

## Bellie & Speymouth Church

Reaching out - Welcoming in

### Weekly Newsletter No 25 - Sunday 6 September 2020

#### It's Autumn

Yup, we started all this Coronavirus COVID-19 stuff back in February with the 'wash your hands' campaign when it was still winter and here we are now in autumn and it's still with us.

But look on the good side, most of us are still here, most of us got through the bad times with little more than a new pandemic hairstyle, the harvest is in full swing, the apple trees and plum trees are hanging with fruit – let's just take a minute and thank God for what he has done for us.



Thank God for all we have learned – prior to March this year most of us thought 'zoom' was what racing cars did; many have learned how to do modern mathematics after helping the kids with their schoolwork, we are speaking more to neighbours, we have become experts with our home computers and heaps of other things.

#### From Seoras

##### THE WIND OF THE SPIRIT

In different places throughout scripture, the Holy Spirit is described as a wind. In fact, it does so from the very beginning. The Bible opens with the famous verses, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*"



The word "Spirit" here is "ru-ach" which comes from the word for wind. It implies the breath of God. Just as in the next chapter it goes on to say that God *breathed* life into Adam.

Then, in Ezekiel, the prophet has the vision of the valley of dry bones. God's power to bring restoration is pictured as a flowing wind. It moves through the hopeless valley, and rises up a great army, breathing life into them.

At Pentecost, when the Spirit came with power and rested on those gathered there, it all began with the sound of a rushing wind.

Then in John 3, we find Jesus using this same picture of wind to describe the moving of God's Spirit. He says, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

This has become a popular image in trying to describe our invisible God. Just like the wind we can't see Him, but we can see His effects on the world. One of the easiest places to see the movement of the wind is in the trees around us. It's mesmerising to stare up at the swaying branches, and listening to the sound of thousands of leaves rustling against each other.

Just as we can't see the wind itself when we look up like that, so we can't see God physically. But we know He is there; we see Him at work in the world.



We can't control the Holy Spirit, and we can't see the Holy Spirit. But what we can do is allow ourselves to be moved and changed by Him.

I remember being quite inspired the first summer I was at the Celtic Kirk service at Speyfest. It was a lovely morning, and as we worshipped, the tent was being buffeted by the warm wind. It was as if God was making His presence known, showing His pleasure as His people from lots of different churches gathered to praise Him.

So that is my simple thought for this week. Perhaps the next time you notice the breeze moving before you, you will be reminded that God's presence, although unseen, is with you. His Holy Spirit lives within you because of Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross.

## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the presence of your Holy Spirit in us. We pray that like the wind moves and shapes the world around us, that we would be moved and shaped by your will.

Breathe new life into us each day. At times where we feel like the dry bones of Ezekiel's vision, would you revive and renew us by your Spirit. Stand us up in your strength, and send us out to move with your kingdom.

We pray that we would see you at work in our community as easily as we see the wind moving in the trees.

In Jesus name, AMEN.

## Birthdays

There are some important birthdays coming up this week in our church family, so who do they share these days with? Some you may not have heard of, some famous, some infamous:

### Sunday 6 September 2020 –

(1860) Jane Adams (American feminist), (1935) Jock Wallace (Manager, Glasgow Rangers 1970-78 and 1983-86), (1972) Idris Elba (actor)



### Monday 7 September 2020 –

(1533) Elizabeth I (English queen 1558-1603), (1917) Leonard Cheshire (pacifist), (1936) Buddy Holly (singer)

### Tuesday 8 September 2020 –

(1157) Richard I (Richard the Lion Heart 1189-1199), (1886) Siegfried Sassoon (poet), (1959) Judy Murray (tennis)

### Wednesday 9 September 2020 –

(1585) Cardinal Richelieu (The Three Musketeers), (1754) William Bligh (Mutiny on the Bounty, later Vice Admiral and 4<sup>th</sup> Governor of New South Wales where again there was another mutiny against him!), (1828) Leo Tolstoy (War and Peace)



