

NEWSLETTER

We already find ourselves in September and so it is time for another newsletter! As always Jay will willingly take suggestions for articles and loves it even more if you write them! The deadline for articles for next month is 28 September.



In this Edition

Meet Evelyn Johnston

Liz Goodge reports some snippets from Session

Claire MacDonald tells us about Imagine

We hear from Pastor Best...

Joe McGarry shares some of his thoughts on small groups

Hear about Moyra Cowie's recent trip to Kenya

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Here is our next instalment of snippets from session...

At our meeting this month, we met with representatives from Aberdeen Presbytery, following our request for another 6 month period to try to call a new Minister to Oldmachar. Our discussion resulted in a recommendation being made to Presbytery at its meeting on Tuesday 1st September, that this should be allowed. Accordingly, the Nominating Committee will be re-advertising the vacancy as soon as possible. Please continue to pray for both the Committee and the Kirk Session during this time.

We now have a Letting Policy for the church, that outlines how parts of the building can be hired and how much it will cost. There will be a copy in the foyer very soon for you to have a look at.

We approved the recruitment of the Youth Volunteers for this new school session. More details will be announced towards the end of September, but we are extremely pleased that there are likely to be 4 very talented young people on the team this session. All have been interviewed by James Gregory and one of the Elders and all will be undertaking the DNA course during their year with us.

We were delighted to hear that, following some technical problems, the sound and vision link to the crèche is now fully operational and the hearing loop in the church is also back in working order. We thank the technical team for this.

We agreed that Causeway Prospects can use Oldmachar church to host their launch in the Bridge of Don in November. Causeway is a Christian organisation with a mission to make the Gospel accessible to people with learning difficulties. Speak to Liz Thompson for more details or you can look on the website www.prospects.org.uk

Joe McGarry with some thoughts on why we should be in a small group...

It's very easy to be alone in a crowd. Merely because a person is surrounded by hundreds of people, it does not mean they are not alone. Life in the church, unfortunately, is not different. A person can worship week after week in a church and never truly be known. The difficulty is that that the church is the community of faith and there is the very clear assumption that we would be living and doing life together. Unfortunately, vibrant community is not often the spiritual norm in the church.



Spiritual isolation has many costs and is particularly felt through spiritual growth. God has crafted us to grow together, not in isolation, and we need spiritual community. Without it, sermons about God's grace to transform peter out as we face the daunting task of spiritual life on our own. We end up feeling alone, isolated, and spiritually defeated. In the worst cases, we feel God's plan for abundant life is for everyone else but us. Spiritual hope slips further and further away.

But that's not the way it's supposed to be. The church is the community of faith, and small groups are a fantastic way for the church to become a vibrant community of transformation and service. They release the power of life giving community into the church. It has been said that Christian formation is what occurs when, through community, a person encounters God's grace and truth over time. When one experiences the close community of others in Christian grace and the truth of God over an extended period—Christ mystically takes shape and form in the heart of the person. We are formed into Christ likeness together as spiritual isolation becomes a thing of the past.

Life together in little communities provides the opportunity for deeper levels of authenticity, service, honesty, love, and commitment. Small groups provide an optimal environment to encounter, create, and be shaped by one another and the love of God. Why be in a small group? Because small groups are where people encounter the life changing power of community. They are the spiritual environment where we are no longer alone and as we know God's grace and truth over time, we're formed.

Do you want to serve God and the congregation at Oldmachar in a very practical way?

Additional people are urgently required join the dedicated group who help keep the church clean and tidy. We work in small teams, on a rota basis, and a relatively short commitment of you time could make a big difference!



To find out more please speak to **Brian Ferguson**

Calling everyone with a garden!

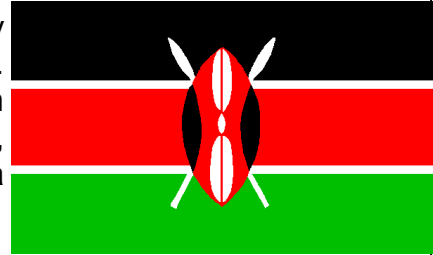
If you are thinning out plants and shrubs and would rather not throw them away please plant them in the church garden.



If we can fill the church garden with plants then maybe there would be less room for weeds to grow! Just take the plants down and find a space, no need to ask anyone first, all donations appreciated.

