

All the way through scripture, God's people have followed Him through all sorts of challenges and difficulties, and we are no different today. Our calling is still to hold tightly to our identity in Christ, pray for our world, and to shine the light of the gospel to our families, friends, and communities.

As we continue to prayerfully consider how to be a church amongst the challenges of this year, we plan to restart worship in our church buildings from this **Sunday, the 25th of October**.

We are restricted to a maximum of 50 people plus the minister at any one time and services will last about half an hour. While we are not able to sing, have social time afterwards, or some other familiar elements of our services, we still will be able to worship God! While praying about what I should prepare for these services, the word that kept coming to my heart was "refreshing". Many of us have experienced a great deal of emotional, spiritual, financial and relational difficulty this year, so I feel led to create a worship space where we can listen to our God, who can give us much needed spiritual refreshment, peace and rejuvenation. The services will therefore be focused on hearing from God in prayer, listening to scripture read reflectively, allowing music to move us, and inviting God to speak to our hearts. I hope that by the grace of God, we can come away from these times of worship and respite feeling refreshed and rejuvenated to continue living out our faith.

SERVICE TIMES

Bellie Church – 10am (pre-booking only)

Speymouth Church – 11.30am (pre-booking only)

You can also tune in to a livestream of the 10am service by going to our Facebook page

www.facebook.com/bellieandspeymouth/live

If you would like to attend a service, please call John on **01343 820 671** and let him know the number of those attending from your household/bubble. You will need to rebook each week.

If you don't feel up to it just yet or are in one of the higher risk categories, please pray and know that you are not forgotten and we are deeply united in God's Spirit.

Friendly Greetings to all from the Young Church Team.

Whilst we very much miss interacting with our Young Church families, we're grateful for the lovely photos of many of our youngsters enjoying Isabel's exciting Messy Church initiatives via John's Church newsletters. A stroll alongside the Fochabers burn to admire the ever-increasing border of painted stones brings a ready smile and happy memories of some of our youngsters. We give thanks to Sullie and his cuddly heilan' coo, Hamish, for sharing their exciting video adventures in and around our lovely area. Throughout this pandemic, there's been more time and opportunity to appreciate our immediate surroundings and these weekly adventures highlight this blessing. Personally, these videos have rekindled happy memories of bygone teaching days when our class mascot, Spot, (a furry dog puppet) set off each Friday afternoon to "a good home!" He would return on a Monday morning with accompanying account/photos of his weekend family adventures! Depending on the activities, he sometimes returned looking a bit bedraggled but this all added to his "street-cred!" Sullie and Hamish (with just a tiny bit of help from Mum and Dad!) have elevated this idea to a most superior level! This welcome new dimension to worship is much appreciated by their ever-increasing number of "fans!" During Lockdown, various cuddly toys decided to form an "extended



*All good gifts around us are sent from Heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love.*



Written by Sophie Aged 7

household" with Alex and myself for family catch-up times, and various celebrations have been "staged" indoors and outdoors for all our

great-nieces/nephews. Having seen some of the cheerful rainbow displays within the village, the "cuddlies" were keen to share in this good cheer initiative so ...

promptly positioned themselves on our bedroom



window sill! Six months on.... and they still bring a smile to people's faces!

Having completed the first term at school or nursery, we now look forward to hearing about some of the new experiences which the youngsters have enjoyed. I feel sure that smiles, fun and laughter will feature in many of these tales. In the meantime, we wish all our families a restful and relaxing October break. Hopefully the sun will shine and a few teddy-bear picnics can be enjoyed 'midst the beautiful autumn colours and the welcome signs of a good Harvest surrounding us. Friendship blessings, Alison

Lonely without my friends

Obstacles all around

Classwork at home

Keeping our distance

Don't stop praying

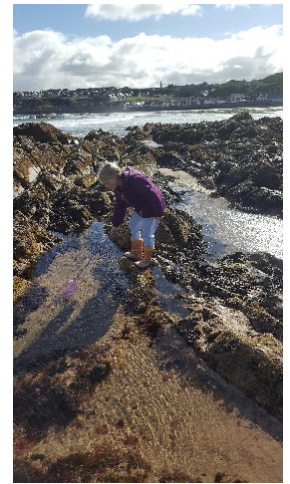
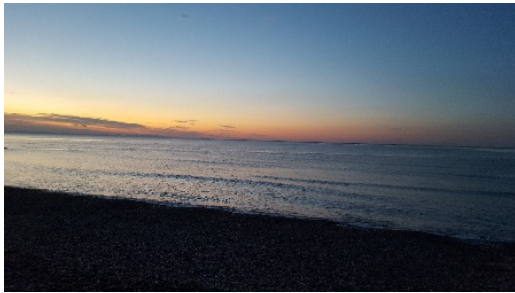
Only allowed hugs from Mummy

When will the virus go away?

