

The Herald

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Castlehill
Parish
Church



Christmas

Layla

Winter
2021

Editorial

You will see that our magazine has a different look about it. The front page was designed by the winner of a competition for pupils at Forehill School who were asked to show the Christmas story. I think you will agree that this was a success. In a further involvement Kincaidston school were asked by their teachers to write a poem about Remembrance Day and in seeing the poems, we felt that they should be in the magazine as well. Reproducing the copies was not too successful but there was no way we would alter anything because of the thoughts behind them. The words accordingly have been highlighted

You will see from Paul's article that we are still processing the future shape of our Church within the Presbytery and in the magazine, Allan Jack depicts the work that has to be done to ensure the correct decisions are made.

Sadly, this will be the last magazine that I will be producing. For almost ten years I have had the privilege of being your editor. It was a very steep learning curve at the beginning and has proved a challenge for each edition. It is however time to look to a younger generation to take over and generate new ideas.

Our new editor Rachel Queen is soon to be in place, and I am making myself available for assistance where needed for the Spring edition. I have every confidence that Rachel will do the job well and I ask that you all, contributors and readers, give her every support. I am very grateful for the contributions many of you have made through the years and for the ideas you have put forward.

From the Church of Scotland's perspective, in looking through various church's websites I was informed that "The Herald" came out as one of the better magazines. They were also impressed that even through Covid, we managed to publish. This is in no small way due to our minister Paul Russell and to you, our loyal contributors.

Thank you all for allowing me to be your editor, despite the commas in the wrong place and the odd date which proved to be wrong. It only shows that you must have read each issue carefully which was the object of the whole exercise.

Take care,

Wellwood Grierson Editor,

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

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Charity Number	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 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 Manse

Dear Friends

It is Advent and we look towards another unusual Christmas - so let's go to a familiar verse for the season:



“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” Isaiah 9:2

The disrupted COVID years in 2020 and 2021 have created more trauma, compounded grief, and very real fears than we could have imagined. During this worldwide pandemic, we have endured loss of life, economic challenges, climate changes, political unrest, habits have changed, and relationships sometimes become strained. All of us have been navigating unfamiliar territory, and we are a changed people. At this point we are trying to reconstruct our world. As much as we'd like to return to our old normal, we must approach Advent differently this year. We have to be more thoughtful, compassionate, and responsive than perhaps we've ever been.

For many in all congregations, in person mixing is still not what happens for Church: many choose to worship in front of their computers, iPads or phones. Many have settled in there, trying to stay safe. Church leaders everywhere are holding out hope for safe, in-person gatherings of more and more people in the months ahead, while continuing to communicate with their communities virtually aware that for the present, some will feel more comfortable at home.

What if we looked at this season as an opportunity to embody the “good shepherd” for our community? A wide-open door through which we can help people begin to journey on through this valley of deep darkness. A perfect chance to lead people in addressing the pain we've all endured, and to work together toward healing for all in the Light of Christ?

This Advent is also a chance to awaken the memory of our community after so much time away, not just physically but mentally and emotionally. And consider the possibility that we might attract people who were disinterested in matters of faith before COVID, but who are curious or even actively interested in asking questions now.

Before we can proclaim joy, we must acknowledge the pain. We must recognise the poverty, the suffering, the isolation, the anxiety that is still surrounding us in our community and throughout Scotland and do what we can to address this even in small measure. By our open door welcome and reaching out to others who haven't the confidence to come in, we can let others know that we seek always to create in Castlehill a safe place for all.

As we move through Advent 2021, we are conscious again of the uncertainty around our freedom to do Christmas the way we might choose because of the latest Covid-19 variant. Of this we can be certain: Christmas cannot be cancelled. Even at the worst case scenario, if we cannot congregate to celebrate it in worship, we can and we must reassure ourselves and our community that God is with us, and that in Jesus we are reminded God is especially with us when life is at its most challenging. So may you all be blessed this Christmas and for 2022, whether you celebrate alone, with your families or, however.

We go forward with renewed hope and living faith together. We look forward to what 2022 with all its changes will bring us under God. The warmest good wishes from all at the manse to you and yours.

Paul

PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN

On Tuesday 7th December, Presbytery will vote on the proposals for change throughout the whole area: no congregation will remain unaffected. The proposal for Castlehill is that future mission should be in union with St Leonard's Church. If, as is expected, that is passed by Presbytery, we then move on to discuss a local mission plan for the future, first as it applies to Castlehill's parish, then as a joint venture with St Leonard's.

