



# THE BRIDGE

Magazine of Ellon Parish Church



A P R I L | M A Y 2 0 1 8

# Our Vision

## Vision

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In response to the love of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) we seek to be a people of meaningful faith, meaningful community and meaningful witness. *Matthew 22:34-40*

## What it means

### Meaningful Faith



Recognising our **identity** as the **family of God**, we worship God with **all** our heart, **all** our soul, **all** our mind and **all** our strength.

### Meaningful Community



Managing our **resources**, using our **gifts in service** and **nurturing** our **relationship** with God and each other in **love** and **humility**.

### Meaningful Witness



**Teaching** what **Jesus** commanded, **going** where **Jesus** tells us to go and **loving all our neighbours** in our church, parish, country and world.



ELLON PARISH  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

meaningful faith | meaningful community | meaningful witness

# WORSHIP @ ELLON PARISH CHURCH

## ELLON PARISH CHURCH

Family Worship | 10am (**10:30am from 6<sup>th</sup> May**) | Sunday | Fellowship afterwards including Fairtrade Tea & Coffee and butteries.

## SLAINS KIRK OF ELLON PARISH CHURCH

Family Worship | 11:15am (**9:15am from the 6<sup>th</sup> May**) | 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday | Fellowship before including Fairtrade Tea & Coffee and home bakes. | Collieston Community Centre

## CONNECT

Contemporary Worship | 7pm | 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday | video | discussion | praise band | Fairtrade filter coffee, tea and home bakes throughout.

# CHILDREN @ ELLON PARISH CHURCH

## TWINKLE STARS

0 years – pre-school children | 10am | Sunday | games | songs | free play | snack

## STAR SQUAD (SUNDAY EDITION)

Primary School aged children | 10am | Sunday | games | songs | crafts | puzzles | story | fun | friendship

## STAR SQUAD (WEDNESDAY EDITION) (TERM TIME)

Primary School aged children | 3:30pm – 4:30pm | Wednesday | games | songs | craft | Bible story | snack | fun | friendship | Kirk Centre

## CARDBOARD CAFÉ

Babies, toddlers, parents, carers | 9:30am – 11:30am | Friday | snacks | story | crafts | messy play | Kirk Centre

Call 01358 725690 for more info.

All leaders and helpers for our children's work have been approved by the Kirk Session and are PVG checked.

# YOUTH @ ELLON PARISH CHURCH

## GSUNDAY

S1 – 16 | 7pm | Sunday | Kirk Centre | games | chat | friendship | fun

## BEYOND

16 - 25 | Sunday | Kirk Centre | chat | exploration | friendship | fun

Call 01358 725690 for more info.

All leaders and helpers for our youth work have been approved by the Kirk Session and are PVG checked.

# PRAYER @ ELLON PARISH CHURCH

## FRIDAY MORNING PRAYER

Alternate Fridays | 7:15am | Ellon Parish Church | worship | liturgy | prayer  
| all welcome | Fairtrade tea & coffee

## SUNDAY MORNING PRAYER

Sunday | 9:45am (10:20am from 6<sup>th</sup> May) | Ellon Parish Church | prayer for those  
leading the service | all welcome to join in this prayer time

## PRAYER BOX

Always available | Under the sign outside Ellon Parish Church building | drop a note in the  
box for someone or something you'd like the church to pray for | confidentiality is always  
respected

## PERSONAL & PASTORAL PRAYER

If you or a loved one, or someone you know, would like pastoral or prayer support we will  
be delighted to offer this either through prayer on a Sunday morning, or by visiting your or  
their home to offer support. Please speak to Alastair, your elder or Edith in the Kirk Centre  
Office. Confidentiality is always respected.

## CHURCH TRANSPORT

If you cannot get to church because of lack of transport,  
the BB CHURCH BUS could take you there and back.

For more details contact **Anne Milne** (01358 720040)

Please don't forget to let Anne know if you are NOT requiring transport on any  
one or more Sundays. Thank you.



# MUSINGS FROM THE MINISTER

*Ellon Parish Church minister Rev Alastair Bruce muses about stories and questions.*



“But what does ‘the highest heaven’ mean?” This was the question that James, my four-year-old son, asked Nicola when the choir were just beginning to sing their introit on Palm Sunday. There was something insightful about my wee boy asking a question like this (he, of course, takes after his mother). In the Jewish tradition of the Passover, which this year starts on 17th April, the family sit around a table, having a meal and telling the Jewish story of the Exodus, when the Israelites were eventually saved from their slavery in Egypt (you can read the story in the Bible in the Book of Exodus). During the meal the youngest child asks questions, and this forms the basis of retelling of the story.

Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week, the last week of Jesus’ earthly life. And we spend the week remembering

and retelling the story of a God who loved the world so much that he came to earth to live with us, to show us how to live and ultimately die in love to bring us back to Him. It’s been called the greatest story ever told.

This is the story of a God of love.

This is the story of a God who was willing to draw close to us.

This is the story of a God who let nothing, not even death or all the things we do wrong, get in the way of having a relationship with us.

This is a story worth telling, and that is a story worth asking questions about.

This is a story that I hope my wee boy keeps asking questions about and keeps telling his whole life long.





# ELLON PANTO OPEN EVENING

Ellon Parish Church Drama Group are looking for  
new members for this year's pantomime

## Aladdin

The group are looking for enthusiastic fun individuals over 18 to join  
them *onstage* and *backstage* (props, curtains, lighting etc.)