No singing allowed

And from Mum Lisa...

Brighter days overcame the darkness as Sophie and I were able to appreciate the nature and beauty around us. Daily walks became adventures and setting up treasure hunts for friends. Climbing hills and wondering at the vastness in front of us, watching the sunset with fish and chips and listening to the sea and birds singing daily. Exploring Moray and visiting new places.



Inspired by the rainbow pictures, fun was had finding rainbow buttons and creating our own. Crafting continued with drying some wildflowers found on our walks and making a masterpiece to



remember this time forever.

Lockdown has not ended but it has given us a time to stop, reflect and realise just how busy our lives have become. When the 'new normal' arrives, I will remember the simplest things in life and ensure they continue to be a part of it.



Praise God for the harvest of science and skill, the urge to discover and create and fulfil: for dreams and inventions that promise to gain a future more hopeful, a world more humane [CH 230 v. 4]

TAKE NOTE



Denise & Neil Brown

Although we haven't been able to meet as a group since March we still see some of the children when out for a walk or in the park. Since the schools went back in August, not a week goes by without Denise being asked "Is it Take Note on Friday?"! At the beginning I told them not for a few weeks, but now I'm saying it'll probably be next year!! The children obviously miss their Friday night's fun. I don't think Neil and I have had so many Friday evenings at home for over twenty years!!

Looking back at our records, this will be only the second Christmas since 1998 that *Take Note* have not been able to put on their Christmas celebration in the church! ☹ ☹

Just to clarify why we cannot run *Take Note* at the moment. The current Scottish Government guidelines state that we can only have up to 10 people of all ages indoors from 5 households and 15 people from 15 households outdoors. BUT singing, drama and shouting is not allowed. The Church of Scotland guidelines state that any group where parents drop off their children is currently not allowed.

We look forward to seeing you all out and about and hope we can be back to Take Note in the near future.



Birthday Blessings from your Church Family to ...



Aiden Lambourne, Lilian Archibald, Marshall Smith, Brodie Lambourne
Hope you had a great time - way back in September!
Coming very soon!! - end of October – Lewis Campbell Woo-Hoo!
Coming up in November - Innes Brownlee, Jackson Wailes, Angus Davidson
Not long now!

Like everyone else, **BELLIE BABES** are not gathering as normal. But here is a little harvest poem they might have learned. From Joan Kilpatrick via Annette Meighan ☺ ☺

**Harvest time is here again, Cut the corn and sift the grain,
Pick the apples on the trees, In the chilly Autumn breeze,
Dig the carrots, parsnips too, Lots to eat for me and you.
Thank you, God!**



Some 4 - and **all** 2 - legged walkers were delighted and thankful for Neil Brown's splendid clearing of the path behind Gordon Chapel. It meant we could concentrate on the wonderful sights of huge rose hips, stunning flowers and follow the Rosebay Willow Herb 'cycle'. Thank you, Neil! You're a star!



In the just reward of labour, God's will is done; in the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done; in our world-wide task of caring for the hungry and despairing, In the harvest we are sharing, God's will is done. [CH 231]



BELLIE & SPEYMOUTH GUILD ~ Liz Moir

Under normal circumstances our meetings would be underway but circumstances are still far from normal! Just before lockdown we were looking forward to our annual Daffodil Tea and our monthly get-togethers for fellowship and fine pieces. Sadly, none of these took place.



Technology has become very important and although I am not very good at using it, I did manage to watch the Annual Gathering on Sat 5th Sep, which was streamed online. It was very well presented using clips from several previous Gatherings, including great hymn-singing, rousing musical contributions, inspirational snippets from various former Moderators and short but equally inspiring updates from our Project Partners. There was also a ‘virtual’ handing over of the role of **National Convener** from Marian McIntyre to **Mabel Wallace**. Congratulations to all who planned and took part in it.

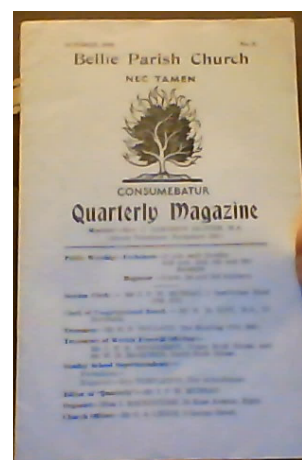
Four regional groups (North, South, East & West – ‘seemple’!) have been established to help Guilds Together groups work more closely to share ideas. We are in ‘North’ and our key contact is National Vice Convener is Helen Banks.

