

# **The Livingstone Herald**

**The Quarterly Magazine of  
Livingstone Church**



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## Editor's Letter

Welcome to a bumper September edition of the Livingstone Herald!

In May, I attended a friend's wedding in Kuala Lumpur. It was quite an experience watching all the various Hindu rituals taking place in the temple. Hopefully it will be the only wedding I attend which starts at 6.45 one morning and finishes late on the following evening. I recuperated with a few days in Singapore before my return home.

It has been an interesting few months within the church, particularly regarding discussions and reports made at the General Assembly 2019. The highlights of which are mentioned in the Minister's letter.

In July the new manse was purchased at 27 Cuninghame Drive and the old manse should already be up for sale.

By the time this is published, the Summer Mission will be over, having had an excellent start with over 250 attendees on its first day. Most organisations will soon be coming back from their summer breaks, so now seems like a great time to try out something new, like the Badminton Club, Craft Club or The Guild.

Last issue, I stated my desire to run a series of opinion pieces on the future of the church. Fortunately, there's been a healthy response to this appeal and I have included an article on my own thoughts in this issue. I would urge any member to send in their thoughts and feelings on the future of the church, be they long, short, named or anonymous. After all, this is our magazine, so what better place to express our thoughts and opinions?

The cover image for this issue is curtesy of Tracey Rolandelli:

<http://rolandellidesign.blogspot.com/>

## Minister's letter

Dear Friends,

There's no denying it: we're in a time of rapid change occurring all around us. Today, as I write this letter, Boris Johnson will take up residency of 10 Downing Street as leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister. There is a tension across the world between countries and all around us things change.



At the General Assembly in May of this year voted to accept the Radical Action Plan. You can find full details on the Church of Scotland website on the following link:

[http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about\\_us/radical\\_action\\_plan](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/radical_action_plan)

These, though, are the main decisions:

- † Up to £25m to be spent on projects aimed at church growth, with particular emphasis on church planting
- † 100 new worshipping communities to be established
- † Focus on engaging with people under 40
- † Cost of central administration to be cut by up to 30%: four councils to be merged into two
- † Number of Scottish presbyteries to be reduced from 43 to about 12, focused on supporting local congregations in their ministry and mission
- † Networks, hubs and other new local church structures to be developed
- † Kirk Sessions to be reduced in size and focused on 'leadership and strategic decision-making'
- † Decision-making and resources to be devolved from the central administration to regional and local levels
- † No congregation to pay more to the centre after next year until new arrangements are agreed

- † Land and buildings plan to focus on ‘well equipped spaces in the right places’. Money from sale of redundant buildings to be shared between congregations
- † Improved training and support for all ministry and leadership roles
- † General Assembly to be made smaller
- † Encouragement of a season of ‘prayer and preparation’ across the Church from September to December 2019

All these mean significant change throughout the Church: the central restructure including Councils and staffing, Presbyteries and local congregations. It will be a difficult time, but reality has struck here: the Church can no longer keep on going on as it was. As real as that is for the Church nationally, it is just as real for us in Ardrossan Presbytery, in Stevenston and for us as Livingstone and Ardeer congregations.

We need to grasp that change and look to how we can prepare ourselves for the future and what changes we need to manage as we head to union. But we do that, worshipping the one true God, who does not change (Malachi 3:6a – I, the Lord do not change). He continues to love us and desires that we return to Him in love and service. He calls us to “act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). That call leads us into ministry and mission and he gives us the tools with which to fulfil that calling. That gifting is not for us to hold on to but to use, develop, share with others, in service of God.

As we go forward, we need to see how God wants us move and that means prayer and focussing on our relationship with God, individually, as Kirk Sessions and as congregations. In a time of change, we can be confident on a faithful God who does not change but wants to transform us into His image and His ways.

Every blessing  
Dave.



## Kirk Session News

Our most recent joint Session Meeting was one with a difference as it was held in the new manse in Cuninghame Drive. This gave Elders an opportunity to view the new property before Dave and Maureen move in. It was also the beginning of a new arrangement of Session Meetings as it has been agreed that all future meetings, will in the main, be joint with Ardeer alternating between the two church premises.



The purchase of a new manse was necessary as the current manse in Priesthill View, while meeting the criteria by way of number of rooms, was identified as not having a suitable layout. The General Trustees in Edinburgh recognised the problems with the current manse and have agreed to help finance the purchase of 27 Cuninghame Drive. This means that we have been able to purchase a new manse at no cost to either congregation. We wish Dave and Maureen every blessing in their new home.

