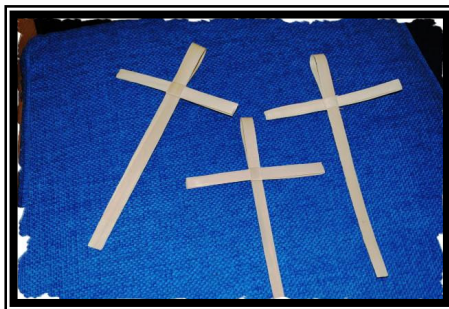




**Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish Church
linked with
Muiravonside Parish Church
Spring 2013**



**From the Manse
February 2013**



'And anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.' ... Matthew Ch10, v38,39.

Dear friends,

This morning I was telling the children at Shieldhill Primary School the wonderful story of Greyfriars Bobby. Bobby the little Skye Terrier who kept watch over his master's grave for 14 years.

His master - John Gray had been a night watchman for Edinburgh City Police. He was a lonely man and his only friend was his dog Bobby. When John died he was buried in the graveyard surrounding Greyfriars Kirk in the Old Town of Edinburgh. And only one friend followed his body to the grave - his dog Bobby. The people in authority chased the dog away many times, but always it returned ragged, wet, and hungry, to the grave of its master.

A kindly farmer heard the story of Bobby's devotion and gave Bobby a home in the countryside many miles from Edinburgh. But one day Bobby disappeared and several days later Bobby was found back at his master's grave exhausted and with bleeding, torn paws. Nothing would keep Bobby away from his beloved master. Bobby died in 1872 and was buried just inside the gate of Greyfriars Kirkyard, not far from his master's grave and if you visit Bobby's grave you will find that instead of flowers laid there are sticks. Why? Because those of you who have dogs know how much they love to play with the simple pleasure of a stick!!!

Bobby's story is remarkable and shows a loyalty which is rarely seen - hence why Baroness Burdett-Coutts paid for a life-size statue of Greyfriars Bobby to be erected in 1873. Baroness Burdett-Coutts realised that we could all learn and be inspired from Bobby's loyalty for his master. Bobby's story reminds me of having faith, and our loyalty to God who is always loyal to us. As we journey through Lent over the coming weeks, we discover that remaining loyal to Jesus is not always an easy journey. As the cross loomed nearer his friends

hid, ran away, and one betrayed him with a kiss. Another lied three times that he was associated with Jesus. And as he suffered anguish and distress in the Garden of Gethsemane, rather than supporting him through it, his friends fell asleep.

But Jesus was still loyal to them, despite their disloyalty, and he continued to love them, believe in them, and forgive them. To the friend who had denied him three times, the greatest honour was bestowed upon him following his resurrection, that of building the church.

Nothing much has changed since Jesus' time in relation to following him. In Jesus' time his own people thought he was mad, the religious leaders of the day were jealous, the political leaders were threatened. Therefore to be one of his friends was a huge sacrifice- and it's certainly not any easier today. Sadly some mock our faith, seeing it as merely a crutch, an anaesthetic to the sadness and pain of life. We are often ridiculed within the press and media, and any publicity we get always relates to membership decline, internal theological divide, and the indifference and apathy of society to our message.

Good news stories are rarely publicised, the press rarely advertise the fact that the Church of Scotland is the largest social care provider in Scotland. Most people have no idea of this fact. We never hear about lives changed and transformed through the work of the church, broken hearts made whole, the bereaved comforted, the vulnerable cared for, the oppressed given a voice, the sick visited.....

But it was never meant to be easy. Bobby lay by his master's grave year after year, in the wet and rain, with bleeding paws and sores on his skin. Some people around thought he was mad. Why would a dog prefer to stay out in the wet and cold rather than sit by a warm fire and enjoy the heat and comfort on his little body? We all know how much our dogs and cats love the warmth.

