

The Future is in God's Hands

"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

People are nervous about the future these days— especially with the global economy teetering this way and that. They are not confident that the job market will improve, or that inflation can



be reined in, or that greedy power brokers can ever be held in check. The war in the Ukraine and other conflicts around the world. Political powers who seemed to gain more and more control over our lives. Not to mention, the absurdity of cultural, sexual, and moral decadence now before us daily. These are indeed, troublesome times fraught with worry and uncertainty. But Christians are promised a future that depends on something far better than economics or politics or political correctness. The Lord over the universe, Jesus Christ, promises that he is always with us!

Francois de Fenelon, a great Christian leader in seventeenth Century France, wrote in a letter to an unknown recipient, "The future is not yet yours; it may never be. Live in the present moment. Tomorrow's grace is not given to you today. The present moment is the only place where you can touch the eternal realm."

Ask yourself whether you're living in the future or trying to get there early. What does God want you to do in the present? When we worry about the future, we fail to truly trust God, to realize that he is already there. To God there is no future, no time, no constraints. He is not limited in the ways we are limited, and He can see everything we can't.

When you think about the future, refuse to picture a future without God's love, grace and care for you and the people you love. The future may not look the way you want it to, but you will not be on your own. We all fear the unknown—but is there really any such thing in a world ruled by an omniscient God who has graciously and shockingly promised he will never abandon us? God is already there, and nothing surprises Him. Nothing is unknown.

In Jesus' life, as a man living on earth, He had an awful lot He could have worried about. He understands exactly why you feel overwhelmed by your circumstances, your responsibilities, and your uncertainty about the future. Lay it all out for Him. As in any relationship, your honesty will build intimacy. Then thank God that He is in control of all that worries you, that He lives in the future and will be there when you get there, that nothing mystifies Him. Be quiet and allow the Holy Spirit to remind you of what the Bible teaches us about God's character and capabilities. Reminisce about the specific ways God has taken care of you and other people whose stories you know.

Furthermore, express your confidence in God's wisdom and love, even when life is a bruised and bloody

Continued from page 1:

mess. Acknowledge that God is not a nurse, a butler or a genie. He does not live to implement our plans or fulfil our dreams. He calls us to a life that finds meaning and joy in his plans, which produce much greater results than simply our own comfort and happiness. Reaffirm your commitment to trust him and to reject worry and ask for his help in living up to that commitment. Then accept his peace and focus on what the next moment requires of you.

Of course, living in God's peace does not mean denying reality. Faith and trust in God can give us the courage to face reality with greater boldness than we could muster on our own. As with Job, your worst fears may become reality: "What I always feared has happened to me. What I dreaded has come true" (Job 3:25). But as with him, God will give you strength and grace to declare in faith, "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last" (Job 19:25).

When the future seems threatening, imagine the worst, and make peace with it as a possibility—but at the same time, recognize that it's probably unlikely. Also recognize that your worrying can't prevent it. Then look at it in light of God's truth and promises. Even if the worst happens, he'll be with you and will grant you a kind of strength you won't know until you need it.

Take a lesson from the apostle Paul and refocus your gaze on what lies at the end of this dark and echoing tunnel, where you can see only the ground you stand on: For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So, we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

Dear Christian, the Bible—like common sense—makes clear that the future is not our domain. We have no claim on it, right to it, knowledge of it or assurance that it will ever arrive. The future belongs only to God, who rules and lives outside the limitations of time. And that same God is so good and beautiful, he has greater gifts in store for us than we can even imagine. Our unknowable future is bright because He is there already and at the same time, with us now! Therefore, rest in Him!

Dear Lord, help me not to worry about circumstances I cannot control. May I trust my future to you alone as the firm foundation of my life. Amen.

With every blessing in Him, who is our Saviour and Lord, **Benjamin**

Did you know?

From the church website you can access our:

- ⇒weekly pastoral letter
- ⇒monthly prayer diary
- ⇒daily reflections
- ⇒audio and video recordings of morning worship
- ⇒daily Bible verse and much more including:
- ⇒a link to our Facebook page
- ⇒worship resources
- ⇒links to other Christian materials.

https://

www.blairgowrieparishchurch.org.uk

Bible Study

If you'd like to join our autumn
Bible Study Group, please let
David Howat know so he can
keep you informed of dates and
times.