This has to be completed in a relatively short space of time and will then go on to become part of the complete Ayr Presbytery Mission Plan which will be sent to Edinburgh for approval as it has to fit in with the national shortage of money and ministers which is our current reality. It is unclear at present when exactly such changes will begin to be implemented but the national mission plan has to be complete by the end of 2025.

Probably the only guarantees are that there will be further changes and you will be kept appraised of all these as we learn of them. For the moment, can I urge you to relay any comments or suggestions for the future of our Church to me, Allan Jack, Margaret Devlin and Margaret Graham who are our representatives.

Paul



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

SUNDAY ADVENT SERVICES AT 11.00 on 28th November, 5th December [Communion], 12th December [Baptism], 19th December.

Special Advent Services:

Sunday 5th December 6.30p.m. BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Wednesday 15th and 22nd December 6.30: Brief Advent Services

CHRISTMAS WEEKEND:

Friday 24th December 7.00pm ALL AGE CHRISTMAS EVE

Saturday 25th December 10.00 SHORT CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

Sunday 26th December 11.00 BOXING DAY SERVICE

NEW YEAR: Sunday 2nd January 2022 11.00 WELCOME THE NEW YEAR

There can be no school Christmas Services in Church again this year but I shall be sending in a virtual Christmas message to some of the schools and visiting on the subject of Christmas as well.

MAGAZINE EDITOR

As you may have heard, after some ten years of outstanding service as Editor of The Herald, Wellwood Grierson feels he wishes to step down from this position. Proper tribute will be paid elsewhere, but I cannot let this opportunity go by without saying how blessed we have been to have his expertise, diligence, enthusiasm, to say nothing of his never-ending patience and gentle powers of persuasion which have combined to create a magazine which is nationally recognised and which attracts a lot of attention within and beyond our congregation and community. His inspiration has been infectious on other contributors and has been a constant witness to his personal and the congregation's faith. We shall be ever grateful for Wellwood's sterling service in this capacity and we are happy that he will be available in the background as "Consultant" for the short term.

Thank you, Wellwood, most sincerely for all you have achieved as Editor.

Paul

Forehill School

As you will see the front cover was produced by the school. It was a very difficult job to pick a winner from their competition. We must thank the other entrants for their talented efforts, **Ellie R – P7P, Cerys A - P7P, Holly H – P7P, Nina B – P6P, Emily G – P6P, Oriana T – P6R, Nicole C – P6R**

We are delighted to say that our choice, was the one drawn by Layla R P6P, Sadly, we do not have space to show the other entries but I can assure you they were very worthwhile.

The School are keen to be involved in future magazines if is practicable and we will certainly look at that when the time comes





A' about Christmas



The ither night Ah wis watchin the telly and Ah started to watch "A Christmas Carol" As a wee lassie Ah thocht it wis a song but then I found out it wis a book. I wis hiven a coffee wi my friend Jean the next day and Ah wis sayin about the three Christmases, Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future.

We started talkin about the Services at the Church. Mind when the Christmas Eve service wis a mass o' waens greetin and shufflin' about, it was great tae see them. Then the watch night service packed fu' and us a' hauden candles. If the service wis a bit lang the wax melted and burnt yer hand and then the candles went oot. The Health and Safety folks wid hiv a field day noo. Then ye had a' the guys comin oot the pub. They caused a bit o' a steer but the singing went up a notch and let's face it they came in.

Noo the Present Christmas disnae have that. The pubs stay open a lot later and oor service is finished before they come oot. Ye cannae pit too many folks into the pews noo either because o' Covid. The soup ye used to get, Ah don't think ye are allowed tae make it noo and likely the Kirk wid get sued if somebody burnt their mooth. Ye cannae gie onybody a kiss for their Christmas. (Ah looked to forward gettina a kiss frae yin o' the attractive elders at the door, mind you a fund out he kissed everybody). Lots o' folk are feart tae gae oot at nichts that late, so they dinna bother goin. Sadly. no mony Kirks bother tae have a Watchnight service noo either. It's great that oor yin did that up until Covid. Maybe it will come back again.

Ye cannae hand oot cards or parcels,,,Covid again. An' certainly nae hugs for Christmas. Try gein' it laldy when yer singing "Oh Come All Ye Faithfull" wi a mask on.

