

CHRONICLES



*St. Blane's Church
Dunblane*

February 2019

Number 216

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Dear brothers and sisters

Cinema or church?

During my recent time off I managed to get to see a film at the cinema or “the pictures” as we used to call it. The film, about a former Vice President of America was ok, not sure how much of it was true – you have to be careful with these types of films. But it was not the film I want to reflect on, it was the experience of going to the cinema.

I went during the day midweek, the cinema was pretty quiet so I hadn't booked, I was on my own. Because it was quiet I was able to arrive and purchase my ticket. Because I bought my ticket from a machine in the foyer, I didn't have to talk to anyone. I was early so I bought a cup of tea from a well-known coffee retailer that is located in the foyer of that particular cinema.

I sat and drank it playing games on my phone. There was a workman filling in forms at the table next to me and a lady arrived at the table on my left with what I think was some form of chai tea drink as the aroma was quite powerful. I was tempted to ask her but the time had come for me to go to the cinema. Having presented my ticket to the person at the door, I was told that the cinema was ready and I took my seat. The person who served my tea and the person who checked my ticket were the only two people I spoke to in that cinema during the two and a bit hours I was in the building.

I found and settled in my comfortable seat, there were people around me, but not close by. There was little conversation in the room and soon enough the lights dimmed and the 20 or so people sat through the adverts and trailers and then the main feature. Together we focused on

the screen and immersed ourselves in this story, together we shared an experience as we focused on the story of a man's life, warts and all as they say. But we did it completely as individuals without any interaction with each other. We shared the emotional rollercoaster of this brief joint couple of hours and then at the end of the film we all got up and left the cinema without a word to one another. One couple chatted to each other about the characters in the film but that was it.

Why am I reflecting on that experience? Well as I drove home it made me wonder how that compares to going to a church service? In many ways it is the same sort of experience. We decide individually or in family groups to go to church. We go in assured that we will get a seat, we may know the people around us, we may not. We may talk to the people around us, we may not. Once the service starts we have this joint experience or worship time together where we focus on something bigger, the big story of God. We may or may not have a cuppa in the hall afterwards and then we go home. Some of us may talk about the experience with someone else, most won't. Is that what church is to be like? Is our experience of worship any different from going to a cinema? In fact there are many in our church that, for good reason, want church services to be on line, on demand, ready when you are in your own home - is that the model that we should be concentrating on?

I think not - yes we come as individuals into church; we join a church family as individuals. There is a reason we don't dim the lights and sit in a dark room without talking, the reason is that we are all involved in something together as we worship. We come in and we say hello to each other before the service, we ask each other how we are getting on, we share our life stories as we prepare to worship together. Then as the service starts, we join together, all ages, singing together, doing actions sometimes together; praying together, hearing God's word read and preached. We are in this together. After the service we have fellowship together over a cup of tea or coffee. We share what we have been through together, we talk about each other's lives, we get to know each other on a deeper level, we support and encourage each other in the faith or in our lives. We, having given ourselves to God in costly worship,

give ourselves to each other in costly fellowship. Or do we? Is your experience more akin to a cinema or a church?

Hebrews 10

²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The writer to the Hebrews challenges us to keep coming to church, not just as individuals but together. Together we are to spur each other on toward love and good deeds, to encourage each other. Friends that is the kind of church we are building here in St Blane's, a church, not a cinema, a group of all ages who come together, know and love one another, a welcoming, family of disciples who together worship and follow the master.

That is costly, if you think cinema prices are ridiculous these days, then it is more than that. Not just costly in terms of our tithes and offering, it is costly in terms of us reaching out to one another, crossing a room to talk to someone you don't know, getting to know people enough to share your struggles and to pray for one another. Costly in terms of time and emotions but it is all worth it. Remember we are people who have a real hope, a God who is amazing, a God who has spoken through His word and through His Son. We are part of something far bigger than ourselves as individuals.

Friends we are not building a cinema, no Jesus is building his church.

Blessings

Gary

BOOK GROUP

The book group is going to look at the Good News of the gospel in the context of the 5 Solas of the Reformation. Bamboozled?! Don't be! The Solas assert that salvation is:- according to Scripture alone, in Christ alone, by Grace alone, through Faith alone and for the Glory of God alone.

These are big topics but should prove to give us some very worthwhile discussions. If you would like to join us you would be most welcome, the group is relaxed, informal and keen to discuss our faith.

Jean Proto

Special Thanks

St. Blane's thanks all those who contribute towards the church flowers each Sunday, and for those who deliver them.

Special thanks to our organiser Nessie Nelson.

<p>Items for May Chronicles should be submitted by Saturday 27th April. Contributions are always welcomed. Please e-mail douglas@crannoch.plus.com</p>
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Coffee Morning –Bridge of Allan Church Hall Saturday 9th March - 10-12

This annual event is always well supported by St Blane's so you will not be on your own. The Hall is next to the church and there is plenty of parking at the Co-op and the Library/Health centre.