Photo by madeleine ragsdale on Unsplash

Pastoral Care Group

The Pastoral
Care Group
has restarted
after 2 years of
inaction due to
Covid.



There are over 30 folks to visit but only 4 volunteers at present. The Pastoral Visitor is the caring face of the church delivering support to those in the congregation who are isolated, ill or in need of help. Pastoral Visitors are a prayerful presence for those who seek support when the Minister alone is not able to serve all those in need. If you would like to help in any way, please contact Clifford or Benjamin. Anyone joining the group would need to undergo a PVG application.



The Guild

After a nice summer break, the Guild looks forward to getting back together with a variety of meetings and activities planned.

These begin with our Dedication Service on Sunday 11th September, when we will also dedicate our new lectern which was made with a legacy from Jean McFadden, one of our former members, and which has been beautifully crafted by Chris Joslin.

Following our Dedication Service, we have a Mini-outing on 26th September to Taste Perthshire at Bankfoot for a cream tea. Our autumn programme will then proceed with fortnightly meetings and will include one evening meeting per month.

Continuing the Guild Theme of 'Look Forward in Faith', our Guild Projects will focus on 'Wee Seeds, Big Trees'. The charities to be supported will be BEAT, Starchild and Home for Good.

We look forward to having interesting speakers, fun activities and of course, much fellowship.

All are welcome. Just keep an eye on the Church intimations or please contact one of our Leadership Team if you are interested.

Mary, Margaret or Colleen.



Church Diary Dates:



Sept. 11th - Guild Dedication Service

Sept. 25th - Harvest (All Age Family Service)

Oct. 2nd - Boys Brigade Enrolment Service

Nov. 6th - Communion Sunday Nov. 13th - Remembrance Sunday Nov. 27th - First Sunday of Advent

Dec. 24th - Christingle Family Service (evening)

Dec. 25th - Christmas Day—10.30am

Hall Lets

Since the Covid restrictions were lifted the halls have again been well-used. It has been good to see our regular groups back, and to welcome some new users as well.



Currently essential plasterwork is underway in the halls and toilets so everything looks a bit bare, but progress is being made and we can look forward to decorating when the plaster is dry enough. It will then be so much more attractive. It is, however, already brighter because we have new lights!

Hall rental is an important part of our regular church income and using this important asset well can support other church activities, such as mission or maintenance, so our aim for the next year is to welcome even more users in to the halls. The upper hall can provide a super large space for community activities and we can also offer smaller, more flexible spaces for meetings etc.

Please share information about the halls to any contacts you have who might be interested and for further information please contact me by email at colleenajoslin@gmail.com or by phone on 01250 873701. Thank you.

Colleen Joslin

Chairs for Sale!



20 Beautiful Elm Church Chairs for sale.

Perfect for use as they are with just a polish, or ideal for upcycling.

All proceeds to the upgrading of the church audio-visual (AV) system.

£30 each or £100 for a set of 4.

Negotiable prices for other quantities

Please contact David Howat for more information.

We Owe So Much to Those Who Have Gone Before



Recently an inventory of communion ware belonging to the church was taken. Among the items were flagons, pewter cups and baptismal bowls along with plates and stands. Many came from other churches in the town when there was a union. Quite a few of the artefacts are engraved and they are to be displayed at the Open Doors event on 17-18th September.

As such treasures are examined it does bring to mind the long road the church has travelled. When the church opened in 1902 it was known as the new St Andrew's UF Church.

If a look further back in history is taken, it can be seen that the church today is rooted in the past. In the 17th century the Stuart kings sought to interfere in the matters of the church. Charles the First introduced the Book of Common Prayer which was to be obligatory in all churches. He wanted total control and saw it as a way of unifying his domain. We might remember how feisty Jenny Geddes threw her stool at the minister in St Giles shouting, "Dost thou say mass in my lug?" In that century people took great exception to state interference in the life of the church, believing firmly that Jesus is head of the church not the king. To that end a Covenant was signed.

Thereafter the Covenanters were oppressed, driven from their homes and pulpits. Among them was Cargill who was rigorously hounded and later executed. Thomas Hogg, who ministered at Kiltearn, Evanton, was another who was imprisoned on the Bass Rock before making his escape to Holland.

