

BIGGAR KIRK OFFICE BEARERS

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Published by: Biggar Kirk
Typeset and Compiled by: Church Administrator
Printed by: Greyfriars Parish Church, Lanark

*Biggar Parish Church of Scotland is a
Charity Registered in Scotland: SC000333*



A Letter from our Minister

I have never forgotten a meeting I was asked to convene between representatives of Glasgow Presbytery and the Kirk Session of a church which was passing through difficult times. We met in a poorly lit hall. The paint was flaking off the walls. There was a smell of damp. Outside, the ground around the church was overgrown with weeds and strewn with litter. The mood of the elders matched the shabby state of the property. Morale was low and as the meeting wore on tempers became frayed. At one point a man at the back of the hall rose to his feet and thundered, "Anyone walking past our church would think that God was dead," and then sat down. There was a silence as his words sank in. Then discussion resumed and happily took a more positive turn. But he was right. Buildings speak.

Church buildings project images which either enforce or undermine the message which we as a church have been given to proclaim. That is something which those of us who have grown up in the church sometimes fail to realise. We tend to accept the out-moded character of our buildings. They may no longer be fit for purpose but they are all we have known. For us, their old-fashioned ambience may even lend them a certain charm. But for those who have little or no connection with the church, and whom we want to reach with the gospel, buildings which look back a hundred or two years suggest that the Christian faith belongs to a world other than the world in which they live and work and play and may colour their perception of the gospel. .

Many of the buildings we have inherited are not buildings we would now choose to have. They are more a liability than an asset. In most situations we can't do away with them, and that's that. So what is to be done?

We now have to meet standards required by current legislation particularly with regard to kitchen, toilet and disabled facilities. But beyond that we must surely do all we can to ensure that our premises are functional and serve the church's programme. The problem is that all too often the building determines what the programme shall be. Many congregations are imprisoned in their buildings and are confined by the limitations which their property imposes on their worship, service and witness. The harsh truth is that often these limitations have to be accepted. The cost of overcoming them would be beyond the resources of most congregations. But where possible, action must surely be taken, however modest, to break from the stranglehold of what has been called the "edifice complex". Everything should be done to ensure that our buildings better serve our purposes and assist rather than frustrate our mission as a church

Which brings me to proposals to refurbish St. Mary's Hall. For the past two years and more a working party has been looking at what might be done to upgrade the premises. Briefly, organisations which use the hall were consulted; a working brief was drawn up and a firm of architects chosen to produce plans; the plans, which were approved in principle by the Kirk Session, were displayed for inspection by the congregation and adjustments made in response to comments made by members and by the Church of Scotland General Trustees; the plans are currently being costed; once we have a cost, a meeting of the congregation will be called to decide whether or not to proceed with the refurbishment; we shall also require the approval of Presbytery and the General Trustees; if approval is given by all parties concerned, the work will be carried out in the summer of 2014.

We shall be displaying the final plans for inspection in due course and providing all the necessary information to help us make an informed decision. Meantime, may I commend the project to your thought and prayer.

David Easton
Interim Moderator and Locum

VACANCY UPDATE

Biggar linked with Black Mount

The Nominating committee have been out and about. Please remember them in your prayers as they go about the task of finding a minister to serve both congregations.

Announcements



Deaths

Our congregation has had a number of bereavements during the months of February to April and we would ask that you remember the families and friends of:

February

Mrs Jean Graham
96 Knocklea, Biggar

April

Mrs Isabella Whitefield
4 Westercrofts Gardens, Biggar



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

BIGGAR KIRK



Church Roll

Admission of New Members by Certificate of Transference

Mrs Jean Kirkpatrick
2 Northcrofts Road, Biggar

Mr Adrian Shilliday
22 Libberton Mains
Libberton, Carnwath.

Mrs Rachael Shilliday
22 Libberton Mains
Libberton, Carnwath.

Certificate of Transference from Biggar Kirk to Clacton-on-Sea

Mr William Adamson
Holmlea
7 Rathmor Road, Biggar.

