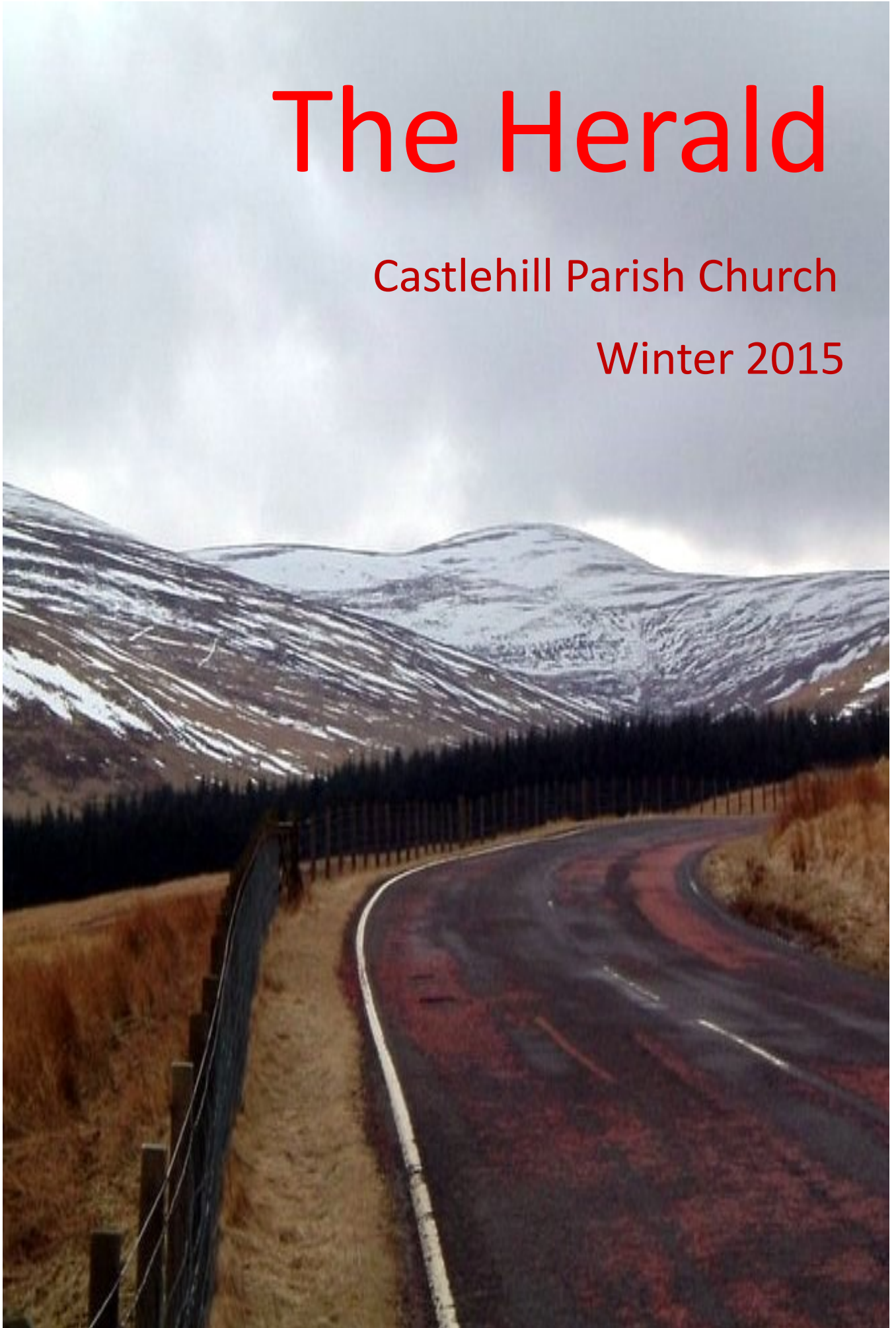


The Herald

Castlehill Parish Church

Winter 2015



Editorial

The front cover shows the allure and the beauty of hills. Throughout our Bible, reference is constantly made to hills, mountains and high places. We are familiar with the psalm, "I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come mine aid". For many, inspiration and peace comes from walking in the hills. Jesus himself retreated to a high place to meditate and listen to God's message.

