

The Herald

Castlehill Parish Church

Winter 2018



Editorial

As Christmas approaches once again, our front cover shows the Nativity Scene and it is that which should be foremost in our minds, as we are once again having a festive season without a designated minister. Within the pages of our magazine we see some of the reasons for this. But as we read on through the reports of the organisations, everyone in our Church keeps us vibrant and looking to the future.

Nothing has been allowed to slip, and congregational attendances have remained remarkably stable. In this respect we have much to thank our Locum, Christine Stewart. But you will notice we have an item from the Mission and Discipleship Council on Prayer, and its importance in our lives. Often, we do not think anyone hears our prayers, or even answers them. Perhaps they are being answered in the work that all of the Congregation do and we have never noticed.

At this Christmas time let us pray for everyone in our Parish and beyond. May they enjoy this time with their families and friends, exchanging and receiving presents and remember God's gift to us, Jesus, the most precious Gift of all

A Happy Christmas to you all,

Wellwood Grierson Editor

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Have your say

If you have any comments to make on the Magazine, please feel free to do so by letter or email to herald@castlehillchurch.org We are always pleased to consider any articles for the Magazine from members of the congregation, These can also be sent to the same email address.

Status Quo or Change – Mission or entrenchment?

The General Assembly of 2018, like so many before it, considered the situation facing the Church of Scotland today and into the future. With a lack of ministers, extended vacancies, reduced income and diminishing numbers it was agreed that the status quo was no longer an option. How then does the Church reshape itself for the future? So many congregations are struggling to maintain worshipping communities and in the process are pumping finances into buildings that are no longer fit for purpose and have become a drain on congregational resources. In communities where there are several congregations in a reasonably close proximity there is a great deal of duplication and many congregations without the expertise required today to fulfil the remit that trustees have, by law, taken on.

The Ministries Council in reporting to the Assembly agreed that each Presbytery would be allocated a set number of ministries and at local Presbytery level the distribution of these ministries would be established. The Presbytery of Ayr, like all other Presbyteries, will have to take its share of reduction in ministers of word and sacrament.

The Presbytery of Ayr has been aware of the situation and over the years has taken some measures to deal with the facts and difficulty. The Mission Committee of Presbytery divided the Presbytery into four areas now referred to as Mission Focus Groups; East, North, South and Ayr Central. These Mission Focus Groups meet to discuss and determine how the allocated number of ministries might be deployed within the area. This is to ensure that there is a bottom up solution rather than a top down solution to the dilemma that faces the church today. This of course means that the local congregations have to grasp the nettle rather than look elsewhere for solutions or people to blame for bad decisions! Castlehill Church is in the Ayr Central Grouping and there is to be a reduction of two ministries in the Grouping.

However regardless of which churches will share a minister with another church or will be closed to accommodate the reduction in ministry there still requires to be a change of focus from status quo to change, from entrenchment to mission. Due to the geographical location, demands on ministry and size of the parish it has been expressed that Castlehill Church will not link or join with another parish. This does not mean that the status quo is acceptable or even desirable. If a congregation is to be focussed on mission there requires to be a well equipped membership, encouraged to exercise the many ministries that the congregation has been God-gifted.

The make up of the Presbytery of Ayr has been taken into consideration when the numbers of ministries was allocated to it. The 50/50 urban/rural nature of the Presbytery meant that when calculating the number of ministries a weighting was given due to the rural nature of many parishes. Over the last 25 years there has been a considerable reduction of ministries and increased number of linkages and unions in rural areas and so there now needs to be consideration given to town charges. Presbytery has been advised that Prestwick has entered upon an exploration exercise where much thought is being given to what will be appropriate ministry in the future for that area. The last meeting of Presbytery resulted in an agreed deliverance that Troon:Portland and Troon:Old will enter into a linked charge moving in time to a union.

All congregations whether encouraged to change in terms of closure, linkage or union as well as those who will continue as they presently are must seek new ways of being church and embrace the opportunities that all members are offered to exercise their God given ministries. Training will be required and offered but members, not just elders of the church, need to have confidence that there is a place for them in the ministry of the congregation.

The congregation of Castlehill has been encouraged by the Mission Focus Group, along with other congregations within the Grouping to work in a closer informal way with neighbouring congregations. In our case this will be with Ayr:St Leonard's and Ayr:St Andrew's. This close liaison has been exercised in the past, most recently with the Summer Mission that was held jointly and hosted in Castlehill Church. The Kirk Session will consider further ways of improving a joint working together. Do remember us in prayer and consider in which ways you can participate, to ensure we continue to be a Missional Church, reaching out to all ages and groups within and beyond the parish.

