

Mission Statement

"Our purpose is to honour and enjoy God, proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, serve our community in Jesus' name, strengthen one another in our spiritual life, and influence our world through prayer, witness, truth and grace."

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



The newsletter gets bigger and better! Thanks to Lesley for continuing to build on the excellent foundation laid by Tony. I can heartily commend all of the articles you are about to read.

We should be proud of how Anne and Nicola are taking our church ever further into cultural engagement with two very different but relevant areas of interest, one parochial one global. Climate change remains the greatest emergency faced by every creature on the planet. As those who know him, we owe it to our Creator to repent for how we have squandered and damaged the earth's resources and to lead the way towards a more reverential approach. One could say the same about our cultural and linguistic inheritance! The initiatives being pioneered by Anne and her team and Nicola and YV are not only faithful to God but they offer a bridge into the public spaces where our mission belongs.

The pulsing heart of that mission is the Good News that God sent his Son into this broken world, paid the price for our sin, broke the power of death by rising in glory and invites everyone who will follow him to renounce the devil and receive the gift of eternal life. As a church we have been training ourselves for that mission by engaging in an Alpha Course. The next stage will be to put what we have learned into action by inviting non-believing friends and relations to a follow-on course, in which we shall no longer be participants but leaders. It will take us out of our comfort zones but it will be the making of us as Christians and, as such, will prepare us for the future.

That future will be different in so many ways. The congregational survey and Dave's letter prove that the conversation has already begun around what that will look like. But there are changes afoot in our Presbytery and in the national Church of Scotland, whose impact will expedite and multiply those changes. We face a future in which ministers and parish boundaries give way to the release of gifts within a priesthood of all believers. The focus of mission will increasingly be on the local church, which will need to be spiritually dependent on God, materially self-sustaining and operating out of buildings which are "well-equipped spaces in the right places" – even if that means under shared ownership and management with the communities we seek to reach.

(continued on page 2)

Need prayer or someone to pray with you?

Email Mary Fennell: 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.

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

Website: www.sschurch.co.uk

Notices: lesleyinsky@yahoo.co.uk

(MINISTER'S MESSAGE continued from page 1)

If that all sounds daunting take heart. I believe God is encouraging us through two recent appointments and a diary date. Jackie MacLennan is no stranger but she has chosen to apply her wealth of wisdom and experience to guiding us into the future as Parish Development Assistant. Clarke Muir soon won't be a stranger either, even though he is only with us over the summer. But it is a privilege to play our part in shaping a new minister, while also being blessed with the gifts of ministry, freshness and enthusiasm he will bring. The diary date is Sunday 20 June, when The Rev'd George al-Kopti will preach to us on the occasion of Sanctuary Sunday, which is World Refugee Day and, for the Eastern Church to which St Pauls' Amman belongs, Pentecost – when the Spirit came!

Take a moment to savour Catherine's delightful article. Let the 'Church Life' page cause you to reflect on your own life's journey. Take inspiration from Kilmore's spring-cleaning efforts. And praise God from whom all blessings flow...

Rory

Pròiseact Cholm Cille do YV

Tha YV na Cille Mòire air a bhith soirbheachail le tairgse maoineachaidh de £ 3,000 airson pròiseact bho mhaoin phròiseict Naomh Calum Cille 1500, tro Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Bidh YV a' riochdachadh bhidio (no bhideothan) mu far an tàinig Calum Cille air tìr faisg air eaglais na Cille Mòire agus ann am badan eile den Eilean Sgitheanach, agus turas dh'Èirinn gus obair còmhla ri buidheann òigridh Gaeilge air an dearbh rud aig a' cheann acasan, le làrach-lìn bheag (Gàidhlig, Gaeilge agus Beurla) mar dhìleab den phròiseact.

Tha Naomh Calum Cille cho cudromach ann an Crìosdaidheachd agus tha e cudromach gun cùm sinn oirnn a' teagasg ar n-òigridh mu eileamaidean cudromach den chreideamh agus den eachdraidh againn.

Ma tha ùidh agaibh barrachd fhaighinn a-mach mun phròiseact, cuiribh fios gu Nicola NicThòmais aig strathandsleat@gmail.com

YV Columba Project

Kilmore YV have been successful with a funding bid of £3,000 for a project in relation to the St Columba 1500 project fund, via Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The project involves YV producing a video (or videos) about where Columba came ashore close to Kilmore church and in other parts of Skye, and a potential trip to Ireland to work with an Irish speaking youth group on something similar at their end, with a small website (Gaelic, Irish and English) as a legacy of the project.

