

The Herald

Castlehill Parish Church

Spring 2018



Waiting for summer

Editorial

Our front cover shows a picture of calm, withering beauty, and the overwhelming feeling of waiting. In Jerusalem that first Easter the early Christians must have experienced all of these. What was going to happen next? They had witnessed the death of their Master on the Cross. There was now a calmness over the city, an expectancy, but of what? Jesus had told his disciples he would rise on the third day, but did they really believe that.

The tale that the women, visiting the garden, told of the empty tomb, the meeting with the “Gardener”, this was not what they had expected at all but, as events unfolded, they came face to face with their risen Lord, the withering of their hopes was replaced by the message of the Resurrection.

We read of these events, but not everyone experiences the feeling and the belief that Jesus has risen, as did the disciples, and somehow many are still waiting. To all the believers in our Church, their task this Easter and beyond is to approach those who are still waiting and tell them the Good News. Not everyone wants to listen, but as we know in the parable of the farmer sowing his seed, some will fall on fertile ground.

I hope you all had a happy and fulfilling Easter.

Wellwood Grierson, Editor.

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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.

Dear Friends,

When I read the newspapers or watch the evening news on television I often wonder where people can turn to for hope in this dark world.

The ancient road from Jerusalem to Jericho is a narrow, treacherous path along a deep gorge on the Judean wilderness. Its name is Wadi Kelt, but it's known as the valley of the shadow, for this is the location that inspired David's 23rd Psalm. The place itself offers little reason to compose such a hopeful poem. The landscape is bleak, barren and perilously steep. It's a good place for thieves, but not for anyone else.

When David wrote, "Yea though I walk through the vale of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" (v4), he was in a place where evil was an ever present reality. Yet he refused to give in to fear. He wasn't expressing hope that God would abolish evil so that he could pass through safely; he was saying that the presence of God gave him the confidence to pass through difficult places without fear of being deserted by Him. In another Psalm, David said that the Lord was his hope (Ps 71:5).

Many claim to have hope, but only those whose hope is Christ can claim it with certainty. Hope comes not from strength, intelligence or favourable circumstances, but from the Lord. As Maker of heaven and earth, He alone has the right to promise hope and the power to keep the promise.

As we worship together we comprise a community of faith and our faith in God brings the hope I need to be able to read the newspapers and listen to the news broadcasts and remain within this dark world with praise on my lips and thankfulness in my heart, because I know that the Lord, the source of my hope, is with us in that community. Why not come along and share that hope – there is enough for you too!

*Our strength and hope is in the Lord-
We rest secure in His sure word:
And though we are tempted to despair
We know we're kept within His care.*

John Paterson Interim Moderator,

Presbytery of Ayr – Alternative Gift Scheme 2017

I am pleased to inform the Congregation that a total of 51 postcards were bought raising a sum of £255 which has been passed to the Malawi Committee of the Presbytery of Ayr. This will buy seeds and fertilisers for our partners in Bandawe and Limphasa Presbyteries in Malawi.

Thank you, Andrew Graham



Rainbow Services offers more than simply the delivery of Care Services. If you are looking for a service that lets you or loved one keep on enjoying life at home why not look at our website:-www.rainbowcareservices.co.uk or give us a call on T:-01292 294180.

From your Locum 'Minister'...



I really would love to make my garden nicer. I keep saying it and I mean it and what's more, I really believe it...I am a dormant gardener. I'm not talking about the constant hard work of mowing the grass and edging it. My husband dutifully does that, as well as a host of other jobs. I'm talking about growing shrubs, plants and flowers. I love working with them and long to have more time to work at it. I dreamt that when I retired from school I would develop a beautiful garden. And here I am, working away in the 'garden' of Castlehill Church instead. However, I am looking forward (in Hope) to fine weather and lighter evenings... One day it will be the way I want it. Oh well, I can keep dreaming....

But, of course, our life is like a garden and the ideal life is one where we trust God to do the weeding and pruning along with the planting. How much more beautiful our lives would be if we could allow God to assist in the management.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Galatians 5:22

My grandson used to love to help me in the garden, and I tried to encourage him. I remember he even came round and removed the dead flowers from my daffodils while I was away one Easter. Of course, he had helped to plant them so he thought they were his. I got a running commentary from the minute they popped up through the earth until they were in full glorious bloom. He even understood why it was good to remove the withered flowers. Learn young, learn fair!