We are currently waiting to hear about Scottish Government funding for next year. We are very hopeful as the money to support comes from 3 government departments –Community Justice, Early Years and Public Health. This shows a joined up approach to help children who are in a difficult situation through no fault of their own.

There are now Visitor Centres in almost all prisons in Scotland. Our set up is unique as it is based on local volunteers recruited from local churches augmented by students from the University of Stirling. This is a real example of faith in action reaching out to society.

Come and join us. Come and hear about what we are doing. Come and meet some of our volunteers.

Dan Gunn

Chair Stirling Interfaith Community Justice Group

Christian  Aid

Our annual coffee morning was held in the Cathedral Hall on 19th January. This was well attended and raised the excellent sum of £743. Grateful thanks to all who supported the event in any way.

Christian Aid Week 2019 will be held from 12-18 May, when the usual stalls and restaurant in the Cathedral Hall, house-to-house collections and the annual service will take place. Full details will be given nearer the time.

‘I was in prison and you came to see me’: the Christians taking the Bible into Scotland’s jails

Visiting prisoners in HMP Greenock, Peter Diamond finds that even those who have committed the worst crimes imaginable can be redeemed, and speaks to the volunteers who are spreading the message of Christ behind bars

When I visited the women’s wing of HMP Greenock recently to take part in a workshop run by Prison Fellowship Scotland (PFS), I openly admit I was rather nervous. It made me realise just how sheltered my life had become and that there is a wealth of work being done in the margins of society to help try and transform people’s lives through Faith. Within seconds of meeting my guide, Terry Paterson, who has been involved with Prison Fellowship for more than 20 years, I was at ease. We then met with the group of about 12 PFS volunteers, both male and female who warmly greeted me. I was now ready to go to jail.

PFS work to serve the spiritual and emotional needs of prisoners, largely through Bible discussion groups. Few of their volunteers are Catholic, and the organisation is looking for more people to help minister to the prison population. Through speaking to various PFS volunteers about why they are involved in the regular Bible discussion groups, it’s clear that they believe in companionship in Christ.

People, not prisoners

What is hard for new volunteers initially is that they see a prisoner before they see a person, or they see a crime before a Christian. A prisoner may disclose with you what he or she has done to merit a jail sentence, however, PFS instructs their volunteers very clearly to engage with the person not the prisoner. Anyone who wishes to become a volunteer with a PFS Bible group will undertake brief training before going into a prison to help them navigate through the class with ease

and it allows them to keep themselves focused on the purpose of evangelisation.

Following security protocols, we eventually made it into the women's wing of the jail. There we were escorted to a classroom and the female inmates practically skipped into the room to help set up chairs. It was immediately evident that they were at ease with the volunteers and vice versa, with first name terms being exchanged all across the room.

Deep breaths

There was a real rapport with the leaders of the Bible class, which isn't surprising considering some of the volunteers have been coming to Greenock prison for decades.

I was introduced to a female prisoner who was serving a life sentence. Nervous, I told myself, 'take a deep breath Pedro, this will be fine.' It was fine of course, and within about 20 seconds the woman, aged about 40, was giving me a rundown of the Prison Fellowship set up, her own story and how she was worried the programme would be reduced due to lack of prison staff.

I had forgotten what it was she was inside for almost instantly and when the Bible group sang the opening hymn, Father I Place into Your Hands, the meaning of a song I had known and sung oblivious to its significance since I was five-years-old, took on a whole new meaning. I'm sure you are humming the hymn along in your head as you read this, so you will now understand that if it wasn't written by a reformed prisoner, then it should have been.

*'Father, I place into your hands
The things I cannot do,
Father, I place into your hands
The things that I've been through.
Father, I place into your hands
The way that I should go,
For I know I always can trust you.'*

‘Touched by God’

Speaking to the prisoner, she explained very quickly that she had been touched by God and that Prison Fellowship quickly formed the bedrock of her Faith, helping her to grow, engage and transform her life.

She said: “I was a drug-addict all of my adult life and I never felt part of anything. You knew people and they knew you—or more likely didn’t want to know you. “Before I came to prison I had been a bad person for many years and was full of guilt and shame. Morally and spiritually, I was bankrupt inside and had nothing to give. I was dead inside. I honestly was, there was nothing there. “I was at the lowest point of my life when I came to prison and I remember being in my cell and just falling to my knees and cried out for God to help me because I knew I was beyond the help of anyone on Earth.” The prisoner, whose name cannot be revealed for legal reasons, stated that at that point, in her cell, her journey of Faith began. She added: “Since that moment my life has turned around and the Fellowship has been invaluable to my growth and journey to becoming a Christian. “I’ve been coming to church for six years now. I had started going to church services at Cornton Vale prison but they didn’t have any Prison Fellowship Programme there. “So when I was transferred to Greenock jail I was craving more guidance and knowledge and thankfully the people from Prison Fellowship provide a bit more of that.”

