



Cumbernauld Old Parish Church



Newsletter – May 2024

Greetings!

One of the joys of each new year is seeing the snowdrops begin to push through the ground and then start to blossom. It is always a welcome sign that another winter is coming to an end and that spring is on its way. There then seems to be a gap – maybe simply because we have waited several months for this moment and our anticipation takes time to reawaken – before the next flowers appear but, sure enough, before too long crocuses and daffodils make their colourful presence felt, themselves to be succeeded by bluebells and wild garlic.

Anyone who has walked through Cumbernauld Glen during the first few months of the year will be well aware of the changing seasons, as the banks of white flowers suddenly appear as if from nowhere, then become banks of glorious yellow and then, as at the time this letter is being written, become banks of blue.

There is change, but it follows a pattern. There might be a predictability about it, but nevertheless it is still wonderful to behold and see it all happen before our eyes. We just need to take time to appreciate the marvellous rhythm, the sequence, of creation as it unfolds around us.

The Christian Church, too, has had its own calendar for many years and, whether or not we adhere to it rigidly, one can see the unfolding (perhaps 'revelation' might be a better expression) of God's plan for creation, and humanity in particular. It's a plan no less wonderful and marvellous than the changing seasons, and Jesus Christ is right at the heart of it. We need to take time, make time, to fully appreciate its pattern, its scope, its glory. >>>

It starts with a promise: that God will come and save God's people.

Advent helps us prepare for the arrival of the One in whom and through whom that promise will be fulfilled. The short season of Christmas is a joyous explosion when the Christ-child is announced to all, and that is followed by Epiphany, that 'a-ha' season as the light begins to dawn as to who Jesus is and why he came. However, it also brings the realisation that not everyone will welcome Jesus' message of uncompromising love. As Jesus prepares his followers for his inevitable death, the season of Lent is a time of preparation where we get to see where and how it will all end.

In a few short months of each year the rhythm, the pattern, of God's plan is revealed, with all its (for us) highs and lows. And yet the story hasn't ended. The agony of the cross, love laid bare for all to see, Christ's death, is that which gives us new life, new hope. On the third day after his crucifixion and burial, Christ was raised to life. Winter becomes spring, death becomes life and, although we repeat this pattern every year in our churches, it still never ceases to amaze, never fails to be a cause for immense gratitude.

This letter is being written on Ascension Day. A few days from now the Church will celebrate Pentecost, that day when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers gathered together in Jerusalem and changed the world for ever. We have seen God's promise delivered; the church is the people through whom God's promise continues to be delivered, day upon day, year in, year out.

God's love is for all, whatever the weather, whatever the season. As the hymn-writer Sarah Betts Rhodes put it:

God, who made all things,
On earth, in air, in sea,
Who changing seasons brings,
Careth for me.

Ivar Struthers (magazine editor)

Mission in Action

At our last meeting on 7th March the Mission in Action group focused on one aspect of our draft Mission Plan. This was the establishment of a wellbeing space within the church sanctuary in the Old Parish Church. How can we spotlight this church space as a beacon of hope and wellbeing not only for our current congregation, but also for the people who don't come to church but may need what a caring church community has to offer? What about the many people who are not OK but who would appreciate a local space where 'it's OK not to be OK'?

This is the premise behind the creation of a Renew Wellbeing Cafe and we, the Mission in Action group, are currently investigating the process for establishing one in Cumbernauld Village in our church space. Renew Wellbeing is a nationwide organisation that supports churches towards setting up and sustaining spaces where people can come to experience fellowship, share hobbies, drink tea, eat cake, learn new skills, feel safe, escape isolation, pray. In other words, be in a space where it's OK not to be OK.

We have approached the Renew Wellbeing organisation and, on the 25th May, the six members of the Mission in Action group attended a presentation in Glasgow given by Ruth Rice who established the first Renew Wellbeing Cafe. As a group we found this talk to be very motivational and Ruth, herself, was an inspirational speaker.

We now intend to participate in an online introductory workshop to become better informed as to how we might take forward this missional endeavour within our own church space. We will also visit a Renew Wellbeing Cafe that is run by an ecumenical group of churches within Glasgow Presbytery.

