

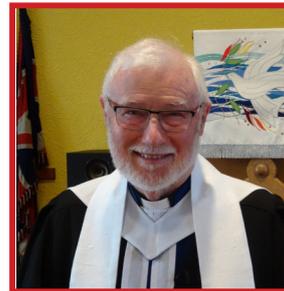


Broxburn Parish Church

The Bridge Newsletter Edition 8

FROM THE INTERIM MODERATOR

Rev. Derek Henderson



Dear friends,

As I sit in my study writing to you, the recent snows have melted and the snowdrops are in full bloom in our garden – it always amazes me how they survive under the snow cover and reappear unaffected when the snow melts. But they are a welcome sign that Spring is perhaps not that far away. It is good to have something to look forward to.

Recently, I was in a group discussing the story of Moses (online via Zoom, I hasten to add!) when someone pointed out a new significance to those words in Exodus Chapter 12 where the first Passover is being recorded. The people of Israel are told to prepare the unleavened bread, sacrifice a lamb and daub the doorposts with its blood and most critically are instructed, *"None of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning."* What the individual remarked was that this must have been the first lockdown in history!

The good news now is that many of those who are most vulnerable to Coronavirus will have had their first vaccinations and once the vaccine takes effect can look forward with some confidence that, even if they contract the disease, its impact will be greatly lessened. As the key indicators of the impact of the disease continue to improve so we might all begin to enjoy greater freedom in the not too distant future – but not immediately.

It was like that for the people of Israel. Once they were out of Egypt, they still had many difficulties to overcome wandering the wilderness before they reached the Promised Land and what might be called the new normal for them. We too will have much to resolve before we can enjoy our new normal.

However, we are now into the season of Lent and have Easter and all that it means to us as Christians to look forward to. We may think of Lent as a time when we give something up, just as we have had to do in our everyday lives in these times, but Lent is also a season of hope, a time when the death and resurrection of our Lord achieved so much for us and enabled us to move out from the darkness into the light of eternity.

May God bless you all this Easter time,

Derek

Treasurer's Update

Thanks once again to everyone who has helped boost our Church coffers in whatever way, whether via donation envelopes, bank transfers or cheques. I continue to be humbled by everyone's generosity.

In November we received our gift aid tax reclaim of **£1,953.76** and some additional contributions, bringing our total income up to **£5,366**. With expenses of **£5,644** outstripping income we ended the month with a deficit of **£278**. In December, we saw another flurry of donations bringing in an extra **£1,385**. This brought our total income for the month up to **£5,016**, outstripping our lower expenses of **£1,760**. Our biggest regular expense, which we pay for 10 months of the year, is our Ministry and Mission contribution payable to the Church of Scotland. Our last payment for 2020 was made in November, leaving December 2020 and January 2021 being 'free' months, allowing us to build a financial buffer for the rest of this year.

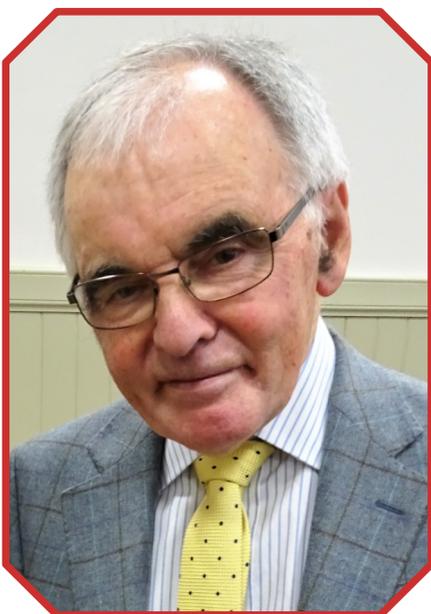
We started 2021 with another 'free' month and yet another flurry of additional donations totalling **£1,579**. This resulted in total income of **£4,922** far outstripping our lower expenses of **£1,462**. Our Ministry and Mission contribution for 2021 starts again in February so expenses from then on will be much higher.

Although we missed out on a lot of social and fundraising events in 2020, we ended the year in a healthy financial position thanks to your ongoing generosity, and we have started 2021 in a similar vein.

Let's hope it's not too long until we can meet up again for worship and fellowship in person. Until then, stay safe.

Sue Sneddon

John Macaulay (18th March 1942 - 22nd December 2020)



On Friday 8th January 2021, the funeral of John Macaulay was held at Broxburn Parish Church. The service was conducted by Rev. Jaco Boonzaaier.

John was appointed to the role of Session Clerk at Broxburn Parish Church on 7th December 1980, having been ordained as an Elder in February 1978. He served as Session Clerk for almost 40 years, under four different Ministers.

