

The Herald

Castlehill Parish Church

Winter 2020



Faith Hope and Love

Editorial

When we thought about our Winter magazine around two months ago, we were not sure if we would have enough material, could it be printed or how would we distribute it. We set out however and sadly some of these thoughts are still in our mind. We took heart from our front cover.

Faith, we all have to some degree and I remember again the story of the African tribe who went down to the river to pray for rain after a heavy drought but only one lad took an umbrella. We had Hope [the first candle to be lit at Advent] that things would improve and through the efforts of so many, we have managed to produce this edition.

Looking at all the contents they are epitomised by the Faith and Hope of the contributors and the Love for their Church.

It is perhaps easy to forget the Christmas story in these times, but remember that too was a new beginning, emerging from a time of strife and difficulty for the people at that time. They too had Faith and Hope then, and Love was born at Bethlehem.

We will all find Christmas different and perhaps difficult this year. Services at Church will take place in different formats but hopefully we will be able to take part at some time over the festive season.

The main thing is to take care of yourselves, your families and of others.

A peaceful Christmas to everyone

Wellwood Grierson

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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.



From The Manse



CHRISTMAS LETTER

Dear Friends

This will be my second Christmas with you as your minister but as we begin to make our way through Advent, I am most conscious of how different this year and this Christmas are from any previous year I have known. I know many of you so much better but since lockdown in March while we have kept the channels of communication open, that is not the same as being able to be in close contact other than in some of the more difficult circumstances that have come our way. The time to be more in touch lies ahead. As I write this, it is with the good news that vaccines against Covid 19 are on the horizon: when they will become readily available for all, we do not know. We can have confidence that at some point they will. We can look into the unknown of 2021 with a hope for our world.

And we shall celebrate Christmas 2020. Elsewhere will be listed our Advent and Christmas services. How many will be able to attend these remains at present unknown. Even if we are still in Tier 4, they will take place and we shall continue to record reflections for each week and for Christmas and put them on our Facebook Page and on our website. The shared Advent/Christmas booklet has already been circulated and I would like to pay thanks to our friends who have kept this contact alive for our congregation. and others.

Covid can't stop Christmas. It will change how Christmas is celebrated in the community and Covid won't conveniently stop for the Christmastide. Please continue to follow all the now all too familiar guidelines to stay safe. Can we make this a way in which we live out a model for others to follow?

Can we use this opportunity to reassess the priorities of Christmas? Remember the story of the Grinch and how when all the commercial trimmings and the tinsel of Christmas were stolen, the celebration of the meaning of Christmas continued unabated. Lord Kelvin, the famous Scottish scientist from bygone years, went to university and was shown into his very bare, small room that was sparsely furnished but to be his home for his first year by his new landlady. His face fell at the lack of comforts, but his landlady is said to have replied, "Listen, son, if there is anything you want that isn't here, just tell me and I'll tell you how to make do without it." A salutary lesson which was a first class preparation for his future. All the extras of Christmas are exciting and wonderful but in a time of pandemic are they what we want or what we need?

But, yes, to use the words of that old song, for many this Christmas it will be lonely. Can we commit ourselves to giving Castlehill Christmas greetings to all who fall into this category. A word, a card, a phone call, an email on one of the days you might otherwise not contact people. Let them know that they are not alone.

Christmas is not for me a "holiday" time in any sense. Especially if you have difficulties, or if you just need to talk, please contact me at an early stage. Together this Christmas, can we all rediscover and reaffirm that Immanuel, God is with us is the only essential of our Christmas and it is the only thing which will never change.

May you know peace, comfort and love this strange year. At the brightest and the darkest points, remember you are loved!

Every blessing.

Paul

COMMUNION

As we are in Tier 4 at our traditional Communion Sunday, we shall not be celebrating Communion in worship at this time. As soon as numbers are able to increase, we shall intimate an alternative date.



OUR NEW EQUIPMENT

To respond to the limitations of Covid-19 in a positive way, we were fortunate enough to gain a grant which has enabled us to introduce efficient Broadband to the Church and Halls, the ability to stream services and to improve the communication that we make available for our congregation and community.

We are still on a steep learning curve in getting to use it to the full, but we shall continue with this. It would help us tremendously if we could develop a team of volunteers who are willing to train how to use this for the future. If you could do this or would like to know a bit more about it, contact me as soon as you can!

Thanks! Paul

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 6th December ADVENT 2	11.00am
Wednesday 9th December Advent Reflection	7.00pm
Sunday 13th December ADVENT 3	11.00am
Wednesday 16th Advent Reflection	7.00pm
Sunday 20th December ADVENT 4	11.00am
Wednesday 23rd BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE for all who are finding Christmas difficult this year. Come together.	7.00pm
Thursday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP	7.00pm
Friday 25th December BRIEF CHRISTMAS SERVICE	10.30am
Sunday 27th December CHRISTMAS 1	11.00am
Sunday 3rd January NEW YEAR SERVICE	11.00am

On Christmas Eve, we shall be ringing our Church bells with Churches and communities around the world to signify the hope of Christmas. Listen out!

Finance

Our financial year ends on 31 December and it has been a challenging year. During the lockdown period our only income was from standing orders. There were 150 users of FWO envelopes and letters were sent asking if they could change to standing orders. Thirty-five people completed the form and 3 people set up payments themselves via direct banking. Some people continued to use envelopes and delivered them to the manse, and some sent cheques for offerings.

