STRATH & SLEAT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

newsletterJanuary 2020

Mission Statement

"Our purpose is to honour and enjoy God, proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, serve our community in Jesus' name, strengthen one another in our spiritual life, and influence our world through prayer, witness, truth and grace."

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From the Minister

"For in welcoming strangers...

The start of a new year is invigorating - and not just because one may have chosen to mark it with a game of shinty, plunge into the sea, or even a church service! It is that association with



new beginnings which a new date brings. At one level, the first of January is no different from any other day but we choose to invest it with significance, in the same way as we load other ordinary days with meaning which applies to every day but which we find useful to be reminded of on particular occasions, like the resurrection of Jesus at Easter or the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

As I write we have just crossed the line from Christmas into Epiphany. If Christmas is when we celebrate how God became a human-being in Jesus, then Epiphany is a reminder that Jesus is still God. The combination of divine and human natures in Jesus are central to our faith. He had to be divine to be Immanuel (God with us) and he had to be human to be our great high priest, offering the ultimate sacrifice of his perfect life for the sins of us all. What a saviour!

Let us never lose our awe at what this implies. That sense of wonder is what keeps our faith fresh and invests our praise with conviction. Indeed that impulse to praise, so vividly expressed in every genre of music from gospel to plainchant

(Cont overleaf)

Need prayer or someone to pray with you? Email Mary Fennell 1995gideon@gmail.com

Need to talk? Questions about the Christian faith

Contact the minister, who will find the right person to speak to you.

Rev. Dr Rory MacLeod Phone: 07841 654281 rorymofg@gmail.com

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From the Minister (cont.)

to hymns ancient and modern, nourishes our relationship with God, because it expresses his worth, and it empowers our response, out of gratitude for his goodness. We do not have to earn God's favour, so why not celebrate it through works of mercy and grace?

As I mentioned at the parish service in Broadford on Sunday 29 December 2019, ,my resolution for 2020 is that every member and adherent in Strath & Sleat will reach a mature understanding of the faith we share and that we shall all acquire the confidence to give an account of that faith, appropriately, to those around us. I realise that is a big ask! Which is why the Kirk Session is working hard to deliver Alpha, the tried and tested tool which has mobilised Christian communities around the world into mission. We plan to start with a course for those who already have an appetite for outreach and, when they have been inspired, they will make sure everyone else receives the same opportunity.

While maintaining our commitment to mission partners and Hope & Faith School, I am looking forward to continuing our commitment to serve refugees. We expect to build on the outstanding work of Jean Gillies and her fellow pioneers of New Scots Holidays. In the early summer we shall be welcoming the pastoral team of the Jordanian church with which we have twinned. And all the while Archie MacCalman is assembling a group to progress our ambition of providing refugee families with a new start in Skye. Look out for an opportunity to get involved and then please join us in this great endeavour...

... some found they were entertaining angels!"

With love in Jesus, your minister and friend, Rory

Church Life		
Funerals	Chrissie MacInnes 9 th November, Kilmore	
	Prof. John Brown xx December, Glasgow	
Births	Sophia Margaret Brown, 31 st Dec 2019 5 th daughter for James & Fiona	



What's on???

25 th January	6pm	Burns Supper, Seòmar Cruinnichidh SMO
8 th Feb	7pm	Hope & Faith School fundraising quiz night, SMO
22 nd February	6pm	Post-Valentines Charity Auction, Kyleakin Church Hall
Fri 28 th Feb-Sun 1 st Mar		Kirk Session Retreat, Inverness
Thurs 5 th -Sun 8 th March		Faith Mission Weekend, Kyleakin Church Hall

Jan-March

Tuesday 17th Mar 7.30pm Annual Church Gathering, Kyleakin Church Hall

Sun 29th March 11.00am Joint Parish Communion, Kilmore Church

Communions

It was agreed at session that the Parish Communions would take place on the 5th Sundays throughout the year, rather than having separate communions and joint services. Each church is also welcome to organise local communions with the minister when required. Dates for 2020 are as follows:

29th March – Kilmore

31st May – **Elgol,** followed by a bring-and-share lunch

30th August- Kyleakin

29th November- Broadford

The Parish Ladies Group

As we enter a New Year the ladies group are now looking forward to starting our new study, this time looking at the life of Paul. This is a 30 week study from the "Ancient Future Bible Study series" by Stephen J Binz.

The ladies group meet on the 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month at 1pm beginning with a cup of tea, this is a time of fellowship, bible study and prayer.

