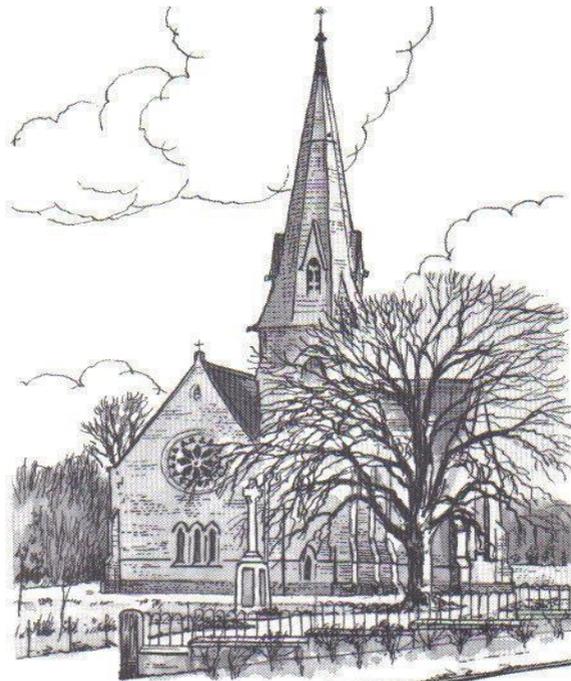


AYTON AND DISTRICT CHURCHES
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
Charity Reg No: SCO01208

PARISHES NEWSLETTER

*Ayton, Burnmouth, Foulden, Grantshouse,
Houndwood, Lamberton, Mordington and Reston*

JULY ~ OCTOBER 2020



Ayton Parish Church

THE MANSE, GREY GABLES, AYTON

It is now some four months into lockdown that has so greatly affected the lives of us all. It has forced us to alter the ways in which we live our lives. It has affected people's working lives with many being furloughed and putting their jobs at risk. It has restricted our movements, our contacts with other people and we have learned to 'social distance'. It has meant, across the population, there have been people facing up to various degrees of isolation, for many that has meant being shielded. For many too there has been the cost of being affected by the disease, sadly for many losing their lives.

In such times, such difficult challenging times, I think we all look for positives. I am not saying that we try in any way to turn this whole time of Covid-19 into something good but there are things that we can draw on, we can build on when things get back to 'normal'. But I ask a simple question, do we want to get back to 'normal'? It has struck me, and I am sure many others, there is a new sense of community that for many had been lost. Across these communities we have seen projects set up to support people. Projects that have provided food, have offered practical support, but also people simply being good neighbours. I know as a church we have been using new methods like Zoom (who had heard of that a few months ago?) and social media to communicate and to worship. I hope we do not simply return to 'normal' but that we grasp the opportunity to build on the bonds that have been created in this time and to use all the ways we are discovering to communicate and to look out for one another. The call of Christ is to love one another as He first loves us. Let us use every way we can to come together and to share together, not only in times of crisis, but all the time.

God Bless

Norman

Worship during Lockdown

Worship is continuing during this period but in different ways. We meet on Zoom on Sunday morning, gathering at 10.30 and worship beginning at 10.45 for about half an hour. We have scripture readings, a thought and prayers. It is an informal occasion with opportunity, if they wish, for people to contribute their own thoughts and to offer prayer. Why not 'come along'? contact Norman for details.

Update on Finance and Property News

Without our regular services taking place, as under the present regulations we cannot hold church services, our Minister Norman Whyte, very ably supported by others, has held services via Zoom each Sunday; he is to be congratulated in doing so. However our income has suffered and I look forward to the time when we can get back to our normal round of Sunday services and being able to hold fund-raising events. At this time of year I normally enclose an invitation with the Newsletter inviting people to donate to our Annual Special Appeal to which our communities contribute very generously. But this time we are unable to distribute this edition to every household in the district so I shall make the invitation later in the year when we all hope that the virus will have abated and normality will be restored.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has donated in the past; your help is truly appreciated. Also a special thank you goes to those people who, off their own bat, have sent contributions over the last three months to help us. We are down on income but the usual outgoings have still to be paid each month!