Some people who already gave by standing order increased their amount. If you have been using a standing order for a while perhaps you could review the amount but of course we appreciate for some this could mean decreasing what they give if their circumstances have changed.

Standing orders income came to approximately £3900 each month and our direct debit payments were £5532 each month. This figure did not include gas and electricity charges. Our Ministry & Mission payment was £57,055 for the year and we had always paid it over 10 months. We changed to paying over 12 months which meant £1426.37 less paid each month from June to January.

I changed to claiming Gift Aid refunds monthly instead of quarterly.

To date maintenance and repairs to the church, halls and manse have cost £17,048.20.

Margaret Devlin



Girl— Guiding

We left our Guide meeting on 16th March at 9pm following advice from GGUK that meetings were now suspended. After a couple of weeks, we started to meet on line on Zoom.

This was the start of a new concept for us. We had Quizzes, scavenger hunts, chats, book reviews, baking groups and craft sessions. We read poetry, sang campfire songs weekly and we logged into Zoom. Angie and myself dropped supplies off round the doors for the girls to complete the activities. This continued right through the summer and when September came, we could meet outdoors so we met and played treasure hunts, painted stones and left them in the woods for Secret Stones Ayrshire. We walked and had a campfire and toasted marshmallows and played capture the flag.

Guiding Scotland brought out a new challenge badge Out and about in the Dark which the girls embraced and bat watching and animal tracking became a new activity, we even recruited girls over lockdown. Autumn came with chilly nights but we persevered and with really good attendance, lots of paperwork ensued and indoor meetings commenced, pumpkin carving and cake decorating enjoyed by all.

Sadly, GGUK moved the goal posts and we are waiting on London signing us off to restart indoor. We went back outdoors and we go to do Astronomy. The girls' spirit and adaptability has been paramount in keeping us going they are amazing young women.

Our heartfelt thanks to Paul and all at Castlehill Church for making us welcome and keeping the unit going in these hard times we appreciate it so much. We long for the day things normalise and we can get out and about again but, in the meantime, we are doing really well.

Many thanks Christine Angela and all our amazing young members

Linda McClurkin

Girlguiding is currently being delivered in different methods across the sections. Challenges have been sent to parents of units unable to meet face to face whereas our Monday night units enjoyed meeting face to face outdoors before finally being able to meet indoors. Unfortunately all our units are back to delivering both email or by virtual means while we are in tier 4.

Girls continue to gain badges, theme awards and section awards with the work they carry out at home.



A HUGE Thank You goes to Christine and Angela for the work they have done as District Commissioners over the last few years.

We look forward to the end of tier 4 and finally being able to meet on a face to face basis regularly.

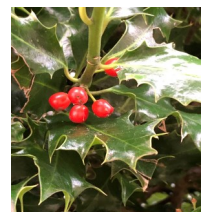
Carol Thomson

The Coffee Shop

Are you ready for a blether? Back at the beginning of June it was decided to start a Zoom group to keep contact with all those who had been at the Church "Coffee Shop". We log onto Zoom and it is so good to see a well kent face on the screen. We keep it to a Tuesday morning at 10.30 am for about 40 minutes.

We have had so many chats over the weeks some who were regulars and others who had never been at the coffee shop, but wanted the opportunity during these times to blether with others. I was able to keep in contact even when I was in the Highlands on holiday in July.

Interested in joining us? Contact Margaret Graham on e-mail margaretgraham4628@btinternet.com



Moanin' Minnie

Hello, it is a while since I spoke to you. I wis away for a wee while and then this Covid thing came along, and of course ye didna have a magazine in the autumn, anyway I'm here noo. Is this no a richt carry on. I wisna oot onywhere for ages then one o' ma freends, Jean, telt me the Kirk wis open again, did a fancy goin' along.

Onythin' tae get oot, so we went along. You'll no believe this there wis a queue tae get in. Ma freend and I were standin' thegither and this man said "are ye fae the same household?" "No indeed " says I, and he says "you will have to stand two meters apart and wait to go in" Well that wis me telt! "Where's your mask?" Ah said Ah didnae have one. "Well I have one here, wear it all the time" That wis me telt again.

"Right " He says "In you go, but sanitise your hands at that machine there. Ah looked for something tae press but couldna see onything. "Its automatic" he says "Just put your hands below it." "Now just wait to you are asked to go in". Whit a palaver.

Then a woman says tae me " What is your name?" Ah've been comin tae this kirk for years and she didna ken ma name. Anyway Ah telt her and she wanted ma telephone number. Noo if it had been a man, that would have been a guid idea, but as Ah hesitated, she says "it's for track and trace" Ma hearin's no sae guid even worse through a mask, and I thocht she said Jack and Tracy, and Ah had tae say that Ah didna ken them, whit did they want wae ma name and number.

Weel we got that sorted oot and Ah waited for Jean at the door. Another buddy at the door said we wid have tae sit in single seats. Ah said we had come thegither and always sat thegither. "Not today" say she. "You will have to go over there" "But" says I " that's no my side o' the Kirk." She gied me a look and a thocht Ah had better go and sit doon.

Nae singin'!. Jist had tae look at the words. Didnae recognise onybody because o' a' thae masks. It wis queer. Then it wis time to come oot. That wisnae simple either. Wait till ye're telt. No that door! and dae ye're hands on the way oot.

Weel that wis an experience and Ah had tae wait on Jean, she came oot anither door and then we were telt tae move on and no' gather for a blether.