A date has not been set yet for this new study to begin I will put it in the intimation nearer the time, the ladies group is open to the ladies of our parish for further info please contact me on 01471 820168, email 1995gideon@gmail.com or see me at church **Mary Fennell**

NEW SCOTS HOLIDAY IN SKYE

Back in July last year, congregation was invited to take part in a pilot project (New Scots Holidays) which was being established of part the Scotland-wide New **Scots** Integration Programme (NSIP). NSIP is a partnership of different organisations, including the Church of Scotland.



Basically, we were being invited, along with two other Church of Scotland Parishes, to take part in a pilot project offering holidays to refugees who had been settled in other parts of Scotland (in our case, in Aberdeenshire). The project was designed to support the two-way integration of refugees in Scotland by offering them a space for rest and recreation and the opportunity to learn more about life in Scotland beyond their home neighbourhood. Simultaneously, it gave an opportunity for the refugees, hosts and the wider community to build up friendships across cultures and to encourage mutual understanding and respect.

Our Session felt that this was a very worthwhile project and that, living in an area of outstanding beauty, we were in an ideal position to offer such holidays. We were guided very efficiently all the way by Sabine Chalmers, Refugee Integration Coordinator, who organised first of all the recruitment of a local Church rep (me!) and then worked with me to recruit local hosts and agree a suitable time for the holiday. Sabine came to Skye for a couple of days to complete the recruitment process and to deliver training to our hosts (Janet and John Norman MacLeod, Mairead MacDonald, Marrion and Innes Grant, Lesley Jones, Timmy and Janette Curry and Norman and Jean Gillies). Among other things, this included raising our awareness of cultural differences and other potential challenges, in order that we would be well prepared to give our guests a warm welcome and appropriate hospitality.

In the meantime, the Refugee Resettlement Officer of Aberdeenshire Council matched our host families with refugee families (all Syrian and Muslims) and there was great excitement when we each received the details of who would be holidaying with us and even more excitement when we initiated contact through messages and pictures sent via whatsapp. This allowed us and our guests, a total of 14 adults and 10 children, to get to know each other a little before the holiday began.

We had decided on 14th to 18th October as the holiday period as it coincided with school holidays in Aberdeenshire and we all gathered at Kyle railway station on the allotted day to

meet our guests, whose train journey had started in Inverurie. This marked the start of a very busy, enjoyable and emotional 4 days, which had a significant impact on all of us.

We were blessed with good weather and our new friends really appreciated our beautiful scenery and couldn't stop taking pictures on their phones! We had planned joint activities beforehand which included a trip to the Clan Donald Centre, to An Crubh and to Portree, where we paid a visit to the Aros Centre; there our younger guests enjoyed the indoor play area and the adults were able to watch the new film all about Skye. Some of our guests had known each other before the holiday but they all seemed to get on really well and enjoyed meeting up with each other for these activities. On the last evening, we had a ceilidh and shared meal at Sabhal Mor, which was open to the wider community, and we had a really enjoyable evening sharing our respective music and dance traditions.



A small amount of money was available through the project to finance activities but we were very fortunate that most of the venues we visited gave our guests free entry, making thus it possible to extend the of range activities. We are very grateful to these local businesses for

supporting the holiday in this way. In addition to the joint activities, we all enjoyed spending some relaxed time at home with our families, getting to know them and finding out a little about their back stories.

The adults, although all learning English, were not fluent so communicating had its challenges and resulted in some amusing moments! Sign language came in useful as did Google translate, an app they all had on their phones which did the translating for us (although not always accurately!).

They had all experienced very difficult times prior to fleeing their own country and most had spent time in camps in other countries before being granted refugee status and resettled in Scotland. Some still have family living in Syria and are very concerned for their safety. Having had to flee their country of birth, it is very important to them to retain their culture and they were very keen to share aspects of that with us: some had taken

traditional food items with them and very much enjoyed sharing them with us and some had even brought a shisha pipe (but I don't think any of us tried it out!).

A few weeks after the holiday, Sabine and the evaluation officer from the Refugee Council came to Skye to meet up with the hosts, to carry out an evaluation of the project and subsequently met with our guests to complete the process. A full report will be available in the near future but the informal feedback we have had from Sabine was very positive with all guests reporting how much they had enjoyed the holiday and how they had felt respected and made to feel like family.

We even received a letter from the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, thanking us and congratulating us on being the very first group in Scotland to take part in such a project.