This is not a fanciful proposal but a real wish by your Mission in Action group to provide a space that could make a difference to people living in our community and that, we believe is, indeed, meaningful mission. We look forward to keeping you updated as we become better informed and hopefully realise a major aspect of our Mission Plan.

For further information regarding Renew Wellbeing spaces go to

<https://www.renewwellbeing.org.uk>

Sacrament of Holy Communion



The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated
in Cumbernauld Old Parish Church on

Sunday 2nd June at 11.00am.

All welcome!

Stated Annual Meeting

The Stated Annual Meeting of the congregation will take place after morning worship on **Sunday 23rd June 2024** (shortly after 12 noon) in the Parish Church.

This meeting is open to all members of the congregation will be your opportunity to hear from the Treasurer about the Annual Accounts for 2023 and to ask any questions that you may have about the Accounts or any other aspect of church life.

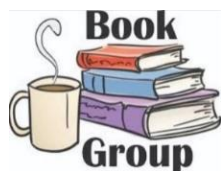
You are warmly invited to remain in church after morning worship for tea and coffee and for the Annual Stated Meeting on Sunday 23rd June.



The ladies of the Craft Group are recovering from our efforts for the Easter sale which will enable us to donate £200 to a local charity (yet to be decided}. Thanks go to Jim Dickson who took some of our goods to sell.

If you don't knit or crochet but would like to learn, our ladies are very happy to help beginners.

Whether a beginner, intermediate or experienced crafter you are welcome to come along to the Session House on a Thursday afternoon from 1 – 3pm. Tea and chat provided..



Do you like to read and enjoy talking to others about books? Then this could be just the group for you! We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 2pm in the church.

The group is supported by the local library and led by Moira, one of the librarians, who brings copies of the book of the month for everyone.

We have read quite a varied selection in this year including some books by Scottish authors; the most recent was *The Paper Cup* by Karen Campbell. We have also read *Freeze* by Kate Simants which was set on a ship in the Arctic where the characters were contestants on a reality show that certainly didn't go to plan, and *The Bones of You*, a psychological thriller by Debbie Howells. The group's last meeting was on 7th May when copies of *Home Stretch* by Graham Norton were given to the group. In June we'll get something to keep us reading over the summer while the group takes a break.



Church Register

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals
(conducted at Cumbernauld Old Parish Church,
or by the Ministry Team)

Baptisms: None
Weddings: None

Funerals:

	Date of Funeral
James Hendry	5/03/2024
Margaret Stevenson	11/04/2024

Union update

After morning worship on Sunday 28th April, a representative from Glasgow Presbytery officiated at the voting process on the proposed union between Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum / St Mungo's. The proposal was approved by 45 votes to 9. However, the vote taken at St Mungo's on the same day went the other way and the proposal was defeated. This means that the proposed union as laid out in the current Basis of Union document will not now go ahead as originally planned.

At the time of printing (12th May), the situation and the way forward is unclear. Rev James Gemmell will continue in discussions with Glasgow Presbytery to bring forward a new proposal for consideration and we will of course keep the congregation fully informed as things change. In the meantime, it's business as usual.

Food Bank Update

Thank you to everyone for their continued support, not least for the amazing response to our Easter Egg Appeal. It was particularly pleasing to see so many 'Real Easter Eggs' at this year's event. Of the millions of Easter eggs sold every year, only the Real Easter Egg is made from Fairtrade chocolate and has an Easter story book in the box. (See the picture on our Fairtrade report elsewhere in the newsletter.)

The food bank continues to open each Thursday morning in the Session House and numbers have crept up a little in recent weeks with 3 – 4 people being the current average. People are finding it hard to cope with the cost of living – especially energy costs.

The Village food bank reopened after Covid in late April 2023 and by the end of this April we will have given out over 130 food parcels and made lots of cups of tea and coffee. As mentioned before, those attending appear to value a warm, welcoming space at least as much as the practical help.

In addition to groceries, toiletries and household cleaning items are distributed approximately once a month. We remain grateful to Kay at Pets Pantry for providing pet food as required.

Look out for details of our Harvest Appeal in the autumn.
And finally, heartfelt thanks to all our supporters and cheerful volunteers. You really make a difference!



