



Welcome to the June Magazine. As we mentioned in the last magazine 2009 is going to be a challenging and changing year for the congregation.

These changes continue with Barbara Ann leaving us in May.

Our Minister Mr Hamilton retires on **Sunday 14th June**, further details are in the magazine for a presentation and lunch on that day. There is also details of a farewell ceilidh for Douglas and Nancy being held in the church hall on **Friday 12th June**, please give these events your consideration and give Douglas and Nancy a really good send off, as we wish them well in Douglas's retirement.

Rev. Bill Armstrong has now been with us since early March when Mr. Hewitt left to prepare for May for taking up his post As Moderator of the General Assembly. Mr Armstrong is settling in well and we hope he feels at home with us in Westburn as he carries out his locum duties till June 2010 when Mr. Hewitt returns.

It is up to all of us to support Bill (Armstrong) and help him particularly with any information about members of the congregation who are ill or in hospital. Communication is so important, it is up to all of us to work with Bill and ensure a good year for Westburn, that is a good year for Minister and congregation. As it says in Hymn **You are the church, I am the church, We are the Church together.**

If you missed your elder's visit please turn to page 4 for important information.

The next Magazine material is due by mid August.

Material to either Cath Barbour or Joe Craig or e-mail Cath at cathbarbour@btconnect.com.

The Magazine team...



**The Manse
67 Forsyth Street
Greenock**

Dear Members,

This is my last letter to you as your minister. I retire on the 6th July.

I am taking holidays, to accommodate the move to our new house, so my last Sunday will be Communion Sunday on the 14th June.

Inevitably I have been looking back over the years. I started my theological training in 1969 at Trinity College, Glasgow University.

In 1974 I moved to Cathcart Old Parish Church as Probationer Assistant and did a further year with the congregation as an Ordained Assistant. In 1975 I moved to my first charge of Newtongrange, 7 miles south of Edinburgh. Being a country lad, I asked God, if it was possible, that I would get a country parish. What was Newtongrange? It was the biggest concentration of miner's rows in Europe! But God has a delectable sense of humour – 5 years later he **ADDED ON** the country parish of Borthwick.

Then came the call to St George's North. I had always said I would never stay more than 10 years in the one charge, as you got used to the congregation and they got used to you. "Move on and let fresh and new thinking come in." Well, I was minister in St George's North for 21 years! My only excuse is – "there was always something new to do." I'm sure there were many in St George's North that wished I had stuck to my original idea of going after 10 years. Through those years many became my friends and I will miss them deeply when I move on to pastures new.

In 2006 I was beginning to look towards the run in to retirement but there was, once again, a change to my plans. This change was the union between St George's North and St Luke's. There was now certainly no coasting into retirement and also the adjustment from being sole minister for 31 years to being a collegiate minister. It has been busy, at times frenetic, but it has been encouraging and exciting. Bill Hewitt and I have got on well. Sometimes it was frightening, as in certain situations, each knew what the other was thinking without a word being spoken. Rather like an old married couple!!!

"Change" is once again thrusting itself upon us – Bill preparing for his year as Moderator of the General Assembly and me going off to – well exactly what I

am going off to remains to be seen. This means great change for the congregation too. But change can act as a stimulus and I hope that Office Bearers and members will face these changes as an opportunity to move forward rather than an excuse to sit back.

I won't be sorry to leave the job. It has changed out of all recognition over the last few decades, but I will be sorry to leave all of you. I will miss you all and I suspect I don't yet appreciate just how much I will miss you – the former St George's North members who put up with me so graciously and warmly and the former St Luke's members who have welcomed me with acceptance and friendship. We are Westburn now, and soon I will be no longer with you on the Church's journey but I will always hold you in my heart and prayers.

Ah Well! Back to clearing out 35 years of accumulated "things"
Why is this "change" lark always so hard?

Your Minister and Friend,

Douglas Hamilton

INVITATION TO "Retiral of Rev. Douglas Hamilton"

*Rev Wm Douglas Hamilton will retire as minister of Greenock
Westburn on SUNDAY 14 JUNE 2009*

*On Sunday 14th June there will be one service at 11am
which will be Holy Communion.(There will be no afternoon service)
A presentation will take place in the Church when the main speaker
will be The Right Rev. William C. Hewitt, Moderator of the
General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.
After the service a buffet will be served in the church hall*

