



Balshagray Victoria Park
Church of Scotland

The Herald

Spring 2022

From our Interim Moderator, Rev Jonathan Keefe

Doubt

In the Winter Olympics the last couple of weeks, doubting has proved to be a great hindrance to medal winning. Confidence leads to the podium, not doubting.

But when it comes to our faith doubt can have an important role – some would say a vital role. If as Christians we have never doubted (and more importantly never spent time working through our doubts) we will not be in a good place at all when personal tragedy comes our way, or when an informed sceptical friend asks us sincerely, *'You don't believe there is just one true religion, do you?'* The foundation of our faith can be made stronger by questioning our doubts.

The traditional approach has often been to dismiss or ignore personal doubts and then dismiss the doubts of others, but Jesus encouraged neither of these approaches when people approached him with doubts. Thomas was certain he would never believe unless his hands felt the wounds on Jesus' live body; when Thomas stood before him Jesus encouraged Thomas to do just that, and also said, *'Do not disbelieve, but believe!'*. To not address our doubts is akin to acquiescing in our doubts, and that helps no-one.

Equally in Mark 9 Jesus met a man with a desperately sick son, and in the course of the discussion Jesus questions the man's uncertainty about whether or not he can heal his son, saying, *'All things are possible for one who believes.'*

Rather than claiming *'But I do believe'*, the man then is totally honest and confesses his faith as *'believing and not believing'* and asks for help with his doubts. After which Jesus blesses him by healing his son.

So while doubting is not commended as such, there is a strong imperative not to dismiss doubts or ignore them, and it seems only good will come from questioning them.

Yours, at times doubtfully,

Jonathan

Pastoral Care

If you would like to be part of the team that regularly visits people then please let me know.

If you have any pastoral care needs, or know of any of our members in need then please contact me, or your elder. Thanks.

Anne-Marie Masson

BVP Organist

After more than 20 years of playing the organ at BVP, Douglas Gibson will be retiring on Easter Sunday (17th April).

Music in the church will continue on the piano – and, occasionally, on the organ – thanks to volunteers.

An appreciation of his long and much-valued service will follow in the summer edition of "The Herald".

Unitary Constitution

You may remember taking part in the postal ballot in June 2021 on the future constitution of the church. 87 members voted unanimously to adopt the Unitary Constitution. We finally received our new constitution from CoS HQ in January. This means that we can now officially disband the Congregational Board, and from now on all fabric and finance matters will be the responsibility of the Kirk Session. The advantage of this move is a simplification in the decision making processes, and needed to be in place prior to any moves towards a potential union. We are enormously grateful to Iain Fergus, and all those who have at times served on the Board, for their faithful service and commitment to ensuring the upkeep of our much loved sanctuary and halls. If you have any further questions on this please let me know.

Ranald McTaggart
Session Clerk

Tea/Coffee after Church

It's been great to be able to restart our hospitality after the morning service. Many thanks to Annie Masson and Susan Gibson for running this in its early stages. We are however keen to put together a rota for the rest of 2022. To that end, we are looking for more volunteers to support with this. If you're interested in helping out this way, please speak to Christine McTaggart.

Upcoming Services

World Day of Prayer

Friday 4th March - Partick South Church @ 6.30pm

Communion

Sunday 13th March

Holy Week Services

Monday 11th - Wed 13th April – Jordanhill Church @ 8pm
Thursday 14th April – Communion Service – Partick South @ 6.30pm

Friday 15th April – Good Friday Service – Partick South @ 6.30pm

Sunday 17th April – Easter Service at Balshagray Victoria Park @ 11am

Property Matters

The new sanctuary boilers are now up and running. As they are hidden away in the basement, the new boilers can be seen in the below photo.

The generosity of the congregation in responding to the giving day helped to meet a significant proportion of the new boiler costs.

Other property works completed over the last period included roof and gutter repairs. In the next period various electrical works and the cleaning of the external gutters are scheduled to be completed.

David Hay
Fabric Convenor



Compassion

Compassion have written to thank us for the £1008 which will be used support Dinar, Jose and Martha throughout this year. Through this they will receive education, Christian teaching, clothing, nutritious meals and health care.

I have also received a letter from two of the children we support. Firstly, Jose who is eleven years old and lives in El Salvador writes:

'It is such a pleasure to say hello to you and I hope this letter finds you well. I want to share with you a little bit about my family and me. Let me tell you that I attend school. My favourite food is hamburgers because they are so yummy. My favourite sport is soccer and I love it because it is a lot of fun and keeps my body in good shape. My favourite Scripture is Psalms 91 because it tells us that God takes care of us. My favourite animals are the lion and the dog and I like them because they are cute. I love to go to the ocean during my vacation. I have been helping my sister over the past days. I ask you to pray for my family and me. I say goodbye with so much love.'

