Bennachie Parish Church of Scotland Newsletter

Bennachie Blether

Winter 2023



Babies do that to you

After the lights and the kisses,
the visits and the visitors,
the presents and the promises,
only a Baby remains;
and parents who have never
been this way before.

After the dreams and the whispers,
the angels and the merrymakers,
comes the silence;
comes crying in the night,
a long, interrupted journey,
along a strange path.

Things will never be
as they were before

Babies do that to you;
Jesus does that to you.
But He comes with you all the way,
carrying love in His tiny hand,
holding heaven in His heart.

by Tim Lenton

(Courtesy of Parish Pump)

Dear Reader,
Welcome to the first edition of the Bennachie Parish Church of Scotland quarterly newsletter. I have named it the 'Bennachie Blether'. I hope that conveys its purpose of spreading good news and information through the parish. Your feedback on the style and content of the newsletter are welcome – what do you think of the name and what could be improved?

It has been a privilege preparing this first edition, from my perspective there's a lot going on across the parish, we have some very special Ministers who are doing some amazing work in view of the challenges. We also have many dedicated and skilled people working within and supporting the local leadership teams (LLT's). I'm enjoying being involved in that work. If you are interested in joining the editorial team please let me know. Training can be provided if required.

In this edition amongst other articles you'll find:

- A letter from one of our ministers.
- A testimony from Rev Tose Shayamunda, Assistant Minister.
- Bennachie Parish Church Session Summary Report.
- Reports from the LLT's across the parish.
- Testimony by the Editor.
- Information on children's activities and upcoming events.
- Details of regular groups.
- A map showing the location of the churches within Bennachie Parish.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the contributors and to thank in advance all those involved in the production and distribution of the newsletter.

Newsletter Editor

E-Newsletter: If you would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail please let us know by contacting the church office on 01467 643883 or by e-mail to office@bennachieparish.church

Online Newsletter: To view this magazine online please go to: https://www.bennachieparish.church and click on NEWSLETTER in top banner.

A Message from one of our Ministers



Dear friends,

Where is Jesus?

Where are we to see Christ at work?

From the Arians in the 4th century to the Deists in the 18th century to the "God is dead" movement of the mid-20th century, there have always been some folks around the Church who struggle to see how God could take any active role in the goings-on of the world. Indeed, even within the Church itself there is a strong line of thought that the Church is merely a memorial society: Jesus left us a long time ago so we gather weekly to remember him and his teachings and then go out to try and do the sort of things that He can't do – because He's no longer here.

Maybe it's because God is Spirit and we are no longer trained to "see" spiritual things, or maybe it's just that we've forgotten how to ask the right questions or look in the right places. Whatever the reasons, it's often hard to translate our credal belief – that at the Ascension Jesus took the power to reign and since Pentecost He continues His mission among us in the power of His Spirit – into recognising Jesus at work here or there. Yet, as Gerard Manley Hopkins reminds us in his sonnet *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*, "Christ plays in ten thousand places, Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his."

It's easy to see if you know where to look. Do this now: Assume for a moment God is in the world and at work in your life. Think about a situation that is troubling you or causing you pain. Now ask yourself "The God Question": "What is God doing in this situation?" It may take some practice and it helps to know what God is like – which we discover by studying Scripture – but, if we look and ask, we will start to see God at work bringing comfort, healing and transformation.

The first three months of our union has been a frantic time. So many systems to put in place. So many new ways of doing things. So many new people to get to know. So many expectations – and fears. It's been hard for me to ask any questions other than "What's next?" But when I pause to ask "The God Question": "What is God doing in our new union of

churches?", a glorious landscape of grace opens up before my eyes: energetic volunteers working round the clock to get our finance, IT, pastoral and outreach systems "talking" to one another; congregations welcoming Euan, Tose and me wherever we go; parish-wide prayers being offered regularly for Sheila as we wait and watch eagerly for her healing; local lay people stepping up to make sure worship continues on Sundays when a minister isn't present; Hope Café, Thursday Drop-in and Loaves & Fishes creating spaces for fellowship; members supporting fund-raisers across former parish boundaries; friends offering friends lifts to joint services; and, oh, the joint services themselves!, celebrations of life and community.

Don't get me wrong, we are far from having all the details of the new union pinned down. I have probably never felt less "in control" of all that is happening in the church. But when I see all that God is doing in you and among you and through you – the members of Bennachie Parish Church – my heart sings! What a joy to be part of this ministry team! What a joy to be one of your ministers!

