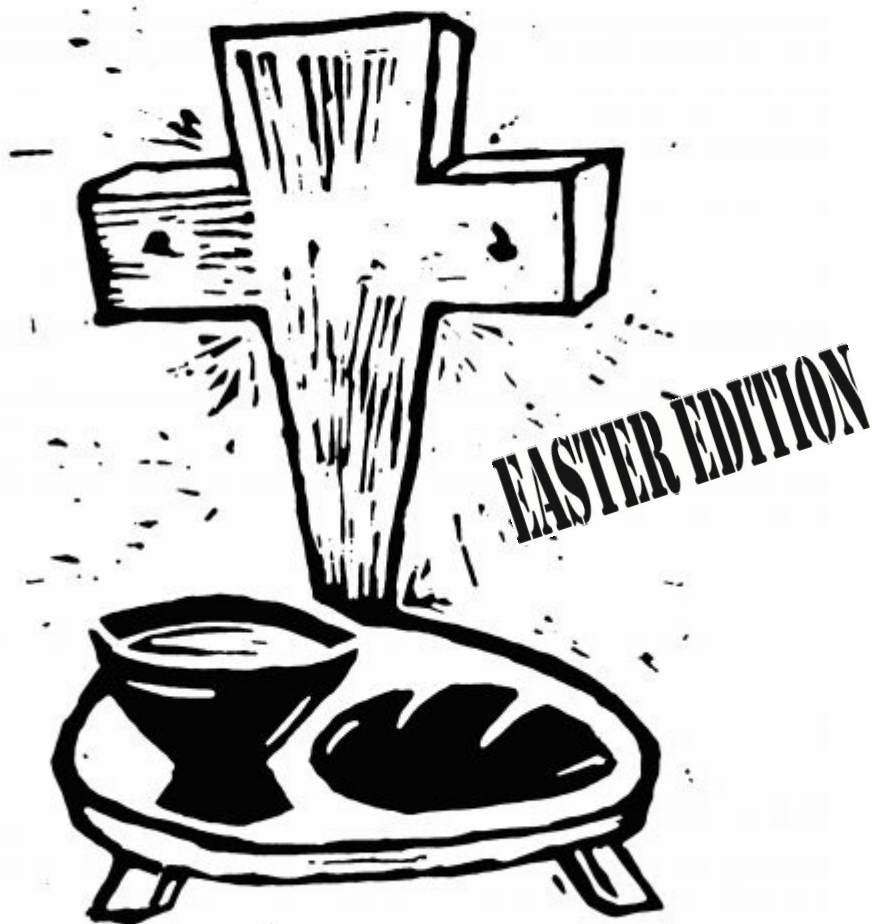


News & Views

Biggar Kirk

Here for You



March 2014

From the Minister

Mike Fucella

I really enjoyed my first Christmas in Biggar. It was great to join with many of you for the late night shopping on November 29 and then to have so many folk join us for the various Christmas services. Many came to school assemblies, the Christingle Service, the watch-night service on Christmas eve and our Christmas morning all-age service. It was a busy, yet joyful time. I am now looking forward to celebrating my first Biggar Easter. You will see the full schedule of events for Lent, Holy Week and Easter on pages 6-7 of this newsletter. Do join us for any or all of these events.

Jesus not only taught his disciples to do what he said, but he also showed them how to live by his example. Many would say that Church folk are just the opposite of what they should be. At times that has, sadly, been true. Because we feel we can do better, at this time between Christmas

and Easter the folks at Biggar Kirk have been looking at the fruit of the Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit are all those things that made Jesus so appealing --his love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We have decided to commit ourselves once again to relying on God's strength and trying to become more like Jesus in all those ways-- not just for our own sake, but so that the world can, by God's grace, be a better place. Why not come and see how we are doing? I hope you'll be surprised.

