

Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald

September 2024

If that was summer, I suppose that was it. Wet and miserable for most of us. I know age is ever increasing and so I shouldn't be too surprised but I just don't like the accompanying feeling of cold and dampness. Still, September beckons and there is still a faint hope of it bringing some warmer weather. I hope.

September certainly brings to many of us at the Abbey a full timetable of meetings and an exciting programme of work. Worship, as always, remains our heartbeat, central to all we do and plan for the future. It never fails to offer the highest quality of choral singing and organ playing. When mixed with words that not only comfort and encourage but may, at times, challenge, we can look forward to services that reflect the best of the Abbey's long tradition of inspiring music and thought-provoking preaching. However, all this only comes at a cost. Choristers are attracted by the scholarships we can offer, enabling them to learn their trade and develop their skills under Dr George McPhee, one of the finest church musicians in the country. Financial resources are currently scarce and considerable efforts are being made to try to replenish the psalmody fund as a matter of urgency.

USE OF COMMON CUP AT COMMUNION

Following the recent unanimous decision of the Kirk Session, use of the Common Cup was reinstated at the August diet of Holy Communion. As explained in David Davidson's excellent article included in this month's magazine, such has been the Abbey's tradition since its very foundation. During the last Kirk Session meeting, Dr Davidson and Dr Iain Morton both supported the view that the 'official' ban on its use during the Covid period had probably been unnecessary. Anyone with any qualms about using the Cup for whatever reason, should simply accept it and then pass it to their neighbour. Within our Reformed Tradition, they are still participating in Communion by doing so. Personally, I am delighted we have returned to continue the tradition of our forebears and am sure other churches will be pleased to follow our example before long.

AHEAD...

Coming months should bring a mixture of excitement and progress, challenge and promise.

- Two former committees, the Parish Committee and the Community Outreach Committee have combined forces and, as a result, each has given fresh vigour to the newly created Outreach Committee.

Already, the Outreach Committee has been in regular contact with Asylum Seekers housed in the Watermill Hotel and continues to support Paisley's homeless. Its 'Talk it Over' group continues to fulfil such a necessary role for people within our local community and beyond.

- The work of developing our marketing strategy continues apace. We very much appreciate the assistance given by outside professionals, especially that by departments of the University of the West of Scotland based both in Paisley and in Ayr. Discussions are being held with the King's Foundation at Dumfries House as to the formation of a formal partnership with the Abbey; and Stakeholders are being sought to work in conjunction with us so that future plans might all the sooner become reality.
- After beginning to show signs of wear after their time on display, the historical timeline has been removed from the south aisle and will be replaced by, what is planned to be, the first in a rolling programme of exhibits from the Abbey's archive.
- Over the summer, progress has been made ensuring the Manse meets all current building regulations and can now be advertised for lease. While we continue to await Building Consent from the Council, the Abbey Halls in Lawn Street are now being advertised as for sale.
- Discussions with the architect continue as to the restoration and refurbishment of the King's Apartment on the top floor of the Place of Paisley. It is hoped this work might soon begin on site enabling the apartment to be advertised for holiday let/ lease as soon as possible thereafter. Sketches are being prepared regarding the addition to the Abbey of a Visitor / Welcome Centre. We await sight of these with great interest and will keep the congregation updated as to progress.

AND PRESENTLY ...

Meanwhile, the daily work of hundreds of people: loyal volunteers, supporters, office-bearers and staff continues to ensure the Abbey is open to the public as a place of prayer, peace and hope. We sometimes underestimate just how important that is. To this end, we continue to work closely with the local Presbytery and the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland developing the 'Signature Churches' plan recently approved by the Church's General Assembly. By this plan, the Abbey as one of the great 'cathedral' buildings of Scotland will be designated for priority assistance in the upkeep of our buildings.

To aid us in furthering common interests, at the beginning of this month we have, what we hope will be, the first in a series of joint meetings with colleagues representing St Giles' Cathedral Edinburgh. Together, with Presbytery's support, we plan to be a leading force in furthering the Signature Churches initiative, bringing even greater support to the great historic churches of Scotland.

