



Balshagray Victoria Park  
Church of Scotland

# The Herald

May 2021

**From our Interim Moderator, Rev Jonathan Keefe**

## **Everything changes**

*'The only constant in life is change'*. So wrote the Greek philosopher Heraclitus and these post-pandemic days I am beginning to wonder how many changes we can cope with. It's truly great that we are coming out of lockdown, and society steadily (though slowly) gets back to something like what we all used to know as normal. The 'new normal' is in some ways becoming the 'old normal', reminding us there is really no such thing as 'normal' – although there are delays and setbacks. Society is opening up again and there are mixed responses to all of it. Hugging was a part of daily life and a source of comfort to many pre-lockdown, and many are delighted the first minister is once again endorsing them - but hugs were also to some mercifully infrequent, a source of stress, and will be so to even more post lockdown. Social interactions have changed for us all.

Alongside changes in society there are also changes within our own families, our own church family at BVP, and our social spheres – ones that are personal to each of us, and too many to mention. Children have grown up over lockdown, parents and grandparents have aged, new opportunities and relationships have arisen and old ones are lost, but the process all seems to have speeded up.

Many of these changes are not easy to cope with. They are stressful. We all expect there to be change in our lives

(Benjamin Franklin said *'When you are finished changing you are finished'*), but the rate of it and extent of it can seem overwhelming.

And so I want to share some words from Psalm 46 that have been a great comfort to me in times of change. The psalmist speaks of change that is unimaginable – mountains literally falling into the sea, the world crumbling beneath our feet, the seas roaring and foaming and the mountains trembling - and then says, *'Be still, and know, that I am God'*. *Be still... and know... that I am God'*.

Change is an opportunity for all of us to remember the unchanging God we have. An opportunity to experience stillness of a sort that can only be known in stressful times. In these changing days may you discover (or rediscover?) the God who never changes, and may you know stillness in knowing Him.

*Jonathan*

## **John Goddard (25 May 1943 - 16 May 2021)**

We give thanks for the life and Christian faith of John. A life lived to the full right up until he was called home. He enriched the lives of those who had the privilege of knowing him as a friend. We pray that Veronica and the family would know the peace that passes understanding as they grieve, and find comfort in countless happy memories and the knowledge that one day they will meet again in glory. In John's own words:

*There are problems with getting old.  
At least that is what I am told.  
Without even trying,  
Your chances of dying  
Increase more than five to ten-fold*

John Goddard

## **From our Locum, Rev Derek Peat**

As I write this article we as a nation find ourselves looking at the next term of our Scottish Government. You may, like me, feel that the pre-election campaign went on for ages and are glad that it is over.

It is always a question to ask how we as Christians should be involved in politics. We find Christians joining a number of parties and at times get elected as parliamentarians. Even if we are not aspiring to that, we might ask what is demanded of us as followers of Jesus in this world.

To get some direction on this I turned to some writing from Jim Wallis, an American who has published on the interface of faith and politics. In his book 'Seven ways to change the world' Wallis writes about being in Davos for the World Economic Forum, and there was a debate about how to get the general population more engaged about Third World debt cancellation and aid. The rock star Bono, the singer from U2 (some of you may have heard of the band) argued that what was needed was a worldwide revival of faith that would demand action from governments on issues of justice.

Bono then quoted the words Jesus used in Luke 4: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' In response Wallis writes: 'We must go back to Jesus, who was quoting Isaiah, and if the great mountains of greed, injustice and indifference are to be moved they will most likely be pushed aside by the mustard seeds of faith.'

As we know, major world leaders are due to descend on Glasgow later this year for the COP26 summit, and Glasgow presbytery is involved along with the other church denominations in the city. Whether we choose to be involved in the work before it, or in other smaller scale ventures, it's clear that one duty we have as Christians is working to obtain justice for the poor.

One problem about injustice is that it can seem that God has forgotten his people. To look at this, we might turn to the book of the prophet Habakkuk who lived in Judah towards the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. Habakkuk asked God why nothing seemed to be getting done to solve the issues of that time when wickedness and oppression were rife in Judah. God responds by telling him that he will do works that will be too astounding for Habakkuk to understand. He has to eventually settle by resting and trusting in the Lord.

It falls to us to trust in the Lord and know that God is still on his throne and active in the world, but we are indeed called upon to play our part in fighting injustice. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to enliven our passion for this and equip us to play our part. Then we really will have a means to act effectively in politics.

