



Wick St Fergus Church of Scotland



January 2018

Welcome to January. A guid New Year till ane and a' and mony may ye see. As you can see from this introduction I am still in good old Scottish Hogmanay, Jimmy Shand mode. And at this point I must confess that I am writing this in November because of printing schedules. Michelle Foubister, my esteemed editor, is a hard, but efficient, taskmaster. Normally John Houston is the object of my mischief on Sunday mornings and I think that Michelle gets off far too lightly, don't you?

But what is the point of all this hilarity? Because of this time of year (and the late, lamented Rikki Fulton has a lot to answer for in this) people often tell me that I am supposed to be miserable like any good Presbyterian minister should be. But let me tell you that we Presbyterians are great party animals. We are not like Jock O'Hazeldean, as Sir Walter Scott would have described him going about "letting the tear doon fa.'" In fact in years gone past in Scotland Christmas was just another work day for many and it was New Year that was the big festival with merriment and the occasional medicinal dram to keep out the cold and cure the lurgi.

In fact, in Cairndow in Argyll, they used to keep two New Years (more on that in another occasion). It all goes back the time of the ancient Celts and Picts. For them their New Year took place at what is now called Halloween. It was a time of paying tribute to their ancestors and of looking towards what was to come. It was a time of letting go of regrets and of taking up the potential of what awaited. One of the ancient Celtic Saints once wrote, after this idea was taken up by the church in Scotland for the new, New Year, "We thank Jesus mac Mary for the past because it has made us what we are this day. We thank Jesus mac Mary for the future, for what we will become." That is an exciting prospect, but it can also be intimidating. If the past year has been difficult then looking forward can be a cause of anxiety. After all, you have learned not to expect anything else.

But, at Wick St Fergus Kirk we believe that everyone is important, that everyone has inherent worth, that all deserve respect because, in the end, all are children of God or in the old Scottish saying, we are all Jock Tamson's bairns. As St Paul once put it, "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." If you struggle with your vision for the year to come, then come and see us. Part of what the Church of Christ does, or at least should do, is help you to carry that burden until you are ready and able to let go. And that gives me hope because it tells me that I am not alone. God gives us as gifts to one another in order that our pilgrimage through this life, through the year to come even, might be made less burdensome.

We all have our crosses to bear in this life, as my old Gran used to say. But sometimes we are called to be like poor Simon Cyrene in the Gospels who was made by the soldiers to help Christ bear his cross to Golgotha. Part of the job of the Church is to help the Christ in you bear your cross. I like the late Mother Theresa's take on this. When asked why she helped the poor lepers in Calcutta Mother Theresa used to say, "When I wipe the dirt from the face of a beggar, it is Christ's face I am wiping. When I offer someone a cup of water, it is Christ I am giving the water to." So please, don't give up on hope before the New Year has properly begun.

Let us help the Christ in you bear your burden this year. Or if things are going well with you then join with us in making a difference in our great community of Caithness. Get involved in making a difference. Continue to agitate for our NHS staff and patients.

Continue to speak up for the voiceless. Join with us for together it is Christ we are service. A happy and blessed New Year to you all and come and see us sometime. You know where we are.

Revd John Nugent BD(Honours)

Flowers for Sunday



DATE	KINDLY DONATED BY	ARRANGER
7 th Jan	Mrs Roberston, 11 MacLeod Road	Mrs Harper
14 th Jan	Mrs M Robertson, Miller Ave	Mrs Johnson
21 st Jan	Exmouth Memorial	Mrs Harper
28 th Jan	Mrs N Durrand, McLeod Road	Mrs Harper
4 th Feb	Mrs Julie Steven	Donor

If you would like to fill an empty date on the rota please contact Mrs Harper on 602612 THE LARGE HALL IS NOW IN USE EVERY SATURDAY UNTIL 11.30 AND FLOWERS CANNOT BE ARRANGED AT THIS TIME.

Church Duty Rota



Date	BUS	STAIRS	DOOR	DOOR	USHER
7 th Jan	A Duffy	J Coghill	J McLennan	E Henderson	J Houston
14 th Jan	J Mackay	G MacDonald	B Campbell	M Thomson	M Foubister
21 st Jan	G Ramsay	****	W Robertson	A Sinclair	G Watt
28 th Jan	I Banks	H Gray	M Duffy	R Mappin	J Cormack