Yours,

Mike

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Biggar Guild

Supporting Projects that Change the World

Kathleen Roger
Guild Project Co-ordinator

126 years ago Professor Archibald Charteris, a great man of the Church, rallied and challenged the Christian women of Scotland to get together in practical service to their church. This began as they discovered a need for bed-linen and other medical equipment in a small hospital in North India. With great enthusiasm the women of the Church of Scotland took up this challenge and for many years they sewed, knitted and raised money for this project. Today we are glad to be able to contribute in this way by supporting "our projects".

The Guild are given 6 projects for 3 years and Biggar Guild have chosen to give to the first 3 on the list:

- **Heart for Art:**
helping dementia patients in Scotland
- **The Julius Project:**
to help homeless people in Scotland
- **Mary's Meals:**
a school-feeding programme in Liberia

- **Comfort Rwanda:**
to build houses for widows
- **Out of Africa:**
to help refugees from Africa in to Malta
- **Passage from India:**
self-help groups of women in Scotland.

All of these are very worthwhile causes and we are doing our best to help them.

In addition, some of our members have recently started knitting little vests and hats for "Fish and Chip Babies" (i.e. African babies born in hospital who have to be sent home wrapped in newspaper because they have no clothes for them). Many hundreds of these garments have gone to Africa and are now keeping babies warm. There is always need and there is always something we can do. Please consider joining us as we meet on a Monday evening. You will be made most welcome. This is a good and practical way to witness to "Whose we are and whom we serve".

Clydesdale Food Bank

Helping neighbours closer to home

Caroline Deerin



Did you know that over 25 households in the Biggar area have been helped through the Clydesdale Food Bank in

the last six months?

In 2011 an audit done by three churches in Carluke highlighted that food poverty was becoming more and more of an issue in the area and the possibility of creating a food bank was proposed. New Beginnings in Carluke had already been providing food starter parcels for people who were homeless or had recently been allocated housing, as well as providing emergency food parcels in response to a range of scenarios.

In 2012 the three churches agreed to develop a food bank in association with New Beginnings. Thus the Clydesdale Food Bank was born. Referrals soon arrived from all areas of Clydesdale and it was clear that satellite branches were needed to deal with local deliveries. Calls for help went out through the churches in the area and they were quick to respond.

There are now five satellite branches of the food bank operational in Forth, Carstairs Junction, Biggar, Douglas and Kirkmuirhill/Lesmahagow.

Official launch events were held in the Tesco stores of Carluke, Lanark and Lesmahagow and these highlighted the need for the public to help through donating food and money. The response was amazing.



The service has already dealt with over 250 referrals, helping 420 people. In the Biggar area alone we have been able to respond to many referrals. The churches, shops, schools and communities in the area have been large contributors through generous donations of food, money and Christmas gifts for children. Without this support, the Food Bank would be unable to help so many individuals and families.

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Each food delivery includes long life food such as tinned soup and vegetables, cereal and biscuits as well as household essentials such as toilet rolls and washing-up liquid. In addition some fresh food is bought specifically for each delivery. In Biggar we have been able to reduce this cost through the community commitment of Jane and Ranauld Brown who own Biggar Flavour and The Orchard. Any bread, rolls etc not sold at the end of the day are given to the

branch for freezing and thus available when referrals arrive.

The service relies on volunteers to pack and deliver food and to collate food donations and take them to the Food Bank in Carlisle. We now have a small team of individuals in the area who undertake these tasks but there is always room for more.

If you would like to donate food or become involved please call Caroline Deerin, Volunteer Co-ordinator, on 01899 220224.

Biggar Kirk Finances

As with any organisation the Church needs a regular income to survive. We are grateful to all those who contributed to the work of the church over the years, but we have not been doing so well of late. In the last six years our expenditure has exceeded our income. We have committed ourselves to cutting back on as much spending as we can, but it is also important that those who are able continue to support the vital work of the Church. If you would like to make a regular contribution or just a one off gift it would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact:

Anna Boyd
01899-220068
anna7boyd@gmail.com



For Christians the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the pivotal event of all of history! Come and explore with us the meaning of both the cross and the empty tomb this year in Biggar Kirk.