John Paterson, interim Moderator

Greetings of Peace and Joy for Christmas 2018 and Best Wishes for 2019

It is my constant joy to be with you all and to assist you in the work of our Father God in the name of Jesus and with the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Let us remember in the words of The Guild, 'Whose we are and Whom we serve'. And yet, let me encourage you all to keep praying that God is even now preparing someone to hear and accept the call to be your new full-time Minister.



With that in mind and with reference to the information about current church affairs shared by the Reverend John Paterson, I would like to make one or two points for your consideration.

Let me tackle first the least palatable issue as far as most people are concerned – Money! Times have been increasingly difficult for most folks and it is not my wish to make things more difficult. However, it would be remiss of me not to suggest that we all do some deep and serious soul-searching about how much we really want the Church to prosper – for in our times money is essential for everything that we do – notwithstanding that Jesus could feed thousands with five loaves and two small fish. At the heart of that story, though, is the sacrificial giving of a young lad.

Even if the church were inundated with candidates for ministry, the sad truth is that they could not afford to pay them. I would only like to suggest that we examine our hearts in relation to our own commitment to maintaining the work of the church in relation to some of the non-essential spending that we do. I believe this is a matter for prayer for all of us. Let me complete this thought, however, by reminding you that I love your generosity throughout the year, but would only ask you to consider your core giving to the work of the Church.

The second issue that we have is to encourage the many out there in our community who value the Church but who have got out of the habit of attending. Perhaps there are those that we know who would benefit from an invitation to join with us on a Sunday morning. For many the thought of turning up on their own is a huge issue– yet Castlehill Church has the ability to give simple warm welcomes without any fuss. This is something for all of us... We now have in place the new initiative for Messy Church - more opportunities to encourage those around us to attend.

Thirdly, John talks of requiring a well-equipped membership to exercise many ministries. Well, there is already plenty of evidence that God has provided this church with many gifts. Perhaps in the new year we should take time to explore and encourage each other in how best to share in ministries according to our gifts and talents. Just a thought.

Fourthly – let us take up the prayer challenge if we have not already done so. Taking time to pray shows that we trust God to be listening and caring about each of us and our situation. He invites us constantly throughout his word to acknowledge His Sovereignty over the Church by looking to him for guidance, in faith that he will answer.

All of this is between each individual and God. May you be richly blessed as you find new ways to trust him as we reflect this season on the greatest love gift of all - Jesus .

Christine Stewart (Locum]

Seniors Afternoons

A record attendance was recorded at the October meeting, when the entertainment was provided by Hugh and Friends from Maybole. It was a great afternoon, enjoyed by everyone. Sadly Hugh Paterson, the organiser, was unable to attend through ill health and we wish him a speedy recovery.

The December meeting will take the form of a Christmas Party, entertainment by the Forehill School choirs,
Please note this will be in the Main Hall at 2.00pm

Wellwood Grierson

And when you pray....

Matthew 6:7a

“How do you eat yours?” That was the question in a certain egg-shaped confectionery advert. The implication being that there is no right way to do it, but rather it’s about how you best experience the egg.

How do you pray?

Perhaps you haven’t really thought about it too much. Perhaps it’s now hard to concentrate because you’re thinking about chocolate, but regardless of appetite, past experiences, how we wrap it up or try to explain it, prayer can be rather confusing. It can often be a mystery. It can at times seem like a chore. It can even be a blessed relief.

So then, how *do* you pray?

Are you a morning person? Do you greet the sunrise with thanks and praise to our God? Do you utter hopeful words and try and live them throughout the day to come? Are you more spontaneous? Do you respond to life with a ‘breath prayer’, off the cuff, as life makes you dance to its tune and in each moment you seek the steadying hand of our Creator and Sustainer?

Perhaps you find yourself needing space. Like a free-diver coming up for air after plumbing the depths. Maybe you carve out some time in your day to be still and know the presence of God. You may prefer to reflect on your day in the presence of God, as was the practice of Ignatius of Loyola, who gave us the daily examen – a way of praying that helps us recognise God’s presence in the midst of the day just lived.

The practice of prayer is part of the lifeblood of our faith. We may find ourselves in the darkest of circumstances, when prayer is the only thing that we can turn to for comfort. We might see prayer as that thing we do together on a Sunday, or as the words said on our behalf by a minister or worship leader. Maybe it is the one thing that keeps us going, those times when we can just let God know how we are feeling. It might even be that thing that happens by accident or that we’re unaware of until, looking back on a time of quiet, perhaps with a cup of tea or watching the world go by from our living room window, we realise that in the stillness, God was there the whole time.

