

Barrhead St. Andrew's Church



Lockdown Newsletter



Our new Community Hall is at a standstill!

It was all going so well. Our builders, Fleming Buildings Limited, came on site at the end of January. At first, all went well and the site was soon cleared and contoured. Trenches were dug for the foundations but the persistent rain in early February delayed the pouring of the concrete. When the foundations for our new Community Hall were eventually in place, the building squad managed to make up the lost time and the steel frame of the building appeared as if by magic!

Then coronavirus struck. The government decreed that all building sites had to shut down, so on Monday, 23rd March, the site was closed and locked up – till further notice.

No-one knows when it will be possible to start work again, so we don't know when the building will be finished. We'll just have to wait and see.

Peter Inglis

A Letter from John Angus Morrison

You will recall some time ago we had a report from John Angus Morrison, who is working in Madagascar 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language' He is also involved in building new community facilities there and we assisted by sending £1,800 from our 'sweetie money'. John Angus came back to Lewis before the current crisis and has sent the attached message and photographs, which I am sure you will find interesting.

'I was apprenticed as an engineer and I take pride in what I build or do in that respect. But the block would not be what it is without the contribution of St Andrew's congregation. The two showers are as important as the toilets. They would not have existed but for your help. It is indescribably difficult for the peoples of Fort Dauphin to keep clean like we do. Not because they are lacking in hygiene but they have little access to water. It is difficult to express. These are not unsophisticated people at all, but the French colonialists did nothing for them in terms of infrastructure.

I am actually back on Lewis. I returned early April. I was "strongly advised" by the British Embassy to leave. I was on the last flight out (chartered). Previously I was offered a seat but said that I was not leaving until the block was finished and, remarkably, the workers pulled out all the stops and finished it in the nick of time. The standard of workmanship surprised me and, because it was for the school, the workers put in a bit more effort than they perhaps might have. To say the least, I was delighted. I returned home for the sake of Mum and Dad. Fort Dauphin is a nice place to be, even given its difficulties. Nice kind people with a ready smile and I never experienced problems because of the colour of my skin.



Good, decent Christian people who have the greatest respect for the teachings of our bible. A Sunday sees many, many people out in their Sunday best, bible in hand.

My intention is to spend the winter here, attend college to study fashion and design and, with God's grace, return to FD and start a business, ostensibly to give some folks work. There is no industry there. I think it can work. I have already looked into setting up a radio station (apparently not too difficult) for the English Centre and, have my sights set on filming a soap opera. That would really put FD on the map. I miss the place and my friends there - and, at least now they know where Scotland is! I remember my dad, a man of few words, saying to me as I left for the first time: "Go out there and show them what a Scottish person can do."

One of the best things I ever did in my life.

So thanks again for the encouragement - meantime, I am locked down - but I live in a beautiful house, in a beautiful place and thus count my blessings.

Kind regards,

John Angus Morrison.'



7th Barrhead Rainbows, Brownies and Guides



Life is certainly very different for everyone just now and of course that includes in Guiding. At the start of the lockdown, as a leadership team, we were very keen to carry on Guiding if we possibly could and felt it was important to stay connected with our girls. So, much like the rest of society, we have gone online.

Rainbows are our youngest section at age 5-7 years and for them this has taken the form of Facebook Live sessions. Each week a leader goes onto our closed Facebook page and speaks to the girls, usually playing a game, singing a song and setting them a task for the week ahead. The tasks are all part of the Rainbow programme and count towards badges and awards. Our week is then filled with lovely photos and videos of the girls carrying out the activities. The following week, the leader presenting the session lets the girls know which part of their badge they can tick off.

You might recall that Girlguiding launched a new programme almost 2 years ago, and as part of that programme, the highest award a girl can achieve in each section is the Gold Award. This award won't be earned by every girl, instead will only be achieved through huge commitment and dedication. As the Rainbow programme is 2 years, they are the first section to be nearing the end of the programme and we are delighted that around 7 girls are heading towards Gold, having completed the last term of activities online. More about that once the girls finish the award.

Brownies are the next section for girls aged 7-10 years. In a very similar way to Rainbows, we started off with Facebook live sessions for them, singing songs, playing games and setting them a task for the week ahead. This continues weekly but for Brownies we felt needed a little bit more and we have therefore recently started 2 weekly Zoom meetings. This has enabled the girls to speak to us and to each other, which is so important. Not all of the Brownies join these sessions, in fact



different girls join on different weeks, but the important thing is that they continue to connect with us.