Newfound stability

The inmate explained how she couldn’t have dealt with the hardships of jail life without her new found Faith, and how the Prison Fellowship Bible evenings have provided a stability that allows her to take her Faith into the main lunch hall and share. “The volunteers are great—they make you feel like you’re a part of a community for one hour or so, which is such a lifeline because prison can be a very lonely place,” she said. “There may be hundreds of people around you throughout the day in prison but you can still feel very isolated within and so to come together with people and feel welcome, feel part of something, is really

great. “Yes sometimes it can be a struggle and you go through some rough patches but that’s what the fellowship is there for, to brighten you up, and it really keeps you going. “It amazes me that if there are any bumps on the road or rough patches, and you come through them, you become stronger in your Faith.” “Becoming a Christian has been a life-saving and life-changing experience for me. Without my Faith I don’t think that I would have survived in here,” she added.

A changed woman

Since being baptised a Christian in the jail two years ago she has learned how to play the guitar and now leads the singing and strums along at the Prison Fellowship evenings. She has even been able to share her story with her fellow prisoners, allowing them to hear the role that God has played in her transformation. She said: “I really enjoy the wee songs and music we play at our sessions and I think a lot of the girls that come along that maybe haven’t found their Faith yet come along to take part in that and it allows them to explore a bit and ask questions. “I love to participate in the group and I think as you begin to grow in Faith, the way I have in here, then you naturally want to share it. It’s as if the more I share and participate then the more I get out of it. “The nights we have with Prison Fellowship are the bedrock but the aim for me is about trying to expand that and take it back through to the halls and create that Christian community for everyone.” The woman that spoke to me in Greenock jail delivered her tale in a few minutes with more passion than even some priests I have encountered over my life. She remains worried about the lack of facilities within the prison life and insisted that Prison Fellowship is vital to tackling some of the big issues around restoring human beings on a wrong path. “I’ve had to come to prison in order to be set free and feel part of something and that’s because of Jesus and what I’ve achieved through Prison Fellowship,” she said. “When the group come in each week you are reminded that you are a part of a wider Christian community even though you’re here in jail and that’s important because it provides hope. “A lot of the women in here are so vulnerable and it can give someone that wee bit of hope that might sustain them.” The Prison Fellowship meeting I

attended had more than 20 inmates present keen to listen to Billy, who led the group of 12 volunteers, some who have served time behind bars themselves. The prisoner whom I spoke with said her ambition would be for Prison Fellowship to continue outwith the Bible class and to share songs, prayers and stories within the main hall of the jail. “When people hear my story about the crimes I committed and the way I lived they are shocked, and rightly so, but when I tell them about my journey it gives them hope,” she said, adding: “Well I hope that’s the case anyway.”

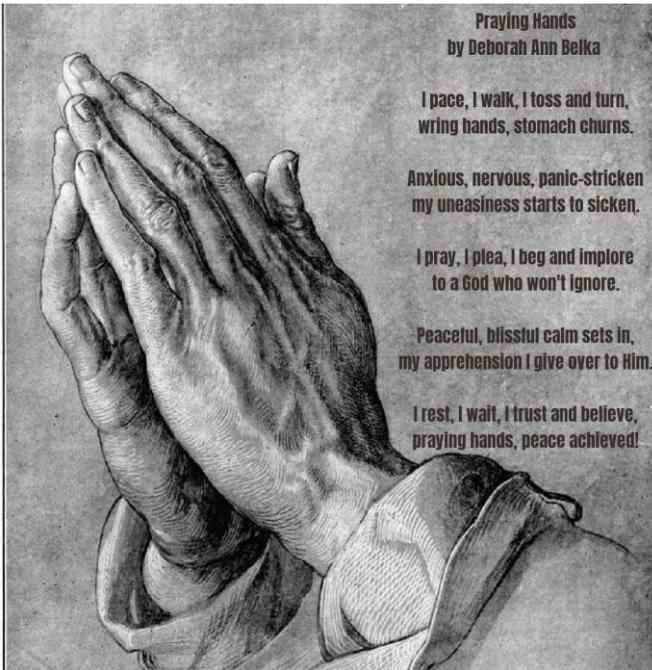
“You start having conversations with people about your Faith and about what God’s done for you in your life and other people may ask questions but most of the time they want to find out more and it’s great to be able to share that,” she said. “It is very simple. “With the volunteers we sing songs, prayers, share our stories of transformation and ultimately we want to take that back into the halls and share it with other people and I pray that will happen.”