*Members of the congregation who wish to contribute to a financial
gift should place a donation in an envelope marked 'Rev Douglas
Hamilton Retiral' and place it in the offering plate on Sundays 24th
May, 31st May and 7th June, or hand an envelope to your elder.
Please complete the tear-off slip and send it no later than 7th June
to:- Mr Alan Gallacher, 29 Nelson St. Greenock
All are welcome to attend as Westburn Church marks the
retiral of the parish minister*

Name:-

No of places reqd:-



50 Ardgowan Street
Greenock
April 2009

Dear Friends,

First of all can I thank you for the gifts that you gave to Moira and I on our last Sunday with you in March. I go to Edinburgh on Friday to have my official photograph taken and my cassock will be worn with great pride, not only in the photo but throughout the Assembly and the coming year. Moira truly appreciates the gift you gave to her, she had great fun choosing her jewellery and wrapping it in the jewellery roll. I also want to thank you for the wonderful 'send-off' which we enjoyed in the church and afterwards in the Academy. It was a very emotional day and I thank you all for your support and look forward to that continuing throughout the year. You will be able to keep up with our engagements through the Church of Scotland website, www.cofscotland.org.uk.

I know that this magazine will be the last one during Douglas' ministry here and I want to thank him again for all the work which he has done over the years in St George's North and in particular for the work and the fun which we have shared in the last two and a half years. It has been a joy to have him as a colleague and when I return I will certainly miss both he and Nancy.

I also want to thank Barbara Ann for her time with us. Her enthusiasm and friendliness and her undoubted gifts have endeared her to us all and we will watch with interest her future ministry.

I am also indebted to Bill Armstrong for his willingness to come out of retirement and look after Westburn for the next year. I know that you will give him the support that you have given me.

I have to admit to feeling in a kind of 'no man's land' at the moment. I no longer have parish responsibilities and I have not yet taken up the Moderator's role. My time is being spent in preparing for the worship which takes place every day during the Assembly, and studying the various reports which will come before us.

Sadly as you will know the media has featured one particular debate which threatens to overshadow the rest of the week but there are a lot of other

challenging reports including "Growing up in Scotland today" and related to that "How to make the church child friendly". There is an interesting paper on the current economic situation and our response as individuals and as a Church.

These reports and others are also available on the website as is the coverage of the Assembly itself. It will be streamed live on the Church website and it would be good to know that some of you are watching and listening throughout the week. When David Lacy was Moderator, his mother watched from her home in Bristol and sent a message to him to smile more! I will try my best.

I will look forward to welcoming those of you who are able to come through to the opening and it will be a very special moment for me to be able to point you out in the gallery and pay tribute to your support.

We move through to Edinburgh on the 11th May and I am sure the enormity will really sink in. However Edinburgh is only 75 miles away and we will be back from time to time staying in Greenock and being able to worship with you. Until then can I thank you again for all your prayers and good wishes and may God bless you now and always.

Bill Hewitt

WESTBURN CHURCH WEBSITE

We are indebted to Jim Bell for updating the Website, it is good that we now have a busy and interesting site, particularly with our minister soon to take up the position as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the name of Westburn Greenock will be noted and hopefully many people will visit the site to find out more about us, thanks to Jim they will.

Please pay it a visit at – greenockwestburn.org.uk and find out some interesting things about our church.

Contributions from members from the congregation will be most welcome.



LOCUM MINISTER

Two months have passed since I joined the Westburn team. Laura and I are beginning to feel at home among you and we thank you for the warmth of your welcome.

My settling in has been greatly eased by the good company and support of Douglas and Barbara Ann but their time is drawing to a close and by mid June they will have gone their separate ways.

I wish Douglas a long and happy retirement. From personal experience I can assure him that he will continue to be gainfully employed within the Church. When I retired 14 months ago I had intended to play golf and let the world go by. That lasted for 6 weeks. Then I was invited to act as Locum in St Andrew's, West Kilbride where I had served as probationer assistant 30 years ago – I could hardly refuse. Four months later I “retired” for a second time.

Next came an invitation to occupy a similar role at St John's, Gourock; again I could not refuse – I had been Interim Moderator in the last vacancy there and I was pleased to go back again.

As soon as my next “retiral” date came into view I was asked by the Rev Bill Hewitt to substitute for him on a full-time basis throughout his moderatorial year. The challenge was too great to resist. If all goes according to plan, my next “retiral” date will be in June 2010.

I had been forewarned about the other member of the team, Barbara Ann. She certainly is a breath of fresh air. In her own exuberant and enthusiastic way she will blow down the musty corridors of the Church; and I hope there are many like her preparing for the full-time ministry of the Church of Scotland.

What of myself? No doubt by this time you will have found out a bit about me but for the record, and to avoid speculation, I will list a few potted details.