Guides of course are older again at age 10-14 years and they have been having weekly Zoom sessions. As the girls are older, they are far more able to interact in this way and they enjoy seeing and speaking to each other. One week they all met in their kitchens and made a 'cake in a mug' together and they have also worked as a team to 'escape' from an online escape room. They also enjoy quizzes, games, scavenger hunts, a challenge to make an outfit from items found around their homes and every week they end by singing 'Taps', the song traditionally sung at the end of every guide meeting.

Our promise is at the heart of everything we do in Guiding and that remains the case with online Guiding. We say our Promise together at every virtual meeting, just in the same way we always do. The girls are reminded of the importance of keeping their Promise during these difficult times and we have had lovely photos of the girls helping others and being kind.

None of this would be possible without the support of the Parents and we are very grateful to them for the way they have engaged with us and are supporting their daughters to continue Guiding.

We don't know when we will be able to resume in person meetings, and our next challenge is likely to be that some girls will move between sections virtually after the summer – this will be new and different but we are confident that we can carry on with virtual Guiding until we can meet again.

7th Barrhead Leaders



Online Church

And we say God works in mysterious ways!

Who would have known when we launched our Online Church live and catch up services on 22 December 2019 as part of our outreach/pastoral care extension, within 3 months we would all be 100% reliant on digital worship for maintaining a weekly offering of worship in Barrhead St Andrews....

How has this digital journey evolved or does it feel more like a revolution?

We have gone from less than 10 households viewing in those early weeks to viewing numbers now, both live and on catch up touching 100 households. Households may have multiple viewers.

From a weekly service online, to hosting Holy Week Services, Joint Services, Zoom Services and crucially providing the opportunity for families to join together and celebrate the life of loved ones.

Participating in National prayer initiative "thy kingdom come"

We have seen worshippers join us from Canada, England, Portpatrick and other congregations across neighbouring communities

We have increased member participation in services, both live and pre recorded, through pictures and words.

On average 10 Church meetings take place on zoom each week

What does this tell us about ourselves?

We are far more capable of change and change at a fast pace.

We have far more digital capabilities than we give ourself credit for - even if we feel it has been thrust upon us.

The Challenge

How can we take the advances of this time, harness, grow and expand them? - not retreat to the way we have done things in the past, just because we have done them in the past..... let's create our own new normal, not have normal built for us...

How do we support less digitally enabled parts of our community access our worship - those in schools, residential care settings, congregational members, young people and organisations?

If you wish to get involved in supporting our online support services and worship, please do get in touch - Jim Glen

Jim Glen

1st Barrhead Boys Brigade

Facebook: 1st Barrhead Boys Brigade

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We have celebrated Holy Communion as a virtual family

We commenced an audio only version of the service uploaded weekly and accessible on a local rate telephone number 0141.



What does this mean for the future?

The growth in Digital Church is a massive opportunity to connect with our community, and with individuals who might not walk through our doors on a weekly basis...



The reach, growth and speed of digital communications far exceeds the spoken word.

We have a responsibility to share God word in this space.

Church Quiz

Over this period of isolation, we have held a couple of Church online social events with Quiz's- Quizmaster James Guthrie has been testing our mental abilities - in fact if he had been in the same room we might have been throwing things at him.

This has been a nice relaxed time and up to 20 households have take part. During this time we were able to meet the Fulton family who are new to the area and have been joining us weekly during our online services and it was nice to see Jim Cowan join us for our first event.

Quiz 1 winner were the Wilson's
Quiz 2 winner were the Denovan's

Here's to our next social event, maybe when all is over we might continue with these virtual fun and friendly activities.

BB goes virtual....

Like all other activities in the life of our Church they have been hit hard at this time. Face to Face new to meeting came to a close like turning off the light switch.

Undeterred the BB nationally launched a #BB@home program for all sections, published weekly with 6 activities to be competed from your own home or when undertaking exercise. After hearing and seeing the success our guides were having with online sessions, the BB quickly followed suit. Each week we have been engaging with up to 20 boys and leaders in these online sessions. While these are not the levels we would engage with face to face, we have found new a way to help us stay connected and we have managed to offer a range of activities from, quizzes to online gaming and playing countdown, capitals, Pictionary, Simon says and find me....

We are very grateful to both leaders and boys embracing this quick evolution of BB.

Sadly, this period has seen the cancellation to a number of significant events included ... annual parents evenings and awards, end of session camps and celebrating some of our senior boys getting Queens Badge and Presidents Badges.

We will have a lot to make up for in the months ahead.... but I am sure we will come back stronger and fitter later in the year.

