

BIGGAR KIRK OFFICE BEARERS

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Biggar Kirk



Advent



A Letter from our Minister

John Flavel, the seventeenth century English divine, said that "some providences, like Hebrew letters, must be read backwards."

The reference is to the fact that Hebrew script, from our western cultural perspective, is back to front. The writing is from right to left instead of from left to right. Similarly, the first page of a book in Hebrew is what we would regard as the last page. Flavel's point is that it is only from hindsight that we can see the meaning and purpose of much that happens. This way of looking at things is rooted in a Christian world view, and is summed up in the doctrine of divine providence.

There are, of course, secular versions of the doctrine which are but faint echoes of the apostle Paul's robust affirmation that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him." (Romans 8.28) When faced by disappointment, set-back, or difficulty, many find comfort in the hope that everything will come right in the end. "Things have a funny way of working out," they say. So the Christian belief in a God who is sovereign, albeit in ways we may not understand, is replaced by the upbeat expectation that favourable coincidences or just good luck will prevail in the end.

The problem, as we all know, is that the difficulties of life often do not resolve themselves, at least not to our immediate satisfaction. They may even call in question God's goodness. What then? What if what happens to us seems to fly in the face of God's purposes, or to contradict his promises? It is at this point that a firm faith in the providence of God enables the believer to affirm that God is at work for good in all circumstances. As William Cowper, the hymn writer, put it: "Happy is the man who sees a God employed in all the good and ill that chequers life."

These thoughts are triggered by the perplexity which some of you have expressed as you have shared with me the adverse circumstances which you face – difficult situations at home, stressful relationships at work, and the setbacks, hurts, and losses which we all find hard to bear. The Christian faith does not provide immunity from trouble; nor does God promise to remove our afflictions. He does something better; he presses them into service. They become the means by which we grow in faith, mature in character, and through perseverance develop staying power as we walk the Christian way. That is why James in his letter can say: “Consider it pure joy when you face trials of many kinds.” (1.2)

But what is true of us as persons is also true of the life we share in the church. There too we face many frustrations, irritations, and setbacks, not to mention embarrassments of our own making. It would all be very dispiriting were it not for the fact that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him.”

Apply that to our own congregation and to the almost four years we have been without a full-time minister. After all the difficulties which have prevented us from progressing the vacancy, we are now hopeful that permission to call will be granted in December. (See *Vacancy Update below*) I hope that when in due course we look back on the years we have been without a full-time minister, we shall be able to say that, despite the problems we have faced and the delays we have suffered, the core of the congregation is in better heart now than it was, and all because in everything that has happened, God has been at work for our good.

Yours encouraged,
David Easton
Locum and Interim Moderator.

Vacancy Update

At a meeting of the congregation on 21st October, the ‘*Basis of Linking*’ between Biggar and Black Mount, was unanimously approved. The vote at Black Mount was also unanimous. The concurrence of the Ministries Council of the Church of Scotland will be sought at a meeting of the Council on 11th December, and if granted will be ratified by the Presbytery at a meeting to be held later that day. The way will then be open for us to elect a Nominating Committee, consisting of representatives of both congregations at a date to be intimated early in 2013.

Congregational Register

Deaths

Our congregation have had a number of bereavements during the months of August to November and we would ask that you remember the families and friends of:

August
Myra Pearson
September
Nan Brownlie
November
Marjorie Dempster

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”
[John 11 : 25]

Sacrament of Baptism

August
Milly Greene
Madison Greene
September
Zara Dunn
Cameron Miller

October
Benjamin Roberts
Catherine Roberts
November
Quinlan Lawson
Archie Boyd
Esme Sutcliffe

‘The Lord Bless You and Keep You’

Weddings

September
Nicola Bishop to Stuart Gordon
Kelly Evans to Laurie Barron
Joanne Carrick to John Kerr
October
Rebecca Clark to Michael Walsh
November
Jennifer Glen to Stuart Moffat

“Love is patient, love is kind... It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”
1 Corinthians 13 : 4 and 7 (NIV)

BIGGAR KIRK



Office Bearer Resignations:

Mr Pete Brotherstone,
Treasurer

Office Bearer

New Appointments:

Mrs Elizabeth Cochrane, Treasurer
Windyknowe, Elsrickle, ML12 6QZ
Tel: 01899 810 262
E-mail:
elizabeth.cochrane3@btinternet.com



Biggar Kirk Door and Offering Duties

December Group 'D'

Lorna MacDougall
Janette Rae
Sadie Cameron
Peter Lyon
Rhian Sharma
Joan Urquhart

January Group 'E'

Jean Shearer
Kenneth Watson
David Campbell
Moira Galbraith
Tom Matthews
Sheena Rae

February Group 'A'

Nanette Stott
Alex Clarkson
Bill Gourlay
Elizabeth McDonald
Lynn Beaton
Margaret Weir



January

6th	11am	Morning Worship
	7pm	Evening Service
13th	11am	Morning Worship
20th	11am	Morning Worship
27th	11am	Quarterly Communion

February

3rd	11am	Morning Worship
	7pm	Evening Service
10th	11am	Morning Worship
17th	11am	Morning Worship
24th	9.30am	Holy Communion
	11am	Morning Worship

Biggar Guild



The new season has started well with our numbers remaining steady, but we would be delighted to welcome anyone, male or female to join us even if only for one or two of our meetings.

