

The Herald

Castlehill Parish Church

Winter 2010



Welcome to our Winter edition of The "Herald".

We bemoan the fact that Christmas has become too commercial and shops and advertisers start their promotions almost before the summer is over. We perhaps feel that in our November magazine we too are a bit guilty of starting too early. Good news however is worth shouting about all the time and to proclaim the good news of our Saviour's birth we want to be among the first to shout. In the magazine you will find several references to Christmas and in particular details of the advent services starting at the end of the month and carrying on through December. Make sure they are in your diary and, if you cannot come to them all, please come to one at least.

Our committee wishes all our readers a joyous Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year

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From the Manse



Ready or not - God comes

I have an app on my phone that counts down the sleeps until Christmas. It also calculates how many days, hours or minutes are left. And it is counting down a bit too quickly for me. Time passes relentlessly and nothing can change that. Of course, for our young people, it's probably not passing quickly enough. Some of the first people we are told who recognised the Christ Child for all that he was were Anna and Simeon - two people who had waited a lifetime to see God fulfil his promise to send a Messiah. They counted it a great privilege to, literally, hold the Son of God in their arms. In that moment of wonder, all their expectations were fulfilled.

A recent report highlighted how high expectations are of Christmas - but what is it we expect? Is it the glitz and glamour? Or is it the quiet advent of the Son of God?

We all have so much to do at this time of year - so much that it is just possible that we will miss the advent of Jesus, the God child who comes into our world, whether we are ready or not.

With my own eyes I have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples: a light to reveal your will to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel.

Luke 2 v 30-32



Blessings

Liz Crumlish

Forthcoming Services

28th November - All age worship for Advent

5th December - Communion - 11am and 6:30pm

19th December - Nativity Presentation

22nd December - Quiet Christmas Service

24th December - 7pm - All Age Worship
11:30pm - Watchnight

25th December - 11am - Christmas Celebration

26th December - Readings and Carols

Advent Worship

Each Wednesday in Advent, there will be a service at 7pm.

On Wednesday 22nd December, there will be a Quiet Christmas Service, remembering those loved ones we miss especially at this time of year.



Would you Follow

How many would follow the star tonight
If it shone past the Milky Way
Leave comfortable homes and follow it still,
Over the hills and away.

How many would open their doors tonight
For a weary and shabby pair
Make room at hearths for a Stranger-Child
Though the infant be wondrous fair?

How many would give of their goods tonight
The best they possess and more,
For their faith in a star and an angel choir
And a King forevermore.

We censure the folk of a bygone time
For indifference to Mary's plight
How many would do any better now
Would YOU follow the star tonight?

What is Prayer?

Prayer is a conversation with God, not always a request for something. Any request will not necessarily be what YOU wanted, but what God wanted for you. Be sure you show your gratitude for your answered prayer.



"What do you mean " it's
a bit muddy ?

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A thought from Douglas Moore, Auxiliary Minister

Let the old year go

I don't know - perhaps it's the long dark nights or the [usually] dreich weather, but we find ourselves in a more reflective frame of mind at this time of year than usual.

Of course, there's New Year, which is a time of looking back, taking stock and thinking about things that might have been or things that may have turned out differently if only we had known what we know now.

Sometimes the New Year can hold a fear for the future that lies ahead. Sometimes what happened in the past can hold an even greater dread. Sometimes, if we allow it to happen, the past can define our future.

There is the possibility that what ventures we may try in the New Year will be restricted by failures of times gone by.

Of course the past is important to us. It is the memory of past childhood pain that keeps us, as adults from touching a hot kettle or oven: we ignore the past at our peril. Sometimes though, the past does not just warn us – it can paralyse us. Helen Mallicoat wrote a poem that urges us not to live like that:



I was regretting the past
And fearing for the future...
Suddenly my Lord was speaking:
"My name is I am." He paused.
I waited. He continued.

"When you live in the past
With its mistakes and regrets,
It is hard. I am not there.
My name is not I was."