**Wednesday 25th April at 7.30pm**

Kirk Centre, Station Road, Ellon

All welcome – No experience required – No audition

Come along for a chat, tea and coffee

(Members do not have to be affiliated to any Church)

**Aladdin Pantomime dates: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

Rehearsals: Wednesdays 7.30pm to 9.55pm from 9th May (exc. school summer holidays)

Backstage crew required from October but can join in from May

For more information please contact Denise on 07882 384615



The Ellon Parish Church of Scotland is a Charity Registered in Scotland, No: SC008819



## STUFF FROM THE SESSION

*Ellon Parish Church's Session Clerk **Sandra Beaton** gives a brief overview of the work of the New Teams and the kinds of things discussed and considered in the Kirk Session.*

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The Kirk Session have had two meetings since you were last updated. As it was the beginning of the year the January one was held after the newsletter printing deadline so I will try to give you a combined resume of the two.

The **New Teams structure** began in February and the teams, taking into account the individual aims for each team, are establishing objectives for the year ahead.

**Vicky Stigant, Presbytery Youth Work Facilitator**, talked to Session on the topic of Young People and Faith. Two pieces of research formed the basis for the discussion, namely, *Sticky Faith* and *Growing Young*. *Sticky Faith* is a programme to help develop long term faith and research found that faith sticks with children / teenagers / youths when they are actively involved in all-church worship; serving and building relationships with younger children by putting what they have learnt into practice and by adults in the congregation showing an

interest in them. *Growing Young* - Churches are both shrinking and ageing as more young people disengage and this programme provides a strategy any church can use to involve and retain young people.

**Whitworth Fellowship Programme** – Carter Hudson, a student from Whitworth University in Washington will be joining us on a 10-week placement in the summer. The Kirk Session saw this as a great opportunity for the Church. With the structure we now have and Kirk Fest over the summer taking on a young enthusiastic person will be of great advantage as well as give a student a good overview of congregational life

**Presentation of Accounts** – The accounts were presented at the March meeting by treasurer Andy Bruce and Session, as the Trustees, approved them at this meeting. They were presented to the congregation on Sunday 25th March at the Annual Stated Meeting.

## **Timings of Worship**

Back in May 2013 the arrangement of service timings was not conducive for the Minister to preach at both Services and so at that point the Kirk Session agreed in principle, under the guidance of Rev Jim Davies, to change the time of the Slains Worship Service to 11.15am for a 6-month trial period with the plan to review this in January 2014. However, due to Jim's ill health and then the vacancy this review did not happen. Now 3 years on the current situation does not work. The Ministry Act of 2000 states that the minister should be present during Worship and should not be asking Elders to routinely lead Worship in their absence. Also maintaining and developing a pastoral link with the congregation is extremely difficult.

So, commencing on **the 6th May 2018**, Session have agreed to move the time of the **Slains Worship Service to 9.15am** (continuing on the 1st and 3rd Sundays) with fellowship before the service and to move the **Ellon Worship Service to 10.30am**, with fellowship afterwards with a view to reviewing this in March 2019.

**Associate Minister Post** - The advertisement for this post had been changed to remove the need for an ordained person to apply and change to a full-time Parish Worker post. This was advertised with a closing date of 12th March. Alastair had news, hot off the press, that there had been 4 applicants for the post which the Ministry Team will now consider to invite for interview.

## **Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator OSCR**

The Finance Team leader, Elaine Henderson, informed Session that following recent reports of deeply troubling abuses connected to some charities working in the international aid sector, OSCR, as a regulator, take such matters extremely seriously and therefore it was a requirement that charity trustees discuss two key points they require to be reminded of namely Safeguarding (keeping vulnerable beneficiaries, volunteers and staff safe) and Notifiable Events. Session as Trustees were made aware of the actions points and the action required should it become necessary.

**New Elders** - A number of names had been put forward for Session to consider for the Eldership and these were given due consideration.

**Session Clerk** - As my tenure as Session Clerk comes to an end in November Mary Paterson has been approved by Session to take over the role and will shadow me in the position until that time.

So, let me close with a reminder of our Vision for Ellon Parish Church whichever part you play or role you fulfil:

*In response to the love of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) we seek to be a people of meaningful faith, meaningful community and meaningful witness Matthew 22:34-40*

God Bless





ELLON CHURCHES TOGETHER

PRESENTS

NEW SCOTTISH HYMNS BAND

WEDNESDAY  
2ND MAY

FREE ENTRY

DOORS 7PM

DONATION OFFERING TAKEN DURING THE EVENT

ELLON PARISH CHURCH, 36 THE SQUARE, ELLON AB41 9JB



Ellon Churches *Together*

[NEWSCOTTISHHYMNS.COM](http://NEWSCOTTISHHYMNS.COM)

THE NEW SCOTTISH HYMNS BAND WRITE MEMORABLE NEW SONGS FOR THE CHURCH. DRAWING ON VARIOUS STYLES AS WELL AS THEIR SCOTTISH FOLK ROOTS, THEIR MODERN HYMNS INSPIRE PEOPLE WITH THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS.

JOIN ELLON CHURCHES TOGETHER FOR THIS INFORMAL WORSHIP CONCERT AS THE BAND SHARES SONGS FROM THEIR RECENT ALBUM "WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED" AND REFLECT ON OUR WONDERFUL REASONS FOR SINGING WHEN WE GATHER TOGETHER AS THE CHURCH.