In preparation for the new season, our Dedication Service was held in the Church on 30th September and this was followed by our first meeting the following evening. This was led by our Deacon, Ann Lyall, who spoke on our theme for this year: 'A Faith To Proclaim'.

To date, some of our members have attended Guild meetings in Lanark, Broughton, Coalburn and Blackmount during which they enjoyed sharing their faith and fellowship.

We look forward to celebrating our 125th anniversary at our Guest Evening on 17th November when we will welcome Mr Bill Love, Locum of Culter, Blackmount, Libberton & Quothquan who will join us in an evening of praise and worship.

Ruth Bryden, President

Biggar Kirk Annual Quiz Night: Friday 1st February 7:30pm, St. Mary's Hall



Once again you are invited to put forward a team (or teams!) of four to compete for the Biggar Kirk Quaich at the Biggar Kirk Annual Quiz Night which will be held on Friday 1st February, 2012 at 7.30pm in St. Mary's Hall, Biggar.

There will be a charge of £5.00 per head, with refreshments and light supper provided. Anyone interested in an evening of fun and fellowship should contact Bill Gourlay on 220493 or by e-mailing: williamggourlay@aol.com to obtain an entry form.

Please Note: Due to the size of the hall we are limited to 30 teams, so completed entry forms should be returned as soon as possible, but not any later than Monday 14th January, 2013. Thank You!

Children's Quiz Answers

'Christingle'
The orange represents the world. The red ribbon represents the blood and love of Jesus that was shed to save mankind. The four cocktail sticks represent the four corners of the world and the fruit and sweets, the four seasons. The candle at the centre of the orange represents Jesus as the light of the world.



Church of Scotland National Youth Assembly 10th—13th August, 2012

After my time at the Church of Scotland General Assembly earlier this year, I decided that I would like to put my name forward to become a youth representative at this year's National Youth Assembly. Amazingly, I was accepted and with financial

help from our Kirk Session I found myself setting off on Friday 10th August to meet up with a group of young people from Forth who were travelling to attend the National Youth Assembly being held at the West Park Conference Centre, Dundee from the 10th to the 13th August. The NYA is a Church of Scotland event which is held every year and is attended by around 100 young people aged between 16 - 25 years who have a Church connection.

During this year's NYA, we held 3 debates on the topics of: Finance (tax evasion/avoidance), HIV/Aids, and domestic abuse. It had been decided earlier by this year's Committee that to enable everyone to have a voice, delegates would be split into smaller age defined groups at the beginning of each day to discuss the 'topic for the day'. Every group had to write down their ideas and views about the topic and then these would be collated and contribute towards a collective report that would be finalised at the end of the debate. Later in the afternoon, each group would once again join together and discuss the list of 'best ideas and views that the NYA had to offer on the topic' which had emerged from the earlier debate. Our remit was to discuss each idea/view on the list, decide which ones our members would like to add or take away and whether we agreed or disagreed with them. After a break, everyone would once again join together in the hall and deliberate as a whole assembly the overall report for that particular issue. The outcome from each of the three debates discussed over the weekend have been written into individual reports and will be presented to the 2013 General Assembly—thereby fulfilling the promises and intentions of the 19 youth representatives elected by those attending the NYA assembly.

The theme for the weekend was: 'Breaking Barriers' and not being content just to debate our 3 topics during the day, each evening we joined together to have late night discussions on various topics, relating them to our theme of 'breaking down barriers', e.g. society or gender. We also joined in multiple worship during these sessions with songs and prayers which were directed towards the theme. Overall, aside from the hard debating each day, it was great to meet up with some old friends and to have the opportunity to make some new ones! I would just like to say 'thank you' not only for giving me the opportunity to go to this year's NYA but also for providing the finance to help me get there.

