



Chalmers Memorial Church Newsletter Winter 2023



Let us be thankful, then, because we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us be grateful and worship God in a way that will please him, with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28

Dear Friends,

The Manse, November 2023

"The tectonic plates of change are rumbling under our feet and God is teaching us to stand and then walk in new ways..."

Those words, with which I begin this short letter, are taken from a recent talk I delivered to the Guild at Chalmers Church as they continued to think about the three year theme of the Guild which is "Looking forward in faith".

There are apparently 7 areas on earth where tectonic plates meet – areas where the surface of the earth can sometimes be prone to earthquakes and/or volcanic activity. Scientists tell us that some of these tectonic plates are connected at some distance to the source of their volcanic activity. The common denominator amongst them, of course, is that when they move they can bring destruction, chaos and uncertainty.

Sometimes, I venture to suggest, it seems that the modern day church is sitting on its own homemade "tectonic plates", especially in these days when there is so much change around us, or at the very least the prospect of change.

Later in this newsletter there is a brief update about the current state of play, as it were, in relation to the future union of Chalmers Church and Cockenzie Old Parish. Whilst the discussions have been almost universally amicable it would be wrong to say that the prospect of change (on both sides) is going to be easy. The tectonic plates sometimes rumble and with them comes uncertainty.

The closer we get to the point of decision making too also brings with it many questions, some of which we can answer now and others which will be answered only in the act of "being together". And it is good to remember this whilst at the same time recognising that God is with us and, so long as he is with us and we seek to be faithful to him, then he will teach us to stand anew as we journey together to the future.

After all, is this not the message of this Advent Season which we are just entering? Advent – the time of waiting... the time of preparing... a time to set our feet on the path towards the coming presence of our Saviour, the one who walks with us along the so called "tectonic plates" under our feet.

May you feel His presence at this season.

Your friend and Minister
Robin Allison (Rev)

Our Minister
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Sunday 24th December (Christmas Eve)

- 11 a.m. Service of Readings and Carols
- 6.30p.m. All Age Pop Up Nativity
- 11.30 p.m. Watchnight Service (in Old Parish Church)

Monday 25th December (Christmas Day)

- 11.00 a.m. Joint Family Service (in Chalmers)

Sunday 31st December (Hogmanay)

- 11.15 a.m. Joint Service (in Old Parish Church)





Kids Kirk continues to bring in new children with our **Streetwise** sessions as we travel down Luke Street visiting lots of houses. We meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month 10am – 12noon, for children in P1-P7. On **Saturday 16th December 10am-1pm**, our journey down Luke Street takes us to the Stable for our special **Christmas Session**. Families, Friends and the Church family are welcome to come along from 12.15pm and join us for a bite to eat.

Please contact Sheila to request further information.

<https://www.facebook.com/chalmersmemorial> or text - 07980 059 974.

God Bless, *Sheila & Amanda*

Session Section

The Kirk Session met in November for their regular business meeting.

Plans for the Conference about the Union arrangements were clarified, and encouraging numbers were expected to attend. Joint services after Christmas are planned, as has become normal, with Communion to be shared at the service in Chalmers on the first Sunday of the Year.

Rev Allison updated us from the small group working with our neighbours in Longniddry and Gladsmuir. This *Blindwells team* delivers welcome packs to newly occupied houses, and there have been several events now, run by the churches as an initial outreach to the area. A monthly plan of events is in place for the first half of 2024.

In discussions relating to normal business, finances are in good order, fabric of the church and manse is being well maintained, and it was good to hear that the Kids Kirk, having started back from scratch after the abrupt stop in 2020, is slowly growing in numbers and enthusiasm.

A report from the new – and now large – Presbytery of Lothian and Borders indicates that their union, while challenging for all, seems to be taking best practice from each, and they are creating some thoughtful structures to support the churches under their supervision.

Our Hall Lets become a challenge, with more requests for regular and one-off requests. All credit to those who juggle the timetable of space, and communication with Users.

Indeed, all credit to *all* who make up the Committees and Groups who – especially at this time of change - and we have to acknowledge, this time of some apprehension – are getting on with the job of being church here. There is no sense of any winding down, rather building up to what the church will become in 2024 and beyond.

