



INVERNESS FREE NORTH CHURCH

NEWSLETTER

June 2018

From the Manse

Dear friends,

By now you will know that I have been called to be the minister in the congregation of Gairloch, Kinlochewe and Torridon (GKT), in Wester Ross. I accepted that call at the meeting of Presbytery on Monday 4th June. Alasdair Macleod (Smithton) was appointed Interim Moderator.

The reason for my accepting the call can be summarised in three words: ending, sending and beginning.

Ending: As my ministry in the Free North and Madras Street moved forward it was with a great sense of purpose. The Lord was good and gracious. We saw many folk coming to profess faith, attendances in the Free North and Madras Street grew, the demographic of the congregation changed and we saw an increase in youngsters and families coming along. The Gospel work was developing in terms of developing a strategy, cultivating a leadership team, expanding the worship and revitalising the work in Merkinch by planting a church there. My motivation for ministry was from a convicting sense of God's hand upon me. I loved to preach the whole counsel of God with passion and practical application and thoroughly enjoyed pastoral visitation. However, latterly I also began to experience what I can only describe as a feeling of 'an impending closure'; the sense that my ministry here was going to come to an end soon. That was a challenge to deal with and led me to much prayer, seeking God's will in this.

Sending: The question for me then was 'if my time here is to end, where am I to go or what am I to do? I had no sense of a call to another pastoral ministry, even though a number of congregations informally approached me. I began to wonder if my time in the pastoral ministry itself was coming to a close. Then, just a number of months ago, the congregation of GKT was powerfully laid upon my heart by God's hand. About 18 months ago the same congregation

approached me to be their minister and I declined because I had no sense of God's call to go. This time, it was convincing and clear and compelling. The words of Psalm 139. 5-6 describe it: 'Behind, before you hem me in, O LORD, and you have laid on me your mighty hand'. One of the elders there said that he had never lost the belief that I was the man that God would call to be the minister there one day.

Scripture readings over these last few months have moved me forward in the Lord's timing and at his pace, to this point in time. I truly believe I am being sent to GKT.

Beginning: GKT was the place where I did a ministry placement in 2005. At that time the Lord's hand was on me, guiding me to ministry there. There was an expectation and anticipation that I would begin my ministry there, but it wasn't to be. This decision, in many ways, is about going back to the beginning.

Many people have been wondering whether they have done something wrong, or could have done more to prevent me leaving. They ask because they can't understand why I am leaving. I hope, from the intimation and from this précised version of that, you will see how this is about God's hand on my heart and ministry; it's not about fault or failing but faith. The last 6 years have been a wonderful, growing, learning, blessing, challenging, friendship-making experience which in God's providence I trust will be as of much good to you as it has been to me. I am leaving, believing the congregation to be in a healthy condition. As the Lord takes away so he also gives, and so He will give to you the next man of his choosing to accompany you on the next stage of this journey as a congregation.

My final preaching date will be the 24th June, the last Sunday of the month, and we hope to move to GKT in July. A date for the induction there will be set by the Skye and Wester Ross Presbytery soon, the most likely date being at the end of July.

God bless us and be gracious to us.

Psalm 139. 5-6: 'Behind, before you hem me in, O LORD, and you have laid on me your mighty hand. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too high to grasp, too great to understand'.

Your friend and Pastor

Colin

Rev Colin MacLeod

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Please remember the following people in your prayers –

Housebound

Mrs Anna Cameron

Mrs Margaret Grant

Mrs Mary MacDonald

Mrs Effie MacIver

Mrs Christine MacRae

Residential Homes

Mrs Mary McCulloch – Aden House

Mrs Anna MacLeod – Ballifeary

Miss Nan MacDonald - Ballifeary

Mrs Johan Macleman – Kingsmills Home

Mrs Margaret MacAulay - Highview

Mr Alasdair & Mrs Barbara Morrison, Isobel Fraser Home

Mrs Ishbel Graham - Kingsmills Home

CONDOLENCES

Jane Faulkner passed away at home on 19th April, aged 64 years. Jane was a member in the Free North and a regular attender at Madras Street. The funeral service took place in the Inverness Crematorium on Thursday 3rd May. We remember her son John and his family and Jane's sisters Svea and Marsailidh in their sad loss, thankful that Jane trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ and that she has been called Home.

