



After Pentacost

Dear friends

Over these next months, we will be looking at the theme of “what the disciples did next” after Pentecost and picking some examples from the book of Acts. In all my years in the church there have been very few times when we haven’t been waiting for something - waiting for Presbytery to decide, waiting for outcomes from the General Assembly, waiting for the next programme to start, or planning decision to be made etc. The temptation in these times is to do very little because we feel powerless; we can feel that we’re not in control of the situation, so we are tempted to give up.

The exciting example from the disciples is that they went through all the same stuff as we do yet they persevered. There were times of waiting, times when they had to endure persecution or suffered setbacks, shipwrecks, and all kinds of uncertainty; times of grief and soul searching. Through everything they managed to keep “The main thing the main thing”. They kept their eyes on Jesus, who is the “author and perfecter of our Faith” (Hebrews 12: 2-3). Their challenge is our challenge.

In the book of Nehemiah we read about the rebuilding programme the people of Israel undertook after their return

from exile in Babylon. Their enemies were constantly trying to distract them, to cause fear and immobilise them; to stop them securing the walls of Jerusalem. The great leader Nehemiah said this of his enemies:

But they were scheming to harm me; 3 so I sent messengers to them with this reply: “I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?” (Nehemiah 6: 2b-3)

So why should the great work of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ and seeking the Kingdom of God stop just because we need to regroup and re-organise? In this time of waiting for the Presbytery Mission Plan to be implemented our job is to keep our focus on Jesus and our hearts attuned to Him and His leading. We need to keep gathering to worship our great God with passion in Spirit and Truth. We need to look after each other, and love each other well, have an open door to all, and actively engage in the mission of Jesus Christ to reach the lost in Arbroath. The mission never changes despite uncertain times. That’s our call and let’s keep on going as Nehemiah did in his day and the first disciples did in theirs.

Love to you all, **Jonathan**

Finance Update From Scott

I’d like to take this opportunity to give you a further update on where we are financially. As many of you will recall, at the ASM in March this year I highlighted the concerns regarding the challenges facing the church General Fund - our main operating account - which was in deficit last year. This continues to be one of our biggest financial challenges, primarily down to the impact of energy cost which are crippling! Coming out of contract, with no option to enter new contracts, saw energy costs spiral upwards. In contract gas cost 2.23 pence per kWh rising to just over 20 pence per kWh out of contract – just over a nine-fold increase. This has recently eased, however it still sits at almost 16 pence per kWh. Electricity has been similarly affected.

At the recent Kirk Session meeting in June, the Session discussed the financial situation at St Andrew’s Church in this current year, including looking at a range of scenarios which would reduce the potential deficit for the General Fund in 2023. A worst-case scenario is a deficit of approximately £28,000 which is clearly unsustainable. However, by looking at a number of actions this can be reduced or, ideally, a surplus achieved – but this is very challenging. Actions being pursued include - securing more favourable energy contract rates as soon as they are available, continuing our efforts to reduce energy consumption, increasing income from the hire of our premises, e.g. the recent vaccination centre contract. We have also looked at maximising small savings across a range of expenditure headings, however there are many expenditure items over which we have little or no control, e.g. our contributions to the nation-

al church – at just over £77,000, our biggest single cost by a significant margin! - rates, council tax, Presbytery Dues, insurances, etc. So we also need to look at our income options. As mentioned, increasing income from hire of our premises is a priority – Linda has been working tirelessly (and successfully) on this. Our main source of our income, as you would expect, is free-will offerings. Over the past three years we have been blessed in that these have not been too adversely affected by COVID-19 and subsequent cost of living pressures - at least, not to the same extent as many other churches - but the impacts are there. So, a big thank you for all the sacrificial giving I see each month!

In terms of free-will offerings, as always, if you are a taxpayer make sure you are signed up as a ‘Gift Aid’ giver – the tax we reclaim each year from HMRC is significant – over £20,000 last year across all giving to the church! If you are unsure about Gift Aid and would like more information, just drop me and email at - finance@arbroathstandrews.org.uk or catch me on a Sunday morning.

