

Letter from the Editor



There is a small deciduous Rhus tree at the back of our garden. It is a lovely bright green colour in spring but its yellow upright flowers are really quite insignificant. However in late autumn /early winter it takes on an altogether different look with the leaves turning yellow, red, orange and brown, and a whole variety of shades in between. This year it, and all the other plants, have been in wonderful display because we have had NO WIND. The fallen leaves are almost like a reflection of the plants themselves... two for the price of one. Now that the leaves have disappeared from its branches, the overall effect is of a tree made up of sets of antlers locked together. That's why its common name is stag's horn.

In the centre pages of our daily paper, amateur photographers have been displaying daily, their shots of late autumn in Scotland. The BBC Scotland web news page too, has a dedicated area given over to the best photographic submissions from all across the land. The variety of the subjects and the quality of the workmanship are really outstanding. We have seen pink sunrises in Helensburgh, huge Japanese maples in Blair Drummond, riverbank scenes from Dumbarton, the youth hostel at Loch Ossian and Pittenweem harbour cottages. Scotland in autumn can be truly wonderful (who needs to go to Canada to see the "Fall"?)

Fortunately some of the hardy plants are already making their mark as the annuals fade. The winter pansies and polyanthus are showing some colour among the decaying leaves. However the mild weather has been really kind to the pelargoniums/geraniums for they are still blooming and giving us lots of colour in spite of the cooler conditions.

Has anyone a ready remedy for fallen leaves? Usually the strong wind blowing in off the sea sweeps the detritus into some readily accessible corners for us and we can scoop them up into the brown bin. Not so this year, the lovely fallen reflections have a consequence. So we will have to put away the slippers and newspaper, get out the rake and do some bending exercises. Oh the health benefits of gardening!

Interim Moderator's letter



Today, we live in a very troubled world with serious conflicts in various places where people and families are suffering from awful atrocities. In the New Testament in the gospels of Matthew and Luke we read that over 2000 years ago the people were suffering in a similar way from the Roman authorities and no doubt had similar thoughts.

Luke tells us that an angel of the Lord appeared to a priest named Zechariah and told him that his wife who was barren and over the age of 50 would bear him a son and he was to be called John. He went on to say that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth and would prepare a way that would be fit for the Lord. Sometime after, an angel appeared to Mary and informed her that she would conceive a son and his name was to be Jesus. The angel told her that the child would be known as “Son of the most high” and that his reign would never end. We are familiar with the rest of the story but it does show us that God cares about the problems that we face and is always with us.

We will shortly be putting up the decorations for Christmas and getting concerned about the presents to be purchased and the excess of food that will be bought by many of us. However, let us look beyond the glitter and concentrate on the real meaning of Christmas. This child Jesus that was born would go on to offer people a new way of living and a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. That same Jesus is still giving us the same message and if we let him into our lives this will make an immense difference.

We often complain that our churches do not have the same influence as they used to have and are not well attended. I am sure that the church has made many mistakes along the way and people are discouraged, but we should not pass the buck. We as members are Christ's disciples and it is also up to each one of us to exhibit our faith and to encourage others to come and join us. Maybe then, our congregation will grow

and perhaps 2017 is the year that God has chosen for the birth of a new ministry in Livingstone and Ardeer.

This is a wonderful time of the year with such good news to share about our faith and the hope that the world will be a better and more peaceful place if more will follow the teaching of that little child born in such unusual circumstances.

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

Ken Welch.

Prayer Thoughts



In planning for these notes I became drawn to what the gospels say about Jesus praying and how this might compare with our own prayer lives. The writers tell us about different occasions when Jesus prayed. From his baptism to the anguish of Gethsemane the story of Jesus ministry is woven with prayer. As our guide and example, Jesus shows that we need to continue that conversation with our Heavenly Father, just as he did.