My roots are in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. On leaving school I trained as an engineer with Ferranti in Edinburgh. Eight years later I moved to Marconi in Fife. By this time Laura and I had married and the first two of our three children were born in Dunfermline. Laura trained as a nurse in the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh.

Four years later I answered the call to full-time ministry and trained at New College in Edinburgh. After serving out my probationary year I was called to Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay, my only charge, where I served for 29 years. Laura was invited to become the local practice nurse and continues the work which she thoroughly enjoys.

Eighteen months ago we became grandparents for the first time when our elder daughter presented us with our grandson, Bruce William.

What do I hope to achieve during my time with you? Well, I have not come to Westburn just to hold the fort until the moderator returns. The work of the congregation will continue, and I will give as much time and leadership as possible within the limits of my knowledge of the congregation. I have also agreed to take on the responsibility of chaplaincy to Ardgowan Primary School and Greenock Academy.

I hope and pray that the year ahead will be productive and enjoyable for us as together we continue with God's encouragement to witness for Christ in the congregation and parish. I certainly relish the challenge.

Bill Armstrong

Unfortunately Barbara Ann was on holiday when Magazine material was due, but I am sure she will have an opportunity to say her farewell and inform us of the next stages in her preparation for The Ministry, which we know from personal experience in Westburn will be a lively exciting ministry. We have enjoyed her time with us and hope she has found it a worthwhile part of her training. The members of the congregation wish Barbara Ann well as she goes on to do God's work wherever that path may take her.

We look forward to hearing from her from time to time and for now bid her farewell in May with love, encouragement and God's Blessing.

Rev Douglas Hamilton an appreciation

Rev William Douglas Hamilton was inducted as minister of Greenock:St George's North in December 1986.

He came to Greenock from Newtongrange linked with Borthwick. This was his first charge and he served there for 10 years. While there he oversaw the restoration of Borthwick Church.

He arrived in Greenock as successor to Rev J Stewart Pyper and to a congregation formed of a union in 1983 between St George's and Martyrs' and North. His neighbouring charges were Mid Kirk with Rev Alex Porteous as Minister, Union Church with Rev Andrew Taylor, St Marks Greenbank with Rev Alec Chestnut and the Old Kirk which was vacant. Since 1986 these neighbouring churches have been involved in 4 unions and 3 church buildings closing.

A few years after Douglas arrived he decided to revamp the Kirk Session by organising the formation of sub groups in the areas of pastoral care, mission, nurture and worship. He encouraged elders to be active in the affairs of the congregation and to initiate new projects. From this work came the activities that helped to make St George's North a busy church such as services in Royal Court, Town Centre Outreach in 1992, Christmas Café, Harvest projects first in Malawi then in South Africa, services in Westburn Centre, Church Aunties at baptisms, summer barbeques, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services, Alpha course, prayer and bible study workshops, youth leaders meetings and Quest group.

Underpinning all of this was worship offered on Sunday mornings. The New International Version of the Bible replaced the Authorised Version and Mission Praise supplemented The Church Hymnary Third Edition. Sermons were linked to themes spreading over several Sundays and occasionally sermons were broken down into parts linked with appropriate hymns. His preaching notes would sometimes consist of an

index card with a series of headings and from this would come a 20 minute sermon. Family services were held once a month.

Throughout his ministry Douglas was praised for the sensitive way in which he conducted funerals. His eulogys which summed up so well facets of the person's character won him praise both from within and outwith the church.

During his ministry in St George's North there were close links with St Luke's and with the ministries of Rev Russell Barr and Rev Bill Hewitt. This was helped by both the Barr and Hewitt families having sons as members of the 7th Greenock Boys Brigade Company which was attached to St George's North. At company inspections there were at least two ministers present.

Over the years the churches in the West End of Greenock faced common problems of declining membership and declining finances. Out of these concerns came the five churches covenant. Douglas served as chair for the first year which was recognition of his seniority and experience. He tried to give a lead and treated people fairly. When later the covenant had failed the minister and office bearers of St George's North were praised for the dignified way in which they had conducted themselves.

The last years of St George's North were not easy. Throughout the Covenant there were rumours and comments made that St George's North should close. Douglas dealt with all this with tact and in providing as much information as possible. The Kirk Session would meet the day after a covenant meeting so they would be updated before any rumours started circulating. When as the result of the covenant it was formally proposed that the church should close Douglas supported this with the risk of personal unpopularity. After the failure of the Covenant St George's North asked for union even at the sacrificial cost of losing the church buildings. Douglas supported this. Out of all this came union with St Luke's to form Westburn.

