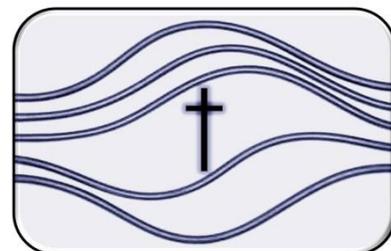




Wick St Fergus Church of Scotland



February 2017

Welcome to February. This is a very interesting year for me. The last Thursday in January marked exactly eight years since I stepped off the bus from Glasgow to be met by Revd Ronnie Johnston. I was only supposed to be here for two weeks. Two weeks became a month, a month became several and so on. This month also marks my 55th year on the planet. This time of year marks the beginning of my annual review of what I am doing and how I intend to proceed in the months to come.

There will be one or two changes and that is a good thing. We don't always like change but the fact is that change is a sign of growth. It is necessary. The world around us changes and so must we. I am not talking about compromising the central reality of our message and that is that God came among us as one of us (you can read about that in John chapter one of your New Testaments) and in so doing proclaimed to his world that he hadn't given up on them that his purpose for them was love and that such love was to be the shared portion of every person on the planet. That never changes.

As our understanding of God grows and develops we begin to see different facets of God and how God is to be understood. This is also a sign of growth and is entirely healthy. In this regard the church across the nation faces many challenges. These challenges come from forces within and without the church. There are some within the national church who would have us retreat into some kind of "holy huddle" or theological backwater where we can pull up the drawbridge and put the oil on to the boil. The cry then becomes, "Repel all boarders."

The challenge from outside the church is of great concern to me. The best way that I can think of describing this comes from Bruce Springsteen's song "World's Apart" on his album 'The Rising.' The song depicts a humanity at war with itself, the victims of that war being shut out because they are different or because they have been demonised. They are depicted by Bruce as banging on the doors of the church whilst crying, "May the living let us in before the dead tear us apart." Jesus once said that the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force. He was talking about the need that is in our society and our world and how people become so desperate and devoid of hope that they will cry out for any kind of help forcefully and loudly. The reason why? The unco guid or self-righteous close them out because they do not fit. So listen to this message.

At Wick St Fergus church of Scotland, we will never turn anyone away who comes to us. You might not like what you hear or see but one thing we can promise is that here all are welcome. We believe that Christ welcomes all and if he tells us that you are welcome then it most definitely is not the lace of anyone to turn someone away. The Gospel is a message of hope, a light in the midst of a dark and gloomy existence. Jesus once said, "Come to me all you who are weak and heavy laden and I will give you rest." He didn't say, "Come to me all you who are theologically astute and who understand the deeper points of theological discourse and you might just get in if you pass the dress code."

"Welcome" is engrained into our DNA at Wick St Fergus. We don't get everything right. We are human beings and we make mistakes sometimes. We believe in vigorous debate and in this we are historically authentic. But we believe that we are part of one another and that all God's

children are gifts of God to one another. Sometimes we would like to take some of those gifts back to the shop and get them exchanged for a credit note but that option isn't open to us. But we believe that all have worth. All have value in God's eyes, and in our eyes and here you will be welcome so come and see us sometime. You know where we are.

Revd John Nugent BD(Honours)

The manse computer has broken and consequently many files were lost, please contact the minister if anything you were looking for in this newsletter has been omitted.

Church Register

DEATHS: We are sorry to report the passing of the following people:

Donnie Farquhar: 28th November 2016

Stewart Bain: 5th December 2016

Jean Ross: 13th December 2016

Donnie Shearer: 8th December 2016

George Alexander of Watten: 20th December 2016

Isobel "Sybil" Munro: 30th December 2016

Elizabeth "Betty" Sutherland: 30th December 2016

James Ray McWhirr: 23rd January 2017

Diary

Choir Wednesdays
2nd Stewardship – 7pm
9th Session – 7pm
12th-13th Feb Book Sale

Flowers for Sunday

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
5 th Feb	Mrs Julie Steven	Donor
12 th Feb	The Moor Family	Mrs Simpson
19 th Feb	Mrs Jacqui Budge	Donor
26 th Feb	Family of the Late Mrs Gates	Mrs Harper
5 th Mar	Mrs K Harper	Donor

