

THE MAGAZINE OF TROON OLD PARISH CHURCH

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Five hundred, twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes.
How do you measure a year?

Twenty years ago I went on a mission trip to Washington D.C. working with the homeless. Near the height of the Aids epidemic many folk were scared about working with the homeless. Globally an estimated 25 million people were living with HIV. Doctors reported up to 16,000 new infections daily. The homeless were a particularly vulnerable population. It was, however, a week filled with joy and not fear. We learned much, and were given abundant amounts of love and grace from those we sought to serve.



One young woman had a crush on Roger, the lead actor in the latest Broadway hit. The other participants on the trip would cry out, “Oh Roger, you’re dreamy” every time we passed on the playbills plastered around the city. Once back home the teen gave me a copy of the sound track. After playing it for the first time I was sold on ‘RENT the Musical’.

Twenty years ago RENT premiered in New York. It is a post-modern retelling of La Boheme. Despite its famous source material the critics panned the plot, the music and anything else they could find. Yet it humanised the lives of Americans living with HIV. By daring to talk about HIV at the height of the Aids epidemic RENT connected with audiences on a deep level. Soon it was a sold out hit and is still among the longest running shows on Broadway. In its first year RENT won multiple Tony Awards and earned a Pulitzer prize for drama. Even today its songs remain poignant while surrounded by the sepia tones of Broadway sentimentality. The final number is crafted simply as a series of questions:

.. Five hundred, twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes?

How do you measure, measure a year? In daylights; in sunsets; in midnight's; in cups of coffee; in inches; in miles; in laughter; in strife? How do you measure a life?

Twenty years later the United Nations HIV task force announced that great progress has been made to halt and reverse HIV infection. Death rates have fallen by over 30%. Over 16 million people are receiving life saving and life changing treatments. There is still much work to be done and UNAIDS has the goal of a 90% suppression rate of the virus by 2020.

Twenty years later that star struck young woman is now a minister in Washington D.C. Recently she reminded me of that summer. Now the earworm of RENT's final number is in my head again. As I hum along I am asking how do I measure my life, my faith, my discipleship? The song continues:

.. In truths that she learned; or times that he cried; in bridges he burned...in five hundred, twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes how do you measure a year in the life? How about love? Seasons of Love...Measure your life in Love.

Measure your life in Love! Is that not a good place to begin? I don't mean the romantic love of Broadway but the self emptying love of God. As children of God ours is a Christ shaped love. After twenty, forty, sixty years that is the answer we should hear. Measure your life in God's love. If we measure our lives by God's love, we cannot fall short.

Men and women of good faith and goodwill stepped out in love to reverse the devastation of HIV. Twenty years after the first effective HIV drugs appeared, Love is winning. There is still a long way to go but Love is winning!

Whatever your season of life, may you not seek any measurement save God's Love and your infinite worth. Such Love is always the measure.

Grace and Peace,

Dave

Editor's Note

'RENT the Musical' is returning to the West End, St. James Theatre, with an all star cast this Christmas from 8th December until 28th January to celebrate its twentieth anniversary.

Tribute to Laura Margaret MacDonald

It is with sadness I write that Laura MacDonald, member of the family of Troon Old and an elder of Troon Old Parish Church, recently passed away. The following has been kindly made available by her sons, Kenneth and Robin. Laura will be missed by us all at Troon Old and beyond. There is a space in our family now which leaves a sadness but smiles and happy thoughts arrive quickly and fill our being when we think of Laura. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends by whom she was so well thought of and much loved.

The Lord Bless You and Keep You.