With the coming of Westburn Douglas embarked on the last phase of his ministry. He came to Greenock to cement a union and he would leave Greenock having formed a union. He worked closely with Rev Bill Hewitt and again a familiar pattern emerged of the subgroups of Kirk Session initiating projects. Services were offered twice on a Sunday morning and both ministers worked closely together in allocating services and duties on a Sunday.

Outside the church Douglas's main leisure activities consisted of following football and studying Robert Burns. He was president of Greenock Burns Club, a role which he enjoyed as he participated in various functions invariably wearing the Hamilton tartan.

It can be hard to sum up a ministry of 34 years in a few words but perhaps it could be described as a ministry rendered in the Lords service obediently and faithfully.

As he prepares to retire may the words of the Aaronic blessing be with him

The Lord bless thee and keep thee

The lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace

Alan Gallacher

Session Clerk St George's North
2001-2006

PASTORAL CARE

1. **Church Car Run** - the Annual Church Car Run will be held on Wednesday, 24th June 2009. The arrangements will be similar as in previous years. If you are interested in attending, please contact your Elder. Volunteer drivers are asked to contact either Bill Dempster or Stuart Robertson.
2. **Church Visitors** – the committee are still looking for volunteers to be Church Visitors. If you are interested, please contact Bill Dempster, Ruth Gillies or any member of the Pastoral Care Committee.
3. **June Communion** – as you will read it elsewhere in this newsletter, Douglas Hamilton is retiring and his final service will be the Communion Service on Sunday, 14th June 2009. There will be a farewell lunch after the morning Service in the Church Hall and followed by a programme in the Sanctuary. There will be no afternoon Communion Service. Elders are being encouraged to ask members who would normally attend the afternoon Communion to attend the morning Service so that as many Member can participate in the lunch. Transport will be available to take folks to and from Church. If you would like to come to the morning Communion and lunch afterwards, please give your name to your District Elder, or contact Bill Dempster on 784317.

Bill Dempster

Life and Work

Life and Work is available last Sunday of every month priced £1.60
Subscriptions available.

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

Delivery can be arranged if you are unable to get to church.

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 ministers 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's don't know they can't do something about it.

Presbytery Report

WORLD MISSION AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS Commends this years World Mission Stamp Project assisting the Roma (Gypsy) people and also Zimbabwe Network Scheme.

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHP Mrs Eleanor Hood is the new Presbytery Co-ordinator and will shortly be in touch with all Prayer Correspondents.

APresbytery resource event will be held in the Cornerstone Presbytery of greenock and Paisley met at Cornerstone, Bishopton on 10th March and 14th April.

Welcome The Moderator welcomed Rev Glenn Chestnutt recently inducted to Gourock: St John's

Farewell The Moderator intimated the death of Rev Robert Montgomery and praised his life of faith and service, especially to Mount Zion Church Quarrier's Village.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE Rev A Sorenson, Rev D Hamilton and A.Millar Are appointed as Presbytery representatives on Renfrewshire Educational Trust for 3 years.

A nomination for a new post of Depute Presbytery Clerk will be brought to a future meeting of Presbytery.

Additional elders are required to serve on Presbytery in the areas of finance, building works, human relations or insurance. Congregations are urged to nominate same.

, Bishopton on Tue 23rd June at 7pm. Linda Pollock will lead an evening about training and resourcing people and congregations who work with 0 to 16 yr olds.

COMMUNITY INTERESTS Presbytery instructed the clerk to write to AdamsHouse congratulating staff on a “5 star” rating in a recent Care Commission Report.

Anyone interested in working with Inverclyde Peace Initiative should contact convenor of Community of Interests as a matter of priority.

Congregations are asked if they can offer financial support to Scottish Churches Housing Action.

The Committee is interested to hear from any congregation engaged in “eco-friendly” work.

Margaret Crawford
Presbytery Elder

Newsletter - What's going on in

FAREWELL CEILIDH

A Farewell Ceilidh for Douglas and Nancy will be held on the 12th June in the church hall.

Tickets priced £10.00 will be on sale soon [includes Fish or Chicken Supper]

Music will be provided by “THE REEL DE’IL “.

A sheet will be available in the foyer for numbers and choice of supper.

An early response would be appreciated.

RETIREMENT PRESENTATION FOR REV W.D HAMILTON SUNDAY 14TH JUNE

There will be a congregational lunch in the church hall after the morning service.

The Social Committee would welcome donations of home baking on the morning of Saturday 13th June.

