

Letter from the Editor



Welcome to the Christmas edition of the magazine.

We have recently returned from a week's holiday in Andalusia visiting quite a few interesting towns there, among them the lovely city of Seville. In the past we had visited Seville in July when the temperature exceeded 40 degrees. This time it was much more pleasant for sightseeing with the temperature around 23degrees.

Seville Cathedral, which is the third largest church in the world, is most impressive. It began life as a mosque and minaret and was built of bricks in the 12th century. The mosque's courtyard was conserved (now the Orange Tree Courtyard) as was the minaret which today forms the lower two thirds of the Giralda bell tower.

During the 15th century construction work began on the Gothic Cathedral using stone. Parts were added to it, including the Royal Chapel, the main Sacristy and the upper part of the Giralda, during the heady years of the Renaissance. Interestingly the bodies of both Christopher Columbus and his son are buried within the cathedral.

We found it intriguing that two different great religions, Christianity and Islam, had used the same site for worship, and recycled the fabric – a rather modern concept.

Interim Moderator's Letter



I recently discovered that “Doctor Who” has been on our television screens for around 50 years – but only in earth time. The remarkable Doctor is described as a Time Lord; he is not a prisoner of time as we are, he can flit back into the past or forward into the future almost at will. The programme has always been a great favourite of the children (and even some older children) even though at times, many would wish to hide behind the sofa when the Daleks were at large.

Presumably, the longevity of the programme has depended as much on imagination and ingenuity of the script writers as the scary monsters. The present day programmes in content and illusion are quite different to the original ones. The success may also be due to the various actors who have played the part. The Doctor has been regenerated from time to time and thanks to modern technology, the gimmicks and gismos are always being updated. Doctor Who is the product of fertile human imaginations.

In a few weeks' time, we will celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, the child of Bethlehem. He is not a product of our imagination. We believe him to be the Son of God. According to the bible he is timeless – he was there ‘in the beginning’. He is not the character of fiction, but a living presence. He is universal and local; he seeks to

live in every heart. The Christmas story reminds us that God took flesh and came into our world in a vulnerable child.

Ordinary people, like the Shepherds welcomed him with open arms. The Wise Men, who studied the stars made their greatest discovery of all time. The cycle of time has brought us again within sight of Christmas, the annual reminder of the love God has shown us in this significant Child, the outward expression of the love we share has its beginnings in him. The cards we send and the gifts we give at Christmas are token reminders of God's great gift to us.

"Doctor Who", the Time Lord, will live as long as his television ratings satisfy his creators and producers; the Lord of all Life is with us forever.

Looking beyond the festivities, the gift that we would all like to receive is that of a minister for our linked congregations. It may be that 2016 is the year that God has chosen for this to happen and we must continue to pray that this may be so and put our faith in Him who never fails us.

May God bless you all throughout the Christmas Season and in the New Year to come.

Ken Welch

Interim Moderator

Session News

As I mentioned at September Communion we are being asked to have members sign a form giving their agreement to the church recording their name and address. Many members have completed these but there are still a number of members who have yet to return these forms. Your elder will again at this visit encourage you to do this.

Your membership is important to us as a church and we hope and pray that you will continue your membership and links with Livingstone Church by completing and returning your form either to your elder or to me.

Sandy Hershaw

Prayer Thoughts



I'm sure that we have heard someone being described as 'having a good conceit of themselves'. There are various reminders in the Bible that position, due to power, riches or intellect are not requirements for belonging to God. In fact they may be quite the opposite and are hindrances.

In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 11 and verses 25 and 26 Jesus prays these words;

‘Oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding the truth from those who think themselves so wise and clever, and for revealing it to the childlike. Yes Father, it pleased you to do it this way’

What is being emphasised is that God is making the kingdom inclusive, not exclusive. Our belonging to God is unconnected to ideas that the world considers important. God’s standard depends on simplicity, stripping away any trappings of status that the world might see as an advantage. Instead God wants us to have faith with a childlike trust and put our hands into His, just as a toddler would seek the reassurance and safety of a caring adult. Jesus words are offering His thanks to God for making it that way, thanks that we should all echo in our own prayers.

Themes

Approach: Quietly repeat the Lord’s Prayer and enter God’s presence with childlike trust and faith.

Confession: Bring to God the occasions when the attractions of worldly recognition and acknowledgement based on worldly standards have taken you away from simple faith in Him. Ask for His forgiveness, guidance and strength not to be beguiled by worldly recognition.

