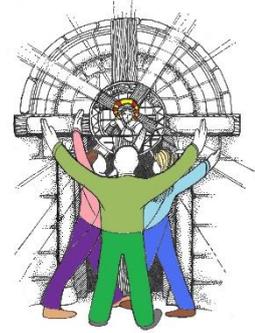


The Church of Scotland

Strathbrock Parish Church

St Machan, Ecclesmachan – St Nicholas, Uphall

Charity No. SC006336



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Annual Review

June 2022

Dear Friends,

The first eighteen months of my ministry has been a steep learning curve and I can only say thank you to you all for the very gracious and loving way in which you have accepted me as your new minister in the most difficult time. These past two years has been unlike any other, not only for our church alone, but across Scotland and the whole world. Churches had to make quick and often difficult decisions to remain in contact with members and some have seen real innovation. Our church, likewise, tried our best with what we had available to us to provide services online – and my heartfelt thanks goes out to all who worked (and continues to work) very hard to produce online services every week. My thanks also to our wonderful team of elders – during these past two years we've had to get to know each other, trust each other while trying to navigate lock down, risk assessments, church services, communions and not to mention the very difficult but necessary decision to sell the Church Hall – which has been such a wonderful resource for the Church Family in the past half century. The reality of the necessity for change, however, means that we are looking at ways and means of being church that is unlike what we've known before and albeit scary and uncertain, we have our full trust and confidence in our faithful heavenly Father who gives us enough light to trust Him for each day and each step we take.

As to the future and the putting together of the Presbytery Plan for the churches in Uphall and Broxburn, the conversations are ongoing, with the aim to have the Presbytery Plan finalised towards the end of the year. I will keep communicating what's happening, and to reiterate what I've said before – nothing will be decided before it has been put to you as the members of this congregation.

We are grateful for our neighbours and the use of the South Church Hall over the past 6 months – seeing the Girls’ and Boys’ Brigade Companies, the BUSY Project and the Early Service make good use of the Hall has been very encouraging, as well as the successful Christian Aid Coffee morning just a few weeks ago. My hope and my prayers are that we can strengthen our relationships and work closer together as sisters and brothers in Christ – as the Psalmist says in *Psalm 133: ‘How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head...for there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life for evermore.’*

Likewise, our own Travelling Well Group, and other house groups have resumed their meetings and we are encouraged by the Prayer Group meeting faithfully every Wednesday. As we proceed cautiously out of the pandemic, we look forward to more opportunities for us to meet together in the upcoming months.

My invitation to you all is that if you feel the need to speak to me about anything, please do not hesitate to contact me.

May we continue to humbly serve the Lord, and seek His face,

HANNEKE

Summary of our Finances

The accounts of 2021 were presented to Session and approved by them and an external auditor in March 2022. Our Total income was £83141 and our expenditure was £80346 which resulted in us ending the year with a surplus of income over expenditure of £2795. Whilst this was really encouraging this was partly due to our Ministries and Mission allocation being reduced last year due to the COVID pandemic. This allocation has been increased this year by £3823 and the surplus last year will assist with our budgeted deficit for this year.

The bulk of our income comes from our church members and visitors through their offerings which amounted to £57225 and we were able to claim tax recovery from Gift Aid donations of £11369.

The biggest expense is our ministries and mission allocation which covers the cost of the minister’s stipend, National Insurance and Pension contributions and the work of the Church of Scotland nationally which includes assisting other congregations around Scotland whose income cannot meet the minimum stipend. Other expenses include Insurance, Council Tax, Salaries, Heating & Lighting and Maintenance of our buildings. The Stewardship and Finance Workgroup continue to closely monitor all expenditure.

The full accounts will be available online on our church website in the upcoming months, once it has been uploaded by OSCR. But in the meantime, a copy will be available to peruse at our meeting on June 12 after the morning service in St. Machan.

We are extremely grateful to everyone for their continued giving, especially during this time of steep rises in cost of living. Many of you are now on Bankers Order which helps reduce banking costs and if anyone wishes to move to this method, please do not hesitate to speak to me.

Treasurer

Mike Stears