

Newsletter

Crown Church, Inverness

February 2021: No. 767

Parish Minister: Rev Douglas Robertson



SUNDAY SERVICES

During the current restrictions due to Covid—19, Douglas will be broadcasting on Sunday mornings at 11 am. To watch these and previous recordings please go to the Crown Church facebook page (a facebook account is not required to see the service)

9.30 services have been suspended for the time being.



“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Matthew chapter 5, verses 14 to 16

From the Minister



Dear members and friends of Crown Church,

A lectionary is a list of recommended Bible readings for each Sunday or Holy Day (Christmas, Easter, etc) in the year. There are usually 3 or 4 readings each week, one from the Old Testament, one from a gospel, and one from another part of the New Testament. Some lectionaries also publish a reading from the Psalms, or a second Old Testament reading.

Typically, a lectionary will have a 3-year cycle, with one of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark or Luke) providing the bulk of the gospel readings in each year. John's gospel features heavily at Easter time in any year, and in the Christmas season when Mark is the main gospel – because Mark doesn't narrate any birth stories of Jesus.

I don't stick rigidly to the readings in any lectionary, but I do refer regularly to the Revised Common Lectionary as a guide for my preaching program, particularly from the beginning of Advent (4 weeks before Christmas) until Pentecost (40 days after Easter). The reason I do that is to make sure that we touch upon the major themes of the Christian faith every year.

Mark is this year's gospel. In many ways it is the easiest of them all to read. I have often recommended it as a starting point for anyone who is exploring Christian faith for the first time, or returning after a long time away.

John's gospel is deep and esoteric, Matthew's was written for a mainly Jewish readership and takes a bit more unpacking, Luke's is a little bit more careful and academic, but Mark's gospel – which was probably written earlier than any of the others – is a simpler read. That's not to say that there aren't challenging passages, especially those full of miracles and healing, but the stories are largely told as a straightforward narrative.

Mark was most likely the "John Mark" who is mentioned in the book of Acts, a companion of Paul for some time, but later thought to have spent more time with Peter in Rome. While he probably met and listened to Jesus himself as a young man, his writing almost certainly reflects the stories Peter would have told about Jesus' life and ministry.

While all the gospel's record the importance of the Passion of Christ, the week from Palm Sunday, through Good Friday, to Easter Day, Mark perhaps places slightly more emphasis on it in his gospel. As early as chapter 8 it is foreshadowed, and roughly 1/3 of the whole book (chapters 11-16) deals with the final week of Jesus' life.

Perhaps this reflects Peter's emphasis. This was a period that must have profoundly affected Peter, from the euphoria of the Triumphal Entry (chpt 11), to the mystery of the Last Supper (chpt 14), his inability to stay awake while Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (14:32-42), followed by his bravado when Jesus was arrested (14:47), and then his denial of Jesus (14:66-72); through to the fact that when Mark recites the risen Jesus' desire to meet his disciples, Peter is the only one mentioned by name (16:7).

If Mark really did get his stories from Peter, then Peter the blustering egotist had truly become humble and self effacing, willing to recite stories that portrayed himself in a less than flattering light! And all for the glory of God and to bear witness to his Son Jesus Christ.

It is my hope that as we read through this book together we might find something of that same transformation taking hold of us, to seek first the Kingdom of God, and to lift high the name of Jesus.

Douglas

LENT BIBLE STUDIES

As many of you will be aware, before the dreaded virus hit us last year we had started a number of Bible study groups for the Lent Season. These had to stop when we were locked down the first time, but three of them then resumed on Zoom and have kept going for the whole of the year.

