

Newsletter

Crown Church, Inverness

April 2021: No. 769

Parish Minister: Rev Douglas Robertson



SUNDAY SERVICES

Great news! We are able once again to gather as a congregation and we did so for the first time on Sunday 28th March. As we are limited in the numbers we can accommodate please do contact the office to let us know if you would like to attend.

Douglas will continue to broadcast on Sunday mornings at 11.00 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)

9.30am services have been suspended for the time being.

Sunday 4th April Morning Worship at 11.00am followed by special prayers

Sunday 11th April Morning Worship at 11.00am

Sunday 18th April Morning Worship at 11.00am

Sunday 25th April Morning Worship at 11.00am

Sunday 2nd May Morning Worship at 11.00am

'Thanks be to God who give us victory through our

Lord Jesus Christ'

1 Corinthians 57

From the Minister

Dear members and friends of Crown Church,

As I write it is early springtime, a beautiful and bountiful season when flowers start to come out, the sun seems higher and warmer, the days are getting longer, lambs will soon be cavorting in the fields and my grass needs cut far too often!

It is also Easter, a rather fitting coalescence of signs and symbols, a new beginning, a fresh start as love arises out of human sin and conquers the winter of guilt and judgment with the springtime of mercy, forgiveness and grace. In more than 20 years living in Australia, I never did adjust to the times and seasons being upside down. Christmas never really felt like Christmas when Santa had to wear shorts and flip flops, to keep cool while wearing a fur coat on the top half! Easter also lost something of its natural symbolism when it wasn't coincident with spring, yet the Christian message of both Christmas and Easter is real and permanent, whatever the season, and whether we are north of south of the equator. Not only is it not dependent on the seasons, it is not dependent on the day of the week either, it is not reserved for Sunday only.

I think Philippians 2:5-11 captures very well, and very succinctly, the essence of both Christmas (vs 7) and Easter (vs 8). Humility and sacrifice are the qualities that are acceptable to God, and while we were still sinners, imperfect in our pride and selfishness, Jesus made the perfect offering to God on our behalf, and the Apostle Paul beseeches us,

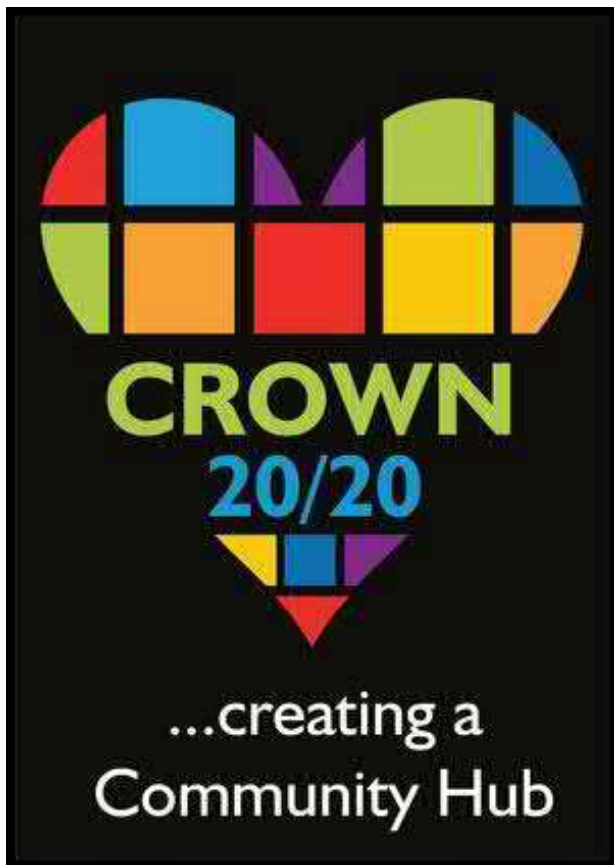
In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death--even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Wherever the birds are migrating to, whether the flowers are just seeds in the ground or open petals, whether the sun is shining or a storm is raging, whatever season we are in and whatever day of the week it is, this must be our Christian ambition: to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

Wishing you every blessing, Douglas





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

As we remember the anniversary of the first Covid-19 lockdown and reflect on the consequences which have impacted on us all in more ways than we could ever have predicted, we also remember that God works in all circumstances for our good. Despite the trials and restrictions of the past year, we give thanks for the progress that has been made since our conference in late 2018 when the ideas for a complete re-imagining of our premises were agreed. Only with the benefit of hindsight do we realise how much disruption the current work would have caused in a normal year of church services and a full programme of activities in our halls.