Whatever your habit or preference may not really matter. What is important is that we are having the conversation, that we are opening ourselves up to God in whatever moment we can manage, that in some way prayer is part of our life. Prayer may be a constant companion on the journey, or a friend that visits once in a while, to bring comfort and solace. It may be something deeper, more mysterious that is largely left unspoken, something felt, yearned for, grieved over or something long-forgotten brought to mind.

How we pray then, is not the most important thing, but rather that the experience of prayer and the encounter with God is recognised. That our faith is tended and our relationship with God is nurtured, in precious moments. No fancy wrapping is needed and it may not always taste sweet but, in the midst of life, listening for and opening our hearts to God is indeed food for the soul.

Resourcing Worship Team, Mission & Discipleship Council



Get the most out of South Ayrshire **LIFE**

South Ayrshire Life is a new website packed with up-to-date information on what's happening in communities throughout the area.

New friends, new things to do and a helping hand when you need it are just a click away on the **South Ayrshire Life** website.

And there are now more than 1,200 activities to choose from!

Whether it's toddler groups, walking football, knit and natter, sport, money advice or lunch clubs, there's something for everyone on **South Ayrshire Life**.

You don't have to be on the internet to get the most from **South Ayrshire Life** as there is a free telephone number to call and find out about activities and help services near you.

South Ayrshire Life also has a community information centre at 57 Newmarket Street, Ayr, which is home to a whole range of regular drop-in sessions.

The door is open for help and advice on a host of issues, with no need for an appointment.

YOUR DROP-IN DIARY

Each day of the week we provide help and information on a variety of subjects:

Help to quit smoking, Advice from Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland. Community Health Addiction Nurses providing support. Action on Hearing Loss and Action for Mental Health.

Trading Standards are here to help beat the fraudsters. There is the Dementia Support Association and a Free Legal advice clinic offering free legal advice on Power of Attorney and will writing.

There is a Sensory Impairment Support Group to help older people with hearing/sight loss and the National Autistic Society are in attendance with useful advice.

Seascope are here to help with housing needs and Recovery Ayr provide support for people in recovery from substance abuse.

You may even be interested in volunteering to help in some of these projects

To find out more, days and times, please visit www.southayrshirelife.org, call the team on Freephone 0800 432 0510 or drop in to South Ayrshire Life in Newmarket Street.



Castlehill Church Guild

Harris Tweed is made. In fact, after their visit to us, they were heading to Largs to join others who were taking part in the Mod. They gave us many interesting facts about the production of this tweed, including the very important part urine plays in the process. We also learned that the length of the tweed is measured in metres while the breadth is measured in inches. They also sang many of the Gaelic songs that are sung by the women while they waulk the tweed, the name given to the process of softening the tweed after it has been woven. Two of our ladies, Margaret Graham and Sheila McKenzie, joined the group so maybe we'll have some Ayr tweed!!



There have been many interesting speakers so far this session, including our own Christine Stewart talking about "Seeking the way". The Interim Moderator, John Paterson also gave an informative talk on Mother Theresa

Remember, everyone is welcome at the guild so do come along on a Wednesday evening at 7.30pm - we start again on 9th Jan 2019

Marion Reid Convenor



BIG thank you to everyone. Our 'call' to the congregation for resources for our craft work has been outstanding.



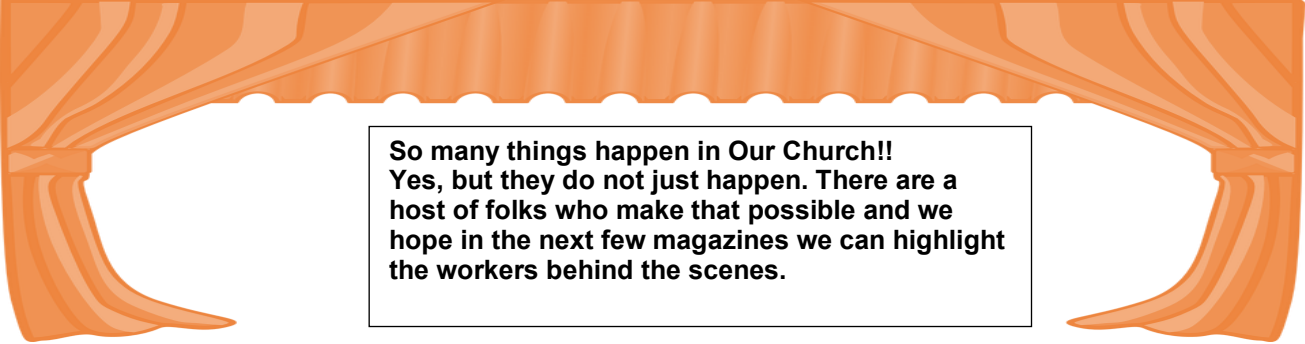
Our bible themes have been:
September - A Holy Temple
October - 10 Bridesmaids
November - Remembrance

