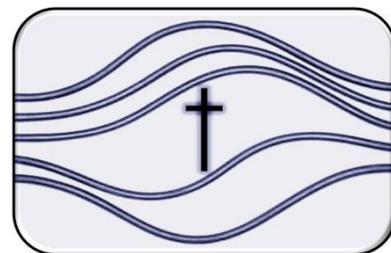




Wick St Fergus Church of Scotland



January 2017

Welcome to a New Year. 2017. What an eventful year the past year has been. But as we face the end of an old year and the beginning of a new, I am conscious that there seems to be much fear and angst in our world. The rise of the far-right both in Europe and the USA coupled with ongoing economic uncertainty as well as concerns about our health service and the future facing our young people, are all part of an accumulation of matters affecting our community.

Now some might say that such matters are not the business of the Church. I find that I have to say exactly the opposite to that. I am reminded of something that one of my street friends said to me many years ago. Some folks from a fundamentalist-run soup kitchen used to put folks through a full Gospel service before feeding the street folk with some weak tea and sandwiches with the ends turned up. One of these well-meaning folks asked my friend, "Why don't the homeless come to Christ? Do they not like the Gospel?" To this my friend replied, "Deafness of the ears has one major cause." The leader of the soup kitchen asked him what that was and again my friend replied, "Deafness of the ears is caused by emptiness of the stomach."

This brings us to what will probably become my verse of the year. It is Hebrews 13:2 which says, "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." The word in the original Greek and which is translated as "hospitality to strangers" is made up of two other words and literally means "love of the foreigner." Some politicians make a career out of stoking up fear of the foreigner. They stigmatise minorities and marginalised groups and needy people in order to avoid doing anything about the problems faced by others. They slam doors in the faces of the needy and tar everyone with the same brush.

Here at Wick St Fergus we take the ministry of welcome seriously. Our "theme hymn" says that all are welcome. At our communion services part of our invitation says, "Come, all of you who have tried to follow Jesus and those of you have failed." We say this because we recognise our own powerlessness at times. Who are we to judge the need of another? We acknowledge that we all face need whether that need is for food, shelter, a hug or for someone simply to show us a random act of loving kindness to let us know that we are worthy of respect and that we carry an inherent dignity, even if that is hidden from sight sometimes.

It breaks my heart to know that there are young people who face danger, bullying and abuse just because they are gay or because they come from difficult circumstances. They shouldn't have to face the coming year with fear and angst. It pains me to acknowledge that there are women who will face the coming year with fear because of abuse at home. As far as it depends on us, all who come to us will never be turned away and we will seek with those who come to us to build hope. We stand opposed to all division whether those who build division do so on some kind of arbitrary basis and, make no mistake, we stand opposed to those who abuse the Bible and seek to use it to enforce their prejudice.

We believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting our sins against us, forgiving us before we even ask for forgiveness, revealing God as love in his innermost, defining characteristics. And that will never, ever change one another, we need you with us and you need to be with us. We need one another. Come and stand with us so that together we can seek to actualise God's rule in this world. Come and visit with us. You know where we are.

Revd John Nugent BD(Honours)

Flowers for Sunday

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
8 th Jan	Mrs Roberston, 11 MacLeod Road	Mrs Harper
15 th Jan	Mrs M Robertson, Miller Ave	Mrs Johnson
22 nd Jan	Exmouth Memorial	Mrs Harper
29 th Jan	Mrs N Durrand, McLeod Road	Mrs Harper
5 th Feb	Mrs Julie Steven	Donor

Church Duty Rota

Date	BUS	STAIRS	DOOR	DOOR	USHER
1 st Jan	J Cormack	R Mappin	I Banks	H Gray	M Duffy
8 th Jan	E Henderson	J Houston	J MacLennan	J Coghill	A Duffy
15 th Jan	M Thomson	M Foubister	B Campbell	J Mackay	G Macdonald
22 nd Jan	A Sinclair	G Watt	A Rosie	W Robertson	G Ramsay
29 th Jan	R Mappin	I Banks	M Duffy	J Cormack	H Gray
5 th Feb	J Houston	J MacLennan	A Duffy	E Henderson	J Coghill

Sermon information from the Minister

DATE	READING 1	READING 2	SUBJECT	DAY OF CHURCH CALENDAR
1 st Jan '17	Psalm 8	Acts 3:1-10	The Blessing Of The Sanctuary	Ney Year's Day
8 th Jan	Isaiah 42:1-9	Matthew 3:13-17	The Baptism of Christ	Baptism of Christ
15 th Jan	Psalm 40:1-12	Galatians 1:11-24	Extent of the Reign of God	2 nd Sunday of Epiphany
22 nd Jan	Malachi 3:1-5	Luke 2:22-40	Presentation of Christ in the Temple	Presentation of Christ
29 th Jan	Psalm 122	Hebrews 2:14-18	He became like us	4 th Sunday in Epiphany

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

Please can all items for February's newsletter be with Michelle by Wednesday 22nd January – Thank you

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