Future expansion

Prison Fellowship operates in 13 of 15 jails in Scotland. With just 100 volunteers they are looking to boost their numbers to sustain and grow in their locations. A spokesperson for Prison Fellowship Scotland said: “Our weekly conversation groups are interactive discussions based on Biblical text, themes and interpretation. “Our key focus is always on relationships, using the time to get to know the men and women who attend. We always go at an individual’s pace. “We assume nothing and we do not judge, criticise or condemn. Even if an individual’s opinion differs from ours, we embrace equality and diversity.” On concluding my chat with the long-term prisoner, she revealed that now in her daily life she tries to do what Jesus would do if He were in the Greenock jail. Furthermore, her family is now proud of her and have seen a ‘real difference.’ She added: “Now everyday I try and do a good thing for someone. It can be very simple, like a smile or inviting someone for a cup of tea. “I guess because of the rubbish stuff I’ve done in life it’s about time I gave something back. “Prison fellowship has given me

self-esteem, a purpose and has restored me to the person who I am supposed to be. “My family has seen a real difference within me, so much so that they want to ‘check the label on the back of ma heid’ to make sure it’s still the same human being. “They are proud of me now and I needed to change for them. I’m glad I have. “Now I have so much to give and that personal growth within makes me so hungry to give even more back, to pass it on, to let people see they can also transform their live with God’s help if they are willing to let Him into their lives.”

Article submitted by Kenneth MacKenzie



Additional information on Albrecht Durer's sketch Praying Hands:

Today, the Praying Hands (11.5" x 7.8") is housed at the Albertina in Vienna, Austria. Due to the fragility and age (over 500 years) of the original sketch, only a facsimile is displayed for the public.

A story of the origin of the Praying Hands has been widely circulated for many years. In this, Dürer comes from a poor family of 18 children. Albrecht and his brother both desired to be artists, but since there was no money for art school, the older brother went to work in the mines to pay for the cost of Albrecht's education. The roles were then to be reversed. But alas, the brother's hard work ruined his hands and the chance of ever becoming an artist. In tribute to his sacrifice Albrecht sketched his brother's hands. Most likely this is a fictional account.

In this simple sketch we see a whole spiritual dimension. We see our story of helplessness and plea for intervention. We see God's mercy in Christ, the One who pleads for us from above, and we remember God's promises.

Mrs. Mary Rennie
15 Argyle Grove
Dunblane
FK15 9DT

11th December 2018

To all at St. Blane's Church,

Thanks for putting a smile on our faces this Christmas!

I am writing to offer our heartfelt thanks for your kind donations of gifts and gift cards to distribute amongst our children this Christmas.

Your continuing support means the world to us and it's wonderful for our children and young people to know that people are thinking about them at Christmas.

I would very much like to come and meet you all to say thank you in person on behalf of Aberlour. Could you let me know when might be a suitable time?

From everyone at Aberlour, thank you once again for your kindness.

With our very best wishes for a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Abby Parkhouse
Regional Fundraiser
Tel: 07730 195164
Email: abby.parkhouse@aberlour.org.uk



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www.aberlour.org.uk

Friends of Abbeyfield

Park House in the centre of Bridge of Allan is run by Abbeyfield Scotland Ltd. It offers Supported Independent Living for up to 7 elderly residents, each with their own flatlet or room. Home-cooked lunch and tea are provided daily round the year in the communal dining-room.

Our Friends of Abbeyfield (Park House) are volunteers who help to improve the quality of life for the residents by arranging social events, many of them based in the house, including a weekly Friday Coffee Morning. We occasionally also arrange modest daytime trips out for those residents interested.

We would welcome a small number of new Friends to join our Group. If you would like to find out more, please phone Liz on 01786 833100 or Isabel on 01786 823998. Thanks for reading!

St. Blane's & Lecropt Church Family Weekend 15/16/17 November 2019



**Where: Field Study Centre Millport, Cumbrae Island, KA28 0EG,
2 ¼ - ½ hours from Dunblane**

When : Friday Tea to Sunday Lunch

Price: Adults - £95, under 18's – free (thanks to a kind donation)

**Accommodation: Single/Double Rooms (all ensuite)
Full Board/Conference Rooms/<https://www.millport.org/fsc/>**

**Who: All who would like to come from St Blane's & Lecropt/all
ages/singles/couples/families/Up to 100**

Activities

Social – large session with quiz & other fun

Small groups – eg photography with tips, craft, baking, treasure or scavenger hunt, walk, board games

Worship/Teaching/Looking at our Vision

Some separate activities for Sunday School and TBC Groups

Free Time

Purpose:

To spend time together as a Church Family:

- getting to know each other better
- having fun
- eating & serving each other
- praying
- worshipping
- reflecting and learning
- refreshing our spirits

Note - location changed from Kindrogen near Pitlochry due to its closure for refurbishment. Any questions, comments or if you would like to assist the team making arrangements - to Adrian Davidson (rebecca-harris@tiscali.co.uk) please.

Adrian Davidson

THE ADVENT CRAFT GROUP

– all you need is a pair of scissors!

