

December 2021
Issue No 50



From the Minister...

Welcome to this Advent/Christmas edition of the Reflections magazine. Life is more 'normal' than it was this time last year, however, we are still living in the shadow of the Covid 19 pandemic and coping with the effects of this strange time on all of life. Some people have found that their faith has sustained them, others have wrestled with questions and doubts, still others have discovered renewed faith. As I said to the congregation when we celebrated Communion on Sunday 7 November, there will always be a place for you at God's table. I would like to thank you all for your faithfulness and continued giving to the life and witness of Kay Park Parish Church.



There are times when thanks and appreciation are important, and this is one of them. Eleanor Hamilton steps down from the helm of 'Reflections' with this edition after 20 years of hard work, dedication and enthusiasm. Eleanor, we salute you! Thanks to those who have worked alongside Eleanor including her roving reporter, Shiona Thomson, and the printing team. Thanks too, to all who have contributed to the magazine and shared in the work of distribution. We hope in the future to continue to be able to communicate to the church family and community and will be looking at how best to do this. Part of this will be online but the printed word is still important and will always be. If you are interested in helping with this area of church life, please let me know.

You may recall that there was a pilgrimage to the Holy Land organised for February 2021 which had to be postponed due to the pandemic and was rescheduled for February 2022. Our hope was that by then life would be back to a sufficient level of 'normal' that the pilgrimage could go ahead, but sadly for a second time we have found the need to postpone. However, I am delighted to say that we now exploring the possibility of rescheduling for October 2022. There will be more details to hand soon. You might like to consider this opportunity for a unique and precious journey in the footsteps of Christ?

My prayer for our church family and community this Advent and Christmas season is that we might be aware of the light shining in the darkness. Jesus would declare that He was the 'Light of the World,' where do we see signs of that light in our lives and community?

I leave you with the words of a beautiful carol and wish you and all those in your circle the Love, Joy and Peace this Christmas season.

Rev Fiona

The Candle Song

Like a candle flame
Flickering small in our darkness
Uncreated light
Shines through infant eyes

*God is with us, alleluia
God is with us, alleluia
Come to save us, alleluia*

Stars and angels sing
Yet the earth sleeps in shadows
Can this tiny spark
Set a world on fire?

Yet his light shall shine
From our lives, Spirit blazing
As we touch the flame
Of his holy fire

Graham Kendrick
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The Magazine of Kay Park Parish Church Kilmarnock
a welcoming Church in the heart of the community





Churches Together



Christmas Fair - Saturday, 11 December

There will be a stand for the Fellowship of Kilmarnock Churches at a Christmas Fair in the new public space at St Marnock Street. Exact times have to be confirmed, but will probably be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is a great opportunity to witness to our faith and we hope that you will want to be involved. So how can you do that?

We can display materials from churches at our stand. What do you want to tell the community about activities in your church? Please send leaflets for display to Barbara Graham at 42 Annanhill Avenue, KA1 2LQ, by 8 December. Alternatively, you can hand them in at New Laigh Kirk on Open Doors Days (12 noon to 2 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday), marked clearly for the attention of Barbara Graham.

We are looking for volunteers to staff the stand. Previous street fairs were held in July, but at a December Fair we

shall devise a rota for slots of only one hour, as we don't want frozen statues at our stand. If you can help for one hour, please let me know if you have a preferred time in the middle of the day. Once exact times have been confirmed, I'll draw up a rota.

Carols @ the Cross - Saturday, 18 December

For many years we have gathered at Kilmarnock Cross from 11 a.m. to 12 noon to sing carols with the Salvation Army Band. In past years we have had as many as c. 150 people joining us as shoppers paused to join in the singing before moving on. Last year we were unable to gather due to Covid restrictions, but this year we shall resume our joyful tradition. Feel free to come for the full hour or as much time as you wish. Bring your friends and family! Once again New Laigh Kirk will ensure that hot drinks are available after the singing.



A Latvian Christmas

Priecigus Ziemassvētkus, or perhaps more familiarly, Merry Christmas!

As in many European and Scandinavian countries, the focus in Latvian communities is on gathering round the tree on Christmas Eve. Presents are piled below, but not given until a 'party piece' is performed; a festive poem, learned by heart, a song, or a story, all in Latvian, of course. Christmas music is played, particularly 'Silent Night' and real candles are lit on the tree, with any fairy lights switched off – a magical period of time for me each year, even now, some years out of childhood! Presents are then shared and opened.

Christmas Day is, therefore, 'the morning after the night before', a pleasant, relaxing day, the food good, but not of any particular tradition, such as turkey.

New Year is noted and acknowledged, but clearly secondary to Christmas.

At other times of year, Easter is a big celebration, with Jani, or St John's Night at Midsummer, perhaps the most spectacular, with beacons, bonfires, national costumes, with garlands of oak leaves and flowers, worn on the head, decorated swings, singing, dancing, and special foods, washed down with significant volumes of refreshments!

Silvija Wilde





Christmas in Kay Park Church

'It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness'



ou are invited to come and share this Advent and Christmas time, whether a regular attender or not. If you read this and have never been to our church, you can find our building on London Road, to the left of Braeside Court.