Patronage became an issue for the church. In 1843 a group of ministers opted out of the established church because they objected to ministers being imposed on their congregations. This came to be known as the Disruption and split the church. This split lasted, at great cost, until 1929 when there was a reunification.

Today the church walks in the footsteps of those who have gone before. These people made mistakes as we all do; they were ordinary people like ourselves. Their faithfulness and love for God give us encouragement and we press on...

Marjorie Ferguson

Social Club

The Social Club was delighted to be able to start up again last October after the last two challenging years and for members to be able to meet up, play games and socialise again.

We are a friendly club with an emphasis on fun, and we would be pleased to welcome any new members. If anyone is interested in coming along, our badminton sessions are on Tuesday afternoons from 1.30 pm and Wednesday evenings from 7.00 pm, and carpet bowls are on Friday mornings from 10.00 am.

We restart meetings on Tuesday, 6th September.

Anne Byres: Secretary



Knitted Goods

There is always a warm welcome awaiting us at the Family

Centre of the Perth Prison, when we go with our boxes of beautiful knitted goods.

This fantastic space is part of the wide scope of caring projects run by Crossreach so if there is surplus of the goods we take they will be passed on to the Care of the Elderly Project, or the Sunflower Project, or the Postnatal Depression Project. Nothing will be wasted, and this is a practical way of spreading God's love to those less fortunate than us.

Please give me a ring for more information or leave your knitting on the long bench in the Lower Hall.

Moira Somerville: 01250 875 240

For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Proposal to move to The Unitary Constitution Model

In June 2022, the Kirk Session agreed that it was now the right time to move to the Unitary Constitution Model. We are therefore planning to bring the proposal to the congregation after Morning Worship soon, with a view to voting on the issue.

There are advantages to making the move. As well as being the preferred charity model and reducing the number of Trustees, these include the possibility of:

- Most business matters being devolved to sub-groups with people serving for a time-limited period;
- Fewer Session meetings with better informed and faster decision-making;
- Expanding the current, informal leadership group to include sub-group convenors;
- Encouraging congregation members to attend Session where an agenda item is of interest;
- Specialists/experts/community group leaders being invited to the leadership group and/or sub-group meetings to advise or inform decision-making.

Each sub-group would have:

- Standing Orders (as the Kirk Session is responsible for decisions made),
- members drawn from elders, Congregational Board members, church members/adherents and other external agencies/individuals with specific skills or knowledge,
- a small discretionary budget, if approved by the Kirk Session, to spend on agreed priorities,
- agreed dates when it would report back to the Kirk Session so there is a balance of reporting opportunities across any agreed sub-groups.

Any sub-groups being formed would include Worship (chaired by the Minister) and Finance and Fabric, but may also include, for example: Welcome & Outreach: Communication: Mission (including Youth): Social, Hospitality & Fundraising: Pastoral Care (including Safeguarding).

The Kirk Session would continue to have oversight of the whole life and service of the church with meetings open to all. Matters of discipline, admission to membership and appointment of elders are reserved to the Kirk Session.

Used Stamps

I am still collecting used stamps and the box is filling well. Owing to COVID, I

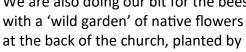


haven't had news about the project for the next two years, but please keep saving up your used stamps, which are worth thousands to support overseas projects that are overlooked by World Mission.

Please put them in my pigeonhole in the Lower Hall. Thank you! Moira Somerville.

Church Garden

This year our garden has been maintained by a dedicated few and it is looking beautiful. Heartfelt thanks to the volunteer weed killers, lawn mowers, weeders and planters. We are also doing our bit for the bees





the Messy Church. The 'team' would welcome more volunteers to help with any of the gardening tasks. Please speak to Clifford if you are able to help in any way. Thank you.



Treasure Chest Appeal for AV Fundraiser

We can use any broken gold or silver jewellery to boost our AV fund. Do you have broken chains, odd earrings or anything else that is no longer usable? If so, and if you are willing to donate, then please pop it in an envelope and put it in the plate on any Sunday, or contact David or Colleen to arrange collection. Thank you.