The first advent craft group was fun(ny) and friendly. Fifteen attendees (posh words) from St Blane's, Lecropt and Dunblane managed to drink their way through approximately 120 cups of tea/coffee, ahem – numerous biscuits and actually made some great crafts. We laughed, we cried and we laughed again making new friends along the way.

Colossians 3.23 was our scriptural challenge. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

And we did work at it with all our hearts. To be fair the aim of the group was to enjoy making crafts, not too stress ourselves out by trying to create works of art. However, His hand was upon us and we created some amazing pieces. The group ran for 4 weeks and we made felt Christmas tree crafts; Christmas cards; floral table decorations; bunting for the church; beautiful angels; and to finish a variety of edible Christmas treats on the last evening. All the group brought their own particular favourites for us to share and we had a very convivial last session, even although the demonstrators were questionable!

Despite a few traumas – losing the holly and poinsettias, and failing to work out how the automatic needle threader functioned – we carried on. If you didn't manage along you missed a good event but do not despair an Easter/Spring event is planned and the details will be intimated soon. The invitation is open to everyone male or female and no previous crafting skill is required but you must be able to drink tea or coffee while chatting/laughing and crafting and also anyone with a degree in engineering or home economics would be most welcome and useful in helping us work out how the needle threader functions....

To all the Girls/Ladies who attended –you rock! See you next time.

Signed The Facilitators (ha ha ha)



So, what are we doing in Sunday School?

The Sunday School teachers met on 11 January 2019 to discuss plans for the year up to Easter and to think about the Junior Church ONLY outing on 19 May 2019.

We have been looking at Bread for life – the Feeding of the 5000, The Good Shepherd and Death to Life – which challenges the children to tell Jesus, as many things as they can, about what they believe about Him. We have herded sheep, timed ourselves making jam sandwiches, tried to work out how long it would take to make sandwiches for 5000 plus and sung the Baa Baa song at the tops of our voices. In the middle of February we start our Easter preparation. Why are we starting so early – the teachers feel that Easter and Christmas are so important for us as Christians that we need to spend more time on these topics. We hope everyone in the church family will ask the children about what they are doing at Sunday School. It's good for them to know people are thinking about Jesus and not just on a Sunday.

Graeme and Lynn Hay were welcomed to the Sunday School team and goodbye and thank you to Margaret Watson for all her hard work in the past. As the Sunday School changes to meet the needs of the growing children it also needs a bank of volunteers who are prepared to give their time to our children. Can you read a story? Can you help children colour in? Do you have ideas that we could use? Can you be there once every few months to give us a hand if we are short staffed due to illness, holidays or other circumstances? Here is your opportunity to see Jesus through the eyes of our young people. Please let Gary Connery know if you would be prepared to help us.

Details of the Junior Church outing will be available soon and we hope that all the children will put this date in their diary (mums, dads and grannies). It will be great fun and completely different from what we have done in the past – watch this space. The Sunday School prize giving and church barbeque is planned for 23rd June.

In closing the SS team thank you for your continued support and ask you to pray that the team will be blessed with some more volunteers.

Rosemary McLellan

If you would like your event promoted in the church pew sheet and calendar, please send the following details to:

stblanesannouncements@gmail.com

Can you please include:

- Name and brief details of the event
- Date, time, place (eg. Church Hall)
- Contact person for questions or more information - Name, contact number and email address.
- Any other necessary details - such as cost, rsvp date, etc.

St Blane's Communication Committee

St Blane's Golf Day

The next St Blane's Golf Day is on Thursday 16th May - an afternoon of golf followed by a meal and a talk from a Christians in Sport golfer. This is an opportunity for folk from St Blane's and Lecropt to come together, including friends with or without a church connection, have some fun and enjoy fellowship and make new friends.

More details to follow

Michael Yuille

e: mgsyuille@gmail.com

t: 0784 112 3155

Presbytery Report

Inductions of new Ministers at Killearn and Stirling St Marks took place towards the end of 2018. Another induction is pending at Buchlyvie linked with Gartmore. There are eight vacancies, which is roughly a quarter of churches in the presbytery.

The adhoc group working on a new presbytery plan continues. The focus up to now has been on Stirling City Centre and its 4 churches including one linkage. Stirling Allan Park South and Stirling St. Columba's are now working on terms of union for a new church. There is work underway with the various Carse churches with a third meeting imminent which will discuss various proposals. Many of these churches are small but active and serving their communities in a number of vibrant ways. This situation is complex as the boundaries are fluid and there are in fact numerous options.

The group has also divided the presbytery into a number of small areas with the churches invited to meet informally and look at ways of working together. We, including Lecropt, are linked with the Cathedral, Logie and Bridge of Allan.

Your prayers for all of the above are encouraged.

Dan Gunn
Presbytery Elder

Prayer chain

“To pray is to accept that we are, and always will be, wholly dependent on God for everything.” (Timothy Keller.)