The pandemic has been a dark time for people across our community, country, and world. The theme of our different services will be *'Light in the Darkness.'* You do not need to be a member to come along, there is nothing expected of you, just come as you are. Whoever you are and whatever your story there is a place here for you.

'Sundays'

Each Sunday we meet at 11am

From **Sunday 28 November** we light a candle week on week as we count down to Christmas Day. The music we share will reflect this special season of the year. Hope-

fully, your favourite carol will be among those we sing.

Sunday 5th there is an opportunity to bring along a new, unopened toy/gift for a child from birth to age sixteen, which we will pass on to the Salvation Army to distribute. Please bring the gifts unwrapped.

In addition to meeting at **11am** on **Sunday 12th** we will also meet at **2.30pm** for **'Blue Christmas'**. This gathering recognises that Christmas can be a challenging time, especially for those who are grieving. There will be music, words of reflection and an opportunity to light a candle in memory of those you have lost and miss so dearly.

Sunday 19th we tell the Nativity Story, hopefully in a fun but meaningful way.

Boxing Day, Sunday 26th we will enjoy the music of this special time of year led by our church choir. In addition, we will welcome internationally renowned Mezzo Soprano, Linda Finnie.



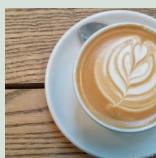
'Weekdays'



ur church **Advent Cafe** will be open on Mondays and Wednesdays during the four weeks of Advent.

Tea/Coffee and snacks will be available from 10am till 12 noon and from 2pm till 4pm

The following are dates for your diaries :



Mondays	29 November	Wednesdays	1 December
	6 December		8 December
	13 December		15 December
	20 December		22 December

Come along and bring your friends and neighbours, enjoy a friendly chat.

We look forward to seeing you there. If anyone would like to volunteer their help please contact Jean Deans or Moira Graham





HELP THE FOODBANK AT CHRISTMAS

Over the years your welcome donations have gone to the Salvation Army and are distributed to the homeless and to those who are struggling to make ends meet.

Moira Graham has taken on the work that Jim Rae-burn carried out for so many years and for which we are very grateful.

Over the past two years the donations have dwindled. and Moira would like to ask you to consider helping by adding some of the items below to your shopping bag. On a Sunday just pop them into a bag (so that you don't forget them!) and drop them into our basket at the front door of the church as you come in. If it's difficult for you to carry the donations to church you can drop them off at Moira's house, conveniently situated at 4 Braehead Court, or, if it's

impossible for you to drop them off but you would still like to contribute, Moira would be happy to pick them up from you. Either way please give her a ring at 07966 452941.

CARRIER BAGS—Could you please bring any plastic carrier bags that you don't need to church. Moira needs them to transport your gifts to the Salvation Army, who also need them to distribute your donations.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

You might also like to start laying aside a donation each day in November that would be brought to church or picked up by Moira at the beginning of December, so that Christmas 2021 could be a little bit more special for those who need our help.

Items for donation:

Tins – soups, fish, all-in-one meals, veg, beans, fruit, desserts.

Packets - tea, sugar, pasta, pasta meals, rice, meals, breakfast cereals, dried fruit

Jars, bottles - coffee, pasta sauces, stir fry sauces, tomato ketchup, brown sauce, jams,

Toiletries - soap, toothpaste/brushes, face cloths

Goodies - sweets, biscuits, soft drinks (concentrates) crisps

No perishable food please

'LOSS ADJUSTERS' IS BACK!

This is a group for anyone who has lost a loved one, whether recently or some time ago, but would like to be with people who truly understand loss.

It is an informal meeting over a cup of tea, to talk or just to listen to others going through the same and share laughter as well as tears.

We have been back in the Church café, from 7.00—9.00 pm on Tuesdays. Check with Olive or me for dates.

Please let us know if you are thinking of coming along and would like to know more. We would love to see you. There will be a warm, understanding welcome for anyone who has never been, but who has lost someone they loved.

Olive Gow

Fionna McLaughlan

fionnamclaughlan@gmail.com

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The Guild

The GUILD reopened on Tuesday, 26th October, 2021 when we had a reasonable turn out of members after such a long time of not being able to enjoy each other's company. Our guest speaker was our minister, Rev. Fiona Maxwell, and she gave a very inspiring address based on our Guild Theme – 'Lights and Bushels'

Finally, for this year we are having our Guild Christmas Lunch at 12.30pm in Kilmarnock College on FRIDAY, 10th DECEMBER, 2021. We re-open on TUESDAY, 18th JANUARY, 2022 at 2pm and at the same time on every second Tuesday thereafter until 5th April, 2022.

The Church of Scotland Guild was established in 1887 by the Rev. Archibald Charteris. Today, 130 years later there are 150,000 members in 800 Guilds across the country.

The Church of Scotland Guild is a MOVEMENT within the Church of Scotland which invites and ENCOURAGES both WOMEN and MEN to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and enable them to express their faith in WORSHIP, PRAYER, ACTION and FELLOWSHIP. The Motto is from Acts 27 Verse 23.

'WHOSE WE ARE AND WHOM WE SERVE'



The Guild supports six different projects over a three-year period, two each year, with some of our fund raising going to support them, as well as local charities.

In October, I attended the Project Partners' meeting of the Guilds from all the churches in our area. The project we were going to hear about was Starchild.