All the above is taking place now, during this month of September. Thereafter, as our work stretches into the months ahead, we place our faith in the guidance of a God whose love has been experienced down through generations past as well as present. Whatever the future may hold for the Abbey, above all else, it must remain a beacon of unrequited love within a society so often confused, chaotic and brutal.

Jim Gibson
Chaplain to His Majesty The King in Scotland
Minister at the Abbey.

CHANGE IN ABBEY OPENING

From **Monday 16th September** it is hoped the Abbey will be 'open' seven days per week. It is intended that, staffing permitting, the Abbey, café and shop will all be open to the public from 10 am until last entry at 3.30pm. The Abbey will then close at 4 pm. Our thanks to volunteers and staff for making this change to our timing possible.

ALLOVUS

Wednesday 11th September sees the start of a new venture in which *EVERYONE* can participate and enjoy. From 1.30pm until 3.30pm folks can come along and take part in a programme of activity designed for all, including: talks, discussions, musical events and surprises! Refreshments served. Donations taken. No need to be a member of the Abbey. Enter by outside stairs at the Abbey carpark.

NORAH BEATTIE

Members of the Abbey will be sorry to hear of the coming retiral of our Church Officer/Caretaker/Cleaner, Norah. For nearly twenty years, Norah has been an essential member of the team looking after our properties, keeping the Abbey clean and ready for whatever event: worship, concert, graduation might be next in the diary. Sadly, she will be leaving us in early October. We thank Norah for everything she has done over these years of service and, especially, for her willing friendship. She will be much missed by many in the congregation. Anyone wishing to donate to a retiral gift can do so by contacting the Abbey Office (0141 889 7654).

ELDER DUTY TEAMS

September - Team 2

October - John Kitson's Team

November - Michael McGill's Team

PARISH REGISTER JUNE, JULY & AUGUST

Wedding

29 June Laura MacDonald & Johnathan Terry
14 August Natasha Guthrie & Richard Begg

Funeral

7 August Margaret Neil
26 August Iain Lawson

New Members

Wendy Nicol
Janet Roddick
Roger Roddick
Isabel Stoddart

ALLOVUS

**Allovus (All-of-us) Paisley Abbey's
new club for everyone
starting in the Abbey on 11 September 2024.**

**Wednesdays - 1.30 pm - 3.30 pm
Meeting fortnightly**

**Varied programme of activities, speakers and outings
Refreshments served**

SYLLABUS September - December

11 September	Getting to Know You
25 September	Quiz Day
9 October	Harvest Time
23 October	All Things Relaxing
6 November	Memories of Times Past
20 November	Film Day
4 December	Scams And Scammers
18 December	Christmas Fun



COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE

In June 2024 the Parish and Community & Pastoral Committees amalgamated to form the Community Outreach Committee. Below is some information of the work carried out in this committee.

SUNDAY COFFEE

Following morning services, coffee, tea & biscuits are served by Aileen Livingstone and team. This is a lovely time to chat with friends and visitors. If you would like to help serve Sunday Coffee, please contact Aileen.

HARVEST

This year we will support WaterAid for Harvest Thanksgiving. It's easy to take water for granted living in Scotland with so much rain, however our friends in other parts of the world are not quite as fortunate. We also deliver plants to those in the congregation who are housebound. Harvest this year will be on 6 October. If you would like to help deliver plants then please contact Sally Cook.

SENIORS OUTING

Twice a year in June and December we invite the senior members of the congregation to afternoon tea. In June we had a lovely time at Caulders in Erskine. These outings are full of fun, chatter and laughter. Drivers are needed for these events. If you are able to help please contact our transport convener Marion McDougall.

CHRISTIAN AID

Christian Aid week is held annually in May. This year the Abbey held a fundraising lunch to highlight the growing scarcity of food globally.

FOODBANK

The last Sunday of each month we take the congregations donations of non perishable food, toiletries, cleaning products and pet food to the foodbank. These donations are gratefully accepted. Monetary donations are also welcome. For further information contact Margaret Sharp.

