

# From the Minister

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We are well used to the nativity stories in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke – with the angels, the shepherds, the star and the wise men. We all probably played our part in a nativity play or two when we were children.

But what about the Nativity story in John's Gospel? Our theme for the advent season this year comes from that Gospel. In John's story there is no reference to sheep, Bethlehem or even angels. What John gives us, instead, is the big picture. John tells us what the cosmic significance of Christ's coming was.

According to John, in Christ at Christmas the light of God stepped down into darkness bringing his light into the world.

For all of us who know only too well how dark the dark can be in our world and in our own hearts this is truly good news.

C.S. Lewis, that famous apologist of Christian faith in the last century, once said,



*"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."*

May we this advent season, because of the light that was given to us that first Christmas, learn to see not only the magnificence of Christ, but also to see everything else—our lives, our relationships, our community and our world in the hopefulness Christ's light gives us.

*"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never put it out...This was the real light—the light that comes into the world and shines on everyone." (John 1:5,9)*

**Mike Fucella**

# Biggar Kirk Guild

*Frances Henderson - President*

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The 2015 - 18 strategy for the Guild is 'Be Bold Be Strong' and this year's theme is 'Go in Joy'. The Guild meet regularly in St Mary's Hall at 7:30 pm from the first Monday in October until April and we enjoy a varied programme of speakers. During the months of May to September we meet monthly for a cup of tea and a time of fellowship which provides our members with fellowship over the summer months.

We began this year's new session with a talk looking at our theme 'Joy'. In November we were treated to a demonstration of floral art and discussed how colour and flowers can bring about 'Joy'. We are planning a very special 'Guest Night' in mid-November when we will be entertained by three members of the Royal Scottish Ballet who will discuss costumes and the music played in the ballet Hansel and Gretel which the ballet company are performing during this Christmas season. Looking forward, our annual Coffee Morning is due to be held on 12th November (10am - 11:30am) and in December we are looking forward to our



Christmas meal at the Barony in Biggar.

This year, Biggar Guild are providing support both financially and prayerfully to three projects 'Feed the Minds', 'All Friends Together' and 'Street Pastors'. To date, across Scotland, the Guild have raised £238,349 in support of these three projects, in addition to another three projects.

Our meetings keep us aware of issues both at home and abroad and we enjoy fellowship together through prayer, speakers, discussions and song.

The Church of Scotland Guild has been running for 129 years and is still a very important and positive part of the work and witness of Church life in Scotland. We welcome all to come along either as a guest or as a new member.

# Visiting Biggar Kirk

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Every year we welcome visitors to Open Church and to Sunday Services and it has been a joy to meet fellow Christians who have shared worship and times of prayer with us. We have enjoyed the company of cyclists (on their journey from Edinburgh to Newcastle), regular visitors spending time with family, folks enjoying the local caravan site and many others visiting Biggar Kirk for the first time. I invited a few of our visitors to write a short contribution for inclusion in News and Views and feel blessed and encouraged in sharing this with you.

***Caz Alcorn - Editor***

I visited Biggar Kirk in July along with two friends while on holiday. We were welcomed very warmly and made to feel at home especially over coffee after the service. The service focussed on the work of Open Doors. We were really

impressed with the presentation involving several members of the congregation, particularly enjoying the reading using different voices. The part that had most impact on us was the film clip of Maryam explaining how her faith was helping her and that her one desire was to return to her home in Syria. Who would not be moved by her plain speaking; her simple but real trust in God shone through. Since returning home the message of the service has stayed with me and I have looked at the Open Doors website and prayed more often for those who are refugees. The service certainly made me stop and think about my attitude towards refugees and what my Christian response should be. I have mentioned the format of the service to our vicar and asked that we consider doing

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something similar in the autumn. Thank you for a stimulating and thought provoking service.

We attend Holy Trinity Church Matlock Bath and I hope we would extend a similar warm welcome to anyone visiting the beautiful Derbyshire countryside.

***Sheila, John and Hazel***

My wife and I have been regular visitors to Biggar Kirk over the past 6 years because of family connections, and have really appreciated both the ministry and the fellowship. We have always been made to feel very welcome, in an inclusive atmosphere both during the service and at coffee afterwards.