May we all enjoy relaxing and enjoying the presence of God in our lives this summer.

Love and prayers, and God Bless you all, Christine.



PS William (grandson) and I planted the daffodils in autumn 2005. In 2011 I had a lot of work done to the layout of the garden and raised beds were put in just behind the wall where the daffodils are. To my dismay, only leaves – no flowers – came up the following spring. A friend advised me to get rid and plant new ones but I did not have the heart to dig up such happy memories. Thankfully! The following year they returned in full bloom and now seem brighter every year.

Christine

TJ GROUNDCARE
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All areas covered

07885413902
tomgardener1@yahoo.com

Answers to the winter edition
Competition –
"Well Known Ayrshire Landmarks"

- 1.Auchinleck House. 2.Culzean Castle.
- 3.Rozelle House. 4.St John's Tower
5. Oswald House. 6. Dunure Castle.
7. Dumfries House . 8. Skeldon House, Dalrymple

Castlehill Bowling Club

It seems a long time ago since we had our Christmas Party, a successful afternoon with fun games of bowls and the usual lovely tea provided by the ladies. We were joined by our minister Christine Stewart and her husband William.

During the early part of the year we were saddened by the death of a former member, Harry Hunt. Jean Hunt has donated a trophy in his memory, the Jean and Hurry Hunt Champion of champions Cup to be played for by the winner of the ladies singles and the gents singles.

On 28th March we held our Annual General Meeting and presentation of prizes.

The following Office Bearers were appointed:

President: David Kerr, Vice President: Michael Hardie, Treasurer: Moira Alexander

Tea Committee: Joan Macfie, Sheila McKenzie, Kathy McCreadie, Frances Russell and Moira Alexander

The Prize winners for season 2017/2018 were as follows:-

Ladies Singles	Winner, Rita Macey-Lilley	Runner Up, Georgie Harris
Ladies Pairs	Winners, Isabella Kerr/Rita Macey-Lilley	
	Runners Up, Moira Alexander/Kathy McCreadie	
Gents Singles	Winner, George Neill	Runner Up Harry Lorimer
Gents Pairs	Winners, Sam Storrie/ Wellwood Grierson	
	Runners Up, Ronnie Duff/ John McDermott	
Mixed Pairs	Winners, Robert Forrester/Rita Macey-Lilley	
	Runners Up, Moira Alexander/ Wellwood Grierson	
Champion of Champions	Winner, Rita Macey-Lilley	Runner Up, George Neill
Monday Points League [Christmas Leader]	David Kerr	
Winners equal	David Yates and David Kerr	
Wednesday Points League [Christmas Leader]	Isabella Kerr	
Winners	Isabella Kerr and Robert Forrester	

The first event of the next session will be an outing to Girvan, hopefully in July and the season will start again on 3rd September 2018

David Kerr President



Prize-winners 2017/2018



Waiting For Tea!!

Moanin' Minnie

Ah wis jist sayin' the ither day, they aye seem to be formin' committees and that's the last ye hear o' them. Ah mind aboot three years ago, the congregation were asked to gaun tae a meetin along wi' the Kirk Session aboot a revue or somethin' like that, an' that wis the last we heard o' it. A wummen overheard whit Ah wis sayin' and she says that there will be somethin' in the magazine aboot it. That should be interesting at least Ah hope so. It's on another page somewhere, have a read and see whit ye think.

An Unusual Easter Service

"For [...] I was in prison, and you visited me. Then the good people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you [...] in prison and care for you?' Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.'"
Matthew 25:35-40 (abbreviated, New Century version)

When was the last time that you read this passage and thought that it applied to you? I freely admit that I had thought that I could get by with helping the poor and the sick, but never thought that these particular words of Jesus were meant for me. How very short-sighted and complacent I was!