On Ma way home Ah wondered if it had been worthwhile and then Ah got tae thinkin'. It wis nice and peaceful, naebody yappin roon aboot ye. Ah actually read the words o' the hymns and Ah had never thought aboot them before. Ye jist sing the words without thinkin'.

Plenty o' peace and quiet tae think aboot why ye were at the Kirk in the first place. Nae tea and nae chat [maybe the word is gossip], Well maybe they're no the important things aboot bein there. An' the service wisnae sae long as usual so Ah had plenty o' time tae get back for ma dinner.

Actually Ah quite enjoyed it, so Ah'll be back next week, but Ah will be early and get tae my side o' the Kirk!



Rainbow Services offers more than simply the delivery of Care Services. If you are looking for a service that lets you or loved one keep on enjoying life at home why not look at our website:-www.rainbowcareservices.co.uk or give us a call on **T:-01292 294180**.



Wee Kirks



In our last issue we regretted that we were unable to collect the Wee Kirks but hoped to do so in October. Sadly, this has not happened either and we are now looking at next year. We intimated in the Church and through some of our collectors that if the contents were put in a polythene container with the name and amount they could be handed in at Church and added to the Sunday collection and some collectors also arranged to pick them up.

I am delighted to say that we have received a substantial amount in this way and the individual amounts have been noted in the collectors' books. No receipts I am afraid, but they are all in the bank. If there are any more that can be dealt with in this way, we would be delighted. So much of the Church income has been depleted in the past few months so every little helps. If it helps phone me on 737459 and I will arrange to collect.

I am sure that many of you have missed the visits and the chats which are as much of the Wee Kirks tradition as collecting the money. All of you take care and hopefully next year you will have a visit.

Wellwood Grierson

Fabric Report

Well as you know the Church was closed for a while but we did keep a check on things and at the end of lockdown we managed to have J.Brody repair the canopy over the front entrance. The last time it seemed to have a main repair was the year 2000 as it seemed to be packed with

old Ayrshire posts of this date so you can feel confident if you have to wait to come into church the canopy will not fall on you.

We have also changed the door in the north hall. It is now a steel door and the lighting at the doorway will be improved. The plumbing has also been checked, so this hall is ready for use again.

The church main hall was used through lockdown to provide meals [details are shown elsewhere in the magazine] but any marks have resulted in the hallway being painted and also the floor was revarnished after all the use.

The shower in the manse has been repaired The manse also got the cracks in the outside walls repaired and some trees taken away. but as you know there is always something needing done and as I am writing this, the only thing that is a problem are the autumn leaves which keep falling but that will soon be over.

Liz Reid

The Guild

As a Guild, we have not met since March when the bombshell of COVID was delivered. We are hoping to meet in the New Year and enjoy the fellowship we share, but that will all

depend on the regulations in place at that time. We have a few Speakers on standby ready to come along.

Christmas will be different this year, but the sentiment of the Committee is still the same, and we wish you all good health and happiness for the year ahead. The Christmas Big Sing, which should have taken place in Glasgow, has been cancelled but a virtual event is in the planning.

Merry Christmas to one and all.

God Bless,

Dorothy Jack, Secretary.

Retirement

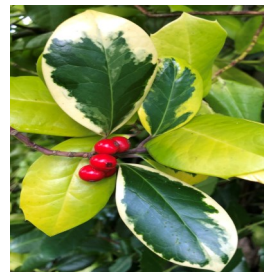
Barbara McDonald has worked as a cleaner for the Church for ten years. She came to do 8 hours to help Maureen but when Maureen left she carried on. She has a large family, her husband died in 1987 and they had 3 daughters and two sons, 20 grandchildren and 20 great grand children and now lives in Kincaidston with her dog. Her pride was her brass's and she will not be happy now as they are all sprayed. Barbara is 85 years old, still very fit and healthy but she was happy to retire and enjoy her family. She was married in 1958, one of the first weddings in Castlehill church and her wedding photo was in the 50years anniversary display.

Liz Reid



Synonymous anagrams

Anagrams are always interesting to tackle, but the results here are very interesting:



Presbyterian	Best in Prayer
Astronomer	Moon Starer
Desperation	A Rope Ends It
The Eyes	They See
The Morse Code	Here Come Dots
Dormitory	Dirty Room
Slot Machine	Cash Lost In Me
Animosity	Is No Amity
Election Results	Lies Let Recount
Snooze Alarms	Alas No More Z's
A Decimal Point	I'm A Dot In Place
The Earthquakes	That Queer Shape
Eleven Plus Two	Twelve Plus One
Mother In Law	Woman Hitler

Thanks to Freddie Burden

Who would have thought that the body advising the Government on the Covid Pandemic could possibly result in an anagram. Well it does.

**The Scientific Advisory
Group for Emergencies
[S.A.G.E.]**

**Rectifying egress of the
Coronavirus epidemic**

I wonder who worked that one out.

Or how about this one:

**The Manchester United
and England football player
Marcus Rashford**

**Battled for the funds so
hard-up children can rely
on meals. A great man**

Or

A stitch in time saves nine

this is meant as incentive

It is Good to have a laugh



A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

'Mama, look what I found,' the boy called out.

'What have you got there, dear?'

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, 'I think it's Adam's underwear!'

Always something to worry about!!!