Thanksgiving:

- Ministry – continue to give thanks for David Hebenton’s work with us.

- Fabric – give thanks for the diligence of the Fabric group in keeping our church buildings in good order.
- Pastoral Care – give thanks for the often unseen work of the people who visit those who are no longer able to join us in worship.
- Flowers – give thanks for those who arrange the church flowers each week and the joy given to those who receive flowers after the service.
- Finance – give thanks for the considerable amount of work done by our treasurer in looking after the church’s financial matters.

Intercession:

- Blythswood Care – pray for those who work with Blythswood and for those who receive the gift of a filled shoe box.
- Hardship – pray for those who find the Christmas season difficult, for whatever reason.
- Absent Members: pray for those who would love to continue to join us in fellowship, but who are prevented through frailty.
- Ministry – pray that God will direct a minister to come and lead us in Livingstone and Ardeer.

Andrew Tomlinson

The Guild



At the time of writing this report we have already enjoyed eight meetings of the Guild, all very different but nevertheless interesting, amusing and uplifting.

Our joint concert with Ardeer Guild on 17th November helped us to recognise “Guild Week” and to be entertained by ‘Close Shave’, a barbershop choir from Bishopbriggs, who have won many competitions around the Glasgow area. It is always good to get together with the Guild of our linked charge and foster friendships with them.

In contrast we are due to visit South Beach House on November 24th to entertain the residents, this year with the Scottish songs of Andy Stewart, the Corries, and Sir Harry Lauder.

1st December is the nearest Tuesday to the birthday of Mary Slessor and to celebrate the occasion we will have Karen Gillan from WORLD Mission reminding us of Mary Slessor’s fascinating life.

Our speaker on 8th December will be Juliet Robb who will tell us of the charity Olive Tree and the Holy Land and will bring some items for sale which could solve some Christmas present problems.

We end the year with the AGM followed by our annual Christmas Service taken by the guild members.

If any of these meetings interest you please join us. You will be made most welcome.

Dorothy Penno

Presbytery Notes

I attended my first meeting of Ardrossan Presbytery as Elder Representative at the beginning of November. It was a sad occasion as we started with a tribute to the late Rev. Marcus Thane of Largs St John’s and Cumbrie. The various committee chairs reported. The most relevant to us was Stewardship, with Presbytery passing the repayment plan for ourselves with Ardeer. This entails us repaying 12.5% of the total debt over the next 10 years (£1250 per year). Mission promoted material from World Mission possibly of interest to our learning group. Business reported on some major developments being undertaken by various congregations. As a newcomer I was allowed to leave early as I have not been appointed to any committee yet. No doubt that will have changed by the next meeting in December.

Finlay Kerr (Presbytery Elder)

J.A.M. Club



I can't believe another year is nearly over and Christmas is upon us once again. The Jam Club will again be taking the Christmas service on Sunday the 21st December when the children will be doing the

readings, prayers and of course performing the Nativity play. We hope everyone in the congregation will support us as it is a big thing for them to stand up and perform in front of everyone.

After the service the Jam Club invites everyone to the large hall for tea, coffee and Christmas biscuits and chocolates that the children have made the day before. The Jam Club Christmas Party will be on the Saturday from 1:30 pm till 3:00pm where fingers crossed even Santa might arrive!

Luisa Chisholm

Shoebbox Appeal 2015



Thanks to everyone who donated to our Harvest Shoebbox Appeal for Blythwood Care and to those who attended the harvest lunch. A special thank you to everyone who helped make the lunch such a successful venture for this very worthwhile cause.

A total of 60 filled shoeboxes and £ 414 was collected. The guild also donated two large bags filled with knitted goods. This was transported to the depot in Glasgow to make our Harvest, someone's Christmas.

Dorothy Hershaw

Weeping Widow



Recently we travelled to Northumberland for a few days. The weather was great and the countryside at its autumnal best so we decided to have a day at the seaside, travelling through Morpeth and Ashington to Newbiggin-by-the-sea. A few weeks earlier we'd noticed an article in a newspaper about an exhibition at Woodhorn Mining Museum just outside Ashington and sure enough we came to signs along the roadside advertising that the exhibition was now open.

Many of you will remember seeing picture of the poppies at the Tower of London last year in the "Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Blood" installation. There were two sculptures "Weeping Widow" and "Wave" by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper. After 11th November 2014 it was agreed that the works at the heart of the design should be preserved for the nation and should tour the country and be on display at selected locations in the U.K.