News about our plan to do alterations and improvements to Ayton Church have been given in previous Newsletters. I'm afraid the arrival of the Covid-19 problem and the regulations that very properly came on the back of it stopped us in our tracks. However I can report that we are now able to go ahead with the work and the contract has been awarded and all the permissions are in place. So by the time this edition is in your hands I hope that work will have started. You may wonder how we can afford to do this work – well it is because of generations of previous worshipers who raised money in years gone by and carefully invested it specifically

for property ventures. We have not been allowed to spend it in any other way like heating costs or other day-to-day expenditure. Now is an ideal time for this modernisation work to go ahead during the summer weather and whilst the building cannot be used at all. Whilst the work is being done, even if the regulations on use are withdrawn, we will not be using the building for services until it is completed.

I am excited as we shall then have a building with modern facilities and which will lend itself not only to the worship of God but enable us to hold functions like concerts, where those attending can be well looked after and disabled people have easy access. I hope you are excited too!

Bob Kay, Convenor

WORSHIP, MISSION & STEWARDSHIP

Since lockdown we have all been learning new ways of doing things; prior to this I had never Skyped or met on Zoom, but now it is becoming the norm. The Church now has a Facebook page, the weekly service happens on Zoom, and is e-mailed to 55 addresses, some of whom distribute it further. If you would like to receive the service please let me know. A daily “Thought for the Day” was sent out during Holy Week, and a Christian Passover happened via Zoom. The VE day commemorations happened, but not as planned. We joined with East Berwickshire Churches Together to pray during the nine days between Pentecost and Ascension Day, and we recently celebrated Holy Communion on Zoom. We continue to monitor Government Guidelines as to when it will be safe and possible to open our churches.

Sadly Easter Art was cancelled and the Holiday Club cannot happen in Ayton School, however – the good news, virtual Holiday Club is going to happen. In conjunction with BCYT Berwickshire Churches are running “HOME HOLIDAY CLUB” ON 20th – 24th July. To register your child and request an activity pack email homeholidayclub@gmail.com before 13th July. This will include online bible stories and activities.

Susan Patterson, Convenor

SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING REFLECTIONS

Well what a change to all our lives since I put pen to paper for input to the last Newsletter in February. Four months on our lives have been turned upside down by a virus. Years ago illness which couldn't be identified by the family doctor was simply put down to having a virus. But like so many other things in our lives, viruses have grown up and become stronger and more invasive and infectious. Even the creation of social media like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, You Tube and Google, unthinkable 20 years ago, did not cause such a profound shock and sudden change to the way we are having to live now. Looking to the future it is hard to see us returning to the normal anytime soon until, and if, a vaccine is developed or a medicine that controls the virus is found. Until then we shall continue to have our social freedoms controlled to prevent the virus spreading causing loss of life and tragedy which has already happened to so many.

Our social and fundraising group which exists to promote and encourage community interaction in Ayton and District Parishes has been stopped in its tracks by the lockdown (it last met in March). The elderly and those with underlying health conditions which make up the majority of our active congregation have suffered particularly badly by not being able to go out to coffee mornings, sponsored walks, concerts and other events where we all used to meet-up for a blether and to offer face to face support. Indeed most interaction up until now has been online through social media using conferencing platforms like Skype, Zoom, Facebook, etc. And if you don't have that technology involving routers, computers, smart phones you're pretty well cut off. All you can do is use the phone and snatch a quick chat over the fence or at the door for deliveries or with visiting carers.

On the upside now that families can take exercise outwith 5 miles of home it gives us the opportunity to get out in our lovely countryside and enjoy all that nature has to offer whilst observing the distancing rules with other people (and the spring was particularly beautiful this year). For those that can do this it is a great stress reliever and spirits reviver; but until groups are allowed to meet and socialise it remains impossible

to hold any physical events, which would be possible to plan whilst observing the 2 metre rule.

As for fundraising on the back of the original planned events shown below, this is not happening. Donations for the church or for other charities can of course still be made to the church via the Treasurer.

UPDATE ON PROGRAMME OF EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2020

The regular Coffee Mornings are cancelled until further notice.

Christian Aid Walk - 17th May cancelled - under review for later in the year.

Fete - 23rd August in Ayton Kirk grounds- dependent on easing of lockdown restrictions.

Harvest Lunch - 25th October 12.30pm in Reston Village Hall assuming lockdown rules relaxed.

