

Newsletter

Crown Church, Inverness

JUNE 2021: No. 771

Parish Minister: Rev Douglas Robertson



SUNDAY SERVICES

With the easing in Coronavirus restrictions there is no longer a limit placed on the number who can gather in a place of worship. However we **do** still have to maintain 2 metre distancing and so in practice we still are limited in the numbers we can accommodate and so please continue to contact the office to let us know if you would like to attend on a Sunday morning.

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 6th June The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at 11.00am followed by special prayers

Sunday 13th June Morning Worship at 11.00am

Sunday 20th June Morning Worship at 11.00am

Sunday 27th June Morning Worship at 11.00am

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

'O give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever'

Psalm 118

From the Minister

Dear members and friends of Crown Church,

Covid restrictions are easing. We can move around the country once again. We can visit friends and family in their own home or have them into ours. We can eat in restaurants and stay over in hotels. We can even fly overseas on holiday to a limited list of destinations. We can have more people in church and very soon we might even be able to sing the great hymns of praise together again. We're not out of the woods yet, but I think most of us feel as if we are finally getting close to the light at the end of the tunnel. (Sorry for mixing my metaphors!)



I hope we can organise a celebration service before the end of the year, to invite the whole community to join us in a collective shout of grateful thanks to God that this madness is finally over.

And yet, there is a cloud that will remain, casting its long shadow over any celebrations. There are too many people who have been hurt by this, too many lives lost, families left unable to grieve properly without a decent funeral, illnesses other than covid undiagnosed or untreated because of pressures on the health service, businesses destroyed, life savings dwindling, jobs lost, dreams shattered.

We cannot celebrate without a deep sense of lament and ongoing prayers for those around us and throughout the world who continue to struggle through the pandemic and all its obvious and less-than-obvious consequences.

So where do we look for comfort? If you Google something like "comfort in the pandemic" too many references come up with my own particular struggle.....comfort food!

On a more serious note, the Silicon Valley branch of the Salvation Army has a wonderful page on its website with the snappy title, "9 Bible Verses to Help Your Unique Situation During the COVID-19 Pandemic".

The one that speaks to my hopes and fears for the future is from Jeremiah 29:11, *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

As I reflected on this verse it struck me how much it applied to Crown Church and all our plans for the future, but I also thought that perhaps this was a much broader word of prophecy that the whole Church of Scotland needs to hear, especially as the General Assembly draws to a close as I write. This was quite possibly the most radical Assembly in living memory, which could so easily have been a depressing reflection on covid killing off the church, but instead was a beacon of hope for a renewed, revitalised, re-inspired church serving Christ and serving our communities as we rise into the light of a new dawn.

Somewhat appropriately, the Sunday of Assembly week was Pentecost Sunday (May 23) and in that service I expressed my hope that the Assembly itself would experience an outpouring of God's Holy Spirit and then spill out onto the streets of Edinburgh with a new vision for God's work which would spread around this land.

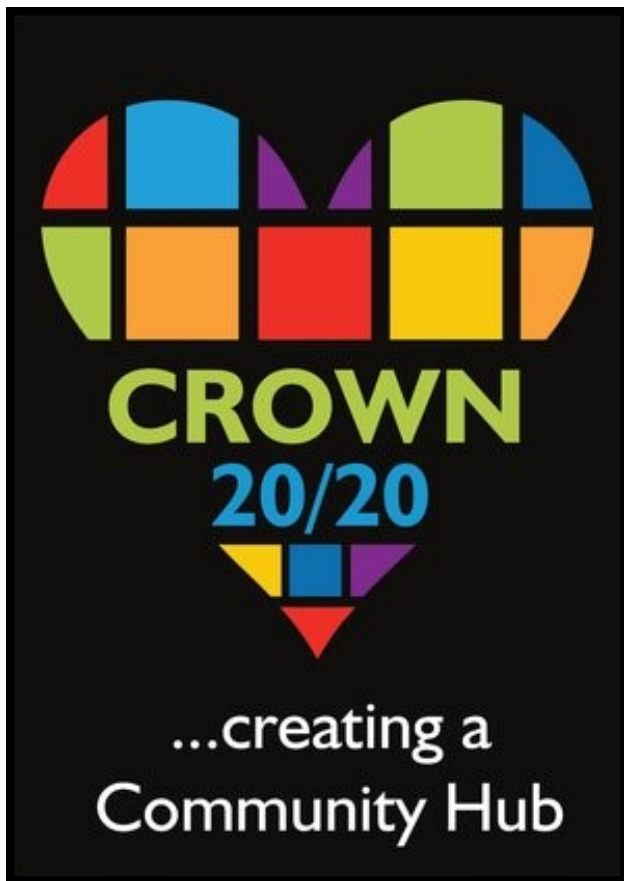
Together with the ripples of covid and covid recovery that will stay with us for a long time, it is my prayer that the ripples rippling out from this Assembly might effect long-term reform in the church too.

