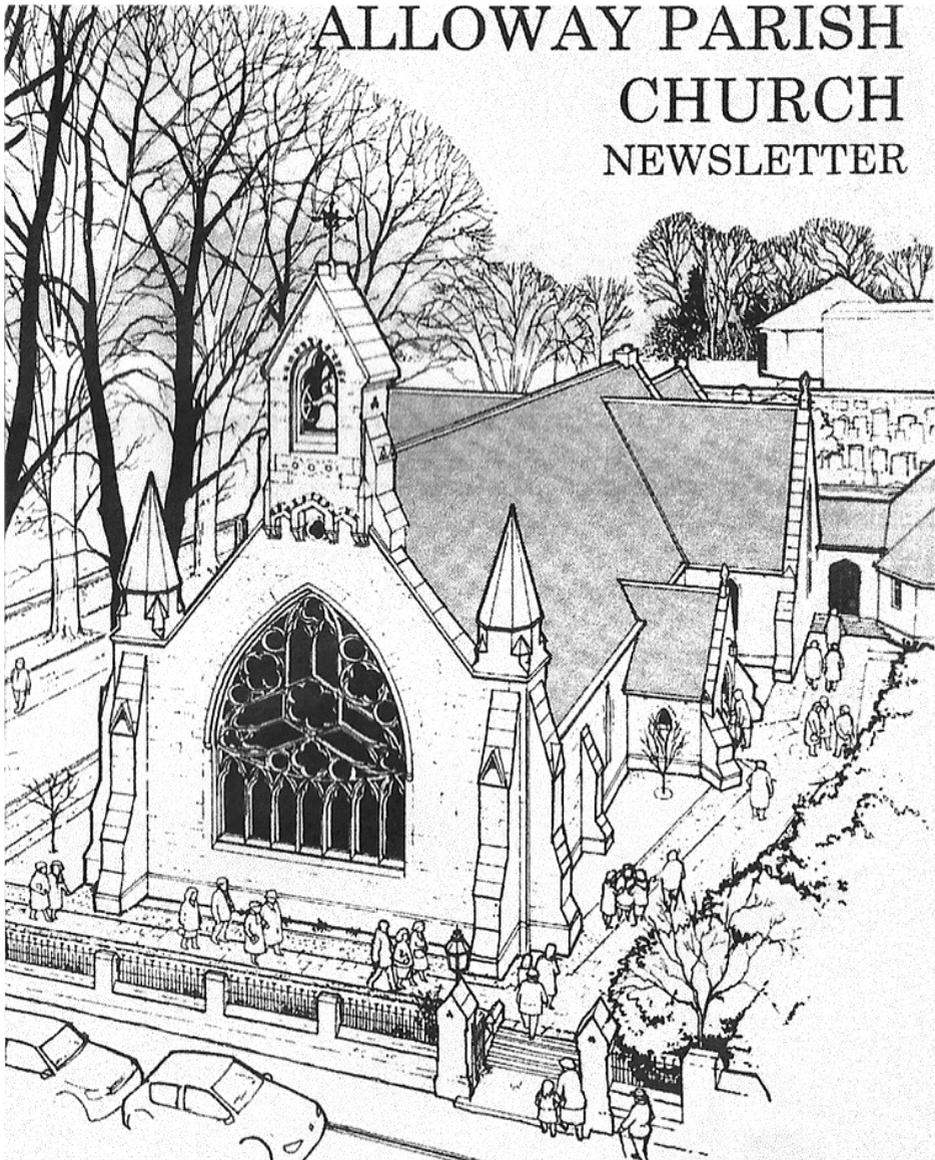


# ALLOWAY PARISH CHURCH NEWSLETTER



2021



Dear Friends

In late May the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met online.

It met in the season of Pentecost.

The Assembly sought to promote a vision:

“The Church of Scotland seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities”.

The vision is seen to be fulfilled in the mission of the church.

The Five Signs of Mission

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The challenge to every Presbytery congregation and member is to engage in this mission imaginatively and intentionally.

However, at this time there remain great constraints in terms of finance and personnel.

Added to that is the small matter of a global pandemic which we are still living through.

Changes indeed are coming!

One phrase which was used several times at the Assembly.

“The task ahead of us is not greater than the task behind us ”

In church life the next five years are going to be challenging and formative.

However, I for one refuse to embrace the sentiments of Private Fraser of Dad's Army who frequently declared “we're doomed”.

Rather I think we must be faithful.

Catch the vision! Look for the new opportunities of service.

From these testing times the church of the future will emerge.

Keep safe.