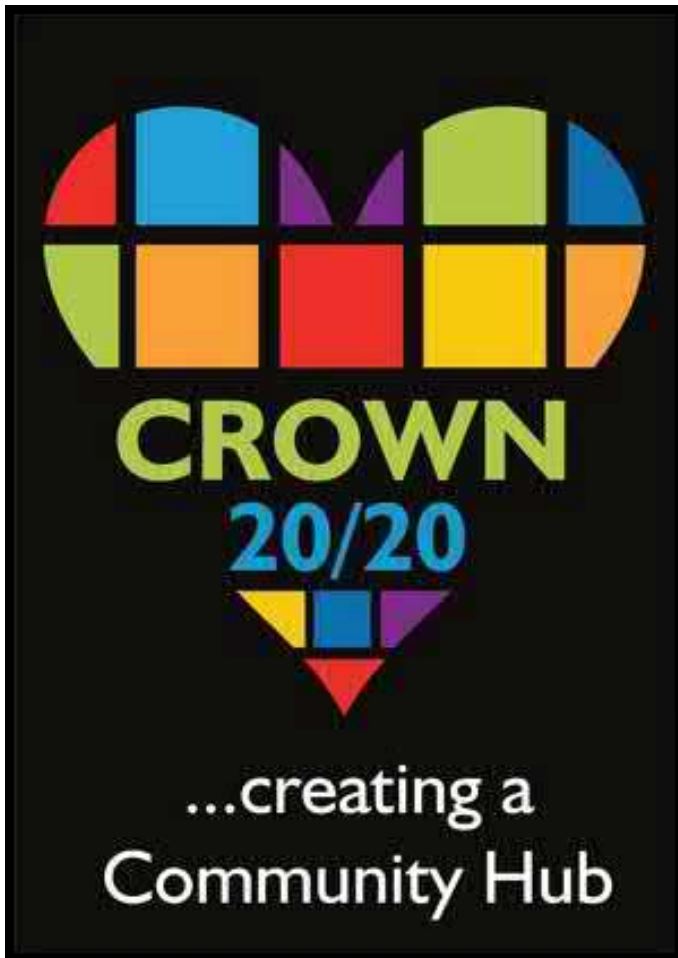


This year we'd love to have some more of you join us. If we get too many to fit into existing groups we'd be more than happy to start one or two more .

The studies are not intense, but we hope they are meaningful, as we share together our thoughts about what certain passages of Scripture might mean and how they apply to us in 21st century Scotland. They are also a great chance to catch up with folk and remain socially connected.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year is February 17 and runs through to Easter. If you are interested in joining a group, please contact Morven or email me:

drrobertson@churchofscotland.org.uk



Update from Crown 20/20 Group

“Crown Church aims to invest in a major upgrade of our church buildings to provide a warm and welcoming home for worship, equip us with modern and accessible facilities to support Christian outreach into our community and to help our church meet the needs of that community.”

Dear Members of the Congregation

We are delighted to start the new year with more good news. We have been successful with our application for funding from the Scottish Government’s Climate Communities Action Fund to cover the cost of replacement double glazed windows in the Upper Hall. The sum involved is a most generous £9,955.58. We are also very pleased that The Highland Council will cover the extra cost of fireproof glazing for those windows which look over the fire escape.

The grant from the Scottish Government is the latest assistance we have received in the major refurbishment of the Upper Hall and brings the total amount of grants and donations to more than £84,000 once Gift Aid is recovered. This figure includes the current congregational appeal of £33,625, including Gift Aid. What a terrific effort from you all. The appeal has now been closed but there will be further opportunities for giving as we progress our ambitious plans for upgrading the church. We are also grateful to The Highland Council for a £30,000 grant from the Inverness Common Good Fund.

The Upper Hall is the focus of much of the current building activity at the church and contractors I&F Ferguson are making good progress on the re-fit to give us even better facilities and greater storage.

(continued on next page)

And of course we are delighted that The Highland Council has agreed to install an 8-person lift to the Upper Hall as part of their partnership with us over the conversion of the Lower Hall into a nursery unit for Crown Primary School. We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint in the building and this is very much in our minds as we progress our many improvements. The photo shows the work to insulate the walls and ceiling which will be out of sight, and out of mind shortly, but will result in considerably smaller use of heating energy.



