

# ST FILLAN'S CROSIER

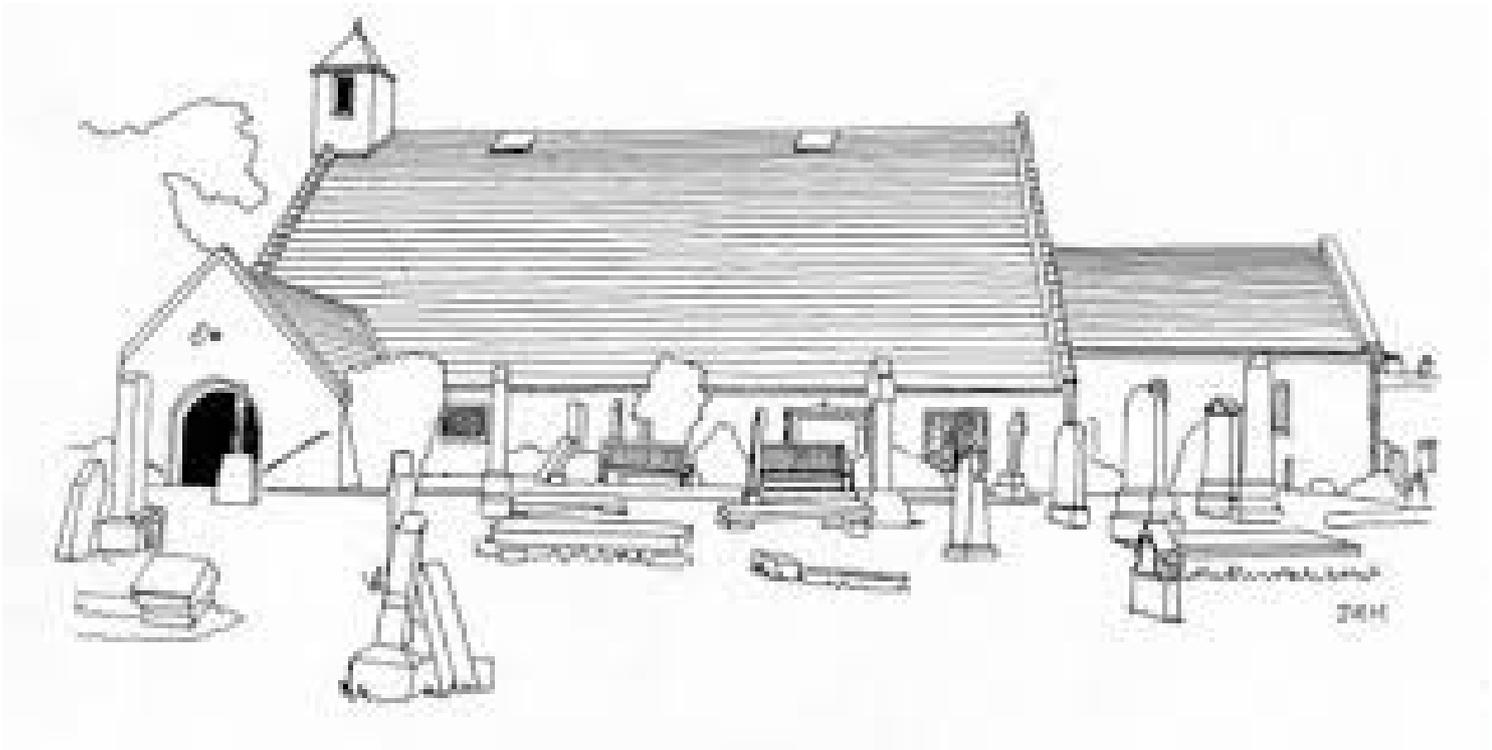
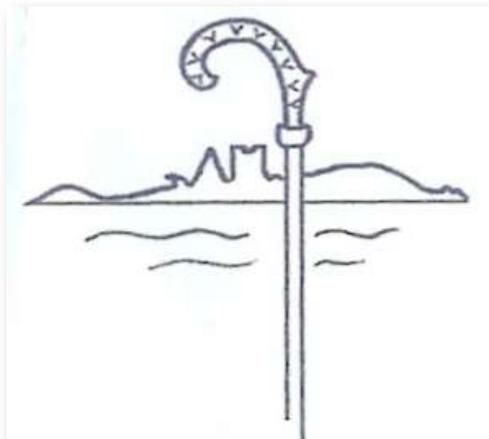