Hamper Draw - 14th November 10.00-11.00am Bowling Club assuming lockdown rules relaxed.

Ceilidh - 20th November (Ewan Galloway booked). 7.30pm-11.30pm, assuming lockdown rules relaxed.

Other Events being considered after easing of lockdown:

Organ Concerts

Berwick Concert Band and the Echo Choir

Bar-B-Q at Ayton Village Hall

Quiz

If you have any ideas of social events we could organise under present lockdown restrictions contact me or any of the Committee Members.

If you are feeling lonely, cut off and just in need of a chat ring me (018907)81419.

Paul Oswald, Convenor

Berwickshire Churches Emergency Food Parcels

Volunteers wishing to help with distribution should contact:

Eyemouth Food Bank

Administration Noreen Thompson nthompson@hotmail.co.uk

Volunteers Judith Renilson judithrenilson@gmail.com

Food Donations Cathy Bond cathybond@phonecoop.coop

Please keep your donations coming and thank you to all those who have contributed so far.

RESTON GUILD

Were you aware that the Church of Scotland Guild has 17,000 members, making it one of Scotland's largest voluntary organisations? Given that Reston Guild has not been able to meet since Lockdown, this report has to be rather different from usual. March's Newsletter included the February meeting, and following that we were involved in World Day of Prayer, this year written by the women of Zimbabwe, which took place at St Ebba's Church in Eyemouth. Sadly we missed Dr Ishbel Dorward speaking to us at the end of March - I do hope we can plan that for the future.

The Guild arranges a three-year theme, with a different title each year. We should be moving into the final one of the three later this year, so would normally be planning our next session with that in mind. It has been "One Journey, Many Roads", with the first year being "Seeking the Way", followed by "Companions on the Road", and next "The Extra Mile". What a perfect title it turns out to be, as so many are doing exactly that. A local example is the Eyemouth Food Bank, and there are many others near and far around the country. Let us pay tribute to all those volunteers who are going the extra mile.

Reston Guild annually collects donations from its members to pass on to the Guild Projects. I believe we usually choose three out of the six, but they are all very commendable initiatives. They include CrossReach, Join up the Dots; Boys' Brigade, Scotland, Faith in Young People; Sailors' Society, Chaplain for our Ports; Free To Live Trust,

Seema's Project (for street children in Pune, India); Malawi Fruits, growing the future; and World Mission Council, Journeying Together. One of the reasons I think it worth being part of the Guild is all this excellent work they support across the country and the world, raising large sums of money for so many charities. But it is also worth highlighting the contact with members they are maintaining throughout this period of lockdown. They have always provided online monthly reports but there is presently a weekly newsletter, with all sorts of contributions from Guild groups large and small around Scotland. Our own President, Anne Clemit, has been forwarding these to local members.

Caring, Contact, Community - they are all so important, and with the Guild motto being. "Whom we are and Whom we serve" there must be a particular responsibility for us as the church to involve ourselves. (Anyone can access this – I go through www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/the-guild)

GRANTSHOUSE WEDNESDAY CLUB

The Club held the last meeting of this season on March 4th when we were entertained by Sue & Ray of Laidback. Little did we realise that as we sang "Those were the days, my friend, we thought they'd never end" that Covid-19 was about to end all social gatherings.

Sue & Ray subsequently emailed their best wishes to everyone and said they looked forward to returning.

The talk by Phil McLean on April 1st was cancelled and likewise the summer outing. However we will all keep in touch in different ways and make sure we shall start up again with a good programme once again.

Church Pews

Anyone interested in acquiring a pew from Ayton Church please contact Bill Stewart at stewartbill19@btinternet.com. The pews are 3.75metres long with a decorative panel at one end and three intermediate frames.

Lockdown Initiatives

Reston & Auchencrow have introduced a community food exchange open to everyone in their area. The aim is to reduce the amount of food going to waste and landfill and make use of this in their own community. Set up in the Reston Village Hall people are encouraged to take what they need, leave what they do not need and donate anything from home that they will not or cannot use. Lists are available of acceptable goods. Open Monday to Friday 10am-12noon.

Each Monday and Wednesday fresh food is available from 'Fareshare Tesco'.

