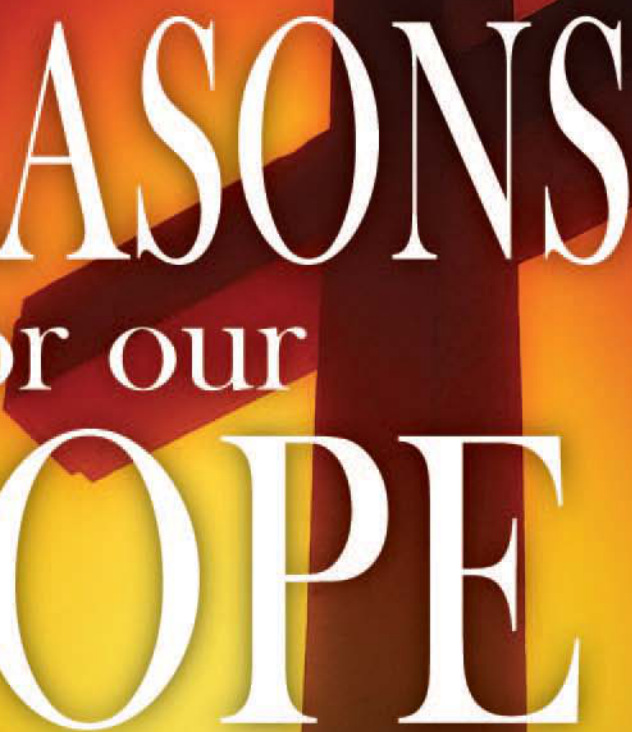


Biggar Kirk
Here for You

News & Views
Easter 2016



REASONS for our HOPE

1 Peter 3:15-16

From the Minister

Reasons for our Hope

In modern day Britain we live in a multicultural, multi-faith society. Because of technology and the ever more fluid movement of people, goods and ideas our world is much more closely connected than it has ever been. This in many ways is something to be celebrated.

- New spices make life more flavourful!
- Different languages bring new ways of looking at the world.
- New perspectives lead to new solutions to problems.

A world of different faiths and different worldviews, however, doesn't mean our historic Christian faith is no longer relevant or true. What it does mean is that now more than ever Christian people need to know what they believe and why. We need to be able to articulate our beliefs in an understandable way with gentleness and respect for what others believe. As the pace of globalisation quickens we will be called on more and more to, in the words of St. Peter, "give a reason for the hope that is in



us". (1 Peter 3:15-16) It is my hope that we in Biggar Kirk will be prepared to do just that.

Throughout Lent (February 10 – March 24) this year in Biggar Kirk we are looking at some of the tough questions Christians face. Questions like:

- Hasn't science done away with God?
- Why does an all-powerful, loving God permit suffering to happen?
- Isn't religion the reason we have conflict and wars in the world?
- Don't all religions really teach the same thing?

To help us with the first question we had the opportunity of welcoming Professor Tom McLeish from Durham University who is both a faithful Christian and a top-notch physicist. Tom visited Biggar High School and spoke with the students during

(Continued on page 2)

the day on the 3rd of March and then at a public meeting in the evening in the Corn Exchange. It was an important day for young people and adults to realise that science does not exclude Christian faith but the two are great partners in helping us to discover the nature of reality.

Every Sunday throughout Lent we will discuss some of these tough questions in the morning

service. Please come along and let's learn together how we might say with the Apostle Paul,

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16-17

Mike Fucella



Church is not something you go to

It's a family you belong to



I remember an incident that happened many years ago when we lived in Sivilai – a small village on the Thai-Laos border. I had been visiting a woman, Mrs Ali, who was in hospital having been involved in a car accident. She was paralyzed and could not

do much for herself. The young nurses were not particularly busy but, when she asked for help with anything, one particular nurse was very brusque with her to the point of being rude. I observed it for a few days and in the end felt I had to say something, but I didn't want to come in too heavy.

