

From the Minister

The move from the old decade to the new coincides with lots of change in the Church of Scotland, and a fair bit of change regionally and locally as well.

When we think about structures, it is clear that there is a whole lot of innovation due to emerge in the '20s – and early in them too. This May the General Assembly will hear how our “radical plan” for the future is shaping up, with the possibility of a quite different-looking denomination stepping from the mists, and soon.

At the “middle” tier of the Church of Scotland, presbyteries are set to merge in large number. For as long as anyone can remember, there have been more than 40, from Shetland to England and beyond. Before long there will be 12. And within each presbytery, work is proceeding towards new ways of working, with “hub” churches and their satellite congregations being a distinct possibility. Many congregations prefer not to think too deeply about what may be around the corner, yet that corner is now not too far away – not least with a new Presbytery plan emerging last month which will, in time, move parish life on to a totally different footing.

So what of us in Gladsmuir linked with Longniddry? There are big challenges here with falling rolls and fewer people ready to step up to volunteer for key posts. In each of our two congregations it is a common cry that, “we can’t get folk into the building on a Sunday morning”. We are not alone.

Set against that is the fact that our worshipping communities, though ageing, are vibrant and active, both across their parishes and in the wider world. There is a lot to do ... and a lot is being done, not least in reaching out to people who are elderly or in need.

The Church is changing, and that is why the Longniddry kirk session has been changing too, with a new set of workgroups more clearly targeted upon action and outreach. And if our long association with the Church of Scotland’s Path of Renewal movement has taught us anything, it must surely be that faithfulness means each one of us viewing ourselves and one another as disciples of Christ intent on playing our part in the *Mission Dei*: nothing less than the very mission of God.

These are worrying times. These are interesting times. These are exciting times. Where do you stand on these three statements?

Robin

Rev Dr Robin Hill

Minister, Longniddry Parish Church

Session Clerk's Report

Membership

Roll at 01 January 2019	304
Added during the year	<u>+2</u>
	306
Removed during the year	<u>-17</u>
Roll at 31 December 2019	289

We welcomed two new members this year both by certificate (i.e. they joined from another Church). We lost 17 members. This seems alarming but is actually because we reviewed our roll and we moved several people to the Supplementary roll. We lost 7 through death. Our membership numbers don't always give a very accurate picture of Church life. We regularly have over 80 people at Sunday morning services and have at least that many people actively involved in Church work.

Communion Services

The 3 services continue to cater for all tastes. The 9.45am service remains primarily an all-age service. The 11.00am is a traditional service. We shared a 6.30pm communion on our traditional communion Sundays between three churches, who each hosted it in turn (St Michael's in Portobello in March, Gladsmuir in June and Longniddry in September and December 2019). We also introduced a quiet, contemplative evening communion on the second Sunday evenings of March, June and September.

Baptisms

In 2019 there were two baptisms. As ever, it is lovely to welcome new members into our Church family.

Kirk Session

Our Eldership numbers have increased to 43 in 2019, as Jenni Lucietti and Dave Munro were ordained as elders in February 2019. Unfortunately John Thomson, a long-standing elder, died at the end of 2019. We are thankful for his steadfast service over the years.

General Comments

Douglas Hamilton joined us as a student attachment in autumn 2018 and was with us until late spring 2019. Douglas brought many skills and talents to his time with us and we are grateful for his insight, enthusiasm and prayerful support.

Last year the Church and Halls continued to be very well used for a wide variety of activities, and their excellent condition, including the grounds, is to the credit of Derek Easton, Fabric Convener, and Leah Glen our Church Cleaner during the year.

The numbers attending Church on Sunday remain good and many people help with the work of the Church during the rest of the week outwith our building, often unseen and unsung. Many, many people come into our Church and halls each week to enjoy fellowship, meet friends, learn something new, remember something old, and make good things happen. This is the Church at its best.

My thanks, as ever, are due to all the office-bearers and helpers for their hard work throughout the year. Without all these people there would be no Church. It is a privilege and an honour to serve as Session Clerk of Longniddry Church.

Abigail Morrison, Session Clerk

Finance and Fabric

The Group continued the maintenance and management of the Sanctuary, Halls and Manse to standards expected by the Kirk Session and Congregation. The Financial affairs were also managed effectively and efficiently. Energy Management is a priority and will continue to be in an effort to be a “Green” consumer in line with Church of Scotland Policy. The Group is also working in conjunction with the “Eco-Congregation” sub group to reduce the carbon footprint of the church buildings.