For our part, I'm sure I speak for us all when I say that this experience was not only a positive one for our guests but also had a positive impact on all of us. For a brief time we had the opportunity to share Christ's love with fellow human beings whom we would not normally get the chance to meet, and we all felt the richer for it. They are keen to return our hospitality and there are plans for us all to meet up in Inverurie to share a meal and have a catch up one day in the Spring.

This pilot is likely to be extended and there may therefore be another opportunity this year to host a refugee family for a holiday in Skye. You may therefore want to consider if this is something you would like to be involved in.



BIKES FOR NEW SCOTS

While we have been very much aware of the valuable ongoing work of the local community group, Sleatfugees, the latter part of 2019 has seen activity in the parish promoting refugee needs in innovative ways. Following the generosity of many in contributing financially to Bikes for Refugees, the hosting of refugee families and the prospect of a refugee family becoming part of the community, a further step seemed to me to be the collection of bikes locally for refugees settling in Scotland. Some members of the parish and others have already generously donated bikes for this purpose.

For refugees arriving in Scotland seeking safety and shelter, providing them with a bike helps promote their social inclusion and integration into Scottish life and sends out an important message of solidarity.

Bikes for Refugees attempts in its own small way to make the world a brighter place by welcoming New Scots with a bike. This can provide free travel to work, college, the shops or the doctor's surgery or the surrounding countryside. Those who are alone and have lost their families are enabled to meet new people and make new friends.

Bikes for Refugees was set up in 2016 and has so far refurbished and gifted over 800 donated bikes to New Scots. It has two main bases, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, where volunteers repair and distribute bikes.

The people of Skye and Lochalsh have been very generous over a number of years in showing their support for refugees. Now there is a further way in which you can do this. Bikes in serviceable condition for which you have no further use will be gladly received and taken to the Bikes for Refugees workshop in Glasgow. Please contact Innes (mandigrant@btinternet.com or on 01471 833 252) to arrange a drop-off/pick up. One of the 200 refugees still waiting in the queue will be delighted that you did.

GO-4-IT

Sleat Community Choir is approaching its first birthday! We stated in February 2019 with an initial 26 people attending the first meeting. Since then we've attracted a variety of people from the community and now have 18 members who attend on a fairly regular basis.

We had our first public appearances over the Christmas period, helping to lead the community carol singing at Armadale Castle in aid of Marie Curie and opening the Carol

Service at Kilmore Church on Christmas Eve.



We continue to meet fortnightly on a Monday between 12.30pm and 2pm. New members are always welcome and we would especially like more men to become involved. We sing a wide variety of types and genres of song to suit all tastes, including traditional melodies from around the world, old favourites and well known pop songs.

The next meeting of the Sleat Community Choir will be on Monday 20th January, in the community rooms at Kilmore Church. Then fortnightly until the end of March when we will have a short break for Easter. Why don't you **Go-4-It?**



FESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM BROADFORD CHURCH

Mairi Dick & Mary Strachan

A Happy New Year to all while we look forward to see what opportunities 2020 will have for us. Enclosed is a brief reflection on the festive season we have just enjoyed celebrating-the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Broadford Primary School Carol Service was held in on the 19th of December. The children came in smiling on a day of cloudless sky and glorious sunshine- so different from last year, where they were wearing oilskins and dripping wet! The children sang lovely, and were so responsive to questions raised by Rory our minister and Mr Atkins, their head teacher. It was lovely to have quite a number of adults over and above teachers at the celebration, including some from the church congregation. Following the service, a Strùpag and nibbles were enjoyed.

The Watchnight Service at 11:15 p.m. on Christmas Eve was a joy to see- there were so many who stayed and enjoyed Christmas greetings and hugs- this was my favourite! The Christmas Day short service gave us the opportunity to reflect thankfully and God's great gift of his son to become a Saviour.

Carols For All The rafters were truly raised in Broadford Church when around 200 hearty singers sang a variety of Christmas carols and early music. The newly- formed South Skye Chorus under Anthony Cleverton, and The Island Consort under Ian Roden gave enthusiastic and skilled performances, and eight young and old Clarsairean accompanied Leanabh an Aigh sympathetically and beautifully.

Thanks too to the stalwarts of the church choir for their delightful performance, to Ruairidh for leading the service, to the extremely talented musicians, to Jackie and the food providers, to Farquhar on the audio-visuals, to all who supported it in any way, and Jack for counting the amazing sum of £447 raised for the New Scots Project.

Cafe Chat has had a wonderful year of activities organised by Judy and Dave, but now that the funding has come to an end we will continue to meet in Broadford foyer on the first Monday of every month at 1.30 -3pm. It is also hoped to keep the Bookworms meetings going - further info to follow!