Lent 5 March - 13 April

Throughout the 40 days of Lent, Christians prepare to celebrate Easter by committing more time in prayer and other spiritual disciplines. Some people may very well 'give something up' in order to concentrate more on preparing their hearts for Easter.

At Biggar Kirk this year each Sunday during Lent we will be looking at the different Spiritual disciplines - prayer, fasting, contemplation and meditation, and giving and forgiving.

We are also taking up the challenge to be more generous during Lent by following the suggestions on the website www.40acts.org.uk (check it out if you have internet access.)

Holy Week 14 April - 18 April

We meet for services every day during Holy Week at 7 pm. On Maundy Thursday we will celebrate Holy Communion together and on Good Friday we will have a Service together with the Black Mount Congregation in Dolphinton.

Easter Day 20 April

At 7:00 am on Easter morning we will gather on The Knock to have a brief sunrise service. We will then head off to St. Mary's Hall for a special Easter morning breakfast. Then at 11:15 am we will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus with an all—age service including an Easter egg hunt!

Easter Holiday Club

Looking after God's World and exploring Easter

Anne Smart



This year we have decided to hold our holiday club in the Easter holidays instead of the summer. We hope children will enjoy being with us for a fun-

filled few days and will then come and bring their families to celebrate Easter with us on the Sunday. (There will even be an Easter egg hunt in the church!!)

The club will be in St Mary's hall from 10am until 12 midday from Monday 14th – Thursday 17th of April.

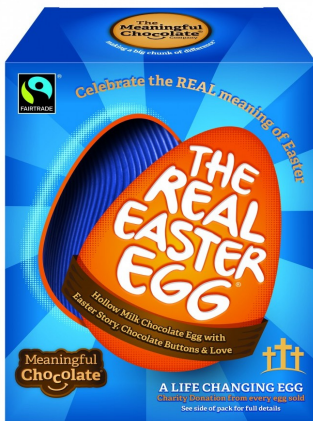
We will, as always, be offering crafts, stories, drama, music and games as we explore Bible stories together. Our theme this time is Waste watchers and we will be thinking

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about the wonder of God's creation as well as exploring some amazing stories about Jesus. The club will also encourage children to be eco-friendly –looking after God's world.

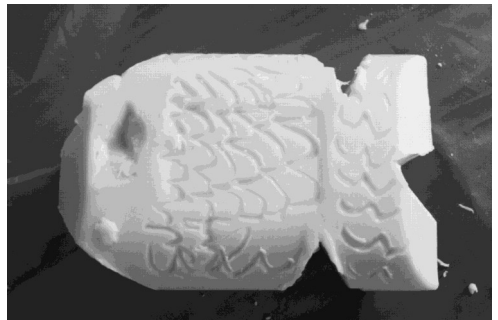
The club is for primary school age children. We are restricted to a maximum of 50 children



Get Your Real Easter Eggs

Fairly traded Belgian chocolate Easter Eggs complete with a 24 page kid-friendly Easter story book. On sale in St. Mary's Hall after the morning service every Sunday during Lent.

so do please book early to ensure a place. Attendance is free – we just need people to register so we know numbers and can group children together. Registration forms are available from Biggar primary School Office and the Church Office in the Gillespie Centre.



Soap carving of a fish – one of the many crafts the kids did at the last holiday club



Messy Church is fun for the whole family so kids, bring your parents along and join

Messy Church is full of activity and creativity with games, arts and crafts. Messy Church offers friendship and food—we always share a yummy meal together.

Dates coming up:

- Friday April 4th Easter Messy Church 4pm-6pm at Black Mount Church, Dolphinton
- Saturday May 17th 4pm-6pm St Mary's Hall, Biggar
- Saturday 31st May 4pm-6pm at Black Mount Church, Dolphinton

For more information about Messy Church contact Jane Fucella 01899 229291 or Hazel Knight 01899 810348.