Finance

The Treasurer, Douglas Clarke, has managed the Church Finances in a most competent and professional manner.

A detailed report and copy of the year’s accounts are available to view as a separate document. Our thanks go to Douglas Clarke for his dedication, financial management and excellent presentation. Thanks also to John Ellis who carries out the “in-house” examination of the accounts to ensure compliance with the requirements of OSCR.

Property

The Church and Halls continue to be used not only for worship but also extensively for leisure, recreation and community groups. The use of the premises by both Church and non-Church organisations has placed a big demand on the use and maintenance of the premises but the Group has managed the occupation effectively.

Our cleaner, Leah, continues to do an excellent job maintaining the property in a clean and serviceable condition for the users.

The Halls Leasing Convenor, Robin Cuthbertson, has managed the Church and Halls diary in a very efficient manner.

The Church Grounds Sub Group continues to manage and maintain the relevant areas to a highly satisfactory standard. The Manse and associated grounds were also maintained to a satisfactory standard and continue to meet the requirements of the Rev. Hill and his family.

Acoustic issues following the alteration works to rooms 2 and 3 have now been resolved but will continue to be monitored and remedied as required.

The alterations have also raised issues regarding storage provisions and this is an ongoing problem that we are endeavouring to resolve. A number of repair and maintenance items have been undertaken to all the Church buildings. A programme of planned maintenance for both the Church and the Manse is in place for the coming years.

In conclusion I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and personal thanks to all of the members of the Finance and Fabric Group for their support during the year and also to the members of the community who, although not members of the church, do their bit to maintain the premises to a standard that make

them available to all. All members have risen to the call when a bit of painting has been needed, cleaning cover for illness or even making “buns” for our turn at the Second Saturday Coffee Morning.

Derek Easton, Convenor

Discipleship Workgroup

In framing our new set of workgroups, one of the first to be given the green light was “Discipleship”. The point of this title is to emphasise that it is no longer appropriate (as if it ever had been!) to define the church simply according to the number of its members. Depth of discipleship is what really counts in terms of a congregation’s commitment, engagement and stewardship.

One tremendous advance in recent times has been the extent to which our people in Longniddry Church have engaged with worship training. As a result of the enthusiasm and dedication of these volunteers, we now have occasional Sundays when entire services can be taken without an ordained minister leading from the front. In an age when fewer ministers of Word and Sacrament are being ordained across our denomination, this form of worship leadership will most certainly become significant for us, and perhaps for others too.

Lots of areas of work are covered by our workgroup, from worship planning to Bible study; from Path of Renewal to adult education. Two developments, however, merit special attention. First, 2020 has been designated by both kirk sessions as our “Year of Mark”, when we will be journeying Sunday by Sunday from January to June and September to November through the short but fascinating gospel of Mark, learning not only about the life and teaching of Jesus, but also about the writer of this little book and the people who read it in its earliest days. Armed with Mark pamphlets and an array of pens, people attending worship are encouraged to listen and then to re-read and annotate the texts with their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Engagement with the Word then becomes a much more active (and scribbly) sort of thing for all concerned.

Lastly, linking worship with pastoral care, it is excellent to report that two smartphone prayer apps are about to be launched to assist elders and visitors to find the right words as they engage with people in their homes. This project, based in Longniddry manse has involved half a dozen writers from across the country, with Katie Hill serving as the compiler. The easy-to-use selection of 55 prayers will be available this spring, courtesy of the excellent team at Sanctus Media. What’s more, it will be distributed free of charge all round the world. We are grateful to the Presbytery of Lothian for financing this venture, which will be a resource to those who would like to pray but who might not have the words.

Robin Hill

Music in Worship

During 2019 music has continued to play an important part in our worship at Longniddry Church.

Organists

Our organists, Marion Devlin, Isobel Stretton, Charlie Davidson and John Coupland have shared organ duties and we are lucky to have several people willing to cover the services on a Sunday morning. Each of us has our different styles and it adds variety to the worship every week. We all appreciate the fine singing of the Longniddry congregation, even when confronted with a new hymn!

The Church Band

The church band has around 15 regular members who play at services once or twice a month. As ever, we are always happy to welcome anyone who plays a musical instrument to join us (no audition required!). So, if you have a recorder, violin, ukulele etc etc gathering dust in a cupboard and fancy making music again, we would love to have you in the Band. We are a happy group who enjoy leading the worship and we finished the year with the traditional Christmas Eve Service when ex-members joined us again to swell the sound. Contact Marion Devlin for more information.