Hope to see you there!



Wise men - Abi, Charis and Arianna; Shepherds and sheep — James, Mia, Skye, Grace and Ivanna; Angel — Talitha; Mary and Joseph - Elayna and Charlie; And readers (not in the photo)- Kylah, Eilidh anne, Leah, Ru,
Lexi, Abi, Charis and Arianna; Narrator — Iona.

The children in Sunday-school made advent calendar bunting. The first 9 days of December contained some of the prophecies from the Old Testament which tell us about God's plan to send a saviour. The rest of the bunting tells us how God made His plan come about. The older children read these verses out while the younger children and the crèche acted what was being read (some doing both!)

We thought about what gifts we might bring to a new baby. Perhaps a pretty mobile or a teddy? But the wise men had brought strange gifts. The Bible doesn't say why they brought these unusual gifts but ...







Gold would have been the normal gift to bring to a new King – and Jesus is **THE** king of all kings. Frankincense was a spicy resin burned in the temple by the priests and Jesus is **THE** priest for all of us. And Myrrh was an ointment used to prepare a body after death (a very strange present for a baby!) but it shows us the reason for Jesus coming. Jesus came to give his life for each and every one of us, if we choose to accept him as our Lord. His free gift to us... our choice to accept it!

BABY AND TODDLER GROUP'S CHRISTMAS PARTY





The Baby and toddler group has been meeting on Thursdays since February last year. They had their first Christmas party just before Christmas and each of the children were given a book telling the nativity story (most of the cost for these was raised from a donations given at a church soup & sandwich lunch. When I asked Janette and Sheila how the group was going this was their reply...

"Each week we have seen anything from 8-20 children come along. We have a core group of about 12-15 that are there most weeks. We have seen the children grow over this past year and it's been amazing and really special as some of the children were just babies when they started coming! We have built really good relationships with the parents and had some really great chats.

The book was really special and a great way to introduce the kids to the nativity story as the whole book is really interactive with pull out and pop up pages. It was great to be able to give these books to the kids and so into their lives. We couldn't have done any of this without the support of our AMAZING church family! We are always so aware of the support from the church and it is such as encouragement to us."

Also in Kyleakin: A new group of about 6 (S1 and above) have been meeting since the beginning of February 2019.

Your prayers for all of our young church are really appreciated, thank you!

BURNS SUPPER FOR ST PAULS AMMAN

Last year Strath & Sleat twinned with St Paul's Church in Amman, so we could get involved in their refugee support programme. In June this year, the Pastoral Team from St Paul's is coming to visit. We have been fortunate to receive some funding, however we still need to raise more finances for the visit and the refugee support programme we are keen to help with.

There will therefore be a Burns Supper on Saturday 25th January at 6pm in Seòmar Cruinnichidh, SMO.

Entry is free and there will be opportunities to donate on the night. Come along and find out more - and please bring your sporran and your friends!



THE COMMUNITY PRAYER DIARY

The Community Prayer Diary was produced by Carl and Rebekah Brettle from Wales, this is a prayer resource which can be used daily to pray for key people who live and work in our community and well as praying for others.

Within this resource there are seven column's covering every day of the week, each column has a heading, of course in order for you to be able to fill in each column you would have to do some ground work to find out who these people are (homework)

Each of us seek community transformation and this is just another resource available to us. If you would like a copy of the prayer diary please get in touch with me.

Carl and Rebekah's vision was to see every street and every person in the UK covered in Christian prayer, so in 2012 The Neighbourhood Prayer Network (NPN) was launched. If you would like to register your street as being prayed for of would like further information on what they do check out the website www.neighbourhoodprayer.net.

If you would like a community prayer diary my email is 1995gideon@gmail.com or phone 01471 820168

Mary Fennell, Parish Prayer Co-Ordinator Neigh



2020: PRAYER FOCUS

When it comes to praying for the world, where on earth do you start? Although there is so much to give thanks for, it can sometimes feel overwhelming when crises and tragedies fill our TVs, newspapers and social media feeds. But let's be encouraged to keep on praying.

Below are two of the main issues and some of the key countries in urgent need of prayer in 2020.

Conflict and political instability

It's estimated that by 2030 nearly half of people in extreme poverty will be living in areas affected by conflict. Our mandate to pray for peace has never been more critical.

Here are four countries facing long-running crises, which you can focus your prayers on:

Yemen – widely seen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, conflict has left 24 million people in need of urgent help.

Venezuela – political and economic turmoil has led to a mass exodus of people into countries including Colombia and Brazil.

