

# The Herald

Castlehill Parish Church

Spring 2019

*I am the Light of the world*

## Editorial

Our front cover depicts a dismal scene of darkness and almost destruction. The empty crosses portraying death and despair. There is however a shining light appearing from the gloom. And what has caused that light to shine? The giant stone has been rolled away. It sits at the side, and so easily it could roll back. Our present world can depict a dark and dismal picture, but that can be changed if we would only step forward and roll away the stone and let some light into the darkness.

The stone is heavy and it takes effort to move it away to reveal the light, and so often we do not bother. If we learn nothing from the Easter story other than that the tomb was empty and that it held the Light of the World, then that might be sufficient. Let us help each other to bring back the light.

**Wellwood Grierson Editor**

### **Castlehill Parish Church, 1, Old Hillfoot Road, Ayr KA7 3LW**

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<b>Charity Number</b>	SCO01792

### **Have your say**

If you have any comments to make on the Magazine, please feel free to do so by letter or email to [herald@castlehillchurch.org](mailto:herald@castlehillchurch.org) We are always pleased to consider any articles for the Magazine from members of the congregation, These can also be sent to the same email address.

## FROM THE INTERIM MODERATOR

Dear Friends,

Easter is the Church's greatest Holy Day – the Festival of Life. But it is not simply continued existence that we celebrate; it is the “risen life” revealed in Jesus Christ. The words “eternal life” express the meaning of Easter more accurately than “everlasting life”, for we need to keep clearly before us that just to go on without end is not our hope; we believe that the risen life which we are to partake of in Christ is a new quality, on a level of value which is divine.

On this supreme Christian festival it may cross our minds that our Easter joy is so definitely identified with Christ that we cannot imagine even the best men and women of other faiths having any experience really comparable to ours. Have we, as Christians, so to speak, a monopoly of eternal life? Christian theology has often taught something very like that, and, of course we must recognise that the way we are treading as followers of Christ is not the same as followers of the Buddha or the mystics of Islam. But every spiritual religion holds out before its adherents the prospect of fulfilment, not in death, but in a new and higher kind of living. The words “eternal life” can have a meaning for every awakened human soul.

If we know the significance of “eternal life”, we shall be aware that to possess it is our highest good and worthy of all our efforts, but at the same time we learn that, ultimately eternal life is a gift and not a reward. “The gift of God is eternal life.” This important truth too can be misinterpreted so as to induce in us spiritual sloth; we say to ourselves “we must wait for the gift, because all our striving for eternal life by itself must be in vain.” But when we learn the lesson that eternal life must be a gift of God we learn, at the same time, that we are capable of receiving the gift and that capacity in us can be sharpened and kept sensitive by “waiting upon God” calmly but expectantly. For there is another thing we may learn in our waiting – that the Giver of the gift of eternal life is not separated from us by impassable barriers. He is not a prisoner in Heaven – he lives, hidden, in our deepest being.

May this Easter be a time of revelation for you in your realisation of the enormity of the Easter event, Christ's sacrifice, and the offer made to you by his death and resurrection, the gift of eternal life.

Yours in Christ, **John Paterson**



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## FROM YOU LOCUM

Dear friends,

I was rooting around for something light-hearted this month and I thought you might enjoy this refreshing look at a story of growing older, misunderstandings, affection and the joy of the Lord all rolled into one. However, I would ask you kindly to note, that although I am a Grandma, and my grandson might have offered a similar explanation for the two fingers, this letter was not written by me!

