

St.Saviour's Church, Bridge of Allan *Magazine*



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Spring 2021

Dear Friends,

As I write this, the sun is streaming very beautifully through the stained glass, and if you block everything else out, you have no awareness of the mess which the world currently finds itself in.

Indeed, no awareness that it is also Ash Wednesday as we appear to have been in one long and difficult Lenten journey for most of the last year.

But the whole feeling of Lent is to journey in the darkness, the wilderness and the difficulties of the desert and return to life in ways which we had not even dreamed of seeing before. And this is certainly what is coming from the world and the time which we are currently journeying through. Perhaps for the first time in many of our lives we have a collective feeling of loss, uncertainty and a rocky, deeply changed course ahead of each and every one of us.

Lent's culmination comes at Easter with all of the rich promise of new life which our faith and our culture have woven inextricably together. New life is never without challenge, and a sense of loss, but it is also about an embracing and a seeking. In the Easter story we have the ultimate story of how new life and a new world triumphs over all of the pain and loss of the world which has gone. The challenge is to learn how to embrace this life, and to live again.

My prayer and my hope for you is that you are able to sense some of the excitement of this new life which is evident in all that this newsletter contains, and I am eternally grateful for all who have worked to bring it to fruition.

Love, Jo x

Walking Group,

Anne Williamson writes;

In the absence of a weekly walk, the walkers of St Saviours and friends from the village and the wider world have been enjoying their own individual, local "virtual walks" regularly. Each time, they send in their trail tales and beautiful photos to feature in a calendar for 2022. Proceeds will be divided between St Saviour's and Aberlour children's charity.



Hall & Rectory Sale

Alastair Williamson writes;

The Hall/Rectory and surrounding land (apart from a section of land known as the "Church garden" and the immediate environs of the Church building) will be put up for sale to interested developers. If successful, the proceeds of the sale will be used to rehouse the Rector (as per SEC requirements) and any remaining funds will be preserved in a proportionate Restricted Fund for the purposes of Rectory maintenance and a similar Fund for creating/maintaining the multi-purpose function of the church building. The Hall will not be rebuilt, instead the new multi-functional Church space will be utilised for worship, sanctuary and community purposes.

All this process will be subject to ongoing Vestry scrutiny, referral to the Diocesan Buildings Committee and the Diocesan Standing Committee.

Hall & Rectory Sale Q&As

Thanks to everyone who responded to the Statement by the Vestry on the plans for the Rectory and Hall. A number of questions were raised alongside your comments and I will try to answer them here:

Without a Hall and kitchen, will it still be possible to have Parish Breakfast after Sunday morning services, once they resume?

Yes, the after service coffee session is an important networking and social occasion for the Rector and congregation. Although the refurbished washing up area in church is compact, we will use that to prepare and tidy up the "breakfast". We plan to use the rear of church (around the font) as there will be adequate space there once our new seating is installed. Over time we plan to gradually improve the "kitchen" arrangements. As always, St Saviour's will adapt and make things happen.

Again, without the Hall, are church toilet facilities rather limited?

The church loo has been modernised and streamlined, with hot running water on tap. It is not currently adapted fully for disabled use (a priority next step).

What is the state of heating in church?

The current system is part operational but has proved to be prone to breakdown and costly to operate. The Vestry is researching new heating systems for church as a matter of urgency, bearing in mind the SEC's commitment to going carbon neutral by 2030. We plan to have a new system in place by next winter.

Can we have a look inside church before it opens again?

Sadly no, the COVID regulations, the exercise of care and prudence mean that this will not be possible, even on a controlled basis. Some interior photographs follow that hopefully give you an idea of the splendid interior we now have waiting for our return.



In connection with the planned sale of Rectory and Hall...

is there a need to act now, or can this be delayed? In the Vestry's statement to the congregation, the state of church finances was pointed out. The church's expenditure exceeds income and that means repair bills of any size will be unsustainable; we can't afford to maintain these buildings into the future.