As many of you know, I frequently visit Belgium. When there, I attend an evangelical Protestant church in Flanders. The congregation is small but enthusiastic and is currently led by a minister from the Netherlands. Hymns are sung to the accompaniment of a guitar and / or bongo drums (many of the congregation come from Africa).

Three weeks before Easter, I received an email saying that members of the congregation were invited to join the minister in a musical service at the local prison. I hesitated at first, but eventually decided that, since I was going to be in Belgium at the time, I would join in. Boy, was what followed an eye-opener in so many ways!

First, we all had to submit photocopies of our ID cards in advance to the prison security officers. Then, when we actually got to the prison, we had to go in as a group, have our ID cards verified against the photocopies (and then taken from us), and have all keys, phones, cash etc. placed in locked cupboards. After a long walk through administrative corridors, we arrived in the main part of the prison. Do you remember the scenes in *Porridge*? Long gangways of cells with metal staircases? That's exactly how it was!

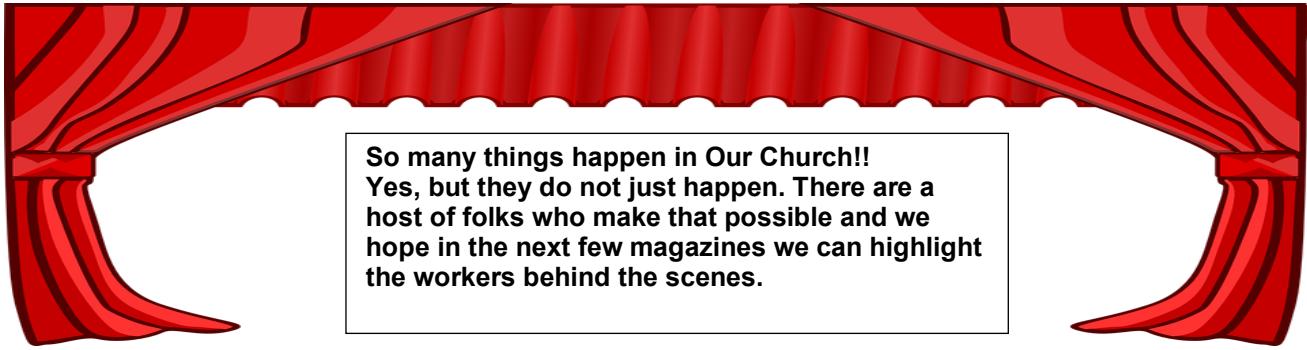
There were nine of us churchgoers including three guitarists (one of them the minister) and six singers (led by the minister's wife). We were shown into a large, empty room with lots of chairs laid out. Having taken our positions at the front, the prisoners came in: sixty in total, all male, aged from 18 to about 55, some with tattoos on arms and legs.

What followed was an Easter service taking the story from before the arrest of Jesus, through the crucifixion and up to and including the resurrection. Our minister led the service (in Dutch, of course) helped by the regular prison chaplain, who translated the meditations and the readings into what I recognised as an East European language. It transpired that the language was Romanian and that 25% of the inmates were Romanian. That immediately reminded me of our Boys Brigade and the magnificent work that they do in Romania.

In total, we sang six hymns, only one of which I actually knew! Luckily, they could be found on YouTube and we had had half an hour's rehearsal before going to the prison, so I didn't make too much of a fool of myself. The Belgians in the congregation sang along lustily, making it feel like a regular Castlehill church service. The final hymn was a rousing rendition of "Thine be the Glory". It was so stimulating in fact that the prisoners asked for an encore and we had to sing two of the three verses again!

The unexpectedly spiritual part of the evening came at the end. Many of the prisoners came up to us as they left, shook our hands and thanked us for having given them an opportunity to celebrate Easter. It was a truly humbling moment. This had clearly been a service in every sense of the word. It made me feel that the Holy Spirit had been powerfully at work on that day and in that place.

John Fisher



**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 in the next few magazines we can highlight
the workers behind the scenes.**

Bell Ringing

The bell is rung to signify the start of worship and is a sign of preparation for a Sunday Service. As children we are told that the bell rings out 'Come to Church! Come to Church!' at 10.45am every Sunday.