TALK IT OVER GROUP

The Talk It Over group is for mums with post natal depression of feeling overwhelmed following the birth of their baby. Mums come together to discuss their concerns and support each other. Counselling is also available. There is a creche available and anyone who would like to assist with this, please contact Margaret Sharp.

HOMELESS AND BEFRIENDING

John Kitson and Fiona Small attend the Homeless and Befriending meetings. This group consists of representatives from various Paisley churches, the Salvation Army, St Vincent's, Blue Triangle and Renfrewshire Council. There are many places throughout Paisley where anyone who is homeless can receive a meal and chat to someone. This information was collated and a card produced to give to anyone homeless. If you would like to know more about this group please contact John Kitson.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

We visited the asylum seekers staying at the Watermill Hotel before summer and hope to start working with other churches to help them in September.

As you can see this is a busy committee with many ways to help others. If you would like to help in any way, please contact any of the names mentioned.

THANK YOU FROM LINDA NEILSON

Linda Neilson and family thank you all for your help and support during this difficult time. Doug would have appreciated your kindness and friendship greatly.

FOUR LETTER WORD COMPETITION

The Competition was drawn with great aplomb by Linda Barrett on 21 July as the Minister was on a well-deserved holiday. As there was no Abbey Herald in July & August this is the first chance to publish the answers – which are:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------|
| 1. EACH (or ENDS) | 2. APES |
| 3. TILE | 4. OVER |
| 5. RIDE | 6. ABLE |
| 7. ITCH (or ARTS) | 8. LING |
| 9. RAGE | 10. EARS |
| 11. RATE | 12. RING |
| 13. ARMS | 14. VICE |
| 15. USED | 16. EAST |
| 17. AVER | 18. AILS |
| 19. SING | 20. ROVE |

The winner on this occasion was **Mrs C Combes of Kilbarchan** and the runner-up was **Mrs Elizabeth Kitson** – so again the 2 prizes were split between a kind supporter of the Abbey and an active member thereof which is beautifully equitable!

Warm congratulations to them both and as ever our thanks to everyone who contributed in any way.

Thank you all and again congratulations to the two worthy winners of this competition.

S.G.C.

SALUTING HEROES OF PAISLEY ABBEY

Article from the Glasgow Herald on Monday 2 September

It is, of course, welcome and gratifying that Paisley Abbey is to share in a £735,326 urgent pay out from the National Churches Trust and also to receive a Fabric Repair Grant of £10,000 from the Wolfson Foundation (“Not so Holy water to be kept out of Abbey after emergency funds”, the Herald, August 29). This funding will help to avoid serious material damage to the fabric of the much admired and much visited Grade –A listed church.

The award of such financial contributions is, of course to be greatly appreciated. Paisley Abbey is of much more than local, district and regional significance. It is viewed by many as a national treasure. We should be grateful for all the hard work and resolution of the volunteers in fund raising. We are living in times when difficult decisions with regard to the allocation of resources are having to be made and those involved on behalf of the Abbey and the two charities concerned are to be congratulated in securing that this “ancient and iconic building” will be kept wind and watertight, still to be enjoyed by congregation, members and its many visitors.



CLOISTER COFFEE SHOP

Looking for a quiet coffee spot in Paisley?

The Abbey café has been upgraded, and relaunched over the summer months.

Following a series of workshops and two presentations, the Church Manager and one of our elders Jan Norris were successful in receiving a grant of £11,200 to spend on the archive and café.

The money has been invested in two new coffee machines, decorating costs, installation of Wi fi in the café, the purchase of a PRS license to enable us to play suitable background music.

There are further developments planned, but why not visit and support the Abbey in this new venture?

We were also delighted to receive a donation in memory of Anna Mathie, and this has enabled us to purchase new crockery.

