

The Link

July 2021

The Church of Scotland
Parishes of Ardoch and Blackford



Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139
Blackford Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC005594
ardochparishchurch.org | blackfordparishchurch.org
facebook.com/blackfordparishchurch

Office Bearers in the Parishes of Ardoch & Blackford

Minister: Revd. Mairi Perkins

Ardoch Manse, Feddal Road, Braco FK15 9RE

Tel: 01786 880948

e-mail: mperkins@churchofscotland.org.uk

Ardoch

Session Clerk:

Mr Charles Robertson

01786 880947

cr.ardochsession@gmail.com

Blackford

Session Clerks:

Mr Gordon Roy

01764 682356 &

Mr Sandy Marshall

01764 682354

sessionclerk@blackford.org.uk

Depute Session Clerk:

Mr Bob Aitken

Tel: 01786 880310

Church Officer & Property:

Mrs Shona Stewart

Tel: 01764 682221

Treasurer:

Mr Stuart Brannen

Tel: 01786 880394

Treasurer:

Mrs Mo Shedden

treasurer@blackford.org.uk

Organist/Choirmaster:

Mr John Duncan

01786 880877

Organist:

Mr John Duncan

01786 880877

Sunday School Leader:

Mrs Ann Gordon

Tel: 01786 880590

Sunday School Leader:

Mrs Shona Stewart

Tel: 01764 682221

Safeguarding:

Mrs Joyce Wighton

Tel: 01786 880606

Safeguarding:

Mrs Jeannette Barr

Tel: 01764 682825

Content for the October 2021 edition of *The Link* should be submitted to gordon.roy@outlook.com by the 2nd of October for that issue to come out in mid-October and see us into early January.

From the Manse

Hello! I want to take this opportunity to thank our Session Clerks and elders from both Ardoch and Blackford churches for the tremendous effort in keeping God's word alive, visible and heard over these many months in our churches, community and people's everyday lives.



We see our church blossoming once again with the sound of singing on a Sunday morning and the return of faces and friends we have perhaps not seen for many a month. We have experienced God in new ways, new songs, new places and often in the unexpected.

The church grounds this summer will be filled with the shouting and laughter of our youngsters as they enjoy our planned holiday clubs. Once again, they will learn how God can be part of their lives.

Summer is a wonderful time of year and, as we embark on this season of picnics, family gatherings and rest, I pray that God will bless each and every one of us with a summer of fun and joy. May we take time this season to spend more time in prayer, in contemplation and in listening to God showing us how to do His work, being more committed to serve God's people, and more in love with our God who created and loves us.

God Bless Rev Mairi

Blackford Parish Church was, more than ever before, at the heart of Blackford Gala Week in June. As well as the Queens attending to deliver our Bible readings, they brought the attendants and we had a physically distanced crowning as part of the service.

We hosted teas and coffees in the grounds while the Blackford Fiddle Group played. Our scarecrow was one of the first in the village but then we did have the bale of straw in the grounds too.

Sandy rewrote the words of "Walk 500 miles" to give us "The Gala makes 500 Smiles" with Mairi and others starring in the video directed by Gordon and hosted on the church YouTube channel.



Ardoch Kirk Session

Since the building re-opened on the 25th April, people are slowly returning to "in person" worship. We acknowledge that people have different levels of functionality and different capacities. We understand that it is still too early for some to take the big step to return to in person worship. However, with the installation of the audio-visual system we are now able to both record and livestream our church services of worship to our congregation and also share this facility with our friends in the Blackford congregation. For those with no internet connection, hand copies of the service are delivered round the village and posted to the outlying farms.

Christine Souter, our website manager, keeps the website updated weekly; please access the website regularly to be informed of what is happening within our Church community.

Hopefully by the autumn we will return to a more normal pattern of Sunday Services. The online worship has been a lifeline during the pandemic but face to face contact is paramount. "Yes, Church on the sofa is nice.... but it will never be the same as Church in God's House."

Charles Robertson, Session Clerk

Blackford Kirk Session and Moving Forward

Our May and June meetings have allowed us to digest some of the bigger issues affecting all Church of Scotland congregations as well as the detail and that impacts our lives as disciples, leaders and members of our local congregation.

We are continuing to make progress with our "Root 66" project to create a biblical theme garden in our church grounds. The layout has been marked out by members of the Hot Chocolate Club and we will soon be laying the 66 stepping stones to make the pathway. After this is completed, we will then move on to looking at plants and shrubs and other features to transform this area. If anyone would like to be involved in this exciting and on-going garden project, please speak to Sandy Marshall (682354).



We are very pleased to report that we have been successful in obtaining some grant funding from the Allchurches Trust to help towards the costs of urgently needed roof repairs. Our church is very grateful to this trust for this award of £1,500 and we extend our sincere thanks to them for their financial support in helping us continue to maintain the church building.

