



Bellshill and Bothwell Parish  
Church of Scotland

## Sunday 1st of March



**Zia Yusuf: Reform  
will restore Britain's  
Christian heritage**

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**Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.**

**1 John 3:18**

Dear Friends,

Earlier this week, while reading the news, I came across the image and headline at the top of this newsletter from *The Times*, dated 22 February. You may well have seen the same article or commentary responding to it.

Over the years, I have been told, more than once, that the church should not “get involved in politics.” I have always (gently) resisted that view. The truth is that we don't really have the option of being unpolitical. To choose not to engage is, in itself, a political stance, a quiet endorsement of the status quo.

Rev. Ken Leech who was an Anglican priest and founder of the homeless charity *Centrepoin*t, once said:

**“All Christians are political, whether they realise it or not, but especially when they don't realise it.”**

If we believe in a God who cares passionately about His world and His creation, then surely we must also believe that God cares about how that world is governed, how people are treated, and how justice is pursued. Scripture is also not silent it speaks consistently about righteousness, mercy, and the dignity of every human being, just flip through the pages of your Bible.

Throughout history, Christians have allowed their faith to shape public life in transformative ways, from *William Wilberforce* and *Elizabeth Fry* to *Martin Luther King Jr.* and *Desmond Tutu* to name just a few. Their commitment to Christ led them not to withdraw from the world, but to seek justice and compassion within it.

Sadly it would appear that political parties are increasingly using Christianity and religion as a tool, deployed to sway voters. It is also sadly increasingly common to see the cross reduced to a badge of national identity or employed as a rhetorical weapon in cultural debates. To do so diminishes both faith and politics. The cross of Good Friday that our Saviour carried and died on stands not for power or exclusion, but for love, forgiveness, life and hope.

In 1 John 3:18 we read:

**"Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."**

These words are later echoed in words often attributed to St Francis and Mother Teresa:

**"Spread the love of God through your life, use words when necessary."**

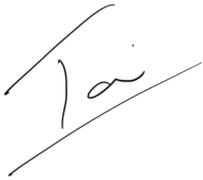
As we approach the upcoming elections, we will undoubtedly encounter many headlines and bold claims. I would encourage you not to switch off, nor simply to be swayed by headlines and election promises. Instead, look deeper. Ask whether the words we

read and hear are matched by actions that reflect justice, compassion, integrity, and truth.

As Christians, our calling is not to align uncritically with any party, but to bear witness, thoughtfully, prayerfully, and courageously, to the kingdom of God in the midst of public life.

With every blessing

**Revd. Iain**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Iain', written over a horizontal line.

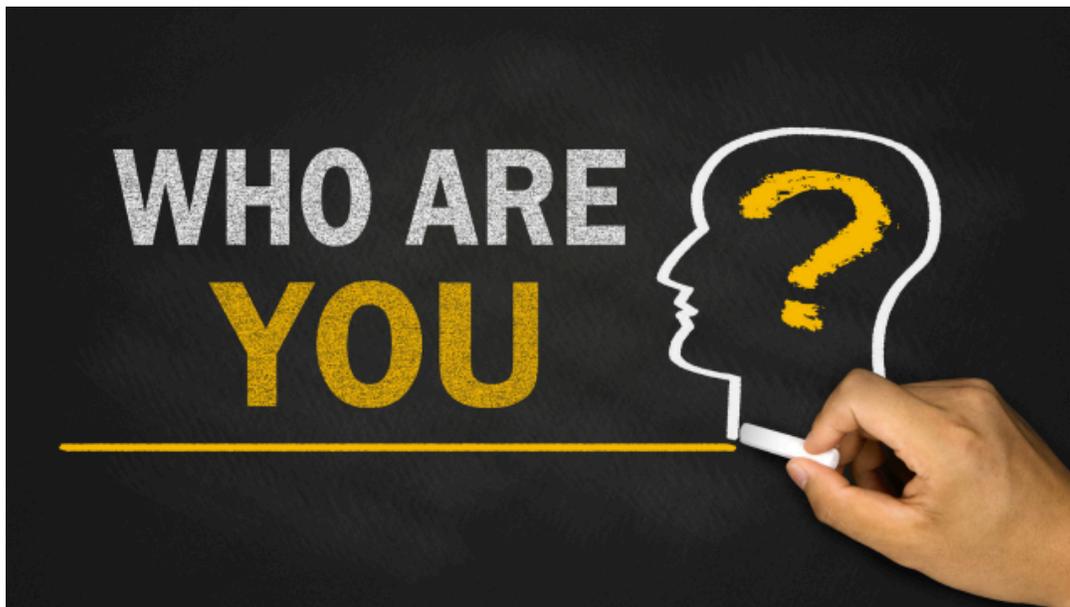
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Download the Order of Service

Here

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**Sermon recap**



Here is a brief recap from last weeks Sunday Sermon.

To watch the service (again) click [here](#).

On Sunday we played "Guess Who" to remind ourselves of that big question Jesus faces in the wilderness: "If you are the Son of God..."

Matthew drops Jesus straight from the waters of baptism into the sand, the Father's voice still echoing, and the tempter's challenge goes straight for identity. Jesus doesn't perform or prove himself; he stands rooted in the declaration already spoken over him. As we begin Lent, that season of dust and stripping back, we're invited to stop trying to earn what has been freely given and to live from the truth of our baptismal name.

