



Cluny & Monymusk Churches Together Newsletter

November 2021



Letter from the Minister

This short newsletter is to keep you informed of the changes and challenges that face us as we move forward into 2022. I know more than most how challenging change is. Until now I have been comfortable working my way for the last 30 years amongst you; yet for the final years of my ministry this will change as we move toward a team ministry. I know how unsettling all this is. It's not what we expected when we joined the church or indeed when I felt called to minister to the folk of Cluny and Monymusk and I can assure that this is not how I expected my final years to be; first held back by Covid and now moving towards a parish grouping in one form or another.

By May 2022 we should see an agreement reached within our parish grouping. At the same time, we should see plans approved for an enhanced Presbytery covering not just from Strathdon to Ellon and Westhill to Huntly but an area from Shetland in the north to south of Stonehaven in the south. Our new Presbytery will encompass six former Presbyteries and will have a number of full-time staff. I will be stepping down as Presbytery Clerk probably at the end of 2022 but maybe earlier depending upon progress. This will free up some time for me and I hope to be able to devote more of it to our congregations' journey towards the wider parish grouping. I have been very involved in local and regional planning for the future of the church and once this is approved I will look to take a step back and allow others to move it forward.

I am sorry if I have not been what you wanted me to be over these last couple of years but then I have not been what I wanted to be partly because of changes in the wider church but also because of Covid.

I have been hesitant to resume regular home visits during this pandemic. When infection rates fell during the early summer I started visiting again and it did make me realise how much I had been missing them. Then as infection rates began to rise I have been visiting only in times of real need. Some may think I am being over cautious but my main reason is that I want to protect you. That is why in church we are still using social distancing although legally we are not forced to do so. Our hope is that people will feel safe coming to church. Part of this safety is due to our wonderful cleaners at both places of worship who have helped us to keep to the church guidelines on cleanliness. A huge thanks to them all.

Folks while as I have said I have restricted my regular visits please let me know if you would like or need a visit and I will make very effort to see you.

I wish you and yours every blessing

Euan Glen

Minister of Cluny lw Monymusk

Joint Worship

During the second half of 2021 the congregations agreed to hold joint worship each Sunday on alternative months in each place of worship. So far it has worked well with worship in Monymusk Church and in Cluny Church Hall. The services begin at 10.00am. This pattern is to be reviewed at our joint Kirk Session meeting in late November. I expect it may be continued in 2022 but the elders and committee members will make the final decision. With smaller numbers attending this saves money to heat buildings and also energy as we seek to reduce our carbon emissions. We are using Cluny Hall rather than the church because the windows can open and a ventilation system allows a change of air so that the doors remain closed. Monymusk has no such option so the doors remain open to allow ventilation; so please wrap up well when you come to Monymusk Church!

Parish Group News

There are now monthly meetings of a Steering Group held with representatives from all the congregations involved with the parish grouping journey. I am grateful to Anne Harrison, Ann Wilkinson, Sylvia Henry, Dot Gray, Susan Reid and Louise Craigmyle for their participation representing the congregations of Cluny and Monymusk. They are working hard for us all and we are coming closer to making decisions which will have a direct impact on all the congregations going forward. The direction of travel just now is for a union of all the congregations being served by a team ministry of 3 ministers. That is still a bit far off and is likely to come into being once one of the ministers leaves to facilitate change.

There is a list later on in this newsletter of activities held across our parish grouping which you may want to participate in.

Anne Harrison and Dot Gray have been working with the session clerks of the other congregations to help prepare the way going forward and to ease some of the administrative work being carried by the ministry team. A report from Anne is set out below.

Parish Grouping - Session Clerks focus group

We are all in the same boat throughout Scotland, all attempting to identify new ways of working within a pared down structure of presbyteries, fewer ministers and reduced finances.

