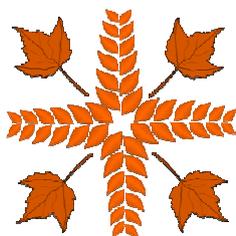


**Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Parish Church
linked with
Muiravonside Parish Church
Autumn 2019**



www.bsandm-church.org.uk

Interim Moderator : Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher

Locum : Mr Jim Paxton - Reader Church of Scotland

Registered Charity

Blackbraes and Shieldhill SC 002512

Muiravonside SC 007571



A Message from the Interim Moderator

DISCERNING GOD'S WILL

“Come gather’ round people wherever you roam
And admit that the waters around you have grown
And accept it that soon you’ll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin...’
Then you better start swimmin’ or you’ll sink like a stone
For the times they are a changin’

Lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

‘The times they are a changing,’ Bob Dylan wrote the lyrics of this song in 1963 as a deliberate attempt to create an anthem of change for the time. The song was released as the title track of his 1964 album of the same name. Many others have sung this song down through succeeding generations, because it speaks to every generation in its own distinctive way.

Today, following the 2019 General Assembly, the anthem of the Church of Scotland speaks about the desperate need for radical change. The song the Kirk is attempting to sing is, however, not about doom and gloom but about challenge and opportunity, for the times are still ‘a changing,’ and the Kirk doesn’t want to be left behind.

When searching for a quotation about change, I quickly discovered that many of the reference books listed “Change” not in isolation but with “Reform” by its side. The two words seem to sit cheek by jowl - in reference books - if not instinctively in our minds.

Perhaps when thinking about change, we should remember the words of George Bernard Shaw who wrote: “Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

Now, dear friends, there’s nothing like a bit of Latin to help us along the way.

Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda
“A reformed Church is always requiring to be reformed.”

The Church of Scotland proclaims a living Word that should not become static or stale. In the face of declining membership, declining numbers of ministers, declining finances, declining engagement with local communities, etc, the Church at every level of its work and witness must be willing to change or reform.

The Church of Scotland's Radical Plan – accepted by the 2019 General Assembly, encourages innovation, creativity and the exploration of new ways of being the church today. Congregations across the land have been instructed to move with the times and embrace the challenge and opportunity such changing times bring.

The optimistic Robert H. Benson says: "We can all change, slowly and steadily, if we set our will to it." Whereas Henry George is more cautious, he writes: "There is danger in reckless change; but greater danger in blind conservation." I'm sure we all sit somewhere between their views.

As I grapple with the reality of the need for change and the rawness of the emotions change evokes, I turn instinctively to scripture and seek guidance there. I am drawn to the story of Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. *John's Gospel 2: 1-11 NIV*

Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

"Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come."

The need was real. The problem was great. To have no wine at the feast would have been extremely embarrassing. Jesus would have been aware of this. Something had to change. The status quo, a phrase that gets bandied about, was not an option. But Jesus, who in the minds of many onlookers could simply snap his fingers and make everything right, was not prepared to change the situation if it would have been perceived purely as a means of making him some kind of magician. Nor did he want to turn the water into wine simply because his mother asked him to do something. Jesus was grappling with a big change in his own life and he needed to resolve this first.

"You must not tell me what to do." John 2:4 GNB

Whose will was to be at work in this situation?

Would changing the water into wine make him a local family hero or show Jesus to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world?

Before Jesus was prepared to change the situation he had to discern the will of God.

Whose will is to be at work in our situation?

This, dear friends, seems to me to be the issue we have to address as we explore the need for change. Of course we cannot remain static, and yes we do need to listen to others, but in moving forward we must be sure that it is not simply our will, or the will of others, but rather God's will that is being discerned for this time and this place.

The question this prompts must surely be, "How do we discern the will of God?" and the answer has to be, "Through prayer."

It is, therefore, helpful to know that the Church of Scotland has deemed September – December 2019 to be a "Season of Prayer"

I know that Blackbraes & Shieldhill linked with Muiravonside are congregations that do indeed pray for others and self. I know that you are a faithful community who seek to discern the will of God. I have seen with my own eyes how you want to keep the living Word alive in your parishes but I have also heard with my own ears, cries of dismay as you (like many other congregations across the land) feel you are being dragged out of your comfort zone.

Jesus' mother knew in her heart exactly who Jesus was. She had discerned God at work in their lives. She wasn't asking him to do something about the situation because she wanted her son to make the family famous in the community, she asked him to do something because she knew He was the Son of God.

His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." John 2:4 NIV

When we discern God's will, through prayer, for these parishes, will we do whatever Jesus tells us?

Blessings Always

Jean W Gallacher

Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher - Interim Moderator

From the Moderator
General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

Dear fellow members of the Church of Scotland,

In May, the General Assembly approved the work of the Special Commission and the Radical Action Plan. It was overwhelmingly agreed that we needed reform in many areas of our life and that we couldn't postpone the decision to act any longer. That change process has already begun and I am writing to ask for your prayers.

At the GA a new Trustee body of 12 people was elected, and they have been meeting regularly since they were appointed. The Trustees are led by the Very Rev Dr John Chalmers and the Vice Convener is an elder and Session Clerk, Mrs Norma Rolls. To provide continuity from the Special Commission, James McNeill, an elder, serves as the Administrative Trustee.

