

## The Way Ahead

Hello everyone,

I recently attended a meeting where we discussed future ministry provision for the churches in Arbroath after the Service of Union on 29th February. It was a bit of a shock for me to realise that this article might be the last one I write under the banner of the Quest magazine of St Andrew's Church. After the Service of Union, there will be a period of transition as the nuts and bolts of implementing the union take place over the months ahead. During this transition a lot of work will be done to establish the new united kirk session including working out arrangements for worship centres and finances as per the Presbytery Mission Plan. Perhaps a new Arbroath and District church magazine will be proposed covering items of interest from all the previous congregations.

Over the course of January and February, the focus for our Sunday services has been (and will continue to be) "The Way Ahead: following Jesus". We are looking at what it means to grow as followers, or disciples of Jesus through uncertain and challenging times and allowing Him to get us fit for the new era we are entering. The teaching has revolved around four key phrases which I be-



lieve may be important for us in this time ahead (see diagram below) and bring a focus for God's "growth plan" for us as individuals and as church.

So far, we have looked at how we need to keep our relationships healthy – our relationship with God being the most important one - but also our relationships with each other. Jesus was sent by the Father full of grace and truth (John 1: 15). I think it is good to take stock of how well we exercise that balance between grace and truth in our own lives, able to speak and model unconditional love and encouragement like Jesus, but not to shy away from tackling the tough issues we face ahead.

In February, we will go on to look at some characters from the bible, who have been passionate in prayer and worship, learnt how to lead courageously and model for us how to live with vision and discernment. Often times they didn't get it all right, and nether will we, but nevertheless I challenge us to pray every day. Why don't you cut out the image above and pray through each phrase, and let's see what God does amongst us!

Love to you all, Jonathan

### Scottish Heroes of the Faith: Robert Bruce of Kinnaird (Part 1)

Though there is no firm record of the date of Robert Bruce's birth, it is generally believed that he was born in early in the 1550s. Certainly, we know his place of birth was Airth Castle near Larbert in Stirlingshire. His father, Sir Alexander Bruce, wanted him to be a lawyer, and so he studied law both at St Andrews University and then on the Continent. His mother was from the Scottish nobility and was born and brought up as a devout Roman Catholic in Calendar House, Falkirk. (It's interesting that the family homes of both his parents are still today in excellent condition and open to visitors.)

But during his studies in law, Robert embraced the Reformation biblical teaching of salvation being a gift of God, received only through faith. At that time, the Roman Catholic Church taught that God met us halfway—each person had to reform themselves to some extent, and then God extended grace to them. It is probable that the young Bruce heard John Knox's sermons in the university chapel in St Andrews, for at the time Bruce was a student there the fiery reformer was preaching the Reformation teaching that the gift of salvation was 'through faith alone, by grace alone and through Christ alone.'

His father had given him his own estate of Kinnaird with a fine stately home and several farms whose rental income made Robert a wealthy young man. However, to his mother's distress, he resolved to return to St Andrews to study for the ministry. Very angry with him, she persuaded his father to withhold the income from his estate, thereby leaving him in poverty. Nothing daunted, Bruce sold his horse, and walked from Airth to St Andrews to begin his study for the ministry in the Kirk, which was then in its infancy, the Reformation having just taken place in Scotland in 1560.

Not only was he a brilliant student, he was also a powerful preacher, showing great promise. People flocked to hear him ministering in Holy Trinity Church: standing room only when the young aristocrat was preaching on the Lord's Day. But his rise to huge influence in Scotland had only just begun!

D Searle

We were all so greatly saddened to hear of the passing of Lorna Searle after a long battle with serious illness. David and Lorna's faith was amazing and, at a time when David was devoting his every effort to help Lorna, he had to fight his own serious health issues with his voice which, with thanksgiving, have been overcome. And still, David finds time to make his immeasurably valuable contributions to Quest. Thank you David, - yourself a 'Hero of The Faith'!

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**ST. ANDREW'S ARBROATH****Member Records - December 2023 / January 2024****Baptisms** - None**Weddings** - None**Funerals** - None

Jonathan and Ian, our pastoral assistant, conducted other funerals though none were of members of our congregation. Nonetheless, we remember the bereaved families in our prayers.

**IMPORTANT DATE****MARCH EDITION**

Word Processed files as attachments, should be sent directly to the Editor by

**Thursday 22nd February**

If you do not have my email, phone me on 01241 875235

## Towards Arbroath and District Church of Scotland

At the end of 2022 the Presbytery Mission Plan for the Arbroath and area cluster of churches was approved by Presbytery and the appropriate committees of the central church. This plan approved the union of all nine churches in the cluster – Arbirlot, Carmyllie, Colliston, Frickheim & Kinnell, Inverkeilor, Old & Abbey, St Andrew's, St Vigeans and West Kirk.

2023 was therefore a year in which we worked hard to implement the plan by;

1. Creating a transition team to facilitate the legal process involved in creating the union, including deciding on a name.
2. Providing activities to build relationships – Walk and talks to churches, joint bible studies, prayer evenings – bearing in mind that in weeks like Easter Code and Bubblegum & Fluff we are already working together.
3. United services of worship in the summer and at harvest and Christmas time.

In June 2023 we held the first congregational vote. As 2 of the 9 congregations didn't vote in favour of the union we took some time and offered Question & Answer sessions to try to address concerns and to listen to other voices. Perth Presbytery were then involved in the decision to hold a second vote, this time involving 8 churches, providing Arbirlot with a little more time to make a decision. The second vote was held in December and was approved with a resounding majority.

