



**Welcome to
Meldrum &
Bourtie Parish
Church
2 October
2018**

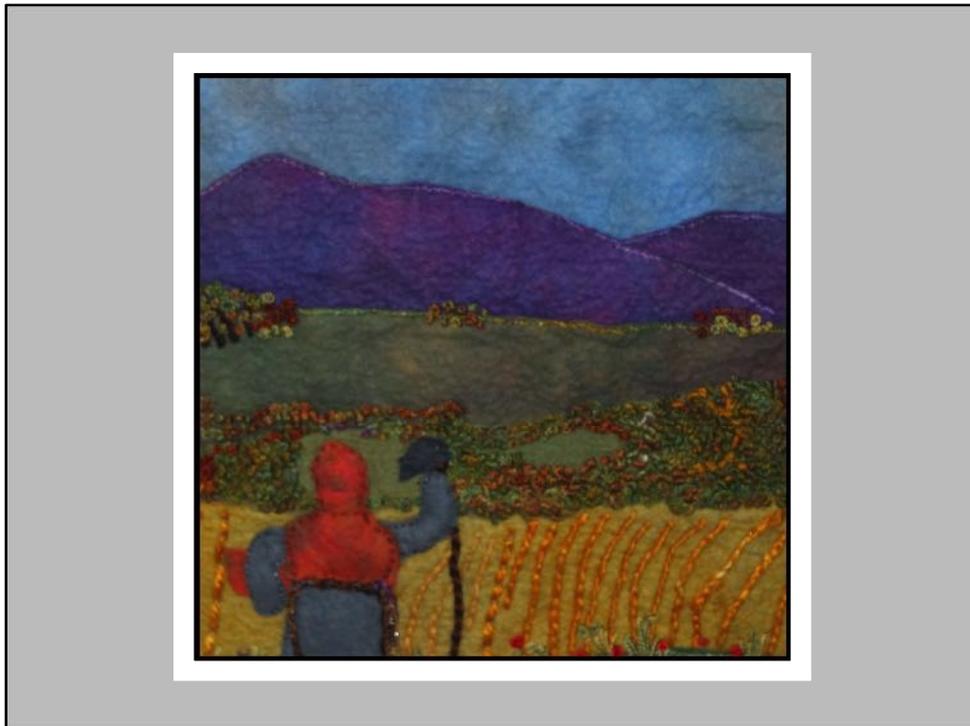


Part 1 The Beginning.

Any kind of research into the early history of Scotland is fraught with difficulties. When I came here I knew there was a local saint called Nathallan. His name is remembered in placenames and in a half-remembered legend. I have long wanted to know more about this saint but could not find him in the Saints of Scotland book. As an old archaeologist, I have connections however. My friend Graham found him in the Aberdeen Breviary the oldest printed book in Scotland. From the new translation by Alan McQuarrie, and from the local legend I have put together this story that is celebrated in our embroideries and which is our guide through tonight's worship and presentation. As with all stories from the deep past not all the details are secure and it is impossible to validate some of the claims made but it is certain that Nathallan was a real person though it turns out that Nathallan was not his real name but a Latinised form of a Pictish name. There is also the possibility that there were several people whose life stories were condensed into Nechtans and that some of the hagiography which surround him was added for the edification of the worshippers rather than as actual history. When Nechtan's story was written there was no discipline of history as we know it now.



The story begins in the early 600s at Tullich, near Ballater where a boy called Nechtan was born beside the Dee. He was born to a noble family but made his life's study the word of God and the contemplation of the Divine. In order to keep his soul pure from the temptations of an easy, rich, life as an academic land owner, Nechtan became a farmer. Not a gentleman farmer, but the hands dirty, hay in your hat and nicky tams kind of farmer.



His crops flourished. He was good at farming but a terrible famine came to the land and Nechtan gave away his seed corn to stop his family and neighbours from starving to death. When Spring came he had nothing to sow in his parks but sand. From the sand he sowed across the land every kind of corn grew and multiplied until there was a huge harvest waiting in the park.

In Meldrum the story is slightly different. Nechtan's crops survived a blight than killed everyone else around and so he could feed his family and neighbours.

Alice's embroidery..the happy farmer



Meldrum & Bourtie

Our Story



We are now going to reflect on the seeds we have sown in this parish and those we have harvested from the plantings of our past.



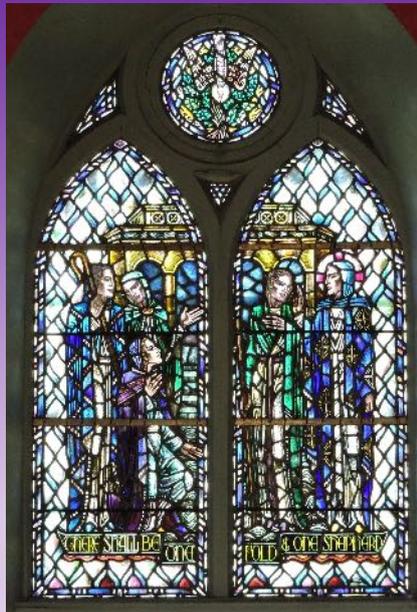


Psalm 100

**Worship the Lord with gladness,
come before Him with joyful
songs know that the Lord is God,
it is He who made us and we are
His; we are his people, the sheep
of his pasture.**

John 10:16. There shall be one fold, one Shepherd.