When presenting the Radical Action Plan on behalf of the Council of Assembly, Dr Sally Bonnar, concluded her presentation in these words:

“Trust will be of foundational importance. We are not them and us ... only us together. Even together we don't have all or even many of the solutions and that only by listening to God and trusting our brothers and sisters will we have any hope of success. And finally we need a total reliance on the living God... That is why within the plan we call once again for the church to pray, for a season of prayer which will be a time of reflection and preparation across the church”.

The General Assembly agreed to have a season of prayer for this process of change from September to December. To help you in your prayers I have added a prayer.

Many thanks,

Rt Revd Colin A M Sinclair

Moderator

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

SEASON OF PRAYER

A Prayer for the new post of Chief Officer

Lord Jesus Christ, Head of the Church,
We pray for the Church of Scotland at this time.
As we begin a significant process of change
give to us wisdom to know what to do
courage to do what must be done
and compassion and understanding
for those for whom this will be hard.

We pray for the Trustee body
appointed to act on our behalf
for those who lead it
and those who serve on it.
Give them vision of what might be
and practical understanding of how to get there.
Help them to listen carefully, speak graciously and decide clearly.

Especially at this time we pray
for the appointment of a Chief Officer
and for the first round of interviews on August 12th.
Bless those candidates who are invited to attend
and the interview group as they meet with each of them.
Grant discernment to know your will
Make it clear to them who is the person for this responsible job.

May we all support the Chief Officer
and the Trustees in the months ahead,
as, in dependence on your grace,
they work with us
for the renewal and reformation of our Church,
and for the glory of your name.
Amen.

Rt Revd Colin A M Sinclair

Moderator

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland



The Church of Scotland

Locum's Letter

Greetings folks,

I am now a couple of months into my service with you and things have been going well. I am enjoying my time at both churches. It takes a while and it can be difficult starting over the holiday period. Faces come and go, names I never remember, but gradually the church will now start to re-emerge from its summer slumber. Church activities will restart. Routines will re-establish. We will move forward together. It is unfortunate, on a Sunday, I cannot stay longer for the coffee after the service, but I have to rush off. That fifteen minutes flashes by and I head out the door. I know I do not have time to speak to everyone though I try to make myself available.

If you would like me to give you a visit, please let me know. I am a blether at the best of times, as you are possibly starting to realise. There does not need to be a reason behind my visit. Maybe you would like a chat with this guy that has been foisted on your church. The idea that you must be ill or such like before the minister calls is wrong. We all have dreams and aspirations; we all have ideas. Many an outreach has started off as a chat over a cup of coffee. Those are the stories I want to hear. I don't want to drag you down a road you do not want to go. But one thing is certain, standing still is not an option. Opportunities crop up. The skill is to recognise them, implement them, and assess the outcome. As I write this, I am planning the Gospel Rock service in Muiravonside.

By the time you read this it will be past. Success will be judged on the people attending that service. We are there to plant seeds, or nurture and water seeds already planted. Only God can make them grow. It may be months or even years before that service bares fruit. There is no quick fix. When it is over, we move on to the next opportunity. Maybe we will get them back for that.

The next opportunity may possibly be our Harvest Service. We will be looking again at inviting people in. Our prayer must always be that, at some point, they will stick. It will happen when that new person realises that there is more to Christianity than an hour slot on

Sundays. They can be encouraged to attend other functions. Bible studies and Prayer groups will be underway. Christianity in action. The Guild will soon be back. The Prayer Shawl Ministry is a fantastic outreach. Not only the people receiving but their families also take note. We need your prayers for growth in the Guild and the Prayer Shawl Ministry. Many churches are closing their groups due to lack of office bearers. No-one wants to take it on. There is mileage to be gained in supporting these and other functions. It boils down to fellowship. Are we operating something someone outside the church wants to be part of?

My friend, John, shared his first official service as a qualified Reader with the linkage. He was overawed at the welcome he received. He was totally over the moon when the craft group offered to make him his Reader's Stole. A simple act of kindness but have you any idea just how far the word will be spread? Simple acts like these sets your church apart. You have a great wee church.

Let's get the message out. Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish Church is alive and well. Together, with prayer, we can make inroads into the community. It all starts with prayer. It continues with outreach. Outreach is sowing seeds into a community. More Prayer. And then pray that the Lord of the Harvest lets us see the fruits of our labour.

In His fields,

Jim the Locum.



Funerals

'The Lord will protect you as you come and go, both now and forevermore'.



Muiravonside Parish

Annie McKinnon

Mabel Brodie

Stewart Boath

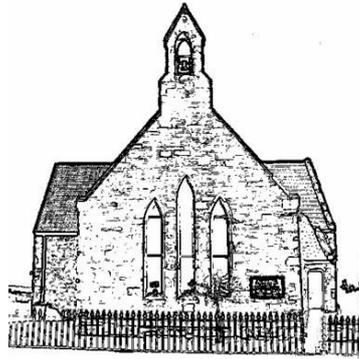
Kal Graham McMillan

Arthur Grant

William Macaulay

Funerals

'The Lord will protect you as you come and go, both now and forevermore'.



Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

James McDonald

Ann Savage



The General Assembly

The Church of Scotland General Assembly theme for 2019 was inspiring and outlined how change will happen resulting for a special commission report.