Are you interested in seeing what we do PLEASE come along on 15th December 4-6pm. Join us in our celebration of Messy Church. We will be looking at the birth of Jesus through the eyes of Mary and the Angel.

Fabric Report

Once again we have had to replace a few light bulbs in the church buildings. We also have had a leak in the north hall and problems with the main door and outside light these are being attended to. At the beginning of November we were targeted with vandalism and two windows broken they will be repaired when the glass comes in. We hope you are warm in church as the new heating boilers are working well. We have a few things we would like to do in the New Year outside of our list and when money is available we will get on with this. I hope you are all enjoying the newly decorated main hall but can I ask if you are putting chairs around the hall not to put too close to the wall as we already have a few chips on the paintwork. Thanks to all who help with the various jobs around the Church Buildings.

Liz Reid Convenor



**So many things happen in Our Church!!
Yes, but they do not just happen. There are a
host of folks who make that possible and we
hope in the next few magazines we can highlight
the workers behind the scenes.**

Hospitals/Nursing Home Visitors

Ever been in hospital? Or a nursing home? Then, you may well have had a visit from one of our visiting teams. There always has been a strong and caring group of people in Castlehill, outwith the Eldership, who visited people in their homes after they came out of hospital, the groups who visited the hospitals, or the Outreach Group who visited and cared for those in very difficult situations. It is now more awkward to obtain access due to data protection, so it is more important than ever that people inform the church if they know of anyone who would wish a visit.

Over the years, and with our different ministers, we had the Healing Group consisting of Mae Bell, Margaret McCormick, Anne Hamilton, Margaret Coulter and Margaret Cairns. Then came the Pastoral Care Group which consisted of Margaret McCormick, Linda Telfer, Betty Dunlop and Sheila McKenzie. After that the Befriending Group was set up by Margaret Cairns and Trudy McLeod, assisted by Margaret Grierson, Margaret Morgan, Lorna Maxwell, Sandra Wyllie, Linda McClurkin, with Denise and John Fisher. Elderly people still on the roll and outwith the Parish were visited. Moira Alexander, Sheila McKenzie, Dot McCormick, Pat Colquhoun and Margaret Worral visited hospitals and homes. Additionally, they helped with transporting patients to special services in the Chapel at Ayr Hospital.

Biggart Hospital and South Lodge Nursing Home were visited by Margaret McCormick, Margaret Cairns and Margaret Grierson.

Sheila Mackenzie regularly visited all church members in the Nursing Homes.

Gordon Reid had now taken on this task and visits the Biggart Hospital, Integrated Living and a couple of the nursing homes on a regular basis, taking copies of the Herald along with him. He finds this work both fulfilling and rewarding.

On the first Sunday of each month a group visit the residents in Creggan Bahn, they hold a short service which is much appreciated by the folks in there some of whom are members of our Church. Anyone who wishes to come along is welcome.

Ailsa Hospital

Originally there were four groups who would take it in turns to visit once a month, baking cakes so that all the patients could enjoy their afternoon tea. Margaret Rae, Jean Hunt, Mary Hendry, Andrew Graham and Anne Riley visited continuously for approximately 12+ years.

We would like to thank sincerely all our volunteers for giving their time and support in forming part of our healing ministry over the years and to apologise to anyone who has been omitted.

Website

The website was set up 20+ years ago. It has gone through several revisions as the technology has improved. Starting in the days of the Rev Ian Stirling with the assistance of Alan Scott, the website ran on the back of a Christian Aid ISP Service which was terminated only a few years later. BT then provided the connection and, when the Rev Peter Park came, this was upgraded to incorporate the e-mails from the office. After this the Rev Liz and Idris Crumlish took over the running of the website which then fell to Douglas Wilson on their departure. The decline of Douglas Wilson's health meant that the website became stagnant. The website is now administered by Allan Jack with the help of Alan Scott hopefully reflecting more broadly the activities in the church. Any suggestions for new hyperlinks to relevant organisations or updates to the pages are extremely welcome. www.castlehillchurch.org.