I have already mentioned a change in Session meetings. Another change for Livingstone elders is that Charlie Campbell will not be with us. Charlie passed away suddenly in May. Charlie was a very hard working and committed Elder who fulfilled his pastoral role diligently with care and concern for our members. He served faithfully in the counting house on a Sunday morning and was a very active member of The Work Party and The Fabric Committee. Charlie was a quiet man with a deep faith who supported every aspect of church life.

Sandy Hershaw.  
Session Clerk.



## Finance Report

Below is a summary of the second quarter for 2019:

2019	January	April	May	June
General Account				
Balance brought forward	2,399	3,054	1,656	507
Income		3,086	4,254	3,656
Expenditure		4,484	5,402	4,482

Main income and expenditure items:

Income from collections

Compared to 2018	+17.7%	+13%	+14.5%
Dividends		1,306	

Expenses

3309 per month M&M February-November

200 per month manse fund

200 per month cleaning etc.

271 per month insurance

401 travel expenses

1,357 gas

	January	April	May	June
Fabric Brought forward	5,580	4,653	4,673	4,630
Income		80	80	80
Expenditure		61	123	879
	39 per month boiler service			
	53 repainting			
	701 roof repairs/inspection			

Designated Funds	April	May	June
Income	226	176	42
Expenditure	0	400	54

Balance from all funds	154,862	158,143	156,040
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You will see that compared to the same months last year we have maintained a good percentage increase. This is good news and the Trustees thank you all for considering your offerings. As I said last time there is a continuing disparity between our income and expenditure. While our financial situation is not as critical as it was at this time last year we are not breaking even, (look at the trend in the General and Fabric Funds balances). Pat is busy preparing our submission to HMRC for 2018. If you paid tax (in the past 5 years and have given to the Church) and have not filled in a gift aid form please get one from the counting team-it only requires your name and address. That extra 20% is vital for our future. The Gift Aid rebate will help improve the General Fund balance but we are heading for a deficit by the end of the year and we know that the Ministry and Mission contribution for 2020 will be the same as this year

F. Kerr (Treasurer).



## **Fabric Report**

Fence: – The fence nearest the school was showing severe paint flaking. We started to scrape it, to remove the old paint down to the bare metal when a chap on his way to the gym told us he was a painter. He advised us to put a primer on before painting, he told us what to get and where to get it. Primer and paint were obtained as he suggested. All the fence was taken to the bare metal, primed and painted black. The same chap told us we did the correct thing and that the paint should last a good 8 to 9 years. This job took quite some time to do but was completed before the end of June.

Counting House Chair: – Somebody stood on the seat with the result that it gave way. New plywood was purchased, cut to the correct diameter and holes were drilled to the same pattern as the original. Bill Munn then stained the new wood as the original stain. The new seat was then nailed back into position.



Fire risk assessment: – This was professionally done and I have to report that there are no major problems. There are however 8 minor actions that need to be carried out within 3 months of the inspection.

Arthur Taylor.



## The Guild



I cannot believe that here we are at the end of another successful Summer Mission week and I am writing about the start of the Guild in September.

This year it was decided in the Guild Office at 121 George Street that 'Guild Week' should move from November to September. The National Guild Meeting takes place on the first Saturday of September (the 7<sup>th</sup>) and Guild Week will be held from 8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September with our Guild Dedication Service on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Guild Office have prepared a QUIZ for Guild Week to start off the session, with an opportunity for congregation members and their family and friends to pit their wits against each other and enjoy a good afternoon in good company with the usual afternoon tea. We will be hoping for teams of four to participate. The Quiz will take place on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September at 1.30pm, so mark the date in your calendar!

In order to prepare for the quiz and to start the session well, we will have our first meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September at the usual time of 1.30pm in the Church Hall.

Dorothy Penno.

## Prayer Thoughts

The Priority Areas conferences which several of us have attended over the last 18 months essentially challenge us to find the best way of doing God's work in our area. They don't do this without teaching and sharing of the experiences of the leaders and guest speakers. At the end of each conference each church takes away a plan which is reviewed at the next conference. Part of the plan from our last conference was to strengthen the prayer life of the congregation. The approach which I wanted to try was an inclusive one as I have a fear of a 'prayer group' becoming a clique which others feel they are not able to join. The approach has obviously been too unstructured and didn't seem to meet the congregations need. So, like those who tried before we have to look for other ways to ensure that we have an active prayer life. The book of Jude in the New Testament at verse 20 says this; 'But you, dear friends must continue to build your lives on the foundation of your holy faith. And continue to pray as you are directed by the Holy Spirit.'



