



Fowlis Wester



The Church of Scotland



Madderty

Parish Magazine

November
2023



Monzie



Gask

Mid Strathearn Church of Scotland

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Sunday Services

At the moment we are holding one church service each week.
We rotate round our church buildings, a different church each week - service
time is 10.30 am

Information on where our church services will be held and when can be
found on our website

www.midstrathearnchurch.org

Locum's Letter

Peace on Earth Goodwill to all mankind.

The simple straightforward song of the Angels as they scared the life out those poor shepherds abiding on the Bethlehem hills. How many millions probably billions of people have repeated that prayer at the twenty one hundred Christmases since? I am not a gambling man but I would put a wager on in all of those Christmases you could count the number of times there has been a peaceful world at Christmas on your fingers.

In the early 1860's war raged throughout the United States as the civil war ground on. The poet Henry Longfellow had suffered a double tragedy his beloved wife Frances had died in excruciating agony and pain three days after her dress caught fire whilst readying her daughter for a Christmas party in 1861. In 1864 he received news that his son an officer in the US army had been killed just before Christmas. On Christmas Day he heard the bells of the Washington churches ring out for the birth of Christ.

As he heard them his heart broke again and he wrote of how there was no peace on Earth and hate mocks the song of peace on Earth goodwill to men.

Fast forward fifty years and many young men who had flocked to the recruiting stations to sign up to fight for King and Country in the war to end all wars were only too painfully aware that the promise that it would all be over by Christmas was false. They, instead of returning home victorious to be embraced in the arms of young women, were huddled down freezing cold and wet in trenches that stretched from the North Sea almost to the Alps.

Yet even there the message of peace and goodwill crept through. Somewhere on Christmas Eve the unmistakable strains of Heilige Nacht came over No Man's Land from the German trenches, the British replied with Still the Night (or Holy Night depending on where the troops were from) Despite dire warnings of disciplinary action from their officers the soldiers left their trenches and met their enemies as men. In some cases gifts were exchanged in some places football games were arranged as the Christmas Truce of 1914 took hold. In most places the truce lasted barely 24 hours and the war returned to "normal" by Boxing Day.

In one or two sectors it continued on until the New Year with a great deal of fraternising between the two sides. In one case a German came over on New Year's Day full of apologies for continued machine gun fire the day before

saying, ‘It wasn’t us it was those so and so Saxons up the line!’ Both sides warned the other of shelling schedules so they could take shelter. The high command did not take kindly to these shenanigans and in at least one case ordered a complete changeover of units “before the whole war becomes a farce”.

Perhaps the men thought, well, if we are still fighting this time next year we can at least take a rest at Christmas but sadly there is no record of the truce being repeated for any of the three subsequent wartime Christmases. They did though have hope that the message of peace on Earth might be heard.

As Longfellow listened to the Bells that Christmas morning in his grief and depression he began to hear another message from them that “God is not dead nor doth he sleep, the wrong shall fail and right prevail With peace on Earth and goodwill to men.” On the Eastern Ukrainian front there is hope. In Gaza and Israel there is hope.

It is the eternal hope of the Angels of Bethlehem, Longfellow’s family, the squaddies in the trenches of World War 1, and countless generations. The hope of Peace on Earth goodwill to all mankind.

Merry Christmas and Happy Peaceful New Year.

Bob

Bob Milne
Locum Minister

PS Three days after Christmas 1864 Longfellow got the news that his son had been badly wounded but was alive! Happily he made a full if slow recovery.

SERVICES

Sunday 3rd Dec. - Monzie Church 10.30 am - Christingle Service

Sunday 17th Dec. - Fowlis Wester Church 10.30 am - Normal Service

Gask Church 4.00 pm - Carol Concert followed by Gask
Community Assoc. Christmas
Party

Sunday 24th Dec. - Madderty Church 10.30 am - Normal Service

Fowlis Wester Church 11.15pm - Informal Carol Singing
11.30pm - Watchnight Service

Monday 25th Dec. - Gask Church 11.00 am - Christmas Day Service

Sunday 31st Dec. - Madderty Church, 10.30am - Songs of Praise

COMMUNION IN MID STRATHEARN

Sunday 7th January 2024 Monzie Church, 10.30am

For information on when we are holding any Communion Services please refer to our website - www.midstrathearnchurch.org

Come if you'd like to, come if you're able to and come as you are to share the Lord's Supper with other Christians in Strathearn when you can.