Since that time progress has been rapid. The Union has been approved by Perth Presbytery and the central church. OSCAR (the charities regulator) has been informed and it is their role to legally bring the eight charities into one body. The date for the union has been set as the 29<sup>th</sup> February and there will be a Presbytery-led service on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February to effect this at 7pm in St Andrew's Church. Once the union takes place all elders from the eight legacy congregations will form the new Kirk Session.

Already many people in church teams – session clerks, finance, property, safeguarding, roll keepers, elders and more have been getting together to work out how to establish new structures to operate a united congregation operating in 6 worshipping centres and one mission centre. It's not a small task and we won't get everything right first time but the ministry team (Peter, Carla and myself) are so grateful for all the time, effort and enthusiasm that is being given and shown and the support we are receiving from Perth Presbytery. We are also meeting with present locums and our invaluable staff to reassure them of their value to us and make sure we secure their roles in the new organisation correctly.

Following the union we are planning a united service to celebrate. On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March (Palm Sunday) we welcome to Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton and her husband to lead us in worship and we will share in Holy Communion together followed by lunch. This will be at the West Kirk at 11am.

Please pray for all involved in the coming weeks and months as a new structure is established and that this coming together of people will provide the foundation for more opportunities to share God's love with the people of this area.

**Dates for the Diary:-**

**Service of Union – St Andrew's Church – Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 7pm**

**Celebration of Union – West Kirk – Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 11am**

## Guild News

Greetings Ladies,

Welcome to 2024 - we started the year with a very appropriate subject for a Scottish housewife. Getting rid of the old and starting anew, who had a good red out before the bells? Brenda Carcary, waste strategy officer for Angus council, and her colleague, explained the new system of kerb collection while outlining the very important reasons things are changing. Lots of questions were asked and I'm sure we will still have more as the changes are implemented.

On the 29th of January we are to have a quiz night, with a look back at the 50s, 60s, 70s etc., our fashions, and special items which evoke memories, all accompanied by some snack foods from those decades.

I am adding pictures from our very successful Christmas craft evening when Gaynor excelled by providing some wonderful craft items for us all to do.

Of course the year would not be complete without the Christmas party. Oh! BOY! It was a roaring success, held in the Meadowbank, and we had a lovely meal in warm comfortable surroundings with plenty of room for some active games.

Feed back from this evening was all very positive with lots of smiles, laughter and singing.

**Till next time always remember -**

**“Whose we are and Whom we serve.”**

## Dalitso Project

Hi all,

Happy New Year from us all at the Dalitso Project.

We are still recovering from a very busy December where we had mosquito nets being bought in abundance for our Malawian family, Christmas Food orders that had a good few of us up early on Christmas Eve filling boxes of soups or cheesecake bases topped, plus the whole team had been hard at work at all the Christmas Fairs, the sales of which went for the purchase of blankets. Sums of money raised totalled £7185.30 – Mosquito nets £2110, Christmas food orders £1311 and Christmas Fairs £3764.30.

As we sung on Sunday ‘Our God is a great big God’ who has provided so well for us that we may in turn, share this

with others. So, a massive thank you to you all who gave so generously.

We will have much more news in February as we finish off our accounts for 2023 and plans for 2024.

However, we do have dates for your diary already:

We are again manning the soup kitchen/coffee & cakes in the big hall at the Spring Fair which will be held in the church on Saturday 02 March 2024, as well as our Church soup lunch on 19th May.

Please get in touch with me or Charis on 07877 256236 or any committee member, if there is anything you want to ask about Dalitso.

Doris

## Christmas at the Wednesday Café

Meeting on the first Wednesday of the month, means that our Christmas party is quite an early one. We all look forward to it as it's a happy time. The Café girls provide delicious home baking every month, but it's extra special baking at Christmas.

Our afternoon started with a visit from the Primary 1 children from Ladyloan and they were a delight, reminding us of the true meaning of Christmas. Thank you so much to

the teachers and helpers for all their hard work and to the children who did so well.

We then moved through to the big hall and enjoyed a wonderful Christmas tea and a visit from Santa who had gifts for everyone. We also had an extra, unexpected visitor at our party – a lady who had mistakenly thought she had an appointment for her Covid vaccination who we invited to join us instead! (She returned for her vaccination the next day.)

The Wednesday Café is a friendly place where folk with dementia, along with their family or friends, can enjoy a home baking and optional activities. A warm welcome is guaranteed!

## Prayer & Pancakes

**St Andrew's Church, Hamilton Green  
4-6pm Tuesday 13th February 2024**

Feel free to drop in and out between these times – you can work round the prayer stations at your leisure.

Free event

Join us to mark the beginning of lent with a dedicated time

of prayer as we begin journeying towards Easter. There will be a selection of interactive prayer stations to move between and you can complete as many or as few as you wish. These prayer stations aim to provide a quiet space where you can individually reflect on the season of lent and what it means to you.

There will, of course, be pancakes and refreshments provided!

This is an intergenerational event so is open to all.

# More In Photos

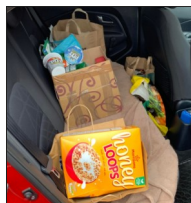
## Guild Christmas Party held at the Meadowbank on 11<sup>th</sup> December



Café entertained by P1 Ladyloan children, followed by Party



Harvest food donations that were passed to the Foodbank at Old & Abbey Church.



A feast of goodies from Dalitso catering

