if the position would be very similar to that of 2020—either a small deficit or small surplus except for one very significant event.

That event occurred in August when a Cheque for almost £22000 was received from a Legal firm. This was for a Legacy left to the Church by a faithful and regular attender who, sadly, passed away last year. This exceedingly generous and totally unforeseen donation means that Menstrie Parish Church will end this year with a large surplus of more than £20000.



Fabric Boxes

For many years now Elders have gone round their districts twice per year collecting donations from members of cash put into their Church Fabric Boxes located in many homes. This service was stopped, initially, last year during the first lockdown.

It is clear that over 2020 and 2021 that many members are no longer using cash as frequently as before and therefore the overall use of the Fabric Boxes has diminished significantly.

The Kirk Session therefore approved a recommendation from the Finance Committee to discontinue this regular collection by Elders of contributions in these boxes permanently.

However, this does NOT prevent any member still using their box. This means that when you do have a need to give this money to the Church please contact either your Elder, or Mike Hamilton (01259 760937) or Jim McAlpine (01259 763004) to have it uplifted. Alternatively, the money can be brought into Church and placed in a clearly marked receptacle at the back of the Church.

Jim McAlpine

Pastoral Care Group.

The last twenty months have been the most traumatic time most of us can recall. Sadly some of us have lost friends and relations to a virus that very few people had heard of two years ago. As a result of the national lockdown, members, including the pastoral care group, were not able to support the bereaved or the lonely as we would want to. However I was inspired by the response of so many people and organisations who responded to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community.

As the church was closed for most of 2020 we were not able to organise events such collecting for the Poppy Appeal, the Christian Aid week or Harvest Thanksgiving.

As the church opened up during 2021 we have been able to re- establish Harvest Thanksgiving and the Poppy Appeal. After our Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday, £410 was sent to the Christian Aid Organisation, six baskets of fruit were delivered to Menstrie House and £90 along with 47.65 kg of donations were taken to the Gate charity. Collection tins for the Poppy Appeal were placed in the local shops.

The Pastoral Care group would like to thank all members of our community who called on or telephoned those who were housebound or isolating during the pandemic. We are all hoping for a more normal year in 2022

Calum Macleod (on behalf of the Pastoral Care Group)



Parish Bereavements

It has been a strange time recently as funerals could not be held normally in the Church. It has been difficult with direct funerals to keep track. The list below shows the names of those on our roll who died over the past difficult months. Some may have been in previous newsletters before lockdown started. Apologies if anyone is missed out.

Mr I Cameron

Mr A McGrouther

Jenny Greenhill

Margaret Ferguson

Margaret Crocket

John Henderson

Edna Rankine

Agnes Geddes

Jimmy McKenzie

Jim Thomson

Betty Millar

Colin Sievewright

Maureen Hunter

Rena Horne

Dorothy Wright

Margaret Brown

Mrs Robertson

Maud Tannoch

Marion McCulloch

Jenny Tainsh

Christine Paton

Why not send us some reflections of the person you knew and we can include them in our next newsletter as a fitting tribute from their Church.

“In my Father’s place there are many rooms” John 14:2



Blythwood Care Christmas Appeal 2021

On Monday 1 November the contribution from Menstrie Church was taken to the collection point at Morrison's, Alloa. It is heartening to see that despite things not quite being back to 'normal' that members of Menstrie Parish Church continue to think of others.

Thanks to everyone who gave filled boxes; filled gym bags; monetary donations; knitted goods and items that can be added to other boxes. I am sure that the recipients of all these gifts this Christmas will be very appreciative of the donations made by our members.

The Gate

We continue to support The Gate Food bank. You can leave dried goods (tins, packets etc) in the Church vestibule or inside the Church any Sunday morning. If you prefer, monetary donations are very acceptable. Envelopes should be given to Ian or any of the Session Clerks.

At this time of year Christmas fayre and Advent Calendars, would be much appreciated, as well as toys and toiletries for Women's Aid.

Teas after Church.

As you know we are starting to serve teas after Church from Sunday 21st November.
Strict COVID health rules will be adhered to.

Rota for 2021.

Nov. 21. Laura Christie & Wendy Tetlow
28. Isobel Munro & Susan Delaney
Dec. 5. Heather Bain & Nancy Stewart
12 Betty Winkley & Wilma Irvine
19 Jim & Annette Young.

There will be no teas after the services on
26th December & 2nd January.

Members of the Kirk Session will serve teas as before on the last Sunday of the month but we are in need of volunteers to cover other weeks so that a rota can be made up for 2022.

If you feel you could assist on a Sunday please contact me, Isobel Munro or Margaret Perry.

Many thanks
Laura Christie



Thank You

Thank you to everyone who sent cards and flowers as well as messages of support when my mum died in June. They were very much appreciated.

Norma



Girlguiding in Menstrie is part of Hillfoots District which covers Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers across Menstrie, Alva and Tillicoultry.