Whatever your denomination, or none, all are welcome.

Mid Strathearn Website

www.midstrathearnchurch.org

We are always looking to keep the website up to date so if you have any updates or news please send it to Colin Crawford by email - webmaster@midstrathearnchurch.org

Perth Presbytery

Dear Friends

Many of you may be wondering what is happening with our churches in Mid Strathearn. You may have heard rumours of closures and change, and so I welcome this opportunity to explain what has been happening, and bring you up to date with developments.

Over the past two years, the Church of Scotland nationally has been reviewing its deployment of ministers and the number of church buildings in use. This review has been precipitated by the declining numbers attending church, and the reduction of people offering themselves for full-time ministry. Basically we have too many buildings and not enough people. And we are reminded that the primary function of the church is Mission, Mission, Mission, to share the good news of Jesus Christ far and wide.

Here in Perth Presbytery, every church and parish has been subject to review, with proposals for linkages, unions and the closures of buildings. The aim is to have ‘well-equipped spaces in the right spaces’ for the community and the church. Here in Mid Strathearn we currently have four church buildings – Fowlis Wester, Gask, Madderty and Monzie; we hold a church service in each building once a month, and on the months where there is a fifth Sunday we have been holding Café Church, often in one of the community halls.

Under the Perth Presbytery Mission Plan:

- Monzie Church is scheduled to close at the end of 2023
- Gask Church is scheduled to close at the end of 2025
- Our other buildings, at Fowlis Wester, Madderty and Gask Church Hall, are all subject to review; this review will take place mid-2024.
- In the course of time, Mid Strathearn Church will be linked with Crieff Parish Church, and will share a minister. In the meantime, we continue with our locum, Rev Bob Milne, and our lay worship leaders David Cameron, Tim Carmichael and Judith James (to all of whom we are much indebted.)

These decisions are final and cannot be appealed against.

Although Monzie Church is scheduled to close at the end of December this year, various processes have to be observed before the building can be put up for sale; so we intend to continue to hold a monthly service there until such

time as the building is sold. It will be a similar situation with Gask Church in 2025.

Looking to the Presbytery review of our other three buildings, our Kirk Session has already conducted a survey, of members and people living in the community, to explore how we can best reach out to our community, what needs there may be that we could help to meet, and what role our church buildings may have in pursuing and fulfilling that mission. We would still welcome hearing from members and non-members alike of any creative ideas which you might have.

While recognizing the strong emotional attachment which many people obviously have to all of our church buildings, we do well to remember that church is people, not buildings. Our mission is to share the good news of Jesus Christ with our community and neighbours – and already we have been trying to come out of our buildings through events such as Café Church and Messy Church. I also appreciate that the last few years, with a vacancy, Covid and then the Presbytery Mission Plan proposals may have led to sense of uncertainty and concern; but we do not yet know what amazing things God may be planning for Mid Strathearn. Let's look Forward in Faith.

With best wishes,

Marjorie Clark
Interim Moderator



Funerals

Mrs Yvette Harley	–	2023
Mrs Margaret Douglas	–	September 2023
Mrs Jean O’Neill	–	October 2023



Baptisms

Molly Annabelle Kate Greene – 27th August 2023

From the Social Committee...

In September a bunch of smiling people set off with a spring in their step and walked the 3½ miles from the Knock over to Monzie. The sun shone and the views were to be appreciated. Once at Monzie, a delicious picnic lunch was enjoyed in the Hall with a few extra folk joining them there. A lovely morning!



Prayer WhatsApp

As part of our outreach to anyone and everyone I have been asked to advertise again the weekly Prayer WhatsApp.

The prayer WhatsApp allows those who are on the WhatsApp to post prayers at anytime when they want to about issues which they would like to pray about with others and with God. It is a way of keeping in touch with each other and what normally happens is a prayer is posted weekly and goes out to all those in the group and contains whatever the person posting the prayer wants to pray about. Others can add to that or indeed at anytime post their own prayer, but there is never any compulsion to feel that you have got to take part in and make up prayers but at least you might find issues there that you want to pray about on your own in your own time. It is just a way of making the power of prayer go more widely. All you need is a phone with an internet connection and please contact me if you want any more information. Thank you, David Cameron 07775850316 .

