

Stevenston
Ardeer Parish Church of Scotland

Network June 2018



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Dear Friends

By the time you're actually reading this letter, we'll have passed the first anniversary of my induction to the linked charge here. Maureen and I have been settling into the manse and finding our way around the area. It's a good time to reflect and a good time to look to the future. Things have changed over the last year but then they could never stay the same anyway.

I've made good contacts in Ardeer Primary School and Glencairn Primary School and there's been church services with both schools and monthly assemblies. At Ardeer, through the North Ayrshire Council Participatory Budgeting Event, we were awarded some money to develop a pilot Family Learning Project which will run after the school holidays. There'll be more detail on that later. We had a special visit to the Church from the Primary 3s at Glencairn Primary School and there's some examples of their work in the small hall.

I've seen my first Summer Mission here and I've seen how Ardeer, Livingstone and the High Kirk can work together focusing on children and young people. We've had a few 5th Sunday services through which we've done things differently: I know they don't suit everyone but for me, it's about our worship of God. We've had a couple of Messy Church which reached a good number of families. At Easter, we explored Holy Week and celebrated our Risen Christ at Stevenston Point at 7am on Easter Sunday with our friends from the High Kirk.

We've started out on the Path of Renewal with a focus on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and the 2 Kirk Sessions have enjoyed joint Session Conferences at the Communion weekends. We've had evening worship on the Communion Sunday, the last one being at Livingstone, these services have a focus on the ministry of Christian Healing.

At Livingstone, we celebrated with John Kerr on his 100th Birthday weekend and we admitted Alexander Chisholm as a new member. At Ardeer, we welcomed wee Kirk at his baptism. We held a Thinking/Founders Day service at Livingstone for the Scouts and Guides and presented President's Badges to 4 young men from the Boys Brigade at Ardeer.

I'm also very grateful and thankful to God for Brian Murray's placement with us. God has blessed us richly through Brian and I pray that He continues to do so.

We have to be aware, though, of certain things as we look to the future. The circumstances of the Church of Scotland is forever moving as the Church seeks its place in today's society. There is an ever declining number of people, members and those who minister, which also brings a decline in available funding. You'll maybe remember that I was inducted on a 7-year reviewable tenure and so that brings a particular focus.

Again, by the time you read this, the General Assembly will have been and gone but there will be things to consider and ponder as a result of the Assembly with implications for the church locally and nationally.

But more importantly than all these things, is our own relationship with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit; as individuals, as congregations, as a linked charge and as the Church of Scotland in Stevenston. We must be able to connect with the Father to identify what it is He wants us to do in this place, what's His plan and provision for us here. Prayer and focusing on the Living Word are vital in the relationship with the Father and that's why we will develop prayer meetings in both congregations to pray for God's will for both congregations.

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV

Our call to prayer is not just occasionally but continually.

From Matthew 6, verse 6 "But **when** you pray..." and verse 9 "This, then, is **how** you should pray..." (my emphasis added) Jesus expects us to pray and even shows us how to pray.

Prayer is necessary in the life of a Christian and as God's people in this place, we need to be praying both individually and together. Please, when prayer events are intimated, come to them, be part of it, for it's the only way we can find God's will for us.

Keeping you all in prayer

Dave

Dear Friends,

They say that time speeds up as you grow older! That certainly seems to be the case for me this year in particular. It seems no time at all since I first walked into Livingstone and Ardeer Parish Churches to shadow Dave and to learn the ropes just after the New Year. Now here we are on the threshold of May at the time of writing. Most of you have come to know me and what I can do and what I still need to learn and it has been a most pleasant experience for me to share these things with you. I said at the outset that I was on a journey with God and I hoped you would walk a little way with me. I have found only love in your presence, good cheer and interest in how things are going and for that I give you my warmest thanks.