These words remind us of Jesus promise that we would not be set adrift, rather we would have the guidance of the Holy Spirit to ensure we follow the path that God wants us to travel. The challenge which arises from the words in Jude can be summed up by the question; 'Are we open to the directing of the Spirit?' Discernment can be quite awkward, are we merely following our own ideas or are we accepting the Spirit's guidance? If I borrow the conference title to sum up with another question; 'Should we make the 'priority area' for our personal development in our walk of faith, the aim of being more in tune with the Holy Spirit?' Prayerful consideration has to be given.

## Themes

**Approach:** come before God humbly but in the knowledge you are there at His invitation.

**Confession:** review your prayer life and ask God to forgive it's weaknesses.

### Thanksgiving:

- † Ministry – give thanks for Dave Sutherland and his ministry with us and Brian Devlin in his role.
- † Path of Renewal/Priority Areas Conferences – give thanks for the encouragement to consider innovation and not be afraid for it to fail or need adjustment.
- † Summer Mission – give thanks for the team who invest great time and effort into making the mission a success.
- † Young People Ministry – give thanks for the group who inspired by the summer mission developed a youth group meeting throughout the year.

### Intercession:

- † Prayer Life – pray that there will be a re invigoration of the churches prayer life.
- † Bereavement – pray that the pain of loss is gradually overcome and good memories are kept bright.
- † Schools – pray for staff and pupils at the start of the new term, particularly those stepping up to new schools.
- † Stevenston – pray that the churches will have a positive impact in the town.
- † Townspeople – pray that there will be a strong sense of community with the Church strongly involved.

## Prayer Life

At some time or another or perhaps even regularly we have a health check. The outcome is to alert us to any unknown problems and to begin the process of seeking remedies. There can be the situation where everything is fine which usually brings great relief. Can we, should we, go through a similar process with our prayer life? Like a health check, should we only apply it on an individual level or widen it out to family and church prayer life? Simply by looking at prayers and prayer advice in the Bible does not produce a nice neat checklist – that would be too easy. Nevertheless, a prayer life health check is worth investigating.

A Google search came up with this as a possible starter;

- † How regularly are you praying?
- † When do you pray? How?
- † When did you last register an answered prayer?
- † How do you recognise God's voice?
- † When did you last minister to someone else in prayer?
- † How regularly do you receive prayer ministry?
- † What's your usual balance between:

- requests for you
- requests for others
- confession
- praise/thanksgiving to God
- silence
- song
- etc.



These are all good questions and like a medical health check give strong indicators to the health of our prayer life.

If we turn to the Bible and investigate prayer there is a wealth of material. Matthew chapter 6 contains Jesus teaching about prayer where in verse 6 he encourages us to be apart and pray

privately to God and in verse 7 to make our prayers concise not to ramble and be repetitive. Mark 12, verse 40 reminds us not to make a show of prayer when there are elements of sin in our own lives which we need to deal with first. Acts chapter 12 verse 5 gives an example of praying for others. Luke chapter 18 verse 13 shows us that it is important to recognise our own state before God and his graciousness that allows us to ask for our sins to be forgiven. Romans chapter 8, verse 26 tells us about the role the Holy Spirit plays in our prayer life. Ephesians chapter 6 verse 18 urges us to pray in the power of the Holy Spirit and to be persistent in our prayers for Christians everywhere.

If we turn to Psalms, we find many are prayers often offered in situations of hopelessness and despair. Talking to God was obviously a huge part of David's life and his prayers show the importance of turning to God in prayer when we or those known to us face life's difficulties. I recently witnessed such an example when on hearing that a baby of one of the members had been taken seriously ill, one congregation phoned round to ask for prayers for the child's recovery.



An active vibrant prayer life is vital, personally, within families and as a church. How do we perform in the prayer life health check? Do we get an all clear or do we need to start following a better regime for the sake of our prayer health?