St Columba is such a key figure in Christianity and it is important that we continue to engage our young people in important elements of our faith and history.

If you'd be interested in finding out more about the project, please contact Nicola Thomson on strathandsleat@gmail.com



CHRISTIAN AID



Many thanks for all the walking, running and cycling over the Skye Bridge. And thank you all for your donations. £1642 has been donated to date, plus £265 in gift aid. So with some other offline donations, a fantastic total of **£1907** has been collected. We will keep it open a few more days in case we can possibly hit £2000!

Here's the link to the 'justgiving' web site...

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mary-m-strachan?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=mary-m-strachan&utm_campaign=pfp-share&utm_term=130c90922e99426a81a082dc9da63d02

NEW POST!

We congratulate Jackie and give her a huge welcome to the new post of 'Parish Development Assistant'! Many (if not all of you) will know Jackie already as she is a regular at Kyleakin Church and already involved in many things in the Parish as well as in the wider community. She will be starting the post in July so it's a bit too early to give much detail as the first part of her job will be to find out what the needs are in our church and community, before helping us to find ways of moving forward to meet those needs. She will be visiting the different parts of the Parish to get to know people and to gather information and views. More news to follow in the months ahead! In the meantime, we would value your prayers in this new and exciting venture.



CHRISTIANITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

For the past two months, the Creation Care group has been following the Tear Fund series of films on Christianity and Climate Change. Each short video is accompanied by questions to guide discussion, with pointers to further information. The speaker is a Christian climate scientist, and in each episode, she responds to a question posed by a Scottish church leader or member. So far, we have considered: "What the Bible says about the natural world" and "Climate change is a poverty issue". On June 21st, the topic will be, "How to persuade others to care about climate change". Future titles include "What we can do as a church", and "There can be a better future."

In the May film, Katharine Hayhoe explained that climate change is a justice issue, with the greatest impact on the poor and vulnerable. The poorest 3.5 billion people are responsible for just 10% of greenhouse gas emissions, but suffer most consequences. World hunger has been increasing since 2016 due to climate change and conflict. Climate change exacerbates conflict as well as loss of crops and livelihoods, increased disease, and forced migration. Our reliance on fossil fuels pushes our global neighbours deeper into poverty.

The film series is just one of the resources available through Tear Fund's 'Reboot' campaign [Reboot – take action on the climate crisis – Tearfund](#) which invites Christians to join in prayer and action to tackle injustice and see a breakthrough in the climate crisis. They call for "a coronavirus recovery that tackles poverty and injustice and helps end the climate crisis", rebooting the world "for a greener, fairer future." The campaign also includes prayer, and the 'Wave of hope'. In the Wave of hope, people write a message on home-crafted 'hands', stick them on the window, take a photo and add it to an online gallery which will be shown at the G7 and COP26 for the Prime Minister and others to see our hands waving and calling for a better future. Perhaps the children and young people of Strath and Sleat could start the Wave from Skye!



The very observant may have noticed two apple trees in the Broadford Church grounds. These little trees were planted on the east side at a small ceremony on a sunny, but chilly, afternoon at the end of April (see photo). A few weeks later, Mary Strachan, Jo Headley and I brought along seedlings of hawthorn, hebe, beech, cotoneaster and willow to plant out as the start of a hedge and windbreak. No significant further work on the grounds is planned at this stage, but we would be pleased to hear any suggestions or comments.

Anne MacLennan

KILMORE REOPEN!

(only 3 spaces left last week, so book your space for Sunday 6th in Kilmore and Sunday 13th in Kyleakin as soon as possible!)



And thank you to all of the volunteers who worked so hard to get the church clean again after all the building work!



OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES!