Image from [scotlandschurcheTrust.org.uk](http://scotlandschurcheTrust.org.uk)



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## Letter from the Manse

Few of us would have even dreamed that most of the world would be going into lockdown as we all celebrated the beginning of 2020. How quickly things can change.

To our great regret, the Church of Scotland has instructed us to close St Fillan's Church, even as a place for prayer – as soon as this instruction is lifted, we will open up again.

Those who first built the Church thought that people with contagious diseases, like leprosy, could infect other worshippers, and so they created the Leper's Squint in the west wall of the Church.

This allowed those excluded from worship because of their illness would still be able to follow the Mass, albeit from a distance.

At this time of deep distress, may St Fillan's still stand as beacon of hope for all of us, as we try to deal with the impact of the Covid-19 virus on our lives, and the lives of those we love.

At the same time, let us remember in our prayers those who work so tirelessly in our National Health Service to keep us all safe, and pray for those who bear the very heavy responsibility of Government, in Westminster, Holyrood, and in our local Councils, as they make difficult decisions about resources and priorities.

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The Church Season of Lent offers Christians a time for self-reflection on how we should live our lives.

The German/Dutch Priest, Thomas à Kempis, became part of the religious community of Mount Agnes in 1406. This Order was based on the *Brethren of the Common Life*, which sought to live a simple life, based on the life of Our Lord.

His most famous book, *The Imitation of Christ*, encourages its readers to live in such a way that the believer would live a truly Christ-like life. For centuries, it was one of the most-read Christians texts, apart from the Bible.

In trying to get his readers to be honest about reviewing their own lives critically, rather than getting other people to change, Thomas à Kempis writes: "*Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.*" , an early example of tough love!

For most of us, critical self-examination against the Life & Ministry of Jesus is a daunting and demanding calling during Lent.

The end of Lent brings Holy Week, and then Easter, as the Church remembers Our Lord's Sacrifice on the Cross, and celebrates His victory over death & sin, as Easter Day dawns.

This reminds us that however dark the days may be, death and sin have lost their hold over us, and that in Christ we find forgiveness for our failings, and His unfailing acceptance and love.

Brian Wren wrote the Hymn: Christ is alive!

*Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.*

*Christ is alive, and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.*

Peter Gerbrandy-Baird  
Parish Minister

## Low tide, high expectations.

Today, 24<sup>th</sup> March, at 8.34 when the tide was at its lowest I set out from Kinghorn to walk along the beach to Burntisland with the single hope of getting Oysters at the fish shop.

I had a clear view of my goal and a headwind to battle against. Underfoot was a ridged, sand carpet, covered in shells. Cockles, clams, winkles and razor fish in abundance and the numerous waders were having a feast on the diverse diet of shellfish. Ironically, it was the Oyster catchers that were in the majority.

Trudging along, I soon became aware that I was a lone figure on a vast landscape of sky, sea and sand. How often had I sat on the train beholding a solitary individual and wondering at their motive or purpose. A train passed, and I saw myself looking out, at my own lonely figure, tramping along.

I did not follow a path but instead, seeking adventure, walked on the wild side. I struck out with the sea birds and paddled through the shallows; I was now so far out, I was almost half way to Edinburgh. Watching my trajectory and with an eye on the shore for a good landing spot, I found myself stepping onto dry land at Burntisland, within an hour, and heading to Calum, the fish monger.