There is a connection with Starchild and Kilmarnock; the charity was set up in remembrance of the founder's adopted brother, Frankie Marsh, who tragically died in a house fire at the age of 27. Frankie's natural parents were from Uganda and were over here studying medicine. His mum was training to be a nurse and placed Frankie in Tankerha', on London Road, where she regularly visited him, but she was not able to take him home with her. Michaela's parents, who were from Glasgow, were looking to adopt a child that was hard to place and when he was adopted, aged 13 months, in the 60s it was extremely difficult to place the only little black boy in Kilmarnock. Both Frankie and Michaela were born only a month apart and were brought up as twins - one black and one white.

Michaela travelled to Uganda to try to find Frankie's family and amazingly, or miraculously, found them. Michaela was so overwhelmed by the poverty in Uganda that she was determined to do all she could to alleviate the situation.

This charity was set up to help children and particularly

those who are disabled or living with autism in Uganda. These children would appear to be treated terribly by their mothers, some of whom feel forced to

chain them up in cupboards with no light and leave them there for days, so they can go out to work. The reason for this isn't because they don't love their children, they do, but due to the stigma and myths that it is a curse brought on the family through the mother, they have no choice but to hide them away.

The speaker, Michaela Foster Marsh, who was the founder of the charity, told us what they hoped to do with the help they receive. This is to build a purpose-built holistic centre called the Sunflower Sanctuary. The aim being to find the light in every child. They will do this by offering support, training and guidance to the mothers and hopefully break the cycle of poverty by addressing the lack of equality and inclusion.

Michaela has written a book Starchild which tells the story and all the twists and turns that happen. You can also find much more about Michaela, Frankie and the charity on their website www.starchildcharity.org.

Jean Herbert—Guild Project Partner



YOUNG CHURCH @ CHRISTMAS

Young Church are still not meeting on a Sunday morning as we haven't enough willing volunteers, so we have put together little gift bags for the young church families to enjoy together during this advent season. Each family will receive a gift bag which will include four crafts, one for each week of advent. The contents include a dotty Christmas decoration, a snowman card, a foam Christmas tree, and a wooden stable with tealight. The bag also contains The Kind Advent Calendar, which gives a bible verse for each day and a kindness act for the families to take part in. We have included in the bags the Christmas Windows from the Scottish Bible Society, a pack of ten activity cards which help families interact with the Christmas story, as told in the Gospel of Luke. Through short daily readings, activities and a specially produced three minute long daily podcast, households will be able to pause and reflect on what Christmas really is about. And, of course, there has to be a sweet treat to enjoy! If you are on Facebook you can follow the activities throughout December as there will be regular updates of the journey right up to Christmas Day.

Vanessa Twomey



Grateful thanks to Vanessa, who has kept us in contact with Young Church members throughout the pandemic and has spent hours putting together these wonderful gift bags.

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KAY PARK Strollers & Striders

Sixteen Striders gathered at Eglinton Park, Kilwinning, for a two hour walk along the various trails. Starting from the car park, we followed the Cairnmount

View trail, firstly through woods past the old dovecot then up a sharp rise to the Cairnmount view point. A brief stop to appreciate this, and catch our breath, followed. Continuing on our route took us back round past the loch towards Eglinton Castle. With all still feeling up for more, we walked a part of the Corsehill route, which brought us back round past the former Wilson's Food Factory and to the Tournament café for refreshments.

Two weeks on and it was the turn of the Strollers, with fourteen meeting at James Hamilton Park in East Kilbride. Although it rained steadily throughout, there was little wind and it was quite mild. With a sizeable lake and well surfaced paths, each Stroller decides on how many laps to cover. An inviting tearoom on each circuit leads to some making an early stop and going back round afterwards, with others carrying on before enjoying their refreshments at the end. If nothing else, this eases the burden on the serving staff as not everyone arrives at once.

September's Striders' outing was based in Stewarton. The riverside path from the Mill House brought us to the Fenwick road where we took right back towards the Cross before taking left through St Columba's churchyard. A left turn, under the viaduct, led us to Lainshaw Woods where we joined the woodland path. This initially follows the Annick Water before rising and continuing to Kilwinning road. A right turn towards Stewarton was followed by a tour skirting some of Stewarton's more recent housing developments before crossing Dunlop road and returning to the Mill House through Cunningham Watt Park. Tea / coffee and scones were then taken in the private dining area of the Mill House.

The "dear green place" and venue for COP 26, was the location for our "stroll" in October, specifically, Rouken Glen Park in Glasgow – an extensive open space with miles of footpaths, and easily reached within 30 minutes of Kilmarnock.

Our thirteen strollers had a pleasant autumn day for our outing, and gratifyingly, we had 8 non KPPC walkers, and our youngest ever member, 18 month old Max, who brought his granny along !!

Our "apres stroll" was enjoyed in the huge, garden centre restaurant, all decked out for Christmas (the home baking is a treat).



A local walk for the Striders was our November outing. Despite a weather forecast of continuous heavy rain, the group met in defiance of this and were rewarded by a mainly dry walk. From Western Road, we followed the cycle path to Knockentiber before taking left through the village. A further left turn, immediately followed by another left, took us along a country road back under the cycle path. On up and over Wood Hill brought our first brief heavy shower before we met Kilmaurs Road. Two right turns took us on to John Walker Drive which we followed to Western Road. Here the continuous rain started on the final stretch to the cars before heading to Morrisons' café for refreshments.