The part that was on display at Woodhorn for two months was "Weeping Widow" which was a 55 foot cascade of poppies falling from the winding wheel of the No.1 Heapstead mine shaft then flowing down the side of the wheel house through a fence and spread out on the grass. It was a wonderful sight and all the people who had come to see it stood in respectful silence and thought.

The stream of poppies reminded us of the lines in the well-known hymn, "Time, like an ever-rolling stream bears all its sons away." It brings to mind all the people who died and especially those who have no known grave. Out of the 9000 workforce at Woodhorn, some 2500 were in the armed forces and 250 lost their lives. By the beginning of 1917, the colliery supplied not only coal for the war effort but also skilled miners who could tunnel and dig deep trenches for the front lines.

Quite near the Poppies exhibition is a memorial to miners who died in an underground gas explosion before the First World War. So the men from Woodhorn went from dangerous work at home to just as dangerous work in France.

After touring the country the two displays will be gifted to the Imperial War Museum where they will be on show until the autumn of 2018.

The Pilgrims

Continuing our theme of looking at other churches in the Presbytery we arrive at

Kilwinning Old Parish Church



The Abbey Church

The Parish Church of Kilwinning was built by John Gartland and John Wright and completed in 1774. It stands on the site of an earlier sixteenth century church which in turn was located within the ruins of Kilwinning Abbey. The Abbey was founded in 1188. The church therefore has a history that goes back over 800 years on the site. However there is also a connection with the Celtic church which takes us back over 1400 years.

In 1929 when the Church of Scotland was reunited, the burgh parish of Kilwinning was divided between the congregations of Erskine, Mansefield and the Parish Church which became known as the Kilwinning Abbey Church. There are currently around 617 members in the congregation, mainly resident in Kilwinning but coming from the neighbouring towns as well.

The Abbey of Kilwinning was founded around 1188 on land endowed by Richard de Morville. The monks of Kilwinning were members of a branch of the Benedictines, an order which obliged them to spend a considerable part of each day in prayer and worship and to occupy the rest of the time in useful labour.

The first mention of a Protestant minister of Kilwinning, one William Kilpatrick was in 1587. The first church was built within the ruins of the Abbey and worship has been continuous in the Protestant tradition since that time.

The Eglinton Gallery is on the upper floor of the church and would be occupied at morning service by the Earl of Eglinton, his family and members of his household. Access was available through a door at the rear from the Eglinton Room which avoided the need to enter the gallery through the congregation. In cold weather a welcome fire was available in the Eglinton Room.

The Memorial Screen was erected from a generous gift made by John Cole-Hamilton in memory of his father, Col. A.R. Cole-Hamilton who died at Gallipoli in 1915, his mother Sarah and his wife Gladys. It was dedicated on 10 June 1990 and incorporates the Cole-Hamilton shield and the seal of the Abbot of Kilwinning. It also displays the healing plants used by the monks of the Abbey.

The three manual organ built by Forster & Andrews of Hull was first played on 29th December 1897 and is highly regarded for its quality. The mechanism of the organ is still in its original state apart from the installation of an electric motor. The British Institute of Organ Studies has awarded the instrument a Grade 1 certificate because it has outstanding historic and musical importance and is in essentially its original condition.

The above information was sourced from a leaflet from Kilwinning Old Parish Church.

The Abbey Tower



The Abbey Tower, despite its proximity to the Old Parish Church, actually belongs to North Ayrshire Council.

The Abbey originally had twin towers commanding the entrance to the nave, only one of which survived the tumultuous consequences of the Reformation, and it collapsed in 1814. It was replaced by the present tower in 1816, and while it is not an exact replica of its predecessor, the tower gives some impression of the grandeur of the whole Abbey in pre-Reformation times. The Old Parish Church, modest in comparison, is built on the choir of the Abbey.

Within the tower, there are 143 steps up to, what in good weather, is the best panoramic view in Ayrshire. At weekends in the summer months, and at other times by arrangement, volunteers from Kilwinning Heritage, an organisation which among other things manages the Centre on behalf of North Ayrshire Council's Museum Service, will happily, and sometimes breathlessly, conduct visitors to the top. Fortunately, there is ample opportunity on the various floors to pause and marvel at the exhibits displaying the ingenuity and activities of our forebears, some of which, such as the Papingo shoot by the Ancient Society of Kilwinning Archers, continue to the present day.

When built, the tower's main function was, and still is, to display the time to the local population. The clock mechanism geared to operate all four faces, was built and installed by the local clockmaker in 1816 and is still operating, powered by an electric motor, rather than, as originally, by gravity.