Realising this means that we need to make our requests known to God, and that's how the twenty members of the prayer chain group can support you. With this edition of Chronicles you will find a prayer request postcard. You can make your request using the card which can be posted in the church porch letterbox, or the box in the Mitchell room, or handed to your elder. You may wish to keep the card or pass it on to a friend, or you may prefer to make any requests through your elder or the minister. Today, or anytime, the group is committed to help you by praying.

Thank you

Once again I have, a short time before Christmas, received “the Church flowers” and once again I have been a bit tardy in sending my thanks, so since Chronicles is due to be published soon I thought it a good idea to express my thanks more publicly. The receiving of the flowers was much appreciated by me and this pleasure was increased because it brought back happy memories of how Frances used to respond to receiving the kind gift with the prayers and thoughts of the congregation.

My thanks especially to the members who provide and deliver the flowers and to our Flower Convener Nessie who efficiently organises all aspects of the flower rota.

Thank you all,
God bless,

Pat Mackay

Thoughts on the Lord's prayer

I cannot say FATHER if I do not demonstrate this relationship in my daily living.

I cannot say WHO ART IN HEAVEN if all my interests and pursuits are in earthly things.

I cannot say HALLOWED BY THY NAME if I, who am called to bear His Name, am not holy.

I cannot say THY KINGDOM COME if I am unwilling to give up my own sovereignty and accept the righteous reign of God.

I cannot say ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN unless I am truly ready to give myself to His service here and now.

I cannot say GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD without expending honest effort for it, or by ignoring the genuine needs of others.

I cannot say FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US if I continue to harbour a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION if I deliberately choose to remain in a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I cannot say DELIVER US FROM EVIL if I am not prepared to fight in the spiritual realm with the weapon of prayer.

I cannot say THINE IS THE KINGDOM if I do not give the King the disciplined obedience of a loyal subject.

I cannot say THINE IS THE POWER if I fear what my neighbours and friends may say or do.

I cannot say THINE IS THE GLORY if I am seeking my own glory first.

I cannot say FOREVER if I am too anxious about each day's events.

I cannot say AMEN unless I honestly say "Cost what it may, This is my prayer."

Source unknown

Dunblane Churches Together, Lent Study Groups

We are hoping this year to arrange ecumenical groups to study and discuss the course *The Mystery of God* published by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI).

There was some disappointment that the CTBI material last year gave little scope for study or discussion, but this year's course appears to be better constructed, with more material each week than will be needed, allowing groups to find their own best way of working.

There will certainly be at least one evening course group, and we hope also to have at least one group meeting during the day. Will anyone who might be interested please contact me on 823749 or on adjbirch@btinternet.com, indicating whether they would prefer an evening or daytime meeting and which days of the week they might manage. The material for the course can be found at www.ctbi.org.uk/lent.

All participants will be very welcome, but I would be particularly glad to hear if anyone might be prepared to host and/or to lead a group.

Anthony Birch

St Blane's Pastoral Group

We organise transport to Church, local hospitals, and the Health Centre. If you feel you would benefit from help, please contact any of the group.

Janet Conely 823800

Myra MacLeod 823414

Morag Campbell 823028

Margaret Carter 822597

Liz Reid 823576

The Christian Church Year, 2019

Movable dates in the Christian year

As the date of Easter varies from year to year, dates which depend on Easter also vary: for example, Ash Wednesday, and Pentecost. So, when Easter is early, it encroaches on the nine Sundays after Epiphany, however the number of Sundays after Pentecost expands to compensate for the deficit.

The major dates of the Christian Church Year for 2019, beginning with the Season of Epiphany, are:-

The Season of Epiphany (January 6 – March 5)

The Epiphany, or revelation, of the baby Jesus as the Son of God come into the world, is traditionally celebrated on the 6 January.

Epiphany: January 6

Shrove Tuesday or Mardi Gras: March 5

The Season of Lent (March 6 – April 20)

Lent is the 40 day period before Easter beginning with Ash Wednesday.

During Lent Christians may fast, or give up some of their usual routine, to give time to personal examination and to reflect on their relationship with God.

Ash Wednesday: March 6

First Sunday in Lent: March 10

Holy Week (April 14 - April 20)

Holy Week is the last week of Lent. It is the week preceding Easter and the period in the Christian year when Christians remember the last week in Jesus' life.

Palm/Passion Sunday: April 14

Maundy Thursday: April 18

Good Friday: April 19

Holy Saturday: April 20

The Season of Easter (April 21– June 9)

Easter is the season in which Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the most important festival in the Christian year.

Easter Sunday: April 21

Easter Monday: April 22

Ascension Day: May 30

Ascension Day commemorates the ascension of Jesus into heaven 40 days after his resurrection from the dead, and can be understood traditionally as his taking up into heaven at the conclusion of his earthly ministry.

Pentecost: June 9

Pentecost is the festival when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is celebrated on the Sunday fifty days after Easter. Pentecost is also known as Whitsun.