The bell one hears rung in Castlehill came from Ochiltree Church. Bell ringing was once part of the duties of the Church Beadle but for the past 15 years, David Kerr has taken on this role. One of our oldest members, John Wilson rang the bell from time to time and it was taken up by his two sons, Allan and Gordon. Not a job for everyone as there is a 'knack' to ringing the bell and it gives one a good work-out.

If you look at the Bell Tower, can you see the image of the 'Crown of Thorns' portrayed in the framework?

Flowers

Have you noticed who buys, arranges and delivers the flowers? The flower arrangers (Stella Nixon, Margaret Grierson, Frances Russell, Alison Smith, Rose Macgregor, John Hamilton and, the newest member, Catherine Holland) use their talents to show off the flowers beautifully. Recently retired after almost 30 years' service are Joanne and Jean Currie. Flowers are bought either in memory of loved ones who have passed or to celebrate a birthday or anniversary. After the services, these flowers are delivered by a dedicated team of volunteers, to members of the congregation who are going through difficult times in their lives to show that the wishes and love of the church are being brought to them and let them know they are in our thoughts.

Cleaning

Our employed cleaner is Barbara Macdonald who has been with us for 10+ years and co-incidentally she and her husband were the second couple married in Castlehill Church after its founding. The church cleaning was deemed too much work for our one employed cleaner, so a small group (Liz Reid, Margaret Devlin, Margaret Graham, Dorothy Jack and Lorna Maxwell, who was replaced by Sandra Struthers) was formed. Every week the Main Hall and North Hall are looked after by this group although other parts, including the Toilets, are dealt with as necessary.

It is amazing how many hats, scarves, umbrellas and gloves are left behind. If anyone is looking for a lost item, the first port of call is the vestibule and failing that, the coat rail outside the office.

Our thanks to them all for keeping our premises spic and span.

Local Church Review

My article is about our Local Church Review 2015-2020 and 'hands up' I wasn't aware that such a review took place but I am learning and getting involved.

Local Church Review was enacted by The General Assembly in 2011 replacing the Superintendence Quinquennial Visitation (QV) programme. Our last QV had been in 2011. Our LCR would be carried out from 2015. So where are we half way into our 5 year review.
Our LCR story so far.....

27th April 2015

At Presbytery information regarding the Local Church Review (LCR) process was discussed and issued to all charges in Ayr Central Area of Presbytery at their meeting of the Area Grouping.

September 2015

Kirk Session were tasked with gathering relevant information requested by Presbytery. This information would be collated in advance of the congregational LCR sessions and distributed to Rev. Bill Johnston, Minister Ochiltree linked with Stair; Mrs Isabell Montgomerie, Presbytery Elder Ochiltree linked with Stair and Rev. Mandy Hickman, Mission Development Officer, Presbytery of Ayr who would be our congregations review visitation team.

Office bearers completed this information gathering which included – number of members over the previous 5 years; number of baptisms; weddings funerals over previous 4 years; numbers of those attending church activities in a typical week; external/community groups using our church premises.

October 2015

Completed questionnaire returned to Presbytery.

26th November 2015

Planning session took place in the main hall at Castlehill Church. This session was facilitated by Rev. Mandy Hickman, Mission Development Officer. The LCR team visiting – Rev. W Johnstone; Mrs Isabell Montgomerie; Rev. J. Paterson (Interim Moderator).

The visitation team explained how the LCR created principles to shape the life of the congregation. Encouraging us that the process in which faith and vows of membership should be highlighted and strengthened throughout. To have a creative relationship between congregation, Presbytery and the wider community.

There were 30 members Castlehill Church in attendance. Full and open discuss was encouraged throughout the evening looking at the objectives of where we want to be over the next 5 years.

6th December 2015

Preaching Sunday was led by Rev. William Johnston and attended by Mrs Isabell Montgomerie after their LCR visit where communion was celebrated. Preaching Sunday is of importance and underpins the process in Word and Prayer. It was also an opportunity to encourage the whole congregation to participate in the vision of mission for our church.

16th June 2016

Presbytery Reception of LCR Reports – Douglas Owens, Session Clerk and Margaret Graham, Elder attended this meeting and there were 5 members of the Mission Committee in attendance.