Moyra Cowie tells us a litt about what can happen when you ask God to 'enlarge your life so you can make a greater impact for him'

Hardly seems like 6 weeks since I returned from my second trip to Embu in Kenya – still buzzing from it. Through the Prayer of Jabez, God has once again given me the opportunity to have more influence, more responsibility and more opportunity to make a mark for him.



On 6th July, I and 6 colleagues from Aberdeen College left for Nairobi. We were also joined by Nelson, Fedelis and Lynette Maturi. Our mission was to deliver sport in schools in the Embu District and show the teachers how sport can be used to teach so many core skills. We had sent ahead of us 15 boxes, weighing approx 300kg of equipment – and it all arrived intact!

There are many types of schools in Kenya – government funded primary schools, private primary schools, secondary schools which the pupils pay to go to and local colleges which the students pay to go to. We managed to visit 2 government funded schools, one private funded primary school, 3 secondary schools and the local teacher training college. Whilst private and secondary schools struggle to buy books, sports equipment is way down the list of priorities so equipment is lacking and it was a pleasure for us to hand over equipment at each school.

I also ran a Sports Leader Day course for teachers wishing to gain confidence in leading sporting activities. This gave all 30 candidates who attended the course a certificate to add to their CPD. Seventeen schools we had not had a change to visit sent candidates for the course and we were able to send them back not just with new confidence and knowledge but also 6 balls for the school to use for sport. As well as sending sports equipment to 3 schools I visited last year we were able to assist 26 schools and a teacher training college with sporting equipment.



Being able to interact with the teachers and pupils from all these schools was just amazing. As well as teaching sport I also delivered many lessons on Scotland via powerpoint – thanks to the Multi media project I was gifted to take along. This piece of equipment also allowed to me to teach so many children 'My God is a Great Big God' – having anything from 30 – 350 children singing that song at once was just amazing!!!!

I believe God still has amazing plans for me in Embu and there is an invite for me to return in July 2010 – so where is God calling you to go???? Can I get another team together to do God's work – a team willing to offer drama, sport, bible study, music, home visitations – is this you? If you feel God calling you or wish to know more – speak with me and we can pray together to see what God is calling us to do.

Some musings from Aileen Barclay or Pastor Best...

Some years ago a very dear friend gave me the name Pastor Best as a slight but fond insult. Rather than taking offence, I laughed my head off since it's such a wonderful title to have bestowed upon oneself. With my 60th birthday fast approaching, I am of course long past my best! But on the other hand, to be the "best" pastor puts the title in a completely different context. When you reflect on it, the title (although completely erroneous when applied to me) is rather endearing—even flattering.



Yet, the same title conjures up images of women portrayed in programmes such as "Absolutely Fabulous" or the "Vicar of Dibley." I ask myself what these women really say to women like myself and discover that I truly like them and identify with them, however ludicrous they may sometimes appear. They misbehave, seemingly vulgar sometimes and can behave in more inappropriate ways than the boys in "Men behaving Badly." At a deeper level though, the characters tell us quite a lot about being human. It's their little acts of kindness that draws me to them, even to people who it seems they don't appear to like very much. It's the remorseful tears when they find themselves in hot water and their fumbling attempts to right the wrongs gone askew that I enjoy so much.

Sometimes in church it's very hard to keep up the image of ourselves we'd like to portray to others and I am no exception. I cringe when I think about some of the gaffs I've made as a Christian woman, particularly in Oldmachar! Then I remember Peter the Apostle and thank God for him. He made plenty of gaffs during his life time being rebuked by Jesus for his eagerness to sort things out as he saw it. Well, maybe he didn't do some of the things Joanna Lumley and Dawn French did but he was well known for his little acts of kindness, his remorseful tears during the crucifixion and for his fumbling attempts to prevent Jesus death. So maybe Pastor Best isn't really such an awful title to have as some think. For Jesus said that it was on this rock—Peter—that he would build his church. The bible says that there is hope and for all of us there is no matter what title others bestow upon us.

POVERTY



christian
aid

Christian Aid have been working away at a plan to end poverty. Completely. Forever. This from their website...

"People made it. People can fix it. If you think ending poverty is too big a task, ask yourself if it's any bigger than abolishing slavery? than eradicating small pox? than ending apartheid? than liberating Europe from Nazi tyranny? Come on. We're humans, we do BIG things. We just need to put our minds to it. We've worked out the theory. Now we're embarking on the journey to put the theory into practice. Join us on that journey."