The new presbytery mission plan and deadline of December 2022 to formulate an agreement amongst the six parishes of Cluny, Monymusk, Kemnay, Echt and Midmar, Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch and Kintore encouraged the six session clerks to meet. Firstly, to get to know one another and secondly to discuss how we might benefit the work of the proposed parish grouping as above.

We have now had four meetings, three of them held in churches. For me, it has been interesting to visit the other churches, observe the different ways they are organised and recognise their situation within their own parishes. We have two town churches with a number of office bearers, and then four rural parishes with a limited number of office bearers. However, through discussion we find we all face the same challenges – fewer people attending church with the resulting fewer willing hands. We all have similar tasks but some have committees and others to share the

load – others like Cluny and Monymusk work with a small happy band of volunteers.

The Steering Group had a presentation of a variety of different models currently either being implemented across Scotland or being investigated. More recently we have based our discussions on the Shetland model which now exists as one parish, one session, multiple churches with local leadership teams. This seems to be the preferred way forward for ourselves. Together we are discussing the new overarching session and its role, also the roles of the local leadership teams. There is a lot to tease out. No one has all the answers. The session clerks group acknowledges that the way forward has to be for us to work together to support the four ministers and the work of the Steering Group where we can.

Euan will be outlining more information on this but suffice to say that any proposed plan will come back to each session and congregation to be agreed.

The session clerks have also tried to identify ways in which we can share good practice and/or resources to eliminate duplication of effort or finances and begin to work more closely across parish boundaries to start the process of becoming one. We hope to create a calendar of activities that happen regularly within each parish with a view to sharing this on some kind of platform for others to see – this may be via the church website, on Facebook or within a newsletter.

Communication is vital within our own churches to let people know what is happening and although we know the future will be different, we are all trying to work out the best way to ensure a worshipping community exists in Cluny and Monymusk albeit perhaps differently.

Parish Grouping- Digital worship

The congregation of Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch does not have a minister and the four remaining ministers have committed to offering ministry support to that congregation by taking services, carrying out pastoral work for weddings, funerals etc. and acting as a joint interim moderator for them. Euan has been to Blairdaff Chapel of Garioch on a few occasions both for Sunday worship and to conduct a funeral and to arrange a wedding for next year. Because of a shortage of ministers, it has been agreed that we shall use a digital service when Euan is not available due to his commitment elsewhere in the parish grouping. This will be an

enhanced copy of the weekly online joint service and will be shown on the screen through the digital projector. It is not the same as having a minister in the flesh, but it is the way the parish grouping feel we can cover our responsibilities and still maintain local worship with fewer ministers available and may be more common in the years to come. There have been services like this in Cluny and Monymusk churches with the next scheduled digital service due on 12th December. Notification of dates will be shared with the congregation.

Parish Group Diary Dates

Every Week

All in-church services in each of the Area Group 3 buildings are 10:00, except Echt, at 10:15

Midmar opens only on the first Sunday of each month meantime, with Echt the remaining Sundays

Cluny and Monymusk are alternate months, October in Cluny, November in Monymusk.

Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch alternate weeks with Blairdaff (even dates) and Chapel of Garioch (odd dates).

Sunday	Explorers Sunday School Bible Chat	Kemnay	10:00
		Kintore Zoom	19:00
Monday	Bible Study Girls Brigade	Kemnay	19:30
		Kintore	
Tuesday	Lunch Club	Kemnay	12:00 – 14:00
	Mainly Music (pre-school)	Monymusk Hall	13:45
Wednesday	Quiet Reflection	Midmar	11:00 – 12:00
	Midweek Service (FB & YouTube)	Monymusk	10:00
Thursday	Lunch Club	Kemnay	12:00 – 14:00
	Little Lambs of Kemnay Women’s Fellowship	Kemnay Echt	14:00 19:30

	(fortnightly)		
Friday	Little Lambs of Kemnay Drop In Coffee - Foodbank Donations	Kemnay Kintore	09:00 10:00 – 12:00

Every Month

2nd Sunday	Messy Church	Kintore	15:00 – 17:30
1st Sunday	Sunday School	Cluny Monymusk	10.00

For all the above, please visit the relevant church website or Facebook page for more specific details of how to join.