The Church Family

Have you ever noticed in Churches that through the years, particular families have long standing connections. I wonder if you know how many of the **TATE** family belong to your Church. Let me tell you.

There is old man **DIC-TATE**, who wants to run everything, while uncle **RO-TATE** tries to change everything. Then there is sister **AGI-TATE**, who stirs up plenty of trouble, with help from her husband, **IRRI-TATE**. Whenever new projects are suggested, **HESI-TATE** and his wife, **VEGI-TATE** want to wait until next year. Then there is aunt **IMI-TATE** who wants our Church to be like all others. **DEVAS-TATE** provides the voice of doom while **POTENT-TATE** wants to be the big shot and there are a few of them about.

But not all family members are bad.

Brother **FACILI-TATE** is quite helpful in Church matters, and a delightful happy member of the family is Miss **FELICI-TATE**, cousins, **COGI-TATE** and **MEDI-TATE** always think things over and lend helpful steady hands.

And of course there is the black sheep of the family, **AMPU-TATE** who has completely cut himself off from the Church.

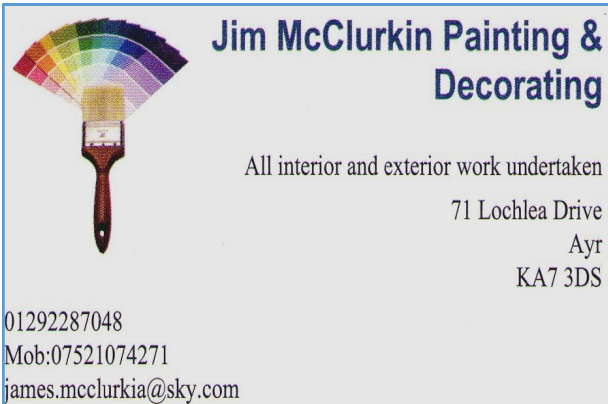
Well did you recognise any of the **TATE** family in our Church?

Courtesy of Kelso North Parish Church

Social Committee Report

We had a very good Autumn Fayre and at the moment we have raised £1653 and everyone enjoyed the morning. The winners of the hampers were T,Chalmers and L.McDermott and the winner of the cake was M,Morgan. The winner of the Quiz was Mrs Robertson, Riverside Place, Ayr. Thank you to everyone for their support.

Liz Reid, Convenor

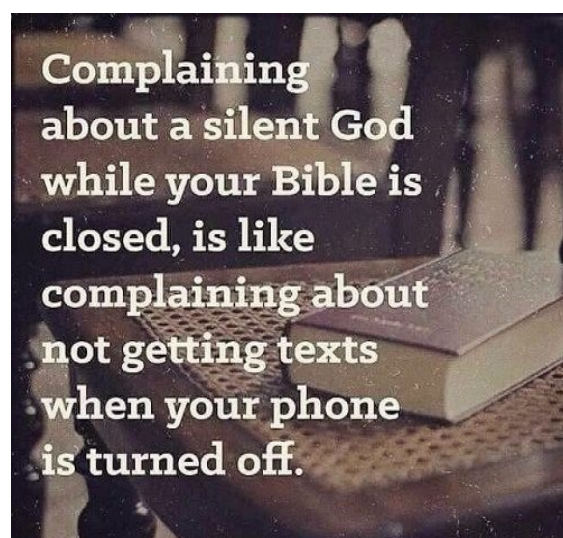


Jim McClurkin Painting & Decorating

All interior and exterior work undertaken

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We do not realise how much talent is around us, and while Rose McGregor has moved out of the area, perhaps we can claim some credit for her foray into hymn writing. Here is her story and the hymn she wrote.

"I wrote the poem after I was out running one day and it was on the road home from Kirkmichael to Patna . There is this hill, but it felt like a mountain to me, just after the Dalvennan Fishery. I always struggled to get myself up it without having to walk. I could never manage to run up it , so I started saying to myself- "GET UP- THE MOUNTAIN LIKE MOSES DID".

So this is what I repeated to myself to enable me to get over the hill and so the poem developed.

I'm a member of Ayr Writers Club and Chris Merry asked the group if there were any poets who would like to share one. They thought they would be good lyrics to be made into a song and surprise! surprise! I got mine chosen.

It is a dream come true for me to have a poem made into a song as I used to always make songs up as a child and tried to memorise them as I couldn't read or write music."