From the Treasurer

Proposed new Audio-Visual Installation



I appreciate that there is a range of views about the wisdom of spending around £37,000 on an Audio-Visual Installation. However, the spend would be an investment in our future, enhance our hall letting capacity

and bring us in-line with what many other congregations are already providing. A decision has been made that we should not use reserves for this.

We have three sources of reserves.

- A Growth Fund held centrally worth about £170,000. From that each year we derive dividends.
- A fabric fund again held centrally. It stands at about £35,000 but over the next year we are certain to require all of it to meet our continuing and essential repair and replacement costs including new boilers.
- Our current account with the B of S locally.
 Its balance is usually about £10,000.

We are, therefore seeking donations from members and friends **along with some fund-raising events.**There are three ways to donate.

- Firstly, money can be donated, with Gift Aid, to the Church Funds, simply as a donation with no conditions.
- Or a donation can be "DESIGNATED" for the AV project. That allows some freedom as the Church Board (or its equivalent under a Unitary Constitution) can use discretion as to how the money is spent while keeping in mind the donor's wishes. The donation can also be Gift Aided.
- Finally any donation can be "RESTRICTED".
 This means it can only be spent on the AV project unless the Treasurer gains specific permission from the donor to use the donation for another purpose. Again, the donation can be Gift Aided. Please contact me if you wish to donate in any of these ways.

Kind regards, **Dr Alasdair Shaw**

Property Update

The roof repairs were completed in February and the work started on repairing the plasterwork in the hall. Unfortunately, when the main work was started the job extended because more of the cornicing and ceiling fell down. However we now have a safe building which will be painted early in the new year.

The building passes all fire safety tests now, with emergency lighting and fire alarm systems that meet the British Safety standards.

The gas boilers are reaching the end of their lives and we have quotes to replace them. We would like to replace them with something other than a gas system, but our building doesn't allow that just now. However, new gas boilers will be much more efficient and reduce the current heat waste.



We now have a much better entrance to the hall with the

scratched brown walls and doors replaced with a



lovely blue-grey.

The lightning conductor was

repaired in February and will now save the clock tower from a lightning strike! The clock also needs a service to return the chimes to the correct time. It seems locals are missing these chimes

These major and expensive repairs have been required for some time but we are approaching a point when only minor repairs and maintenance are required for the buildings.

Meanwhile, the sound system we use in church is a very old system and failing. Replacement is essential so that we can hear and record the services on Sundays. The quote for this is £15,000, which is half of the AV costs. In addition, we need an improved WiFi system that covers all the areas of the buildings to meet the our needs and those of the hall users who add to our regular income by the rental they pay. The visual part of the AV project will allow services to be broadcast live and reduce the editing required at the moment.

Susan Whiteford.

Doors Open Days 2022



The plans for the Doors Open event over the weekend of 17th/18th September are coming together. The booklets and banners have been picked up from Perth and will be distributed throughout the town.

The Doors Open event usually takes place in September each year. It is organised by the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust and gives people the opportunity to visit buildings not always available to explore. This is the first time for many years that our church has been opened for visitors.

The Church doors will be open from 10am – 5pm on Saturday 17th September and 1 – 4pm on Sunday 18th September. Each day visitors will be able to look round the magnificent building with the barrel ceiling, view the stained glass windows depicting the life of Moses and to hear

the 1907 organ. Former minister Rev. Donald McLeod, has offered to play the violin as he often did during services and special performances in the past and a full programme of performers, on guitar and organ, will be available soon.

For the younger visitors there will be a treasure hunt and a hunt to find the knitted mice hidden around the Church and on Friday 16th the local schools have been invited to visit to look round the buildings and take part in a quiz.

The groups who use the hall will have stalls selling crafts, cakes and there will be a display of art works from the Ericht Art Club.

Throughout the weekend refreshments will be served in the hall, with coffees, soup and teas available on Saturday, and traditional afternoon teas on Sunday afternoon. The afternoon teas on Sunday must be pre-booked with booking available now by scanning the QR code here or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/blairgowrieparishchurch.

All up to date information is available on the Church website and on our Facebook page. Do come along to join the fun, and bring your friends please.