Has planning permission been sought? That will be the responsibility of the purchaser, permission has been given for a variety of projects in Bridge of Allan over recent years.

Have you any idea of potential value of the site? We have nothing publishable; we await offers when we do meet potential developers, which will happen after the end of the consultation period and when diocesan approval is obtained. The diocesan view (as the matter has been considered by Vestry and Diocese) is that the value will be adequate for the proposed plan of action. In view of the state of repair of the buildings, and expected future costs, inaction is not an option.

Do you intend to buy another Rectory in Bridge of Allan or other local area? The requirements from the SEC for Rectories are specific and designed to meet the needs of a variety of Rectors and their families, whilst protecting the Charge's capital interests. It is not yet known whether a suitable house that meets the specification can be found in the village, or whether a best fit home would be more easily found in other local housing areas.

When is the AGM? It has been delayed to allow for the consultation period over the Hall/Rectory. We are currently planning to hold the meeting via Zoom, with special arrangements for those who don't have the facility, on 21 March at 12.30. Proper notice will be issued beforehand and the Annual Report and Accounts will be provided.

Let's Get Together

Vanessa Berridge writes;

"LET'S GET TOGETHER" - well that's prohibitive for sure just now!

It's such a shame that, after the established time we had, informally, regularly enjoying each other's company and coffee in friends' homes, that we have had to stop. It was an excellent way to keep abreast of St. Saviour's and village news and chat. I for one am missing it.

BUT, it's only the Church building that's closed. We, the people, are still here, and in small ways are keeping ourselves together, trying to make sure that no one is isolated or left out with emails, 'phone calls, knock on the door for quick catch ups etc.

I'm really hoping that when restrictions are lifted and the warmer weather arrives we can at least "GET TOGETHER" in gardens, and won't we have a lot to talk about!

Please keep in touch with each other and keep our friendship web connected.

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Reflection by a Member of the Vestry

Alison Logie writes;

It's almost a year since we gazed on our newly renovated, beautiful Church. Yes, we would be there for Easter. But we did not reckon on a force beyond our control – Covid 19. We have been imprisoned in our houses for the last year and it looks like another Easter will pass us by and we will still be exiles. In the last six months the Vestry has been having to make some very difficult decisions which we have been unable to talk about as permission was needed from the Diocese to implement them. All this takes time. This has been hard for us as we know St Saviour's is a very close congregation. The main decision to actively explore this was made after the Quinquennial report which indicated that nearly a hundred thousand pounds would be needed to repair the Rectory and the Church Hall. We are an ageing congregation and this means that income will be reduced in time. So with permission from the Diocese and congregation we have decided to explore selling both the Hall and Rectory. I have been worshipping in St Saviour's for 46 years so it is with great sadness that I personally believe it is absolutely necessary. But we are lucky as we have a beautiful Church which will be perfect for worship and other activities. Hence why we have decided to invest in fine chairs, which will be more adaptable than pews for any activity we have in the Church – concerts, drama, groups etc. We can look forward to a new future where the Church will be out going into the community. It will be an exciting time.

(The Vestry has taken a vote on the colour from a myriad of samples.)



Project for Easter

Sue Horne writes;

The Project will involve making flowers.

The flowers can be wooden, knitted, fabric, ribbon and real and do not have to be true to species! It is the quantity and colour that is important; they can all be very basic. The Flower Group will have more details about ideas for real flowers, and I will try to contact as many people as I can who knit and sew but If you would like to take part please let me know and feel free to include those out with the congregation – the more the merrier!

This project will involve: woodwork; metalwork; painting; knitting; sewing; flower arranging etc.!!!!

The whole theme is Resurrection, Life, Spring, Joy

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Church Heating

Cedric Davies writes;

Following completion of the church roof project and it being the year 2020 the five yearly quinquennial inspection of the church, hall and rectory was carried out. This drew our attention to the fact that the church heating system was not in good order. So, of the six heaters, two were condemned, two needed repairs and servicing thus leaving us with two working units with a question mark hanging over them. The outcome was that Bill Logie and I were asked to look at what might be done to correct the situation.