# ON THE SQUARE

## ELLON PARISH CHURCH COFFEE SHOP

*Set "On the Square" in the gorgeous Aberdeenshire town of Ellon, the Kirk Centre Coffee Shop is a friendly, modern coffee shop serving delicious hot & cold drinks from Lattes to Irn-Bru, lunches of soup, paninis, salads and more plus delicious homebakes not to be missed. All amidst inspiring local art and craft work.*

**Opening times:**

**Tuesday – Saturday | 10am – 4pm**

**Sunday & Monday | closed**

**For info or bookings call: 01358 723517**

*Tables with access to play materials can now be booked in the  
St Ternan's Hall*



# FAIRTRADE QUIZ NIGHT

*Ellon Parish Church Fairtrade Team leader **Anne Wilson** reports on the fairtrade movement and the recent quiz held in the Macdonald Golf Club*

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On 10<sup>th</sup> March the church's Fairtrade Team decided to hold a quiz in the MacDonald Golf Club. We had various reasons for doing so: as a Fairtrade church we are always keen to promote Fairtrade in the church and in the community as much as we can. Why? Because Fairtrade has a similar ethos to The Big Issue i.e. a hand up and not a hand out. The aim of the movement is to give workers in the developing world a fair wage for their work and also a safer working environment. Just one example is that bananas with the Fairtrade logo are not only traded at a fair price, but also they are not treated with sprays which are harmful to the health of the farmers. We also aim to raise funds which are

then all ploughed back into Fairtrade.

The event turned out to be a success raising £589. Part of this money will be given to the church for ongoing Fairtrade purchases such as Fairtrade tea, coffee and biscuits, and also to any of the young people groups to buy Fairtrade goods.

We would like to thank all those who supported the quiz, MacDonald Club for their help and support, and the Co-op for its donation of a prize. Our other events in 2018 will hopefully be stalls at the Ellon and Collieston Galas, the Fairtrade Christmas Fayre again in September and, looking ahead to 2019, maybe another quiz.





## Life Group Details

### Daytime Bible Study

Leader: Alison / Nicola  
When: Friday fortnightly (to coincide with Friday Prayers) 1pm - 3pm  
Venue: Eileen Davidson's house,  
The Haven, Station Road

### Evening Video & Discussion

Leaders: Neil and Elaine Henderson  
When: 2nd and 4th Wednesday  
7 for 7:30pm  
Venue: Henderson's @ 7 Davan Place

### Evening Book Group

Leader: Andy Bruce  
When: 1st & 3rd Wednesday, 7:30pm  
Venue: Andy Bruce's house,  
Strathnavar, Station Road



## CHANGE OF SERVICE TIMES

From **6th May 2018**

Slains Worship  
9:15am (fellowship before)

Ellon Worship  
10:30am (fellowship after)



# POINT TO PONDER

Ellon Parish Church member **Mags Graham** ponders a brief moment of helping hands.

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Have you helped someone this week? That was the question Alastair asked in church. I hadn't thought about it, but if you don't count all the normal stuff you do for husband, children, work colleagues and clients then the answer was probably not. Then I remembered something that had happened two weeks previously and the range of emotions that memory brought with it surprised me. The strength of the feelings inspired me to write about it.

Picture the scene, a coffee shop in Aberdeen, my birthday, it is the end of a long day of eating, drinking and generally

spoiling myself with husband, 3 daughters and their boyfriends.

In this particular coffee shop, ok it's Nero's on the corner of Market street, other coffee shops are available, the toilets are upstairs some of you may be familiar with the venue. I have always thought the stairs were very steep and menacing. I do have a bit of a fear of stairs after an incident when I was a teenager. I frequently find myself clinging to the handrail after a trip to the loo.

So, I was coming back from powdering my nose on the day in question and I noticed



a very frail looking elderly man on the stair in front of me. He was moving very slowly one step at a time and looked like he could topple headfirst down the stairs at any moment. I decided that I would feel better if I quickly overtook him and then walked down the stairs in front of him so that if he lost his balance at worst I could provide a soft landing. I didn't think of actually asking him if he wanted help, for fear of appearing what? interfering? patronising? over dramatic? (Moi?) I was almost past him when he spoke to me, I wasn't expecting that. He reached out his hand, making his position even more precarious and said, "can you help...?"

"Of course!" I said and before I knew it our arms were entwined and he was holding so tightly to my hand I knew that if he went down I was going with him. We made it alive to the bottom and I asked if he was ok now before letting go of his hand. Our eyes never met but in those few minutes I felt so many conflicting emotions that my head was spinning. Not good in this situation.

First, I was shocked, then slightly uncomfortable, at being so intimate with a complete stranger, then I felt guilty for feeling uncomfortable. Next, I felt great warmth and was delighted with myself for

just being there in the right place at the right time, then guilt again because this wasn't about me! Anyone could have provided an arm and I was now thinking that it must have taken courage for him to ask for help and began thinking how awful it must be to have to rely on the kindness of others. So back to guilt again. The effect of this on my brain caused me to chatter inanely with exaggerated cheerfulness all the way down the stairs, as if to reinforce that this was an everyday occurrence. As I said, my head was spinning because it wasn't normal and it felt weird. Then guilt again, why was helping another human not normal and weird?

Also, how arrogant of me to only think about how good helping someone made ME feel. It was really nothing to do with me, how must it feel to be the person who needs to ask people for help just to go out for coffee something that I do every week and totally take for granted. I am such a spoiled brat!

So, here's the thing, helping people makes you feel good and if you don't totally embarrass yourself by turning into a gibbering idiot, hopefully the person you help feels good too.

Don't tell my family but that was the best birthday present ever.



ELLON PARISH CHURCH IS ON FACEBOOK.

Search for "Ellon Parish Church" and 'like' us to receive all the latest updates.