Ailsa Fyfe

Advent Services at Biggar Kirk

2nd December

11:00am Morning Worship
including Admission of New Members

9th December

11:00am Morning Worship
2:00pm Afternoon Service
7:00pm Evening Service

16th December

11:00am Sunday Club 'Nativity' Service

Wednesday 19th December

7:30pm 'Reflections' at Christmas

23rd December

11:00am Service of Lessons and Carols

Monday 24th December

6.30pm Christingle Service
11.30pm Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday 25th December

10:00am 'All Age' Christmas Day Service

30th December

11:00am Holy Communion



Church & Society Council

Poverty & Homelessness Action Week

This year's Action Week challenges the blame culture against people who are poor and homeless. Homelessness Sunday is 27th January 2013. Poverty Action Sunday is 3rd February 2013. On one of these days, we invite church members and their friends to share a cup of tea or coffee and make a small donation (we suggest £1 per cup) to the work of Scottish Churches Housing Action. Fairtrade preferred! All funds raised will be used to support grass-roots projects and national campaigns, challenging the demonisation of people experiencing poverty and homelessness.



Moderator's Medal

The Moderator's Medal is a competition to encourage young people to think about spirituality, faith and belief. The theme for the 2013 Moderator's Medal is based around the 200th Anniversary of the birth of the famous Scottish missionary, explorer and anti-slavery campaigner, David Livingstone. Using art, video, poetry, dance/drama or written essay, entrants should illustrate how they have been personally inspired by a Christian who has put their beliefs into action and brought a positive change to others and whose story has made them think or act in new ways. A Moderator's Medal will be awarded to the winner from 3 groups:

- 10 – 13 years
- 14 – 15 years
- 16 – 18 years

The deadline for entries is 15th March 2013 and the prizes will be awarded by the Moderator of the General Assembly in May 2013.

Stevenson Prize for Schools

This is a competition encouraging excellence within the field of Religious Observance. Entries may be submitted in any medium including electronic forms.

Last year entries included:

- Folders of work describing school assemblies and activities relating to RO
- DVDs showing pupils conducting RO
- PowerPoint presentations

The competition is for work by pupils and a prize will be awarded to one Primary, one Secondary and one Special Needs school. The deadline for entries is end of March 2013. Details are available from: Agnes Mullen in the Church and Society Council office: 0131 240 2275.

Religious Observance University Course

Coming early next year: RO Course for school staff and chaplains. This course on the design and delivery of Religious Observance in schools is aimed at school staff and chaplains. It is a Masters level module, (worth 20 Masters credits) and delivered by a partnership of Glasgow University, Scripture Union Scotland and the Church of Scotland. Dates/booking information will be available soon. Call Ewan Aitken on: 0131 240 2275 or email: eaiken@cofscotland.org.uk

A View from the Chancel



Our church has had its fair share of challenges over the last few years.

Financially, we are fortunate that, until recently, we have been able to pay our way. By this, I mean that, until 2010 our expenditure was less than our income.

Remarkably, for a parish church with a declining congregation situated in a small country town, you, the membership, have consistently contributed over £60,000 per annum in the last few years. Combined with additional sources of income, such as gift aid reclaimed and hire of halls, this level of giving has allowed the church to cover: our contribution to ministers' stipends [as if we still had a full time minister] and the wider work of the Church of Scotland; maintenance of our own buildings; utilities, cleaning and administrative costs; and the financial costs of regular church activities such as the Sunday Club.

However, although we have worked hard to manage our funds, this situation changed in 2011 when we spent more than we gave.

This year, 2012, our expenditure is again exceeding our income. We need to address this imbalance, before it becomes critical. As we draw near to the point where we are able to call a new minister, none of us would want to welcome him or her with a big deficit!

At its November meeting, the Kirk Session will be agreeing a budget for 2013. This is likely to require expenditure of around £100,000 (this is operating expenditure, and takes no account of the planned improvements to St Mary's Hall).

In examining the figures, I have learned a lot. I began to have a strong sense that you, as members of Biggar Church, are not given enough information about our financial position. As virtually all our income comes from you, this is not satisfactory. Over the coming months, I hope to provide more information about how the Kirk Session is trying to make best use of limited resources.

To begin this process, I'd like to tell you a little about where our money comes from.

We currently have 579 members. Dividing £60,000 by 579 gives an average contribution of £104 per year (£2/week). But in order to comfortably fund the running of our church, we need to be less dependent on other sources, such as hall hire, legacies and investment income. If we seek to achieve the full cost of £100,000, we need to give an average of £173 per year.

This sounds a lot. Perhaps it is easier to think of it as £14.39 per month, or £3.32 per week – slightly more than a pint of beer, and not quite enough for two cups of coffee in Aroma.

Last year, **including all sources**, our income averaged £3.05 per week per member – a shortfall of 27p. This sounds trivial, but it doesn't take a genius to see that 27p x 52 weeks x 579 members leaves a very large hole.

As members of the Church of Scotland, each of us has promised *"to give a fitting proportion of my time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world."* Giving is a very personal and private thing, and so it should be. Clearly, there are some who can't afford to give much money but can use their talents to good effect, and others who find it difficult to give much of their time but are able to give more financially.