*Dear Family,*

*I went to the local Christian Bookshop and saw a "Honk if you love Jesus" car sticker. I thought it would be a good idea to put one on my car. I'm so glad I did! What an uplifting experience I had. You see I was stopped at a red light at a busy crossing, lost in thought about how good the Lord is, and I didn't notice the lights had changed. Then I heard car horns and realised some people in the queue must also love Jesus.*

*Would you believe it, LOTS of people love Jesus! While I was sitting there, the man behind started honking like crazy. Then he leaned out of his window and screamed, "For the love of God, Go! Go! Jesus Christ, Go!" What a real cheer leader for Jesus! Then everyone started honking, so I leaned out of my window and started waving and smiling to all these lovely people. I even honked a few times myself to share in the love.*

*I saw another man waving in a funny way with two fingers stuck in the air. When I asked my grandson (who was sitting in the back) what that meant, he said he thought it was a Hawaiian good luck sign. Well, I've never met anyone from Hawaii, but I thought it would be friendly to lean out of the window and give the man the good luck sign back.*

*My grandson burst out laughing. Even he was enjoying this wonderful religious experience. A couple of people were caught up in the joy of the moment and got out of their cars and started to walk towards me. I thought they must want to ask which church I attended, but then I noticed that the lights had changed, so not wanting to hold everyone up, I smiled and waved good-bye to all my new found brothers and sisters, and drove off.*

*In the mirror I saw that I was the only car to have got across before the lights changed again, and I felt very sad that I had to leave them all behind after all the love that we had shared. So I slowed down, leaned out of the window and gave them all the Hawaiian good luck sign again as I drove away.*

*All my love, Grandma. Xxx*

*And love and prayers for each of you... Christine*



I have no doubt that nearly everyone has heard of 'Christian Aid' (CA) but, if you are like I once was, it is more than likely that folk only really think about CA in May during the Christian Aid Week. It is quite right that people do give both attention and money during that week but what of the rest of the year?

CA is involved around the world for all 52 weeks of the year. There are different emphases in separate years including Climate Change, Water Poverty and

Displacement of Indigenous Peoples. However, CA doesn't turn away from needs of people wherever such needs exist. That is where the money goes raised during the 'Week'.

There are distinct appeals such as the one for the Cyclonic Floods in Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Malawi recently. Funds such as those raised in Castlehill are earmarked for efforts to alleviate the suffering.

All CA works are given an impetus by belief in the legacy of Jesus Christ and that none should be denied help. There is very little proselytising – the example that the CA workers and the relief efforts show, tell of the love of Christ.

CA began in the wake of WWII to help the refugees caused by that conflict and hasn't wavered from the much-increased task. The branch of the Christian Church to which one belongs is irrelevant in CA. It is a truly ecumenical group.

As the Christian Aid representative for Castlehill Church in the local Ayr branch, my eyes have been opened wide by the love, commitment and hard work throughout all the efforts of CA worldwide to make the World a better place and give people who have nothing, or who have lost much, a helping hand.

**Allan Jack**

## Seniors Afternoons

The attendance in February, entertained by Pat Kane, was probably the best we have had. In April we had the Fullarton Voices and again the attendance was great. It is good to see folks coming out

for the afternoon and in many instances bringing along a friend. That is really what the afternoon is all about, fellowship and having an enjoyable time.

Our next meeting will be in October on **Tuesday October 8<sup>th</sup>**. Make a note in your diary and if you need transport let us know.

**Wellwood Grierson**

## Fabric Report

This year we hope to get outdoor work done and we are getting quotes for this and will keep you updated. We also are going to have spring clean-up days and we will need at least two days. These are planned for 16th and 17th of May 10-12 on both days. We hope this will give us more storage space by clearing the main hall stage area. The team have been keeping checks on all areas of the church and carrying out any repairs they can to keep maintenance costs down but it is an ongoing task. There is always something needing done but if you are aware of a repair needing our attention please let us know. Thank you for your support.

**Liz Reid**

Hi a short report from social to let everyone know about the strawberry tea on the 3rd of July at 2.00pm. We look forward to having a good turn out on and, hopefully, a lovely sunny day. The next planned event is our musical evening when we have a male voice choir coming on the 25th of October this should be a lovely evening for all to enjoy and tea will be served afterwards.

## Social Committee

**Liz Reid**

Our Thanks are due to Dorothy Jack and Sandra Struthers for their work in co-ordinating the articles for Behind The Scenes. We are sure that many others took part through the years but records are sometimes a bit sparse when researching. Thanks to you both.