Rose McGregor

Like Moses Did

Go up the mountain like Moses did

Go up the mountain like Moses did

Go up the mountain like Moses did

And listen to our dear Lord there.

When daily life seems so hard to bear

And being trustworthy has got you nowhere.

Stay obedient to the Lord in prayer

Speak with him today.

Go up the mountain like Moses did..... (as verse 1)

When loved ones seem to have done you wrong

The faithless seem mighty and your strengths all gone.

Stay obedient to the Lord in prayer

Speak with him today.

When you return you will shine so bright.

God will have chosen you with great delight

For trust and obedience God gives his love.

When you speak to the Lord in prayer.

When you speak to the Lord in prayer.

Go up the mountain like Moses did

Go up the mountain like Moses did

Go up the mountain like Moses did

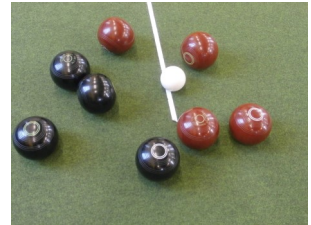
And listen to our dear lord there

And listen to our dear Lord there.

Rose Macgregor

Castlehill Bowling Club

Bowling is well underway this winter with two new members giving us a total of 43. Some come on Mondays and others on Wednesdays, but also some on both days. This sometimes presents problems in arranging ties in the various competitions, and a lot of phone calls have to be made to allow games to progress.



With all the bowling taking place over the past 20 years, some carpets have become worn at the edges, with the foam underlay breaking away, and it was decided to apply for funding to buy new carpets. Margaret Graham undertook the task to apply for grants under the banner of the Year of the Youth, but our application was turned down as we do not qualify in providing anything for the Youth. Margaret is still exploring other avenues, but in the meantime it was agreed that, using our own funds, we would buy one carpet meantime. This came in to use at the end of November.

Sadly we were shocked to hear of the sudden death of one of our members Roy Wilson, who was a nephew of Jim Roy, well known in our Church. Roy has battled illness for a number of years, but had a great spirit. Our thoughts go out to Vari, Rbbie and family. There was a good turn out of members to his funeral on 27th November.

David Kerr President

GIRL GUIDING

Girlguiding numbers are healthy. All the Units are involved in introducing the new Programme for each Section. This encourages the girls to work on their own or in small groups and they are enjoying the challenge of doing this.

Rebecca Crawford, Ami Fisher and Ivy McDowall from Tuesday night Guides obtained their Baden Powell Award. This is the highest award presented in Guiding. The girls chose to be presented with their badges and Certificates at their own Unit and this has taken place. There are other girls in the District working towards this before the Award finishes in June of next year. There is a different structure being brought in for the girls to work towards awards.

We were delighted to be asked by the Church to take part in the remembrance service by laying a wreath. There was a representation of Brownies, Guides and Rainbows, with the Rainbows and Brownies presenting plastic poppies, which they had made at their Units.

Some of the Guides were lucky to go on a trip to Blackpool, which involved Units from all over Scotland. They had a sleepover in the Tower Ballroom. They visited the Sea Life Centre, Madam Tussuads, went to the cinema and the brave ones stood on the glass floor at the top of the tower. There was also a Guide residential at Dumfries House, where they took part in archery, wall climbing and geocaching and shelter building.

The Rainbows and Tuesday night Brownies enjoyed a halloween party with the Alloway Units. The Units are looking forward to a joint Christmas Party at Kidz Play in Prestwick in December.

Tuesday night Guides are bag packing in Morrisons on Sunday 9th December to raise funds. If you are in that day, please say hello and drop a penny in our buckets.

As you can see Girlguiding is still very active. If anyone would like to show an interest in taking part in Girlguiding either as a Young Member or as an Adult Volunteer, please go onto Girlguiding UK website and register your interest.

From Girlguiding we wish everyone a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2019

Linda McClurkin



"Anyone who had a heart
Would take me in his arms and love me, too
You couldn't really have a heart and hurt me,"
sang Cilla Black in 1969.

In the Middle East and in Africa there is a long tradition of hospitality to any stranger who finds themselves without a bed when night falls. In the Old Testament care for the stranger is mentioned as early as Deuteronomy 14. 29 NIV: ". . . the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest."

Nearer to home, I remember being very impressed that in Tiree everyone seems to leave the doors to their houses unlocked so that, if visitors arrive in their absence, perhaps in bad weather, they can just walk in and make themselves a cup of tea or coffee and wait for the householder to return.

