

June and July 2023  
Newsletter

# Old High St Stephen's Church of Scotland

## OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

Are recorded and are available via our [website](#) on our [Twitter feed](#) and [Facebook page](#). So you can enjoy these services at a time suitable to you, links are sent to our e-mail list. To go on our e-mail list, please contact our [Church Administrator](#).

## SERVICES AT ST STEPHEN'S

Following the closure of the Old High Church for Sunday Worship, all Sunday services are now held at St Stephen's Church at 10.30am

## CONTACT US

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**If you would like us  
to keep in touch –  
please send us your  
up-to-date e-mail and  
address details**

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## THOUGHTS FROM REV JAMES

I never wanted to be a Minister. Ask 5-year old me what they wanted to do and it would probably be a firefighter. Ask 15-year old me what they wanted to do, and he'd probably say teacher or something. 18-year old me was a photographer, and if you'd asked me in my mid 20's to early 30's what I wanted to do, I'd have probably said I was happy enough, as long as the job paid for the things I do like.

One of the things I did like was my involvement in my church in Dalgety Bay, and then later on in Kirkcaldy. It started off small, then over time I would be involved with putting together parts of services with our worship group, building a Tardis for the Sunday School (a very long story) and doing the things that help to make church happen - mainly moving furniture. But Ministry was never one of the things what really occurred to me. Ministry was for minister type people, and I certainly wasn't one of those.

It was only when my wife expressed an interest that I started giving the idea some thought. However it would take another few years before I finally gave in and responded to God's call with something not quite similar to Samuel's response, "Here I am Lord." Actually, I think it was more that I trusted God that if he wasn't calling me, the Church of Scotland would fling me out. So here I am, although I have often thought that the only reason I am here is because of a horrific mistake with the paperwork at the Church of Scotland... 😊

However it's the characters in the Bible that have had unusual callings that resonate with me. Moses was a shepherd who had killed a man. Paul persecuted the early church. Both unlikely candidates for doing the Lord's work. The thing is, God calls us not for the work we have already done, but for our ability to be moved and shaped by him. We are clay in his hands.

The most important calling from God is for us to know him and to be drawn into fellowship with him. God calls people out of darkness into his light. When talking with Nicodemus about being born again. Jesus says, "The wind blows where it wishes, and so it is with everyone born of the Spirit" Gods power is blowing through us. It is only when we have truly drawn closer to God that we can try to understand our callings.

God's calling may not be for you to be a Minister, but think of all the ways you serve him. But also, reflect on the ways you could serve him better. We are all called to serve, using the skills He has blessed us with. And if you don't know about your calling, please just pause, and say, "here I am Lord" and listen.

## UPCOMING EVENTS OVER THE SUMMER

- 27 June Inverness Presbytery Meeting
- 27 June Crown Church Guild Coffee Morning
- 26 July Crown Church - Canadian Choir
- 4 July Kirk Session
- 9 July Baptism
- 16 July OHSS Sunday Walk
- 23 July Baptism
- 6 August St Stephen's - German Choir Visit
- 26 August Cameron House - Fundraising Tea
- 27 August Ice Cream Sunday

## NEWS FROM THE CONGREGATION

**OHSS KIRK SESSION** The Kirk Session will meet in the Church on Tuesday 4 July at 7.00 pm. Please note the earlier start time. The Presbytery Clerk, Rev Trevor Hunt, and Mission Implementation Advisor, Murray McCheyne, will be joining the meeting at 8.00 pm.

**Interim Moderator** At the Kirk Session Meeting held on 16 May, Rev Duncan MacPherson advised members that he was resigning from that position following the congregational vote. At the Presbytery Business Meeting on 13 June it was agreed that Rev James Bissett would take on the additional role of Interim Moderator. We are grateful to James for taking on this task.