Editor

### Dates for you diary

<b>BB Display</b>	<b>17th May</b>
<b>BB 60th Celebrations</b>	<b>17/19th May</b>
<b>Strawberry Tea</b>	<b>3rd July</b>
<b>Beetle Drive</b>	<b>4th September</b>
<b>Concert/Tea/Male</b>	
<b>Voice Choir</b>	<b>25th October</b>

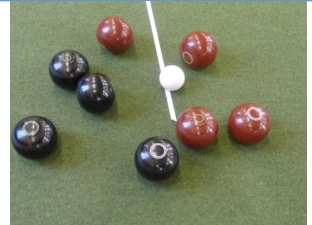




Champion of Champions	Winner	George Johnstone
	Runner Up	Anne Park
Ladies Singles	Winner	Anne Park
	Runner Up	Rita Macey-Lilley
Gents Singles	Winner	George Johnstone
	Runner Up	John Park
Ladies Pairs	Winners	Sandra Struthers/Georgie Harris
	Runners Up	Dorothy Jack/Moira Alexander
Gents Pairs	Winners	George Johnstone/Wellwood Grierson
	Runners U	John Park/Robert Forrester
Mixed Pairs	Winners	R. Macey-Lilley/Harry Lorimer
	Runners U	Anne Park/Joan Macfie
Monday Points League - Christmas Leaders Equal Rita Macey Lilley and Isabella Kerr		
Monday Points League - Winner Moira Alexander....Runner up Rita Macey Lilley		
Wednesday Points League –Christmas Leader John McDermott		
Wednesday Points League –Winner George Neil Runner up John McDermott		

# Castlehill Church Bowling Club

**The Club** started again on 9<sup>th</sup> January, everyone keen to get back and sample the new carpet which arrived in November. The points league is played with great fun and spirit, where anyone can win and gain two points no matter whether you play poorly or not. Perhaps the competition for the main trophies is slightly more serious.



The average attendance on Mondays is around 25 and on Wednesday 22. During the session Sam Storrie suffered a broken hip and was unable to attend. We were saddened by the death of Roy Wilson, a nephew of Jim Roy, who enjoyed his afternoons with us.

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February, South Ayrshire Council held a Funding Seminar in Kyle Academy, where Clubs and Groups had a chance to go and vote for funding. Margaret Graham put on a fine display, advertising our Club, and with all the members voting we were hopeful of success as we had lost out on lottery funding previously. On the following Monday we found that we had been awarded £1000 for new carpets and equipment and we say a big thank you to Margaret for her enterprise and hard work.

The competitions are now finished and it is good to see some new names on the Trophies and the prize winners are proudly showing off their trophies on the previous page.

**David Kerr, President.**

## BOOK REVIEW FOR CASTLEHILL CHURCH MAGAZINE

### "MEETING JESUS ON LIFE'S JOURNEY" by ALISON MURPHY

This book contains a collection of poems which invites you to put yourself in the shoes of some of the people of the Bible who had a face to face encounter with Jesus.

What might they be thinking?

What if it had been you?

We also have to find Jesus on our own life's journey.

What might we find if we have our own encounter with him.

These poems will both stir people's imaginations and encourage them on their own journey.

There are photos and bible verses to accompany the poems.

Alison's previous book 'From Christmas to Easter - A Celebration' contained poems solely pertaining to Christmas and Easter. In addition to Christmas and Easter poems, this book contains poems about people who met Jesus. The second part of the book is entitled 'Enjoy the Journey' and covers a variety of topics.

Alison Murphy is originally an Ayrshire girl, born in Cumnock. She has lived in Midlothian since the age of four, but still feels the pull of her Ayrshire roots.

Meeting Jesus on Life's Journey is available from Words of Wisdom in Cumnock, priced £7.99.