In the end God opened the door as we were both standing at the end of my friend's bed. I quietly asked the nurse where she was from and if her mum was still alive. She told me, and said yes. I was then able to point out that Mrs Ali was someone's mum. I

(Continued on page 3)

gently suggested that when she was feeling annoyed she imagined her own Mum in the bed, so that she would be able to be as patient and loving with Mrs Ali as she would want someone to be with her own mum. It was a risk and for a moment I thought she was going to be angry – but God softened her heart – and with tears in her eyes she said sorry. Her attitude changed.

We, the church, are the family of God. We say it and we sing it. When we look around on a Sunday we don't just see a mixed up hotchpotch of people. We see our brothers and sisters in Christ. We see our grannies and grandads, nieces and nephews. We, as the body of Christ, have our birth family but we are also part of God's family. We have a place. We belong.

Recently I seem to have been particularly struck by some of the things this means in practice. Being family is about being loyal to one another, looking out for one another, celebrating with one another and crying with one another. It means being willing to be involved in each other's lives with the openness, compassion and vulnerability that we see in Jesus. It means being there for each other when life is difficult, whether practically or emotionally. And it

means being willing to listen.

It was lovely at the last Messy Church to see a volunteer who is in her nineties helping a small child. Everyone is welcome in the family of God whatever your age. And it is as we spend time with those who are older or younger than us that we bless each other and God blesses.

I have been very aware of how well the pastoral team includes those they visit in the Biggar church family – even if the folk they visit can't get to church very often. Popping in with the latest intimations or News and Views, sitting with a coffee and sharing church news or delivering a CD of the service are all ways that Biggar members are included in the family. We can 'be family' by doing very practical things to help people – shopping or laundry, driving or cooking. And we can be family by praying for each other and listening to God for each other. Something we can all do whatever our age.

I thank God for the family of Biggar Church. I pray that as we actively live out being family God will use us to draw more and more people into his family!

Jane Fucella

(Team Leader – Pastoral Team)

Pastoral Care

If you would like to be visited by a member of the pastoral care team please call Jane Fucella on 229291. If you would like to receive CDs of church services please contact the church office or your elder.

Flower Guild

Members of the Flower Guild have been greatly saddened by the death of Jean Shearer, a member for many years, she will be missed by everyone. We continue our ministry of putting flowers on the font and delivering them to anyone in need of comfort from our church family each week. I know how much recipients appreciate this kind gesture by

the number of letters and phone calls I receive. The Calendar for 2016 is in the vestibule for anyone wishing to provide flowers on a particular day. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all who have supported this work over the years.



Ruth Bryden (Coordinator)

Gift Aid

A big thanks to everyone who supports Biggar Kirk through Gift Aid contributions.

After recent personal tax allowance changes, it is time to check that you still pay as much or more tax than the amount you claim on all your donations in a tax year. Please inform me of any change in circumstances.

If you are **NOT** paying by Gift Aid, are you eligible? If so, could I ask you to consider doing so, especially if you give regularly? Your donation will never be disclosed. Gift aid can now also be claimed on open plate collections, so even if you give by Direct Debit and don't like missing the collection plate on a Sunday,

(Continued on page 5)

anything you put in will help reach our extra targets.

This system is vital to the work of the Church as it recovers from the taxman, an extra £250 in every £1000 claimed. There are also envelopes available

from the Church, church office or myself, if anyone wants to make a one-off payment/ gift.

If you would like any further information, please contact:

Anna Boyd

Thank You Volunteers

Contributions to News and Views are certainly on the increase which is a real encouragement! Thank you to everyone who has made this issue possible and helped in a variety of ways from writing articles, typesetting, printing, distributing, collating, proof reading etc! Biggar Kirk has a newly formed Communications Team and as a group we are on a learning curve and working on a variety of initiatives including updating the Church Website. We will of course keep you in touch with plans in the days ahead.

Volunteers in Church and the Gillespie Centre are imperative to the well-being of the community we live in. Volunteering is about helping others and giving a little back and it is amazing the difference you can make by becoming

involved. Please chat to Rev Mike Fucella to share your gifts and skills in Biggar Kirk and Sharon Forster, Manager at the Gillespie Centre, if you would like to volunteer at the Gillespie Centre. You can make a difference!