Biggar Kirk comes across to us not only as a 'church' in the sense of a beautiful old building (which it certainly is), but as an assembly of God's people, which is what a real church should be. There is a sense of peace, a sense of God's presence, attached to it. It has been very encouraging to see the growth of the congregation over the period we have been visiting, which has embraced the ministry of both Mike and Jane, but also of David Easton before them - and the expansion of the ministry in the wider Biggar area. It is good to see how Biggar Kirk has been able to bring together the Christians in the area, and is so involved in the wider community.

We are members of Gilcomston Church in Aberdeen, and I know that anyone who is visiting Aberdeen would be very

welcome. I should add that Biggar Kirk is known at Gilcomston, in that David Easton as a young man was under the 'care' of the late Rev Wm Still, minister for 53 years and we at Gilcomston prayed both for Mike and Jane long before we actually met them in Biggar.

We have greatly enjoyed getting to know many of you.

***Percy and Hazel***

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September we had the privilege of sharing in the Sunday Evening All Age Worship and Supper whilst visiting a very special and best friend. This was held in the newly renovated St. Mary's Hall. What a wonderful facility, beautifully decorated and with a kitchen any catering establishment would be proud of. We also shared in a lovely meal with desserts to die for! The thing that really hit home to us was the number of young families and children you have that attend the worship. Biggar Kirk should be so proud of this and really cherish them, many churches would give their right arm to have so many in that age group. Everyone felt so clearly relaxed and part of this Church Family. We really enjoyed the worship time which gave us food for thought whilst still including the younger members. This had obviously taken much planning and skill to appeal in that way. God is clearly at work here and it was a joy to be with you. We will be back!

***Mike & Marian. North Wales***

# Men's Breakfast

*John Turnbull*

The idea has been around in church circles for many years: provide a hearty breakfast and an interesting speaker and men will come. So it was that on 10 September around twenty five men gathered in St. Mary's Hall to enjoy a 'full Scottish' cooked by ladies who



obviously knew that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

It was of course also our hearts for God that we came to have nourished and our speaker Alastair Muir, a serving police officer in Glasgow certainly did that as he gave us an almost 'no holds barred' (one or two ladies had slipped in!) account of his life that was both inspiring and challenging.

Like a modern prodigal son he left home on an impulse to join the police in

London – 'enjoyed' bad company – made some money – left the police – travelled the world sampling strange religious practices along the way - then returned home when his money ran out.

Two particular experiences however led to a complete change of direction in his life and both revealed how hugely influential our willingness to speak the name of Jesus can be in the lives of others. The first came during his time hitch-hiking in Canada when it seemed as if every driver who gave him a lift spoke to him about knowing Jesus. The second came during his time at the Scottish Police College where, on re-joining the police he shared a dormitory with a colleague who openly read his Bible and later invited him to join him at a Scripture Union Holiday Camp. Having nothing better to do at the time, he accepted the invitation and by the end of the week, in simple faith he believed in Christ and accepted him as his Saviour leading to a whole new chapter in his life that would take too long to tell here.

We all left greatly encouraged by what we had heard, some of us no doubt thinking about our own stories. Look out for the next one and be sure to come.

# Meet a Biggar Kirk Member

*Mike Chad*



**Occupation:** Business consultant/analyst/ facilitator, and failed philanthropist.

**Age:** 69

**Who (people) and what (pets) share your home?** Daphne and I have been married for 45 years. No pets now. Used to have cats, but when the last one got run over, we couldn't bear to risk it happening again.

**How did you come to live in this area?** My job moved from the west coast to Edinburgh (36 years ago) and I needed to be able to commute. We realised that there's nowhere else we'd rather be.

**What would you save if your house was on fire?** Daphne. Anything else can be replaced.

**What quality do you most admire in a person?** Honesty, integrity, empathy, lack of ego, and commitment to use their talents for the well-being of others.

**What is your favourite Bible verse and why?** John 13:34 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another”. Says it all, really.

**What miracle would you like to work?** Sorry to sound glib and unoriginal, but PEACE ON EARTH. Recent pictures from Syria and Yemen are just heart-breaking. Sadly, yes it would be a miracle.

**What is the best advice you have ever been given?** “The more you give, the more you receive” (which has provenance in Luke 6:38), also, as an older wiser colleague used to quote from Shakespeare: “present fears are less than terrible imaginings” –

**Do you have a favourite hymn or song and why?** “Love Divine, all Loves Excelling” (which should only ever be sung to Blaenwern). A favourite of my parents which takes me back to the church where I grew up. The last four lines are quoted in a memorial to my mother, which is in that church.