Worship in the Meldrum area has a rich history. From the time of St Nechtan in the 7th century there has been a Christian tradition in the area. Please look up to the stained-glass window above the cross and below the dove of the Holy Spirit.



John 10:16. There shall be one fold & one Shepherd.

The words say, 'There shall be one fold and one shepherd'. It commemorates the union of Presbyterian Churches in Oldmeldrum and was dedicated in 1956. Our strength is that we have a grand tradition of Worship and co-operation through the ages. Our **CHALLENGE** is to continue this into the future.



Our Church family share the reading of Bible passages each week and our Reader and others contribute to prayers as asked by the minister based on the Lectionary theme. The IT team offer valuable support each week, Elders and the Worship Group help with Family and Special services throughout the year, all in liaison with Alison. We are grateful that Alison trusts us to both be involved and offer ideas at the planning stage. On occasion Elders will take the lead to prepare and deliver the service.



Baptism

- **Infants**
- **Older children.**

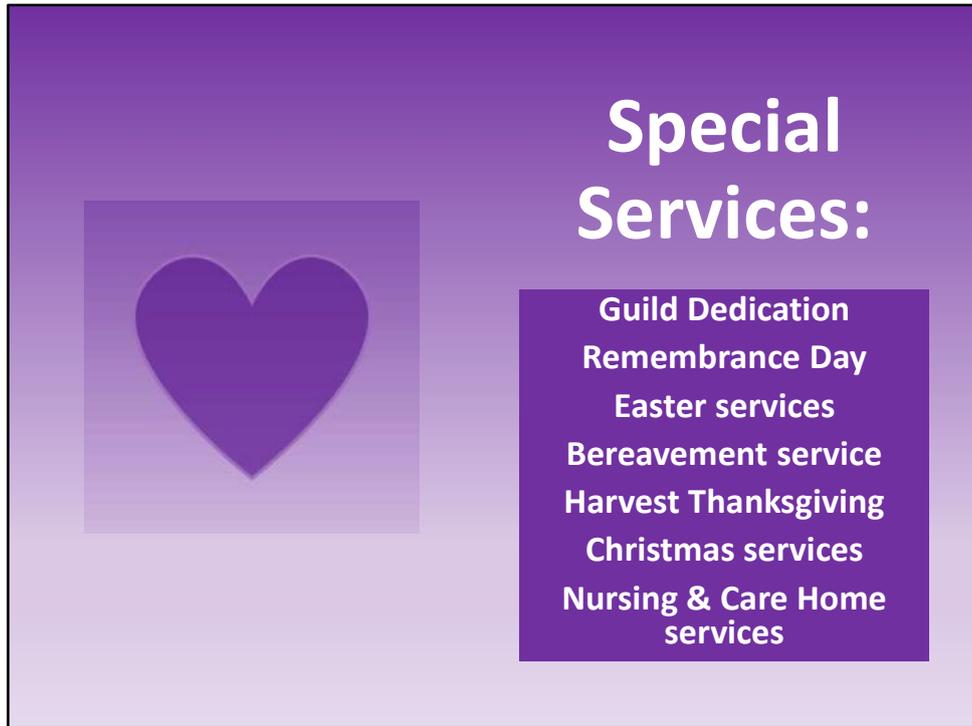
Worship and the Sacraments

Communion

- **Formal**
- **Informal**
- **Open table**



We have been blessed to witness the Baptism of infants and older children. These are always special occasions. Our Communion services are held twice a year both morning and evening with our members visited and invited to these. More regular informal Communion services are celebrated monthly after morning worship in Meldrum. Children have attended Communion services and we have an inclusive open table.



Special Services:

- Guild Dedication
- Remembrance Day
- Easter services
- Bereavement service
- Harvest Thanksgiving
- Christmas services
- Nursing & Care Home services

These services mark the progression of the seasons and the Church year. We enjoy our ecumenical link with St Matthews and St Georges Episcopal Church at Easter during Holy week. We worship Maundy Thursday together in each of our Churches on alternative years. Opportunities for charitable giving and support for others provided by the special services.



Messy Church with craft activities, songs, stories and shared food around a Biblical theme has been a rewarding experience. The spin off 'Messy Church Family Christmas Eve service' with a craft task and something to take away at the close of the service has led to a full Church. At the 2017 we struggled to seat everyone, Mums, Dads and Grandparents all participated in the craft making. We aim to encourage the participation of our young people in the monthly Family service and build on this type of worship. Our young people have read in Church, helped to welcome at the door, helped to uplift the collection, carried the Bible in and volunteered to take part in Church activities

Variety of Instruments

- Organ
- Keyboards
- Guitars



Music and Song

- ❖ **CH4 hymnary**
- ❖ **Action songs**
- ❖ **Fischy music**
- ❖ **Quiet music for contemplation and reflection**
- ❖ **Music with images and visuals**

A variety of music, hymns and songs are used throughout the year to bring praise and depth to our worship together. We have had services where favourite hymns have been chosen by the congregation. Each member whose hymn was sung shared the story of why that particular hymn was their favourite with the congregation. We also benefit from a small group of singers who can help lead us in song.