Nonetheless, I was surprised to discover that while only 25% of us use regular standing orders, between us we contribute 58% of the offerings. And even more surprising, with these regular payments, 50% contribute less than their "share" of £14.39 per month. Most alarming is the discovery that, apparently, more than 60% of our members contribute nothing!

The message is clear enough. And it *is* a personal one. It is not for me to suggest how much you should give to your church. But I do feel that I can ask you, very politely, to have a think about it, pray about it, and if possible, give just a little more.

This is rather more serious than my usual piece in News and Views. Thank you for taking time to read it.
Anon



SU Holidays 2013!

Our programme of activity holidays for 10-18s taking place in 2013 are now available and bookings are being taken. We offer a full range of superb holiday options including:

Multi-activity; Music, Drama and Creative Arts; Camping; Sport-specific; Regional focused holidays for people from your own area and Exam-busting study holidays at Easter time. For all the details and to book, please visit our dedicated website: www.suholidays.org.uk



Origin Scotland - 15th anniversary A special Christmas concert to mark Origin's 15th anniversary Saturday 1st December, 2012 Usher Hall, Edinburgh

Since 1997 Origin Scotland has been staging quality Christian music events in Scotland, and abroad through our daughter ministry Origin South Africa. It's fifteen years since **Origin Scotland** was founded as a partnership between three Edinburgh churches. Since then we've grown into an independent ministry with many churches represented within the band, choir and orchestra as well as the tech crews and other volunteers. Join us for a fantastic Christmas celebration concert to mark Origin's 15th anniversary with the Exile Band, Choir and Orchestra at 7:30pm on Saturday 1st December in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh. Tickets £15, £13, £10 and £8 available from: www.usherhall.co.uk/whats-on/Christmas



Joke Time

What did the elf say was the first step in using a Christmas computer?

"First, YULE LOGon!"

Mum, Can I have a dog for Christmas ?

No you can have turkey like everyone else!

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas ?

It's Christmas, Eve!

Who is never hungry at Christmas ?

The turkey - he's always stuffed!

What's brown and creeps around the house?

Mince spies!

XIS<==
X = (L) 05 - (LX) 40
I = (X) 01 - (XI) 6
S = (XI) 6 - XIS

ADVENT QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The angel Gabriel
2. Mary the Mother of Jesus greeted Elizabeth
3. John the Baptist
4. Zechariah
5. It was his father's name
6. Caesar Augustus
7. Has been born to you: he is Christ the Lord
8. The shepherds
9. The virgin Mary
10. To Elizabeth her cousin
11. According to Luke
12. According to Matthew
13. Herod
14. According to Matthew
15. Jacob
16. Isaiah
17. According to Matthew

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The independence debate begins
by Sally Foster-Fulton, Convener,
Church and Society Council,
Church of Scotland



In the wake of the Edinburgh Agreement of 15th October, 2012, Sally Foster-Fulton, Convener of the Church of Scotland's Church and Society Committee reflects on the way forward:

The referendum announcement signalled the start of a new phase of the independence debate.

I'm passionate about removing the inequalities that exist in our society and this focus should run through everything that we debate over the next two years. The real mark of a good society is how it treats its most vulnerable.



The referendum is a unique and historic opportunity to shape the kind of Scotland we want to live in. The outcome of the discussions we are just starting to have will characterise the kind of Scotland we want to leave to those who come after us. What an exciting prospect.

So what kind of Scotland do we want for the 1 in 5 children in poverty? What kind of Scotland do we want for those seeking asylum or those who have migrated here for economic reasons? What kind of Scotland do we want for those who need extra support due to disability or increasing age? What are our priorities? For only when we have decided that can we decide who is best-placed to help deliver the vision.

The Church of Scotland will urge local congregations to consider hosting community referendum meetings to allow the issues to be discussed, and I for one as Convener of the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland, am excited about participating in them over the course of the next two years. These are discussions and decisions that can frame the future vision - independence or not!

Busy Mum's



'Busy Mums' meet at 8:00pm on a Monday evening. We are really enjoying being able to regularly participate in a focused bible study and prayer session.

For the last few months we have been working through: 'The Essential 100' – E100 which is a Scripture

Union produced book that takes a broad sweep through the 100 essential passages and stories in the bible - 5 studies at a time. Each chapter of studies covers one story or passage—this requires that we have all read the five studies as homework, as well as the accompanying teaching and application. When we do meet, we go through the passages together discussing our own views and opinions, as well as how each of us feel we have personally benefited from the passages. We also use the teaching book which provides questions that helps us to apply the lessons.

As there is quite a lot of reading, it normally takes us 2-weeks to do each chapter. This allows us to do some bible study every second week and meet for prayer and worship the weeks in between.