Andy Fell Session Clerk

Laura was Troon through and through. She was baptised, married and now remembered in this church. She was born on the 8th of March, 1934 in Titchfield Road, Troon and died on the 4th of February in Bentinck Drive, Troon. This is a distance of 1.5 miles but over the 29,919 days in between she had quite a life. Laura was the elder daughter of John and Margaret Dodds. She started at Marr College thirteen years after it opened and I could still see pictures of her adorning the walls when I was there thirty-five years later. Laura did very well at school and was accepted by the University of Glasgow to read medicine. This was a particular achievement because at the time there were very few females in the field. She graduated as a surgeon in 1959 and began working in Glasgow. In 1960 she married Bruce MacDonald, had two sons (1963 and 1965) and returned to Troon in 1967 to raise her family. She became a part-time general practitioner in Kilmarnock when such positions barely existed, she was a dental anaesthetist, she ran family planning clinics throughout Ayrshire and she was a nursing home inspector, all this while looking after a family comprising a very old-school husband and two increasingly obstreperous boys. It was not, however, all work and home. She had time to develop and pursue a number of special interests including travel to far flung places. When Bruce passed in 1998 she took her grief with her on a six week trip to the Caribbean and Central America on a banana boat. On her return she had a sea gait and a rather worrying love of rum and sea shanties. Probably her greatest interest was the company and love of life long friends. She had the good fortune to belong to a unique circle of women (known at home as the 'Merry Widows') who travelled the world together and formed tight bonds of love, support and friendship. These ladies were about consistency, adventure, loyalty, mutual support and stability, all characteristics which were typically Laura. Her other interests included golf, bridge and curling. She was a church elder as her father had been, she was Chairwoman of Ayrshire Cancer Support, she loved drawing, painting, cooking and fine wine. She also had a bunch of more unusual interests and pleasures which included large Cuban cigars, bossa nova music, German brandy and fast cars. She was optimistic and supportive to children, to patients, to friends. Her ethos was 'there is nothing you cannot do'. She was artistic and although a doctor, more

the right-brain creative sort, both producing art as well as appreciating it in others. She was Christian, seeking the best in others and turning the other cheek even when it hurt. She was loyal even when people disappointed her. She was also mildly anti-authoritarian and had a lovely subversive streak. When she was barred from entering the Registrars' Lounge at a Glasgow hospital because it was men only, she simply stood outside for a week drinking her coffee until they changed the rules. I had the great fortune to be with her on her last Sunday. We talked about the past, then Troon gossip (those twinkly eyes!), and eventually about the future. I laid out the options as I saw them but before I could continue with my list, Laura asked "where is the 'none of the above' option"? This was classic Laura. Why be constrained by the linear thinking of others when you could get lateral and be creative and obstinate at the same time? Finally she says "I'll think about it". In Laura speak that could mean any of three different things:

1. Hell, no
2. I know something you do not know
3. I do not like your options so I'll work out some of my own

I left Troon on Sunday night not knowing which "I'll think about it" I had actually heard. Although I know that Laura will be missed terribly, and her sudden passing has been a great shock, we also have to acknowledge that she had a brim full life which she lived well and on her own terms, and a graceful exit. Who could ask for more?

Robin MacDonald

Church Railings and Gates

What a difference to the outside of our church! It has been quite transformed. Grateful thanks from the Session and congregation must go to those who so patiently repaired, rubbed down and painted all the railings and gates around the church. Not an easy job, but one which has SO improved its appearance, especially when so many visitors were in town at the time of the Open.

Many, many thanks to Neil who organised the project and to all who took part in the renovations. We hope that, as was expected, it was "good fun" despite the anticipated good weather in April and May not happening!

Many thanks for enhancing our beautiful church.

Communications and Publicity Committee



Fundraising Report

Earlier this year Elizabeth McAughtrie and I took on the role of joint convenors for the Fundraising Committee. With the support of the extremely hardworking, dedicated team members of the committee, we hope to continue to provide you with a varied selection of entertaining fundraising events.

Fundraising activities that took place over the summer were as follows:

- 28th May our Table Top sale raised £620 for our funds;
- 25th June the sun shone for our Summer Fayre, which raised £1,075;
- 2nd July the church was filled with classical music with a WW1 theme from American friends of our minister, Lelia & David Sadlier. Donations raised at this event totalled £180, which was split between Poppy Scotland and the Steeple Restoration Fund;
- 15th September Ladies Night; many of the female members of the congregation and their friends enjoyed an evening of browsing various stalls for fashion, handbags, local crafts and beauty products and for some a little pampering by the hair and beauty consultants. A few glasses of wine, nibbles and good conversation only added to the great evening. The final total raised was £650.50.

This year's **Summer Fundraising Challenge** "Buy a Brick" campaign to help restore the clock tower raised a whopping £4,130.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank all those who support us in these events.

Future Events

As I write, the annual Ceilidh approaches on the 24th September, tickets are selling well and funds raised will be reported in the future.

Our organist, Andrew McConnell, has kindly agreed to provide us with an 'afternoon of music' in the church on Saturday 15th October @2.30pm, tickets are on sale for £3. Come along and enjoy a coffee and a chat afterwards in the church hall.

The next Table Top sale is planned for Saturday 29th October. If you wish to sell your wares, reserve a table for £10, contact Anne McCulloch (312658) or Catriona O'Dwyer (220327).

Christmas Card Delivery Service

As in previous years Troon Old will be organising a Christmas Card Delivery Service to addresses in Troon, Barassie and Loans.

