

Pastor's Report for AGM: September 2021

I want to begin by thanking everyone who prepared a ministry report. Sadly, there is not time for me to highlight all the good things contained in these reports. I do encourage you to read these reports again and to note the specific points for prayer.

Jesus asked a very specific question on more than one occasion. The question was "what do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:36,51). These reports will help us to be specific in our prayers. What a difference it would make if everybody in the church is praying in specific ways, and everyone is prayed for in their sphere of ministry. May these reports be information that helps us to pray for God's transformation.

It has been a year where we have all experienced a lot of change and I would like to thank all the volunteers who served the church so faithfully through another lockdown. Probably the area of church life which was most disrupted was our children and youth ministries. We are grateful for the team providing online resources and those who filmed all age talks and family zoom sessions. Some face-to-face meetings were also organised when this was possible. It was wonderful to be a part of an in person holiday club in August and a great encouragement to see so many children at CCC once again.

We give thanks to God for all our volunteer leaders and for the appointment of Nicki Hutchison and Helen Cuthbert to our staff team in June and August 2021. I will not comment further on these areas as Nicki and Helen will be presenting later.

The last time we had a Church Meeting was November 2020. This was followed by a challenging Christmas season with covid restrictions and then a third national lockdown in January. We relied on online communication and face to face walks in the snow. Churches were allowed to reopen again at Easter with a limit of 50. Restrictions eased further in late April, and we recommenced all age morning worship services in June.

There have been tremendous efforts across the church family to build up the fellowship and care for the community throughout this period. For example, the CAP teams and the listening ear teams who worked by telephone. The teams who served us with sung worship have had to constantly adapt all year. They have served us with such commitment and dedication. The musicians who sang solos into camera and then learned how to lead us in praise in small bands as we wore face masks. Also, the production and media team who learned how to use new equipment and the stewarding and cleaning team who worked so well to support the re-introduction of in person services. The children and youth teams who made plans for face to face and then had to adapt them as government regulations changed. The teams who worked out layouts in the auditorium. Those who reached out with care to those who were anxious, weary or isolated. To Marion and the coffee shop team who provided a wonderful place for fellowship when regulations allowed. We heard powerful testimonies like that of Kayleigh who spoke to the Daily Record about how CAP and the people in this church had helped her find hope.

It has been a demanding year and it is not surprising that many became weary. Yet, we thank God for his inexhaustible resources and his strength which he gave to us in our time of weakness. I want to stop, recognise and give thanks for your labours. God knows and God sees and God values deeply all your service for Him. And so do I. It is a privilege to serve here at CCC with such a committed team of leaders and a church with a big heart.

The teamwork is something that I want to particularly emphasise. I am blessed to be part of a team with very committed elders, deacons, ministry team leaders, church secretary, and staff. We have meetings which brings everyone together to ensure that the ministries of the church are integrated and working well. With the appointment of Nicki and Helen plus the appointment of new elders we now have more capacity to rebuild the ministries of the church.

The body of Christ is built up and grows as we serve together in love with the different gifts God has given to us. Through effective teamwork we can do so much more than anyone could do on their own. Homegroups and other church members have worked together with elders and the pastoral care team to support families in need. The care of Dorothy and John Watt is a very good example of this teamwork, and it was so much appreciated by the wider family. Our homegroups continue to make a vital contribution and we appreciate all the leaders who have been so faithfully supporting their groups with online fellowship, pastoral care and discipleship.

As an Eldership we have been very concerned to keep in contact with the membership, adherents and community contacts responding to a great variety of needs. This was particularly challenging in lockdown. We have been able to get alongside many people who have faced very challenging circumstances in this past year. Having Janet on our staff through lockdown has been part of God's provision for CCC. She has worked at depth particularly with women and working closely with the elders has coordinated, encouraged, and built up the pastoral care and listening ear teams. We are conscious that good pastoral care means supporting church members and homegroups as we care for one another. We appreciate being informed when people have been missed out or would appreciate a visit, so that we can follow up as soon as possible.

In June we recommenced our morning services with six baptisms. We did one per service so that we could take time to hear each testimony and give thanks to God. It is so important to stop and give thanks for each one and reflect on how God has been at work through the ministries of our church. Melissa was invited by a church member to connect with our online service, and she responded with faith that day to the preaching. Willie was connected to our church through a friendship with an elder and then made a commitment after an online 1:1 Bible study. Mike made his public profession of faith after several Alpha courses and discipleship support. Fiona, one of our teenagers, grew up in the church and was baptised on her gap year while serving at CCC. Marie was greatly helped by our listening ear ministry and with the help of a friend started attending CCC. After studying Mark's gospel at the Christianity Explored course, she was born again. Iona along with her young family has experienced the welcome, care and fellowship of CCC. It is with the encouragement and love of our Christian community that Iona responded to the call to follow Jesus.

God has not only blessed the church with salvation but also with gracious financial provision. Duncan will explain how we started the year with a very challenging situation but ended the year with a surplus. After many years the church has now paid off the debt for the building. As the Mission Support Team have explained in their report, we were able to support our sister church in Sliven and our link missionaries in Afghanistan through your generous giving. Thank you.

By God's grace we need to all play our full part in the regathering and rebuilding of the body of Christ here at CCC. We cannot do this in our own strength. We need God and we need each other. Devotion to Christ is expressed in loving commitment to one another. Christ has promised to build his church and he will do this as each one of us plays our part (Ephesians 4:16). This is a call to love His church, and to be devoted in prayer, fellowship, discipleship and in worship (Acts 2:42-47). Let us pray for a growth in our discipleship and an overflow in mission.

A verse that I think is crucial for us at this time is Hebrews 10:24-25

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on to love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Pastor Alasdair Macleod

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