Despite the unavoidable absence of a number of regular Strollers, a better than expected group of 17 gathered at the Burns Centre in Alloway on a dry, bright morning for our November Stroll. Before starting, the group paused to pay tribute to the recent passing of Dave Samson, a founder member of the group. The early part of our route took us along Shanter Way and onto a fairly muddy path through the former Cambusdoon Estate. Here a stone archway is all that re-

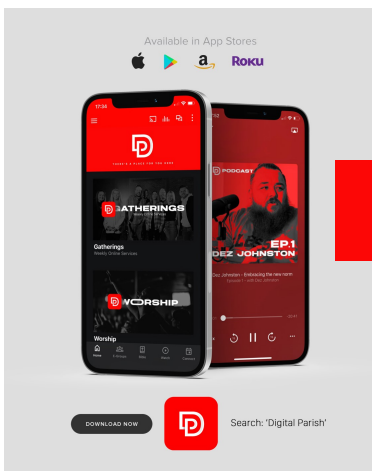
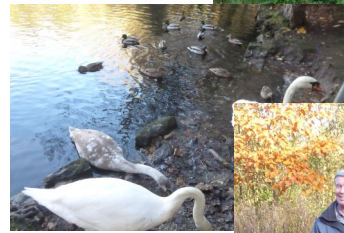


mains of Cambusdoon House. Originally built as a home for wealthy businessman and philanthropist James Baird, who later served as an MP, it became a prep school until the late 60s. One notable former pupil is Sir David Murray, once owner of Rangers FC. This path exits onto Greenfield Avenue and a left along this brought us to the rear of Belleisle Estate. This took us to what's left of Belleisle House Hotel where a right

allowed us to follow a path across the golf course onto Monument Road. With time in hand, given that it was Armistice Day, we decided to extend our walk through the Remembrance Woodland within Rozelle Estate. This was a new experience for some of the group and at 1100 we stopped to observe the two minute silence adjacent to one of the commemorative carvings. After this, we continued on the path until exiting back onto Monument Road. A left took us back through Alloway centre before joining the Poet's Path back to the Burns Centre for refreshments.

Next dates are: Striders – 25th November
Strollers – 10th December

New walkers are always welcome. If you fancy joining us, watch the church intimations , or contact David Miller on 07977050624 539397 or Bill Caldwell on 540006. We look forward to seeing you. Why not bring a friend?



Do you remember reading about the work of the Pioneer Churches in the last magazine? You would read that Kay Park Church is supporting the initiative of a Digital Church. If these words seem foreign to you, the concept is simple. There are many people all around us who have a deep faith in Jesus Christ, but no church connection. This is an attempt to find a home, a community for them. Church as we know it can seem strange to many others, but the digital world is one that, for millions, is

comfortable. It is where they can air their questions, talk about the things which they want to understand, find out more. Digital Parish is where they might find people with the same questions who are seeking different paths to the truth.

If you use a tablet or a smartphone you will use apps—these are the icons that you use to find BBC news, the Weather Channel, Facebook, Gmail etc. DigitalParish is a new app that you find in the App Store on your phone/tablet. Search for it and up it comes. Take a look, even if you are a regular church goer - there might be something that takes your interest. If you know of anyone who would like to explore their faith, but doesn't want to attend a regular church service, tell them about DigitalParish, where they may meet like-minded searchers.

The app was launched in November; it's very new and growing every week. Take a look and let us know what you think.



We're always asking how we can help—we'll here is how... read on

DELICIOUS ORANGES, DIRECT SUPPORT AND DISRUPTING EXPLOITATION



Mediterranean Hope would love us to get involved in beating the cycle of exploitation often described for us by mission partner Fiona Kendall. Since 2019 Mediterranean Hope has had a base in Calabria, a fertile Italian region facing the challenges of poverty and organised crime. Mediterranean Hope projects support migrants who toil in the fruit fields for a paltry hourly rate, often living in camps or squats, usually without running water or electricity.

Mediterranean Hope has a key partnership with local co-operative SOS Rosarno, which has created an ethical supply chain through its commercial enterprise, Mani e Terra. By setting a fair price - paid direct to the cooperative – producers working to an ethical code of practice can guarantee their workers a decent wage. Buyers are assured excellent, fairly-traded products bearing the brand “ETIKA” and a proportion of the price paid is ploughed back into social projects, 10% going to Mediterranean Hope.

Following the example of Protestant churches in Italy and Germany, the Church of Scotland will this year support a pilot project to bring the ETIKA brand here. Fiona says “Buying ETIKA citrus fruit is a really simple way to help beat exploitation”. And so she asks:

COULD YOU BUY A CRATE - OR MORE - OF ORANGES, LEMONS OR CLEMENTINES?

A 10kg crate of fruit could be donated to a food bank, if not used for eating, juicing or making marmalade. Some buyers are using lemons for curd or lemonade; others, clementines as stocking-fillers.