We would welcome anyone who would like to join us. So if you are a Mum in need of some fellowship and teaching we'd love you to come along and join us. Interested, please contact Elly Sutherland on: 01899 - 221824.

Mairi Maxfield

'Afternoon' Service of Worship

There will be another 'Afternoon' Service of Worship on Sunday 9th December in St Mary's Hall, North Back Road at 2:00pm.



This service is particularly intended for those unable to attend the Church on a Sunday morning. Worship will last around 30 minutes and will be followed by tea/ coffee and a chance to meet and chat with friends. We extend a very warm welcome to attend this service. Remember: Transport is available and if you would like a lift please contact: Mrs Nanette Stott Tel: 01899 221163. The next Afternoon Service will take place at 2:00pm on Sunday 10th February in St. Mary's Hall.

If you would like to receive a Pastoral visitor from the Church please speak to our Deacon, Ann Lyall : Tel 01899 229443 and Jean Shearer 01899 221505.

Jean Shearer

Church



There are seventeen dedicated singers in Biggar Kirk Choir, and we would all be delighted if others in the congregation would consider coming and joining us. Many churches no longer have a choir, but it is our hope that here in Biggar our numbers will be maintained to support the musical life of the church.

Perhaps you may wonder what we are doing sitting in the chancel - are we helpful, supportive, necessary, or, even occasionally, the focus of a joke? The Kirk Choir does play an important part in leading the worship in church, Sunday by Sunday, singing an introit to begin the service each week, and also an anthem for about forty services throughout the year. All this requires considerable commitment from the choir which meets for practice on Thursday evenings, except during the summer months.

For the choir, the church year is divided into two parts - from January to early May, and from late September until Christmas. We would be very happy if there were any interested who might feel able to make a commitment, even for just one session, for example in the months leading to Christmas. It is not necessary to read music - although this is helpful, there are a number in the choir who are not readers, and the separate parts are taught, making it easier in a group all singing the same part. A stronger choir with greater numbers would give us more confidence and reduce the pressure on the present members who attend faithfully almost every week.

With the choir leading the singing, the response from the congregation is enhanced, and this is particularly valuable when new hymns and songs are being introduced. The Church Hymnary: 4th Edition (CH4) has over 800 hymns and worship songs and responses, from all over the world, and many of these are new to us - there are still a considerable number which we are not familiar with, and here again the choir is able to give a strong lead.

Anthems and songs are chosen to be relevant to the church year, or to a particular service. We look for music which we hope will have a broad appeal, and also for words which will contribute to the worship of today. We have learned some new and challenging anthems as well as returning to the old favourites, and it is very rewarding for the choir to hear the occasional appreciative comment from the people in the pews!

On the Sunday before Christmas this year, the Morning Worship will be a Service of Lessons



Glasgow Churches Together



Carols for Peace 2012

Sunday 16th December, 2012 at 3:00pm

A musical event in the City Chambers, Glasgow to celebrate the birth of our Lord.

Glasgow churches in build-up to Commonwealth Games

Glasgow's church leaders have endorsed the 'More Than Gold' campaign to guide the Christian response to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The Games will provide an opportunity for churches to serve and witness to their communities, the organisers, athletes and the many visitors who will attend the event. It's judged that 'More than Gold' will enable churches and the wider Christian community to respond to those opportunities for Glasgow and Scotland with one voice.

The 'More than Gold' brand has been used since the 1996 summer Olympics in Atlanta as:

- A flag for faith-based outreach, hospitality and service without overstepping any denominational or doctrinal boundaries
- An interface between the sports event's organising committee and the churches

It has combined local focus with international recognition for Commonwealth Games, Pan-American Games, All-Africa Games, Indian Ocean Games, Olympic Games and Paralympics

Church leaders recognised the 2014 Games' potential for mission following Glasgow's selection as host city, and in April 2010 appointed Chris Plews as Churches Commonwealth Games Co-ordinator.

A graduate in Law from Glasgow Caledonian University, Mr Plews gained a diploma in community learning and development before serving as a youth worker with Paisley YMCA then spending more than three years as a development worker at Church House, Bridgeton.

He said: "The work of creating a More Than Gold organisation in Scotland is currently in its early stages but the response from denominations and para-church organisations has been overwhelmingly positive and there is genuine excitement about the broad range of opportunities."