Of course, once you have the results of a health check-up, there is often a plan put in place to help improve your health. It should be no different for a Prayer Life health check. Such a plan could look something like the following;

## **Prayer Life Health Plan: Steps to an Active prayer Life**

1. Don't be afraid to talk to God who is always available to listen.
2. Have a regular time or times each day that you devote to prayer, start small and build up.
3. Make sure you choose a time when you are able to focus on speaking to God.
4. Have a regular prayer that you use each time, The Lord's Prayer taught by Jesus would be perfect for this.
5. Include prayer items you know about, which could be;  
Confession – unburdening yourself to God and asking for forgiveness.  
Thanksgiving – giving thanks for what God has done and answered prayer.  
Intercession – asking God for his intervention. It could be illness, bereavement, guidance for yourself or others.
6. You don't need an appointment to pray, you can talk to God at any time.
7. Remember to be patient when waiting for God's answer, it is a two-way conversation.

### **Get prayer active!**

Andrew Tomlinson.



### **Scottish Bible Society**

Here is an excerpt from a letter of thanks received by Mrs. Mary Wilson from the Scottish Bible Society:

“In many places around the world, Christians live in an environment that is openly hostile to their faith in Christ, or where jobs are so scarce that they live in poverty, or where there simply are not enough Bibles to meet the demand. But now thanks to

you, they are being strengthened and encouraged through the Word of God.

With the help and prayers of supporters like you, more people across the globe will have the opportunity to learn about the God who loves them and to experience changed lives.

Thank you so much for helping to fund Bible distribution, translation and other Scripture related projects in places like Laos or Cambodia, or China or Syria.”

### **Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal 2019**

The Shoe Box Appeal is Blythswood Care’s biggest Christian literature project. Give thanks for the lives touched and transformed having read the gospel message included in every shoebox.

Blythswood Care started as the Blythswood Tract Society in 1966. Give thanks that sharing the good news of the gospel through Christian literature has been essential to the work from the start.



Blythswood would like to thank everybody who contributed in any way to the Shoe Box Appeal in 2018, enabling them to gather and distribute 107,073 shoeboxes.

The shoeboxes received last year were distributed in Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

In Livingstone we have been supporting this very worthwhile cause for many years and we hope that this year will be no exception. Please look out for the leaflets in church or visit the web site [www.blythswood.org](http://www.blythswood.org) for a list of items required. You could also ask your friends and family to help with this project.

This year filled shoeboxes will be collected at our Harvest Service on Sunday 22nd. September 2019.  
Thank you in anticipation of your continued support.

Dorothy Hershaw.



Pantomime season is upon us once again! Livingstone Players are proud to present their 2019 pantomime – Mother Goose - written by Roy McGregor and directed by Anne Cochrane. At the time of writing, rehearsals are just about to start as we face an intense but fun and rewarding four-month period in the run up to our opening night.

This year, the pantomime will take place on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>-Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December in Livingstone Church Hall. Tickets are priced at £7 for adults and £5 for children except for the opening night where all tickets are priced at just £5. Proceeds will go to Christian Aid. The tickets have designated row and seat numbers and will go on public sale on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October. As usual, tickets sell quickly so don't delay as we are limited to how many people we can accommodate in the hall.

If you don't know any cast members or can't buy tickets on a Sunday after morning worship then you can buy your tickets online at our website: [www.livingstoneplayers.org.uk](http://www.livingstoneplayers.org.uk) . Here, you will find lots of information about our past productions. Our Facebook page and Instagram also have regular updates about Mother Goose and future performances. Simply search for Livingstone Players on Facebook or Instagram.

Livingstone Players.

## Summer Mission 2019



'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' John chapter 8 v12  
This was the text for this year's Summer Mission. The response we had to this year's events certainly lit up our hearts as we were so encouraged by the numbers attending. The week started with the Fun Day in the High Kirk grounds. Over 230 children and their families enjoyed activities, craft, face painting, bouncy castles and a BBQ. It was so good to see a few of our members enjoying the sunshine, watching the activities and enjoying a cup of tea, home baking and BBQ. For many families in our community this event gives an opportunity to share in fun activities and for many it is one of the highlights of their year. The fire service and paramedic vehicles luckily were not in use but were there to enhance the children's experiences and we were very grateful to the staff for their visits.

At the Summer Club this year, around 45 children enjoyed stories, crafts, songs, games, puzzles and each day shared in lunch together. As in previous years we used and adapted Scripture Union material. This year the theme was Waste watchers. It highlighted that God created our world from nothing and we have a responsibility to look after it. The planning group met regularly from January to plan and prepare all the materials, activities and events. This group, made up of members from the three churches, work extremely well together, sharing the

workload and enjoying fellowship, friendship and faith together. We are also so lucky to have a large team of adult 'volunteers' and young leaders from the three churches who helped at all the various events and activities. Many of these young people have been children at the mission and it is great to see them developing into young leaders.



