

THE LINK

PASTORAL LETTER

Jim Turrent | Lead Pastor



Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to introduce this new issue of *The Link*. Our sincere thanks to the editorial and production team.

What a joy it is to be able to meet again on Sundays without booking! We have been encouraged by the attendances thus far. Our thanks go to those who have led us so wisely and well regarding all the regulations! We thank God – not just for *what* has been done – but for the *way* in which it has been done.

The staff team continues to grow! We have already welcomed Andy Holt as Minister in Training, and Kathryn Wright who is on placement with us from Highland Theological College/UHI (and a Ministry Associate). By the time of publication of *The Link*, we will have welcomed Ruth Taggart as Ministry Associate and Sarah Thompson, Biblical Counselling Intern. Do pray that God will bind us together as a team and that he would bless each one and cause their service to flourish to God's glory.

As you take in the range and content of this publication, give thanks to God for what He is doing in and through Central Baptist. Please pray that amid so much happening that we would not lose the essential simplicity of the Christian life: worship, prayer and the ministry of the word.

Love in Him, Jim

Glorifying
God as we:

Listen
to His Word

Pray
to Seek
His Will

Love
His People

Serve
His Kingdom

CONTENTS

FRONT COVER		Pastoral Letter
PAGE 3		Church Meetings Face to Face
PAGE 4		Women's Ministry Update
PAGE 5		Growing Leaders Group
PAGE 5		Hospitality
PAGE 6		Student Ministry Update
PAGE 7		Youth Ministry Update
PAGE 7		Word Search
PAGE 8-9		Children and Families Update
PAGE 10-15		Ministry Training Programme
PAGE 16		Carnoustie Baptist Church Update and Prayer Points
PAGE 17		Lochee Baptist Chapel Update and Prayer Points
PAGE 18-19		Gospel Transformation
PAGE 20-21		BMS - News from Peru
PAGE 22		Williams Family Update
PAGE 23		Members File - Return to normality?
BACK COVER		Church Contacts

EDITOR'S NOTES

The Link has been compiled by our magazine team and designed by Ken Drysdale. If you have ideas for future issues of the magazine, please get in touch with the team. You can either contact us individually (our details are in the church family directory) or email office@centraldundee.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

The Link Magazine Team | Katherine Belford, Fiona Mackay, Lindsey McCowan, Allison McMahon, Jane Scott, Tegwen Wallace and Kathryn Wright.

CHURCH MEETING FACE TO FACE

WEDNESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER AT 7.30PM

Bryan Bennett | Church Secretary



THE many impacts of this pandemic exceed anything we could have imagined and many of them have been hugely significant for many of us. From a church perspective, being unable to all gather for worship for so many months has been hugely significant, and I am really pleased to see restrictions eased to allow us to open up fully Sunday by Sunday.

Another benefit of these changes is the ability to meet as a church membership to make the important decisions that underpin our work and witness here in Dundee and beyond.

After a number of online meetings since August 2020, we can now meet together this September to continue to seek His will and further progress the plans that we believe have been created with His leadership.

Our last church meeting was actually 'historic' in the sense that it was our last meeting operating as a UVA (Unincorporated Voluntary Organisation).

Aside from important progress on the road to becoming a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) we also progressed our Ministry Training initiative by appointing Search Committee members, and were updated on a number of issues like church finances and the proposed Christians Against Poverty (CAP) debt centre in Dundee.

In our September meeting we will deal with the election of all Elders and Deacons as a SCIO, the proposed re-election of Deacons at end of term, and consider what is meant by the term Elder-Led Congregationalism among other things.

Although our last few meetings have been online, the attendance has been really encouraging. Please make every effort to be there on 8 September, you know your input and even just your support, demonstrated by your presence, is a great encouragement to all the leadership team. ■

WOMEN'S MINISTRY UPDATE

Karen Keir | Women's Pastoral Coordinator

ONLY weeks after taking up the Women's Pastoral Coordinator role in February 2020, Covid hit and my plans for the women's ministry at CBC underwent a slight remodification! Plans for further women's events had to be shelved and the focus shifted to a more online platform, not incidentally my area of expertise or comfort!

However, what followed has been a huge encouragement to me and I hope to those who have taken part. Prompted by the quick adaptation of the Mums@Central groups to online studies, I issued an invitation to the women of CBC to a Women's Bible Study and was bowled over by the response. The result was the formation of two study groups, one on a Tuesday evening and one on a Wednesday morning, both studying the same material over Zoom.