Marge Paterson

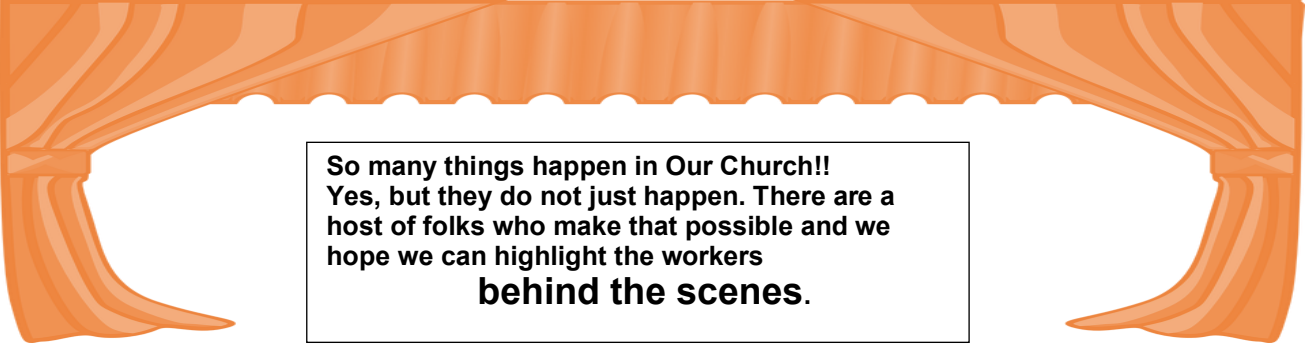


## CHURCH CHOIR

The choir have had an excellent year and have grown in number, welcoming three new members. We have continued to enjoy leading worship, introducing new hymns and anthems to the congregation.

The choir practices are held on Friday evenings at 6.30 pm and we still have chairs to spare to welcome any new members. If you enjoy singing, come along and join in the fun and fellowship that we have together

**Liz Kelly Organist**



**So many things happen in Our Church!!  
Yes, but they do not just happen. There are a  
host of folks who make that possible and we  
hope we can highlight the workers  
behind the scenes.**



## Wee Kirks



The wee Kirks have been a feature of Castlehill Church for many years. They originated from an idea suggested by an elder in Dalmellington Church. The suggestion was taken up by Tom Blair and Robert Crockett, members of the Session at that time. The money collected was to help pay for the cost of the North Hall. When the Hall finances were completed it was decided to carry on the idea to supplement Church funds. The first Wee Kirks were wooden and some are still in existence we believe. Well over £60,000 has been collected in this way through the years and the congregation's thanks should go out to the members who faithfully have popped their loose change into the Wee Kirks. There have also been many dedicated collectors who over the years have called and collected the cash and some are still collecting since the inception. It also takes the form of a pastoral visit to some of our older members who do not get out much and it keeps them in touch with their Church, and many friendships have been struck up over the years. How can you take part, well read on.

You can give a Wee Kirk a good home by phoning the Church Office or Wellwood Grierson on 737459. This will be delivered to you or it can be collected. Each April and October a collector will call round and empty it and give you a receipt. If you pay tax and let us know, the government will add another 23p for each pound you put in. Every year we collect around £2,500 from Gift Aid and we would like to increase this if possible. This is a painless way of giving and helping your Church. We are always on the look-out for extra collectors so if you want to help please give us a call.

Currently we have 12 collectors, 4 are members of the congregation 6 are elders and two Board members.

Collections are down a bit due to several reasons. A number of Church members have passed on and the uptake has not been proportionate. Use of bank cards, particularly connect transactions have reduced the amount of change in people's purses, and there is generous giving to Broken Chains, which probably has an impact. The past year's total was £2030 and from that the amount available for Gift Aid will bring in another £200 approximately

Wellwood Grierson took on the task of co-ordinator in March 2003 from Margaret Gerrard. The scheme started around 1988, and one of our collectors, Ann Thomson, still does her district. Also, of interest is the fact that when some of our members died their spouses carried on with the Wee Kirk even although they themselves were not members of our Church. We are grateful to our members for their generosity

### Free Will Offering (FWO) Envelopes

The FWO envelopes have been ongoing in the church for upwards of 40 years. Over that time there have been a few people who have administered the system, Joan Ness, Sandra Struthers, Sandra Goldie, and most recently, Sandra Wyllie in the office (obviously a job for someone with the name Sandra!!!).