TO MAKE THIS WORK, WE NEED TO FILL AT LEAST ONE LOCAL PALLET WITH 56 CRATES @ ONLY £25 EACH

WHEN? Order by 03.12.21 to enable pre-Xmas delivery. Delivery to Kay Park Church due mid-December

DELIVERY? To Kay Park Parish Church Scout hut from which collection can be made

ORDERS? Bill Caldwell – 07947 128615 or thecaldwells@talktalk.net
Jeff Davies – 07917 360887 or jeffandsheila@talktalk.net

FURTHER INFO? cfinlay@churchofscotland.org.uk or fiona.kendall@fcei.it

PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD AMONGST YOUR FRIENDS AND TAKE A CRATE!

SHARE WITH FAMILY, NEIGHBOURS OR FRIENDS

Now we know what we can do—let's do it!





580 years of Service

In this remarkable list below lies a record of continuous and dedicated service to the Church of Scotland. Represented are session clerks, treasurers, property conveners, magazine editors, presbytery elders, Guild presidents, choir members, Monday Boys and district elders. Many of these people have held more than one of these offices at the same time. They all have continued to work for the church until their poor health, for some, made it impossible to continue. One person on the list, Jean Kelso, made history, by being one of the very first women to be ordained to eldership in the Church of Scotland, which was a remarkable event thanks to the courage of the ladies and the determination of the minister, the Rev John Weir Cook.

Long Service certificates will be presented by the minister, Rev Fiona, on Sunday 28 November. Sadly, Alex Wotherspoon passed away in October and his certificate will be collected by Mrs Lesley Wotherspoon.



George Thomson	50 years
Alex Wotherspoon	40 years
Jean Kelso	40 years
Alex Dempster	40 years
Douglas McCreadie	40 years
Bill Neilson	40 years
Ian Bremner	30 years
Olive Caldwell	30 years
Sheena McGougan	30 years
Sandra Nisbet	30 years
Charlotte McCrone	30 years
Jim Wilson	30 years
John Nisbet	30 years
Betty Bryan	30 years
Roger Bingham	30 years
Connie Gardner	30 years
Ellen McLeod	30 years

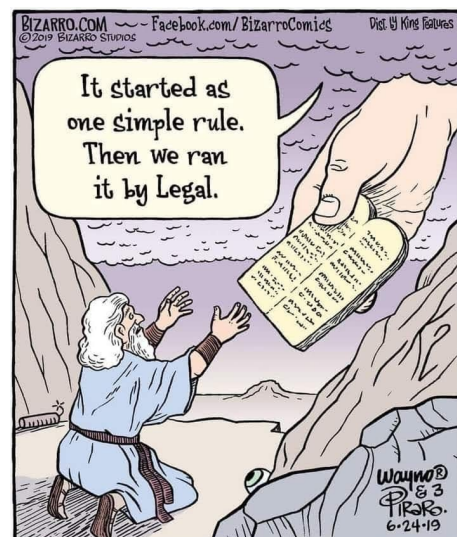


We shall remember them

If you passed along London Road in the weeks preceding 11 November, you could not have failed to spot the amazing display of artwork done by the Cubs, Beavers Scouts and Scouts of the 37th. Ayrshire Scout Group, who meet in their hall behind the Church. The church received many messages saying that they had given passers-by cause for reflection as they looked at them.

The Honours Lists of Old High and Henderson congregations, of those who gave their lives in the two World Wars, are situated inside the glass doors in the foyer of the church. Just looking at them is poignant, as you see several of the same surnames and know that, since they

are all from the same congregations, you are looking at young men who were probably related to one another. On Remembrance Sunday they were remembered in a very moving service of Remembrance, conducted by our minister, when representatives of the organisations, some of whom would be only six or eight years younger than those we were remembering, laid poppy wreaths in front of the communion table. A moving film and a recording of the sound of gunfire and of shells exploding, made in the minutes before the peace was announced, reminded us, if we needed reminding, of the cruelty of war.



Memories

I thought I would share with you my church family a few of my memories of the highs and lows of my time as your Session Clerk from the Union of Henderson Church and Old High Kirk in November 2012 until September 2021.

The first high must be of the service of Union itself which I personally found to be very moving and the start of a journey which would see many changes in the following nine years. This was followed by the £50 challenge which created a stir in the church – the enthusiasm was palpable – the money raised was good, but far better was the fellowship, the friendships formed and a coming together of the two former congregations into one.

The refurbishment of our building was for some a high and for others a time of unwelcome change, but I believe we have a welcoming building fit for purpose. The service to commemorate the re-opening at which the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, our very own Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, is one which must sit among the 'highs'.

The retiral of David Lacy in 2017 began on a high with the farewell celebrations, but was quickly followed by a deep low for me personally, as we began the search for a new minister.

Throughout this time, we were well supported by Rev Eddie Simpson and by Rev Kim Watt and Rev Bill Hewitt our Interim Moderators. It was a time of treading water.

Another event in 2017 which stands out in my mind is the Commissioning Service of Fiona Kendall when she pledged herself to work overseas in Italy and I have followed with interest her journey with Mediterranean Hope.

01st November 2018 saw the induction of Rev Fiona exactly six years since that service of Union. 2019 saw some new and exciting things happening in our church; Messy Church, Blue Sunday, Advent Café as well as the usual Watchnight Service with the church packed with familiar faces, but also less familiar ones. And then the pandemic. This must be the lowest point and it is taking time and patience to climb up again.