Wishing you every blessing,

Douglas



Reay and Brian Macgill would like to thank everyone for their kind messages, cards and gifts on the birth of their grandson, 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.”

Crown Church sits on a busy corner. If you are one of the many who regularly pass by on your way to town but have never been inside our buildings, what impression will you have of what goes on? Those of us who belong hardly ever stop to think about that, because we have experienced the worship, the fellowship, the sharing, the activities, and we are familiar with what lies through those six doors. But there is not much to attract you as you hurry home in the middle of winter with the church dark, and the majority of the lit windows hidden from view. You may be tempted in the summer to sit a while in our lovely garden, but sometimes you can sit for a long time and not see anyone going in or out, and you certainly can't see what's happening inside even if there are a hundred people on the premises.



Wouldn't it seem like an impenetrable religious club? And six rather forbidding doors –which one to choose? Compare this experience with being in a strange town and choosing which shops to visit, and a restaurant for dinner where there is glass, and light, and you can see what's inside before you set foot in a place. It is an expectation that has crept up on us over the past 30 years, that people can see in before entering a public space – and we need to keep up.

The public image that our buildings convey has been one of the considerations at recent meetings of Crown 20/20. Now that the upper hall work is all but complete, we have been giving time to look at planning for the next phase of our redevelopment.

An attractive and obvious main entrance is high on the list, and yes, think lights and glass and accessibility, with a foyer space which presents a visible welcome to the passer by on the street. We are working with our architect to develop exciting plans with the intention that we will have them ready to share as soon as we are all able to meet up.

The main goal of the re-ordering of the way we use our premises is to enable mission. Watching the Mums, Dads and toddlers arriving for the newly re-opened Toddlers Group, it was probably only the welcoming face of Struan just inside the door which stopped them turning tail when they first looked in and were presented with a long corridor and many closed doors. By the end of the morning, their happy time in the newly refurbished, bright, warm and safe upper hall had left them with a memory which complemented the welcome and which will bring them back again. Buildings speak to us. First impressions are vital. We need to consider every point at which we touch the community we serve.



Prayer Diary

June 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

June 6-12

Thank God for each new day of grace and the many blessings that we have from Him.

Lord, heal and bless our world. Bring comfort and hope as your light pierce the darkness. Amidst the doom-and-gloom reality we pray that Your love will illuminate and forge a path for all. Amen

Pray for the activities for the children and young people that have gradually been re-started within the church facilities; (For YC Inc, Toddlers group, Corner Club). Give thanks for Struan McRoberts, for him to be continually blessed with strength in all the work he has been doing to inspire young people in their journey to know and follow Christ.

Give thanks for all the boys coming to the different sections of the Boys Brigade, that they continue to enjoy the time and learning together; pray for the continuing support of the leaders.

June 13-19

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.

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.

Thank God for everyday blessings; for the joy of families and friends and the knowledge that His love surrounds us each day.

Pray for all elderly people in our community, for those living in their own homes or nursing homes and care homes. Pray for strength, resilience and peace among them, their families and staff who support and help look after them

June 20-26

Pray Psalms 31:24: 'Be strong, be courageous, all you that hope in the Lord.' Give thanks to God for all he does for us and the promises He gives in his word.

