



Broxburn Parish Church

The Bridge Newsletter Edition 6

FROM THE INTERIM MODERATOR

Rev. Derek Henderson



Dear friends,

On the evening of Wednesday 14th October, the Kirk Session met by Zoom with representatives of the Presbytery's Planning Committee in order to discuss the current vacancy at Broxburn. This conversation had been delayed partly by the number of vacancies there have been recently, but more significantly by the lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. After discussion, the Convenor of the Planning Committee advised that his Committee planned to report on the matter to the next meeting of Presbytery on Tuesday 3rd November - hopefully the outcome will be positive and we will share that outcome with you as soon as we can.

Nevertheless, this is only the start of the journey, some parts of which will be different from what they would otherwise have been because the rules governing the vacancy process have had to be adapted to meet the circumstances in which we find ourselves. For example, we can't hold congregational meetings in the way in which we would have done in the past.

Once Presbytery approval to call a minister is given, the Presbytery's Vacancy Advisory Committee would first meet with the Kirk Session to provide guidance and support on the way forward. At this point, the provisions of the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act 1 2015) have to be considered by the Kirk Session. In addition, the electoral register of the congregation has to be brought up to date and attested. Only then can a Nominating Committee be elected to take matters forward.

This is just a summary of the procedures which have to be complied with and may seem a bit daunting, but if we take it step by step and listen to the advice we are given, we should be able to move forward.

I will provide further advice and updates in these regular newsletters.

When I opened the meeting on that Wednesday evening, I quoted from the prophet Jeremiah.

I know that Jeremiah has a reputation for doom and gloom, but what he said that I thought was relevant to our situation was this:

“I am confident that God has a plan for us...”

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. I will be found by you,” says the Lord.

I am confident that God has a plan for us and that as we prayerfully seek a way forward he will listen and if we search for him diligently, he will be found by us.

May God bless you all at this time,

Derek

Church now open for funerals

At the September meeting of the Board and Session, the decision was reached that we would request approval from Presbytery to re-open the Church for funerals. All the appropriate paperwork and policies were in place and a deep clean of the Church and halls was undertaken. Approval from Presbytery was speedily granted. Funerals which take place in the Church will still be subject to current Government guidelines - including the limit on numbers of people attending, which is currently 20.

Thank you to everyone who assisted with enabling us to re-open for funerals.

Treasurer's Update



Our deficit in August was slightly less than the £1,200 I'd predicted at the time of our previous newsletter. With expenses totalling £4,592 and income totalling £3,455, we ended August with a £1,137 deficit.

In September, we benefitted from a flurry of donation envelopes and cheques, bringing in an additional £1,950 on top of the ongoing standing orders and bank deposits. This resulted in our income of £5,021 outstripping our expenses of £4,661 by £360.

Thanks once again to everyone who has contributed to our Church coffers in whatever way.

I have now provided all the gift aid information to Jean Weir to allow her to submit our next tax-rebate claim; this should help boost our income either this month or next. Meantime, October



has started well with a very generous donation of £1,000 being made! I continue to be humbled by everyone's ongoing generosity.

Stay safe everyone until we can meet again to share fellowship!

Sue Sneddon



Our Christmas Post service has been very much valued by all of us as well as the wider community. It has proved to be a great opportunity to serve our community and a way to work off these extra December calories! It was also a great fundraiser for our chosen charities.

However having taken into consideration the practical difficulties in these times of COVID of finding a way to safely sell stamps, involve local shops, sort and then deliver the cards, the consensus is that regrettably we will not be able to provide this service this year for Broxburn.

Broxburn Parish Church
Sunday Club
HUB

Hello everyone, we hope you had a good time over the October holidays and you are happy to be back at school. We are really missing you at Sunday Club, we hope you are missing us too!

A man once asked Jesus: "What should I do so I can go to Heaven?" Jesus replied, "What is written in the Bible? What do you think?" The man answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and love your neighbour as yourself." "That is right!" Jesus said. But the man wanted to know more so asked: "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus decided to answer this question with a parable.

What is a parable?

It's a story told to help us understand something a bit better. Jesus used many parables in the Bible – let's look at one he told the man about The Good Samaritan. "There once was a Jewish man walking along a road. He was going from Jerusalem to Jericho, which was a journey of about two days. The man was enjoying his walk when suddenly a group of men jumped out from behind a hill, took his belongings and beat him up very badly leaving him lying on the side of the road. A few minutes later, a Priest was walking down the same path and saw the man. Do you know what he did? He crossed the road and walked on the other side.

Later, another man, a Levite, was walking down the road. Levites were people who helped Priests with their work. Do you know what he did? He slowed down, walked a little closer to the man but then walked past without helping him at all.

Just a few minutes later, another man came along who was a Samaritan. Jews didn't always treat Samaritans very well so they never really got along (remember, the man lying on the road was a Jew). What do you think the Samaritan did? As soon as he saw the man he took pity on him, he put oil (which was quite expensive) onto the wounds and then put on some bandages. The Samaritan also paid for the man to stay at a hotel until he was well enough to leave. "Which of the three men do you think was a neighbour to the man who was hurt on the road?" asked Jesus. The man replied, "The one who helped him." "Go and do the same" said Jesus.