An' whit about Christmas Future? Will oor Kirk still be there or will we hiv tae travel miles. Whit will the services be like.. Maybe we will be forced tae watch online (whitever that is), but it will likely be a recording maybe even frae last year. But as Jean says, an' Ah agree wi her, the story hasnae altered nae matter how they try tae change it roon about. So, Ah'll jist wish ye a' a very Merry Christmas and whitever ye dae tak care o' yersell

Moanin Minnie

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Church of Scotland Buildings Audit

I am one of the volunteers for the Building Audit which is part of the overall Presbytery Plan for all of Scotland. To that end, every parish will be affected, and this includes Castlehill.

A key part of the Plan is the classification of buildings which will set out the future shape of the building resources for worship and mission. This Building Audit excludes Manses and houses occupied by retired ministers and/or their spouses.

Every ecclesiastical building (mainly churches and church halls) will fall into one of the following:

The building is expected to remain in use beyond the lifetime of the Plan

The building is expected to be closed during the life of the current Plan, under an adjustment contained therein or otherwise

The building is expected to be disposed of as soon as possible under an adjustment contained in the Plan or otherwise

The Presbytery is unable to decide in relation to the building

There is a consensus that the Church of Scotland has too many buildings, which this effort seeks to address. Many are underused, many are too large for present-day needs, and some are in the wrong place.

There is NO simple solution to this problem. Presbytery will want, and need, to consider which buildings are essential and useful for the mission it envisages. This will entail, in all expectation, a reduction of about 30% of all the buildings.

The individual spreadsheets to be completed are grouped into Churches (with Hall(s) attached) and Separate Halls. For Castlehill, the Sanctuary and the Main and Lesser Halls would be on one spreadsheet while the North Hall would be on another. Within the questions are those common to both churches and halls but there are those which are specific to each. Photos also are to be uploaded.

The first question is on the type of roof (flat or pitched) and what material(s) make up the roof, followed by gutters and downpipes as well as their material. Then we look at the windows, doors, and lighting. There are some beautiful stained-glass windows which must surely be salvaged when a church is to be disposed of. However, many of the churches have mainly clear windows (with diamond leading). The framework of both windows and doors are noted and all this information is wrapped up in questions about water ingress and whether repairs are outstanding or have been done. The main questions on lighting are whether it is adequate and if there are emergency lights.

Then there is a section on access into and around the church/hall. Most have access ramps (although not all at the front door) but many doors are on the level. Most, if not all, of the churches have a raised area around the Communion Table and only one, so far, has a ramp allowing wheelchair access. As an aside, there are questions about fixed roof ladders although I don't have to climb up them! They also want to know if the building has a lightning conductor.



There are questions on Fire Alarms (Y/N), Health and Safety Officer (Y/N), Fire and Risk Assessment (Y/N) and who has been trained in Environmental Health. This follows listing the number of toilets and whether there are any accessible ones. Is there a kitchen? Is the heating by Oil, Gas, Electric or Heat Pump? One church has heating provided by a Biomass Burner which isn't one of the options!!

If there is a council owned graveyard around the church/hall, that must be noted. Graveyards sometimes have private mausoleums within them which could be a problem and one church I have audited has a War Memorial (in wood) behind the Pulpit. What will be done with that if that church is one to be disposed of?

Do the buildings have dedicated Parking with or without accessible drop-offs/spaces? Is there a train/bus station or is there a bus stop close by?

Questions (assuming pre-Covid numbers) follow about normal attendance (in church) and what the full capacity is. Next are questions on how often the Hall(s) are used during the week. What are the normal hours of worship and, roughly, how often are 'ceremonies' other than worship held? These would include baptisms, weddings, and funerals, etc.

Does the church have any Audio/Visual facilities? These range from a simple microphone and speakers to the equipment in Castlehill.

The General Trustees also wish to know if the church/hall has been in receipt of any Grants and/or Bequests within the last 10 years and they want details thereof.

Is the church involved with the local community of the village/town/city? How often do organisations from outside the church use the buildings? Can the church be used for anything else? This is a problem when the pews are immovable.

Some churches have mobile phone masts in their towers/steeple which are to be noted as do any instances of any 3rd part leases within the buildings.

In villages, there may be opportunities for the church/hall to act as one of the local services such as a pop-up Post Office, Police Station, or a shop. The last question confirms who owns the building.

Ayr Presbytery is in the second pilot scheme of this Plan which still must be rolled out over the country. The data so gathered will determine which buildings are to go. The audits in Ayr Presbytery should be completed by Christmas this year.

