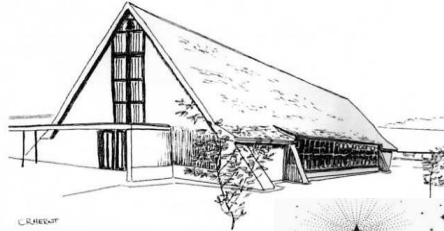


KIRK OF THE HOLY ROOD
KIRK MESSENGER



*MAY YOU ALWAYS BE JOYFUL IN YOUR UNION WITH THE LORD, I SAY IT AGAIN –
REJOICE. (PHILIPPIANS 4 V4)*

DECEMBER 2018

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Parish Register

Deaths

Mrs Jessie Jones
Mrs E. McGillivray
Mrs E. Robertson

9 Douglas Avenue
Barleystone Care Home
13 Newbiggin Road



Service for bereaved families and friends

This service will take place on Sunday 16th December at 7pm. Anyone missing a loved one will be welcome at this quiet service of remembering. If you know of anyone who would appreciate a letter telling them about the service, please give me a note of their name and address.

Betty Sutherland



DIARY DATES

Saturday 1st December

Messy Church

Abbotsgrange Church

2pm – 4pm

Sunday 2nd December



Communion 11am

Food Bank Sunday

Saturday 8th December

Christmas Carol Singing at Asda

11am – 12noon

Sunday 9th December

11.00am Gift Service

(Toys for local children)

Sunday 16th December

11am Family Service

7pm

Service for bereaved families and friends

Sunday 23rd December

11am – Family Service

Sunday 24th December

Christmas Eve Service

11.15pm





“Be still and know that I am God”. Psalm 46

I was listening to Reverend Colin Mailer’s prayer on a Sunday morning and the verse above came to my mind as he was talking about listening to one another so my prayer is based on this.

Heavenly Father when we open our eyes every morning we give thanks that we have come through to another day,
We ask you to lead us as we hand over the people we love and the people we have concerns for,
For our own needs which can be a health matter, a disability, a worry, to be forgiven, a blessing, or a thank you.
Each day is so different from the next and we look forward to meeting or talking to people we know that we can share our love with.
Help us to take the opportunity when it comes to stop and listen to one another to stop rushing around or just stop being busy when they want to talk.
You never know if that's the only person they will speak to all day.
Help us Lord to give of our time this day over to you by listening to that small voice the Holy Spirit in each of us to do your will and the people all said Amen!!!

**Eleanor Neilson
Prayer Promotor**

Where have all the flowers gone?

“Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time passing.
Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time ago...”

Almost 60 years, yes 60 years, have passed since the American folk singer Pete Seeger wrote “Where have all the flowers gone?” It was his way of registering, albeit melodically, his principled objections to the Vietnam War.

In recent weeks war songs of another conflict which ended 100 years ago have been aired on radio and heard also on TV. Centuries earlier Jane Elliot immortalised Scotland’s losses at the Battle of Flodden when she wrote “The flowers o’ the forest are a’ wede awa!”

Almost always the pipe tune which accompanies that composition is played as a lament on Remembrance Sunday, all of which indicates the emotional pull of a composition can be just as powerful long after it was first published, and more relevant in some circumstances than comments uttered by politicians or preachers.

Some of you may have heard me repeat at funeral services words written a century ago by J.M. Barrie, author of “Peter Pan” and other works. He said simply: “God gave us memories that we might have roses in December.”

Now he was writing in an age when flowers were not, indeed could not, be brought into this country on a daily basis from around the world. But today, a century later, we know what he meant – that memories remain fragrant and precious.

Just the other week I visited several outlets, garden centres as well as supermarkets, when I hunted for daffodil bulbs to plant in good time for a display next Spring. Eventually I got what I wanted but not before learning from one garden Centre boss that Spring bulbs are scarce this year.

Why? Because although we had a very hot summer the prolonged cold weather in February and March devastated the bulb harvest in this country and in the Netherlands. Where have all the flowers gone indeed?

It’s a question the Church is asking. But there’s no need for us to despair. The root stock is still here and vigorous. That’s us.

God Bless.

Colin Mailer, your friend and locum minister.

Outreach

Our Harvest Thanksgiving gift to Let the Children Live was £605. I'm sure that this amount will mean a lot to a small charity working hard to make life better for children who would otherwise live a friendless life on the streets.

The £700 we were able to send to the United Mission to Nepal continuing our Jubilee Project allowed them to develop their education programme in the remoter parts of the country.

On Armistice Day the amount donated to Poppy Scotland was £147.

These gifts, along with your regular generous donations to the Foodbank are a wonderful way of reaching out to help people working for others.



As Christmas approaches, we will have tags on sale for £1 to be used to decorate the tree with your messages and prayers. On the Sundays in Advent there will be gift bags on the pews. If you wish you can pop in some small change. This all adds up to a Christmas donation to the work of Aberlour.