Jan Norris would be happy to welcome new volunteers for the café shifts. Please speak to her, or leave your contact details with the Abbey office. Meanwhile, Linda, Jan and Margaret Craig are deeply appreciative of the current volunteers who have increased their shifts to enable this new venture to launch.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

There will be a coffee morning in support of Macmillan Cancer Care on Thursday 26th September from 10.30 am.

Please come along and support this good cause.



CONGREGATIONAL HARVEST LUNCH - 6 OCTOBER

The Events Committee warmly invite all members of the Congregation and friends to a Harvest Lunch in the Panel Room of the Place of Paisley after the morning service on the first Sunday of October. Come along and enjoy delicious seasonal soups and sandwiches followed by tea/ coffee and shortbread etc.

Tickets priced £10 per person will be on sale from the Abbey Shop and at a table in the Cloister after Sunday services.

RENFREWSHIRE FOODBANK

The congregation of Paisley Abbey generously supports the Foodbank set up to serve our local community in Paisley. By doing so we are trying to assist the most vulnerable people for whom life can prove the most difficult. The Foodbank distributes to those for whom the need is most urgent. If you would like to contribute, please bring along your donations to the Abbey on the last Sunday of the month. Anything you may be able to donate will be much appreciated.

Thank you to all who faithfully donate each month and to those who now give support. Your donations show the community that the congregation of the Abbey care for others and actively contribute to the wellbeing of all.

SATURDAY LUNCH HOUR CONCERTS

Saturdays at 12.30 pm
Admission is £5 payable at the door

14 September
Trio Alba
Daniela Hathaway

26 October
Rudsambee
Conductor - Ian James Munro

23 November
Paisley Abbey Choral Scholars

21 December
Programme of Christmas Music
Abbey Brass



EVENTS AT THE ABBEY

**LONDON CONCERTANTE – Vivaldi Four Seasons
& Vaughan Williams The Lark Ascending**
Friday 6 September at 7.30 pm
Tickets from £21 available from candlelightconcerts.co.uk

SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA - Mozart & Beethoven
Also featuring music from Wagner
Thursday 12 September at 7.30 pm
Tickets from sco.org.uk or 0131 557 6800

LONDON CONCERTANTE – West End Musicals
Music from Hamilton, Les Mis, West Side Story & many more
Sunday 6 October at 7.30 pm
Tickets from £21 available from candlelightconcerts.co.uk

**LONDON CONCERTANTE – Vivaldi Four Seasons
& Vaughan Williams The Lark Ascending**
Sunday 3 November at 7.30 pm
Tickets from £21 available from candlelightconcerts.co.uk

LONDON CONCERTANTE – Viennese Christmas by Candlelight
Strauss, Tchaikovsky & Brahms
Thursday 5 December at 7.30 pm
Tickets from £21 available from candlelightconcerts.co.uk

CITY MUSIC PRODUCTIONS - Vivaldi Four Seasons at Christmas
Sunday 8 December at 7.30 pm
Tickets from £20.52 available from www.citymusicproductions.co.uk

LONDON CONCERTANTE – Christmas at the Movies
Home Alone, Elf, White Christmas & many more
Sunday 15 December at 6 pm
Tickets from £21 available from candlelightconcerts.co.uk

VOLUNTEERS 'THANK YOU' COFFEE MORNING

Some additional pictures from Janette Lynch from the 'Thank you' Coffee Morning which was on Friday 31 May.



Margaret Craig, Revd Jim Gibson & Janette Lynch.

Some of the volunteers enjoying their tea, coffee & cakes and having a chat.



Revd Jim Gibson, Margaret Craig & Doreen Gibson.

PAISLEY ABBEY SCOUTS

In June we were so excited to be investing the new Squirrels into our Drey formally before we finish up for the summer break.

Investiture is a special time where the Squirrels made their Scout Promise, and becomes a member of both the group, and the worldwide Scout family.

We want to warmly welcome the Squirrels into both Paisley Abbey Squirrels and the worldwide Scout family.

They got their Membership Award. This is a purple badge with a picture of the fleur-de-lis – an international symbol that's worn by Scouts all over the world and their neckie. Which they can proudly wear, to show which Scout Group they are part of.