The results from this audit will be combined with Local Mission Plans (still to be decided upon) and available preaching resources to arrive at the vision for a 'new' Church of Scotland. Ayr Presbytery will cease to exist next year as the new South-West of Scotland Presbytery comes into existence as Ayr merges with another five presbyteries.

We're in the middle of a long process and no-one knows the exact outcome. Those of us involved in the process will endeavour to keep you up to date with the ramifications as they occur.

Allan Jack



Down Memory Lane



How many remember 16th January 2016? That was a cold and slightly snowy night when the Social Club held a 60's night. It was a roaring success, a packed hall not just Church members but even with some from outside our Church coming along to join the fun.



Michael and Liz Hardie made up a very competitive quiz, found easy by some and difficult by others. Not sure who won, but Laurie Reid was near the top.

Robert Forrester's guitar was bought at a charity shop for a very few pounds, but sold for over £20 that night to swell the funds.

Some may well prefer to forget their outfits and the photos may well embarrass but it was a great night, not to be forgotten, and enjoyed by everyone.



Who do you recognise or do you even recognise yourselves?



Finance

Our financial year ends on 31 December and it has been another challenging year.

Our Ministry & Mission payment to the Church of Scotland was set at £45,506 and due to be paid over 12 months. In March it was agreed we could reduce this to £2000 over the remaining 10 months. I am pleased to report we can pay the shortfall of £18,759 before the end of December. A number of outside groups started using the halls again in September which has brought us welcome income.

To the end of October income from FWO envelope was £7,120, Standing Order income was £36,971 and Open Plate income was £2,630. The National Giving donations during October raised £1075. During this period gas & electricity costs for the church and halls came to £4,436 and insurance costs were £1,823.

To date maintenance, repairs etc to the church, the halls and manse have cost £17,768.06

Margaret Devlin

Fabric Report

We will have new lights down the side of the main hall to north hall. We could not get any spare parts to repair old ones so hopefully these one are bright enough. We also should have the fascia boards at the front of the church replaced. There has been a problem in getting the rosewood boards and it has taken a time to get this done. This was a request to be done from our Church of Scotland five yearly report .

I hope you have noticed that we have had the monoblocs repaired. We had to get the drains lifted up higher and all the blocks were cleaned, repaired and re-laid . We hope that no cars or vans will go on this . We are working our way around the church to freshen up the walls where needed.

Jim.McClurkin has done a very good job painting the ladies toilets and hallway. We are looking at clearing out the garden at the back of the Church and up the side of the north hall and to keep the paths clear around the church, this is ongoing.

We put the Christmas tree up on the 25th November and hope this brightens up some dull days. Merry Christmas from the Fabric team.

Liz Reid

Social Committee

This year with all the rules and regulations, we decided we would have a small Christmas table sale on the 12th of December and you can have a cuppa and a mincemeat pie. The sale tables will have some home made items all new and made by members of the church there will also be some small hampers for sale. Before that on the run up to this day we hope you will have bought some lucky tickets for our big food hamper

I hope you can join us on this day if there is any goods left we will sell them on the next week after church.

We will soon be discussing what we can do at the beginning of the year, but we will have to wait and see!!

Liz Reid



Stained Glass



By now most, if not all, of the congregation will have seen the new stained-glass windows recently installed in the church. You will either have had the opportunity to see them up close or in the opening credits to the streamed services on Facebook or the YouTube channel. Below is some background and history of Stained Glass as it has been used through the centuries.

ORIGIN

Both the ancient Egyptians and Romans manufactured small, coloured glass objects, with the towns of Sidon, Tyre and Antioch in Phoenicia being centres of glass manufacture. Churches of the 4th and 5th centuries had windows which were filled with thinly sliced alabaster set into wooden frames, giving a stained glass-like effect. When glass became more widespread, supports changed from large iron frames to stone/wood and, eventually, lead as the panes got smaller and details increased.

HISTORY

Churches and monasteries in Britain of the 7th century have evidence of stained glass. Monkwearmouth and Jarrow are where hundreds of pieces of coloured glass and lead have been discovered in archaeological digs.

In the Middle East, during the Islamic era, stained glass has been mainly non-pictorial and of purely geometric design but with both floral motifs and text.

In contrast, European stained glass reached its height as an art form in the Middle Ages, when it became a major pictorial form used to illustrate the narratives of the Bible to a largely illiterate populace.