There used to be upwards of 650 envelopes distributed by the Administrator and delivered to households either by an Elder or a Manager for that area. Nowadays, with the introduction of standing orders and direct debits, and the unfortunate dwindling numbers in the church, only around 175 envelopes are now being distributed



It may seem that it has been around for ever, but Facebook has been going for just 14 years. For those of you using Social Media, the Facebook page is a valuable resource helping to keep people informed about what is coming up in the life of the Church. It is updated regularly by Margaret Graham assisted by Allan Jack and is often the first contact point for folk outside the church enquiring about different events.

**Dorothy Jack, Sandra Struthers**



# Girl Guiding

All the units have again been busy, working on the new programme and obtaining badges.

We had our Thinking Day Service in February with a good attendance. Our District Commissioner updated the congregation on everything that the girls had been up to in the past year. Rhian Nillson and Ashleigh

Maxton of Monday night Guides were presented with their Baden Powell Award at the service. Rebecca Crawford, Ami Fisher and Ivy McDowall of Tuesday night Guides were previously presented in the Unit at their request. There were various comments from the congregation stating how nice it was to see the girls and how well behaved they all had been. After the service we had a Thinking Day Challenge in the hall in which the girls had to go around various stations in order to complete challenges and obtain their badge.

Monday night Guides recently had an overnight at Nether Auchendrane and Tuesday Brownies are preparing to go on Pack Holiday to South Newton Campsite in Renfrewshire. They also had a night at Craft Daft.

Monday night Brownies had a "Bring a Friend to Brownies" Night. There are spaces available for these Brownies and if you want to enquire for this Pack or any interest in any packs in our District both for young volunteers or Adults, please go onto the Girlguiding website where there is a link to make an enquiry.

Other things the girls have been up to is roller disco, cinema, outdoor pool and supported smalls for all.

All our units are on the Easter break now for a few weeks but are looking forward as we approach the Summer to some outdoor activities.

**Linda McClurkin**



## REV. BILL JOHNSTON

***" 'Peace I leave with you, my own peace I give to you, so set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears forever.' And the question I want to ask each and every one of you is simply this - would you like to have that kind of peace at work in your life today?"***

If you attended morning Communion on Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019, in Castlehill Church, you will recognise these words as the opening to Bill Johnston's last opportunity to share with us from the word of God. I can think of no finer tribute to Bill than to remind you of his beautiful sermon that simply showered us with blessings from God himself, in Jesus. Heavenly grace and peace flowed through every paragraph he had prepared - and this was fitting from the man who really cared about every one of us.

The thing about Bill is that he did not have to announce that he cared - it came across in how he spoke to us, in the way he took time to smile as he passed, nodded with a glint of mischief in his eye... He was a humble man who never looked for praise or thank you - but there was within him an inner strength that masked his uncertainty about difficult health conditions.

He was a man of deep faith and had a thankful heart for all that God had given to him - and he was especially thankful for his beloved Ann, and all their family. They were rightly his first concern and we must now remember them in our prayers and with loving support for Ann.

I can assure you that Bill also had a special love for Castlehill Church (as he would for those he had served in other churches.) But he always had a special fondness for this part of God's church family because it was here that his faith was nurtured so lovingly by all who helped him to complete his studies for the ministry and enabled him to serve God as was his heart's desire.

Of course, we did not realise that morning was to be his last Sunday with us - or perhaps we would have given just that little bit more attention to his words as he guided us into the fellowship of the Lord's Supper, so let me conclude this brief memory with more of his words from that same sermon:

***" 'My peace I give to you.' Will you accept it? Will you make room and space in your life to share that kind of fellowship with God. Will you do what God has been waiting for you to do for some time, perhaps even years...will you stop thinking you have to carry that burden or problem on your own? Just hand it over - accept the peace that Jesus offers..."***

How I loved to serve alongside Bill Johnston,

May each of us know the love of God,

Christine

## CHURCH FINANCE

The church financial year ended on 31 December 2018. Members of the Congregational Board and Kirk Session are Trustees of our congregation and they approved the Annual Report and Financial Accounts at a meeting on 10 March. These were passed to an Examiner to be approved and then a copy went to the Attestation Committee of the Presbytery of Ayr and a copy also went to Church of Scotland headquarters in Edinburgh. Following approval by the Attestation Committee a copy will go to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

At 31 December 2018 there was a deficit of £4,705 in the General Account. The amount given by Free Will Offering envelopes, Standing Orders and the amount of Gift Aid claimed were less than in 2017 but the amount given by the open plate was more. Fabric expenditure for the year was £36,267 which included £21,960 for the replacement heating boiler and £6,850 for re-decorating the Main Hall.