Weddings



16th March

Ashleigh Cadzow to Brian McDonald

11th May

Ann Kay to Robert Simpson

26th May

Caitlin Douglas to Garry Cowe

Biggar Kirk



June

2nd	11:00am	Morning Worship
9th	10:00am	Gala Day Service
16th	11:00am	Morning Worship
23rd	11:00am	Morning Worship
30th	9.30am	Holy Communion
	11:00am	Morning Worship

July

7th	10:00am	Morning Worship
14th	10:00am	Morning Worship
21st	10:00am	Morning Worship
28th	10:00am	Holiday Club Service

August

4th	10:00am	Morning Worship
11th	10:00am	Morning Worship
18th	11:00am	Morning Worship
25th	9:30am	Holy Communion
	11:00am	Morning Worship



Biggar Kirk Door and Offering Duties

June - Group 'E'

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

July - Group 'A'

Nanette Stott
Alec Clarkson
Bill Gourlay
Elizabeth McDonald
Margaret Weir

August - Group 'B'

Ella Coubrough
Joyce Kelly
Margaret Moffat
Patricia Saulnier
Cameron Sutherland
Anna Boyd



This year, the focus of the World Mission stamp appeal is 'The Living Water' project run by a congregation from the ECCB (Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren) in Horní Krupá in the Czech-Moravian Highlands.

The project is part of a wider ecological programme started in 2008 to build an environmental centre and provide services and education for the local community, congregation and schools. Its purpose is to help share practical teaching on water life and improve understanding on the impact of water on biodiversity while engaging with the community. The centre has already received international recognition.

Money raised from the stamp project will go towards improving the education programme and offering more hands on exploration of plant and water life by restoring the old well at the centre and building a small lake. You can help further this exciting endeavour by collecting your used stamps which are sold to make money. Please help by placing your used stamps in the collection boxes which are located in the Church Vestibule, St. Mary's Hall and the Gillespie Centre.



All of those young and old become
young once again at every gathering
of the Evergreen Club.

The Evergreen Club held their last meeting of the session on Monday 25th March. As throughout the year, we had a good turn out and a good selection of hand-made competition articles for our two lady entertainers to judge. During the evening our members were treated to songs and amusing tales by the WRI choir, providing a perfect ending to our session.

We are now looking forward to our summer outing on Monday 13th May when we head to Perth, first stopping at a Garden Centre for a coffee and a snack. Before meeting for High Tea at the Royal George Hotel there will be ample time for our ladies to indulge in some 'retail therapy' - or to just relax - the choice is theirs. All we hope for is that the sun will shine for us on the day.

Margaret Lawson, Secretary

Biggar Kirk Summer Opening

The Church will be open from 10:00am until 4:00pm Monday to Friday during the summer months of July and August for visitors to our town. This requires a rota of volunteers to be on duty within the church from 10:00am - 1:00pm and from 1:00pm - 4:00pm. If you can help in any way, please contact Kathleen Roger by phoning: 220235. Remember - we can't do this without your help!



Fair Trade Palestinian Crafts

Hadeel is a Fair Trade shop which aims to provide a sustainable source of income for craftspeople working with social enterprises in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, as well as one in the Galilee and another in the Negev. Our work also helps to sustain infrastructures, as many of the producer groups also provide health, education and emergency services in their communities which lack any form of local government which might do this.

Hadeel is owned by the Scottish charity Palcrafts. Any surplus we make on sale of goods is gift aided to Palcrafts which distributes small development grants to our producers. In the past we have provided items such as a digital camera, a computer, a printer, storage equipment, a laminating machine, English and computer literacy courses, an industrial sewing machine and 2 electric carding machines. We also organize educational tours to our producer groups and disseminate product information to customers and other interested people.

We are a member of the British Association for Fair Trade Shops and supply other fair trade shops and individual fair traders as well as Palestinian solidarity groups. We are a sister shop to Sunbula which has 2 shops in Jerusalem, and work closely with Zaytoun in the UK.

If you are interested in finding out more about Hadeel, then please look at our website: <http://www.hadeel.org> or come along to our shop which is open **10 am to 5 pm** Monday to Friday at 123 George Street, Edinburgh, Tel: 0131 225 1922.



Symphonic Praise Saturday 1st June, 7:30pm St. Mary's Cathedral, Palmerston Place, Edinburgh.

