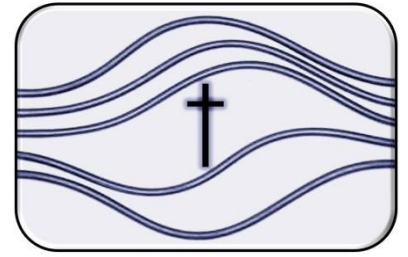




Wick St Fergus Church of Scotland



August 2018

Welcome to August everyone. Last month's magazine was a bit on the somber side. I guess I was a bit like the old mannie that I met once when I used to live in Stromness.

I had gone down to the "Pierhead Parliament," which is like the Scottish Parliament but only in this case it is more fun. There for years the men of the town would gather and discuss the important affairs of the town and county. Anyway, one day I went down there for a seat and to listen to the banter. It was a glorious and sunny Stromness afternoon. The sun was beating down and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Some of the lobster boats were returning to the harbor after a hard day's work at the creels. It was the perfect afternoon scene.

I turned to old Reg Fawns who was sitting next to me and said to him, "Isn't it just the glorious day, beuy?" To this Reg replied as only he could, "Aye, beuy, but we'll pay faar hid yet." Some people, with some justification it must be said, see religion as arguing about words with the threat of eternal damnation hanging over them. I think that it was Sigmund Freud who once wrote that a definition of faith was believing in something that we know isn't there thus linking faith to some kind of mental aberration, something a good course of therapy could sort out. But faith is much more than this.

Religion, far from being the greatest of human evils, has produced some of the greatest examples for good ever seen in human history. Now what passes for religion is another thing completely. When politicians get a hold of religion or when religion is appropriated by the powers of the state then instead of being a force for good it becomes transformed into an agent of oppression. Instead of inspiring altruistic living it becomes a mere "ology," a means of social control or as Karl Marx described it, "an opiate of the people."

What sets radical Christianity apart from ideological religion is the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Why do you think that there have been attempts down through the history of state religion to hide him behind walls of stone and regulation and law? When he spoke in Palestine two thousand years ago the politicians trembled, the fathers of false religion quaked in their boots. That was why he was killed by a coalition of religious folks who suffered from religion as well as the political leaders of the day. But as Easter Sunday showed, you can't keep a good man down. He defied the authorities in his living, his dying and his rising again. He defied those who tried to categorise people into certain designated groups by showing that all were worthy, that all had the capacity to give and receive love, that no one was to be excluded from mercy and justice and that the way to God was open to all. He embraced the leper and treated women with respect, honour even.

All this at a time when women were regarded as the property of their husbands. Children, who had particular restrictions on their rights placed upon them found a place close to the heart of Christ. No one was excluded because they were gay, straight, young, old, male, female, sick, well, crook, villain, Pharisee or foreigner. All had value. All were welcome.

That is what true religion is about.

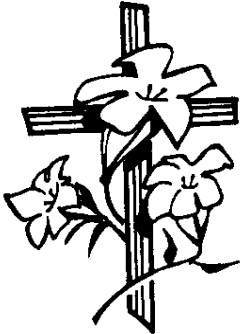
It has nothing to do with arguing about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin or other such doctrinal irrelevancies. In a word, it is all about love. If you want to know more come and see us at Wick St Fergus. You know where we are.

Revd John Nugent BD(honours)

Church Register

Due to Holidays, all church register information for August will be published in September's edition of the newsletter. Thank you for your understanding with this.

Flowers for Sunday



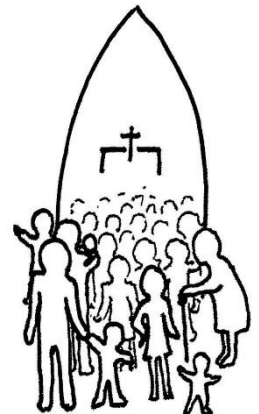
DATE	KINDLY DONATED BY	ARRANGER
5 th Aug	Mrs Durrand, Ackergill	Donor
12 th Aug	Farquhar & Durrand Families	Mrs Simpson
19 th Aug	Mrs Liz Nicolson, Sibster	Donor
26 th Aug	Mrs M Bremner	Mrs Harper
2 nd Sep	Mrs K Robertson, Broadhaven	Donor



***If you would like to fill an empty date on the rota please contact Mrs Harper on 602612
THE LARGE HALL IS IN USE EVERY SATURDAY From 7.30am UNTIL 11.30
FLOWERS CANNOT BE ARRANGED THEN - thank you for your co-operation with this.***

Church Duty Rota

Date	BUS	STAIRS	DOOR	DOOR	USHER
5 th Aug	G Ramsay	W Robertson	*****	A Sinclair	G Watt
12 th Aug	M Duffy	R Mappin	I Banks	J Cormack	H Gray
19 th Aug	A Duffy	J Mclennan	E Henderson	*****	J Coghill
26 th Aug	J Mackay	B Campbell	G Macdonald	M Thomson	M Foubister
2 nd Sep	G Watt	G Ramsay	*****	A Sinclair	W Robertson



Sermon Information from the Minister

DATE	READING 1	READING 2	SUBJECT	DAY OF CHURCH CALENDAR
5 th Aug	Psalm 51:1-13	Ephesians 4:1-16	Know that you are a forgiven person	10 th after Trinity
12 th Aug	2 Samuel 18: 5-33	Ephesians 4:25-5:2	The arrogance of power	11 th after Trinity
19 th Aug	1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14	John 6:51-58	Wisdom and the absurd	12 th after Trinity
26 th Aug	Psalm 116	Luke 13:10-17	Love overcomes law	13 th after Trinity

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – DIARY

St Fergus Street Stall – Friday 24th August
Open Day – Saturday 29th September
Autumn Thrift – 12th October

What problems do ministers have to deal with these days?