Sunday 9th December is our Gift Sunday when you might like to add another present to your Christmas list to be given to a local child who might not have many parcels to open on Christmas morning.

After this gift service we invite you to come through to the hall and enjoy some Christmas goodies as a very small thank you for your generous support throughout the year.

**Betty Sutherland
Outreach**

Finance

Since the last magazine was issued, we have had a relatively quiet time financially. There have been no major surprises, which while boring, allows me as treasurer to plan ahead with a little more confidence. We have had some extra income since August, with the income from renting out the manse slowly accumulating in a Fabric account held for us by the trustees at 121 George Street. Some of the proceeds were spent on essential repairs and refurbishment in the manse, but these would have been required at some point anyway, so we are in a much better place financially with the manse being occupied. May I offer my thanks to those working tirelessly behind the scenes with regard to this.

I did get one very pleasant surprise last month, when the council reimbursed the church for council tax we had been billed for. Despite the manse being empty over the past 2 years, there are certain conditions which can result in council tax still being charged, mainly in an attempt to avoid perfectly habitable properties lying empty at a time when housing stock is in extremely short supply. Despite my explanations of our charitable status, and the fact we were actively seeking a new minister, we were asked to pay council tax until my appeal could be considered. I'm not sure if my appeal has now been successful, or if Allyson Black has helped to move the process along, but we were given a cheque for £1449. This will be very helpful as I try and balance the books this year, while setting aside some funds to act as our emergency reserves.

Talking of balancing the books, the finances of the church are currently holding their own, with respect to "normal" income and expenditure, which is exceptional in the current economic and social climate. Our General Fund should end the year pretty much empty, but with all of our commitments met. That is not to say we are in a position where we can rest on our laurels, far from it. We must continue the hard work and see where it takes us.

Fundraising

Our next fundraising event will have taken place by the time you read this. Our Christmas Fayre / Fete (I can never remember the exact name!) is on Saturday 10th November. An unbelievable amount of hard work has been put in prior to this, with more still to come, and I am sure it will be another hugely enjoyable occasion for us all. There is a wealth of talent and inspiration among our congregation, and a pool of people with a ridiculous appetite for hard work. I only hope that their endeavors are suitably rewarded by a healthy number of people both attending and spending.

Between the last magazine and this one, we also had a very successful Silent Auction and Coffee Morning at Talbot House. Well over £600 was raised from this endeavor, which is a great reward for the hard work put in before, during and after the event. I very much enjoyed seeing everybody pulling together to make sure the event was a success, and I thank you all very much for your donations and your work in preparing for the event, running the event, or attending in support. We defied the dreich and damp weather on the day, and our enthusiasm and fellowship shone ever more brightly.

There was also a Car Boot Sale, which raised a very healthy £600 for church funds. While some of the stalls were taken by traders from outside the church, there was still an awful lot of work undertaken, during and after the event, to plan, advertise, co-ordinate and organise on the day. There would also have been a significant amount of work to tidy up afterwards. I offer my sincere thanks to all of you who supported this event in any way.

Stuart Blackwood
Treasurer

*****NEWS UPDATE*****

The Christmas Fayre fundraising was a great success. There were several stalls with a good variety of goods for sale not to mention the fun of the bottle stall and hamper raffle. A big thank you to all who participated in any way from organising to attending. The fantastic sum of £1800 was raised on the day and we are still counting!
Our next event is the Prize Bingo to be held in February. Anyone wishing to make a donation of a prize should see Alyson Black.
Thanks again for your support.

The Fundraising Committee

Women's Association

The Association has had a good start to the session with approximately 44 members attending each week. Our opening concert was a huge success with Linlithgow Ladies Choir entertaining us. To hear their voices raised in song in the Church was quite something.
Some of the ladies took the opportunity to go Falkirk Town Hall to see "Crazy for You". As usual the Bohemians put on a fantastic show with great energy.
As you read this we be winding down for the end of this year's session. We have in store:

- 5th December. Floral Arrangements with Catherine Carter
- 12th December Christmas meal at the Abbotsinch
- 19th December. Carol Concert

This will take us into the break before looking forward to another packed programme for the beginning of the new year.

We are always open to welcome new members so if you think you would enjoy an evening of fellowship and talks, or demos why not come along

Helen Scott, President

Local Church Review

Many of you took the time to respond to the questionnaire which was contained in the last issue of the magazine. There was not a time limit for responses to be returned, so if you would like to voice your opinion, or add to answers you have already given, please feel free to contact me. Note that this can be done anonymously if this is more comfortable – please use my pigeonhole in the Small Hall (marked Treasurer, up near the top left corner). Please feel free to approach me at any other time, if you so wish.

I'd like to thank you for all the responses I have received so far. I can see that everybody is hoping that a new minister is somewhere on the horizon. I am sure the nominating committee are of the same opinion, and that their tireless work will bear fruit soon. In the meantime, we will just have to let them continue with their work.

