

Church Newsletter



Winter 2020

The Church of Scotland Parish of
Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch
(SC004050)



Interim Moderator's Letter



Warm greetings from your interim moderators.

A few months have now passed since Rev Martyn Sanders retired and Mark Paterson and I were appointed as Interim Moderators for Blairdaff & Chapel of Garioch Church (BCOG). Mark and I work together at Inverurie West Church, with Mark as Joint Session Clerk and myself as the parish minister. Our role as Interim Moderators is to help the BCOG Session and congregation through this transitional period - both in terms of necessary procedures and also in terms of vision and forward planning. Vacancies are never easy for congregations, and current circumstances are particularly challenging. Pandemic restrictions, the push to complete a Presbytery Planning Review, and the retirement or resignation of a number of key role holders have added to the Session's pressures. Nevertheless, although the buildings have been closed, the Session has been busy behind the scenes.

Tasks they are currently engaged in include: preparing an electoral roll (more explanation of this can be found later in the newsletter); getting the manse ready and applying for necessary permissions to rent it out; keeping the buildings maintained; searching for people willing to fill vacant roles vital to church operation, including Session Clerk and Treasurer; and preparing detailed risk assessment and building checklist documents - a legal requirement if the buildings are to be re-opened at any point during this crisis.

In the meantime, if the paperwork can be approved in time and further restrictions are not imposed, the Session hope to enable some form of in church worship during Advent. There are very strict parameters under which this can legally happen, so we do ask for everyone's patience as we try to make this workable.

Mark and I will be doing all we can to support and encourage both Session and congregation during this challenging period. Change is never easy and it is fair to say that none of us expected 2020 to unfold as it has! If we can help in any way or you would like to get in touch, our contact details are:

Rhona: r.cathcart@inveruriwestchurch.org / 01467 620285

Mark: sessionclerk@inveruriwestchurch.org / 01467 625675

We continue to encourage members to get to know and worship with other congregations online or to take advantage of the increased radio and television worship services. Wherever and however we 'gather', Christ remains among us.

Every blessing, Rhona Cathcart

Forthcoming Services 2020

After many months of listening online, reading prayer inserts or sharing the radio and television content, we are delighted to offer services in our own kirks for the four Advent services in Nov/December. If this is a success and complies with legislation, we will look to continue into 2021.

Chapel of Garioch Church	10am	29 th November
Blairdaff Church	10am	6 th December
Chapel of Garioch Church	10am	13 th December
Blairdaff Church	10am	20 th December

There will be no Watchnight nor Christmas Day services in 2020.

Coming back to Kirk

Unfortunately, it is not possible to allow our congregation just to turn up, to ensure that we can manage the social distancing still required and follow our Risk Assessment Guidelines. Therefore we have a floorplan of the pews and you need to **book your seat** as these are limited, a bit like going to the theatre! Call any one of the working group or preferably email the new kirk email at the end of the newsletter. We really look forward to welcoming you back.

You must use the provided hand sanitiser on entry and wear a mask, following one way routes. Singing is not permitted by The Church of Scotland, but we hope to have carols to listen to. Toilets open on request. No refreshments can be offered. Note the pew cushions have been removed, so feel free to bring your own cushions if desired. The collection will be at the door on entry, not during the service.

A Prayer

God, our constant Companion and Friend, grant that we might live the miracle of now and be where we are, for that is the only place where we can experience you - in the here and now. Give us grace to be attentive to you in the stranger's smile, in the little acts of love, in the beauty of creation. May we not miss our neighbour's gift or our enemy's need, but see you in everyone and give thanks. May we see you coming to us in everything that we experience so that our hearts may be enlarged and our vision of you expanded. Amen

Electoral Roll

The Kirk Session is in the process of making up an Electoral Register for the congregation of BCOG as part of the vacancy process. If your name and current address are already on the Communion Roll, then you will automatically be placed upon the Electoral Register. If you are a regular worshipper, but are still a member of another congregation and you wish your name to be added, then you should arrange to hand in to Lewis Taylor a valid Certificate of Transference before 31 December 2020. If you are a regular worshipper and not a member of this or any other congregation, then the Kirk Session can add your name to the Electoral Register as an "adherent". If you wish the Kirk Session to consider this, you should obtain a form from Lewis Taylor, complete it and return it to him before 31 December 2020.

Email Address Request

The posting out of the newsletter is to those on the Communion Roll and we now request your email address as part of the information we keep. Email copies are sent, but for the remainder the physical copies are hand carried by the elders or volunteers. If you do have an email address, but it is not noted, please forward it to the Kirk attendance email address. If a couple has separate email addresses, please ensure we have each person's emails. This will ensure news is passed to you as quickly as possible. There is care taken with your information that it follows GDPR legislation. Thank you for helping us update our records.



Presbytery Plan (extracted from Rhona's letter)

As well as the general work, the Session has also been asked to think about the future of the parish of BCOG in consultation with the Presbytery Planning Review team. All congregations in the Presbytery are engaged in this process and have been asked to think carefully and realistically about their future - including the sustainability of ministries and buildings. They have also been asked about how they might work more closely, or in different ways, with other congregations. This could include different ways of being 'church'.

A new plan will be presented to the Presbytery of Gordon by the review team in January. None of us know exactly what this will bring, but the BCOG Session will be meeting with a representative of the Planning Review team towards the end of November to get a clearer idea of what options might be available or recommended for the congregation.



Opportunities to help within the Kirk

Volunteers are needed for the following posts, no previous experience necessary, only enthusiasm:

Session Clerk # Treasurer # Gift Aid Convenor

Please contact the folks below for details of what's involved.

Note, although the position of minister is also vacant, there will be no vacancy matters considered until at least March 2021 at the finalisation of the Presbytery Plan proposals.

Session Small Group

While the Kirk Session continue to meet regularly via Zoom, a smaller group is working hard on the re-opening activities as outlined in the Interim Moderator's letter. Please feel free to contact any of the group re the opening.

- Lewis Taylor lewis-taylor@sky.com / 01467 371727
- Dave Thomson thomson.thomson@btinternet.com / 07990 587542
- Angela Hogg angietrek@hotmail.com / 07955 753782
- Stella Gauld stellapos@hotmail.co.uk / 07768 306106
- **To confirm attendance:** bcogattendance@googlegroups.com

Finances & Giving

What strange times we are living in. As you know the Kirk buildings have been closed for many months but there is now a glimmer of hope that we will once again be able to worship in the Kirk, albeit in a completely different way. During the closure, revenue into the Kirk through the generous freewill giving of our members has virtually dried up, but overheads have had to be maintained. As we find different ways to worship, so we can find different ways of donating.

Have you thought about starting a Bank Standing Order, or simply a one-off Bank Transfer? Also it is possible to donate online via the Church of Scotland

Website where you just click on the Red Donate Button at the top of the Home Page and follow the instructions to donate to an individual congregation. It is so simple! Finally there is the good old cheque book; we still love to receive cheques!

As there is no central address meantime, contact any one of the above Session Small Group and we can collect cheques, or give to your usual elder.

Cheques made payable to:
Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch Church
Or for Bank Transfers:
Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch Church
Bank of Scotland, Garioch Centre
Inverurie, AB51 4SB
A/c 06004248 Sort Code 80 08 41

Looking for more information?
The parish website can be found at:
www.blairdaffandchapelofgariochchurch.org.uk
Services, Social Events, News, Prayers, History
bcogattendance@googlegroups.com