Seven year old Martha who lives in Uganda would like to tell us that her name means 'a royal lady.' When she grows up, Martha would like to be a nurse. Martha and her family are well and she is thankful for our prayers for them all. She enjoys the centre days at the project she attends and while there, likes playing skipping ropes with her friends.

Thank you once again for your support of the children and their families.

Joan Canavan

BVP Prayer Group

We continue to meet at 7.30pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month. This is via Zoom, and only lasts 40 minutes. It would be great to have some more people along to this meeting, and you might find it easier to attend 'virtually'! I can send you the link by email.

Ranald McTaggart

Preparation During Lent Leading towards Easter

At www.tearfund.org/campaigns/lent-devotional you can sign up for bite-sized reflections, prayers and poems to be sent each morning to encourage and inspire you over Lent.

Unfortunately, they have now run out of booklets for this year's devotional, but if you have access to the internet you can still receive the free emails.

Gift Aid Reclaimed

Over £10,000 was received by Balshagray Victoria Park from HMRC in January, as Gift Aid repayments relating to 2021 offerings.

As was the case a year ago, the reclaimed amount is less than in pre-pandemic years due to decreased offerings in 2021, resulting mainly from reduced attendances at services. However, the amount is an increase on that received last year.

As always I would like to thank everyone who contributed through the Gift Aid scheme in 2021, whether by weekly offering envelopes, standing orders or occasional cheques.

If you don't already participate in the Gift Aid scheme but do pay tax, then please do consider joining the scheme so that the Church may reclaim in connection with your offerings too. Please just ask me for information – no obligation!

Also, if you don't already do so then you might want to think about setting up a **standing order** to BVP, which would avoid the inconvenience not only of finding change to put into the weekly envelope but also that of tracking which weeks have been 'paid'. This would also reduce the amount of cash to be handled by those counting the offering in these COVID times.

Roberta Yule
Gift Aid Convenor

BALSHAGRAY VICTORIA PARK CHURCH 2022 BUDGET

<u>INCOME</u>	BUDGET	ACTUAL 2021
FWO	5000	5480
ORDINARY COLLECTION	500	494
DIRECT PAYMENTS	30000	31205
MANSE RENTAL	14500	14636
TAX RECOVERED	10272	8523
OTHER OFFERINGS/DONATIONS	3000	4800
HALL RENTAL	2000	1720
INCOME FROM GENERAL TRUSTEES	<u>1000</u>	<u>1260</u>
TOTAL	66272	68118

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
MINISTRY & MISSION	39635	36799
PRESBYTERY DUES	2677	2911
LOCUM/PULPIT SUPPLY	3000	8316
CLEANER	2000	845
FABRIC/REPAIRS	5000	4305
HEAT/LIGHT	7000	5877
INSURANCE	6000	5880
STATIONERY	500	460
MISCELLANEOUS	<u>1500</u>	<u>1389</u>
TOTAL	67312	66782

NOTES ON BUDGET.

1. The estimated income and expenditure suggests that BVP will be in a good position to cover all costs this year.
2. The claim for Gift Aid has already been completed and shows a good increase from 2021. Many thanks to Roberta for her efficiency and it can be mentioned that HMRC were very quick to respond.
3. Hall rental continues to be affected by the pandemic. Some users have stopped their lets.
4. Ministry and Mission costs are up this year due to the subsidy no longer applying but there is likely to be a saving on locum costs.
5. Fabric costs from 2021 do not include the new boiler as this was covered by the Gift Appeal and money received from the Church of Scotland held fund. Expenditure for 2022 is hard to predict especially as the future of BVP remains uncertain but there are still substantial reserves in line with accounting guidelines.
6. Heat and light costs are expected to rise due to current trends.

Introductory Safeguarding Training

The following training courses are intended for anyone intending to take up a controlled position within the congregation or for existing PVG cleared persons who are requiring a refresher course. Refresher courses are now required for continuing PVG registration. Please copy the co-ordinator, Colin Murray, into your application.

Date: Wednesday 23 February, 2022

Time: 19:00 Duration: 2 hours Online – Zoom

Date: Saturday 30 April, 2022

Time: 19:00 Duration: 2 hours Online – Zoom

Date: Wednesday 1 June, 2022

Time: 19:00 Duration: 2 hours Cathcart Trinity Church

To register for any of the courses listed above please note bookings are made through the presbytery office. You can contact them by email Glasgow@churchofscotland.org.uk or telephone 0141 332 6606.

