

## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



"This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1.11

Advent is the season of waiting, as much for Jesus to return as to celebrate his arrival at the first Christmas. And it is fitting that we do celebrate, considering the life and death and resurrection and ascension that followed. Jesus' mission to earth revealed God in all his mercy and glory. In his death and resurrection, he secured our release from slavery to sin and our hope of eternal life. His ascension into heaven confirmed his victory and demonstrated the style in which he will return to complete that mission – to redeem and renew creation.

The interval between Jesus' ascension and his return is known as the Age of the Church. We know when it began but when it will end is impossible to tell because it will be when Jesus returns and nobody knows when that will be. But it could be today!

The imperative of the Second Coming fuels our hope for the future. It should also inject urgency into what we are about here and now. Our mission is to tell the world about Jesus, so that everyone has the opportunity of rejecting the devil, turning away from their sins and accepting Jesus as Saviour and Lord, thereby receiving eternal life as befits his chosen ones. When he returns it will be too late, everyone will have to face Jesus as they are: either as those who have already identified themselves with him, or among those who have rejected or ignored him.

Things will look different then, to the way they do today. Today the church looks weak, old-fashioned, out of touch. That is because society has moved on – to the extent that church and society are increasingly at loggerheads. This is making it more and more challenging to identify as a Christian. In some parts of the world, it is even illegal to confess the name of Jesus. Yet the Bible proclaims that, one day, "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord."

Revelation is the one book in the Bible which covers this Age of the Church, from its earliest days to Jesus' return. It does so in a way that relates what is happening on earth to what is happening concurrently in the spiritual realms, to reveal a greater reality and a deeper significance to what we can perceive with our physical senses. After Christmas we shall be exploring Revelation in a series of Sunday sermons which will take us up to Easter. In the meantime, read on for glimpses into how our own church is seeking to make the most of the time that remains...

Until he comes, and with blessings for a meaningful Advent and a joyous Christmas,

Rory

### **Need prayer or someone to pray with you?**

Email Mary Fennell: [prayercoordinator1995@gmail.com](mailto:prayercoordinator1995@gmail.com)

### **Need to talk? Questions about the Christian faith**

Contact the minister, who will find the right person to speak to you. Details are on the last page.

**Website:** [www.sschurch.co.uk](http://www.sschurch.co.uk)

**Notices:** [lesleyinskye@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lesleyinskye@yahoo.co.uk)

Strath & Sleat Church:  
Isle of Skye is a Charity  
registered in Scotland  
No SC001285

# WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER?

## Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>

**11am:** Whole Parish Communion in Kyleakin Church (and on zoom)

## Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>

**11am:** All-age Family Christmas service in Kilmore Church

**11am:** All-age Family Christmas service in Kyleakin Church (and on zoom)

**Afternoon** (time to be confirmed) Community Carols in Kyleakin Village Hall

## Friday 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas eve

**7pm:** Family Carol service in Kilmore Church

**11.30pm:** Watchnight service in Broadford Church

## Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas day

**11am:** Family Christmas day service in Kyleakin Church Hall

## Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> – Boxing Day

**11am:** Whole parish Service on zoom

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January** – Whole Parish service in Broadford Church

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## UPDATE FROM JACKIE

So, we are approaching four months into my new position as your parish development assistant, and perhaps you are wondering what I've been busy at, and what have I achieved? I have been busy out in the community making links and exploring how best to move forward with some of the ideas we have had, to reach out into the places where we live and share the good news of Jesus. I've also been helping some of our congregation in preparing resources for YV and for the Christmas services in the parish.

We have begun the Make it Count group for parents, grannies and their little ones. We meet on a Monday and have been graciously given use of the Free church building in Sleat. This lovely warm and modern venue gives us a space for the children to play, but also have some very important time to interact with other children of a similar age and for the parents to connect with each other. Something which they have very much missed during the covid months. Its developing into quite a lovely little group. I have a small team of willing helpers who come along and support the families and bring their wealth of experience in lots of different ways. There is always room for more helpers, so if you have a few hours free on a Monday morning, then let me know and we will make good use of you at the group.

So, what else have I been up to. We hosted a visit from Broadford school to the church in Broadford. They were studying Christianity and one of their teachers thought it would enhance their studies to come along to the church to bring some of the aspects alive to them. We had great fun, hosting them, giving them a little bit of history about the building and allowing them to explore and see things for themselves! They had an array of questions and for some it was their very first time inside a church so it was a great experience for them. This was to have been the first part of an interactive event which helps us tell the story of Christmas in a fresh way for the children. Unfortunately, this has had to be shelved due to the restrictions under covid from both the Church of Scotland and Highland council, we are not permitted to have these visits to buildings. Whilst this a little frustrating, I do hope that we may be able to use some of the activities and parts of the program within our own services around the festive season.