We also held two Youth Evenings attended by 18 young people. The programme for these was varied and included games, sports, challenges, discussions and each evening we shared in supper and a chat together. We hope that some of these young people will join our monthly youth group.

The Summer Mission is a massive outreach project within the town. The three churches split the costs equally which is quite a financial commitment. We were very grateful again this year to secure the help of Lidl who provided some of the food for Messy Church and Tesco who gave us food for the fun day, beautiful books as prizes and Tracey (from Saltcoats Tesco) served free fruit to those attending Messy Church. As an additional financial boost, we managed to secure funding from Cash for Kids which made a huge difference to what we could provide for the children. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors for their help. It made such a difference to us financially and meant we could enhance our provision of food for the children at all the various events.

Each year we review our work and try to build on the past strengths taking into account the views of the young people and helpers.

We hope we create positive memories of Christian Community while helping to build relationships with children and their families so that they may become part of a church community. How appropriate that the children's favourite song of this year's Summer Mission was 'It's me who builds community'.



Here are a few quotes from some of our helpers.

'I help at the Summer Mission every year because I enjoy working with the children and seeing them having such a good time'

'It is so good to see young people develop over the years to become leaders themselves'

'I come along to help because the Summer Mission is a time when all children from all backgrounds can come and sing songs, play games, do crafts and hear through Bible stories that God loves them.'



'I love to hear the children singing the songs and having such fun doing the actions'

'This is the fourth year I have helped at the Summer Mission. I enjoy working with the children and getting to know them.

The children have fun, fun, fun as a child told me. It is not just the children who have fun but the adults working as well. We all get on very well together and help each other.'

The Summer Mission finished with Messy Church in Livingstone and a Service of Praise and Thanksgiving in the High Kirk.

A huge thank you to everyone from Livingstone, for their help and support with the fun day, the activities with the children, behind the scenes in the kitchens and at Messy Church. Without their help we would not have had such a successful Summer Mission.

Dorothy Hershaw.

## **Messy Church**

On the second Saturday of the Summer Mission we held a Messy Church here in Livingstone. We 'd had such a good turnout for the Fun Day and Kid's Club but were unsure of how well the Messy Church would be supported. We needn't have worried. By 12 o'clock well over 80 children and adults had arrived in the hall and were keen to get going. Even the kitchen staff some of whom were there from 10 o'clock had to up their game when they realised just how many they were catering for. We are incredibly grateful to our local Lidl's, who once again donated most of the food and drink for the Messy Church. They also provided the ice cream and fruit cocktail which was much appreciated by all on such a warm day.





Four different craft activities were laid out on the tables. The crafts were: making willow crosses, owls, rainbow blowers and making a bird feeder from tetra cartons. The latter task, I felt, was rather ambitious but it was amazing how the children coped with a little adult input. Tracy from our local Tesco attended as well and set up a fruit tasting table. The children joined in enthusiastically and most had a go at several of the activities.

After an hour's craft the children and adults went into the church for a short time of worship led by Dave. Incorporated into the service were some of the catchy tunes the children learned during the four days of Kid's Club and Dave focused on the Memory Verse for this year's Summer Mission which was from John 8 v. 12 – Jesus said, "I am the light of the world....."

Meanwhile within half an hour the large hall was totally transformed from craft activities to lunch, with tables laden with cheese, ham, crusty bread and rolls, salad ingredients and crisps. Tea, coffee and juice were also provided along with a lovely selection of cakes, given by Dorothy Penno. There was a fantastic atmosphere in the hall and thanks to all the summer mission helpers along with the hard-working ladies in the kitchen, the Messy Church was a resounding success.

Catherine Reid.





## Views from the Pews



I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the first run of 'Views from the Pews'. I hope this will encourage others to participate in this discussion and share their thoughts. – Editor.

Churches today do not have large numbers coming to Sunday worship due to many reasons, elderly and sick who are not always able to attend, young who are more attracted to the various activities that now take place on Sunday's and their parents caught up in taking them to the activity of choice. The church has lost two generations to the modern world, the parents who were our Sunday school of the past and their children, many of whom were never introduced to church. What can we do to entice people in? Become modern? Stay traditional? Mix both? In the words of Johnny Nash there are more questions than answers but we all need to pray to find an answer.