I think our early meetings with the (now well documented) struggles to switch on video and sound, adjusting angles of the screen etc. only served to break the ice and get to know one another better. Personally, these groups have allowed me to accelerate my sense of belonging in the church as we have studied Scripture deeply together and shared what God has been doing in our lives.

It has been an immense privilege to walk with other women as we endeavour to take God's word to heart and seek to respond in obedience to Him, growing in our knowledge and in our love for Him and for one another.

If this is something that you would like to be involved with, please let me know and I'll be in touch. We are looking at God's Covenant with Abraham and its relevance to us today at the moment.

In addition to the women's studies, I have been involved in leading the 'Growing Leaders' group with Stuart as well as the student ministry. These various areas of ministry produce opportunities for one-to-one pastoral care and this is something that I am available for even if you are not involved in these particular groups, so again please just get in touch if you want to talk.

As Covid restrictions ease I do hope to begin to organise more events such as 'Women's Breakfasts' and 'Women's Conferences' so watch this space! ■



GROWING LEADERS GROUP

Stuart Keir | Pastor

WE have some spaces available in our Growing Leaders Group for this coming year (starting September). This year we will be covering the following four modules at the pace of one module every 2 months.

MODULE 1 – The Bible in Missional Perspective (Giving us a clear grasp of the redemptive story line of the Bible and why the Church is so central to mission)

MODULE 2 – Christian Living (Helping us to see how all of life is to be lived for the glory of God – not just Sundays!)

MODULE 3 – Apologetics (Helping us to understand common objections to the Christian faith and equipping us to give a reasoned defence in the face of these)

MODULE 4 – Bible Truth (An examination of the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith seen through the lens of the Nicene Creed)

If you are interested in going deeper in your faith, want to become better equipped for Christian service and are interested in joining this group then do please get in touch with me (pastor.stuart@gmail.com). ■

HOSPITALITY

Eva Stirling and Kathryn Wright



OUR church has been greatly blessed over the years with those who have humbly and sacrificially served us: cooking meals, organising funeral teas, serving coffees, and producing an abundance of tray bakes. Their service has given us times of fellowship where, as we sit together at a table, we have been given the opportunity to share our lives, our joys, and our burdens. The glory has rarely been theirs, but it has certainly been Christ's.

As we move forward into a new phase of church life, this ministry will, God-willing, become part of our daily activities together again. There will be some changes but hopefully this will continue to be an area where many people will find the blessing of fellowship and discipleship as they serve the wider church family.

A lot of work has been done to develop a team of willing helpers who have trained to Level 1 or Level 2 Food Hygiene level to bring us up to current regulations for safe provision of food-related hospitality, but there are still opportunities to join the team so we can provide for all the occasions we would wish to in the future. If you feel you are led to serve in the Hospitality Ministry, you can attend a basic training which takes less than an hour either face to face or via the internet. Please contact Kathryn Wright or Eva Stirling. ■



STUDENT MINISTRY UPDATE

Stuart Keir | Pastor

AS we look to the beginning of a new academic year in September, and with restrictions continuing to ease, we very much hope to be able to do far more in-person ministry among our students.

So what will the coming year look like? Well, understanding that 'We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps' (Proverbs 16:9 NLT), here is what we are planning:

STUDENT SERVICES: We introduced these short lunchtime services last year as a way to allow us to connect with the students as a group, and them with each other. The response and feedback have been really encouraging so we plan to continue with them at least through the first Semester, welcoming new students and reconnecting with returning ones. Our aim in these services will be to work through the book of Philippians with its emphasis on proclaiming what it means to be a joy-filled, committed follower of Jesus Christ.

STUDENT GROWTH GROUPS: Previously we have had one big home-based Bible study group for students and young people. Partly because of the ongoing uncertainty of what might be possible in homes and partly because of a desire to disciple students in smaller groups this coming semester, we aim to start student growth groups. Each of which will have around 6 people in it, be led by one of the team, and be based around following up on the Philippians talks, and building strong relationships of trust and healthy accountability.

HOSPITALITY: Also, we are very much hoping that the easing of restrictions will allow us to do far more in the way of in-person care and hospitality through welcoming students in our home, linking new students with 'adoptive' families, resuming monthly after-evening service hot chocolate times and planning a number of events.

