

# CANONBIE CHRONICLES

Edition 40

[www.canonbiechurch.org.uk](http://www.canonbiechurch.org.uk)

Spring 2019

## Our Mission Statement:

*We are here to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and further God's kingdom; to teach, encourage and nurture all believers; to respond to human needs by loving service; to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation, and to care for God's creation.*

**Communion - Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March; 11:30am. All welcome**

## **The Future of our Church**

### **The Church is in decline.**

Take a look at this video: <http://www.falkirkpresbytery.org.uk/resources/re-imagine>

A 10-year strategy presented to the General Assembly in May 2018 highlighted the current trajectory of figures for the Church as downwards, across the board. We have falling numbers of Ministers, Elders, people in our congregations and finances. There are missing generations in congregations. Not only do we have very few children compared to ten years ago, or similarly young people (under 25s), the number of folks in their 30s and 40s is also very small. Given that the majority of those attending Church are over 60, these missing generations pose a real challenge to the very existence of the Church. We cannot afford to ignore this and fail to produce a plan to address it.

Around 75% of our Ministers are aged over 50. Best estimates suggest that the number of full-time paid ministers will fall to around 550 in the next 5-6 years, leaving a shortfall on the current model of ministry of around 300. It is obvious that falling congregational numbers and ministers will lead to a parallel fall in income.

The General Assembly asked for a more "radical plan." Instructions included: -

- Presbyteries to create robust, imaginative and courageous Presbytery Plans, to reduce the number of charges, create ministry hubs, enable new pioneer and new church planting opportunities, and new reformed pathways into ministry
- Kirk Sessions to work with Presbyteries to reflect on the state of decline of the national Church and in particular how that affects the Church locally and determine what their vision and mission is for the next three years

In response to this instruction, our presbytery, Annandale & Eskdale, held a one-day conference on the 16th February at Lochmaben Church. 5 elders from Canonbie attended.

In his introduction the **Presbytery Clerk, Rev Adam Dillon** emphasised the thirst for change across the Church of Scotland. We were asked to consider the changes we had seen to the world around us in our lifetime. Has the Church changed likewise?

**Rev David Pitkeathly (Border Kirk)** reflected on how the Church of England has been faced with the same challenges. But their Renewal and Reform programme had encouraged congregations to take their witness out to the people by using different buildings and working with other mainstream denominations ecumenically. A prophetic and passionate leadership in all this work has arrested the decline in membership.

**Rev John Pickles (Annan St. Andrews)** saw the future as offering real opportunities despite the inevitable reductions in trained ministry across the presbytery. If a church is spending more than 20% of its income on building insurance, is it viable? We need to let go of our buildings and use the local halls or worship collectively online. Communities want a church but they are not prepared to pay for it. We are "...running Rolls Royces on Fiat Punto budgets". We need to be radical!

**Rev Neil Campbell (Moffat)** noted that the standard of a minister resident in every parish was long gone. Changes in the world around us had seen the disappearance of a teaching ministry. More inclusivity had resulted in populist preaching. We need to learn to read our Bibles again and break away from funding ministers and buildings. Be the Body of Christ!

Group discussions after these speakers identified the need for real leadership from the General Assembly and Presbyteries to encourage change. But that change should be made by the congregations driving reform from the grass roots of the Church. This should have the objective of a new flattened structure with corresponding processes throughout the national Church.

**At Canonbie, we need to engage fully with the changing landscape before us.** This is the first of a series of articles I will be writing for Chronicles to inspire discussion, prayer and hope amongst us, the Church.

Anthony Lane, Presbytery Elder

## @theCafe News from Canonbie Community Café

Our final film of the season will be shown on the 15th March. ***The Rabbit-Proof Fence*** portrays the struggles encountered by a group of Aboriginal girls in Australia and concludes a successful run of evenings in the Community Cinema which has included a two-course supper prior to the screenings. We are indebted by the assistance given by Matt of Driftwood Community Cinema. The management group are discussing how to proceed. We would find it difficult to continue on the present basis as the licence for the films costs around £100 each which, for this first season, was funded by Driftwood. The church licence would cover the showing of films but not allow us to advertise outwith the building or charge admission to the film. One possible way is to set up a film club where we could directly contact those interested. We will keep you advised of developments prior to the start of the next season. We are in the process of organising a new exhibition of photographs taken by members of Langholm Camera Club. This will be on display from 1st April in the Café. We are setting up a small grant scheme to enable local groups and clubs to obtain funding for projects which will benefit the whole community. This is a work in progress and application forms will be available shortly. If you would like to contact the Community Café our email address is: [canonbiecafe@gmail.com](mailto:canonbiecafe@gmail.com).



Fairtrade Fortnight 2019 runs from 25 February to the 10<sup>th</sup> March. The Fairtrade Foundation's focus this year is on the people, particularly the women, who grow the cocoa in chocolate. £1.86 is the amount a cocoa farmer in West Africa needs to earn each day in order to achieve a living income. Currently, a typical cocoa farmer in Cote d'Ivoire lives on around 74p a day. Almost all cocoa farmers in West Africa live in poverty.

For the women the situation is even worse. They may plant and harvest on the farm, look after children, carry water, collect wood, cook and clean for the family, and transport the cocoa beans to market but often with fewer rights than men.

This is why the Fairtrade Foundation is campaigning for a living income to become a reality for cocoa farmers in West Africa. We can all support cocoa farmers around the world by buying Fairtrade chocolate and cocoa and from the 25th February we can also sign the Fairtrade Foundation's petition calling on the UK Government to make sure that our trade with developing countries puts poverty reduction first, delivering living incomes for all. Go to [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk) to find the link for the petition and look out for #SheDeserves on social media.

Come to our Big Brew Coffee morning in aid of Traidcraft Exchange on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 10am to 12pm, in Church.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Traidcraft Exchange Reverse Advent Sock Initiative. We raised a fantastic £183 and a few pennies!



Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April our Church will be playing host to the

### ***Abaana New Life Choir***

**A children's choir from Uganda**

Members of our church will be providing accommodation to the children and their chaperones for their stay in Canonbie. Watch out for more details, but put the date in your diaries now!

[www.abaana.org/what-we-do/new-life-choir/new-life-choir](http://www.abaana.org/what-we-do/new-life-choir/new-life-choir)

Canonbie Chronicles is published quarterly for the Church membership. Weekly worship on Sundays at 11:30am. You can find out details of all church events by looking at our website, Facebook page or on notices distributed widely around the village and in Church. [www.canonbiechurch.org.uk](http://www.canonbiechurch.org.uk)  
e-mail: [canonbiechurch@gmail.com](mailto:canonbiechurch@gmail.com)

**Locum Minister: Rev Pauline Steenbergen.** 07743927182 [Locum.ae@gmail.com](mailto:Locum.ae@gmail.com)

One Sunday each month. Available for pastoral care visiting on Tuesdays & Thursdays. Also, funerals, weddings and baptisms.

**Interim Moderator: Rev Paul Read.** 07792714162 [pread@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:pread@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Canonbie United Parish Church is a registered charity SC000717.

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