Update

CHRISTIAN AID
SCOTLAND

Christian Aid Service of Thanksgiving in Paisley Abbey

Sunday 25th November, 6.30pm

Paisley Abbey, Abbey Close, Paisley, PA1 1JG

A celebration of the world-wide work of Christian Aid and a chance for us to thank local churches and communities for all their efforts which make our work possible. The ecumenical service will be led by Rev Kathy Galloway, Head of Christian Aid Scotland. Tea and coffee will be served after the service. This is an open invitation to everyone in the local churches and community so please pass this invitation on. For more information please contact Val Brown on 0141 221 7475 or

e-mail her at: vbrown@christian-aid.org

The Glasgow Santa Dash: George Square, Glasgow

Sunday 9th December 2012

Give poverty the run around this Christmas! In December, thousands of Santas will descend on the UK to stroll, jog or run to raise money for good cause. Get your Christmas fancy dress out for this 5km run around Glasgow is for all ages.

- Registration fee: £15 per adult, £5 per child

- Minimum sponsorship: £50 per person

Register now by contacting: www.christianaid.org.uk/getinvolved/events/running/christmas-fun-run.aspx

Biggar Kirk Fundraising Committee:

Renovation of St. Mary's Hall

On Saturday 8th September, the Fundraising Committee held a Coffee Morning in the Gillespie Centre to begin raising funds towards the cost of renovating St. Mary's Hall. A wonderful total (which included some donations) of £448.42 was realised.

The Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed in any way towards the success of the Coffee Morning. A report was sent to the Lanark Gazette and letters advising information regarding the renovation of the hall has been sent to all hall users explaining what we are doing and asking for their support.

As fundraising towards the renovation is an on-going concern ... we anticipate that more fundraisers will follow - so watch this space! *Sadie Cameron, Fundraising Team Leader*



and Carols with readings to illuminate the whole Christmas story, carols sung by the congregation, and special Christmas anthems and carols with the choir. Practice for this service will begin shortly - perhaps it might be a good time to 'give it a try' - and we would be especially delighted to welcome more men. Please do consider whether you might be able to help in the choir - we do enjoy our time together, we practise hard but there is also a considerable amount of laughter, and there's a special seat in the chancel waiting for you. Who knows - you might even enjoy it?

Margaret Filshie

From the smallest of babies through to the tallest of teenagers there is something in our church for you.



The Nursery allows infants to stay in Church with their parents. Toys are available in the North Transept for the children to play with under the supervision of Enhanced Disclosure checked volunteers.

The Crèche and Sunday Club are for young people from 3-years to P7. They meet in St. Mary's Hall from 10:45am until the end of service. Most Sundays they join in the first part of the service at the Church and then go back to the hall for their own activities.



B.Y.F.



The teenagers (S1 to S6 plus) of our church family get together most Sunday evenings at 7:00pm until 8:30pm in St. Mary's Hall for their own Youth Fellowship where they like to chat about things which concern them and take part in activities they enjoy, e.g. crafts, baking, DVDs, music and outings.



Our Father, who does art in Heaven ...

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy. "Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked. "You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven..."



St. Mary's Hall Project



The congregation and other hall users were invited to inspect the architect's plans on display in the hall on 6th and 13th October. Visitors were able to look over the plans and discuss the options with members of the project team. Feedback was given by visitors and considered by the team.

One common feedback theme was over the size and layout of the proposed kitchen area. Others were over the overall size of the building, the provision of storage, the need for a meeting room, and detail of cleaning, toilet and changing facilities. The need for modern energy saving and eco-friendly systems was recognised.

The project team led by Graeme Kerr has met since, and taking the comments into consideration has proposed amendments to the plans. These are to be sent to the architects, and the revised plans will be presented to the Kirk Session on 26th November.

If the plans are accepted by Session the next stages will be to seek estimates from building contractors for the work, and then to present final plans to the Congregation and to Presbytery for approval. Should all these stages be successfully negotiated, building work could start in mid 2013.

This is not the time to discuss the financial process in detail yet, (*please see the Fundraising Committee's article in this N&V edition*) however should the project proceed significant fundraising will be needed to complete the work to the desired standard. There has been some action on this front already: a coffee morning has been held; a cheque received from Biggar Little Cinema and Biggar Yoga Club; and approaches have been made to trusts and potential community benefactors, some with positive responses.

I will give an update in the next News and Views.

Alastair Fyfe



WE HAVE A NEW WEBSITE

The Church has a new website which we hope will be easier to view and to keep up to date on a regular basis. Please take time to have a look at: www.biggarkirk.btck.co.uk.

Any comments or opinions for improving the website would be much appreciated. These can be e-mailed to the Church Administrator on: st.maryskirk09@hotmail.co.uk



Anyone out there
"technically literate?"

In order to enhance our worship, we have a sound system installed in the church. Like a lot of technology (cars, televisions, computers) we only think about it when it stops working properly. This happens rarely, but when it does, it can be very distracting.

The system is not complex, but does require some knowledge and skill to operate it correctly.

We are seeking someone to take responsibility for the sound system. We need someone who could be available each Sunday, although the duties could just as easily be shared by a small team of people.