My journey is one that has no clear end as such, just a walk with God to see where He leads. That has always been my approach to my calling. I try, in my way, to keep from putting conditions on what God wants of me and I find it, for the most part, fine. Occasionally I get a 'wobble', a period of uncertainty or doubt when I try to put my stamp on this route He is taking me on. By that I mean when I think I can do things myself without the aid of the Holy Spirit to guide me. I know when these times are because it is difficult. That is why I put so much emphasis on prayer. We cannot have enough prayer in my estimation. ***Thessalonians 5:16-18, Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.***

Pray at all times for all things in the name of Jesus. Pray when you don't feel like praying so that you will feel like praying! That is the measure of my trust in myself and the measure of trust in God. Letting Him have the only and final say. If I leave you with nothing else I hope, by the grace of God, to have preached and encouraged prayer. I know Dave has a stronger grasp of these matters than I have in my humble learning process and I hope to continue encouraging prayer amongst you. I was so delighted that a prayer group has started albeit that I was away for the first one. In terms of the process of Readership Training, it is going well. At least from my point of view and, hopefully, Dave's as well. I always wanted to come and learn, but also to be of some help. I am particularly grateful, therefore, for the inclusion Dave has allowed me in matters of sacrament that might otherwise be closed to a Reader in Training - that of taking part in the sacrament of Communion and of the Baptism of wee Kirk. What a blessing these occasions were to me and I shall hold their memories dear for some time to come.

However there is an end purpose to my placement and that is to reach a point where I will be assessed on my calling when some visitors to the churches will appear and take notes. Please make them feel very very welcome and say how wonderful I am and have been! I jest of course. It is a serious matter in many respects. You will no doubt have seen that I find joy in leading services and speaking to you. I try not to take myself too seriously, but God has need of people who are at some level grounded and serious about His mission and I hope that there is that side in my character too that delights Him. Now I have given some testimony here about myself and how I feel about things. Reflection on one's walk with Christ is healthy is it not? Perhaps you who are reading this have similar thoughts about letting God lead you in whatever calling you are feeling. That wee small voice in the conscience that calls in the night just like when Samuel was asleep. Somewhere deep inside there is a gut feeling that you have a purpose God has initiated. All Christians have a purpose, of course, but what I speak of is that special purpose to which God has given you, perhaps with a gift to develop. For me it is to encourage, motivate and edify brothers and sisters in Christ and to help refresh that Covenant relationship with God. What is it that you so desire for the church, for the community, for the nation and beyond? What is it that God is speaking to your heart about this very moment as you read this? Don't let it go. Speak to Dave or someone else that you trust. Come; journey with us; come journey with me. I need all the companions on the way that can encourage me as well. Well, I don't know of what I will be writing the next time but, God willing, it will be from a place further down the road. Harry Lauder springs to mind with the phrase. "Keep right on to the end of the road, keep right on round the bend." Oh to know what's round there!

Every blessing
Brian



The "Who wants to be a bible millionaire' quiz planned for February had to be cancelled because of the weather.

This has now been rearranged for Wednesday 20th June at 7pm in the church hall. It will be a **fun** quiz based on the bible. Everyone will be in teams so no one will be left having to answer questions on their own, and **it will be fun**. After the quiz there will be tea/ coffee and refreshments and a time of fellowship. We look forward to seeing an many people as possible there. Please spread the word and bring your friends.

Many Thanks for your support

The Learning Group



General Funding

We are now one third of the way into the year which should provide us with a good measure of our finances in the year to date compared to the budget. Regular Offerings to end April 2018 total £10,885 representing a weekly average of £640, compared to £686 in 2017. While this may appear a relatively small reduction, on an annual basis this is equivalent to a £2,400 income reduction over the full year. Against budgeted income of £37,500, based on the above weekly average annual income from Offerings is likely to be £33,500. We already operate on a relatively low level of expenditure and are always seeking ways to keep our expenditure down; we do however need a minimum level of funding to operate as a self-sufficient congregation.

In addition to the above income from Offerings we have received Gift Aid refunds of £1,331 plus a donation of £500 from the Guild which is a very welcome addition to our income stream. A further Gift Aid application covering the period July 2017 to March 2018 is presently being prepared.

Major items of expenditure include £2,407 on energy, Salaries £1440, Insurance £709 plus Presbytery Dues of £709. Due to our Standing Order with bank not being processed we have to date not made any payment towards our Ministries and Mission allocation of £23,600. In addition, as a result of income from Grants received during 2015 in support of the building restoration exceeding £300,000, we are required to pay £879 for water services during 2018. This is an additional expenditure, not included in our annual budget.

Given the lower than anticipated income from offerings plus additional expenditure compared to that budgeted I have concerns about our ability to meet our annual obligations.