**What book are you currently reading?** “More Human” by Steve Hilton. Recommended reading for anyone who wants to change the world for the better.

**What is your most treasured item and why?** Not really interested in

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“stuff” though I seem to accumulate far too much of it. If I’m really pushed, I’d have to say that my most *useful* item is my smartphone, which enables communication, and access to a vast

range of information when I need it.

***Name your desert island essentials?*** A piano, running water, BBC Radio 3.....

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## From Parent to Child - *Anon*

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I gave you life but I cannot live it for you.

I can teach you things but I cannot make you learn.

I can give you direction but I cannot push you there.

I can allow you freedom but I cannot account for it.

I can take you to church but I cannot make you believe.

I can teach you right from wrong but I cannot decide for you.

I can buy you beautiful clothes but I cannot make you beautiful inside.

I can teach you respect but I cannot force you to show honour.

I can offer you advice but I cannot take it for you.

I can give you love but I cannot force it

upon you.

I can teach you to share but I cannot make you unselfish.

I can advise you about your friends but I cannot choose them for you.

I can explain about the facts of life but I cannot build your reputation.

I can tell you about drugs but I cannot say ‘no’ for you.

I can warn you about sin but I cannot make your morals.

I can help you set goals but I cannot achieve them for you.

I can teach you about kindness but I cannot force you to be gracious.

I can pray for you but I cannot make you walk with God.

I can tell you how to live but I cannot give you eternal life.



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

# WHAT'S H

## YOUTH FELLOW

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6:30 – 7:30

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6:30 – 7:30 (followed by Tai

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Dec, 6:30 – 7:30

St Mary's Hall, North Back Rd, Biggar

## Quarterly Communion

11.15am

Sunday 30th October

Sunday 29th January 2017

## Taize S

27th M

26th Febru

## Remembrance 'All-Age' Service

13th November

War Memorial - 10:50am

Church - 11:15am

## 'Wee' Worship

St. Mary's Hall - 12 noon

2nd November; 7th December

1st February; 1st March 2017

## Afternoon

St. Mary's Ha

11th December (c

## Messy Church

12th November (Blackmount) : 4pm - 6pm

10th December (St. Mary's Hall, Biggar) : 4pm - 6pm

21st January 2017 (Blackmount) : 4pm - 6pm

25th February (St. Mary's Hall, Biggar) : 11am - 1pm

18th March (Blackmount) : 4pm - 6pm

22nd April (St. Mary's Hall, Biggar) : 11am - 1pm

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Hope to meet every 2-weeks from the New Year. Contact the Minister for information.

## Prayer Meetings

**Gillespie Centre**

Sunday Morning : 10.15am

**St. Mary's Hall**

Sunday Evening : 7:30pm

**3 South Back Road**

Thursday morning : 9:00am

## Service

7:30pm  
November  
January 2017

## All Age Evening Worship

**Food and Fellowship 5pm at St. Mary's Hall**

30th October; 20th November; 4th December  
15th January; 19th February; 16th March 2017

## Biggar Guild Coffee Mornings

**St. Mary's Hall - 10am - 12 noon**

12th November

11th February 2017

## Services

**11 - 2:00pm**  
(communion)

## Bible Study

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

## Biggar

## ate Night'

## hopping

th November

## Biggar Kirk Quiz

**St. Mary's Hall - 7:00pm for 7:30pm**

3rd February

## Note from the Editor - Caz Alcorn

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As a Church Family we are blessed every day - blessed in our faith and by our friends and family. We all have times in our life when we are challenged. Having been on the receiving end of both prayerful and practical support I have been really blessed at a time of challenge and change to find a bunch of flowers on my doorstep nearly every week of last summer and boxes containing Supper -- enough to feed my family on return from hospital visiting, not to mention the newly laid eggs and comfort eating opportunities in the form of delicious cakes and well received DIY support and above all feeling a sense of belonging! The quote that comes to mind is:

***You can give without loving, but  
you cannot love without giving  
(Amy Carmichael)***

The folks involved in preparing and receiving meals have been really blessed and I am delighted to share this comment from Nyisha.....