Much love,
Neil

Bennachie Parish Church Prayer and Praise Chain



If you or someone you know is in need of Prayer support, it is our privilege to help.
Please send an email to: prayerrequest@bennachieparish.church
or phone Joyce and Jeff Thomas on 01467 643434

- **Please, if possible, have the consent of those for whom the prayer is requested.**
- **Please provide the wording of the prayer to ensure that all are praying for the exact same thing.**
- **People can give as much or as little detail (e.g. name or initials) as they wish.**

This is a confidential service. No information will be shared outwith the Prayer Chain members.

Bennachie Parish Church Services

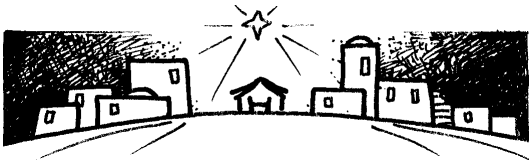
December Services

2023	Blairdaff / Chapel		Cluny / Monymusk		Echt / Midmar		Kemnay	Kintore
03-Dec	Chapel	Patricia Findlay	Cluny	Euan Baptism	Midmar	Tose	Neil Communion	LLS
10-Dec	Blairdaff	LLS	Cluny	Patricia Findlay	Echt	Euan	Tose	Neil
13th								7pm Neil
17-Dec	Chapel	Tose	Cluny	LLS	Echt	Neil - Instant Nativity	Euan	Tose - Instant Nativity
17th Dec								6.30 Carols by Candlelight, Neil
21st Dec			Monymusk	Carols in Square 7pm				
24-Dec	Blairdaff	Tose	Cluny	Neil	Echt	LLS: Alistair McRobb	Sheila	Euan
24th Christingle			Monymusk	7.00 Family Service Euan			6.30 Christingle Sarah Earley	5.30 Christingle Neil
24th Watchnight					Echt	11pm Watchnight Tose/Sheila	11pm Watchnight Euan	11.15 Watchnight Neil
25th Dec			Monymusk	10.30 Euan			10.00 St Annes	
31-Dec		-		-		-	-	Joint Service

What's on in Bennachie Parish Church?

Scan the QR Code below to play the Bennachie Parish Church 'What's on' Video.

How to use:
If you have a smart phone or iPad etc. switch on the Camera App and point the camera at the QR Code - you should then see a button or link to press to view the current version of the what's on video. The video is updated on Friday each week.



PARISH REGISTER



IN MEMORIAM

God of hope and giver of all comfort, we commend to your tender care those who mourn the loss of a loved one. Give them the peace that passes all understanding. AMEN

2nd Aug	Mrs Christina Michie	Inverurie
11th Aug	Mrs Jean Hepburn	Littlewood Court, Kemnay
18th Sept	Mr Douglas Barclay	Littlewood Court, Kemnay
4th Oct	Mrs Marjorie Moir	Morrison Place, Kemnay
6th Oct	Mrs Lesley Anne Grigor	Millstone Place, Kemnay
15th Nov	Mrs Elsie Murray	Wood Gardens, Kemnay
27th Nov	Miss Ann Brown	Littlewood Court, Kemnay

BAPTISM

And he took the children in his arms, he put his hands on them and blessed them. - Mark 10

8th Oct	Rudi John Forbes Barnard	Dunecht

TRANSFERRED

9th Aug	Prof. Paul Nimmo	Fetternear View, Kemnay

Bennachie Parish Church Office Hours

Tuesday – Friday from 9.30 am – 12.30 pm

Tel: 01467 643883

email: office@bennachieparish.church

Bennachie Parish Kirk Session

And so it begins. We are all now part of a new greatly enlarged parish with all the problems, worries and work associated with this major change. But such excitement too! Because of the many pressures of reduced finances and workforce, the Church of Scotland decided that churches throughout Scotland should form new groupings, and that sadly some churches would close. In our area, this meant that Cluny Church, Midmar and Blairdaff would close and the buildings sold. The parishes of these churches are now to be supported by the remaining churches, that is Chapel of Garioch, Monymusk, Kintore, Echt and Kemnay.

It is never easy to accept such major changes; new people to get to know and to work with, but new opportunities for development of our local ministry as well as ourselves. Familiar faces crop up, but also new faces, even new members.

There is no doubt there is confusion about what is going on, when and by whom. We are trying hard to communicate with church members and the community. A website is being developed for the new Church, although the original church websites will still exist. This newsletter is an example of our efforts. We have a Team ministry with Neil Meyer, Euan Glen and Sheila Mitchell. Sadly, Sheila has been ill, and has been away from her ministry. We miss her contribution and wish her a speedy recovery. We so depend on each other.