The Clangers

The Clangers (belleplates group) contributed to the worship on several occasions during the year and their unique musical sound is much enjoyed by the congregation. We have also played at Longniddry Inn at Frank's folk night. We enjoy playing a varied selection of tunes and would be delighted to have more players. Why not come along and try out the belleplates at one of our very informal practices after the service on a Sunday? There is no need to be able to read music. Beth Elliott and Kath Cowern, or any of the other players, will be happy to give you more information.

Marion Devlin

Longniddry Community Gospel Choir

New in 2019 was our Gospel Choir. About a dozen folk came along on Thursday evenings to sing some wonderful Gospel songs in parts. It was challenging but huge fun. The year was capped off by performing with the Heart and Soul Swing band at one of their concerts in November. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.

Abigail Morrison

Longniddry Church Guild

The Guild in Longniddry continues to meet on the third Wednesday of each month from September to May and although our group is declining in numbers, we still manage to produce an interesting and varied programme for meetings.

However we do welcome new members which is essential for the future of the Guild in Longniddry Church.

In 2019 we welcomed speakers from two Guild Projects, Malawi Fruits and the Sailors' Society, and also, nearer to home, Richmond's Hope bereavement charity and Bethany Trust.

In addition, we have lighter musical evenings and a couple of outings which members enjoy.

The donations for all charities and projects are met from the income from our Annual Coffee Morning and we are so grateful to everyone who supports us in this venture.

May I pass on my thanks to all members and Committee members for all their valued support.

Alison Ferguson, Convener

Safeguarding

In Longniddry Parish Church we adhere to the requirements of the Church of Scotland Safeguarding policy.

The Scottish Government introduced the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme which Longniddry Safeguarding Group has implemented for volunteers working with children and elderly people. Some members of the Kirk Session have also joined the scheme.

Most of the Kirk Session, including the Minister and Session Clerk, have attended courses as recommended by the Church of Scotland. Training is mandatory and must be kept up to date.

Safeguarding panel members; Mary Barron, Sheila Jamieson, Blythe Peart, and Moyra Wilson.

Beth Elliott, Safeguarding Coordinator

Pastoral Group

The group's remit covers pastoral care within parish and congregation, elders' visiting, hospital transport, Church flower deliveries and social activities.

Hospital transport is a valuable service provided by volunteer drivers and is available to all villagers whether it be hospital, doctor or dentist visits. Grateful thanks to Sheila Jamieson for ensuring that all requests are met and for the care and compassion she gives. The Second Saturday coffee mornings are greatly enjoyed and we were able to make a donation to Upmo who offer support and opportunities to young adults with learning difficulties, enabling them to realise their potential. Church flowers bring pleasure and comfort to those receiving them. Thanks must go to the ladies who deliver them with friendliness and sensitivity. We are involved with the Monday singing group and the Sporting Memories group, both of which are run by volunteers. Andrew Ferguson deserves special mention for the time, thought and inspiration he puts into the sessions.

At Easter we had a tableau of crosses and eggs, in November we displayed the knitted poppies in the Church grounds and in December, Mary and Joseph's journey was depicted as knitted figures displayed in scenes around the Church.

We organised a "Mystery Tour" in late summer and fifty fun filled passengers boarded a coach after Church one rainy Sunday. Happily the sun came out and shone on our trip through Fife ending in a chatty, happy meal in South Queensferry. In December we had a Christmas trail around the village for all the family. This was followed by a Christmas Party with jolly music from Robin, Bill and Erica, good food and lots of fun and games.

The group also organise teams of volunteers to prepare meals at the Bethany Night Shelter on allocated nights throughout the winter.

The Longest Night Service was much appreciated by all who attended, thanks to Robin's sensitive approach.

Frances Cunningham

Church and Hospital Transport

The scheme organises free door-to-door transport to church or medical appointments for any Longniddry resident and it is provided by a team of volunteer drivers using their own cars. During the year 69 journeys were undertaken to medical appointments with over 50% of these being to Edinburgh with the remainder ranging from North Berwick in the east to Livingston in the west. Transport to church services was usually organised by informal arrangements with friends or neighbours. Although having lost several drivers to illness and personal circumstances, all requests for transport throughout the year were met. Positive feedback and voluntary donations indicate that the service is much appreciated. The success of the scheme is largely due to the volunteer drivers, who invariably respond to my requests with a cheerful willingness to help. I thank them for this and their generosity in giving of their time to help those in need.