Luke chapter 5, verse 16: *But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.*

Luke chapter 6, verse 12: *One day soon afterward, Jesus went to a mountain to pray and he prayed all night.*

On these occasions Jesus had been carrying out God's work very intensely, so casual conversation was not going to be enough. Instead, a very focussed uninterrupted time was called for and Jesus found that time in isolation. He sought a situation where there would be no distractions and a deeper level of conversation was possible.

This is a model worth applying to our own prayers. It is right that we can become ‘chatty’ with God, feeling at ease, having an everyday kind of conversation, but it is also important that we have real quiet times, without the possibility of distraction, when all our concentration will be on our prayer and God’s reply.

Themes

Approach: Come thankfully knowing that God welcomes us into his presence.

Confession: Share with God those things you know that have set you off his path for you, ask for forgiveness and guidance back to his way.

Thanksgiving:

- Ministry – continue to give thanks for David Hebenton’s work with us.
- Dedication – remember to offer thanks for the many people who continue to work within the church in many different ways, ensuring our fellowship continues each Sunday.
- Service – give thanks for the years of faithful service of those members who have died.
- Blytheswood – give thanks for the work done by Blytheswood through their shoebox appeal.
- Our Guild – give thanks for the work they continue to do in support of the schemes of the church.
- Nativity – give thanks for the celebration of the gift of Jesus at this time of year.

Intercession

- The Bereaved – ask God to comfort those who have lost a loved one in the course of the year.
- Families – pray for those who are experiencing hardship, financial or health related, and pray that they are supported.
- Nativity – pray that the real meaning of Christmas will not be lost through commercialisation.

- The World – Pray for those countries and communities devastated by war or natural disaster that they may be built up again.
- Ministry – pray that God will direct a minister to come and lead us in Livingstone and Ardeer.

Andrew Tomlinson

A Winter Prayer



As we travel through the winter, may our way be smooth and bright
 And a guiding star near us, lead us on with love and light
 May our homes have warmth and comfort, when the days are dark and drear

May the gifts of hope and friendship, take us safely through the year.
 We thank Thee for the love we share, the harvest of the heart
 For all the precious gifts of life, Your hope and joy impart
 We pray for those less fortunate, who suffer every day
 Be with them on their journey Lord and help them find the way.

Jean Paterson

Session News

The Kirk Session was saddened to learn of the death of one of its long serving elders, Ann Auld.

Ann had a very long association with Livingstone Church. She attended the Sunday School and was a member of the Junior Choir. The then organist Bill Archibald often involved the children in cantata performances and it was in one of these performances that Ann played the role of the Fairy Queen. Although university resulted in her not participating regularly in the senior choir, she was drafted in as an alto for special performances.

On Boxing Day 1959 Anne married her beloved Bobby in Livingstone. Both were faithful in their worship throughout their married life. Their children Colin and Gillian attended Sunday School.

Ann further served the church as a deacon and was one of our longest serving women elders ordained in Livingstone in 1989. Always someone who was happiest in the background she never the less was a very faithful, compassionate and diligent elder throughout her long service.

Ann was heavily involved in the life of Livingstone and a faithful member of the Guild. For a considerable number of years she was the guild delegate to the overseas mission committee. To make funds for the work abroad Ann encouraged us all to collect stamps from our mail and especially at Christmas time.

We extend our sympathy to Colin, Gillian and their families.

Sandy Hershaw

Isobel Beck's Introduction as Deacon to Abbey Church



This took place on the evening of the 14th September 2016 before a very large congregation, consisting of not only Abbey Church members, but also a multitude from the churches that have been graced by Isobel's presence over her years of service and training. It was especially gratifying that her mother and close family were able to be present.

The service was conducted by the resident minister Jeannette Whitecross, assisted by the ministers from Kirkgate and Castlemilk, Dorothy Grainger and Morag Garrett. Readings were given by two fellow Deacons, Fiona Blair and Barbara Urquhart.

Isobel's mission in Kilwinning must surely have gained strength from the obvious warmth of the welcome and the words of encouragement and support she received throughout the evening. Our prayers and thoughts are with Isobel as she embarks work in this historic parish.