**Inverness Presbytery** meet on Tuesday 27 June and will be asked to approve a deferred union for Old High St Stephen's. We will not be permitted to call a Minister. The charge will remain vacant until the Rev Douglas Robertson demits or retires from his post. There is much hurt in both congregations regarding the current situation but we should continue to work together as much as possible. We will keep you up to date with any developments. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk

**1668 CAFÉ** There will be an opportunity to contribute towards the 1668 Cafe on Sunday 30 July and Sunday 27 August. They require cleaning materials, toiletries, tinned meat, tinned meals, cereals etc. Please bear in mind that many of their clients have limited or no cooking facilities. The staff at the Cafe very much appreciate the support we give to them - it really does make a huge difference to their clients. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk.

**OHSS WALK SUNDAY 16 JULY** We are arranging another Summer Church outing to a local garden. It's a nice opportunity to share fellowship and see an interesting house and garden

We plan to visit the gardens at Old Allangrange, Munloch which is part of Scotland's Garden Scheme. Afternoon tea will be provided after a walk around the fine garden, and a talk about the development of the garden along eco-friendly lines. The cost of the tour and tea with cakes is £20, and will be outdoors if the weather is fine, but in the House should it be wet. If you would like to come, please contact one of us by Friday 14 July. We will aim to leave from the Church at 1.30pm to arrive for 2pm and have afternoon tea about 3.30pm. If you would like to come but don't have transport, please let one of us know. Malcolm Steven

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**MONDAY MORNING TODDLERS** at St Stephen's Church Hall is a highlight of the week for both the toddlers and parents who attend. It is a wonderful opportunity for the children to explore new toys, play with others, sing songs and make crafts. For the adults it is an opportunity to socialise and enjoy a much needed hot cup of tea! For this we are extremely grateful for the help we receive every week from the very popular ladies on the rota from OHSS who help to prepare the children's snacks and parents tea and coffee.

We wanted to show our appreciation to the church, to meet the congregation and to raise some funds for the group, so we organised a coffee morning following the church services on Sunday 4 June. We were thrilled with the turnout and the buzz around the church hall. The baking proved popular, the toddlers enjoyed roaming and meeting new people and many of the grown-ups got their heads together to tackle the Scottish Islands quiz.

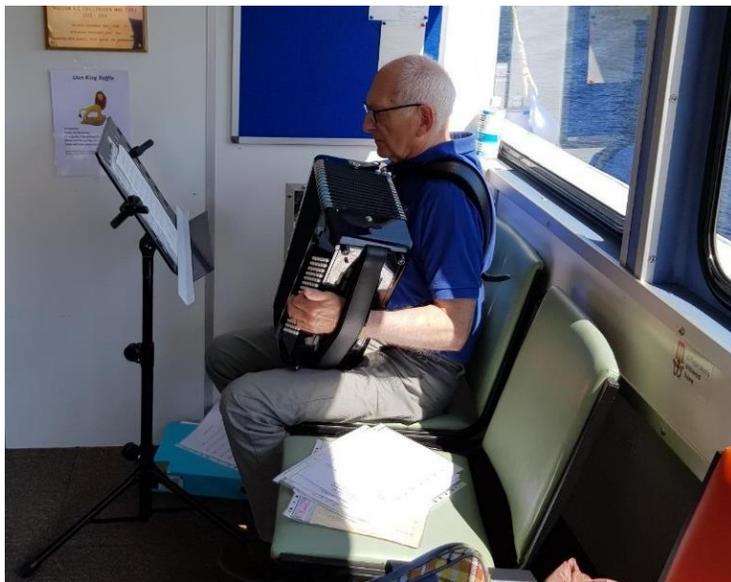


We are delighted to announce that through your kind and generous donations, a whopping total of £446.12 was raised! This will be used to fund a summer trip for the toddlers group to attend Farm Ness on Monday 3 July and to source new toys such as a wooden play kitchen for our regular Monday sessions. Finally we are also happy to inform you that the winner of the Scottish Islands quiz was Deborah and Malcolm McRae who received the prize hamper last week - well done both! Kirstie Simmons

**SEAGULL BOAT TRIP** The joint Pastoral Care Teams at Crown and Old High St Stephen's organised a trip on the Seagull boat sailing on the Caledonian Canal. It took place on Friday 2 June, a glorious day for a sail.



