

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



"In 1656 the Puritan preacher and pastor, Richard Baxter, launched the "Worcester Association". The aim was to unite the church around the core doctrines and practices of the Christian faith, by visiting each family in every parish and (re) introducing them to whichever version of the Catechism (manual of Christian faith) was most appropriate. Baxter was known for his warm pastoral heart and devoted himself to the scheme out of a deep and genuine concern for the ultimate well-being of the souls in his charge.

Now, I doubt you would thank me for imposing myself on your family home from 1pm until night-time to rehearse the Shorter Catechism and then returning six weeks later to check that you had learned it! People do things differently these days. But we still have the same need to know and understand what we believe, in order to fulfil the same obligation that Christians through the ages have shared, to give an account of the hope we have so that others might find meaning and purpose in their lives through faith in Jesus.

There are many modern equivalents of Baxter's 17th century "Worcester Association". The Kirk Session has selected the Alpha Course as being the most relevant and engaging for Strath & Sleat. It's an 11 week course which is usually conducted informally around a meal and involves a short film followed by an open discussion, exploring what following Jesus means in the 21st century. Rather than swallowing points of doctrine, Alpha is all about asking questions and listening to one another - in order to tease out what we really believe. At the end of the day, it's about equipping us all to be confident in our faith and able, even eager, to share it with others - gently but convincingly.

Continued on page 2

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."

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

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE continued from page 1...

I would love every member of Strath & Sleat to take the course, whether you are newly joined or have been a lifelong member. There is always something more to learn and sharing your experience will encourage others on their journey. On account of Coronavirus, the Alpha Course has gone on-line, where it works just as well. The Sleat Youth Vestry has already embarked on a version designed for young people. I am inviting all of you, of whatever age, to consider signing up for a course after Easter. It will occupy a couple of hours a week only and we shall do our best to accommodate whichever time of day best suits you. Initially we shall meet online but we may move into real meetings, as rules allow.

To indicate your interest (without obligation) please email me at rorymofg@gmail.com or phone me on 01471 822416. In the meantime you can watch a brief promotional video by following this link: <https://youtu.be/MzMWZHMLXEO>. Or simply type Alpha Course into your computer's search engine and do your own research. Jesus came to reconcile us to God and one another, so that we might enjoy fullness of life. What can be more important, relevant and exciting than that? This is why I have no hesitation in urging us all to seize this opportunity to make refreshing our faith the platform upon which we "build back better" from the restrictions we have been under.

Rory

RORY'S FUNDRAISING for IRAQI REFUGEE CAMPS

As you know, Rory has launched his next fundraising appeal for the refugee camps. St Pauls in Amman are already supporting this project as these are refugees that don't get any funding from the usual sources.

As soon as restrictions allow, Rory and Al Sutton have set themselves the challenge of a seven hour Kayak, an eight hour cycle and the Blaven/Clach Glas ridge! And meanwhile, Rory promised "If I reach my target (£1,000) by Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day and day before Ash Wednesday), then I shall shave my head and give up hair for Lent!" And by Shrove Tuesday Rory's target had been exceeded, and then some!!! FANTASTIC!!!

<https://www.facebook.com/645274585502378/videos/744929989791461>



So on Ash Wednesday Annice got the clippers out!

Just click on this link above to see Annice's clippers in action! The amount raised so far is an amazing

£2,652! If you would still like to support this fundraiser, (and reward Rory for his **very** generous sacrifice) here's the link for more details and to the 'just giving' page...

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/roderick-macleod-1?utm_term=YD68Ddb4g

“GRÀDHAICH DO CHOIMHEARSNACH MAR THU FHÈIN”

Tha cuimhn' agam o chionn beagan bhliadhnaichean a bhith aig tiodhlacadh bhoireannach sa bhaile, boireannach a bha cho laghach agus cho còir 's a bha tè riamh. Ged a bha mi air a bhith eòlach oirre fad bhliadhnaichean, 's ann a dh'ionnsaich mi barrachd mu a beatha ann an leth-uair a shìde den t-seirbheis sin, na dh'ionnsaich mi riamh. Agus chuir e dragh orm. Bhithinn ga faicinn a h-uile seachdain 's i a' tadhal dhan bhùth bheag a bh' agam aig an àm, gach seachdain airson pàipear-naidheachd; bhithinn tric ga faicinn aig tachartasan sa choimhearsnachd agus nuair a bhithinn a-muigh air cuairt leis a' chloinn. Ach 's ann glè ainneimh a bhiodh sinn a' bruidhinn air a' bheatha a bh' aice mus do chuir mise eòlas oirre, no mu na rudan a bha cudromach dhìse. Cha do bhruidhinn sinn riamh mu dheidhinn creideimh.