Holiday Club Kirk Fest BBQ

Afternoon Beach Fun

Ellon Parish Church

Kirk Fest

9th - 14th  
July '18

Cardboard Cafe Communi-Teas

Community Film Night

Quiz & Acoustic Cafe



ELLON PARISH  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

meaningful faith | meaningful community | meaningful witness

More details to follow on [ellonparishchurch.co.uk/Kirk-Fest](http://ellonparishchurch.co.uk/Kirk-Fest)



# SYRIAN NEW SCOTS FEAST AFTERNOON

*Ann Bruce tells all about the recent "feast" afternoon held in the Kirk Centre*



Last Sunday afternoon we were treated to a wonderful feast of food in the Kirk Centre. Our Syrian New Scot families had wanted to cook for us but it took a while for us to organise a date which suited everyone. We had fifty tickets to give away, really just so that we knew how many people the families were catering for and all fifty tickets were snapped up.

The food was delicious and beautifully presented. Mostly it is mince and chicken with rice, nuts and lots of salads and very sweet puddings, with Turkish coffee on offer too.

The families had obviously worked very hard to produce all the food, plenty for everyone who was there and they seemed to enjoy the afternoon as much as we did. The food which was left over was taken across to the church for the Connect congregation to have a taste, or for people to take home.

Other news, the two new families who were held up by the snow have arrived and seem to have settled in well. Both families live on or near Western Avenue, close to one of our original families. They are very happy to have company near by.



# AN EVENING OF MUSIC BY THE MARISCHAL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

*Member of the new Stewardship Team **Ann Gammack** gives an overview of the recent concert held in Ellon Parish Church*



Once again Ellon Parish Church were entertained by members of Aberdeen Marischal Chamber Orchestra in aid of fundraising for Ellon Parish Church and the proposed visit that the orchestra is to make to Prague in July of this year. Members of the orchestra are encouraged to audition for the University's Symphony Orchestra at the beginning of the academic year and if successful will be invited to join the Chamber Orchestra. Rehearsals take place weekly with three concerts during the year.

The event itself which was compèred by Bebhionn Paterson, herself a member of the orchestra, showed the abundance of talent found within the orchestra with some playing more than one instrument during the evening.

The evening began with the string quarter consisting of Shannon Stevenson, Caitlin Knox, Sassi Mucke and Solja Hansen

followed by a duet on clarinet given by Sarah Eggleton and Bebhionn Paterson. Thereafter there was a violin and piano duet by Zoe Young and Otto Itgenshorst, a viola solo by Sassi Mucke, double bass duet played by Paige Millar and Calum Young, a violin solo by Shannon Stevenson with Chukwuebuka Anucha playing a flute solo ending the first half of the concert.

After the interval of teas and coffees and plenty of home bakes, which again was provided by family and friends of the orchestra, the second half of the concert began with a brass quintet consisting of Leah Forsyth, Gavin Hunter, Dominic Gallio and Finley Campbell followed by a cello and piano duet given by Solja Hansen and Otto Itgenshorst, a vocal solo by Caitlin Knox, viola duet played by Sassi Mucke and Anne Schmit and a piano solo played by Otto Itgenshorst.





The evening ended with a Ceilidh Band consisting of members of the orchestra playing various Scottish pieces by well-known Scottish Composers with dancing taking place in the centre aisle of the church.

The whole evening was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience with a promise of a return visit. The abundance of talent shown throughout the evening was seen on the faces of the members whilst playing their instruments and the

enjoyment they get whilst doing so. This was also clear from the response of the audience during the night.

If and when the Orchestra make a return visit to Ellon Parish Church, which is more than likely, you should try and come along as you would find it to be worthwhile and not to be missed.

On behalf of Ellon Parish Church however, we would like to take this opportunity to wish the orchestra an enjoyable visit to Prague for all its members.





Would you like to get back into the workplace but lack confidence?

Have you 2 hours to spare a week?

Perhaps you have recently retired and looking to keep active?



***Why not come and volunteer with us  
at “On The Square” Coffee Shop at  
the Kirk Centre?***

Iris our manager (723517) would love to  
hear from you

Come and learn new skills  
Keep active | Make new friends

## COFFEE AND CRAFT

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the Month | 2pm – 3:30pm

Coffee and craft takes place in the Wee Chapel once a month on a Thursday at 2pm. It's an opportunity to get together to share what's been happening in the week and to do some craft work together. It's open to anyone who happens to like crafting projects whether they are young or just young at heart.

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## COFFEE AND CHAT

Last Friday of the Month | 2pm – 3:30pm

Coffee and chat takes place in the Gathering Area at the back of the Ellon Parish Church building once a month on a Friday at 2pm. It's open to anyone who is in need of a bit of company and a cuppa.

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## TRIDCRAFT HIDDEN ENTREPRENEURS CHALLENGE

We got our Twinkle Stars and Star Squad Sunday (0-12yrs) to take up the *Traidcraft Hidden Entrepreneur Appeal* by planting bulbs in tea cups and selling them as Mother's day gifts for £3 each, (we got the tea cups and saucers free from our Nearly New Team, the soil and bulbs were kindly donated). At the end of Mother's Day we had made £107 and have since had another donation of £5 bringing our total to £112 for the Challenge. Well done to the Children becoming involved in this Challenge and raising money for the Traidcraft Hidden Entrepreneur Appeal which the government will match. *(details traidcraft.org.uk)*



## CARDBOARD CAFÉ TEAMS

We are delighted that there are now 4 teams to help with Cardboard Café.

Each team has a Team Leader who is responsible for making sure things run smoothly on the day and for arranging to have enough helpers for the sessions they are on. The Team Leaders are **Pam Adam, Nicola Bruce, Ros Mackie and Sandra Beaton.**

The teams are on once every four weeks and if you'd like to help out on one of the new teams the Team Leaders would be delighted to chat with you about it. This can be everything from helping set up and clear up, to welcoming on the door, getting down to play with the kids or just chatting with the parents.