Of course, to a greater or lesser degree all of the above is dependent on where we find ourselves in relation to Covid. Please do continue to pray for the students who are part of our church family and for our ministry to them.

Please pray also for the work of the Christian Unions on the campuses and for Charis Chi as she works with international students through Friends International. ■

YOUTH WORK UPDATE

Stewart Milligan | Youth Leader



THE YOUTH PROGRAMME restarted on Sunday 22 August with YF on Sunday evenings as our main teaching session initially. We are awaiting updated guidance to youth work regulations, so for the moment we have decided to postpone Sunday morning Bible Class and Bible Class

Plus until we can figure out how we can safely deliver this – although the church is going back to normal, there are still issues with space/rooms available which we are exploring with Colin and the children's ministry.

Alongside our weekly YF sessions, we will be restarting our discipleship groups (junior boys and girls, and senior boys and girls groups) which will be organised among the various groups as to the best time and date for meetings.

As a result of uncertainties around residential weekends and the potential for restrictions to be brought back in over the autumn/winter, we are postponing the youth weekend until spring 2022. We will, however, be restarting our Super Saturday events September through to December and more details on these Saturdays will be given in due course.

POINTS FOR PRAYER: wisdom for the youth team as we seek to get back to some form of normality, pray that our young people will engage again as we return to more in-person sessions and that any anxiety or worry would be removed and they would feel comfortable joining us in person; and pray for more volunteers – we have lost a number of our student leaders over the past year and a half so our youth leader ranks are thin and we need more folks passionate about seeing our young people grow in faith to join us. ■

WORD SEARCH

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.'

9 WORDS TO FIND

N	C	A	D	T	U	D	G	E
E	P	H	Q	E	L	U	R	Y
W	X	V	R	O	S	O	V	A
I	C	O	H	I	F	S	J	W
Z	F	E	S	E	S	N	A	A
B	B	R	R	M	G	T	W	P
S	G	E	A	N	Y	O	N	E
S	H	C	O	M	E	D	V	S
T	N	O	I	T	A	E	R	C



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES UPDATE

Colin Watson | Children and Families Coordinator

HOPEFULLY by the time you are reading this article the Children’s Ministries at Central will be looking more like what we had before March 2020!

As a result of uncertainties regarding government guidance on what we could and couldn’t do, we didn’t have a Holiday Club this summer but instead we had regular activities and get togethers throughout the school holiday period. They were branded ‘Loads o’ . . . ’ and included Loads o’ Play, Lego, Sport, Art, Games, Bouncing and Loads o’ Bikes, culminating in a family service called Loads o’ Singing!

The purpose in these activities was three-fold:

- 1 An opportunity for our children to have fun with each other and re-engage friendships.
- 2 An opportunity for parents to have fellowship.
- 3 An opportunity for families, perhaps new to Central, to meet myself and others in the church family, as well as an opportunity to introduce friends and family to ‘life at Central’.

Through meeting with the children and families at these various activities, and through pastoral visitation, I have been reminded how blessed we are at Central to have folk who sincerely want to bring their children up in His ways. Their desire to tell others about Jesus and live their lives in a God-honouring way is humbling and exciting in equal measure! I urge you to keep praying for them, especially as the children start back at nursery and school and for some of our older young people as they move on to work or study.