Ordinary Time/Season after Pentecost (June 10 – November 30)

Trinity Sunday: June 16

Trinity Sunday is a day when Christians think of the nature of God rather than, as with other festivals, commemorating historical events of special significance.

The Season of Advent (December 1 – December 24)

Advent is the four week period before Christmas. There are four Sundays in Advent. The word 'Advent' means 'coming' or 'arrival' and in this case points towards the birth of Jesus celebrated at Christmas. One special service involving children is called Christingle and can be held during Advent, Christmas or Epiphany.

First Sunday of Advent: December 1

Second Sunday of Advent: December 8

Third Sunday of Advent: December 15

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 22

The Season of Christmas (December 25, 2019 – January 5, 2020)

The season of Christmas begins on the 25 December and traditionally lasts twelve days ending on 5 January. Christmas is the time when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Christmas Day: December 25

First Sunday of Christmas: December 29

Investing in Peace in Palestine and Israel (IPPI)

This is a national movement which seeks on the 24th of each month to meet together to pray for peace in this deeply troubled region of the world. There is a small group in Dunblane which meets locally for an hour on the 24th. Do join us if you can.

The problems are deep and complex and the situation can appear to be totally intractable with the suffering and bloodshed increasing in intensity and volume. The need for prayer has never been greater.

Here are some examples to consider.

The Great March of Return continued on Friday the 18th of January. Defence for Children International – Palestine (DCIP) reported that 45 children have been killed in Gaza since March 30th.

- **Lord, we pray for a breakthrough in the peace talks and an end to this pitiless siege of Gaza. Comfort those families who have lost children and cast your protecting grace over all children in Gaza. Lord, in your mercy...*hear our prayers.***

Riyad al-Malki, the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Palestinian Authority, stated that this year Palestine will assume the presidency of the Group of 77 and China, to negotiate development issues in the U.N. Palestine has been a non-member observer state in the U.N. since 2012. It intends to re-submit its application for full membership of the U.N. at the end of this year's mandate.

- **Dear Lord, we pray for strength and steadfastness for those working in organisations like the U.N., who devote their lives to challenging injustice and oppression. Lord, in your mercy...*hear our prayers.***

Students have been returning to school after their mid-year vacation. Many pupils in the occupied territories face obstacles to their access to education. Some students experience abuse from Israeli settlers on their way to and from school, others face delays at checkpoints, while others are subjected to frequent searches on their school bus journeys.

- **Lord, we pray for the students as they go back to school, that they would continue to value their education. For those who face further difficulties, may they find the determination to complete their studies and use their qualifications to help their local communities. Lord, in your mercy...*hear our prayers.***

Human Rights Watch criticised the Palestinian Authority for restricting online freedom of speech and arresting dissidents.

- **Thank you, Lord Jesus, that when you came into the world, we received your grace and truth, (John 1:17). Help us to stand firm and challenge the suppression of truth by those in authority. Lord in your mercy...*hear our prayers.***

On Sunday, the 13th of January, a group of Israeli settlers destroyed nearly a thousand tree saplings in Burqa, west of the northern occupied West Bank district of Nablus. The saplings were being cultivated to transform the land around Burqa into a nature reserve.

- **Lord, we pray that these frequent acts of vandalism by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank would cease. Lord, in your mercy...*hear our prayers.***

We as Christians cannot walk on the other side. Let us always remember this area in our prayers.

Dan Gunn

A Good Read

“Where was God when that happened?” By Christopher Ash. 2017.
About £3 available as paperback or e-book. Approx 90 pages.
How could God let (fill in the blank) happen?

When a disaster happens or personal tragedy strikes, we may find this difficult to answer, or begin to wonder if God is truly good or truly in control.

This clearly written book answers the toughest questions about God's providence, evil and suffering, and is especially helpful for Christians who are struggling or don't know what to say when asked. A great little book to read or give away.

Have you noticed that on the door wedge used between the Mitchell room and the main part of the church there's a resident wee carved wooden mouse? This anonymous, humorous poem lends yet another twist to the story of the "poor church mouse".

The Moosie's Prayer

A puir wee kirk moose a' forlorn
Its furry coat fair sairly worn
Sank doon upon its bony knees
and prayed - for just a wee bit cheese.

The tears ran doon its wee thin cheeks
But nane could hear the saddest squeaks
That drifted oan the cauld nicht air
Till whiles it couldnae pray nae mair.

SYNE daylight cam, the kirk bells rang
The doors swung open wi' a bang
Communion day had come oan by
Wi' wine and plates o' breid held high.
The wee moose lay as still as daith
And watched it a' wi bated braith
Then thocht - if I keep awfu' quate
A bit micht jist fa' aff a plate.

And so it gazed as roond they went
Then jist as tho twas heaven sent
Whit landed richt upon its heid
Bit twa lumps o' communion breid.