Join together with hundreds of Christians in the magnificent surroundings of St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh to worship the King with the Exile Chamber Orchestra, Origin Praise Choir and the Exile Band. Tickets are FREE and can be booked by calling 0131 208 0095 or by contacting: www.originscotland.org



Biggar Kirk Flower Guild

The members of our Flower Guild create a variety of beautiful floral arrangements in the Church throughout the year. Every Sunday, the Guild organise the delivery of flowers to those church members who are experiencing difficult times, such as illness or bereavement, or who are celebrating a special occasion, such as an anniversary, or to those who are no longer able to attend services in the Kirk.

Occasionally, the Guild also holds a flower festival which presents its members with another opportunity to display local creative talent.

We always welcome new members who would like to be involved in this valued contribution to the life and worship of the Church. If you would like more information about the Guild or would like to join, please contact the Convenor, Mrs Jean Paul (221036), or speak to any other member of the Flower Guild.

Jean Paul, Flower Guild Convenor

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel are now recruiting for Ecumenical Accompaniers to serve in the West Bank and/or Israel in 2014. They are looking for 18 people to serve for 3 months and 2 people to serve for 4.5 months in four different teams.



Please note that we recruit EAs for the Britain and Ireland part of EAPPI only. One of the essential requirements of our posts is that candidates must be able to demonstrate their "involvement with church/ecumenical and/or peace networks in the UK or Eire". The deadline for applications is **Friday 21st June 2013**. More information about the work of Ecumenical Accompaniers and about the programme itself can be found on: <http://www.quaker.org.uk/applyeappi%20> or by contacting **EAPPI Recruitment on +44 (0)20 7663 1027**.

St. Mary's Hall Project Update

The project has taken significant steps forward since I last reported in News and Views in November, 2012.

The revised plans (incorporating comments from the people who looked at them on the

two consultation days in October) were received back from the architect in November. They were presented to the Kirk Session, who commented favourably on the alterations, particularly the larger kitchen size and improvements to storage. Session gave permission to proceed to the next stage.

The Architect and Surveyors visited the hall in February. Whilst on site the amended plans were discussed, and there were no major problems foreseen with these.

There are three further stages to develop a project following agreement of the scheme design; Planning, Building Warrant and then Tender. We effectively have the Planning drawings now. When considering the way forward it was agreed that the plans could not be put before the Congregation for approval without a detailed and realistic estimate of costs being known. To achieve this in the most cost effective way we have asked the Architect and the Engineer to prepare the Building Warrant stage drawings and the Quantity Surveyor to prepare "un-priced bills". This will allow the plans to be costed. At the time of writing, the un-priced bills and plans are being offered to a number of building contractors, both local, from further afield, and also to a firm that specialises in conservation refurbishment work.

Once the indicative costs are known we shall present the final plans to the Congregation for approval and if successful then on to Presbytery. By the time all these stages are negotiated, it will be too late to award contracts and start building work during the 2013 summer period, so realistically work will start in mid 2014.

Clearly this is an ambitious project. However we have sufficient money available and promised from grant applications to get the work started. The fund-raising which is ongoing will be vital for completing the project. When the costs are known the fund-raising target will be set. Led by the vision of the Session and our new Minister, the project team has confidence that the project will be realised and the refurbished Halls will serve God's purpose in Biggar and the local area.

Alastair Fyfe, Property Convenor

mobile BIBLEWORLD

Bibleworld came to Biggar just after the Easter holiday. This was a venture that we had been planning for almost two years after receiving an anonymous donation of £2000 to be used for children's

and youth ministry. We debated how to spend the money appropriately and decided to use half of it to bring Bibleworld to our town and inviting children from all the local schools to use the facility. We realised that schools would need help with the cost of transport, and that we would need a small team of volunteers to help, so we asked local churches for their financial assistance and support and then worked together to make it happen.

Bibleworld Mobile is an interactive trailer classroom that travels around Scotland visiting schools, communities and churches. Linked strongly to the 'Curriculum for Excellence' framework, the Bibleworld programme is suitable for school and community groups alike. It offers P5-S1 pupils a lively and stimulating introduction to the Bible and aspects of the story of Christianity.