PRAYER

Over this year since being asked to be Prayer Representative for Castlehill Parish Church on the new Ayr Presbytery - Prayer Promoters Group. I have attending meetings which due to the Coronavirus pandemic were cancelled. God has lead us in a different direction and since May 2020 over the past 27 weeks through Mrs. Christine Stewart, Presbytery Prayer Promoter (our former Locum) a weekly prayer booklet has been produced with the help of other Prayer Promoters from twenty parish churches in our area. I arranged with the Rev Paul Russell that copies of these are available on request from Sandra Wyllie in the church office either by email or posted out to people's home addresses. The feedback from people has been very positive.

Earlier in the year I received material from organisations, "Let's start a conversation by Try Praying" and "Thy Kingdom Come" from Lambeth Palace on behalf of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York more about them later. We were being encouraged to use this material by The Very Rev Colin Sinclair, The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2019

It is a privilege to be able to speak to God and Our Lord Jesus through the means of prayer either personally, individually or in a group setting. They will always listen at any time and help guide you forward in faith.

PRAYER IS A CONVERSATION WITH GOD.
YOU DON'T NEED TO USE SPECIAL WORDS OR A SPECIAL VOICE.
YOU CAN PRAY OUT LOUD OR SILENTLY.
GOD KNOWS WHAT YOU THINK AND IS AWARE OF ALL YOU DO.
YOU CAN TALK TO HIM ABOUT ANYTHING.
Above "Copied from Try Praying booklet"

Prayer

Father God and Lord Jesus Christ.

We praise you for your loving kindness given freely to us.

For the world around us and the work you have us do.

The guidance you give through to us all through your Word, Songs of worship, and Prayer.

As we look over the past year so different to any other.

let us give thanks for the way your Church has been able to witness the faith.

To help this in our own community and further away.

For those on the frontline in hospitals and GP services in the community, over worked nursing staff.

For all key workers in the food supply chains giving us our daily needs of bread and other services of help etc.

The neighbor who says hello "Can I help you" or the friendly chat.

We thank you for opening our eyes to different opportunities to serve you.

We think of those who are isolated because of illness or lonely on their own.

The bereaved who suffer grief from the loss of a loved member of their family particularly when unexpected. Help us to be a comfort in their time of need.

For our own Minister, Office bearers and members of the church as they look to the future in faith to follow your guidance as one year ends and a new one starts.

These things we ask in your name and your blessing be upon them.

Now and forever more.

Amen

Andrew Graham

Prayer Promoter, Castlehill

The logo for smile.amazon.co.uk, featuring the word "smile" in orange and "amazon.co.uk" in black.

The church received a mail shot about this way to support charities.

Amazon donates 0.5% of eligible purchases to the shopper's charity. We have signed up to this system.

If you shop at Amazon go to smile.amazon.co.uk and sign in with your usual details. You will get a drop down list to choose your charity and we are listed as Castlehill Parish Church of Scotland: Ayr.

Each time you shop start by logging on to smile.amazon.co.uk and the church will automatically receive a percentage of your purchase amount. There is no added cost to the person shopping and prices are the same as the standard amazon site.



Kirsty is a Group Account Director with a Public Relations Company. Last year one of her main clients was the Edinburgh Tattoo. This year it is the Scottish Government producing campaigns to support the efforts against Coronavirus. No one could have foreseen such a change in work patterns. I asked Kirsty to give her thoughts on the changes this year have made to her life and thinking.

Editor



2020 — ALL IS NOT LOST

If there's one thing we can say with absolute certainty, it's that 2020 has been an emotional rollercoaster for all of us.

As the coronavirus pandemic took hold of Europe in March and we entered a national lockdown, my routine, the way I work and my expectations for what 2020 might be were quickly thrown out of the window.

Suddenly, I was working from home (in a one bed flat in the middle of Edinburgh), Zoom calls were the only way I could see friends, family (I spent eight whole weeks on my own) and I started to cook... (a shock to everyone who knows me) – without warning, my life, as well as everyone else's, had been transformed.

It hasn't been an easy year for anyone. And without sounding like a selfish, spoiled brat – because I know I've been incredibly lucky to be working safely from home when many others have been on the front line, putting their lives at risk – I miss my normal life.

But what do I miss?

The office. There's been a lot of think pieces about WFH [working from home] and why this might mean the end for office spaces. A lot of people never want to return to the office. But without sounding like a total loser, I miss the office! I miss birthdays meaning mimosas and your favourite cake at 11am (the perks of working in PR), instead of a personalised zoom background and a 'happy birthday' email. I miss the phone call. Why must everything now be a video call? I am sick of looking at my own, tired face. And I really miss my home. Home is now work. Work is now home. There is no escape. And if you try and leave your 'desk' (if you're lucky to have one) colleagues and clients want to know where you're going and what you're doing – because actually, where ARE you going and what ARE you doing? There is nowhere to go and nothing to do.

I miss really interesting conversation. My friends and I recently discussed the fact that no one has any new news to tell at the moment because no one has been doing anything. There's no good gossip, no stories from nights out or from family parties. Instead, all anyone can talk about is the pandemic and what it means for them.

I miss spontaneity. Having to book a seat to grab a coffee, plan in advance to see friends and family – there's no 'dropping by' any more – and no lunches, that turn into drinks and then nights out. Everything in life is now planned, even down to the supermarket shop to avoid the queues.

It's been the worst. Until now. I think 2020 may have just given us the mother of all comebacks? Yes, we're still in lockdown, yes Christmas won't be as it normally is and for many people life will never be the same.

However, it might just be that all is not lost for 2020. This week we heard a vaccine is coming. Trump is gone (almost) and Biden is here. Scotland are going to the Euros. And travel is almost back! 2021 does look brighter and with only a few weeks to go of 2020, I think we should all live it in the hope that things will only get better, because it might very well happen.