We are also blessed in that the very generous Jean Scott legacy allows all building maintenance and repair to be met from this separate restricted fund and takes the pressure off the General Fund over the next few years.

Although this is extremely challenging and needs to be addressed – and of course is happening in the midst of presbytery planning - I do need to stress that none of this will stand in the way of God being at work in our midst and building His Kingdom here in Arbroath!

(Continued overleaf)

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ST. ANDREW'S ARBROATH
Member Records
June 2023
Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals - None

The General Fund, although the biggest and main fund, is only one of many. We have funding in place to support ongoing work from other funds. For example, the girls' group, mental health projects, Sunday Club, and mission work to name a few.

We also have Havilah which is our biggest single project. This is self-sustaining, primarily from grant funding. This funding frequently comes in on a just-in-time basis – so we need to keep the Havilah team in our prayers as they continue to seek grant funding support for the project.

If anyone would like to know more I'm happy to provide further details to anyone inter-

IMPORTANT DATE

SPETEMBER EDITION
Word Processed files,
as attachments,
should be sent directly

to the Editor by
Tuesday
22nd August
or to the church office by
FRIDAY 18th August

ested! Just contact me at -
 finance@arbroathstandrews.org.uk

In the meantime, could I ask you to keep the following in your prayers:

Uphold the Kirk Session that God gives them wisdom and discernment in seeking God's will at this time;

Uphold the Havilah management group and staff in your prayers as they continue to pursue grant funding for the project; and,

I would ask you to please prayerfully seek God's guidance in your own individual giving.

Scott Anderson

Opportunities for Prayer

As you know every Thursday evening, Sunday evening and Tuesday morning (men) we meet together for a time of prayer. It is so encouraging to meet with others as we seek God's will for our families, our town and our church. It is especially encouraging that we have been joined by our Christian brothers and sister from other churches and denominations across the town.

We would love for you to join us at these times. Even if you have never prayed in a group before remember your payer could simply be adding an 'amen' to the prayers of others. On Zoom we break up into small groups of four to five which is not so daunting.

We thank God for the many answers to prayer which we have seen over the months and years of meeting together.

If you have anything, or anyone, you would like prayer for please do not hesitate to contact us.

I know many of you pray at home faithfully each day and would ask that you uphold Jonathan and Kate in prayer, as well our interim moderator Geoff Redmayne, and all those who are making decisions in the Presbytery Planning process.

Zoom links and prayer times and our mobile numbers can be found in the monthly 'What's On' notices.

God bless,

Scott and Elaine

The Dalitso Project

We had a successful AGM on 9th June where we were able to compare the lives of Esnat a 16 year old Malawian girl at our centre and Emily, (same age) one of Becky & Naomi's cousins, here in Scotland. Do we realise just how many more opportunities Emily has - computer, books, electricity, etc. That said, Esnat is greatly appreciative of the opportunities she has been given by being on our programme too. For us, we still have a lot to do to bring the gap a good bit closer.

How do we do that?

We need to get our message out far and wide.

Financially, we are in a good position, ever thankful for the Jean Scott legacy but without that we would have had a struggle to keep up with costs. Like here, every commodity has risen in price. We had a £47023 deficit and as treasurer, trustees and manage-

ment committee we need to think how in 2 years' time we can turn that around.

How do we do that?

We need to get our message out far and wide.

If we had another 200 folk giving £20 per month or 400 giving £10 we could achieve that. We have around 200 sponsors - so could each of us find that one or two people to come on board? As I said at AGM, we do not need you to sponsor a child (unless you want to) but to support us in our work.

Do you know that person, or two?

Let's get our message out far and wide.

Please get in touch with me or Charis on 07866 256236 or any committee member.

Also, if anyone would like a copy of our accounts, please let me know. I will have with me at church on a Sunday over the next few weeks too.

Doris