Looking back it is amazing how the timings of that have fitted in with lockdown restrictions being lifted to allow contractors to work and materials to be sourced . It has provided steady work for a number of tradesmen in a well-ventilated space and we pray for the continued health of all the workmen who are nearing the completion of this part of our refurbishment. We are grateful for the exceedingly good relationships which exist between the architect, the contractor and all the workmen, and ourselves.

Thanks to the benefits of technology, we have been consulted at every turn, and had all our requests dealt with in a timely and satisfactory manner. The project is being completed within budget, and the finance has been in place for some time thanks to the response to our appeal to the congregation and the granting of funding applications, particularly from the Inverness Common Good Fund and the Scottish Government's Climate Communities Action Fund. Much to be thankful for.

(Continued on next page)



We hope members of the congregation will be impressed with the refurbishment/modernisation of the upper hall, complete with new kitchen and toilet/shower facilities, greater storage and generally a much better use of the space to accommodate a wide use of activities. It will accommodate the latest audio visual equipment and everything possible has been done to reduce our carbon footprint through double glazing and better insulation, bearing in mind that the Church of Scotland wants church buildings to be carbon neutral by 2030. The leaking

flat roof has been replaced with a zinc finish, new rhones have been provided, and the fascia painted, and while the slater had scaffolding in place he also replaced some broken or missing slates on the nearest part of the church roof. All remaining asbestos has been removed.

We are looking forward now to the completion of the upper hall in time to allow it to be in use before The Highland Council, through their contractor Morrison Construction, begin the conversion of the lower hall into two nursery classrooms for Crown Primary School. Work is due to start on Monday 26 April and be completed by early August, in time for the start of the new school session.



The Corner Club will run their Easter Holiday programme in the lower hall in the first week of the school holidays. They will resume their normal programme on the 19th April in the upper hall.

We are grateful to the Council for the supply of a secure container which is now outside the Midmills door, full of the contents of the cupboards in the lower hall and old kitchen. Our grateful thanks are also extended to Heather and Kenny Beck who have arranged for everyone to empty cupboards and given them a hand, and to all the groups who have cheerfully done that.

So there is much to be done and much to look forward to before the next update from Crown 20/20 when the upper hall will be operational.

(Continued on next page)



Prayer Diary

March 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

April 4-10

We pray O Lord that you would grant us a season of peace and joy at this time of Easter gladness. We thank You that Easter is not about a people but All people. That your love and salvation are for all those who confess with voices, hearts and lives.

Give thanks to God for the new season of spring time, for brighter weather and the reminder of renewal and fresh life; For all the goodness and beauty of His creation.

Pray for the children and young adults you know. Pray that they would know that they are loved by God, and that they would have an awareness of their value in Christ. Pray for opportunities to support and love the young people in your life.

Pray for all the children who have been joining the Treasure Seekers via Zoom; Give thanks for Pat and Struan for their work in bringing the children together and sharing God's word with them.

April 11-17

Loving God, we ask for your healing over every part of our lives – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. We pray that you would make us strong and resilient for the days ahead. We know that you have great purpose for those who believe in your name. Help us not to allow the distractions and struggles of our days, weary us down to the point of exhaustion.

Pray for those who are grieving, those whose lives have changed through loss, that they will know the peace of God that passes all understanding. May they know that they are helped in the palm of God's hand.

Pray for our neighbours, for people who live alone, for people who are struggling with illness and for God's peace to fall on them. Pray for protection and safety over our neighbours' homes and families, and ask God to give us opportunities and courage to share His love with those around us.

As we move towards easing of the lockdown, pray for continuing safety and protection against the COVID virus.

April 18-24

Pray for the business community and services in the Crown Church parish and throughout Inverness; Pray for continued support to enable the business community to flourish and develop for the service of the people.

Remember and pray for those who are experiencing everyday life challenges with great difficulties and whose spirits are weakened; may they find support and comfort through relationships and appreciation of life's daily triumph.

On this day 22nd April, Earth Day, praise God today for the earth that He has gifted to us, and all the beautiful plants and animals He has created for us to enjoy. Commit to caring for every part of God's creation, and ask Him to prompt us to be a good steward of the earth. Pray for the advancement of conservation and renewable energy and that our governments will prioritise looking after our earth.