Mrs Johan Lamont passed away peacefully in Highview House Care Home on 23rd May, aged 102 years. She was a long standing member in the Free North. Johan lived in Fairfield Road before moving into Highview in 2012. The funeral service took place on Thursday 31st May at 11am in the Free North with interment in Balmacara Cemetery, Kyle of Lochalsh afterwards. Please

remember Kayte, Sybil, Graham, Johan, Etta and Mary and their respective families in their loss. We mourn but not without hope.

Colin

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Eilidh and Seumas Macleod on the safe arrival of Norah, who was born on 16th April, Weighing 9.2lb. May the Lord bless them as a family.

Colin

DATES FOR THE DIARY

June

- Saturday 9th Ladies Bible Study in the Fellowship area from 10-11.30am **every second Saturday** of the month
- Sunday 10th Colin taking both services
Isobel Fraser Home service **second Sunday of month** at 3pm
- Tuesday 12th Congregational lunch and devotional in the hall at 12.30pm
- Wednesday 13th Tumbletots meets **weekly** in the Hall from 10am to 11.30am
Mid-week meeting in the hall at 7.30pm and **every week thereafter**
- Thursday 14th Road to Recovery meets **weekly** in the Fellowship area at 7.30pm
- Sunday 17th Chris Davidson preaching at the morning service; Colin in the evening
Cameron House service **third Sunday of month** at 3pm
- Tuesday 19th Tuesday @ Dobbies at 10.30am **third Tuesday of the month**
Deacons' Court meets at 7pm for prayer and 7.30pm for business
- Saturday 23rd Likely Dads meets in the hall from 10.30am to 12 noon on **the fourth Saturday of each month**
- Sunday 24th Family service and Sunday School Prize giving
Congregational Fellowship in the Hall at 8pm with Fiona Dolan
- Friday 29th Office Bearer's Training in Fellowship area at 7pm

July

Sunday 1 st	Services taken by Mr Ronnie Philipps
Wednesday 3 rd	Prayer round tables in the hall at 7.30pm
Sunday 8 th	Services taken by Rev John Murdo Macdonald Isobel Fraser service at 3pm
Sunday 15 th	Services taken by Donnie Macleod (11 am) and Sandy Finlay (6.30pm) Cameron House service at 3pm
Sunday 22 nd	Services taken by Mr Ronnie Philipps
Sunday 29 th	Services taken by Rev John Murdo Macdonald

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Guys Gearing for Growth

We have been meeting on the first Tuesday of the month in the Manse. Having completed the 'Identity' series we've begun looking at 'Vintage Jesus', a series of talks by Mark Driscoll on the person and work of Jesus. A 30 minute DVD clip on a particular topic gives much food for thought and discussion which we enjoy together. This group is aimed at men who wish to grow together in fellowship and discipleship. Anyone interested in coming along should speak to Rob Maciver or email him on robertmaciver@outlook.com.

Communion

We were very thankful to Andrew Macleod, Assistant in Tain, for taking the services on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd April. John Marker was unwell and unable to attend. Innes Macsween, Assistant in Smithton, preached on the Friday night. The weekend was a time of clear, challenging and encouraging preaching and warm fellowship. We thank the Lord for three new members joining by Disjunction Certificate: Mr Jim Riddle, Mrs Olive Gunn and Mrs Helen Cormack.

Colin

Acclaim Choir

What a great night of praise was had on Saturday 28th April in the Free North as the Acclaim choir, led by Elaine Kirkham, sang their hearts out to a full house, to the Glory of God. The sum total of £3319.85 was collected for Maggie's Highlands. We look forward to the Christmas concert now booked in the Free North on Saturday 15th December.

Colin

Fiona Christie – Latin Link Colombia

On Sunday 27th May Fiona Christie from Latin Link joined us for the day. She shared a message with the children in the morning and later, at the evening fellowship, gave an overview of changes she witnessed in Colombia and the mission in that country over the 10 year period from her starting work there in 2008 to her return to Scotland this year.

Fiona's started with a question to us; has Colombia made a transition **from war to peace?** To an outside observer this might appear to be the case. There was a globally publicised peace deal in 2016 between the government and a Marxist rebel group. However, whilst this led to some disarmament there is still ongoing fighting between groups with ostensibly different political aims, but essentially between groups vying to control the drugs trade. This absence of any real peace presents a challenge to Christians trying to live godly lives in Colombia.