Cut out & keep this section

Cards can be handed in:

- Before or after the service on Sundays 27th November and 4th December (not 11th)
- Weekday mornings, weeks commencing 28th November and 5th December (Mon-Fri 10a.m. to 12 noon)
- Saturday cafes on 3rd and 10th December
- Outwith these times cards can be handed in to Charles Duncan Butchers (correct money should be enclosed)
- Any housebound member can contact the church office on 313520 and we will arrange to pick up their cards

The cost per card will be 30p.

Help Required

We desperately need volunteers to work alongside us to sort and deliver cards. If you can spare some time (work will not be undertaken during worship time) please contact Lynn Ferguson 316320, Anne McCulloch 312658 or Joy Allan 315643, all can usually be found in the Main Hall after Sunday Service.

Lynn Ferguson

Money Puzzle

When are two £10 notes worth more money than a £20 note?

The answer is when they go in the church open plate.

The tax collector allows Gift Aid claims on open plate donations less than £20. So the two £10 pound notes gain another £5 for the church but the £20 note gains nothing. Better still would be if the open plate contributors who are taxpayers committed to the weekly offering envelopes. A £20 note gets its £5 added by that method.

If you would like to join speak to Tom Bonnes (01563 851 964)

Woman's Guild

I hope everyone has had a good summer despite the weather!!

Our 2016 / 2017 session resumes on 11th October with our Dedication Service conducted by Rev. David Prentice – Hyers. We look forward to seeing all our members attend and hopefully welcome some new ladies.

On 8th November 2016 we are going to the Gaiety Theatre to see “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels” and prior to the show we will meet for a meal at the Gaiety Restaurant.



Guild Committee 2016

At our meeting on 6th December 2016 we are having a baking demonstration by Janet Cousar which I am sure we will all enjoy.

On 10th January 2017 we are having Jimmy Young from “First Response” who will give us an insight into the terrific work that they carry out 24/7.

At our meeting on 7th February, we look forward to Nigel and Linda Rayner telling us about their visit to the Holy Land supported by visual aids.

On 7th March we have our Beetle Drive which is always popular with members and friends.

Finally, we have two more dates for your diary, 19th November 2016, our Christmas Fair coffee morning and 11th March 2017 our Spring Fair. We look forward to welcoming you all at these events. We would like to thank everyone who supported our coffee morning on 3rd September and for all the donations of baking received.

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to our forthcoming session.

Margaret Parkinson

Guild Secretary

The Church of Scotland's Best Kept Secret

CrossReach was launched in June 2005 and was previously known as the Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility. Under its new name, CrossReach continues the Church of Scotland's long tradition of providing care and support. In fact, this work started back in 1869, so the church has a long history in the field of social care.

CrossReach employs more than 2,000 staff, supports some of the most vulnerable people in Scotland, and has an annual expenditure of £51 million. Most of the funding comes from local authorities, but it is reliant on donations and legacies to help continue their vital work.

CrossReach (the Church of Scotland Social Care Council) reports each year to the General Assembly and has the following remit:

- To offer services in Christ's name to people in need as part of the Church's mission
- To provide specialist resources to further the caring work of the Church
- To identify existing and emerging areas of need, to guide the Church in pioneering new approaches to relevant problems and to make responses on issues arising within the areas of the Council's concern through appropriate channels such as the Church & Society Council, the Scottish Executive and the like.

CrossReach's Mission Statement declares:-

In Christ's name we seek to retain and regain the highest quality of life which each individual is capable of experiencing at any given time.

Our motivation for serving others is a response to the grace and love of God shown to us by Jesus Christ. This empowers us to love and serve others in his name. Christ's love moves us to reach out to those who are in the greatest need - the marginalised, the poor, the frail, the hurting and the disadvantaged.

In this way we understand that all our activities and services are a response to and an outworking of the love and grace of God in Jesus Christ.

If you want to learn more about the work of CrossReach, or are interested in volunteering or supporting their work, please visit their website at www.crossreach.org.uk.

David Reid

New Elder

At our service on Sunday, 19th of June Mrs Lynn Ferguson, Joint Convener of our Fund Raising Committee, was ordained as an elder and warmly welcomed into the fellowship of the Kirk Session. We very much appreciate Lynn's willingness to serve, and we wish her every blessing as she takes up the role of the eldership which we trust she will find rewarding and fulfilling.

Editor

Troon Old Parish Church Golf Competition

This year's competition was held on the 16th of June at Fullarton Golf Club and afterwards at TOPC.