Pray for those who are struggling with loneliness and ill health, asking for His healing care and comfort. May the Lord be with them and bless them.

April 25 – May 1

Whatever your own family situation today, thank God that He has adopted you as a son or daughter into His family. Thank God for relationship and the opportunity to share life with other people, ask Him to reveal more of His intended plan for families to You and to teach you how to love those around you like He does.

Thank God for His provision and pray for anyone who are going through financial difficulties. Pray for those who have lost jobs due to the COVID pandemic; ask God to help them find new and fulfilling roles.

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.

Pray for the work of our partner church, Northstreet in Jamaica. Give thanks for the generous donations and blessings for the most needed upgrade of computer facilities for supporting the children's education.

If you have particular prayer requests for the next month (April 2021) please do send them to our *church secretary*, Gloria who will pass them on,

or e-mail Jude Madeleine; judedmond@yahoo.co.uk



Daily Bible Readings for April

Sunday, April 4, 2021

Monday: *Jesus Appears to His Disciples*, Luke 24:36-53

Tuesday: *Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas*, Acts 1:12-26

Wednesday: *The Holy Spirit*, Acts 2:1-13

Thursday: *Early Christians*, Acts 2:14-47

Friday: *Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar*, Acts 3:1-10

Saturday: *Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico*, Acts 3:11-26