With every blessing,

Derek

## **Compassion**

I have just received a letter (dated February) from ten year old Jose in El Salvador. He and his family are well and have had groceries and hygiene kits hand delivered by the Compassion Centre. The Christmas gift money he received from us was used to buy him new shoes. Jose asks that we pray for him and his family and writes, 'I am so happy because I am attending the church where my grandmother goes.' Jose has been doing his schoolwork online and although he gets bored being at home all the time, is filling his time doing homework and playing with his sister and niece.

Thank you once again for your continued support of Jose, Dinar and Martha and their families. Please pray for them as they try to cope during this difficult time.

*Joan Canavan*

## **Unitary Constitution**

As you may know, at the end of May a ballot is being sent to members and adherents of the church to give a view on changing the constitution of the church. This would normally happen at the Stated Annual Meeting of the Congregation, but due to Covid restrictions, we cannot hold that meeting at the moment. Why are we doing this? At the moment, BVP operates under the Model Constitution in which the Congregation is governed by two separate bodies: the Kirk Session, composed of active Elders, and the Congregational Board, composed of some active Elders and Non-Elder Elected Members of the Congregation. If we decided to move to the Unitary Constitution, we would be governed by only one body, the Kirk Session. Committees of the Congregational Board would become Committees of Kirk Session.

The principal reason for this move is because of the Church's status as a recognised charity overseen by the Charities Regulator. At the moment all members of the Board and the Session are Trustees of the charity, but currently a Board member is liable for the decisions made at Kirk Session even although he or she has no vote there, and similarly for Session members not on the Board. It is for this reason that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has urged Congregation to move to having one body which also comprises the Trustees of the charity.

More and more Congregations have moved to the Unitary Constitution in recent years and the May 2016 General Assembly urged those Congregations with the Model Constitution to consider adopting the Unitary Constitution. It may be, therefore, that in due course the Unitary Constitution will become compulsory throughout the Church of Scotland. In view of the above, the Kirk Session felt that it should discuss the matter again and at its most recent meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April the Session agreed unanimously to

recommend the adoption of the Unitary Constitution. We now need put this to a vote of the congregation and, if agreed, we would then proceed to the next stages in the process through Presbytery and the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh.

You will have realised that under the Unitary Constitution we would no longer have a Congregational Board with Elected Members. However, the Kirk Session would have the power to appoint non-Elder members of the Congregation (some of whom might be the current Elected Board Members) to full membership of its Committees and Sub-Committees with full voting rights at these meetings. Such members would also be welcome to attend Kirk Session meetings although they would not have a vote. The Session would, however, still have the benefit of their opinions and experience.

We hope, therefore, that you will return your ballot paper and so participate in the decision concerning the future management of our Congregation. Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this matter. If you have any further questions, please get in touch with myself or Jonathan Keefe.

*Ranald McTaggart*  
*Session Clerk*



## Keswick Convention – Summer 2021

During the past 18 months, many events had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, including last year's Keswick Convention. However, the good news is that this summer's Convention is going ahead, and all the arrangements are now in place, with some changes to the speakers' programme. The Keswick Convention will take place during the period Saturday **17<sup>th</sup> July until 6th August**.

This year's theme is "**Faithful**", which will focus on 'Gods Faithfulness' and the three principal guest speakers will develop this topic during the morning Bible Reading sessions.

- Week 1: Paul Mallard (replacing Alistair Begg)
- Week 2: Tim Chester (replacing Simon Manchester)
- Week 3: Mark Meynell

Readings: Wk 1- Philippians; Wk 2- Exodus; Wk 3- Hosea

Please note that Alistair Begg and Simon Manchester are both re-booked to speak at the 2022 Convention.

There are also many other speakers such as Jeremy McQuoid and Rico Tice who will lead the evening worship services or speak at some of the additional events, seminars, and lectures. The convention is ideal for families with young children or teenagers and a wide range of programmes will be available. Music will be provided each week by; Colin Webster (wk 1), Ben Slee (wk 2) and Olly Knight (wk 3).

This year's convention will take place at the new Derwent site and all necessary precautions will be in place to ensure everyone is kept as safe as possible, which will include 'social distancing'. This will require those who attend to use several on site venues with a relay link. To determine how many people will attend this year's Convention, '**Registration is essential**', so please visit the Keswick Ministries web site for details. If you just want to listen to the Convention from the

comfort of your own home; visit [www.keswickministries.org](http://www.keswickministries.org) where you will be able to access the **live streaming facility**.