**If you think you could give a bit of time on a Friday morning** then either ring Edith in the office or email [info@ellonparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:info@ellonparishchurch.co.uk)

## COFFEE SHOP VOLUNTEERS

If you have a spare couple of hours in the week Iris in the coffee shop would love to hear from you. There are various jobs that you could do from serving to washing dishes, depending on your skills! If you think you could help then phone **Iris on 01358 723517**

## NEARLY NEW SALE

The Nearly New Sale takes place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of the month from 10am – 12noon. The next is **14<sup>th</sup> April.** Donations of **nearly new** goods can be dropped off anytime before.

## WALKING GROUP

The Walking group will restart their weekly walks on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 6.30pm at the Kirk Centre (weather permitting) **For more information please telephone Catherine Burnett on 01358 720524.**

## RAG BAGS

Please continue to bag up any old clothing, shoes and handbags for recycling. The church receives 40p per kilo for these

We will no longer collect household linens but if you have good quality linens, please offer them to the Nearly New Sales Team.

There are also outlets for linens at the Red Cross and the Fire Station.

Eileen Davidson

## THE BRIDGE MAGAZINE

If you'd like to contribute to the Bridge Magazine we'd love to hear from you. We're looking for people to write articles about faith and books and what's going on in the church community as well as in Ellon. Contact Edith in the Kirk Centre Office, Eddie Graham on [eddie.graham@ymail.com](mailto:eddie.graham@ymail.com) or Rev Alastair.

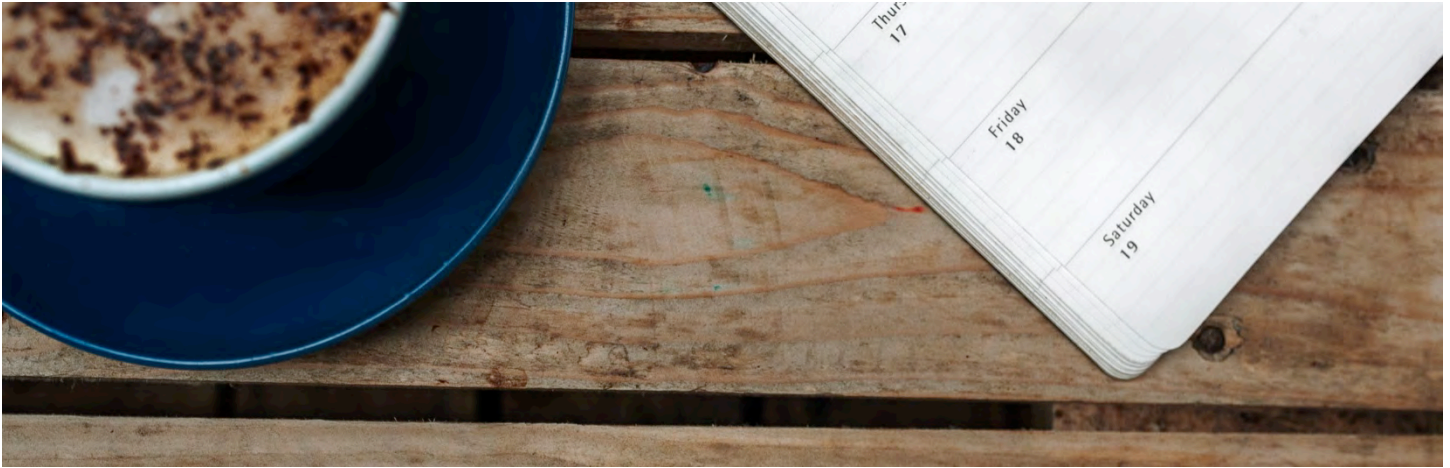
We are always looking for articles of interest to include in The Bridge Magazine. If you have anything you'd like to contribute to The Bridge that is loosely church or community related then please let us know.

**The closing date for submissions for the June / July edition will be Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018.**



# ELLON PARISH CHURCH REVIEW OF THE YEAR

*Rev Alastair Bruce reviews the year gone past and some of the things in store for the year to come. (NB this is the text of what Alastair said at the Annual Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2018)*



*\*First of all I beg forgiveness for anything or anyone I may have forgotten to mention! It is / was not deliberate! ☺*

If you happen to google the question “What is the church?” then you’ll get nearly 65 million results. 65 million answers to a four-word question. Now, I’m sure there will be repetition and there’ll probably be some answers that are just plain misguided or wrong, but on the first page alone you’ll see the words building, hierarchy, the Greek word ekklesia, one person saying the question is wrong, it should be *who is the church* and a couple that will talk about it being a group of people.

Many thinkers over time have tried to define the church. The great church father Augustine felt that the church was a group of believers and that they were to live together in unity and harmony. The great reformer John Calvin defined the church as “Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the

sacraments administered according to God’s institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists.” The Bible refers to the church as God’s family, a chosen people, a spiritual building and the body and bride of Christ.

More recently the theologian Tom Wright has described the church as a river and a tree for various reasons, but in a tight definition he says that *the church is the single, multi-ethnic family promised by the creator God to Abraham. It was brought into being through Israel’s messiah, Jesus; it was energised by God’s Spirit; and it was called to bring transformative news of God’s rescuing justice to the whole of creation.*

Recently the comedian Milton Jones tried to define the church, he said;

Sometimes people think of church as being like a giant helicopter. They don’t want to get too close in case they get sucked into the rotas.