Sunday, April 11, 2021

Monday: *Peter and John before the Council*, Acts 4:1-22

Tuesday: *Believers Pray*, Acts 4:23-31

Wednesday: *Believers Share*, Acts 4:32-37

Thursday: *Ananias and Sapphira*, Acts 5:1-11

Friday: *The Apostles Heal*, Acts 5:12-16

Saturday: *The Apostles Are Persecuted*, Acts 5:17-42

Sunday, April 18, 2021

Monday: *Saul Persecutes the Church*, Acts 8:1-25

Tuesday: *The Conversion of Saul*, Acts 9:1-19a

Wednesday: *Saul Preaches in Damascus*, Acts 9:19b-31

Thursday: *Peter and Cornelius*, Acts 10:1-33

Friday: *Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit*, Acts 10:34-48

Saturday: *Peter in Prison*, Acts 12:1-19

Sunday, April 25, 2021

Monday: *The Death of Herod*, Acts 12:20-25

Tuesday: *Barnabas and Paul Commissioned*, Acts 13:1-3

Wednesday: *The Apostles Preach in Cyprus*, Acts 13:4-12

Thursday: *Paul and Barnabas in Iconium*, Acts 14:1-7

Friday: *Paul and Barnabas in Lystra and Derbe*, Acts 14:8-20

Saturday: *Return to Antioch in Syria*, Acts 14:21-28

Sunday, May 2, 2021

Monday: *The Conversion of Lydia*, Acts 16:11-15

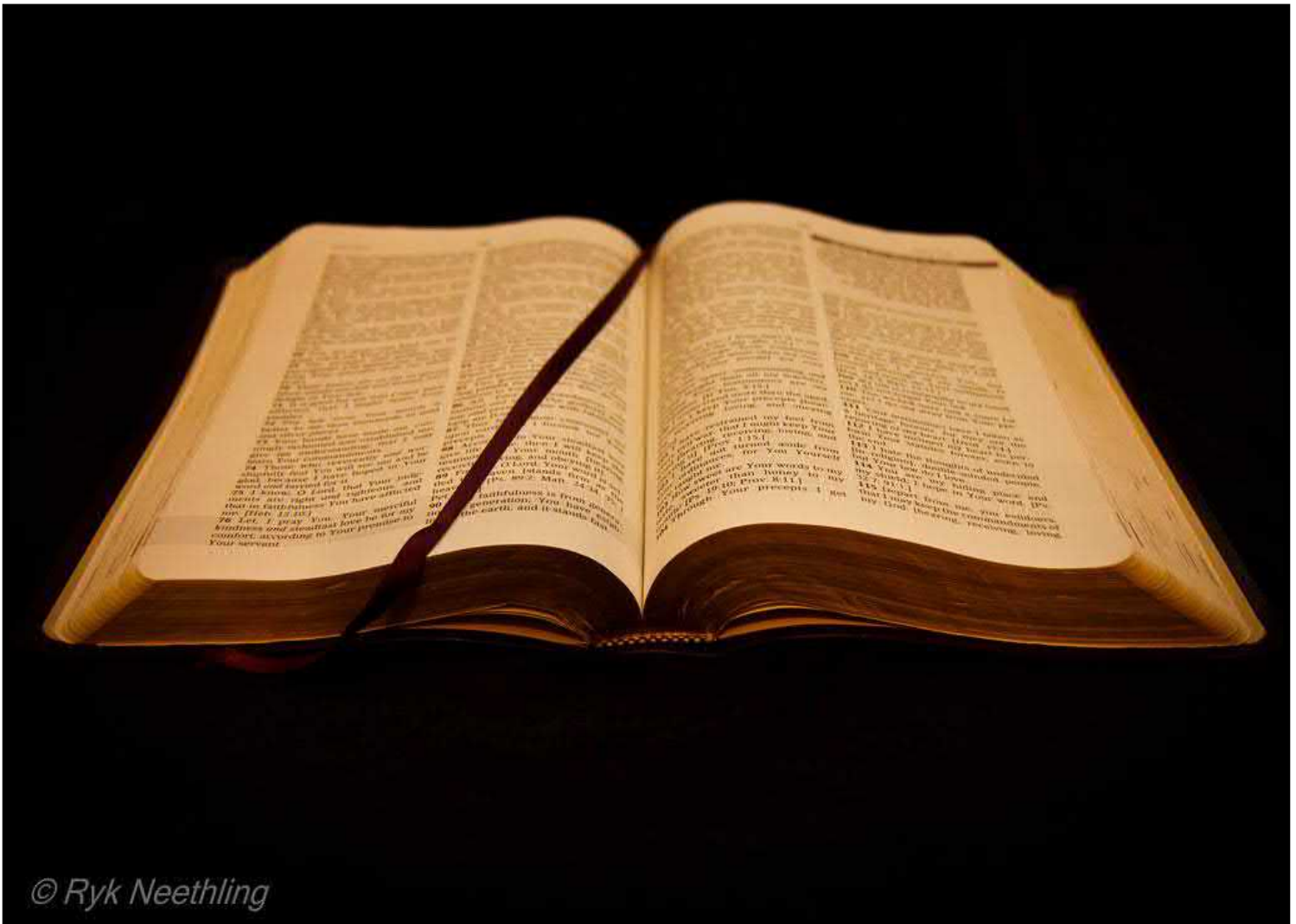
Tuesday: *Paul and Silas in Prison*, Acts 16:16-40

Wednesday: *Paul Sails for Rome*, Acts 27:1-12

Thursday: *The Storm at Sea*, Acts 27:13-38

Friday: *The Shipwreck*, Acts 27:39-28:16

Saturday: *Paul Preaches in Rome*, Acts 28:23-31



© Ryk Neethling

Cameron House

As the congregation and Guild of Crown have been great supporters of Cameron House since it opened 34 years ago I thought you would be interested to know how the home has coped in this difficult year.

Thanks to the strict restrictions and hard work and dedication of the staff Cameron House has to date been clear of Covid and everyone is in good heart and all the staff and resident have now had their second vaccinations.

We are all looking forward to the day when we can get back to having Church Services and afternoon entertainment again.

Please remember the staff, residents and their relatives in your prayers





Jamaica Appeal

At the time of writing, it's just little before Easter, but we appear to be well on the way to reaching the target of £1,750 necessary to refurbish the computer suite used by North Street Primary School pupils and the wider community there.

Meanwhile, Christian Gudgeon, the lady from

Gairloch, who is litter picking the beaches around her Gairloch home. Christian will share the amount raised for student sponsorship between the Dochas Trust working in Malawi and North Street United Church in Kingston.

She has twice raised her target and is aiming at £1000, i.e. £500 for each.

Her fundraising page is at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Spring-Plawk>.

For our next edition, I hope to have more details of their plans from Don Reynolds, who joined us for after church coffee a few Sundays ago.

Hearing the news from a Caribbean country, especially how they are tackling Covid, was really enlightening. We pray God's blessing for their safe progress through the pandemic and beyond.



Making your spare time count –volunteer with Inverness Citizen's Advice Bureau



One of the guiding principles of the CAB service is that it's a voluntary service provided by individuals supporting their local community.

At Inverness CAB we value the contribution our volunteers make and fully recognise that we are unable to do what we need to do to meet the needs of our clients without the amazing effort and commitment of our team of volunteers.