"When you live in the future
With its problems and fears,
It is hard. I am not there.
My name is not I will be."

"When you live in this moment,
It is not hard.
I am here.
My name is I am."

If something hasn't worked in the past, then perhaps it's time to try something new. You see, God calls us to be obedient, not successful.

May this coming year be one where we learn to lean on our Saviour who can supply all our needs.

After speaking to Liz and with her understanding, I will be taking more of a back seat for the next wee while. This is due to increased work and family commitments. I hope to show my face as often as I can. My guess is that it is likely to be early in the New Year when things will return to normal. Though I will not see you so regularly, my thoughts and prayers are with you.

May each and every one of you know God's richest blessing.

Douglas

A Year of time

Though even thinking on the subject of time may prove discomfoting, it is not a bad idea – especially at the beginning of a new year.

As we look into "YEAR" we look at a block of time. We see 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8760 hours, 525,600 minutes 31,536,000 seconds. And all is a gift from God. We have done nothing to deserve it, earn it, or purchase it. Like the air we breathe, time comes to us as part of life.

The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, strong and weak – every man woman and child has the same twenty four hours every day.

Another important thing about time is that you cannot stop it. There is no way to slow it down, turn it off, or adjust it. Time marches on. And you cannot bring back time. Once it is gone it is gone. Yesterday is lost forever. If yesterday is lost, tomorrow is uncertain. We may look ahead at a full year's block of time, but we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it.

Obviously time is one of our most precious possessions. We can waste it. We can worry over it. We can spend it on ourselves. Or as good steward we can invest it in the Kingdom of God.

The New Year is full of time. As the seconds tick away, will you be tossing time out of the window, or will you make every minute count?

Castlehill Bowling Club



Bowling Summer outing

Out of a wet week there was one sunny afternoon and that was when we had our annual foray into the world of BIG bowls at Girvan. The company of 48 people contained one minister, 13 elders and 5 former elders and it would have been hopeful that the heavens and the sun would be kind. A very close and exciting afternoon's bowls resulted in the winning rink of David Lynch, Nancy Gordon and Isabella Kerr, winning narrowly. The lowest scoring rink will remain just that, but they at least got a prize – others got nothing. The first toucher this year went to Nancy Gordon. It was a most enjoyable afternoon with a lovely tea supplied by the ladies of Girvan Bowling Club. This year we had nine spectators, who cheered us on enthusiastically, [well some of the time]. It was good to come together during the summer and look forward to the winter indoor session again.

Castlehill Church Seniors

On 12th October we had a very successful afternoon with about 50 in attendance. The entertainment was by "Best Friends" from Cumnock with a return visit, which proved popular. An excellent tea was provided by the ladies of the Coffee Shop. The next meeting will be in the main hall on 14th December at 10.15 when we will be having our Christmas party. The entertainment will be by a local school choir and a good attendance is hoped for. In February on the 8th we will have a return visit of Peter Christie from Troon, and if last year was anything to do with it, it should be good afternoon. On 12th April we will be being entertained by Jim Colvin and Friends, who are great favorites of our afternoons. We ask you to put these dates on your calendar and come along and bring a friend.

Wellwood Grierson

Castlehill Church of Scotland Guild

The Committee would like to wish everyone a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year in 2011

The Guild starts again on January 13th 2011. On that night, our minister will tell us about the retreat she led for other ministers in Virginia last year.

We are also having a Scottish Evening on Wednesday 26th January to which all are invited. Tickets are on sale for this for £5 (this includes a light supper).

Best Wishes from The Guild Committee



ST ANDREW, Patron Saint of Scotland

It is surprising how little we know of Andrew. His name occurs only twelve times in the Four Gospels and once in Acts and usually it is in a list of the Disciples. It is only in the Gospel of John that we get glimpses of the real individual.