Ramblings of a Sunday-School Teacher

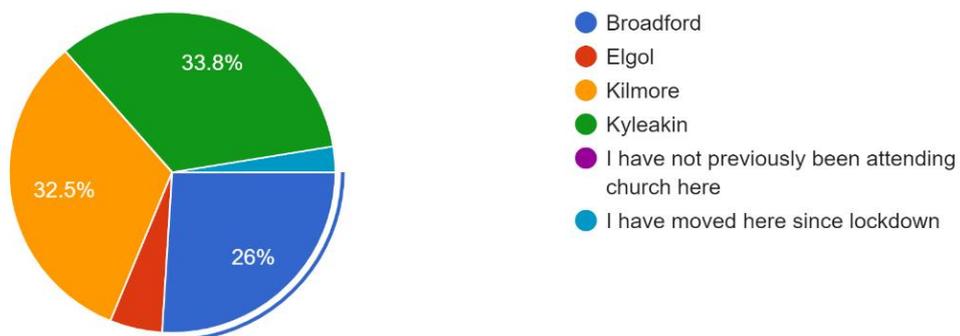
After just over twelve months of 'All age Talks' on Zoom, today was a red letter day, real Sunday School at Kilmore Church. True, the All age Talks have been a challenge, at first it was getting used to the technology but as time went on it was trying to connect with a strangely empty space...no eye contact, no feedback, no fidgeting then today came, real children at last. Catherine and I arrived at Church and went through the necessary Covid procedures before going to sit in the customary front pew with the children from Sunday-School. Glad to see them and amazed at how much they had grown. I sat down with a somewhat glib "Hello, strangers, how are you all?" A somewhat bemused Corran responded, "Why did you say that Catherine? We're not strangers, we're friends!" How beautiful was that? We hadn't seen each other for twelve months but the truth was there... we're friends, and why? Simply because God loves us! We spent a happy forty five minutes this morning, sitting in the sunshine in the Churchyard, decorating stones that we had found in the grounds, with simple but heartfelt truths, 'God loves us' 'God is good' 'God made the world' 'Be kind'. Yes the time for Bible teaching will come but for today it was enough just to know that 'We're not strangers we're friends because God loves us'.

Catherine Aden

Reopening Churches – Questionnaire summary

Place of worship you normally attend

77 responses



ZOOM ENGAGEMENT

The majority of you (78%) have been regularly engaging with Zoom. Some of you were engaging less frequently than when we were face to face, others were dipping in and out and/or attending other services online. 8 of you said you were not attending anything.

THOUGHTS ON REOPENING

Most of you (74%) were keen to attend church once we reopen while almost 10% selected 'maybe' and the rest were more reluctant to attend until the situation was safer.

Parish as one

60% agreed that there should be continuing provision for Parish wide services.

Online provision

75% agreed that online provision should continue, at least some of time and for those who could not attend.

Traveling to another church

Only 31% would be happy to travel to another church, with 30% preferring to attend online than travel and the remaining 40% either declining or not able to answer a clear yes or no.

Sunday Schools and YVs

All parents who responded were keen to have Sunday School and Young Church open up again. YV Kilmore had been meeting online weekly but children generally had not been engaging with Zoom although the All Age Talks had been very gratefully received.

REASONS FOR NOT ENGAGING WITH ZOOM OR ATTENDING LESS FREQUENTLY

Broadband was a key issue for some of you with poor connection and sound effects being the main issues.

Children – Some of you found it harder due to the children needing attention during the service time and younger children just didn't engage.

Some of you just were **uncomfortable using an online platform** like Zoom, didn't feel it worked as well or felt shy of being on camera, for example.

MAIN REASONS FOR CHOOSING NOT TO ATTEND CHURCH IN PERSON ONCE IT REOPENS

Most of you were concerned with being in church but still under restrictions around numbers, no singing and having to wear masks. You felt this would have a significant and negative impact of your experience in church.

Safety was also a key issue for you, as not everyone had been vaccinated and Zoom seemed like a sensible way to continue.

Other practical concerns included pressure on teams to arrange everything, additional cleaning required and the risk of the church, with its tight budgets already, having to spend funds on screens and additional equipment to address safety concerns.

A couple of the positive reasons that you were keen to come back into church included:

"No concerns, will be lovely to get back for us and the children."

"Not concerns but I think we will face lockdown situations again and we must be ready for those. We can't go back to the old way of doing church but must learn and adapt."

"Showing the community that we are still alive."

ZOOM HIGHLIGHTS

[A grouped summary of your comments, as there were many!]

Being with the whole parish, sense of fellowship, part of a bigger church, feelings of togetherness, getting to know others

Learning new songs, young Sleat singers, different forms of worship, having the English on screen for the Gaelic hymns

The consistency in preaching between Rory and Jade, Having George from Aman preaching Ease – no travelling, comfort of own home, cup of tea/coffee, less of a rush in the morning!

Children's addresses, Archie and the kids, crafts, different approaches, excellent

No church duties!

Shows that church is not a building

Post-service chats, seeing folk in their own surroundings, involvement of young folk (praise and readings)

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WHAT HAS BEEN LESS ENJOYABLE?

Not seeing people in person.

Being unable to sing together.

Extended time of praise was not for everyone

Having face-to-face fellowship with other members of the congregation over tea & coffee after the Sunday service.

Missed the worship leaders and others who were unable, or preferred not to, take part in Zoom

It can be less personal; you don't get to meet/support people individually in the same way.