Songs of Praise



East Perthshire Churches Together held a Songs of Praise in Blairgowrie Parish Church Hall on Sunday 21st August.

The band, with Andy Lang and Kim Lafferty (Guitars), Jim Webster (Bass Guitar), Roz Arno-

Button (keyboard) and Geoff Bridge (oboe) accompanied all the hymns, most of which were from Mission Praise. Hymns included old favourites like 'Great is thy Faithfulness' and 'When peace like a river', and some new ones including 'Longing for light, we wait in the darkness'.

There was a short talk about Ukrainian refugees living in the area and there was a collection after the service for them.

The service was followed by tea and coffee and a time of fellowship.

Breaking News!

'New to You' shop

AV Fundraiser: Guild and Church

Church Halls:

21st, 22nd & 23rd October

Please save items that you would like to donate for this sale for collection nearer the time, and please come along. You never know what treasures you might find!

Volunteers are needed to help on any of the days. Please contact Colleen on 01250 873701 or email <u>colleena-</u> joslin@gmail.com

2nd Blairgowrie Boys Brigade



Hello everyone. I am glad to give a wee update on our

2022/23 session. We are hoping to have as great, if not greater session than the last one!

Our enrolment and Games night is the 26th August 2022 this year and we have a jam packed programme for the session ahead. This just a wee sample of the activities up to the October holidays:-

- Games Night "Getting to know each other" games and a selection of old favourites;
- Getting into teams and creating a team shield;
- Fire Drill with Clifford (always a highlight);
- Outdoor Adventure to Airlie with toasted marshmallows, hot chocolate, den making and outdoor games;
- Potted sports night and an evening with our minister.

Last session our leader in charge of Anchor boys had to step down. We want to wish Douglas Munro the very best of wishes for his move to Edinburgh and to thank him for the dedication and hard work he has given to the 2nd Blairgowrie Boys Brigade. We want to welcome former boy Euan Campbell joining this session as a young helper.

We continue to look for former boys, officers and anyone willing to join this great company, so if you know or hear of anyone please contact:

2blairbb@gmail.com or call **Carol Annand** on 07495526878. Hope to catch up with you all in the next newsletter!

Our Correspondent in Pakistan

Schools started back on 16th August, although it has been a little stop-start with so much rain.

The amount of rain has been very unusual and there has been bad flooding in other parts of the country. Here many houses have been damaged by the heavy rain - mud walls and flat roofs are not designed to withstand lots of rain. When it rains here, it is the equivalent of the disruption caused by snow in Scotland.

Thank you for remembering this country. The heavy rainfall simply adds to the other hardships so many are facing here. The children are happy to be back at school and we give thanks that the school continues to be a safe place for these dear ones to learn and thrive and grow. Please do continue to remember us in your pr/s.

Caroline White

To explain the last abbreviated word, it means "prayers". She is not allowed to write the word!



Mary's Meals



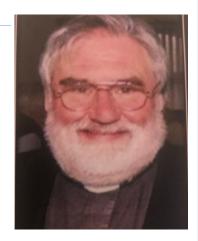
This global charity which was started in Scotland ensures that children will get fed if they attend school and it has transformed the lives of millions of children in third world countries.

During the past 15 years, a group of people in and around Blairgowrie have raised over £100,000. They concentrate on a school in Malawi, and since the children have been getting better nutrition, their academic skills have improved noticeably. This gives them a better chance of leaving school with the ability to move on into further education which enriches the country overall.

The charity also helps to feed and educate children in Zambia, South Africa, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Haiti. Margaret Yung (01250 875086) heads up the Blairgowrie group, and she is always willing to speak to groups or provide resources. The next big fundraising project is the Ceilidh in the Town Hall on the 13th January, which is a lovely way to end the Christmas festivities.

In Memory of Ian K. McLachlan

lan became a member of Blairgowrie Parish Church after he retired as the long-serving minister of Girvan South, Dailly and Barr churches. He came to live next door to us almost four years ago; he had fond memories of childhood holidays spent at Kinloch where his grandfather had been the minister. Sadly poor health prevented Ian from fully enjoying his retirement and from helping with pulpit supply which disappointed him greatly. As his health deteriorated he became less mobile and latterly was unable to leave his house. He passed away on Monday 1st August 2022 at Ninewells Hospital from heart failure and scarring of lung tissue. He was also suffering from long term cancer.