Andrew and his brother Simon (Peter) came originally from Bethsaida (John 1, 44) and later moved to Capernaum (Matthew 1, 29), villages that lay east and west of the point where the River Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee. They earned their livelihood as fishermen. Andrew became a follower of John the Baptist (John 1, 40), but on witnessing and recognising the significance of Jesus' baptism, brought his brother Simon to meet Jesus the Messiah. Matthew 4, 18 and Mark 1, 16 tell a different story, viz. that Jesus came upon the brothers as they were casting their nets in search of fish and invited them to join him. In John 6, 8-9, we see Andrew the man of initiative, when beside the Sea of Galilee he found the boy with the five loaves and two fish for the feeding of the five thousand. It was also to Andrew that Philip went first when, in Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover, a number of Greeks were asking to see Jesus (John 12, 20-22) after the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

The evidence for Andrew's mission after Jesus' death and resurrection consists of a mass of legends written centuries after the events and highly unreliable. At the best they suggest journeys which started from his home area, moved northwards through Syria, into and across Turkey, west to Constantinople, then south into Macedonia and Greece. Perhaps he met with or established some of the early Christian groups later visited by Paul. The tradition is that he was arrested in Southern Greece and crucified at Patras on a cross in the shape of the Greek letter X (Ch). Unlike Jesus, however, he was tied to his cross and his death came slowly, enabling him to preach to the onlookers for two days.

The stories of Andrew the Patron Saint similarly are only legends. The commonest of these tells how in the 4th century, when the Emperor Constantine decided to move the corpse of Andrew to Constantinople, Regulus, a monk in Patras, was told by an angel in a dream to remove three fingers of the right hand, one upper arm-bone, one kneecap and one tooth and set off with these relics to the west. On his travels, he was shipwrecked on the east coast of Scotland and was given land on which to set up a small church by the king. The presence of the saint's relics meant that the town of St Andrews and its cathedral which later flourished in that place became places of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages. Not only that, the same King Angus had a vision in which St Andrew spoke to him and as a result he won a great victory over an English army. St Andrew now became the patron saint of Scotland and his cross the emblem on our national flag. St Andrews Day is the 30th November.



Castlehill Church 2011 Calendar with a wonderful collection of soup recipes is available now for £3 - great for first footing!

Cosy Café

Recently we started a new initiative for young people in Castlehill Church called Cosy Café. The idea behind it is to encourage all young people of secondary school age to come along and just chill out. It is an opportunity for them to meet with their friends in a warm, friendly environment. They can have a cup of coffee, tea or hot chocolate **absolutely free**. If they want to bring along snacks they are more than welcome to do so.

They can also play games, listen to music or if they have an instrument and want to bring it along to play they can do that too. It is an evening of fun and enjoyment. So if you know of anyone who attends a local secondary school why not encourage them and their friends to come along and enjoy a nice cuppa and some fun.

The group meets once a month in the North Hall Castlehill Church from **7.30pm to 9.00pm** the next meetings will take place on the **11 November, 02 December and 13 January**.

If you want more information then please contact Tom McLeod on 01292 570100.



Castlehill is once again a church involved in training students for ministry. As we welcome a new generation of ministers in training, we continue our series, looking back at previous assistants and asking:

Where are they now?

Christmas Greetings to you, from me. Iain U. Thomson, a former Assistant Minister at Castlehill Church, but so long ago that few of you will have heard of me. I served as Assistant Minister to the Rev Michael Dickie from July 1970 until March 1972, when I was inducted to the Parish of Skene, just outside the city of Aberdeen. Yes I've been in my present charge since 1972.

I have fond memories of my time at Castlehill – it was a wonderful learning experience where Michael Dickie gave me free rein but was always there for me to discuss, share ideas and advise. I was particularly involved in youth work, pastoral visiting and sharing with Michael in worship. It was, I remember, a busy Kirk with thriving youth organizations and a warm friendly congregation. My wife, Christine and I happened to be having a short holiday in Ayr a few years ago and came to Castlehill on the Sunday – and lo and behold it was when you were celebrating 50 years as a congregation. We enjoyed sharing with you on that happy occasion, and also managed to visit Michael, and my former landlady Marella Grigor. The Parish of Skene has undergone massive changes in my time here: when I came it was basically a rural parish with four villages, farms and the start of a new 'garden suburb' called Westhill. Westhill has now expanded to some 5,000 homes and has a large, ever growing industrial estate, with many oil companies having their headquarters there – certainly not a sleepy parish.