Jesus said : “Follow me and I will make you fishers of people.” Such was the theme.

The path to navigate change will be difficult, with obstacles and problems along the way. However this journey can be hopeful, powerful and prayerful. Many churches lie vacant. Team Ministry or Hub Ministry will result within the future Church.

May our linked churches of Blackbraes and Shieldhill linked with Muiravonside be agencies for local mission in the months ahead.

John Robertson



The Church of Scotland



Yearly Outing

On Thursday morning 25th July, along with my youngest daughter Fiona, we headed for Rothesay on the Isle of Bute, via Cardwell Garden Centre at Gourock and the Cal Mac ferry from Wemyss Bay.

All went to schedule, arriving by car after a 30 minute crossing on a beautiful warm day. We visited Ettrick Bay where many people were gathering for a music festival.

Our next stop was in Rothesay for an ice cream at Zavaroni's, then off to the hardware store which would embarrass Falkirk and Stirling where no such stores exist!

Onward to Loch Fad where Donald Campbell's "Bluebird" was recently trialled, such a scenic freshwater loch.

Back to the ferry for our final journey from Wemyss Bay to Largs and a fish tea at Nardini's before heading home!

Such a special day.

John Robertson



“Tales From a Shieldhill Garden.”



Green Soup

A number of years ago a book came on to the market that was entitled “What Will I do with all these Blooming Courgettes?”. I felt that I had missed a trick because I have been, for some time, finding cunning ways to use up courgettes.

Courgettes belong to the same family as marrows, cucumbers and squashes. Courgettes are not small marrows although they resemble marrows in many ways. They can be yellow, striped green and yellow or green. The male flower can be stuffed and deep fried or added to salads. The male flowers do not have small courgettes behind the flower.

Courgettes are quite easy to grow and because of the quantity of fruit that each plant will produce, they are a good plant to grow if you do not have much space. They will grow in a growbag, large pot or in the ground. I grow mine inside tyres as this helps to keep the plants away from slugs and snails. They do not like a lot of rain and add water at the base of the plant. This year I put my courgettes into the poly tunnel because of the great trouble that I am having in the garden from large snails.

I would like to digress a wee bit as my title is ‘Green Soup’.

The last time that I drove to Ireland I visited the Ulster/American Folk Park that is a wonderful open-air museum that is very close to Omagh. It was lunch time and so I made use of their excellent café and that is where I first enjoyed a plate of green soup. This delicious soup was made from broccoli and kale. This got me thinking, as well as courgettes growing well, so does kale.

When I returned home, I made my first pot of courgette and kale soup. So, what goes into this soup? Two or three courgettes, a handful of kale, an onion and a small clove of garlic make this pot of green soup. I use a white stock either vegetable or chicken stock cube. It doesn’t take very long to cook and it is whizzed in the blender.

We went through that summer with courgette and kale, broccoli and kale, leek and kale and cauliflower and kale. The least successful one was lettuce and kale.

Soup, of course comes in many colours , but green soup as far as my

husband is concerned, is viewed with suspicion. He is not very fond of some of the vegetables that I grow and he knows that some of them are hidden in blended soup.

Early in the year when garden vegetables are scarce, and this is when I look at the weeds. There are some weeds that no end of digging out gets rid of them completely and so I like to get my own back on them and pick out the ones that I can eat. One of the best, green soups that we ate this spring time was nettle and ground elder. I also added a leek. You need 2-300g of young nettle leaves, a handful of ground elder and a leek. It must be whizzed and, if asked, it is vegetable soup. After all, God promise Adam that the plants of the land would bear leaves and fruit that can be used as food.

Courgettes are versatile vegetables that can be used in soup, risotto, with a tomato sauce to accompany pasta, can be stuffed and mixed with nuts or chick peas to make veggie burgers. I have used very young ones as filling in a quiche.

Green soup was on the lunch menu today.

Rena



Guilds Together

The Guilds Together Dedication Service will be held in Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish Church on Thursday 19th September at 7.30pm.



Rena





The Blythswold Trust Shoebox Appeal

For the past twenty-six years The Blythswold Trust has been sending filled shoeboxes to eastern Europe. Ladies' shoeboxes are an ideal size and the things that go into the box has to fit inside the box and, sometimes. That can be a bit of a challenge. As the Trust has been a little late sending out leaflets, I have your box instructions here.

Each box must have:

Hat, gloves and scarf
Toothbrush and toothpaste
Soap
Small toy. The toy must be new
Sweets. The date must be after March 2020

Do not include

Used or damaged items.
War toys or toy guns
Chocolate or food other than sweets
Chocolate Eclairs or Chocolate Limes
Books that have lots of words

Other things can be included, the one requirement is that it fits inside the shoebox.

Rena



South Africa Link



Editor's note—Graham and Sandra's letter about Easter was received after the Easter edition of the magazine came out, but still has lots of very interesting news, hence its appearance in the Autumn edition.)

NEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Easter 2019

Dear Friends,

It is Easter Monday and we are in the midst of a rain storm – unusual for this time of year but very welcome. Graham conducted the Tenebrae Service at St Andrew's on Maundy Thursday, Zwai took the Good Friday service and we shared the Easter Day communion with baptism and a musical interlude from Neil and Chris, our organist and colleague. Attendance was good considering the fact that most of the congregation go home for Easter.