I miss being able to read others (tone, body language etc) in the same way that I can when we are in the same room together.

Technical problems (e.g. freezing) due to slow internet connections

Missing the children/young people. Sunday school (REALLY miss the kids)

Miss seeing some of the people who don't join zoom.

Additional comments included:

A desire to see joint online services continue, on a fairly regular basis.

Economic and environmental benefits of being on Zoom.

Appreciation to Tony and Archie for their continuing technical and hosting skills.

Rotating Sunday Schools and worship teams

Praise – lots of comments and mixed views as you'd expect. Some of you, from right across the parish, really enjoyed being able to access an extended time of worship while others preferred their own worship styles. Many of you commented on how nice it was to have our young people participate in the worship – Caramarie, Emily, the Brown family, Ishbel and Esther.

Some of you felt having church only online made it less accessible for those wishing to join for a first time (as names and cameras are all visible on Zoom) although on the other hand Zoom Services have reached all over the world.

WHAT ASPECT OF CHURCH WOULD YOU NOT LIKE TO SEE RETURNING?

[A selection of your comments]

"Empty pews. In Jesus' name, fill the churches!"

"Overlong scripture readings", for some of you, having the readings in both languages was an issue.

"Hand shaking"

"The rota! Sometimes we'd only have Rory once each month."

"Participation of the congregation in some way could we read hymns if we are not allowed to sing?"

"Churches becoming parochial in attitude and outlook."

"Would like to be able to sing hymns/psalms together with everyone rather than be sung at."

"More people to be involved in delivering the all-age talk."

"I would like church to be freer and more informal on Sundays"

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON WE HAVE LEARNED OVER THE PAST YEAR?

God's in control not us and our faith must continue

Church is not a building

Brevity of life

Neighbours

We can worship from anywhere

Supporting each other

Appreciating the little things

There are more of us than we thought, we are a family, there is a lovely atmosphere on Sundays so we must be stronger than we might think.

WHAT NEW HABIT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE CHURCH MAINTAIN AS WE MOVE FORWARD?

[Grouped summary]

Format

Whole parish meeting. Connections with Christians in other places such as Jordan. The extended worship. A slower Lord's Prayer. A variety of all age talks. Times of extended worship (rather than hymn sandwich) - maybe with more explanation as to why that's a good thing.

Online

Zoom! Meeting together regularly and also the use of zoom so that those who can't attend the building still have an option to participate. Some kind of online outreach. Using technology to open up what we offer to a wider group of people, while remembering that there are some who can't use that technology. Inclusivity by being online.

Outreach

Activities in and around the churches during the week which congregational members and community can join in. Adaptation is critical in my opinion.

Youth

Youth involvement. I would like the younger members of the church to support the aging congregations by sharing their enthusiasm and spirit. Youngsters taking part. More congregational participation

Environment

Email notices rather than wasting all that paper every week

Respect for all

YOUNG CHURCH

What kind of concerns do you have around Sunday-School and YV starting up again, on a face-to-face basis?

No Sunday school teacher in Elgol now

Safety

Actually getting my kids back into the building again

Space for Broadford

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

"Well done to all the people - Tony, Rory, Archie and others - who have done so well in organising the Zoom services. Once Covid is over and it is safe to visit each other again, we could maybe do something to try to ensure that there is no "digital divide" by giving help to people if they need it with setting up the Internet and Zoom and other facilities."

"Thanks to all who have made the Zoom services possible"

"Massive thank you, to your team for the Zoomroom provision."

"Have found all facilities online from different churches very supportive with time to pray and reflect on content"

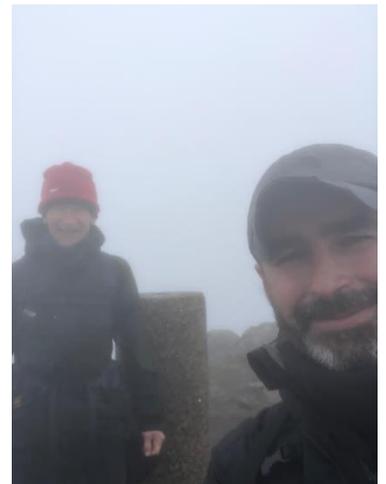
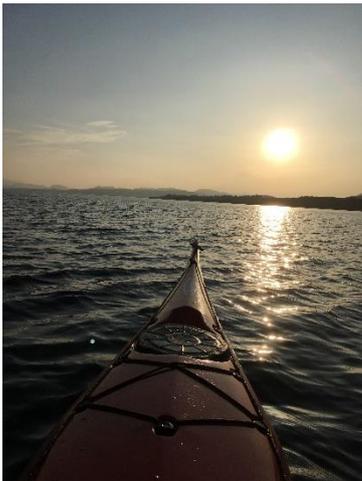
Mòran taing dhuibh uile. Thank you, all of you.