The sound system is a very important element of our services. If you are interested, and have some understanding of such installations, **or are willing to be trained**, please contact either the church office, the Session Clerk, Mike Chad, or speak to any of the elders on duty on a Sunday morning.

Thank you.



'Wee Worship' is a pre-school group for children and their carers which aims to teach the children about God in a fun and interactive way through crafts, stories, songs and games. We meet during term time on the first Wednesday of every month between 11:45am and 12:45pm in St. Mary's Hall. This also allows for a social time together during which we eat our packed lunches.

The group has now been running successfully since September with a few mums being willing to take it in turns to lead a small part of the session. If you who would be interested in coming along to 'Wee Worship' or if you know of anyone else who would be interested, please contact Nicola Campbell on 01899 - 221942.

Mairi Maxfield



NATIONAL AIDS TRUST



World Aids Day

World Aids Day is held on 1st December each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died. More than 90,000 people are currently living with HIV in the UK and globally an estimated 33.3 million people have HIV. More than 25 million people between 1981 and 2007 have died from the virus, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

How can we mark World Aids Day?

We can wear a red ribbon.

Churches can put up our specially designed posters.

Design a large red ribbon banner and drape it outside your church.

If your church is already flood lit then light it up in red.

Serve red-ribbon cupcakes for after-church tea and coffee.

Hold a Souper Sunday!

Attend one of the four gatherings being held in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Dundee. Details will be available soon from: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/events/events/world_aids_day

30 years after the first cases of HIV – the red ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for those living with HIV. In 1991 – a decade after the emergence of HIV – a group of 12 artists gathered to discuss a new project for Visual Aids; a New York arts organisation that raises awareness of HIV. They were photographers, painters, film makers and costume designers, and they sat around in the shared gallery space in New York's East Village. After a short brainstorm they had come up with a simple idea that later became one of the most recognised symbols of the decade - the red ribbon, worn to signify awareness and support for people living with HIV.



The red ribbon was the first ever ribbon symbol, inspiring later versions such as the pink ribbon for breast cancer awareness.

Where can you get a red ribbon?

You can buy traditional fabric red ribbons from any HMV and MAC make-up store or any Virgin Active Health Club

NAT's 25th birthday red ribbon brooch

This year, 2012, is an extremely special year as we celebrate the 25th birthday of NAT (National AIDS Trust). To mark this occasion, NAT has created a limited edition 'silver' anniversary red ribbon brooch. The stylish brooch is created in shiny red enamel with a silver trim and features a single silver sparkly gem to signify 25 years of tackling HIV in the UK. Get your 25th birthday red ribbon brooch from the NAT shop now - there's only a limited number available.



Invest in Peace: Action for a just peace in Israel and Palestine



Please invest in peace. Whatever your experience or available time, the ideas listed below can help out. One person cannot do everything, but together we can make a difference. You can get further information about all these suggestions from the Church of Scotland website: www.cofscotland.org.uk

Pray and Worship

- From wherever you are, join the 'Wave of Prayer' organised by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem every Thursday at noon.
- Remember all Church of Scotland staff working in the Holy Land
- Sing the new Hymn: *Lord Jesus, You Wept for Jerusalem*

Give

- £10 to the Al-shurooq School for blind children
- £100 towards Christian Aid's work in Gaza
- Buy books for the Evangelical Lutheran Schools' Library project
- Financially support projects in the Holy Land
- Give 3 months of your time working with the Ecumenical Accompaniers Programme (EAPPI)
- Make a gift of fairly-traded Palestinian products from Hadeel

Read

- *Kairos Palestine* document
- *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* by Naim Ateek
- Church of Scotland Mission Partners blogs
- Christian Aid Reports

Write

- Send a Christmas card to Christians living in Bethlehem.
- Write to your MP or to the Israeli Ambassador to Britain reinforcing British opposition to illegal settlements in Gaza

Meet

- Invite a Church of Scotland Mission Partner or EAPPI volunteer to speak at your Church
- Go to Israel and Palestine on pilgrimage and meet Christians living there
- Twin your congregation with a Church in the Middle East
- Invite Jewish or Muslim neighbours to talk about their faith