Bill Munn

The Guild



We have already had 9 meetings of the Guild this session. We had a successful coffee afternoon for MacMillan's on Sept. 27th and received a thank you card from them last week for the £250.66 that we sent.

We had a very interesting afternoon on Oct. 4th when Margi Lee, from Ardrossan, told us about her trip to Africa to help nurse Ebola patients, and her further trip to help teach the local people how to nurse their sick until the outbreak ended.

On October 11th, Anne Hynde, from Saltcoats, showed us photographic views of Glasgow and Ayrshire and the audience were delighted to recognise familiar places.

We had an excellent visit to Lime Tree Larder in Kilbirnie. We learned a lot about the different types and tastes of chocolate from all over the world. We also had various flavours of ice cream to taste and then we purchased chocolates, ice cream, jams and chutneys to remind us of a lovely afternoon.

The first of 2 Guild Projects was explained to us on 25th October by Ivy Blair. The project from Prospects and called "All Friends Together" aims to help churches welcome people with learning disabilities and include them in all aspects of church life.

On 1st November Kevin Simpson explained the work of the charity Malawi Fruits which has been running for 5 years. Every time Malawi is mentioned on the news the "poorest country in the world" is always stated. Malawi Fruits are trying to encourage the farmers of the north of the country to grow crops which can be easily sold, for example paprika and sunflowers. The one statistic Kevin mentioned was that on any Sunday 80% of the people of Malawi will be in church - in Scotland 8% of people will be in church - food for thought!

We are looking forward to the party in aid of Toilet Twinning on 15th November. There are 2.5 billion people in the world who do not have access to a toilet - can you imagine how awful that must be? We have supported this charity before and any one of you who has seen our new toilet in the tower will have noticed the framed photo of a toilet on the wall. This is the toilet that we twinned with after our concert last year. So we hope to twin the other toilets in the church - look out for more framed photos after our party.

The last month or so has been a sad one for the Guild with the death of 3 of our members. We lost Ann Auld, a faithful member of the Guild until she became too frail; May Stevenson, our longest serving member until this session and Ina McDonald, who was a member of our guild as well as Ardeer. All of these ladies will be greatly missed.

Dorothy Penno

Letter of thanks



Dear Friends,

Thank you for the beautiful Church flowers you gave me recently. They were lovely and brightened up my day. I miss the church so much, the friendship, the fellowship and all your kindness to me. Thank you for thinking of me. I truly appreciated it.

With love,

Nan Mochan

Two little notes of thanks from Isobel Beck

Dear Friends,

I would like to thank everyone for the lovely cards that I received upon taking up my new post as Deacon at Kilwinning Old Parish Church and thank you also to everyone who attended my service of introduction. It was a great night and it was lovely to see so many people. I am loving my new post and am already in the midst of preparations for a busy Christmas season.

Peace.

Dear Friends,

Susan, Isobel and family would like to say a huge and sincere thank you to everyone for the kindness shown to their mum during her illness and for the many lovely cards, expressions of sympathy and generosity shown since her passing. Thank you to all who attended the funeral service, it was a wonderful tribute to mum's life and very touching to see so many people gathered to pay their respects. The sum of £1,360 was raised from the retiring offering and will be divided between three of mum's favourite charities: Ardeer Parish Church, Robin House Children's Hospice and North Ayrshire Cancer Care.

Blessings.

Peter Pan



2016 has flown by and it is already pantomime season! Our cast have been practising flying too as this year, Livingstone Players are performing Peter Pan - written by Roy McGregor and directed by Shona Paterson. We have 16 children in the junior cast who are very talented and have been working extremely hard every Sunday

afternoon. They are sure to entertain on stage with an array of songs and dance routines playing the lost boys and pirates. The junior cast are also directed by Shona Paterson with choreography by Fiona McGregor.