But he did it because he was loyal, and his loyalty knew no end. Like Bobby loyalty costs and some people may think we are a bit odd for giving up our precious time on Sunday mornings to come to church. Others may think we are deluded for believing in God

especially as there is no scientific proof to back it up. The media and press may mock us, call us 'out of date', describe us as in decline, on the way out, out of touch, out-dated, irrelevant.

But at the end of the day you can't deny the truth of Christ, you can't contain God's love, you can't suppress the hidden, quiet work of the Holy Spirit. No-one can predict with conviction and certainty that the church will eventually die. Especially when the first church consisted of only twelve friends of Jesus, and somehow that was enough to establish the early church, and ultimately change the world and the course of history forever.

God is calling each one of us during this period of Lent, and as a church community, to be loyal to him.

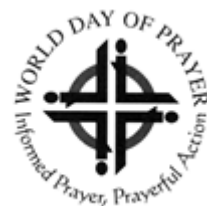
To accompany Jesus on his journey to the cross. It will not be an easy journey, like Bobby we may become uncomfortable and tired.

But once you meet with the person of Jesus Christ, as his disciples discovered, there is simply no other journey worth making.

God's blessing be upon you all during this season of Lent,

***Your minister and friend,
Louise***

The annual **World Day of Prayer Service** will be held at 7pm at Wallacestone Methodist Church on Friday 1st March. This is a beautiful service of hope and joy as we celebrate our faith with those from overseas. Please come along if you can and be inspired by the beauty and peace of this service and enjoy fellowship with folks from our sister churches in the Braes.



Holy Week Services



Please note that during Holy Week there will be services held each evening at 7pm in the following churches:

Monday - Polmont Old Parish Church

Tuesday - Laurieston Parish Church

Wednesday - Brightons Parish Church

Thursday - Blackbraes and Sheildhill Parish Church (Sacrament of Communion will be served)

Friday - Slamannan Parish Church

Please try and come along to as many as you can. These services are becoming busier each year and help us as Christians to focus in on the journey that Jesus took during the week prior to his death and resurrection. These services are also a wonderful example of Christian Unity as members from all the churches in the Braes area gather together to worship.

The services are normally no longer than 45 minutes and refreshments are served afterwards.



New members

Several people have approached me over the last few months enquiring about church membership.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Blackbraes and Shieldhill or Muiravonside Churches then please contact the minister by e-mail or telephone. louise.mcclements@virgin.net or tel - 01324 717757

It is hoped to admit people as members in both churches some time in the summer.

You becoming a member would be a great blessing to our church.

Weddings

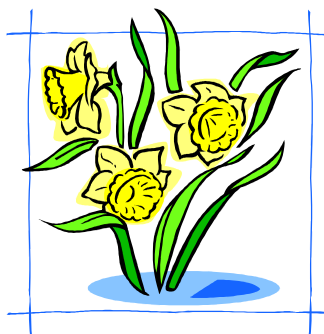
**'Meanwhile these three remain -
faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.'**

Muiravonside Parish

Fiona McIntosh and Simon Gallacher
on Saturday 9th February 2013

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Donna Eadie and Bruce Tulloch
on Saturday 16th February 2013



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



Funerals

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

Muiravonside Parish

Mrs Barbara Wright
Mr Ronald Wilkinson
Mr Richmond Weir
Mr Alexander Gray
Mr James Cameron
Miss Mary Waugh
Mr James Anthony

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Mr Simon MacArthur
Mrs Mary Munnoch
Mrs Shuna Gray
Mrs Janet McLauchlan

Field Names

Man Wull. Ye are a weel learnt chiel.
Ye ken the Fairms o'Angus weel.
Ilk Midden Heid and Standin Stane.
Bit faith man. Ye are nae ye're lane.
A puckle names I ken masel.
Sae here are some I'll try tae tell
There's Buttock, and there's Nicolton.
There's Parkhall and Vellore.
Gilmeadowland. Gilandersland,
hold memories by the score.