On my homeward leg I decided to stick closer to the watermark where the seaweed is in abundance and the fascinating relics of an age of travel and industry are still in evidence. The high tidemark had little plastic waste probably due to a valiant community campaign to remove it. Amongst the flotsam and jet-some there was an abundance of driftwood which had been repeatedly washed and bleached. In my youth in Cramond, after a storm at sea, we would go gathering wood and take it home, for the fire.

Low tide is the time to study what's left by the sea and watch the long shanked waders that feast on its harvest. Were my high expectations fulfilled? Yes. I watched a Guillemot who was completely unaware of my proximity; preen himself on a rock enjoying the approach of the water. His fastidious attention to his plumage was ensuring that he was ready for the next tide. And yes, I got the Oysters.



## CHANGING OF THE TREASURER

**I rejoined St Fillans in 2010 and was relieved to learn that a new Treasurer had just been appointed. I had been Treasurer at my previous Church and had promised my wife I would not volunteer again. Andy Bastow had taken over at this time. He has now decided to hang up his calculator and I am pleased to say that Liz Pearston has volunteered to take over the duties supported by Marion Bayne.**

**I have been on the Finance Committee for some years now and am now the Finance Convenor. I have therefore seen close up what a great job Andy has done as our Treasurer. He has worked tirelessly to ensure that our accounts are kept up to date and that we live within our means. We have now built up considerable reserves and can face whatever the future throws at us knowing that we are in a robust state financially.**

**I would therefore like to thank Andy both personally and on behalf of the Session and Congregation for doing such a wonderful job for us as Treasurer. I know that he will give his full support to Liz and Marion as they commence their duties.**

**One of the most difficult positions to fill for any Charity is that of Independent Examiner and we have been very fortunate at St Fillans to have had Donald McAndie carry out these duties for the past 13 years. He has now decided to stand down from this position.**

**I know he has been a great support to our Treasurer and again I would like to thank him on behalf of all at St Fillans for all that he has done for us. His replacement will be Alan Thomson.**

**Bill Henderson**

### **Coronavirus: What to do about Offerings, WFO's, donations, etc!**

*The financial impact of the current pandemic on many organisations may be very severe, and we at St Fillan's are not immune. Because services in the Church are cancelled for the time being and use of the Hall is also curtailed, St Fillan's will inevitably lose some expected income, while we continue to have to make regular monthly payments.*

*I'm sure some in our congregation, members and other community supporters, may wish to continue with their giving or regular offerings during this difficult period, but are unsure how to go about it. Read on to find out how you may easily continue your regular support.*

*For WFO's, collect them into an envelope week by week and maybe each month put the envelope into the Treasurer's Posting Box inside the Aberdour Pharmacy when you visit. Similarly, if you wish to make a donation in place of the weekly Open Plate, collect these into an envelope, mark it 'Open Plate' and post it at the Pharmacy. You can post 'Lenten Appeal' envelopes or any other donations in the Pharmacy too, but please remember to mark the envelope appropriately. If you are not able to get to the Pharmacy yourself maybe ask a neighbour, friend, or your elder to put your gifts in the Pharmacy for you.*

*Perhaps this is the opportunity you need to start making regular contributions through a bank standing order, and you don't have to be a tax payer to do this. But if you are, you may also like to fill-in a Gift Aid form. Phone Liz Pearston the new Treasurer (07760-448585) or Marion Bayne (01592-873399) who will be pleased to deal with this and arrange for the form(s) to be sent to you.*

*Many thanks for your continuing support.*

*Andy Bastow*

## Summary of the '2019 Trustees Report'

The congregation received the 2019 Annual Report and Accounts during Morning Service on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March - here is a short summary. The full Trustees Report covers the Church's Organisation, Governance, and all the main activities carried out in the year from Young St Fillan's to Pastoral care, Property maintenance, and various aspects of community interaction. Also included is a summary of the end year financial position, the main objectives and the budget for 2020.