We have had a spate of ordinations recently. First was the ordination of Jonny Womack (Anglican), one of Graham's PhD students, as a deacon at St Alban's Cathedral across the road from St Andrew's. The bishop of Pretoria allowed Graham and Zwai to participate fully in the ordination. Then Graham participated in a historic ordination of Diane Willman, one of our St Augustine's students. Diane is part of the Roman Catholic Women Priests movement and she was ordained by her lady bishop. The ordination was uniquely different and Graham was involved in the laying on of hands. Then we had to miss the ordination of Bos Tlhoale (Lutheran), who with his wife Malish came to the UK with us two years ago. Our next ordination is at the end of June in the Diocese of Saldhana Bay north of Cape Town, where our friend of over forty years, Thembeke Mpako-Nutsi (Anglican), serves.

Ecumenical life, always much easier in South Africa than in Scotland, goes on with Graham's involvement at St Augustine's Roman Catholic College. Towards the end of January, he was approached by the Baptist Theological Seminary of South Africa to teach Church

History which he is also finding immensely rewarding. We are not sure if ageing brings an element of ecumenical versatility with it but we are immersed in working together with other churches where possible creating deeper understanding?

Graham's contract was renewed at the University of Pretoria where he continues mainly doing research. He has also been appointed a research associate in the department where he did his Master's and Doctoral degrees at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Then there is his work with the Council for Higher Education and the National Research Foundation.

Twice recently, the Moderator of General Assembly asked Graham to act for him. The first was at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Correctional Services (prisons) and the Uniting Presbyterian Church to provide improved services for former prisoners. The second was to constitute the Association of Church Choir and Musicians which provides sterling service in the development of church music.

Apart from all this Sandra has been very busy with her language editing work and hosting visitors. First David and Chris came with their friends, Neil and Will. A day later our friend, Heather Clark arrived from Aberdeen. During their visit we suffered electricity blackouts the first of which was for 3 days. This served us with a real challenge for cooking and keeping food fresh as the temperatures were in the region of 35/37 degrees! Thereafter it was for two-and-a-half hours 3 times a day for the following two weeks.

The day after the boys left, Sandra's cousin, Helen, and her husband George arrived. The five of us spent the best part of a week at Sir Richard Branson's Rock Lodge in the Sabi-Sabi national game reserve. Arriving there was mildly traumatic as the dirt road was blocked by felled trees and rocks with just enough space to pass.

On meeting some of the protestors we discovered that this was a service delivery protest, of which there are many spread throughout the country as the general election approaches. They pointed to a tar road which had been built for tourism while they remained after 25

years of democracy without water. This is a real injustice. Anyway, they directed us in a very good spirit to another gate at which we were able to enter the reserve. We had a lovely time and the game views were fantastic!

We pray for you during the forthcoming Brexit, whatever the result is!

Graham & Sandra

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Christian Aid Week

The total amount raised by Blackbraes and Shieldhill Church for Christian Aid this year was £467. Thanks are due to all who helped raise this amount - by supporting the Christian Aid lunch, giving donations and collecting coins in small money boxes. Thanks also to those who completed gift aid forms.

Marion Zacks



Thank you and Message

Dear Friends,

The Family and I would like to extend a thanks to the congregation of both churches for the cards, gifts and support while I was in hospital.

Thank you to those who visited, and continue to do so.

It was nice to see weel kent faces and being kept up to date on the gossip, sorry, the affairs of the village news.

It's good to be back at church, something I thought would never happen, thank you all for the warm welcome back it's amazing what can be achieved with a little prayer and a lot of faith !

For those that don't know, I had a stroke in December, and have lost the use of my left hand side, but with perseverance, my physio sessions, and determination by myself, I know things will start working again.

Giving up the property convener position was a difficult but necessary decision, but to be honest, I am still, in my head in that role, looking what needs to be fixed, and what could be improved within the church grounds and walls, old habits die hard I guess ! I just can't switch off.

I see my faith as that too, some things need fixed or repaired, but with a prayer and following the ways of the Lord the best I can , I know my foundations are sound.

Bill McKinnon

Thank You

Jessie McArthur would like to thank members and friends for the get well wishes, cards, flowers and other expressions of kindness she received from her recent admission to hospital. She would also like to express her thanks for the lovely flowers she received from the church.



Just a little note to say thank you for the lovely flowers and the best wishes when I was ill recently. It was very much appreciated.

Thanks

Mrs Jean Robertson x

COINCIDENCE or DIVINE INTERVENTION?

I woke at 6.30 on Thursday morning the first day of August feeling a bit jaded and not at one with the world, turned on my laptop and there is a message with the worship sheet for Sunday the 4th August 2019, starting with Let us build a house ending with Jubilate everybody.

Not unusual except they were from Rev. James Brown from Bochum in Germany. Their service was a communion service with the baptism of a child to be named Andrew Currie, the father James Currie. Rev James Brown had intended the e mail to be sent not to me but to baby Andrew's father James Currie.