We are all familiar with Matthew 25.35 NET

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,"

Archbishop Desmond Tutu makes no bones about it:

"And you remember the wonderful parable we have about the last judgment. He said that when we are judged about whether we will go to heaven or to hell, it will be by thoroughly non-religious criteria. He didn't say that you will be asked: 'Did you pray? Did you go to church?' He didn't mean that those were not important things. But you will be judged by whether you fed the hungry, whether you clothed the naked, you visited the sick and those in prison."

One of our local ministers had to remind a reluctant parishioner, when the immigrant crisis was at its worst, that the Holy Family fled to Egypt and waited there until Herod died, which must have been a fair length of time [Matthew 2.19 NIV]. They were an excellent example of asylum seekers.

Indeed the people of Israel wandering in the desert, then toiling as slaves in Egypt, [predicted in Genesis 15.13 NET] exemplifies the situation of the dispossessed migrants, wandering from one closed border to another in Europe today.

Angela Merkel's moral stance on immigration cost her vital votes. She was well aware that letting in over one million immigrants fleeing wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan would be unpopular but stood up for her principles. She said, "It was an extraordinary situation and I made my decision based on what I thought was right from a political and humanitarian standpoint," The gamble played off. If anything, her moral rectitude has enhanced her political career. She, a daughter of the manse, clearly does not regret her decision and probably could not have lived with her conscience had she acted otherwise.

We don't seem to have very many immigrants in Ayr. However, "strangers" are not necessarily immigrants. There are always people, who for one reason or another may find themselves alone at Christmas time. Have you seen the Bisto advert on television? Apparently, "Contact the Elderly organises monthly tea parties and are now encouraging people to "spare a chair" for Sunday lunch. I don't know about you but I certainly over-cater when expecting a visit from the family and this Christmas will be no different. Maybe we could find it within our hearts to invite someone along with the family or, if that is too intrusive, to host a lunch on another day to help us eat up the "crumbs from our table"! One or two churches and cafes regularly open up at Christmas to welcome the homeless and no doubt would be glad of assistance or contributions of food.

To quote Desmond Tutu once more, "In God's family, there are no outsiders, no enemies."

Denise Fisher

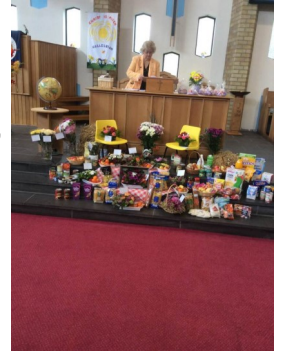
Other events in our Church

We had a successful Harvest festival. Thanks to all who provided gifts of flowers, which went to members of the Congregation, Fruit and Vegetables to the Meals for the homeless, tins and non-perishables to the Salvation Army Food Bank and cash donations were given to Christian Aid



A Remembrance Day service was held with the Youth organisations present. Wreaths were laid by the Boys Brigade, Girl Guides, Church Guild and the Church. It was a poignant service remembering 100 years since the end of World War One.

We also had a Dedication Service for the Boys Brigade.



Financial Report

Our financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December and we currently have a deficit which means our expenditure is more than our income.

Each year we have to make a Ministries & Mission contribution to Church of Scotland headquarters and for 2018 this was assessed as £60,745. We received a reduction of £11,196 because we have a vacancy for a minister which meant a payment of £48,523 and we also pay the salary and travel expenses of our locum. The Presbytery of Ayr levies an amount for Presbytery Dues and Property Levy and this was £1729.

The cost of insuring the church buildings and the manse was £2,357.56 and to date heating and lighting the church, manse and halls has cost £5,916. The manse has been let since September therefore since then we are no longer paying heating and lighting costs for it. Maintenance and repair of the buildings cost £43,197.74 to the end of October which included £21,960 for two replacement boilers for heating the church and halls.

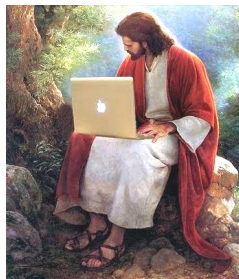
The Annual Fabric Appeal raised £2,385.65 and we received £495 in Gift Aid claims. This was a reduction of £1,516.95 from the amount raised by the Appeal and Gift Aid claimed in 2017.

If you are a tax payer and make offerings by standing order or the Free Will Envelopes we could claim back the amount of tax you paid via the Gift Aid Scheme. We can claim 25 pence for every £1 you donate and we received £10,166 to end of October from HMRC in claims under the scheme. There are Gift Aid Declaration forms in the vestibule and they are also available from the office or on the church website www.castlehillchurch.org under the Publications heading. Completed forms can be returned via the office or given to Margaret Devlin.

