

# Easter Greetings

to Communicants & Friends of Tay and Lyon Churches



## Rev Robert Nicol, Interim Moderator

Early on in the Ukraine war, the BBC's Quentin Sommerville reported on the destruction being wrought by the advancing Russian forces, and memorably said: "If this is a surprise to you, then you haven't been paying attention".

It was exactly what he had witnessed in years of reporting on the Russian involvement in Syria, where they used techniques already developed over the previous 20 years on other battlefields. We might reason with ourselves that Syria and Afghanistan are farther away, and embroiled in the complexities of the Near and Middle East, which we can never really understand.

Ukraine seems much closer, as well as a clearer struggle of good versus evil, and has echoes of the horrors of the Eastern Front in the Second World War. But maybe some of us haven't been paying attention to how the world has been changing. With the Ukrainian war overlapping with the Covid pandemic, we can be in no doubt now that we have entered a new era, knowing that the world will never go back to the way it was.

And so, we come again to Easter and wonder what this event has to say to us this year. There is always a danger that we move too quickly from the story of Palm Sunday and Jesus's entry to Jerusalem, to the joyful Easter morning. To get there, Jesus had to endure the days of what we call Holy Week, as he

challenged the religious and political authorities with the way of love and peace, knowing that they would reject him and show no mercy. What happened in that week had far greater significance than one man's struggle: Easter is the true turning point in human history. At Easter, God demonstrated the extent of his love and mercy towards the fallen human race.

Christmas is seen by many as a brief escape from their troubles into some sort of fantasy world. Easter is associated, rightly, with new life. But it is impossible to associate Good Friday with any superficial jollity. The Cross of Calvary is where we see God suffering with our suffering; confronting injustice and cruelty and death itself. Only because of Good Friday can Easter morning show us that these things do not triumph; that God has the last word.

One broken-hearted Ukrainian woman said that "even God has fled Mariupol". We can hardly begin to understand the despair she must feel, so who are we to judge her feelings at this time? But Good Friday and Easter show that God is there, in the midst of the suffering and devastation, and that he will, despite everything, have the last word.

*Easter Blessings to you all.*

## CHURCH SERVICES APRIL-JUNE 2022

Date	Fortingall	Kenmore	Preacher	Notes
10 April	11.00	-	Robert Nicol	
15 April <b>Good Friday</b>	11.00	-	Robert Nicol	
17 April <b>Easter Sunday</b>	-	11.00	Robert Nicol	Communion
24 April	11.00	-	Robert Nicol	
1 May		11.00	Worship Team	
8 May	11.00	-	Pat & Eric Walker	
15 May		18.00	Robert Nicol	Etape Sunday
22 May	11.00	-	Geoff Davis	
29 May	-	11.00	Robert Nicol	Stated Annual Meeting
5 June	11.00	-	Alex Towns	
12 June	-	11.00	Pat & Eric Walker	
19 June	11.00	-	Robert Nicol	Communion
26 June	-	11.00	Geoff Davis	

### Some Musings from Sandra, your Outreach Elder

I'm writing this little note on a glorious sunny afternoon having just returned from a cheerful congregational lunch in Molteno Hall marking the progression of Lent. All the Spring flowers on the tables reminded us that Spring has now sprung and the clocks have moved forward.

Time for Spring Cleaning! Time to box up those clothes we will never wear again and gather the 'bits and pieces' we no longer use, preparing them for the charity shop now able to open its doors. Isn't it such a good feeling when you see space on the cupboard shelves! Decluttering is good for the soul. Decluttering the mind is also very good for the soul! Over the past two years we have had

plenty of time to take a good look at how we live our lives and evaluate what really matters. As all the restrictions begin to ease perhaps now is the time to be honest with ourselves and throw away the thoughts and deeds that hold us down to reassess our relationships and behaviour towards others, ponder over the structures and attitudes which interfere with us as we do our best to run the best race of life.

Don't forget to give the mind a good spring clean, as well as the cupboards! I hope this finds you well. Take care,

*My very best wishes. Sandra (01887 830 316)*

### Fortingall Church: Heating and Decoration

In the depths of a winter cold spell the heating in Fortingall decided to have a rest!! The problem arose because the old original pipes in the church were all clogged up with sludge and it was just too much for the boiler with which to fight. Alas, too many of us know that feeling too well! The plumber diagnosed the faults, ordered up the new parts and flushed out the pipes. Once more we are back up and running but perhaps we need to think of a more efficient and reliable system before next winter.