The Committee highlighted certain aspects of our Objectives and discussed with us areas of 'good practice' that had been carried out in other churches. One main point that must be addressed then by us was the issue of line management of our staff.

It was stressed to us that it should not be left until the vacancy was filled. The Committee was very helpful and gave us suggestions of how this could be done.

August 2016

Our LCR was presented to a meeting of Presbytery for ratification.

June 2017

Kirk Session agreed to have LCR as an Agenda item. Also for Margaret Graham who would ensure that the Objectives for LCR were kept up to date and that she would keep in touch with relevant groups to have updates recorded.

August 2017

Nurturing Group – Training session by Rev. John Paterson, Interim Moderator, was carried out for Conduct of Funerals and Bereavement.

November 2017

Publications Group – reaching out to the wider community they have put together a leaflet ‘What’s on’ in our church on a weekly basis. Informing everyone of the wide choice of groups that they could become involved with.

Kirk Session agreed that there would be a re-introduction of visits by church officers to groups who use our premises again as a way of reaching out to the wider community.

Youth Group – applying for funding from the Church of Scotland to have Messy Church as a regular activity and to encourage younger members of our community to be welcome into our church premises.

So where are we now?

Having been without a minister for over two and a half years has not made things easy for our congregation. Christine Stewart has worked hard to fill as much of that gap as possible, and has succeeded admirably. Christine has been supported by so many of our Church Members and if you read our wee article on behind the scenes that makes for interesting reading and what a lot of work is ongoing in our church from our congregation that perhaps you were not aware of. Are you an active member of one of these activities? Or would you like to be, just let somebody know.

Margaret Graham

Seniors Afternoons

On 13th February we had a very enjoyable afternoon with a group from Alloway Church, “Musical Memories”. Their wide variety of music was appreciated by a great turn out of members, from the oldest in their nineties to one under one year old.

The April meeting was entertained by the Ayrshire Ukes and their infectious music was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. Infectious enough to entice a few to get up and dance and it was amazing how many still knew the words to old “hits” There is a video around to prove it!!!

Our thanks are due to all the ladies of the Coffee Shop who provide the food and to all those who provide transport for those who otherwise would not be able to come along.

YOU are cordially invited to the start of our next session on 9th October. Let us know if you need a lift and we will try to do that for you. Please come along, you will enjoy the afternoon and feel free to bring a friend.

Wellwood Grierson

Social Group...What to look out for:

You might have missed the Beetle Drive on **18th April**, but do not despair there is another on **12th September**. Before that there is Soup and Sweet Lunch on **10th June**, so put these dates in your diary. The big events later in the year are the Autumn Fayre on **27th October** and on **24th November** look out for Music, Food and Fun. Watch for details on the notice boards and we will keep you up to date .Make sure you come along and join the fun and enjoy your time with friends.

Liz Reid



Castlehill Church of Scotland Guild



Over the last 3 years the Guild has supported 6 projects under the Theme - Be Bold Be Strong

1. Care for the family – Let's stick together Care for the Family is a national charity which aims to promote strong family relationships and to help those who face family difficulties. The work is motivated by Christian compassion, with resources and support available to everyone, of any faith or none. The Let's stick together sessions introduce simple principles to highlight the skills which help facilitate happy, healthy and lasting relationships for the whole family, including bad habits to avoid and good habits to build upon. The Guild have raised £94,570.12 so far for this project.

2. Christian Aid – Caring for Mother Earth in Bolivia Bolivia is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in South America. Millions of people live in difficult conditions, struggling to survive. Deforestation coupled with climate change has left communities who rely on the forest for survival vulnerable, as crops flood and livelihoods are lost. Women very often have to spend hours every day collecting firewood for cooking. Not only does this prevent them from engaging in other activities, but when the forest is under water it becomes difficult to get the wood they need. Caring for Mother Earth has worked with over 700 families to educate them about climate change and has supported them in building and using solar powered ovens enabling families to eat all year round. The Guild has raised £89,785.39 to date for this project.