Social Events at Kildrum and St Mungo's

Sunday 26th May will be a Soup & Sandwich Sunday, so please stay on after morning worship for that. Please add your name to the list on the notice board at St Mungo's if you plan to attend. They would appreciate any donations of soup – again, please add your name to the list if you are able to bring soup on the day.

On **Sunday 16th June** there will be an Afternoon Tea Dance in the large hall. More details to follow.

And on **Friday 16th August** there will be a Social Evening at the Royal British Legion club in South Muirhead Road. Again, details to follow.

Men's Group

The Men's Group next meets on **Tuesday 21st May** when our speaker will be Jim Walker who will be presenting 'Photos of Old Cumbernauld.'

The event takes place in the Church Session House starting at 7.30pm and is open to Men... and Ladies. Please bring a friend!



Thank-you to everyone who has donated items for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Care. We've known it as the baby bank, although they give out clothing items for older children, school uniforms, hygiene products and toiletries too.

Unfortunately, they don't have storage for toys or books.

It's nice to think that our donations, no matter how small, can be a great help to local families.

You can place your donations at Church any Sunday – there's a box in the vestibule – and any help at all would be very welcome.



Positive Action in Housing

Cumbernauld Old Parish Church has received a letter of thanks following the donation of £46.75 we made to Positive Action in Housing in January.

In their letter they state that the donation was critical to the success of their Winter Crisis Appeal which supported over 400 families and individuals from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this donation, enabling Positive Action in Housing to provide humanitarian relief to some of the most marginalised members of society. You can read more about the vital work they do at www.paih.org

News from South Africa – Easter 2024

Dear Friends,

Easter has come and gone as did Christmas in a buzz of activity since our last letter. The year ended off busily. The Council on Higher Education asked Graham to do a number of evaluations for programmes hoping to be introduced this year. Then there was end of year external marking for UNISA, the College of the Transfiguration and the University of Venda and three doctoral theses for the University of Pretoria, in addition to normal marking at the Baptist College. However, we did manage to squeeze in a trip to the UK though we didn't get further than Brighton. Sandra's widowed sister, Louise, whom we hadn't seen for over twenty years, came to visit us with her grandson, Christopher, so that took up our time. It was great catching up.

Then back to South Africa in time for the Baptist college graduation – always a high-powered event with lots of ululating and calling out: 'That's my beautiful wife!'; 'That's my child!' Another year has begun and we have ended the first term. Then Graham is to teach an Honours module in the History of Christian Theology in April. We are hoping to restart the undergraduate programme at St Augustine's in the second semester.

The National Research Foundation work was delayed last year and only happened in February due to the installation of a new system which had a number of problems, The work was increased as Graham was asked to take on the Historical Studies panel in addition to the two Religious and Theological Studies panels, which meant more reading and writing!

In the midst of this, our son, David, came for a fortnight's visit which took us to Sun City with friends, Stanley and Tshego for a relaxing couple of days. >>>

Just before that, Graham was teaching our probationers on Post Academic Training and we ended up that evening with twelve guests for a braai and Bible Study.

Other than that, church work has kept him busy. The vacancy at Trinity: Lynnwood went well and the congregation called a probationer, Graham Fryer, whose grandparents we knew well. That was resolved in February and Graham was inducted at the beginning of March. Then, at the same Presbytery meeting, Graham was appointed Interim Moderator to our congregation at St Mark's, also here in Pretoria. It is a poorer, elderly, but enthusiastic congregation which is not able to call a full-time minister, so other alternatives will have to be sought.

Graham has also submitted his manuscript on the History of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa for consideration. Now he has just finished a book chapter he was asked by an international publisher to write on Church of Scotland mission in Africa from 1945 to the present. It was a sad and painful experience to learn that the Church of Scotland mission has come to a virtual end after centuries of committed outreach throughout the world by generations of faithful missionaries.

The Mamelodi project continues; we are delighted that we have been able to get 13 children into full time education this year. With your generosity and our sons in Brighton continuing to support the work, we are confident that we shall be able to also provide monthly groceries to the child-headed families in addition so far for most of the year.