Others think of it as a Winnie the Pooh pyjama suit. Safe and warm, but they hope to goodness no one sees them in it.

And to some it's a baseball bat. For most of the time they play a nice little game with their friends. Then once a year they go out into the high street and hit someone over the head with it.

On one occasion the rock Singer Mick Jagger said *"Jesus Christ was fantastic, but I do not like the church. The church does more harm than good"*

However, the writer Rob Bell calls the church a *"blessing machine"* and the pastor Bill Hybels calls the local church the *"hope of the world"*.

I'm not going to add my own definition, but I think I like the multi-ethnic family of Tom Wright, and I like the blessing machine and the hope of the world.

So as we look back on the last year and think ahead to this year to come, to what extent are we a multi-ethnic family blessing machine that is the hope of the world? Well, I think sometimes we are, and I think sometimes we're not.

Lets start with the good things. The ways we are.

Our continued work with the Syrian New Scots is a multi-ethnic blessing that brings hope. The four families we welcomed last

year have settled into their lives here in Ellon. They have a level of structure that helps bring some stability to their lives; they are learning English well and are managing to pick up bits and pieces of voluntary work, most noticeably for us in the Coffee Shop, which has been a huge blessing. They've also been able to welcome two new families in the last few weeks and help put their minds at ease that this is a safe place. So, our work continues there through the Syrian New Scots Steering group.

In the last year we've brought joy and light into the lives of those of our community. From the Beer and Carols evening in the Tollbooth that was so busy the management were considering not allowing anyone else in; to our

engagement with people at the Ellon and Collieston Galas, doing things for free for the community; giving out hot chocolate, waffles and the like at the Ellon

Christmas lights switch on and raising over £100 by giving it away free! We've brought smiles and laughter to the faces of many families through the family film nights at Kirk Fest in the summer and at Christmas, we've brought light into the lives of those who are bereaved or lonely through our pastoral visitations and funerals, as well as the care home services, coffee and chat and coffee and craft.

We've brought a message of hope through those and through our services here in Ellon and in Slains, and that will continue and be developed as we put into place the Kirk Session's plan to adapt the times of



...I like the *blessing machine* and the *hope of the world*...



services. We've prayed for light and hope for the world, our community and those folks we know every second Friday morning during Friday morning prayers at 7:15am. We've brought light and hope through our activity days and holiday club weeks and we were very blessed by the visiting team last year, and hopefully this year. We've brought fun, laughter and joy to the Kirk Centre through Star Squad Wednesdays and the primary aged young people who attend, and on a Friday with Cardboard Café and the continued adventures of the BB and GB.

So, we have much to be thankful for. We've been blessed to have new people come to be part of our church family both those who have had church involvement and have moved to Ellon and folks who have joined the church by profession of faith, which has been galvanised by attending the recent Alpha Courses.

People have been blessed with multiple free dinners at Alpha, not to mention the stimulating videos and discussions. And

this has continued through folks involvement in Life Groups.

In terms of raw statistics, we have had in the last year, 2 people join our church by profession of faith, 3 people join by certificate, 28 members have passed away.



We've celebrated 5 baptisms, 1 blessing, 1 wedding and conducted 56 funerals (which incidentally continues to be the highest number in Gordon Presbytery) and so I'm very grateful for Rev Sheila Craggs, Janet Adie and David Smith for their help and support in this area.

We've run Alpha Courses in the Autumn and Winter for 19 people where we've had 6 helpers. Of that number roughly half have been non-church members with two taking up active membership.

We also had 14 food contributors to Alpha from the church and thankfully no one has done any counting or statistics on the number of pounds put on over the duration of an Alpha Course!

As follow up and development from Alpha we've set up 3 Life Groups which give folks

an opportunity to deepen their relationships with each other and with God. Currently there are nearly 40 people attending these.

Cardboard Café has had 172 returning children and generally 70 folks each Friday.

Star Squad Wednesday began just less than a year ago and we have grown this to 18 primary aged young people, and we currently have 10 regular young people on the books of Star Squad Sunday and Twinkle Stars and at least two will be added in the next year! Kirk Fest last year had around 40 children attending with 30% moving from this into Star Squad either on Sunday or Wednesday.

The Activity Day in June last year had 20 children, the November ones had 33 children and the one last month had 39 children.

The GB and BB continue to be a valuable part of the community of Ellon and of the church here, and the new teams are currently thinking about ways in which we can strengthen the links between the church and our uniformed organisations, but our thanks and prayers go with them

as they continue to inspire the boys and girls.

Our food bank quietly does a massive amount for those in Ellon who might be struggling for one reason or another, bringing hope and friendship.

We continue to be blessed by the yearly panto which is a great source of fellowship



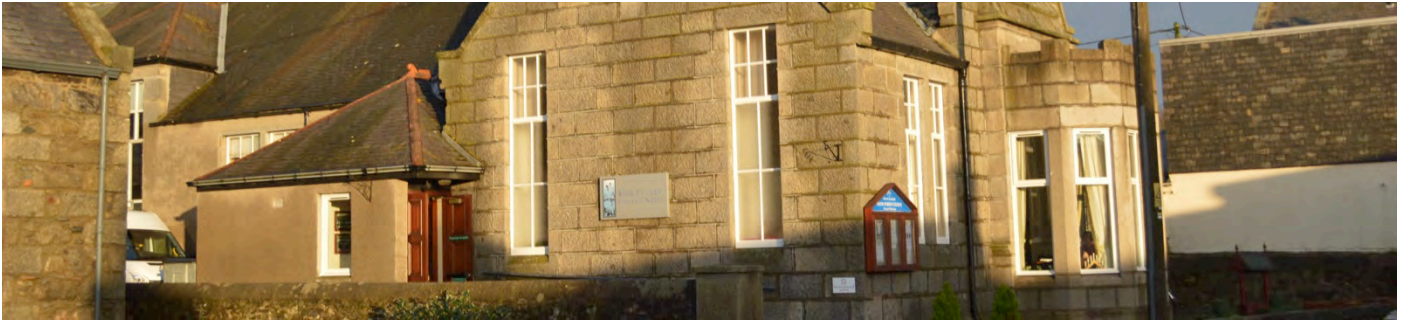
and fundraising, which raised **£4435.63** for the church and the Nearly New Sales Team which equally is a grand source of fellowship and fundraising, also raising over **£4000** last year.