A special thanks to Mike Chad who has served as Session Clerk for many years at Biggar Kirk and to Cameron Sutherland for being willing to follow in Mike's footsteps in this role.

The next issue of News and Views will be due for distribution in mid-June so contributions will be needed by 29th May 2016. God Bless,

Caz Alcorn

(Editor)

Thailand

At the start of November, I had the great privilege of spending nine days away from Biggar; two days on airplanes and seven days in Thailand, travelling with my friend from Edinburgh, Alison Proud, and Jane Fucella. We had a wonderful trip seeing amazing places, meeting inspirational people and knowing God's blessing in a far away place and unfamiliar culture. The trip was split between time in Bangkok and time in Sangklaburi, a small town near the Burma border.

We shared time and stories with many people over the week including overseas missionaries, refugees, orphans, church workers, students, health workers, entrepreneurs and families. We did not have to spend long in Thailand before we were meeting people whose lives were affected by human trafficking, persecution, displacement, child abuse, disease, prostitution, drug abuse, imprisonment and poverty.

Before I left Biggar, I hosted a coffee morning in my home and people came, brought cakes and gave very generously allowing us to take a financial gift out to the Sangklaburi Community AIDS

project. I thought that I would share with you a story of one family we met who are supported by this project.

We met Thezer at the house of the project worker, where about 30 of the patients had come that day to a review clinic and to collect their medication. She had travelled with her husband and one month old baby, from their small one room home in the Burmese jungle, to the Thai border, where they had been met and driven the rest of the way in a truck provided by the project. The clinic provided time for support, check ups, sharing and of course eating together. Both Thezer and her husband are HIV positive, the baby is the youngest of five children.

The eldest child is 12 years old and her role is to look after the baby whilst mum works at the market to provide for the family. The project supported the two younger boys to start school, providing uniforms etc. However after one month the boys dropped out of school as they were needed at home to support their Dad, whose health was very poor due to AIDS and TB. This family face many tough decisions

in their lives, with so many issues we take for granted such as: freedom, justice, equality, housing, food, childcare, education, sanitation and healthcare. However through the project's support, all four children are HIV negative and the baby is provided with formula to give her the best chance possible of also not contracting the virus. The parents have their TB and AIDS medication provided which they would otherwise be unlikely to obtain. They also have access to health education, advice and moral support. The project is a

great example of the love of Christ being shown through lives of service and sacrifice to some very poor and vulnerable communities.

Nicola Campbell

Matt 25:45 (MSG) *"He will answer them, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me—you failed to do it to me.'"*



The Mon Bridge in Sangklaburi— 1 Km long constructed all of timber

For details of any Church activities please contact the Church Office or Rev Mike Fucella. We are always delighted to welcome new folk to any of our events.

Easter Services

Maundy Thursday	7pm Biggar Kirk
24th March	
Good Friday	7pm Black Mount
25th March	
Easter Sunday	Sunrise Service
27th March	Centre at 6:30am
	All-age Communion

Biggar Kirk ASM

Sunday 13th March
11.15am

Quarterly Communion

11.15am
Sunday 24th April
Sunday 26th June

Sunday Afternoon

Sunday 8th May 2pm

Monthly All Age Evening Worship

Food and Fellowship 5pm at the Manse

Sunday 6th March
Sunday 17th April
Sunday 15th May
Sunday 12th June

Taizé Evening Worship

24th April 7:30pm



Messy Church

19th March Black Mount, Dolphinton 4-6pm
23rd April Biggar 11am-1pm
21st May at Black Mount, Dolphinton 4-6pm

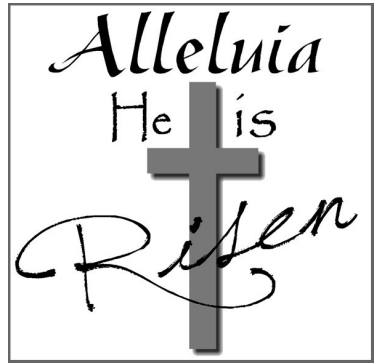
APPENING

Services

Kirk

bunt Church

ice meet in front of the Gillespie
0am or on the Knock at 7am
nunion 11:15am Biggar Kirk



Gala Day Service

Sunday 5th June
11.15am

on Service

Wee Worship

For pre-school children, the first
Wednesday of every month in term
time. 11.45am to 12.45pm please
bring your lunch.

en's Breakfast

turday 18th June 9am

Prayer Groups

Sunday Gillespie Centre: 10.15am
Thursday 3 South Back Road Biggar 9am.