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. Some former members have returned to perform with Livingstone Players this year. Wilson Kerr returns as Captain Hook after an 8 year absence whilst Alan Cochrane has been unable to hide his delight after being cast as Mr. Darling, opposite his good wife Anne, who takes on the role of Mrs. Darling. The pantomime is sure to be filled with laughs, fun, music and dance as we travel to Neverland. Will Peter Pan triumph over Captain Hook? 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 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th December in Livingstone Church Hall. Tickets are priced at £6 for adults and £4 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 185 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 Peter Pan 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 been busy re-flooring the stage, painting it black and fitting new supports underneath the stage. Along with our increasing range of merchandise available at affordable prices, our 2016 pantomime is sure to live long in the memory - oh yes it will! We look forward to seeing you there!

Ross Glover

Christmas memories

I asked some of the congregation to write about a Christmas present from their childhood. Here are their replies.



I remember feeling happy when I got a Bus Conductor's Outfit one Christmas complete with peaked hat, a ticket punch with tickets and a whistle. I arranged the dining chairs to make a bus and as I was in charge, my brothers were not allowed on until they bought a ticket. With some imagination it didn't take much to make us happy!

Frank Smith



Christmas was a lovely time of year but it was certainly not as huge as it has become. Stockings were hung from the mantelpiece at the side of a coal fire - early to bed, great excitement. Stockings were filled with an apple and orange, half crown and sweets.

I remember getting a cash register - same as the one in Open All Hours but smaller -and I loved it. I was a great shop keeper and played at selling all the Christmas cards which were graded by size and value.

A post office set was also a great present, especially if it had an ink pad and stamp! Happy times!

Sandra Erskine.



It was every little girl's dream, and then, one Christmas morning - wow! - there it was, resplendent at the foot of the tree - my very own doll's house, a magnificent Tudor-fronted mansion, beautifully decorated and furnished, waiting for me and my imagination to fill endless hours of fun in the years to come. Later, I learned that my Dad had built it himself, making the memory of that splendid edifice all the more precious.

Anne Cochrane

Christmas for me as a youngster was a non-event. Christmas Day was the same as every other day on a poultry farm. Hens had to be fed and watered twice a day, eggs collected every afternoon and everyone had jobs to do. What made one Christmas really special was my sister had worked a miracle with Santa and managed to have a toy Post Office left for me. It had an ink pad and a rubber stamp, postage stamps, envelopes and toy money. When I could bear to drag myself away and investigate my stocking, there, was a liquorice pipe, laces and a Catherine wheel! Oh Joy!

Catherine Burns



When I was around twelve years old I received a Christmas present of a size 3 football. I was thrilled as I loved football. I thought it couldn't be better. However I was even more thrilled the following Christmas when I received a full size bicycle with straight handles, lots of chrome and 3 speed gears. It gave me pleasure over many years.

Charlie Campbell



I remember when I was about eight or nine an aunt and uncle gave me two red leather bound books, one was a variety of stories, which I still have. The other was different fairy stories with beautiful coloured pictures. I lent this book to someone and I never got it back. To this day I still love reading. Last Christmas I got a present of a book called 'For the Fallen' to commemorate the Great War and it is full of pictures and wee stories.

What will this Christmas bring, I wonder?

Brenda Bendelow



In primary 2 or 3 the class started to get gym in the large hall in the old primary building at Ardrossan Academy. Some of my class had gym shorts but not me. I mentioned this to my mum who was good at

knitting and making clothes. That Christmas I opened up one of my presents to discover a pair of gym shorts. Yes, mum had made them. They were white with a blue stripe down both legs and blue piping round the legs. I was so proud of these shorts. I used them every gym class till alas I grew too big for them, and to be honest they were beginning to fall apart.

Arthur Taylor

Church Flowers



May I take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all who support the flower fund throughout the year with their donations of money and time. To all who arrange and deliver the flowers, thank you so much. The flowers look lovely each Sunday and are greatly appreciated by all who receive them. I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Many thanks,
Liz Canavan

You made a difference.