Wee Worship

Do you have pre-school age children? If so we would love you to join us with your kids at Wee Worship. We meet during term time on the first Wednesday of every month between 11.45am and 12.45pm in St. Marys Hall. It is a great social time. We start by eating our packed lunches together. We then learn about God in a fun interactive way through crafts, stories, songs and games.

If you would be interested in coming along to Wee Worship or if you would like more information please contact Nicola Campbell on 01899 221942

Young Women's Group Reunion

Lorna MacDougall



"Biggar Kirk Young Woman's Group" (formally known as The Mother's Fellowship in Gillespie Moat Park church and St Mary's church) continued as one group when the churches joined in 1976. The group held regular afternoon meetings when a short service of worship was followed by a talk or demonstration and then a cup of tea. Many former members look back at these meetings as a welcome break from their young children. The children were looked after in an adjacent hall by a wonderful group of "aunties" with enormous patience and kindness while the meetings took place. The children's ages ranged from new borns to primary age who arrived full of energy at the crèche after school. Without these ladies our

meetings could not have taken place.

As well as the regular meetings many social and fundraising events for church and charity were held-----children's parties , coffee mornings, fashion shows, concerts, jumble sales and perhaps the highlight of the year " The Gala Day Lorry" The busy members worked hard together in a spirit of fellowship and many lifelong friendships were formed.

Sadly the group was disbanded in the early nineties due to dwindling numbers as more and more new mothers returned to work.

Most former members look back at their time in the group with

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great fondness. It was a time of fun and laughter where we supported each other through good times and difficult times. (the Aunties also supported the mums with quiet words of wisdom).

We hope this reunion will be full of happy memories when we can rekindle some of the spirit which we enjoyed throughout its existence."

Plans are now well underway for the reunion of all former members of Biggar Young Women's group being held on Friday 21st March in the Elphinstone Hotel, Biggar.

About 80 invitations have already been distributed and many positive replies have been received. We are aware that some

past members may not have received an invitation - please do not be offended - it is some time since BYWG was active and our memories are maybe not as sharp as they were!! If you were a member and would like to come to the reunion, please contact one of the names below and we would be very happy for you to join us.

In the meantime, if you have any photos or other memorabilia, please look them out and either give them to one of the members below or bring them along on the night.

We are looking forward to a happy relaxed evening full of fellowship, memories, chat, song and laughter.

For further information, please contact:

Lorna MacDougall:
lornamacdougall@hotmail.co.uk
(01899-220212)

Sue Pacey:
springdale40@tiscali.co.uk, or
Kathleen Tawse:
kathleentawse@hotmail.co.uk

News from the World Church

Ratchatewi Church, Bangkok, Thailand

Mike Fucella

In the world today there are over 2 billion Christians. Most of them are not located in the Northern Hemisphere but in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Whereas in Scotland the Church is declining numerically, in other places around the world it is growing at a phenomenal rate.

I had the privilege of being part of one growing church in Asia. Ratchatewi Church in Bangkok, Thailand is only two years old but has grown from its original size of 20 members to 50 members in that relatively short space of time. The church does not have its own building but rents a meeting place for its weekly services.

Most members in the church are below the age of 30 with the majority made up of university students and young professionals.

Since its inception Ratchatewi Church has dedicated itself to caring for those less advantaged in society. Elder Daw who is employed in the food industry visited a project in one the most infamous slums in Bangkok and was inspired to get involved. He

has since helped the slum community to start a bakery. He and other members of the church visit the slum community every week and during the school



Elder Daw

holidays last summer took kids from the slum on a holiday camp to the seaside.

Folk at Ratchatewi are keen to have a partnership with Biggar Kirk and pray for us regularly. In May two of their members will visit.

March 2014

Pastoral Care

The Church Caring in the Community

Mike Fucella

We hear so much about the difficulties that government social services face in trying to provide care in the community these days. With the rise in the average age of the population this is not surprising. But did you know that the Church has



*Susan Littlejohn, Ann Hamilton and
Rev. George Shand at The Bield for a
mid-week service.*

provided care for the hospitalised, housebound and those living in care homes for decades?