With every blessing to you all, on behalf of the Session - this Christmas and in the New Year ahead.

Mary Gordon, Session Clerk

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the recent Day of Giving. As advised the funds raised are going to go towards the steeple repairs. Up to date quotes are being received and hopefully this work can be carried out early next year. However, one of the Companies we were dealing with has become insolvent and has stopped trading.

Some more work is required to find the source of water entering the building at the east side stained glass window. We have had various attempts to get this sorted over the past couple of years and have had the roof checked with some slates replaced. A small hole was found in the woodwork above the window which was fixed but when the wind and rain blow from the east, water is still running down the inside wall. One possibility about to be investigated is to check if the glass lead surrounds are secure.

Over the summer window frames at the manse and Church were repainted with various other small pieces of maintenance carried out. The Church gates are in poor condition and are beyond repair. A quote for replacing these has been received but has still to be approved. East Lothian Council confirm Planning or Listed Building permissions will not be required if we replace like for like.

Hopefully the items above can be fixed over the coming months as there are various other things needing attention, including improving the disabled access to the buildings, having the Church re-wired, providing/creating additional storage facilities and replacing window sills and window frames at the manse. These are all major pieces of work and will, perhaps, need to be agreed by the appropriate Committees post Union.

John Murdoch

Funerals since last newsletter

Irene Paulat, Port Seton funeral on 26th September

Alison Livingstone, Port Seton funeral on 28th October 2023

Adam Johnston, Seton Mains funeral on 5th December 2023

Thanks

Cath Currie and her family, Katy, Kristian & Simon would like to thank everyone for the lovely cards, church flowers and prayers on the passing of Brian, a very loved father and husband. Our heartfelt thanks to you all.

Jessie Hobbs would like to thank everyone for their love, prayers and support shown during Brett's illness and passing. Special thanks for everyone who offered transport during this hard time.

FUNDRAISING

We are very grateful for the generosity of our members. Since August you have donated to our fundraising activities no less than **£6,896!**

The final sum raised at the Annual Sale on the 26th August was **£770**, which was a good result considering a number of other events were going on in the village that afternoon. Joyce Buchan's quiz sheet raised a further **£66**.

On Sunday 8th October, our Day of Giving raised the magnificent sum of **£5,900**. This will enable us to make much needed repairs to the church steeple and wind vane. In keeping with previous years, 10% of this was donated to a local charity; this time it was the turn of The John Bellany Day Centre who were very grateful for the **£590** they received.

Tom Gordon's much anticipated Quiz Night, always good fun, resulted in **£160** going to church funds.

The thanks of the Stewardship Committee go to all who helped to make these events as successful as they were and, of course, to all of you for your support. We continue to be inspired by your generosity, particularly in the current financial climate.

George Smith, Committee Convener

Church Union Update

The steering group last met on 26th October 2023. Their main task then was finalising the preparations for the Joint Churches conference session which was, at the time of this newsletter reaching you, held on Saturday 25th November 2023.

On that morning we took a closer look at some key areas that will guide our new congregation when it is formed especially it's worship, pastoral care, mission and outreach, community work and so on.

In terms of the future union and its dates, the plan still remains that the actual union will take place (subject to a congregational vote) in the second half of 2024. However, the plan currently is that the vote by the congregations of the Old Parish and Chalmers will take place in the Spring of 2024 in order to allow us to finalise preparations for the new congregation, agree on our initial range of activities and recruit/allocate office bearers before the union takes place. Our aim is to get as much of the basic structure of the new congregation in place before the union.

At the recent meeting of the Kirk Session, there was extensive discussion about the name of the united congregation which you will probably know is proposed to be, "*Cockenzie and Port Seton New Parish Church of Scotland*". In coming to the name, the Church Union Steering group have looked at many alternatives. We have also sought to follow the national guidelines which state that all Church of Scotland's must have in their title both the name of the community they serve (in our case *Cockenzie and Port Seton*) and the words *Church of Scotland*. The only choices we have, therefore, are on the very few words between these phrases. We recognise that opinions will vary as to how folk feel about the name and if you have any questions, thoughts or queries about this, or any other aspect of the union arrangements please do not hold onto them.