As Christmas approaches once again, we recall how the shepherds looked upwards and then followed the angels' call to visit the stable in Bethlehem. The wise men too gazed heavenward and saw the star, which they followed until it rested over the place where the Baby Jesus lay.

Let us resolve in the New Year to continue to look upwards for guidance, for hope and continued help on our earthly journey.

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 email address quoted.

From the Interim Moderator

Dear friends,

As Interim Moderator I write my first letter to you and thank you for your prayerful and practical support at this exciting time when we, together, seek a new minister to come amongst you as pastor and spiritual guide. This time in your history calls for patience, trust and much prayer. Your Nomination Committee is working hard and conscientiously to do what you elected them to do in your name and in Christ's name. I ask you therefore to remember them in your prayers. As God loves each one of us he seeks only the best for us, and invites us to share in his ministry which is one of mission and outreach.

The work of the congregation continues and with Christine at the helm you will find that the rhythm and routine carries on with some similar and yet some different touches. Her enthusiasm I am sure will encourage you in your enthusiasm to ensure that congregational life, especially at this very special time of Advent, will tell the nativity story afresh in a way that will attract some who have been many times and others who hear it for the first time or the first time in many years. It is an event from history that still speaks to us today. It has the potential of bringing much blessing and new purpose and promise into the lives of those who hear and believe.

During Advent and Christmas there may be visitors and there may be some who have returned to worship after some time. What should they expect and what ought we to give?

I love reading wayside pulpits with their notices. Recently I noticed one that read, 'Come in and experience the presence of God'. That one caught my eye primarily because it's an important promise to make and sometimes a hard promise to keep. Hard, because if we're not careful our Church might reflect the presence of its people more than the presence of our God.

So what would a church have to do to display the presence of God? Its people would have to live like him! Dynamics like hospitality, the loving acceptance of all kinds of people, a quickness to serve, a tangible love for one another that makes people feel safe and included regardless of colour or class, and a patient tolerance of one another's weaknesses would all be a great way to start. Paul said we should walk in a manner 'worthy of the Lord' (Col 1:10). And he also said that being worthy means that we will be humble, gentle, bearing with one another in love, eagerly maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:2-3).

Let's live in such a way that others will experience the presence of the God who lives in us – wherever we are, but especially at church.

Remember potential members may visit during this season and a potential minister may even visit, but above all a soul who might be saved for Christ may sit next to you one Sunday morning. How will you respond and will he or she experience the presence of God?

Yours in Christ,

John Paterson

Worship for Advent and Christmas

Sunday Worship in Advent: 29th November; 6th December [Holy Communion]
13th and 20th December – 11.00am

Midweek Worship; Wednesday 9th and 16th December 7.00 – 7.25pm

Quiet Christmas Service for those hurting and grieving:

23rd December 7.00 – 7.25pm [plus time to chat and have a tea/coffee]

Special Events:

Salvation Army and Ayr Community Gospel Choir Sunday 6th December 6.00pm

Christmas Eve: All Age Worship – 7.00pm

Watchnight Service – 11.30pm

Christmas Day Worship – 11.00am

From our Locum

Dear parishioners of Castlehill Church,

Let me start by saying to you all that I feel very privileged and blessed to have been chosen to 'fill the gap' while you wait for a new minister. The first few months have flown by – and I guess the rest will follow suit.



I recently saw a caption to an article which read: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..."* and that fills me with a quiet peace. It's easy to lose sight of it in the hustle and bustle of life. Perhaps some people never stop and think about it at all – yet I doubt this because in the book of Ecclesiastes we read that 'God has placed eternity in the hearts of men'. I believe that this is the reason that we do ponder our origins and our future state.

It's the same at Christmas - we hardly pause to remember that 'God is Love' and that's why we have Christmas in the first place. More and more we seem to shut Christ out of Christmas – ask kids at school what Christmas is for and the answers are almost always the same. It's for getting presents, of course. However, it doesn't work like that for all kids. I once had a child in a class who was given a £10 note on Christmas morning, only to have it 'borrowed' back from him by his alcoholic mother later in the same day. I know she despised herself, but that didn't help her son. Christmas just has to mean something different!

