

The Kirk Quair

Aug — Sep 2023



**“Go into all the world and preach the
Gospel to all creation” Mark 16:15**

**St Andrew's
In the Grange
Church of Scotland**

Musings from the Manse



Thank you for making my birthday so special. I appreciated the cake and fizz, the card, and your generous gift. This all came as a complete surprise, and I am blessed to be the minister in such a wonderful congregation. Thank you!

Have you ever heard a phrase or word that the more you heard it, the more you despised it? The word that has been getting under my skin is “RESTRUCTURING”.

“Restructuring” gets used when there is organisational change. In this context, it has many negative connotations. I went through a restructuring process once and have spoken to many people who have been through this process many times. It often seems fraught with anxiety, fear, worry and loss. When done poorly, the outcome can result in fewer people doing more work.

Restructuring, in itself, is not a bad thing. It is good to periodically look at what we have and ask if we are making the best use of our resources.

Although it is not a word we often use in the Church of Scotland, it is currently happening in the Church as circumstances oblige us to move towards a leaner institution.

Having listened to people's experiences on both sides of organisational change processes, often the focus is on restructuring operations and procedures, whilst any changes necessary to culture are neglected.

In this restructuring process of the Kirk, we need to be aware that we address our culture as well as our structures. In this sphere, I think St Andrew's in the Grange can be a gift to the Church as a whole.

Recently, I preached on 2 Peter 1:1-11, where Peter talks about how we treat each other as the foundation for any healthy church. Peter writes

that our faith in God needs actions, starting with how we engage with each other. He understands that human relationships can be complicated, but we need a set of values that inform our relationships. Here is what he says (2 Peter 1:5-8 NRSV)

“For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love.”

As with organisational restructuring, these verses are a good opportunity to reflect on our congregation and ask if we are doing the best with our most important resource, people. They help us to be conscious of our interactions with each other. Are our actions, words, and conversations reflecting the values Peter asks his reader to hold themselves to? Not just the people we like but the people we struggle to warm to or whose ideas we do not want to engage with. As a Church, I wonder how we would rate ourselves as individuals and as a congregation on these values.

As I read this passage, I was struck by how simple these values sound, yet how hard they are to live out. This verse asks us to work diligently to ensure that our culture is fertile soil. To allow good seeds to be planted that will grow organically out of interactions with each other in the Church and out into the world around us.

I am excited about our future together and what God is doing in us.

Blessings

Justin



Pause for thought

How much time a day do you spend on your smartphone? According to one app monitoring firm, App Annie, we can spend an average of 4.8 hours a day on it. However did Jesus manage two thousand years ago when there were no smartphones, tablets or laptops. No landlines either but, yet, He was able to keep in touch with His friends, arrange to meet and eat with them and even to go fishing on the Sea of Galilee. Although He couldn't spread the word on social media, huge crowds turned up to hear Him speak. Perhaps, we should spend less time gazing at the small screen and actually talk to those around us instead.

StAG News

Eldership

We are sorry to say that Hunter has decided to step down as an Active Elder but he will continue to attend Session meetings as an Emeritus Elder. Session wish to put on record their appreciation and grateful thanks for his contribution and loyal service over many years.

New Church Website [www.](http://www.cofsguernsey.org)

A good website speaks volumes about the life of a congregation; however, the same can be said about an unloved website. Our website, although functional, was outdated, hard to update, and incompatible with mobile phones. It needed a refresh, and it is with great excitement that we hope to have our new website go live in the next couple of weeks. Not only is this a refresh, but it will also allow for greater flexibility for news and events happening in the Kirk. We thank Andrew Wilkinson for his hard work in getting the website up and running.

To visit the website, go to cofsguernsey.org

Happy birthday!

During the morning service on July 16th, we sang “Happy Birthday” to our Minister and presented him with a Happy Birthday badge. Afterwards, we went through to the hall, specially decorated with balloons and a birthday banner for the occasion.



As well as the usual refreshments, we enjoyed “Happy Birthday” cupcakes and a Colin the Caterpillar chocolate birthday cake. The proceedings were rounded off with

the presentation of a birthday card and gift voucher

Flower rota

Carolyn has done a fantastic job organising the Flower Rota and placing flowers in Church when needed. We have been blessed with her eye for detail and her dedication. In the last few months, however, Carolyn has wanted to focus her time elsewhere and decided to stand down as Flower Convenor. As a congregation, we thank her for all she has done during this time.



The use of flowers was discussed

at the Kirk Session, and who might take over. We wanted to learn from Carolyn's experience and allow the new convenor the opportunity to thrive in this new role.