Although the weather was variable, a terrific time was had by all. As usual an enormous vote of thanks is due to everyone who made the competition such a success, from our starter, Patsy Patterson, who sent everybody on their way on time and fully armed, to Joy and her team who arranged and provided a lovely supper, to SAC for the use of the course, to Robert Carson and his team for organisation, and to the congregation for their most generous donations and prizes.

This year's triumphant team were our chums from St Meddans and the individual winners from the card competition were Hazel Brown and Robert Carson. Congratulations to you all (next year handicaps will be reviewed!).

Next year's competition will be on Thursday 22nd of June, and we are keen for more of our golfing congregation to compete, with a special request for more juniors to come along and play.

Peter Holmes

Blythswood Christmas Appeal

I know that many of you enjoy filling shoeboxes for the annual Blythswood Christmas appeal. This year your boxes will make a real difference to many people living in Pakistan and the poorest parts of Eastern Europe. Last year your practical, simple gifts were very much appreciated and brought much happiness. At this time Blythswood are asking particularly for tooth brushes and toothpaste, items we take for granted. Further information is available in the Blythswood leaflets which you will find in the office, on the table outside the office and in the church vestibule.

Please hand your boxes in to the office no later than Sunday, 13th November.

Thank you,

Editor

Babes and Toddlers Group

We welcome new faces at our Baby and Toddler Group which runs every Tuesday morning from 10am-11.30am. We have lots of space for boisterous toddlers to run around and plenty of quiet space and bouncy chairs for the littlest faces!

There is a cuppa and some biscuits on offer and snacks for the children.

We all help to run the group together but unfortunately in recent months numbers have dwindled so new additions to the group would be most welcome. All we ask is £1 to help us keep the biscuit supply up!

Karen Meikle

07782323670

Christian Aid 2016

When the last issue of Top Talk was published we did not have the figures for the total monies raised during Christian Aid week in May. Together with the other Troon Churches we raised £7,757.14 from the house to house collections and £939.40 from the soup lunches held during that week. Additional monies raised from the sale of quiz sheets and other donations brought the total net income to £8,876.69. This was a fantastic amount of money to raise in just one week.

Thank you so much for your support and generosity.

Our next event will be a coffee morning to be held in St Meddans Church Hall on Saturday 29th October from 10am till 12 noon. Please contact me if you would be able to help on the day or to donate home baking.

Thank you

Lesley MacInnes

Tel: 318951

Fair Trade

Fairly traded goods are crucial to help make an impact on the lives of producers and their families in the developing world and the Fair Trade stall at Troon Old Parish offers us all a powerful way to reduce poverty through our everyday shopping. These goods provide us with a chance to create a partnership between producers and consumers, while ensuring a better deal for the farmers and craftspeople, which allows the producers to plan for a brighter future. Receiving a fair price for the goods they produce allows these people to improve their standard of living through access to education, healthy food, healthcare and community improvement projects.

The key principles of Fair Trade according to the Fairtrade Foundation are:-

1. Trading practices are fair and not one-sided.
2. Prices paid are fair and sufficient for producers and workers to earn more than enough to meet their day-to-day needs.
3. Payments are often made in advance to ensure the supplier can fulfil orders.
4. Producers and workers have a voice, whether organised into groups or involved in workplaces where there is freedom of association.
5. Safe working conditions, non-discrimination and welfare of children.

Thank you for your continued support of the Fair Trade stall, it really does make a difference.

There is a new autumn catalogue available with a large range of items, including Christmas cards, decorations and gifts. Please feel free to take away a catalogue, there are many items which we do not have on the stall, but which can be ordered.

I would also like to thank Anne McCulloch for her help with the stall over the past few years.

Judy Irvine
Tel: 315162

Wintertainment

Here we are again, Troon's Annual Wintertainment Family Fun Day event is upon us. Of course it is still a bit early but we have been planning the day for some time now and this short article is to allow you the opportunity to get the date into your diaries. Troon Old's support of our event is fabulous, every year we have to thank all those of your congregation who give of their time in allowing us to put on the various Dancing Displays, Young Fiddlers (with Wallace Galbraith and your own David Moore) etc. A Christmas visit from Mrs Claus in Room 1 is a treat for the young folk, which only highlights what a great venue the halls in Troon Old are. On behalf of the Activities Group of Troon Community Council, we look forward to seeing you all there enjoying yourselves.

George Mulveny

The Christmas Cafe

Advance notice that this year's Christmas Cafe is on Saturday 10th December from 10am-1pm. This is always a fun Cafe with lots of extra stalls and of course a visit from Father Christmas! Please pop the date in your diaries and watch out for more information nearer the time.