The staff o' life lay oan the flair –
Then, bounteous answer to his prayer
Jist as he thocht, 'It looks fell dry'.
Ae body couped some wine forbye.

Wee moosie stoated up the aisle
Wearin sic a boozy smile
The folk stopped singin', fair aghast
Tae see a drunken moose walk past.

The organist fell aff his chair,
The meenister could only stare
Tae see this drunken, sinfu' moose
Cavortin' in his sacred hoose.

At last it staggered up the nave
Then turned and gied a happy wave
"I ken noo when its time to pray
I'll do it oan communion day".

Dear Church family,

We are working to create a church calendar and we need your help.

If you are the contact, the coordinator, or the “go to” person for an event, committee or ministry (each can only have one contact listed), and would like your event/meeting promoted in the church service sheet, website and church calendar, please send the following details to:

stblanesannouncements@gmail.com

Can you please include:

- Name and brief details of the event - answer the basic questions a first time guest would most likely ask.
- Day, Date, time, place (eg. Church Hall) of each meeting
- Contact info for questions or more information - Name, contact number, and/or email address
- Any other necessary details - such as cost, rsvp date, etc.

The online calendar will be updated around the 25th of each month for the following month. The deadline is Wednesday each week for the service sheet for the following Sunday. Space is limited.

Note: If you have a special occasion you would like to share in the “Family News”, please let us know.

For any queries, speak with Angela MacKenzie or contact her at the email address above. Thank you for your help and patience as this will be a work in progress.

St Blane’s Communication Committee

**Daily Bible Reading Guide for
March - May 2019**

<i>March 2019</i>			<i>April 2019</i>		
<i>Fri</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Matt 5:38-48</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>John 6:1-15</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Matt 6:1-6</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>John 6:16-27</i>
			<i>Wed</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>John 6:27-40</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>John 12:24-32</i>	<i>Thur</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>John 6:41-51</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>John 1:1-18</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>John 6:52-59</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>John 1:19-28</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>John 6:60-71</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Luke 18:9-14</i>			
<i>Thur</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>John 1:29-34</i>	<i>SUN</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Mark 8:31-9:1</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>John 1:35-42</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>John 9:1-17</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>John 1:43-51</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>John 9:18-41</i>
			<i>Wed</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>John 10:1-18</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Mark 2:18-22</i>	<i>Thur</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>John 10:19-42</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>John 2:1-12</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>John 11:1-27</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>John 2:13-22</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>John 11:28-44</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>John 2:23-3:15</i>			
<i>Thur</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>John 3:16-21</i>	<i>SUN</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>Matt 21:12-17</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>John 3:22-36</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>John 12:9-19</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>John 4:1-26</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>John 12:20-26</i>
			<i>Wed</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>John 12:27-36</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>Mark 3:31-4:9</i>	<i>Thur</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>John 17</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>John 4:27-42</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>John 18:1-19:42</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>John 4:43-54</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Matt 27:57-66</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>John 5:1-18</i>			
<i>Thur</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>John 5:19-29</i>	<i>SUN</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>John 20:19-23</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>John 5:30-47</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>John 14:1-14</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>John 7:1-13</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>John 14:15-31</i>
			<i>Wed</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>John 15:1-11</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Mark 5:1-20</i>	<i>Thur</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>John 15:12-27</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>John 7:14-36</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>John 16:1-15</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>John 7:37-52</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>John 16:16-33</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>John 8:12-20</i>			
<i>Thur</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>John 8:21-32</i>	<i>SUN</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>John 14:1-7</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>John 8:33-47</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>John 17:1-11</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>John 8:47-59</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>John 17:12-19</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>Mark 8:11-21</i>			

May 2019

<i>Wed</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>John 17:20-26</i>
<i>Thur</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Luke 3:1-14</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Luke 3:15-22</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Luke 4:1-13</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>John 21:15-25</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Luke 4:14-30</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Luke 4:31-37</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Luke 4:38-44</i>
<i>Thur</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Luke 5:1-11</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Luke 5:12-26</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>Luke 5:27-39</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Matt 7:15-29</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>Luke 6:1-11</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>Luke 6:12-26</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Luke 6:27-38</i>
<i>Thur</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>Luke 6:39-49</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>Luke 7:1-17</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>Luke 7:18-35</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>Matt 7:7-14</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Luke 7:36-50</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>Luke 8:1-15</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Luke 8:16-25</i>
<i>Thur</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>Luke 8:26-39</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Luke 8:40-56</i>
<i>Sat</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>Luke 9:1-17</i>
<i>SUN</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>Matt 13:24-34a</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>Luke 9:18-27</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>Luke 11:1-13</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>Luke 12:22-31</i>
<i>Thur</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Matt 28:16-20</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>Luke 9:28-36</i>

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday: Morning Worship 10.00 a.m.
Evening Service 6.30 p.m.

Communion: Last Sunday in February, May and October
10.00 am and 6.30 pm (after Thanksgiving)

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