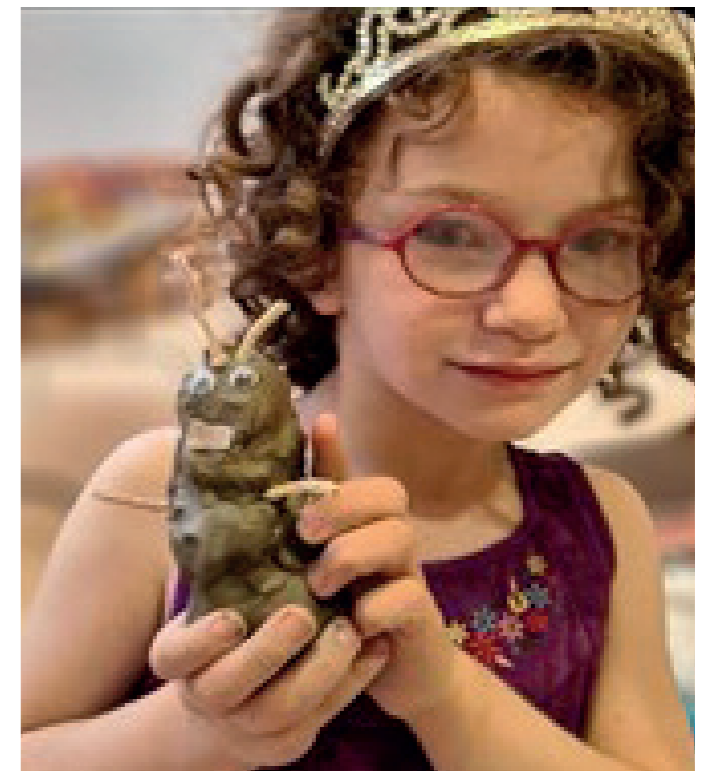
What our Children’s Ministries will look like in the next few months is unclear; however, we want to persevere in our desire to serve, encourage and challenge our children and families to ‘run the race’. One specific prayer point is that Ruth Taggart, one of our newly appointed Ministry Apprentices, will be working with me and our families for part of her time. Pray that she’ll quickly establish good relationships, her skills and talents will be used to bless others and that she will be blessed and more equipped to serve our Lord. ▶

In Him, Colin



“Train up a child in the way they should go, even when they are old they will not depart from it.”

PROVERBS 22:6



MINISTRY TRAINING PROGRAMME

Stuart Keir | Pastor

NOTWITHSTANDING the significant challenges to life and ministry that these last 18 months have presented, it has been exciting to see the church's plans to develop Central as a place where people can gain training and experience in Gospel ministry take shape.

This September we look forward to welcoming two **Ministry Associates** onto the team: Ruth Taggart and Kathryn Wright. Both are well known to us. Ruth worshipped with us while she was a student in Dundee and has spent the last year working with the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship in St Andrews as a Relay worker. Kathryn is a committed member and already hugely involved in the life of the church, particularly on the admin side where she provides valuable support.

Both will be serving generally in the church over the course of the coming academic year, while also having the opportunity to gain experience in particular ministry areas. For Ruth this will be in student and children's work, and for Kathryn this will focus on ministry to seniors, in the church and, as opportunities open, in nursing homes.

Alongside internal training and mentoring, both will also receive external training. For Ruth this will be through Cornhill Scotland and will see her spend Mondays and Tuesdays down at their base in Glasgow learning vital Bible handling skills. For Kathryn this will be through continuing online studies with the Highland Theological College.

It is worth stressing that the Ministry Associate programme is designed for those who are seeking to discern what God's call on their life might be. It runs for 1 year in the first instance, with the possibility of renewal for a second year. After this, associates may go on to further study and preparation for ministry or, equally, may go on to serve in non-vocational ways but better through the experience and skills that they have accrued through their time with us.

**Do please commit to supporting these two sisters through this year.
You can do this through prayer and, if you are able, through contributing to their personal financial support.**

If you are interested in knowing more about how you could support financially then do please speak to either Ruth, Kathryn or myself, or contact the church office. ▶

We are also delighted to welcome Sarah Thompson onto the team who will be gaining experience in Biblical Counselling through working as an intern with us over the course of the coming year or two. Sarah will be jointly supervised by the church and BCUK, and will be developing Biblical Counselling in the church through one to one work and the training of others.

Sarah will be giving, initially at least, the equivalent of 1.5 days/week to this and is doing this on a non-stipendiary basis. Do please be in prayer for her, and for Lloyd and Nathan as they adjust to a new pattern of life.

Please continue to pray also for Andy Holt, our Pastor in Training, and for Helena and little Harris. This will be Andy's first full year with us and already we are seeing the blessings of having him in this role. This year, alongside his continuing online studies in Theology with the Southern Baptist Seminary in Kentucky, Andy will continue to work and gain valuable experience in the church.

Pray also for the overall team. We meet as a staff team on Tuesday mornings for prayer, planning and support, and then the trainees meet again as a group on Fridays for times of reflection, study and mentoring. ▶

RUTH TAGGART

Q Please tell us who you are?

A Hello, I'm Ruth, from the north coast of Northern Ireland. I studied Mathematics here at the University of Dundee (2016–2020) and attended CBC during those student years.

I got baptised in December 2018 and have been a member of the church since 2019.

Q What is your Christian background and your areas of ministry interest?