The huge trailer arrived on Monday morning and was set up on the ground beside the old sports centre in Biggar. We were all amazed at just how large it was inside when it was



fully erected – capable of taking a class of thirty-six children and the adults accompanying them. The area was divided into six zones – with well organised, interactive resources for the children to use. Hannah, who works for the Scottish Bible Society, was there to guide each group through the experience and did an excellent job throughout the week. Altogether there were 389 children on the trailer during the week and 132 adults which is a fantastic response. Some of the children came back twice bringing their parents in the evening.

We asked the children to share their thoughts about the experience. This is just a small sample of their comments:

"I was surprised how fun it was. I thought it would just be books but it wasn't. I enjoyed that there were lots of different stations you could try. Maybe it would be better to have a shorter time at each station so you can try them all.

I really enjoyed the museum section because you got to take the things home. I learned that there are 66 stories in the bible.

I learned music and songs are based on God sometimes. I enjoyed the plane experience because I found out about different countries and their bible.

I was surprised because I thought we were meant to listen to a bible story but we played on computers and done quizzes.

I really enjoyed the questionnaire from clips about Jesus' stories.

I enjoyed how it looked very realistic e.g. an aeroplane, library and it was fun and active and you felt like you weren't learning but you were.

I enjoyed the museum zone because I liked the inking and making my own manuscript.

I learnt lots about the bible and I really enjoyed the whole set up and activities. It was really cool looking at other countries and the way they read the bible."

I think we can conclude that as far as the children are concerned it was a huge success. We are so grateful to everyone who made this venture possible – it was great to all work together to accomplish this. Thank you so much



According to Statistics - 14,000 hungry Scots rely on foodbanks for handouts

Hungry Scots are being forced to turn to foodbanks. Last year, 14,318 people were given handouts across the country – a rise of 150 per cent in just one year. It is thought many more are suffering because they're too ashamed to ask for help or live in areas where foodbanks do not operate.

These figures were released by The Trussell Trust, who helped launch more than 320 foodbanks throughout the UK, including 14 in Scotland. A total of 9750 adults and 4568 children turned to foodbanks for meal handouts north of the Border because they were going hungry. Last year, the total was 3865 adults and 1861 kids.



The reasons were simple – poverty and benefits problems. Of those who responded to Tussell, 2612 had too low an income, 4264 people reported benefits being delayed and 2168 cited changes to their benefits.

Foodbanks provide a minimum of three days of nutritionally-balanced food to individuals and families who are struggling financially and are referred by local agencies.

At Scotland's 14 foodbanks last month, 135 tons of food were donated by churches, schools, supermarket customers, groups and individuals.

Biggar Kirk Monthly Giving January to April, 2013

	Jan Act	Feb Act	Mar Act	Apr Act	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
SO	3144	2690	4036	2961	12831	14000
FWO	1023	872	996.8	718.4	3610.2	4168
Open	643	733	882.24	584.49	2842.73	5184
Donations	500	0	0	0	500	1500
GA refund	1065	768	1190	776.5	3799.5	4000
	6375	5063	7105.04	5040.39	23583.43	28852
Surplus/ Shortfall	838	2150	108	2173	5269	

*You should each give, then, as you have decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly.
[2 Corinthians 9:7]*



The Church of Scotland Stewardship and Finance



Some good news....

A new Government scheme could increase our income by up to £1250 per year. It's called "Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme" (or GASDS for short!!)

So what does this mean for Biggar Kirk? It means that we can claim another 25% from HMRC for small (open plate) donations, up to a maximum of £5000 in any one year.

Accounting for this money will mean a little more work for the door/offering volunteers, but hopefully, this will soon become routine.

So... while it is still desirable that *all* taxpayers should complete a Gift Aid form, this new scheme will boost the value of smaller regular giving.
Every little helps!

Mike Chad

Christian Aid and partners are organising early morning coaches to take supporters by ferry from Scotland to Belfast. On arrival in Belfast a meal of soup and sandwiches will be provided so supporters can hear and reflect on what is happening at the G8 and why it is so important. A contribution to costs will be requested but the overall cost will be subsidised.

