

SHERBROOKE MOSSPARK CHURCH

JUNE 2021

On 16th May 2021, we gave a special thank you to someone who has given a significant level of service to the church over many years.

George Galloway has been involved with the Property committee for nearly forty years and convener for nearly 35 years - an amazing service record by anyone's standards.



George didn't want a fuss but we felt it was only right that we gave him a gift to mark the esteem with which he is held by all of us here at Sherbrooke Mosspark.

The 40-year track record doesn't fully reflect the years of dedication he has provided to Sherbrooke Mosspark - through several ministers, a church which had to be rebuilt after the fire, coping with the ever changing legislation - it was never an easy job but one George has dedicated a lot of his life to. Like all dedicated servants to the church, he always made light of his work - there isn't an inch of the church or the

manse he hasn't been involved with or rebuilt at some point. I understand he even built the choir bookshelves at one point!

In true George style, he has handed over a fully detailed file to Carole Mackie who has kindly agreed to take on the role of Property Convener.

Thanks must also go to Margaret who has had 'shared' George with us - always patiently answering the phone or indicating where George was - 'probably up at the church'!

We presented George with an Acer tree - given with many thanks and best wishes from us all at Sherbrooke Mosspark.



Clare

Session Clerk

Dear friends,

That's one month now I have been with you as Locum Minister. I am enjoying my time at Sherbrooke Mossspark Parish Church, although it would be better if I could visit you in your homes. Maybe it won't be too long before I can do that.

One of my interests is gardening. This is a new interest for me. When I was working full time I never had the time and now I realise what I have been missing.

Our garden is normally a peaceful place. Green finches flit to and from the feeders. Blackbirds and Robins and other smaller birds forage for their food on the ground. Now and again a crow sweeps in to have a drink at the bird bath.

Recently, however, a gang has started to invade the garden.

Pigeons, large and small pigeons, and when they zoom in, they demolish any food scraps within minutes. One pigeon has even learnt to balance on the seed tray of the bird feeder. As the feeder swings about and the bird frantically flaps its wings to stay in position, its mates below pick up the seeds that fall to the ground. At this point I scare them off to give the smaller birds a chance.

I can't help admire their technique though. The birds have learnt that joining together helps them to achieve more than going it alone. They have an enterprising leader to follow.

We can learn from that bird gang, I think. Like the birds, we are usually more productive and effective when we are working together, especially in the church during the time of a vacancy.

One Bible writer expressed this in a poetical way when he said: "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, a friend can help them up. But pity the person who falls, and has no-one to help them up. (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10)

Working together can be good for us, and company can be good for us, the right company can be even better.

We, like the pigeons, need a good leader to follow. The best leader I have come across is Jesus who said "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35)

Food for our souls, supplied by Jesus of Nazareth.

Douglas Clark

Locum Minister.

The Making of the Messy Church Videos

When John and I first decided to give making videos a go we were unsure of so many things. The technicalities had to be sorted out first. We decided we would use my iPhone to video, and with it on a little stand we quickly realised that having it positioned on top of the Lazy Susan meant we could swivel the camera more easily without making people sea sick!

At the beginning we had the phone fitted into a little stand that I had received a few Christmases before but rarely used, standing on top of a stack of books. It was difficult getting both our heads in the picture. We seemed to be able to have John's head and lower down there was a bit of my face - or my head and shoulders and John was only on camera from his nose down. In fact one video was like that because the camera slipped and so he continued with part of his forehead missing!

Then John bought a tripod in which we could attach the phone and on its stem there was a button to switch it on and off without being seen. Previously the video would start and close with John's arm coming in front of the camera to switch it on or off.

So now we have the tripod, the Lazy Susan and the phone attached to the tripod. All we needed now was to have our heads in gear.

I tried writing out the highlights of what I was going to say but in one video it was apparent that I was reading something and not looking up enough. Also the notes could be seen. The next time the tripod meant that they weren't in view but when I moved one sheet across to read the other you could hear the rustling of papers.

I tried it without any bullet points and my eyes seemed to be pirouetting as I tried to recall what I was going to say. On the whole it wouldn't matter if I was telling a story but if there were significant dates or people in it I couldn't afford to get that wrong. It looked like my eyeballs were birling out of control!!

One of our first videos, I remember, I had iced together a tower of Maltesers and John was making a tower of straws. In true Blue Peter style we had ones in the making and completed ones to show. Well, when filming, John's straws wouldn't stay together to stand up no matter what he tried so he went onto the completed one and blow me it wouldn't stand either. He had to help support it. I got to my completed Malteser tower and, as I stretched over to pick up the plate that it was standing on, the tower just collapsed as it came into view!!!! Even we were laughing!

