

May 2023  
Newsletter

# Old High St Stephen's Church of Scotland

## OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

Are held at St Stephen's Church  
at 10.30am

Sunday Services are recorded  
and are available via [the OHSS  
Website](#), [Twitter feed](#),  
[Facebook Page](#)

(Ctrl + Click to follow links.

So you can enjoy these services  
at a time suitable to you, links are  
sent to our e-mail list following  
the service.

To go on our e-mail list, contact  
our Church Administrator.

## CONTACT US

Church Administrator:

(079 342 85924)

[invernesschurch@gmail.com](mailto:invernesschurch@gmail.com)

<https://www.oldhighststephens.com>



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

Registered Charity No.  
SC035073

## THOUGHTS FROM REV JAMES

Back in November I was invited to the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre at Beckett House near Swindon as part of my role as chaplain to the local Air Cadets. It's located on an MOD base near Swindon. This was a great opportunity to meet up with chaplains from all across the UK and finally meet in person colleagues I had only ever engaged with via Facebook. Just outside the base is the Royal Army Chaplains Museum which if you find yourself in the area is well worth a visit. After walking past the sign on the pond that says "do not walk on the water" you get a



tour which tells the story of British Army chaplaincy from earliest times to the present day, with the help of archive material and historical relics from several centuries. Its collection is dedicated to the work of Army Chaplains throughout history in peacetime, under fire, and in captivity. The museum archives also hold material relating to the department and its history, including information on the four chaplains who have been awarded the Victoria Cross.

I was particularly impressed with the field chapel which was used in Afghanistan, and how the chaplain had managed to cram all the essentials of Church of England worship into a container not much larger than a large suitcase you would take on holiday. I wonder, if I gave you a generous sized box, what would you pack?

Military chaplains have an exceptionally challenging, although rewarding calling. They are often to be found right out in the front lines of conflicts, although they remain unarmed. I know from many who have served that the chaplain is highly valued and respected and helps lift morale.

Each year at our General Assembly, we recognise the work of chaplains within the forces. Last year, the Rev Craig Dobney, who served in the RAF before being called to ministry, said: "When I joined up I was lost to God. Throughout my career my faith slowly came back, mainly through the support and care we get from our chaplaincy teams." He added that his son was now in the Army, and that: "To him, the Chaplain is the parent looking after those boys and girls in the combat areas."

And the Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, whose son JJ was seriously injured while on service in Afghanistan 11 years ago, said military chaplaincy was a key point of ecumenical work in the Church: "When we arrived at the hospital it was a Roman Catholic chaplain, Father Michael Sharkey, who held our hands... in that moment all that matters is you have someone holding the hand of God when you don't know how to do that."

As chaplain to the local Air Cadets, I take my hat off to the chaplains, and not just the Christians, who are there on the front line of conflicts and have an awful lot harder job than me. I ask that you remember them in your prayers, because as long as we fight, there will be a need for someone to be there to provide pastoral care, spiritual support and guidance.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**ST STEPHEN'S PARENT AND TODDLERS GROUP** will be serving the coffees for us after Church on **Sunday 4 June**. They will also have a home baking stall. They would like us to help them as they want to raise funds to be able to take the children on an end of term outing. Please come into the Hall after the service and show our support for these young families in our Church community. Have your Coffee and buy goodies at the Stall.

**ST STEPHEN'S TODDLER GROUP**

**FUNDRAISER  
COFFEE MORNING**

**SUNDAY 4TH JUNE  
AFTER THE CHURCH  
SERVICE**

**HOME BAKING  
STALL**

**PLEASE GIVE THEM YOUR SUPPORT**

**AFTERNOON TEA FOR CAMERON HOUSE** The joint Pastoral Care Teams of Crown Church and Old High St Stephen's are organising an Afternoon Tea in the Upper Hall at Crown Church on **Saturday 26 August**. This is a fund-raising event to help swell the funds for a new mini-bus at Cameron House, the specialist Care Home for dementia sufferers run by the Church of Scotland, here in Inverness. A mini-bus is so useful for transporting the residents on outings and to social events, like Sounds Familiar and other activities geared to their needs. It provides essential suitable transport and getting out and about in the community is so beneficial to us all. The Tea will be served from 1-3pm and will consist of sausage rolls, sandwiches, scones, pancakes and of course home-baked cakes! In fact you could say that it is more of a Lunch than an Afternoon Tea. There will also be a home baking stall and a craft stall selling gifts and other small craft goods. This is an early notice for crafters to consider making goods over the Summer months ready for us to sell! Further information to follow but Save the Date - Saturday 26 August. Further information from Val Cantlay at OHSS and Brian McGill at Crown Church.