Kirsty Grierson



DOWN MEMORY LANE

I was surprised but delighted when Douglas Owens asked me to write this piece for the church newsletter. I met Douglas fairly recently when I returned to Castlehill to attend the funeral of my very good friend Johnny Wilson.

It is forty years since I completed a ten-year tenure as Organist and Choirmaster. As I sat in the church those few weeks ago my mind drifted down memory lane and I reflected on what were very active and fulfilling years on the organ bench.

I had previously been Organist and Choirmaster at Coylton Parish Church, and at the time I moved to Castlehill its membership numbered between 1,800 and almost 2,000. Rather a contrast between a country kirk and an urban congregation!



Michael Dickie and I enjoyed an excellent working relationship, and I was fascinated to work with the 'procession' of assistants who came to Castlehill for their probationary years. I had the pleasure of first getting to know Paul Russell during that time, too.

Musically, there were many highlights, not least our monthly series of 'Music in Castlehill' recitals which took place each year and featured prominent choirs, bands and orchestras, and which attracted support from a wide area.

Perhaps the most notable event was one of the very first West of Scotland performances of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat', with Belmont Academy Choir and Orchestra.

It took place in the church on a Sunday evening, and well before it was due to start the church was crammed full to capacity, with a very long queue outside! A second performance had to be held later the same evening, to accommodate all who wished to attend.

Due to work commitments, at the end of 1979 I relocated to the south side of Glasgow and took up the post of Organist and Choirmaster at Mearns Parish Kirk, where I remained for thirteen years before taking up a similar post at Williamwood Parish Church.

In 2002 I decided to move to Kirn, and was appointed Organist and Choirmaster at The High Kirk in Dunoon, a post which I held until a major change of direction in my life some seven years ago.

By that time I had retired from a long career in the travel industry, but I had always wanted to 'dabble' in theology. Having then had some spare time on my hands I learned that there was an opportunity to study theology at the University of Glasgow, and so it was that things took a rather unexpected turn!

As the degree course progressed it became increasingly clear to me that I was experiencing a call to ministry, and – to cut rather a long story short – I applied to be a candidate for the Ordained Local Ministry in the Church of Scotland.

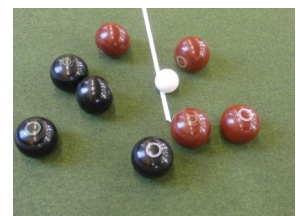
The training programme is extensive and exhaustive, and as I write this piece I am coming to the end of my probationary year, prior – all being well – to ordination in a couple of months or so.

Whilst this has not been a 'normal' year, so to speak, it has been a hugely busy one. There is an acute shortage of ministers in Dunoon and surrounding area, so my duties have been much more onerous than a probationer might expect. Having said that, I am gaining tremendous experience and I find the work very fulfilling.

All-in-all, quite a change from those far-off days in Castlehill, but I look back on those ten years very fondly. Thank you for the memories!

Sandy MacPherson.

Castlehill Church Bowling Club



We have missed everyone over the winter months. No bowling, no chats, no teas and no competitions. It looks as though our season will not be viable until possibly the start of next session in September, hopefully. Then we will have a party, our Annual General Meeting, and the presentation of the trophies for the 2019/2020 season. It will be wonderful to get back together again and we can only hope that this will be possible. Until then take care and look forward to seeing you all.

David Kerr President



AS THE FOOD DISTRIBUTION FROM CASTLEHILL COMES TO A CLOSE
this is part of the story that has taken place:

1. There have been 227 volunteers from the 10:10 Trust, various churches in the area and people who have no particular church affiliation: a tremendous team of dedicated people.

2. Over £115,000 has been spent locally supporting our community in this time plus support from South Ayrshire and grants

3. 880 households have received parcels of food — many on several occasions (this does not include local schools and hostels who have received regular help)

4. Some 165,000 meal equivalents have been distributed

The above is a brief survey of what has been a monumental project which has been conducted in and from our Church halls and has been co-ordinated by The 10:10 Trust who had the vision to see the need for food in South Ayrshire during this time of Covid-19 and with our help, that of Ayr Baptist Church, and as you can see, the input of hundreds of volunteers delivered practical assistance across South Ayrshire from Dundonald in the North to Girvan in the South. It has been an often challenging task to undertake: but faith frequently asks a lot of us as we seek to demonstrate the love of God in the most practical of ways.

I would like to pay tribute to Dylan Harper and the 10:10 Trust for their caring and dedication over the past months and to thank them from our parish, and the other communities in South Ayrshire which have been served by the Distribution Centre here. The respect they demonstrated to those in need motivated many others to become involved and it has been a privilege for me to share in getting to know them and to be involved in a small way with the work. We wish them every blessing for the future.

Paul

From Castlehill Congregation

I wonder if you realise the work that has been done to allow us all to come back to worship. Half of the Presbytery churches have not achieved this, some due to the type of premises they have, but others have not got round to it yet. Our minister, Paul Russell has made sure that our place of worship is open for all.

**A Huge
Thank
You**

Lack of effort has not been apparent with Castlehill Church as Paul Russell and some dedicated members of the Board and Session have put in a tremendous effort to ensure the start of Sunday services and your safety within our Church buildings. Adhering to the many pages of Church of Scotland instructions, making sure we were within Government guidelines of Health and Safety and applying Risk Assessment data, they have provided us with an environment which is safe and comfortable for our morning worship.