One area for development that I highlighted last year was to agree and develop our strategy and vision. Our vision, which was launched last year, is “in response to the love of God (Father, Son and

Holy Spirit) we seek to be a people of meaningful faith, meaningful community and meaningful witness” and this continues to be slowly embedded into our practice as a church. Around this we moved to Unitary Constitution and have a total of nine new teams working on various aspects of the church. What this





means is that more people should have a meaningful say in what the church does and how it develops. I'm pleased that this structural change has indeed encouraged more participation from the congregation as a whole. We're even in the process of inviting some people to become new elders.

One difficult and sad decision we made in the last year was to agree to not retain the Slains Kirk building. It's always sad to close a church building, but I was pleased with the dignity and grace with which this whole process was carried out, we were even praised by presbytery for the way the process had been put together, administered and brought to fruition.

So we have much to be thankful for and we have much to thank God for guiding us through especially the difficult decision about the Slains Kirk building.

Nevertheless, we have no room for complacency and there are still areas for development. I've talked over the last couple of years about the need for a Mission Strategy and to know the actual needs of our community. Recently we sent out a survey to help us in this. So far we have had over 100 responses to this and Nicola Bruce our Mission Development Worker will compile this, draw out some themes and present the findings to the Kirk Session and the congregation in the

near future, before she disappears off on maternity leave. There is still time to fill in the survey either online (link on facebook or website) or in paper (please return to Kirk Centre office, prayer box, manse letter box or the offering plate on a Sunday) From the responses so far we know that isolation is an issue, but that people generally think positively about Ellon Parish Church.

We need to look at how we do Pastoral Care. We have some very skilled people in this area, but my fear is that people are slipping through the net, so this is an area we need to think seriously about this year.

We also need to think about our finances. I've said in the last couple of years that we need to think seriously about fundraising. This is something the new Stewardship Team has been tasked with, and a few ideas have been generated. However, we've been talking about this for a long time so it's time for some action in this



...we need to look to look at how we do pastoral care...

area and I want to report some good news when I stand here next year.

We also need to look at and think about the Kirk Centre. It's a wonderful resource, but it's a bit tired. We've had it for 20 odd years and it was wonderfully innovative at the time, but we need to think about how we can best serve the community and our church through it. Although it's a working building, I think it could be more of a blessing to our community.

Although we have seen developments in our work with young people it's an area we need to keep developing if we are to be a church that is sustainable, multigenerational and vibrant. However, I think following from the recent Kirk Session meeting, we need to not only think about young people or older people only in isolation, but think about how we bring the generations together. How we do that is still under discussion but if we are to keep the young people and families we have then we need to have a genuine multi-generational approach to what we do.

So, there are areas for development, but I'd worry if there weren't. There are things we need to do to keep us just treading water with the changing and developing world around us. But there are also things that we need to give time to bed in, take root and grow. We've started and changed a lot of things in the last couple

of years and so we now need to nurture them.

So finally I'd love to say a huge thanks to all the elders and office bearers. For those who have served on the Congregational Board and those who have begun to serve on the new teams.

Thanks to Andy for keeping the finances in check, Doug for presenting them, Mary P for clerking for the Congregational Board, and agreeing to take over as Session Clerk in November and Sandra for her listening

ear, diligence, tenacity, wisdom and patience as Session Clerk.

I'd also like to thank Mary S for her beadle-ing, to Neil Henderson for being Presbytery Elder, for the whole Leadership Team for their input and insight. Thanks also to Edith for her

hard work in the Kirk Centre Office and Frank, Colin, Irene and Joyce for their work at the Kirk Centre/Church. And also to the Ministry Team of Alison, Pam and Nicola for all they do. And hopefully I'm thanking a new member next year for all their input.

So, as we bed some things in and as we develop things, may we be a blessing machine, may we be hope to the world and a united family who brings the good news of Jesus to our community through meaningful faith, meaningful community and meaningful witness.



**... we need to keep developing if we are to be a church that is sustainable, multigenerational and vibrant...**





GUARDIANS OF  
**ANCORA**  
HOLIDAY CLUB

## Activity Day

Monday 4th June | 10am - 3pm

P1 - P7 | bring packed lunch

## KirkFest Week

Monday 9th July - Friday 13th July

10am - 12:30pm | incoming P1 - P7

Ellon Parish Kirk Centre | Free!

more info/booking: [ellonparishchurch.co.uk/activity-days](http://ellonparishchurch.co.uk/activity-days)  
info@ellonparishchurch.co.uk or 01358 725690



ELLON PARISH  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Ellon Parish Church Presents

# WEDNESDAY EDITION STAR SQUAD

3.30-4.30pm

Ellon Parish Church Kirk Centre  
P1-P7

• GAMES | ARTS & CRAFTS | BIBLE STORIES | SNACK | SONGS | FRIENDS | FUN •

Registration

[www.ellonparishchurch.co.uk](http://www.ellonparishchurch.co.uk)

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meaningful faith | meaningful community | meaningful witness



# A COMMUNION REFLECTION

*In this communion season elder, Worship Team member and coffee shop volunteer **David Smith** reflects on a personally profound and unusual service of Holy Communion*

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Many years ago, my employer transferred me to Mombasa, Kenya as a technical adviser, for a 2-year period. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there and one of the many highlights was my membership of the local Methodist Church, which was located near to where I lived.