What's next? Strupag n craic. After a slow start we are now meeting once a month and the invitation is for all ladies in the parish, to come to Kyleakin and join us. We are planning some little activities which you can easily do (not exercise or knitting!) Next month in December we will have a go at making table decorations for your Christmas table! And of course, we do what us girls do best, have a chat and a laugh. Why not look out for it in the intimations and come and join us?

Something I have just been very on the fringe of helping set up is the Joshua Stones writing group. This group is looking at how certain parts of our memory are triggered by such things as food, or a song, or a certain smell. This has been headed up by Jane McDermott and if you think it's something you might like to get involved with, they meet on Thursdays by zoom so you don't need to leave the comfort of your own home!

I have also ideas for opening up the Church in Broadford for a drop in for High school kids and along with Anne MacLennan we have been planning the grounds and for a re-opening of the church building once the renovation work is completed. If you have any ideas for this spring time event, then please get in touch and let's plan to get Broadford church open and serving the local community again.

In conclusion if you have an idea or can see a way for us to reach out into the community where you live then please get in touch. No idea is a silly one, in fact sometimes they are the best ones!

Jackie MacLennan [Strathandsleatpda@gmail.com](mailto:Strathandsleatpda@gmail.com) 07835249640

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## DO YOU BAKE AT HOME FOR CHURCH?



**If so, would you be interested in doing a short (only 2 hours!) on-line food hygiene course?**

**REHIS Introduction to Food Hygiene course by e-learning**

The General Trustees are pleased to offer all members of the Church of Scotland access to the REHIS Introduction to Food Safety and Hygiene course by e-learning. This is a recognised food hygiene qualification that will take approximately 2 hours to complete, and will introduce learners to the basic principles of food safety. This course will be suitable to anyone who handles, prepares and cooks/bakes low risk foods such as biscuits, cakes and teas and coffees. This course is especially important for those who bake at home for church purposes.

- This course is delivered entirely online through a third-party training partner.
- The Church of Scotland General Trustees will cover all training costs so there are no direct costs to the congregation.
- All learners will need to have access to a computer or tablet with an internet connection.
- There are no exams or tests during or at the end of this course.
- All learners who complete the course will be issued with a REHIS Introduction to Food Hygiene certificate.
- This course should not be undertaken by anyone who has already successfully completed this course OR who has completed the REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene Course. However, anyone who wishes to undertake this course to refresher their knowledge and skills are welcome to apply.

Please speak to the minister or one of the elders if you might be interested.



## A LETTER FROM SESSION REGARDING THE FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE BROADFORD CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



Earlier this year, prompted by the Church of Scotland's directive for churches to become "well equipped spaces in the right places", our Kirk Session took some time to consider how this requirement could be applied to each of our churches in Strath and Sleat, and what changes or improvements needed to be made.

Regarding our church in Broadford, we felt that we had a duty to seriously consider the future direction of our church as some hard facts had to be faced up to and considered:

- Nowadays a building serving a small congregation and used only for an hour or two weekly and with high overheads, is increasingly vulnerable.
- We are a small mainly older congregation, with no Sunday School at present, and no young church within our walls.
- Our church hall which was condemned for public use several years ago is uneconomical to restore, and due to the presence of asbestos in the roof space, would be very expensive to demolish.
- Having had to close for a year and a half due to covid, our church building has become even more isolated from the local community.
- Situated right in the centre of Broadford, it's in the right place, but only a few from the village attend.
- How do we engage with local families in our locality and welcome back to our church those in our community who used to be regular attendees?
- We've seen the closure of several churches in this area already, and yet look at how our church can be packed to the door at a funeral. So, what does this tell us, and what's to be done? Do we just carry on as before, or do we need a change in direction?

With these thoughts in mind, we began to consider a new approach to using our church building in a way that would reach out and reconnect with our local community. For some time now the view that church buildings can benefit from becoming multi-use has gained more support. Community access to church buildings helps people to become familiar with crossing the threshold of the church. It's possible it may even lead to increased attendance at services. Also allowing the community to find a home within the church building for their activities, brings community and church closer together making a considerable contribution to outreach. Engaging more with those who are not churchgoers at present could be beneficial in many ways.