There's Castlehill and Tarduff.
There's Bowhouse and Whiterigg.
There's Coxhill, and there's Candy.
Candyheid and Candyrigg.

There's Broadheid, and Melon's Place.
Aye! And Desert Brae an' a'.
There's Netherton. There's Cumston.
Causewayend and Almond Raw.

Noo a' ken they're nae in Angus Wull.
But they're nae sae far awa'.
They're whaur I spent my childhood days.
The happiest days o' a'.

Submitted by Andrew McDermott



Drew's
view

*Hi Everyone,
I decided to do something a bit different
this time and have written a story with
fictional characters. However the events
described could actually happen,
especially when God is involved!
Blessings from Drew*

The Other Side of the Mirror

Dan Carter had a friend called Amanda, who was a doctor and worked at a hospital in London. Amanda actually specialised in children and was an expert in all of the illnesses that can unfortunately befall them, so her correct title was a Consultant Paediatrician. But to everyone she met and all the children she cared for, she was simply Amanda. She wore a white coat like all doctors used to do, but hers was slightly different, as she shared this coat with a very small teddy bear, who peeked shyly out of her top pocket, so that only his eyes and the top part of his head were visible.

This, of course brought a marvellous reaction from any new children that she met and was a wonderful icebreaker. The more outgoing ones would ask her lots of questions about him, such as, "What's the teddy's name?" and, "How old is he?" They were quite amazed when they found out that the little teddy was actually almost as old as Amanda herself. More importantly, the very shy children, who wouldn't normally speak at first, were enchanted by this small bear, who seemed to be even shyer than they were.

For a moment, they would forget their illness and the fact that they were in a hospital consulting room, as Amanda urged them to talk to the small teddy bear, to see if he would come out of her pocket. Dan saw Amanda once while she still had her white coat on and asked her about the teddy bear. She informed him that this little bear had helped her to find out what was wrong with the children, better than any training she had in putting them at ease. She also added that for personal reasons, the bear meant an awful lot to her, but she said no more.

You could pass Amanda by in the street when she was off duty, as she did some shopping, wearing her usual comfortable lilac blue anorak, along with faded jeans and you'd never guess that this lady was in fact, a professor. She was a very humble person and actually quite shy. She told Dan once how she dreaded going to all these highbrow dinners and functions she had to attend, but could not get out of, as being a professor, she was expected to be there. She came originally from a town just a few miles from where Dan lived.

Dan actually first met her in his early teens, as she went to the same secondary school, although she wasn't always in his class. But they did occasionally share one or two classes together. They got on very well and sat beside each other at every opportunity. Even then, outwardly she seemed a very happy person who had a lovely smile, but as Dan got to know her better, when she thought he wasn't watching, she looked so sad sometimes, as though she was worried, or reflecting about something that was causing her great concern. One time Dan asked her about this, but she just laughed, denying anything was wrong and appeared to be her own self again.

After that, anytime he noticed this sadness, Dan would try to cheer her up. He seemed to have a natural ability to make her laugh, with a wealth of funny stories that he knew. He remembered her being exceptionally good at the sciences, which she later went on to specialise in, whereas he went on to specialise in art and photography. He was also very interested in religion and was really curious to find out if she had any faith. Once Dan asked her shyly, but she immediately looked sad, almost on the point of tears, then answered rather cryptically that she once had a bad experience with God. She obviously didn't want to discuss it further. Although their career paths parted them, after school they kept in regular touch with each other. Dan thought it was something to do with the times that he cheered her up. He especially recalled on one occasion, she had looked at him with immense gratitude, as if he had done much more than the simple act of horsing around to cheer her up, but had possibly saved her sanity.

He felt then she was on the brink of telling him something, but it was as if she hesitated for a moment, then decided not to. After University, she moved to London, worked there for many years, became a consultant, then a professor, but to Dan, she was still simply Amanda,

from class 5a at Wentworth School. Friends who know them used to nod knowingly and hint that a secret romance was probably going on, but so far anyway, it wasn't like that at all. They were just very good friends and had remained that way, with cards and presents at Christmas, the occasional visit and birthday cards exchanged.