Pray for peace in our world; that all people may live free from violence, in safety and security, and with hope for the future.

Give thanks that during difficulties and distress, others can lift us up before the throne of grace. Help us always to remember those in great need.

Give thanks for the completion of work on the upper hall. Pray for the continuing progress and success with the next phase of the work to develop the church facilities. Pray for God's blessings over the Crown 20/20 group for their leadership and for all those contributing.

June 27 – July 3

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 God's light and love to shine into the minds of all who are depressed, anxious or suffering from dementia.

Pray for those who are homeless and give thanks for those who provide 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 those who are struggling with loneliness and ill health. May the Lord be with them and bless them.

This prayer diary has been prepared by the Discipleship Team. We hope that you will find it useful.

If you have particular prayer requests for the next months (July/August,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 June

Sunday, May 30, 2021, Psalm 1

Monday, Psalm 5

Tuesday, Psalm 10

Wednesday, Psalm 17

Thursday, Psalm 26

Friday, Psalm 36

Saturday, Psalm 73

Sunday, June 6, 2021, Psalm 100

Monday, Psalm 103

Tuesday, Psalm 105

Wednesday, Psalm 111

Thursday, Psalm 135

Friday, Psalm 147

Saturday, Psalm 149

Sunday, June 13, 2021, Psalm 13

Monday, Psalm 3

Tuesday, Psalm 51

Wednesday, Psalm 69

Thursday, Psalm 90

Friday, Psalm 102 S

Saturday, Psalm 140

Sunday, June 20, 2021, Psalm 23

Monday, Psalm 11

Tuesday, Psalm 16

Wednesday, Psalm 46

Thursday, Psalm 52

Friday, Psalm 121

Saturday, Psalm 131

Sunday, June 27, 2021, Psalm 30

Monday, Psalm 34

Tuesday, Psalm 40

Wednesday, Psalm 57

Thursday, Psalm 66 F

Friday, Psalm 116

Saturday, Psalm 138

Sunday, July 4, 2021, Psalm 150

Monday, Psalm 2

Tuesday, Psalm 22

Wednesday, Psalm 25

Thursday, Psalm 50

Friday, Psalm 106

Saturday, Psalm 119



Donald Matheson, a personal appreciation of a life well lived.

We were all greatly saddened by the death of Donald Matheson, after a short illness, on 18th April this year. His funeral took place in Crown Church on Friday 30th April.



Donald and Beth have been very dear friends of myself and Marion for many years now. Donald, particularly in my church life, has been something of a mentor to me and I will miss his company, perhaps more than most.

Preparing this appreciation has been made a great deal easier than would otherwise have been the case by dint of the fact that Donald, quite typically, prepared a narrative encompassing most of the main events in his life. He prepared this in August 2019. His son, Alistair, has been kind enough to provide me with a copy together with copies of the photographs which accompany this article.

Donald was a dyed in the wool Invernesian, born (appropriately) in Inverness in 1936. He was brought up in Inverness along with his 2 brothers and sister and educated in Inverness, initially at Inverness Royal Academy Junior School and then latterly at Inverness Technical

High School where, one supposes, his interest in accountancy first developed. He was school captain in 1954.

He completed his apprenticeship in terms of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland and qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1961. He later went on to serve on the Council of the Institute as chairman of the local area committee.

Donald's working life was dominated by his role in the Highlands and Islands Development Board and latterly its successor, Highlands and Islands Enterprise. He first joined the Board in 1967 only 2 years after its formation and went on to become the Director of Finance.

On the basis of my present understanding, as early as his days in Inverness Technical High School, he was rather attracted to a young pre-nursing student. Never a man to rush into things with undue haste and without due consideration, he eventually married Beth in 1962. Their two children followed, first Fiona and then Alistair.



Theirs was the happiest of marriages. They were able to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary in 2012. Their 2 grand daughters, Sophie and Emelia, have been a source of great joy. The loss of their granddaughter, Ellie, in 2013, aged only 10 months, was a terrible blow. Nevertheless, although their grief and pain was almost tangible, they bore this loss with great fortitude and continued their unstinting support to their family, as they always had.