A Growing up in a Christian household is something I am thankful for – my parents and church family have encouraged growth and nourishment spiritually from such a young age. The past 3 years or so have been pivotal regarding my faith – I've grown in love for God and His Word, and have grasped something more of His faithfulness. Having been on Dundee University CU committee as a student and completed my time as a Relay Worker in St Andrews (working alongside Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship), I have a heart for student ministry and see great gospel opportunities in this area. I look forward to getting involved with children's ministry and serving as part of the praise band too.

Q What steps led you to the conclusion that this programme was right for you?

A I feel that now could be the right time to serve and be discipled in a slightly different context – within church, rather than UCCF/CU setting. I am hungry to learn more, and have a real desire to keep pursuing training – I see potential for growth personally, but long to be part of a wider growth more corporately within the body.

More than anything, it is just a real privilege – having the opportunity to return and serve people within a church that is already dear to me. CBC's vision for investing in the next generation of gospel workers is very exciting. What a joy to be part of His kingdom work!

Q How do you think this programme will help you mature as a Christian?

A I have been so blessed by teaching and resources during my time on Relay, and trust that I will find the same to be true this year, as I spend time in study and work with staff at CBC. Something I am prayerful for is that my heart and affections will continue to be stirred for Christ, and that I am reliant on Him for all things. I am very acutely aware that I am not a finished product by any means, but I do believe God can use our weaknesses, including my own, for His glory. ▶



KATHRYN WRIGHT

Q Please tell us who you are?

A I'm Kathryn, I moved to Dundee in 2006 from Galashiels to study Chemistry at the University of Dundee, and I have been a member of Central Baptist Church since 2015.

Q What is your Christian background and area of ministry interest?

A Growing up I had little experience or understanding of the Christian faith and for most of my life I wholeheartedly embraced atheism. While working in a research laboratory I became friends with a Christian colleague who had started bringing me to Central with her. This is where the word of God, living and active, revealed the beauty of Christ to me. Since coming to faith I have had the privilege of serving within a variety of roles in the church, and in gospel outreach within the city. My area of ministry interest is working with seniors, within church and within care home settings.

Q What led you to this program?

A I have been studying part time towards a Theology degree with Highland Theological College since 2019. For the last year I have been prayerfully seeking an opportunity to serve in Christian ministry, but I am aware that I have much to learn about myself, ministry, Christ, and my walk of faith. It is an honour to have the opportunity to serve and grow within the church where I came to faith. My prayer is that as this provides a chance for me to train and discern God's leading, that I can also be a blessing to those whose love and support have surrounded me for the past 6 years.

Q How do you think this will mature you as a Christian?

A For the next year I will have the opportunity to combine studying and service with others who are all at different points in their walk with Christ. With time for mentoring, feedback and prayer, there will be a focus not just on the development of knowledge and skills, but also on the shaping of character. For me this is a step of faith, to trust in my Heavenly Father's care and provision, but also trusting that He can and will work through my weaknesses and imperfections as I seek to serve His kingdom. ▶



SARAH THOMPSON



Q Please tell us who you are?

A I'm Sarah Thompson, wife to Lloyd and mum to Nathan our son who was born in April 2020. Lloyd and I have been coming to Central for a couple of years and became members in early 2020 just before the first lockdown. I currently work part-time as a GP, although I will be reducing my GP hours as I begin the internship.

Q What is your Christian background?

A By God's grace, I had the privilege of being brought up in a Christian home and recall becoming a Christian early in life, based on a child's understanding of faith in Jesus. As an adult, my Christian experience has been seasonal and undulating, albeit I trust with a consistent progressing direction to becoming more like Christ, by the grace of God and His work in my heart. It has been my repeated experience that it has most often been through the deepest valleys of suffering that I have grown most in my trust in and love for Christ.

Q What is an internship?

A The Biblical Counselling UK Internship is designed to support churches who desire to further establish a biblical counselling approach to pastoral ministry. The scheme runs for 2 years and in my case will be on a non-stipendiary basis. It will be a well-supported role with provision of training and mentoring from Biblical Counselling UK, as well as supervision provided by members of the leadership team here in Central. In the context of Central, the intern role will involve meeting with people one to one, and also providing training for others in order to equip us as a congregation to further develop our 'one-anothering'. I hope to be able to offer 1-1.5 days per week of my time to the church in this ministry.

Q What steps led you to the conclusion that this programme was right for you?