A group of 12 went aboard the boat and enjoyed a sail with tea and home baking and musical entertainment provided by their accordionist. It was a very successful outing enjoyed by all. Val Cantlay



**CHRISTIAN AID WEEK A BIG Thank You** to all the members of Old High St Stephen's who contributed to this recent fundraising campaign. The retiring offerings raised £474.80 not including Gift Aid. The Door to Door and Online page raised £880. Adding this to the Coffee morning and Plant sale gives a grand total of £2686.55 with gift aid still to be added. This is a very similar amount to last year and will buy seeds and equipment for many people in Africa suffering drought and famine. I have copied this prayer from Christian Aid to remind us of the purpose of this charity work. I hope you all enjoy the rest of the summer. Deborah Macrae

#### **Recipe prayer**

Breadmaking God,  
 You take a large measure of pigeon pea flour grown with dignity and dedication,  
 a pinch of salt to season and celebrate diversity,  
 a tablespoon of sugar to encourage and enable,  
 a teaspoon of yeast to inspire and dream,  
 and a glug or two of water to bring us all together.  
 Leave to rise to stretch and learn,  
 then bake in an oven of justice and love.  
 The smell of baking bread invites us to the table, where all have equal worth,  
 to take, break and eat,  
 until all are fed and hunger is no more.  
 For this is a celebration of community, of God's presence among us.  
 Amen.

**VISITING CHOIR FROM GERMANY** On Sunday 6 August the **Elikuren Choir** will participate in morning worship at St Stephen's. This choir, consisting of 14 singers, are touring the Highlands and will also be going to Dornoch Cathedral and St Lawrence Church in Dingwall. They will be singing sacred songs at various points during the service and an organ scholar who is accompanying them will also play for us. This falls within the holiday period for our own choir, but we hope that there will be good congregational participation in this service, with an opportunity to meet with our German guests afterwards. Andrew Stevenson.

**SUMMER EVENING CONCERT - WEDNESDAY 26 JULY AT 7.30PM AT CROWN CHURCH** A Canadian Choir, 'Les Chanteurs de Lorraine' from Quebec, is including Inverness in a Scottish Tour that has been long postponed due to Covid. They will perform a mixture of classical solo and choral songs by Mozart, Verdi and Izet, along with some contemporary songs.

This is being organised under the auspices of Inverness Music Society. There will be refreshments at the end. The choir is offering this concert as a gift, but there will be an opportunity on the way out to make a donation towards the running costs of this event and for future concerts. Details from Andrew Stevenson (242767) or [stevenson.ata@btinternet.com](mailto:stevenson.ata@btinternet.com)

**ICE CREAM SUNDAY 27 AUGUST** The service on Sunday 27 August will be a family service geared to families and children. We hope to welcome some of our Toddler friends. It will be informal, shorter than usual, and with familiar hymns. Ice cream will be served in the Hall afterwards where young and old can mix and enjoy ice creams together. Val Cantlay

**THE CLAVINOVA** I've been asked to share the story of the Clavinova. A few months ago now, it was agreed by Session that one of our spare electric pianos would be gifted to Cameron House for use in services and concerts as the one they had was beyond repair - nobody was able to service it anymore. The plan was for us to drop off our piano and collect and dispose of theirs. Thanks to Stuart and Christine for the trailer and the heavy lifting.

As we are all aware, it's good to reduce, re-use and recycle, so instead of taking it on a final voyage to the tip, I took the old piano, a 22 year old Yamaha Clavinova home to attempt some repairs, on the theory that if it's dead, I can't make it any more dead. Now I'm not a musician, or a musical technician, but I do know how to read an instruction manual. There was a video on Youtube dedicated to the repair of the keys on this instrument, so I followed those steps. I had to remove all the keys

individually, 88 of them, and greased them to free them up. The picture is partway through the process.



*Clavinova Apart*

I also did a few other cosmetic repairs, such as making new feet and a music stand from scrap wood in the garage. A quick coat of furniture polish later and it was looking good. Pam came and checked it and she reckons it now plays fine.