From there it developed to those well-known examples such as the great Rose Window in York Cathedral and in other cathedrals such as Ely.



PRODUCTION

Glass uses silica (quartz sand) as its primary ingredient. The addition of potash, soda and lead lowers the very high temperatures needed to melt silica.

Glass can either be blown or rolled which is then annealed. Rolling is a more modern technique whereas most medieval glass was hand-blown.

Glass is coloured by adding either metallic oxides or finely divided metals while still molten. For example, green/bluish green is produced by the addition of copper oxide while the addition of cobalt produces a deep blue colour and gold gives burgundy (wine red) and violet glass. Modern red glass uses metallic copper (as it's cheaper than gold).

Transparent glass (soda-lime glass) becomes greenish as it thickens. That effect can be reduced by adding sodium permanganate or selenium. Deep green can be achieved by adding iron oxide and/or chromium such as that used in wine bottles. If tin oxide and arsenic are added, emerald-green glass is reached.

As well as gold, copper and selenium with cadmium sulphide are used to give a red colour.

To get all shades of yellow, silver nitrate is used, while adding sulphur and carbon and iron salts produces amber. Deep yellow is achieved by using calcium. Titanium intensifies and brightens colour.

Opaque white glass is produced by adding tin oxide with arsenic and antimony oxides.



USES



Modern stained glass is used by artists and sculptors in secular projects – e.g., the work of Charles Rennie Macintosh - but let us look as how it has been incorporated into churches and other religious settings.

The early stained-glass windows in churches were there to illustrate stories from the Bible so that the, largely illiterate, congregations could follow sermons and be educated as the stories were laid out. This developed into images of famous religious folk such as the Apostles, saints and historical figures – St Margaret and St Andrew are common examples in Scotland.



This has led to purely devotional images as the literacy of the congregations developed.

It has also spread to memorial windows for the great and the good of the country or, sometimes, just the parish where the church building was located.

There is no doubt that, during the Reformation, many beautiful stained-glass windows were destroyed as being 'Popish'. This austere inclination is still apparent in many Reformed churches today, even in Castlehill where up till now there has been only clear glass in our windows. No doubt, the cost of having stained glass is far more than clear windows and the replacement costs mean even further expense and this has contributed to the decrease in stained glass use.

However, the spiritual uplift that a beautiful stained-glass window gives to the soul is hard to beat and it is hoped that the 60th anniversary windows now behind the chancel will give everybody who attends Castlehill heart-soaring moments.

Allan Jack

Guild



Our Guild started at the beginning of October with everyone so excited at being able to meet again. We had a full house for our Opening Social with the Loudoun Friends Ceilidh Band who certainly had our feet tapping. What an enjoyable evening we had.

So far, we have had a variety of speakers. We have had a Thought from Paul, our Minister. Dane Love took us to some of the Lost Villages of Ayrshire. Tracy Moynihan taught us a new way to cook, and Ruth Box from Pioneers UK spoke on Chocolate Heaven.

This year we wanted to do something different, so we have arranged a bus trip to Dumfries House to see the Christmas decorations. We have also arranged our Christmas night out at one of the local restaurants.

In the New Year our syllabus is full with speakers talking on a variety of interesting topics such as A Scottish Night, Ayrshire Cancer Support and Blackthorn Sea Salt, which should be attractive to our members.

Our new session starts on 12th January and anyone who wishes to come along will be made most welcome.

The Committee and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2022.

Dorothy Jack, Secretary



Girlguiding Castlehill & Doon Report



Well what a few months we have had. It has been an absolute delight to be able to get back to face to face meetings and events. Throughout lockdowns the Monday night Brownies and Guides managed to run virtually allowing girls to engage with activities for their awards. Tuesday nights ran with activities being emailed to girls for completion. Several girls gained interest badges, skill builders, theme awards and then went on to gain their Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.



Tuesday Rainbows had a day camp at the end of July to celebrate the achievements of the girls throughout lockdown and all the girls had gained their Gold award. The girls were entertained with Funfair activities and a visit from Uncle Billy. A great day was had by all. September then saw an influx of new Rainbows to a Tuesday unit offering more girls their Girlguiding opportunity. More recently Tuesday Rainbows have raised over £80 for Children in Need by completing a Strictly Girlguiding night and learning a new dance.