They will require the name, congregation, email address and phone number of each person for whom you want to book a place. Contact details are required in case of last minute changes, which would only be in extreme situations.

Thank you,

Colin Murray
Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Sustaining Grace

'My grace is sufficient for you.' 2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV

There are two kinds of grace. The first is *saving grace*, which means that the moment we place our trust in Christ, God wipes the entire record of our sins clean.

The second is *sustaining grace*. Sustaining grace doesn't promise us an easy, trouble-free life, but instead promises that God's strengthening presence will be with us through the difficult times and struggles. Paul wrote: 'I was given a thorn in my flesh... Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness"' (vv. 7-9 NIV). It's a very vivid image – a thorn piercing the soft skin and lodging beneath the surface, bringing a reminder of our weaknesses with every move we make. But along with that comes the reminder that God's with us in our weakness, holding us, letting us lean on Him for strength, and saying to us, 'My grace is sufficient for you.'

John Newton, the Anglican clergyman who wrote the hymn 'Amazing Grace', found that God's grace was sufficient. On the day his beloved wife, Mary, died, he found the strength to preach a Sunday sermon. The next day he visited church members, and later on, he conducted her funeral. Looking back he wrote: 'The Bank of England is too poor to compensate for such a loss as mine. But the Lord, all-sufficient God, speaks, and it is done. Let those who know Him, and trust Him, be of good courage. He can give them strength according to their day. He can increase their strength as their trials increase ... And what He *can* do, He has promised He *will* do.'

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Christine Hay, Prayer Secretary

The Persecuted Church

Christmas is now behind us, and as we move forward into yet another New Year, the sad reality is that for many hundreds of thousands of Christians throughout the world, the outlook for 2022 remains bleak and uncertain. Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world, and in many countries, Christians continue to be deprived of true religious freedom, despite laws permitting it. Sadly, Christians are still subjected to increasing religious intolerance, torture, and imprisonment, plus many other forms of persecution, such as harassment, the confiscation of property and the lack of basic human rights.

There are many radical and extreme Muslim organisations and Jihadist groups, such as the al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda, Taliban, and Boko Haram, who are very active in many African countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Nigeria, Mali, Eritrea, Libya and more recently Mozambique. Christians in Afghanistan are more at risk following the overthrow of the elected government and the imposition of Sharia law. The governments of Iran, Algeria, North Korea, and China, continue to persecute Christians.

In India, Hindu extremists continue to be very active. Attacks on Christians, and the destruction of churches and property is on the increase, and many states are imposing anti-conversion laws, leading to more intimidation of Christians.

Sadly, on Christmas Day, the charred bodies of at least 35 civilians killed by the Myanmar Army (Burma) were discovered in a predominately Christian area, near Hpruso Township.

The Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar are longstanding partners. The Moderator of the General Assembly, Lord Wallace, wrote to the Foreign Secretary expressing his deep concern about the widespread abuse and atrocities that are taking place.

Throughout 2021 many attacks took place in different countries and some of the attacks were indiscriminate, killing not only Christians, but also many Muslims and those of no faith. In India, and some African countries, Christian women even as young as 14yrs continue to be abducted and sold to the highest bidder as 'sex slaves' or forced into marrying Muslims. Sadly, this 'New Year' will doubtless bring fresh challenges, more threats, plus acts of violence and persecution against our Christian brothers and sisters.

PAKISTAN – in the Diocese of Peshawar, two clergy were attacked and shot on their way home from All Saint's Church. Pastor William Siraj was killed, and the Rev Patrick Naeem was severely injured. Thankfully, he is recovering from his injuries. There have been many life-threatening incidents against Christians and the Christian Church in Peshawar.

CHINA – beginning on 1st March, the Chinese authorities will have greater control over online religious content. Organisations and individuals based in China who wish to provide religious information online, will require to obtain prior permission from the Department of Religious Affairs. Foreign organisations, and individuals, will no longer be permitted to operate online religious information or services within Chinese territory.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO – on Christmas Day, at a restaurant in Beni, whilst more than 30 diners were enjoying celebrating Christmas, a suicide bomber tried to gain access in order to set off an explosive device. The Police stopped the attacker from entering the restaurant, but he managed to set off the device at the entrance. The bomber and seven diners were killed, and more than twenty others injured. The authorities blamed the attack on the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) an Islamist group with links to the Islamic State (ISIS).