## NEWS FROM THE CONGREGATION

**CONGREGATIONAL VOTE ON PROPOSED UNION WITH CROWN CHURCH** The congregational vote on the proposed union with Crown Church was held on Sunday 14 May. The result was as follows:

Voting for the Proposed Union

For the Union	28
Against the Union	44
Spoiled Papers	<u>2</u>
	<u>74</u>

Voting to accept Rev Douglas Robertson as the Minister of the Union

Agree	31
Against	38
No vote/spoiled	<u>5</u>
	<u>74</u>

Voting at Crown Church was:

For the Union	80
Against	<u>11</u>
	<u>91</u>

The result of the vote was sent to all members on e-mail.

Members of the congregation were able to submit questions (18) prior to the meeting and the Interim Moderator had provided answers to them on the day. Concern was expressed that proxy/postal votes were not permitted. This is the law of the church that only those in person can vote. It would take an act of Assembly to change. Interestingly, St Andrews Church Bo'ness

petitioned the General Assembly this year to have electronic voting. The Legal Questions Committee will now consider this petition but it would still refer to members on the roll and able to access the meeting electronically (Zoom or other).

As a result of this it is likely that OHSS will go into a Deferred Union to take effect when the Minister at the Crown Church retires or demits. The Presbytery Mission Implementation Team meets on Wednesday 7 June and they will advise us of the way forward after that date.

The Kirk Session met on Tuesday 16 May and were sorry to learn that the Interim Moderator, Rev Duncan MacPherson stepped down at the end of the meeting. He was unable to continue due to the term of Interim Moderator likely to be for a considerable time. He was thanked on behalf of the congregation for his help and support over the last 2 months. The Presbytery, who meet in June will advise of a new Interim Moderator in due course. In the meantime, the Kirk Session are unable to meet until this appointment is made. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk

#### **BAPTISMS**

26 March Emily Olivia Horsburgh, Woodside Gardens

#### **FUNERALS**

##### **March**

27th Mrs Georgina Smith (Georgie), Royal Ness Court

29th Mr Donald James (Don) Campbell, Lochardil Road

##### **April**

28th Mrs Elizabeth Matheson, 140 Culduthel Road

##### **May**

17th Mrs Diana Fraser, previously Clachnaharry

**COMMUNION SERVICE** The morning service on Sunday 25 June will include Holy Communion, led by Rev James Bissett.

**GIFT AID** One of the many contributions that our dear friend, Cliff Sim, made to the church was organising Gift Aid. Since his passing, I have taken on this responsibility. It makes an enormous difference to our funds as 25% can be claimed on your giving. Many in the congregation give regularly either by standing order or weekly freewill envelopes and have been able to sign gift aid declarations. Unfortunately the company that provides the freewill envelopes has gone out of business. We are looking at an alternative source or using spare envelopes left over from last year. Going ahead, may I encourage you to switch to standing order if you have not done so already. Importantly, we are also able to claim Gift Aid at 25% on Open Plate donations. May I take this opportunity to thank you for your generous giving and if you would like further information or to review your giving, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07751 324116 or [sandiecraig@yahoo.com](mailto:sandiecraig@yahoo.com) Sandie Craig

**PRESENTATION TO OUR INTERIM MODERATOR** We were delighted to welcome back our former Interim Moderator Rev Scott Polworth (Inverness Kinmylies) and his family on Sunday 30 April. This is most of what I shared with the congregation on the day.

During the last three years any Minister or Interim Moderator has had the most difficult of times with Covid, Zoom and Microsoft Teams Meetings, Risk Assessments, on-line services, keeping in contact with members remotely, closing a building and then comes a Presbytery Plan with all projects and vacancies sisted until the Plan is approved. The Plan was approved last year but implementation is much more difficult as you know. In March 2022 the Presbytery arranged the closure service at the Old High and during that service you preached the last sermon, bringing to an end hundreds of years of worship on that site. When we were clearing out the Old High we found four half pews which we donated to the Mens' Shed. A few weeks ago I contacted them to ask if they had used all the pew wood and if not would they be able to make something we could present to you. I was asked to visit them one Tuesday (which is wood-working day) and met with five retired gentlemen with much more artistic ideas than I had. During the meeting they realised a colleague was setting up a wood-turning lathe that very day so he joined the meeting as well. The end result is this bowl which is suitably engraved on the bottom as well. This was the first item they made with their lathe and they were really pleased to be asked to make something with such a historic connection to the Church. I also presented a cheque from our congregation. Flowers from the morning service were given to Scott's wife Sharon.