Is the end of poverty really a realistic goal? Please find out more and engage with the debate at www.christianaid.org.uk

Claire MacDonald tells us what it was like to be at Imagine this year...

When I told people at work that I was going to be spending a week helping to look after 11 teenagers, while camping in the middle of a field in Thainstone...they thought I was rather mad (and I kind of agreed with them!), however Imagine really was an amazing week.



Arriving on the Tuesday we started to set up our tents...all went well until a gigantic 12man tent showed up!! It took about 6 of us to put up (while negotiating a very strong wind). Then it was all hands on deck to put up the gazebo which we had brought to provide storage for our food and a communal place to gather. The gazebo went up quickly, however came down just as quickly when a guy rope snapped in the wind and the gazebo went flying across the field!! Thanks to a new gazebo we were soon ready to start the week.

Each morning and evening we went to the main meeting with around an hour of worship and then the speaker for an hour. The speakers spoke about finding a bigger picture of the world, of God and ourselves and were extremely engaging. It was amazing to see the whole hall filled with hundreds of young people worshipping, listening and connecting with God's message. There were also three or four seminars each day (Our very own Joe McGarry and Julie Forbes were among the seminar speakers!) on topics from worship to theology and separate girls and boys talks. The youth really responded to the seminars and main meetings and went from being unsure at the start of the week to supporting and praying for each other during the meetings.

There were also many recreational activities happening throughout the day, the highlights being the evening acoustic gigs (Zak and Stephen had a night each on the stage) and "Imagine's got talent". Heading back to the campsite at the end of the night provided an opportunity to socialise with youth from other youth groups, mainly the group from Inverness who were camping with us. Many flumps were toasted over garden candles and silly games played into the small hours before us leaders decided it was time to send them to bed (whether they went to sleep or not was up to them!!).

It was great seeing many members of the congregation come out to Imagine in the evenings to see what was happening, provide us with some food, and encourage the youth. Everyone in the Oldmachar group grew closer to God and strengthened their bonds with each other, Imagine really was an amazing time of worship and fellowship, and although I was exhausted by the end of the week, it was most definitely worth it!

Praying for everyone in the congregation.

Here is the list of people for prayer this month, it doesn't matter if you don't even know who these people are, God does!! When we get to the end of the Church roll we will start all over again!

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|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Barbara Brown | 6. Sandra Bruce |
| 2. Jay Brownlee | 7. Ian Brunton |
| 3. Sandy Brownlee | 8. Sheila Brunton |
| 4. Darren Bruce | 9. Alex Buchan |
| 5. Sarah Bruce | 10. Coreeta Buchan |

Meet your congregation...

Here we have the next instalment of our regular feature where each month we interview someone from Oldmachar to find out some more about them. We always need people to volunteer for this so if you would like to see yourself on these pages or you would like to suggest someone else to be here then please Email Jay (address on the front page)

Evelyn Johnston...

What was it that first brought you to Oldmachar? The Cornerstone is in place and, as in any building, a sure foundation is required so I'm one of the stones in that work. A group from St Columba's was the onset of Oldmachar.



What is your favourite biscuit? More a cake than a biscuit – I cannot resist Millionaires Shortbread.

What would you say is the best thing about being a Christian? Shall we go back to the word "foundation". Ask any lady who wears a foundation garment how she feels and I'm sure the answer would be "what a difference it makes".

If you were a colour which one would you be and why? White – it's bright ,it suits most people, it lights up dull colours and it's easy to deal with.

Which is your favourite book of The Bible and why? I have a fondness for the book of Ruth and the caring friendship there.

What is your favourite childhood memory? With the advantage of advancing years I'd say being part of a loving family ,which in our youth, is taken for granted.

What is the number one reason that someone should come to Oldmachar? Oldmachar is blessed in the friendliness and openness of the leadership team and our members. Confirmed by friends who have visited.

Dates for your diary

September

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| 6 | Evening Service, 6.30pm |
| 20 | Charlie Devine, 2.30pm |
| 18 | North East Scotland Youth For Christ ceilidh and stovies night, 7pm Copthorne Hotel (see www.nesyfc.org.uk for more details) |
| 26 | Somebody Cares fundraising sale. 10am—2pm, 80 Summerhill Road. |
| 25-27 | Encounter Weekend (see www.souledout.org.uk for more details) |
| 27 | Jim Bailey's family Show at St Columbas |