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Bellshill and Bothwell Parish
Church of Scotland

Sunday 22nd November 2026

Where is God?



Dear Friends,

This week brought another blow for our church building in Bothwell. It has been confirmed that dry rot is present once again beneath the pews on the right-hand side of the church, on the piano side. Despite having been treated less than 2 years ago, the dry rot has returned, and it has spread with surprising speed.

We are still hoping that the heating will be repaired in time for Christmas, and in the meantime we will make sure the building is kept safe to allow us to use during the Christmas period. In January the company will return to investigate further, which will mean lifting all of the new floorboards that were laid not so very long ago and we give thanks for warrentys.

I won't pretend otherwise: this news hit me hard. It has weighed heavily on my shoulders this week as I carried it around with me, turning it over in my mind. Then someone gently asked me a question that made me think:

> **"But where is God in all of this?"**

It really made me stop and think because these past months we have faced many challenges with our buildings, and we continue to face them. Progress on our West Halls has not been as quick as any of us hoped, as we met one hurdle after another. We have had roofing problems on all of our buildings, and the boiler house at the church in Bothwell has been condemned. Our church building in Bothwell has been without heat for weeks, which has been hard on all of us, and hard on the very fabric of the building too. Now the dryrot has returned beneath the floor.

In the midst of it all, are we in danger of missing God? What might God be trying to say to us through these troubles? What are we not seeing?

I was reminded of Elijah on the mountain in 1 Kings 19. As he waited for God, there came a great wind, then an earthquake, then a fire, but God was not in any of them. Then came "a sound of sheer silence", and it was there that Elijah met with God. Sometimes the noise of our problems is so loud that we struggle to hear the voice of God speaking to us. Perhaps, then, this is the moment for us to be still and listen: to turn to God not with spreadsheets and plans, but with prayer. To sit, to pray and to listen, and to say "Here I am, Lord."

I was reminded of the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount when he said:

> **“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume”**
>
> Matthew 6:19

I don’t think Jesus would mind me adding dry rot to that list! His point is not that earthly things don’t matter, but that they can never be where our hearts finally rest: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

So I find myself wondering, and I offer this as a question for all of us rather than a criticism of anyone: how much of our time, energy and attention do we give to our buildings, and what might we be missing as a result?

Our buildings matter. They hold generations of prayer, of baptisms, weddings and farewells, and many people have given faithfully and generously to care for them. We want them to be warm, safe places where everyone is welcome. But the building has never been the Church. The Church is us, God’s people, called to share the good news of Jesus with the communities around us. As Peter puts it, we are “like living stones” being “built into a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5).

So perhaps these troubles are not only a burden but also an invitation.

They invite us to hold our buildings a little more lightly, and to ask together what God is calling us to be and to do in Bellshill and Bothwell in the years ahead for us and those who come after us. This is the very conversation Project 100 has begun, and if you would like to be part of it, you would be most welcome we want to hear your voice. Our prayer is that we might create a space, and become a congregation, no longer braced for the next problem, because we have done the hard work of properly equipping our buildings which allow our gaze to turn consistently outwards: focused not on stones but on living stones, and on growing the kingdom of God.

And if, like me, you have been feeling the weight of it all, remember that we do not carry it alone. Jesus says,

> **“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest”**
>
> Matthew 11:28

Whatever we find beneath the floorboards in January, whatever becomes of our boilers, and whatever lies ahead, the foundation of our church is secure, for as Paul reminds us, “that foundation is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Grace and Peace to you,



Sign up here to be part of the Project 100 working group.

Sign up

A draft Order of Service

Please note that the Order of Service is currently only a draft and the final version will be posted on the church website towards the end of the week.

Download here

Sermon Recap



Sermon Summary: No Spare Parts

Reading: Exodus 17:8-13; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

This past Sunday we looked at Moses. The great and mighty Moses, who led the Israelites out of slavery and spoke to God face to face. There he was on a hllltop, unable to keep his arms up while holding a staff. Aaron and Hur hold his hands up until the sun sets, and together they do what none of them could have done alone.

Many years later, Paul speaks to the Corinthians about unity and reminds them that the body of Christ, though it has many parts, is one body. We all have a part to play. Everyone belongs. Everyone matters. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:26, if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

This morning we are not all here. Some of our number are not in this room because this is not the building they know. And there are people who are also missing from

Bothwell when we worship there. People who stopped coming somewhere along the way these past fourteen months, and we did not always notice. We are not complete. We have not been complete for a while. And we ought to feel that, because a body notices when a part of it is missing. There are no spare parts in the body of Christ. We each have different roles, but no role is a minor one. Some of them just aren't seen straight away.Who holds your arms up? And whose arms are you holding?