In this parable Jesus teaches us we must be kind to everyone, not just our friends. Let's all do what Jesus asked and be like the Good Samaritan!

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal



This year's shoebox appeal may have been more challenging than in previous years, but once again, the congregation of Broxburn Parish Church has risen to the challenge. We've had a very positive reaction to taking part in this very worthwhile project, with lots of people committing to fill a shoebox or drawstring

bag, and others making donations to help the charity's work. Thanks to everyone taking part.

Special thanks to Helen, Iris and Jean who volunteered to make drawstring bags to use for those who didn't have shoeboxes, and to everyone else phoning around to gauge interest and distributing leaflets and bags for use.



All filled shoeboxes/bags need to be handed in at our large hall between **10am and 12 noon on Monday 26th, Tuesday 27th, Thursday 29th and Friday 30th October**, to be ready for collection by Blythswood Trust.

Covid and social distancing may have prevented us from meeting up - but we've still found a way to work together as a team.

THANK YOU!



Zoom along to our midweek service!

Are you missing worship? Well, why not join our Zoom service at midday on a Wednesday. Using Zoom means that you don't have to have the internet to join - you can also dial in on your landline telephone. In addition to the short service there is an opportunity for a catch up chat afterwards.

If you've not used Zoom before, don't worry, as step by step instructions will be sent to you as well as the joining code and password. If you would like to watch or listen, contact me on: **07833 701274**, and I'll be very happy to send you the instructions and codes.

Anne Gunn, Session Clerk

Answers to Books of the Bible grid

N	U	M	B	E	R	S	E	L	C
L	O	N	I	A	N	S	B	R	I
A	N	A	I	P	P	I	L	E	N
S	S	G	A	L	A	T	I	V	O
S	U	E	S	E	H	I	H	O	R
E	D	N	I	E	P	O	P	R	H
H	O	E	A	N	S	N	S	P	C
T	X	S	I	S	M	L	A	E	O
I	E	S	T	H	E	R	E	T	R
T	U	S	N	A	I	H	T	N	I

**Well done
if you got
them all!**

Starting at the top left and working clockwise, insert the answers to the following clues:

4th book in the Old Testament; 13/14th books in the Old Testament; 7/8th books in the New Testament; 17th book in the New Testament; 13/14th books in the New Testament; 20th book in the Old Testament; 21/22nd books in the New Testament; 17th book in the Old Testament; 2nd book in the Old Testament; 11th book in the New Testament; 19th book in the Old Testament; 1st book in the Old Testament; 9th book in the New Testament; 10th book in the New Testament.

Among the many challenges our society faces at this time is that of finding the appropriate words to describe and express that which needs to be described and expressed. As we have discovered, that is a far more difficult challenge than might have been anticipated.

At this time, the 23rd Psalm is 'a mirror for us': 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' The imagery speaks to us and for us. It evokes a memory embedded in our spiritual consciousness that resonates with every part of who we are. Whatever paths we take, even to the 'darkest valley', the Lord leads us so that we 'fear no evil'. In our journey, personally and collectively, the Psalm speaks **to** us and **for** us.

**Good shepherd,
Speak to us and for us.
Speak to us in the midst of us these times
And, in the words of the Psalmist, speak for us.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**Good shepherd,
Speak to us at the break of day
And in the evening.
Speak to us the words that resonate in the depths of our hearts
Even as human words fall silent.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**Good shepherd,
Journey with us,
Even to dark valleys.
Go before us
And lead us safe home.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**Good shepherd,
We confess that we fear the times
And that our souls are troubled.
Lead us to still waters
And restore our souls.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**Good shepherd,
Surely you are with us
And your presence there to comfort.
Comfort us when we are anxious
And strengthen us when we are weak.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**Good shepherd,
In these present times,
May your goodness and mercy be with us.
In times to come,
May we recall that goodness and mercy has surely followed us.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.**

Happy 100th birthday Doris!

On 21st September 2020, Doris Elcox celebrated her 100th birthday. Sadly because of COVID restrictions this could not be the celebration she deserved. However, we couldn't let the day go unmarked. Our Interim Moderator Derek Henderson presented Doris with a bouquet of flowers and a card from the Church. There was a small (socially distanced!) gathering of well-wishers from the Church bringing along cards, some gold personalised balloons, and a batch of Doris's favourite treacle scones made by Wilma. Tam, our local lockdown piper, came along and played Happy Birthday and other favourites. Below is the life of Doris, in her own words:

"I was born on 21st September 1920 at Edinburgh Maternity hospital, weighing just 2½ pounds. I had to spend the first six weeks in an incubator and was named after the nursing sister. Finally, I was brought home to Distiller's Houses in Kirkliston.