3. Mission International – Haiti Project Mission International is a Christian missionary charity based in Dundee. It was started in 2006 by Hugh Henderson MBE in order to improve the material and spiritual lives of some of the poorest communities around the world. Our vision is to be ambassadors for the poor around the world and to encourage as many people as possible in this country to help meet their needs. The Haiti Project began in 2010 working with a local Christian church in the north eastern town of Ouanaminthe. The aim of the project is to construct a multipurpose building to be used as a school, community centre and new church centre. In the hope that both children and adults reach their full potential. The Guild have raised £84,183.31 for this project.

4. Prospects – All Friends Together Prospects in Scotland were delighted to be selected as one of the Guild projects. They are a small organisation and so really value working in partnership with the Guild. They believe that through their project All Friends Together they can make a significant, positive change to the lives of people with learning disabilities in Scotland. The project seeks to help churches to welcome people with learning disabilities and include them in all aspects of church life and to build friendships. The Guild have raised £88,041.80 to date for this project.

5. The Ascension Trust – Street Pastors In the UK, there are around 12000 Street Pastors in about 350 areas. In Scotland, all Street Pastor areas are under the umbrella of The Ascension Trust (Scotland). In April 2007 there were no Street Pastors in Scotland. In April 2015, there were over 500 operating in 20 areas from Edinburgh to Tain. Working within an 'Urban Trinity' of Churches, Local Authorities and Police, Street Pastors go out in all weathers, from around 10pm until 3am on one or more nights at the weekend. We now have Street Pastors locally in Ayr and Prestwick and we enjoyed a well-informed talk from them this year. The Guild have raised £107,585.41 to date for the Street Pastors. The total raised to date is £587,121.31, showing that over the last 3 years the Guild has shown tremendous support for, and commitment to these projects, and now even though we are now moving into our new three year strategy they will still continue to be Bold and Strong in supporting the 6 new projects in the years ahead.

6. Feed The Minds – Breaking the Cycle of FGM This project helps to empower women and girls in Kenya to fight the horrendous practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), so they can stay in school and reach their full potential instead of being forced to marry and have children. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) over 125 million girls and women across 29 countries, including Scotland, alive today, have been cut. FGM is the partial or total removal of the external genitalia for non-medical reasons. Seen as a rite of passage, it is carried out on girls of 12 years, sometimes younger. It can lead to severe problems and even death. Survivors tend to drop out of school, are married off and give birth, all before 16. Feed the Minds is an ecumenical Christian charity founded in 1964, they are working hard to raise awareness and to combat F.G.M., however complex cultural and social reasons make this very hard. Nevertheless, we are committed to promoting a culture of change to ensure every girl can choose her own future and to stop the innocent becoming victims. We do this by engaging the whole community in activities that raise awareness, share knowledge and drive positive social action. We recently had a speaker for this project and the ladies were shocked that this practice continues to this day even in Scotland. Our speaker, Lily, took a photograph (see above) which was sent to Feed the Minds to join other similar pictures to show our commitment to help to end this terrible act. The Guild have raised £122.955.28 to date for this project. As you will see this project has the highest figures out of all 6 projects.

Sandra Wyllie

GIRLGUIDING

All units have again been keeping busy. We had a County Thinking Day Event at Newton Wallacetown Church in February where Units from our South Ayrshire County attended a fun afternoon of games and crafts.

We attended the Youth Service at our own Church in March. A few of the girls took part in the service with carrying colours, doing a sketch and singing.



Tuesday night Brownies had their Pack Holiday at the Tamar Manoukian Centre at Dumfries House Estate at the beginning of April. The girls took part in wall climbing, shelter building and the assault course as well as other activities.



The other units are looking forward to weekends away with Monday night Brownies and Tuesday Guides sharing a weekend at Dumfries House Estate, the Rainbows are having a sleepover in June and Monday night Guides are going down to Blackpool for an overnight in the Tower Ballroom.

We are looking forward to more adventures as we head towards the Summer and these will be shared at a later date.

Linda McClurkin

The Bunny Hunt

WE SEEK THEM HERE

WE SEEK THEM THERE

IT'S CONFIRMED

Every bunny is accounted for in Castlehill woods according to the 213 people who took part in Castlehill Church Annual Bunny Hunt.