We got to know him very well during his time as our neighbour and I spent many hours in his company, finding him to be of tremendous intellect and a very kind person. Although never afraid to voice his opinion, he was also a great listener and was interested in the community in general, even to the extent of regularly writing articles for the Hub Magazine under the name Ian K.

Margaret and I attended his funeral at Girvan, along with many members of the joint congregations and the local community, plus the troop of Air Cadets who turned out to honour their former Chaplain. After the burial the ladies of the church laid on a lavish afternoon tea in the hall and there we learned so much more about him and the positive impact he made on an enormous number of people's lives. Even folk around the town, as well as the staff and fellow diners at the hotel we stayed in a few miles away at Maidens, had either known him or heard of him!

Following his retirement a seat was placed in the park next to the church with a plaque reading

'Rev. Ian K. McLachlan In recognition of 20 years dedicated pastoral service to the parishes of Girvan South, Dailly and Barr churches and to their respective communities. A well liked Minister and Friend. January 1999 to August 2019'

Ian was without doubt a unique individual and Margaret and I feel privileged that he touched our lives. Alisdair Drummond

Messy Church & Family Services



Messy Church returns for the autumn on the 18th September at 9.30am, the theme is Open Doors and Welcoming All. As usual we will be baking and making something we can share with visitors. **What if someone** famous comes through our doors – what will we do? Come and find out.

In April we celebrated the story of Easter with the children making an edible Garden

of Gethsemane and an Easter wreath.

In June the theme was Ascension with the ascension of our Lord and also the ascension of the Queen celebrating her 70 years on the throne. The children decorated their own crowns and made paper aeroplanes and we had our own fly past!!



Feeding of the 5,000 was the theme in June and donated items were passed to the Foodbank to be used by those less fortunate than ourselves. The children made boxes for a picnic which they filled with their own sandwiches and mini biscuits. During the short service at the end of the activities the children learnt about the story of Feeding the Five Thousand and in learning about how Jesus made a small amount of food feed lots of people, we learned how we can do our small part to help others.

The Craft Group: Mice and Members

The Craft Group began meeting earlier this year, in March. We meet each Wednesday from 10.00 – 12.00

in the church hall and people are welcome to drop in at any time. Some of us are very experienced at knitting, crocheting, sewing, embroidering and some of us are complete novices - but whatever level we are at, we all enjoy the company, the chat, the support and the refreshments. It is lovely to see new friendships being forged and skills being readily shared. One of our members says that it is her favourite day of the week!

We celebrated the Platinum Jubilee with tea and cakes, wearing our decorated crowns, so not much craft was done that day. We have been busy knitting mice for the mouse hunt that will take place in the church on the 17th and 18th September at the Doors Open event.



We appreciate that Benjamin, our minister, has taken the time to pop in on occasion to share fellowship with us. The support and encouragement of the Kirk Session is also warmly welcomed.

We had a break over July and August and are looking forward to restarting our meetings on 7th September. We have around 18 members but would be delighted if others want to join us, as all are very welcome. If you don't do any craft work, just come along and be inspired.

For further information, you can contact **Elinor on 01250 870618**.

Growing Up in the Church

I was privileged to be invited to contribute to the video being made about church life over the past few decades for the Doors Open event being held on 17th-18th September in the church. **Do come along and hear my experiences of growing up in the church and growing up in Blairgowrie.**

I was born in the 1950s and brought up in Blairgowrie until I left for university and a teaching career in 1970, returning in 2019 with my wife and son just prior to COVID appearing.

Aspects of church life no longer with us from the '60s still stick in my mind:

The silence in the church prior to the minister arriving

The hymn boards

The conservative dress of all - ladies wore hats

The evening services

Sunday school picnics - FOUR buses

The payment for using church pews

Old fashioned earphones stored in the pews—and still there in some pews.



Most of the characteristics and traits of Church and Sunday life as I knew it have gone and are unlikely to re-appear. They were part of a culture which influenced the lives of a much larger proportion of young adults than is the case in the 2020s. I have no doubt myself that these characteristics have positively influenced me in the faith and life I try to lead today.

Charlie Smith