Watch

Films: *Budrus, With God on Our Side, East Side Story*

TV: *The Promise*

Children's Fun Page

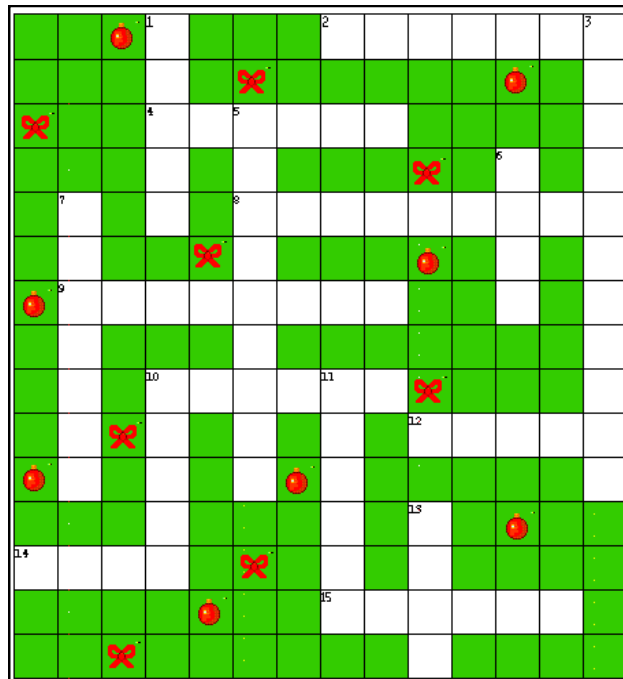
Christmas Crossword

ACROSS

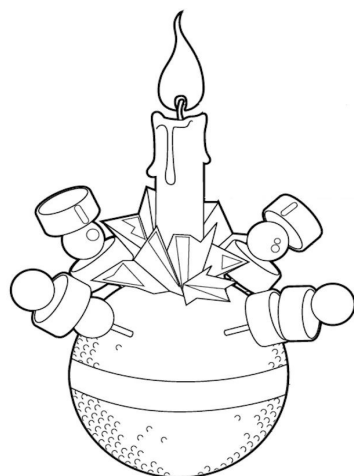
2. What you put on your gifts so you know who the gift is for.
4. ____ the Snowman (name of a song)
8. Where does Santa live?
9. What month do we celebrate Christmas?
10. ____ Bells (name of a song)
12. Who has a long beard and wears a red suit?
14. What children like to get for Christmas.
15. What Santa rides in.

DOWN

1. What do you give each other at Christmas?
3. What a Christmas house is made of.
5. Something you put on your Christmas tree.
6. If you are bad, what does Santa put in your stocking?
7. What is the name of the reindeer with a nose that glows?
10. Whose birthday is celebrated on Christmas?
11. You put these on your Christmas tree to make it glow.
13. What do you decorate with ornaments for Christmas?



What lies in a pram
and wobbles?
A jelly baby



Christingle means: 'Christ Light'

Using the word list below, fill in the missing words in each sentence. Once you have, done this you can then colour in your Christingle.

light; four; fruit; orange; blood; candle;
world; red; love; sweets; Jesus; seasons

The _____ represents the _____.

The _____ ribbon represents the _____ and _____ of Jesus that was shed to save mankind.

The _____ cocktail sticks represent the four corners of the world and the _____ and _____, the four _____.

The _____ at the centre of the orange represents _____ as the _____ of the world.

Adult's Fun Page

Advent Quiz

1. Who said. "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour"?
2. Why did the child leap in Elizabeth's womb?
3. What was the name of that child?
4. What name did the neighbors want to give Elizabeth's son?
5. Why did they want that name?
6. Who was the Roman Emperor who decreed a census should be taken?
7. Complete the sentence: "Today in the town of David a saviour..."
8. To whom did the angel speak that sentence?
9. Who said "My soul magnifies the Lord"?
10. To whom was it said?
11. Which of the 4 Gospels gives details about the shepherds at Bethlehem?
12. Which of the Gospels tells us about the wise men?
13. Who was the King who interviewed the wise men?
14. Which of the Gospels begins: "A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham"?
15. Who was the father of Joseph?
16. Which great Prophet is quoted with the words: "A virgin will conceive..."?
17. Which of the Gospels gives us that quotation?

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

I P H M D T O A H F G R J Y
O V E C A Q I C F A Y U T C
G Q N T O R P T O R D H P O
A R Z A E R K S U E E R H L
L E S Y S R I M D S P O I O
A V C N K W N N S Y S M L S
T E W H A H E A T U K A E S
I L E D O I L R S H A N M I
A A H J J O S O B E I S O A
N T T E N F I E K E Q A N N
S I T I U N S U H J H H N S
N O A P H I L I P P I A N S
Y N M Y X R T R V V E B P S
S Y H T O M I T C J A M E S

Maths Puzzle

Take 9 from 6, 10 from 9, 50 from 40 and leave 6.
How Come ??

COLOSSIANS	
GALATIANS	
HEBREWS	
PHILEMON	
ROMANS	
TIMOTHY	
CORINTHIANS	
EPHESIANS	
THESSALONIANS	
PHILIPPIANS	
REVELATION	
MATTHEW	
ACTS	JAMES
JOHN	JUDE
LUKE	MARK
PETER	TITUS