Kirk Session decided, therefore, that there needed to be some changes regarding how we did flowers in church.

The decision was that we would continue to have flowers for liturgical events such as Harvest, Easter, Christmas and, also, for civil occasions like the King's Birthday, Liberation Day, Remembrance Sunday etc. Members of the congregation who want to put flowers in church as an act of remembrance or celebration would also be encouraged to do so.

This will be coordinated by the newly appointed Flower Convenor but she will not actively seek to fill gaps in the rota. We also ask that flowers in church are locally grown.

It has been customary to distribute the flowers to members of the fellowship after the service and this will continue.

We know and regret that there has been some miscommunication about Session's decision but please don't hesitate to contact

Justin if you have any questions or queries.

Andrea has "stepped up to the plate" and agreed to be our new Flower Convenor and we are very grateful.

Guernsey Welsh Choir



Our last report on the Guernsey Welsh Choir which includes three of our congregation, was when they were entertaining the crowd at the England v Wales Rugby International in Cardiff's Millenium Stadium. On 10th June, however, they were "much closer to home" in our Balcony at St Andrews in the Grange singing at Thomas and Anna's wedding.

Disabled Access

The Property Convenor has now arranged for a survey to assess how access to various parts of our premises for the disabled might be improved and we are awaiting the report and recommendations.



Guernsey Caring for Ex-offenders (GCFO)

As part of the series on volunteering, the spotlight turns to GCFO, who do exactly as it says on the tin! After working for GCFO for three years, Covid reared its head and I returned to the coal face of nursing to 'do my bit' but have continued as a volunteer. There are four paid employees at GCFO who are based at Trinity church, with the art and craft room above Guernsey Welfare in Upper Mansell St. Numerous activities are offered in the art dept and items made or restored are sold to fund the service. Involvement for an ex-offender can begin whilst serving their sentence, on release or, even, after many months back in the community. GCFO is a Christian charity but open to all of any faith or none.

Volunteering for GCFO can be as little or as much as you like and whilst it can be very rewarding, it can also be frustrating and disappointing. Not every ex-offender immediately becomes a model citizen but as Mary Herve (the CEO of GCFO!) says, we give someone a chance, then another and then another and you just hope and pray one day everything comes good.

A volunteer may be allocated as a mentor to someone newly released from prison, helping with everything from picking up from prison on release day, taking them to Social Security, Probation or the Police, or to their new accommodation, if they are lucky enough to have some. It is becoming almost impossible to secure accommodation for any ex-offender due to the lack of affordable housing. Sadly, homelessness is very common among ex-offenders and this alone can cause many to re-offend hoping they will be sent back to prison for food and a roof over their heads. Meeting for a coffee or a chat on the phone once a week is always popular, a friendly face and social interaction is greatly appreciated, as coming out of prison can be a lonely time. Depending on the nature of the offence, social exclusion and /or family abandonment can be very isolating leading to depression and risk of further re-offending. Prison visiting is largely carried out by volunteers, often for someone not native to Guernsey but who has been convicted and has no friends or family on island to visit them. Visit times are treasured by prisoners

and are often the highlight of their week. A volunteer might go weekly or monthly for a one hour visit to the prison for a chat over a cup of tea and biscuit. Mary carefully allocates a volunteer with a prisoner who has asked for visits with someone whom hopefully they can chat with common interests.

Offering paid work to an ex-offender is invaluable as finding employment can be challenging with a criminal history. Currently, there are three ex-offenders supported by GCFEO, working in five households who belong to our church, carrying out gardening, decorating, general DIY and odd jobs.

Their website, created by an ex-offender is www.gcf eo.org

From the Editor

There can be no doubt that we are living through difficult times and, at Future Focus in June, we considered possible ways forward. Recently, two thought provoking publications on outreach landed on my desk.

The first, the Baptist Union equivalent of Life and Work, had a series of stories about fourteen churches recovering from what might well have been terminal decline, even closure. Each of their stories is different but the common denominators are prayer and the courage to embrace change and to step out in faith ... "To go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation."

The second was the inspirational Summer Newsletter of the small Yorkshire charity, Jacob's Well, about which I have written in the

past. Evolving from the vision of just one couple, it has sent goods valued at over £8.7 million to the people of Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict. Mind blowing! Perhaps, as we look to the future, we could adopt the mantras "Mighty oaks from little acorns grow" and "Together, we can do it!"



Much of this edition is about looking to the future but we also continue the series about the charitable work supported by "our unsung heroes," with a contribution from Alison, a volunteer with GCFEO. Ethel, our Commissioner, has written a reflection on her experience at the General Assembly which was in full swing as I was writing the last editorial and also, as usual, a little humour to lighten the tone and bring a smile.