Social Events - Dates for your Diary



Madderty Hall's Christmas Fayre.

Sat 2nd December 10am - 2pm

The church will again be having a Cake & Candy stall at the Fayre. Please do come along for a lovely festive morning's shopping and enjoy teas, coffees, mince pies and hot chocolate. And if you can bake for the sale, that would be most appreciated!

For info, call Anne 07813 386440 Or Sheena 07952 015527



Community News

Madderty

Rag Bag Collection Point

We are hoping to have a Rag Bag facility placed in the car park at Madderty Church. This will give us the opportunity to raise funds for the church and recycle textiles at the same time.

Madderty School used to provide this facility but no longer do so. The facility should be available from the end of November – beginning of December. Please check our website (www.midstrathearnchurch.org) for information on when the container is in place. We would be grateful for your support so please do use the facility if you can. Thanks in anticipation of your support. Noted below are guidelines on what can and cannot be recycled.

Items that **can** be bagged and placed in the bin are:

- * Wearable clothing
- * Paired shoes (tied together)
- * Handbags
- * Belts

Items that we **cannot** accept for recycling are:

- * Workwear/Uniforms
- * Wet/soiled clothes
- * Curtains/Towels/Duvet Covers/Pillows & Pillowcases
- * Blankets
- * Tableclothes
- * Linens/Cushions/Carpets.

Madderty War Memorial Refurbishment

Thanks to the Hay McLagan Trust Madderty War Memorial was repaired and entirely re-pointed with lime mortar by a specialist stonemason earlier this year. The workmen were amazing and even turned up at 6 in the morning to make sure everything was still intact after gales at the time. The wrought iron seat for visitors was also carefully repaired and painted. The young man from the War Memorial Trust visited three times to give advice and is delighted with the results of the work. I'm sure all who visit will appreciate how much improvement has been made.



This Farming Life.

Our herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle was founded in 2002. We bought 14 heifers and a bull from Geordie and Julia Soutar, who farm at Kingston near Forfar.

Geordie has collected all of the remaining Native (original) Aberdeen Angus cattle families and he was given an M.B.E. by the late Queen for his effort. The numbers had become so few ie only 150 natives left that they were actually classed as a rare breed. He collected animals from the 9 remaining cow families and now exports native genetics, all over the world to all beef producing countries.

Suckler beef-farming in Scotland, is under serious pressure and cow numbers have declined. Thus it has become more important for cows to be easily managed, cheap to feed, ie on grass and to produce high-quality meat.

In July 2018, Jo and I went back to Geordie and Julia's sale of some of their pedigree, Native Aberdeen Angus cattle. We bought a delightful little in-calf heifer, Dunlouis Kindness, who was born on 4th March 2015. She calved a single heifer calf easily, on 16th October 2018. Since and including the first calf, she has produced 9 calves ie 3 sets of twins. We did once have another cow who had triplets - all survived; but 3 sets of twins out of 6 calvings, is exceptional and Kindness still looks like a butterball!



Fowlis Wester

Margaret Douglas RIP

After a long and spirited struggle with cancer Margaret died in September 2023.

Her well attended funeral on 10 October 2023 was taken by Bob Milne at Fowlis Wester kirk where she and Bill had worshipped since moving to New Fowlis in 2005.

Born Margaret Baird, the youngest of four children, she joined her two sisters and their brother just before the last Christmas of World War Two at Moffat Mills, Airdrie. Margaret enjoyed a happy childhood excelling at school where her abilities were both recognised and encouraged at Airdrie Academy. She went on to study at Coatbridge Tech before starting work in the Fiscal's office, where she worked for some 30 years rising to become Office Manager. It was said openly that Fiscals and lawyers could come and go but if Margaret were to leave, they would be in dire straits.

Margaret and Bill met in 1964 and were married on 5 October 1966, happily sharing 57 years of loving devotion to one another.

Bill's work offered him a transfer to South Wales in 1991. Margaret fully supported him in the move and started work in a solicitor's office, quickly becoming as indispensable there as she had been at the Fiscal's office. They readily made a new life and new friends there and Margaret enjoyed the social life in Wales. Some of her friends from then made the long journey North to say their final farewells, showing how much they valued their friendship.

