

CLUNY & MONYMUSK CHURCHES TOGETHER

NEWSLETTER

October 2022



LETTER FROM THE MANSE

It has been some time since I last wrote an item for the church newsletter and there is a lot to talk about. For the first time in my 30 year ministry we are producing a joint newsletter for both congregations that is going to all the homes in both parishes as this is an extension to the way we have been sharing much since coming out of lockdown. Further on in the newsletter you will find an article about the Presbytery Mission Plan which details both the ministry cover going forward and the future of the buildings. This is hard reading and the cause of upset but matters in the national Church of Scotland and locally mean we can't carry on as it's always been, change had to happen and while we wish it had happened to other people it affects us directly. There is information about a potential union of congregations of Blairdaff & Chapel of Garioch, Cluny, Echt & Midmar, Kemnay, Kintore and Monymusk to form the new single parish probably called Bennachie Parish Church of Scotland. There is an article about our children's work with mainly music midweek and Sunday School on Sundays. There are comments from Anne Harrison from Cluny and from some from Monymusk about the upcoming changes and finally there is a collection of items in the newsletter about upcoming events and special services which I do hope that you can come along and spend some time with us. Sometimes we get so caught up in the local that we fail to see the bigger picture. Change is affecting all aspects of life just now, from the health service to working practices and the cost of living crisis. While the

church does have to think about its future, we also have to be able to recognise and in our own way help others in our parishes who are going through times of great change, maybe through work or family circumstances, through ill health or bereavement. To my horror I look back on the last couple of years and see far too much time has been spent on trying to keep the church going rather than being the church. In all this change and challenge it is important that while buildings may close and church may be done differently to what we have all grown up expecting it to be, that the church is still active and God is still present in the hearts of those who follow him and his love reaches out to all people in good times and bad through our acts of loving kindness and concern. We are not giving up being His church and in future newsletters we shall let you know our plans for the future in our service of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

If anyone would like a visit please get in touch.

May God bless you and yours at this time

Euan Glen Minister Cluny & Monymusk congregations.

PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN

The last 4 years has been a time of transition for the Church of Scotland which began before Covid was even imagined but which was heightened by the onset of Covid and the lockdowns that followed. This has resulted in a serious wake up call to the Church, that it could not continue as it always had done in all our lifetimes and that things had to change. A financial and property review was undertaken primarily by the Assembly Trustees (who exercise authority over the day to day running of the Church of Scotland) and the General Trustees (who oversee and technically own in trust on behalf of local congregations most church property in Scotland) and the outcome of this was that ministry numbers will have to be reduced to around 600 full time ministries which will include around 450 parish ministers and 150 other ministry type staff (youth workers, mission workers etc) . An Act of the General Assembly of our Church (the annual decision making authority in our Church) was passed called the Presbytery Mission Plan Act which instructed the church to review where it was and where it hopes to be in 5 years time. The number of ministers available was allocated to each

Presbytery and our allocation to Gordon Presbytery went down from 27 to 16 ministry posts and a Presbytery Mission Plan was drawn up over 2 years of negotiation and meetings which was presented to the Presbytery of Gordon on 1st October 2022.

This plan stated that Cluny Church and Hall would be given a (b) classification which meant that it had to be closed sold or otherwise disposed of within 5 years of the plan being approved. The Kirk Session and Board members of Cluny decided at a special meeting held in September 22 that it would propose that the date to be entered into The Presbytery Mission Plan be 31st December 2024. The Session also felt that it would put the buildings on the market before that date probably starting in 2023. These are difficult times for everyone involved with Cluny Church.

The plan stated that Monymusk Church would be give an (a) classification which means that it should remain open during the next 5 years and beyond.

At the time of writing this newsletter the Presbytery Mission Plan is not yet finally approved as once approved by Presbytery has to be approved by the General Trustees and the Faith Nurture Forum(a central Church committee with oversight in presbytery planning matters) .

As minister of both congregations I have tried to stay neutral in the preparation of materials to be submitted to Presbytery and have kept out of meetings with the Presbytery Planning Committee. Both congregations worked hard in this task and I want to thank all Session/board/committee members for their hard work. They could not have done any more. I do hope that going forward we can continue the close working relationships that have been built up especially during the last 10 years and move forward as the church in these parishes as best as we can.

BENNACHIE PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

The Presbytery Mission Plan that I have mentioned above has decided that the Presbytery should be divided into area groups and we are in a group comprising our 2 congregations together with Blairdaff & Chapel of Garioch, Echt & Midmar, Kemnay and Kintore congregations. Currently this area group is served by 4 parish ministers (Blairdaff &

Chapel of Garioch is vacant) and we have been meeting together both ministers in groups and with representatives of each congregation to find out how best we can work together going forward. The Presbytery Plan states that at the end of the first 5 years of the Plan being in place our ministry numbers will be reduced to 2 parish ministers and a 0.5 FTE MDS post. How we are going to reduce the staff is not yet clear though it is likely that I shall be retired during the 5 years of the plan being in place.

The steering group has been working on the probability that we shall unite with our neighbours in the area group to form one large parish served by initially 4 ministers in a team ministry and a 0.5 FTE MDS post. The procedure for union is that each Kirk Session has to approve a Basis of Union Document and then the congregations have to approve it. While it might be nice to bury your head in the sand and say we are not changing, we like things the way we have them now, there does seem to me to be little option just now and there will be an initial benefit of team ministry where ministers support one another and share the workload. There is a lot of work to do this Autumn as we try to detail how we can work together as one parish but with local area worship groups. Technology will play a part going forward as ministry numbers reduce and we learn how to stream services etc. Monymusk Church is planning a major upgrading of its audio visual capabilities to tie in with our neighbours facilities. This will result in a new sound system, installation of flat screens computer and cameras to stream services live. A major investment in 2023.