Ach thug e orm smaoinachadh, carson nach robh sinn a' bruidhinn air na cuspairean mòra seo, nar beathannan làitheil? Bidh sinn ga dhèanamh le cuid de ar caraidean - an fheadhainn às dlùithe, an fheadhainn a tha deònach a dhol an sàs ann an deasbad leinn no bhith a' meòrachadh air gnothaichean den t-seòrsa. Ach carson nach eil sinn ga dhèanamh le feadhainn leis nach eil sinn cho dlùth? Le cinnt, dh'fhàsadh sinn na b' eòlaiche air a chèile nan robh fios agus tuigse na b' fheàrr againn air na rudan a bha prìseil dhaibhsan.



Nuair a bha a' bhùth fhathast agam, shìos aig Eilean Iarmain, thigeadh gu leòr luchd-turais a-steach. Mar as trice, bhruidhneadh sinn air an aimsir, no na saor-làithean aca, no bhiodh iad a' faighneachd dhìom, le iongnadh, ciamar idir a bhithinn a' tighinn beò sa gheamhradh! Ach bho àm gu àm, thigeadh cuideigin a-steach aig an robh ùidh ann an gnothaichean na bu dhoimhne – neo-eisimeileachd do dh'Alba, no eachdraidh an eilein; beatha-choimhearsnachd no chroitreachd; feallsanachd no creideamh. Tha cuimhn' am croitear aon latha ag innse dhomh mar a bhiodh e a' leughadh a Bhìoball gach oidhche mus deigheadh e na shineadh:

b' e iongnadh agus urram a bh' ann dhomh sin a chluinntinn. 'S iadsan na còmhraidhean prìseil air a bheil cuimhn' agamsa fhathast. Chan e an fheadhainn mu dheidhinn sneachd agus dìl uisge.

'S dòcha gu bheil cuideigin sa bhaile agaibhse a dhèanamh feum air beagan èisteachd no brosnachaidh nan cluais. A bheil fios agaibh mu bheatha ur nàbaidh, mus do chuir sibh eòlas orra? Saoil dè na rudan a tha prìseil dhaibhsan? 'S dòcha gum b' urrainn dhuinn uile ceum a ghabhail gus barrachd tuigse fhaighinn orrasan a tha mu thimcheall oirnn. Nach b' fheàrrde dhuinn sin, seach a bhith ga chluinntinn airson a' chiad uair nan òraid-mholaidh?

Nicola Thomson

CREATION CARE COGITATIONS

John the Baptist was to go before the Lord, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1: 17).

This was the focus of a study in 1999, anticipating the new millennium. On re-reading recently, it seems appropriate right now as we are forced to review 'normal' on the other side of the pandemic and Brexit. Remember too, that everything will be impacted by climate change and other aspects of creation carelessness such as biodiversity loss and pollution.

Covid 19 has brought illness, grief, economic disaster, exhaustion, fear and anger to different communities. Hunger and poverty have increased, and the sea floor is littered with 'disposable' gloves and masks. Tom Wright, in 'God and the Pandemic' (2020) urges us to "embrace lament as the vital initial Christian response to this pandemic". Prayer and reflection are essential, but then "fresh action must come out of lament". "New opportunities can and do emerge".

Remember that the first disciples were in lockdown, fearful and doubting, when Jesus joined them in their bleak situation to give them instructions and to promise the necessary resources for the task of preparing all people for the Lord. He totally transformed their outlook. God works out his purposes in his world through faithful disciples (but can bypass the reluctant to ensure that the job gets done).

Wright refers to the early Christians in Antioch, a bustling and prosperous city, when Agabus prophesies the famine of AD 41-54 (Acts 11: 28). Rather than questioning the famine, looking to attribute blame, or claiming it as a punishing sign from God, these Christians asked who was going to be at special risk, and how they could help. They then set about getting relief to fellow, less prosperous, believers in Jerusalem.



How does this relate to our situation? Preparation for the Lord includes acknowledgement and repentance of disobedience to God, and being Christ's witnesses in a changing world. We must strive to rebuild a society that is fairer and more sustainable. We may have been unwittingly contributing to health, climate and economic injustices by our previously 'normal' lifestyles. The Scottish and international poor are more likely to suffer and die from Covid, pollution, extreme weather, hunger or violence.

Turning the hearts of parents to their children can be interpreted in various ways, but one interpretation is that the current generation "must think in terms of making the world a safe, just, and fit place to live for those who follow us" (Hughes, 1999). Earth Overshoot Day is the date when humanity has used up the ecological resources that the earth can regenerate in one year. In 2020, we overshot on August 22nd, so we were stealing from our children until December 31st. If

we do not make radical changes to our use of the earth's finite resources, the world is going to be a dangerous and scary place for today's young people.