When Bill retired in 2002 persuading Margaret to do likewise was not initially an easy task, but she did eventually reduce her hours, and in 2005 retirement became a reality.

Margaret and Bill would have happily remained in Wales, but family commitments persuaded them to return to Scotland. They searched Scotland before choosing their home in Fowlis. Here again Margaret lost no time in becoming part of the community, joining the Rural and being their hard-working secretary for no less than seven years. Margaret showed her adaptability at being able to immerse herself in whichever community Life led her to be in. She was a conscientious and hard worker but also someone

who enjoyed her social life and fun times, but above all the love she shared with Bill brought joy and purpose to her life. They enjoyed their holidays, becoming regulars on various cruise ships and latterly renting villas with a pool so that Margaret, who never learned to swim, could enjoy the water. Their most notable holiday was perhaps their Golden Wedding trip to Mauritius for which, apart from the superb destination, the icing on the cake was the flights in First Class there and back.

From an early age Margaret had had a faith in God. She was generous putting her faith into action supporting many charities financially, until prudence dictated otherwise. Having moved to Fowlis Wester, Margaret became a regular attender and supporter of the church with Bill, until Covid lockdown and her failing health made it too difficult.

Margaret had a love of animals and a softness for some in particular, being adopted by a neighbour's cat who dined on the very best of chicken for much of its life. She also enjoyed gardening, the garden at Fowlis being testimony to her skill and hard work as well as the countless flowers produced and given away over the years. Margaret was a good knitter, too, producing baby garments by the score to give away.

Margaret will be missed primarily by Bill but also by so many others who were lucky enough to know her and be loved by her. RM

Gask

Report from Gask Community Association.

The Community Association has held several events this year, including a Coronation Tea Party and its Potato Weighing Competition (and tea), and has one more to come in terms of its Christmas Party on Sunday 17th December (which is the same day as Gask Carol Service and is designed to fit in with it). By the way, the winning entry for the potatoes was an (almost) incredible 3.52kg (Sue Jardine Patterson), though Jamie Smith came a very creditable second with 2.66kg. On the same day another huge haul of litter was also collected.

I should reiterate that the Community Association is keen to welcome any members of Mid Strathearn to its events, including those living outside what used to be the Parish boundary, and, indeed, at both events this year there was a good representation from the Parish. I believe there is a desire on both

sides to strengthen the relationship, and I see it as a very good way the Church can make contact with the wider community. So don't feel concerned about joining in after the carol service - you are welcome.

As to the trees that were planted last year and that are commemorated by the plaque, all save three whips have survived and they appear to be flourishing. Those three whips have been replaced and throughout the year all have been watered and weeded as required - though perhaps it is hard to remember that there was a time this year when it was dry for an extensive period of time! The four mature rowan trees are looking very well. A continuing sign of good co-operation and a very small step towards the current climate crisis.

Jamie Findlay

Monzie

Doors Open Day 16/9/23

This is a national event, organised at a local level by the Council who arrange publicity etc. Monzie Kirk took part in it for the second time. It was a great success with 22 visitors in the four hours we opened for, including Councillors Brock and Donaldson who both said how impressed they were with the Kirk. The visitors were all from the Perthshire area, only one was actually a member of the congregation but we weren't really expecting folk who regularly attend services in Mid Strathearn. There was the usual interest in the Burne-Jones windows and other features of the building. Aija Allan, one of the ladies who use the organ to practice between her lessons, had very kindly agreed to come along and play several pieces during the afternoon. Jean Florence and Pam Regan did sterling work on the teas and coffees.

Harvest Thanksgiving

This took place at Monzie this year. The Kirk was beautifully decorated thanks to the hard work of a small team of helpers from within the congregation. The large congregation attending gave generously in food donations to the Crieff Food Bank and in cash totaling £157.85 for Christians

against Poverty, whose local group who will use the money to go towards the cost of Christmas Hampers for those less fortunate. In fact such was the attendance at Kirk that I'm told we ran out of clean cups for the tea/coffee and all the biscuits were scoffed! There were also half a dozen bairns there, it was great to see such a buzz about the place and there were lots of comments about what a success the service had been.