Gordon Roy & Sandy Marshall, Joint Session Clerks

Blackford Ways and Means

We are now into the second half of this year and we continue to be hopeful that some "Ways and Means" activities may be able to restart again soon, depending on COVID guidelines and restrictions.

One date for your diary is Saturday 4th September when we will support the Blackford Flower Show by hosting afternoon teas in our church grounds with donations to church funds.

Although October is still a long way off, we are hoping to be able to hold our annual "Music Fest" in some form again this year with provisional dates being proposed around the weekend of 23rd/24th October. When the time is right we'll look forward to enjoying our social activities once again.

Sandy Marshall & Laura Peacock

The Breath Prayer by Sheridan Voysey

This was shared by Charles Robertson in one of his *Thought for the Week* emails that are now reaching ninety-four contacts. People are clearly finding this an uplifting start to their week.

Lord God, fill us with your Holy Spirit.

We receive your loveand release our insecurity

We receive your joyand release our unhappiness

We receive your peaceand release our anxiety

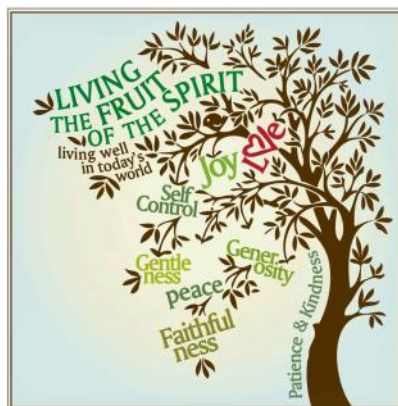
We receive your patienceand release our impulsiveness

We receive your kindnessand release our indifference

We receive your faithfulnessand release our disloyalty.

Essentially, we breathe in slowly as we receive and breathe out as we release. Taking that time to slow down is not just a breathing exercise but encourages us to focus on God who wants to fill us afresh each day making us more like him as we take on the character—the fruit—of the Holy Spirit.

The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
(Galatians 5:22-23)



Sunday Services

If you are still in the habit of not attending worship in person, we are very keen to see you join us—hence not closing one of our buildings each month to have joint services this summer. Both congregations will adjust as guidelines on physical distancing, face coverings, refreshments and other contact points change.

In the meantime we are indebted to the Ardoch IT team which enable both websites to host a live stream of the service each week and also putting a recording of the service on the website. The team has also been in attendance for another funeral and a wedding. The quality of the audio and visual output has been much appreciated by all attending. Now that we can sing, albeit behind face-coverings, we are trying a combination of singing hymns accompanied by John at the organ or keyboard and singing with recordings on the screen.



We have received an estimate for the work involved in changing the video input to the Hall from the Church to make use of the central camera instead of the side camera. This will give much better flexibility in the views that can be sent through. The Kirk Session has approved this work to be done. Currently we are not transmitting to the Hall, but this would add to the experience for those in the Hall attending a service.

The team of volunteers has now increased to five and we hope to have a rota made up soon. However, it would still ease the burden if we could have more helpers. We would also need more volunteers as our team is to combine with the Communications team with a much broader remit.

Ardoch IT Team

Flower Rota	Ardoch	Blackford
18 July	M Hay	Jeannette Barr
25 July	G Scott	Ella McEwan
1 Aug	M Hay	Shona Stewart
8 Aug	L Dawson	Karen Shaw
15 Aug	J Kemp	Holiday Club
22 Aug	A Spiers	Rita Marshall
29 Aug	C Souter	Helen Laing
5 Sept	M Ferguson	Laura Peacock
12 Sept	F Lyle	Jessie Wilson
19 Sept	D Scott	Jane Roy
26 Sept		Karen Shaw
3 Oct	J Dawson	Robert Miller
10 Oct		Stuart Laing

If you don't have any other pattern of regular Bible reading then the Lectionary gives a breadth of reading over each week to experience the richness, variety and authority of the Word of God. We don't use them all on any Sunday but time spent reading our Bibles at home is never time wasted.