*"My second pregnancy, along with the birth of my beautiful daughter, Robyn, brought with it many trials and tribulations. None more pressing than upon receiving blood test results, that my due date had been brought forward so instead of three weeks I had three days to prepare!*

*Suffice to say much chaos and panic and although I had the majority of things from the birth of my firstborn, Eli, there was the matter of rescheduling flights for my family and re-jigging time of annual leave for*



*friends and other family members. Not to mention my beloved plans for the weeks of winding down and pampering and cooking meals to then freeze for ease post-delivery went out the window.*

*So it was a huge relief to know that during that initial first fortnight home,*

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*we had meals cooked and provided for us by our lovely fellow church-goers, thanks to the amazing 'Meals For New Mums' scheme.*

*Every day I looked forward to not only the beautifully cooked and thoughtfully prepared meals and desserts (oh we ate well!), but also and more importantly, the company. Each visit was like a welcomed distraction from my painful recovery from the C-section so rather than enter the usual 'New Mama AKA Hermit' territory, it was a lovely chance to have a little chat over some tea and cake and/or introduce my little one to a new friend. These visits truly became the highlight of each day. Not only was this uplifting but also a way*

*to stay connected with the Church and create tighter and new bonds with members of the church.*

*As someone who had suffered previously from a bout of Post-natal depression and took a while to reintroduce themselves back into the community many months later, I found this scheme very refreshing and would recommend it to any if not all new mums who are Biggar Kirk Members. If only to feel like you're being pampered for a fortnight with amazing food (tailored to your tastes/needs I might add), great company and a chance to coo over your new bubs. Perfect."*

**Nyisha**

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## Gillespie Centre News - Gillespie Association

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### **Volunteer Recognition**

Without the volunteers the GCA would not be the local community hub that so many hold dear. In their words, we would like to share a few comments they have made, explaining just what makes the GCA such a special place to them:

**Nan Agnew** – *"I have been a volunteer for 18 years now and I enjoy my role serving the local community, this enables me to meet new people."*

Nan recently accepted the Volunteer of the Year Award, on behalf of all of the hard working volunteers within GCA.

Nan has also been part of our recruitment panel, representing the values of volunteering to all interview candidates.

**Nanette Stott** – *"I too have been a volunteer for almost 18 years and I joined to meet new people and have stayed so long because I now consider them to be like family."*

Nanette was invited to appear in a publicity photograph with members of the EMS National Chamber Music Day

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in our Bit of Culture Community Event which took place on 17 September because of her impressive musical background.

**May Cameron** – *“I have been a volunteer since the Centre began when the local Minister Cameron Mackenzie wanted a place for the local community to meet. I’m sure he would be glad to see his vision is still going strong.”*

We are grateful to May’s long standing volunteer commitment and her gifted musical talents.

We are fortunate to have such a wonderful team of volunteers who create a warm and friendly atmosphere. We are always looking to recruit new members to join our amazing volunteer team and if you feel you could spare your time and talents please call in and speak with volunteers or staff.

Extended thanks to Linda Struthers, Mike Chad and the volunteers for delivering a wonderful community musical event with Granny Green, featured with our poster girl Nanette Stott.

Our ***Celebration of Diversity Community Event*** on 15 October was

also hosted by our wonderful volunteers and Lynne McSpadden our kitchen assistant. People were able to sample award winning food from the Taj Mahal and enjoy traditional homemade Lassi drinks. Everyone marvelled at the Bhangra Dancers from MYB Bollywood Dance Group and were amazed by the Dhol Drumming Talents of the VIP Dholies who gave a traditional welcome.

***Biggar Late Night Shopping*** is scheduled for 25th November from 6pm – 10pm and will be a joint venture with local crafters and businesses and Gillespie Centre. We will be serving hot food from 5.30pm until 8.00pm.

The ***Biggar Community Christmas Fayre*** takes place on 3rd December from 10.00am – 1.00pm and if you require a table please make a request to Sharon or the staff team. All tables are booked on a donation basis which is collected on the day.

Citizen Advice Bureau will be offering their service within the Gillespie Centre on Wednesday afternoons from 3pm - 5pm during the months of October 2016 - March 2017.