### Thursday 10 September 2020 –



(1929) Arnold Palmer (golfer), (1960) Colin Firth (actor), (1973) Bay City Rollers (formed 10 Sept 1973)

### Friday 11 September 2020 –

(1771) Mungo Park (explorer, West Africa), (1862) Hawley Harvey Crippen (Dr Crippen, murderer), (1885) D H Lawrence (author)

### Saturday 12 September 2020 -

(1575) Henry Hudson (Explorer/navigator – Hudson Bay), (1913) Jesse Owens (American Olympic athlete, Berlin Olympics 1936), (1897) Irène Joliot-Curie (Daughter of 'Marie Curie' and in her own right, a Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry, 1935)



But whoever you share your day with –

*Have a Happy Day*

## Churches reopening

There is still a great deal of work going on to explore the practicality of reopening the church buildings, initially for worship. This has involved various risk assessments and writing up various guides on how we can do things. We have to ask you to be patient as this is new to all of us involved and we have to make sure we get it right, **first time**.



### *Come in but remember:*

- ***Wear your mask***
- ***Wash your hands***
- ***Keep your distance (2m)***
- ***Stay in your seat***
- ***Don't sing***
- ***Don't make faces at the minister behind your mask***

The regulations and guidelines of the Scottish Government and the Church of Scotland have to be followed eg at the moment various social gatherings in the church halls are restricted by the rule that only three households can gather indoors. If we were to proceed with say a Coffee Morning or even our tea/coffee after worship at Bellie Church, we may have to follow the '*Coronavirus (COVID-19): tourism and hospitality sector guidance*' rules and that is a whole new ball game.

To assist with the planning, each household on the Communion Roll of Bellie and Speymouth Church will shortly receive a letter asking you some questions about your intentions regards attending church for worship. This will allow us to plan with a degree of foreknowledge so we can determine what numbers to expect and **how**, as well as **if** we can accommodate the wishes of our parishioners. It would be helpful that once you receive this letter that you reply as soon as you can to allow the Kirk Session to make informed decisions regarding the opening of the church buildings.



Some of you would have joined in this year's Annual Gathering of the Guild on Saturday. Some may regard the Guild as a gathering of (mainly) wives for a cuppy and some friendship with a bit of hymn singing and prayers thrown in. This is far from the real picture. The Church of Scotland Guild is, yes mainly women and yes, they do have a cuppy and yes, they sing some hymns and pray but they also engage in real issues and not just Church issues. The Guild has been a strong advocate of justice throughout the world. They forced politicians to tackle the issue of people trafficking and also the rights of women and girls in not only the developing world but also in this country.

Take time this week to pray for the Guild and the work they do both here and throughout the world.



What a great afternoon we had. A big thanks to Alison for her recipe for 'Zoom biscuits' and showing us how to make them. There were about a dozen or so folk baking away, some young and some not quite so young but all busy creaming butter (marg) with icing sugar and flour then trying to squish the mixture through a piping bag, then baking the biscuits and finally eating them. There is some chocolate decoration to come yet to make them even more delicious.



Apart from Alison, we watched a video 'Hamish makes a cake' and this one had beetroot in it – yes, beetroot. (who needs a minister when we have Hamish?)

Watch out for the next Messy Church probably at the end of October.

### Keep safe



I was in Grantown on Spey last weekend so it was a bit of a shock to hear of the outbreak of the virus at Millers of Speyside this week- that's close! Please be assured we were nowhere near that factory over the weekend but it shows that we need to maintain our vigilance especially when in public places. This bug might just be hiding round a corner.

But just because we need to stay safe doesn't mean we have to be glum.

Glumness can be as infectious as the Coronavirus but 'corona' is Latin for sun.

So let's have some sun in our lives – smile and be cheerful let's turn ☹️ into 😊 .

For your diary -or to remember

- Watch the Reflections from Seoras on Sunday followed by
- More adventures of Hamish
- The coffee/tea time at 11.00am on Sunday morning. (If you can, why not invite a neighbour who is not on line to join us using your computer/laptop/phone – it is such a friendly time together.)

May we feel the blessing of God in us and around us

John