Margaret Devlin

What will you do with any old Christmas decorations, baubles etc. after Christmas? Well do not throw them out as we can use them at Castlehill Church for a future project. Bring them to the Church after New Year and someone will take them off your hands. Thank you in anticipation.

Stella Nixon



It's Christmastime and even Jesus is online! Kirsty Wyllie

When we think about all the technology that we've got access to today, it can be a little bamboozling. To make it less so, I've been asked by the editor to share with you some information about the social media world. Facebook is a networking site where registered users can create their own personalized profile pages to connect with family and friends, and upload pictures and videos, and post comments on them. You can also join in on groups and events that are happening locally and globally, watch live events and send direct messages to each other.

However, Facebook is only the beginning because with Google and YouTube available to us now, we can search for anything in the world and listen to music or watch film, shows and other resources on any device that we may have. These can be live or recorded. Twitter is another word that crops up a lot. It is another online platform where you can broadcast or "tweet" your views on anything you want to and connect with a wider community of people, and Instagram is Facebook in pictures, our own personalized online gallery where we can capture the moment and share with those we want to share them with.

So why is all this information about being online relevant to the church? With the season of advent drawing in, we get ready for the wonderful retelling of how Mary gave birth to Jesus. Luke 2: 10 prompts us to invite everyone we know to join in on our celebrations. We are encouraged to have an open-door Christmas where everyone is welcome. This puts me in mind of a painting by Thomas Kinkade called, "Christmas Chapel". It's a beautiful image of a chapel in winter with a glowing light streaming from within the chapel itself. This, to me, is a perfect illustration of the feeling of love and peace we all should receive when entering a place of worship and is a beautiful reminder of how Jesus is the light of the world.

Christmas is that special time of year that we all want to be at home and an increasing number of churches are now streaming services online via YouTube and Facebook in the hopes of reaching a wider community. This is because having an online presence has become the new front doors of any church, offering people the opportunity to share in the experience of worshipping Jesus from wherever they happen to be in the world and see if it resonates with them, especially those who simply feel that church is not relevant to their lives and feel uncomfortable about walking into a church to worship. The church is our spiritual home and without people in churches there is no church to speak of, because people make the Christian family. Therefore, we should have our doors open, not just at Christmas but all year round, letting people know that they are welcome because with Jesus there is always room and no closed doors, digitally or otherwise.

Advent Services.

A short meditation advent service will be held prior to the morning services on 2nd, 9th 16th 23rd December at 10.00 am. All welcome.

Boys Brigade

Stewart Veitch and Andrew Miller received their Presidents badge, at the Dedication Service. They are now working towards their Queens Badge and Stewart is helping in the Junior Section with Andrew working with the Anchor Boys. £535 was made from Soup and Sweet lunch, which will go to help with Rumanian trip next year .

Ian Queen

Baptisms

23rd September Myrren Bell, Maybole

Weddings

14th September Brian Christie and
Jackie Reeves

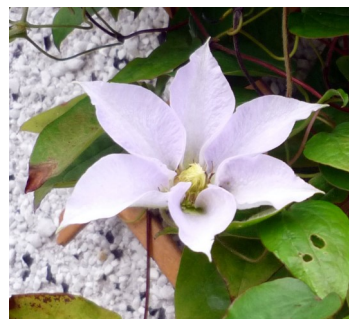
Funerals

24th September Bill Willett
23 Orchard Avenue

4th November Charles Keenan
20 Mt. Oliphant Crescent

13th November Hannah Willett
23 Orchard Avenue

21st November Marion Main
6 Marguerite Place



Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?

A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.

May not the darkness hide it from my face?

You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?

Those who have gone before.

Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?

They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?

Of labour you shall find the sum.

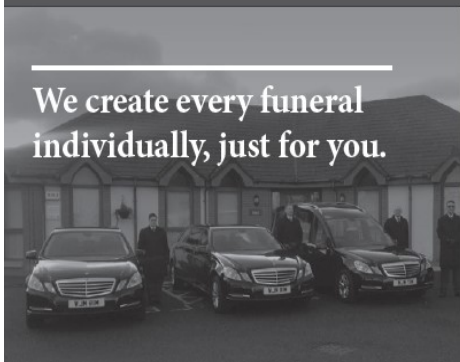
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?

Yea, beds for all who come.

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