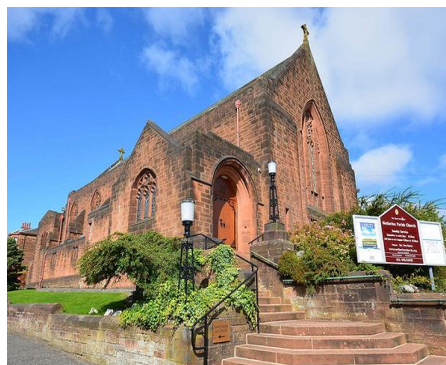


# NETHERLEE AND STAMPERLAND PARISH CHURCH NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2023 EDITION



## From the Editor

Thank you to everyone who has given positive feedback for the first edition. Although .pdf is the most widely used format for easy open documents, if you have any difficulty opening the newsletter, please let Elspeth at the Office know. The deadline for the September issue will be **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September**. Articles (and pictures in .jpg format) can be submitted at any time to the mailbox [nandsnewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:nandsnewsletter@btinternet.com). I look forward to hearing from you.

*Karen McQueen*

## Services

The Sunday services in the coming weeks are at 10.30 a.m. as usual.

## A Very Special Occasion

At coffee and fellowship time after the service on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July, it was a great privilege and delight for us all to be able to celebrate with Mary and Jim Black as they cut the cake to celebrate their 68<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Many congratulations to them both from the whole congregation.

*Helen Illingworth (photo by Lisa Kerr)*



## A Chance to Chat

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September we will be having a brunch after the communion service. It will be lovely to hear everyone's "what I did on my holiday" chat over brunch dishes, puddings, and coffee. If you are able to help with any preparation, clearing up, or making a pudding, please can you get in touch with either Marjorie Lang ([marjorie35@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:marjorie35@hotmail.co.uk)) or Barbara Cochrane ([barbaracochrane857@gmail.com](mailto:barbaracochrane857@gmail.com)).

If you are coming along and have any particular dietary needs, please let us know so that we are able to ensure you will have a lovely brunch. Looking forward to seeing you at our first event of the new session.

*Barbara Cochrane*

## Sunday Club

We hope all our Clubbers have had a great summer break; we are looking forward to welcoming you back and hearing all your holiday news. It would be lovely if we had some new friends too (aged 3 years to P7) when we return in September. Please feel free to join us in the Welcome Hall before the service (which starts at 10.30 a.m.) on **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> of September**.

*Elaine Murray*



## Your Choir Needs You (or a neighbour or a friend)!

As you can see from the pews, choir numbers have sadly diminished over the last few years and, although they are still an outstanding group of singers with outrageous banter and good humour, it would be lovely to add a few to the team for the new session.

Can you sing? Or do you have a neighbour or friend that may be willing to give it a go? Could you help advertise for new members? Our first rehearsal of the new session is on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> September at 7.20pm for the men and 7.45pm for the ladies. Rehearsals are challenging but great fun and there is music for everyone. Why not come along for a few rehearsals and see if it is for you and, even better, bring a friend. If you'd like more details or to view the choir contract and annual salary (!!!), just see me after the service.

*Steven Crawford*

## 90kg Rice Challenge

In September we will be thinking about Harvest. This year the Kirk Session has agreed to the congregation participating in the **90kg. rice challenge**. Why 90kg? This is the amount of rice a farmer in Malawi needs to sell in order to support their family and to pay for one child to have a year of secondary education. This is one way of supporting sustainable fairtrade farming and providing the opportunity for a young person to look to the future. After all, our young people have full secondary education as a right. The rice is very tasty and is available in both white and brown at £4.00 a kilo bag. The rice will go on sale from **3<sup>rd</sup> September**. Please help us meet our target.

*Sheena Wurthmann*



**FAIRTRADE**

## Greetings from Tiberias!

## PARTNERPLAN

***(The following article is the experience of Muriel Pearson who is working on the ground in the Holy Land. Any views expressed on the political situation in the area are the writer's own).***

It is an accident of history (or divine will) that the Church of Scotland has a church built as a war memorial and a hotel in Jerusalem, a hotel and congregation in Tiberias and a school, Tabeetha School, in Jaffa. In terms of church presence and influence we are small here, but we are here. Over time we have worked to build on the legacy and the challenge left to us in pursuit of peace with justice.

There are two mission partners, myself based in Tiberias on the edge of Lake Galilee, my colleague Rev Dr Stewart Gillan, based in Jerusalem and living in Beit Jala, and a staff of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, working together in a way which is quite rare in the Holy Land. In the school the student body of Christians, Muslims, Jews, and others tell us again and again how much they value the diversity of their peer group, and while they receive an excellent English medium education in a Christian school, they often go on to key roles because of their language skills and their intelligent and open approach to difference.

Most of the staff in the hotel in Jerusalem live in the West Bank and have the same issues of permits and closed checkpoints as other Palestinians working in Israel, but our staff retention rate is high, and staff speak of how much they value their colleagues as 'family'. The same is true in Tiberias where a much larger staff (almost 100) serve the guests in the four-star hotel. About half the guests in Tiberias are Israeli, and the rest a mix of holiday makers, pilgrims, and tourists. My role is to lead the small English-speaking congregation, welcome pilgrims, support staff, act as chaplain in the hotel and school, work with partner organisations and strive to communicate to folk back home something of the complexity, and the simplicity, of life in the Holy Land. I want to introduce you to three of our partner organisations, but before I do I want to make clear that here in Tiberias it is possible to be very comfortable and only be exposed to the injustice and violence through newsgathering if that is what I wish to do. Although Jenin is closer to Tiberias than Glasgow is to Edinburgh I have never been there. It is important to make sure I go to the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), including Gaza, and meet people who are faced with the daily injustice of the prolonged occupation, the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, increasing settler violence, high unemployment, a weak leadership in the Palestinian Authority, and in Gaza, the blockade.

