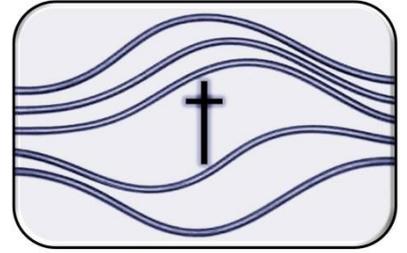




Wick St Fergus Church of Scotland



October 2016

Welcome to October. By the time you get to read this I will be on holiday in, wait for it, Stromness in Orkney. Now some folks might think that October is a strange time of year to be going on holiday and that Stromness at that time of year is a particularly strange choice to make. In response to that I have to say that Stromness has a particularly artistic community with exponents of the various art forms from painting to sculpture to music and also literature. One of the reasons I love the place is because I have many friends in the town from when I used to live there and we have always kept up contact.

The parish church in the town recently bucked a trend after it went into vacancy for the second time within a year and a half. It had several great locums and on the 22nd of September called a new minister. I say, "Bucked a trend" because there is a false opinion abroad which suggests that rural churches are unable to call ministers. Part of this relates to how a Kirk views itself and I would like to suggest that Kirks who struggle to call someone are Kirks that pay lip service to being part of the community but which have lost that community vision. This applies not only to churches that are functionally separate from the community in which they are situated. It also applies to those Churches which do not see themselves as a model of community. When I used to work for the Iona Community we used to talk a lot about building community around a shared task or vision. This sort of ministry is needed more than ever today. If a Kirk is built on cliques it sees clear lines of authority between the various groups within itself. Some groups will see themselves as being better than others and therefore they deserve to be running things with others doing as they are told. If this is the case, then this attitude will carry over into how a Kirk relates to that community within which it is situated. Said community will then find it difficult to relate in a positive way to the Kirk. If you want to read more about this just have a wee keek at St Paul's 1st letter to the Corinthians.

One of my favourite writers, George Mackay Brown who incidentally came from Stromness, in his poem called "Roads" has a stanza which reads, "The road to the Kirk is a road of silences." Another Orkney writer, Edwin Muir, says this in one of his poems, "The word made flesh here is made word again, a word made word in flourish and arrogant crook. See there King Calvin with his iron pen and God three angry letters in a book and there the logical hook on which the mystery is impaled and bent into an ideological instrument." The fact is that God calls us to live in community, those of us inside the Kirk and those of us outside. In the creation stories in Genesis our first parents are instructed to live in community and this continues throughout the Old Testament. In the New Testament a new community of faith is created on that first Pentecost Sunday and what we have today is a continuation of the events of that first Pentecost Sunday. We stand in direct continuity to those happenings. Between now and then we see generations of people who took the message of Christ seriously enough to try and build a community of faith that would pass on the Gospel to those who were to come. At the end of this month is All Souls' Day and Halloween when we remember those who have gone before. It's not about the fun of things that go bump in the night fun though that is and can be. I, in particular, will be thinking of my own Mum now two years dead. She made sure that my brother and I and my sister went to Sunday School. She once described the Church as a community of love. I like the sound of that because that is how the New Testament sees the Church. We are a community of love that extends that love to those in the wider community. If we can do that then no vacancy need be all that long. God isn't going to send hurting people to a toxic community in order for them to be hurt even further. That is one reason why our "theme hymn" at St Fergus is "All are welcome in this place." We are a welcoming and inclusive community for all whether broken or whole, rich or poor, gay or straight, foreign or domestic. If you would like to find out more, come and see us. You know where we are. **Revd John Nugent BD (hons)**

Special News

On the 20th September Dr Morag Macdonald was set apart as a Reader in the Church of Scotland at the Church in Strathy at a special meeting of Caithness Presbytery. It was a very special service. It was led by Revd Heather Stewart and the sermon was preached by myself. Morag, some of you will remember, did one of her probationary times with us here at Wick St Fergus and like me, I am sure that you were struck by her quiet but profound spirituality. She is an excellent preacher and I am sure that she will be a blessing in whichever Kirk she ministers. We are blessed to have preachers with her calibre here in Caithness at a time when preachers are in such short supply. Morag is a great student of the word with a great pastoral heart. Please continue to pray for her.

Church Register

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

Lizzie Scollay (nee Sandison) 25th August 2016

Ishbell Gordon (nee Steven) 25th August 2016

Elsie Nicolson (nee Farmer) 6th September 2016

WEDDINGS:

27th August 2016: Kimberley Smith and Mark Shepherd

Diary

Choir Wednesdays

Stewardship 6th October

Harvest 9th October

Session 13th October

Thrift 14th October

Flowers for Sunday

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
2 nd Oct	Guild	
9 th Oct	Harvest – Mrs J Cormack	Donor
16 th Oct	Vacant	
23 rd Oct	Family of the Late Mrs Barrett	Mrs Harper
30 th Oct	Mrs P Weir, Huddart St	Donor
6 th Nov	Vacant	

There are a couple of vacant dates for the Flower rota. If you are willing to take one, please contact Mrs Gates.