Along with Stella Gauld from Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch as the deputy, I took on the challenge of being Session Clerk to the new Kirk Session of Bennachie Parish Church. I bless the assistance of Stuart in the Church Office, as well as the ministers who respond so kindly to my queries. A major task is finding out who is who, and importantly how to contact them. Shared knowledge and shared resources will be beneficial to all of us in the care for our parish, property management, our social events and money management to name but a few.

More than 70 elders took part in the original kirk sessions. Not all these folk will now attend Bennachie Parish Session, but they are still busy in their local leadership teams. The management of the many aspects of Bennachie Parish church life is a work in progress, but we look forward to a new and enthusiastic time together.

Dr Sheila Simpson, Session Clerk

Cluny and Monymusk Local Leadership Team

This team has held its first meeting at which we agreed on the responsibilities we now have to our former members and to the Kirk Session and the Committees of Bennachie Parish Church. We are committed and enthusiastic about putting these into practice as far as we are able with our limited numbers.

Our first priority is to develop the capability and quality of our audio-visual equipment so that we are able to make full use of technology in Monymusk Church.

Discussion then took place planning for our annual Christmas services and events in Cluny and Monymusk Churches.

On Sunday 17th December at Cluny Church at 10am our Locally Led Christmas Family Nativity Service is a new departure. The service will be led by adult readers, younger members of the congregation and musicians. Allan Bickett to play the organ. A Party Tea in the hall will follow the service.

On Tuesday 19th December players from the Bon Accord Silver Band join us to play Christmas Carols around the tree in Monymusk Square at 7pm. Come warmly dressed and ready to sing! Refreshments are on sale from 6.30 pm. There will be a collection for the Cyrenians.

Rev Euan Glen will lead Family Services in Monymusk Church at **7pm on Christmas Eve and 10:30 on Christmas Morning**.

A very warm welcome awaits you at all of the above.

Church Giving

Joyce and Jeff, interim Free Will Offering and Gift Aid custodians for the Bennachie Parish Church of Scotland.

Greetings to all who read this, the first newsletter of this new combined church. Happy Christmas.

At this joyous time of the year when we give, often more than we can afford, tempted by Black Friday sales pitch and children's peer pressure we often lose sight of what it is all about. Then of course there is the

sadness of tribal conflict around the world and climate disasters. Then poverty and homelessness. All combine to make us forget what it is all about.
The celebration of Christ's birth. This is the time to rejoice. Peace comes down at Christmas, families unite to celebrate. Our new congregation numbers 1,680. Each one an ambassador for peace for our Lord Jesus Christ. What will you do for Christ's church? Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Might be a bit overwhelming? Let us start by inviting someone who has not returned to Church after Covid to join us. Let us ask the Lord in prayer what we should do, who we should invite. Let us make time to help in the work of the church. Let us use our talents to help maintain the church. Let us give of our money, each as they can to further the work and to maintain our places of worship.
Some practical points:

- Please return your Data Protection form as soon as possible.
- If you give by Standing Order, please use the Bennachie Parish Church FWO bank account. Sort Code 82-65-26. Account number 80047098
- If you give Gift Aid, please ensure your GA form is up to date with your correct name and address.
- If you use FWO envelopes they will soon be delivered to you. They will be different from previous years. If you don't receive them or get the wrong ones, please contact us at jeffthomas@bennachieparish.church

If you don't give, and can afford to give something, no matter what value can we ask you to prayerfully consider your commitment to Christ's church.
All giving is treated with confidentiality.

Thank you J&J

The Church is Out There

Littlewood Court, Station Road, in Kemnay, is a retirement housing complex run by Aberdeenshire Council. It has thirty-two flats across two levels, with lift access, a communal lounge, a library and gardens. Each flat is provided with gas central heating, double glazing and a fitted kitchen. A door entry system provides security, and all properties are connected to the Community Alarm Service. A comfortable place to live.

Activities vary from fish and chip nights, bingo, dominoes, craft clubs and

concerts…and plenty of opportunity to make friends.

Kemnay Kirk has sixteen members who reside here, and regular elder visits help to maintain contact for those who cannot come to the services. Using current technology, church services are live streamed and enable folk to feel part of Sunday worship in the comfort of the Littlewood Court lounge. Visiting elders can serve communion.

Life does not stop when one retires or needs help in one's home. We hope to provide insights into the past and present lives of the residents in this newsletter as time goes on. Watch this space!

Update from Chapel of Garioch



Bennachie Parish Church union is certainly showing the signs of working together. A plea from Chapel of Garioch church to change a lightbulb at height led to the offer of a scaffolding platform from folks at Kemnay and the job was duly carried out successfully.