These installations based on key events from the Easter and Christmas stories are wonderful creations crafted with love and care by the Flower team and helpers. They are meaningful for our congregation and are very special. They also enable us to share Christian beliefs and the stories with local primary school children, their teachers and helpers. This is deeply rewarding and allows us to share God's love and the gift that Jesus gave us as an act of witness and a form of worship. We would like to invite all who are curious to come and experience this for themselves. We are grateful to Regine from Rhynie Parish who inspired us to try this idea.

WORSHIP IN ALL WE DO

PROSKUNEO (Greek) to fall/bow down before.



**We Worship God in Spirit in our Hearts
We Worship God in Truth in our Minds**

We are reminded by the example of our lord Jesus and St Nechtan that everything we have comes from God. Through leadership of our Minister and Reader, the words of the Bible, prayers, hymns and teaching that we encounter in worship we can grow spiritually and keep striving to love our neighbour.

WORSHIP IN ALL WE DO

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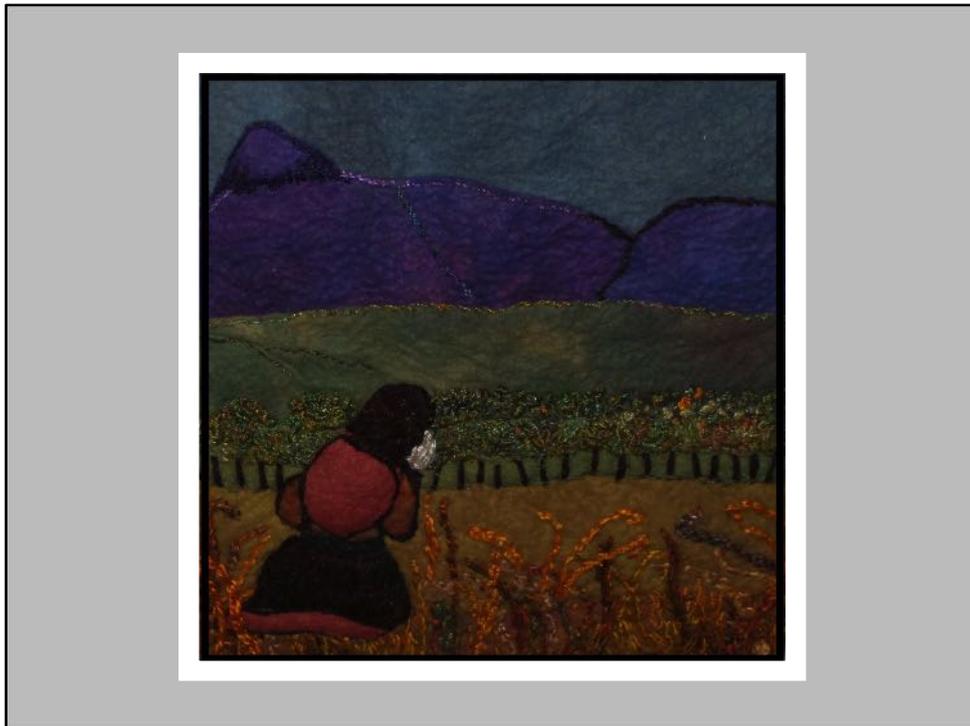


Prayer point:

As we worship God in Church and in our daily living we pray for the Holy Spirit to help us encourage the young families in our Parish to join us. We also ask the Spirit to show us ways to go **OUT** and connect with them.

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Part 2 The Loss of Faith

Winnie's embroidery. the crops are lost.

In Meldrum the next part of the story is that Nechtan's crops eventually died too and he realised how he had become arrogant and proud of his agricultural skills and that he felt that God had abandoned him and so lost his faith.

The Aberdeen Breviary story is slightly different. Nechtan gathered a large number of his neighbours to bring in the miraculous harvest but a whirlwind and a huge storm kept the reapers from the field. Nechtan shouted at them in anger and shouted at God for sending the storm. The reapers and neighbours began to murmur against God and lose their faith in his goodness. Nechtan realised his folly and in repentance shackled his leg with a padlock and set off for Rome to do penance by visiting the shrines of Peter and Paul.



Jackie's embroidery, the shackled arm

In Meldrum the story is that he shackled his arm rather than leg but in both stories he threw the key to the padlock into the Dee before leaving on his pilgrimage. He set off for Rome.



Lorna's embroidery of the Voyage.

We are going to tell you about the things which have caused us to question and the things in which we have lost our faith and hope and of the journey we have been on to regain them



The Vision

A new Church centre with community facilities was to be built in a more central location for the expanding village.



Some years ago, in what feels like the mists of time but in reality was 2005/6, the trustees had a vision of a new Church and community centre which would be more central to the life of the village and would provide all the necessary facilities in one location. This was to be built on the glebe lands and was to be financed by the sale of the remaining glebe to a developer.

This vision evolved over the years with many challenges being presented over matters such as access, feasibility, facilities (including a possible swimming pool) all being addressed by a task force set up to deal with the project. The final version was for a Church with an attached hall and a community cafe.

Plans were drawn up and costed and a deal with a developer for the sale of the land was agreed subject to planning permission being granted.