Thanks to everyone who contributed to our Harvest Service. The packaged food used for the display was taken to The Church of the Nazarene in Ardrossan where it will be allocated to the local foodbanks. This year we collected 61 filled shoeboxes, £255 in cash donations and many knitted items. These have all been delivered to the Blythwood depot in Hillington.

Blythswood Care provides practical help, love and support for those in need.

Whether through filled shoeboxes at Christmas, relief and development aid or social projects for young and old, Blythswood brings hope to families in Europe, Africa and Asia. For every £1 donated, Blythswood delivers more than £5 worth of grass roots aid. With the support of ordinary people like us, Blythswood achieves EXTRAORDINARY transformations and provides loving care for body and soul.

Wonderful! A new book to mark Blythswood's 50th Anniversary has now been published. What makes Blythswood Care the organisation that it is today? The answer lies in the personal stories told in this book; a collection of testimonies from Blythswood people sharing stories of God's faithfulness.

Available now for £4.95 direct from the shops or £6.95 by mail order. Just contact Head Office by email, phone or buy online.

Thanks again to all who contributed.

Dorothy Hershaw

Fabric Committee Report



As many of you have noticed and favourably remarked, the big red front doors of the church have been 'prept' and painted by Bill Munn ably assisted by the A,B,C,G, Team, with lots of advice from 'the gaffer'. They now look very welcoming and smart.

Now that rehearsals have started for the pantomime we have been busy making props which will help to make a great production.

The toilet in the bell tower is now complete and even has a picture of our twinned toilet in Bangladesh (More information on this in Guild article.)

Permission has now been given by the Kirk Session and Ardrossan Presbytery to replace the three windows, which are leaking, above the front doors. We hope this will be completed by the end of the month, making them weatherproof before the winter.

1st Stevenston Brownies



Our first meeting of the session was held on 1st September. This was a welcome meeting with games and songs. The following week we began our badge work. As well as each girl choosing her individual badge to work on this session, we have chosen two others to be worked on as a group.

We have decided to choose Disability Awareness and Healthy Heart badges. Disability Awareness encourages them to learn about two disabilities, as well as learning about seeing and hearing dogs. One of our Brownies who was working on her 'Friend to animal badge,' actually sponsored a seeing dog. She brought in lovely pictures of Lexi, a golden retriever puppy and also lots of information about the training Lexi will have.

We also had a visit over two weeks from Lindsay who works with disabled children. Not only did she tell the girls about different kinds of disabilities, but she also brought several games with her which as well as being fun, helped show the girls how people with disabilities learn to cope.

For the Healthy Heart badge, we had an evening of fruit and smoothie tasting and a healthy eating quiz. The girls are keeping charts on the exercise they do over several weeks and also charts of healthy and unhealthy foods that they eat.

At the beginning of November we had a visit to the library, where the girls saw pictures of Old Stevenston. They dressed up in old costumes and played games that children of bygone days would have played. We had a very enjoyable and informative evening and really appreciate the help of the library assistants in setting this up for us.

In December we will be making Sand Art Christmas pictures. We did this two years ago and the girls loved the beautiful pictures they made.

To end this session we will be taking the girls to the church panto and then our final meeting will be at Bonnie Leslie Court where we entertain the residents with a Nativity Play, some carol singing and a party with a visit from Santa if they are good! Our next session will begin on 12th January, when we look forward to more fun filled Thursday evenings.

Pat Gray

JAM Club



The JAM Club has been busy so far completing harvest, learning about animals and birds of the forest, and also about Joshua and Gideon. Christmas is always a busy time and this year is no exception. Our Christmas service will be on Sunday, 18th December when Alexander Chisholm will be taking the service and the Nativity with a difference. 'The Little Star's Big Shine,' will be acted out by the other members of the JAM Club. After the service, the JAM Club will be serving tea and coffee along with eats that they have made. For all their hard work the JAM Club Christmas Party is on the 17th December when they might even get a visit from Santa if they are really good!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation for their support and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Luisa Chisholm

Christmas Gift Service.