My ministry here has been a bust one with many interesting challenges. Skene Church is a traditional 200 year old building in the centre of the Parish, and then in 1981, we built a new multi-purpose church in Westhill; and extended it in 2003. The building belongs to the Church of Scotland, but is also somewhat unique in that we share it with the local Roman Catholic and Scottish Episcopal congregations, so there is quite a bit of ecumenical activity, such as a joint Holiday Bible Club and united services during Lent for example.

The priorities in my ministry over the years have continued to be what I learned during my time at Castlehill – preparation for and leading of worship, pastoral care and seeking to build up and active, friendly and welcoming congregation. Those who knew me as a young lad at Castlehill will however be surprised to learn that I was Clerk to the Presbytery of Gordon for 12 years: administration was not my strong point in my earlier years but I learned its importance with experience. "Don't put off till tomorrow what you can do today" With kind regards to all at Castlehill.

Yours sincerely
Iain U. Thomson



Children's Corner

Find the words about **Frosty the Snowman** that are listed below in the word search grid. Circle each letter one by one. Each letter of the Frosty the Snowman Christmas word search grid may be used in more than one word. **When the word search puzzle is complete, read the remaining letters left to right, top to bottom, to learn an interesting fact about Frosty the Snowman.**

Y T H E C N A M W O N S C H R
 T M I S A T M A S S L A U G H
 S O E N M A G I C I A N G F R
 O O S L E B R O O M S T I C K
 R T Y T T H E S N O W A M O A
 F B N W O I A S F M I C R R E
 S U T R L E N S A C O L R N L
 D T R A I N E G H E D A B C O
 Y T O G F Y I E N A E U A O P
 U O T P E C N A D R P S Y B H
 A N N L H D T J H E C P A P T
 S N A A S A C O O U N T Y I R
 Y O T B O Y T S I L N A N P O
 C S C H O O L C H I L D R E N
 I E N E T E E N F P I Y F T Y



FROSTY THE SNOWMAN WORD LIST

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| BROOMSTICK | MAGIC HAT |
| BUTTON NOSE | MAGICIAN |
| CAME TO LIFE | MELTING |
| COAL EYES | NORTH POLE |
| CORNCOB PIPE | PLAY |
| DANCE | SANTA CLAUS |
| FROSTY | SCHOOLCHILDREN |
| HAPPY | SNOWMAN |
| JOLLY | TOP HAT |
| LAUGH | TRAIN |

Santa has got the spelling wrong on his parcels. Can you rearrange the letters to find the correct presents ?

dtedy
utppep
sjiwa

kobo
cepnsi

rca
rtina
lpnae

lldo
racrtot

Parish Registers

Funerals

July

Frank McFarlane Temple House

August

John Summers	Fenwickland Ave
Margaret Trousdale	Burnbank Road
Anne Kane	Treebank Crescent
Allan Brown	Orchard House
Mary Pattie	Gavin Hamilton Court

September

Mary Tindall	Maple Drive
Henry Parker	Dalmellington Road
David McDonald	Heather Park
Jane McWhinnie	Kincaidston Drive

October

Bertha Baker	Glencairn Road
Jack Wyllie	Belmont Drive
Scott Morrison	Caledonia Road
Marion Muir	Heather Park
Susan Hatton	Mount Oliphant Crescent
Bertie Bell	Hillfoot Road

Baptisms

Neve Hannah Paterson 26th September 2010

Weddings

Craig Mennie & Linda McNally 18th September 2010

Praying Hands

Many years ago I saw an old black and white film at the cinema, and the closing scene was a pair of writhing hands. This disturbed me greatly for a long time afterwards, so much so that when I saw drawings or paintings of praying hands, it filled me with horror. Recently a friend gave me an unexpected present of a leather bound journal. The outside of the book has a sketch of a pair of praying hands, and inside gave the story of how it came about.