- Jean Galloway.



The times they are a-changin'.

On the first Sunday that I came as a visitor to Livingstone church, I remember the warm friendly welcome extended to me by everyone. The church was packed full of young and old. Upstairs alone there must have been 30 – 40 members. Now it seems that we are lucky to have that number in total.

A small dedicated team of members from all three churches put a huge amount of effort into events like 'messy church' and the 'summer mission'. These events have been popular and very well attended year upon year and while that is wonderful, it still does not seem to bring in any more bodies on a Sunday. So

where do we go from here? How do we sustain our Church buildings, indeed can we?

Do we close one of our Churches and congregate in the other? If so how do we choose one over the other?

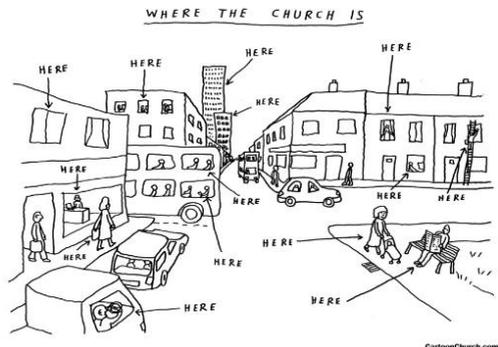
Should we close both Ardeer and Livingstone or all three churches including The High Kirk, look for a new site and rebuild with a modern purpose - designed building?

As the famous hymn goes:

'The Church is wherever God's people are praising, knowing they're wanted and loved by their Lord. The Church is wherever Christ's followers are trying to live and to share out the good news of God.'

The future I would wish for our churches would be a positive, vibrant one.

- Anonymous 1.



Within the next few years I would like to see one united church of Scotland in Stevenston, with everything possible being done to encourage more young people into the church. I do feel however that inroads have already been made in this by Summer Mission and Messy Church, both of which have been very well attended and pray that events like these will eventually result in more young people attending church.

- Anonymous 2.

## Church of the Future

Alan asked me to make a contribution to the September issue of the magazine. I interpreted the request that it was about The Church, i.e., at a national level, not our parish church.

We have been well versed as to the present-day problems facing the Church of Scotland. I understand that over the coming years, there will be fewer congregants, fewer ordained personnel and a crumbling property estate that will require finances to upkeep and alter for ongoing needs.

I think we will see the greater development and use of an 'electronic church' as a possible way to overcome and address the present issues. We've seen a start of that in our computer-controlled projection system. Developments in broadband signal could enable adherents to congregate in unison but from disparate locations. If this happened, we could have electronic parishes. You only have to walk down any High Street and see individuals glued to their phones communicating with their pals, shopping sites, bank accounts etc. These folks are joined into something bigger. I think it's only a matter of time before church communities go the same way.

I would, miss, the personal contact that Sunday worship, amongst other things provides but getting together with others could be in conjunction with electronic forums.

As a final comment, from my travels around the world, I can't help noticing that where there is NO formal link between Church and Government, I notice that Christian commitment and expression is stronger. Something we, as a nation, should maybe consider, breaking that historical link.

- Ken Gibson.



The direction of the Church at the moment is somewhat unknown; we are in uncharted waters. It has been in decline not just for years but for decades. I often feel it is in a period of terminal decline but that doesn't mean we stop the good work we are doing. Heading through a period of change and constant renewal is never easy but it is something we have to embrace, and do so together in harmony. We have to adopt the 'Evolve or Die' attitude and aim to alter the way that Church is perceived in the local community.



For me, Church is about refreshing our connection with God on a regular basis. The community aspect of fellowship is so important. Seeing the same faces over the years makes us very much like a Church family and we strive to help one another and the wider community in any way we can.

In the future I would love to see the pews of the Church full with people of all ages on a Sunday morning. That, however, is likely to be nothing more than a distant memory. Reflecting honestly, we have three Church of Scotland buildings in Stevenston – none of which are fully fit for modern worship. The buildings themselves can be barriers for both welcoming others in and also the huge financial drain for the upkeep and maintenance – costs which will only rise in the coming years. Could one of the existing Churches be the main worship centre in the town? I'm not so sure. It would certainly need a major re-fit. The ideal solution would be to create a purpose-built space somewhere near to the centre of Stevenston to replace all three Church of Scotland Churches. The likelihood of that happening is questionable but perhaps if the three congregations had that foresight ten or even twenty years ago, we would be in a much stronger position now. I do feel there needs to be a building somewhere that people can call 'Church' despite the Church being wherever God's people are praising.