Thanks to every one of you who took the time to respond to our recent survey about reopening churches. We were really pleased to receive 77 responses, which equated roughly to 77% of adults regularly attending, and we had a good representation from across the parish, including a couple of responses from those who have moved here since lockdown.

The Session has had sight of the responses and will be working through some of the points to ensure that we can respond to the comments and suggestions included in the summary.

'Rory's Alternative MacNab'

You might remember Rory's head-shaving stunt, to kick-start sponsorship for 'Al's Gand MacNab' - a trio of adventures which Rory planned with Al Sutton, who brokered our twinning with St Paul's Church in Amman, to raise money for Christian refugees in Jordan. Well, circumstances prevented them from teaming up as originally hoped, so they are doing their own thing. On Wednesday 19 May, Rory cycled 44 miles around the Kylerhea - Glenelg - Glenshiel - Lochalsh - Skye Bridge - Breakish loop. On Friday 21 May, Archie MacCalman led them both up Blaven. On Saturday 29 May, Rory paddled 22 km around the Broadford islands of Pabbay, Longay and Guillemon. And, to round it off, Archie and Rory are getting together again to climb Clach Glas. Thank you to everyone who contributed via Rory's Justgiving page, far exceeding the original aim of raising £1,000, so that the total now stands at nearly £3,500!



LETTERS PAGE

Your comments and suggestions are really appreciated. (And thank you Dave for being the first contributor to the 'Letters Page')

REOPENING CHURCH

I am very grateful for all the effort many have put into facilitating the week to week of church life and communal worship other the past year. However, I am hoping very much that our times apart are quickly coming to an end.

With an eye on reconvening, we have recently responded to surveys regarding our attitudes to such, and also on the thought of attending Sunday morning services again. Whilst some wisdom is required for the ongoing safety of everyone, especially those in older years, it has raised other questions in my mind with regards to how our church services should look in the months to come.

There are aspects of the lockdown period which no doubt will be reflected upon, from the mourning of those lost to the celebration of being able to re-meet. In some ways I sense there is an element of Jubilee Year about the coming months. Of course there will be the ongoing reminder that, whilst hit hard over the past year, western countries, possibly with the UK at the forefront, have benefitted greatly from the vaccine rollout whereas millions around the world continue to suffer, and for many, increasingly so.

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One of the aspects of reconvening that has been playing over in my mind is what the experience of arriving at church on a Sunday morning will look like. I have no complaints about recent years gone by and it has been good to see families and inclusivity increase in our public worship together. However, I can't help feeling that if I were to turn up at 11am on a Sunday soon, troop past familiar faces and file into the same pew as ever, and then for the hour or so to unfold as before, almost as if nothing has happened, then I would be in some ways lacking for the experience. I am not, of course, referring specifically to the first week or so back, where no doubt reference and reflection will be made to what we as a nation and a church have gone through, but to the ongoing conduct of worship and teaching together. I don't have answers, but have a deep sense that there are questions which I suspect many are asking individually, and no doubt the session has considered, which we would be remiss not to ask corporately, which go way beyond the practicalities of hand washing and social distancing (a rather unbiblical approach to corporate life whereby even the outcast lepers of OT times were embraced and welcomed by Jesus.)

Our Sunday church life, whilst 'equipping the saints' should be for the public worship of GOD and for feeding our church community and our mission to the locality. Exactly what this looks like practically in our four churches will no doubt be somewhat different, as we reflect on the makeup of the individual congregations and the communities within which they serve. Perhaps some time of reflection for how the churches have evolved in recent years, from praise to seating to family, child and adult teaching and engagement, would be a good, but brief, place to start. It would seem to me that to not consider these questions and to not contemplate that our time apart might be an opportunity that the Lord wishes us to benefit and grow from would be remiss at best. I note from reading the 2015 report on the Forward Together survey, that it was recorded: The parishioners saw the way ahead as one of moving decision-making beyond where there were felt to be entrenched positions and into more discursive forums using more open processes for ensuring representativeness.

I thank Rory and the Session for their continued commitment to church leadership and ask for wisdom as these questions are raised. May GOD's grace and wisdom be with you all.

Dave Mockett

CHURCH LIFE

Funerals

Thursday 27 May

Friday 28 May

Edward MacGregor

Gordon Graham

Broadford Cemetery

Broadford Church.

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, 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

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