Biggar Kirk has a team of dedicated pastoral carers. They visit and organise special worship services in homes and care homes throughout the parish. All of our visitors have the required safe guarding qualifications and they follow a code of practice to keep themselves and the people they care for safe.

The team together with local ministers visit at least one care home per week to lead a worship service. These include The Bield, Greenhills, Abbeyfield and the Gillespie Centre Lunch Club.

If you would like a visit from the team or know of someone else who could use a visit or if you would like to volunteer for this fulfilling ministry please contact:

Jean Shearer— 01899- 221505
jeanhsh@live.co.uk

or

Ann Hamilton—01899-221055

Flower Guild

Brightening Hearts as well as Church Services

Do you ever wonder where the beautiful flowers that decorate every church service come from? They do not appear magically but are the product of a lot of hard work by a dedicated team who give of their time, talents, finances and yes, flowers from their own gardens.

Not only do the flowers brighten the church services even through the bleakest of winter months, but they are also distributed to those in the Biggar community who could use some cheering up. After the service the flowers are rearranged and taken to people who are ill, bereaved or housebound or who are celebrating a special occasion like a birthday or an anniversary.

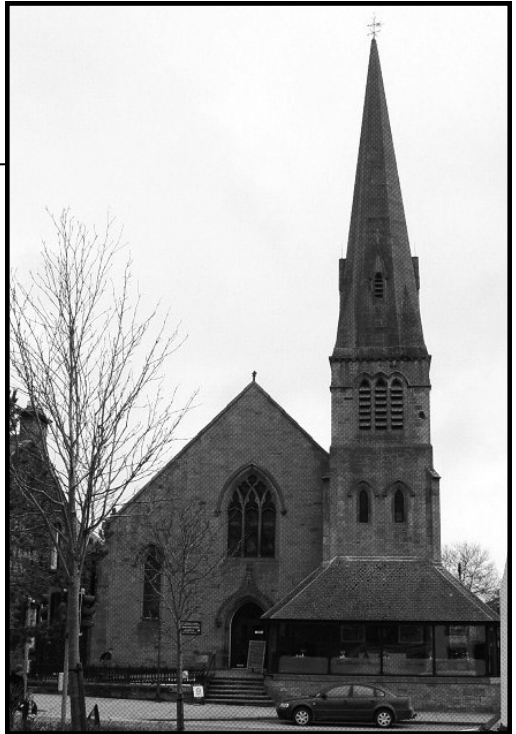
Many of those who have received flowers from the guild have written cards and letters to say how much they appreciate this act of kindness and thoughtfulness from the congregation at Biggar Kirk.



Our Halls

Benefitting Church & Community

Not only does Biggar Kirk provide the building for The Gillespie Association to continue its great work in our community, but we also have another building-- St. Mary's Hall on North Back Road. The Hall is used by many other organisations including the Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Explorers. We are in the midst of plans to renovate this building to make it even more useful for the church and the community.



The Gillespie Centre – Biggar High Street



*St. Mary's Hall - North
Back Road*

*See the back page of this
newsletter for information
about booking St. Mary's for
your club or special event.*

Contact us

If you would like to get married in Biggar Kirk, become a member or arrange for a baptism or a funeral please contact the Minister.

If you are interested in joining 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 happy to serve you

Minister	Rev Mike Fucella	01899-229291 mike@fishwrapper.net
Administrator	Mrs Elaine Fyfe	07532-266505 St.maryskirk09@hotmail.com

Our Office is located on the ground floor of the Gillespie Centre. Our opening hours are Tuesday (10:00-12:00), Thursday and Friday (9:00-12:00) and Wednesday (9:00-4:00).



Please join our facebook group: **Biggar Kirk**



We are also on the web: www.biggar Kirk.btck.co.uk