Bible Study

Groups meet on Monday morning, Wednesday and Thursday
evenings and Friday morning. Details from Church office.

Busy Mums

Mum's with young children meet together for
coffee, support and Bible study on Monday
mornings. Details from Church Office.

Gillespie Centre

An Extract from the Past



The Gillespie Centre is owned by Biggar Kirk as a Community Centre. It provides Biggar and surrounding rural area with a focus for a variety of activities and events. It is housed in the former Gillespie Church Building, which has its own distinguished history. The Centre is now managed by the Gillespie Centre Association.

The Gillespie Church had its origins in the old Relief Kirk in Biggar that was built in 1783 on a site slightly west of the current building, which replaced it in 1879. The new building became known as the Gillespie Church, after the Rev Thomas Gillespie [1708-1777], who founded the Relief Synod in 1752. In 1847 the Relief Synod joined the United Associate Synod to become the United Presbyterian Church, before returning to the fold of the Church of Scotland in 1929; such are the complexities of Scottish Church History! The Gillespie Church was used for worship until 1946, when the congregation united with Moat Park Church, and the building was used as Halls.

In 1976 the combined congregation of Gillespie Moat Park united with the Parish Church of St Mary's to form the congregation of Biggar Kirk. A decision had to be made as to what to do with the Gillespie building. After a great many meetings and much heart searching the Kirk Session gave the go ahead for a project to use the building as a community centre and an appeal was launched.

In 1979 major reconstruction work began, and in 1982 the building re-opened as the Gillespie Centre. Condensing all this into one sentence makes it sound simple, but this was the culmination of years of hard work. Apart from the major construction work carried out, there was the work done by the congregation themselves; men and women worked tirelessly, not only fund raising, but cleaning, scrubbing, painting and decorating and doing a variety of other jobs that made it possible for the Centre to open it's doors to the community.

(Continued on page 11)

Since it's opening the Gillespie Centre has been very much at the heart of life in Biggar, providing facilities for a variety of local organizations, catering for both young and not so young, to meet.

The Coffee Shop continues to provide a range of delicious home cooked food and endless cups of coffee and tea. Countless children have spent a great deal of their early years in the Centre graduating from Mothers and Toddlers to Playgroup and on up through Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Sunday Club, coming in from school at lunch time, and enjoying special events held there.

Many friendships have been cemented in the Centre amongst the mums as well as the children. Leisure classes, activity classes, and all manner of groups and clubs have their meetings in the Centre during the week and most Saturday mornings see fundraising coffee mornings run by local Charities, raising thousands of pounds over the years.

The volunteer team are essential to the existence of this Community Project. New people to the area find that volunteering is a great way for them to meet people and make new friends.



Some of the Gillespie volunteers at their annual lunch

St. Mary's Hall Refurbishment

Project Update

The works are progressing well. The stonework to the new entrance door is complete and the ramp is now being formed, with the archaeologist watching just in case anything interesting appears! Most of the external repairs are complete to the roofing, stonework and gutters, with the drainage progressing.

The internal partitions and plumbing are being worked on and we are in the process of getting the new kitchen designed and choosing the colours for the new toilet fittings. The new windows are measured up and will be in manufacture soon, so we will see those appearing in the coming weeks.

We have met with a number of the hall users and will be looking at the amount of storage we will need

and how we will manage the refurbished hall. The works will progress quickly from now on until our anticipated completion mid-April. It is an exciting time as we see the Hall take shape.

It will soon be time to look at the internal fittings for the storage, signage notice boards etc. There is an opportunity for the congregation to donate towards any specific item for the finishing touches and I would be happy to have a discussion with individuals who might consider giving towards these needs.

We ask for your prayers that the rest of the works go smoothly and within budget.