Our annual Christmas Gift Service this year will be on Sunday 11th December 2016. As usual the donations will be given to NAC Social Work Department to help needy families. The congregation are asked to donate Christmas gifts for children and this year the Social Work Department has asked that if possible they could be for children between the ages of 8 and 12 as this is the age group in greatest need. The gifts should not be wrapped as this makes it easier for them to be appropriately allocated. Donations of paper or gift bags would also be most welcome.

An offering plate will be available for people who wish to make a monetary contribution. This money will be given to help the Social Work Department provide a Christmas meal for families in need.

Sandy Hershaw

Christmas Stamps



Please remember to bring along to church your used stamps from Christmas cards. Remember also to leave a small edge round the stamp i.e. don't cut too close to the stamp picture. As in previous years these can be left in the basket on the table in the vestibule at any time. They will eventually go to the Scottish Bible Society to help with funds. Thanks to everyone who has saved them in the past and please save them again this Christmas and of course throughout the year.

Mary Wilson

Another extract from Anne and Alan Cochrane's travels

It's the little things

Before going to Buenos Aires we had three objectives, Steak, Tango, Malbec. Not necessarily in that order, but we did achieve them all. We also found that our (thankfully well sound-insulated) hotel was on a 14 lane highway, with an additional four lane bus route in the middle. Fortunately there was a traffic-light-controlled pedestrian crossing, but it still took three changes of the lights for two old and pedestrian Scottish pensioners to cross.

Within easy walking distance was the Teatro Colon, the third biggest theatre in the world, the Plaza de Maya where the "Mothers of the Disappeared" still stand in front of the Casa Rosada, and the Plaza Dorrego, with its tango dancers and a memorial to Evita. (It's not compulsory to sing "Don't cry for me Argentina). A bit further on is La Boca, once a ship building area now run down, and where there are still brightly painted corrugated iron houses, more tango, and tourist shops.

On the walk back into town we had intended to visit a Russian Orthodox church, but it was firmly closed, so we went into a cafe next door for some lunch. Our waitress was learning English, and was desperate to talk with us. It must have been early in her studies. Not at all put out, and remorselessly cheerful, she engaged other waiters, help from the kitchen, and even customers to lead her, word by word, through fairly short conversations. As none of them was much better, and they wouldn't hear of us trying Spanish (just as well), it consequently tended to take quite a long time. We eventually were able to order empanadas (like wee delicious bridies) and a glass of wine (each), and what we thought would be a quick lunch took a fair bit longer, but it was an absolute joy. All the staff, and some of the customers learned to shout "cheerio" in Ayrshire accents, and the wide, beaming smiles lit up the rest of the day. I hope her English is improving.

Alan Cochrane

Recipe for scones



I can't believe how easy this recipe is and how delicious the scones are.

Ingredients :

14oz S R flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

6 fl. oz double cream

6 fl. oz lemonade

Pre heat oven to 200 degrees (fan)

Sieve flour and baking powder. Make a well in the centre. Pour in cream and lemonade. Mix all then lightly kneading put on to floured board. Flatten to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. Using a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. cutter make the shapes (10-11) approx. Place on greased paper on greased tray. Brush with milk. Bake in oven for 12- 15 min. Leave to cool – delicious with jam and cream.



Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.

You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.

Don't cry because it's over ; smile because it happened.

Church Diary



Sunday 4th December

Communion Sunday

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

Sunday 11th December

Annual Gift Service

Sunday 18th December

JAM Club Nativity

Saturday 24th December

Combined Carol Service in
Ardeer Church at 7pm.

Sunday 25th December

Joint Christmas Day service at 11.am
in Livingstone church

Please see weekly Order of Service for other events.

NB Commencing on Sunday 1st January the services in Livingstone will begin at the new time of 11.30 am and those in Ardeer at 10am

My thanks as always go to all contributors. Your support is much appreciated.

Articles for the next magazine should be with me by Sunday 5th February. I'd like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.