We were able to claim Gift Aid of £12,332. If you are a tax payer and use a standing order or FWO envelopes or the Wee Kirks to give money to the church we could claim 25% of the amount given back from HMRC if you sign a Gift Aid Declaration form. There are forms in the vestibule and the office and they can be downloaded from the church website [www.castlehillchurch.org](http://www.castlehillchurch.org) under the publications section. Completed forms can be given to Margaret Devlin or returned via the office.

**Margaret Devlin**

## Smashing Down Narrow Doors



"When it all falls, when it all falls down, I'll be your fire when the lights go out" is a line from a song which talks about how even in struggle and hardship there is always someone willing to be with us as we start all over again, and for many, that someone is Jesus. There's a link between this song lyric and what we're told in Luke 13:24 when Jesus said, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you will try to enter and will not be able to". This perfectly illustrates the way I feel about churches in general, because as long as people make an effort to keep on creating and moving forward, then there's always going to be a light peering through the 'narrow door' of change and new beginnings. I know it's natural to become comfortable with things, especially if "that's the way it's always been done". I am discovering that I don't want to get stuck in being comfortable, or wish my spiritual life to be limited and safely tucked away in a box. Let's be bold and creative in our relationship with Jesus, being adventurous and open when it comes to our connection with churches in general, in other words to smash the narrow door and run freely into what the future holds.

**Kirsty Wyllie**

## PRAYER SEMINAR



This was held on the morning of Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March. It took the form of a short introduction of what to expect and then we move to various "stations" in the Church Buildings. At each one there were several items to read and ponder over, each one with an invitation to pray or just sit and think. As we moved around, and generally in silence, some appealing more to some than to others, A cup of tea and biscuits and scones were available and over this there was chat amongst each other.

How to sum it up?. Well the remarks of those attending did just that.

"I felt the better of the experience as I left .

"Two words that described the prayer seminar, ' liberating and cathartic'. It has revealed to me love is and should be unconditional, an open door of acceptance".

"Did not know if I would enjoy it, but I am glad I went"

"Did not know what to expect, but I felt the better of being there"

"I hope there will be another"

"A lovey peaceful morning"



### A GIVING CHURCH

In our prayers for others, we remember all the good causes which our Church Members constantly support. The weekly donations to the Food Bank, handed on to the Salvation Army to be distributed to those in need.

The large bottle in the vestibule, which has to be regularly emptied. The original use was for "Pennies for Peru" Now we send the money to Broken Chains to help those in need in Ayr. The total collected to date is £2,863.79, and there are still coins in the bottle.

These monies do not go through Church Funds but directly to the organisation. The cash is important but so are your prayers and we thank God for your generosity.



## WHITELEYS RETREAT

Since the purchase of Whiteleys Farm, in March 2018, the focus of the charity has been the renovation of the retreat and specifically the 2 cottages and surrounding area. It has been challenging, to say the least but Maxine Allan CEO (Volunteer) project managed every aspect of this. From encouraging local individuals to volunteer, striping wallpaper, painting doors, gardening etc and establishing relationships with businesses throughout Ayrshire which saw unprecedented support in the form of skilled trades people. Unbelievably, after only 6 months, Whiteleys Retreat welcomed the first families to stay, offering them unique therapeutic respite.

The cottages are light, airy and comfortable, renovated to a very high standard and are exactly what families want for respite. From speaking to many families who have a child/young person with cancer or a life altering illness, it was evident that a comfortable, homely environment would be perfect to spend time in, away from the clinical backdrop of hospitals and treatment centres. There are, of course, portable hoists, shower trolleys etc which can be used if required and both cottages are fully accessible for wheelchair users.