John fulfilled the role of Session Clerk faithfully with professionalism, discretion, humour, discernment and a valuable knowledge of procedures and church law. He will be sorely missed.



Answers to Christmas Carol Quiz in Issue 7

- Let's put up holly everywhere! **Deck the Halls**
- An Afro-Caribbean Yuletide song **Calypso Carol**
- Witness some vessels approaching **I Saw Three Ships**
- As kings once glowed (*Anagram*) **Good King Wenceslas**
- Does that sound the same to you?
Do You Hear What I Hear?
- Father, relax and have a drink with the guys!
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
- Not much to look forward to at this time of year
In the Bleak Midwinter
- Look - out in the blizzard! **See, Amid the Winter's snow**
- Sung at a famous West Midland Cathedral?
Coventry Carol
- One evening these guys counted sheep (but not to sleep!)
While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night
- Often referred to as the Scottish Carol
Child in the Manger
- The original Mr Edmonds I hear? **The First Nowell**
- Duegate (*Anagram*) **Gaudete**
- A few monarchs from Leyton?
We Three Kings of Orient are
- Arrived in ideal conditions for a late night stargazer
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Where has the Boys' Brigade gone?

Following the initial COVID-19 lockdown last March we have been following guidance from the Boys Brigade HQ which is based on advice from Youthlink, of which the BB is a member. We have also been complying with the Broxburn Parish Church Covid Policy. This all means that we have not been able to meet face to face in the Church Hall for nearly a year now!

Once we understood the limitations imposed on us by the lockdown restrictions we decided to keep in contact with the boys and their parents as much as possible. To do this we introduced them to **#BBathome**, which is a programme of home based activities provided by BB HQ, based on BB programme materials. These activities were distributed online to the boys each week and the boys were invited to share their work and thoughts. We also provided **#faithathome** to help provide weekly devotional material for parents and their whole family and included weekly releases of material from Alpha Scotland and their programme Alpha youth series 2.0 and also links to other Church of Scotland, BB and other youth activities.

This continued throughout 2020 trying to keep as much continuity for the boys and their parents as possible. To provide some variety, during the summer months we added **#BBatcamp** and provided links and information for UNITE and also CUMBRAE CAMP at home. We then broke up at the end of July.

We began the 2020/21 session at the end of September and restarted the **#BBathome** and **#faithathome** online activities. This continued till December when the company staff started trialling **#virtualBB** on Zoom, for Going Live in January 2021.

We now meet weekly for **#virtualBB** parade nights, for 40 minutes on a Monday evening, via Zoom. It has to be said that this past year has been a challenge due to the Covid-19 outbreak and pandemic.

One significant challenge, which was overcome, was getting the staff up to speed so that we are now at least as competent as the boys with Zoom and online working!

We are having a good time and are looking forward to 2021 which will bring us to further Christ's Kingdom, and allow us to show that church and BB was not shut down by the pandemic, it has just appeared in thousands of places elsewhere online and in other ways.

Douglas Leiper,
Captain, 2nd Broxburn Company

A THOUGHT FOR EASTER

Bible Passage:

"After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews." **(John 19:38-40)**

Secret Disciples:

These two men, Joseph and Nicodemus are interesting characters. We know from other passages that both were members of the Sanhedrin: Joseph is also described as wealthy and would have had a home in Jerusalem, which also explains why he would have a tomb just outside the city. They were what one writer has described as "twilight disciples." They believed in Jesus but had stayed in the background. The gospel writer goes so far as to describe Nicodemus as the one "who had come to Jesus by night."

But elsewhere, John, the Gospel writer is scathing about these secret followers of Jesus: *"Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God."* **(John 12:42-43)**

And yet, here, after the crucifixion of Jesus, these two men come out of the shadows into the open at a time when all the other disciples had run away. Not only that, but they went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. This act openly committed them to being followers of Jesus. But what is intriguing is the timing of this action. Yes, it was after Jesus had died but given the mindset of the religious and civic leaders at this time, it would seem to be the worst moment to reveal themselves as his followers. But somehow the crisis of the crucifixion gave them the courage to declare where they stood. Given that Jesus was dead, and that must have seemed to them to be the end of it, it couldn't have been any sense of hope that motivated them.

We know the resurrection was soon to come, but they didn't. And yet, here they are, heading off to see Pilate to ask for the body. We can't know what was going on in their minds but it has been suggested that the time when faith and action are most important is when things are at their worst. It is not the time to hide in fear and trembling, but it is the time to do something. What is also striking at this time of great disappointment and danger, is that the "secret" disciples were in fact the only ones who did show up – the rest were all in hiding. There is a sense in which these secret disciples thus redeem themselves for not speaking out in Jesus' defence earlier, when they would have had the opportunity.