Continued on page 5



CREATION CARE, continued from page 4

So - what about using the church grounds in Broadford and Kilmore to grow nutritious food for local consumption (eg Food Bank) with minimal transport and packaging? This could draw in people who would not think of entering the church buildings, and provide habitat for birds, bees, and soil organisms. Congregational facilities and skills could help to run workshops on repairing clothes, tools etc. Other ideas keenly invited!

We hope to hold a Zoom meeting in the next few weeks to bounce around ideas for Strath and Sleat to contribute to preparing for the Lord by tending his creation. Please get in contact if you are interested: aomacl@tighgorm.scot 01471 822 501

Creation Care meetings are held on the third Monday of every month by Zoom, 7.30 - 9pm. All welcome.

Monday 15th March: Talk, 'Climate Change and Health'.

Monday 19th April: Bible Study

A QUESTION FOR JADE

“Hi Jade. Most people know you by now, but just in case anyone is unsure, please could you introduce yourself?”

“What do you want to be when you grow up? We have all been asked that question, probably more than once and normally by the time someone has reached my age they have a definite answer, and I do now. In truth I think I have known what that answer should have been to that question for years, however I was too scared to follow through. Instead, I tried my hand at other things, working in tourism, care, teaching and even fish farming for a fleeting moment, however there was always something nagging at me, telling me I was not where I should be. Then in 2015 I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia and after my initial treatment I realised that while it may seem possible to run from God (for a time) you can't actually hide from Him, just ask Jonah, and as such I entered the discernment process for the full-time ministry of the Church of Scotland. Thankfully as part of this process I was placed in Strath and Sleat and it was here that I was welcomed into an amazingly vibrant and nurturing Christian family. In 2019 I was accepted as a candidate for the ministry, which was both the most amazing and terrifying moment of my life, and then I was given back to Strath and Sleat to begin my initial training. Just after that, in May 2019, my leukaemia returned and as such I had to defer for a year while I moved back to Glasgow for a bone marrow transplant. In October 2020 I was able to return to Glenelg (I know, I know I am a mainlander) and resume my training and this is where we are now. I have been placed in your care (and vice versa), to begin to learn the basic ropes of ministry and all that it involves and in doing so I have met the most wonderful, supportive, and encouraging individuals who together make up the Strath and Sleat Church. This then is why over the next few months you may see more of me and less of your minister on a Sunday morning, however things will return to normal soon enough I promise. Until then I just want to say thank you for having me and for helping me to find my feet during this initial part of my training, your prayers, encouragement and feedback are very much appreciated. Thanks, Jade”

And Jade is arranging a gathering on TUESDAY 23RD MARCH to mark the anniversary of the first lockdown - as our own opportunity to express lament and commitment. (details will follow soon)

KYLEAKIN YOUNG-CHURCH

It was a challenge this year to find a way to celebrate Christmas under the restrictions of the pandemic. We would normally have been working towards our family Christmas service since the October break! So this Christmas Kyleakin's young church did 2 things. Those who enjoyed singing or playing music each sent their home recordings of 'Away in a manger' to Tony who was able to combine them into a single group performance which was wonderful to hear and see! Some of the Sunday school dressed in costumes and we then heard them, their families and some of our older young-church members reading of the wonderful events that occurred when Jesus was born. For obvious reasons this was done with no read through or rehearsal, but our young people rose to the occasion to bring us the Christmas story this year. So a HUGE thank you to you all!



Meanwhile Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time to prepare for the events to come at Easter. We need to think of how we can make more space for Jesus in our lives. So here's a simple craft anyone can do.



Cut 46* strips of paper (about 2cm x 15cm). Then **each day during lent**, write (or draw) a short prayer on one strip of paper. For example you might...

- **Thank God for something** (e.g. family, friends, dinner, your home, your hard working teachers etc.)
- **Ask Jesus to help you with something you're finding difficult.**
- **Ask Jesus to help you think of something kind you can do for someone.**
- **Pray for someone who needs Jesus's help.**

And as you do each one, use it to make a paper chain (after you've decorated them!). It would be lovely if we could join everyone's chains together at Easter!

SPRING EVENTS TO GET YOU THINKING

Grasping the Nettle, the team behind 'The God Question' have arranged a new series of events to be held online this spring. The first two webinars will be looking at the Athiest's view of God. All events are free and you can find out more and book online [here](#).

Grasping the Nettle



STRUGGLING FOR A TITLE. CAN YOU HELP?

The idea of a webinar without a title is unthinkable!
But what if you can't settle on one that you think works?

A very unusual step would be to write a note like this to people who would naturally expect a title - and try to explain.

We're clear about what we're trying to do in a pair of GTN webinars scheduled for 18th and 25th February; it's the title that's the problem.