From fundraising and funding, the retreat now has the most amazing Garden of Wellbeing, Tilly's Playpark which offers inclusive and sensory play, The Hub which is a place of fun, relaxation and indoor sensory equipment and of course the animals which include alpacas, Shetland ponies and bunny rabbits.

Feedback from those who have stayed has been overwhelmingly positive and quite emotional; 90% of those who have stayed at the retreat have been families from Ayrshire, referred to the charity through a close working partnership with Crosshouse Hospital. Each family has made their own memories at the retreat with some favouring the opportunity to spend time outdoors, away from hospital appointments and 'scary injections' while others have enjoyed playing music together, creating art and so on. We offer families holistic therapies including meditation, one-to-one yoga, reiki, massage without even having to leave the comfort of their cottage.

During this time, the charity itself has become further established, with 2 new members of staff – Bernard Smith (General Manager, full time) and Susan Webb (Development & Charity Manager, part-time) with both posts being funded ensuring that all monies fundraised are therefore going straight to respite services. Volunteers continue to be vital to the charity and over this past year there has been such commitment and passion shown by individuals. These volunteers give up their precious time to help at a variety of events throughout the year and not forgetting the established Board of Trustees who ensure governance.

The charity has an open day planned on **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June from 12noon until 4.00pm** where interested individuals can visit and see for themselves the unique respite facilities that they offer.

For more information you can visit their website [www.whiteleysretreat.com](http://www.whiteleysretreat.com)



Summer camp arrangements are progressing well with confirmed attendance at present of 22 Boys and 11 Leaders. The venue is as last year at the BB Centre at Kirkham near Blackpool which has been a first class facility that I have used for many years now. Apart from the on-site activities of archery, wall climbing and a trim trail we are making some changes to our excursions this year and visiting Cadbury World in Birmingham plus the lego centre which is nearby so making a full day out.

The whole week should be another fun filled adventure creating some fantastic memories and talking points for the Boys which will last a very long time.

**Doug Wilson**





We are celebrating the 60th anniversary of the 17th Ayr Boys' Brigade this year. Our celebrations are focused on the weekend of 17th - 19th May.

On Friday 17th we are having our annual display to which we have invited former chaplains and our Queens Men. It's hoped as many as possible will attend to make it a memorable celebration.

On Saturday 18th May we are holding a fund raising event to raise money for our trip to Romania. We are holding a race night in Forehill Primary School to which all are welcome. The tickets are £5 which includes a buffet. If you haven't experienced a race night they are a lot of fun.

On Sunday 19th May we will hold a morning service at which we will be presenting Queens Badges to John Houston and Gavin Drysdale. We expect there will also be a good number of our former members attending this service also.

To help spread the word of our celebratory activities please pass this information to any former member and ask them to contact me for more details. My email is [lanqueen1@aol.com](mailto:lanqueen1@aol.com)

In the Summer magazine we hope to publish a 60th anniversary celebration.

**Ian Queen**

## HOLIDAY CLUB

22 youngsters had a great time on Tuesday and Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> April. Following the Easter story they made good use of their imagination and the lego bricks provided to create pictures of the events of Holy Week. Thanks to those who helped in a worth while and appreciated two mornings.

## BUNNY HUNT

Over 100 enthusiastic "Hunters" took part in Castlehill woods, on Saturday 6th April. After their exertions there followed a well-earned filled roll and drinks This a photo of all who helped to make it a success.





# Pioneer Farming Ministry



Ayr Farming Church Support has continued to help people in the Agricultural Community who have experienced many varying difficulties ranging from domestic issues, such as relationship break ups and financial problems to suicides and fatal farm accidents. Mental health and depression is a common problem within the farming community, which is worsened by the isolation in which farmers live. To address these problems I have facilitated meetings with health professionals that has led to health checks being carried out in the mart. Farmers are now able to have their blood pressure, sugar levels, BMI dental and mental health checked. These drop in clinics have been held on 4 occasions during 2018. A number of people have been diagnosed with seriously high blood pressure and have been referred to their own GPs for further treatment.