The teams on duty each Sunday have a lot of preparatory work before the service starts and after the congregation leave, they have to clean and sanitise everything

Not only that, but by extending the Sunday Service availability into our main hall, this has allowed the maximum of 50 members to increase to almost 70. Further to the Sunday service they have provided daily devotional reading material to members' homes and by email, made available booklets of prayers, allowing everyone to stay in touch with our minister and our Church. There is also a short address from Paul each Sunday for those who have Facebook facilities and are not able to come to Sunday worship

We owe them all a debt of gratitude which should not be forgotten.



Seniors Afternoons

Sadly, the last Seniors afternoon was in February and at the moment, even next February is a doubt. We will however be looking forward to starting up again and there will be a warm welcome for everyone. We will be in touch to let you know what is happening. Take care everybody.

Wellwood Grierson.



Christmas Revisited: Gloria & Archie's Nativity Story

I was asked by the editor to write about how I've been doing during the pandemic, but I've decided not to do so. Yes, things are different, but I want to make people smile and retell the Gloria and Archie 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





Diamond Jubilee 2016

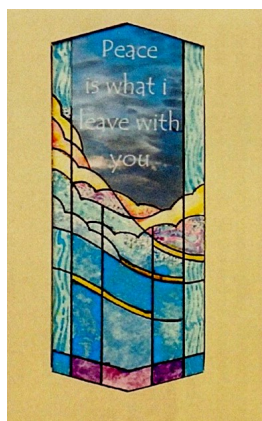
At the end of that year the various events to celebrate the Jubilee had raised £1053. In 2017 the congregation was asked for ideas on how we should spend this money and mark the Jubilee. A number of suggestions were received, and the Congregational Board decided we should explore the idea of stained glass windows. Rev. John Paterson, our Interim Moderator, had dealt with Rainbow Glass of Prestwick when having stained glass windows installed at his church in Cumnock and recommended them.

In September 2017 Wellwood Grierson, Robert Forrester and I met with Moira Malcolm of Rainbow Glass in the church. Moira took a number of photographs and measurements of the existing windows and discussed the proposals. She said we should contact the Church of Scotland Committee on Church Art and Architecture, CARTA, to ask permission to install stained glass windows. We should give them the photographs and information she provided and any ideas regarding the design brief. Following a meeting of the Congregational Board I contacted Judith Roebuck of CARTA to ascertain if they would be happy to look at the proposal before we formulated a design brief. The Stained Glass Group meet a few times each year but Judith contacted them by email and they seemed to be in favour of us developing a design brief for the windows. Moira would be attending their meeting on 5th December regarding another project and they would discuss the initial views of the group with her then.



In January 2018 Judith Roebuck emailed me saying it was quite a challenging project and while they were prepared for us to proceed with working up a design brief they offered to visit the church and provide some advice and guidance. Moira had told them we currently had Rev. Paterson as our interim minister and that he had assisted her in developing appropriate themes in the past.

In February 2018 Judith Roebuck and Rebecca Caddie of CARTA came to Ayr and met Rev. Patterson, Wellwood, Robert and I in the church. They followed their visit with a report saying "We consider the ideas presented would be workable and therefore recommend the stained glass artist is asked to work up a proposal for submission to, and agreement of, the Stained Glass Group".



For the rest of that year there was little progress as Moira had done conservation of glass for the V&A museum in Dundee and she was almost finished 6 windows for St Columba church in Ayr. Once the St Columba commission was finished, she would start on the design ideas for our windows.

In March 2019 Moira said she had completed the design and would attend the next meeting of CARTA when they would discuss the proposals for the design of windows at the church.

In May 2019 Moira attended a meeting of the Congregational Board and gave a presentation on her design for the windows.

She said this had been a tricky brief and design as the shape and composition of the windows was unusual and they were small which made it difficult to include a figurative content. The design brief said the design should have an Easter theme, be simple and read as a triptych but asked for the inclusion of a number of figurative led themes. She decided to depict 2 main themes.

The grief of Mary as mother of Jesus in a figurative form.

The Ascension of Jesus Christ in a symbolic form but had replaced the appearance of Christ with His words from John 14 verses 27 and 28. "Peace is what I leave with you" and "I am leaving but I will come back to you".

The central window would be directly below the pre-existing cross on the wall behind the communion table with the other windows to the left and right.

In July 2019 Moira attended the CARTA meeting and presented her design and on 29th July I had a letter from Judith Roebuck saying the design had been approved. The church is a category C listed building and CARTA had contacted Historic Environment Scotland and gained their approval. Judith advised me to check with the South Ayrshire council if Listed Building Consent would be required and the planning department said it would be required. I got the application form and on 6th August I went to Edinburgh to meet Judith Roebuck. I took the original plans for the church and she was extremely helpful in saying which parts of the plans could be used with the application and the other information I could submit.

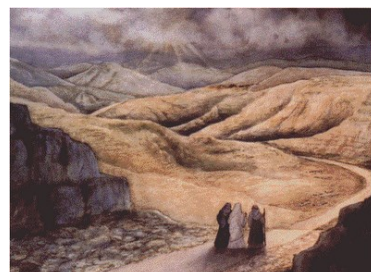
In November 2019 the application for Listed Building Consent was approved and I was advised to check with Building Control if a Building warrant was required but this was not needed.