Bill Munn

Q. What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney?

A. Claustrophobia!

Q. Why does Santa have three gardens?

A. So he can 'Ho, Ho, Ho!'

It's panto time



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It is Panto time again! This year, Livingstone Players are performing Aladdin - written and directed once again by Roy McGregor. We have 12 children in the junior cast who are dedicated and talented as always. They work extremely hard every Sunday afternoon and are sure to entertain on stage with an array of songs and dance routines. The junior cast are once again under the direction of Fiona McGregor and Shona Paterson.

Like most years, we have welcomed new faces to both the adult and junior cast. The new cast members have combined well with the not so new to maintain a vibrant and fun rehearsing environment. The pantomime is sure to be filled with laughs, fun, music dance and bright colours as we embark on a journey of good versus evil. Will Aladdin marry his Princess or will the evil Abanazer ruin everything with his cunning plan? You'll have to come along to find out!

Livingstone Players are once again putting on an additional performance this year and the show will take place on 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th December in Livingstone Church Hall. Tickets are priced at £6 for adults and £3.50 for children. All proceeds go to Christian Aid. The tickets have designated row and seat numbers and are on sale now. As

usual, tickets sell quickly so don't delay as we are limited to 182 people in the hall each evening.

If you don't know any cast members or can't buy tickets on a Sunday after morning worship then you can buy your tickets online at our website: www.livingstoneplayers.org.uk . Here, you will find regular updates about Aladdin along with lots of information about our past productions.

We are extremely grateful to our audiences who return each year and hope you will come and support us again. We are also very thankful for the efforts of the work party who have given our stage a new lease of life by replacing all the curtains with professional black drapes this year as well as installing four new spotlights in the hall. Along with our increasing range of merchandise available at affordable prices, our 2015 pantomime is sure to live long in the memory. We look forward to seeing you there!

Ross Glover

1st Stevenston Rainbows



We started this session on the first Thursday of September with ten girls on our register. The girls chose activities that they would enjoy

from our Rainbow Roundabout on the theme of look, learn, laugh and love to create our new programme.

Three of our rainbows who had turned seven had a Pot of Gold party with a rainbow theme before moving up to the Brownies. Their friends wished them well and shared fond memories of their time in Rainbows together.

Theme nights are always a favourite with the girls and they recently enjoyed our Halloween party with “spook”tacular activities including fancy dress, dooking for apples, witches fingers, smarties challenge and swamp jelly. Bonfire night saw the girls create their own bonfire collages with glittering fireworks backdrops.

We are looking forward to the festive season, and if we are good and keep our promise to be kind and helpful, hopefully Santa will come to join our Christmas party. We are also hoping to arrange a trip to the panto for the girls as an extra treat before the holidays, ready to bring in a fun new year for the Rainbows.

Gillian McDade

1st Stevenston Brownies



Our session began on September 3rd with 20 girls including 3 new Brownies who came up from Rainbows. All three girls made their promise recently and were word perfect. For the first time we have a

girl completing her Culture badge. Abby has worked extremely hard compiling her family tree, making up an album of photos and comments about her life since she was a baby, and researching into other religions.

As a pack they are working towards the Home skills badge and we also have girls working on Book lovers, Artist and Swimming badges. The weeks since coming back haven't been all work. We had an outing to Oscars where we enjoyed a great Princess Hallowe'en Party. On 26th November we will be celebrating St Andrews Night with some traditional Scottish fare. Anything which involves food is always a great success.

We will be going to the panto in the church hall on the 3rd December. The Brownies always look forward to that. Each week from now on we will be busy practising for our Nativity play when we entertain the residents of Bonnie Lesley Court on December 10th. We enjoy a party with them and hope Santa will pop in again this year.

Our next session will begin on 7th January with a games night and some badge work. We also look forward to celebrating Burns night with some Scottish dancing, thanks to Mrs Reid, and more food of course!

Some of the activities we have planned for spring include a visit to Asda supermarket where we will have a tour of the bakery department and perhaps we may even get a wee sample. We also have a visit to the library in March. At present I am trying to arrange a visit from a member of Stevenston Historic Society, followed by a town walk. A joint meeting is being arranged with the Rainbows by Lauren our

young leader, who is working towards her warrant. We will be having a sponsored keep fit at the beginning of the year to help boost our funds.