Anyone wishing to help on the Saturday in the preparations for the lunch please give their name to Betty Stuart, Jean Wilson or Linda Murray.

Upcoming Events

If the Stedfast Silver Band concert this year is as good as last year we’re in for a treat. Watch out for an announcement about this and other events we’re looking into on your behalf such as the Bowling Evening, Proms in the Park .We will also look at the Edinburgh Tattoo for 2010.



TIME FOR PRAYER

In our lives we do not always get what we want. As children, one of the lessons that we learn is that we cannot always have what we ask for, even although sometimes it is only much later that we understand that this is for our own good.

In our prayers, the answer that we get is often very different from what we were looking for, and sometimes this can be hard for us to understand, but as Christians we try to trust that God has his own purposes for us. Jesus himself hoped that he might be relieved of the horror of execution on the cross, but in the end he willingly followed God's will, accepting that it had to be.

In this prayer, a man has asked for strength, health, wealth and power and in response to his request he receives weakness, illness and poverty. But he realizes that this has led him to be a better person, and that he has in fact turned out to be "most richly blessed". May we too come to know that as we make our way through life, with its ups and downs, its triumphs as well as its disappointments, if we stay in the company of Jesus we are most richly blessed.

THE PRAYER OF AN UNKNOWN CONFEDERATE SOLDIER

I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I had asked for,
But everything that I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered;
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.
Amen.

Douglas Scott

FIRST FRIDAY GROUP

The First Friday Group's first-foot was none other than John Cumming whose topic was extremely current – "Credit Crunches" past and present. With great aplomb John took us through the mazes and labyrinths of what has happened to the economies of the world and compared them to past disasters. The words and advice he left with us – it's happened before and things will improve (before the whole cycle comes round again).

The following month, February, brought a total transformation to the normal FFG "menu". Not just one speaker appeared but four young musicians (from the local college across the road) entertained the Group with a wide selection of piano music, arias and show songs accompanied on the piano and suitable introduced by Stewart (from Helensburgh). Kimberley (from Irvine), Stephanie (from Paisley) and Kenneth (from Gourrock) certainly gave their audience plenty to enjoy and this was much appreciated by Group members.

Friday 13th March is considered an "unlucky" date for some but certainly not for the First Friday Group (masquerading as the 2nd Friday Group for the unobservant!) when our own (on temporary loan, of course) Barbara Ann Sweetin visited us with her interpretation of "The Way Ahead". In true fashion, Barbara Ann came, saw and conquered and made it an unforgettable, interactive evening with many responses from her attentive audience – a pity it had to close was the general consensus.

The Group closes down physically but not, one hopes, mentally, until the new session hopefully reconvenes in October. Warm thanks are due to all our members and guest speakers who made the session what it was.

Graham Eadie

P.S. At the end of the March meeting, a presentation was made to the Convenor which was extremely "memorable" in more senses than one and a suitable floral gift was made to his wife. The Convenor, on behalf of his wife and himself, would like to thank members for their generosity and their good wishes - not forgetting the appetising and tasty catering arrangements.

A committee is looking at First Friday Group for next season details in next magazine.



Class photograph from Vhutshilo Mountain School Venda.

A recent news letter from Sue Anne our friend in Vhutshilo Mountain School tells of many difficulties encountered over the past few years, with death and illness Susie writes "Once again the school has had a year of sadness and joy, major achievements and frustrating setbacks, but through it all we have been anchored by the increasing health and happiness of the children in our care.

Amidst the sadness of one of our support workers dying and leaving 3 young children a group of French visitors arrived, six school children and Only 2 of the women accompanying them spoke English this resulted in the children learning catchy French songs as the visitors worked in the

classrooms teaching art and dance and learning of the great difficulties these children live with. They came laden with clothes, toys and games and since returning home are involved in raising funds and making people aware of the horrors of the AIDS pandemic.

Many visitors from various parts of the world have visited , funding and helping in many ways . A big highlight was a new vehicle thanks to a very generous donation from Stichting Protestants Steunfonds in Holland". (This vehicle is essential as Susie drives early every morning to collect the children to bring them to school and is really enjoying a much upgraded vehicle.)