To mark the occasion had a Squirrel 'Nut Hunt' at the end of the session where it the Squirrels were awarded with their new Squirrel Jumpers, bag and water bottle ready to take on the next adventure.



VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA - 24 AUGUST

Many thanks to the members of the congregation, along with their families and friends, who supported us on this special occasion. What a lovely afternoon we all had in a beautiful vintage setting with lovely background piano music, lots of laughter, delicious food and a real sense of wonderful fellowship. Our thanks must go to the amazing team of helpers whom, without their hard work and enthusiasm, the smooth running of the afternoon would not have been possible. To the sandwich makers, bakers, donators of china and table covers, florists, church officers, pianist, photographer and those involved in any other way, we give our heartfelt thanks. Of course, the afternoon wouldn't have been the success it was without you being there, so thank you!



All the delicious cakes & scones that were served at the Afternoon Tea.

A special Thank You to Irene Doole & Marion McDougall (looking very glamorous!) for their hard work in organising this event.



Everyone enjoying themselves at this wonderful afternoon!



VISIT OF THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO

We were delighted to welcome Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía as a visitor to Paisley Abbey on Thursday 29th August 2024. The archbishop was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain last year and was making a pastoral visit to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Paisley. He had arrived in Paisley on the preceding afternoon and his visit to the Abbey was central to a busy schedule before he left at lunchtime on the following day.

The Apostolic Nuncio is the personal representative of Pope Francis to the Court of St James's, the royal court of King Charles, which formally receives all ambassadors accredited to the United Kingdom. His role is equivalent to that of an ambassador, representing the See of Rome to the United Kingdom Government.

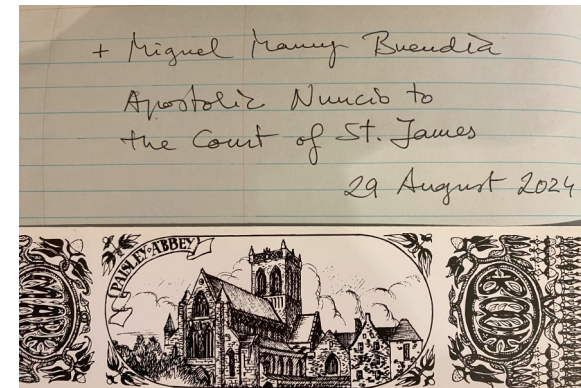
Archbishop Buendía and his retinue, which included Rt Rev John Keenan, Bishop of Paisley, were met by our minister, Rev Jim Gibson, along with the Moderator and Clerk to the Presbytery of Clyde, Revs David Burt and Robbie Hamilton respectively. The archbishop was given a brief tour of the Abbey Church and was especially interested to hear of the continuing importance of music in our worship and to be reminded of our Cluniac heritage, being designed in pre-Reformation times as *Abbaye Notre Dame de Paisley*, and our associated candidacy for UNESCO World Heritage status.



Jim Gibson led the company in prayer in the St Mirin Chapel. His words were evocative of the Church of Scotland's *St Margaret Declaration* of friendship with the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland that was welcomed by the 2022 General Assembly as "a decisive and irrevocable statement of our friendship with one another, based on our shared faith in Christ." Archbishop Buendía and the priests in his party then sang the well-known Gregorian chant, "Salve Regina," a fitting echo of the music that monks would have sung daily in Paisley Abbey Church before the Reformation.



Prior to his departure, the archbishop signed our visitor's book and was pleased to receive the gift of a Paisley Abbey quach as a memento of his historic visit.



HOLY COMMUNION IN PAISLEY ABBEY CHURCH

*THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HAS AN
'OPEN COMMUNION'*

*AND ANY WHO LOVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
ARE INVITED TO SHARE IN THIS SACRAMENT.*

For someone of my generation, being a “manse bairn” implicitly meant being brought up in the ways of the church. As an infant, I had little to say about my Baptism – “the mark of entry into the Christian family.” That was the choice made by my parents in keeping with their desire for their children to be brought into the Christian family, and their promise to bring up their children in the ways of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seventeen years later, I made my own choice to become a “full member” of the Christian family, making my own profession of faith and sharing in a Communion service for the first time. Acknowledging that I had been baptised and being confirmed in the faith that I had professed, I was admitted to the fellowship of the Lord’s Table and invited to share in the Lord’s Supper.