Christmas

While it is difficult with any certainty to plan events for Christmas we are hoping to hold special services in both churches to mark a return to live worship during the Christmas period. It will be different from previous years because of Covid guidelines and the need to clean the churches between services. So far what we hope to do is

16th December 7.00pm Carols in Monymusk Square with the Bon Accord Silver Band. – If wet we shall use Monymusk Church

19th December- some form of family service 10.00am - details to follow

24th December Christmas Eve family worship in Monymusk Church 7.00pm

25th December Christmas Day family worship in Cluny Church 10.30am

26th December Boxing Day Family worship in Cluny Hall 10.00am

2nd January Worship for new year in Monymusk Church at 10.00am with holy communion at the close of worship

Please note these dates are subject to change dependent on circumstances

Christmas Fundraising

For nearly two years now many of our seasonal events have had to be cancelled or curtailed for safety reasons. This year however we are hopeful that come December, we can begin to plan a return of some of these popular Christmas activities and you will find more about them in this newsletter.

Similarly, fundraising events have been reduced during the year resulting in a decrease in income. However, there is still the opportunity to purchase any of the following items which in turn will help redress the fundraising shortfall.

Holly Wreaths – to order see below. Holly, ivy, assorted greenery, ribbon - £15.00

Monymusk Church Christmas cards – available in Monymusk Post Office. £2.50 for 5 cards

Monymusk Tea Towels – featuring every house in the village. Available at Monymusk Post Office or Monymusk Church - £5.00 each

To order a wreath, please contact -

Louise on 651359

Dot on 01467 460321

Or Anne Glen on Monymusk Church Facebook

Finances

There is no finance report included with this newsletter but as minister I wanted to say a sincere and heartfelt thank you to Scott Langlands for his many years of being our Church treasurer. Never did I imagine, when I met Scott and Lynda to make plans for their wedding, that they would both play such a big role in the life of our congregations; for that I am truly grateful. Scott initially took on the role for Cluny Church but for the last few years he has served as treasurer to both congregations. We have greatly appreciated his hard work on our behalf.

It is true to say that the finances of both congregations have taken a hit because of church closures and falling numbers attending so I offer a sincere thanks to everyone who has continued to support the congregations through direct giving, through weekly offering envelopes, by putting money into the plate and by supporting our limited fundraising events. Keep up the good works folks.

Children's Work

The Sunday School resumed their gatherings on the first Sunday in October. There was a large group of children and it was brilliant to see them gathered in Cluny Church for our worship before heading to the hall for their activities. The same pattern happened in Monymusk in November and again a good crowd gathered. Special thanks to Susan and her team of helpers offering this valuable resource for the church.

Mainly music continues to be well supported and meets on Tuesday afternoons in the village hall at Monymusk starting at 1.45pm. For any information about the children's work please contact Susan Reid.

The Ministry Team

Echt and Midmar

Rev Sheila Mitchell was inducted as parish minister in 2018 after serving for 17 years as a chaplain in the NHS.

Kemnay

Rev Joshua Mikelson who was inducted to the charge in 2015. Joshua is from Washington in USA.

Kintore

Rev Neil Meyer who was inducted to the charge in 2014. Neil comes from South Africa where he worked for the Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa serving in parishes in Johannesburg and then the farming community of Elgin in the western Cape region

Cluny and Monymusk

Rev Euan Glen who was ordained and inducted to Cluny lw Monymusk in 1992. Euan serves on a number of local, regional and national church committees and is Presbytery Clerk for Gordon Presbytery.

Email Updates

In order to communicate quickly and effectively with our members we ask that you provide us, on a voluntary basis, with a contact email address. This would be securely held, used to communicate church information only and would mean that you can get any updates or information efficiently. Please email gglen@churchofscotland.org.uk