This week, when the whisper of "if you are..." tries to unsettle you, pause and choose to live from belovedness rather than anxiety. Try one small practice: each morning this week, sit in silence for two minutes and speak aloud the Father's words over you, "You are my child, my beloved", and let that steady what you do, rather than making everything you do try to prove it.

Head over to <https://pastors.ai/church/@bbcofs> to catch up on last weeks sermon and the previous weeks.

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## Have you just joined?



Have you recently joined our mailing list? Or perhaps you're wondering what you may have missed? There's no need to worry. Below you'll find links to our most recent emails, so you can catch up on what's been happening, and more importantly, get to know our Elders a little better.

Please remember to share this email with those struggling to receive it and ask them to email [minister@bbcofs.org.uk](mailto:minister@bbcofs.org.uk)

**8th Feb:**

<https://preview.mailerlite.io/preview/697613/emails/17882345...>

**15th Feb:**

<https://preview.mailerlite.io/preview/697613/emails/17919430...>

**22nd Feb:**

<https://preview.mailerlite.io/preview/697613/emails/17928490...>

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## **Elders in the spotlight**

We conclude our spotlight of Elders today. Sadly one elder has not been highlighted yet, Annabel Leitch who is currently unwell but for now meet Val...



### **Valentine Grzybek, known by all as Val**

Val with his wife Patricia, and their son and two daughters, moved to Bothwell in 1988. Val was previously a member of Coltness Memorial Church, Newmains where he was also an Elder. Val was in the Police and retired after thirty years service which saw him carry out a wide range of police enquiries mainly in the United Kingdom but also in Germany, France, Holland and Israel.

On retiring from the Police, he was recruited by an international insurer investigating claims in the uk and Northern Ireland. He retired from the insurance industry in 2016 and now concentrates on assisting with his four grandsons, garden, travel and golf.

Val is an elder at Bellshill & Bothwell Parish Church and has been convenor of the Church's property committee for four years which he finds challenging and interesting.

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## **Mission Statement**

Over recent weeks I've been sharing our new Mission Statement praying that, in time, we won't simply remember the words, but begin to live them out together. If you can't quite recall it yet, don't worry. I've included it again below. But I'd love to know:

**What does it mean to you?**

**How do you see it shaping our life as a congregation?**

Why not drop me a quick email and share your thoughts? I'd really value hearing from you.

A photograph of a church service, showing people seated in pews and shaking hands. The image is darkened and serves as a background for the text.

**“  
BBCofS seeks to follow the  
example of Jesus Christ as a  
vibrant worshipping community,  
embracing change while  
respecting tradition, nurturing  
one another, and loving the world  
beyond our walls.  
”**

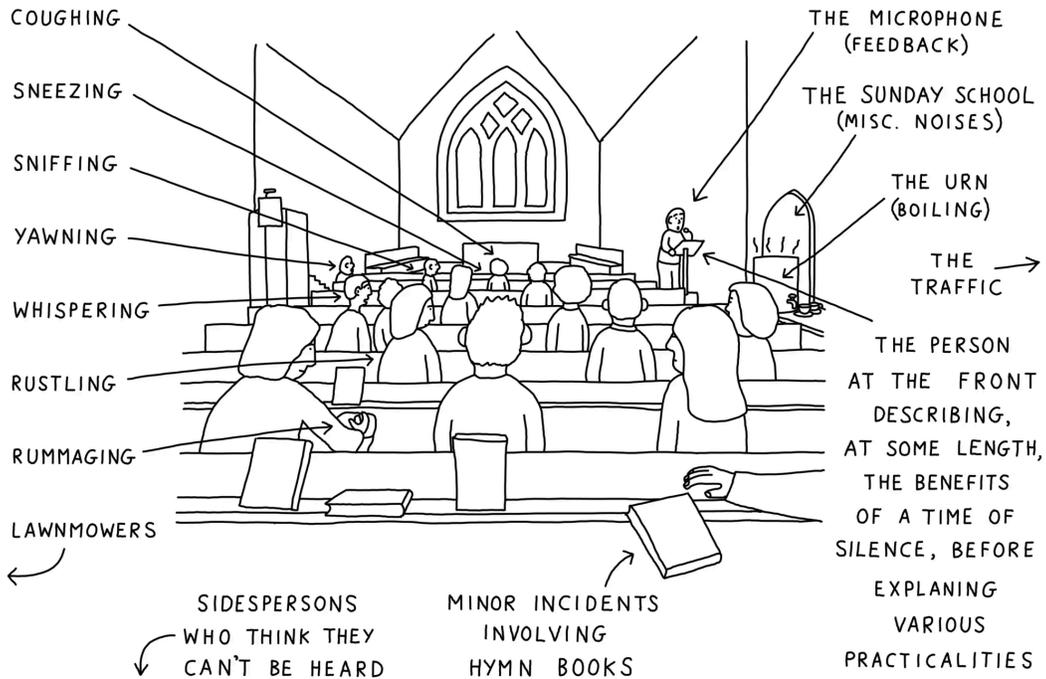
*@BBCofS*

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**A final thought....**

# A TIME OF SILENCE

PLEASE IGNORE ALL DISTRACTIONS



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