Work on the Upper Hall has revealed a long-standing leak in the flat roof above the BB store which will now become toilets. The Congregational Board has agreed that the Fabric Fund will pick up the cost of replacing the flat roof with a zinc roof, and Ferguson's have scaffolding in place and expect the work to be completed by the end of the first week in February,

One of the spin off benefits of working with The Highland Council on the Lower Hall Project has been their welcome assistance in dealing with the removal of asbestos from the building. Since the turn of the year, asbestos removal specialists have been removing a significant amount of material from the basement. A further inspection has now being undertaken as the surveyor can now access areas which he was unable to search until the asbestos in the basement was removed. Any further asbestos found will also be removed.

The Council have advised us that their contractor, Morrison Construction, hopes to start work on converting the Lower Hall on 26 April and complete the contract by 6 August. We are confident that most of the work being carried out in the Upper Hall will be completed by the time the Council moves in downstairs.

The lease covering the Council's use of the Lower Hall is due to commence on 1 April and the agreement is in the final stages of being confirmed.

(Continued on next page)



Finally, we are in discussions with the Council about the co-ordination of the installation of a new fire alarm system which will cover both halls. Thought was also given to moving upstairs the audio visual equipment currently in the Lower Hall. However, it has now been decided after expert advice that we will put in new 'state of the art' equipment which will stand us in good stead when we need to use the upper hall for worship during refurbishment of the sanctuary, but will also be a major incentive for people looking to book small conferences when the quality of the AV available is a major consideration. It will of course be a wonderful resource for the congregation and all organisations using the hall. A small team is considering and consulting

over décor for the hall itself, the kitchen and the toilets.

Given the partnership working with the Council, it might be helpful to set out some access arrangements for future use of the building.

- When the Lower Hall Nursery is in use, the Council will maintain security for children with the use of fobbed doors. The Lower Hall will not be used by the congregation and the Council will be responsible for security arrangements.
- The adult toilets remain open to anyone at all times. Nursery staff can use them and will be responsible for security when they leave the nursery.
- The Small Hall will be open for the congregation to use after 3pm each weekday as well as all weekend, and all school holidays.
- The kitchen will be open for the congregation to use after 3pm (with the possibility of negotiating earlier access if required) on each weekday, all weekend and all school holidays.

Access to the nursery for staff, parents and children will be from the school playground. There will be no exit to Midmills Road through the church car park.

So there is lots happening at the church despite the impacts of Covid-19 and you can be assured we will be making as much progress as we possibly can in the weeks ahead. Thanks again for your support for our vision.

Crown 20/20 Group

The minister's new bench!

Those of you who attended the minister's induction service in January last year may remember that Douglas was given a new bench to mark the beginning of his ministry at Crown.

The new bench has now been installed in the church garden and is looking splendid. The picture underneath of Douglas and Alison was taken after the service on Sunday 3rd January. Under normal circumstances, we would doubtless have had a small gathering to formally present the bench. Indeed, we might still be able to make such an arrangement when the Covid restrictions permit.

In the meantime, thanks are due to Heather and Kenny Beck and those who assisted them who have all helped to bring this about.



Prayer Diary

February 2021

This prayer diary has been prepared by the Discipleship Team. We hope that you will find it useful. You may like to detach it from the newsletter and use it to pray for our church and community. If you have particular prayer requests for the next month (March 2021) please do send them to our **church secretary**, Gloria who will pass them on, or e-mail Jude Madeleine; judedmond@yahoo.co.uk

Feb 7 - 13

Pray for so many lives lost during the coronavirus pandemic; Pray for families and friends who have been bereaved as a result of lost loved ones, and the widespread grief caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Keep us, God our Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pray for strength and courage as our world continues to battle through the coronavirus pandemic. Pray Deuteronomy 31:6; "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you".

Father God, thank You for Your love which extends throughout all generations and to all people of the world.

February 14 - 20

Oh God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.

In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness, be their light; through him who suffered alone on the cross, but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Loving God, please give us the strength to fix our focus and our eyes on you. To take all our feelings and fears to the foot of the cross. Bring Scripture to memory when we at times are feeling hopeless. Guide us through this season of the coronavirus pandemic and all the changes happening around us.