Even fifty years ago, in the era when these personal events occurred, there seemed to be greater emphasis on a process of preparation for Communion than now. In writing his guide for communicants, Roy Paterson stated that “the Lord’s Supper is a meal offered to those who belong to the Lord. It is not a private party where we are free to choose the guests. This means that at the Lord’s Table there can be no divisions or barriers.”

Paterson noted that “preparation for Communion used to be strict and systematic. Every intending communicant had to be catechised (examined on the Shorter Catechism, the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed and the Commandments) by the minister and the Kirk Session. Their approval was signified by the granting of a Communion token.”

“To-day,” he continued, “the Sacrament is still a great and solemn occasion in Scotland. It is the climax to the weekly worship of a congregation but in fact is attended by many who are not regular worshippers. The practice has been for a Communion card to be issued to all members ‘in full communion’ but this is an invitation rather than a ticket of admission. In practice the Church of Scotland has an ‘open Communion’ and any who love the Lord Jesus Christ are invited to share in this Sacrament.”

Looking back, I wonder if Roy Paterson wrote that last sentence in a spirit of anticipation. With hindsight, might the practices of his “to-day,” though relaxed in comparison with historical precedent, still have been perceived as the very “divisions or barriers” that he said were prohibited?

A Sacrament is a religious rite in which a material object, usually of small value, is used to convey some spiritual truth or meaning which is of very great value. Churches vary in practice as to the number of Sacraments observed. Quakers and the Salvation Army have none, while the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches each have seven. Baptism and Communion were always given a pre-eminent place and, at the time of the Reformation, these were regarded as the only two sacraments warranted by the words of Jesus.

Communion is the Sacrament given to anyone within the fellowship of the Christian Church. It entails partaking of the elements of bread and wine in a meal, much different from the Jewish Passover in which it originated. The simplicity of the act of eating a tiny piece of bread and taking a sip of wine contrasts markedly with its complex, symbolised, and multifaceted meaning. Communicants experience a raft of emotions, complementary rather than competing. These encompass fellowship, remembrance, thanksgiving, proclamation, and consecration – a shared experience of shared Christian feelings – feelings that, in Protestant interpretation, are merely represented by bread and wine. Wonderfully, such an intense spiritual workout does not exhaust the communicant but is restorative, giving a renewed sense of peace and hope through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The recent coronavirus pandemic triggered unprecedented changes in human social interaction, including the implementation of social distancing policies and mandatory avoidance of public gathering. Churches were forced to close their doors and, even on reopening, measures continued that prohibited the participation of the faithful population in their conventional religious practices and acts of worship. Conduct of the Sacrament of Communion has proved especially contentious given the fear that contact with a shared Communion cup or vessel may act as a vehicle of transmission of pathogens to the worshiper.

The issue of the potential transmission of infectious diseases through Holy Communion has given rise to a growing number of research efforts since the late 19th century. In his unsurpassed scholarly volume, ‘The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland, 1560-1960,’ George B. Burnet wrote:

“Early in [the twentieth] century an innovation from America began to disturb the Churches. The individual cup had arrived. New researches in bacteriology and public hygiene brought the common cup under suspicion, and though medical opinion was divided a considerable body of public opinion became apprehensive of infection and favoured the individual cup. This was specially so in the United Free Church. But over twenty parish churches - three of them in Glasgow - having established a precedent, an overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow came before the General Assembly of 1907 asking for a ruling on the matter of individual cups.