The short answer to that was to fit a new heating system. To begin with an approach was made to Zerowaste Scotland for advice followed by a request through the Diocesan office to find out what other churches were doing who were faced with similar problems. About the same time a headline in The Church Times announced that the SEC would now seek to become carbon neutral by 2030, which is not very far away.

From the various replies which gradually came back the options facing us thus seemed to be gas, electricity or air/ground source heating. Given that church heating poses its own unique demands these responses seemed not to point to a clear way forward. However further enquiries have revealed a heating consultant who has been used extensively for some 20 years by the Church of Scotland.

So, we are now in touch with him with a view to having a proper heating survey carried out. We hope that will provide us with a way forward and some indicative costs for both installation and operation. The next item to address will then be accessing grants to cover the installation costs.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Trish Jones writes;

Hello, Prayer Shawl Knitters! Someone who received a shawl some time ago called me last week to say that, when she's feeling a bit lonely or sad during these lockdown days, she wraps herself in her prayer shawl and is comforted in remembering the love and prayers of our St. Saviour's community...just one example of how much your work is appreciated! SO... if you would like to get knitting, please contact me at pjones1225@gmail.com so I can order more yarn! And for anyone, if you know someone who should have a shawl, please contact Jo at jomulliner@cantab.net

Book Group

Hard Times by Charles Dickens

Sylvia Broomfield writes;

As it became apparent in the autumn that we were still not going to be able to meet in person, we looked at other ways of keeping the group going and keeping in touch. We read the selected book, *Hard Times*, by Charles Dickens and then we each e-mailed our thoughts on it by the day we were due to have met in November. Whilst there were some criticisms, we all enjoyed the book, which is perhaps an easier read than some longer Dickens books.

Before the end of last year, we managed to select a reading list for 2021, also by e-mail. This is as follows:

12 January	The Salt Path	by Raynor Winn
9 March	Where the Crawdads Sing	by Delia Owens
11 May	Trio	by William Boyd
8 June	Poetry of Judith Wright	(postponed from 2020)
13 July	A Walk in the Woods	by Bill Bryson
14 September	North and South	by Elizabeth Gaskell
9 November	Love After Love	by Ingrid Persuad

We have now had our e-mail exchange on *The Salt Path*. This again was, I think, unanimously enjoyed and I am happy to lend my copy if anyone would like to read it. I have also finished "*Where the Crawdads Sing*" and found that an excellent read too, although we have yet to send in comments.

If you would like to join in our exchange of thoughts on any of the books on the list, you would be very welcome. We look forward to some day in the future when we shall all be able to chat about books again in person!





The Church Garden

Maggie Moss writes;

It is so good to be able to write positively about something that has happened over the last few months. The Church Garden has now become a Village Garden, open to all, as indicated by the new sign on the gate, inviting anyone to come in. A permanent sign will be made when possible.

Alistair Kerr, who cuts the church grass and hedges has enlarged the new gap in the Church Garden hedge to accommodate wheelchair access. He has done a beautiful job and moved with care the plants that had to come out to make room for the enlargement. A garden bench has been donated. Do please look in the new Village Garden if you have not already done so.

The Garden Team continued to work hard from March to September last year as usual with some extra tidying later in the year. This went on despite the garden not being able to be used for any of the normal activities, including over Easter and in June for the garden party. It should look, as ever, both cared for and welcoming once "normal services can be resumed", thanks to the Team's hard work, some members putting in many extra hours. We are most grateful to them all.

If anyone would like snowdrops for their garden please contact me.

Lent Study Course - 'The Eucharist'

Nick Price writes;

I am running a six-week Study Course by Zoom for Lent on 'The Eucharist', using the Pilgrim Guides published by the Church of England. These will start on Ash Wednesday (17th February at 7 pm). There are fifteen of us on the Course which is joint with the Parish Church.