Date	Readers Ardoch/ Blackford	Lectionary readings for that week
18 July	Dorothy Johnson David Macdonald	2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 89:20-37 Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-56
25 July	Bob Aitken John Graham	2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14 Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21
1 Aug	Liz Paterson William Hensley	2 Samuel 11:26-12:13; Psalm 51:1-12 Ephesians 4:1-16; John 6:24-35
8 Aug	John Souter Sandy Marshall	2 Samuel 18; Psalm 130 Ephesians 4:25-5:2; John 6:35, 41-51
15 Aug	Eleanor Thomas Holiday Club	1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14; Psalm 111 Ephesians 5:15-20; John 6:51-58
22 Aug	Peter Scott Richard Bolton	1 Kings 8; Psalm 84 Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:56-69
29 Aug	Irene Robertson David Macdonald	Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Psalm 45:1-9 James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-23
5 Sept	Pat Duncan Shona Stewart	Proverbs 22;; Psalm 125 James 2:1-17; Mark 7:24-37
12 Sept	Lyndsey Thomas Jeannette Barr	Proverbs 1:20-33; Psalm 19 James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38
19 Sept	Phyllis MacLeod Moira Hanslip	Proverbs 31:10-31; Psalm 1 James 3:13 - 4:3, 7-8a; Mark 9:30-37
26 Sept	Michael Boxer John Graham	Esther 7; 9:20-22; Psalm 124 James 5:13-20; Mark 9:38-50
3 Oct	Charles Robertson Gordon Roy	Job 1:1, 2:1-10; Psalm 26 Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16
10 Oct	Dorothy Johnston Jane Roy	Job 23:1-9, 16-17; Psalm 22:1-15 Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

Should you be unable to find a replacement please contact John Graham (Blackford) on (01764) 218734 or jag_annfield@hotmail.com or Christine Souter (Ardoch) on csouterbraco@aol.com or 07767 380011.

Christian Aid Week 2021

We delivered the new style envelopes across the village this year inviting them to be returned rather than intimating that we would visit again to collect. This door to door collection together with Hot Chocolate's Big Brekkie raised £760 for this year's appeal. It would be difficult to separate the two sources of donations but we are encouraged to use the same models again next year.



The Big Brekkie was "take away only" this year and coincided with the village *Safari Sale* of art work, crafts, jumble and baking. Our bacon rolls and hot drinks were popular with shoppers and stallholders alike served by the team of Hot Chocolate volunteers.

Ardoch Pastoral Care (Outreach Team)

Pastoral Care is perhaps the one thing that people most associate with the church. Expressing care and concern for one another, especially in practical ways, has been part of the Christian faith since it first began. Our team support Rev Mairi, our minister, to provide a good level of Pastoral Care within the Parish. After many months of restrictions, we are now able to do Pastoral visits to members of the congregation in their homes. Face to face contact makes such a difference to the quality of any Pastoral work. As always good communication is essential with our remit in the community, so we deal with situations as they arise. Flowers and a lovely card "specially made by Barbara" have been delivered to people affected by bereavement, illness or recovering from surgery.

The team is very hopeful that it will be possible to restart the community lunches in October. The team see this as a very important missional event in our community. May God bring peace in your past, purpose in your present, and hope in your future.

Team contacts are: Charles 880947, Barbara 880509, Lillian 880483, Heather 880556, Anne 880347



Ardoch Church Wildlife Project

This project has got off to a good start with the construction of bug hotels, bird nesting boxes, bird feeders, a squirrel feeder and a hedgehog hibernation pit. There are three red squirrels visiting the feeder every day; it is lovely to see them. There are many different species of birds using the feeders.

Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal

Ardoch News from Pat & Ann

We have agreed to help out this year with the shoe box appeal, as we have done for many years. Braco ladies have been doing some incredible knitting which has been taken to Crieff and made up into shoe boxes and sent to head office in Glasgow to await shipment later in the year. The knitting appeal is ongoing and very much appreciated.



In November, when the shoe boxes are normally donated, leaflets will be available but shoe boxes will not be provided. If you can provide an empty one, an arrangement can be made for collecting it. If you care to fill one yourself, the collection date and place will be announced nearer the time. We are also happy to accept donations which can be made up into boxes, i.e. Toothbrush and toothpaste, hat, socks, scarf, shampoo (200ml or less). This enables people to give as much or as little as they would like. We look forward to your continued support.



Blackford News from Shona Stewart

Hopefully the Shoe box appeal will go ahead this year and we will be allowed to fill some shoe boxes. There will be donation boxes situated just inside the door as you enter the church. Donations of toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, socks, etc can be left and will be used to fill the shoe boxes to donate to children and adults. There will also be a box outside the main door for donations if you cannot make it to the service on a Sunday.

The ladies who knit have been very busy with their knitting needles making snoods, jumpers, hats, gloves and scarfs. If you would like to knit for us please get in touch. Knitting needles and wool can be supplied as required.

Many thanks to all those who donate to this appeal.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the project, providing fat balls, bird seed and squirrel nuts. The winter & spring plantings in the church grounds have been removed and restocked with summer plants and the introduction of rudbeckia plants which attract a variety of pollinating insects.



Ardoch Church of Scotland Guild
Whose we are, and Whom we serve
Looking forward in faith.



As I have pondered long and hard on what to write for this Link, Crossroads/Crossreach, kept going through my head.

Still lacking inspiration, and motivation, I promise I will phone all our members again before we start the new session.