What turned out to be a brilliant day was enjoyed by the 73 families who came along. The excitement of the children going out to find the bunnies and then coming back, so animated, made it all worthwhile for those who worked on the day.

An event like this couldn't happen without the hard work of those who helped throughout the day. I had 21 willing volunteers helping with registration, craft table, kitchen, serving teas and eats let's not forget the guys outside supervising the car park and woods.

To those who provided crafts for sale thank you; Morrisons Store for their support and Prime Cuts, The Mount for the generous discount and of course the photographer



What is Messy Church?

Messy Church is a form of church for children and adults that provides those who attend the opportunity of learning about Jesus through hospitality, friendship, stories and worship. We welcome those who don't already belong to another form of church.

Messy Church session is over a 2 hour period held in the large hall at Castlehill Church. We start with a short celebration time involving story, prayer leading us into activities linked to the theme finishing with us all sitting down and enjoying a simple meal together to bring the session to a close.

To run a successful Messy Church we need the volunteers to assist us in running the session. Are you interested in attending Messy Church even to see what it's like or in helping us with the organisation of a session. Please contact Margaret Graham, 01292 264547 – email : margaretgraham4628@btinternet.com

STOP PRESS: We have been awarded a Grant from Church of Scotland Go For It Fund. We'll be advertising hopefully later in the summer when our first session will be but feel free to contact Margaret for further information or to become involved.



Roots, Branches and Air

Kirsty Wyllie



We are told in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you" and I invite everyone to imagine the peace that Jesus spoke of as being like roots, branches and air. We all choose to put down roots because we wish to build a home for ourselves. We all want to feel that connection, as if we belong. There is a tradition we have at our church that makes everyone feel they are welcome; we share the peace with one another and it means we are starting off our Sunday mornings with kind words and friendly smiles. We like to end the sharing of the peace by singing a hymn that reminds us that his peace is indeed moving in our church. The words of Deep Peace by John Rutter remind us that all we have to do is close our eyes, and search deep within ourselves, to feel the Holy Spirit surrounding us. It feels as if we are getting a massive hug from Jesus. It's only after that, we are filled with confidence about what we must do and we are at peace.

Once we have firmly planted our roots, it's very important to start growing branches. It may take us a while to figure out how to grow in our faith but Jesus already knows and as his followers, he wants us to find a cause bigger than ourselves and be like arrows hitting our targets. In other words, we should stay focused and make a positive change to the wider world in some way. In the final episode of the BBC Television series, "The Musketeers", we see the Musketeers under threat and their Garrison bombed. This looks like the end of the Musketeers because we see a young cadet feeling defeated; he doesn't know how to carry on after such a horrific event. But the captain tells him that the Garrison was only ever 'a place and that we are' The Garrison'. This echoes the words of the hymn, 'I am the Church' where we are told how the church is not 'a building' it is 'a people.' Jesus commanded us to ignite the fire in the lives of others so that they too can find this peace for themselves, because wherever we are the spirit of Jesus can be found. After all, it is not called the Good News for nothing. Let's share the peace that Scripture can bring with kind words and smiles every day. The church is for people to come as they are, regardless of who they are as individuals, and be confronted with the notion that they are good enough and that anything is possible with Jesus. He is the light in the darkness.

Loving Jesus is as easy as breathing but obeying him requires us to have complete dedication and commitment to our faith journey and not sit back and enjoy the view. This is not always an easy thing to do because there are times when we feel lost in the mayhem that life brings. Imagine yourself in a labyrinth, many paths to take but not knowing which one to choose. What we forget to do is listen to the Spirit within and no matter what path we walk down we will ultimately find Jesus waiting for us with unconditional love and understanding. Many writers like Robert Frost in The Road Not Taken and Helen Steiner Rice in The Bend in the Road have touched upon how we always start off with a plan of how our lives should turn out, but in the end the air sweeps us off in a different direction and we are led to where we need to be. This image reinforces what Christians have always believed. With Jesus at the heart of everything in our lives nothing is too much of a challenge because he is the road map, the compass pointing us in the right direction. Peace means different things to many but the word itself instantly conjures up images of love, acceptance and contentment – that is what the Holy Spirit is all about. We trust that through Jesus everything will turn out the way it's supposed to and the peace that Jesus spoke of will be like growing roots and branches, and breathing air.

