

Dear all

As I begin my 4th year as Pastor in Tayside Christian Fellowship, I am very conscious of the need to rely fully on God for His blessing and His provision. I trust and pray that this deep sense of need for His Presence is shared among us as we face another year of *service for* and *worship to* Him.

Pastoral Worker

We advertised our vacancy for a Pastoral Worker and for the first time used Social Media as our main means of reaching out. As of today, 4 January 2019, the ad reached 1097 people and was shared 3 times to others' timelines. 53.4% of interest was from women. The two highest interest groups were from women aged 18-24 (22.5%) and men aged 25-34 (16%) but there was a good age spread of interest. We have had 5 expressions of interest via Facebook and I have issued 5 application packs. In addition, I had 4 emailed expressions of interest and I issued application packs to these individuals. We have received 1 definite application which the elders are considering. The advert is also running in GLO, Tilsley and amongst Baptist Colleagues as well as with the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches in Scotland and also with Partnership. Please pray that we will be led to the right individual for our needs as a church.

Bible Studies

The framework for our studies in 2019 includes John's Gospel, the letter of 1 John and also The Spring Feasts of Israel, The Servant Songs of Isaiah and the hymn of praise that is 1 Timothy 3:16. Hosea and Acts (Part 2) and a series on 'The Love that drew Salvation's Plan' will also be taught but we have still to finalise the summer series and our Christmas series! We also decided to remain with having a special focus on evangelism on the first Sundays of the month and in January - March, these services will be arranged by Gordon Crawford, Peter Ferguson and Dave Martin and it is so good to have these brothers taking responsibility for this special effort. We also have some speakers visiting us including Peter Maiden, Sam Gordon and Jim Turrent as well as input from our gifted brothers in TCF. We have an abundance of gift available to us and it is so important to have this balance in the church. I was also struck by some advice in a recent piece by a friend called Peter Mead (see <https://biblicalpreaching.net/author/pmead/>) '*...people therefore ask for preaching with good clear application. "Just tell me what to do!" But Houston, we have a problem...When I teach application in preaching I tend to refer to the ABCs of application. Yes, there is a C-level of application ... and that relates to our conduct: what we ought to do. But underlying that is a B-level of application which runs deeper ... and that relates to our beliefs: what we ought to believe. And underlying even that is an A-level of application which runs deeper still ... and that relates to our affections: what response should be stirred within us. Application is not just about conduct. Or perhaps I should say, life-change occurs at a deeper level than just conduct. When life-change occurs, it tends to change us from the inside-out - from the depths of our hearts, through our thinking, and into our actions.*' I intend to take this to heart as I undertake whatever preaching and teaching for the TCF Family this year. In my own journey of faith, it has certainly not just been about behaviour but also about the mind and the heart. My earnest prayer is that I will demonstrate faithfully that I am a child of God by His Spirit and His Word.

Elders

The Elders meet for our traditional 'away day' on Saturday 12 January 2019. There is much to occupy our minds and discussions that day and your prayers will be very much appreciated. How is our current 5 year planning going and how do we need to prepare for the next phase? How do we address the findings of the Survey and the recommendations for action? How do we support the Home Groups and encourage greater take-up of this aspect of church life? How do we encourage the church in open worship and communion? How do we promote and encourage internships? How do we encourage and support new deacons and new elders? What about progress on the building and the state of our finances? Please pray as I take over chairing the Elders that the Lord will give us guidance as we serve Him together.

One to One

I love to meet with individuals and especially as we try to help each other develop in heart, head and hand. For one individual we have now finished our joint reading of two books and have moved on to our third. For another individual we are on our second book and for others, we are at various stages of book one! In all the changes I face, this aspect of my call is unchanged. It doesn't matter if I'm called 'pastor' or not, just please let me know if you would like to meet like this - the invite stands!

Family

Laura and I had a lovely time in Faroe with Andrew, Susanna and the boys. Sámuel is now 2 and Benjamin is 6. Susanna has changed job and is supporting a boy with very acute learning, care and development needs. Andrew is now chef in a new restaurant owned by legendary Faroese chef Leif Sørensen and this is a great opportunity for development. Benjamin heads for school in the summer and Sámuel is still trying to cope with ear issues. We also had a great time over Christmas with the McCullochs! Family is a wonderful gift from God.

Thank you for your ...

faithful support ...

and encouragement!