Tuesday Brownies and Guides, both of which had a number of girls move sections into their units, have been busy working on their Theme Awards and badges as well as looking forward and planning their programme for the New Year. Examples of some of the activities completed so far - fruit kebabs, decorations, games, group work and individually working, promise activities, genealogy and baking biscuits.

Wednesday night Brownies in Dalrymple have been busy working away on badges and growing as a Unit.



Monday night Brownies have continued their unit experiences by completing awards while working from home and building Hedgehog houses, making fruit kebabs in the rain, and developing their first aid skills through their skill builder work. Lucy, one of Brownies within the unit raised over £700 for Tommys for her Charities Badge by making and selling bracelets and keyring.

Monday night Guides and Rangers have been out and about over the last few months while completing their awards as well. They have enjoyed experiences including hiking, paddle boarding and putting their heads together to escape their 'Escape Rooms' experience.



Having returned to face to face it was an opportunity to finally say thank you to Christine and Angela for their work during their term of office as District Commissioners which ended in October 2020. Janette presented them with a bouquet of flowers and Afternoon tea of behalf of myself and the District.

October saw a secret finally come be announced. Angela had nominated Christine to the Scottish Awards Committee for her Girlguiding work. As the hours and opportunities she offers to Girlguiding and the work with girls in her units was recognised Christine was awarded the Scottish Chief Commissioner Award. Christine was presented her Award by County Commissioner, Fiona Robertson, in the presence of family and Girlguiding friends at a unit meeting surrounded by those she currently works in Girlguiding with.



Over the summer we have been delighted to welcome new volunteers into the leadership group, working with all sections has allowed us to open more opportunities to girls locally. November finally saw us open our Rainbow unit on a Monday evening and its been a delight to work with new volunteers to promote the opportunities available to girls and themselves.



Representatives from units throughout the District took part in the laying of the Wreath and displaying the flags during our recent Church Remembrance Service. Ashleigh, Jessica and Oriana presented the colours within the colour party and Poppy and Elodie laid the wreath on our behalf. Brownies were represented in attendance.



With units opening and more opportunities becoming available I can't thank our leadership team enough for their time, skill and expertise given to the girls through their work with the units.

Thank you to all our Leaders and volunteers.

Carol Thomson
District Commissioner

WeeKirks

Thanks are due to all our collectors who were back on the road again in October and November. From what they said, the Wee Kirk holders were delighted to see them again. Amazingly in times when folks do not have a lot of change due to card transactions the total came to £1042.35 which is about the usual levels. Thanks to you all again.



Wellwood Grierson

Attention Photographers!

For 2023 we intend producing a Castlehill Church calendar. From December 2021 through to October 2022 we are asking you to submit photographs of our area. Let us know where the photograph was taken, date, your name and any other information you wish to give us.

We will select a picture for each month and calendars will be on sale during December 2022.

Please send your submission to maggie641.mg@gmail.com

Margaret Graham
Publicity Group



Seniors Afternoon

We had a very successful afternoon on the 12th October in the Main Hall. The excellent entertainment was provided by "True Colours" They kept our feet tapping all afternoon as we tried to remember the words of some well known songs,



The ladies provided a lovely tea, all within the current restrictions, which really did not spoil the afternoon. Over 50 turned out, some who had never been before which was very encouraging.

Our next afternoon will be on Tuesday 14th December at 2.30 pm in the Main Hall. Normally we would meet earlier to accommodate the Forehill School choir, but unfortunately under present regulations they will not be able to come.

There will be other entertainment so do not miss it.

Look forward to seeing you then.

Wellwood Grierson

South Ayrshire

foodbank

Our Foodbank distribution hub at Castlehill Parish Church on a Friday morning has now been running for six months with a team of volunteers on a rota with three or four people each week from 10am and 12 noon in the Lesser hall.

We receive boxes for distribution from South Ayrshire Foodbank for either one, two, three or four people, on a regular basis

The system works on a referral basis (not a drop-in basis) with the recipient having either a paper or electronic voucher. When the recipient arrives with their voucher a box for the appropriate number of people will be opened and the contents checked by the volunteers and placed in carrier bags before handing over to the voucher holder. The boxes contain enough food for approx. 3 days.

If you like to help or find out more please come along any Friday between 10 and 12 noon or speak to Margaret Gerrard (07740778348), Andrew Graham or Rev Paul Russell

Breakfast Club

We had excellent meetings on the last Saturdays of October and November. While the attendances were low in number, we would recommend that you come along for an enjoyable half hour. We start at 09.30 and our next meeting will be the last Saturday in January, the 29th, when we are hoping to have a Burns Breakfast, depending on restrictions in force. So watch out for information on that. There will be meetings on the last Saturdays in February, March and April. Hope to see you there.