Every blessing

Neil McNaught



## Rev. David gives an overview of The Church of Scotland – General Assembly 2021



Together with Rev. Neil and Bill Duncan, I had the privilege of 'attending' the meetings of the 2021 General Assembly. Given the restrictions associated with COVID-19, this was once again an 'on-line' General Assembly via 'Zoom' and meetings were held on five days

over the period 22nd-27th May 2021.

This year was a clear opportunity for the Church of Scotland to 'bite the bullet' and make a number of difficult decisions that will not only help to ensure its survival, but also ensure that it takes a new and innovative approach to mission - to spread the Good News of Christ and also to commit to the work that Christ calls us to do.

In his article, Rev. Neil has outlined the five signs of mission agreed for the national church, for presbyteries and for local congregations. Within the context of significant financial pressures within the Church, an excess of buildings, declining membership, and a shortage of full-time stipendiary ministers, I would like to outline some of the key decisions taken at the General Assembly.

**Finance:** the financial challenges of the Church were highlighted as the Assembly passed a budget with a deficit of £11m, and approved a new scheme to replace the system of Mission and Ministries allocations. The Assembly also agreed to the establishment of a new Pioneer Mission Fund to support local church growth, with a particular emphasis on church planting and the establishment of new worshipping communities.

**Presbytery Mission Action Plan:** Presbytery reform continues with the Assembly agreeing to three further presbytery mergers - merging Edinburgh with West Lothian, Hamilton with Lanark, and bringing together six presbyteries (including Ayr Presbytery) in south-west Scotland.

A plan was also passed to cut the number of ministry posts to 660 by 2025 - the number of associated posts in each presbytery was also outlined. It was further explained that the church currently has 837 ministry posts including 137 ministry development staff. There are however 299 vacant charges, and 36 congregations under the guardianship of their presbytery, resulting in the need for 335 interim moderators. The convenor of the Faith Nurture Forum stated: "We are draining the resources of the church - people, morale, finance - just to keep this broken system going. Without a radical treatment plan the Church of Scotland will not survive.

It was further agreed that church vacancy procedures will be suspended as presbyteries begin the process of allocating their reduced numbers of ministries under the new plans. It was agreed that no church will be granted permission to call a Minister after June 1, except with the agreement of the Faith Nurture Forum. Churches going through the process will have until December 31, 2021 to find a sole nominee before the process is stopped.

**Same Sex Marriage:** The Assembly voted to send draft legislation on the solemnisation of same-sex marriages to presbyteries for consideration. The legislation will now be considered by presbyteries later this year and, if a majority agree, the issue will return to next year's General Assembly for final approval.



**Westminster Confession of Faith:** The Theological Forum will bring to next year's General Assembly firm proposals on the confessional standards in the Church of Scotland. Taking into consideration the Forum's report into the place of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Church's subordinate standard, Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions are to discuss the options presented before next year. The Theological Forum has said its preferred option would be an approved book of confessions, to include the Westminster Confession along with various other confessions and creeds.

## *Alloway Parish Church Newsletter—June*

**Faith Impact Forum:** The Assembly welcomed the fact that the Church no longer holds investments in oil and gas companies and welcomed the agreement that 'in principle' no future investments will be held in fossil fuels companies unless the investments are agreed to align with efforts to keep global heating below 1.5oC.

Kirk Sessions were 'urged' to take part in the training offered on violence against women.

The Assembly agreed to call on the UK Government to restore the commitment to 0.7% of GDP in overseas aid and adding that the Assembly 'Deplore the decision of the UK Government to cut overseas aid programmes'.

In his concluding remarks, Lord Wallace the Moderator of the General Assembly suggested that 'significant progress' had been made during the week. He said: "The challenges are very real and five days of debate, deliberation and deliverances do not make them disappear. But our prayers and our hopes must be that as we emerge from this Assembly we are better equipped and better prepared to deal with them". He said that the Assembly had demonstrated "An awareness of the need for flexibility, a can-do rather than a 'it's never been done this way before' attitude, that must surely augur well for the future."

Further detail on many of the above points will no doubt appear in the months ahead - it is clear however that challenging times lie ahead!

God bless, David.

Rev. David Hume

Church Family and Schools Worker

07858 966367

[dhume@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:dhume@churchofscotland.org.uk)



## **Saint Columba Day 9th June**

In 563 AD St Columba sailed from Ireland to Iona - a tiny island off Mull, in the Western Highlands. He brought Christianity with him.

Columba (c. 521-97) was born in Donegal of the royal Ui Neill clan, and he trained as a monk. He founded the monasteries of Derry (546), Durrow (c.556) and probably Kells. But in 565 Columba left Ireland with twelve companions for Iona, an island off southwest Scotland. Iona had been given to him for a monastery by the ruler of the Irish Dalriada.