Once the frosts have gone you will soon see the painters freshening up the tired looking harling and working on the outside paintwork restoring Fortingall Kirk to its usual majestic glory beside the Yew tree within the village.

## Kenmore Church Repair - An Update: James Duncan Millar

Many years of trial and a great deal of tribulation have shown that the best way to deal with the church's voracious dry rot is to treat the walls as well as the wood work and not to let it dry out naturally. In addition, it is vital to prevent further water access to the structure of the building. To this end, we have employed David Pirie (joiner/builder) with Murray Petrie, a building surveyor, provided to us by Presbytery, to investigate the extent of the dry rot spread, both in the tower and at the rear of the church. Work was approved by the Kirk Session in autumn 2021 and started in November 2021. Since then, the following has been done:

**1.** Stain glass windows' repair in both the vestry and the organ gallery, completed in early February.

**2.** A further check and repair of the slates and roof structure, using a hydraulic lift, has found faults in some of the flashing and gutters; these have been repaired or replaced. However, the gales and heavy rains of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 displaced further work on the tower roof floor and some of the flashing caused a considerable influx of water into the tower's West stone wall. This is a serious setback, but we are in the process of getting a full quote which will allow us to submit an insurance claim for this new work.

**3.** The whole of the tower's West wall above the balcony, inside the church, has been chemically treated as have the North walls inside the tower. The balcony floor has been exposed and several supporting beams found to be riddled with rot. These have been treated and replaced to stabilise the floor.

**4.** Examination of the surrounds of the top of the back window on the church's North wall revealed further dry rot, which has now been treated. We are now hopeful that we have reached the limit of dry rot spread westwards on this wall at the balcony level. However, dampness had extended downwards to the back of the church requiring the removal of the back pews and partitioning to prevent dust spreading. Treating and injecting the stonework on these walls continues.



**5.** Work on the back tower door is currently underway where rising damp has been an issue in the past. There are also signs of rot around the top of the door and on the West inside wall, which is not unexpected given the evidence on the floor above.

**6.** Other work includes repair of the eaves on the west projection of the North transept where dampness was showing. This appears to be drying nicely. A similar exercise repairing the guttering on the North wall of the church and replacing the two badly corroded downpipes at both ends of the wall has resulted in stopping water ingress at roof

level and at the fixing point where down pipes attached to the harled wall. New soak-aways have been created to take rain water away from the walls.

**7.** The round stained glass window on the North wall of the tower was found to be riddled with dry rot so this has been removed to a Perth joiner who will restore the frame before the Rainbow Glass Company repair and replace it back into the wall.

All of the above work has cost about £420,000 so far. Most has come from various donations and benefactors and a generous gift from the Bolfracks Garden Trust has allowed us to carry out the present work. We had hoped to use this on reharling the outside of the church, but we will have to see what remains after we finish our investigative work. Further work is needed to reinstate and re-decorate the gallery, the back of the church and the tower, all of which will come at considerable cost. Proper estimates will follow after the full extent of the existing dry rot has been discovered.

The kirk (<https://taylyonchurches.org.uk/kenmore-kirk>) is a focal point in the village and stands in the heart of our community. It is there for everyone of us at all the important moments of life and death. Any building over 400 years old needs very considerable maintenance to keep it warm and water-tight. Donations, however great or small, for the repairs would be much appreciated. To do so please contact the Treasurer Olive Munro on **07784 948 054**.

## Fortingall War Memorial – Lives Remembered, Fran Gillespie

Every Remembrance Sunday in November people all over Britain gather at war memorials to lay wreaths and contemplate the ultimate sacrifice made by the men and women whose names are inscribed on the memorials. I realised that, except for two or three, I knew almost nothing about the fifteen men from both world wars whose names appear on the memorial at Fortingall. So this year, with a tremendous amount of help both from volunteers living locally and those from further afield, I set out to find out more about them. Relatives willingly lent photographs, military museums all over Scotland trawled through their records and gradually we built up a short dossier of information on each man. When completed this, plus a wealth of images, will be uploaded onto the local heritage website <https://fortingall-graveyard.org.uk> and the text issued as a booklet. We plan to have a small plaque on the gate of the memorial ground to give visitors the website address.