Amanda had one of these luxury flats that have sprung up in London recently, which overlook the Thames. Dan could vouch for the fact that the flat was absolutely lovely, as he had visited it many times. It wasn't a penthouse, but was very high up in the building and had a wonderful view of the river. He loved sitting with her on the veranda, drinking a cup of coffee and watching the large variety of boats and pleasure craft that constantly went by. In the evening, it came into a class of its own and the view was so wonderful, with a galaxy of lights visible across the vast city.

Dan recalled visiting the flat just after she had bought it. He told her enthusiastically how beautiful it was. In fact he went one better and amended his praise to the fact that it was absolutely wonderful and she must be so proud of what she had achieved. Again, that look of sadness and melancholy passed over her face for just the briefest of moments.

However Dan soon forgot this, as she showed him a piece of furniture she'd picked up for a bargain price. It was a beautiful, full length mirror, which had superb crystal clear glass and a light teak frame that matched the rest of the bedroom furniture. In keeping with the other furniture, it also had a contemporary look, which meant it didn't look out of place in a modern flat. Judging by the clarity of the glass, it was obviously top quality and Dan could even see the reflection of the city buildings through the window, as the curtains were open. Amanda told him she had been searching for a full-length mirror for quite a while. She often had to wear an evening dress to these functions that she so hated going to and with the aid of the mirror, could check that everything was just right.

Dan visited Amanda any time he was in London, which was two or three times a year. However, sometimes there would be a slightly longer gap of about six months before he would see her again. It was during one of those gaps that he had checked the answer machine

after doing some work, (Dan was a freelance photographer, so he tended to switch the machine on when he was working in his darkroom, so as not to be disturbed) and discovered Amanda had left a message. She sounded as if she had been crying and had to pause once or twice. She said,

“Dan... please... call me as soon as you get back... I must talk to you... It’s very urgent!”

She then hung up, with no further clue as to why she had to speak to him so quickly. Dan didn’t hesitate and called her straightaway. She seemed delighted to hear from him and started crying again. Fearing the worst, he gently tried to find out what could have happened to her. When she sensed his concern she said,

“Oh no, it’s nothing bad. On the contrary I don’t know how to say this...”

She paused as if to collect her thoughts then started crying again. Finally, she managed to say,

“Something wonderful has happened! But I cannot possibly tell you about this over the phone. You’ll think I’ve gone mad. Is there any way you can come down to see me tomorrow, or even better, tonight? I really need to talk to someone I can trust and I think – no – I’m convinced you’ll be able to help me with this. ”

Her voice started to waver again. Then she pleaded, “Dan... Please! ...”

He didn’t hesitate.

“Don’t worry Amanda, of course I’ll come.”

Greatly relieved, she hung up.

Dan wasn’t able to get a flight that evening, but managed to get a booking for one the next morning. He arrived at Amanda’s flat just before lunchtime, not knowing quite what to expect. She was waiting for him at her door. He was relieved to see she looked very excited, but otherwise fine. She also looked absolutely delighted to see him. She had a pot of inviting coffee ready, which was great. Once they got settled on her large sofa, at the window that looked out over the river to the city beyond, he asked her what had happened.

She sat for a second or two, as if she was trying to think how to start and asked,

“Dan, do you remember much about what you said when we were at school?”

She paused, looked rather thoughtful, then added,

“Oh dear. It seems such a long time ago now. Do you remember, one time we got talking about religion and I think you asked me about faith?”

She then looked really embarrassed, as her memory travelled back through the intervening years to what she had said and like Dan, she probably saw the same picture of two teenagers sitting together, sharing a dilapidated desk in an ancient school - two people who had their whole lives ahead of them.

“I shrugged you off didn't I?”

Dan thought back remembering how dismissive she had been, which was so unlike her.

“Yes, you did.”