Ed

BEYOND OUR SHORES



It is hard to imagine how we would feel if a member of our family was seized and taken away and nothing more was ever heard from them. Keith Davies, Ambassador and Speaker, of Christian Solidarity Worldwide

(CSW) tells of the heartbreak behind the headlines...

Any hope for the disappeared?

It was a normal day in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. A Christian pastor, who ran a non-governmental organisation focussing on people living with HIV/AIDS and recovering addicts, was in his car on a city street when five SUVs and two motorcycles drew up. Fifteen men wearing black balaclavas emerged and took just 42 seconds to abduct Raymond Koh. An eyewitness described it as like “something out of a movie.”

Raymond Koh has not been seen or heard of since that day in February 2017. His family is still seeking answers nearly five years after the event and continuing to trust that God will help them find the truth. His wife, Susanna, says, “I believe the Lord is my Good Shepherd.” She tells of how God has encouraged her very personally. “He is the provider of all my needs.”

Many other Christians have disappeared in recent years. Alice Ngadah was taken by Boko Haram from her home in Rann, Borno State, Nigeria along with two other humanitarian workers. Her friends were both executed, but Alice was spared, her captives declaring that she was now their “slave,” and it was now lawful “to do whatever we want with her.” Little is now known of Alice’s situation, except that she is still alive, and in the hands of a highly dangerous and violent terrorist group.

Gao Zhisheng is a Chinese Christian human rights worker who was first detained by the authorities in 2006. Between 2006 and 2011 he was ‘disappeared’ many times and suffered beatings and torture. In a memoir published in 2016, he detailed the torture and solitary confinement he had endured and said he was sustained by his Christian faith and his hopes for China. Gao was arrested again in August 2017.

Nothing has been heard from him since that time. His wife, Geng He, says, “There have been no phone calls, no information. Nobody knows anything about him. It is as if he has evaporated.”

These stories of Richard Koh, Alice Ngaddah and Gao Zhisheng are repeated time and time again in a number of countries around the world. The sheer depth of emotional pain that must come simply from not knowing about your loved ones is terrible.

Please pray for the people mentioned, and you can even send a word of encouragement to Susanna Koh at the following address:- #107, Lot LG109B, One Itama Shopping Centre, No 1, Lebuhr Bandar Utama, 47800, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, West Malaysia

Learn more about the work of CSW at www.csw.org.uk

... AND CLOSER TO HOME

The Five Marks of Mission were described briefly in the June-July edition of the *The Quair* when we were discussing the way forward and our “Future Focus.”

For many of us, the mark of a healthy church has been its finances and this has often been the Church of Scotland's criterion when assessing a congregation's viability and their right to call a minister. However, with declining numbers and a lack of ministers, the Church of Scotland has started using a different criterion when assessing congregational health, namely, the Five Marks of Mission to Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform and Treasure.

When we, at St Andrew's in the Grange, are up for review, this will now be the criterion on

which we will be assessed.

The Five Marks of Mission are not sticks with which to beat ourselves up but tools to help us assess our congregational health by placing people rather than finances at the centre. It allows for challenging conversations and, where needed, grasping the nettle.

Although, as pointed out last time, the Five Marks of Mission are not universally accepted, the Theological Forum “sees them as an attempt to define the elements of mission for the church of the 21st century” and, surely, a church which is delivering on all five marks must be regarded as a healthy church. We will be giving much more thought to this as we consider our future mission.

NOT AN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) BUT A GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

In 2014, I attended the General Assembly; then in the travel restricted covid years I was twice an on line Commissioner, yes me, with a split screen and voting by computer. 2023 and I am back in Edinburgh, short bus trip, climb The Mound without oxygen (just), quick visit to the Coffee Room and I am seated with my tablet and a keyfob voting gadget ready for devotions and business. Well, to listen and learn hopefully.

Justin covered several areas in the last magazine, has given an overall resume verbally in a service and there is the “on line” recording of proceedings for in depth details. Many things, and people’s questions/attitudes thereto, can take you by surprise. Mine was the revelation of the dreadful state of many manses. So much for those believing that the Kirk will be rich from the sale of loads of properties. Good intent by those not allowing the Quinquennial Visitation Team over the threshold when necessary repairs/upgrading could not be afforded but, sadly, shortsighted and resulting in a not fit for purpose home for the minister and a less than saleable property for the market. Makes our Fabric Conventor and his Team Gold Star material.