How have other churches who have gone down this route fared? Close to home, - several years ago, Lochcarron Church of Scotland successfully reordered their church building, and opened it to the community during the week. Five of our congregation paid a visit to the Lochcarron church to find out how it had worked out for them. At that time, we spoke to elders and members of their congregation who had been initially opposed to the reordering of the building, and particularly to the removal of the pews. Every one of them said that now that they had seen the benefit to their church, they would never like to go back to the way it was before.

Over the course of the summer months, contact was made with several other churches who have reorganised their buildings and are now involved in community sharing of their buildings during weekdays, with worship continuing as usual on Sundays. When asked how successful it had been, their responses were mainly very positive. However, the management of the church building, cleaning, supervision, movement of chairs tables and fixtures etc, constitutes a fair amount of extra work, and requires enthusiastic helpers some of whom could be from the community. Most of the churches contacted reported having a very successful and improved ongoing relationship with their community. Most senior members of our congregation myself included, have benefitted from growing up in a time where it was the done thing that the community engaged with the church. As this is not the case anymore, the responsibility now falls upon the church to engage with the community, otherwise the community and the church are both deprived. It's the church's mission to reach out to the local community, and offering a welcoming space within our building in order to bring our congregation and community closer together - that in itself makes a considerable contribution to outreach.

The Kirk Session decided that the way forward for the Broadford Church must involve a reorganisation of the ground floor space within the main church building, making it accessible for community (and church) use during weekdays, with worship continuing as usual on Sundays. We then began to consider how to make our building more available and relevant to the local community around us, and also how we might equip our building; enabling activities for children and young people to happen, and to make our worship more inclusive for all ages. Providing a flexible space within the church building makes this possible. An application for grant assistance towards the project was then made and approved by 121, and together with a generous financial gift, this will meet most of the cost of the work. A meeting with Presbytery was then held to discuss the proposal. In September, Presbytery gave their approval, and Session decided to go ahead with the project. The work is planned to take place during January 2022. This will mean our church will close after the Sunday service on the 2nd January. It is hoped to have all work completed by the beginning of February.

So, what does the work involve?

**The Pews** - I understand that saying goodbye to our pews will not be a popular decision with some of our congregation. However, a project of this nature cannot be effective unless the ground floor pews are replaced by comfortable but stackable chairs to create a space suitable for the wider range of activities that today's young church is involved in and to create a flexible space for community use.

**The Heating** - An infrared heating system (not the glowing type) together with wall mounted convector heaters will be installed. The existing antiquated main switchgear will be replaced to cater for the demands of the new heating system.

**Flooring** - The preferred option is to have the wooden floor sanded, bringing it back to its original appearance, filling any holes and imperfections, and treated with a coating to maintain its appearance.

A challenge! For us all this is a big change in direction for our congregation and quite a challenge. It will require willingness on our part to do our best to make it work with our focus on re-establishing our church at the centre of our local community. Jackie MacLennan who has been appointed as Parish Assistant will be closely involved in helping us achieve this. I hope that this will give you a bit of background on the reasons for our decision to go down this road for Broadford Church.

*Farquhar Graham (On behalf of the Kirk Session of Strath and Sleat).*

## AND A HUGE WELCOME TO THE NEWEST ADDITIONS TO OUR PARISH!



Eoghan Gillan  
Thomson

Born 2<sup>nd</sup>  
December  
2021

8lbs 6oz.

Ruairidh  
Alasdair Parry

Born 15<sup>th</sup>  
October 2021

7lbs 6oz



We ask for the Lord blessing on both these families.



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## COP AND CREATION



The 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties was across our screens and radio during the first half of November. There was a fascinating combination of the world's powerful leaders making speeches to assembled delegates and the media, then negotiating behind closed doors, while representatives of the least powerful massed outside and shared in rich and varied programmes of storytelling, practical workshops, art, culture, and academic presentations. Most of the powerful flew in, some of the masses walked for days or weeks to get there.

Negotiations were tense, line by line, word by word – influenced by political and vested interests (the fossil fuel delegation was larger than that from many small nations). Meantime Indigenous peoples shared harrowing stories of climate injustice and young people expressed frustration and fear for their future.

The final Glasgow Pact managed to take some important steps forward, but will not keep us within 1.5°C global temperature rise: the limit for a reasonable chance of a tolerable earthly future. We each have to reduce our demands on the earth. Governments must take radical action, but can't do it without our cooperation – and may need to be persuaded into action by the electorate.