In 2020 Moira was working on our project when the coronavirus lockdown happened and Rainbow Glass had to close. They opened again in August and started the production process for our windows.

The windows will be installed on Tuesday **15th December** and Rev. Paul Russell will dedicate them on **Sunday 20th December**. This has been a long process, but I hope the congregation will approve of the result and it will be a fitting tribute of the 60th Anniversary of Castlehill Church.

Margaret Devlin

Many of the older members of the Church will remember Allan Ramsay, who wrote a great amount of poetry. One of our readers remembered this from a previous magazine, and thought it was worth including it again



A dusty road, a weary woman with a worried man.

A sleepy town, a simple stable, where it all began.

A special night transformed by light and angel song.

All leading to the tiny Babe, who planned it all along.

To Castlehill Church

To you dear friends, my thanks sincere

These lovely flowers my heart did cheer

All members love I do not know

Because they never told me so

When all the memories are unfurled

I'll have no enemies in this world

Please read this note from pulpit fall

And tell them clear, I love them all

Allan Ramsay



It's O.K. I have been vaccinated



Having been closed since March we finally got our face to face meetings back up and running on 9th October. I found the task daunting, I could never have managed the process without a great deal of help from Margaret Graham, Colin Reid and Paul Russell. The process involved us adhering to the guidelines of the Scottish Government, the Church of Scotland and the Boys' Brigade. Once we opened the doors and the boys came back the pain receded into the distance and the effort was more than worthwhile. The parents expressed their gratitude to us for getting the meetings back open. Our socially distanced meetings have become a normal way of operating and are working well. For a period we were the only company in Ayr Battalion operating, now we are one of only two.



In September we managed to present two Queen's Badges. Stewart Veitch and Andrew Miller were awarded their Queen's Badges during our service on Sunday 13th September. It was a joy to be able to honour their achievements before they both left to embark on their respective life journeys, Stewart has joined the Navy as a submariner and Andrew has gone to university in Aberdeen.

Ian Queen



Photographs of the Awards Presentations

Boys Brigade, Links with the Past



It is interesting to find a connection with the 17th Ayr BB and the history of the Movement.

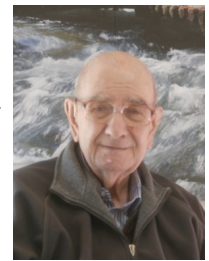
I found these photos on social media, they have a real connection with the 17th Ayr. The photographs are of the floral displays which the council installed to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Boys' Brigade.



The gardener on the left is a Mr Colin Blair. He was without hearing or speech and he worked as a gardener for the local authority his entire working life. He was responsible for these BB Centenary floral tributes and created many outstanding floral displays in Belleisle Park. His son also Colin Blair, gained his Queens Badge at the 17th Ayr in 1976 at the same time as I did, we went on to be each other's best man. His mother still lives in Caledonia Road.

Ian Queen

We have also experienced some sadness. During the summer we were saddened to learn of the death of Johnny Wilson. Johnny and his late wife, Emmy, were supporters of the 17th Ayr from the foundation of the Company. Their son, Allan, was one of our earliest Queen's Men. Emmy and Johnny regularly organised Christmas fetes and they organised the fund raising for the purchase of our original Colours in 1969. Emmy and my mother made the teas for all the BB events for years up until I retired them in the mid-nineties. Johnny was the last church member to have worshipped in the original barn church, he was an ever-present at all church activities. He was first on the invitation list for our annual BB display. The church family and the 17th Ayr will miss Johnny.



Unfortunately, worse was to come with the shocking news of the death of Alistair Bowman on 4th November, aged 25. Alistair is a Queen's Man of the 17th Ayr. Gaining his Queen's Badge was one of the proudest achievements of his life. His death is an absolute tragedy, it has shocked the whole community as demonstrated by the numbers who came to the church to pay their respect during his funeral. In the eulogy delivered by his mother Eleanor, she shared his achievements and his mischief, we were laughing and crying. As his mother said, he put more into his 25 years than many manage in a lifetime.

This is a photo from our first trip to Romania with the young girl for whom we paid for the building of a house.

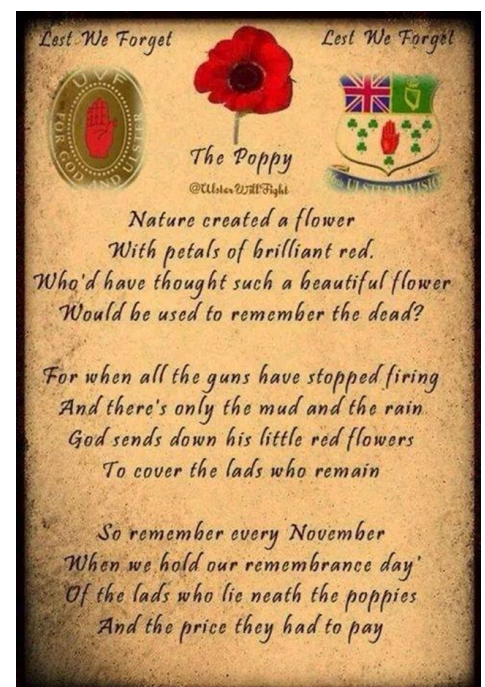
Any time I bumped into Ally I would always leave him with a smile on my face, any time I think about him now, I smile. You were a very special person Ally and touched so many people which is why you are so terribly missed by so many people. We give thanks for Ally's life and hold Eleanor, Billy and Fiona in our prayers.