Sheila Jamieson

Sporting Memories

The Group have met every Thursday morning 10.30 to 12.00 (except Christmas and New Year) in Room 3 of the Church Halls. The average number of Participants attending the meetings is 12 and they have an interest in a variety of Sports. Topics discussed involve Football, Rugby, Golf, Formula 1 Racing, Tennis and some less popular Sports like Bowls, Curling and Darts.

There is also a Weekly “Spot the Ball ” and Sports Quiz.

Anyone interested in Sport is more than welcome to come along and participate if they feel inclined.

A couple of ex professional Footballers have been guest speakers, relating their sporting experiences during the 1960’s and 1970’s. The Group Participants reminisced with interesting questions directed to the guest speakers.

The Group also had two excursions, a visit to Knockhill Race Track in July and a trip to Hibernian FC Stadium in October.

I also visited the John Bellany Day Centre in Port Seton on several occasions during the year.

Andrew Ferguson, Group Volunteer

Singing Group

Our very successful Singing Group ran for four sets of six-week sessions in 2019, starting in February, April, September and November. The group is open to anyone at all and is especially good for those whose memory might not be as good as it once was. Over twenty people regularly attended the group. We sing Scots songs, musical numbers and popular songs from a variety of eras (from Doris Day to Abba and beyond). After 45 minutes of singing - ably led by Caitlin McGillivray of the Manor School of Music - we have a chat over a cup of tea or coffee. We were visited by our MP (at the time), Martin Whitfield, and we helped swell the singing at the Muirfield Riding Therapy carol service in December.

Abigail Morrison

Church Flowers

Throughout the year I have the very pleasant duty of ensuring that there are always flowers in the church for Sunday services, memorial services and occasionally weddings.

I do enjoy the job and I am supported by willing helpers when we decorate the sanctuary at Christmas, Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving. My thanks to those assistants.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank all the ladies who so happily help by doing their own flower arrangements and of course all those who contribute financially.

My thanks also goes out to the team who distribute the flowers week by week to people in the village who are unwell, bereaved, or finding life difficult. Obviously we are not always aware of everyone whose spirits might be lifted by receiving flowers but there is a box in the gathering space where you can put their names and we will ensure that they are sent flowers.

Ann Reeks

The Wednesday Club

We have enjoyed a varied programme over the year at our weekly meetings with music, talks, quizzes, games, our usual Burns afternoon and demonstrations too. We have welcomed visitors from local schools, Longniddry Library and a variety of speakers and entertainers. In the summer months we held a monthly meeting just for a cup of tea and a chat.

The highlight of our year was a very special afternoon tea on 9th October to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Longniddry Wednesday Club. We enjoyed the company of fifty guests, made up of regular attendees and helpers together with Jill and Peter Wilmshurst who travelled from Kirriemuir to be with us.

We ended the Autumn session with our usual visit to the Longniddry Inn for the Christmas meal. We have enjoyed a successful session with buzzing conversation at our friendly meetings. We are pleased that our meetings attract such a wide range of people (aged 60 to 101). Any retired people who would like to join us are always welcome.

Alison Leakey

Church Magazine

The Longniddry Church Magazine has been published ten times a year for over fifty years. It continues to be a valuable source of information for news and events in Longniddry and beyond. Thank you to all who are involved in the publication and distribution of the magazine, including all of the contributors, Liz Neil who collates the magazine for distribution and the Lady and Gentleman Visitors who deliver the magazines to every house in the village. Also thank you to Jim Couper who puts information from the magazine onto the church's website.

Nicola Clarke, Editor

Lady and Gentleman Visitors

There have been a few changes over the last year to the Lady/Gentleman Visitors List and things continue to run smoothly.

Once again I would like to thank the Lady and Gentleman Visitors for all the time and help they have given to distribute the Church Magazine. It is always much appreciated. Thank you too, to Mrs Liz Neil for arranging the magazines to get them ready for pick-up on the Sunday mornings and Mrs Christine McVey for dealing with the special envelopes.

I do have a reserve list for anyone who wishes their name to be added to this list. If anyone would like their name to be added please let me know, it too would be much appreciated. Depending on the number of houses in the district it doesn't take long to deliver the magazines!