The men were all volunteers, not conscripted, and they died pitifully young. With the exception of Major Frederick Donald Mirrielees of the Home Guard, who died in a horrendous accident with a grenade at Garth House, the average age of death was only 24. One was just a boy of 18. The fifteen joined various battalions in the Black Watch, Seaforth Highlanders, the Gordon

Highlanders and others. One man was in the navy and went down in a cruiser torpedoed off The Netherlands' coast, and the boy died in an RAF seaplane which crashed upon take-off. Only one died outside Europe, in a savage battle near Tunis in 1943, but most were killed on the battlefields of Flanders and France.

All have connections with Fortingall. Some came from local families, with others the link was more tenuous. I was surprised to see a South African among those listed until I found out that he'd married a relative of the Molteno family of Glen Lyon House. Another lad came from Kilmarnock and enlisted in Dumfries, but at the time of his death in 1915 his father was the manager of the Glen Lyon farm. The links are all there.



So at our next chilly Remembrance Day gathering at the memorial, I'll be looking at the names and thinking yes, I know you, George and Angus, Ian and Robbie and wee Ken from Ardrasgairt, I know who your mum and dad were and where you were born, I know how you posed, shy but proud, for your studio portrait in your smart new uniform, I know with what courage and honour you gave up your life. I'll be silently thanking them all for what they did, and so, I hope, will you.

## WildFox Events in Poland, Jo Fox-Pitt

On 5th March David Fox-Pitt MBE from Ardtalnaig, South Loch Tay, decided to help Ukrainian refugees arriving at the Polish border. WildFox Events, an adventure challenge company, has equipment that could be used at this quiet time of year. He packed a Landrover Defender and Unimog, a box trailer and a mobile pizza oven trailer and with three friends



headed out to the little town of Medyka on the Poland/Ukraine border. There he set up a field kitchen 24/7 supplying hot food and drinks for those entering Poland. The border is only a few metres from his camp. David is passionate about supporting the Polish community and not putting them under any extra pressure. Therefore his growing gang of volunteers try to be as self-sufficient as possible and sleep in

tents or vehicles. It has been very cold at night (-12 deg C). He doesn't know how long he'll need to operate, but he does know that for those he meets he is making a huge difference. His camp is overflowing with kindness and language is no barrier for the many women and children who turn up. Sporting his kilt to make people smile, he is catering for up to 3000 people a day. David says "It's similar to a feed station at one of our events, yet it's like Groundhog Day, never ending - day after day after day and the queue is sometimes many hours long. Anything I can do to cheer the anxious and cold refugees is worth it." David is volunteering for a family charity, **The Siobhan's Trust**, named after his late aunt. They are punching well above their weight and are the only significant UK presence at this border crossing. David is making valuable connections with other charities and Polish community groups and is also working with **Tayside and Strathearn Help for Ukraine** to

keep the supply chain going for items that can't be easily sourced locally in Poland. The needs may change as the situation evolves but his first priority is to keep the kitchen serving. If you want to donate please go to [siobhanstrust.uk/donate/](https://siobhanstrust.uk/donate/) or contact David's wife, Joanna on 01567 820 409; [jo@wildfoxevents.com](mailto:jo@wildfoxevents.com).



### Mary's Meals and the Backpack Appeal, Margaret McGlauchlan

In March this year, the very last of the filled backpacks were picked up by a Mary's Meals van and delivered to Glasgow on their way to waiting excited children in Malawi. This activity has been ongoing for the last 17 years! The Charity has decided, due to soaring costs, the Backpack Project will end to allow the charity to focus on feeding hungry children in the world's poorest countries

It all started in 2007 when the ladies and friends of the Guild busied themselves raising money to buy useful goodies to fill the backpacks for the hungry children being fed by the charity Mary's Meals. Do you remember the bake stall under the gazebo outside the Thrift shop or the one on the village green at the Guild BBQ? All monies raised helped to buy the *goodies* for the packs! Local businesses, contacts, saved items for our parish team and with kind donations we estimate that over the years around 900 packs have been sent from this parish.

**A Big Thank-You** to all who helped in all sorts of ways - sourcing bargains, filling pencil cases, collecting flip-flops, spoons, towels, shorts and T-shirts, making donations - the list goes on. **Thank you all HUGELY.** Collecting and filling those back-



packs was a lot of fun and judging by the photographs of the children who received them they also had a lot of fun receiving them!

<https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/>

