

Teaching and preaching Christ to a congregation

Sue McGregor's Background & Context

- Minister at Helensburgh Parish Church of Scotland (inducted February 2025)
- Previously at Greyfriars, moved from academic registrar background to parish ministry
- Large, lively congregation with strong children's ministry
- 14 baptisms conducted February-December (unusual volume for Church of Scotland)
- Congregation showing signs of "quiet revival" - new visitors and returning members after years away

Core Theological Framework for Preaching

- **Avoiding Moralism**
 - Preach Christ as representative/substitute, not just moral example
 - Start with what Christ has done, not what congregation must do
 - Gospel should lift burdens, not add to them
 - Obedience becomes joyful participation, not grim duty
- **Participatory Community vs Individualism**
 - Salvation is into community, not isolated belief
 - Worship is what Christ does in/for us, not what we do
 - Eucharist as participation in Christ's ongoing life
 - Resist "spiritual not religious" individualism
- **Trinitarian Preaching Vision**
 - Spirit transforms human words into living words
 - Preaching as participation in Christ's ministry, not performance
 - Congregation listens as people ready to hear living word
 - Faith comes through hearing (Romans 10:17)

Key Resources & Practical Applications

- **Recommended Reading**
 - "Worship Community & the Triune God of Grace" by J.D. Torrance
 - "Life Together" by Bonhoeffer (despite dated language)
- **Congregation Engagement Themes**
 - Mustard seed faith, lament and thankfulness
 - "Invitational ministry" - everyone part of inviting others
 - All as "seekers and explorers" journeying deeper into Christ
- **Structural Change Context**
 - Church formed from union of 3 congregations (most recent 10 years ago)
 - Focus on "what is Christ calling us to be now?" vs looking backward

- One former building now Buddhist Meditation Centre