



Arbroath and District Church of Scotland

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March 2024

WELCOME to the first news sheet of Arbroath & District Church of Scotland and to your current Ministry Team supported by Rev Jonathan Humphrey and Keith Scott providing locum cover and Rev Norman Nicol providing pulpit supply. Following the Service of Union on 29th February 2024, we now move forward together with one Kirk Session. Much more information will be available in our first full correspondence as the Kirk Session determines the best way to operate to enable us to share God's love with one another and our local community but for now a little more about the team, planned Easter services and the banking changes that are taking place.

Peter

Thirty years ago I was single at college preparing to complete my degree before moving to Aberdeen for further study. That's where I met Rona. Twenty years ago we were married and preparing to move to Friockheim with a five year old and a bump.

Nothing stays the same. We are constantly surrounded by change. Who would have thought back then that the internet, mobile phones, and social media, would become tools to bring the whole world to our doorstep? Certainly since Covid many now connect and worship online. We know that the church has also seen huge changes, and we now are embarking on a significant institutional change as we form a new union covering Arbroath and District.



We can find ourselves looking to the past with a sense of longing for what, and for whom we have lost. There is nothing wrong with that. We remember what was good in the past with a desire to recapture what was good and right and true because we value what is good and right and true. We can also look forward to the new thing that God is doing; to what we shall receive from his gracious hand.

I am looking forward to discovering the joys of working as part of a team with Chris and Carla and whomever is to join us in the months to come. I am also looking forward to sharing in the mission of Jesus Christ as, together with sisters and brothers across six worshipping locations, we proclaim Christian unity to a community and world so often fractured and divided one from another.

The adjustments we have all been facing are daunting and I share that sense, but I firmly believe that the prayer of Jesus in John 17, that the church may be one so that the world will believe, is the great hope and promise by which the Kingdom may grow. For too long the world has looked at the church and dismissed the message we proclaim because they see division. We have an opportunity to shine as Christ's light to the world, to be that community on a hill, to be the enduring salt of the Covenant preserving and flavouring the land. We can also be certain that change will continue, and none of us know what the church will be preparing for in twenty or thirty years. What we do know is that Jesus will still love his church, and that deathly ways shall not prevail against her.

It won't be easy, and we won't get everything right, but with commitment to God in Christ Jesus expressed in commitment to each other then we shall take the best of what was promised in the past into the Kingdom's future and the name of Jesus will be proclaimed forever.

We are the people of Jesus, and his Kingdom is ever near to the one of faith.

Let us rejoice and be glad. Many blessings.

Peter

Carla

Hi everyone, my name is Carla. I studied Social Sciences at Edinburgh Napier University and completed a Masters in English Language Teaching at University of St Andrews. After university, I became the youth work coordinator at St Andrew's Church in 2018. I then became Ministries Development Staff as Children & Family worker for Arbroath and District in February 2023. In my time off, I love crafting, baking and building Lego!



I believe that going forward, we need to look outside the walls of our churches to see how what we are doing connects children, young people and families with what is happening within our congregations. We have strong ties with our local primary schools with schools visiting churches, events to learn about Christmas and Easter, and the Bible Alive programme for P6's that runs through the whole story of the bible. I am so looking forward to strengthening these relationships and connecting with as many children as possible.

In a lot of my work, we have already begun working together as a collective of churches for example, through our large school events – Bubblegum 'n' Fluff for P5, Easter Code for P6 and previously Popcorn & Cake for P7. For many years now, these programmes have brought together groups of volunteers from many of the churches in the area to lead the children in their activities. I am so excited to start out new family ministry where families will be learning about God through activities, crafts and Lego, hearing His Word and singing songs worshipping Him.

I am filled with so much hope in God's plan for our union in this community and throughout our whole country. One of my strongest goals is to give children and young people a positive opinion and outlook of church. I would be thrilled if we can create lasting, happy, positive memories for people in our community. Showing that God loves every one of them.

Chris

When Mike and I arrived in Arbroath at the end of October 2020 – fresh from a 15-month probationary period significantly impacted by the pandemic to begin to serve God amongst the good folks of the West Kirk and the community on the western side of Arbroath, I really wasn't expecting what began 6 months later following the 2021 General Assembly.



Our three girls, students for the first time, had been joined by their mother, a student second time around as I responded to God's call and the 5+ years of training were a joy and a challenge, a time of testing and of many blessings – much of what I suspect they should be as we are asked to explore and question what we believe in to deepen and strengthen our faith.

We moved from Glenrothes – our family base for 25+ years and soon found ourselves loving the town and surrounding area – the sea, the sand and the cliffs, the surrounding countryside and the town itself, our dog Sally (sadly no longer with us) providing lots of opportunities to get to know the area.

Whilst I know that the discussions, questions, head scratching and soul searching that have taken place over the last couple of years have been difficult, as a newcomer I have been immensely grateful for the opportunity it's given me to get to know folks in other churches across the district, to begin to learn more of the traditions and histories that are a part of the area and the wonderful array of talents and experience that are around.

We unite as one congregation in what will be six places of worship and a Mission Centre on 29th February – a day that only occurs once every four years in the Gregorian calendar. A day when traditionally things are turned upside down and since the days of St Patrick, women can propose to men! I like the explanation of Alexander Boxer who said that the need for a leap year to resolve the number of days in a calendar year is a great reminder that "the universe is really good at defying our attempts to find nice, pretty, aesthetically pleasing systems to fit it in." I suspect that our God is the same and hope and pray that as we discover together where and how God is calling us to serve in our area that we will trust what might at the moment seem a little bit upside down to be the very thing that unites and inspires us.

Chris xx

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