Volunteering for CAB is an interesting and rewarding opportunity and allows you to develop your skills and knowledge, be part of a team and support many people in our community who need some help.

All volunteering roles require a commitment to on-going training. For the role of General Adviser this includes an initial 4 stage training programme that can take up to 6 months to complete. This programme includes practice and assessment, as well as guidance and support, and enables trainees to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required to be a General Adviser.

The topics covered include: benefits, employment, debt, housing & homelessness, consumer, family relationships and many more. This will help prepare you for the broad range of enquiries you may deal with as a General Adviser.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, the majority of training is currently delivered via Zoom. A General Adviser is expected to volunteer for a minimum of 1 day per week (or 2 x 0.5 days).

There are also opportunities to volunteer for Reception or Administration.

Anyone who would like further information is welcome to contact Eileen Ardern who has been an Adviser for some time (eileenardern@hotmail.com) or call the Inverness Office of CAB (01463 237664). An application form is also available.

CORONAVIRUS - A CONVERSATION WITH GOD

Good morning, Lord!

As I sit here and muse about nothing in particular, a thought is beginning to grab my mind. It's a bit like the dawn of a new day - out of the inky-black darkness there breaks the faintest finger of light. Almost imperceptibly it grows in its intensity until, just like the full light of a new day, it fills my mind. And, here's that thought; it's just that things are so different now from how they were just about a year ago. Change, change, change!

I go to the supermarket and I wear a mask, and I clean the trolley, and I apply sanitiser to my handsand, then, I kind of hope for the best. I bump into a fellow shopper who in another time might have smiled at me, but they kind of frown and quickly (quite rightly) they put 2 metres between them and me. Sunday by Sunday I go (well virtually anyway) to Church but I miss the people I long to have fellowship with, and I miss the symbols and surroundings that help me focus on You. On the odd time when I've been able to be at Church, I haven't even been allowed to sing. So strange!

I don't feel great, so I call my doctor but (and I understand why) the best they can offer is a telephone consultation. Oh, by the way, thinking about my doctor leads me to say "thank you" for the vaccine I received recently. I hope it works!

A courier delivers a parcel to my door and, whilst he used to ask for my signature, now he takes of photograph of the package he has just placed on my doorstep. Oh, Lord, a light has just come on, and I've got a great idea - I'll book a holiday on some far-off shore. Oops! I know, I can't do that. The virus the virus the virus! So much has changed and continues to change. As the hymn rightly has it, "Change and decay in all around I see".

Did I just say "the hymn RIGHTLY has it"? Actually, my faith tells me that there is more truth in another line of that same hymn, "O thou who CHANGEST NOT, abide with me". I feel better as I remember that You are God, that You never change, and Your love for me is as constant and as permanent as is the Universe You created.

The virus will be with us for a while yet, but the really good news is that you will be with me forever - that is Your promise, and putting my faith in You is my response.

Thank you for listening.

"I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed." (Malachi 3: 6)

Stewart Robertson



Olive Grove Adieu

It is with very heavy hearts that the trustees of the Olive Grove have taken the decision to close the cafe. While we had hoped to re-open, particularly once the roll out of vaccine gathered pace, we have had to accept that this will not be possible.

We have been very grateful to have a rent holiday since the first lockdown in March 2020, but are now at the point where we would need to renew our lease for 2 years from 1st April.

Taking into account all our overheads, an uncertain opening date in late April or mid May and the need to space our customers much more widely, we felt it was unlikely we could earn enough to cover our running costs. The possibility of any future lockdown would remain a further financial concern.

We are beyond sad, especially as, with scarcely any exceptions, the Olive Grove team of early 2020 had all volunteered to return. We are also beyond sad as we know just how much the Olive Grove has meant to our regular customers, all of whom need a friendly meeting place as they emerge from lockdown loneliness.

The inspiration of the Rev Willis Jones, the Olive Grove opened its door in 2009 and was just celebrating 11 years in business when Covid struck. Why has it been such excellent outreach?