Our God gives and gives and keeps on giving. The love of Christ brought Him into the world, and His love took him out again via the cross, to help us to put right the mess we've made of life. Think about it.

One of my favourite Bible verses is *'We love God because He loved us first.'* There was a time when my grandson (now 13) and I would play a wee word game. He was just a toddler and it went like this:

I'd say, *"I love you William."*

He'd say, *"I don't love you, Nanny."*

I'd say with mock tears, *"I don't love you, then, William."*

And he'd say, giving me a cuddle, *"But I do really love you, Nanny."*

And of course, I'd say, *"I do love you all the time, William".*

Every time I had this conversation, I'd think, 'Isn't it good that God doesn't play these games with us. He just loves us!'

Have a good Christmas season as you discover afresh the delights of God's love.

Christine (Church Locum)

Wee Kirks

I was asked recently again about our Wee Kirk scheme and how would they go about getting one. Well we have a dozen dedicated collectors who visit over 130 homes in April and October. While we are appreciative of the money collected, it also provides a Church contact for members of our congregation who are semi housebound and unable to attend Church services. The visit is looked forward to by many. Each year we collect around £2,500 which is a fantastic total and we are able to claim gift aid of almost another £300.



To get a "Wee Kirk" contact the office or myself and one will be provided.

Wellwood Grierson



KIDZ PAGE

A *Christmas Quiz* for the family to share at Christmas dinner between courses!



1. Why do we celebrate Jesus' birth on 25 December?

2. According to the Bible, what are the names of the 'Three Wise Men'?

3. Why is Saint Nicholas commonly identified with Father Christmas?

4. When was celebrating Christmas made illegal in Scotland?

5. When did we start using trees in the UK to celebrate Christmas? From where did we import the custom?

Those were the Q1 questions. Now for the silly ones!

6. Where do Santa's little helpers go to relax?

7. Who delivers Christmas presents for cats?

8. Who beats his chest and swings from Christmas cake to Christmas cake?

9. Where do snowmen go to dance ?

10. What do you call a reindeer with ear muffs?

From which well-known carols are the following lines taken:

11. All meanly wrapped In swaddling-clothes

12. Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

13. To free all those who trust in Him From Satan's power and might.

14. God with man is now residing, Yonder shines the infant Light.

15. And take us to heaven, To live with Thee there.



Answers will be found on Page 11

Another step along God's Highway

My how time flies it doesn't seem a year since I was ordained in Castlehill Parish Church and welcomed back by all of you last October – just over a year ago! It is a true saying time really does fly. Unfortunately that means that my time with you is now over and by the time you read this I will have moved on to pastures new at Craigie/Symington linked with Prestwick South.



With Liz starting her role as the "Pathway to Renewal" co-ordinator, Kristina moving to Alloway Parish Church and now me moving on it is a time of major change at Castlehill. Someone said to me recently this is a new start for Castlehill but I don't see it that way. This is just the next phase in the spiritual journey of all of us.

Yes there will be difficult times and challenges ahead and yes a good deal of uncertainty. But I believe it's important to maintain hope and faith in the future and always to have a positive perspective. I firmly believe that the journey we are on has been planned and executed by God and that it is the path he wants us to follow. Also remember that whatever difficulties or challenges we face God has already equipped us with the skills, knowledge and help we need to overcome them.

This is not the end of anything at Castlehill simply the next phase in your faith journey and I have every confidence in the nomination committee that they will choose the right leader to accompany you on the next stage of your faith journey.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that yet again I have found my experience at Castlehill to have been very enlightening and uplifting. I thank you all for the warmth and love that I received during my time with you. I have made many new friends and those friendships first formed when I was here as a student have been strengthened. Thank you for your support and love during my brief time with you.

I would also like to thank Liz Crumlish and Christine Stewart for the help, support, encouragement, friendship and the opportunity to work and to share in worship together I hope we have the opportunity again in the future.

Finally it is my hope and prayer that that Castlehill will continue to be an outward looking Church nurturing and caring for everyone in the Parish. I wish you every success in finding a new Minister and God's Blessing on your future.