Please as in all the items in the newsletter pray for God's guidance as we move forward and please remember that whatever the future the church is about the people not the places and it is about gathering to praise God for what he has done and will continue to do for us through his Son Jesus Christ. Please don't give up worshipping him wherever and however you do that.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Cluny and Monymusk Sunday School

Families meet on a Sunday morning (10-00 am) approximately once a month alternating along with the congregations in Cluny or Monymusk churches, to have fun, learn the Christian stories and play our part in the church and in our local communities.

We meet next in Monymusk church on Sunday November 6th at 10.00am for the story of the servant who didn't understand about forgiving.

You are very welcome to join us.

For more information please contact Susan Reid
reidsatmonymusk@talk21.com (01467651480)

Anna and Susan.

mainly music

For Families with pre school children and babies. You are very welcome to join us a Tuesday afternoon in Monymusk Hall from 1-30 to 3-00 pm for songs and rhymes, a snack for the children, toys and activities, tea and cake for Mums ,Dads and Grannies.

The cost is £3

For more information or to register to come along please contact Susan Reid reidsatmonymusk@talk21.com (01467651480)
the mainly music team.

THE ROLLER COASTER

At times I have honestly felt that I wanted to climb off this roller coaster that has been gathering speed over the last couple of years. Euan has been telling us for years that changes were to come in the Church of Scotland, that numbers of people worshipping were reducing, numbers of ministers were also reducing and costs to keep all our church buildings going were spiralling. We were very like the ostrich that keeps its head well under ground and hopes the passing squalls would just do that, and pass. Well they haven't!

Various forms and statistics have been gathered over recent years and all fed in to the Church of Scotland administrators. Little did we know or actually consider that in the not too distant future drastic proposals would be made, with very little opportunity for challenge. We all knew that hard decisions had to be made, but not in our church....

It has been such a difficult six months for us at Cluny as our friends and neighbours in Monymusk also grappled with decisions that have been made about us. Submissions to reverse changes have in some ways been successful but have had a knock-on negative effect on the other church. And so it is with Monymusk and Cluny resulting in the closure of Cluny Church.

This will bring an end to worship centred in Cluny that has been in existence since the 1200s. We all know of the different churches that have been around the area, in Sauchen and at the Thomson's Haulage site as well as near Linton too. Times and religious doctrine change. However, we are still a worshipping community but in the future we will probably go to one of our neighbouring churches on a Sunday. The new Parish of Bennachie encompasses not only different churches but different people and ministers. We know it will be challenging for the reduced number of ministers to serve all communities, and it will also rely on us, the members, to give support and offer help when we can.

It is a very sad time for Cluny folk, some of whom have been born and brought up in Cluny parish and have faithfully served this church and community well. Others of us have come into the parish, and have enjoyed the friendship and support of the people in Cluny.

We met as a Board and Session just over a week ago and after the wailing and gnashing of teeth over the decision to close our church, we also felt we did ourselves proud in our submission to the Presbytery planning group, and although it failed, we have to move on.

There are lots of events planned in the coming months, as you will see from the Calendar as well as within this Newsletter. We are to hold a Harvest Supper in early October, a Soup and Sweet lunch after Remembrance service and our ever-popular Christmas Carol Service will

take place on 16 December. We will work together with our friends in Monymusk to make our future together within the Parish of Bennachie. We must be positive.

Anne Harrison

Session Clerk Cluny Church of Scotland

PRESBYTERY PLAN – REPRIEVE FOR MONYMUSK

The Monymusk Church community is relieved with the news that our church is to remain open, pending Presbytery approval but the happiness is somewhat tempered that this is at the expense of Cluny Parish Church, spiritual home and much loved building of our neighbours and friends in Cluny parish. We can understand the feelings generated by this decision having been in the exact same position several months ago.

The two church communities have been working closely over several years, sharing Sunday services, special services, fund raising events, fellowship and children's activities and of course, a minister! It would be good if we could build on this foundation and grow our mission from here as we move forward together into a new era of changes in local church life.

HOLY COMMUNION

The congregations of Cluny and Monymusk are to celebrate Holy Communion in each of their church buildings in Cluny at 23rd October and in Monymusk on 27th November both services starting at 10.00am. A joint invitation is offered to any who would like to come and share the Holy Sacrament.

CHURCH CALENDAR

We worship each Sunday in Church at 10.00am. We worship alternate months in each church

2022

October & December in Cluny

November- Monymusk

2023

January, March, May, July, September, November- Monymusk

February, April, June, August, October, December - Cluny

Special services detailed below

30th October -Joint Bennachie Service 10.00am location to be announced

13th November Remembrance Sunday

9.30am- Monymusk

11.00am- Cluny

Lunch in Cluny Hall after the service

16 December Christmas Carol Service with choir 7.00pm – Cluny
Date to be confirmed Carols in the Square at Monymusk under the lights.

24th December Christmas Eve Family worship -7.00pm Monymusk

25th December Christmas Day family worship- 10.30am Monymusk

For further information please check out the website

www.clunychurch.weebly.com or www.monymuskchurch.weebly.com

or check out our **Facebook** page for either Cluny or Monymusk
YouTube channel for videos . search for ClunyMonymusk – all one word

To contact the Minister Rev Euan Glen Tel 01467 651470 or Email:

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