

Bergen Bridge

January 2019

Dear Pastor and Church Family,

Happy 2019. I always wonder where the time flies. And here it is a New Year... Again!

2018: if there were two words which we would use to describe it, it would be 'BUT GOD!'

2018 was a year of many changes where if God had not showed up, I'm not sure how we would have gotten by. At the end of 2017, we were looking at needing to move – both residence and office; Ruth was facing surgery on her mouth after suffering from a long-term infection, church attendance had become stagnant with few visitors. We were not looking forward to 2018.

Ruth's surgery took place the end of January, it was not a success, and she is learning to live with chronic pain. The Doctors continue to try to find the source of the problem, but God continues to teach lessons.

With a still struggling US economy affecting our supporting churches, low oil prices affecting the local giving, we had been going further in the hole each month trying to stay in Brechin. We had to either make moves to fit within the income we had or to return stateside for an extended period. We chose to move both the office and the residence back to the church building. In January of 2017, a family from Montana had come and worked hard to strip everything back to the bare walls in the room that had once been Jon's office. Doing so exposed that the supporting beam had been cut off to run electrical wires. The end of 2017 saw the room still torn apart and the beam still unsupported. Besides the beam there were three major problems with us moving back into the upstairs rooms. One problem was the carpet going into the flat was in beyond being in need of replacing; it was worn out the first time we had lived in that space. Second was windows badly needing to be replaced, the wind made it seem like the curtains were blowing as if by gales; the third was the council had declared the flat unliveable the way it was. Which while we knew we needed to make the move, we felt the move was impossible.

BUT GOD...

- A Brechin man found just the right carpet and before Christmas last year the carpet was installed; God led a church in the states to send a Christmas gift that paid for all of it, plus gave us more for moving expenses.
- A farmer friend found out we needed a beam and told us about a steel beam that he had been tripping over for 20 years in his barn, could we measure and see if it might fit? God knew 21 years ago exactly the length we needed.
- Another gentleman who worked with structural side of buildings before his retirement asked if he and his brother could come and put the beam in for us.
- An architect pointed out sometimes it is not what you do but what things are called. This new plan was approved about 6 months later this time compared to not being approved before.

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- A local company that does windows was willing to replace the windows on a 0.9% interest loan to pay back. With the new windows the curtains are no longer blowing in the wind.

None of these people don't attend our church, but they are all people who God has allowed our lives to touch.

Jon moved his desk to the building in March. We moved back into the rooms above the church in April. We sent a letter to churches back home asking for extra moneys to help us remodel the office space for Jon. Instead we had churches drop our support because we have been in one place too long.

It seemed impossible BUT GOD...

- Two Scottish Baptist churches gave gifts to our church that covers the office space and will get us started on much needed work on the church toilets. (If you can help with this project either financially or sending a team to do this that would be appreciated.)
- The ceiling and floor of the office have been redone, the walls will be done before January is.

2019: Waiting on more But God moments ahead.

And church? The core group of believers have grown more solid, and through their faithfulness, new families have been visiting and checking out the church. The growth has not arrived yet, but God is working in lives of people.

And Brechin? God has shown us in so many ways this year that we right where He wants us to be. Over the course of the 2018, Jon became the only minister in town. This means that Jon has been called upon for wide variety of community events outwith the church activities.

We are praying for:

1. Better health so that we can continue in the ministry God has called us to in this place.
2. For souls to be saved as we continue to preach and teach the Gospel and Scriptures.
3. For the believers we are working with to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. For financial provision so we can stay in the work of the ministry without the worry and distractions shortage of funds can cause.

Will you pray these things with us?

Your Bridge to Brechin, wishing you all the best for 2019,

Jon and Ruth Bergen