Jesus came to give us abundant life, but that doesn't mean abundant possessions and limitless self-gratification. We have been conned into consumptive lifestyles which are dependent on exploitation of planet, people and other creatures, with disastrous effects on our climate, but also loss of biodiversity, pollution of air and sea, and social injustice with a widening gap between the powerful and powerless, the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Materialism begets individualism, dissatisfaction, stress, mental health issues, loss of community resilience and distancing from our Creator.

One measure of demand on Earth's resources is the environmental footprint, calculated as the hectares required to supply each person's demands. The world average is 2.75. In Zambia it is 0.99, China 3.38, and UK 7.93. If everyone in the world lived as the average Scot, we'd need 3 planets to supply us. Amazingly though, by reducing our demands and simplifying our lifestyles, we will be addressing most of the other big issues as well.

"Living simply that others may simply live" although attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, is relevant to Christ's followers in 2021. Jesus gave a new commandment, "that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (John 13: 34) and then "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (15: 15). We can show Christ's love by taking fewer of the world's resources from those who really need them.

By burning less fossil fuel, we contribute less to drought, flood and wildfire elsewhere. Buying second hand clothes or furnishing reduces the demand for raw materials and often toxic additives. Reducing demand for excessive cheap food and paying more for local or Fair-Trade produce lessens the need to burn down the Amazon or Indonesian forests for cheap beef or palm oil. We need to re-think travel and holidays, household cleaning agents, personal care products and all of the plastic throwaway items. Learning or teaching to make, mend and grow can be very satisfying - and save money!

Living more simply, with less cluttered lives, may free up some time to relax and listen; engaging with nature, our neighbour – and God.

### **Broadford Church grounds**

Initial work is being done to revitalise the church grounds in Broadford, to make the outside space attractive and useful to church members and the community. This will complement Jackie's opening up of the church building.

The plan is to plant bulbs, fruit bushes and trees along with perennial flowers so that by Spring next year, there will be some colour and interest. Bird feeders and diverse planting should attract wildlife and there will be places to sit down and relax or pray.

The back of the building is already a sun trap (remember the sun?), and so an area will be developed for people to gather – a 'sitooterie'. In suitable weather, this space could be used for getting together after a service, for study groups, prayer, or social meetings.

In time, it would be great to involve members of church and community in various projects, as well as gardening tasks. Ideas include teaching and learning how to grow and prepare food, building a small lean-to greenhouse, constructing a robust bridge over the stream and perhaps having a couple of raised beds to grow vegetables. Ideally, this will be an intergenerational project.

There will be all sorts of ways to contribute, with time, skills, advice or materials. Perhaps you have tools or plants that you no longer need. A wish list includes water butts to collect rain water, bird feeders, bumble bee hotel, garden furniture, materials for greenhouse and bridge. In due course, just spending time in the grounds will be important to show the community that the church is alive, and to welcome in the curious. That might be weeding, but could just be sitting down, reading a book.

There will be an update on progress in the New Year.

*Anne MacLennan*



## LAOIDH ÙR NA NOLLAIGE



Aig an àm seo den bhliadhna, nì sinn fiughair ri bhith seinn laoidhean Nollaige. Tha mòran dhaoine eòlach agus measail air 'Leanabh an Àigh' san eadar-theangachadh a rinn Lachlan MacBheathain. Ach tha a' bhàrdachd a rinn Mairi Nic Dhòmhnail fada nas cumhachdaiche agus i a' dèanamh còimeas eadar an-ìochd nan uachdaran, a bha a' cur nan daoine cumanta a-mach às an dachaighean, agus irisleachd Rìgh nan rìghrean, Ìosa Crìosd, a rugadh san stàball. Rinn mi fhìn seist shìmplidh gus an tachartas ud a chomharrachadh. Carson nach tig thu don sheirbheis Ghàidhlig againn airson a sheinn còmhla rinn?