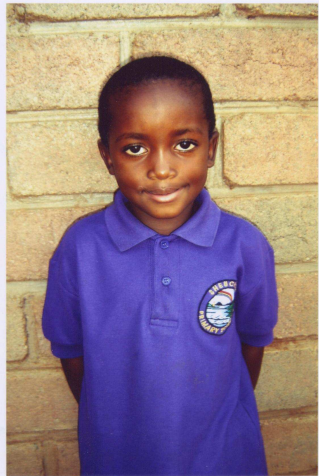
Susie related many great stories of generous donations and includes " a contingency of Scots (kilts and all) from Inverclyde bearing gifts of trampolines, a Kidsmart computer from IBM and loads of clothes and toys, the 8 visitors joined in all the activities and spoiled the children and staff during their few weeks there. Moorfoot, Highholm, Clune Park and Slaemuir Primary Schools were responsible for 500 kgs of clothing, as a lot of uniforms had been donated it was a particularly proud moment when our young Grade 1 and 2 scholars marched into class with their grey pants/skirts and crisp white shirts, with their grubby bare feet shoved under real school desks (bought through another kind donation) the children glowed with what I choose to interpret as an overwhelming desire to learn. "

This is only a small extract from the newsletter which also tells of the many difficulties encountered in lots of areas but mainly it tells of the appreciation and thanks for the great generosity of many groups and organisations supporting and sponsoring the school who now have 55 children, 6 permanent staff, 3 support group women, 2 volunteers, 4 drivers bringing the children in. Considering it all started with Susie collecting a few children and teaching and feeding them in her caravan. With our own Fraser McNeill highlighting the situation and Greenock Presbytery raising in excess of £20,000 to help fund the building of Vhutshilo Mountain School and with Stuart Robertson, Ian McCrorie and Rev. Jill Clancy attending the official opening it will add a special interest when Bill and Moira Hewitt visit in July as Moderator of the General Assembly



Mavhunga Nbivho age 6

These are two of the children we sponsor and receive a progress report on, both are doing well and have now moved into grade 2. More details are on our website, please visit the Venda Page. If you don't have a computer and would like to read the full report please speak to Stuart Robertson .



Mulaudzi Pfano age 6

The Guild

The Guild finished for this session with a very enjoyable visit from pupils of Ravenscraig Primary school along with their headteacher, Isabel Lind. We were entertained with poems and singing both in English and Gaelic with Isabel introducing them in her own imitable manner.

We have bid farewell to Moira Hewitt temporarily, while she is away with her husband during his Moderatorial year. We hope they both enjoy this experience. At our final meeting we said goodbye to Rev Douglas and Nancy Hamilton when we presented them with gifts from the Guild, as they prepare for Douglas' retirement.

We have a few informal meetings arranged before we go on our outing which this year is an evening one when we leave the church and go to the Chartroom in Inverkip for a meal. After the meal, Mattie Stirling one of our members will take us a tour of our local area similar to the one the visitors on the Cruise liners are taken on. If anyone would like to join us for that outing, it takes place on Tuesday 2 June leaving the church at 4.15pm and arriving back around 8.30pm, please contact me either at the church or phoning 725451. The cost for the evening will be approx £15.

The guild committee have met and our secretary is very busy at present compiling the syllabus for next session. So hopefully we will have an interesting programme suiting everyone's taste.

"What does the Lord require of You?" is the next three year strategy and is taken from the book of the prophet Micah in which we are told that we are required "to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8 NIV). The 6 new projects for the next 3 years are as follows:-

CrossReach: on the other side, Scotland

HIV/Aids Project: A New Hunger, Various countries

International Justice Mission: terrify No More, Cambodia

Ministries Council: A Place for Hope, UK

Mission Aviation Fellowship: Mission Run, Madagascar

World Mission: Interfaith Support, Israel/Palestine.

Finally I hope you all have a good, warm, pleasant and relaxing summer and that you all feel the benefit of the break.

Patricia Robertson
President

STAINGLASS WINDOWS

Every Sunday as we worship we gaze at the three beautiful staining glass windows in the Apse in the Sanctuary. One member of the congregation wanted to find out about these windows and after a few enquiries we are indebted to Sandy Maclean for the following information.

In 1912 the whole interior of the church was gutted and completely renovated and after the end of the first world war another part of the renovation was carried through, that was the introduction of these three stain glass windows, these are the work of Mr Douglas Strachan, Edinburgh and are accounted magnificent specimens of his gorgeous colourings.

The centre window is a study of the Nativity; the visit of the Magi to the infant Christ, Joseph is in the background and Mary is holding the child in her arms, and the wise men kneel before him offering their gifts. The artist has preserved the tradition that one of the visitors was a king and his robe is in a glorious rich red. At the top of the window is the choir of angels – remarkable in abundance and fineness of detail.