Everyone is aware that we need to attract more young people into active Church life. We are fortunate to have a hardworking Summer Mission team who absolutely excel when it comes to connecting with the youth of the local area. The next step is to try and keep in touch with these children and their families all year round and that is easier said than done. The youth group, formed last year, has been somewhat successful in doing this. The annual pantomime by Livingstone Players is growing year on year – connecting with people of all faiths and no faith to work together, raising money for Christian Aid. More events like this are needed in which we work with the community. There are fewer people and they are having to do more work which can make Church life harder and sometimes feel like a chore. Without developing new partnerships and introducing fresh faces to the Church, the work we currently do so well will eventually end.

As a nation, we don't like change. We like nostalgia, tradition and keeping things the way they've always been. There is always a place for history and heritage and we do need to look to the past to be able to build a better future. In ten years, Church won't look anything like it does today. However, we can face tomorrow with strength and hope knowing that some things don't change. Hebrews Chapter 13 at Verse 8 reminds us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."



- Anonymous 3.

Looking around at the empty pews, an issue always exacerbated during the summer months, it seems obvious to me that there is no sustainable way forward for three churches in Stevenston. I'm sure that I wasn't alone in enjoying sharing fellowship with members from Ardeer in Livingstone over the past few months. I think that this needs to be extended further. Thinking about the

future and the discussions from this year's General Assembly I can only honestly see a positive way forward through a union between Ardeer, Livingstone and The High Kirk in one church building and think we should approach the High Kirk on our own initiative to start this process now. I think that the best we can hope for otherwise is a strung-out decline before a sudden fatal collapse.

The Livingstone and Ardeer sites should be put on the market and the funds from their sale used to fund two major projects. The first being the construction of a new community hub in the brownfield area with the assistance of the local council as part of the regeneration scheme and any other bodies willing to contribute. This premises would be the cornerstone providing a site for the groups currently based in Ardeer/Livingstone and allowing us to host mid-week services, café-churches, Messy Church events etc.

The second project to be funded would be the establishment of a digital church. This will serve multiple functions, allowing those physically unable to get to church to attend, create the opportunity for those who wouldn't attend a physical church service to do so anonymously, make the church more accessible and appealing to a wider, younger audience and allow us to spread the Word from Stevenston to the entire world. As a younger person, I find many aspects of my life are centred online and in order for the church to connect with many of my generation, a strong online presence and service is nothing short of necessary and will only become more so in future.



**REACH UP**

**REACH IN**

**REACH OUT**



The story of the encounter between Jesus and the rich man worries me. He had followed the law and done everything right but letting go of his possessions was a step too far. In much the same way, I fear that if we don't let go of our buildings and make the drastic changes required of us, then the Church of Scotland will ultimately disappear completely, whatever else we may do right. Half-measures and tentative steps just won't cut it.

- Alan Kerr.

### **A Special Milestone**

Congratulations to Bobby and Brenda Bendelow who celebrated their Diamond Anniversary on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June this year.

Bobby and Brenda are a very well known and popular couple within the congregation and we wish them many years of happiness to come.



### **Brownie Report – Session 2018-2019**

The session began on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September (2018). We are fortunate that our numbers have risen to 26 this year and we now have a waiting list. Our pack is constantly being fed from the Rainbow group who meet in the small hall also on Thursday evenings. They too are at capacity and have a waiting list. Following on from our report in March magazine, in February we celebrated Chinese New Year with Chinese games, food and by making Chinese lanterns. Also in February, we made Valentines cards and enjoyed heart shaped biscuits.

Before having a two-week break for the Easter holidays we had an Easter egg hunt on the last Thursday in March – great fun and excitement for all.

On 25<sup>th</sup> April we had our annual outing, this year we went to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, where the girls enjoyed the Dippy exhibition and quiz. Unfortunately, the weather didn't allow us to eat our packed lunch in the park, it poured all day! The weather didn't dampen their enthusiasm especially as they ran from the coach into McDonalds at Linwood for a Happy Meal on the way home. During May we try to get outdoors as much as possible with nature walks and outdoor games, weather permitting. This year we managed to get out twice!