Donald was a lovely man. I have never heard anyone say anything to the contrary and never expect to. Kindness and generosity were simply part of his natural character. Serving other people was also an ingrained habit. I cannot hope to record a complete list of all his interests and involvements, there are simply too many. He was an enthusiastic Rotarian and served as both Treasurer and President in that organisation. Full of humour and ever on the lookout for a laugh, I have heard him comment that it was regarded as quite scandalous that, during his year of presidency, he slept with the President of Inner Wheel (Beth).

Indeed, humour was one of Donald's strong suits as those who have been present on occasions when full size cardboard cut outs of both the Queen and the Pope have been wheeled out can testify. At the risk of scandalising the entire congregation, I can now reveal that, starting with the Bob Logan era, Donald and I (who used to share the same pew) were in the habit of scoring the sermons out of 10 and would compare scores at the end of the service. "*Strictly Come Dancing*" later adopted our system.

It was quite touching, that at the conclusion of his funeral, the cortege passed along Beaufort Road preceded by his long-time friend and neighbour, David Henderson, complete with top hat and bell, the equipment which Donald had employed over many years to bring in the New Year in Beaufort Road, to the delight of everyone.

He was not quite a lifelong member of Crown Church since, as I understand matters, he had no connection with Crown Church until he was enrolled in the Sunday School, aged 5. So he was only associated with Crown Church for a mere 80 years!



However, from that point onwards, he was involved in just about everything it was possible to be involved in. He had a lifelong commitment to the Boys Brigade. He was appointed to the Congregational Board and then ordained as an elder in 1979. He took over the leadership of the Bible Class. By that stage, he had well and truly "*fingered my collar*" and was instrumental in ensuring I became his successor as Bible Class leader. However, he continued to provide me with close support, particularly in relation to what had, by that stage, become the annual pilgrimage by the Bible Class to the Badenoch Christian Centre at Kincaig, a venture which Donald had pioneered. Both he and Beth continued to staunchly support these outings for a considerable number of years.

He was in at the grassroots at the launch of "*Launchpad*" and became the Treasurer of that venture and indeed the Treasurer just about everything else with which he came into contact. The "*Olive Grove*" was another venture with which Donald was closely involved right from the beginning and, of course, served as its Treasurer until very recently.

He served as Chief Beadle for 12 years. He also served as Session Clerk for 10 years. With Donald's encouragement, I have followed in his footsteps.

In conclusion, and in his own words, "*I have really had a wonderful life*". To me, he was a splendid example of what a Christian gentleman should be: full of grace, humour, kindness and consideration.

Although I will miss him dearly, I consider it a great blessing that it came to me to know him so well and to have had him as a friend for so many years.



Our thoughts and our prayers are with Beth and the family at this sad time.

Bob Forrest



Christian Aid Week 2021

I am pleased to report that 151 donors from the 24 churches of the Inverness Area Christian Aid Group have so far raised a total of £5,820 via our Just Giving webpages. Of this Crown Church has raised £1,245 from 21 supporters. Some Crown people will also have been amongst the 25 supporters who have donated £710 to my "300,000 steps in May" challenge. Yet again some (from all churches) have contributed cheques and in other ways. (I don't have the figures for these to hand at the time of writing, being away from home.)

So I am confident that all these figures will end up higher than they are now. Huge thanks to you all for your generosity.

I am glad to say that I completed the steps challenge, exceeding my target of 300,000 steps by 15%. If I said it wasn't too bad you'd think it was no challenge at all so instead I'll say it was awful. My feet were bleeding every night. I got soaked by rain, hail and even snow as I struggled against the wind. But seriously, it wasn't too bad. I'm sincerely grateful to everyone who has sent me messages of support and made donations.

It may be some time before I know the final results for Crown Church and indeed the Inverness Group. Meantime the JustGiving pages will remain open until the end of June and other means of donation (cheque etc payable to "Christian Aid") are always open.