Linda Hume

Outreach Group

2019 saw the village directory again distributed to all houses in the village by our visitors in September. Many thanks to Jim Jamieson for his hard work preparing the directory and keeping it updated. The directory, along with all other church information, is now on our web page at www.longniddrychurch.org.uk and will be updated through the year. Thanks go to Jim Couper and David Wyllie who are our Webmasters.

Many thanks to the Lady and Gentleman Visitors who continue to deliver the Church magazine and who inform either Abigail or myself of people leaving and coming into the village. We try to give all the new people who have moved into the village a welcome letter from the Church.

The group ran the October Coffee Morning which was well attended and much enjoyed.

Alison Leakey

Wider World Group

The group decided that the remaining money available in The Away fund should be given to the World Mission Council (WMC) of the Church of Scotland – particularly to a community health care project in south India that works to support people with HIV. This project has been supported by the Church of Scotland for some years and was suggested to us by Sandy Sneddon of the WMC.

The group also decided the Christmas Offerings should be given to the Grassmarket Community Project (GCP) school roof in Zambia project.

Abigail Morrison

Traidcraft

The Traidcraft stall continues to operate most Sundays and occasionally at Saturday coffee mornings. A Fairtrade breakfast took place last year and this was a great success. The Small World Shop in Prestonpans, which used to be our main supplier, ceased to operate last year and our current supplier is now The Just World Shop in Portobello High Street. This shop was established in 1991. The Just World Shop is also a supplier of Fairtrade goods to groups, including churches, as well as the public.

Last year there was an increase in sales compared to 2018, but basically the stall is more about promoting Fairtrade rather than sales. The new coffee machine in the church has helped sales because the Traidcraft stall supplies the coffee and tea for all church activities.

Frank Elliott

Christian Aid

2019 was another good year for the Longniddry Village Christian Aid Committee. Over the whole year we raised £7,877 - a tremendous amount.

We had four main events to raise funds in 2019. The first was the Christian Aid Week house-to-house collections in May. Fiona and Martin Jones co-ordinated the work. Our thanks go to them and the wonderful volunteers who visit every house in the village with red-and-white envelopes. In 2019 this collection brought in £3,733, which was about £300 more than in 2018. Thanks are also due to everyone in the village who filled an envelope, helping such a worthwhile cause.

The second event – a first for the group – was a coffee morning with tombola, home baking and plant stalls. This attracted dozens of people and raised £601. Again thanks to all who donated plants and prizes and who came along and bought plants and cakes and consumed coffee, cake, tea and a lot of chat.

Our third event was our annual Sale and Auction at the end of August. This event involves dozens of people and, aside from the fundraising, is a great community event and recycling opportunity. The sale brought in £2,765 after costs.

And last, but not least, we ran our popular Quiz in early November. As always, the brain cells were challenged. Some rose to the challenge, others (mine!) a bit less so. Our thanks go to Iain Stewart for setting the quiz and being an excellent quiz-master. Thanks too to everyone who donated a raffle prize. Ticket sales and raffle ticket sales netted Christian Aid £770 after costs. That was quite about £85 more than the Quiz in 2019. In addition a great, fun, evening was enjoyed by all who came.

In total we transferred £7,733.20 to Christian Aid last year. The observant amongst you will note this is slightly less than we raised. We kept a little back to top up our (small) reserves. We use these reserves to cover the cost of events that we need to pay in advance. Another great year of giving from Longniddry Village – thanks one and all. We look forward to 2020!

Abigail Morrison

Prayer Group and Prayer Diary

The Prayer Group meets weekly to share praise, bible study, fellowship and prayer for those known to us or those for whom we've been asked to pray. We give thanks and pray for our church and community as well as situations at home and abroad.

The Prayer Diary is produced monthly and has a prayer for each day, some for events in our church or village, some for groups of people in particular situations eg the bereaved, others to give thanks for the many gifts we have been given.

Vi Wardrop

Theology Club and Lenten Study Group

In recent years we have studied materials from the 'Living the Questions' series – a section of DVD followed by relevant discussion. In 2019, we explored two of their courses, *Painting the Stars* and *Countering Pharaoh's Production-Consumption Society Today*. The 2019 Lenten study was based on the film, *The Greatest Showman*. The sessions have proved to be interesting, informative and thought-provoking with lots to talk about!

Vi Wardrop