Though Tiberias is a peaceful holiday resort, the legacy of the way the state of Israel came into being and the continued injustices faced by the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and the Arab population which makes up 20% of those living in what is sometimes called '48 Israel, means that tension and fear are never far from the surface. Most Israelis don't hate Palestinians the way some right-wing settlers and their allies do, but they suspect all Palestinians of being potential terrorists and tell themselves their sons and daughters have no choice but to serve in the military, and that the psychological damage they face is the price Israelis must pay to have a homeland.

/...

## Greetings from Tiberias! (continued)

They don't see the separation barrier or the checkpoints or life beyond them and they prefer to keep it that way. But they are paying a high price emotionally, financially, and spiritually to hold on to the 'normal' and because of the current right-wing government and some of its extremist statements and actions it is becoming increasingly hard to keep it that way. Many 100,000s of Israelis have been protesting weekly against the proposed changes to the judiciary since the beginning of the year, and some of them are beginning to see that the inherent and inbuilt injustice faced by Palestinians is perhaps the biggest threat to democracy and is inextricably linked to the legislation against which they are protesting. Perhaps there is an awakening, but it is not yet widespread.

One organisation which is actively seeking to wake people up through the current pro-democracy movement is WAC -MAAN who work to support Palestinian workers particularly in non-unionized settings, where permits are exploited, and Palestinian workers underpaid and exploited. They have joined the organizing committee behind the weekly protests and are making the links between changes to the High Court and justice system and workers' rights. Ma'an say: Our staff is made up of both Jewish and Arab members, allowing us to assist the neediest of Israel's population regardless of language or ethnicity. Ma'an seeks to advance the status of workers of every ethnicity and gender and their opportunities, thus creating a basis for equality throughout society.'

Another organisation anxious to make connections between the prodemocracy movement and the rights of women is Itach Ma'aki – Women Lawyers for Social Justice. They are highlighting the proposed changes around rabbinical courts being given equal status to the secular justice system. The rabbinic courts have no female judges, sometimes don't allow women to be witnesses even in domestic abuse cases and can make it difficult for women to divorce their husbands. Itach Ma'aki has a number of current campaigns including documenting and telling the stories of the women of Masafa Yatta, helping Arab Israelis access childcare and promoting a little heard of UN resolution 1325. Resolution 1325 (October 2000) addresses the impact of war on women and the importance of women's full and equal participation in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. Like Ma'an, this feminist organization also employs Jews and Arabs. Their call for women to prepare to play their part in conflict resolution recognises that women often suffer most in conflict situations and are excluded from politics and peace negotiations.

The third organization I want to briefly introduce you to is Parents Circle Family Forum (PCFF) which brings together bereaved Palestinian families with bereaved Israeli families. As well as helping one another in their shared grief, a stated aim of PCFF is to prepare for a time beyond the current occupation and the accompanying violence when Palestinians and Israelis will need to work together to build a different future. This year I attended the annual memorial service held by PCFF and Combatants for Peace on the eve of Memorial Day when Israeli dead are remembered. 15,000 people attended.

/...

## Greetings from Tiberias! (continued)

The 150 Palestinians from the OPT were only granted permits to attend after a Supreme Court intervention. I was shown the way to the site of the ceremony by an Israeli woman who told me that she was demonstrating every week for democracy but would never attend an event like the joint Memorial Day ceremony because she was born in the year of the Yom Kippur War: a 'child of the storm' as she put it. There were a few extreme Zionist hecklers screaming outside the event that those attending were traitors. On the Palestinian side, criticism is often made of those prepared to seek relationships with Israelis as normalizing the current situation. While Occupation and blockade are the lived reality of Palestinians, bridgebuilding and peace-making are futile and even prolong the agony, they say. Yet, there are many small initiatives bringing people together and seeking a non-violent future. These organisations need support and finance from outside Israel/Palestine. The latest attempt to limit such financial backing by imposing 60% taxation on donations has been shelved, probably only temporarily, by the Israeli government. The biggest lever for change at the moment is the pro-democracy movement in Israel. How can they be encouraged and supported to see the big picture?

It is a tense time here. The violence, particularly in the north of the west bank and the racist and hateful language being used by the government and its supporters, is getting worse. On Tuesday 20th June, following an Israeli military raid in Jenin where 100 people were injured and 5 Palestinians were killed and a retaliatory attack on Israeli civilians at a petrol station and restaurant, the American Ambassador was criticised by right wing members of the Israeli government for seeming to draw an equivalence between Israeli and Palestinian lives.

Unless the equivalence is seen, a non-violent future seems a distant dream. Peter Millar in his book of reflections entitled *Our Hearts Still Sing* tells the following Hasidic story: "How can we determine the hour when the night ends and the day begins?" asked the teacher. "When from a distance you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?" suggested one of the students. "No," was the answer. "Is it when one can distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine" asked a second student. "No." "Please tell us the answer then." "It is," said the wise teacher, "When you can look in the face of a human being and you have enough light to recognise in her or him your brother or sister. Up till then it is night and darkness is still with us." (Tales of the Hasidim)  
*Muriel Pearson (daughter of Jean and Forbes)*

## Advert



Village Theatre East Kilbride (tickets available from the box office)

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Our Seniors (S4 to 21 years) in **Legally Blonde the musical.**