



Welcome to the December Magazine. It is hard to think this magazine carries a Christmas message when it is only November, but, realistically Christmas will soon be upon us. We have heard for some time now how many shopping days are left, and the children are already making their lists for Santa.

With the central heating system work ongoing in the Church, worship in the hall is working well and we are getting to know each other as we sit beside different folks Sunday by Sunday. Some of us are opting for the 9.30 am service, another opportunity to get to know each other. One thing is for sure, the hall is very cosy, just right for some, a bit warm for others. We seem to be adjusting to that, and for now worship in the hall has taken on a familiar pattern.

There is no date for completion yet, and we hope and pray that the work goes ahead with no hitches, and wouldn't it be wonderful if we were back in the church for Christmas. A tremendous amount of work will be needed to put the sanctuary back in order after the work is finished, which will require a large number of volunteers to help, whether for Christmas or not.

Our advent journey will carry on as normal as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, as we may be concerned where we will worship at Christmas, let us not forget that Jesus was born in a stable.

Details of Advent lunches services for December will appear in the Order of Service

The next Magazine material is due last week in January 2010
Material to either Cath Barbour or Joe Craig or e-mail Cath at cathbarbour@btconnect.com.

The Magazine Team



View from the Pulpit: Why does God bother with us?

Walter has been a family friend for over thirty-five years. We met through Gillespie Memorial Church in Dunfermline while we lived there. Our paths also crossed during training for the ministry at New College in Edinburgh. He developed into an exceptionally capable Hebrew scholar with the prospect of a career in academia. We were proud of his achievements. He was adopted by our children as Uncle Walter.



After college, he decided to spend some time in Israel and became warden of what was then the Church of Scotland hospice in Tiberias but found he was expected to spend most of his time acting as a hotel manager and tour guide; he had hoped to spend some of his time getting to know more about Jewish habits and customs at first hand. Some years later he opted to join an organisation called The Christian Mission to the Jews and made his home in Tel Aviv before moving back to live in St Albans.

But Walter's personal life was as unsettled as his career. He had married twice. We were directly involved on both occasions and it was a great sadness to us that this should happen. Word came to us at Christmas about 10 years ago that he had left home, his wife and four children; he included a telephone number as a hopeful point of contact.

I kept the card; but it was some years later I felt I had to try to get in touch with Walter again. I phoned the number. I was told he had gone to live in Birmingham and had left no forwarding address. I was given the number of his estranged wife who very graciously offered to make contact with him through his family. Eventually a call came.

It was not an easy conversation, but we agreed to keep in touch. Some days later an e-mail arrived with the message: "I don't know why you bother with me." I wrote back to say he ought to know. Thankfully, we are in regular contact again.

He came to visit earlier in the year, and we expect him back soon. I'm glad I kept his Christmas card; and that he has been restored to our family again.

We think of Christmas as a family time; and rightly so. By then our grandson with be two and much more aware and involved in our family celebrations. Christmas is a time when we let down our guard a little and for a brief time at least we reflect our innate thoughtful feelings through generosity and concern. It may be the child in us that wants to be reminded year by year of the baby in the manger. It may be that some have a longing for a very different kind of experience that somehow puts the mystery of life and of God into a different, longed-for perspective but which tends to evaporate when the emotion of Christmas is over.

What if our everyday lives, and not just our Christmas emotions, reflected the child-like amazement of the humble Shepherds and the joy of the powerful Wise Men? Would our world not be a very different place? Or have we become just as cynical as those who cannot begin to see that God's way is the only way to the new world promised in the birth of his Son. God's way may be child-centred but it does not stem from a cotton-wool Christmas.

When we reflect on life as it has become, perhaps we might want to say with our friend Walter: I don't know why you bothered. God bothered because of his love for all humanity; the message of Christmas is as simple as that. How we see it, how we react to it and reflect it, will determine what we become and, as a consequence, what our world becomes.

Have a wonderful Christ-centred Christmas. God bless you all.

Rev. Bill Armstrong

Westburn Church Website

Our Church web site is up and running and can be found at - <http://www.greenockwestburn.org.uk/> Please visit it and view it's contents.

Each Church Organisation has it's own individual page. As the winter session is about to commence, the organisations are encouraged to use their page to advertise their syllabus or activities.

A similar invitation is made to any church member who feels that they can assist in making the web site more interesting.

Further information can be obtained from Jim Bell 01475 799381 or all.the.bells@ntlworld.com



Church News Book



The Church News Book can be found on the table at the front of the Church, please use this as a communication to help keep the minister informed of anyone who is ill or in hospital, or of any news of special birthdays and anniversaries.



Be sure to add the person's address even if they are in hospital. If the minister doesn't know he can't do anything about it.