The creation of a Café seating area has long been mooted at Chapel of Garioch (CoG) church. Currently, fellowship is held with folks standing in the aisles between the pews. It has been considered that the removal of the pews under the balcony where the tea serving currently is to create a seating area and café for the fellowship after a service would be welcomed. Mentioning this at the Session meeting has now led to offers of the expertise and sharing of experiences from Echt Church folks as their renovation is still relatively new.

I'm sure everyone has heard of the growing of Topsy, growing without planning or design. We trust that with some hard thinking, we will ensure that the project is very well controlled, and that changes can be made sensitively within the building, whilst also looking to future proof it.

The cafe seating area will require a heating rethink as the pew removal will leave exposed pipes which will need to be moved. Some of the other pipes within the church are currently leaking; the repairs to the pipes have been

going on for some years as this is an old system which is incredibly inefficient. I'm sure that CoG is one of the few churches which offers blankets along with the Order of Service on a Sunday in winter! The start of looking at a café may require the review of all the heating. The café will also require drainage and hot water heating, as it currently only has an incoming cold water tap, but no sink.

Of course, if we start to review the whole heating system and removal of pews in one area, then it makes sense to wonder if it is cost effective and practical if all the pews should be lifted out to be replaced with moveable seating. This would allow for a full review of the existing heating, even consider underfloor heating, which was the best option for Echt.

This change would also mean that the church internal space could be used as a community space too, not just for Sundays, but for other groups in the Parish too, encouraging familiarity with the church, as well as other church activities for our own use currently not possible with the pews in place.

If there is to be disruption to the fabric of the church, this would also be a great opportunity to have an upgrade to the crackly sound system and think about the Audio Visual items needed to standardise across the buildings in Bennachie Parish Church so that Sunday services can be accommodated to be streamed in or out according to requirements, with hymns on screens and not books, etc. The microphone currently interferes with the speakers, meaning that a loud singing minister cuts out the music!

Of course, this is just the very early stages of the discussions. If anyone else has expertise in the areas of plumbing, electrical work, heating and AV, who can help prepare the groundwork in a project plan to allow the Session to make informed decisions in due course, please do contact me. We will have a kick-off meeting in December to start the ball rolling.

Looking for a BPC Rota?

Please note that the rotas can be found on Teams under - BPC All Users - General. Click on the 'Files' tab at the top of the page, then the Rotas folder.

Here you can find the latest rotas for AV, Church Cleaning, Prayer and Reading, Music, Littlewood Court, Tea, Welcome Team and Flowers.

Zimbabwe 1986

The year is 1986, six years after Zimbabwe independence from Britain when parents brought me to this earth and named me Tiritose which was later shortened to Tose which means Together in English. I was born in a polygamous family of fifteen children and me being the second from last. I am married to Sheanesu and we have three children.

It was in April 2003 when I gave my life to Jesus as my lord and saviour. Eight years later while I was working at Air Zimbabwe as a baggage handler, I felt that the Lord was calling me to do full time ministry. It was a tough decision to take but it was like fire kept in my bones such that I could not resist the call of the Lord.

In 2012 I enrolled at Murray Theological College and trained for 4 years for a diploma in theology. Later, I did my degree in Theology and masters in Theology and Sustainable Development.

I was then ordained in 2016 as a minister of word and sacrament and served in two Parishes: Mandara Congregation 2016-2018, then Zvishavane Congregation 2019-2021, before I moved to Scotland to serve in the Church of Scotland as a minister in August 2021.

In my last Parish in Zvishavane I was a minister of over 400 active members with four worship centres. Sunday school had over 100 children. It was great pleasure to work in Zimbabwe as I gained experience of preaching, counselling, and in administering of Sacraments.

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe was formed in 1901 and the Scottish missionaries played a pivotal role in its foundation. It happened that during my theological training, I was taught by Rev Henry Murray who was a grand son of one of the Scottish Missionaries who came to Zimbabwe in 1913. Henry Murray played a pivotal role in my decision to finally come to Scotland. He used to say: *"We came here to preach the word of God as*

Missionaries and we left the comfort of our homes in Scotland. So whenever God calls you to minster overseas, accept it, because God's grace will always follow you" When the opportunity to come and serve in the Church of Scotland arose, Henry Murray's words became vivid in my mind.

Finally, I am here in Bennachie Parish doing God's work as an answer to His call.

Rev Tose Shayamunda, Assistant Minister at Bennachie Parish Church



Meets every Sunday morning in Kemnay Kirk (term time).