Our future is unclear and uncertain at this moment in time but the one thing we can all be certain of is of God's love for each one of us yesterday, today, and all our tomorrows. It has been a privilege to have served as your Session Clerk and I wish Janette every blessing in the future.

Janet

Thank you, Janet

As our Session Clerk of the former Old High Church and of the new Kay Park Parish Church, Janet saw us through the years after the Union, the refurbishment of the church, the vacancy after David Lacy's departure and the 'settling in' period of our present minister, Fiona Maxwell, and no one can doubt that she now deserves a well-earned rest and time to enjoy family time with her husband and supporter, Ian, and her growing extended family. Ill health has meant that we have not seen her back in church for the past few months, but when her course of treatment is over we will be able to welcome her back.

Janet handled all the administration of the Kirk Session with great skill and an amazing re-cap of dates, times and costs. Those of us who sit in the seats and come to the services remain blissfully unaware of the hours of work that it takes to make sure that everything runs smoothly and properly.

As the magazine editor and a member of the Kirk Session, I am taking this opportunity to express the appreciation of those of us who have worked with Janet over the past few years for all her efforts and wish her a return to good health so that she can really enjoy her retirement.



*Thank you
I would like to express my appreciation for all the lovely cards, flowers, e-mails, and messages of support I have received over the past few weeks wishing me a return to good health. This is the basket of flowers I received on my retiral from the position of Session Clerk. Thank you, dear friends. It means a great deal to me.
Janet*

Our new Session Clerk

My first interviewee over twenty years ago was Jack Leishman who had just become Session clerk, and so I thought that, for my swansong, I would interview our latest incumbent, Janette Steven, who has taken over from Janet Grant.

Janette spent her early childhood in Galashiels and Dumfries, before moving to Kilmarnock at the age of seven. She was educated at Loanhead and Wellington School in Ayr, before training to become a physiotherapist. Her first job on qualifying was in the old Kilmarnock Infirmary. Her parents, although not regular attenders at church, joined Henderson and the young Janette embraced church life. She became, along with many others of her age, a communicant and joined the church choir. Those were the days of large communicant classes.

However, in her early twenties, the young Alex Steven appeared on the scene and in 1974 the pair were married by John Cook. Immediately after the wedding the young couple set off for Canada, where Alex got a position with the Royal Bank of Canada and Janette worked as a physio in both clinics and hospitals. They were to remain in Canada for the next fifteen years, and their three boys, Michael, Craig and David, were born there. After a little initial homesickness they settled well into their new life. Janette talked about life in Quebec province at that time, when it was completely French, and no trace of English was tolerated. The Quebec party wanted to separate from Canada, but after a narrow defeat in a second referendum, they gave up the fight.

However, after the boys got a bit older, the family decided to come home. Janette joined Henderson again and the boys came to Sunday School. Janette became a deacon and was ordained an elder in 1996. She has always played a big part in the life of our church. She sings in the choir and is a member of the flower committee. In years gone by she was the convener of the social committee and she initiated our Burns Suppers, and in 2000 she organised our first Flower Festival. In 2006 and 2008 Janette was part of the medical team for the Amazon Hope Project, who sailed up the Amazon, giving much needed help to the indigenous people.

Singing is an important part of Janette's life. As well as singing in our choir she is also on the committee of the Dreg-horn Musical Society. Janette and Alex have two grandchildren, Emily and Logan, and they are very hands-on grandparents.

I was keen to know what the remit of a Session Clerk actually is. She is the minister's right-hand woman (person). She takes the minutes of session meetings and deals with all correspondence. She also has to organise communion services and the duties of elders. In light of our impending amalgamation with St. Kentigern's and Hurlford churches a great deal of work and negotiation will have to be undertaken. I am sure however, that Janette Steven is the person for the job. She is a doer who doesn't shirk from responsibility. She interacts well with people and will be a great asset to Kay Park Church. I really enjoyed our chat.

On a personal note I would just like to thank all the lovely people I have interviewed over the past twenty years. You were all so kind to me and I really appreciated it.

Blessings to you all

Shona K. Thomson



Could this be the last one?

Mike Higgins considers the implications for not having your say in a democracy and in the Church.

As Eleanor's role in the hotseat draws to a close I would like to say what an immense pleasure it has been for me to work on the occasional project with her.

Thinking how the magazine has progressed over the years brings to mind the immense changes in most publications, over the years. Church and club magazines were frequently stencilled sheets with sometimes ink-smudged typefaces created by clapped out duplicators, those pages then laboriously stapled together by a team of volunteers who seldom complained about inky fingers and paper cuts.

It was the same in the wider world of print. When I started in newspapers the printing was done using slugs of typeface that were generated from molten metal in massive lino-type machines.

Some years later slicker methods – involving computers (imagine that!) - were introduced that improved the technology and the look...but also meant that fewer printers and typesetters were required...so they were made redundant.

The technology marched ever onward. It became possible for reporters to directly input their copy to the production stage...doing away with a raft of sub-editors and even more production staff.

Further technology changes - latterly driven by Covid-

induced lockdown - have left many publishers considering whether to do away with the printing process entirely and just have an online presence.