Open witnesses:

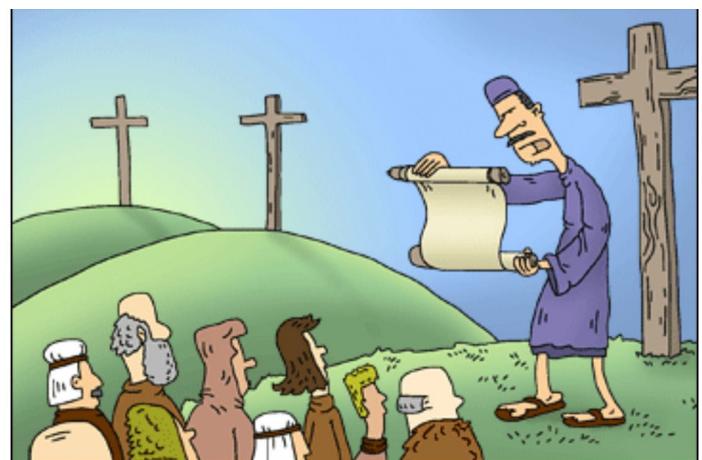
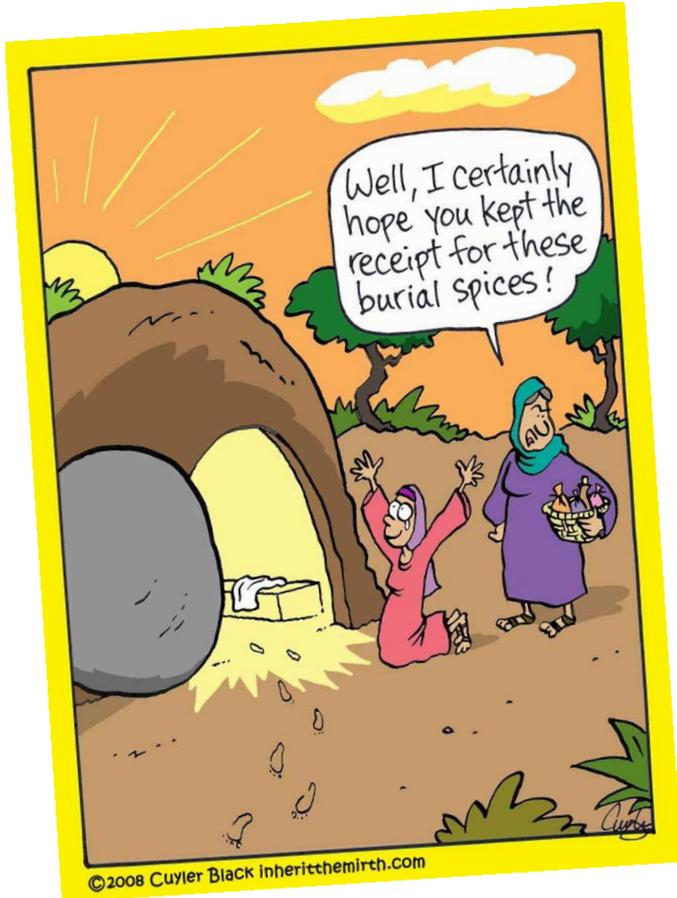
Clearly what other people thought of them was no longer the issue. Now was the time to do something and they did it. Earlier in the gospel Jesus predicted that when he was lifted up from the earth, he would draw all people to himself. Joseph and Nicodemus are now drawn and they step out from their ambivalent positions at tremendous risk to themselves and publicly acknowledge Jesus' honour in their actions. The volume of spices brought by Nicodemus was fitting for a royal burial!

Throughout John's Gospel, the importance of the public visibility of faith among true disciples is underlined. Joseph and Nicodemus have chosen this moment to step into the circle of true discipleship and to join the community of the faithful. We don't know what it might have cost them, but we do know that for many people around the world, public visibility of their faith brings with it significant risk.

The Challenge:

Nevertheless, just as the death of Jesus drove Joseph and Nicodemus into open identification with Jesus, the challenge of this passage for us is whether or not we too can respond to the call of Jesus and be bold and unashamed witnesses for him in the world today.

Easter Cartoons



(See John 19:17-37)

04-18-2014

"I, JESUS, HEREBY BEQUEATH MY CARPENTRY STUFF TO ZED, MY GOOD TUNIC TO ROB, AND I'LL BE BACK TO PICK UP THE REST. TO EVERYONE IN THE UNIVERSE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE ... I LEAVE LIFE."