We were filming in the kitchen but before we started we had to clear the work surfaces and remove the family photos from the fridge door, so one day we thought we would do it in the lounge, at the window. First of all it was too bright so we had to pull down the blind behind us. Then John kept getting distracted by people walking by - so we are back in the kitchen. The last video we made we positioned the camera so I didn't have to clear the fridge door!

Then that wasn't the easy part! When we finished the video we passed it to Tom to put on YouTube. Deeply frustrated he found it impossible so then we found out Alice Guse is a very techy person so passed it to her. If it was below five minutes that was fine but over it we then couldn't send it by email or WhatsApp to Alice, it had to be sent by We Transfer. Many hours have been spent trying to do this successfully. Now we break it in two parts. Usually 3 - 4 minutes, stop and then start another 3 - 4 minutes. Alice can link them together and put them on the church YouTube, then Mags puts it on our church website. At the end of the evening when Alice texts to say that is it done we breathe such a sigh of relief. In the last video we were disturbed by the sound of drilling from our next door neighbour during the second half and had to stop and redo the whole of the second half again. Thank goodness it was almost into the cocktail hour!!!

We started almost a year ago and we are still a work in progress. Someone contacted us a week ago to say he had found us on the website and couldn't believe we were still doing child/youth work thirty years on. He had been in our Youth Fellowship all that time ago. Maybe if he saw us behind scenes he would realise that we are old fogies trying to hang on in there, grappling with new technology!

John and Brenda

A Message from the Session Clerk

18/5/21

We are in the process of drawing up the door duty rota for the next few months. As we have emerged out of Covid we have been working with a fairly restricted list of those who were comfortable performing this task.

Working with the Church of Scotland guidelines, we will progressively be in a position to open up worship at Sherbrooke Mosspark.

With this in mind, could you please email Janis in the office if you would be willing to assist with the door duty going forward.

With thanks

Clare

A Message and appeal from the Treasurer 12/5/21

I presented our 2020 accounts to the Kirk Session in April which showed a recurring deficit for the year of £10,056. I had budgeted for that year a deficit of £16,657 so in the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic this was deemed an acceptable outcome. We also made a loss on our investment holdings but those fluctuate from year to year and the loss followed a large gain in 2019.

The underlying picture of 2020 was more complex with a large fall in income and a large reduction in costs. Our income fell by £21,626 and our costs fell by £28,225. The income fall was mainly in halls income, open plate and weddings but also in freewill offerings. However, many members who normally give weekly by freewill offerings generously made up for the lack of regular giving by making single payment donations for which I was very grateful. Our cost reductions were mainly in building repairs and energy costs. We also managed to recover some salary costs through the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

At the Kirk Session meeting I presented the 2021 budget. The budget for this year was difficult to prepare in light of the on-going lock-down and uncertainty over the resumption of normal worship and regular use of our facilities as a community hub. I presented a position which showed a recurring deficit of £34,690. We aim to recover £20,000 of this from the Consolidated Fabric Fund held on our behalf by the Church of Scotland General Trustees. However, that leaves a deficit (being our normal income less our day to day running costs) of £14,690. As all of you will understand, is not good housekeeping to run on continuous deficits and deplete the reserves that have been built up over many generations by members who have supported SMPC.

This is also a challenging year as we aim to return to "normal" following the pandemic while we move from Tom's era towards a new minister. We are fortunate in having the support of both Douglas Clark and Mark Johnstone through this period and if I know anything about the members at SMPC it is that you will do everything possible to get us back to normal as quickly as possible.

I therefore set the Kirk Session certain financial objectives for the coming year with a view to negating the deficit. Two of these objectives relate to income generation and will require your wholehearted support. They are:

To increase your annual giving to the church by at least 2% - 3% (preferably more given that we did not put out an appeal last year) which will also have the benefit of increasing the level of Gift Aid received; and

To run a Post-COVID fundraising activity to raise somewhere above £3,000.

I am also looking to put in place actions to ensure our controllable costs remain at the level they were two years ago which would represent a real decrease in costs.

If everyone can do their little bit to help achieve the giving objective then this will go a considerable way to restoring balance in the church finances without the need to initiate a full Giving Campaign which I know everyone would really prefer to avoid.