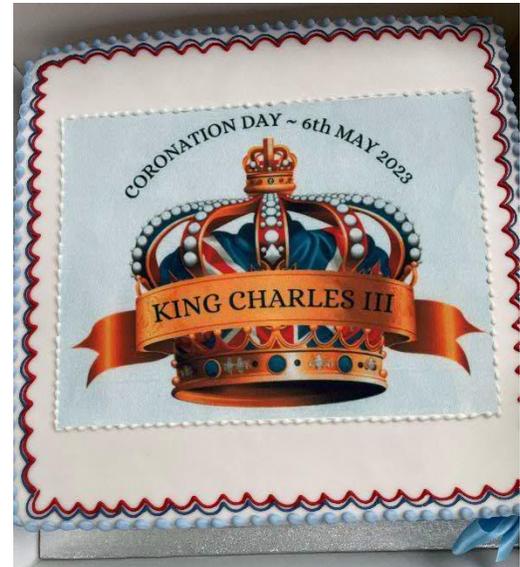
Scott, thank you for the support you gave to our Kirk Session and congregation, we really appreciate it and will

miss having you chairing our meetings always with good humour. Rarely did a meeting go past 9pm and that is an indication of your ability to get through meetings with long agendas. Our loss is certainly the Presbytery's gain and we wish you well as Convener of the Property Committee which I know will keep you even busier. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk.

**CORONATION SUPPER AT ST STEPHEN'S OHSS** joined in the celebrations for the Coronation of King Charles III by holding a Coronation Supper on the evening of the coronation. Fifty people from the congregation came along to the hall to enjoy a cold buffet, provided by the local Am Bothan Café, and a celebratory toast. This was followed by cake and coffee. Caroline MacPherson entertained the company with songs, both solo and community, with accompaniment from Alyn Ross. Pam McCulloch also hosted some games and made sure everyone enjoyed the fun. Well done to the Events Team for the organisation and work.



*Alyn Ross on the Piano*



*MC Pam MacCulloch*



*Caroline Macpherson*

**CORONATIONS AND CHURCH** Whilst sorting through Old High Choir music recently, I came across a Life and Work and OH Supplement from July 1953, when the Senior Minister was Rev Donald MacLeod, the Colleague and Successor was Rev MacLauchlan and the Organist Sandy Halley. The editorial in Life and Work by Jack Stevenson, my father, was inspired by the National Service in St Giles: "the young, newly-crowned Queen requesting that this should be a service for Scotland's sake, as she requested that each one of us would pray for her on her day of coronation". The article cites words from the National Covenant of 1638 - "without God's grace, no word or work of ours is of any avail". It continues: "this is a moment for the Churches to remember that judgement must begin in the house of God. And what might judgement mean for us today if the first preaching of Jesus to His own people from the prophet Isaiah were repeated to us in our situation? Good news from God for the poor, good news for the sufferers from diseases which a hard-hearted society breeds, liberty for all people bowed down by circumstances....."

We may not hear the word 'judgement' used so often nowadays, but the message is surely the same in 2023. The congregation in St Giles was made up of all sections of Scottish society of that day: "there are those here who have no place in pageantry; and the sight of them rightly spoils the pageantry, if that is all it is desired to be". Might the Coronation this month have been 'enhanced' by a little less splendour? The Honours of Scotland were carried into St Giles in 1953: "the Cross surmounting the Crown, a powerful symbol for the day - 'lift high the Cross of Christ' ". A Bible was presented by Rt Rev. James Pitt-Watson, the then Moderator, to the Queen, using the same words as in Westminster Abbey this month: "Here is wisdom; this is the royal law; these are the lively oracles of God".

Alongside that article in the 1953 edition, is a report of findings regarding the distribution of global wealth. "The 19 richest countries in the world have only 16% of the world's population yet enjoy 67% of the world's income. The 15 poorest countries have over 50% of the world's population yet they have to make do with 9% of the world's income". Contrast that with figures from 2023 when 1.2% of the global population (62 million people, equivalent to 1 major country) now holds 47.8% of global wealth whilst 53.3% of the world population holds only 1.1%. How can we avoid the word 'judgement' for not speaking out more effectively against such a massive, further growth of injustice during the 70 years between these Coronations? Andrew Stevenson.

### CHRISTIAN AID WEEK



**Coffee Morning and Plant Sale**  
WOW!! What a great success the Coffee Morning

and Plant Sale were. The morning of 13 May dawned bright and it was pleasantly warm, allowing the plant stall to take pride of place on the grass, thus being a great attraction, helping to bring people in. There was a very happy atmosphere in the hall and the coffee/tea, scones and pancakes were served brilliantly and consumed with relish. The cake stall was laden and did good business. The sums raised were : Door £424; Gordon Harvey Painting £100; Lucky Squares £101; Plants £466.20; Cakes £260.55 making a super total of £1,351.75. So, so many thanks are due to all who contributed and worked to make this the success it was - a real combined effort, including some Crown people helping to serve and many Crown people attending.



*Plant Stall at CA Coffee Morning*



*Coffee and Home Bakes were popular!*

### SWEATY CHURCH 20 MAY - PRESSURE AND FEAR

When David beat Goliath he would have felt some Pressure and Fear, but he was prepared and he asked God for help. This was the theme of our recent Sweaty church. The children built Jenga towers, threw javelins and played human buzz wire. There were 20 children and 8 adults with a lovely buzz around the church. The pizza and snacks were washed down with a lot of juice. We hope to hold the next one in September. Many thanks to all who helped out. Deborah MacRae