Moderator's Prayer

by Rt. Rev. Dr. Martin Fair

There are some things which make sense for a certain period of time but which come to a natural conclusion - such as clapping for carers during the lockdown. Prayer isn't one of them. The Apostle Paul encourages us to 'pray without ceasing' and Jesus himself offers parables where persistence in prayer is lauded. It can be hard to keep going when there's no end in sight; much easier when the finishing line comes into view. In the case of the pandemic, it still feels as if there's not much light at the end of the tunnel. All the more reason then for God's people to continue faithfully in prayer.

We pray:

God whose kingdom is near
And who knows the times in which we live,
May we hear the call of Your Son
And turn once more to embrace the Good News He proclaims.
In the times in which we live,
Grant us grace to do so.
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

God whose kingdom is near
And who knows the times in which we live,
Your Son has embraced time
And became truly human for us and for our salvation.
As we face the hard challenges of these days
May we know that we are embraced by Your Son.
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

God whose kingdom is near
And who knows the times in which we live,
Be with those for whom this day is hard
And who long for respite.
Be with those who seek to bring healing and comfort
And grant them wisdom and compassion to do so.
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

God whose kingdom is near
And who knows the times in which we live,
Be with us as we resolve to journey with Your Son
In the days that lie before us.
Whether in the wilderness, or by the living waters,
May we know Your presence ever renewed.
Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Broxburn Parish Church
**Sunday Club
HUB**

Hello again, I hope you, your friends and family are all well. I don't know about you but I am tired of all this Covid and lockdown, it's just dragging on and on. Remember that it's OK not

to be OK, if you are feeling worried or sad about something – anything - talk to someone that you trust.

**God's Love is ONE-OF-A-KIND
You are ONE-OF-A-KIND
We are all ONE-OF-A-KIND**

In February it was St Valentine's Day which is a celebration of **LOVE**.

Craft - Love Heart Messages

During the past year there are many people we have not been able to see as much as we would like, Grandparents, friends, cousins. So let's send some messages to everyone that we miss. Cut out a heart shape by folding the paper in half to make it like a card, ask an adult to help if you need to. Decorate as you like with colours, stickers, glitter or whatever you have. Make a few using different materials. Inside write a short note. Here are some examples, or you can choose your own:

**Thinking of you
God bless you
Remember God loves you and me too
You are loved**

You can sign your name at the bottom.



The Butterfly Song

We can't sing in church at the moment but we can sing at home! If you are not sure about the tune, ask an adult or get them to look it up on You Tube.

If I were a butterfly
I'd thank you, Lord, for giving me wings
And if I were a robin in a tree
I'd thank you, Lord, that I could sing
And if I were a fish in the sea
I'd wiggle my tail, and I'd giggle with glee
But I'd just thank you Father for making me me

**For you gave me a heart
And you gave me a smile
You gave me Jesus
And you made me your child
And I just thank you Father for making me me**

If I were an elephant
I'd thank you, Lord, by raising my trunk
And if I were a kangaroo
I'd just hop right up to you
And if I were an octopus
I'd thank you, Lord, for my good looks
But I'd just thank you Father for making me me

Chorus...

If I were a wiggly worm
I'd thank you, Lord, that I could squirm
And if I were a crocodile
I'd thank you Lord for my big smile
And if I were a fuzzy wuzzy bear
I'd thank you Lord for my fuzzy wuzzy hair
But I just thank you Father for making me me

Chorus...

Hope you enjoyed singing that - see you next time!

Remember When...

Remember when we used to meet up on a regular basis on a Saturday morning at our weekly coffee bars? We shared fellowship, enjoyed delicious home baking and put the world to rights every week. We could exchange local news and it was always nice to see the older members chatting away. A few cups of coffee (milky or black) or tea, plus a few of the home-made goodies on offer always set us up well to go and tackle the weekly shopping. Both seem like distant memories now.

But thinking back to the coffee bars I remember that one of the firm favourites – of old and young alike – were pancakes! For years I thought I couldn't make pancakes but the late Betty Colqhoun (whose pancakes were epic!) shared her recipe with my late mum and I over a cup of tea at a coffee bar. What a difference that made! So I thought I'd share Betty's recipe with you. They're very easy and quick to make so if you're suffering from home-baking withdrawal symptoms and have a griddle or flat-based pan, why not have a go!