Sermon information from the Minister

DATE	READING 1	READING 2	SUBJECT	DAY OF CHURCH CALENDAR
5 th Feb	Psalm 5: 1-3	1 Corinthians 2: 1-14	Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start	3 rd of Epiphany
12 th Feb	Psalm 13	Mark 1: 40 – 45	Christ: Moved to Mercy	3 rd Sunday before Lent
19 th Feb	Psalm 136: 1-9, 23-26	Romans 8: 18-25	Hope: Helping us to Hang On	2 nd Sunday before Lent
26 th Feb	Psalm 84	Matthew 17: 9-23	The Transfiguration	Sunday before Lent
5 th Mar	Psalm 32	Matthew 4: 1-11	The Temptations of Christ	1 st Sunday of Lent

Church Duty Rota

Date	BUS	STAIRS	DOOR	DOOR	USHER
5 th Feb	J Houston	J McLennan	A Duffy	E Henderson	J Coghill
12 th Feb	M Foubister	B Campbell	G Macdonald	M Thomson	J Mackay
19 th Feb	G Watt	W Robertson	G Ramsay	A Sinclair	A Rosie
26 th Feb	I Banks	M Duffy	H Gray	R Mappin	J Cormack
5 th Mar	J McLennan	A Duffy	J Coghill	J Houston	E Henderson

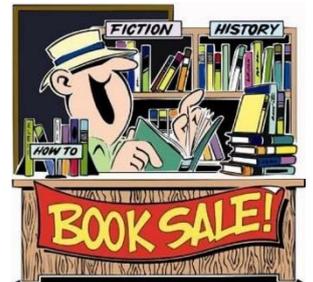
We still urgently require distributors for our magazine.

If you feel you are able to help with this, please contact John Cormack: 01955 603774. We depend wholly on our volunteers and hope we can find more helpful people to assist within this area of the church. With thanks in advance.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Book Sale – Friday 12th & Saturday 13th February

The St Fergus spring book sale will take place in the hall on Friday 12th and Saturday 13th February from 10.30am – 3.30pm. Donations started coming in straight after Christmas, including a large number of Cookery Books, so it looks as if we will need all the space as usual! I heard on the radio this morning that 1 person in 10 does not own a book – don't let that person be you.



AGM/Social Evening – with Nancy Nicolson and Others

Wednesday 29th March 7pm

You are all invited to come along to what is always a very enjoyable evening. The short business meeting, including a short update from the Convenors of the Congregational Board, Stewardship and Fabric Committees, and an explanation of the Accounts by the Treasurer, will be followed by the relaxing part which will be a social programme and Tea. Keep an eye out for further details in your March Newsletter.



The next meeting of the Café church will be Sunday 26th February.

Report on 4th Annual Christmas Tree Festival:

The 4th annual tree festival was a great success raising money for Medecins Sans Frontieres (See below), and already many groups have rebooked for this year. All visitors spoken to said that they enjoyed the display and we were delighted to have some new charities represented this year. Along with our offerings from the Christmas Eve services and Carols at Bilbster, we raised an amazing £1266.75. Thank you once again to everyone involved with these events and to those who came along and supported them, helping us to raise such a fantastic amount.



Médecins Sans Frontières

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is a private international association. The

association is made up mainly of doctors and health sector workers and is also open to all other professions which might help in achieving its aims. Médecins Sans Frontières provides assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict. They do so irrespective of gender, race, religion, creed or political convictions. Médecins Sans Frontières observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and claims full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions. Members undertake to respect their professional code of ethics and to maintain complete independence from all political, economic or religious powers. As volunteers, members understand the risks and dangers of the missions they carry out and make no claim for themselves or their assigns for any form of compensation other than that which the association might be able to afford them.

Amusing Church bulletin notices, which didn't quite work:

Below are some amusing anecdotes which have been published in church bulletins.

- The Fasting & Prayer conference includes meals.
- The Sermon this morning: 'Jesus walks on water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.
- Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "Hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.
- Don't let worry kill you off – Let the church help!!

"We don't change the message; the message changes us."

Website: Find us at www.wickstferguschurch.org.uk

Please can all items for February's newsletter be with Michelle by Wednesday 15th February – Thank you

CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS			
Title	Name	Phone	Email
Minister	John Nugent	07511 503946	nugent0@me.com
Session Clerk	Anne Duffy		
Clerk to Congregational Board	Elizabeth Henderson	01955 604156	tannach.henderson@gmail.com
Treasurer	Martin Duffy	01955 605732	
Magazine Editor	Michelle Foubister	01955 602416	chellefoubister@sky.com
Website	Jean McLennan		jean.mclennan02@btinternet.com

Congregational No.41229.

Scottish Charity No.SC013840