Bless us Lord with hope in you and the power to share this hope with those around us. We love you; we praise you, and we put our faith and hope in you, knowing that you and you alone have everything in the palm of your mighty hands.

Give thanks for the effective roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination program; Pray for all those working tirelessly and who are involved in the vaccination program.

February 21 - 27

'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it' (John 1:5). Today, pause to thank God that He can bring light into every situation. Praise Him for being the light of the world and ask Him to help you reflect that light into the communities around you.

Pray for those who are homeless and give thanks for those who offer financial and practical support. Pray that just as God loves and cares for us, we would also similarly love and care for others. Help us to be loyal to those who need us.

Pray for all our local schools. Give thanks for the technology and facilities to enable the delivery of home schooling. Pray for patience and strength among parents and family members who are supporting children's learning at home.

Thank God for those teachers who were able to continue teaching children at home during the lockdown.

February 28 – March 6

Pray for those who live alone and are lonely. Pray also for people affected by mental illness, ask that God will grant them strength and hope for the future.

Pray for love, peace and hope in every home and family. Pray that God's presence be felt in the lives of our families, friends and neighbours; that His guidance be the driving force in our decisions and choices we make.

Father, help us to trust You when we have financial worries. Open our eyes to those around us who need our help and give us the courage and opportunities to be generous. Amen.

Pray for the thousands of children who are at risk and living in dangerous situations as refugees. Ask God to protect refugees living in fear and restore them to a safe place where their rights will be recognised and they will be valued and protected.

Amen



Inverness Foodbank

As you may know, the Foodbank is being used more than ever as a consequence of the virus. If you would like to support the Foodbank, you can drop off any donations at their warehouse on Glebe Street. Alternatively, you can contact Liz Gray or Alex Grant who will be happy to pick up any items you can spare. Liz tells us that pasta isn't needed just now and suggested the following list of items:

Tins of potatoes or vegetables

Tins of mince/stew

Tins of corned beef

Tins of ham

Oatcakes/crackers

Shower gel/shampoo

Small washing powder/gel

Toothpaste

Dishwasher liquid

Cleaning products (Any food items should have a long 'use by' date)



Christmas garden

Thanks are due to Lesley McRoberts, her team of helpers and also to Crown nursery school for making such a feature of the church garden over the Christmas period.



Treasure Seekers Zoom

“Calling all treasure seekers (/ superheroes / toast eaters / young people / science experimenters / junior magicians...)”

Beginning on Sunday 17th January and running weekly, Treasure Seekers have been running sessions online via Zoom. Pat and Struan are hosting the interactive meetings which always involve some fun, some worship songs, Bible stories, prayers and that special fellowship we get when God’s little ones are gathered together in one (online) space.

So far we’ve learned magic tricks, sung fab songs – both new and old, dressed as our favourite superheroes, found out about our names and begun a journey with Mark to find out more about how amazing Jesus is through his book. And we’re only 3 sessions in!

Through to Easter we’re going to be getting to know Jesus better and exploring the amazing things He says and does throughout Mark’s Gospel, with lots of fun along the way. We’re planning some: toast-eating-origami-folding-science-experimenting-light-celebrating-lent-cracking-memory-versing-blindfolding-Easter-egging adventures and your young ones are all invited!

The sessions run from 9:30-10:00am on Sundays every week. If you’d like more information on the sessions or to get the Zoom code to join, please get in touch with Pat Crippin, Struan McRoberts or via the Church Office. The information is always on our church families’ WhatsApp group too, so why not sign up there while you’re at it?

Pat + Struan TS Zoom Team



To mark the start of Lent, on Wednesday 17 February, Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, is launching a photo competition – ‘Hidden in Plain Sight’ – with both children and adults alike invited to send in their photographs showing the Cross in our everyday surroundings. The winner in each category will be awarded a gift to the charity of their choice.