The detailed accounts themselves show all the categories of Receipts and Payments in 2019, and a broad summary of the numbers covering all Funds is shown in the table beneath with 2018 figures given for comparison:

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Donations and Offerings	£53,538	£51,391	Net allocation to '121'	£46,762	£45,486
Gift Aid Tax refund	£8,699	£12,310	Presbytery Dues (net)	£1,400	£1,395
Weddings and Funerals	£1,731	£2,261	Property Insurance and Licenses	£3,803	£3,974
Use of Church/Hall	£6,894	£6,331	Local Salaries and Fees	£9,440	£9,036
Regular Fundraising	£5,404	£3,899	Heat and Light	£4,083	£3,996
Church Donations Box	£1,383	£1,485	Pulpit and Organ supply	£404	£664
Associated Orgs (St Fillan's Lunches, etc)	£2,634	£2,035	Routine Fabric Maintenance	£1,791	£1,381
Investment Income and Interest	£3,196	£2,899	Ministers Expenses, Printing and Manse Council Tax	£6,248	£6,092
Other Miscellaneous Income	£1,028	£3,158	Church Repairs	£3,882	£6,726
Legacies	£8,000	£13,106	Other (incl betterment and Fabric Fund spend))	£11,763	£3,252
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£92,507</b>	<b>£98,875</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>£89,576</b>	<b>£82,002</b>

Comparing one year with another is always interesting, but taking the Receipts side first, if the 'legacies' are stripped out, the overall income is very similar in both years. But some income was deferred into 2020, and so the general picture on the receipts side was very encouraging despite a continuing loss in active membership. Now when looking at payments, regular expenditure in 2019 and 2018 was very similar too, the main difference being the increased spend on necessary repairs and improvements to the Hall windows and some unplanned works at the Manse.

The figures show that there was an overall surplus in 2019 of £2931, and this was only possible because we received another generous legacy. So total reported funds available going into 2020 were increased to £178,399 which, with the continued support and generosity of the membership the congregation and the community, will help to weather the uncertain times which are undoubtedly still ahead of us in the next few months.

THE NEXT STEP

In my article for the Autumn Crosier I outlined the position regarding the future of our church and said at that time I was uncertain how things might progress.

After the Commission's report to the Presbytery it was decided that the way forward was to pass the matter back to congregations to discuss in groups and as anticipated our grouping is the churches in Aberdour, Dalgety Bay, Inverkeithing and North Queensferry.

Our Kirk Session has already met and chosen a team from the congregation to represent St.Fillan's in these discussions, but now as a result of the effects of the coronavirus on meetings it might be some time before a joint meeting of the churches can be organised.

It is inevitable changes will come, but we remain positive for the future of a ministry in Aberdour in some shape or form and ask for your prayers for the work of our team in future negotiations.

Ewart McSkimming  
Stewardship Convenor

### Family Fun Days.

How time flies! It seems no time at all since we were planning and looking forward to our Advent Fun Day - "**Christmas Lights**". During that morning, away back in December, the 31 children attending learned of Jesus being 'The Light of the World' and that we too are to be 'Lights in the World'. They sang appropriate 'Light' songs, enjoyed watching a complementary video and they were also challenged and had fun when making Christingles and Lanterns; in remembering the Memory Verse and taking part in the Quiz. As always they enjoyed tucking into the themed snacks too! Once again we were delighted to be joined by our five teenagers, whose help and fellowship are enjoyed and appreciated by adults and children alike.

We had hoped our next venture would be '**Colourful Easter**' on **Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> April**, when we'd hoped to use colours as a way of helping the children remember Palm Sunday, The Last Supper, The Trial, The Crucifixion and The Resurrection, BUT very sadly, due to the Covid-19 situation, we have to cancel the event for safety/health reasons

And after that? Prayerfully and hopefully the next dates for the diary - Our Summer event, '**Watt-a-lot**' **Castle will be from Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July - Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July** when we will be using scenery kindly given to us by Newcraigs Evangelical Church in Kirkcaldy. (It's good to share).

We hope all keep well as we look forward to welcoming Boys and Girls Primary 1 - 7 then. (Arrangements for younger children still to be confirmed.)