The famous "Study of Praying Hands" created in 1508 by Albrecht Durer has a history as touching and beautiful as the artwork itself:

When the young Albrecht was studying art he and Franz Knigstein, a friend and fellow art student worked as labourers to pay their tuition costs. Their long work hours left little time for art. Rather than have both of them fail at their art studies, they decided that one should work while the other attended school.

Franz agreed to work as a labourer, while Albrecht gratefully pursued his art career, promising to return the favour once he became a successful artist. Much time passed as Albrecht developed his potential genius. Finally he returned to keep his promise to Franz, who was overjoyed at Albrecht's success. Soon Albrecht realized that the years of labour had been hard on Franz. His fingers had become too bent and twisted to manipulate a paintbrush. He could never become the artist he hoped to be, nor could Albrecht ever fulfill his promise of repayment.

One night as Franz knelt in prayer, Albrecht sorrowfully sketched the crippled hands of the friend who had made his success possible. Albrecht Durer's beautiful artwork is a tribute to the spirit of love and sacrifice to which Franz Knigstein's life was testimony.

The strange thing is my friend did not know of my feelings towards depictions of praying hands, also that I had been talking about it only a few days before she gave me the journal. I know my outlook on praying hands has greatly changed so much. So if you feel compelled to give someone a surprise present, don't hold back. You never know. There may be a deeper reason for it than you'll ever know.

The Lord works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

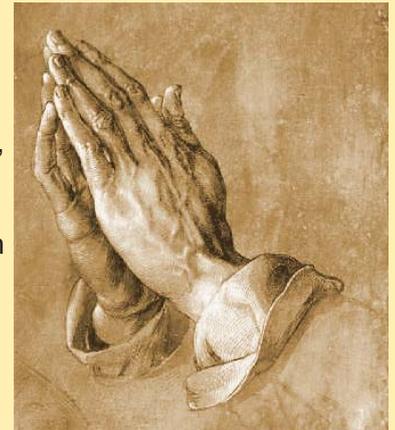
Margaret McCormick, Prayer Promoter.

Annual Fabric Appeal

Following the success of the Fabric Appeal in 2009 the Congregational Board decided to hold an annual Fabric Appeal and everyone should have received a white envelope from their elder prior to the September Communion. The 2009 Appeal raised the sum of **£10,375** and the Church was able to reclaim a further **£1,920** Gift Aid on the donations making a total of **£12,295**. We had hoped to raise half of this amount in our annual appeals and so far we are only **7%** short at **£4,307** [with an estimated gift recovery of **£960**]. A big **Thank You** to everyone who has donated to both appeals and if anyone still wishes to make a donation to help us reach the **50%** target then please feel free to put your envelope in the collection plate on any Sunday up to Christmas. If anyone requires an envelope the Church Office has some spares.

Thank you again to everyone who has donated.

Douglas Wilson, Treasurer



A Christmas Poem

I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book
And every year when Christmas comes, I go and take a look.
And that is when I realize that these names are a part
Not of the book they are written in but really of my heart.
For each name stands for one who crossed my path sometime
And in the meeting they've become the rhythm in each rhyme
And while it sounds fantastic for me to make this claim
I really feel that I'm composed of each remembered name.
And while you may not be aware of any special link
Just meeting you has changed my life a lot more than you think.
For once I've met somebody, the years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word or of a friendly face.
So never think my Christmas cards are just a mere routine
Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between,
For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you,
It is because you're on my list that I'm indebted to.
For I am but a total of the many folks I've met,
And you happen to be one of those I prefer not to forget.
And whether I have known you for many years or few,
In many ways you have a part in shaping things I do.
And every year when Christmas comes, I realize anew
The best gifts life can offer is meeting folks like you
And may the spirit of Christmas that forever endures
Leave its richest blessings in the hearts of you and yours



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