

Bellie & Speymouth Church

Reaching out - Welcoming in

Weekly Newsletter No 27 - Sunday 20 September 2020

Things dinna look great eh? – it's nae great news.

It is hard to take in all the warnings just now while the weather is so sunny and warm. It looks like we are in for another period of being 'confined to barracks' to try to get this virus back under control. Let's pray that when it comes (note it's 'when' rather than 'if') that everyone sticks to the rules and we can get it over with as quickly as possible. So let's keep praying that we get through this next bit of the pandemic as successfully as we did with the first bit.



Churches reopening



Work continues to get the churches open for prayer and worship. Thank you to all who responded to the letter Seòras sent out. At the last count, 43% had responded which is pretty good for such a mail-shot. The replies gave a clear indication of the wishes of the members of Bellie and Speymouth. Based on this, Thursday's meeting of the Kirk Session was able to make some positive decisions and give some clear guidance on the way forward. We are

now proceeding practically to get things organised. It will take a wee while but unless the Government closes us down again, we should be up and running in a few weeks. We will need some help on Sundays to organise people in the churches so be prepared to be asked! More news in a week or so.

Church Administrator.

Due to basically lack of funds, we could not renew the contract for our Church Administrator which expired earlier this month. Because of the size and nature of the Parish of Bellie and Speymouth, the church recommended the appointment of an administrative assistant to relieve the minister from some of the routine tasks which are required. On this basis, Colin Hanover was appointed on a two-year contract in September 2018.

As many of you know, Colin worked much more than his contracted hours. We saw and enjoyed his 'art' work with the posters he produced but, of course, he did much, much more than make posters. It was also not just what he did but how he did it. Colin always had a



cheerful, friendly 'can-do' attitude to his work; he had an eye for detail while always seeing the bigger picture.

However, due to the lack of funds at Bellie and Speymouth Church, it was impossible to renew the contract for Colin when it came up for reconsideration. It's a matter of real regret that we have to recognise that we need an administrative assistant but can't afford it.

So, thanks Colin for all your work. We won't 'miss you' as you are still around and very much part of our church family but we will miss your work in the church.

From Seòras

It's that time of year where it's hard to go anywhere in the parish without stumbling upon some sort of fruit. From trees in the garden, to berries in the bushes there is an abundance of fruit appearing around us.

We're very fortunate to have some bramble bushes and apple trees in the manse garden, which Sullie has enjoyed raiding wherever possible. I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall when Sandra Steel and Alf Grimsley were getting the apples from manse apple tree during the vacancy before I arrived. Apparently, Sandra shook the tree and poor Alf caught a hefty cooking apple on the top of his head.



Fruit really is an amazing gift. To really appreciate it, next time you pick an apple from a tree, take a bite out of the branch it was on first. That'll give you real perspective on just how amazing a piece of fruit is!

Fruit appears as an image and a feature throughout the Bible. People and places are named after fruit, fruit is used to describe lands and locations, and it is also used as a metaphor for faith.

One of the most famous passages about the Holy Spirit is from Galatians 5: The fruit of the Holy Spirit. "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" these are some of the things that we are told will grow in our lives, just like fruit on a healthy tree, if we allow God's Spirit to guide our hearts and our minds.

What is a really interesting thought, is that you could almost imagine fruit trees sitting as bookends for our Bible. We find fruit trees at the very beginning and the very end of scripture. In the opening chapters of Genesis there is the account of the selfish rebellion that led to separation between us and God. What was it that caused this? Well, Adam and Eve took fruit from the only tree that God had told them not to.

For the rest of our Bibles, we read about this gulf of brokenness between humanity and God. Poetry, prophecy, history, all the way through to the end of the book of Revelation – the end of time and the beginning of eternity, where we find our other fruit tree book end.

It says this, "Then [the angel] showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

All the brokenness we see in the world began with a fruit tree, but it ends with them being used to show God's intention to heal and redeem His people.



So, this week, as you tuck into a tasty piece of fruit, perhaps stop and take a moment to think about this. Although it was a piece of fruit taken in greed that has led to the suffering in the world, remember God's promise of a heavenly future without tears or pain, where we will be healed of hurt, and be with Him forever.

Let us pray,

Almighty God. Artist and creator of all the food we enjoy, the architect of the produce of this world. Thank you for the gift of fruit. Not just the variety, the tastes, the enjoyment of growing and picking them, but also what they have to teach us about our faith. Although they remind us of that first act of selfishness in Eden, they also remind us of our future with you. That one day we will see you in all your glory, and enjoy the fruits of healing and redemption. Allow that by your Spirit to give our hearts hope when we struggle.

In Jesus' name we pray, AMEN.

Birthday party!

It's a pity we can't have Birthday Parties just now. Some, we know have had to cancel their celebrations to ensure the number of people (over 12) attending does not exceed six.

If you know of someone celebrating a birthday, or another special day, in the coming week, make sure you send a card, telephone, Facetime them or even have a 'Zoom' party and from all your friends and family at Bellie and Speymouth

Happy Birthday



Harvest Thanksgiving

All round us the harvest is being gathered-in whether in fields or gardens. We have much to be thankful for. Normally we would have a Harvest Thanksgiving service on the first Sunday in October. That's not going to happen this year and even if it did, there wouldn't be many attending. At the Harvest Thanksgiving Service, we normally seek offerings for others who are less fortunate than ourselves. So, this year, the Kirk Session recommends we all make a generous donation to Christian Aid to allow them to share our 'harvest' with the poor in the world.



The easiest way to donate is to go the Christian Aid web-site at, www.christianaid.org.uk and there you will find various ways you can make your donation.

As we move forward let's take time to pray for all who are in this fight to control and contain this virus. Those who are currently being criticised in the media, those who quietly stick to the rules at some cost to themselves, those who have lost their jobs or fear they will, those who fear for their physical or mental health. These are tough times and some need more help than others to see it through.

But with God's help, we will see it through.

Let's then move forward positively. Adopt an 'I-can-do it' attitude and if something doesn't work, at least you have tried. A friend was once asked that apart from God, who would he like to meet in heaven. He replied 'Peter'. When asked why, he replied that he liked Peter as Peter sometimes got things wrong but when he did, he got back up and got going again!

So let's be Peter-people; "Pick yourself up
Brush yourself down
And start all over again" – Go on- Sing it!



God bless us all
John