Adrian Shilliday
(Property Team
Leader)



Cross on the gable end of St. Mary's Hall

Mission

As Christians, we have something of unique and immeasurable value to share with the rest of the world. The angels' song to the shepherds, proclaiming Jesus' birth, makes clear that this good news is for **ALL** people.

This issue of News and Views contains articles by two of our fellowship who have recently travelled to see how God's love is being shared in Thailand and Pakistan and it is great to feel connected with Christ's worldwide family.

Perhaps not many of us will be called to spread God's word in distant lands but we should thank God for those who answer such a call and we can all still play a vital role in this work. None of this work can go ahead unless it is supported by a network of people who are praying and giving. The internet is a wonderful resource to find out about the work and prayer requests of the many missionary societies. Christian conferences like the Keswick Convention can also provide the chance to hear about their work. Your outreach team in Biggar Kirk also hopes to flag up some opportunities for praying and giving with a regular slot in the Sunday morning services. Whilst it is fine to give to different people and projects as their

needs are brought to your attention, it can be an enriching experience to form a long term relationship with a particular missionary or project, sharing in their joys and frustrations and being a true partner in their ministry. If you already do this, the outreach team would love to know so we can encourage others to do likewise. We'd also love to hear from anyone who feels they may be being called to overseas mission so we can do all we can to support you.

It is no less important for us to take the good news of God's grace to those around us where we live and work. It's easy to fall for the illusion of self sufficiency that people, especially in the West, project. However, none of us is complete without God and it can be impossible, to predict when someone may be prompted to question the foundation on which their life is built. Peter, in his first letter, tells us to always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks the reason for our hope. It is my prayer that we would all be willing and able to do this "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3 : 15).

David Campbell

(Outreach Team Leader)

Pakistan

Let me begin a few hours back...

I worked the day shift today, and under the incredible tutelage of a lovely midwife called Ann, I delivered two and half babies! I say a half because the third one got a bit complicated, so someone else stepped in before the wee one went flying! All were happy and healthy and my shoes were the only victims of blood-soaking... it's ok though because I've gotten pretty good at washing them in the sink.

The day continued to be as busy but eventually after the 5pm ward round I went back to my room, got changed into some glad rags and headed over to the Junior Hostel. A group of probation year midwifery students and the fabulous hostel matron were hosting a biriyani party. Biriyani (the proper, proper stuff) is indescribable...You just have to come to Pakistan and taste it for yourself.

So there we were, all dressed up, having a giggle, with threats of a dance off taking place. A lovely, relaxed evening...

Why am I such a glutton for punishment?! I thought, rather stupidly, that I might just pop over to the labour ward for the 9pm round, just to see how a



couple of ladies I knew from earlier were getting on. Excusing myself for no more than half an hour I potted off (IN MY BEST OUTFIT) across the compound to the hospital.

The scene that met me was utter chaos. Controlled and well-in-hand, but still...eight ladies, all well progressed and nearing delivery, lined up like a string of balloons all ready to pop. My mentor took one look at me, raised her eyebrows and suggested I might want to stick around but first perhaps, best if I popped my uniform back on.