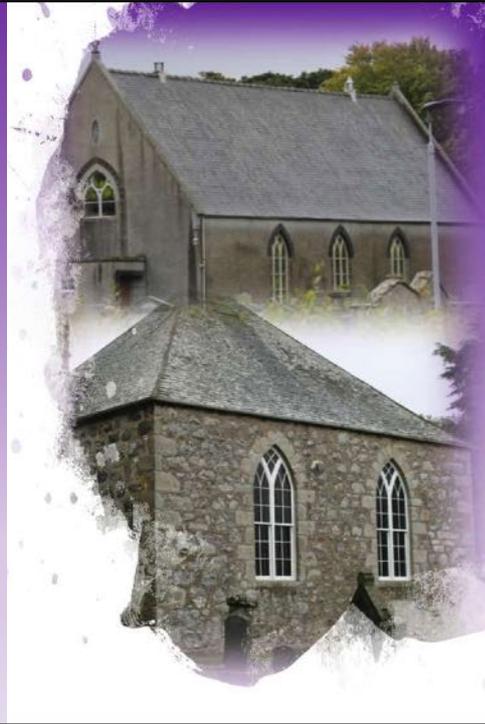
Unfortunately, due to the financial downturn, this deal fell through and the glebe was subsequently re-marketed.

A new deal is in the process of finalisation, again subject to the developer obtaining planning permission, but at a lower valuation.

The Challenge

Unfortunately, the proceeds from the new deal will be well below the level required to build a new church and consequently the trustees have had to rethink what is possible and achievable.

The basic objective remains which is to have a building or buildings all on one site which are large enough to accommodate our current and hopefully future requirements.



Having examined our existing buildings which consist of 2 Listed Churches, 2 manses and a church hall and having visited a number of other churches who have embarked on similar journeys, it became clear that neither of our two churches nor our church hall was suitable as they currently exist or were capable of expansion to be made more suitable to meet our aspirations.

Consequently our efforts have been focused recently on a two building solution, albeit that both buildings would be in close proximity to each other



1. This would incorporate a hall of around 100 sq. metres, kitchen facilities, toilet and shower facilities and would be an eco-friendly building heated by a combination of ground source heat recovery , solar thermal and solar photovoltaic systems.

It would also act as an overflow worship facility on the rare occasions when the Church is filled to capacity.

The building would have the IT and services as befits a modern facility in order to maximise the opportunities for usage both as a Church Hall and community asset.

As part of the design, a covered verandah would be provided, facing the war memorial, such that this could be used during inclement weather during Remembrance services and would incorporate a public address system in order to provide more suitable audio facilities during such services.

2. The new extension to the front of the building would be constructed such that the existing centre stained glass window would be incorporated into the front elevation of the extension, as would the plinth and plaque which currently occupy this space. A new entrance to the church would be formed in place of the existing window. Two entrances to the extension would be formed giving the option of which one to be used dependent on weather conditions applicable at the time.

The existing toilet and access to the organ gallery would be redesigned and refurbished and the stairs to the organ gallery would be removed as part of this redesign.

A new access to the organ gallery would be formed from the existing upper gallery into the organ gallery. The enlarged organ gallery would be made into one large or two smaller meeting rooms with a dividing section.

Disabled access to the new space would be provided by a lift.

An external staircase would also be provided. Adoption of this design would enable the provision of an emergency exit from the existing gallery to be provided, something which does not currently exist.

Other works associated with the refurbishment include:

Repair and/or upgrading
or roof and rainwater
fittings.

Rewiring the power and
lighting circuits and
upgrading the lighting
system to eliminate the
requirement to access the
rafter space to change
lamps.

Repair and refurbishment

of the stained glass windows throughout and possibility of double glazing same.

Internal Insulation of the internal walls and ceiling.

Provision of underfloor heating powered by the use of ground source heat recovery system assisted by roof mounted solar panels to the rear of the

building.

Provision of an up to date IT and audio system to enable streaming of services to both the new hall and to a wider audience via the internet.

Remodeled toilets, disabled facilities and utility facilities and the provision of better storage facilities.

Redecoration throughout.



Enabling Steps

- **Obtain the necessary approvals from Presbytery and the General Trustees**
- **Liaise with CARTA regarding the detail of the refurbishment.**
- **Listed Building Consent required.**
- **Need for a suitable place of worship during the refurbishment works.**

Negotiate with Aberdeenshire Council for use of the land required for the new community hall.

Commission plans and submit planning application.

Obtain tenders for construction and award contract.

Build and commission the new hall.

Sell existing hall.