New Church Website

We have recently secured some funding to redesign and upgrade our Church website. We are grateful to the communities cashback fund for supporting us and in the coming months we will be scoping this development. This will give us a massive uplift in our overall digital enablement for the future.



Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday Susan and all those who have had a birthday during lockdown...

Online donations

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2020/support-your-local-church-with-our-new-online-donations-system>



Clap for Carers and Key Workers

The BB have been taking part in ten weekly clap for carers and keep workers... joining millions across the country who have be marking the support being provided at this time to keep our communities safely served.



'The Day the world stopped...'

23rd of March, I remember it well
The day we will forever look back and tell
How the world as we knew it
Stopped, took stalk and reflected a bit

We stayed inside and locked our doors
No venturing out, just doing our chores
Cupboards, drawers, an early spring clean
Not fully understanding what does all this mean.

Our loved ones voices were all we could hear
So far away and yet so near
Doorstep deliveries, the highlight of the day
Online shopping as we just press pay

So where was God in all of this
As we battled with our not so isolated bliss
Was he watching and listening to our plaintive cries
As we struggled to make sense of all the media lies.

We saw angels in blue at sick peoples sides
As they fought each day to turn the tide
Exhaustion written on all their faces
As they dealt with more and more covid cases.

We saw families playing and sharing a meal
Making the most of this so called raw deal
People being more connected than ever before
As we worried and shook to our very core

God was and still is very near
And to all those whom we do hold dear
He wipes the tears from all our eyes
And tells us not to believe the devils lies

Material possessions no longer matter
When people's lives are laid bare in tatters
Loving thy neighbour sounds a more attractive option
Wherever did we experience that emotion

Our sense of normal wasn't working
Greed and self forever lurking
Trying to outdo everyone else
Our world of plenty was soon to be empty

So Lord forgive us when all we do is take
And forgive us when we make so many mistakes
So let's never return to this time of trial
And always remember our total denial

We are the cause of this awful pandemic
With total disregard for our fellow man
We push and shove and take not give
Although we know that's not the way to live

May we learn to love and give like Jesus
Our strength and companion on the way
So that never in our lifetime or beyond
Will we ever forget that lockdown day.

Prayer Triplets

BLESSINGS

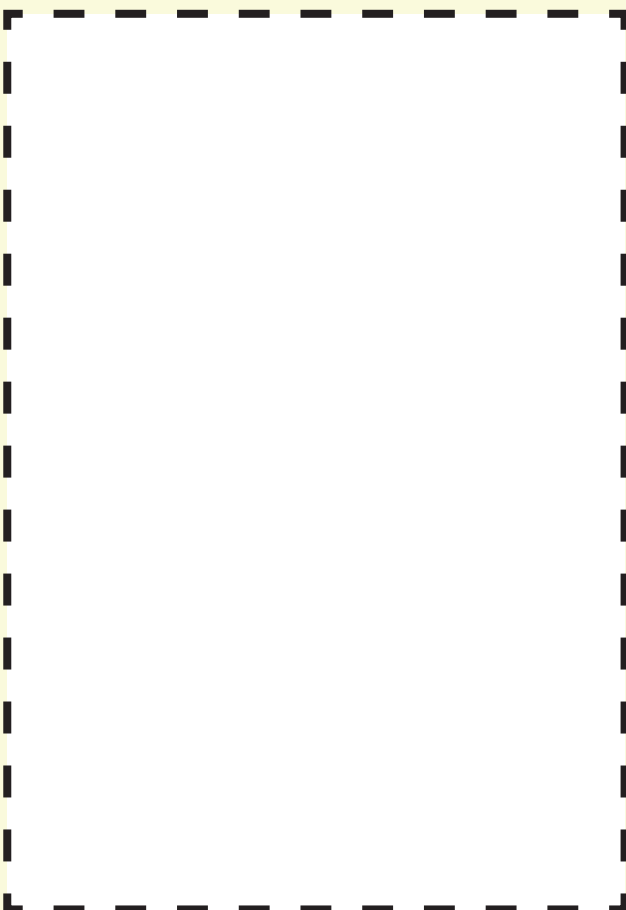
Over the last few months we have all had to deal with changes and restrictions to our daily lives but, as I'm sure you'll agree, there have been bonuses and blessings too.

Once we are back in St Andrew's, worshipping together, the Prayer Group intends to have a BLESSINGS BOARD at the rear of the church so that we can identify all those blessings that helped us get through the lockdown period.

If you are able to print out the newsletter, please use the box below to write down or draw the blessings that helped you and when we come together again, cut out the box and pin it on the BLESSINGS BOARD.

Looking forward to seeing what helped you.

Marle.





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