For those unaware of who Rev James Brown is, he and his wife Heike visited here in October 2010 and led the Harvest Thanksgiving service along with Louise McClements, they were taking part in a Falkirk Presbytery link with Bochum in Germany. I replied expressing

my surprise and sending our best wishes to him and his church family with special blessings to Andrew Currie the baby about to be baptized.

Jimmy as he likes to be called replied saying he has fond memories of his visit here and sends best wishes from Bochum – especially in our vacancy.

What is the probability of someone from Germany sending a List of Hymns to someone in Shieldhill and that a baby being baptised shares that surname?

I have yet to hear from Bochum whether James Currie is a “Long Lost Relative,” now that would be a different story!

Jim Currie

The wedding of our previous Locum The Reverend Marion Perry to The Reverend Malcolm Kinnear at Juniper Green Parish Church Edinburgh on Saturday 11th May, it was a beautiful sunny day with a lovely service, representatives from both churches went along on the day to wish Marion well.

We hope they have a long and happy marriage

From Moira Sharp



Count Your Blessings

When you're on your pension and your friends are few.
Don't sit down and worry as the others do.
Think of all the blessings of the welfare state.
Everything is planned for you so do not wait.

Count your blessings count them by the score.
And it will surprise you that there's many more.

Are you hard of hearing do your friends all shout?
Do they talk in whispers that they can't make out?
Put in your appointment to the clinic go.
And you'll get a hearing aid to help your woe.

When you go out walking to your favourite store.
Do your feet start aching and your legs get sore?
Go to the chiropodist he will make you right.
Set the music playing and you'll dance all night.

Have your eyes got weaker so you cannot see?
Colours seem more faded than they used to be.
Get yourself a pair of specs, they'll look just fine.
And your day will brighten and the sun will shine.

Have you got the toothache and your teeth are bad?
When you look into the mirror are you feeling sad?
Go and see the dentist and in a little while.
He'll fix you up with dentures and you'll smile smile smile.

You may have arthritis or a wobbly knee.
Just walk into the clinic and the doctor see.
She'll give you a prescription that will last a while.
And after your good treatment you will run a mile.

So to hospitals and clinics we can say farewell.
No longer on our ailments do we have to dwell.
To everyone who helped us we our greetings send.
And look forward to a healthy life with all our friends.

By Jim Anderson
Submitted by Etta Napier





Drew's
view

Angelic Diversion Ahead

Have you found yourself driving along a very familiar road or motorway and then suddenly without even realising it, just kept driving on past your exit lane or turnoff? One that you will have automatically taken as a matter of routine a thousand times before? It's not even a case that you are perhaps daydreaming. You are fully alert, but for some reason have you ever just driven on past the exit?

I have done this rather strange manoeuvre two or three times!

The most recent occasion was a few months ago. I was on the M9 motorway coming back from Perth and approaching the turnoff for the roundabout just past Polmont. I drive along this stretch of motorway regularly and always exit at that particular junction. In forty years of motoring, I would reckon that I have performed this routine manoeuvre hundreds - or perhaps even - thousands of times.

There I was, just driving along; fully alert and thinking about what was I was going to have for my tea! The sheer routine of it all is so ingrained, that the car would almost take the turnoff by itself. Not this time, however! I suddenly realised that I could see on my right just past the other carriageway, cars travelling along the road to Linlithgow which runs very close beside the motorway for a short stretch.

It is quite fascinating seeing the traffic on this other road running parallel and so close to the motorway. The only drawback is of course, that it is well past my turnoff! To make matters worse, the next available exit on that side is a good seven miles away and is the one not too far from the little village of Newton before you come to the Queensferry Crossing Bridge.

You would think I would get annoyed about this and give myself a right good telling off for doing such a silly thing after years of exiting the motorway at a junction that I practically know every inch of. However you might be surprised to know that I don't. Instead, I simply say a silent "Thank You" and drive the seven miles to the next exit with a sense of relief.

The very first time this happened, I did get a little angry, On that occasion I was in Falkirk and found myself driving along the Callendar Road past Graeme High School. I should have been driving along Arnot Street towards Comely Park and eventually the

Glen Brae. It meant that I came home via Redding instead of Glen Village.

I didn't think very much about it until the next day. I happened to be talking to my next door neighbour and he told me that a lorry had shed some of its load and a lot of bricks had fallen on the road. This had happened on the very road I would have been travelling on and just when I would be about half way along it. Luckily no one was hurt, but I could have been right behind it if I had followed my normal route. I was a bit shaken as I remembered how I just seemed to turn into Callendar Road without any thought and as if it was just the most natural thing in the world to do.

Coincidence? Happenstance? Or perhaps Drew just being rather inept with his sense of direction?

There is one theory that I often think of which could explain these strange happenings and it is one that I love and hold most dear. I once read that while we are on this Earth that God has allocated us with a guardian angel who watches over each and every one of us. After that day, I became a believer in guardian angels and promised myself that if anything like this happened again I would not get angry or fight against it, but simply go with the flow and let the unseen but gentle hand lead me where it wants to take me.

It has happened several times and on one occasion I missed a turnoff on a roundabout and ended up going round it twice! (Perhaps to delay me for a few seconds and alter a certain course of events?) Or maybe it's simply that I just missed the turnoff which I never usually do! In any case, when it happens I find it absolutely fascinating and not without a little excitement I realise that what I call an "Angelic Diversion" is taking place!