I also work in partnership with agencies such as the Rural Payment Agency, Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution, National Farmers Union Scotland, Police Scotland and Trading Standards to name just a few. This enables me to mediate between farmers and the authorities. This close relationship has enabled these agencies to make referrals to me when they are concerned about farmers.



Carrying out pastoral visits to farmers in their homes has remained a high priority and is greatly welcomed and appreciated by everyone. These visits have given people opportunities to speak to someone instead of keeping issues to themselves. Sometimes people have wept as they share about their difficulties. Others have been angry and one has openly admitted that he has lost his faith and burned his bible and yet still welcomes me into his home.



A sad fact in the farming industry is that suicide is a major issue. Farmers are three times more likely to take their own lives than any other occupational group. In 2018 there have been 3 suicides in the presbytery. I have supported a family whose 17 year old son hung himself in a farm building. Another 28 year old also hung himself in a farm barn. On another farm a 63 year old farmer hung himself in his milking parlour. This has caused tremendous strain on those left behind. Farming also has the highest fatal accident rate over and above any other industry, including the construction industry. I have supported families when a farm worker, in his 20s, was thrown off his quad bike and killed.

A routine part of my work is calling at farms to introduce myself and to hand out leaflets with my contact details on. In 2018 I spent 25 days visiting farms and making new connections with farmers. I have also attended 15 agricultural shows and farming events along with 57 visits to Ayr Market.



This year I have been enjoyed leading worship in several churches within the presbytery, which has enabled me to share with others news of the work I am doing. I am also a member of the Church of Scotland Rural Working Group. This role has enabled me to assist in delivering presentations on my work and the use of media and digital resources that the Church of Scotland has available to presbyteries. I also continue to give presentations to church groups such as ladies guilds, men's groups and other presbyteries who are interested in the work we are doing.

During the year we held three farm based acts of worship. The first was a farm walk and praise at Dumfries house this was an evening that saw around 200 people come along. We also held a harvest thanksgiving at Ayr Mart. We have an annual carol sing in Ayr Mart and this is proving to be a great success, with 250 people joining us in 2018; there was standing room only. It is encouraging to see a great representation from across the age groups as families came together and young people joined us. The feedback received from the people who came described it as an uplifting evening. I have been greatly encouraged by the warm welcome that is always extended to me by the agricultural community be it on farms or in the market. The feedback given both to me and farming members of presbytery is one that supports the work the church is doing in this ministry. The words of one farmer who came up to me in the mart one day sums everything up – "You might not think people appreciate what you do, but we do appreciate it, greatly"

**Rev Chris Blackshaw, Pioneer Farming Minister**

# Baptisms

18<sup>th</sup> December 2018  
Chloe Marie Smith

America

20<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
Penelope Lawrence

Ayr



# Funerals

## December

Margaret Ritchie Morton Avenue

Henry Walker Holmston Road

George Main Marguerite Place

## January

John Doig Creggan Bahn Care Home

Ann Black Claremont Care Home

## February

Elaine Rogers 11 Borough Rd  
Prestwick

## March

Bill Johnston Annfieldglen Road

Margaret McKelvie Bankfield Park

When friends assembled here must part,  
and darkness seems to fill the heart,  
Light one small flame of hope that still  
you walk with us, and always will.

Enfold in love for evermore  
all those we love, but see no more.  
Weeping may endure the night,  
but joy comes in the morning.

I saw this today- no matter what happens in your life, you can start over.



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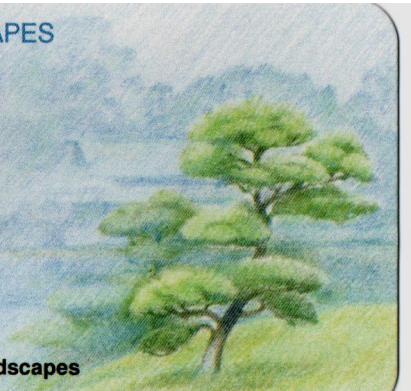
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