One of the main concerns, identified by pretty much all of the responses, is that we have very few younger people (children and adults) attending. While there weren't many suggestions as to what could be done to improve this, and it was more of a concerned observation, there were a few replies that hoped for a younger minister, who would be able to build a rapport with younger people. This is not in any way a slight on Colin, who we are very grateful for, but more a vision as to where the future may lie.

It has also been suggested by many that we should modernise our services, using technology where possible. Using projection screens to show the words of hymns was suggested, as was employing a praise band whenever we can. The local church review team from presbytery have held discussions with the congregation and offered support and guidance. The Kirk of the Holy Rood team, led by me, will put plans in place to achieve whatever we can to fulfil the wishes of the congregation. We are very grateful for the assistance that presbytery have kindly offered to us.

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your contributions to Kirk of the Holy Rood, whether it be your time, your talent, or your financial assistance.

If I don't manage to see you before Christmas, may I wish you the very best for Christmas, the festive season, and 2019.

Also, if you have any questions about any aspect of the church finances, please feel free to ask.

Best Wishes,

Stuart

Interim Moderator

Dear Friends

It seems strange to be writing for the Christmas edition of the Church magazine just as I am about to leave for my "summer" holidays!

Here of course summer is now but a memory: the clocks have changed; the temperatures have fallen and the signs of approaching winter are all around us. On a positive note, we've enjoyed some beautiful clear autumn days with lots of sunshine when we could admire the beauty of God's handiwork in the glowing autumnal colours of the trees and hedgerows.

Hallowe'en and Guy Fawkes celebrations are past but already many are looking forward to the next big celebration - Christmas. For weeks now, the supermarkets have been increasingly stocking their shelves with crackers, Christmas puddings and all the other paraphernalia that's become part and parcel of Christmas tradition here in Britain and in the western world in general.

Sadly, not everyone can look forward to a Christmas filled with the good things of life. For many in our world Christmas will be like every other day - a day of hunger, a day of pain with nothing and no-one to give help, and for some it will be a day of fear - war doesn't take a holiday - and for some fear of the inevitable brutality that so often is the result of over indulgence in alcohol and/or drugs.

Christmas is a time of giving, a time when we express our love for others by giving to them a carefully chosen gift, as the Magi brought to Jesus their carefully chosen gifts. In the west here many of us have more than we need. Charity Gifts is a scheme run by Christian Aid which enables us to give a present where it's very much needed and appropriate to the needs of the recipient. There's a variety of gifts available which range in cost from £9 for a school bag with books and pens through to the most expensive at £150 for a cow. It's something that many of us could perhaps think about as we begin our Christmas shopping. These are gifts that bring real meaning to "Life in its fullness" which is God's earnest desire for His people. If you would like any further information about the Christian Aid scheme you find it on the Christian Aid website at <https://charity-gifts.christianaid.org.uk/>.

We will be celebrating Christmas in church each Sunday in December and on Christmas Eve, and we look forward to seeing you then.

As we prepare for a modern Christmas, it's hard to remember that the first Christmas was celebrated, not with fairy lights and tinsel, but in the dimness, dreariness and stench of an eastern stable, where a young man with the calloused hands of a carpenter had to help deliver the baby without boiling water, clean towels, or anything remotely sanitary. The first visitors to see the new-born weren't proud grandparents bringing flowers and gifts, but men and boys straight off the fields smelling of the sheep they tended, alerted to the wonder of God's amazing grace towards humanity by no less than a choir of angels.

As we sing our carols this Christmas, as we see the sparkling eyes of our children and grandchildren as they receive their presents, as we too enjoy pulling crackers and eating our Christmas dinner, let's pause a while to truly give thanks for the greatest gift of all, the gift that is the true meaning of Christmas, the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ - God with us, born in a stable, cradled in a manger, the Saviour of all who trust Him and walk in His way.

Molly joins me in wishing you all a very joyous Christmas and a very happy, healthy and blessed New Year.

Yours sincerely



PRAYING AND CARING

We in the Church believe in the power of prayer. Prayer should be a conversation with God when we can pour out our troubles to God as well as our heartfelt thanks for his many blessings which embrace his love and care for us every day.

When we are feeling down prayer can relieve our anxieties. The outcome may not be what we expected but God has heard our prayer, listened and responded. Things work out.

Things don't seem so bad when we share our thoughts with God. I believe we are never given a burden we can't shoulder. We are strong because we have faith.

The opportunity for prayer before our weekly service on Sundays is available to all. A few minutes with God when we pray for each individual in the congregation that morning as well as the house-bound and those in hospital. We pray too for those who are at home caring for others – and we ask God to be with us during the service.

This quiet period of reflection, listening or bringing someone to the notice of the leader for all to think about in private prayer is precious.

The Lord's Prayer as taught by Jesus to his disciples still covers so many aspects of everyday life today in this busy world of ours.

Think about the power of prayer and try to set aside a special time to speak to God in private. I have no doubt you will benefit if you do.

God bless,

Jessie Y.L. Mailer



Wishing all our members a joyous Christmas