Some Guilds have had ‘virtual’ events which I haven’t felt equipped to initiate. The current situation also makes fund-raising very difficult, so if anyone has a bright idea, please let me know! Keep safe until we can meet again - and we will! **Our theme this year is going THE EXTRA MILE.** Thank you to those who already are and may God help us to keep going in his strength, ‘whose we are and whom we serve’.

BLAST FROM THE PAST



John McC passed on some ye olde copies of the Bellie Parish Magazine from 1949-51 – fascinating to see that in some instances ‘there is nothing new under the sun’ and in others we have moved on considerably. In his Pastoral Letter of July 1949, and in response to ‘recent events’ (don’t know what) the minister, Rev J Jamieson Glover reflected on the quality of Christian giving. *Christian giving is more than a duty, it is also a grace. If we make our gifts to the church just because*



we’ve got to....then we shall never know the true joy of Christian giving. Far above the duty, is the impulse to give out of pure love for the Saviour, glorying in the new life He has made possible for us and can make possible for others... Elder, W Stratton, reported fully on the General Assembly of that year, admiring its *thoroughly democratic nature and remarkably efficient organisation and work. Most of the work of the Church is carried out by committees... The convener of each committee, in some cases a woman, presents the report!* The Moderator, the Very Rev Principal George S Duncan’s closing speech asked, *Has the church today a sense of mission to a world that has lost its way? Does it really care enough for the needs and distresses of humanity to come effectively to its assistance?* He added *The Church of Scotland is still capable of meeting the demands of a new era, and of appealing with convincing power to the soul of the Scottish people.*



Because of COVID-19, a truncated **2020 General Assembly** took place over an evening and a day (Fri/ Sat 2/ 3 Oct). Some 730 Commissioners, attending online, heard the Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, open the Assembly with a warning that if the Church were to become overwhelmingly concerned with its own survival, it would fail. We are not a ‘self-preservation society’. Instead, he **called for the Church to be outwardly-focussed** ...which means...**to be focussed on mission** rather than maintenance. In his closing address, the Moderator noted many sporting competitions where teams or individuals recovered from impossibly bad positions to win out in the end. How much more hopeful should we be who have a Saviour who rose from the dead?! The recurring refrain of his message was: **GOD HAS NOT FINISHED WITH US YET.**

OTHER ASSEMBLY NEWS

FAITH NURTURE FORUM: Convener, Rev Rosemary Frew, urged the church to build on the innovations that have been forced upon it by the Covid-19 epidemic. *“As we look to the future, a future with fewer buildings and fewer ministers of word and sacrament, we must continue to explore new ways of being church and build on our lockdown learnings.”*

FINANCE: The Assembly approved a **reduction of 18% to the amount of money congregations will be asked to contribute to the central church in 2021.**

FAITH IMPACT FORUM: In the 'Black Lives Matter Debate', Convener, the Very Rev Dr Susan Brown said: *"We have to be very careful about the message we convey... All lives matter, but we have not lived as though they do. We have a system in which because of the colour of their skin, some people are treated unequally. **Saying 'black lives matter' is not about excluding every-body else. It's about focusing on deepest need.** Jesus had a particular passion for the poorest and the most marginalised and those who were suffering most, and he focussed on them above all others."*

YOUTH Moderator of the last National Youth Assembly (NYA), Dana McQuater, said it had been difficult for those involved in the NYA to understand why it had been brought to an end, but added: *"**We look forward in hope to young people finding new ways to become involved in the decision making of this church.**"* The convener of the Legal Questions Committee, the Rev Dr Grant Barclay, **committed to keeping youth representation at the General Assembly to at least current levels.**

GENERAL TRUSTEES presented its report on 'well-equipped spaces in the right places', with chairman Raymond Young **urging the Church to be willing to 'prune' its building estate, while dealing sensitively with the disposal of unneeded buildings, and to work in partnership with other denominations and community groups on new buildings.**

WEDNESDAY ('PYJAMA') PRAYER GROUP

Isabel MacLeod 'led our meeting' on 14 Oct: *It may seem that we have little to keep us going just now, but there is always hope. We can praise and rejoice because **God IS with us** through everything. **He is our Rock and He loves us.** We WILL get through this pandemic and we must keep focussed, remain positive and look forward to the glorious day when we see Him face to face.*

*♪ Because he lives, I can face tomorrow, because he lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know, I know He holds the future And life is worth the living just because He lives. ♪*

*When I was a good bit younger I remember being in Church one Sunday morning, one of only a few young people there that day. We were wishing things were a bit more exciting. Then a visiting couple, clearly well into their 'silver years' were invited up to speak. They took a while to shuffle up to the chancel, where Mrs Smith sat down at the piano and her husband (Rev) stood next to her as they began to sing for all they were worth, a song that simply stated **I don't know how God's going to do it, but God's going to do it.** They sang with such conviction and gusto that our Teen group were blown away and ended up joining in when invited to do so. The couple then proceeded to give their testimony and told how God had used them to further his Kingdom. They left us with the thought that they did not know what God had planned for them next but they would welcome whatever He led them to and would serve till their dying days. What an inspirational couple, faithful in looking to God after many years and willing to serve to the end.*

It stands true today that we don't know how, but God WILL get us through.