Tom McLeod





Although over a month ago the Remembrance service will be remembered for many reasons. The participation of the schools from Belmont, Forehill and Kincaidston in laying the wreaths, rightly involving the young people of our community, as well as the Church organisations. Carol Thomson singing a comparatively new song, "Stronger for the Storm". By Paul Mealor, added to the atmosphere



Colour Party of the Boys Brigade, Anchor Boys: Jacob and Kyle, Rainbows: Elodie and Poppy, Church: Margaret Devlin and Guild: Dorothy Jack

Kincaidston


Our thoughts are with the people in Kincaidston following their ordeal a few weeks ago. Some of our own congregation were affected by having to move out of their homes and others by the effect of the explosion. This area is in our Church Parish and we have many members in the estate. It was great to see representatives of the school, pictured here, laying a wreath in our Church on Remembrance Sunday



Kincaidston school ran a project asking primary seven pupils to write a short poem about Remembrance Day. We have included some of these on the next page, unedited, as they represent their thoughts on such a day. The results are remarkable. Some of the downloads were not too clear so the words were printed beside the poems to make sure that the words were presented to you as it is a truly wonderful dialogue from the pupils. We did not have room for all the poems but we sincerely thank those whose contributions are not shown.

Sleeping Soldiers

They dropped like flies
As bombs gracefully
Danced through the skies
People couldn't sleep
Blood at their feet
But finally they get to rest
Poppies near their chests
We wish them all the best
Because after all
Heaven is where
Sleeping soldiers go to rest
By Luke



SLEEPING SOLDIERS

They dropped like flies As bombs gracefully danced through People couldn't sleep Blood at their feet But finally they get to rest poppies near their chests We wish them all the best Because after all Heaven is where sleeping soldiers go to rest

By Luke


REMEMBERING WHAT THEY WOULDN'T FORGET

Rationed stomachs rumbling like fighter planes, the cuts and bruises all the pains whether it was July or November we will still remember. The sharp jagged wire cutting through piercing skin jagging right in Whether it was July or November we still remember. Slimelike mud, bombs crashing down with a deafening thud whether it was July or November we will still remember. As frosty air blew through, nothing grew but the smiling red poppy Shone through whether it was July or November we will still remember

by Poppy

Remembering what they wouldn't forget

Rationed stomachs rumbling like fighter planes, the cuts and bruises, All the pains whether it was July or November, we will still remember
The sharp jagged wire cutting through piercing skin jagging right in whether it was July or November we will still remember
Slimelike mud, bombs crashing down with a deafening thud whether it was July or November we will still remember
As frosty air blew through nothing grew but the smiling red poppy shone through whether it was July or November we will still remember
Remember
We will always remember
By Poppy



Always Remember the 11th November

Guns shooting...
Lives being lost
Days getting harder
Months going on
Hope crumbling
Countries cracking
Landscapes of all types
Being destroyed
Slimy, gruesome mud
Made legs feel heavy
Lack of sleep
Creates exhaustion
Gunshots ending lives
Only just started
But all will be remembered
With respect
With courage
With loyalty
Resembling the Poppy
The respect that we pay
To the people who fought
Tried and died
Will always be remembered by Leslie

HOPE NEVER LASTS

As they set off to war The sun starts to sleep leaving souls behind leaving us behind Guns going Shedding tears from afar having a connection even of we are apart Memories that will never fade Memories that will always stay. Darkness that covers everything Even thoughts that you have been struggling to find an answer Light comes again A letter has been sent Saying hope will shine When fight has flown by Though the person I am waiting for Hasn't yet to come Maybe death has risen upon them

By Joanna

Hope Never Lasts

As they set off to war
The sun starts to sleep
leaving souls behind
leaving us behind
Bombs blowing
Guns going
Shedding tears from afar
Having a connection even if we are apart
Memories that will never fade
Memories that will always stay
Darkness that covers
Everything
Even thoughts that you have been struggling
to find the answer
Light comes again
A letter has been sent
Saying hope will shine
When fight has flown by
Though the person that I'm waiting for
Hasn't yet to come
Maybe death has risen upon them
By Joanna

Guns shooting Lives being lost Days getting harder. Months going on. Hope crumbling, Countries cracking Landscapes of all types being destroyed. Slimy gruesome mud made legs feel heavy
Lack of sleep creates exhaustion Gun shots ending lives only just started

But all will be remembered With respect With courage With loyalty Resembling the Poppy the respect that we pay to the people who fought, tried and died will always be remembered
By Leslie



The Boys' Brigade started back for the new session at our annual enrolment barbecue on 27th August. It was gratifying that so many boys returned and so many new recruits signed up. We held our first meeting night at the Old Racecourse before moving back to the church halls because the nights had drawn in.