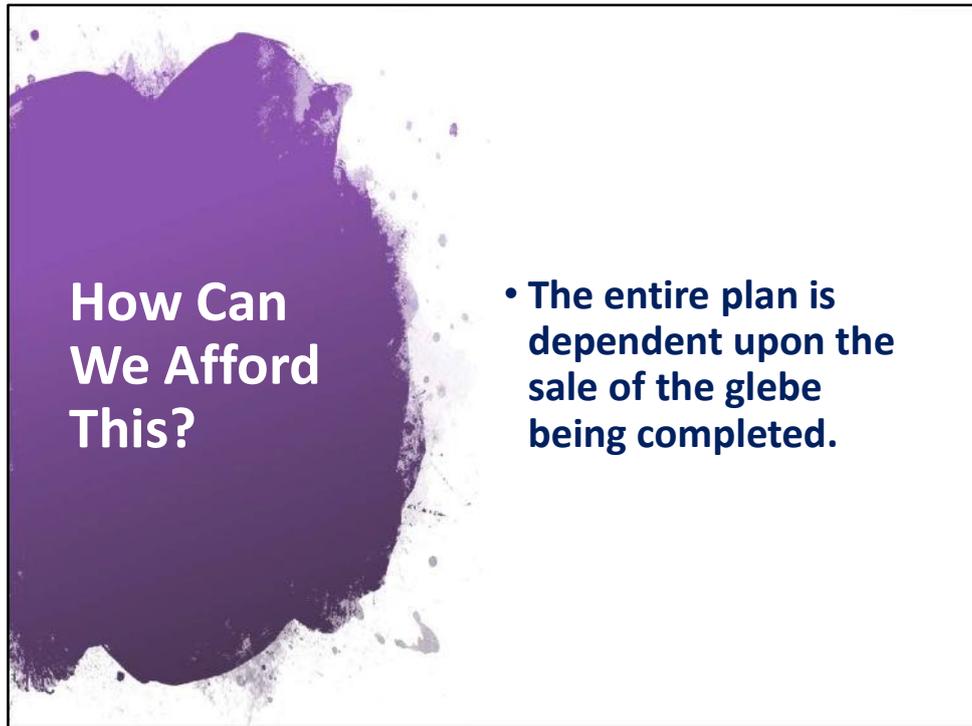
Compile specification of refurbishment and extension works and prepare plans.

Submit planning applications and obtain the necessary warrants for construction.

Prepare invitation to tender and issue to suitably qualified contractors.

Award contract.

On completion, rededicate the building.



On completion of the sale of the glebe and after repayment of monies advanced for the purchase of the access and the repayment of the manse and professional fees loans, it is estimated that the sum of between, £1-1.2 million would be available, of which we would request that £500k - £700k be transferred to the consolidated fabric fund leaving £500k in the Consolidated Stipend Fund for future endowment which can be offset against our Ministry and Mission allocation.

From existing funds, and due to the generosity of persons who have bequeathed sums to the Church, we have approximately £550k available for this project while still retaining sufficient investments to meet our obligations under the terms of the various legacies. We have also projected retaining a significant sum to enable our ongoing benevolent works in the community at the existing level of commitment.

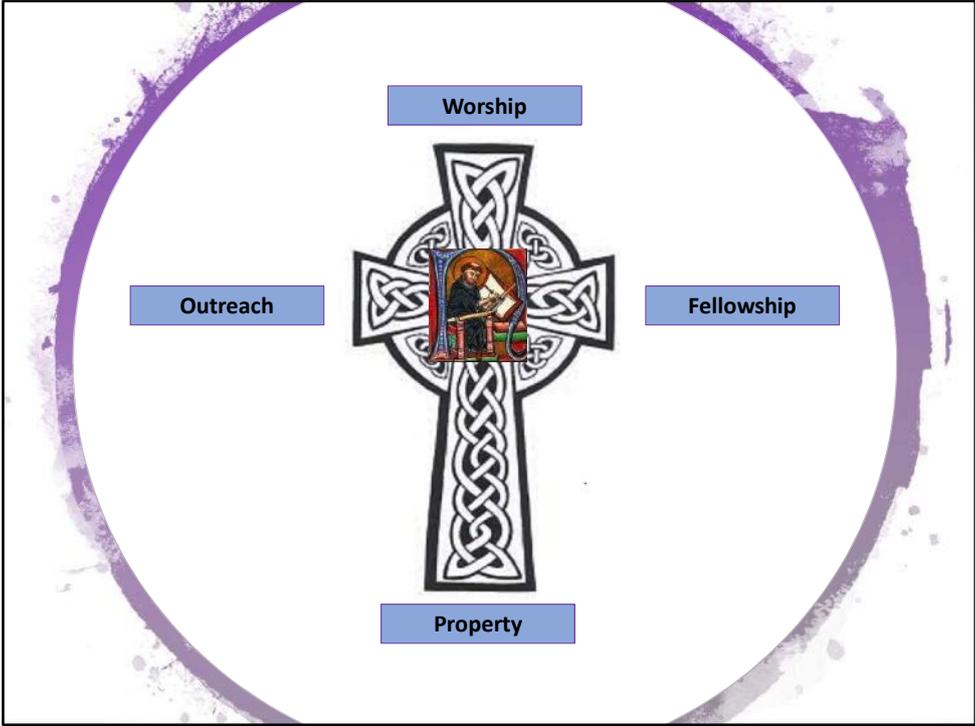
It is estimated that the cost of the new community hall, excluding any land transfer costs, would be c £500k based on a cost of £2000/sq metre. We would hope to do it for less than this.

This would leave £550 - £750k available for the refurbishment works which should be achievable.

In the event of the work costing less than envisaged then any surplus would remain in the Consolidated Fabric Fund for our behalf.

Any shortfall in funding would have to be found by means of grants and fundraising.