Our Prayer Points included *Thanks & praise for God bringing us this far; *Manse Family, John, Ann, Kirk Session & all Church family as we begin to return to some sort of regular worship in buildings; *All those struggling with illness, grief, money worries, relationships, lockdown woes *Those involved in decision-making about the way forward for our Church; *Our young people, from Bellie Babes right up to TGIS...

Why not set aside 20-30mins on Wednesdays at 8am and join us in making a difference through prayer? If you would like the materials, please send me a message <margaretking889@gmail.com>

BITS & PIECES

Riddle-me-ree

What has 4 letters, never 5 but sometimes 9?

Hmmmm...

Taking away the question mark might help



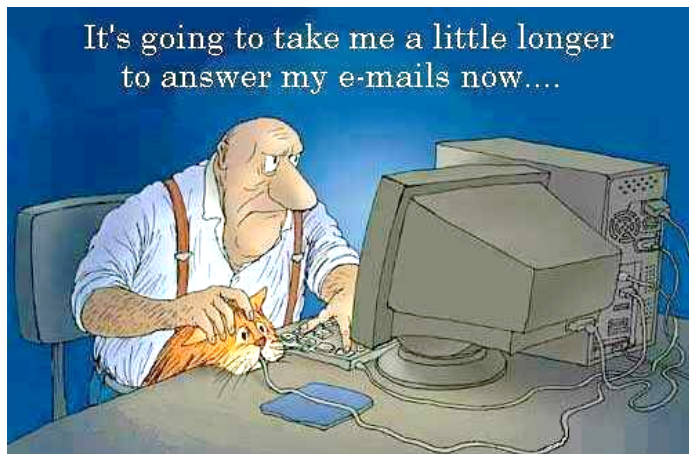
why did the computer keep sneezing?
It had a virus!

If you can start the day without caffeine.
If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains.
If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles.
If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it.
If you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time.
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment.
If you can conquer tension without medical help.
If you can relax without alcohol.
If you can sleep without the aid of drugs.
then you are probably
The Family Dog!

(Source Unknown)

How many words can you make out of the letters of
HARVEST THANKSGIVING?

Somebody reckoned 140 – Can you do better?



Can you (children and adults!) remember some of the adventures that Sullie and Hamish, the coo, have been having these past weeks and what they learned about God?

They tried to find where the wind came from – it seemed to come from everywhere! They couldn't see it but it moved leaves in the trees. That's just like God. We can't see him but he is around us all the time and sometimes we can 'see' and feel him moving in our lives. They had an underwater adventure trying to return Mr Crab's wallet! They baked a cake with beetroot in it to Granny's recipe and discovered that God's 'Recipe Book' is the Bible. Hamish became a highwayman and stole some fruit which was very naughty. But he learned to say 'sorry' and was forgiven just as God

forgives our sins. And lots more... We hope you'll continue to share your fun and learning with us, Sullie & Hamish!

SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY & PRAYER

Thu 22 Oct – Ordination and Induction of Andrew Kimmitt to Aberlour Parish Church, which means Rev Morris Smith can step back from his second 'retirement job'. He is still Convener of Presbytery Business Committee!

Sun 25th Oct - Bellie Church at 10am; Speymouth at 11.30am

These will be short 25- 30 minute services with some music but no singing. It will feel very strange, perhaps even uncomfortable wearing a mask (but less than if you were shopping, I discovered, because you are sitting quietly). You will be warmly welcomed and guided through the 'newness'.

Sun 8th Nov – Bellie Church at 10am; Speymouth at 11.30am

Information about Remembrance Sunday services at War Memorials is not yet available. Please keep an eye out in the Weekly Newsletter and local press for details.

WE REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE...

Despite the enormous challenges and uncertainty of the Covid-19 restrictions and disappointments over numbers of guests and changed dates, these young couples were 'joined in matrimony'. We wish them God's richest blessings.

25 July – Dominic Benstead and Katie Love

23 Sep – Ruth Thomson and Josh Bradbury



...and weep with those who weep

DEPARTED FRIENDS

Jesus said, I am the Resurrection and the Life

George Nichol, Garmouth

Sandy Robertson (92), Netherha' Home, Buckie, late of Garmouth

Jessie Horne (88), Grove Care Home, late of Westmorland St, Fochabers

We are sad but contented to say farewell for the moment to these faithful members of Speymouth and Bellie Church.

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