Life and Work

Life and Work is available the last Sunday of every month priced £1.60 Subscriptions available. Delivery can be arranged if you are unable to get to church.

Please contact **Shelagh Hendry Tele. 794667.**



Emmaus Study Group

Emmaus Study Group will be starting a four week study on Wednesday 18th November. The title is "A Walk On The Wild Side". Please feel welcome to come along and join in this look at the story of Jonah and what it has to teach us today.

Meeting in the The Lounge at 7.30 pm

Leader Rev. Bill Armstrong

First Friday Group

The First Friday group is up and running again, we welcomed to our first meeting Neil Hewitt who shared with us his experiences in Malawi. We were indebted to Neil for agreeing (perhaps we should be thanking his mother for volunteering him) especially as we knew the numbers were going to be small that night.

The programme for the rest of the session is

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Guest</u> | <u>Topic</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 6 November | Ann McLeod | Trip to Ethiopia |
| 4 December | Jennifer Boag | Advent |
| 8 January | Rev W Armstrong | "First Foot" |
| 5 February | Alex Hunter | TBA |
| 12 March | Graeme Eadie | Holiday in Malawi |

Andrew Borland

Patricia Robertson

Report of the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisely Tuesday, 8th September 2009 Within Kilbarchan West Church

Ordinary business commenced after a service of Communion in the retiring Moderator's own church.

Thanks were expressed to Rev Arthur Sherratt for his efficiency at conducting business; one of the meetings being the shortest ever recorded at Presbytery! Having a hearing problem himself he appreciated the help given to him and also the consistent use of microphone by Presbyters.

New members to Presbytery were welcomed and Moderator nominee Rev Alistair Shaw , Johnstone: St Paul's was elected and installed.
Rev.Gordon Armstrong, full time Chaplain appointed by Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board at IRH was welcomed and admitted to a seat in Presbytery.

Notices:- Scottish Church Theology Society Conference – "looking at Darwin and Christian Theology." This will be held in Creiff Hydro from 11th to 25th Jan.

Presbytery Chaplains:- There is a team of chaplains to support ministers, deacons and other parish workers in the Presbytery. Rev Maureen Leitch was appointed earlier in 2009 as the first member of the new Chaplaincy Team.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Rev. Alistair Cook will take over officially as Presbytery Treasurer from Nov 1st 2009. Rev Alistair Cherry, former editor of Pray Now was approved as successor to Rev Alan ward as Presbytery Clerk.

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Safeguarding:- A Safeguarding Learning and Development Course "Training to Train" will be held as a Residential weekend on Sat 23rd and Sun 24th Jan 2010 at Carronvale House, Larbet.

Working with children and young people:- Linda Pollock, Regional Development Officer from the Mission and Discipleship Council and Graham Allison, who specialises in Youth Ministry led a very successful evening in June about training and resourcing individuals and congregations who work with 0 – 16 year olds.

MINISTRY

Presbytery has two Candidates for Auxiliary Ministry and one Leader in Training under its supervision. Grants of £350 and £250 were approved respectively.

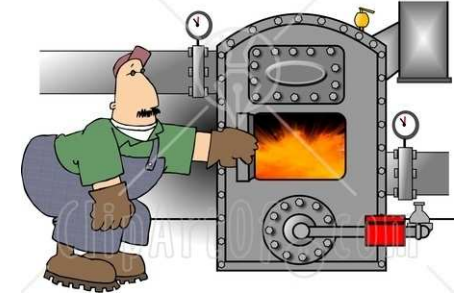
Study leave was approved for Rev Robin Allison, Douglas Cranston, Eleanor McMahon and Alan Ward.

PROPERTY

Greenock : Westburn:- Presbytery approved expenditure of £8,950 or thereby in repairing leaks in the heating system and other resulting repairs and also application to General Trustees for release of funds on behalf of the congregation, noting the financial limit has been breached.

**Margaret Crawford
Presbytery Elder**

Property Update - Sanctuary Heating System



Firstly, thanks must go to Stuart Robertson and the team who cleared the Sanctuary of books, chairs, pew cushions et al and moved the Communion Tables plus associated Lecterns and Baptismal Fonts to the "safety" of the Chancel on 22nd September before the contractor's men started their work on the 28th. Thanks also to Bob Seggie and Ronnie Mackay who have carefully shortened some 16 pews on the North and South walls to accommodate radiators under 6 of the side windows.

At the time of writing this update (15th October) we are halfway through the 3rd week of work and the "stripping out" of the old system pipes has been completed on all 4 levels of the Sanctuary Building (Boiler House, Basement, Sanctuary Ground Floor and Gallery). The first couple of weeks were uneventful. However, and didn't you just know there was going to be a "however!"