I attended Kirkliston School until I passed my Qualifying exam, when I moved for the next three years to Broxburn High School where Mr. Clarkson was the Headmaster.

Grandma Rarity had the only paper shop in Kirkliston at the time and was a great member of the Church. I remember our pew was special as it was enclosed with a door.

I was in the Guides which were led by the Minister's wife Mrs. Anderson. The Minister was blind and had a special dog and when Mr. Anderson came to visit, Mum had been at the fish van and had left the plate with fish on it. Not for long though as the dog jumped up and ate it!

I also taught a class of children at Sunday School and the Minister came and drove me every Sunday to Newbridge where I played the organ in the Colonel Cadell Hall.

When I left school at 14, I worked in Small's shop in Princes Street. It was run then by old Mr. Small and his two sons. When war broke out, Mr. Small had a friend in the Army – a Senior Officer, who arranged for me to get into the ATS in Edinburgh if I volunteered – so I did! I ended up in R.A.F.E. in Edinburgh. They sent me to classes for shorthand and typing and I became the Commandant's assistant, looking after all ATS in our command. It was there I met my husband, who came from Manchester. In 1943, we were married in the ATS Church in George Street by the ATS Minister.

My first house was in Portobello Avenue, Craigentiny and we were there for five years. We then moved to Alexander Street in Uphall. My husband became the Office Manager at Russell's Haulage

Company and as an Executive worker, we were able to move to one of the special houses in Dechmont. We then moved to the new houses being built at Hillview and I have been here ever since.

I enjoyed going to the dancing, which started at the Rangers Club and ended up at East Calder. The dancing kept me young!

When I joined the Church, I was made very welcome. I miss my Church as I seldom missed a Sunday and joined in most things including the Women's Guild.

I would like you all to know how surprised I was to see you on my birthday. Many, many thanks.
God Bless you all."

Doris



○ ○ ○ **POINTS to PONDER** ○ ○ ○

○ **Introduction:**

As I write this, the constraints on what we can and cannot do are changing and in some cases increasing. But even then, there are still little things we can do which have the potential to make a big difference to those around us. We turn once again to Matthew's gospel for inspiration.

○ **Text: The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

Jesus put another parable before them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." (**Matthew 13:31-32 ESV**)

○ **Points to Ponder:**

In this story, Jesus is talking about the black mustard plant which is found in the Middle East. Its seed is extremely small (around one millimetre in diameter), but it can grow to about ten to twelve feet in height.

In this parable, Jesus teaches that although the Kingdom of God started in a small way, with only Jesus and his disciples, it would grow and spread across the world to claim unlimited numbers of followers. Jesus wanted people to know that the mustard seed represented the humble beginnings of the church, starting very small but growing to reach millions throughout the world and that he was the planter. This type of mustard plant may not be familiar to us but we all know the quotation: 'Mighty oaks from little acorns grow' – where great things can come from small beginnings. It is comforting to know that God is at the helm of our faith and we are part of the world-wide church.

And in this time of pandemic, it is interesting to see how some people are turning to the church for support and help. Perhaps, even in this situation, there might be some small seeds of faith for the growth of the kingdom. Some of you may remember the song: "Faith as small as a mustard seed will move mountains by the power of God," which underlines the power of faith and prayer.

○ **Prayer (From the 4th Century by Basil of Caesarea):**

Steer the ship of my life, good Lord, to your quiet harbour, where I can be safe from the storms of sin and conflict. Show me the course I should take. Renew in me the gift of discernment, so that I can always see the right direction in which I should go. And give me the strength and the courage to choose the right course, even when the sea is rough and the waves are high, knowing that through enduring hardship and danger, in your name, we shall find comfort and peace. Amen.

○ **Action: What small action might we do today, even with the constraints which we face, that might potentially lead to large benefits for our church and community?**

Church Notices

The notices below have actually been printed in Church newsletters - thankfully, none of them in the Bridge Newsletter (yet!)

- **The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.**
- **The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.'**
The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'
- **Ladies, don't forget the jumble sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.**
- **Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.**
- **Miss Charlene Mason sang: 'I will not pass this way again', giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.**
- **For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.**
- **Next Thursday there will be auditions for the choir. They need all the help they can get.**
- **Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24th in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.**
- **At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.**
- **Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.**

More notices in our next edition!



Task Group members:

Rev. Derek Henderson
Anne Gunn
Andy Carter
David McWilliams
Sue Sneddon
Hugh Brown

Although we are still not able to meet together for worship, we are all members of our church family. So if we can help you in any way, or you have a Prayer Request, or perhaps you just need a listening ear, please telephone: **07934 073349**. Calls will of course be treated confidentially.

General Assembly 2020

This year's General Assembly was held online on 3rd and 4th October. The Moderator, Rt. Rev. Martin Fair had to cope with all the technical obstacles of 800 commissioners taking part on Zoom! He did a brilliant job and his worship sessions were wonderful. You can watch proceedings on the Church of Scotland website: churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/general-assembly-2020

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