Ingredients:

1 egg
3oz. Caster sugar
6ozs. Self-raising flour
160ml Milk (just over ¼ pint)
2 ozs. melted margarine



Method:

In a bowl, whisk the egg and sugar together until fully mixed then gradually add in the flour and milk, whisking together as you go. Add the melted margarine at the end and whisk gently to create your pancake batter. Heat up your griddle/pan on medium heat and brush with margarine before dropping on tablespoons of your pancake batter. Leave the pancakes cooking until you see bubbles formed on the surface, then turn them over and cook for another 1 minute.



Remove from the griddle/pan when ready and place in a clean tea towel to keep them warm while you continue with the next batch. Remember to brush the griddle/pan with margarine before each batch. This should make 18-20 pancakes.

Now all you have to do is add your favourite topping, and enjoy them.

Until we can meet again at a coffee bar, hang on to your memories.

Sue Sneddon

○ ○ ○ **POINTS to PONDER** ○ ○ ○

● **Introduction:** As I write this, the vaccination programme is moving forwards apace and many people in the priority groups have now been given their first jab. Already people are asking how we will know if this programme has been a success or not: how will we measure success?

Text: Matthew 20:22-23

22 Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." 23 He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

● **Points to Ponder:** Jesus asks two of his closest friends, "*Can you do what I'm going to have to do?*" They say 'yes', not knowing, or not acknowledging what they're saying yes to. People say that you should always read the small print before you sign anything, but James and John just assumed that the success Jesus was going towards was success as their culture saw it. They took it for granted that they were all headed for a future of power, influence and full synagogues!

All too often we assume that success in the church is about numbers, that we can measure God's work by people in pews, bank balances and great music. But the success that Jesus, and after him James and John, were headed for was a short ministry, rejection, torture and death. None of them, in their earthly life, was to see where the church would go.

We can break our hearts, sometimes, by reaching for things which are not important in God's eyes, rather than trusting in God and doing the tasks that are put in front of us. We need to realise that when we talk about 'failure' and 'success,' God actually measures these in totally different ways from us. It's when God gives us grace to let go of our ideas, our priorities, that we can really be free to be used for the kingdom.

● **Prayer:** Beloved Lord Jesus, please show us where we have been too concerned about failure and success in the eyes of our culture and the world and help us to see the world around us with your eyes. Show us, we pray, what you want us to do and where you want us to work to serve you and others in these difficult days. Amen.

● **Action:** The day that you read this, count how many times you think about someone or something as a success or failure, and make a note of these. Do you think that God would see it or them the same way that you do?

WEST LOTHIAN FOODBANK

HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS

The pandemic has never been far from our minds over the last year and it has had an affect on the lives of all of us. As we all know, those who are most vulnerable in our society are the ones who also bear the hardest burden. The 2020 figures for West Lothian Foodbank show an increasing number of people having to rely at some point during the year on the services provided.

Last year there was a **27.5% increase** in the number of people who have had to use the Foodbank. The total was **8,619** people of which **5,648** were adults and **2,971** were children provided. The comparable figures for 2019 were in total **6,761** - of which **4,441** were adults and **2,320** were children.

Following on from the Reverse Advent Calendar event that many churches, organisations and individuals followed, **648** people were provided with a Christmas meals, this figure includes **263** children.

Also in 2020 there were **235** people helped with Test & Protect packs which supported the two week period of self isolation.

Some other 2020 figures: the equivalent of **1 in 17** households in West Lothian getting support for a week and the equivalent of **1 in 20** individuals were given a week of support. The average number of people supported every week in 2020 was **166** people and in the first full week of January 2021 **242** people were supported.

It is therefore with grateful thanks that all the donations of food and other items are acknowledged. I also thank you for the prayerful support that you have given to the work of the Foodbank and to the support of the clients, volunteers and staff.

Douglas Horn





Task Group members:

Rev. Derek Henderson
Hugh Brown
Andy Carter
Anne Gunn
David McWilliams
Sue Sneddon

Although we are still not able to meet together for worship, we are all members of our church family. So if we can help you in any way, or you have a Prayer Request, or perhaps you just need a listening ear, please telephone: **07934 073349**. Calls will of course be treated confidentially.

General Assembly 2021

This year's General Assembly will be held online from Saturday 22nd May until Thursday 27th May. The decision to use Zoom was taken because of the ongoing pandemic. Broxburn will be represented by our commissioner Hugh Brown. Please remember the Assembly in your prayers, especially the Moderator for 2021/22 Lord Jim Wallace.

Broxburn Parish Church of Scotland
broxburnparishchurch.org.uk

Scottish Charity Number: SC 017180

FRIENDLY ○ FAMILY ○ FELLOWSHIP