Finance Update

The church financial year ended on 31 December 2017. 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 18 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 2017 there was a surplus of £5,330 in the General Account. The amount given by Free Will Offering envelopes and the amount of Gift Aid claimed were more than in 2016 but the amount given by standing order and the open plate were less. Although we did not have any major repairs to the church, halls or manse fabric expenditure still cost £8,852.

We were able to claim Gift Aid of £12,787. 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 under the publications section.

Completed forms can be given to Margaret Devlin or returned via the office.

Margaret Devlin



Boys Brigade

In February, Castlehill Boys' Brigade were invited to speak at a gathering for the Ayr Rotary Club about their experiences of visiting the Rhema Foundation in Romania last summer. I was delighted when Mr Queen asked me to present alongside him at the gathering on behalf of the boys.

I was able to share with them what a hugely rewarding experience it was for me. To be able to visit the foundation and to meet those living there was just incredible. The welcome we received was so warm and friendly. I don't think I have experienced anything quite like it before. I met some truly amazing people during my trip and I hope to visit them again in 2019.

Presenting at the Rotary Club was a new experience for me. I had heard about some of the amazing work that the Ayr Rotary Club do in supporting our local community so it was great to be able to find out more about the organisation and its activities. They showed great interest in our presentation and asked a number of questions.

Gavin Drysdale

SANCTUARY FIRST

At a Presbytery conference in February, Rev Albert Bogle gave us an interesting talk on the subject of Sanctuary First [what It is all about is detailed below]. By going to the website and following the link you can receive a daily email with a reading and a short explanation of what the reading means. There is also a short prayer for the day. A modern way of being in daily touch with God, wherever you may be. Go to sanctuaryfirst.org.uk and follow the links. So many people have phones and tablets it makes sense to make daily contact.

Sanctuary First is a Pioneer Ministry being developed by the Church of Scotland through Falkirk Presbytery. The concept was originally developed out of the congregation of St Andrew's Parish Bo'ness but has transitioned into what might be described as a fresh expression of church under the direct governance of Falkirk Presbytery. Albert Bogle was appointed in April 2016, as minister of Sanctuary First with the aspiration that Sanctuary First will become a worshipping congregation of the Church of Scotland on the internet.

We are very keen to develop an authentic caring worshipping community online. If you have any advice or ideas to enable us to fulfil our vision please feel free to get in touch with us. We aim to sponsor monthly opportunities in various locations for our regular subscribers to be able to meet and discover what God might be doing in your local as well as our local world. Please look out for these events being advertised on the site and on social media.

HEAVEN TOUCHING EARTH 1

Baptisms February

Jack Lauchlan

March

Harris Reid

Funerals**December**

Malcolm Halliday	Dalmellington Road
Harry Hunt	Roman Road
Charlotte Wyllie	Queen's Nursing Home
Jean Duncan	Larchwood Road
Marion Dante	Belmont Road
John Thomson	Leslie Crescent
Annie Hayes	Burnbank Raod
Rosalie Kenny	Glendale Cresc

January

Wilma McDowall	Briar Grove
Mary McCrindle	Ellisland Square
Mary Brown	Larghill Lane
Jean Mathieson	Orchard Ave

February

Jane Woods	
Winnie Brock	Ellisland Square
Dan Wyllie	Dunure
Bill Thomson	Woodlands Crescent
Jean Dick	Queen's Nursing Home
John Reddicks	Burnbank Road
Elizabeth Rowan	Carrick Nursing Home

March

Hugh Anderson	Thistle Walk
Bette Brown	Afton Court
Elsie Downs	Juniper Green



As we welcome in a new year
bidding farewell to the old
we look forward to the coming months
to events that will unfold

Winters grip will loosen,
the countryside turns green
and the snowdrop, flower of promise
will very soon be seen

Hard times will come to trouble us
as they do in every year
but with the hand of God to guide us
We can step forward without fear

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