Those wishing to attend should contact Diane Green on 0141-241-6136 or: dgreen@christian-aid.org

Single Christians feel unsupported by family-focused churches

Single Christians feel “isolated, alone and lonely” within their churches, according to new research. More than a third of worshippers who were not married or in a relationship said they did not feel treated the same as those that were part of conventional families.



Nearly four out of ten single churchgoers said they often felt “inadequate or ignored” whilst 42.8 per cent said their church did not know what to do with them. A total of 37 per cent said they “did not feel treated as family members”



The findings were based on the responses of 2,754 people who used the Christian dating site Christian Connection and suggest there is a significant minority of worshippers who feel alienated by the prevailing attitudes within protestant denominations in Britain including the Church of England.

The survey found that older people were more keenly aware of their single status and that women not in a steady relationship were treated as “threats to couples”. Singles said they often felt more valued outside rather than inside their church.

Independent researcher and writer David Pullinger who analysed the data, which included single parents, said churches needed to respond to changing times.

Kirk Ceilidh

The Kirk Ceilidh held in the Municipal Hall on Friday 26th April was a highly enjoyable social evening. An energetic group of dancers responded enthusiastically to the lively music provided by Iain Murray's Clyde Valley trio. During a well-earned break a delicious two-course meal was served by Elizabeth McDonald and helpers.



A feature of the evening was the participation of all age groups from the youngest Sunday Club children to some of our oldest members.



The sum of £221 was raised for the St. Mary's Hall Refurbishment Fund. We are very grateful to all who helped with the organisation of the ceilidh and to those who made contributions of money and raffle prizes. Particular thanks are due to Stella O'Brien and Stewart Houston for ticket sales and other arrangements.

The only down side was that there was room for more church members and friends to enjoy a Friday evening of fun and good company. We look forward to future occasions when we hope the hall will be filled with merry-making Kirk supporters.



Glasgow City Mission Art Exhibition 13th -15th June, 2013 20 Crimea Street, Glasgow, G2 8PW

Come and view more than 50 pieces of outstanding art, created by clients of Glasgow City Mission. Meet the artists and hear their stories that have inspired their art. Selected items will also be available for sale.

Building tours also available for you to see first hand all that happens at Glasgow City Mission and how we help those who are homeless, marginalised and trapped in poverty.

'Afternoon' Service of Worship



Our next 'Afternoon' Service of Worship will be at 2:00pm on Sunday 8th September in St Mary's Hall, North Back Road.

These services are particularly intended for those who for whatever reason are unable to attend Church on a Sunday morning. Worship lasts around 30 minutes and is followed by a cup of tea/ coffee and a chance to meet and chat with friends. A very warm welcome is extended to attend this service.

Remember: Transport is available, and if you would like a lift please contact: Mrs Nanette Stott Tel: 01899 221163. If you or anyone you know would like to receive a Pastoral visit from the Church please speak to our Deacon, Ann Lyall, Tel: 01899 229443 or Jean Shearer, Tel: 01899 221505.

Books of the Bible Answers:
 I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu, kept people looking so hard for facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalised, but the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others, it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. YES, THERE WILL BE SOME REALLY EASY ONES TO SPOT. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. One little lady says she brews a cup of tea, so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now for there are really sixteen names of books of the Bible in this story.

Adult Quiz Answers:
 Doublepuzzle Answer: Lamb of God; Revelation; Transubstantiation
 Shake, Noise, Rows, Ford, Doing, Lost, Consider the work of Religion; In God we trust; The meek shall inherit God (Ecc.7:13)
 the earth; Creator

Children's Answers
 Bible Quiz: 1. Light; 2. Third; 3. Rainbow; 4. Honour our father and our mother; 5. Bread; 6. Joseph; 7. Daniel; 8. David; 9. Jonah; 10. Jesus wept; 11. Twelve; 12. Judas; 13. The Beautitudes; 14. Five loaves of bread and two small fish; 15. The Sea of Galilee
 Old Scripture Cake keywords: butter, sweet cane (sugar), eggs, fine flour, salt, leavened, sweet cinnamon, spices, milk, almonds, figs, raisins, water.