We will now sing Hymn 513, Courage, Brother do not Stumble





Part 3

Faith reignited

In Rome Nechtan went to visit the holy shrines and prayed to be forgiven for his lack of faith. The Aberdeen Breviary and the Meldrum story now mingle again. In Rome the saint encountered a fish for his tea. In the Breviary he is sold the fish by a poor boy. In our

embroidery he is in the market buying the fish. When the fish was cut open the key that Nechtan threw in the river fell into his hand. Taking this as a sign of God's forgiveness Nechtan opened the lock and walked free of his penance in joy. The Pope, on hearing the story, sent for Nechtan and made him a bishop, much against Nechtan's will.

Ellie's embroidery of the key in his hand

We will now tell you about the keys we are trying to use to unlock our future here.



**Forward
Vision**

The story so far

- **Following in the footsteps of St Nechtan**
 - **How we conduct our worship**
 - **Rewarding link with the schools**
 - **Use of our buildings**



You have heard so far how we conduct our worship, the success we have had with certain aspects of it and heard about the very rewarding link we have with the schools. You will shortly hear from Brian that our buildings are used by several very diverse groups giving us a valuable link to the world outside of the Church. And it all may sound so far that we are really all fantastic here in Meldrum & Bourtie. But we do have our concerns;

Our concerns

- **The workload on our Ministers**
- **Our volunteers**
- **Growing population of the Parish**
- **Little connection with new residents**



Firstly:

The workload on our Ministers: it is the nature of most if not all Ministers to say yes to a cry for help, it is your job. However, we have an ever-increasing administration, governance, property issues, safeguarding, data protection etc and on top of all that we have increasing complexity with the financial accounts. Is this really your job too?

Secondly: All our work is accomplished by volunteers. Our congregation is ageing, and we are finding it difficult to attract younger members and families to be active and take up roles. Our main concern is that our willing pool of volunteers is shrinking and many of those who currently help do so in multiple ways which cannot continue for long.

Thirdly: Our Parish population has grown very rapidly over the last few years and we have found it difficult to connect with people moving into the area, we have tried, but have not had a lot of success.

I don't think any of these are unique to our Parish here, coming together sharing our success stories and our problems can only be of help to us all.

Our concerns (cont)

- **Property issues**
- **Forced expenditure**
- **Bound and locked**

- **The way ahead?**



Willie gave a very good and accurate presentation of our property issues and where we are now.

But really over this long period of time, 13 years, what really hurts, and I think this came out very strongly at our meeting with the Presbytery visiting team a couple of weeks ago, what really hurts is after a lot of work and a lot of time spent, nothing has happened, apart from parting with quite a lot of money, we were encouraged to purchase a new Manse, we were encouraged to get our plans ready for submitting to the council, only to be told at the very last minute sorry – the deal is off. After all the work time and effort, we have nothing to show for it. Now, we are still in a kind of limbo, the Glebe is just about sold but missives that we were told would be signed six months ago are still not signed. Don't get me wrong we have a very good relationship with 121 a lot of the issues are out of their hands.

But like St Nechtan, enjoying the abundance of Gods gifts, then experiencing failure, thinking he had been abandoned by God, his own faith started to fail.

At times I have felt as if, like St Nechtan we also had bound and locked an arm to one side as we, rightly or wrongly, could not see a way ahead without the successful sale of our Glebe. Having gone through this process twice I believe we, as a Kirk Session and congregation are now stronger, our faith In God is still with us and whatever path God takes us down, whether we have a deal or no deal either outcome will be the signal to push the start button on whatever plan God has laid before us.

We are now looking to the future with more confidence, taking positive steps, making changes. One such step;



Was to join HeartEdge.



HeartEdge & Meldrum & Bourtie
Parish Church of Scotland

'At the heart. On the edge'
is the vision statement developed by the congregation at St
Martin-in-the-Fields.

- 1. Congregation:**
- 2. Commerce:**
- 3. Culture:**
- 4. Compassion:**

HeartEdge supports churches in blending their mission around four key areas, the 4 'Cs':

- 1. Congregation:** Inclusive approaches to liturgy, worship and day-to-day communal life.
- 2. Commerce:** Commercial activity and social enterprise generating finance, creatively extending and enhancing mission and ministry.
- 3. Culture:** Art, music and ideas to re-imagine the Christian narrative for the present moment
- 4. Compassion:** Models of outreach serving local need and addressing social justice.



Some of the what we get by joining HeartEdge is:

- **Connections:** Access to useful contacts and connections to help our church develop commercial, cultural and community activity.
- **Ideas:** To grow our knowledge and insight to help us in our work via the lived experience of others.
- **Support:** Opportunity to meet those most relevant to us in situ, gaining understanding of their work and experience, live.
- **Mentors:** Via phone calls and meetings, appropriate learning and support from others.
- **Events:** Programmed with bespoke content useful for our context.
- **Publications:** An emerging range of resources based on approaches to ministry used by HeartEdge members.
- **Projects:** Development of resources - all we may need to kickstart specific social justice initiatives.

Very much like what we here in Gordon Presbytery are trying to achieve with this new way of *'doing things'*.



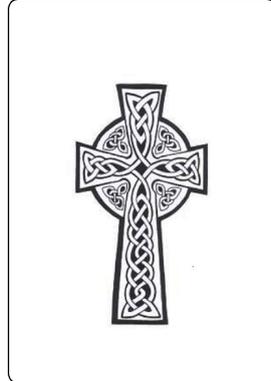
HeartEdge is open to all churches from different denominations, HeartEdge doesn't demand a prescribed theological stance. There is some emerging principles, values, and ways of working and these will evolve and develop over time.