We decided that it would be a good instrument for a music student to learn on, so I'm pleased to say it's now in Sylvia's living room for Elsa to practice on. James

**FRIENDSHIP** On Father's Day's this year I gave Ron Stevenson my late father's Dunfermline Athletic Football team scarf, after he finished playing the organ.



*Ron proudly wears his Dunfermline scarf*

My parents Jane ( Jean) Smith and Richard (Dick) Smith moved from Dunfermline to Inverness in 2010 as my Mum's health declined and I was able to help care for them.

They joined OHSS church and were delighted to meet so many friendly people. My Dad was especially happy to meet Ron Stevenson and Andrew Robertson as they both were from Dunfermline. He loved chatting about the good

old days in Dunfermline and the exploits of Dunfermline Athletic football team. Sadly my Dad passed away in May 2021, 2 years after my mum, and Andrew passed away shortly before my dad.

Happily, Ron is still a lifelong supporter of Dunfermline Athletic (The Pars) and proudly wears my Dad's scarf. My Dad always teased me that 2 good things happened in 1961. Dunfermline Athletic won the Scottish Cup and I was born. Freda Charters.

**BLISTER PACK RECYCLING** This initiative was a great success - though this may also reflect the many medications we all take in the congregation! I am sorry to say that Superdrug will no longer take bulk drop offs.



I would encourage you to keep recycling regularly by taking your packs to Superdrug directly if you or a family member are in town. **We will no longer be collecting them at church.** Thank you for supporting this initiative. Deborah and Rosa

## OTHER NEWS

**ECO CONGREGATION SCOTLAND** This group, which came together in the run-up to COP26, is organising four events in the coming twelve months to keep us all focused and inspired to help create a cleaner, happier and more just world. The theme will be 1.5, it being the maximum percentage of global warming we can allow if we want the planet Earth to survive into the next millennium

**Autumn 2023:** an event with coffee and cakes and stalls (recycling, children's clothes, plants) to keep alive the awareness of caring for the environment

**Winter 2024 (Feb):** online zoom conference with conversations and information

**Spring 2024 (late April):** plant sales and coffee

**Summer 2024:** an Eco Festival like we had last year with many different stalls of products and info about sustainable living.

**Some tips for your information:**

- A new Zero waste/refill shop has opened up in Queensgate next to the Post Office - bring your

empty containers of washing and laundry detergents to be refilled, saving the need for them to be transported to be recycled.

- At Dobbies you can recycle plastic plant pots
- At Superdrug they will take all your empty pills blister packs to be recycled and
- Bodyshop will recycle flagons and pumps of body lotions and handwashes etc.

We would like to invite all of you to be creative and think along about how we can improve life on earth for all of us and for future generations. Let us think back to the world of our parents and grandparents and what was valuable about that that we may have lost, but might be able to retrieve.

We will keep you informed about upcoming events and meanwhile please keep in touch about your ideas, knowledge and experiences. Either via the notice board in the church hall, or via e-mail to [a.aalders@btinternet.com](mailto:a.aalders@btinternet.com) With friendly wishes, Anna Aalders

## COFFEE MORNING AT CROWN CHURCH

*GUILD SUMMER COFFEE MORNING  
27TH JUNE 2023*



*held in the Upper Hall from 10.15 am  
Come and join us for a cup of tea, chat and home baking*

## AND FINALLY ...

**CAMERON HOUSE FUNDRAISING EVENT** As we break for the Summer, please don't forget the **Afternoon Tea** planned to raise funds for Cameron House. The joint Pastoral Care Teams at Crown and at Old High St Stephen's are organising this event, which will be held at Crown Church Hall and will run from 1pm - 3pm on **Saturday 26 August**. If you have some spare time, please consider making something to sell at our Craft stall, and of course we will be looking for donations of home baking on the day. This will be a social event but it is also a means of us raising money for the mini-bus fund at Cameron House. For further information contact Val Cantlay at OHSS and Brian Macgill at Crown Church.