A Following the persistent encouragement of a good friend in our previous church in Edinburgh, I began Biblical Counselling UK's Certificate Course in 2017, seeking to grow in wisdom and the ability to apply the Bible to everyday life and relationships, born out of a desire to be better equipped to connect God's Word with day-to-day life. As I progressed, my passion for Biblical Counselling grew, with a specific turning point in the summer of 2018 when God really challenged me on the direction of my life in the areas of ►

work and ministry. In response to this, starting in September 2019, I embarked upon a year of further exploring God's will for my life, involving reducing hours in GP work, dedicating more time to the Certificate Course and basic theological study while having more time available to walk alongside people.

During this time, I was prayerfully considering the next step and God has amazingly opened up this door of opportunity for this internship, in ways in which I could not have imagined. I am so thankful to Him for His leading and the provision of this 2-year period in which to continue to explore His call on my life.

Q How do you think this time will help you mature as a Christian?

A I have a deep desire to walk alongside others in their Christian journey, helping them to connect the dots between the truths of God's Word and their everyday lives. Even when we receive excellent Biblical taught theology, such as we have the privilege of here in Central, there can still be a massive gap between the theology we are taught and our functional theology – what we live out day by day. Confessing with our mouths on a Sunday that God is good is not the same as living in the reality where we believe wholeheartedly that God is good in our everyday lives with all the challenges and trials we can face. ■

CARNOUSTIE BAPTIST CHURCH UPDATE AND PRAYER POINTS

John Toller | Pastor



OVER the past few months, as Covid restrictions have gradually eased, we've been reading and studying Genesis 1-11. These are wonderful, rich chapters, particularly as we see how they are (and will be) fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It's been particularly encouraging to reflect on God's faithfulness and steadfast love; despite the repeated, ongoing sinfulness of even the best of people, God remains faithful to his promises and purposes – whatever happens, he remains sovereign.



The last 18 months have been very disrupted for everyone and, as with all churches, we've not found it easy when things we've been used to have been taken away from us for a time. Yet it has also been a time of opportunity, with new opportunities to love one another and the chance to take a fresh look at our work and witness. We know that God's purposes for the church have not changed – to be and to make disciples of Jesus Christ – but we are seeking His wisdom for how we serve his purpose in this new season, particularly in our witness.

In some ways we can see how our community has been shaken, in other ways we that people just want to get back to how things were. We are confident in the gospel, which can bring conviction and hope to this community, and ask you to stand with us in praying that lives would be transformed as we declare and display the gospel. The building project is still moving forward; after a few hiccups we are hoping to have our building warrant by the time this is published!

However, as a result of the current situation with prices for materials, quotes for building work are only valid for a very short time; this means we can't put out to tender until we have the bulk of the funds in place. This will require around another £20,000 – so please continue to pray for God's provision, which has been amazing to this point! ■

LOCHEE BAPTIST CHAPEL UPDATE AND PRAYER POINTS

Dave and Cath Dickson



AS the dust settles after the trials of Covid, we are emerging with a renewed sense of vision for reaching Lochee with the gospel. It's been such a blessing being able to meet together more freely, both as a church and socially, something we plan to never take for granted again.



Our prayer and Bible study groups have restarted, and we've been reading through a book of the Bible together each month. We're excited to welcome Emma Kidd onto the staff team on a part time basis as a gospel worker. Last term she started a weekly Bible study with a group of girls from our church and friends. She is also getting ready for the reopening of our Parent and Toddler group this month.

We've made a good connection with the Lochee Community Group, and Dave has been volunteering there when he can. He has built a community website, with the aim to help promote local groups, businesses and events. This has provided opportunity for us to get to know others at work in Lochee. In connection with the community group, we've begun monthly jumble sales at the church, providing tea and cakes along with second-hand items to visitors.

Our school co-op has been developing too. A few LBC families now school together every day, and we join other home schoolers regularly to work towards a nature award. This school year, Andrew and Dave will begin teaching a theology course to a group of our children and others one afternoon a week.

PRAYER POINTS:

- Pray that we will grow stronger together as a church family in the knowledge and love of Christ.
- Pray for the Parent and Toddler group as it restarts this term.
- Pray that people will come to know Jesus through our relationship and activities with the Lochee Community Group.
- Pray for the expansion of the school co-cop, for the families that we reach through it, and for our children to know and love Jesus. ■

GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION

“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

(John 3:7–8, ESV)

It’s both a great joy and a great mystery to see God bringing to life those who were once far from him. Where once there was hostility, apathy or self-reliance, His Holy Spirit brings transformation as people are brought into the amazing relationship with Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Here two of our church members recount the effect of the gospel on their lives. God is good, and he is able!