Ian Queen

Remembrance Day Service



Looking back there may be questions asked about masks and lay out., but despite that, it was a service to remember. "Help for Heroes" sung by Carol Thompson and the "Last Post" played by Rebecca Wilson added to the solemn atmosphere. The absence of numbers did in no way detract from the poignancy of the whole service



Dear Friends at Castlehill, a chance meeting with Wellwood led to his asking if I would write an article on how people are coping with Covid 19. As I have listened to the news and watched various programmes, I have come to see how people in many different situations are seriously affected in quite different ways. I can only offer a few brief comments covering a few situations.

A group frequently mentioned are the Elderly, especially those living alone or in Care Homes. Fortunately, this group is now receiving much better care and attention. It is perhaps more difficult to give sufficient help to those who are physically or mentally or emotionally handicapped. The unemployed, especially younger people, need understanding and listening ears from us.

There are far too many instances of people living in real poverty, among them several single mothers with 5 or 6 children living in 1 or 2 rooms on the 6th floor up with no gardens anywhere near! How can we help them?

I am sure by now most of us have come to see and be grateful for staff in the N.H.S. Care system and Police and Emergency services who suffer real pressures and risk their lives from infections. Whatever our views on Politicians we need to appreciate that those representing all Parties need our prayers that they will think and work for the welfare of the whole nation. To help them WE will try to behave sensibly.

But, as Christians, we should look even further afield and remember Refugees in many countries (many facing persecution) who have no homes, perhaps little if any food, and no medical help. As well as praying for them we can donate to Open Doors, Barnabas, and other organisations.

And of course, there are millions of people in India and different countries in Africa where their nearest Doctor or Nurse is up to 100 miles away, and the nearest Hospital several hundred miles away! Again, Prayer and Financial help through Christian Aid, World Health Organisation and other Voluntary organisations can help.

People in Yemen, Syria and other War-torn countries also have to suffer from Covid 19 infections.

Whatever OUR financial or physical conditions may be, we – who try to follow Jesus, are the most fortunate in society. We know we are never alone and that our Heavenly Father always gives us the strength to Hope.

Speaking for myself, although I am 92, live alone, have advanced prostate Cancer and starting to become immobile (due to a spinal condition) I am blessed with a loving family when it is possible for them to do so; Friends in Castlehill, Kingcase and churches where I have served in Banffshire, Bathgate, Perth and in Ayrshire. People still phone (and visit) to discuss their situations (which helps to give me purpose!) and I can still just about continue with my hobby of painting!!

I was delighted when Paul sent me his Reflections and Prayer booklet (I am not on the internet!!) and invited me back to services at Castlehill – Kingcase where I am a member, has only just started. Someone has said that there have been many more people worshipping on Internet facilities than had been physically attending churches before Covid 19! Folk may have woken up to their need for a faith. I hope we in the churches are ready for this.

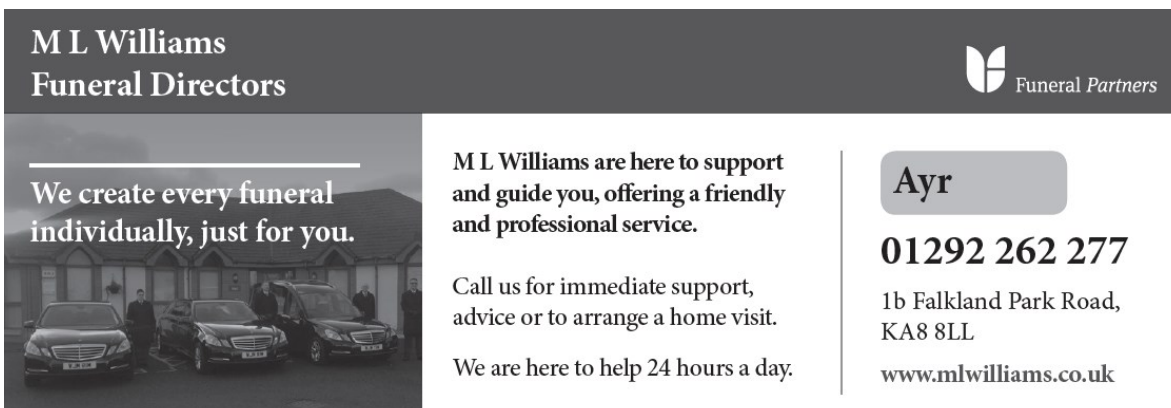
Whatever your own personal situation I pray that you and your loved ones will “stay safe” and be aware of the Presence of Jesus and God’s loving arms around you.

Love from **Michael Dickie**

(who was your friend for 26 years and is still your friend)

P.S. I hope my sermons weren’t as long as this letter?!

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Deaths

April

Jean Patterson Airlie House

July

Betty Kirkland Bellevue NH

August

Rebecca Quinn Nursery Road

John Wilson Mt Oliphant Cresc.

Marion Hooton Glendale Cresc.

Nan McClymont Glenfairn Nursing Home

September

Margaret McNulty Westbank NH Troon

Pat Wighton Holmston Gardens

Mrs Dickson Peggieshill Road

October

Kathy McCreddie Heathfield Care Home



**Can you say tonight, in parting,
For the day that's slipping fast,
That you helped a single brother
Of the many that you passed?
Did you waste the day or lose it,
Was it well or sorely spent?
Did you leave a trail of kindness
Or a scar of discontent?
As you close your eyes in slumber
Do you think that God would say,
You have earned one more tomorrow
By the work you did today?**



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