Tom McLeod

Coffee Shop



Every Tuesday between 10.00a.m. and 12.00 a lively coffee break is open to all. Come along and enjoy a "cuppa" and a bite and join in the chat.

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Prayer Chain.

A meeting of the Prayer Chain members was held in the Fellowship Area in October 2015 for an open discussion on the way forward.

Margaret Cairns has given up as Prayer Co-ordinator, we thank her for the work done in this post to promote prayer plus arranging that prayers requested were passed round members of the chain for further prayer support. Margaret is staying as a member of the Prayer Chain.

Andrew Graham (tel. 261486) has taken over as Prayer Co-ordinator for Castlehill Church.

The group agreed to continue as before though as people decide to come off the group other new members are always welcome, at present there are nine members in the chain. Prayer requests can be put on a card in the vestibule then placed in the plate there for collection. Contact by telephone can be made to Andrew which will be passed on round the members of the chain. A simple note saying who the prayer request is for, including reason for prayer, is all that is needed. You are not alone when others are praying for you.

The group also decided to meet once every three months for fellowship together, thoughts on how to promote and focus on prayer needs at the time. One idea was raised at looking for a theme each month to be promoted in the intimations or The Herald magazine. Please also look at the tables in the Fellowship area where prayer booklets are available just to lift up and be taken away for your personal use.

Each Sunday morning the Quiet Room next to the Church Office is open from 10.30am to 10.50am for prayer, allowing the Minister to then have a prayer with the choir before the start of morning worship.

Prayer Points:

God's help and guidance for the Nominations Committee work towards selecting a New Minister for Castlehill Parish Church.

Thank you for the work of Crossreach within the Church of Scotland and in particular, locally in Cumnor Hall, Ayr.

That God's love will be known by those bereaved or ill in our congregation at this time who need his help, may they be aware of His presence and support around them.

" Father and Lord Jesus Christ we pray for you guidance each day in the different situation you give us to face going forward in faith and with your strength, show us the way ahead. In your name we pray. Amen."

Andrew Graham

Castlehill Church of Scotland Guild

As you read this the first half of our 2015-16 session will be finished. Our Syllabus this year has focused a lot on those who live in crisis and in the New Year we look forward to speakers from Wheels in Motion (mobile food bank), the Salvation Army, and one of our projects Caring for Mother Earth. So we would ask you, as you spend time with family and friends enjoying the Christmas festivities and special meals, to please spare a moment or two to think of those will not be able to enjoy the festive season as they would wish.

Wishing you peace and joy this Christmas

The Guild Committee



A word from our Organist



"Time flies" is an overused cliché, however, I can't believe that we are now half way through November and have less than 6 Sundays until 2016!

This year has seen much change in the church with Liz departing us back in September however, I am happy to report that the choir has not changed at all and this year we have managed to keep all the members we started the year with! This is no mean feat given the sad losses we have had over the past couple of years. I am hopeful that this change in fortunes may encourage more of the congregation to join us, hint, hint!

Some of you may know that on Easter Sunday this year I was baptised and at the same time became a member of Castlehill church. As a gift my parents gave me a hymn book entitled Songs of Victory, and ever since then I have been inflicting the hymns on the choir on a near weekly basis. This book is full of wonderful choruses that would often be associated with our friends in the Salvation Army such as "Since Jesus Came into my Heart", and "I Stand Amazed in the Presence". When the new choir session began in September we started singing a selection of these hymns as anthems on a Sunday morning. The feedback from the congregation has been very positive and the choir have even gone out and bought a tambourine to augment the performance!

From a musical point of view I really like the catchy tunes that many of these songs have however, beyond that, I am struck by how easy the words and melodies of the choruses stick in your mind. I regularly find myself in the midst of some grizzly piece of work and all of a sudden into my head pops "How marvellous, O how wonderful, and my soul shall ever be; How marvellous, O how wonderful, is my Saviour's love for me". This for me is one of the greatest gifts about sacred music, even when your mind is focussed on other things these comforting melodies pop back into your mind reminding you that there is far more to life than the mundane drudgery of the nine to five job or that large pile of ironing that you have been putting off for the past week. Equally, the simple message that many of these choruses contain should not be forgotten and by humming through one of the tunes it gives you time to reflect on that message of God's love contained within. "Floods of joy o'er my soul, as the sea billows role, since Jesus came into my heart."