Rainbows is for girls aged 5-7 years (although there are trials running in some areas to allow girls to join from 4 years of age)

We ran outdoors (and sometimes on Zoom) during the pandemic and had great fun with our Agility Badge; trying out lots of camping themed activities, building dens and trying outdoor cooking and having a trip to Hawaii with Leis and grass skirts! (but in the park instead of racking up air miles...)

Now that we are, thankfully, back indoors we're looking forward to trying an Advent Countdown Challenge and we're hoping to have an evening where we will get donations for the Alva Foodbank - we were at the Halloween Disco Pumpkin Party with Rainbows and Brownies from all over Clackmannanshire and the girls had a great time!

1st Menstrie Brownies is a group for girls aged 7-10 years old and during the pandemic we have been meeting online and in various local outdoor locations, come rain or shine (and there has been quite a lot of rain!). We are therefore very grateful to once again be meeting indoors over winter, in the warmth and light of the church hall!!

Brownies was established in Menstrie in 1927, and has run almost uninterrupted until the present day. Brownies have lots of fun, whilst learning about all sorts of things and earning badges as they go. Recent activities have included litter picking; learning how Parliament works; expressive arts; summer walks in the Ochils; outdoor adventure day with archery and grass sledging; Pumpkin disco party; online international activities; and learning how to make our voices heard.

The next few months are equally busy, with a cinema trip and Christmas party, and there are already activities in the diary for the next two years! We are confident that we will reach our Centenary in style and are grateful for the support of the church and the local community.

Perhaps you know a girl (or an adult) who would like to join us? We meet weekly during School term times and we'd love you to join us!!

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter/>



Blairlogie SWI is now holding their meetings in rooms 2/3 on the second Monday of each month.

Blairlogie SWI covers the area around Blairlogie and is part of the SC&WP (Stirling, Clackmannan and West Perth) Federation . Most of our members come from Menstrie although we also have some from Alva and Tillicoultry, Dollar and Kincardine.

At the October meeting Ray McLeod, our president welcomed everybody back and told us about the varied programme of events the new committee has planned for the year. Shona Storer then treated us to a trip round the Greek islands on her boat before our usual cup of tea and a good blether. We are a friendly group and are always pleased to welcome new members. Why not come along as a visitor to find out more? We only ask you to bring your own mug.

Nov 8th Talk by the Community Policeman

Dec 13th Crafty Christmas

Jan 17th Scots night

Feb 14th Deputy Lord Lieutenant



Anniversary Congratulations

In 2020 due to lockdown and Church closure we were unable to provide newsletters.

An article that would have been included would have been the 65th wedding Anniversary of Bill and Pauline Anderson.

We now send Congratulations to Bill and Pauline who will have been married for 67yrs on 8th January 2022.

Menstrie Seniors Club

Menstrie Parish Church is the venue for the Seniors Club. Meetings are in room 2/3 on Mondays between 2.30pm and 4.00pm. All are welcome.

National Giving Day

National Giving Day was incorporated into our Giving Day on 5th December with a retiring collection going to Strathcarron Hospice.

On the same day children's toys and toiletries for women were received for Clackmannanshire Women's Aid along with festive foods for The Gate.

Thank you for all donations.



Jesus is the Reason

In Bethlehem God gave to us

The source of Christmas Joy

A star is shone on a miracle

The virgin birth of a boy

He was born both God and man

A saviour for us all

The way to get to our heavenly home

If we just heed his call

So as we shop and spend and wrap

And enjoy the Christmas Season

Let's keep in mind the sacred truth

Jesus is the reason

By Joanna Fuchs



December Services

- 5th Rev Barry Hughes
12th Rev Fiona Tweedie
19th Alistair MacPherson
24th Rev Richard Begg at 7.00pm
26th Rev Richard Begg

The Service on 24th will be a Carol service for all the family. An invitation has gone out to the UF to join us at 7.00pm.

All are welcome.





Christmas Shopping!

When you do your Christmas shopping online please remember you can raise funds for the church at the same time.

Menstrie Parish Church of Scotland is registered with easyfundraising First you must register as a supporter then when you shop online through the easyfundraising site, participating retailers donate a percentage of your spend to our church. There is also an easyfundraising app.



It costs you nothing

You can also raise FREE donations for Menstrie Parish Church when you buy things from Amazon – you'll just need to create a free account at smile.amazon.co.uk. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets you enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on amazon.co.uk. The difference is that when you shop on smile.amazon.co.uk, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) to the eligible charitable organisation of your choice.



Merry Christmas

“If you’re worried and you can’t sleep, count your blessings instead of sheep. Then you’ll fall asleep counting your blessings”

Bob Wallace, *White Christmas*

“Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won’t make it white”.

Bing Crosby

“Just remember, the true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart.”

Santa Claus, *The Polar Express*



Minister

In Vacancy. Our Church has a Minister Elect at the moment. Meanwhile anyone requiring the services of a Minister should contact-

Rev. Barry Hughes Interim Moderator
Tel: 07597386762
E-mail: bhughes@churchofscotland.org.uk

Find us on  Menstrie Parish Church