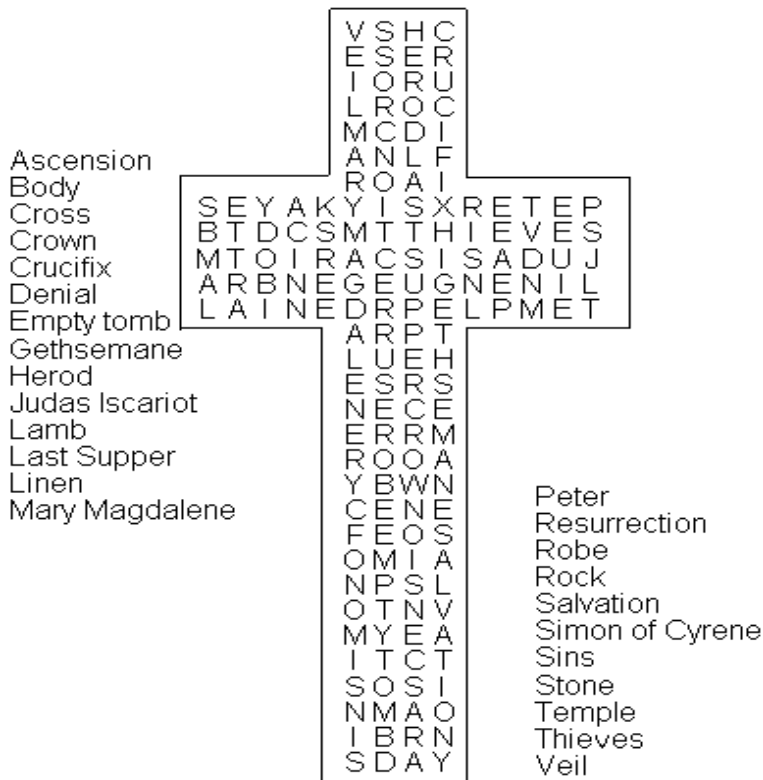
Not a moment too soon! The first to go was Sami who had baby number six, a wee girl. And like dominos it continued, within minutes, Sady across the room had a wee boy. About half an hour later Uz in the next bed along had a wee boy and not to be outdone, Han, across the room again, had a wee girl. Vomit, blood, baby pee, you name it, it's probably on my uniform right now. In the time that this was going on, three

more labouring women turned up at the door and poor Sami (the first to pop) began to haemorrhage. The team are awe-inspiring and incredible. In the midst of all this craziness, they push on and manage to deliver fantastic care. Even just the act of making sure you're giving the right baby back to the right mother takes a massive amount of diligence and co-ordination, especially when you only have

one baby bench for cord cutting or resuscitation! I've been sent back to sleep for a while, with the promise that I'll be woken up if anything unusual happens. Up again at 6.30am to do it all again! I think I might go see if there's a piece of toast lying around anywhere...

Rachel Fucella spent 6 weeks at Women's Christian Hospital, Pakistan last summer.

Easter Word Search



Messy Church ...

is great fun for people of any age. It is geared towards kids, but to be honest, I think the grown-ups love it too. We offer a selection of activities, organised around the hall. At Black Mount Church Hall on 16th January, we were thinking about Daniel and the Lion's Den. Outside the weather was snowy, but inside it was warm and welcoming.

One table had goodies to decorate cupcakes as lions. The kids loved this, creating all manner of 'interpretations' of lion faces. The finished cakes looked gorgeous, and tasted good too! Another table had potato and other vegetable printing. I'm not sure if this succeeded due to Daniel insisting he ate his own healthy diet rather than the rich food offered to him, but it provided an opportunity for messiness, paint and beautiful patterns. We had Den building in one corner, especially popular with the boys, using cushions and blankets

arranged around the stacked chairs, so it was more of a comfortable, luxurious den than a Lion's Den.... Other crafts engaged big sisters and teenage cousins, little pre-schoolers and accompanying adults of all ages.

Afterwards, we gathered together for story and prayer time. Then a feast of soup, salad, ham, wraps, biscuits, juice and much more was produced by the team in the kitchen.



Sharing a meal with new friends was a great way to tie off the evening. We had a great time, helping out, joining in, sharing food, and learning about God together. Why not come along and join us next time?

Samantha McShane

Please Contact us:

If you would like to get married in Biggar Kirk, become a member or arrange for a baptism or thanksgiving please contact Rev Mike Fucella.

If you are interested in joining in any of the activities happening in the church or would like to book an event or activity in St Mary's Hall please contact the Church Administrator either in the office or by phone or email.

We are always happy to serve you

Minister:

Rev. Mike Fucella

Tel: 01899 229291

Email: mike@fishwrapper.net

Administrator:

Mrs Elaine Fyfe

Tel: 07532 266505

Email: biggarkirk09@gmail.com

Our office is located on the ground floor of the Gillespie Centre and is open on Wednesday 0900 - 1600, Thursday and Friday 0900 - 1200.

Please join our Facebook Group **Biggar Kirk**

Website: www.biggarkirk.btck.co.uk