## Pastoral Update

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### ***Admitted to Roll by Certificate of Transference (into Biggar Kirk)***

Mr David and Mrs Carolyn Wardrop-White

Mr Timothy (Tim) and Mrs Emily Rennie

Mr Michael (Mike) Nisbet

### ***Wedding Congratulations*** ***12th March***

Melissa McBride to Michael Trayner

### ***24th June***

Kathryn Scott to Gordon McMorran

### ***8th July***

Catherine (Kate) Shannon to Steven Noble

### ***28th August***

Natalie Bretherick to David Jackson

### ***Deaths***

We offer deepest sympathy to the families of those who have died recently assuring them of our prayers.

### ***June***

Mark Hope

### ***July***

William McAlister

### ***August***

Margaret Michie

### ***October***

Mrs Anne Neville

Mr Thomas Black



# Wee ones in Church

*Jamie Bruesehoff*

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Jamie Bruesehoff is a mum, pastor's wife, runner, camp director and writer. She strives to live and parent with love, grace, and courage. Jamie writes honestly about parenting her spirited children, faith, her struggle with depression and anxiety, running, and of course, those \*that\* mom moments when motherhood leaves her doing things she never imagined or even swore she'd never do-further information can be found in Jamie's Blog, 'I Am Totally \*That\* Mom'

You are doing something really, *really* important. I know it's not easy. I see you with your arms overflowing, and I know you came to church already tired. Parenting is tiring. Really tiring. I watch you bounce and sway trying to keep the baby quiet, juggling the infant car seat and the nappy bag as you find a seat. I see you wince as your child cries. I see you anxiously pull things out of your bag of tricks to try to quiet them. And I see you with your toddler and your preschooler. I watch you cringe when your little girl

asks an innocent question in a voice that might not be an inside voice let alone a church whisper. I hear the exasperation in your voice as you *beg* your child to just sit, to be quiet as you feel everyone's eyes on you. Not everyone is looking, but I know it feels that way.

*When you are here, the church is filled with a joyful noise.*

*When you are here, the Body of Christ is more fully present.*

When you are here, we are reminded that this worship thing we do isn't about bible study or personal, quiet contemplation but coming together to worship as a community where all are welcome, where

we share in the Word and Sacrament together. When you are here, I have hope that these pews won't be empty in 10 years when your kids are old enough to *sit quietly and behave in worship*. I know that they are learning how and why we worship now, before it's too late. They are learning that worship is important.

*I see them learning. In the midst of the*



*cries, whines, and giggles, in the midst of the crinkling of crisp bags and the growing pile of crumbs, I see a little girl who insists on going two pews up to share peace with someone she's never met. I hear a little boy slurping (quite loudly) every last drop of his communion wine out of the cup, determined not to miss a drop of Jesus.*

I watch a child excitedly colour a cross and point to the one in the front of the sanctuary. I hear the echoes of "Amen's" just a few seconds after the rest of the community says it together. I watch a boy just learning to read try to sound out the words in the worship book or count his way to Hymn 672. Even on weeks when I can't see my own children learning because, well, it's one of *those* mornings, I can see your children learning.

I know how hard it is to do what you're doing, but I want you to know *it matters*. It matters to me. It matters to my children to not be alone in the pew. It matters to the congregation to know that families care about faith, to see young people... and even on those weeks when you can't see the little moments, it matters to your children. It really matters that they learn that worship is what we do as a community of faith, that everyone is welcome, that *their* worship matters. When we teach

children that their worship matters, we teach them that they are *enough* right here and right now as members of the church community. They don't need to wait until they can believe, pray or worship a certain way to be welcome here, and I know adults who are still looking to be shown that. It matters that children learn that they are an integral part of this church, that their prayers, their songs, and even their badly (or perfectly-timed, depending on who you ask) cries and whines *are* a joyful noise because it means they are present.

I know it's hard, but thank you for what you do when you bring your children to church. Please know that your family — with all of its noise, struggle, commotion, and joy — are not simply tolerated, you are a vital part of the community gathered in worship.

***This post originally appeared on I Am Totally \*That\* Mom and further posts can be found at : <http://iamtotallythatmom.blogspot.co.uk/>***





## **Christmas Services**

### **18th December**

Blue' Christmas Service - 3:00pm

Carol Service (Blackmount Church) - 6:30pm

### **24th December**

Christingle - 4:30pm

Watchnight Service - 11:30pm

### **25th December**

Christmas Day 'All-Age'