I trust that members will consider this appeal carefully and respond positively. If anyone needs new standing order forms of more information, please feel free to contact me.

Kindest regards

Iain Webster

"A Year Like No Other"

On the evening of 19th May, I, and about seventy others, attended a very different Zoom meeting, based in the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh. This was an informal farewell from the outgoing Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt. Rev. Martin Fair, in anticipation of his return to St. Andrew's Parish Church in Arbroath, where he has been Minister since 1992.

Moderators of the Church of Scotland have a long lead in time - in the first of a number of videos prepared by Martin, he described the excitement of the preparation, moving down to Edinburgh, being fitted with new robes, etc., only to find that with the first Lockdown, he became, in his words, a Moderator who was "all dressed up with nowhere to go".

Martin's Installation took place in an empty Assembly Hall, and it's probably typical of him that he was sorry for his congregation, his wife and his chaplains, who in normal times would have been able to fully participate in such a special occasion. Nevertheless, he felt he had been able to serve throughout the year, given that live streaming, social media and videos were all familiar concepts to him. He declared that one of his mottos was "Keep Calm and Carry On" and referenced Isaiah 40, v. 28. A diary full of events had to change, and instead of a year of travel, he had a year dominated by computer screens. He spoke of "1,000 zoom calls", but it may only have seemed like that. He said that he learned the importance of listening and used simpler technology to try and phone as many of his fellow Ministers as he could, just to ask how they were.

Another video showed his participation in an online series of debates on various current issues, entitled, "It's a Fair Question". During his year, he also appeared on "Reflections at the Quay", but a particular highlight for him as a football fan was his presence on BBC Radio Scotland's "Off the Ball", talking football and sharing faith. And over and above that, he climbed the four Cardinal Munros along with one of his Chaplains and an Army Chaplain.

For the future, Martin's hope is that the Church in Scotland will retain the digital arrangements that have been put in place over the past year. His philosophies are to go forward in faith, look outside the church building, put one foot in front of the other and give thanks for Creation. He had been able to reach out to more people than might have been expected in a Moderatorial year like no other that had been "people rather than places".

The Chat Room filled with messages of thanks at the end of the call. In a time of general gloom, I found this such an inspiring piece - in the words of others, the Rt. Rev. Martin Fair had been "just the man for the job".

Una Heaney

P.S. I wrote the above shortly after the event had taken place. If you'd like to see the full programme, and it is well worth it, it is available on the facebook page of Arbroath St. Andrews, under the heading of "A year like no other".



With Covid Restrictions reducing it would be great to share the things you are doing now and couldn't do before with a photo. Please visit the website for details.



Heather Neill, now 19 years old is a thrill seeker. She flew cross country to Northern Ireland and then jumped out a plane.



Faith Borland celebrated her 21st birthday on 22 May. She is graduating from Cambridge University in July with a BA in Geography and starting an MSc in Economic Geography at the University of Amsterdam in September.



Weddings

Friday 28/5/21 Alan Irons and Heather Tainsh

Thank you for all the lovely cards and get well wishes from Christine Higgison and family



Put in plant supports

Why? Before plants grow too tall and flop over - especially if it's wet and windy. If you support the plants now they will grow up through the support and make it less visible giving the garden a more natural look.

How? It's a good idea to support them with stakes, twigs or wire plant supports. Twigs are most natural but not everyone has access to a plentiful supply. Garden centres and online suppliers have a great selection of appropriately shaped supports from obelisks for climbing plants to plant supports and stakes.

Plant out summer bedding

Why? If you've been to the Plant Sale or garden centre and come home with lots of plants to fill your borders and containers you need to do something with them now.

How? Empty spring containers of bulbs such as narcissi, muscari and tulips once they have finished flowering and transfer them to a suitable area in the garden. It's better to empty pots completely and add new compost for the summer bedding. These plants are susceptible to frost damage so watch out for frosts and be ready to protect plants overnight with fleece or newspaper if necessary.

Weeding

Why? Rising temperatures and longer days mean that weeds are growing strongly and competing with garden plants.

How? To keep on top of weeds it's worth devoting time to removing them each week. A hoe is a good tool to cut them off on a dry day otherwise dig them up by hand with a fork. Remember not to put the roots of perennial weeds such as dandelions or bindweed on the compost heap (the leaves are ok) because the heap may not be hot enough to kill them off.

Most importantly enjoy the garden and don't obsess about anything!

Marjorie

Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

Please continue to send in your news and stories. You just never know how much you are helping someone else by sharing just something.

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