10am - 11am.

Bible Story and song in the Church followed by games, craft, activities for all ages 0-12 years in the session house followed by refreshments.

Everyone is most welcome to join us!

Contact Sarah Earley for more information.

SarahEarley@bennachieparish.church

Loaves and Fishes will close at 2pm on Friday 15th December and re-open Tuesday 16th January at 10am.

We would like to wish all our customers and staff a happy, peaceful Christmas and best wishes for 2024.



The Hope Cafe at Echt Church
Tuesday mornings 9 till 11



The Covid pandemic saw the end of our Tiny Tots Group and also the Seniors' Friendship Club, and we wondered what we could do to replace them.

The church had been refurbished just before lockdown and the pews removed, so we have plenty of useable space in the church.

We wanted to encourage everyone to come, so thought a 9am start would encourage mums who had taken their children to school. There would be a play corner for any small children who came.

It was hoped that previous members of the Friendship Club might want to have somewhere to meet and chat. We wanted to include all generations. To keep the catering simple we decided to serve toast with tea or coffee. We also have shortbread made by one of our helpers. We would suggest a donation of £2.

And so the Hope Cafe began on Tuesday 13th September 2022.

Thanks to my wonderful group of volunteer helpers, it has been a great success, with 20-30 adults attending each week as well as babies and small children.

So far our proceeds have twinned a toilet in Sudan, helped the Turkish earthquake appeal, and we have given a donation to Rev Tose Shaya-munda to help pay for education for the children of his home village in Zimbabwe. We plan to give regular contributions to help Tose's work to improve the lives of the people in his village.

Ruth Williams



Inverurie and District Churches Together (IDCT)

Inverurie and District Churches Together (IDCT) is an ecumenical group of churches from Inverurie and its surrounding area, focused on working together to promote Christian unity. Blairdaff, Chapel of Garioch and Kintore were all members of IDCT and Bennachie Parish Church has taken over their involvement. IDCT looks for opportunities to emphasise our shared beliefs and annually arranges a programme of evening worship for Holy Week as well as a Walk of Witness through Inverurie on Good Friday.

IDCT has also been responsible for setting up the carved Nativity Scene in the Memorial Garden in Inverurie town square, making sure that the 'reason for the season' is prominently displayed.

IDCT Christmas events to look out for this year include Community Carol Singing around the Nativity Scene in Inverurie Town Square, accompanied by Inverurie Concert Band on Saturday 9th December at 2.45pm and a Christmas Family Carol Service in Inverurie Community Hub on Saturday 16th December at 4pm.

Please come and join us for either or both of these events. The more voices, the more joyous the noise!







Loaves and Fishes Christmas Lunch Menu

Tuesday 5th December till Friday15th December
11.30am till 2.00pm

2 courses £13.00 3 courses £15.00

Gluten and Dairy free options available on request
Pre booking is essential

Contact us on loavesandfishes@bennachieparish.church or telephone 01467 643883 and ask to speak to Suzanne.

Babies and Toddler Group ages 0 to 5 years

Little Lambs of Kemnay

9:15am to 10:30 am
Every Friday during School Term at
Kemnay Church Centre, Church Lane, Kemnay

Join us in a friendly and happy environment for play, healthy snacks, tea/coffee, craft and music.

No need to book, pay as you go, currently £2 per family/group.

Find out about our one off activities, January clothing give-away and more from our facebook page, Little Lambs of Kemnay, Bennachie Church at Kemnay website or contact:

jaynecampbell@bennachieparish.church

Monday weekly Bible Study at Kemnay
7.30pm on Teams



Studies are recorded and available to watch again as needed.

Led by Will Buchan and David Bale
If you would like to get involved get in touch and we will provide further joining details.

Christmas for kids @ Bennachie Church at Kemnay!



1st December - 7th January 2024
in the Church Centre Gardens

Start at the railings at the front door of the Church Centre. After finishing the trail pop into the Loaves & Fishes for a free lucky dip surprise (Open 1st Dec - 15th Dec and from Jan 16th 2024)



10th December @ 10am in Kemnay Kirk

"Round the Back" Nativity Play
All children are most welcome to join the fun by dressing up as an angel or a shepherd



24th December @ 6.30pm in Kemnay Kirk

Christingle Party
Meet Chris Tingle at a very informal, relaxed and child friendly service to celebrate Christmas together. Please bring an orange! We will have some spares if you forget!

We look forward to seeing you at Kemnay Church this Christmas!