In 2012 Christian Aid successfully secured match-funding from the UK government that meant the first £5 million donated to Christian Aid Week was matched £1 for £1. Hunger is the world's most shocking problem and our toughest challenge. And yet our planet provides enough food for everyone. It's unfair, it's unjust, and - it's totally preventable. We must push world leaders to end this injustice by tackling the four big IFs: Aid, Land, Tax, Transparency.



Here in Scotland in 2013 we need Scotland's politicians, institutions, organisations, faith groups, private companies and individuals to reflect on their role in tackling global hunger and to take action so that 1 in 8 people will not go to bed hungry tonight or any other night. This summer the G8 world leaders are in the UK. Scotland's voice must be heard at Westminster, at the G8 and across the world as part of the UK. David Cameron is planning a Hunger Summit to coincide with the G8 conference taking place in Northern Ireland, 17th-18th June 2013, at which aid, tax, land and transparency are all on the agenda. With the world's media in town, we want thousands of people to take to the streets and show world leaders that we won't stop until everyone has access to enough food.

Why not join us in Hyde Park, London Saturday 8th June, 2013?



Christian Aid and supporters are coming together in Hyde Park on Saturday 8th June for the biggest campaigning moment since Make Poverty History. With the G8 world leaders in the UK this summer, we have the opportunity to influence some of the world's most powerful politicians and demand they take action to tackle the root causes of global hunger. If you can't manage Hyde Park why not -

Join us on Saturday 15th June 2pm - 5pm in Belfast City Hall (transport available from Scotland)

The G8 Summit is to be held on the 17th and 18th June in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. The IF (Enough Food for Everyone) campaign is organising a family friendly event to allow those who wish to express their support for this campaign that aims to eradicate world hunger this year. Kofi Annan has already agreed to speak and the Belfast Symphony Orchestra and Snow Patrol will be providing musical entertainment. Other speakers and acts will be confirmed nearer the time.

Pop song release highlights human rights abuses in North Korea



A new song aimed at drawing attention to North Korea's dire human rights crisis and inspired by the story of North Korean escapee Shin Dong-hyuk and the work of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), has been released by UK-based band Ooberfuse to mark North Korea Freedom Week. The song, 'Vanish the Night', begins with a message from Shin Dong-hyuk, who was born in a North Korean prison camp: "Don't forget us".

North Korea is the world's most closed nation, ruled by one of the world's most repressive regimes. Over 200,000 people remain in desperate conditions in the country's prison camps, where they are subjected to extreme torture, slave labour, sexual abuse and starvation. Christians are among the most oppressed in a country where there is no freedom of religion or belief.

Ooberfuse has previously released songs in memory of Pakistan's assassinated Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti, and jailed Pakistani Christian Asia Bibi, as well as the official English language song for the Catholic Church's World Youth Day.

Cherrie Anderson from Ooberfuse said, "We have joined forces with Shin Dong-hyuk who was actually born inside one of these gulags but who managed, against all odds, to escape through a deadly high-voltage barbed wire fence patrolled by soldiers with instructions to kill on sight.

"His account of the routine violence and brutality inside Camp 14 ignited our desire to respond somehow. 'Vanish the Night' calls for the lights to be turned on in what has been described as one of the darkest places on earth. Our song is a message of hope for the ordinary people of North Korea whose suffering often goes unnoticed and whose cries are largely unheard." CSW's East Asia Team Leader Benedict Rogers said, "We hope that 'Vanish the Night' will help to raise public awareness of the horrific human rights crisis in North Korea and encourage people to continue to pray and protest until we see freedom come to its citizens."

Anyone wishing to listen to 'Vanish the Night' by Ooberfuse can hear it on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s44BSXxtDAQ>

A View from the Chancel



At last the sun is shining, though there's still a chill in the air. So first a metaphor.... for us, perhaps the "sunshine" is an active Nominating Committee, with the real potential to call a new minister to work with us and our Blackmount friends. The "chill in the air" is our church finances, but I won't dwell on that here.

Springtime is always used as a metaphor for new life, refreshing, having another go, changing things for the better. Our last Stewardship programme, in 2008, resulted in some discussion about our vision of where the church in Biggar is going, and practical projects to bring this vision to reality. Most of these were put on hold due to the vacancy, but I won't dwell on that either. In fact, looking back at the strategic plan, we have carried several of them forward – probably more than I had realised.