Family research

Probably, like you, I found that I had time on my hands after we all went into lock-down way back in late March. How have you filled the passing hours? Learned a new language; done some DIY, tried to catch up on reading all those books you never found time to enjoy? I've done a bit of all these but the main task I gave myself was to write a short history of my life, strictly for my family to read. Why did I decide to do this, because in my case and I suspect it is the same with many of you, I didn't think to ask my parents or Grandparents about previous generations and hence I have a lot of old photo's going back years of people whom I haven't much idea who they are, where they came from or how they fit into my history. They are my fairly close ancestors yet I know little of their lives, who they were or what part they have played in making me what I am to-day.

The next step was to investigate generations even further back. Some years ago I started to look into my family history and got a little way down through the years, even centuries but 'life' got in the way and I was busy with other things and my researches were put to one side. Well here was a splendid chance to take up where I had left off. Perhaps the most important precursor to resuming things was my having an update on a DNA sample that I had tested a few years back. What an eye-opener that was at the time but the recent additional information left me astounded. It would seem that techniques for linking small parts of one's DNA to other peoples from all over the world have advance in leaps and bounds

I had assumed that my blood would show that I was mainly from British and perhaps European people. I was right to think that as for the major part of my ancestors but I was delighted to see traces of forbears from far and wide. The report contains research that stretches back hundreds, even thousands of years, well beyond the five or so generations that are more predictable. It looks at previous mass migrations of people across continents way back in time so I have, in small proportions. Scandinavian, not a surprise, but also north west Russia (Karelia) Also German genes, the Iberian Peninsula, Toscani Italian, Punjabi, Gujarati Indian, Sri Lankan Tamil and Bengali blood. Even more amazingly there would appear to be a smidgen of Japanese, South Han Chinese (their dynasty lasted from 206 BC to 220 AD) and Kinh Vietnamese and , hold onto your hats, Puerto Rican, Columbian, Peruvian and Mexican! To keep the record straight, there is also a percentage of Irish and Scots blood mixed up with the rest of which I am, of course, proud.

It makes me feel quite tired just thinking about this admixture of genes that have gone to make up me, as a 21st century man, living in this eastern corner of Scotland. Who the heck were all these millions of folk and has anyone else, who may happen to read this, have had a similar surprise when researching their antecedents. It gives me a whole new outlook on the so called Rainbow nations; I'm a member and I didn't know. However as I only speak one of the languages represented by this horde of nationalities I shall continue to try to be understood when abroad by speaking English loudly! I haven't got time at my age to learn Russian or Japanese.

Well having discovered this multi mixed heritage, it has made me look out for clues when doing my own researches for any chances that have occurred in the past for distant great uncles and aunts and a legion of distant cousins to have departed from the path of the accepted moral standards of their own time, never mind our own. I'm not going to clype on my own family but a couple of 'misunderstandings', two or three generations ago, have emerged that gave me pause for thought. But I say to myself that without this melting pot enigma, of which I am a proud descendent, what the blazes would I have been like? I certainly wouldn't be the person that I am. Do I hear a cry from the ether that I might have

been a much better person – yes I probably would have been but I wouldn't have been 'me'.

Delving into the history of my descendants has been very absorbing; the time just flies by but the further one goes the more difficult it is to trace a particular line. This is made more difficult as my mother's maiden name was Smith! I am pleased that I have got back as far as the very late sixteenth century on my paternal side but have had to abandon it any further as it seems that unless you came out of the top draw the written records prior to that era are sketchy and have probably been lost in some mass clear out in the 1500's. It may even be that many records or those capable of making records had been vastly reduced in numbers throughout the kingdom by Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries earlier in the 16th century.

As many other people find, several of my great uncles emigrated to north America, back in the late Victorian era, married and settled there taking United States or Canadian citizenship. One or two made visits back to the old country but my efforts to identify their descendants mostly come up against inadequate records. Sometimes there are other people who publish their own family trees and I discovered many hundreds of distant cousins umpteen times removed. It would be impossible to contact them all and we might well have little to talk about anyway.

But my hunt goes on for more information about direct line forbears. I may have to subscribe to a more expensive site on line to get better data but I still have the time and inclination to carry on. As I said near the beginning, if only I had quizzed my grandparents more I would have had a head start, but I didn't – sins of omission!

Bob Kay

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