Just to remind you, the JustGiving page is:

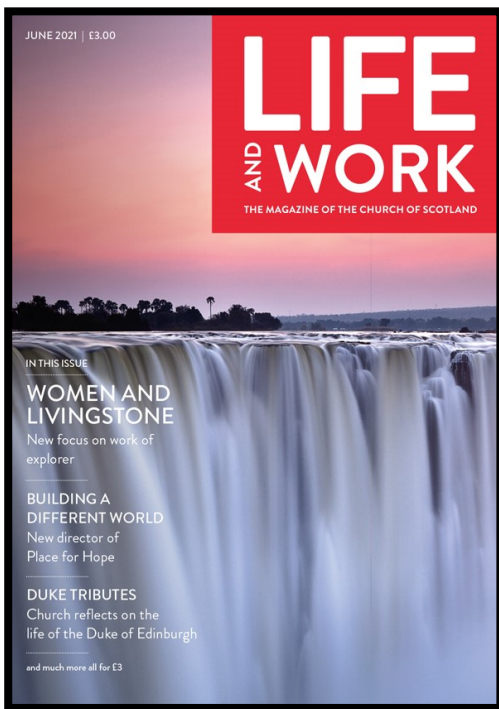
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Inverness-Crown-Church>

Thank you

David Crippin

LIFE AND WORK

JUNE 2021



Women and Livingstone

The reopening of the David Livingstone Centre in Lanarkshire offers the chance of a fresh appraisal of the explorer's life, and particularly the role of his wife, Mary.

Building a Different World

Interview with Carolyn Merry, new director of the mediation charity Place for Hope.

Tributes to the Duke of Edinburgh

Church of Scotland figures pay tribute to Prince Phillip.

Assembly 2021

More reports to this year's General Assembly.

An Unforgettable Experience

John R Hume remembers a personal experience in a village churchyard.

Looking For Deep Spiritual Truth

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers reflects on the spiritual themes in an Oscar-winning movie.

A Pleasure to Serve

In this month's youth column, Catriona Munro introduces her new role within the Church of Scotland Faith Impact Forum.

Online

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Easter Appeal – North Street Church, Kingston, Jamaica

Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously to the Easter Appeal for our partner North Street United Church in Kingston, Jamaica. North Street supports its neighbouring primary school, North Street Primary School in every respect financially, other than paying teachers' salaries in the Day Care and Early Childhood learning Centre.

So, with schools closed and pupils, many in poverty, missing education for the best part of a year – NSU Church have focussed on the need to refurbish their computer room so that they can provide support and mentoring to assist pupils make up some of their lost learning. They have also purchased twelve tablet computers for the use of the children. This is especially important in a country where many young people do not progress beyond primary education.

While we hoped to cover refurbishment costs of roughly £1,700, Crown has raised £4,133.75 (including Gift Aid) which has now been transferred to North Street. This is indeed a great bonus as it will give our partners there the potential to focus on other immediate needs of their area's youth. We look forward to hearing what, with God's blessing, will result.

Meanwhile, in Gairloch, Christian Gudgeon had set herself the challenge of sponsored walking around the area's shorelines for the 40 days of Lent, while collecting litter as she went. Monies raised amounted to £1,000 divided equally between the Dochas Education Trust in Malawi and North Street Church; tons of litter, ropes, pipes, fishing gear and even a teapot were retrieved and disposed of.

Christian's brother, Alex Renton, and his family members have also contributed to North Street United Education Development Foundation which provides scholarships for the children to attend High School. Alex is about to publish a book examining historic Scots involvement in the Caribbean. With that difficult topic in mind, it's fitting that, on this occasion, we have been blessed with the means to respond freely to meet our partner's request.

Mairi Main

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY

Deaths

Eddie Ingram late of Damfield Road, 26th May 2021

June Welcome Team

Marion and John Barbour
Brian Macgill

Readers

June 6th Brian Irvine
June 13th John Barbour
June 20th Ailsa and Blair McAra
June 27th Roddie Lightbody
July 4th Douglas Young

Items for the July newsletter by Sunday 25th July please!

*****Please note our new email address*****

Please send any articles, photographs or news to :

newsletter@crowm-church.co.uk

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

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

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

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The Church website is to be found at www.crown-church.co.uk