One action was "**to develop the Newsletter**". After a couple of hesitant steps, we now have a much better model (you're reading it) with regular contributors and circulation to all members (electronically where possible, to minimise printing/environmental costs).

A second was "**to organise more community and social events**". We have had several – for example, the lunches in St Mary's Hall. The ceilidh in April was also a very enjoyable evening, with all age groups taking part, and the best ceilidh band for miles around. (OK, they're all friends of mine, but it's true).

A third, and major initiative was "**to refurbish St Mary's Hall**". A lot of planning work has been going on in the background, and, with a fair wind, this project will go ahead. Questions have been asked, rightly, about how we can afford it, when we are running at a deficit. The simple answer is that we made a commitment that the surplus from the sale of the old manse would partly fund the refurbishment, we have been offered two small grants, and we are actively fund-raising for the rest. More importantly (the less simple answer) is that if the church is to reach out to the community we need to demonstrate that we are positive, forward-looking, faithful to our commitments, and here to serve, with facilities which are fit for purpose. We **must** afford it! There is nothing more effective in strengthening

relationships, than working together towards a common goal.

Though we haven't quite been standing still, we have more work to do. And we need to pull together to review and tackle some of the other challenges in our strategic plan. Although it will be really stimulating and invigorating to call a new minister, we cannot and should not rely on him or her to do it all for us. We'll look to our new minister for spiritual leadership, to enable and harness all our pent-up energy. Between us, we have lots of skills and talents which can be, and are being, put to good use. We must prepare for, and embrace the positive change that this will bring.

The Oxford University Press has published the first in two volumes looking at all 700 surviving letters of Charles Wesley.

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Wesley co-founded Methodism with his brother, John, and wrote scores of hymns, including the ever popular "Hark the Herald Angels Sing".

The first volume of The Letters of Charles Wesley focuses on his correspondence between 1727 and 1756. The second volume, to be published at a later date, will include letters up to the year of his death in 1788.

The collection is kept at the world-famous John Rylands Library and many of the letters featured in the two volumes are previously unpublished. They offer Christians and researchers a fascinating insight into Wesley and the birth of Methodism, which was seen by many as a radical break from the organised religion of the day.

The two volumes are edited by Dr Gareth Lloyd of the University of Manchester's John Rylands Library and Professor Kenneth Newport of Liverpool Hope University. *"The publication of this collection will shine a light on a remarkable man living in one of the most significant periods in British history," he said. "Charles Wesley was more than just a hymn writer. As co-founder of the Methodist movement, he established a family of Churches with an estimated 75 million members and one which is still growing in many countries...In short, the letters present a rich tapestry of public, private and religious life in Britain at a time of rapid economic and social change, seen through the eyes of a man who ministered to the urban poor and mixed with the social elite."*

Further information about The Letters of Charles Wesley : Volume 1 (1728-1756) can be obtained from:
<http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199259960.do#.UYEBTiSsiSo>



'Whose we are and Whom we Serve'

The Guild held its AGM at its last meeting of the session on Monday 18th March. After business and the election of new committee members, our retiring President, Ruth Bryden, introduced Mr and Mrs Polls from Carmichael. There followed a very enjoyable evening of a lovely selection of Classical and Burns songs and music on the keyboard.

On Wednesday 1st May our ladies joined together on a coach for our Annual Outing to the Burns Museum at Alloway, first stopping at a Garden Centre for coffee and a snack. The sun shone brightly upon our arrival at the Museum and this encouraged some of our ladies to enjoy a little shopping expedition in Ayr instead. This was followed by a very delicious High Tea at the Fairfield Hotel. On our return to Biggar everyone agreed that they had had a most interesting and enjoyable day. We look forward with anticipation to our new session after the summer break.
Margaret Lawson, Retiring Secretary

Would you like to join the Team at Scripture Union Scotland?