*Rugadh Ìosa Crìosd, ar Slanaighear.  
Rugadh Ìosa, mac Moire,  
ann am Betlehem, baile Dhàibhidh;  
mar a gheall na faidhean bho thùs.*

*Sheinn an t-sluagh nèamhaidh gu-lèir  
Molaidhean binn chun an leanabh naoimh.  
Seist*

*Dh'fhàg na ciobairean an treudan.  
Luathaich iad chun an stàbaill maoil.  
Seist*

*Thàinig draoidhean le gibhtean annasach:  
Òr is tùs is mirr ìobairte.  
Seist*

*Dè mu ar deidhinn-e, dè nì sinn  
Leis a' bhalach a th' air a bhrèith?  
Seist*

*Jesus Christ, our Saviour, has been born.  
Jesus, son of Mary, has been born,  
in Bethlehem, David's city;  
as the prophets promised from the beginning.*

*The whole heavenly host sang  
melodious praises to the holy child.  
Chorus*

*The shepherds left their flocks.  
They hurried to the bare stable.  
Chorus*

*Magi came with strange gifts:  
Gold and frankincense and myrrh of sacrifice.  
Chorus*

*What about ourselves, what shall we do  
with the child that has been born?  
Chorus*

At this time of the year, we look forward to singing carols. Many are familiar with, and fond of, 'Child in the Manger' in the translation by Lachlan MacBean. But the original poem, which was composed by Mary MacDonald, is much more powerful, as it compares the cruelty of landlords putting ordinary people out of their homes with the humility of the King of kings, Jesus Christ, who was born in a stable. I wrote a simple chorus to celebrate that event. Why not come to our Gaelic service and join the rest of us in singing it?





# MISSION & MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT IN LOHCARRON & SKYE PRESBYTERY

by Anne Sikorski

The Church of Scotland has an evangelical and pastoral concern for the people and nation of Scotland, a vocation that stands at the core of its identity. Over the last fifty years, Scotland's society has changed radically, but the church has, overall, been unsuccessful in its response to that change.

During the last three decades, the church's membership has declined dramatically, resulting in a crisis which has seen historical denominations become precarious and fragile, a lack of ability and resources to fulfil its vocation, declining interest in church attendance, and a recognition that it is failing to have the expected impact in society

The General Assembly of 2018 instructed a special commission to be set up to investigate the situation and report back to the 2019 General Assembly with recommendations to effect radical change. Three reports emerged from this work

1. The Radical Action Plan (Council of Assembly report)
2. Well-equipped spaces in the right places (General Trustees report) and
3. Special Commission on Structural Reform report

The overall thrust of the plans is devolution of decision-making and resources from the centre to reorganised regional and local structures, with an emphasis on equipping churches for mission in their local context.

Currently Presbytery is working on implementing key changes as instructed by the General Assembly, including

1. Working alongside other Presbyteries to agree a new, larger Presbytery area to be implemented by 2023
2. Identify new parish area/s within the current Presbytery to reflect the reduced number of posts available
3. Implement new Presbytery Planning criteria

While it is still uncertain what this will look like, it is clear from the changes in Presbytery Planning criteria and Presbytery reform, that effective mission and ministry in the near future will rely more heavily on lay people.

To help congregations prepare for this and make the necessary transition Presbytery have created a Mission & Ministry Development worker role to support congregations to identify mission projects that could be effective and achievable, and build capacity to support this change.

I have been appointed by Presbytery to fulfil this role and I look forward to working with you all on this.

If you would like to be kept up to date with this work, please send your email address to me at [asikorski@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:asikorski@churchofscotland.org.uk)

For background to this reform and to read the reports mentioned here, visit...

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/radical-action-plan>

Anne Sikorski - Presbytery Mission & Ministry Development Worker





## LETTERS PAGE

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

*Your comments and suggestions are really appreciated.*

*Or if you would like to contribute to the next newsletter, please send anything to Lesley [lesleyinskye@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lesleyinskye@yahoo.co.uk) or phone 01471 822023*



## CHURCH LIFE

### Weddings

10<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Rebecca Young to John Lawrence Sheedy

### Funerals

18<sup>th</sup> September 2021

John Fraser

Ashaig

25<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Peggy MacNiven

Broadford

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021

Margaret MacLeod

Ashaig

9<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Neil MacInnes

Broadford

25<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Marion Emma Bolton

Broadford.

### OUR CHURCHES

#### Broadford

High Street  
Broadford  
Isle of Skye  
IV49 9AB

#### Elgol

Elgol  
Isle of Skye  
IV49 9BL

#### Kilmore

Kilmore  
Sleat  
Isle of Skye  
IV44 8RG

#### Kyleakin

Kyleakin  
Isle of Skye  
IV41 8PH

**N.B. Regular meetings and services are on zoom from one church at a time with limited spaces. If you would like a seat please see the weekly notices for how to book a place.**

**If you are self-isolating, please let any of us know how we can help:**

Picking up shopping

Posting mail

A friendly phone call

Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

**Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep.**

**#ViralKindness**

### CHURCH SESSION

#### BROADFORD/ELGOL

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	Harry Saunders	01599 534145