Ever wonder what sort of pastoral problems people may be bringing to our minister?

Struggles with loneliness and mental illness are pretty sure to come near the top, according to a new survey. The two issues have been found to be by far the commonest community issues facing Ministers, according to a new survey by the Mission and Public Affairs Council and the Church Urban Fund.

More than three quarters of clergy (76 per cent) reported that loneliness was a 'significant' problem in their community in 2017; eight per cent higher than in 2011. And concern for people's mental well-being increased from 40 per cent in 2011 to 60 per cent.

Homelessness is also taking its toll – it was seen as a significant problem by 14 per cent of clergy in 2011; in 2017 this had increased to 23 per cent.

Of course, the concerns are generally greater in more deprived parishes, where low income, poor education, unemployment, and family breakdown are also widespread. Almost all incumbents reported that their churches were actively involved in helping people who were struggling with loneliness (94 per cent), family breakdown (86 per cent), and mental-health issues (83 per cent), in partnership with charities and other support groups. Meanwhile, one in five benefices (19 per cent) run foodbanks, and more than 90 per cent of local churches now support foodbanks in some way.

Our own minister John told us, "We operate as a parish ministry here in Wick and that means each of these areas is inevitably a part of what we deal with on a daily basis. We are not a one day a week Church. We work seven days a week."

If you feel you can help anyone in our parish, please do so. Acts of kindness, no matter how small, can make a huge difference to someone's day, and may help them more than you know.

We are given gifts for a good reason

If we are not practical, it's good to know we can call on plumbers and electricians to sort out our house problems. Some people are gifted with practical knowledge and skills, and we could not do without them. Other people are more creative and artistic. Such folk may not be able to build a house, but they can fill it with beauty and meaning through their music, painting, sculpture and books.

The Bible mentions Bezalel and Oholiab, who lived in Moses' time. Bezalel's specialty was working with metals; cutting and setting jewels and carving wood. Oholiab was an engraver, a designer and a weaver. Together, these two men had great skill, understanding and creativity, and made the Tabernacle the beautiful dwelling that it was.

Many years later, King Solomon commissioned Hiram, a native of Tyre, to make objects for the Temple out of gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone and wood. He also made coloured cloths and linen. Without Hiram's expertise, the magnificence of the Temple in Jerusalem would not have been realised or remembered!

Such people should encourage us as we seek to discover God's plan for our lives. We, too, are called to be faithful in serving God through using whatever particular gifts He has given us. Faithful obedience is what matters, not whether or not we end up in a position of responsibility, or in a quiet backwater. 'Success' for a Christian is not fame, but a deeper walk, and more fruitful walk, with God.

In fact, the majority of Christians are called to serve God without fame or recognition. Our aim should be to simply love God and to express this in the service of others, with whatever skill or gift we have been given.

If we give ourselves to God, He will prepare us and use us in the way that best suits our gifts and personalities. We might not have the special skills of Bezalel, Oholiab and Hiram, but there is always something we can do for God. Let's seek out God's gifts and use them for His glory.

SMILE 😊

TWO LITTLE BOYS

A couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10, who were excessively mischievous. The two were always getting into trouble and their parents could be assured that if any mischief occurred in their town their two young sons were in some way involved.

The parents were at their wits end as to what to do about their sons' behaviour. The mother had heard that a clergyman in town had been successful in disciplining children in the past, so she asked her husband if he thought they should send the boys to speak with the clergyman.

The husband said, 'We might as well. We need to do something before I really lose my temper!' The clergyman agreed to speak with the boys, but asked to see them individually. The 8-year-old went to meet with him first. The clergyman sat the boy down and asked him sternly, 'Where is God?'

The boy made no response, so the clergyman repeated the question in an even sterner tone, 'Where is God?' Again, the boy made no attempt to answer. So, the clergyman raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face, 'WHERE IS GOD?'

At that the boy bolted from the room and ran directly home, slamming himself in the closet. His older brother followed him into the closet and asked what had happened. The younger brother replied, 'We are in BIG trouble this time. God is missing! And they think we did it!'

The minds of little children

A Sunday school teacher asked her children as they were on the way to church service,

"And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"

One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

Not covered by insurance

A recent letter that appeared in The Independent newspaper: 'Following the recent major flooding, I find myself out of pocket, due to what I am informed is an, "act of God." To avoid future financial embarrassment, please could you recommend an atheist insurance company?'

Untimely answered prayer

During the minister's sermon one Sunday, there was suddenly a loud whistle from one of the back pews. Jamie's mother was horrified. She glared him into silence and, after church, asked, 'Jamie, whatever made you do such a thing?'

Jamie explained: 'I've been asking God to teach me to whistle for ages, and suddenly, He did!'

Website: Find us at www.wickstferguschurch.org.uk or find us on facebook

Please can all items for September's newsletter be with Michelle by Friday 17th August – Thank you.

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