Since the very first time this happened, I wanted to find out a lot more about angels. They are of course, most famous and well documented for their appearances in the Bible. It must be added though that there are also many stories and examples right to the present day of people who felt they have been helped by angels or they have intervened in some way. Usually this happens in a "life or death" situation, but sometimes angels have been known to intervene in less dramatic circumstances.

There are just too many references about angels in the Bible to mention them all here, but I thought I would have a look at Jesus' interactions with angels during his lifetime on Earth just to gain a little bit of insight about them. In a Biblical sense, the study of angels or

“angelology” which is the correct term is made at very high theological levels. My friend Irene who graduated from St Andrews University and reads this very magazine has a great interest in angels and has studied angelology at these levels. She is a Master of Theology and I must apologise in advance to her if I have got anything wrong!

First of all, angels are most frequently described as “Messengers from God.” They interact in the Bible as intermediaries between humankind and God bringing news, but they also bring comfort and encouragement as well. Even before the birth of Jesus in Luke 1:30, the Archangel Gabriel visits Mary to tell her “Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God.” (Luke 1:30-32)

After Jesus was born, the angel which so frightened the shepherds appears in the role of a messenger from God bringing the “Good News” of Jesus’ birth. (Luke 2:8-15) Later in his life, after spending 40 days in the desert, angels come to Jesus in a comforting role and ministered to him. (Matthew 4:11) In Luke 22:43 it is also an angel who comforts Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives as he kneels and prays in great anguish.

Finally in Matthew 28:2-7 following the Resurrection of Jesus it was an angel who rolled back the stone and it was the same angel who speaks at the empty tomb.

So it can be seen that during Jesus’ lifetime on Earth, angels were sent by God as messengers as well as providing comfort and support for Jesus when he went through times of suffering and adversity such as his time in the desert and as the events unfolded just before the crucifixion.

How do angels fare in the modern world? They are still very much with us, just as they always will be and have brought comfort and help to many people. It is rather comforting in what has become an increasingly secular world to see such a large selection of books about them in high street booksellers. Even pop songs have been written about angels by several very famous artists and these songs have become worldwide hits.

It would seem that many millions of people have either bought the books that are available or perhaps purchased or downloaded the songs that the artists have produced. It is even more encouraging to think that although maybe not all of those people go to church or

have any faith, they are still captivated by angels and the things that they do, such as providing comfort or simply just being sent by God to be there for each of us so that we know we are not alone if we are sad or suffering in any way.

I have read many of the books that are available in high street shops about angels and they provide interesting reading. There are many stories of people who felt they were rescued by angels that had been sent by God or at least felt their presence in life or death situations. Some encounters have been literally life changing and it has led to many of them having a faith in God that was never part of their life before.

The books also tend to focus on four of the main archangels and credit them with specialist qualities. The Archangel Michael's name literally means "He who is as God" and is associated with protection. Some people even wear pendants depicting him to keep them safe from harm. The Archangel Raphael's name means literally "It is God who heals" and he is naturally associated with healing.

Archangel Gabriel's name means literally "God is my Strength" and he is associated with communication and beginnings. He is also known as the "Christmas Angel" due to his appearance before Mary announcing she will give birth to Jesus as mentioned earlier. The Archangel Uriel's name literally means "God is my Light" and is associated with bringing the light of knowledge and philosophical thought to humankind.

Modern day people's enchantment with angels even extends to jewellery depicting angels, like the pendant mentioned earlier, as well as porcelain angel figurines which are for sale in all sorts of shops and even certain garden centres! They are routinely purchased as gifts at Christmas time or for birthdays. Not bad for divine beings in a supposedly secular world!

Probably the most well known angel is of course the guardian angel because this particular angel has a personal association. This angel brings so much comfort to people, knowing that God has sent everyone their own personal angel who will watch over them and never leave them. I feel that I often have been helped by a guardian angel who has been sent by God, often when I least expected it and sometimes when I didn't deserve it.

If you are out driving or walking along a road and suddenly find yourself going in a completely different direction, please do not worry or get too annoyed about this. It could be that your guardian angel

has just saved you from harm and you are about to experience an
“Angelic Diversion Ahead.”

Drew Robertson

Tea, coffee and a chat are
always available in the hall
after services. Please stay if
you can.



Budapest Revisited

Although it is reported that in recent years sales of the Falkirk Herald have decreased I still enjoy Thursdays when I can quietly relax and read the local newspaper. One item which I was mindful of recently was a record of an event in Budapest. A Falkirk Bairn who had moved on had organised the 2019 March of the Living, an annual event in Budapest, Hungary, this year honouring a Church of Scotland missionary on the seventy-fifth anniversary of her death.

Born on 6 June 1897 on a farm near the village of Dunscore Dumfriesshire, as a young woman, she moved to Glasgow to train in various secretarial skills and worshipped in the Queens Park free church. She felt a strong call to missionary work, so gained further skills in domestic science and housekeeping. Feeling prepared, she applied for a missionary post with the Church of Scotland and became matron of a girls' hostel attached to the Jewish/Christian school in Budapest in 1932.