Scripture Union Scotland have vacancies for 3 Trainee Instructors based at Lendrick Muir, near Kinross, and for 1 Trainee Instructor at Alltnacriche, near Aviemore. Salary: £200/month (increasing to £400/month on development of experience and skills) plus food and accommodation. **Starting Date: January 2014.**

Please Note: For this post, it is important that you are committed to SU Scotland's ethos, working principles and vision and are able to demonstrate this through your commitment and motivation. It is also an Occupational Requirement (Equality Act - part 1, schedule 9), that the post-holder is a committed Christian. The successful applicant will be required to become a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Scheme and the appointment will be subject to a satisfactory PVG Scheme Disclosure.

To apply please email: vacancies@suscotland.org.uk, telephone 0141 352 7634 or write to: Scripture Union Scotland, HR Dept, 70 Milton Street, Glasgow, G4 0HR. Closing date: Saturday, 31st August 2013.

Young People to take part in Pilgrimage of Hope



Dozens of young Christians will embark on a life changing journey this summer to learn about their spiritual heritage and how their faith can inspire them to make a difference in the world today.

The two-week long Pilgrimage of Hope starts in London on 15 July, where pilgrims will learn about some of the heroes of the faith.

Two days of training will be followed by three days of hands on mission and youth work in various parts of the UK. Five days of pilgrimage will then take them to Iona and Lindisfarne, where they will learn more about the sacrifices made by the early Christians to spread the message of Christianity around the UK and Europe.

Pilgrims will explore the impact of the likes of Lord Shaftesbury, William Wilberforce, and John Wesley, and the pioneering Christians of the British Isles, Aidan, Patrick and Columba.

For many of the 80 pilgrims who took part last year it was a life changing journey. "Claire, a British university student, described what it meant to her: "It was an invaluable time in which we had space to reflect ... it was a time in which I was listened to and enjoyed listening and sharing... Through this journey I feel that God is inviting me to be ready to live for him everyday, and see Jesus in every person, treat them as if they were him. He wants me to continue to listen and be prepared and courageous at uni."

Each pilgrim will be given a church-hosted mission placement where they will help run community events.

One inner city church leader, Juan Carlos, reflected on his experience hosting some of last year's pilgrims: "I learned that it is possible to approach my community. People are open and there are so many opportunities, now the job is to do the follow up reconnecting with all those who we connected with during the mission."

One of last year's pilgrims, Annelise from the USA, explained the way her thinking had changed through the pilgrimage: "I am challenged to live as Christ, to see him in others, always putting God and others first. I've learned it's a lifestyle not a belief.

The pilgrimage is being organised by Fusion Youth and Community UK. To find out more contact: <http://fusionyac.org/pilgrimage>

Church of Scotland National Youth Assembly Friday 16th to Monday 19th August, 2013 Westpark Conference Centre, Dundee



The National Youth Assembly is an annual residential event for young adults aged between 17 and 25 that have some connection with the Church of Scotland. Attracting folk from all over Scotland with different backgrounds it's a chance to worship, learn, discuss and party together.

For NYA 2013 the focus is shifting from debates to other forms of learning and decision making. Our theme for 2013 is 'Identity – who do you say I am?' so we'll be exploring what it is to be me, what it is to be in the Church of Scotland and what it is to be Scottish. Alongside all of that there will be the usual mix of small groups, workshops, worship, late night sessions and social stuff (a Scottish themed Gala Dinner and a murder mystery are being planned) – it's all very exciting so we hope you are able to join us.



So, if you are aged 17 to 25 years and have a connection with The Church of Scotland you are warmly invited to come along to the 2013 National Youth Assembly.

Cost: £105 (£65 if you are from a priority area church)

Bookings Close: 30 June 2013 - please remember places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment.

For further information: http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/events/events/national_youth_assembly

Summer Holiday Club 2013



This year's 'One Church' Holiday Club for children currently in P1 to P6 will have a theme of 'Space Academy' and will be held from 10:00am until 12:00 noon each morning during the week Monday 22nd until Friday 26th July inclusive in St. Mary's Hall.

For children interested in coming along to the Holiday Club, registration forms will be available during the month of June from local Primary Schools and the Biggar Kirk Office located in the Gillespie Centre. There is NO charge for the Holiday Club, however monetary donations on the day would be greatly appreciated towards the cost of juice and snacks for the children.