The Assembly appointed a committee to investigate the whole question and report. The report was given in 1909 by Dr McClymont, the Convener. The Assembly in its deliverance viewed the innovation with unmistakable disfavour, but in view of all the circumstances and various professional opinions, it did not feel justified in actually prohibiting it. But the Assembly did enjoin all ministers to see that the harmony of any congregation was not disturbed by the introduction of individual cups and that in every case where it was decided to introduce them, those who desired the old method of partaking should be conveniently provided for as formerly. In the interests of peace some congregations dropped the new proposal altogether: in others a compromise was reached, whereby the large cups were in use at the main celebration and the individual cups at a second table.”

The Kirk Session of Paisley Abbey gave due consideration to the use of individual cups as its Minutes recorded in 1908, when the matter had first come to the fore, and again in 1924, when the proposed union of the old Established Church with the United Free Church reignited the issue. The Session, while recognising that there was a division of opinion, concluded that there should be no change in the traditional and longstanding practice of serving Communion in Paisley Abbey Church by means of a common cup.

Paisley Abbey Church had of course been the first and only parish church in Paisley until 1738 when the Laigh Kirk opened at the foot of New Street. A further two parish churches were opened later in the eighteenth century on Church Hill – the High Kirk at the top and the Middle Kirk further down. The designation of “High,” “Middle,” and “Laigh” (or Low) Kirks was determined by altitude rather than liturgical practice. In liturgical terms, Paisley Abbey Church has always been the High Church of Paisley and, as such, would never have introduced the innovation – or to use Burnet’s word, “vulgarity” – of individual cups.

Burnet explained: “The objection to individual cups was based primarily on the plea that they destroyed the sense of fellowship and secondly on the distracting noise made by the tinkling of glasses and the re-stacking of trays on the Table. With regard to the chief objection it must be borne in mind that only in very small groups of communicants is it possible to adhere consistently to the one chalice as used by our Lord in the Upper Room (*Luke 22:17*). [Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves.’] The moment the size of the congregation makes the use of a second cup imperative, the principle of the common cup is surrendered. Is there really then, it may be asked, any logical reason why there should not be two hundred extra cups in use, irrespective of their size? Ninian Winzet had something to say about this centuries before. But logic has never been the thing that chiefly prevailed on either side of the controversy: it has been sentiment, doctrinal conservatism, or nervous fear.”

“Where individual cups are used the position is sometimes made worse by having no large cup on the Table at all for the minister’s use in the celebration, or by the simultaneous drinking of the wine by all at a given signal. In the latter, the glasses are ready filled and in small sockets on or beneath the book rests of the pews. In this a definite element of spiritual fellowship is lost, and the whole thing smacks too crudely of a toast. If individual cups must be used, let the trays be carried round reverently by the elders like the large cups and let there always be a chalice at least on the Holy Table for dispensing. Fortunately all but a very few churches avoid extremes. The present writer may say he has used both kinds of vessels and has no desire to return to the distractions - some would say the vulgarities - of individual cups.”

“Of the latest innovation in a few congregations - the individual spoon or ladle used by the communicant to take a little wine from the large cup as it passes along the pew - there are, of course, conflicting opinions. To the present writer this rather clumsy compromise has one serious practical objection at least. The manipulating of both cup and ladle in the shaky hands of some old or nervous people might easily lead to accidents. Many people, indeed, of all ages, feel that they need to hold and pass the cup with both hands free.”

In 2020, a literature review was published in an endeavour to establish the scientific evidence on the transmission of infections by partaking of Holy Communion.

Having formulated a hypothesis that pathogens of the mouth may contaminate wine on the communion cup, one set of researchers performed experiments through which volunteers were asked to drink sacramental wine that contained 14.5% of alcohol from a common silver Communion cup or chalice. Remarkably, the number of pathogens located in the rim of the chalice was found to be considerably low. The authors concluded that the risk of the transmission of infection through a common Communion cup is negligible.

In the same direction, other investigators of the potential transmission of pathogens from one person to another by use of the common cup have reported that under the most favourable conditions only 0.001% of organisms were transmitted from the saliva of one person to the mouth of another. Again remarkably, the commonest type of bacteria to cause upper respiratory infections (*Streptococcus pyogenes*) swabbed from the polished surface of the chalice died off rapidly.