“Generally speaking, we find Crosses set within church buildings or worn as jewellery. But, when we open our eyes to the possibility, we can begin to see images of the Cross all around us - in both nature and the built environment,” Dr Fair said.

Dr Fair, who has spent his year as Moderator reaching out to congregations and churches online due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is keen to show that the Cross is an ever-present support in our lives, particularly during difficult times such as these.

“As we head towards Easter, the Cross will come ever more into view - the central symbol of the Christian faith,” Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair said.

“Generally speaking, we find Crosses set within church buildings or worn as jewellery. But, when we open our eyes to the possibility, we can begin to see images of the Cross all around us - in both nature and the built environment.

“Your challenge, should you choose to accept it: find a Cross that is ‘hidden in plain sight’ and using your camera, or your phone, take a photograph of it.

(Taken from the Church of Scotland website and continued on the next page)

“Perhaps it will be two branches on a tree which form a Cross shape. Perhaps you’ll see a Cross in a section of wrought-iron fencing. Maybe you’ll see it in a set of road markings or in a random piece of graffiti?”

“The only limit is your imagination. Open your eyes and you’ll see that the Cross is all around you.”

How to take part

To submit your entry for the photography competition, please email MediaRelations@churchofscotland.org.uk, attaching your photograph(s) as well as your name and which category you are in:

1. Primary school age
2. Secondary school age
3. 18+

The rules are very simple:

- The photograph must be one that you’ve taken yourself.
- You must take the photograph within your own community and must observe all Covid-related restrictions when doing so.
- Each entrant can submit up to three photographs.

Images can be taken either on cameras or smartphones and must be submitted by email. Please note, the organisers unfortunately are unable to accept photographs submitted via post at this time.

The competition will run for one month - from Wednesday 17 February (the start of Lent) until Wednesday 17 March. All submissions must be received by the closing date.

All entries will be featured [in a special photo gallery on the Church of Scotland website](#).

The Moderator will head a judging panel and the winners in each category will be announced in the lead up to Easter Sunday, with a gift to the charity of the winner’s choice being awarded in each category.

The winning entries will be displayed across the Church of Scotland’s social media channels on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, [and in a special photo gallery on the Church of Scotland website](#).

Let the fun begin. Get snapping!

(Taken from the Church of Scotland website)

PLAWKING!

Although numbers are far lower than in the UK, Covid has had a drastic effect in poorer countries who struggle to find or borrow the extra resources needed to control infection in a wide range of settings including schools. This has certainly been true of the two countries with which Crown Church has most association - Jamaica and Malawi.

So it's been wonderful to be approached by a lady called Chris Gudgeon who is raising funds for both the Dochas Project in Malawi and North Street United Church Educational Foundation in Kingston, Jamaica. Chris was a fellow student with Rev Peter Donald, her brother has previously contributed to NSU Educational Foundation and her daughter Amy, who designed the attached poster, was baptised in Crown Church.

Plawking is a novel word, courtesy of Amy, but is an offshoot of Plogging, a Scandinavian activity which links jogging with litter pick up. It is obviously excellent for the environment and adds a community benefit to gaining fitness. Chris is based in the Aultbea area, so has a lot of shoreline to work on as she carries out her daily challenge through Lent. The immediate aim of Dochas in Malawi is to provide plastic pails with taps so that children attending school can at least wash their hands. In North Street, the immediate aim will be to meet some of the costs of masks, sanitising materials etc which the church must now provide as well as the issue of providing tablets for use when school cannot take place. (Pupils have lost close to a year's schooling, which means a great deal when many won't study beyond primary.)

So, if you can help at all, please check out the advert and follow the JustGiving link to donate - <https://justgiving/fundraising/spring-plawk> Funds will be split 50:50 between both charities. **Mairi Main (Outreach Team Convener)**



The poster features a background image of a beach. At the top, the title "Spring Plawk" is written in large, pink, stylized letters. Below the title, there are several text boxes and images. On the left, a pink box contains the text "What is Plawking?" and "Picking Up Litter Whilst Walking!". To the right of this box is a small photo of a young girl. Below the "What is Plawking?" box is another pink box with the text "I'm planning to Plawk Wester-Ross beaches for the 40 days of Lent 2021." and "Look out for updates Chris Gudgeon on Facebook". On the right side, a larger pink box contains the text "I am hoping to raise money for:" followed by logos and photos for "Dochas Education Trust (Malawi)" and "The North Street United Educational Foundation (Jamaica)". A large pink arrow points from the bottom left towards the JustGiving link at the bottom right.