Church Duty Rota

Date	BUS	STAIRS	DOOR	DOOR	USHER
2 nd Oct	A Rosie	A Sinclair	G Ramsay	G Watt	W Robertson
9 th Oct	J Cormack	R Mappin	I Banks	H Gray	M Duffy
16 th Oct	E Henderson	J Houston	J MacIennan	J Coghill	A Duffy
23 rd Oct	M Thomson	M Foubister	J Mackay	B Campbell	G Macdonald
30 th Oct	A Sinclair	G Watt	W Robertson	A Rosie	G Ramsay

Sermon information from the Minister

DATE	READING 1	READING 2	SUBJECT	DAY OF CHURCH CALENDAR
2 nd Oct	<i>Guest Preacher: Rvd Ronnie Johnston</i>			
9 th Oct	<i>Guest Preacher: Rvd Morag MacDonald</i>			
16 th Oct	<i>Guest Preacher: Mr Ronnie Mackenzie</i>			
23 rd Oct	Joel 2:23-32	Luke 18:9-14	The "S" Factor	Last Sunday after Trinity
30 th Oct	Psalms 24:1-6	Revelation 21:1-6	The Whole People of God	All Saints Day
6 th Nov	Job 19:23-27	James 3:13-18	The Mark of Wisdom	3 rd Sunday before Advent



The Guild

Guild Report Monday 29th August 2016: The early start to our new session gave us the benefit of light nights and meeting with light still streaming through the windows. Mrs Janet Macdonald, our leader for the evening welcomed everyone and led the opening devotions after which she handed the evening over to Mrs Kathleen Robertson who had put together a "Songs of Praise" evening. Everyone enjoyed the Hymn singing interspersed with readings by Mrs Pat Weir, Mrs Kathlyn Harper, Mrs Janet Macdonald

and Mrs Eileen Henderson, duets from Mrs Dorothy Johnston and Mrs Maureen Robertson and a solo by Mrs Kathleen Robertson. The evening was an uplifting beginning to our new session and after our closing praise we all enjoyed a nice cup and biscuits>

Guild meeting 12th September: After the opening devotions led by Mrs Phyllis Gray, she introduced Mrs Valerie Barker, who told of her adventures when she and fifteen other ladies volunteered to take part in the **SOS - Stranded on Stroma** challenge and raised over £9,500 for the RNLI. Based on *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here* programme, with two lifeboat crew members acting as Ant and Dec, they formed two teams and took part in a variety of mental and physical challenges, starting with the erecting of their tents and lighting a fire without matches, which were among the banned items from the meagre clothing and equipment they were allowed to carry with them. The two crew members slept in the comparative comfort of the nurse's house! After one of the challenges of lying in a coffin, containing various alien items like pickled onions, they were allowed the luxury of washing their hair in brown water from a tap in the nurse's house, using Fairy Liquid. Their evacuation from Stroma at the end of the challenge turned into a real life rescue in a force 8 gale, involving the Wick, Thurso and Longhope lifeboats. After the frightening experience of being physically thrown into the lifeboat from the quay at Stroma, they suffered the indignity of being manhandled again at John O'Groats to face all the crowds and media at the Groats Harbour Day. Would Mrs Barker do it again? NEVER! They deserved every penny of their sponsorship and the Guild members have decided that they will stick to their more traditional ways of fund raising.

Guild Strawberry Teas: All roads led to the church Hall on Saturday 17th September for the Guild Strawberry Teas and the tables were quickly filled with folk eager to taste the delicate strawberry delicacies and watch the delightful display of images from the Chelsea Flower Show prepared by Mr Harry Gray. The stalls did well and the Guild members are delighted that all their hard work before, during and after the event raised £578.40 for their funds.

Future Guild meetings.

Monday 10th - Medics sans Frontiers (Mr Harry Gray)

Monday 24th October - Jenny Szyfelbain

Monday 9th November - Guild Night and Bring and Buy Sale.

Saturday 19th November - Guild Week Rally in St. Peter's and St. Andrew's Church, Thurso at 2.30pm. Guest speaker Mrs Pat Weir. For transport, please contact Janet McDonald (602543)

Harvest Open Day Saturday 8th October - "Caithness Past"

We are looking for all things Caithness. Photos, Paintings, Patchwork, Knitted Items, Tapestries Fishing or Agricultural items, Models of any kind, in fact anything to do with Caithness. For more details or to offer items Contact, Elizabeth Henderson or Harry Gray.

Autumn Thrift

10.30 am – 3.30pm Tues 18th & Wed 19th

10.30 – 12 noon on Thurs 20th, October

It is that time of year again, the Autumn Thrift is quickly approaching. Have a look in your cupboards for any clothes, accessories or small items of furniture you no longer require, and pop them down to us. If you are unable to deliver, please contact Mrs Harper for collection. The hall will be open for the hang up and to receive goods from 2pm on Friday 14th. There will be the usual stalls of home baking, jams and chutney, and all donations of these will be gratefully received. Thank you in advance for your generous donations.



Christmas Tree Festival



We are hosting a Christmas Tree Festival again this year and hope to make it even bigger and better than the previous ones. As before the idea is for Groups who could do with a helping hand to find volunteers and/or make people more aware of the service they provide, to decorate a Christmas tree and talk to our visitors about their organisation.

If you would like to be part of this event, or know someone who would, please contact Elizabeth Henderson, 604156 or tannach.henderson@gmail.com for more details.

Street stall – thanks!

Our street stall on 26th August was very successful in spite of the “cloud burst” which threatened to wash us out. We have to thank all those kind folk who supplied the wonderful array of baking and jams, (some which was still warm when it reached us), and for all other donations received.

We are grateful to McAllans who allowed us to have the stall there and helped us after the downpour, and to our members who set up and manned the stall. A grand total of £422 was raised. Well done all involved, and thank you all for the continued support.

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

Please can all items for November's newsletter be with Michelle by Wednesday 12th October – Thank you

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