If you need more information about this year's Convention, please speak to me in church or visit the Convention website.

*Robert Belmore*

## The Guild

We are still having our monthly Zoom meetings, with some members also connecting by phone, and at the end of May we enjoyed a socially-distanced "cuppa" together at one of our local venues.

The National Guild has now introduced a new Strategy, covering the next 3 years: "Look forward in faith" with this year's Theme and Topic being "Lights and Bushels".

In conjunction with this, the Projects have changed, and out of 6 new National ones, the charities we've chosen to support for the 3 years are:

- [Home for good](#), finding homes for vulnerable children in Scotland;
- [Kazuna, village of hope](#) in Tanzania (Vine Trust), building accommodation for families and fostered children; and
- [Beat Scotland](#) to help tackle eating disorders.

We would hope to be able to resume Guild meetings in the Church hall in October, but the easing of Government restrictions have not been published as far ahead as this, so notice will be given in Church of arrangements nearer the time.

Whether or not you're able to go on holiday over the summer, we hope you can enjoy some sunny weather!

*Christine Hay*  
*Guild Secretary*

## Early History of Balshagray

When a new church was planned at Broomhill Cross the name Balshagray was chosen referencing the extensive Balshagray Estate which extended to over 1,000 acres from the River Clyde to what is now Great Western Road. Following the dedication of Glasgow Cathedral by King David in 1136 the lands of Balshagray were part of Govan given to the See of Glasgow. The estate lands were much reduced following the Reformation in 1560.

Over the centuries the name Balshagray had as many different spellings as it had meanings including 'the windy town', 'the town of the hunting of the King' and 'the town of the decayed and withered flock'

Perdyc or Partick, also granted to the See of Glasgow in 1136 was an established village unlike Broomhill which had no evidence of pre-historic or medieval habitation. Broomhill is first mentioned in the Rental Books of the Balshagray Estate in 1525. Cutting through the area was the Crow Road or Craw Road believed to derive from the Gaelic word *crodh* for cattle as it was a drove road for highlanders bringing their cattle to the city via the 'Stockiemuir' and the 'Switchback'.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the lands of Balshagrie, Hyndland and Balgray passed from John Stewart to Stewart and William Crawford who owned rope works and then to the Oswald family of Scotstoun. William Crawford repaired Old Balshagray House dated 1641 which still stood until the 20<sup>th</sup> century and created the tree lined Balshagray Avenue. By the 1841 Census there were 35 households in the area and by 1861 there were 131. Broomhill was planned as a suburb for the very wealthy but had no church, no school and very few shops. There were large villas where the high flats in Broomhill Drive now stand namely Oswald Hill, Oswald Bank, Hope Park, Thornwood and Beechwood all demolished in the 1960's.

There were two farms in the area Low Balshagray Farm east of the Fossil Grove and covering the land that is now Victoria Park and High Balshagray Farm covering an area south of the railway line. The original farmhouse of High Balshagray Farm was demolished in 1928. It stood in what is now Mitre Road and part of the original steading wall can still be seen at number 38. Broomhill began to develop from the 1870's. Victoria Park opened in 1887 with its original entrance in Balshagray Avenue entered through the ornamental gates donated by the Ladies of Partick. Much of the Broomhill area developed between 1888 and 1910 with fine villas, red sandstone terraces, tenement flats and churches.

This photograph was taken around 1911 and shows the newly opened church of Balshagray at Broomhill Cross with a tram emerging from Crow Road and the flats in Broomhill Drive then known as Inverclyde Gardens. The red sandstone tenement flats next to them have still to be built.



*Pamela Joss*

## Prayer Points

### 'Imputed' righteousness

*'Righteousness...shall be imputed to us.'* Romans 4:22-24

To understand the word 'imputed', picture funds being transferred from one account to another. Banks do it every day. Imagine yourself totally destitute and unable to pay your debts. Then in an astounding act of grace someone assumes all your debts, and at the same time transfers to your account such 'abundance' that you never have to work. That's what happened at the cross when God 'imputed' all your sins to Christ's account, and 'imputed' all His righteousness to your account. Mind-blowing, isn't it? Would you say, 'I can't allow you to pay all these debts alone, so I'll work to prove myself worthy of your grace'? We do that when we 'add' our good works to Christ's finished work. Salvation is like health food labelled 'no man-made additives'. Paul writes, 'For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV). In the same sense God 'made' Jesus who never sinned, to 'be' sin, He 'made' you who could never be righteous enough, to 'become' righteous in His eyes. 'But I feel such guilt when I sin.' You're supposed to! But when Christ took away all your sin, He took away all your guilt. So what are you feeling? Inner conflict! Your regenerated spirit is telling you that you can't indulge in sin; it's not who you are any more! Why did God do it this way? Because any righteousness we could achieve falls far short of what He requires. Rejoice – today God sees you clothed in the righteousness of Christ, therefore you're always loved and accepted by Him.