This particular church was known by some of the locals as 'The European Church', because its congregation was predominantly (though not entirely) expatriate. This was not for reasons of discrimination, but simply because some of the services there were conducted in English rather than Swahili.

The minister, a fluent Swahili speaker was keen to involve the expatriate congregation in local matters and on one occasion invited those who were available, to join him in an evening communion service to be held at a church elsewhere in the city.

I was one of those who accepted the invitation and so, found myself one evening, in a rather dilapidated corrugated iron building with an earthen floor and seats consisting of wooden planks nailed to wooden uprights. There, I spotted a young Kenyan man, whom I knew because he, a fluent English speaker, also attended 'The European Church'.

After a brief chat, he expressed a wish to introduce me to his mother and proceeded to do so. His mother was bare-footed and wore only one visible garment – a skirt. This was

no embarrassment, as one was well accustomed to seeing this style of dress, so I shook the good lady's hand and muttered a few words in the only Swahili that I knew – words like "Hullo", "How are you" etc. This was the only conversation possible!

The communion duly took place and all partook of the wine from a communal vessel; a rather chipped enamel jug. This may sound like a rather peculiar situation but, for me it was highly meaningful, and continues to be to this day.

What struck me forcibly about it was that, on the surface of things the differences between myself and the lady to whom I was introduced could not have been greater. We were of a different race, spoke different languages, and the differences between her expectations of life, her disposable income, her living accommodation, her lifestyle, her possessions and mine, to name just a few items, could not have been greater.

Yet we had partaken of the same sacrament and in doing so, all those differences faded into insignificance. What was important was that we were both followers of Christ, both partakers of the feast instituted by Christ himself and both equal in his eyes.

The following words written by John Oxenham sum up, for me the whole essence of what I have described.

***In Christ there is no east or west,  
in him no south or north,  
but one great fellowship of love  
throughout the whole wide earth.***



... those differences faded into insignificance

“...powerful,  
moving...”

“  
it wasn't as scary as I thought  
it would be! Especially as we  
all got comfortable over the  
weeks, it was actually a laugh!  
”

“  
We've really appreciated  
meeting more people, now  
we have people we could  
talk to at church or just in  
the street...  
”

“...really  
interesting...”

“  
...it really helped me  
have some clarity...  
”

“...haven't really  
thought about this  
stuff much before.  
It's been good...  
”

“  
really enjoyed it  
”

“  
10 free dinners! Yes!  
Can I do the course  
again?!  
”



Quotes from the  
Winter 2018 Ellon  
Parish Church Alpha Course.



ELLON PARISH  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

# CELEBRATION OF LIFE

*Jesus says: "I am the way and the truth and the life"*

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## Funerals

Irene Frances Davidson  
Anthony (Tony) Salter  
William (Willie) Campbell  
Isobel Grieve  
Jean Main

Alexander (Sandy) Pirie  
Derek Lawrence  
Dorothy Noble  
William (Bill) Cran

## Baptisms

Jacob Daniel Mitchell (Son of Vicky and Danny Mitchell, wee brother of Caitlin, Kiera, Logan and Esmee

Daniel Walker McGonagle, son of Nataleigh & Stephen McGonagle, wee brother of Orla.

## Profession of Faith

Isla Leask

# FLOWER MINISTRY

Many thanks to the following for providing flowers in January and February to enhance our worship and to bring the comfort of the light of Christ to those in our parish in need of support.

*Mrs M Stevenson, Mrs Y Kelly, Mrs E Davidson, Mrs A Fraser, Mrs D Davidson, Mrs E Gollan, Miss A Gammack, Mrs W Moir, Mrs A Milne, G Burgess & Son, Mrs P Morrison, Mrs D Reid, Mrs A Wyness, Mrs M MacDonald, Rev M Rodger, Mrs E Douglas*



# CURRENT SERMON SERIES

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# CONTACT DETAILS

## MINISTRY TEAM

**Rev Alastair JS Bruce** | Parish Minister | c/o The Kirk Centre, 4 Station Rd, Ellon | t. 01358 723787 | e. [abruce@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:abruce@churchofscotland.org.uk) | Days off: Saturday and Monday

**Pam Adam** | Parish Worker (Children and Families Development) | The Kirk Centre, 4 Station Rd, Ellon | e. [padam@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:padam@churchofscotland.org.uk) | t. 01358 725690 | Working days for Ellon: Thursday, Friday & Sunday

**Nicola Bruce** | Parish Worker (Mission Development) | The Kirk Centre, 4 Station Rd, Ellon | e. [nbruce@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:nbruce@churchofscotland.org.uk) | t. 07711 223100 | working days: Wednesday, Thursday & Sunday (Maternity Leave begins 23<sup>rd</sup> May)

**Alison Young** | Director of Music | c/o The Kirk Centre, 4 Station Rd, Ellon | e. [assanyoung@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:assanyoung@hotmail.co.uk) | 01358 721196

## KIRK CENTRE

**Edith Walker** | Administrator | The Kirk Centre, 4 Station Rd, Ellon | [info@ellonparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:info@ellonparishchurch.co.uk) | t. 01358 725690 | Working hours: Monday – Friday 9am – 12noon & 12:30pm – 2:30pm



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