You see we've been thinking about many of you and how we can help in the following situation:

You find yourself, perhaps without warning, in a conversation with someone who thinks folk who believe in God have never grown up. What sorts of things are they likely to say; what 'slings and arrows' will probably come your way? And how might you respond?

We have engaged Peter S Williams who is highly experienced in this to help think it through, not just in terms of how atheists think about God. (That's session 1) but also in relation to how they think about Jesus too. (That's session 2.) What can a Christian's answer be?

So what title should we use? We were perplexed.

'Reading the Atheist Mind'? Could sound a bit dull and academic.

What about 'Understanding Atheism'? Maybe gives the impression of being too abstract!

How about 'A User's Guide to Understanding Atheism'? But what on earth is a 'user'? Not great.

Another idea: 'Looking Inside My Atheist Friend's Mind'. That could have some appeal but it wrongly gives the impression that there is a thing called an atheist mind and your friend has it.

Stuck! Well maybe not entirely. Talking this through has clarified some things.

Why don't we just settle for **CAN WE HELP YOU?** as our title.

Having read this, we think you'll know what we're trying to do.

To join us just respond to this email, requesting access details. We'll be glad to help.

The GTN Team

THE COMMUNITY FOODBANK - SKYE & LOCHALSH

Many people in Skye and Lochalsh are relying on the food bank to get enough to eat. So please donate when you can. At the moment they are in particular need of:

Rice	Strong bags
Coffee	Tinned meat
Long-life milk	Small bags of sugar



Please look at their website <https://skyefoodbank.co.uk/> or facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SkyeFoodBank/> to get an up-to-date list and other information.

YOUTH VESTRY, FILM-MAKING AND YOUTH ALPHA

We have been very grateful that YV has continued to meet during lockdown, over Zoom with a couple of face-to-face meetings last year, while we worked on a short film for FilmG. YV wanted to interview Dolina Matheson, about her faith and her work as a biology teacher, and how they affected each other. They have made a lovely 5-minute film, called **Saidheans is Soisgeul** (Science and Gospel) and it can be viewed [here](#). It has also been short listed in this year's FilmG Best Heritage Film section. Many thanks to Alasdair MacKay, who was able to support our production.

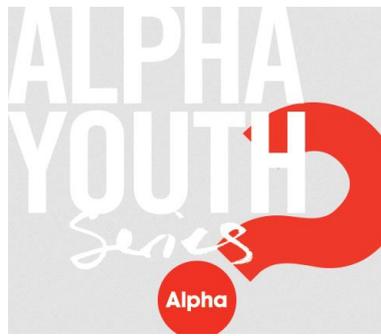


Alasdair provided mentoring for each of the roles required to make the filming happen.



YV team back together after the first lockdown, with thanks to the Free Church for providing a space for us while the Kilmore windows project was underway.

continued on page 9



Since the New Year, we have been working our way through Online Youth Alpha. YV have been enjoying the content and format, with a view to being able to roll this out across Strath and Sleat to encourage those who do not currently have any faith or have had any exposure to the gospel. It has been a real blessing to have YV's own input on the course content and how opportunities arise in their day-to-day lives to discuss faith. To run courses like this across the parish, we need teams of willing folk to help out with the technical side, hosting and facilitating. If you're interested or would like to find out more about what would be involved, please get in touch with Nicola at strathandsleat@gmail.com

You do not need to have any qualifications – Youth Alpha is about facilitating discussions and not having the all the correct answers. Youth Alpha provides all the information that then allows a person to consider their own view of the Gospel and we pray that the Holy Spirit will take them from there on. Dez Johnstone, the Alpha Scotland Director, will be meeting with the Kirk Session in early March to discuss these developments and as Rory mentioned, we shall be running adult Online Alpha too. You can see Dez [here](#), talking about his work, as part of Martin's Memorial's Word on Wednesday video series.

Here's the link for the Alpha resources: <http://tryalpha.scot/>

Although lockdown has had so many disadvantages, we are grateful to God that most of our YV group have been able to continue with us online and we have a member who joined us during the first lockdown too. We give thanks for their faithfulness.

It is fair to say we have all adjusted during this last year, to different ways of doing church, and YV is no exception. Please continue to pray for our youth right across the parish, that their faith be strengthened and that they feel equipped to go out into the world as witnesses to Jesus.

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid ... for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." Deut 31:6



CHURCH LIFE

Funerals Billy Reid - 15th October 2020 at Broadford (graveside)
George Matheson MacInnes (Seoras) - 15th January 2021 at Kilbeg (kilmore)
Margaret Gillies – 26th January 2021 at Broadford (graveside)

OUR CHURCHES

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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 or postponed until further notice.

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

CHURCH SESSION

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