At the invitation from Mamelodi congregation David and Sandra went to the Palm Sunday service where David handed out Easter eggs to the Sunday School children and was then asked to address the congregation. >>>

A young woman came to thank us personally – she has been accepted for university and told us that all her education to this point had been sponsored by your donations. We felt so proud of this achievement she is now the 3rd person to reach tertiary education through the project.

We have sent some photos from Mamelodi (and a couple of videos) and hopefully they'll be attached to the email that comes with this letter.

We hope you had a wonderful Easter?

Lots of Love!
Graham & Sandra



Mission Circle



The BIG Red Bucket still goes out in the Church vestibule on the first Sunday of the month for those who wish to "pop in a pound" to help Graham and Sandra in their work in South Africa.

Members of the congregation are always so generous and it regularly contains £60-£65.

That money buys groceries for families who are struggling, contributes to school fees, buys shoes and uniforms and basic toiletries. Sandra sent some photos of families we have helped (see previous page) and we have also received wee thank you notes from the children themselves.

LETTER OF CONFIRMATIONS

— My name is *Elizeth Mamba* I'm thankful for the church's gifts. — *Given Piamo*
thank you

— *Privedge myena* I'm — *shomanda*
thank for the gifts aweshane
thank you

— *Vusi Solhumele* I would like — *Simphwe Stofile*
to thank you for the gift you gave thank you
me, I really appreciate it.

— *Junior Mtweni* thank you — *Kamagelo Dize*
Thank you

— *Siyaanda Tshabalala* thank you for the gift.



Thanks to everyone for their kindness, Elizabeth

Fairtrade Group report



The Fairtrade group has continued to run a monthly mini-stall on the last Sunday of each month after the service with teas, coffees and Fairtrade home-baking served in Church.

As we intimated in our last magazine article, our Fairtrade stall has been reduced in range to the items we feel are most popular with the congregation. We will continue to offer ethically traded goods at the most reasonable price we can acquire them.

To celebrate Easter we offered to the congregations of Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum + St Mungo's the opportunity to purchase Real Easter eggs from the Meaningful Chocolate Company. These eggs are made from Fairtrade chocolate and include an illustrated storybook which tells children (and adults) about the Easter story, thereby sharing the true significance of Easter as a Christian celebration. We were gratified by the uptake of this offer and in total 78 Real Easter Eggs were purchased, many of which were donated to Cornerstone Church for distribution to young people who might not otherwise receive an Easter egg.



continued >>>

On 20th February, Caroline Edwardson and Anne Morrison visited the Ladies' Circle that meets at The Forge, Balloch, to make a presentation about Fairtrade. We are delighted to have been asked to give a similar talk to the Ladies' Circle at St Mungo's Church on 27th May and to share, once again, the importance of ethical trade in our modern world.



We look forward to your continued support as we promote ethical trade within the Cumbernauld Old church community. We are grateful for your encouragement and for all your purchases which make a huge difference to the lives of the producers who are responsible for growing the crops and foods we all enjoy but possibly take for granted.



Fundraising Update

In April we brought back by popular demand another Quiz Night chaired by popular quizmaster Calum Cormack and, as always, it was fun-filled evening. The fundraising team would like to thank everyone who came along to the Quiz Night and helped to raise £403 for church funds. We're hoping to hold another quiz led by Calum in the autumn.

We are planning something a little different later this summer: a singalonga film night so keep an eye on the Intimations and COPC Facebook page for further details in a month or so.



Please remember, if you do your shopping online, that Cumbernauld Old Parish Church is registered with Give As You Live. By using www.giveasyoulive.com you can then shop from many well-known online retailers and again Cumbernauld Old will get a percentage from each purchase made. Also we continue to collect your 20p coins in *Smarties* tubes which raises funds throughout the year.

Thank you to everyone who help us support the church through fundraising; your support is very much appreciated.



Every Sunday our worship service is live streamed so that anyone who cannot attend in person can still have access to worship. It is a service that is much appreciated by several people in the congregation.

We have a small group of members who take turns to activate it just before 11am but, as the holiday season approaches, we are hoping to get a few more people willing to help.

The equipment is all set up and easy to switch on. All you need is a smart-phone (iPhone or Android). If you are willing to help, please speak to any of the welcome team at church any Sunday.