So many times a cleft stick situation arose, you could sympathise, but hard decisions needed to be taken to cope with the NIMBY syndrome. Whether putting off decisions or simply allowing things to drift, nearly 100 years since the Kirk reformed in 1929 and with society’s changes in the last 50 years, today’s perilous “hanging on by the fingertips” position exists.

The breadth of talent within the Kirk, evident from debate, apart from the overheard comment, early on, “you know who likes the sound of their own voice”; the quality of guest speakers i.e. the amazing lady who spoke on behalf of the overseas delegates, the Lord Lyon, the Forces (Navy) representative and the Chief Rabbi – their role/connection with we Presbyterians gave attendance in person the added dimension of being part of a blessed community, no matter all our differences.

Many find the G.A. heavy going and prefer to be on line. Not me, being there, meeting old friends – Neil came up from Dunbar where his

house and garden have been hard work and where he now attends a very different Kirk; David Coulter working hard and wishing to be remembered to those who wished to remember him (his words); meeting “ names” you have heard of and faces you are familiar with (and just think you know); meeting people with whom you find you have mutual acquaintances – Scotland is very diverse but a small country; seeing and hearing outside the Assembly Hall what people are really like, being asked to assist with Holy Communion, something I regularly consider a privilege, but mostly because of the trust placed in me to behave myself as your Commissioner.

Leading us with faith, strength, conviction and great humour and moderating meetings with skill and unbiased, is a woman, unassuming and without vanity, whose ability with words is powerful and heartfelt, giving voice to the expression that the pen is mightier than the sword and whose limited but open hand gestures epitomise the derivation of that other phrase “a safe pair of hands.” A human being and a disciple of Christ, as she, “Granny,” stepped forward to be inducted as Moderator, an audible wave of understanding wafted through the Assembly Hall as a tiny voice from the Gallery rang out “Hiya.” Ethel



Paul spots a bargain and gets “Two for the price of one!”

He explains: This May, just before her installation as Moderator of General Assembly, I wrote a cheeky letter to the Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, Head of Christian Aid in Scotland since 2016, inviting her to include Guernsey in her busy itinerary. Much to my delight, she replied, “How about 26 November?”

She and her husband who met as theology students in the USA where she was raised, will be taking a short break on the island in November and she has very graciously agreed to preach at our morning service. This is a great privilege for both Christian Aid and St Andrew’s in the Grange and we look forward to a really good turn out for the occasion.

I am busy spreading the word around Christian Aid supporters and encourage you to invite friends and family to come along and join us. It’s a long time off yet but please make a note of the date in your diary.

Paul

Eco – Congregation Scotland

Caring for our environment is an ethical imperative and a mandate from God. We have all seen the effects of climate change as temperatures rise around Europe and the rest of the world. Climate Change is no longer a fringe movement but an essential aspect of our daily lives. In particular, this matters to young people.

But what can we do as a church in Guernsey? How do we ensure we are journeying to care for the environment and use our resources responsibly?

This is part of the conversation Session has had over the last couple of months and with this in mind, St Andrew's in the Grange has become a member of Eco-Congregation Scotland. A word of explanation as many of you might never have heard of this organisation and what it means for our Kirk, especially as we are the only Church in Guernsey to be registered.

Eco-Congregation arose from a partnership between the Government funded environmental charity ENCAMS (now known as Keep Britain Tidy) and the Environmental Issues Network (EIN) of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and was developed from a Pilot Study involving 22 churches from across Britain and Ireland, including four Scottish congregations.

These churches undertook a range of local initiatives and also tested three sets of information packs from the United Reformed Church, the congregations of the London and Southwark dioceses of the Church of England and Christian Ecology Link. The Eco-Congregation Resource Modules used today were developed on the basis of feedback from the pilot churches.

Eco-Congregation was dedicated on 19 September 2000, at a special service in St Paul's Cathedral, London in the presence of representatives of most main denominations. For the Church of Scotland, Margaret Warnock, who was the stimulus for the four Scottish congregations in the pilot scheme, was commissioned as a "Green Initiator", and SRT Director Donald Bruce was commissioned as part of the ecumenical



Steering Committee for Eco-Congregation. The Bishop of London, himself strongly committed to raising the profile of caring for God's creation, challenged the churches to take a lead in the country in putting our beliefs into practice. A special mulberry tree was planted in the cathedral grounds.