Challenge for the week:

Think of somebody you haven’t seen in a while. Not to tell them off. Just to let them know you noticed.

And here is something else. Sign up for Project 100. Not because we need the numbers, but because your voice is part of our today and our tomorrow.

Sermon Link

Worship in the West Halls



Thank you to everyone who joined us in our West Halls and online last Sunday. Of course, the very day we held our first Sunday service in our West Halls turned out to be the same day as a swimming gala at the Sir Matt Busby Centre! Thank you to everyone who managed to find a parking space, and to those who had to turn around and go home, I am truly sorry. The atmosphere was brilliant and despite a few teething problems we got there in the end!

This Sunday we are back in Bellshill, and this week there is no swimming gala (as far as we know!). We would love to see you there at the usual time of 10.30am, so please come along if you can. Remember if you a lift to email us at office@bbcofs.org.uk and we will try and help you.

Bake sale



A huge thanks to everyone who baked, set up, sold and bought all the yummy goods on sale last Saturday. We have managed to raise a total of **£1,055.80** for church funds which is truely amazing. A special thanks to Allison and her team of bakers for their hard work and generosity.

One Question, One Minute



Do we still remember? Click here to watch.

Conference



The Presbytery is arranging a conference that will be of particular interest to anyone thinking of joining the Project 100 working group. If you have the time, please consider joining Revd Iain there.

One Step Beyond Conference

Saturday 21 November

9.30am – 2pm

Venue: Motherwell, Kirk at The Cross

What does ministry and mission in our local communities look like beyond the Presbytery mission plan? How can we play our part in the mission God calls us to in our community and what does that look like?

Join the Presbytery and Forth Valley of Clydesdale for One Step Beyond, a conference to help you develop mission relevant to the skills and abilities in your congregation and appropriate to your community. Inspirational workshops and discussion to help you develop mission relevant to the skills and abilities in your congregation.

Our keynote speaker for the day is the **Rev Dr Doug Gay** who will open our conference with an overview of contextual mission.

Delegates will then have the option to attend three out of four workshops on offer:

- **Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)** - Derek and Helen Pope unpack what this is and how it can enable your church to develop local mission.
- ***Taking SHAPE* -** David Cameron will consider how our Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experiences can help shape our mission and develop our congregation.
- **Mission Audits -** Lyndsay Cameron helps us consider how a mission audit can enable us to better understand the needs of our local communities.
- **New Spaces -** Peter Wood will be exploring Fresh Expressions and Pioneering and how these new spaces can enable more effective mission in different contexts and people-groups.

Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Over lunch the Presbytery Staff Team will be available to chat about how the Presbytery can help resource churches for mission including creating stepping stones to faith and belonging.

We would encourage as many people as possible from the Presbytery to attend this conference and take the opportunity to learn from some great speakers and practitioners and would be a space where a few members of your church might wish to attend so that you can then unpack the themes with your congregation at a later time.

Free tickets are available here:

Click here

A Crackling Christmas



Join us on Sunday 13 December at 5pm for our Crackling Christmas meal! We will be enjoying a delicious roast pig, with tasty vegetarian options available too.

There is a recommended donation of £15 per person, but please sign up whether or not you are able to give. Everyone is welcome at our table. If you would like to bless someone else this Christmas, you can also buy a space for someone else and we will ensure the seat is filled.

Afterwards, why not stay on for our Nine Lessons and Carols service at 7pm, a wonderful way to begin the Christmas season together.

To book your place, please speak to Anne Laird.



Buy tickets here



Hogmanay



Buy your **Hogmanay** tickets! £10, £5 for children. Doors open at 20:30 at the West Halls, first dance at 21:00, last dance just before 01:00. Bring your own drinks (alcoholic or soft) and snacks, and bring your family and friends along for a night of fun as we dance our way into2027. Purchase tickets by emailing hogmanay@bbcofs.org.uk

Pass it on



Enjoying the Newsletters? Pass It On

Do you enjoy receiving these emails? Is there someone in the congregation who cannot get online, or who has drifted out of the habit of coming along but who you still keep in touch with?

We are not able to run a delivery service, but you can. Why not print this email off, head round for a cup of tea, and catch up with them while you share it.

The newsletter is only ever a means to an end, of sharing news and the hope of Jesus Christ. A printed page through a letterbox is good. A printed page delivered by a friendly face at the door is far better and shows the love of Christ in action. Perhaps you cannot commit to every week, but could you manage it once a month? Start today.

Time to sign off

A final thought to leave you with



Bellshill and Bothwell Parish Church

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