As I have indicated previously the vast majority of our income comes directly through members Offerings and wherever possible through Gift Aid recovery. Your ongoing financial support is as ever very much appreciated, I would however ask that, if at all possible, you consider increasing your level of weekly or monthly Giving to help us achieve the income required to enable us to meet all our financial obligations. If you are a tax payer and as yet have not signed up for Gift Aid, please contact either myself or Margaret Montgomery for more information.

Jim Dunwoodie (Treasurer)

A love letter from Jesus

How are you? I just had to send you this letter to tell you how much I love you and care about you. I saw you yesterday as you were walking with your friends. I waited all day, hoping you would walk and talk with me also. As evening drew near, I gave you a sunset to close your day and a cool breeze to rest you. Then I waited, but you never came. O yes, it hurt me, but I still love you because I am your friend.

I saw you fall asleep last night, and I longed to touch your brow, so I spilled moonlight upon your pillow and your face ... Again I waited, wanting to rush down so we could talk. I have so many gifts for you. You awakened late this morning and rushed off for the day. My tears were in the rain. Today you looked so sad, so alone it makes my heart ache because I understand. My friends let me down and hurt me many times, but I love you. I try to tell you in the quiet green grass. I whisper it in the leaves and trees and breathe it is the colour of the flowers. I shout it to you in the mountain streams, and give the birds love songs to sing. I clothe you with warm sunshine and perfume the air. My love for you is deeper than the oceans and bigger than the biggest want or need you could ever have.

We will spend eternity together in heaven. I know how hard it is on earth. I really know, because I was there, and I want to help you. My Father wants to help you too. He's that way you know. Just call me, ask me, talk to me. It is your decision ... I have chosen you, and because of this I will wait ... Because I love you.

Your friend, Jesus XXX



The 2017-2018 session is now behind us and no reflection it has been an interesting mix. We laughed with Gordon McConnell as he gave us a highly entertaining view of being a teacher and being small, we were inspired by speakers such as the Rev. John Carrick as he described God's work in the Middle East, and Elaine Mulholland who taught English in Cambodia. We were given an insider's view of the household cavalry by Mr Ron Hempseed and on the work of paramedics by Leighanne McMail. Mr Alex Hall's programme, titled Flanders fields, showed us the work being done to identify war dead from the First World War, he also gave interesting insights to the period such as boy soldiers. Mr Ron Paterson's Photographs in Motion was a delight both in content, colour, and music. Anyone who thinks chair exercises sounds like an easy way to pass the time needs to meet Mrs Lorna Harris who came along to put us through a session, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves but know we had exercised.

Planning our programme for 2018-2019 has already begun and I do hope you will pay us a visit. You will be made most welcome.

Ann Ewart, Secretary



This has been a busy few months at boys brigade, we held a sponsored walk for all sections so far raising £330. We now have our recipe books ready selling at £3.00. We have just held a coffee morning raising £105.00 a busy wee morning; our next fund raiser is 25th May at Ardeer Recreation bowling club.

ANCHORS - have been busy with games nights and fun over at the swing park. We have just had our parent's night where the best boy was Ethan Grey runner up is Harley Graystone, our drawing competition winner is Lomand Burns well done to all the boys.

We had a great day at our end of session trip to heads of Ayr farm park a great day was had by all.

ANCHORS have now finished registration night for new session, this will be 16th August 6.30 pm to 8pm boys will start the following week Thursday the 23rd August.

JUNIORS - The boys have been taking part in a lot of battalion competitions, the football team won silver, mime and drama team also won silver. Dodgeball team got third place Figure marching team came fourth after a long journey to a snowy Largs.

We have a few camps still to attend 19th May is Eglinton park sleepover / camp for juniors and company

26th May Dunure camp for juniors and company.

Parents night is the 1st June held in the High Kirk Hall 7pm.

COMPANY - boys are attending a camp later in June date to be confirmed

The boys got third place in the battalion pool competition.

Senior boys are going on a trip on the Jacobite steam train in August we are all looking forward to that.

We had four company boys receive their Presidents Badge during a recent church service, thank you

Sutherland for a presenting the gain their

have good church services attend a training Academy, boys

for over 15

hard to gain the

now all made a

Registration for

For parents of boys in primary 2 to 6.



to Margaret Craik and Dave lovely service and for

boys with their badges. To badges the boys had to

attendance, attend all that involved boys brigade,

day at Irvine Royal

complete a bible paper. The volunteered at boys brigade

hours so they have worked

presidents badge. They have

good start on their queen's badges book.

next session is Thursday the 16th august 6.30pm to 8pm

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT THIS SESSION



After a difficult start to our year due to adverse weather conditions, heating problems and difficulties to overcome so that the girls could finish all work required to enable them to win their badges, but happy to announce we did manage.