“ I remember the night I finally understood the cost and magnitude of what Jesus did on and through the cross. The magnitude of this truth hit me and was the only thing weighty enough to take away the weight of guilt and shame I was carrying. It was both the most challenging and the most incredibly beautiful moment of my life.

Really it was the beginning of a whole new life – one filled with the deepest sense of joy, love and forgiveness that I had ever known.

The truth that God Himself, holy, just and powerful, the maker of heaven and earth, who breathed all of creation into being, entered His own creation to die and so defeat death for us so that we can have full and eternal life changed me then and continues to do so today. This is the best of all good news, and I wanted to share it with everyone – I still do!

One funny story my brother (who is now a Christian himself) loves to tell is of how people would keep an eye out for me in the pubs back home and head for the back exit when they saw me coming, in fear that if they lingered too long it would be too late and they’d be left behind to hear me preach the gospel to them!!!

I was told on many occasions by Christians that this would mellow and I’d chill out about my faith a little, but it hasn’t and I certainly haven’t (though I hope I’ve become a little more tactful and loving thanks to God’s grace and His sanctifying love!).

Jesus is everything. He is the King of Kings. Names above every other name and My Lord and Saviour.

Sam Wittman

“ My parents are Christians, my dad was a Deacon, and we went to church as a family on a regular basis. I remember feeling forced to attend and I didn’t want to be there. At 15 or 16 they gave me the choice and I chose not to attend. It wasn’t until the age of 18 at a midnight church service that I went forward and asked Jesus to come into my heart – I believe He did but I was still too weak and tempted by having ‘fun’ and to be honest, being a Christian seemed like hard work. Sadly, I chose ignorance and though I didn’t wholly deny the existence of God, I still thought of Christianity as boring, hypocritical, blinkered, damaging and judgemental. I closed my eyes, my ears, my heart and got on with life without recognising God in it. I now thank God for his eternal patience with me and for giving me my husband Grant, who’s soul searching reached mine and on Father’s Day in June 2019 the Lord broke all my barriers down.

As the truth of the gospel impacted me I was amazed at how short sighted my broad-mindedness was and I began noticing how simple the truth is, it has given me freedom from the weight of the world. My lifestyle was driven by selfishness, pleasure seeking and, frankly, it was pretty shallow. Getting honest with myself has been the biggest challenge; a friend once told me ‘Make sure you have a big torch when you go down into that dark basement’ and now I do, the light is in me. It’s good to know that when I’m on my own, I am never alone. His goodness is in me, I feel His presence and I look back at my life before Jesus sought me out and I don’t want to go back there. He has my life in His hands, and I am learning to hand it over to Him. It’s difficult to let go of self will . . . but I’ll keep trying.

Lindsey McCowan ■

NEWS FROM PERU

Matt Lock | Chair of CBC's Missionary Support Group



LAURA LEE LOVERING is our link missionary with BMS and was serving in the north of Peru in a place called Nauta where she led the integral mission training centre team. She left this role and has recently just returned to Peru from home assignment to begin a new adventure in a different part of Peru.

She writes:

Months ago, as I was preparing to leave Nauta, I started to compile some files of photos under the titles: "Things I will miss" and "Things I won't miss" about living in the Peruvian Amazon. The truth is, when I finally got to the UK for Home Assignment, I was too distracted to be writing blogs! Now that I'm recently back on Peruvian soil, I'm going to indulge myself with a little nostalgia, although I can now also add a part for looking forward: "Things I'm looking forward to in Piura". So here I go...



"THINGS I WILL MISS FROM NAUTA"

Big rivers, big skies; crazy insects; local food – rice and chicken cooked in bijao leaves and what became affectionately known as the 'vomit drink' for its distinctive smell; attempts at jungle chic; luxury river cruises; making chocolate with friends; and, CHRISTMAS! There isn't actually enough space to include all the people, things and places I will miss!