The issue of potential transmission of bacteria through the common communion cup is controversial. Even if transmission occurs, it does not imply inoculation or infection: disease requires a minimum number of pathogens to be transmitted from person to person. Furthermore, the common Communion cup has never with certainty been associated with a pandemic outbreak.

Despite the considerable debate on this issue, in 1998, the United States' Centre of Disease Control and Prevention attempted to achieve a balance between scientific principles and respect for religious beliefs. A study they performed among 681 worshippers partaking Holy Communion disclosed that they did not exert a higher risk of infection compared to those with less or no religious service attendance.

In conclusion, the review commented that the potential transmission of coronavirus by partaking Holy Communion has divided society, politics and medical experts. According to the science, the common Communion cup may serve as a potential vehicle for transmission. However, the risk is considerably lower compared to other conditions of social gathering. Furthermore, the transmission of any infectious disease has never been documented. Finally, the review opined that "definite answers cannot be obtained in this issue. The greatest *medicine of the soul and the body* cannot be explained with human reasoning and pure logical criteria. Furthermore, a balance between scientific views and respect for the spiritual needs of the believers is required. Living with spirituality and prayer relieves stress and suffering."

No church – not even Paisley Abbey Church – can provide a guarantee that infection from use of a common cup at Communion will not occur. The evidence suggests that the risk of infection is very small, however. Individuals will have to determine their own views on the matter, bearing in mind that the issues are not of recent origin: the common cup has been in widespread use for centuries worldwide without it being implicated as a contributory factor in any pandemic. Notwithstanding, common sense dictates that anyone who is known to be at increased risk of infection should be especially cautious and circumspect, and any others who suspect that they may have an actively transmissible infection should desist from partaking Communion by the common cup. Those who, for whatever reason, do not wish to drink from the common cup should accept the bread and simply pass the cup to their neighbour. By doing so, they are still participating in Communion and sharing the "experience of shared Christian feelings – feelings that, in Protestant interpretation, are merely represented by bread and wine."

David C Davidson

SERVICES & MUSIC FOR SEPTEMBER

1 September 11 am Te Deum Anthem	Trinity 14 Morning Service A Hymn for St Cecilia	<i>Stanford in Bb</i> <i>Howells</i>
8 September 11 am Jubilate Deo Anthem	Trinity 15 Morning Service O for a closer walk with God	<i>Stanford in Bb</i> <i>Stanford</i>
4 pm Responses Psalm 119: 41-48 Canticles Anthem	Choral Evensong Give almes of thy goods	<i>Smith of Durham</i> <i>Stanford in C</i> <i>Tye</i>
15 September 11 am Te Deum Anthem	Trinity 16 Morning Service A Celtic Prayer	<i>Boyce in C</i> <i>McPhee</i>
22 September 11 am Benedictus es Domine Anthem	Trinity 17 Morning Service Tu es Petrus	<i>McPhee</i> <i>Palestrina</i>
29 September 11 am Communion Setting Anthem	Trinity 18 Holy Communion My eyes for beauty pine	<i>Haydn ('Little Organ Mass')</i> <i>Howells</i>



ABBEY CONTACTS

Minister:	Revd. Jim Gibson
Director of Music:	Dr. George McPhee
Church Manager:	Linda Barrett
Church Secretary:	Karen Kerr
Session Clerk:	Marion Sommerville
Depute Session Clerk:	Dr David Davidson
Treasurer:	Stewart McDougall
Abbey Herald:	Karen Kerr

The Abbey office can be contacted on 0141 889 7654 or by email at -
info@paisleyabbey.org.uk

*The Abbey, shop & café are normally open
Tuesday to Saturday from 10.30 am - 3.30 pm
Tuesday & Thursday tours are at 2 pm.*

*Abbey website - www.paisleyabbey.org.uk
Facebook - @paisleyabbey
Instagram - @paisleyabbeyofficial
X (formerly Twitter) - @paisley_abbey*