When war broke out with Germany in Europe Jane was on holiday at home and although being advised then not to return to Hungary, she felt that the girls needed her at this uncertain time and hurried back to Budapest. At this time Hungary was a neutral country and many Jewish refugees from countries in Europe fled there thinking that they would be safer. Life became very difficult for the mission school and it was reported that in the search for food she would be at the market before 5am. She also cut up her leather suitcase to mend the girls' shoes. Even at that time she smuggled Jewish adults and children to safe havens.

In March 1944, German soldiers invaded Hungary. German officials lost no time rounding up Jews, introducing anti - Jewish restrictions and transporting them to Auschwitz, the Polish concentration camp. Despite many church requests for her to return to Scotland, Jane and her companions continued to help the persecuted Jews. In April 1944 she was denounced by the son-in-law of the school cook and was imprisoned in various venues in Hungary. Hungarian officials pleaded her case but these were ignored and she was transported to Auschwitz where she died in July 1944 aged forty seven.

This year her work has been highlighted in the media and she is well remembered. In Glasgow there are two stained glass windows in Queens Park Govanhill church where she worshipped and taught in the Sunday school. In Dunscore village Dumfriesshire, there is a Jane

Haining Heritage Centre and the Church of Scotland set up an annual prize for a Hungarian teacher and two students to visit Scotland. In Israel itself her name has been inscribed on the wall of honour in the Garden of the Righteous in Jerusalem.

After the war her bible was found in the mission School and recently some of her belongings were discovered in the Church of Scotland offices in Edinburgh. These have been passed on to the National Museum of Scotland. Jane Haining a unique Scot - the Church of Scotland is proud of you.



Part of the Danube embankment where the River Cruise ships dock is named in Jane's honour. The March of the Living ends here at the poignant Shoes Memorial on the Danube set up in 2005. Sixty pairs of iron shoes of different sizes are attached to the paved walkway. Between December 1944 and February 1945 Jewish men women and children were lined up on the edge of the embankment and ordered to remove their clothing including their shoes. No one was spared. They were shot and their bodies fell into the river to be washed downstream. This very moving memorial represents their shoes left on the bank.

The March of the Living has continued now for 17 years. This year the Scottish connection has made people aware of what the committed and compassionate Jane Haining did.

I'll keep reading the Falkirk Herald. Final thought, I wonder if there is any link between the Haining name and the Haining house name on the Whitecross Road.

Lorna Coulter



Jane Haining

A Muiravonside Memory

On Facebook, Jim our Locum was asking if we had any stories we would like to share about Muiravonside Church and there is a childhood memory I have of the church and its surroundings that always makes me smile. I thought I would just include it in the magazine.

As a child, I often went for a walk with my mum and dad on a Sunday afternoon and our favourite one was starting off at Brightons where we lived, then walking through Maddiston and along what local people will know as the Coal Road. Finally, we would walk up the wee approach road to Muiravonside Church and the cemetery. We would then return along the canal towpath to Brightons.

My favourite part was walking along the little approach road to the church, as all of a sudden, you would catch a glimpse of it through the trees and I always thought it looked so special in such a nice location. Even though I was only about 8 years old, I could feel such a sense of peace as we walked by the church, then continued on up the hill to the cemetery, or “ceemetery” as my friends used to call it!

I always used to think that the little cottage just inside which has since been demolished was where the Minister lived!

The next day – Monday, at school our teacher was reading every day, a chapter from a really good storybook about a little boy who wanted more than anything in the world to have adventures and do daring things – but at the last moment would back out, only to discover the next day a rational explanation for the thing that had spooked him! I can't even remember the book's name, but I think the little boy was called Patrick.

We were almost at the last chapter of the book and the teacher set us quite an exciting exercise. We were to write a little story about how we would think the book would end and what would happen to Patrick!

I immediately put Patrick in the wee approach road to Muiravonside Church and someone had dared him to explore the ceemetery at night! With much bravado he started along the wee road then, as he walked past the Church, he suddenly spotted a light glowing inside the pitch dark ceemetery and promptly fled!

The next day, in the safety of broad daylight, full of curiosity, he returned to see what could have been the cause of this strange light, then suddenly laughed out loud. It had only been the outside light

shining on the little cottage that both I and him thought the Minister stayed in!

I got a gold star from the teacher (the only one I ever got) thanks to Muiravonside Church and its little approach road! Fifty one years later, I still love Muiravonside Church just as much and a few days ago, it just occurred to me that all those years ago, I had written my first "Drew's View" without even knowing it!

Drew Robertson



Website

Our magazines are now available on our website :

www.bsandm-church.org.uk.

If anyone would prefer to access them this way, instead of paper format, please let your Church Elder know.

As well as saving paper, and trees, you would receive the magazine in colour. It could also be enlarged if you need to see it in large print.

Muiravonside Church Facebook Page

Muiravonside Parish Church now has a Facebook page which gives all the latest news of events and can be viewed at:

<https://www.facebook.com/muiravonsideparishchurch/>

We are delighted to say that the Facebook page has seen a large increase of visitors viewing it over the last month, as well as some new people posting regularly and viewing the pages.

It is the “in -place” to go if you are on Facebook, or simply just visiting it and want to know all the latest news about Muiravonside Church.

Well done to Jim the Locum, Nicola and the rest of the team for promoting and contributing to the site, as well as all our visitors and followers - every one of them most welcome!