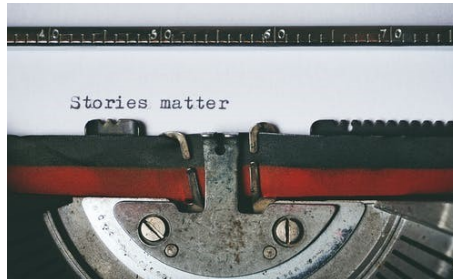
This thought process is right across the board. Many titles have gone to the wall entirely, over recent years, because of the uncertainty about funding, advertising, and other financing. The drive to online has made us fall out of the habit of buying our daily or weekly. One of the most concerning aspects of this demise is that without properly funded, independent publications at local and national level, a vacuum is created.

Cuts mean fewer staff to cover council meetings or courts, for example.

The eyes of many a community are

now shut because the local "rag" has ceased. Democracy, it could be argued, is under threat by this and by the fact that there is so much unregulated, unchallenged, material on social media, injuring the hitherto accepted norms.

Communication within an organisation is also vital so that those within it know what is going on. Big businesses employ corporate communications directors to oversee this. Smaller organisations – like your Church – need the same consideration. Eleanor...actively supported by Shiona and many other stalwarts...have kept the congregation in touch through the magazine, but with Eleanor leaving the post, what now for its future?



Jonah's wife listening to him explain that he's been inside a whale for 3 days.



OUR GIRL IN HONG KONG

我哋係香港嘅女仔。



Tai Lam Chung
Reservoir

Dear Friends,

It seems such a long time since I have been able to be with you all physically and sing with our wonderful choir. So much has changed since we first went into lockdown on the 23rd March 2020 and these changes will continue to shape the world for many years to come.

As many of you know, I moved to Hong Kong in August 2020. At that time, Covid 19 restrictions were tight but you were able to quarantine at home. Fifteen months on, Hong Kong now has some of the toughest quarantine rules of any country in the world. The city's "zero COVID" policy, which requires most arrivals to undergo 21 days of hotel quarantine, is prompting many expats to leave or draw up exit plans.



Lamma Island Lookout Pavilion

Despite this, I am thriving in this vibrant city and embracing everything it has to offer. Now that the weather is cooler, one of the best activities on a beautiful weekend is to get out of the bustling concrete jungle and go hiking. One of my favourite hikes is The Lamma Island Family Trail. It is a very easy hike/walk of about 5km across Lamma Island, connecting the two ferry piers Yung Shue Wan and Sok Kwu Wan. Yung Shue Wan is the main

'town' of Lamma, there's a lovely beach and a variety of restaurants to choose from. Sok Kwu Wan is a smaller village with some nice seafood restaurants along the waterfront near the ferry. Along the trail, you come to a cave which is known as 'Kamikaze Cave'. This was where Japanese forces occupying Hong Kong during WWII concealed speedboats to be deployed on suicide missions against Allied shipping! Totally fascinating and definitely poignant, with this year marking 80 years since the fall of Hong Kong.



Kamikaze Cave

Unfortunately, I will not be able to return home this Christmas as I do not have enough time off work to be able to quarantine for 21 days. However, I know I will have a fabulous Christmas with my Hong Kong 'family' and will be able to share the Christmas season online with my family and friends back home in Scotland.

During the time of Advent, I will reflect and pray on this past year and take comfort and joy knowing how blessed I am to be given the opportunities I have been. During this season, we will all be celebrating Hope, Peace, Love and Joy; I pray that all four of these would fill your life in every way this Christmas and beyond.

Warmest wishes to you all,

Alison



Friendship Club

The Friendship Club resumed on Thursday 21st October when it was lovely to see everyone again after such a long absence. Interaction with one another is so important and we were delighted to have such a good attendance.

Things are, of course, a bit different at the moment, but hopefully certain restrictions will be relaxed in the not too distant future. Unfortunately we are not permitted to have our usual home baking, but we are hopeful that this rule may soon change. For the moment chocolate biscuits have to suffice!

We enjoyed having Bill Caldwell and Grant Donald en-

tertaining us with their songs and anecdotes. They are very popular with our members and they never disappoint. We also had our usual Christmas market, which helped boost our club funds. Our Christmas celebration will be slightly different this year, but it will nonetheless embody the spirit of Christmas.

The committee is now putting together a syllabus for the new year, when we look forward to welcoming back members old and new on Thursday January 13th.

God bless you all and may you have a happy and safe Christmas.

The Shining Lights



For the cartoons in this and in every preceding magazine I am indebted to Joan Lacy EH



Shoobox Appeal 2021



Monday Boys

This is the face of someone who has received one of the shoeboxes so lovingly filled by those who responded to the Shoobox Appeal this year. The gifts are going to Moldova and are already on their journey.

Members of this church contributed 60 boxes, which were heavier than ever this year, and three of our ladies donated over 80 beautifully knitted woollen hats and supplied carrier bags of toiletries, toothpaste, shaving necessities as well as an enormous bag filled with toys, all of which could be added to any boxes that were short of any of the basic requirements or could be made up into new boxes at the checking centre

One lady from Stewarton said that she had been determined to find a "wee hat with flaps" to put in her box last year, because she knew that the winters were severe. It was a very distinctive colour with a lion motif on the front. Imagine her surprise when she looked at one of the photos on the Blythswood website, to see her "wee hat with flaps" being worn by a little lad. She read that he was six years old, had undergone chemotherapy and lost his hair and that this hat had been on his little head constantly for months.