PS. There are lots of other Christmas services happening in Kemnay and in the other churches across Bennachie Parish.
More information is available in the Kemnay Village Newsletter and on the Kemnay Kirk website and Facebook page

Bennachie Parish Church @ Echt and Midmar

The Local Leadership Team for Echt and Midmar has met, and everyone is very optimistic about the future as part of Bennachie Parish Church. We look forward to working with the new Session and to many joint activities and services.

The most recent joint service was held in Echt at the end of October. It was wonderful to see the Church full and the singing was amazing. Echt Young Farmers also send their thanks to everyone who joined them for their Soup and Sweet lunch.



Sheila has had her surgery, the outcome of which is very positive. Our best wishes Sheila, for a speedy recovery.

In case you missed it

On 22/10/23 Jim Buchan posted a link to a very interesting broadcast on Radio Scotland under Teams—BPC All Users—General . If you are on Teams you can click on the link or the icon within the post on Teams (see below) or it can be found on Radio Scotland under the 'Our Story' podcast series. It's an interesting story with some familiar Kemnay voices.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001rgmc



Our Story - The Bailies of Bennachie - BBC Soun...

Mark Stephen meets the people who look after Aberdeenshire's most iconic hill.

www.bbc.co.uk

Bennachie Parish Church at Kemnay

WINTER WARM SPACE- Jigsaw Club

Want some company this winter? Love doing Jigsaws?
Or are you seeking a volunteering opportunity?

Come join us at the Church Centre in a warm, welcoming space where you can meet with friends, do jigsaws, or just have a cuppa and chat.
There will be toys and jigsaws for younger visitors.
Hot/cold drinks and snacks will be provided free of charge.

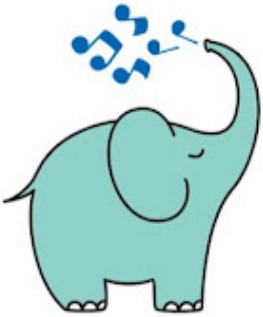
We are welcoming guests from 1 November until 31 March 2024 on the following days and times:
Wednesdays 2-4
Fridays 1-3

N.B. The centre is closed for 4 weeks
from Friday 18 December 2023 and reopens on Tuesday 15 January 2024 at 10am

For more information contact:
Suzanne Bunton 01467 643883
suzannebunton@bennachieparish.church
or
Irene Reid
irenereid@bennachieparish.church

Come along and brighten up those winter days

Children's Groups in Cluny and Monymusk



mainly music at Monymusk group for Mums , Carers, Babies and Pre school children meets on Tuesdays in Monymusk Hall from 1.30 -3.00pm £3.
You are very welcome to join us for music, rhymes, children's snack, tea and cake, toys and activities and the opportunity to get to know other parents.

the mainly music team

For more information please contact Susan Reid:
reidsatmonymusk.t21@btinternet.com

Cluny and Monymusk Sunday School



Cluny and Monymusk Sunday School meets monthly at Cluny or Monymusk Church at Bennachie. All members of your Family are very welcome to come along. We spend time in Church and in the Hall hearing the Christian stories with songs and activities as we take our part in the life of the church.
Picture - Sunday school remember the Monymusk men and women on the war memorial.

Jess, Mairi and Susan.

To find out more please contact Susan Reid:
reidsatmonymusk.t21@btinternet.com

Editor's Testimony

I was born in Leicestershire in a market town called Melton Mowbray, famous for its pork pies. I was baptised as an infant in St Mary's Church. I was the eldest of four children I attended church regularly along with my sister and two brothers in line with my Dad's wishes. Also Sunday school at the Blakney institute which was just across the road from the church.

In my early teens I remember learning the Apostles Creed whilst on my paper round, in preparation for my confirmation ceremony. I must have learned it as I was then confirmed at St Mary's Church.

In my teens it was all hands to the pump helping my parents build their dream home carrying bricks up ladders and operating a cement mixer amongst other things. I spent my free time making Airfix kits, go karts and flying model planes. On leaving school, I decided to study engineering, so I signed up for a National Diploma in Technology. I came out with a commendation and was fortunate in gaining sponsorship from BP Oil to complete a four-year BTech sandwich course in Mechanical Engineering at Loughborough University. My last period of industrial training on the course was a period of six months in Aberdeen mostly spent offshore on a drilling rig.

Having left home to attend university my studies took over attending church, however a seed had been planted.

On gaining my degree I took up a job with BP Exploration moving to Aberdeen. I completed a two-year graduate training programme which included time spent offshore on platforms and diving vessels in the Forties oilfield, before settling into my chosen field as a Subsea Engineer. At which point I was fortunate to meet Diane and we married in Aberdeen in 1982.