HeartEdge is a growing group of Churches here in Scotland, in the rest of the UK and in Europe. Although we have only recently joined HeartEdge we are excited that we are a member of this Group of Churches especially, **when we dare**, to look ahead at what we hope to accomplish here in Meldrum.

In many ways the thinking of our Kirk Session has changed and fits more to the thinking behind HeartEdge. As we realise that although financially we are in a better place than some at the present, our donations are falling with the deaths of members and others moving away, we cannot sit back and hope to replace this income without a new vision and developing a new way of working.

How we do things

- **Changes we have made**
- **Committee structure**
- **Running around in circles getting nowhere**



One of the changes we have made to how we work as a Kirk Session is to have moved away from the committee structure, we found this was just not working for us, creating extra meetings, longer term commitments and really coming back to Session to have the same discussions and debate. At the end of the day it felt as if you were running around in circles getting nowhere. We still have two groups/committees that still run; the Worship Group, which is fun and rewarding to do and our Church renovation development group, not so much fun there.

The Changes

- **Now work in Task groups**
- **Specific projects**
- **Focussed**
- **Short term involvement**
- **Positive outcomes**



So, we introduced Task groups; these are groups that are set up to deal with one project at a time, the group will form, work on the project, report back to Session and when complete the group is disbanded. No long-term commitment with more varied short-term responsibilities as we move between tasks. Just now we have 4 Task groups running,

our Ceilidh Group

our Craft workshop group

our Afternoon Sing along group

and the group here tonight presenting.

We have a couple of projects on the shelf waiting to get started later this year and no doubt more will join them shortly.

The results of this change are very positive: we are now creating more ideas, projects are coming to fruition and taking place. No longer going around in circles.

Thank you.



Part4 Faith Flowers again Coming home

Sheila's embroidery, Faith flowering

Nechtán came home and founded three church communities at Tullich, Cowie near Stonehaven, and here at Bethelnie.

There are records of Nechtán as the abbot of a monastery called Nir, which was thought to be Deer but now is thought to be more likely Fetternear which is close to Kemnay. In the Celtic Church abbots held more power than Bishops and the church was more often located in a monastic settlement than in any great Cathedral power centre.



So we have assumed that the first church at Bethelnie was such a monastic centre which would have had its own High Cross and would have been a centre of education and sanctuary for the whole area.

Alison's embroidery Celtic Cross



Many the hearts that yearn to belong

Here In Meldrum and Bourtie we have a number of different ways of helping people belong - a very important part of all our lives.



In developing people's fellowship with God we have:-

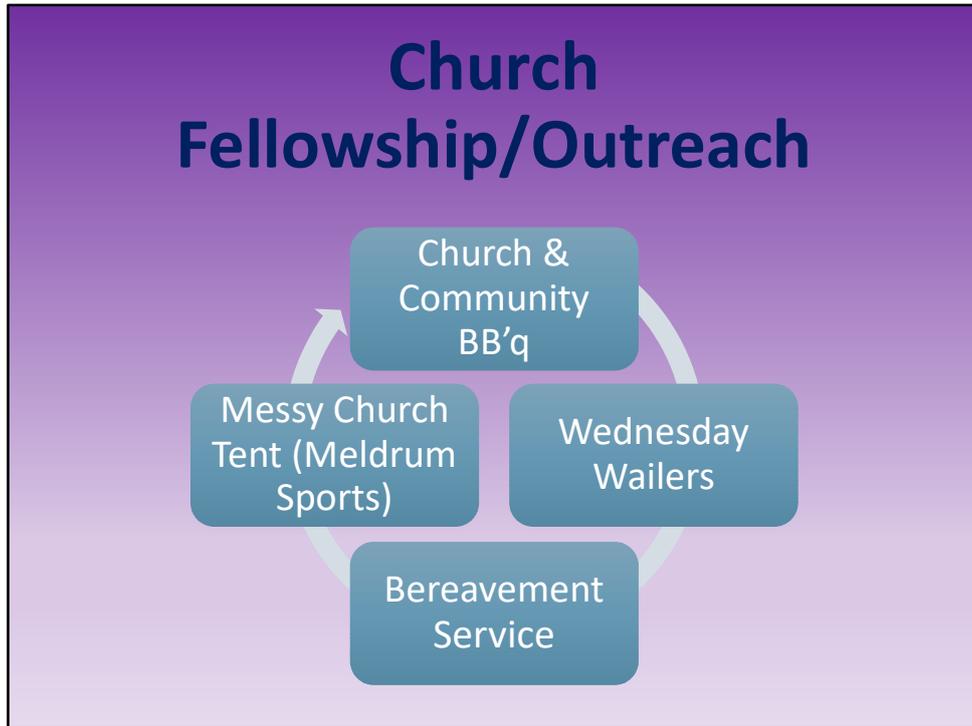
Bible Study groups

Pastoral Care House Visits

Regular Services at local Nursing & Care Homes

We have also given people an opportunity for further fellowship meeting for Tea & Coffee after our Sunday Services, which we find are increasing in attendance.