The north window is a presentation of Miriam and her dancers, the predominant colours being purple and mauve. The drapings of the dancers are graceful and the colouring of the carpet is wonderful. The text at the top of the window is from the 'Song of Miriam' in which she and her women responded to the song of her brother, Moses, when the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea and were safe on the peninsula of Sinai. It reads "sing ye to the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously" Exodus 15 vs 20-21. These two windows were gifted by members of the congregation.

The South Window has deep blue and rich green as its predominant colouring. In the forefront are the spearmen. Deborah is the central figure with Barak at her side. The text is from what has been described as one of the grandest outbursts of impassioned poetry in the Bible, Deborah's song of victory when Barak had routed and destroyed the forces of Jabin. The text reads "Raise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel" Judges 5 vs 1-2. This window together with the Roll of Honour in the Vestibule, forms the War Memorial for those who lost their lives in the first world war.

The Memorial for those who lost their lives in the second world war is on the other side of the entrance vestibule.

Thanks to Jim Kidd for wanting to know about the windows and to Sandy Maclean for providing the details, it is important to know the history of these interesting parts of our Church.

Thank you

A note from Jenny

I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to the ladies at the guild for their kindness and concern when I fell in the foyer of the church hall on the 31st March. A special word of thanks to Janet McGhie, Patricia Robertson and Ida McKenzie for their help contacting the ambulance service and my family. Sincere thanks to all who sent me cards, Easter and get well, also for all the telephone calls and the beautiful flowers which did so much to cheer me up. I would also like to thank Rev. Douglas Hamilton for visiting me in hospital and for arranging to have the flowers from the church delivered. Your kindness is so much appreciated and my warmest thanks goes to each and every one of you. I am improving slowly but won't be able to run the London marathon!

God's Blessing to you all,
Jenny.

What is a friend ?

*How can I find the shining words,
The glowing phrase that tells,
All that your love has meant to me,
All that your friendship spells
There is no word, no phrase for you
On whom I so depend,
All I can say to you is this.
God bless you precious friend.*

J.T.Leishman

The Brownies

Unfortunately we are coming to the end of another busy but fun year. We are hoping to book the climbing wall at South Newton for our last night in May and have our pack holiday in June.

We have celebrated the Jewish New Year, had indoor bonfires with the girls making an artificial fire on the notice board and making the sound effects for fireworks which they threw into the air themselves using streamers, poppers, tinsel and crazy foam. In January we went up to Cornalees where we were treated to a puppet show and reading of Tam O' Shanter. We also had a snowball fight in the car park afterwards but that wasn't planned it just happened to snow that day. Other things we have done include holding our own Highland games, eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, making daffodils on St. David's day, hunting for leprechauns gold on St. Patrick's day, and hunting for dragons on St George's day.

Thanks again to the congregation who are always very supportive and to the Boys Brigade who once again put the tables out for us on the Friday before our coffee morning which saved us from either setting up very late on Friday night or having to come in very early on Saturday morning.



Bonfires and wreaths

Jewish New Year

The Guides

The Guides have a very busy programme over the next few weeks. We are off to Castle Semple for a morning of water activities and mountain biking. We then have our annual outing to Lunderson Bay for a BBQ - fingers crossed the weather stays dry. Finally to round off the session we will be having a party with a Disney Theme. The Guides have been busy making decorations for the hall - Disney artists watch out there could be some Guides looking for jobs! Any girls aged 10+ who fancy coming along to see what we get up to can join us on a Tuesday night in the Youth Hall from 7:30-9:15pm. More details from Marjorie MacLeod on 01475 727328

Marjorie

SCOUTS

The scouts have had a busy start to the year. There are currently 20 scouts in the troop, a reasonable number. Ideally 30 would be what we hope to work towards. So far this year the troop have taken part, in a couple of midnight hikes, 3 trips to Nevis Range sledging, a trip to Glasgow Climbing Centre and white water rafting while on a winter camp to Lochearnhead Scout Station. The major achievement for the troop has been the walking of the whole of the West Highland Way 95 miles in six days by seven scouts and 3 explorers during the first week of the Easter holidays. Not only did they complete the walk but four of the scouts were walking in aid of a range of charities including Ardgowan Hospice and Cancer Research. Some photos attached



Top picture the Scouts - West Highland Way

2nd – Explorer Scouts preparing for action



Explorer Scouts in action again

Explorer Scout

There are currently 12 explorer scouts in the unit. They have participated in the same range of activities as the scouts. Four of the explorers help run the scout troop on a Monday Night. The highlight of their year will be the summer camp to the Czech Republic in August of this year. In June of this year they hope to win the national explorer camping competition to make up for coming second last year.

