

There is a report on the Presbytery wide meeting this week – about 50 people on-line. This is the second of three meetings, called “Vision Argyll”, to discuss church after lockdown, the first meeting discussed Worship, this week we discussed Mission and next time we will be talking about Discipleship.

There is also a reflection on Psalm 139,

And the weekly Presbytery Prayer Rota and list of on-line worship services.

If you come across any articles or news you would like to have in the newsletter, please let me know by using the contact form on the website.

Thanks

David

Vision Argyll:

There was a second meeting on Monday evening of a group of people from across Argyll Presbytery to discuss ideas on how the church is doing, what we could be doing, and most of all – how do we share our faith in Jesus Christ, our understanding of the world, our trust in God’s love, and our assurance of fullness of life. In effect - what does it mean to preach the Good News and make disciples in Argyll today.

The theme of the meeting was **Mission**.

About fifty people joined in with the “Zoom” on line discussions with people from congregations across Argyll and Bute. There were three short presentations:

Rev David Mitchell gave an overview of our current situation with church buildings throughout Argyll, recognising that buildings hold emotional and historic ties for many people in communities. Congregations need to have places to meet and worship and if not existing church buildings then where? On the other hand many buildings are not well suited for their purposes – with high maintenance costs, poor levels of heating and comfort, poor quality, if any, toilets and kitchens.

How do our existing buildings support or hinder our Mission, our worship and our fellowship?

Margaret Jacobsen provided us with a framework within which to develop God’s mission. We are followers of Jesus, what does this look like in 21st century Argyll? As we try to follow Jesus how do our lives reflect this?

Margaret set out five “Marks of mission” to help us to live out our faith and demonstrate this to others, and so be part of God’s mission:

- Proclaim the Good News – be prepared to share your faith, what you believe, the love of God, the life of Jesus, with other people when they ask about your life.

- Teach and nurture – share your experience of god, your understanding of Jesus life, death and resurrection with newer Christians. Help others in their faith from your knowledge and experience.
- Loving service – serve others in your community, put others needs before your own, get down and “wash feet”.
- Transform injustice, stand up for the down trodden, speak up when others are abused, mediate where there is conflict. Speak words of peace and bring people together.
- Safe guard creation, protect life, care for the environment as created by God. Avoid waste, curb pollution and speak out against activities which are harmful to any life and creature.

This is challenging to us, it may cause us to reflect and change some of our ways of living, it may make us uncomfortable, but also we know that this is the way we should live. Ethics, justice, care and love for others is not cheap and easy. Following Jesus is uncomfortable in Argyll today.

Rev Scott Burton provided some thoughts on the church in the future in the community.

The parish system no longer defines how people choose to worship. People can travel to churches in other parishes and denominations. On line services reach across parish boundaries and are inclusive of everyone who can connect, Christians, church goers, and many who would never consider attending worship in a church. But, the church building for many is the heart of the community, and the people of the church have a heart for the community. Our church in the future can no longer be one size for all – there should be a variety of ways to worship together, and a variety of ways to meet and be fellowship – together in the same place, or together on line, or a mix of both. In the 19th century the church invested in church buildings for congregations. In the 21st century we need to invest in technology to bring congregations together.

During questions and discussion after the presentations a wide range of ideas and comments were aired.

Here are some:

During lockdown many churches have found that Face book has been very useful in keeping people informed and attracts a wider group than the congregation. Weekly telephone calls to isolated people have been welcomed. Visits to people who are vulnerable and shielding have taken place from gardens through windows. Requests for pastoral telephone calls have increased.

What many people miss most is the opportunity to get together socially.

Music is important and a church service may be the only place people can take part in music.

Worship need not be on a Sunday morning in a church building. Other times and places may be more suitable in today's culture. Be adventurous in planning worship – outdoors, in halls, restaurants or pubs, go where people meet.

These are by no means exhaustive notes and I have tried to include as many comments and viewpoints as I can, however, I apologise as I may have coloured this report with my own preferences and thoughts.

The next meeting will be in August, topic Discipleship, and if you would like to be there please let me know so you can be added to the list for taking part.

This week our reading is Psalm 139 vs 1 to 12 and then vs 23 And 24:

O Lord, You have searched me and known me.
You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thoughts from afar off.

You comprehend my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word on my tongue,
But behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.
You have hedged me behind and before,
And laid your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me
It is high, I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend into heaven You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there
If I take the wings of the morning,
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me
And your right hand shall hold me.

If I say "Surely the darkness shall fall on me"
Even the night shall be light about me;
Indeed the darkness shall not hide from You
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

Search me , O God, and know my heart
Try me, and know my anxieties;

And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Where can we go where God is not? – nowhere
What can we do that is hidden from Him? – nothing
What can we say that He does not hear? – no sound
What thoughts and ideas are shielded from Him? – none.