Because Covid remains a thing we have continued our restricted meetings, the Junior and Company Sections both meet in the Main Hall on Friday nights. The Junior Section meets from 6pm-7pm and the Company Section meet from 7.30pm until 9pm. This arrangement will continue until Covid restrictions have eased.



In the short time since we restarted we have had some highlights. On Sunday 31st October we had our dedication service. We had the pleasure of awarding three President's Badges to Benn Houston, Callum Murray and Ryan McGeachin.

We also paraded into church our original colours which had been dedicated in 1969 and went missing in 1997. It

was a joy to again share the story of Dougald Donnelly who had kept the colours for all these years until he died. It was an emotional service sharing the stories of Dougald, Charlie and Ally Bowman, with Eleanor Bowman sharing what the Boys' Brigade meant to her son.



Following our dedication service we enjoyed a lunch with boys and their families. Because of the restriction on numbers in the Main Hall we couldn't have the normal dedication lunch so we decided to have two lunches, one after the dedication service for the BB family and another after the remembrance service for our church family. Both were very well attended and the feedback we received was very positive, thank you very much.



In November we went to Moffat for our BB "camp". This was our first weekend away since our trip to Dumfries House in November 2019. The weekend was enjoyed very much by boys and officers. On Friday night we enjoyed a take away from the local chip shop courtesy of Eleanor and Billy Bowman. This was

because, when Ally Bowman was 15, he phoned out for a takeaway from the local Chinese to be delivered to our camp. I was livid! It has now become a source of amusement and the Bowmans have committed to donating a takeaway every year in Ally's memory. We thank Eleanor and Billy very much. The weekend went very well and we were very pleased to welcome Paul and Shirley Russell for lunch on Saturday.



All things being equal we should be taking our fifth trip to Romania next August. Most of the company section boys are keen to go which means this could be our biggest group yet. The fund raising has started and we need to congratulate and thank Rachel for raising over £7,000 running the London Marathon. A fantastic amount of money and a fantastic time of 4 hours 44 minutes!



The generosity of the congregation also needs to be congratulated, we appreciate how much you support the 17th Ayr. In relation to what I said at the BB dedication service, your support helps greatly the opportunities we have to make a difference in the lives of the boys who pass through our care, thank you.

On behalf of the boys and officers of 17th Ayr Boys' Brigade we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ian Queen

As Christmas approaches the Anchor Boys have been busy making calendars which they plan to give to members of the congregation, the boys have had great fun decorating them.



Volunteers

A question was asked at the Session Meeting with regard to coverage of the sound desk if Sandra wasn't available. Moderator explained that GAB are willing to come along and train members who wish to volunteer to be on a rota to cover recordings of services. At present Paul has a couple of interested members. It was suggested that perhaps an article was put in the magazine asking for volunteers. Are you that person? Contact Paul Russell and he will let you know what is involved.



Funerals

October

Betty Williamson	4 Anderson Crescent
Mary Sime	15 Hawthorn Drive
Betty Robertson	Heathfield Care Home

November

Sheila Ramage	8 Forehill Road
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I believe for every drop of rain that falls,
a flower grows.
I believe that somewhere in the darkest
night,
a candle glows.
I believe for everyone who goes astray,
someone will come to show the way.
I believe, I believe.
I believe above the storm the smallest pray'r
will still be heard.
I believe that someone in the great some-
where
hears every word.
Every time I hear a newborn baby cry,
or touch a leaf or see the sky,
Then I know why I believe!

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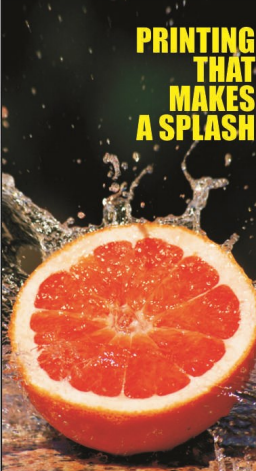


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