Eco-Congregation was officially launched in Scotland at a special dedication service at Dunblane Cathedral on 28 March 2001 when senior representatives of all the major denominations signed a pledge committing the churches to the programme. People came from congregations all over Scotland to worship, to be challenged and to make a statement as the churches of Scotland. Canon Kenyon Wright preached on the biblical basis for caring for the earth, exhorting the churches to focus on loving not only God and our neighbour but also God's creation. Practical workshops looked at worship, young people's activities, buildings and energy use, and working together with local authorities and community organisations to see how churches can reduce their impact on the environment. Together, we explored these issues and shared our varied experiences of finding positive ways to care for God's creation.



The Lent Appeal takes off ... at last!"

Living on a small island, we are accustomed to flight delays and cancellations and our Lent Appeal for MAF was grounded in February when we had a special appeal for ShelterBox after Syria and Turkey were devastated by the second strongest earthquake in their history..

Take off was rescheduled for the day this edition is published, Sunday 30th July, with a 6 pm Check-In at the church hall. When the Gate closes and we are all aboard, complimentary drinks will be served as in bygone days and we will be able to watch an "in flight" video about the history, development and work of MAF since it's foundation by a small group of former RAF pilots just after the end of World War II to the present day when they are enabling more than 2,000 aid, development and mission organisations to bring medical care, emergency relief and long term development. A remarkable achievement worthy of our ongoing support. If you are unable to attend and would like to watch the video at home, please have a word with Sally who has a copy.



Church Calendar



August

Sunday	13	10.30	Café Church Morning Worship
Sunday	20	10.30	Café Church Morning Worship
Sunday	27	10.30	Café Church Morning Worship

September

Sunday	3	10.30	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
Sunday	10	10.30	Morning Worship
Sunday	17	10.30	Morning Worship
Sunday	24	10.30	Harvest Service

October

Sunday	1	10.30	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Rev. Howard Stringer
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“August Services”

In August, we are doing worship a little differently. Come along and grab a bacon roll and a cup of coffee/tea before the service starts at 10:30.

The format of our service will be “café style”, which means it will take place as if you were sitting at a table in a café. Group discussion will be a central focus with various topics up for conversation.



We will still have hymns, prayers, and a short reflection so that it won't be unfamiliar. For those who like the traditional format, we will return to this on the 3rd of September.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to speak to Justin. We look forward to seeing you there.



Baptism

A minister was officiating at the baptism of the youngest son of a Duke and asked for the baby's name. The answer came: “His name is George Edward David Anthony Carrington-Smyth de Winters Cunningham Digby Cecil Barrington...” “One minute please,” interrupted the minister, “I'll fetch another bucket of water!”



Meet & Greet

August

- 13 Andrea & Robert
- 20 Jo & Iain
- 27 Beth & Emily

September

- 3 Sally & Stuart
- 10 Edith & Paul
- 17 Morna & Peter
- 24 Charmaine & George

October

- 1 Gay & Pete

Sunday Readers

August

- 13 Peter
- 20 Iain
- 27 Gay

September

- 3 Sally
- 10 Steve C
- 17 John V
- 24 George

October

- 1 Andrea



Flower Coordinator

Andrea



Church Register

Deaths

4th May 2023 Ann-Marie Anderson

Weddings

10th June 2023 Thomas Davies to Anna de Carteret

Change of Address

Jean Perfitt wants us to know that she has moved to
Maison de Beauvoir Care Home, Rue Cohu, Catel.



More church bulletin notices that didn't turn out quite
right....

At our Session Meeting, the agenda was adopted, the minutes were approved, and our Clerk gave a final grief report.



The vicar is away on holiday for two weeks. Massages can be given to the curate.

Next Sunday Mrs Vinson will be soloist for the morning service. The minister will then speak on 'Terrible Experiences'.

Church of Scotland

St Andrew's in the Grange, Guernsey

The Minister

Rev Justin Taylor

Tel 257345

Website: cofsguernsey.org.gg

Email: jtaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk

Sunday service is held at 10.30 am each week with a creche available for the very young. Details of activities for older children are given in the Church Calendar.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month.

Car parking is available, by courtesy of the States of Guernsey at the Lukis House car park, 80 yards down the Grange and also at Healthspan (windscreen stickers must be displayed at the latter). Both car parks are on the same side of the road as the Church .

Session Clerk	Ms Sally Wilkinson	Tel 263991
Treasurer	Mr Steven Jones	Tel 720547
Freewill Offering	Mr David Lewis-Jones	Tel 726561
Safeguarding Officer	Ms Ethel Robb	Tel 264559
Church Organist	Jurat Dr Alan Boyle	Tel 246153
Creche Organiser	Mrs Amanda Jones amandajones.gsy@gmail.com	Tel 720547
Church Magazine	Dr Bill Harcus billharcus@duck.com	Tel 263688