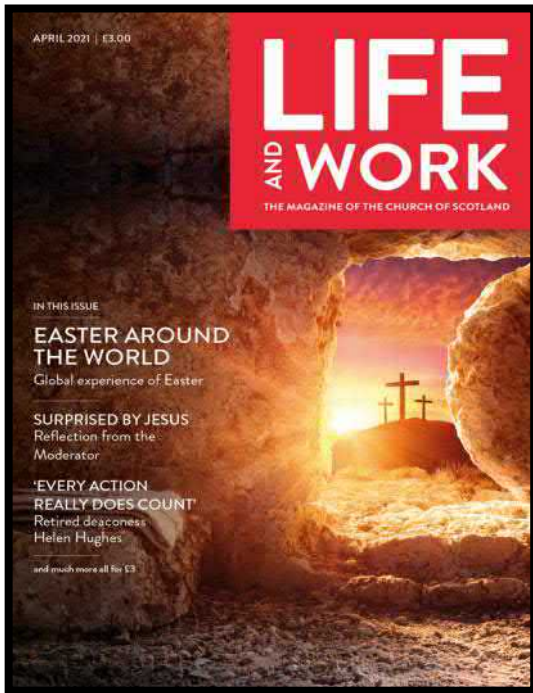
It had an ordinary shop front window located on a fairly busy square; anyone could use it, regardless of church affiliation or none; it brought together volunteers from four churches to which the team added further friends. We also enjoyed the help of numerous young volunteers completing Duke of Edinburgh or Saltire Awards. As a shop front, we have also assisted other local charities in their work, selling for L'Arche, Liberty and Ness Soaps at different times. In the ten years that the Olive Grove has been operational we have distributed an amazing £30,789 to various charities/good causes.

And our customers? Friends meeting up, couples, people on their own sharing tables or just wanting a quiet time out. We all had a special place for our various 'regulars' who called on different days, we loved to watch the progress of 'our' babies, little ones coming regularly with parent or grandparent over the years, we've been inspired in growing old with attitude by a select band of ladies all aged 95+, and we've learned how much a few kind words can warm someone suffering challenges of learning disability or approaching dementia. Is it 'outreach' in a religious sense? I was unsure, until in our last weeks operating, a sadly damaged and usually silent person suddenly said 'Say a prayer for me'. Both customers and volunteers have been hugely blessed in being part of this project and we hope and pray that in God's good timing, another similar opportunity to serve the community will arise. As another volunteer put it "There was so much love in that little place, love within the team, love with the customers'. That's no bad valediction.

Mairi Main

LIFE AND WORK

APRIL 2021



EASTER SPECIAL

Easter Around the World: Church of Scotland ministers and partners from across the globe reflect on how they celebrate Easter

Surprised by Jesus: Reflection from the Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair

Easter Prayer

'Every Action Really Does Count'

Interview with Helen Hughes, retired Church of

Scotland Deacon and passionate Christian Aid supporter

Dreaming Big

In this month's youth column, Rachel Macrae describes the influence of the Church in shaping her life and dreams

A Season of Awakening

The Very Rev Albert Bogle asks whether the Covid-19 pandemic has created an opportunity to reset mission

All in the Timing

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers reflects on death, loss and the importance of signs in the story of Lazarus

God's 'Ministry of Recognition'

In the last in her series of studies, Ruth Harvey looks at Paul's letters as she reflects on the importance of reconciliation in the months to come

Online

Visit www.lifeandwork.org for news and exclusive features, including Coronavirus Diaries from Church of Scotland mission partners across the world. You can also find us at facebook.com/lifeandwork or on Twitter [@cofslifeandwork](https://twitter.com/cofslifeandwork)

Subscribe online from £6 for three issues (special offer for new readers), or download a digital copy for £1.99; return the form in the magazine or speak to your church's Life and Work co-ordinator.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY

Deaths

Miss Sheila Chisholm, Kingsmills Road 13th March 2021

Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Latterly Kingsmills Nursing Home 17th March 2021

April Welcome Team

Jude Madeleine (Beadle)

Liz Gray

Jimmy Gray

Elspeth Gibson

Readers

April 4 Gary McAra

April 11 Sheena Ferguson

April 18 Jimmy Gray

April 25th Jude Madeleine

May 2nd Fiona Carter

Items for the May Newsletter by Sunday 25th April please!

Please send any articles, photographs or news to :

marionandbobnewsletter@gmail.com

Minister Rev Douglas Robertson, 39 Southside Road, 07547976054 drrobertson@churchofscotland.org.uk

Crown Church Office: office@crown-church.co.uk

Session Clerk Bob Forrest: bobforrest_1999@yahoo.co.uk

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