This could be a frightening concept. Thoughts of “1984” and “Big Brother” watching. The “Thought Police” analysing and correcting our ideas. No, this is a Psalm rejoicing in God’s presence in every aspect of our beings. “Big Brother” was watching to bring malice and oppression. God can do no other than to know all things.

God is aware of all things by His very being – it is His nature to be aware of all that is, all that occurs, all that is said. He is this, He does not have to go out of His way to watch and listen to us – it is to him as breathing is to us - it just happens. God is above and beyond all we can ever imagine Him to be. (The use of “He” and “Him” are for our convenience – not a limitation on gender!)

We are always unable to get a picture of the wholeness of God. I came across a quote from Thomas Aquinas the other day – *“If you comprehend God, he is not God. A comprehended God is no god at all”*

But we see glimpses of God, and part of that glimpse is that He knows us to the very core of our being, and every step of our journeys – and as the psalmist says *“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high I cannot attain it” v 6*

What a God, who knows us and yet still loves us, who hears our words and thoughts and still wants to meet us, to be our friend, to draw us into His family. Alongside the Aquinas quote there was another, an African Proverb – “God made man, because he likes to hear a story”. God and us, sitting together and chatting about our life – that is a picture to hold on to. The psalm ends – “Search me O God, and know my heart.....”. We need not try to hide our lives from God, but let’s be open to Him, to tell Him of our story and to wonder at His guidance and His concern. His love and forgiveness. Sit with Him, and have a chat.....

Presbytery Prayer Rota and intimations :

From: Pres. Argyll

Sent: 17 July 2020 10:21

To: Pres. Argyll <Argyll@churchofscotland.org.uk>

Subject: Presbytery Prayer Rota and Intimations

Presbytery Prayer Rota

Sunday 19 July 2020

Please pray for the following congregations and their ministers:

South Uist: Minister Rev Lindsay Schluter

About a third of people in the South Uist congregation have no access to the internet and this has meant a keener sense of isolation for some of them – to hold them especially in prayer at this time.

Strathfillan: Interim Moderator – Mrs Alison Hay

Please pray for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

Intimations

Anyone wishing an intimation posted should inform the clerk no later than Thursday each week.

- **Rev Owain Jones, Moderator of Presbytery calls presbyters to weekly prayer together on Wednesdays at Noon. Prayer is on the Presbytery Website and will be circulated to Presbyters and Session Clerks. It can also be viewed on the following link**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPXtIED6SuGHrf7DYJtMj8w>

- **Presbytery Facebook Page:** If anyone wishes something posted on the Presbytery Facebook Page **please contact either**
Liz Gibson (egibson@churchofscotland.org.uk)

or Scott Burton (Sburton@churchofscotland.org.uk)

- **Online services available from Argyll**

The following services are being provided online for local congregations and those who wish to log in from places further afield:

West Kintyre and Gigha – Rev Scott Burton -<https://www.westkintyreandgighachurchofscotland.org/> **Worship**

The United Church of Bute – Rev Owain Jones - <https://www.unitedchurchofbute.org.uk/>

The Shore Kirk – Rev Janet MacKellar –

<https://sites.google.com/view/theshorekirk/home>

or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/345399762209092/>

Service is available by Phone on 01369 510 932

Ardchattan lw Coll lw Connel – Rev Willem Bezuidenhout <https://www.ardchattanchurch.org.uk/>

West Cowal – Rev David Mitchell
<https://www.westcowalchurches.org.uk>

South Kintyre – Rev Steve Fulcher
www.kintyreparishes.org.uk

Netherlorn Churches Worship Team
<http://www.netherlornchurches.org.uk/>

West Lochfyneside:
<https://www.westlochfyneside.org.uk>

Kilmore and Oban: Rev Dugald Cameron
www.obanchurch.com

Barra and South Uist : Rev Lindsay Schluter(audio only)

Can be accessed via telephone (01871-200336) or the South Uist website
(www.southuistchurchofscotland.com)

eXp facebook page: - a worship and discipleship resource for young people.

<https://www.facebook.com/expdunoon/>

Daily Hope line

It is introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury. There are three options, you can:

1. Listen to a well-known hymn being sung then listen to a reflection on it, about 15 minutes.
2. Listen to well-known hymns being sung and sing along.
3. Listen to a prayer relevant to today's world

This service is called Daily Hope, the phone number is **0800 804 8044** Phone calls are free.

Keep Safe

Stewart

W Stewart Shaw DL

Clerk to the Presbytery of Argyll

Registered Scottish Charity SC001424

You can find news on our church website:

www.northknapdale.org

And our Face Book page – North Knapdale Church.

Contact David Logue – sessionclerk @ northknapdale.org

North Knapdale Church of Scotland - Charity No: SC001002