"THINGS I WON'T MISS FROM NAUTA"

Jungle breakfasts of dinosaur fish soup and tamales; 400m of mud from doorstep to mototaxi (and vice versa) in the rainy season; surprise extended power cuts; luxury river cruises; when the only road is closed for maintenance; and large 8-legged house guests! ▶



First Baptist Church, Piura

Now that I find myself in the city of Piura, a couple hundred miles west of Iquitos, up and over the Andes and stopping just short of the Pacific, what am I looking forward to here?

"THINGS I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IN PIURA"

A day-trip distance to the beach for cooling off; new friends and new neighbours (the young couple own the building I live in and they live downstairs); Hello 'cello, my old friend! No longer living where woodworm and safe transport for fragile items is such an issue, I decided to bring this little instrument back with me finally; the benefits of living in a city which has things like banks, supermarkets and a CINEMA; new neighbourhood – more sand, less mud

and no more wellies!

Thank you again for all your prayers and support for me over the years and particularly during this time of transition. I've already seen my accommodation fall into place and have been very graciously welcomed to the church. I thank the Lord for them both!

If you'd like to keep up to date with news from Laura, please contact Matt Lock or someone from the MSG. In the meantime, please pray for Laura as she settles into her new role in a new place with BMS in Peru. ■



WILLIAMS FAMILY UPDATE ▶

WILLIAMS FAMILY UPDATE

THE WILLIAMS FAMILY have now been in the Arabian Gulf for 20 years! We've learned that every year is different, but, like many around the world, we'd say the pandemic years would take the prize for being the most unpredictable! Various Gulf countries reacted in different ways to Covid, with one extreme being to close airports completely for months while also rationing trips outside the home to buy necessities at supermarkets and, at the other extreme, to seriously attempt to continue life as usual.

The UAE and Bahrain made impressive strides vaccinating their populations, whereas other countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait struggled. Most Gulf countries ended up (at least for a while) on the UK's "red list", meaning that hotel quarantine is required on returning to the UK.

On a personal level, twice now, for "Covid reasons", our family has been separated for months at a time as a result of unpredictable or uncertain travel regulations.

We have mostly been confined at home as a family (thankfully, we all get on well!), with schools online since the start of the pandemic (and looking to continue that way into the new academic year), but we have also been encouraged in many small ways and have seen most of the relationships we had continue and even thrive in one or two cases.

After the initial weeks when we all expected the lockdown to be short lived, many people became resourceful at meeting in twos and threes outside on walks, even in the heat of summer – both neighbourhood friends, other Christian workers and also some national believers.

Like Dundee, many things moved online – in some cases, we are aware of nationals meeting together this way for the first time. Now, with some restrictions easing, the Arab way of prioritising being present together in person is refreshing – like streams in the desert! ■

RETURN TO NORMALITY?

Ken and Ruth Drysdale

KEN has worked all but 2 months since we went into lockdown. Our daily routine has not changed all that much, although we have grandchildren who have become young ladies and toddlers who are off to school, not seeing family has been very difficult! FaceTime is fine, but you can't put your arms around your loved ones.



Will 'normality' hold any fears? Well, yes it does, will normal ever be 'normal' again, will life always now be different, will it ever be the same as it was prior to March 2020? For some of us it never will be as friends and loved ones have died. Ruth has visited and been in touch with some of our elderly members during this period of time, and it has been, and is, very difficult for them. There is still the fear of catching Covid even though they have had both jobs.

Ken has been trying to retire now since he turned 65 back in 2016 and is now semi-retired and will be fully retired by the end of September. What of the future? Ruth has to put up with me being around the house! What does the Lord have in store for us? When we gave up our house and jobs and moved to Kilravock back in 2006 we knew that was what the Lord wanted us to do . . . without doubt! At the moment we have no clear leading, so for us normality will never be the same as it was 18 months ago, but we have the sure knowledge of what will be normal, it will be the faithfulness of the Lord.

Many years ago, before we were married my mum gave me a bookmark, before the days of tablets or e-books, and it's still in my Bible today. It says: 'Plan carefully what you do and whatever you do will turn out right', based on Proverbs 4:26, '*Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure*' (ESV). We need to be open to His leading and guidance. We know what we would like to do and where we want to be.

But we are reminded again in Proverbs 19:21: '*Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand*' (ESV). Whatever the Lord has in store for us, we reflect on what the Bible says in Hebrews 13:8: '*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*' (ESV). He is the same prior to the pandemic, during the pandemic and now as we look forward. Whatever and wherever we end up, we have a faithful God who will not let us down.

'Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase' – Martin Luther King ■

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