Spring Plawk

"What is Plawking?"
Picking Up Litter Whilst Walking!

I'm planning to Plawk Wester-Ross beaches for the 40 days of Lent 2021.
Look out for updates
Chris Gudgeon on Facebook

I am hoping to raise money for:

Dochas Education Trust (Malawi)

The North Street United Educational Foundation (Jamaica)

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/spring-plawk>

Daily Bible Readings for February

Sunday, January 31, 2021

Monday: *Jesus Teaches and Heals*, Luke 6:17-26

Tuesday: *Love for Enemies*, Luke 6:27-30

Wednesday: *Love for Enemies*, Luke 6:31-38

Thursday: *Love for Enemies*, Luke 6:39-42

Friday: *A Tree and Its Fruit*, Luke 6:43-49

Saturday: *Jesus Speaks in Parables*, Luke 8:1-3

Sunday, February 7, 2021

Monday: *Jesus Speaks in Parables*, Luke 8:4-21

Tuesday: *Jesus Calms a Storm and Heals the Gerasene Demoniac*, Luke 8:22-39

Wednesday: *Jairus' Plea and a Woman Restored*, Luke 8:40-56

Thursday: *Jesus Sends Out Disciples*, Luke 9:1-9

Friday: *Jesus Feeds the 5,000*, Luke 9:10-17

Saturday: *Peter's Confession*, Luke 9:18-27

Sunday, February 14, 2021

Monday: *Who Is Greatest*, Luke 9:46-48

Tuesday: *Whoever Is Not Against You Is For You*, Luke 9:49-50

Wednesday: *The Challenge of Following (Ash Wednesday)*, Luke 9:51-62

Thursday: *Mission of the Seventy*, Luke 10:1-12

Friday: *Woes to Unrepentant Cities*, Luke 10:13-16

Saturday: *Seventy Return and Jesus Rejoices*, Luke 10:17-24

Sunday, February 21, 2021

Monday: *The Lord's Prayer and Persistence in Prayer*, Luke 11:1-26

Tuesday: *Jesus Criticizes Pharisees and Lawyers*, Luke 11:27-54

Wednesday: *Parable of the Rich Fool*, Luke 12:1-21

Thursday: *Do Not Worry*, Luke 12:22-34

Friday: *Be Alert*, Luke 12:35-48

Saturday: *Jesus the Cause of Division*, Luke 12:49-59

Sunday, February 28, 2021

Monday: *Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman*, Luke 13:10-17

Tuesday: *Parables*, Luke 13:18-30

Wednesday: *Jesus Heals a Man with Dropsy*, Luke 14:1-6

Thursday: *Parable of a Wedding Banquet*, Luke 14:7-14

Friday: *Parable of a Great Dinner*, Luke 14:15-24

Saturday: *The Cost of Discipleship*, Luke 14:25-35

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY

Wedding

Rachel Hannah and Mark Campbell on 19th December

Death

Mr Donald Murchison, Achvraid Road on 15 December

Mrs Pat Jones, Ullapool on 22 December

Fiona MacDonald, formerly of Inverness, on 7 January

Robert Gilbert Forsyth, East Mackenzie Park on 3 February



Congratulations to Colin and Lily
Baillie who celebrated their
Golden Wedding Anniversary
last month

Items for the March Newsletter by Sunday 28th February please!

Please send any articles, photographs or news to :
marionandbobnewsletter@gmail.com

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Published by Crown Church, Inverness (Church of Scotland)
Registered charity SC 018159
The Church website is to be found at www.crown-church.co.uk