Around this time, I began to have a lot of physical challenges in my job due to my condition, after tests at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary an inherited muscle wasting condition called Becker Muscular Dystrophy (BMD) was formally diagnosed. My career with BP and latterly with Apache North Sea took a different path but I enjoyed a very interesting career, latterly as a Verification Engineer thanks to the training I had received.

After our son was born in 1987, I started attending St Columba's Church in the Bridge of Don in Aberdeen on a regular basis. He and Diane were baptised together. A few years later we moved to Kemnay and I became an Elder at Kemnay Parish Church of Scotland and latterly editor of the

There is currently no cure for BMD. I was fortunate that the condition had little effect in my life until my mid-twenties when my physical strength started to deteriorate very slowly. I have tried to live a normal a life as possible adapting to different circumstances as my condition worsened.

In 1994 Diane saw an advert on TV about Flying Scholarships for the disabled a legacy of Sir Douglas Bader. She sent off and received the application forms without my knowledge, they were put past due to Christmas holidays and nearly forgotten. I completed my application just in time to meet the deadline and a neurologist (the husband of someone we knew in the church) was able to confirm my fitness to learn to fly. After a selection process at RAF Cranwell, I was fortunate to win a scholarship. From over 200 applications 20 were awarded and two winners came from Aberdeen myself and a now close friend. Four of us decided to take up our scholarships together in 1995 and we spent six weeks in Atlanta, Georgia learning to fly. I didn't manage to obtain my wings but flew solo. The instructor I was paired with was a Christian man and we still keep in touch.

Guess what, the close friend I mentioned invited Diane over to her Spanish villa one weekend which led us to buy a property in the same area of Spain.

I have never had a blinding light moment during my life but I believe the Holy Spirit has motivated me, guided me and helped me all through my life. I have recently returned to my boyhood hobby and I am enjoying the challenge of learning to fly a radio control model aeroplane. The concentration required to fly a model plane helps me to forget my disability.

My faith has enabled me to pass worries, over which I have no control, to the Lord's care. I have also been blessed to have good health in general, a very loving and supportive wife who is also a brilliant carer, my son and very supportive friends who have helped me along the journey.

For quite some time Diane and I have been prayerfully considering our Christian journey in relation to Christian Baptism and being "Born Again". Full immersion baptisms are carried out on a regular basis at the Christian Fellowship Church we attend when we are in Spain, known as Salt Church Los Montesinos which is a member of the Federation of Assemblies of God. This has been a great inspiration to us but the practicalities of this in my case have weighed heavily on our minds. We felt that even in a warm

climate, full immersion baptism was not practicable or safe for me although there have been many interesting conversations as to how this might be achieved.

Following discussion with Joshua, our ex Church of Scotland minister we decided to have a joint baptism reaffirmation. This took place in Kemnay Church on Sunday 16 July 2023, it was a very memorable occasion and it boosted our commitment to the Lord. This was a 'sprinkled' rather than a full immersion baptism.

On returning to Spain, we hoped to achieve our goal of becoming associate members of Salt Church, but we found that a full immersion baptism is required to achieve this. Our pastor Chris and his wife Helena kindly came and spent time with us and through a very fruitful discussion a way forward came to light.

I had a full immersion baptism on 18 November 2023 in the wet room of our Spanish home! Diane had a full immersion baptism in a swimming pool the next day.

We feel that we are now moving forward from the same point as we continue our individual Christian journeys on the narrow path and that the Holy Spirit has guided us through the decision process.

For myself the following bible verse is now embedded in my heart:

'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.' – Isaiah 41:10 NIV

David Porter

Bennachie Parish Church Prayer Calendar

If you have a particular theme, event, or group of people that you would like to be included in the monthly Prayer Calendar please contact Noel at:

noellord@bennachieparish.church

Daily prayer available on Facebook:
Bennachie Parish Church

Bennachie Parish Church (BPC)
Regular Groups

Bible Discovery Group	Meeting Mondays via Teams, 7.30pm, contact Will Buchan or David Bale (williambuchan@bennachieparish.church) (davidbale@bennachieparish.church)
Good Morning Group	Meeting 1st Tuesday of the month, 10-11.30am, at Kemnay Church Centre, contact Noel Lord (noellord@bennachieparish.church)
Little Lambs	Fri. 9:15-10:30am. BPC at Kemnay, Church Centre, contact Jayne Campbell: ..... jaynecampbell@bennachieparish.church
Fantastic Families	Meets at BPC at Kemnay at the Church 10am & go to the Centre for 10.30am. Contact Sarah Earley: ..... sarahearley@bennachieparish.church
Men's Group	Currently temporarily suspended.