As we get closer to Christmas and prepare to celebrate the arrival of the ultimate gift of God's love I hope you will take time to hum a few catchy choruses and reflect upon those messages of love contained within. This should hopefully give you time to reflect upon the true message of Christmas and lift your spirit in between getting through those large to do lists that everyone has at this time of year. I have no doubt that as you have read this article some of these tunes are now buzzing in your mind and I apologise in advance if you find yourself lying in bed at 3 o'clock this morning wide awake still humming the tune!

2016 sees the Church celebrate its Diamond year and the choir is very much looking forward to being a part of the celebrations. Look out for the choir's evening of praise planned for later this year where through a combination of congregational singing, guest artists and choir pieces we hope to raise the roof in celebration of this wonderful achievement.

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year

Christopher.

Seniors' Afternoon

On Tuesday 13th October we had a great afternoon's entertainment by Willie Stewart and his daughter Kirsty. The variety of songs was appreciated and the talent was there for all to hear and see. There was an excellent attendance, and the sum of £70 was raised for Polio Plus, Willie's preferred charity. As usual there was an excellent tea.

The next meeting will be in the Main Hall on Tuesday 8th December at 10.15, when we will be entertained by Forehill School Choir and there will be the usual Christmas goodies. In February we will return to the North Hall when we will once again have the group "Musical Memories" from Alloway Church. That will be at 2.30.p.m.

Again we would say that if you require transport please contact the Church office or myself and we will arrange that for you.

The Indispensable Man

(by Saxon White Kessinger)

Sometime when you're feeling important;
Sometime when your ego 's in bloom;
Sometime when you take it for granted,
You're the best qualified in the room:
Sometime when you feel that you're going,
Would leave an unfillable hole,
Just follow these simple instructions,
And see how they humble your soul.
Take a bucket and fill it with water,
Put your hand in it up to the wrist,
Pull it out and the hole that's remaining,
Is a measure of how much you'll be missed.
You can splash all you wish when you enter,
You may stir up the water galore,
But stop, and you'll find that in no time,
It looks quite the same as before.
The moral of this quaint example,
Is to do just the best that you can,
Be proud of yourself but remember,
There's no indispensable man.

Christmas Day 1947

When I was young, I lived on a hill farm in the north of Scotland with my mother, father and three sisters. Margaret was the eldest, then me, then Ruth and seven years later, Gwen. We were four healthy, happy girls, but never so happy as on Christmas morning.

Toys were never given throughout the year. Although mother baked a dumpling for our birthdays, so the coming of Santa was a great event. Because we had no electricity, Father rose first and kindled the fire and lit the tilly lamp, while we ran to mother's bedroom and waited for the call from father that we could come down. Ruth walked in front, I put my arms round her waist, Margaret put her arms round me and mother joined last. We staggered down stairs together in an excited happy bundle and opened the door.

Oh! What a sight met our eyes. Candles lit up the Christmas tree, the table covered with annuals and books and, by the fireside, the six stockings, all lumpy with gifts and crackers, had spilled their wealth on to the floor.

On this particular morning a strange thing happened. There was a knock at the door and, since it was six o'clock in the morning on a little hill farm, this was very unusual. Father opened the door and in came Mr and Mrs Simpson and Jane. Jane was a dark haired, white faced, skinny child, who was in my class at school. It happened that Mr Simpson, who lived in a tied cottage on a neighbouring farm, had been evicted from their house due to a quarrel between him and the farmer. They had spent the night with their cart and horse on our bottom field in the freezing cold. Jim Simpson had been a prisoner of war for four years and found difficulty in returning to ordinary life. Very little was known in those days about post-traumatic stress and Jim had an uncertain temper and a fear of confined spaces.



"Knowing you to be a Christian gentleman, John", he said to my father, "I thought you might give us a warm at the fire"

Of course, they were made welcome and my father said, "Santa won't have visited you, Jane, you being away from home. You're in Anne's class, so why don't you help her empty her stocking."