A more definite change which has occurred in Colombia is that Christians in society have moved **from being marginalised to empowered.** Fiona introduced this point with a challenging question – what would it take for our government to propose before Scottish Christians grouped together to raise their voice in protest? In Colombia the church found its voice when the then education minister sought to introduce teaching materials which ran contrary to biblical teaching on gender. By standing up for biblical truth, Christians saw these materials withdrawn and the education minister resigning her post over the issue. Returning to Scotland after 10 years, Fiona could see movement in this country in the opposite direction to that of Colombia as the standards of the bible are marginalised in our society.

Another encouraging change is that Latin America has gone **from receiving to sending** missionaries. For example Vivi and Sadoc Chongo from Mexico and Guatemala are currently on mission in Dalry, Ayrshire, through Latin Link. This is part of a trend in mission which was traditionally characterised as 'from the West to the rest' i.e. Europe and the US to the rest of the world, to the situation of now sending missionaries 'from everywhere to everywhere'.

Latin Link are aiming to move the focus of mission in Colombia **from adults to children.** This is to seek to redress an imbalance which has sadly developed 'because children don't tithe'. One means to this is Rana Bacana (Funky Frog). This material presents the bible narrative from creation to the new heavens and the new earth in six sections. Fiona was particularly involved with children's ministry in Colombia and her gifting for this was very much in evidence as she engaged with the Free North children at the morning service.

Please pray for Colombia with thankfulness for the encouraging changes which Fiona witnessed during her time there, but also pray that the violence would end and that the country would know a true peace.

Stewart

Sunday School Outing

The Sunday School outing will be on Saturday 23rd June to the Highland Wildlife Park at Kincaig, from around 12.30 pm. We look forward to seeing the animals and especially Hamish the baby polar bear. We hope that most of the families will be able to come along. Friends are welcome to join us and the cost for adults is £10 which should be paid in advance.

Please speak to Sandy as soon as possible to confirm your attendance

Sandy

Family Service and Sunday School Prizegiving

Family Service and Sunday School Prizegiving will be held on Sunday 24th June. Families should sit towards the front and if possible in the centre of the church.

Sandy

OTHER NEWS

Ministry Associate – Chalmers Church, Edinburgh

As I finish up two years as a Ministry Associate at Chalmers Church Edinburgh I want to thank you for your support and prayers and share a couple of quick reflections from this taster in ministry work:

1. The work is endless, but lasts for eternity

One of the things I found hard to deal with was the nature of ministry work – it's an eternal work. Ministry is preparing people for eternity, pointing people to trust in Jesus and to grow in their love and likeness of him. That's a big job(!) and it will only be finished when Jesus returns. So on this side of Jesus' return it can be overwhelming, there is always more that you can be doing. Often things you'd love to be able to do: another Bible study to prepare, another group of people to reach, another person to read the Bible one-to-one with. It's an endless task and a sense of completion of anything is very rare. The wonderful side of this is, the fruit of ministry lasts for eternity. It was a joy to see in the last two years two students become Christians. It is an immense

privilege to walk with someone as they make first steps into trusting Jesus and His work of saving souls is the only work that will last into eternity.

2. The Bible is harder to understand than I expected, but more wonderful than I could have imagined

The big aim of the Ministry Associate Programme is to train people in understanding and teaching the Bible better. I didn't expect that that aim is met via much confusion and many questions about passages I thought were simple! Questions that seem easy like "what is the passage saying?", "how is it saying it?" and "why is it saying it?" can be more difficult to answer than they seem. I have loved wrestling in these questions. I have been humbled many times by the Bible, and rightly so! It is the Eternal, Creator God's Word and I am a sinful creature. It is amazing that he speaks to us through it! The more time I've got to spend in the Bible the more rich and deep and challenging and true it seems to me. There is endless treasure in God's Word.

After the summer I'll start as a Staff Worker with UCCF, equipping and supporting Christian Unions at Heriot-Watt University and their Galashiels campus. If you'd like to hear more about my training over the past few years or about my future role I'd love to chat to you, please feel free to get in touch!

With love in the Lord, Emma.

HELPFUL THOUGHTS

Does suffering mean we have done something wrong? (Job 8:1-4). Not always. God has reasons beyond our reasons."

"We are created by Him for His glory. We must remember we are the created, He is the Creator. If His sovereign Hand is in our creation, He can also be trusted with our suffering."

"God is glorified when our thinking is shaped by His word, not His word shaped by our thinking."