Most of us would be unaware that under the aisle carpeting were very heavy Caithness slabs. Last Thursday (8th) it was noted that a couple of these slabs, when walked upon, "rocked a bit" and one was so dangerously unstable that work might have to be stopped due to fear of accidents to the contractor's workers. The support walls underneath the slabs were found to be no longer supporting, and the lime mortar was no longer holding the bricks together (the under-floor banks of cast iron pipes seem to have been performing that role!) A site meeting with the contractor, project engineer and ourselves took place on Friday 9th. The outcome was that a building firm was recommended to reinstate supporting walls and create wooden floors on the four aisles. This flooring will stretch the width of the aisles and will be covered by new carpeting, the cost of which has been specifically provided for by a recent legacy to the Church. The work required to be undertaken was determined jointly by the builder and a

local structural engineer on Tuesday 13th. Drawings and quotations were received on the 14th with the work scheduled to begin within days.

This additional, necessary under-floor work was never in the plans but it is hoped that it will not extend the time in which the installation of the new heating system and its testing can be completed, and, the very necessary comprehensive cleaning of the Sanctuary can begin prior to its use once again for Services of Worship. It will be good to get back “Home” when the job is done!

**Andrew Borland
Property Convenor**

Church Flowers

We are nearing the end of 2009 and we would like to thank those who donated flowers to enhance the Sanctuary Sunday by Sunday, those who arranged them and those who delivered them after the service. The flowers are greatly appreciated by those who receive them.

The calendar for 2010 will be available on Sunday 6 December, when anyone wishing to donate can put their name against the date which has a special meaning for them. A special plea this time is being made for people to deliver the flowers after the service as this year it has fallen often to the same people and for a congregation our size it seems very unfair. There is a list available at the same time as the Flower calendar, we know that it is not always easy to commit to a particular Sunday months ahead but if members could look at the list from time to time particularly when you think you could be available to help out, it would be greatly appreciated.

Once again many thanks to all who have been involved.



**Linda Murray
Patricia Robertson
Flower Conveners**

Time for Prayer



In our lives, time and again we have to make important choices. Repeatedly we find ourselves in situations where it is difficult to know what is the right choice to make. At other times, it might be more obvious what the right choice is, but it nevertheless remains difficult to make that choice because the alternatives are so tempting, so apparently attractive. At such difficult times it is good to remind ourselves that our prayer can be a powerful resource to help and to guide us.

Our prayers can give us strength and resolve to make decisions that we know to be right, even if hard for us, and persistent prayer can steer us in the right direction when we are unsure or hesitant about what is the right thing to do. So when we are doubtful or uncertain what to do, let us always try to remember to turn to God and ask for his guidance. That is what is happening in this prayer written by John Baillie, a Scotsman who left this country to go and work in America. He was particularly interested in promoting good relations between different Christian denominations, and he eventually became President of the World Council of Churches. This prayer also reminds us that while we may all sometimes find ourselves in difficult situations or predicaments, with the help of God we can seek and find the right way forward.

**Teach me, O God, so to use all the circumstances of my life today that they may bring forth in me the fruits of holiness rather than the fruits of sin.
Let me use disappointments as material for patience:
Let me use success as material for thankfulness:
Let me use suspense as material for perseverance:
Let me use danger as material for courage:
Let me use reproach as material for longsuffering:
Let me use praise as material for humility.
Let me use pleasure as material for temperance:
Let me use pains as material for endurance.**

Amen.

Douglas Scott

The Guild

Here I am sitting writing this article for the next Magazine and we haven't even changed the clocks yet for the winter and the QM2 is about to visit Greenock for the first time.

We are pleased to welcome 4 new members this session and hope they will enjoy the friendship and fellowship within the guild. The entertainment at our Opening Social was provided by members of Greenbank Ensemble, a very enjoyable night was had by all and there was also a chance to meet up with friends from within the group.

We had a very entertaining night when Mrs Kathleen McPherson, a member of Lenzie Union Church Guild spoke to us on Hollywood, a Presbyterian Perspective.

Greenock Presbyterial Council Autumn Rally has taken place in St. Andrew's Church, Port Glasgow but unfortunately Rev Neil Galbraith was not able to be with us but Rev Dr. Glenn Chestnutt addressed us on our theme, "To act justly" and celebrated Holy Communion.

As I said in the last magazine, our Coffee Morning is on Saturday 14 November and we look forward to welcoming you to it. This is our main fund raising event with the proceeds going to the Guild projects and our own Church.

Once again we will be participating in donating gifts for the prisoners at Greenock Prison, these gifts will be wrapped under the supervision of the Prison Chaplain, and this is the only gift not opened before they receive it. These gifts consist of a facecloth, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste. Normally around 300 gifts are made up. It is hoped that we will be able to give them a bar of chocolate as well.

I would still like on behalf of all the guild members to take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful Christmas and every blessing for 2010.