Explorers: Are our youngest section and their subject was Caring and Sharing, this was enjoyed by the learning through fun system, games with sharing theme and helping if someone fell or was new, they also learned to sing caring songs some old as well as new ones and we are happy to say all passed.

Juniors up to and including Brigader; Subject was the Fruits of the Spirit and how relevant they were in today's Society **Peace, Patience, Joy, Love, Kindness, Goodness**

Self-Control, and this the girls enjoyed learning about they made Trees



with their

fruits on them.

They also learned new songs. From this the girls learned how valuable these fruits are in today's society and again we are happy to say all girls passed.

Lorna Harris who came as a helper last year has along with Rebekah Marshall, Rebecca Hill and Abby McCrystal going to commence their Leadership training and its good luck to Lorna who goes on Sunday for her first conference, hoping the girls will be ready to go on the next one..

Girls of the Year are as follows **Explorers** Jessica Marshall, **Juniors** Emily Harris, **Brigader** Charlotte Fisk.

Ashley Grayston Trophy to Hollie English, and **William Wright Trophy** to Rebecca Hill. We also had 8 Girls who attained perfect attendance despite the difficulties, all this leaves me to say is a Sincere thank you to all the parents/carers who make sure the girls are here and to all the Leaders who give of their time and talents to ensure that we Keep Seeking, Serving and Following Christ.

Kay Tudor



Kay as modestly failed to mention in her article that she has now retired as an officer. All the girls, officers and indeed the congregation wish to thank her for the contribution she has made over the years.



Sunday 29th April, being the 5th Sunday in the month, was a joint service and as with previous 5th Sunday services was a service with a difference. The start and close of the service were fairly traditional with the usual hymns and prayers and at the end of the service we had lunch together in the hall.

Thanks to Livingstone for an excellent lunch.

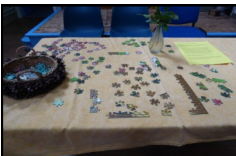
It was great to be able to sit and chat with people rather than rush off home and most people were able to stay so the hall was full and there was a lively buzz.



The focus of the service was prayer and in particular the Lord's prayer. The reading was from Matthew Chapter 5 verses 5 – 15 where Jesus taught his disciples about prayer.

The minister spoke briefly about the passage then we moved round 6 bases, each base looking at one aspect of prayer. The bases were both practical and thought provoking

and gave you the opportunity to think personally about the Lord's prayer



Base 1 – This base was about **God's character** and the fact that we are precious to God. We were asked to take a piece of the jigsaw and pray quietly to ourselves to see what God wants us to do. A jigsaw isn't complete until all the pieces are in place and God wants all of us in His Kingdom or it won't be complete.

Base 2 – This base was about **God's Kingdom**. At this base there was a map of the 3 towns and we were asked to pray for someone, something, somewhere in the 3 Towns, our local area. We have a responsibility to pray for those around us and there are plenty of people in need close to us. How can we bring God's Kingdom to Stevenston?



Base 3 – This base was about **God's Provision**. There were sweets and food on the table. We were asked to take time to say thanks for all that God gives us, not just food but everything He gives us. Then we could have something to eat. The children really liked this base !!!

Base 4 – This base was about **God's Forgiveness**. There was a bowl of water and some paper and pens. We were asked to write on the paper either someone we wanted to forgive or some of our own sins. When then put the paper into the water and asked for God to take away our sins and to help us to forgive others. Rather than just thinking in general about 'forgive us our sins' it was an opportunity to stop and think about particular areas we need to work on personally.

Base 5 – This base was about **God's Guidance**. We were asked to take a verse and think about it and to ask God to reveal the purpose He has for us knowing that He will support and guide us in all we do for Him.