Sandra Pirie

Oor John



John Milligan with on his left his grand-daughter Rosie from Hong Kong and her very good friend, Eilidh, this year's Gala Princess.

Songs of World War 1

On Saturday, 2nd of July a very appreciative audience heard David Sadlier sing in Troon Old accompanied by his wife, Lelia, playing the piano. Both are accomplished classical musicians. David is professor of music at the University of Texas Rio Grande and Lelia is an educator and concert pianist.

It was not quite the advertised programme. The realisation that it was the 100th anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme led to a late change of plan, and we were treated to an afternoon of WW1 songs, not "Tipperary" or "Keep the Home Fires" but contemporary art songs written by composers and poets, such as Elgar, Vaughn Williams, Yeats and Kipling, many of whom saw active service. David seemed effortlessly to fill the sanctuary with very beautiful, sometimes haunting, melodies.

Continuing the Battle of the Somme theme the next day, our worship was greatly enriched by David's very moving rendition of a setting of the Lord's Prayer and by the bagpipe playing of our own Craig Walker.

David was so impressed by the acoustics and setting of our sanctuary that he very much hopes to make a return visit in the not too distant future.



1st Troon BB Pipe Band



1st Troon BB Pipe Band has been crowned World Champions 2016 in their class at the recent World Pipe Band Championships at Glasgow Green - an achievement comparable to winning a Gold Medal at the Olympics.

Over 230 Pipe Bands from across the world competed over two days in August with 40,000 people in attendance and thousands more following the action via live web streaming. This is the biggest pipe band event of the year and brings together the best pipers and drummers from around the globe.

Pipe Major Christopher Bone made a last minute decision to enter “The Worlds” this year as many of his pipers and drummers were travelling to Jersey for the annual Boys’ Brigade Camp. Against 20 international bands in their class, and for the first time in its history, the band was awarded 1st place and crowned World Champions 2016.

Currently there are over 55 boys aged 9-18 years receiving free tuition in piping and drumming with instructors giving their time free of charge. Many of the boys have gone on to play with senior pipe bands at the top level, and several boys have performed around the world. Some of the boys have recently returned from a second tour of China where they performed in some of the largest concert halls in the world and played their bagpipes on The Great Wall of China.

Fiona Brodlie

Owed to Arran

Our Beadle has been blethering again, this time in poetic form about his summer holidays. Please note there is no misprint or miss spelling in the title.

When we disembarked from the Caledonian Isles
We were welcomed with warmth and many smiles.
To Whiting Bay and a wonderful cottage,
A gentler setting would be hard to stage.

To Kildonan, Kilmory and Blackwaterfoot,
No strings attached to this return route.
No problem here in lifting our spirits
When onward we went to Arran's northern limits.

Quiet, peaceful hamlets we passed on our way
As we drove to the castle and wonderful bay.
More spirits were sunk at the distillery in Lochranza,
Please don't waste your efforts on scanning this stanza!

When all's said and done
We relaxed and had fun.

Sadly, at this point he says he 'ran out of rhyme'. Thank you and well done, Gordon. More holiday reminiscences and poems will be warmly welcomed.

Editor

Margaret's Prayer

Thank you to Mrs Margaret Bonnes for sharing with us her favourite prayer which she finds very meaningful and helpful.

A Prayer for Courage

God make me brave -
Let me strengthen after pain
As a tree strengthens after rain
Shining and lovely again.
As the blown grass lifts, let me rise
From sorrow with quiet eyes

Knowing Thy way is wise
God make me brave - Life brings
Such blinding things
Help me to keep my sight,
Help me to see a light
That out of dark - comes light.

Church Diary

Morning Worship takes place at 10.30am each Sunday

OCTOBER

Saturday 15th Recital by our organist. Mr Andrew McConnell, at 2.30pm
Sunday 23rd Bible Sunday
Sunday 30th Sacrament of Holy Communion

NOVEMBER

Sunday 6th Dedication of the Garden of Remembrance after the service
Sunday 13th Remembrance Sunday (service at approximately 11.15am)
Sunday 20th Wintertainment
Sunday 27th Informal Communion after the service
Monday 28th Kirk Session Meeting at 7.30pm

DECEMBER

Saturday 11th Christmas Gift Service
Sunday 18th Service of Lessons and Carols
Saturday 24th Candlelight Service at 6.30pm
Saturday 24th Midnight Service in Portland Parish Church
Sunday 25th Christmas Day Family Service

JANUARY

January 1st United Service in Portland Parish Church at 10.30am

FEBRUARY

Sunday 26th Sacrament of Holy Communion
Monday 27th Kirk Session Meeting at 7.30pm

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