Leapmoor Scout Pipe Band;

The band has around 25 members at present at meets on a Sunday night in the youth hall. At the weekend ten members of the band led West Lothian Scout District Founders Day Parade to St Michaels Kirk in the grounds of Linlithgow Palace the Birth Place of Mary Queen of Scots. Our next outing will be our own Founders Day Parade at the end of May. We have also been asked to take part in the Boness Children's Festival on the last Friday in June. Any guides or scouts wishing to join the band to learn drumming or piping are most welcome to come along.

Campbell Cairns

Listen

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice,
you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me
why I shouldn't feel that way,
you are trampling on my feelings

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do
something to solve my problem,
you have failed me, strange as that may seem.
Listen! All I asked was that you listen,
not talk, or do... just hear.

Advice is cheap: thirty-five pence will get you both
Dear Deirdre and Just Joan in the newspapers.
And I can do that myself. I am not helpless.
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do
for myself, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.
But when you accept, as a simple fact, that I do feel what I feel
no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to
convince you and get about the business of
understanding what's behind this irrational feeling.

When that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.
Irrational feelings make sense when we understand that's behind them.

Perhaps that's why prayer works for people;
Because God listens and doesn't give advice
He listens, and helps you work it out for yourself.

Please listen and just hear me, and if you want to talk wait a minute for your
turn, and I'll listen to you.

SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

(An extract from Arthrocure News – An Arthritis sufferer's magazine)

**When God gave out brains
I thought he said trains
And I missed mine.**

**When God gave out looks
I thought he said Books
And I said I didn't want any.**

**When God gave out noses
I thought he said Roses
So I asked for a big red one.**

**When God gave out chins
I thought he said Gins
So I asked for a double.**

**When God gave out legs
I thought he said kegs
So I asked for two fat ones.**

**When God gave out heads
I thought he said beds
So I asked for a soft one.**

I'M IN A TERRIBLE MESS !!

Pesky Squirrels

There were four country churches in a small Texas town; the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church. Each church was overrun with pesky squirrels.

One day, the Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about the squirrels. After much prayer and consideration they determined that the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

In the Baptist Church the squirrels had taken up habitation in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a cover on the baptistery and drown the squirrels in it. The squirrels escaped somehow and there were twice as many there the next week.

The Catholic group got together and decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creation. So they humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free a few miles outside of town. Three days later, the squirrels were back.

But the Methodist Church came up with the best and most effective solution. They baptised the squirrels and registered them as members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter!

Are YOU a Pesky Squirrel?

Thanks to various members of the congregation who send letters, interesting stories, poems or amusing snippets, keep it up. We are always looking for Material, the Church Magazine is your magazine and is a great communication to the whole congregation. Together let us try to make it interesting.

The Magazine Committee

From the Roll-Keeper

Deaths

Mrs.	A.	McClure	1/1 53 West Blackhall St.	1
Miss	M.	Millar	65 Nicolson St	1
Mr.	T.	Forbes	30 Newton St.	4
Mrs.	W.	Snoddy	41 Eldon St.	7
Mrs.	M.	Campbell	2 Kilbrannan Dr.	13
Mr	G.	McDermid	25 Trafalgar St.	17
Mrs.	R.	Metcalfe	83 Regent Ct.	17
Mrs.	E.	Galbraith	Marchmount, 1 Alderwood Rd.	22
Mrs.	E.	Paterson	Balclutha Ct.	22

New - by Profession of Faith

Ms.	M.	Ritchie	Fl. C6, 9 Jamaica St.	1
Ms.	G.	McNeal	117 Bournemouth Rd.	10
Ms.	S.	Pearson	11 Larkfield Rd.	12
Ms.	T.	Taverner	43 Cambridge Rd.	12
Mr.	C.	Kepler	158 Dunlop St.	15
Mrs.	W.	Kepler	158 Dunlop St.	15
Mr.	G.	Devlin	30 Roxburgh Way	18
Ms.	H.	Williams	30 Roxburgh Way	18

New - by Transference

Mrs.	M.	McLarty	Fl. A3, 9 Jamaica St. from Hamilton/Bardrainney	1
Mrs.	I.	McFarlane	6 Brisbane St. from Hamilton/Bardrainney	6
Mrs.	M.	Nairn	1C Hope St. from St. Martin's	17

Changes of Address

Mr	J.	Heron Merino Ct. Nursing Home	22 from 16
Mrs.	L.	Park Woodlands Nurs. Hm., Quarriers Village	22 from 19