Why would a monk in his mid-40s go into such voluntary exile?

Various explanations include:

- voluntary exile for Christ,
- an attempt to help overseas compatriots in their struggle for survival,
- or even as some sort of punishment for his part in a row over a psalter in Ireland.

Whatever the reason, Columba went to Iona and spent the rest of his life in Scotland, returning to Ireland only for occasional visits.

Columba's biographer, Adomnan, portrays him as a tall, striking figure of powerful build and impressive presence, who combined the skills of scholar, poet and ruler with a fearless commitment to God's cause.

Able, ardent, and sometimes harsh, Columba seems to have mellowed with age.

As well as building his monastery on Iona, Columba also converted Brude, king of the Picts. Columba had great skill as a scribe, and an example of this can be seen in the Cathach of Columba, a late 6th century psalter in the Irish Academy, which is the oldest surviving example of Irish majuscule writing. In his later years Columba spent much time transcribing books.

## *Alloway Parish Church Newsletter—June*

Columba's death was apparently foreseen by his community, and even, it seems, sensed by his favourite horse.

He died in the church just before Matins, and it is a tribute to this man that his traditions were upheld by his followers for about a century, not least in the Synod of Whitby and in Irish monasteries on the continent of Europe.

Here is a prayer of St Columba:

### **Christ With Us**

"My dearest Lord,  
Be Thou a bright flame before me,  
Be Thou a guiding star above me,  
Be Thou a smooth path beneath me,  
Be Thou a kindly shepherd behind me,  
Today and evermore"



## **Reconnecting the Network**

As you will be aware, covid restrictions are partially lifting. It is hoped that we can resume our printed copy Newsletter deliveries from the church to member's households no later than September.

Meantime printed copies of the Newsletter can be found in the church or at the Foodbank.

If you wish a printed copy of the Newsletter delivered to your door before September, please get in touch with the secretary directly on 442083.



## *Alloway Parish Church Newsletter—June*

Dear Friends

With restrictions lifting a little it is our intention to celebrate communion both in our online service and in the church on Sunday 13 June at 10.30am.

We shall hold one service at 10.30am in church (capacity 73) with overspill capacity in the hall of 40.

We fully understand there will be many who will not be able to join us for good health reasons!

If restrictions unfold a little we will be allowed to sing with masks on!!

Do visit our website [allowaychurch.org](http://allowaychurch.org) for our online weekly service!

The Alloway Church Facebook is worth a regular visit!

Join us also for our midweek service every Wed 10.30am with the Zoom codes available from the secretary.

Please note there will be a meeting of the Board and Session on Wed 9 June via Zoom.

Keep safe.

Every blessing

Neil McNaught



## Mixed Blessings

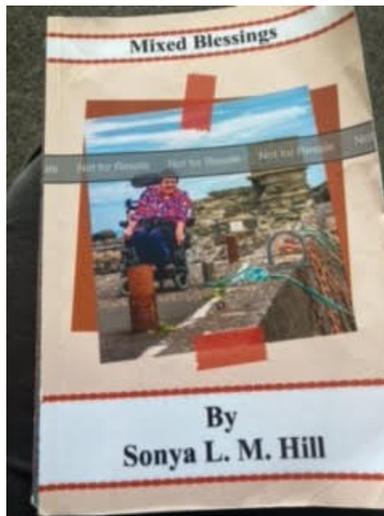
Many of you will know Sonia Hill and her mum Rita. For those of you who don't know them personally, you may well know them by sight as they were regular attenders at second service, Wednesday Worship, and many other Church events.

Sonia has cerebral palsy and has spent most of her life in a wheelchair following a traumatic birth.

She has written a book about her life and experiences, how much she and her mum have had to overcome so that Sonia could access many of the opportunities most of us take for granted.

The book is called **Mixed Blessings**, It is an inspirational read and is now available on Amazon priced £13.00

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B094VR585V/ref=cm\\_sw\\_em\\_r\\_mt\\_dp\\_NX03T5MWY4DAQ5VE0X1N?encoding=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B094VR585V/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_NX03T5MWY4DAQ5VE0X1N?encoding=UTF8&psc=1)



## Sale of Jams and Preserves

Many of you will have sampled the jams, marmalades and preserves which have been available at the Foodbank collection point on a Sunday. These have been produced by Sue Williams, Isabel Bryce and others since the start of lockdown. On 31 May Isabel presented a cheque for £1,600 to Cathy Smith and Christine Maxwell of South Ayrshire Foodbank. Sue and Isabel would like to thank all those who have supported this very worthwhile initiative. Well done ladies for all your hard work.