Catherine E. Duncan (Group Secretary)

## Parish and congregational register

### Bereavements

#### 2019

Mr. John Cuthill; Mrs. Jack Bald; *Ms. Ann Pearson; Mrs. June Cowin; Mr. Brian Cushing*

#### 2020

*Mrs. Margaret Selkirk*

Things beyond our seeing, things beyond our hearing, things beyond our imagining have all been prepared  
by God for those who love Him                      Corinthians 2: 9

### Marriages

#### 2019

James Gilmour and Stacy Smith

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder

### Joining by Transference certificate

The Revd. William and Mrs. Jeanette Clinkenbeard;

### Joining by Resolution of the Kirk Session

Mrs. Elaine Pert

### Joining as Adherents

We welcome and hope you enjoy your fellowship here.

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## Church of Scotland World Mission Stamp Appeal 2020-21

This year the Stamp Project proceeds will benefit The Women's Development Centre (WDC) in Kandy, Sri Lanka which runs a project to support women and girls who have been victims of rape and sexual violence.

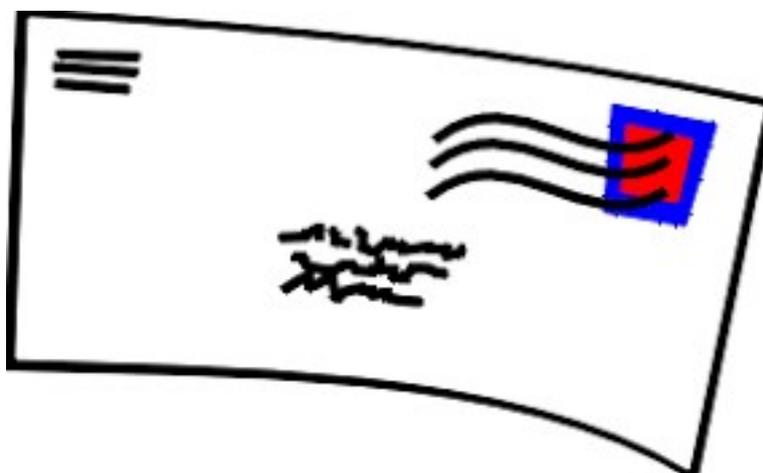
The WDC gives these women somewhere to stay, and supports them in caring for their children, helps them return to education if they wish, and trains them in skills they can use to make a living when they leave. The WDC has a social enterprise and café where the women can work and sell their hand-made products. The team at WDC care for and heal girls who are vulnerable and often discarded by their families. It is impossible not to be moved by what they do.

Help support them by collecting used stamps which are then sold on by the Church of Scotland by

placing stamps in the basket on your right as you enter the Church or  
by leaving them in the wooden box on the first windowsill on your right as you  
enter the Church Hall or  
by leaving them at 4 Manse Street, Aberdour.

Post your stamps to World Mission Stamp Project, PO Box 9191, Wishaw,  
Lanarkshire, ML2 0YB

If you believe your stamp collection is valuable, please arrange for Keith Scott to collect it personally by telephone - 01698 351323



## Christian Aid Week 2020

Christian Aid raised £7.5 million during CA Week last year in Britain and Ireland which helped families who were facing poverty and injustice worldwide. Christian Aid gave over 58,000 people access to well built clinics, helping to save the lives of mothers and babies during childbirth. CA trained 64,000 people in hygiene practices which helped them to fight off illnesses more effectively and CA also gave 13,000 women the means to save and pay for things like transport to the nearest health clinics through community savings groups.

This year the emphasis is on helping poor communities to tackle some of the devastating effects that climate change is having on them. At the moment Kenya is suffering a severe drought but Christian Aid are helping communities to build earth dams to collect any rain water that does fall, which can then be used for irrigation to grow crops and feed livestock like goats to give milk. Justine pictured below is hoping that Christian Aid will be helping to extend the village dam outside her village to increase its water holding capacity. Your donations during Christian Aid Week will help this to happen.