I could not refuse because, though father was speaking to Mr Simpson, his eyes were fixed on me and his expression brooked no argument. Jane was all smiles and when all the stockings were empty, father said "Now, Jane, pick a gift from each of my girls' piles and these will be your presents." We were not pleased, but did not dare show it.

Between breakfast and lunch all of us played board games by the fire and, after Christmas dinner, Mr and Mrs Simpson returned to their cottage after father had pleaded their case with the farmer.

On the first day after the holidays, we all took a present to show to the class. Jane held up the book, "Pip" by Enid Blyton, which had been mine. "I got it from my best friend," she said and pointed to me. "I'm not her best friend," I told my mother. "She doesn't have friends. She always stands by herself at play time and she gets her hand smacked every day for not knowing her words. I don't even like her" "Well! That is a very uncharitable speech for a Christian girl!", mother said. "What did Jesus say we should do?"

"Do you know what "charity "is?" chimed in my father. "It is loving kindness. Christ didn't say we should like people. He said we should love people, whether we like them or even know them."

"You can't love someone if you don't like them first," I reasoned.

"You treat them as if you like them, as if it were you standing all alone by the wall. What would you want then?"

"I'd want a friend," I said.

"Well," said my mother. "You will be her friend. You will walk her to school and play with her in the playground. That is what your father wants. Now, be a good girl for your father"

(When your big sister is cleverer than you and your younger sister is prettier than you and the baby is clever, pretty and cute, there is not much left for the middle child but being "good" to please their father. so I was good and befriended Jane with a will)

After two years of primary school, I then went on to Aberdeen to grammar school and Jane and her family moved to a new farm in Perth.

Many years later, I was back in my home village standing at the graveside of my beloved mother, when through the rain came a slim dark haired woman, who I recognised immediately.

"Jane," I exclaimed. "You have come such a distance."

"Surely you knew I'd come" she said, "You were always my best friend"

She talked about the fun of our school days and she had even called her first child after me.

How humbling! I had never given her more than a fleeting thought.

I hope she had a better friend than I was. A friend under duress, to please my father. It is easy for those of us who belong to a big happy family to go confidently through the world, not always noticing the child standing alone by the wall.

It is good to belong to a Christian church where everyone is made welcome and filled with people who find being charitable a lot easier than I did.

Castlehill Bowling Club

The Club restarted for the winter season on 14th September with 26 members attending. With the addition of three new members our numbers are up to 40 and as an example to us all, nonagenarians Pat and Jean Patterson are back bowling again. We hope the newcomers will enjoy their time with us and when she gets out of her crutches Lyn McDermott will be back competing once more. The point's league and competitions are already under way and we look forward to another successful and enjoyable season.

A request from the minister at the Baptist Church resulted in a demonstration of our club and its equipment one afternoon during the summer. Some of our members and ten from the Baptist Church enjoyed some bowling and a cup of tea and learned a bit of how our club was run. We hope that the get-together was of benefit to them and that they will go ahead and form a club.

David Kerr, President.

ANSWERS to KIDS' QUIZ

- 1. Historical debate has been raging for a long time over the exact date of the birth of Jesus Christ, with estimates ranging from sometime in September to much later in February. Pope Julius I declared December 25th as the official Christmas in the fourth century, possibly to overlap with the Pagan Yule, one of the traditional Celtic fire festivals, it marks the return of the light after the longest night of the year on 21 December.*
- 2. In fact their names are not actually mentioned in the Bible! The Magi are known as Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar as these names were detailed in an early 6th century Greek manuscript*
- 3. Saint Nicholas had a reputation for generosity, secret gift-giving and kindness to children.*
- 4. Christmas trees become popular in the UK from 1841 when Prince Albert erected a tree in Windsor Castle following a German tradition.*
- 5. In 1647, the English parliament passed a law that made Christmas illegal. The Scottish Kirk, which was itself fiercely Protestant, had abolished Christmas as long ago as the 1560s and, although James I had managed tentatively to restore the feast in his northern kingdom in 1617, it was banned there once again after his son's defeat by the Scots in 1640.*
- 6. The 'Elf Farm! 7. Santa Paws. 8. Tarzipan. 9. Snowballs 10. Anything you want - he can't hear you!*
- 11. While shepherds watched. 12. We three Kings of Orient Are. 13. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen. 14. Angels from the realms of glory. 15. Away in a Manger*