We are all desperate to "get back to normal." Let us hope we can all contribute to making a better, fairer normal. Many people have benefitted from the lack of chaotic rushing around, taking stock of what is important in life. Let us seek out, find and help those who have been adversely affected, please.

The Guild Diary

June

Unusually, we had a June Zoom meeting where several members met for coffee and shared a DVD of the past 3 years projects.

July

We are having a break, some people ARE taking holidays.

Thursday 5th August

We are having a 2pm catch up with a speaker from Marys Meals. We are planning for this to be face-to-face in the church building, but if necessary we will move to Zoom.

Thursday 2nd September

All being well, we will welcome Kirsty Duncan in the flesh at 2pm in the church, to deliver personally and professionally her *Songs of Hope* programme specifically for Ardoch Church Guild. A great start to our new session.

Finally, a few of the other words and phrases that have been running through my head as we look back, forward and around as members of The Guild:

Do not settle for Normal. Dream bigger.

Trust your deepest feelings for guidance.

Limit distractions and strive to create balance in the midst of chaos.

Failure is the best reason to start afresh.

Heather McDonald

Summer Church Holiday Clubs

Ardoch, 10:00 to 12:00, 19th to 23rd July



What a wonderful world we live in- we see a glimpse of God's character and majesty as we look at the world he created. So with the children we will explore five bible stories and using the out of doors we will be exploring who Jesus is and the difference he can make to us.

Jungle Adventure will take us on a journey of discovering Jesus through the eyes of his disciples, who were called by him and experienced first hand Jesus' care, provision, and deep friendship.

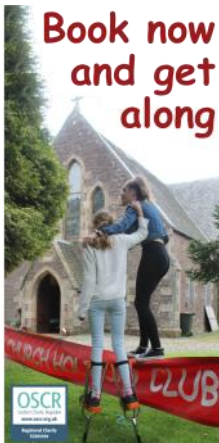


We plan to do as much as possible OUT OF DOORS, like we were with the Hot Chocolate Group (right) a few weeks ago, so you may see us in SUNHATS or WELLIES!

Bookings have been coming in by email to ardochyouth@gmail.com

Blackford, 10:00 to 12:15, 9th to 13th August

We're winding the clock back to 2012 when we used the On Your Marks material ahead of the London Olympics. This year we'll start as the Tokyo Games close.



**Book now
and get
along**

The material is based on significant events from the life of Jesus found in Mark's Gospel. It features the calling of the disciples, the parable of the sower, two miracles and the transfiguration. We'll be spaced out in the sanctuary this year and making more use of the grounds plus the family events still to drop in there.

Registration for those who were at primary school session and for secondary helpers is online using a JotForm link that can be found on our website:

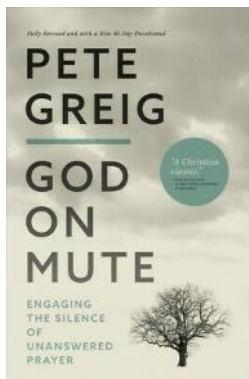
blackfordparishchurch.org/holidayclub

We want to share with all our readers, this advice that was shared in the Bible Study group last month. It opens up the subject of personal prayer with a few simple pointers and words of encouragement.



With regard to the subject of 'prayer', I haven't met a Christian who is satisfied with their prayer life, but I can share with you one or two things which have helped me ...

- 1) I think that our attitude to prayer should be to focus on the privilege aspect of it, rather than the duty aspect. If I understood how much God longs to hear my prayers I think it would change my attitude to praying!
- 2) There are sound Biblical grounds for formal prayer times (e.g. Paul saying 'At my prayers'), and for more spontaneous prayers. I find driving in the car (don't close your eyes!) I can speak to the Lord quite freely, but that's different from closing the door and getting on your knees. I think there must be some kind of routine, but I am very wary of telling someone what routine will suit their lives.
- 3) I never worry about how long I spend in prayer – that is definitely going to bring me into bondage and feelings of guilt!
- 4) The 'shopping list' approach is deadening, but difficult to avoid at times. I think if we find ourselves drawn to pray for certain people or things at certain times that would be the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Prayer-lists have their place, but can lead to ticking names.
- 5) I found it helpful sometimes to pray my reading – in other words, read my Bible, maybe just a short passage and pray very specifically about what I've read. It makes me focus more on the Scriptures, and it also reminds me that prayer is a two-way conversation. It is always helpful to blend reading and prayer.



We'd recommend Pete Greig's book, *God on Mute*, which is the basis of the *Unanswered Prayer* Course we were following recently.

Alongside that, *Pray Big* by Alistair Begg takes Paul's prayers in his letter to Ephesian Christians and very helpfully focusses more on the God we address, rather than on our list of wants.