Church Fellowship/Outreach

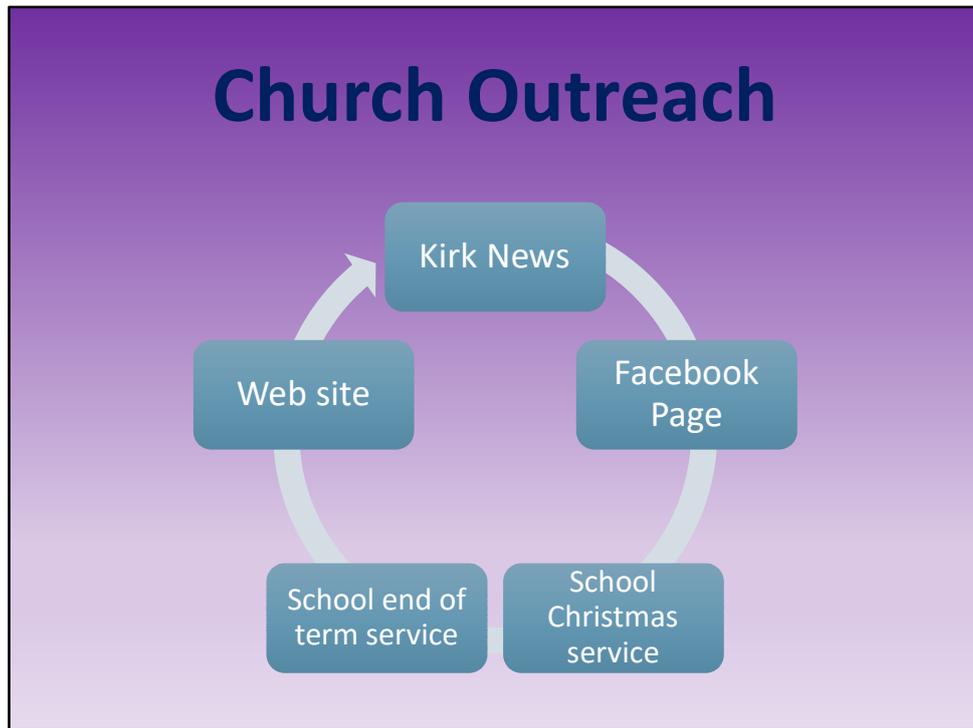


We also help develop our fellowship with each other:-
holding Yearly;

Bereavement Service - bringing together all families bereaved during the year.
Holding a yearly Church BBQ, developed from our previous Sunday School picnics, which are open to the whole Community.

Messy Church run a Tent at Meldrum Sports to celebrate the life of the church.

Wednesday Wailers is a group who celebrate the love of music and singing, by getting together for a sing along.



We also link with the community by publishing and distributing our Kirk News magazine bi-monthly, which twice a year is distributed to all households. We also have our own website and facebook page.

We also link with the local schools, where Alison is a Chaplain at the Academy. There are also end of term and Christmas school services.



Our Church groups also include our Guild, which work tirelessly through the year to enhance the life of the community and support fund raising activities.

We have a sewing group who are currently working on tapestries for display in our church.

Local community groups



As individuals we can also play our part and our members are working in other areas to enhance the life of the community.

Community Cafe

Meldrum Amenities Improvement Group

Lunch Club

Aberdeenshire Health walks



Lastly we support others in their work and lives to develop fellowship bonds in the community by providing accommodation for their use. These are a few examples of the different groups.



We also provide accommodation for use in family get togethers.



We also hold a number of different events at various times of the year, either for fun get togethers, or fund raising get togethers.



Our Vision as you have heard is to develop enhanced facilities and this will help us to develop our Community life.



World Mission - OUTREACH

We have over the years supported a number of groups, either by giving of our own resources - Financial help to Missionary Partners - or by Special Collections, or fundraising - knitting vests, golf tournaments, Christian Aid.



The Parcock Tree embroidery

The Aberdeen Breviary records that his body was buried at Tullich where he was born but in Meldrum, Nechtan/ Nathallan is remembered by the continuing presence of a Parcock Tree. The present tree can be found just off the by-pass. It has a bench under it and a spring nearby and is a place of peace overlooking the present village which replace Bethelnie as the main centre of population in the area. There is a plaque recording the story of the saint's death and it is a good place to pray for this community. Our saint was a faithful farmer and a hopeful sower of the seed of the Gospel. We can aspire to continue his tasks and keep our faith no matter how it is challenged by circumstance and to give our lives to the service of God in this place.



We have a Tree of Prayer here and we would like to bring our worship to a close with a prayer activity.

Under the Parcock Tree: by Alison Jaffrey

**Under the Parcock Tree
the golden gather heaps around
a form, fallen into glory
fiery orange, bronzed yellow
rust blood red and crinckly
brown.**

**Under the Parcock Tree: by Alison
Jaffrey**

**Under the Parcock Tree
roots delve into the dirt of
human life,
furtive, fearful, guilty,
gluttonous,
feeding on the faith-filled
offering**

**Under the Parcock Tree: by Alison
Jaffrey**

**Under the Parcock Tree
the life that was Nechtan's
leaches into the hopeful soil,
feeding faith,
banked up for Spring,
spreading a canopy of hope.
Growing peace**