Church Diamond Jubilee

It seems no time at all since we celebrated our Golden anniversary, when we



had various celebrations including the visit of previous ministers. We had a splendid cake and ceremonial cutting of the cake by our first Minister Rev David Munro and his wife. It is our intention to have some



celebrations throughout 2016 and we have outlined a programme for the first six months as follows:

In January there will be a 60's night on Saturday 16th, and on a Sunday this month there will be a special Songs of Praise service.

February Friday 19th we intend to have a Burns Supper.

An Easter Bonnet Coffee Morning will be held on Saturday 19th March and it is hoped to have a Quiz night during the month.

In April we intend to have a Bus Trip, a Choir Concert and a Jubilee Beetle Drive.

We will be holding a Flower Festival and Summer Fayre on Saturday 14th May, and an Open Carpet Bowling event on Thursday and Friday 26/27th. There will also be a Youth Outing during the month.

June will see the start of our Afternoon Teas and it is hoped to organise a Church "Trek"

Later in the year there will be a Harvest Festival, Celebrations during October on and around the date of the Church's Jubilee, with a St. Andrew's Night in November.

Please look out for details of these events. There should be some "Flyers" around and the Order of Service will also show up to date details. These events are for everyone to join in, and keep a copy of your magazine or fill up your calendar to remind you.

It is also a big year for our B.B. Company with the Battalion parade on 24th April and the Battalion A.G.M. on 1st June. They will be having their Burns Lunch on 31st

January and the annual display will be on Friday 20th May.

Keep up with events by following us on Facebook:



Gloria & Archie's Nativity Story

It all began on a clear night in Bethlehem and Mr Thomas left his sheep to go into town. "Where's he going?" a voice asked. The voice was that of Gloria the sheep who was expecting her fifth lamb.

"He is going to see the new baby" replied Archie the sheep. "It all happened last night when he met three men in robes. I don't know what all the fuss is about?"

The look on Gloria's face was one of surprise. "Mr Thomas must think it's important enough to leave us! What did the men say? Could you hear anything?"

Archie took offence at this comment. "Of course I could hear, I am not going deaf you know."

"I didn't mean it like that!" Gloria laughed.

Archie continued, "The tallest man asked Mr Thomas if they could sit down and rest with him for a while. He agreed and asked if they wished a drink of water. I have never seen a human gulp down water so fast before".

Gloria is fascinated by the story so far. "Where did the men come from?" she asked.

"The fat one told Mr Thomas that they were Magi - Whatever that is!" Archie goes on to tell Gloria, "and that they had travelled far from a place called Babylon. I remember thinking, why go to the trouble of coming so far? My question was soon answered when the smallest of the men said they were simply following the stars and were in search of someone called, The Messiah. I don't know what they were talking about but Mr Thomas sure did. He became all excited and began jumping up and down and started pacing up the length and breadth of the field. I have no idea what was wrong with him? It was at that moment I fell asleep and the next thing I remember is waking up to you asking me where is he going?"

Gloria suddenly realised she knew something about where Mr Thomas had gone. "Oh! I know where Mr Thomas is!"

A look of utter amazement flashed across Archie's face. "How do you know?"

"It all happened when you were asleep!" she laughed. "A man draped in white and bathed in light came to Mr Thomas who was terrified. The man told him not to fear for he was an Angel and that the son of God had been born in a humble stable and that he could be found wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger, for he has come into the world not for kings but for those just like him".

Archie without a second thought told Gloria that they should go and see the baby boy too. Gloria is thrilled with this idea and they both gather up their children and set across the fields in search of the stable that the Angel spoke of to Mr Thomas. The sheep family took what seemed like days to walk along the grassy pastures, when suddenly out of nowhere they caught sight of a single bright star in the sky shining down onto the old town stable behind the Bethlehem Inn.