Help in Time of Need

How many people can honestly say that they have never felt sad and depressed by the following:

1. Grief at the death of a loved one.
2. Feelings of rejection and inadequacy at the loss of a job or breakdown of a relationship.
3. The state of the world we live in as we rush forward into change and dismissal of familiar things and ways of working.
4. Climate change and its effect on our daily lives.

As Christians, we know we shouldn't feel this way but often find it difficult to lift our spirits. Most of us need help to get us through these black days and I find I turn to words which uplift - from the Bible and poetry that I love.

Here are a few examples and there are many more.

"Do not be afraid, for you are deeply loved by God. Be at peace; take heart and be strong." - Daniel

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength...they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

"If thou prepare thine heart and stretch out thine hands towards him...thou shalt forget thy misery... And thou shall be secure, because there is hope." - Job

For anyone who needs help, I can recommend the following book.

"The Swallow, The Owl and The Sandpiper," where you will find -

Words of Courage Wisdom and Spirit," compiled by Claire Maitland for the Sandpiper Trust.

P. McIntosh



Guild



The three year strategy "One Journey Many Roads" began last year, the first theme being "Seeking the Way" when we looked at the many journeys we had made over the years, laughing at times, and reflected on our Christian journey. The theme this session is "Companions on the Road."

We will think of sharing journeys with others and sharing our God given different talents as we work together. God is ever present with us in life, for everyone is on a journey and although we have many happy times, sometimes the road can be rocky. However as I have learned personally recently, the support of family including that of our church family and friends is comforting and much appreciated.

Guild Week highlighting Guild work and activities started in 2003 was always celebrated in the third week in November but this year in line with the new review and reform policy, it will be launched at the annual gathering at Dundee on Saturday 7 September and the week continues until Sunday 15 September.

Some of us will again be attending this exciting gathering which will be a cause to celebrate. Rena Moore, a Blackbraes and Shieldhill Guild member, is the new convener of Falkirk Guilds Together (formerly the Falkirk Presbyterial Council). Our prayers and support are with her as she takes up this post.

On Thursday 19 September at 7.30pm Blackbraes and Shieldhill Guild will be pleased to host the annual Dedication Service. We will be welcoming Church Guilds from Falkirk and District and Cumbernauld to our church. We look forward to sharing a communion service together and enjoying a time of fellowship after the service.

Please see next page for the Guild Diary 2019

Guild Diary 2019

2 October	Jim Paxton	Locum
16 October	Christmas "Alternativity"	Margery Williamson
31 October	Evening Outing	Falkirk Town Hall
20 November	Lynda Ross-Hale	The Cyrenians based at Dollar Park
11 December	Christmas Party	

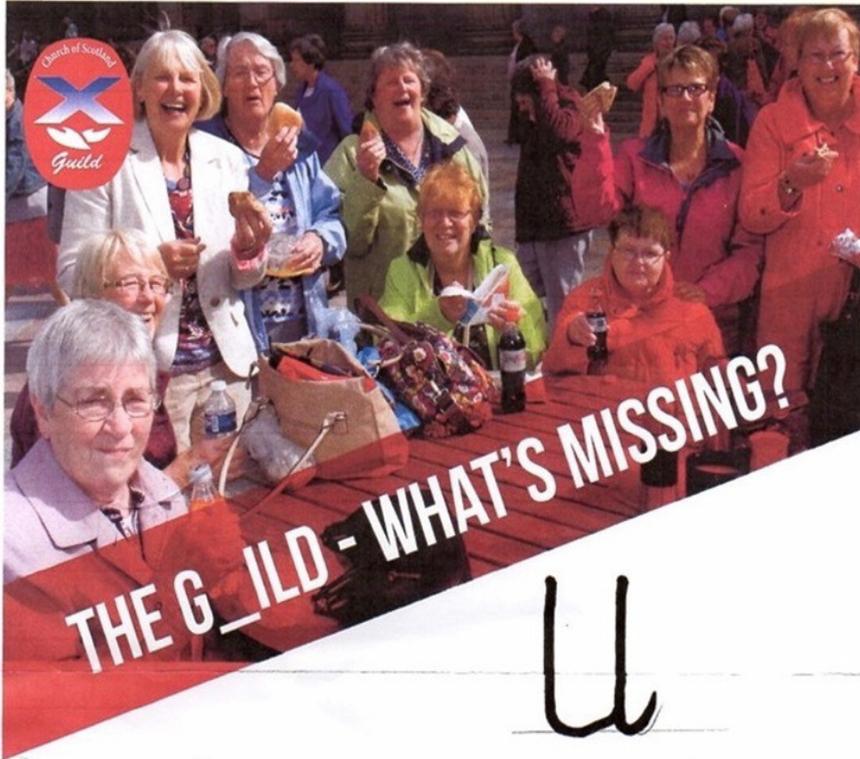
Faith, fun and fellowship is the order of the day at Guild meetings which are open to both men and women of all ages. Come and join us Wednesday 2 October at 7.30pm in Shieldhill church hall. All are welcome- See you there!



“Whose we are and Whom we serve.”

Lorna Coulter





We'd love to see U

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE GUILD AT WWW.COS-GUILD.ORG.UK



Who's Who

Interim Moderator

Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher

Locum

Mr Jim Paxton

Reader Church of Scotland