Property Report – May 2024

There is little to report for the Church and Manse properties in this issue, other than to say the Manse ground floor lounge bay window ceiling is still not repaired – this is being followed up by the church Treasurer through the church insurance.



Rev Fiona Crawford

Thank you to everyone who contributed towards a Thank You gift for Fiona, whose time with us at Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum / St. Mungo's came to an end in February as she moved on to a new role within Glasgow Presbytery.

Following our joint service on Sunday 18th February, Fiona was presented with a bouquet of flowers, a cheque for £300 and a gift-card for her favourite restaurant. Fiona was also presented with a hand-crafted Memory Book with photos and other memories of Fiona's time with us as Team Minister. Fiona leaves with the gratitude and best wishes of everyone at Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum / St Mungo's.

We subsequently received a Thank You note from Fiona in which she said, 'This is just a short note to thank you for your incredibly generous gifts. I was quite overwhelmed and very humbled. I haven't yet settled on what to buy with the cheque but it will go to good use!

I also want to express my sincere thanks for how welcome you made me, your willingness to try new things, your wonderful singing as we tried new songs and hymns, but most of all your encouragement, support and friendship as we got to know one another.

I pray God's gracious and abundant blessing upon you as you move towards a new chapter of the church in Cumbernauld!

Coffee Jar Offerings

If you have been saving your loose change (or even if you haven't, there's still time!) please transfer the coins into a small bag and bring it to Church on **Sunday 9th June**.

The Kirk Session has decided that our 'coffee jar' collection this year will go to the British Red Cross, an organisation that responds to emergencies around the world and whose Emergency Fund exists to help them respond rapidly to people in urgent need.

Donations, however large or small, really do make a difference and any help you can give is greatly appreciated.



Cumbernauld's Blooming Wild

Our group of volunteers who work in the Village cemetery and at Village Veggies are taking part in Beautiful Scotland's competition this summer, which is themed 'Celebration and Cake'.

Together with other community groups in the town, we hope to compile a cook book featuring cakes with unusual ingredients. We already have recipes for Wild Garlic and Cheese Scones, Chocolate and Aubergine cake, and Rosemary and Lemon Drizzle to name a few.

If you have any that you are willing to share, please speak to Elizabeth at church any Sunday.

Last year (if you remember) we were awarded SILVER GILT for the Best Small City and this year we want to GO FOR GOLD, so please dust off those recipe books and copy out a favourite.



A Wee Contemplation Over Coffee or Tea

Sometimes I hear people say, "Help, I am out of my depth and in unfamiliar surroundings. However, I have brought you to this place so that I can mould you and shape you and prepare you for a new season of fruitfulness." *(Heaven Sent, Wisdom from the Father's Heart. Dave & Jenny Gilpin).*

**'Fear not, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name and you are mine.'** Isaiah 43. v1

If I could ever rewrite this verse, it would include *your* name at the very start. This is how God looks upon us, He loved us before creation, He loves us all personally; He knows everything about us, He cares. All he asks from us is to trust in Him alone and submit to His will.

This brings to mind a story in the Old Testament of Esther, a young Jewish girl, who, after losing her parents is adopted by her cousin Mordecai and lives in his house. At this time, the King of Persia, Ahasuerus, divorces his wife Vashti and eventually decides to look for a new queen. When he meets Esther, he is besotted and makes her his new Queen. The King's advisor, Haman, is evil, possibly jealous, and turns the King against the Jewish people, managing to get the King to sign a decree for the murder of all of the Jewish race.

Esther, full of faith and courage, asks Mordecai to fast and pray for three days as she has decided to visit and ask the King to save her people from death. Mordecai thinks this is very unwise and he is worried for her, but Esther thinks only of saving her people and places her own life at risk by asking him. Esther explains to the King that Haman is behind these arranged murders and the King, in love with Esther, grants her request. Haman is executed and all the Jewish people survive.

Esther ultimately shows us a picture of Jesus. In this story, we see how God saves His people through Esther's intercession. She was the only one willing to approach the king, risking her own life. She stands in place of the rest of the Jews, and pleads for their salvation. >>>

God has plans for you...
The people around you matter...
God is Sovereign...
God is always at work behind the scenes...
God has placed us where we are for a reason.

*Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me,
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me, mould me, make me,
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.*
Daniel Iverson

JG



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