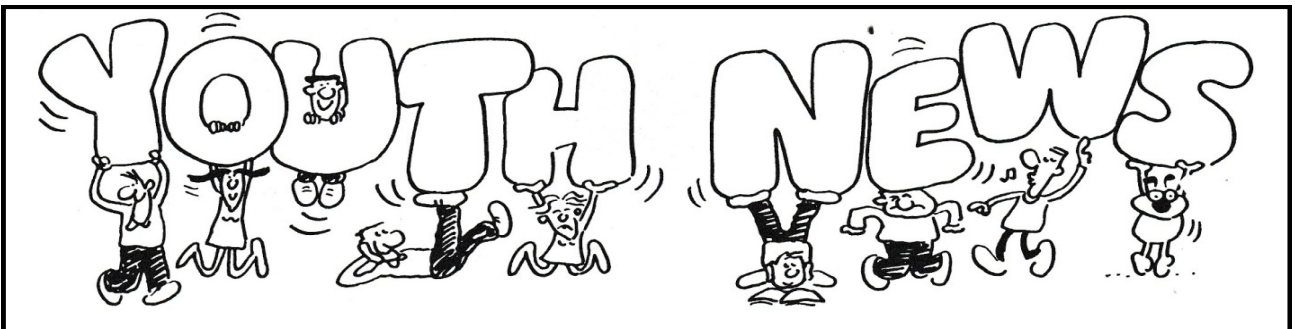
Base 6 – This base was about **God's Protection**. We were asked to seek God's protection for either ourselves or others by writing their name down and hanging it on the prayer tree. There were also scrabble tiles which we could use instead.

We all say the Lord's prayer regularly but we don't always stop to think what it really means, what is God trying to say. We say it out of habit. We say it by rote.

This was a good opportunity to stop and think more deeply about prayer, about ourselves and what it is God wants us to do. I'm sure different people took something different away from each activity, and that's the way it should be.

What did I take away from the service? I felt that the bases helped me in what had been a difficult week to stop and think, more deeply than I usually do, about what God wants for me and about the areas of my life I need to work on. It also gave me the chance to be thankful for everything He does for me and to ask Him to take care of all those I know, and those I don't know, who need His comfort and His love today.

Margaret Craik



Children's Church - This year the trip will be on Saturday 9th June and is going to Barshaw Park in Paisley. We had planned to go to Dean Park however having visited it there is not a great deal to do. There is a range of activities to do at Barshaw Park and we will look into a wet weather alternative – just in case !!!

The bus will leave the church at 10.45 and we should be back by 4 p.m. A letter with full details will be given out nearer the time.

Prizegiving - The prizegiving will be the following day, Sunday 10th June during worship at 11.30 am.

Summer Mission 2018 - The dates for the summer mission are now arranged. The fun day will be on Saturday 21st July in the High Kirk Grounds. The club for children going into Primary 2 in August 2018 to those going in to Primary 7 will be on Monday 23rd, Tuesday 24th, Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th July 11.00 – 1.30 p.m. As usual there will be busses laid on to take the children from, and return them to, Ardeer church.

The Youth Nights will be on Tuesday 24th and Thursday 26th July in Ardeer Church Hall and the Messy Church will be in Livingstone on Saturday 28th July.

More information will come out in June. A personal letter is usually sent to anyone who was there last year and leaflets will be distributed through the schools. Some leaflets will be available in the church and if you know of anyone who would like to come please pass on the information.

As we come to the end of another year the Children's Church would like to thank all those members of the congregation who have supported them throughout the year. Thanks you for your donations, your encouragement and your prayers.

Jean Robertson



Use the clues to fill in the circles on the snake.

The last letter of each name is also the FIRST letter of the next one.

CLUES:

- ① He was captured and sent to Egypt.
- ② Samuel's mother.
- ③ He tried to have Jesus killed shortly after he was born.
- ④ He refused to stop praying to God, and was thrown into the Lions den.
- ⑤ His wife was turned into a pillar of salt.
- ⑥ He wouldn't believe that Jesus had risen from the dead
- ⑦ Strong man of Israel.



Stevenston: Ardeer Parish Church

We celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion at 11.30am on Sunday 3rd June 2018. Please join us in fellowship and worship.



The Annual Stated Meeting for Ardeer Parish Church is on Wednesday 13th June 2018 at 7pm. It's a good time to meet together and hear about how we've been going and what the future might look like. I look forward to seeing you there.

Every blessing

Dave

Next Edition

I am only the editor of this magazine and can only publish articles given to me. I therefore require the co-operation of the whole congregation to contribute and improve your magazine.

Articles to be included in the September 2018 edition need to be in my possession by Sunday 5 August 2018. My telephone number is 01294 468264 or 07554865399 e-mail address is margaretkelso@googlemail.com



Charity number SC 015397