Patricia Robertson – Guild President

Guild Syllabus for 2010

January

12 – Miss Jennifer Boag – Slides of Egypt

19 – Mrs Edith Saunders – Subject of her Choice

26 – Project

February

2 – Burns Supper

9 - Presbyterial Council ABM – St. Margaret's Church

16- Rodger Manson – Old Gourock

**23 – Annual Business Meeting & Bible Study –
Rev. W. R. Armstrong - Topic**

March

2 – Mrs Helen Dunbar – Mercy Ship

10 - (Wed) Spring Rally – St. John's Gourock

16 – Mrs Jennifer D. Gallagher – Justice & Peace Convenor

23 – Closing Social – Stedfast Band

Brownies

This is going to be a busy year for us. We have already been to the Ice Rink for a disco and held a Homecoming Concert for family and friends. A Halloween party is next followed by an outing to Guidespell then a Panto and all before Christmas. Phew! The brownies all received Guide Tartan neckies for performing at the homecoming concert. Shortbread and our other national drink was supplied for the guests.

Anne McKerlie



Homecoming
Concert



Ice

Getting to know the Armstrongs



While our Minister, the Rev. Bill Hewitt, serves as Moderator of the General Assembly, Sunday Services and important pastoral work have been undertaken by the Rev Bill Armstrong. We caught up with Bill to find out more about his background, family life and journey into the Ministry.

October the eleventh was an auspicious day in the Armstrong family as Laura and Bill celebrated their ruby wedding anniversary. The family, Helen with husband Billy, David and Joanne, and grandson Bruce met at the Brig o' Doon hotel in Alloway for a celebratory lunch. It was a beautiful autumn day not unlike the day of their wedding in St Michael's Church, Dumfries. Though both Laura and Bill hail from Dumfries and Galloway. They had met in Edinburgh where Laura was training as a nurse at the Western General and Bill was an engineer with Ferranti.

They made their first home in Dunfermline. By this time Bill had moved to work for Marconi at Hillend in Fife and Laura was appointed a ward sister at the Dunfermline and West Fife Hospital. Bill had moved to Marconi to give engineering a second chance. He had become unsettled in his work and felt the urge to do something completely different with his life. He had grown up in the Church, a connection he had maintained when he moved to Edinburgh.

A further four years in industry had not brought the satisfaction he envisaged and it was then that he, with Laura's encouragement, began to test new waters. An appointment with the Rev Henry Shepherd at the Church Offices gave him an inkling of what would be expected of him if he was to be accepted as a candidate for full-time ministry. Though he felt the challenge considerable, he decided that at each stage he would assess his progress. Following further interview he was accepted as a candidate for the ministry. Five years later he

emerged from New College, Edinburgh with a Bachelor of Divinity degree. The family then moved to West Kilbride where Bill served his probationary period. By this time Laura and Bill had three of a family.

Their first child, Helen, arrived on a Sunday morning while Bill was a student attached to Dunfermline Abbey. He phoned the minister to tell him of the happy event and was given the day off. Helen's birth was announced from the pulpit of the abbey on the day of her birth which meant a lot to Bill, but not so much to Helen. The subsequent arrival of David and Joanne were not heralded with the same ecclesiastical grandeur but the thrill of their arrival was not in any way diminished.

Bill was ordained and inducted to the charge of Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay on the sixteenth on May 1979 where he served out his ministry. He retired on the twenty-ninth of February 2008.

From the Roll Keeper

DEATHS

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|----|
| Mr. R. McVey | F42 St. Andrews Ct. 46b Ardgowan St. | 6 |
| Mrs. J. Park | Bagatelle Nursing Hm., 47 Eldon St. | 22 |

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

| | | |
|--------------|---|----|
| Mrs. I. Lang | Holy Rosary Nursing Home from Residential Home | 22 |
| Mr. J. Ross | Ravensraig Dunrod Unit From Marchmont | 22 |

Moved leaving no forwarding address-

| | | |
|------------------|--|----|
| Mr. N. Macdonald | F3/1, Muriel Blue Ct., 1 Caledonia Gdns. | 10 |
|------------------|--|----|

TRANSFERRED to SUPPLEMENTARY ROLL

Miss S. Jackson 2 Katrine Rd.

20

Kids say the funniest things



Some children from an elementary school were asked questions about stories in the bible, these are some of the answers – exactly as written.

Moses led the Jews to the Red Sea where they made unleavened bread which is bread without ingredients.

The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.

The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.

Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

When the three wise guys from the east side arrived they found Jesus in a manger.

St. John the blacksmith dumped water on his head .

The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 decibels.

The epistels were the wives of the apostles

St. Paul cavorted to christianity, he preached holy acrimony which is another name for marriage.

Christians have ony one spouse, this is called monotony.