CINEMA MUSICALS – CRYPTIC QUIZ

1. High temperature at the weekend?
2. Fairground attraction!
3. The 31<sup>st</sup> biggest state in the USA.
4. My Spanish mother?
5. Decorate one's truck?
6. A European country?
7. Red windmill in France?
8. Tale not of the east!
9. Idle medical practitioner?
10. Enter this vacation accommodation.
11. Sub-equatorial waters?
12. Aerosol product for your tresses.
13. Unhappy French men?
14. A melody audible vibration.
15. Institute of solid material?

Answers: 1. Saturday Night Fever; 2. Carousel; 3. Oklahoma; 4. Mama Mia; 5. Paint Your Wagon; 6. Grease;  
7. Moulin Rouge; 8. West Side Story; 9. Dr. Dolittle; 10. Holiday Inn; 11. South Pacific; 12. Hairspray;  
13. Les Misérables; 14. The Sound of Music; 15. School of Rock





## Parish Record

"Of such is the Kingdom of God"

23.5.21 Emily Smith daughter of Scott and Lyndsay



"To have and to hold from this day forward"

20.5.21 Samantha McRoberts and David Marshall

28.5.21 Michelle Craig and William Wilson



"Blessed are those who mourn they shall be comforted"

6.5.21 Peter Rogers Raithill

18.5.21 Ian Sutherland Raithill

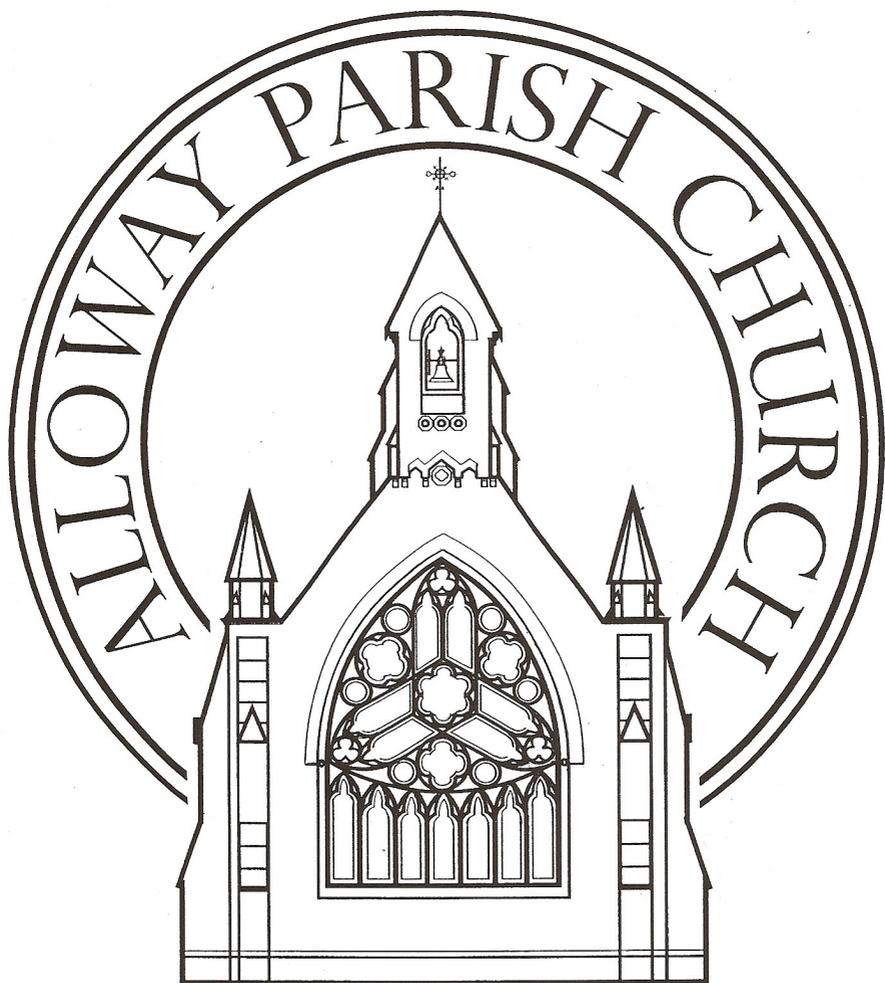
18.5.21 Isabel Reid Kilmarnock

Deadline for July Newsletter—Tuesday 22 June—12 noon

Contributions should be sent to:

[allowaychurch.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:allowaychurch.newsletter@gmail.com)

Please visit our website [www.allowaychurch.org](http://www.allowaychurch.org) or our Facebook page



Alloway Parish Church of Scotland  
No. 100538

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