At this time we begin to think about our summer outing and this year we are thinking of a visit to the Chocolate Factory in Glasgow which I'm sure they would enjoy, but more of that to follow.

Pat Gray

Finance



Numbers

Main Fund Balances	Jun 30 th	Sept 30 th
General Fund	3193	-199.27
Designated Funds	3094	2888
Restricted Funds	2166	2269
Fabric Fund	10370	10122
Beneficiary/Reserve Funds	125140	122887

Comparison of Offerings

	2015(Jan-Jun)	2015(Jan-Sep)
Plate	610	856
Gift Aided	12258	18169
Free Will Offering	5066	7850

Overall Offerings up by 6% compared to same period last year.

Comparison of Total Income 34289 42118

Overall income is up 5% compared to same period last year.

Comparison of Expenses 29549 43344

Overall expenses for the three quarters of 2015 are up 6.5%.

Other income Investors dividends £1370 (since June)
Down compared to last year.

Major expenditure

Ministry and Mission	£2660 per month
Locum stipend	£1569
Electricity	£555
Tree removal	£420
Roof repair (Hall)	£480

Livingstone Players £504

Communication Comm. £200

Fabric (Keyboard) £626

We still have several outstanding invoices which will reduce further the General Fund and Fabric Fund balances.

As you will have noticed there has been work done on the windows and the front of the Church. The bills for these are still outstanding.

Free Will Offering envelopes for 2016 are being distributed now. If you do not receive a set please inform your elder. Likewise if you receive a set but give by standing order tell your elder who will pass the information to Robbie Burns our envelope organiser.

Finlay Kerr (Treasurer)

Fabric Committee Report



We are pleased to report that the centre windows in the apse have now been replaced. We hope they meet with your approval. Painting the outside round the new windows and the troughing is also in hand.

New concrete has been laid at the right hand side of the church forecourt. This gives a slightly bigger parking area at the front of the church. Should you decide to park here at any time do take care when leaving as the road outside can be busy. Expansion joints in the concrete will be filled in and repaired. The slates requiring attention on the roof have been repaired and we are water tight again.

We are at the moment getting ready for the pantomime in December with some painting to be done and 'props' to be made. Tickets are selling like 'hot cakes'. Make sure you order yours.

Church Flower Fund



As we look forward to Christmas and the end of another year I would like to thank everyone for their kind donations to the flower fund and a special thanks to the ladies for their help over the year arranging and delivering flowers. The flowers are very much appreciated by the congregation and all who receive them. It is a nice way to keep in touch. If at any time you are aware of anyone who would appreciate a bunch of flowers please let us know.

The flower calendar for 2016 is now being made up and there are still some spaces. Also if anyone is able to arrange and deliver the flowers please let me know.

I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Elizabeth Canavan

Christmas Stamps



Once again I'd like to remind everyone to bring along their used stamps from Christmas cards received. These will eventually go to the Scottish Bible Society. As in previous years they can be left in the basket on the table in the vestibule at any time. Thanks to everyone who has saved them in the past and please save them again this Christmas and of course throughout the new year.

Mary Wilson

Christmas Gift Service



This year the Christmas Gift Service will be held on Sunday 13th December. As in previous years the gifts will be distributed on our behalf by North Ayrshire Council Social Services. Please bring a new gift unwrapped (though donations of wrapping paper will also be

much appreciated). Gifts should be suitable for children aged 5-16years.

Also in conjunction with our linked congregation of Ardeer, we will again be supporting the work of NAC Social Services by providing food parcels to some of the most needy in Stevenston, enabling them to have a Christmas meal.

Monetary donations can be given in place of children's gifts and all money collected will be used to help purchase food for those likely to be in need over Christmas.



Christmas Word Search



Can you find these words hidden in the word search?

Holly, carols, star, Mary, Joseph, Jesus, Nativity, sheep, baby, inn, presents, angels, manger, donkey, tree, virgin, turkey, shepherds, hallelujah, heavenly host.

Church Diary



Sunday 6th December

Communion Sunday

Services in Livingstone at 11.30am.
Ardeer at 10am.

Sunday 13th December

Annual Gift Service

Sunday 20th December

JAM Club Nativity

Thursday 24th December

Combined Carol Service in Ardeer
Church at 7pm.

Please see weekly Order of Service for other events.

**NB Commencing on Sunday 3rd January the services in
Livingstone will begin at the new time of 10.00 am and those in
Ardeer at 11.30am**

Editor's thanks as always go to all contributors and also to those who put the magazine together. Your support is much appreciated.