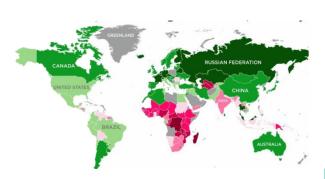
South Sudan – despite a hopeful-looking peace agreement in late 2018, pockets of conflict persist, and millions have fled their homes.

Burkina Faso – churches have been attacked and many schools have been forced to close because of violent clashes between armed groups.

The climate crisis

In 2019, efforts to tackle the climate emergency have prompted more headlines and led to more action. But, in the same year, greenhouse gas emissions hit a record high — a main cause of climate change.

Across southern Africa the global climate crisis is at its most acute. The UN estimates that more than 11 million people don't have enough food to survive across nine southern African countries. These include Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique, nations which also faced the brunt of Cyclone Idai in March 2019.





ECO-CONGREGATION SCOTLAND

Christian concern for the environment, or God's creation, has become increasingly important in recent years, as we realise the detrimental impact of human activity on the environment. A Christian perspective offers valuable ethical and spiritual dimensions that may contribute to environmental work both within and outside the church. It is an approach filled with hope. Without minimising the gravity, scale or urgency of environmental issues, the starting point for Christians caring for the Earth is as a proper response to a loving, creating God. Caring for creation is a key Christian task, and must be rooted in a consideration of the Biblical heritage. Exploring 'green Christianity' can be a positive, enjoyable and fulfilling part of Christian discipleship.

Eco-Congregation Scotland (ECS) is a movement of over 450 Scottish church congregations, of all denominations and none, committed to addressing environmental issues through their life and mission. Its vision is: 'A Scotland that cares for God's creation, now and forever'.

Underpinning values are:

- We care passionately for God's creation
- · We are a faith based movement
- We are rooted in local groups of Christians
- We work co-operatively with each other and with others who care about the environment
- We encourage transformational change at individual, community and national levels



The Mission:

- In prayer, worship and conversation we discover what it means to care for God's creation
- We put that care into action individually, locally, nationally and globally, desiring to live justly in a transformed world
- We commit ourselves to campaigning on urgent threats to the web of life in our vulnerable world

www.ecocongregationscotland.org

ECS considers spiritual, practical, and global living. It supports congregations in their work with help, advice, online resources (such as worship guides and ideas for action), and fostering local networks of eco-congregations. Funders include the Church of Scotland, Christian Aid, and the Scottish Government.

David Coleman is their inspirational chaplain, an ordained minister, and a member of the Iona Community. He visits churches when invited, to teach, explore and encourage the spiritual aspect of caring for creation. We were fortunate to have him join our Creation Care Group meeting in October last year as he returned to Edinburgh after a holiday on Skye. At that time, he expressed his willingness to return to meet with more of the Strath and Sleat congregations. We hope to have him back later this year to tell us about Christian environmentalism and what Ecocongregations are up to around the country. Watch this Space! Ann MacLennan



A PRAYER FOR 2020

Lord God,

You made the world and declared it was 'very good.'
And yet, we have not treated the Earth and our fellow
humans with the care and respect they deserve. We are
sorry and ask for your forgiveness.

In 2020, give all of us the courage to keep raising our voices about the climate emergency, which affects people living in poverty the worst. And may your Spirit of peace be in the hearts of all people, so that conflicts end with peace, and relationships are restored.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

STRATH & SLEAT Church of Scotland

Times & Contacts

Our Churches

Broadford High Street Broadford Isle of Skye IV49 9AB



Elgol

Elgol Isle of Skye IV49 9BL



Kyleakin Kyleakin Isle of Skye IV41 8PH

Regular Sunday service times

10am Kilmore 11am Kyleakin

11am Broadford

3pm Elgol (2nd & 4th Sundays of the month) 6pm Kyleakin Fellowship

Seirbheisean Gàidhlig

6f An t-Ath Leathann (a' chiad Sàbaid), A' Chill Mhòr (an treas Sàbaid)

Midweek Meetings

Mondays 10am - Prayer for revival in Broadford Church

Tuesdays 7.30pm Kyleakin Prayer Meeting, Church Hall

Wednesdays 1.15pm Sleat Midweek Group

7.30pm Broadford Bible study, Broadford Church

Thursdays 10-12 'Parent and toddler' group Kyleakin Church hall

1.30pm Ladies Group, Broadford church foyer (1st & 3rd Thursdays)

7.30pm Housegroup, Grianach, Harrapool (2nd & 4th Thursdays)

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