Instead, please do speak to any member of the Church Union steering group who are, as previously intimated, Mary Gordon, George Smith, Colin Sutherland and Lyn Marshall.

Robin Allison

GET TOGETHER

What happens in the church hall every second Wednesday every month? We "Get Together" for no other reason than that! There's tea, cake, chat, sometimes a speaker, quizzes but most importantly FUN. It's simple - there is no charge, and the atmosphere is best described as "joyful".

Each month those who come give an anonymous donation and every two months that money in its entirety goes to a charity chosen by the group. Simple again! However, the generosity of those who come is enormous as is the good their contributions make, in our church, our country and abroad. Since 2012, we have raised over £5000.

Simple, low key, regular, friendship and giving----there's room for you!

Joyce Buchanan

Chalmers Guild - Mondays at 2.30pm

The new session is well underway now with encouraging numbers attending. We have some interesting speakers for the next few months and look forward to welcoming everyone to these meetings.

Dec. 4th - Annual Carol Service with Lothian East Guilds Together. Meeting in the church **at 2pm**.

Jan. 8th - R N L I

Feb. 5th - Blue Triangle

Mar. 4th - Rev. Robin Hill - "From Westminster to Nashville: the unlikely Journey of the Psalms"

All are very welcome



Sunday

10:00am - All-age Worship (in Hall, led by the worship team)
 11.00am - Morning Worship

Monday

2.30pm - Guild (1st Monday of the Month) (Oct-March)
 6-8.30pm - Beavers and Cubs

Tuesday

10.00am - Chalmers Walking Group
 2.00-3.30pm - Chest, Heart and Stroke Group
 (every second week)
 6.00-7.30pm - Brownies
 7.00pm - Prayer Meeting (on zoom)
 8.00-10pm - AA Group

Wednesday

10.30am - Chalmers Crafters (1st Wednesday of month)
 10am - 12 - Coffee and Chat (Last of month)
 1.30-3.00pm - Indoor Kurling (1st and Last of month)
 1.30-3.00pm - Get Together (2nd of month)
 5.00-6.15pm - Rainbows

Thursday

9.30am -12pm - Adult Resource Group
 1.30-4.00pm - Come and Meet Each Other (CAMEO)
 (during school term)
 6.00-8.00pm - Brownies

Friday

9.30-11.00am - Keep fit class.
 10.30am-2pm - AA Group

Saturday

10.00am-12 noon - Kids Kirk (3rd Saturday of month)

**OUR WORSHIP**

Rev Robin Allison will conduct worship unless otherwise stated.

Sunday 3rd December – 1st in Advent

10.00am All-Age Worship – George Smith
 11.00am Morning Worship with Sacrament of
 Holy Communion

Sunday 10th December – 2nd in Advent

10.00am All-Age Worship – Rev Robin Allison
 11.00am Morning Worship

Sunday 17th December – 3rd in Advent

10.00am All-Age Worship – Mary Gordon
 11.00am Morning Worship

followed by Christmas Lunch

Christmas Services on Front Page

Services in 2024**Sunday 7th January 2024 (no 10am service)**

11.00am Joint Service – in Chalmers
 – with Communion

Sunday 14th January

10.00am All-Age Worship – Colin Sutherland
 11.00am Morning Worship

Sunday 21st January

10.00am All-Age Worship – Amanda Johnston
 11.00am Morning Worship

Sunday 28th January

10.00am All-Age Worship – Ian Bulloch
 11.00am Morning Worship

Sunday 4th February

10.00am All-Age Worship – Rev Robin Allison
 11.00am Morning Worship

Sunday 11th February

10.00am All-Age Worship – George Smith
 11.00am Morning Worship

Sunday 18th February

10.00am All-Age Worship – Tom Gordon
 11.00am Morning Worship

Sunday 25th February

10.00am All-Age Worship – Mary Gordon
 11.00am Morning Worship



Around Christmas you may find Stars hanging around the village. These have been made by people in the congregation and others to wish people finding them a Happy Christmas.

MINISTER

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TREASURER

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BEADLE

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Please recycle this newsletter and care for the earth as God intended.