SRI LANKA – according to the NCEASL (the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka) Christians are suffering increased intimidation and persecution by Buddhist extremists. Christians only make up circa 7% of the population.

CUBA – 2021 was a very difficult year for the Christian Church in this Caribbean Island nation. Major shortages of food and other essentials gave rise to widespread protests. The President issued an order to crack down on the protestors. Church leaders were amongst those who were targeted – many were detained or just 'disappeared'. Some Pastors including Pastor Lorenzo Fajardo are still detained in a maximum-security prison.

"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord will deliver him in times of trouble." Psalm 41 v 1 (NIV)

'CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THE SUFFERING CHURCH'

Robert Belmore

Letter Puzzle *Can you fill in the blanks (each line stands for a letter) and then rearrange the initial letters to form a word connected to a season?*

The chief priests and the whole _____ were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death. He was _____ in the Garden of Gethsemane. In the courtyard of the High Priest, Peter denied _____ times that he knew Jesus. After those denials, _____ a cock crowed. Jesus was put on _____ and then condemned to death. The cross was the Roman method of _____. Mary the _____ of Jesus, was watching as He was crucified. After being in the tomb for three days, Jesus was _____ to life again. Two people were walking along the road to _____ after the Resurrection when Jesus appeared to them. After His Resurrection, Jesus also appeared to His disciples and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey _____ I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

INITIAL LETTERS: _ _ _ _ _

WORD: _ _ _ _ _

The Balshagray Church Players

A recent tidy out of some church cupboards has unearthed a small treasure trove of programmes from the Balshagray Church Players.

The newly formed drama group with elder Alex Dobson as producer gave their first performances of two one-act plays in the church hall on February 23rd and 24th February 1950. It was clearly a success as on Wednesday 29th November they were back for three nights performing three one-act comedies.

Doors open at 7pm, curtain at 7.30pm 'Heaven on Earth', 'The Wee Motto' and 'Orange Blossom' - an evening of entertainment for the princely sum of threepence. To add to the enjoyment ices were available to purchase during each interval. By all accounts they played to sell-out audiences.

The stage was set up in the small hall and the partition, as it was then, opened to create one large hall.

There were many leading lights in the group including Jacky Sinclair's mum and dad, Willie and Mary Tulloch and Roz Wallace's mum and dad, Robert and Dorothy Glen. A young Jacky trod the boards in a 1952 production of 'Welcome Uncle Joe' as Jeanie his younger daughter. Roz Wallace was Betsy the maid in the 1969 production of 'A' Jean Tamson's Bairns'.

The performers relied on the unsung heroes of any drama group, director, lighting, carpenter, make-up, prompts, sound effects and more including the ice-cream seller.

The group also performed in many drama festivals and competitions with the Scottish Community Drama Association where they would perform a one-act play to be judged against other drama groups.

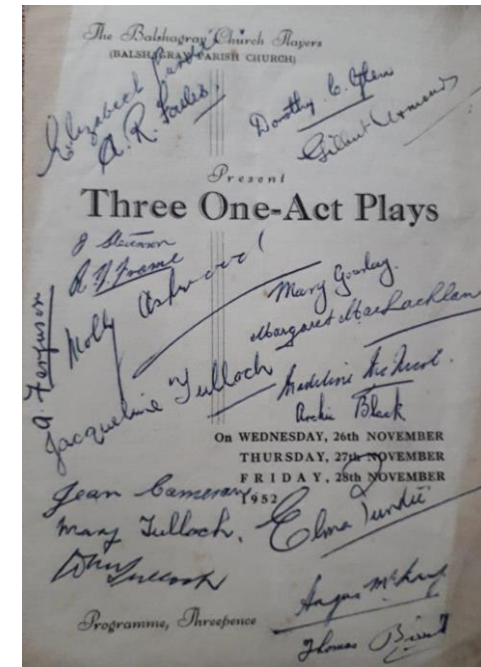
Props were made or borrowed and Knightswood Hospital, Coca-Cola Bottlers and Ross's Dairies Ltd were amongst those who lent props.

What comes across from these old programmes is the sense of shared endeavour and above all else that they were really good fun. Although this group has long since folded it is quite clear that they were A Class Act!

Exit stage left.

Curtain.

Pamela Joss



Answers to Letter Puzzle – Don't look if you want to try it!

Sanhedrin; arrested; three; immediately; trial; execution; mother; raised; Emmaus; everything **WORD:** EASTERTIME

Summer "Herald"

Thanks to all who provided material for this spring issue of "The Herald". Please send items by midnight on **Sunday 15th May 2022** to heraldeditorbvp@gmail.com for the summer issue.