*Copied with permission from "The Word for Today." Free copies are available from UCB Operations Centre, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, England, ST6 4JF*

*Christine Hay  
Prayer Secretary*

## Persecuted Church

In the United Kingdom, we are extremely fortunate in having been able to implement an excellent vaccination programme, which is still in progress. More than 20 Million people have now received their second vaccination, and this has allowed some restrictions to be lifted or eased, which is good news. However, the new '*India variant*' is causing concern, and the need to increase the vaccination roll-out has become a priority.

However, the situation in many other countries such as India and Brazil, is giving rise to serious concerns. There has also been a noticeable increase in cases in Taiwan, Singapore, Russia, China and in South Africa. We have been fortunate in Scotland that all places of worship were able to open for worship in April, subject to various restrictions and the need to implement several safeguards, such as social distancing, the wearing of face coverings and the use of hand sanitisers.

Despite the affects of this global pandemic, there are those who fail to see the need to exercise caution and restraint, and the need to be vaccinated. Unfortunately, this applies equally to governments as it does to individuals. The Coronavirus is no respecter of age, social status, or even religious persuasion. Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus, plus those of no faith, continue to be affected by the virus.

In many countries when 'official aid' is being distributed, Christians are often at the end of the queue, simply because they are discriminated against. This is what is happening to Christians living in Pakistan and India and in many other countries, where it is already a 'hand to mouth' existence.

Sadly, the Coronavirus has not stopped the persecution and killing of Christians by militant Islamist Jihadi groups. Fresh attacks have taken place recently in Nigeria, Mozambique, Mali, Niger, and Ethiopia. In addition to the loss of life, which was considerable, many churches and property were destroyed.

**'CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH'**

*Robert Belmore*

## **Finance Update**

The Annual Accounts for 2020 have been approved by the Kirk Session. During this period a modest surplus was achieved. Although there was a substantial reduction in congregational giving and hall rental, the income received from the letting of the manse was significant. On the expenditure side spending on heating and repairs was reduced. The financial outlook for many churches and the church as a whole will remain challenging for the foreseeable future due to the impact of the pandemic and reduced numbers. It is still not possible to arrange the Annual Stated Meeting at present, but a copy of the accounts is due to be posted on our website shortly.

*Campbell Joss*  
*Treasurer*

## **Property Matters**

Our two sanctuary boilers that have faithfully been providing heat each Sunday since 1985 have come to the end of their operational life. We have now received 3 quotes for the replacement of the boilers which will be considered by the Board on 27th May. Once we have selected a preferred contractor we will require Presbytery approval to proceed with the works with the aim that the new boilers are installed before the winter heating season.

*David Hay*  
*Property Convenor*

## **COVID Protocols**

We continue to follow the Church of Scotland guidance to ensure that the sanctuary is COVID secure for Sunday worship. Over and above the changes to moving around the sanctuary and worship, this includes sanitising touch points each Saturday. A faithful team of volunteers have been providing this service on a rota basis. Duty teams normally meet at 10.30am on a Saturday morning and the task is completed in around 30 minutes. Following a number of people stepping down, if you felt able to join the rota that would be much appreciated. Please speak to David Hay.

## **BVP Midweek Meeting**

We are meeting at 7.30pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month via Zoom for 40 minutes. We enjoy a time of online fellowship catching up on news, a bible reading and prayer. Everyone is welcome to 'come along'! If you would like to receive the Zoom link, please get in touch via email ([bvpchurchofscotland@gmail.com](mailto:bvpchurchofscotland@gmail.com)).

## **August Herald**

Thanks to all who provided material for this May issue of the Herald. As the Herald has moved to a quarterly publication, please send items for the August issue by **Sunday 15th August** to [bvpheraldeditor@gmail.com](mailto:bvpheraldeditor@gmail.com).