Archie was leading his family over the last hill before reaching the stable, when he heard a low groan of pain coming from Gloria. "It's coming Archie! Our baby is coming!" she said, breathing heavily.

Archie stopped on the spot, turned round and calmly answered her, "I will go ahead with the children and let Mr Thomas know. We'll give you some space."

"Okay. Good idea!" she said with a smile followed by a yelp of discomfort.

Archie took the children into the stable and Gloria found a dry patch of grass where she lay down to let nature take its course. Before too long her new born lamb was born and Mr Thomas arrived to find her cleaning her baby. He took both of them up in his arms and carried them into the warmth of the stable where with her new born lamb, Anna, Gloria could see for herself the baby boy that had generated so much talk. A beautiful young woman who Gloria and Archie imagined to be the child's mother is apparently called Mary and she and the man sitting beside her, whose name is Joseph and is her husband, have given the baby boy the name of Jesus. Gloria lay on the soft warm straw amongst the horses and pigs with her family whilst Mr Thomas kept hold of Anna. He had the biggest smile on his face and everyone in that stable felt special as they witnessed the miracle of that first Christmas day.

Kirsty Wyllie

GIRLGUIDING

BADEN POWELL CHALLENGE AWARDS

We would like to congratulate Caitlin Jackson, Catriona McPherson and Jamie-Louise Milby in obtaining their BP Challenge Awards, the highest award in Guiding.

To obtain the award the girls had to complete ten challenges at least one of which was from each of the programme zones of Discovery, Healthy lifestyles, Celebrating diversity, Global awareness and Skills and relationships. For the other five challenges, the girls could choose from any of the remaining challenges.

Some of the things that Caitlin, Catriona and Jamie-Louse did were, prepared a healthy eating cook-book; had international fashion nights; cleared the church grounds of litter for a few weeks; organised a night for learning 1st aid and many more interesting things relating to the zones.



MONDAY NIGHT BROWNIES

Halloween Themed Pack Holiday

Our Brownie Pack had a Halloween Themed Pack Holiday from Friday 31st October to Sunday 1st November.

The girls enjoyed their weekend which included preparing the hall with Halloween decorations, a weekend of crafts, a Halloween party and on the Sunday the weather was kind to us and we went out to the campfire circle, where we sang a couple of songs, said a prayer and the girls lit candles and thought of something that they should be grateful for. We made good use of the candles after that and used them to toast marshmallows.

A good weekend was had by all and the girls can't wait for their next pack holiday!



Linda McClurkin

Parish Vacancy

You are probably aware that at present the Church is without a minister and this is referred to as a "vacancy". In the magazine there are several references to the Nominations Committee. The committee was formed at a meeting of the Congregation on 18th October 2015. Nominations were asked for from those present and the committee is made up of both Congregation members and some from the Board and Session.

Their task is to make visits to consider those who apply for the vacancy. They make no report until they are satisfied that they have a suitable candidate or candidates and then they will come back to the Session with their findings and recommendations. It is important that they are not asked to discuss this during this time. The members of the committee are as follows:

Moira Alexander	Margaret Devlin	Marlyn Forbes	Andrew Graham
Liz Hunter	Alan Jack [chairman]	Eileen McKnight	Ian Queen
George Reid	Marion Reid	Angela Smith	Carole Thomson [Secretary]
Ruairi Wallace			

Our thoughts and prayers are with them in this difficult but important task.

Parish Registers

Funerals

August

Marion Rae	Millbrae Court
David Reid	Treebank Crescent
May Morrison	Church Court

September

Ella Grierson	Temple House Care Home
Robert Dalziel	Bellevale Avenue

October

Margaret McKay	Hillfoot Road
Agnes Ritchie	Rozelle Care Home
Ian Macdonald	Belmont Road
Elizabeth Reid	Rowan Crescent
Mary McLaughlan	Windy Hall



When to the flowers so beautiful
The Father gave a name,
There came a little blue-eyed one,
All timidly it came.
And standing by the Father's feet
And gazing at his face
It said with low and timid voice
And yet with gentle grace
"Dear Lord the name Thou gavest me
Alas I have forgot"
The Father kindly looked on him
And said "Forget-me-not"

”

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