Our last Thursday meeting this session was 30<sup>th</sup> May when we went to Basebowl in Saltcoats for a game of bowling and yet more food.



The session was finally would up on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June with what has become our annual visit to Mrs. Taylors house for a BBQ and garden party, thought unfortunately once again the weather was against us and all the activities had to take place indoors. Not that it bothered Mr and Mrs. Taylor having 26 7-10 year olds taking over their house for the evening. Once again we have to thank Dorothy for all the work she puts in ensuring that the girls have lots of fun while also learning new skills and to Arthur for cooking all the food that was to be done on the BBQ in their kitchen. The next session will begin on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September (2019) from 18-19.30.

Pat Gray.

### **Scout Report from the Dalry Community Day**

It was a great day in Dalry. It started in town with a parade to the glen known locally as the Fairy Glen



The weather was perfect and there were a variety of activities:

- † A sale of children books aimed at 4 to 9 years about a dog called 'Badger the Mystical Mutt'.
- † A story corner with a seat carved from wood in the shape of a pile of books for the storyteller to sit on and benches for the enraptured audience
- † Fairy Face paints
- † Tombola
- † Live music
- † The cub leader had a fire going to toast mallows, which is always popular
- † A nature trail
- † Fairy treasure hunt.

For the Fairy Trail through the glen, a local woodcarver fashioned toadstools, fairies and other creatures on the walk up to the waterfall. He has also created carvings on some of the trees. The Fairy carvings, toadstools and fairies are remaining on the trail. It's a beautiful spot and walk. The car park and start of the walk is a sharp left after the lights at the foot of the brae as you come into Dalry on the Saltcoats-Dalry road.

Arthur and I didn't see any of that as we were serving free burgers cooked by the Dalry Group Scout Leader. It was non-stop.

Dorothy Taylor.

### **Quiz Corner**

All answers will be made available in the next issue.

#### **Old Testament Questions**

1. How did Absalom die and who killed him?
2. Who succeeded Moses as leader of the Israelites?
3. Which queen wanted to kill Elijah?

4. Which prophet spoke of spending money on what is not bread?

### New Testament Questions



1. Which book comes after Ephesians?
  - a) Philippians
  - b) Colossians
  - c) Galatians
2. Who accompanied Paul on his later missionary journeys?
  - a) Barnabas
  - b) Silas
  - c) Peter
3. How many chapters are there in the book of Philemon?
  - a) One
  - b) Two
  - c) Three
4. What was presented to Herod on a plate?
  - a) A loaf of bread
  - b) A crown of thorns
  - c) The head of John the Baptist

### How many

1. How many books of the Bible end with the letter 'k'?
2. How many men did the apostles appoint to oversee the daily distribution of food, Stephen among them?
3. How many jars of water did Jesus turn into wine?

## Answers for Quiz Corner – June

### Old Testament Questions

1. Noah used cypress or gopher wood to build the ark.  
(Genesis 6:14)
2. Nehemiah asked permission to return to Judah and help rebuild the city of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:5)
3. Job was tested by tragedy.
4. Bathsheba's husband was called Uriah, the Hittite (2 Samuel 1 1:3)

5. The fifth commandment is 'Honour your father and mother' (Exodus 20:12)

### New Testament – Multiple Choice

1. b) There are three letters of John.
2. c) Jesus told the man born blind to wash in the pool of Siloam (John 9:7)
3. c) The Jews of Asia mistakenly believed Paul had taken Trophimus, the Ephesian into the Jerusalem Temple (Acts 21:27-29)
4. c) The woman Jesus met at the well originated from Samaria (John 4)
5. b) Jesus was around thirty when he started his ministry (Luke 3:23)

### Wise Words

1. a) Those who oppress the poor insult their maker **but those who are kind to the needy honour him.** (Proverbs 14:31)
2. b) Rash words are like sword thrusts **but the tongue of the wise brings healing.** (Proverbs 12:18)
3. b) The light of the eyes rejoices the heart **and good news refreshes the body.** (Proverbs 15:30)

So how did you do?

1–4 – Looks like you do with a bit more Bible study!

5–8 – Not bad but there's room for improvement!

9–12 – Wow, you've got a great working knowledge of the Bible!

13 – Well done Dave.



## Livingstone Parish Church

We celebrate the Sacrament of  
the Lord's Supper  
at 11.30am on  
Sunday 1st September 2019.  
Please join us in  
fellowship and worship.