Bennachie Parish Church Newsletter

Your comments, ideas & material are always welcome. Letters and articles should be sent to: The Editor, 'Oxencraig', Bridge Road, Kemnay AB51 5QT or preferably via email to the following address:

newsletter_editor@BennachieParish.Church

Please include your name and address. The editors reserve the right to edit material to suit the space available.

The DEADLINE for the Spring edition is **18th February 2024.**

Please ensure all material is submitted by this date so that we can publish on time. *Thank you*

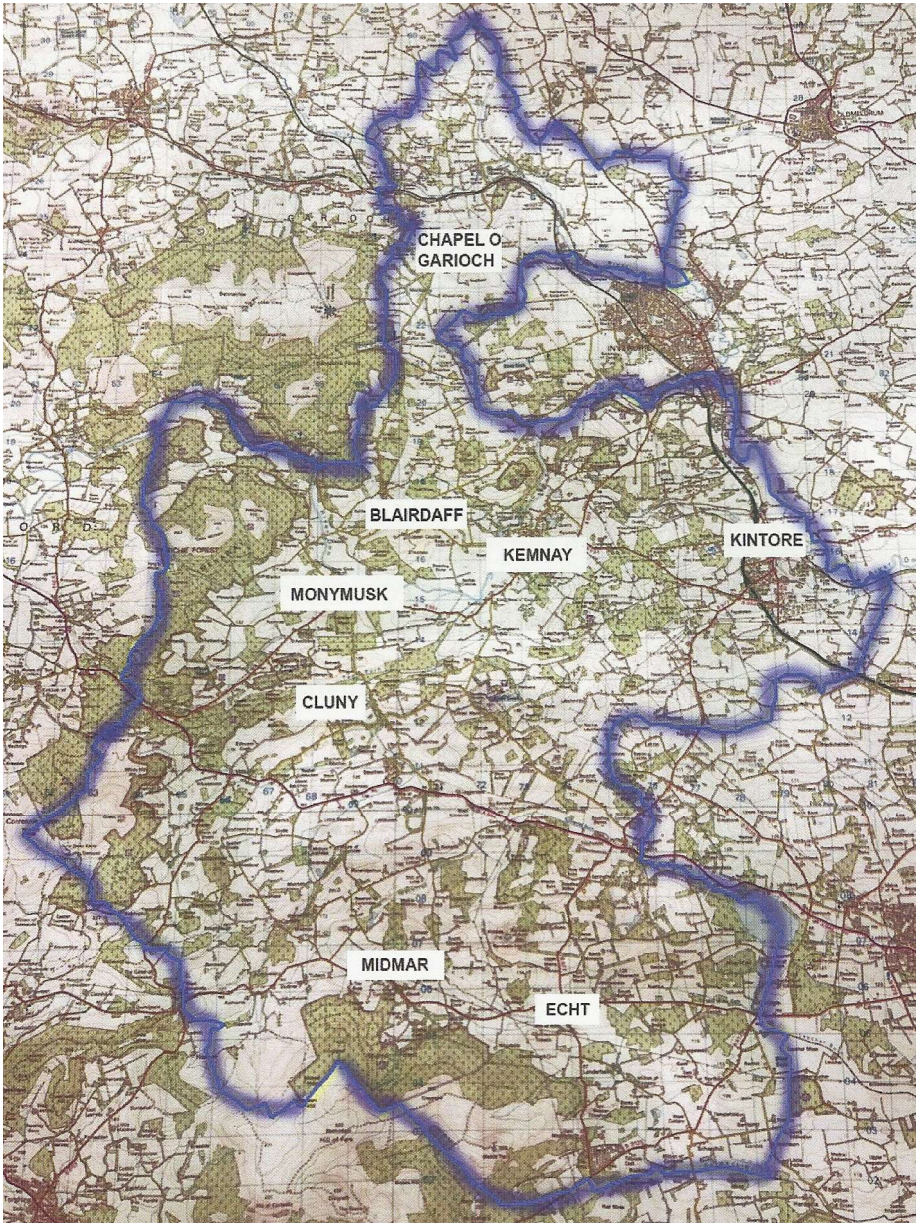
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For information on organisations and activities within the Bennachie Churches please visit:

www.blairdaffandchapelofgariochchurch.org.uk
www.echtandmidmarchurch.co.uk
www.kemnayparish.church
www.kintorekirk.org
www.monymuskchurch.weebly.com

Bennachie Parish Church of Scotland



Scottish Charity No SC014790