Talk about a well-deserved rest! These are some of the young lads who work so hard every Monday to keep the grounds and our building in such immaculate condition all year round—and the reward is a cup of tea and a chocolate biscuit!

Seriously, we all owe them a debt of gratitude because not only do they save the church money, they act promptly and their combined skills ensure that there is not a better maintained church in Kilmarnock.



Prayer Page

Christmas Greetings 2021

Dear Friends, What a strange, funny and sometimes heart-breaking year this has been.

PRAY FOR US LORD

How can we forget Covid 19? Strange to wear a mask, use hand gel, wipe everything, keep away from others. Don't Touch. Not normal. STRANGE.

PRAY FOR US LORD

Funny, not being able to recognise anyone; everyone seeming to look older, act older, feel safest in their own homes.

PRAY FOR US LORD

Sad, the people who have long Covid, the bereaved, struggling with loneliness, grief and the question **WHY?**

The hospital staff and all others involved, who have had to witness tragedy, illness and exhaustion for 18 long months

PRAY FOR US LORD

This is my Christmas message to each and every one.

Luke 2 v11 NIV

Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord

Luke 2 v14

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests.

PRAY FOR US LORD

John 1v5 NIV

The light shines on in the dark and the darkness has not overcome it.



May Hope carry you forward.

May PEACE enter your lives

May JOY fill your hearts always.

May the Peace of Christmas carry you through the dark days of winter.

Wishing everyone a healthy and loving Christmas

*From the Prayer Group, Rene Larmour, Olive Gow and all the Angels in our group who say prayers for anyone in need of our help
May we bless God for all the goodness he bestows on us.*



CHURCH NOTICES

Church Flowers

Sincere thanks to the following people who have donated to the Flower Fund

September

Karen Livingstone,
Sadie Plenderleith,
Marjorie McConnell,
Cathy Williamson
and one anonymous donation

October

Mary Lapham,
Muriel Watson,
Jacqueline Biggar,
Moir Thomson,
Sheila Andrews

November

Paul Scoular,
Elizabeth Templeton,
Silvija Wilde,
Alex Dempster,
Liz Smith,
Evelyn Irving,
Sandra Nisbet

Donations can be placed, in an envelope marked 'Flower Fund', on the Offering Plate or given to Aileen Sansum.

Cheques should be made payable to Kay Park Church Flower Fund.

FUNERALS

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you"

20 October

Mr Alex Wotherspoon,
24 Robert Creighton Place Dist. 6

19 November

Mr Dave Samson,
7 Baird Road Dist. 31

Baptisms

10 October

Rebecca, infant daughter of
Liz and Michael Lacy

17 October

Grace, infant daughter of
Claire and Nick Lobban

24 October

Sarah, infant daughter of
Rachel and Alistair Smith

Welcome, New Members

to

Mrs Maureen Taylor, 11 Faransay Place
Dist 2

Mr Alan Rosamond, 6 Gabriel Andrew Gardens
Dist 43

Farewell!

to

Mr & Mrs Charles Donachy of 3 Westray Drive
Dist 7 by Certificate of Transfer to New Laigh Kirk

This whole page was sponsored by

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December—Sunday worship will be conducted at 11.00 am by the Rev Fiona Maxwell unless otherwise stated

2	2.00 pm	Friendship Club
5	11.00 am	ADVENT WORSHIP – 2
10	12.30 pm	Guild Christmas Lunch—Kilmarnock College
11	11.00 am —3.00 pm	Fellowship Christmas Fair
12	11.00 am	ADVENT WORSHIP— 3
18	11.00 am—12.00	Carols @ The Cross
19	11.00 am	ADVENT WORSHIP—4
24	6.30 pm 11.00 pm 11.30 pm	Carols and Story Telling Gathering for Watchnight refreshment Watchnight Service
26	11.00 am	MORNING WORSHIP—“Follow the Star”



And it's Goodbye from me

This will be my last magazine. The next magazine will have a new editor and I wish my successor as much joy at putting the magazine together as I have had. I became Magazine Editor in 1992 and continued for almost 30 years, apart from a break in 2004—2011, during which I was doing other jobs in the church. I managed to wrestle the magazine back in 2011 and have not let go since then! I am grateful to all those who have provided me with material over this time, especially my dear friend, Shiona Thomson, whose interviews with members of the congregation have been a highlight in every edition. To everyone who has contributed and everyone who has helped with the printing, distribution and eagle-eyed proofreading I offer my heartfelt thanks. It wouldn't have been possible without your help. Thanks also to the sponsors of these pages—they help enormously with the costs of printing.

Ronnie and I joined Henderson Church when we got engaged in 1965 and have loved being members of this wonderful congregation since then. We discovered early on that the best way of getting to know the church and its members is to get involved and the church has been at the centre of our lives since then. Some of our happiest memories here will go with us as we move south to the Tyne Valley in Northumberland in the Spring, God willing. We have bought a new-build house (which isn't ready yet) in the lovely village of Corbridge, which is half way between Carlisle and Newcastle, along the A69, and the very warmest welcome will be extended to any of our friends from Kay Park Church who would like to visit for an afternoon or stay for days. The email address and mobile number will be the same as now and we would love to hear from you. God bless

Eleanor

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