“Can you ever forgive me? I was totally wrong.”

“Yes, of course he said.” But now he was more puzzled than ever.

She went on to tell him what had happened. The night before last, she was to go to one of those functions that she hated so much and this one was really big. It was a national annual dinner for consultants that was taking place in one of the most opulent hotels, right in the centre of London. It was an extremely posh affair and meant that she would have to attend in full evening dress and all her finery. In reality, she had just worked all day, dealt with some really harrowing cases and was absolutely exhausted. More than anything in the world, she wanted to just to put on some music, relax on her sofa and look out on the river, which always calmed her, even after the most harrowing of days.

She had a shower, sat for a few moments on the comfortable sofa in her dressing gown and knew she would have to get ready. Reluctantly, she got up and went to look out her best evening dress and jewellery. Almost ready now, she looked at herself in the large full-length mirror – a beautiful but very sad looking woman in a £1000

designer dress and £2500 diamond ring. She wondered, not for the first time, why on earth was she doing this?

She sighed and was about to turn round, when something happened in the mirror. Her reflection faded away and she saw a very primitive looking hospital ward with lots of very young children. They were dressed in only what could be described as rags and looked dreadfully ill. She recognised right away what was wrong with them – dehydration. They were very close to death and yet she could save them so easily with some simple medicines and fluids. Tears ran down her cheeks as she realised nobody seemed to be looking after them.

One of the children's mothers was there. She was also dressed in rags and weeping over her child. Amanda blinked and the picture had changed. She saw men working in a field. They were trying to plant seeds in a field that was burnt dry and dusty. She knew that these fields would never yield any crops. There would be no harvest for those people. That was why the people were starving – the adults as well as the children. She thought of our own golden cornfields.

Amanda looked at the mirror absolutely rapt. She had forgotten this couldn't be happening. The picture changed and the hospital was back again. However, this time, she saw herself treating the children. The picture was so clear; she could even see the little teddy bear in her top pocket. The children looked so much better. The child's mother came over and hugged her. Amanda then noticed two other figures had entered the picture, but were in the distance. Then, one of the figures stepped forward into view and was watching her treating the children. He was looking at her with an expression of utter love. He also looked immensely proud, as he watched her tending to the children. She knew instantly who he was.

Amanda had had a brother called John. He was two years younger than her and they were very close. For some reason, he never called Amanda by her name, but simply called her Big Sis. At first it annoyed her, but gradually she got used to this and even got to like this pet name. He would spontaneously run up to her, give her a massive hug and say,

“I love you Big Sis!”

Right from the time he was a baby, he had the small teddy bear – the very one that Amanda now carried around with her. He loved this little bear and secretly hid it in his pocket, even as he was beginning to get a little bit older.

At the age of seven, during the school holidays, John had been trying to climb a large tree with some friends in woods, which were near their home, when he slipped and fell. He had really bad internal injuries. Amanda's parents didn't want her to see him like this, but she insisted in visiting him in hospital. John woke up for a few moments, while Amanda was there and clutched the little teddy bear, which was lying on top of the sheets. He tried to move it towards Amanda and obviously wanted her to hold it too. She knew that somehow he was telling her to look after the little bear.

John died soon after and Amanda vowed that she would never let the little teddy bear out of her sight. Even at the age of nine, Amanda knew what she was going to do with her life and vowed that she would never allow anyone else's little brother or sister to die in that way. She would do anything she could to prevent children dying. Although she had been staying for a few days with an aunt at the time, Amanda quite wrongly blamed herself for John's death. She felt she should have been with him. She should have warned him not to climb the tree. She should have been there to catch him when he fell. She never told anyone, not even her mother and father, but his untimely death had haunted her. It still did. She felt so guilty that she was alive and he was dead. She often lay awake at night, wondering if wherever John was now, he blamed her as well.

Now she knew differently. The man in the mirror looked so well. He was so full of life and immensely happy as he watched her. He looked just the age that John would be now, if he had survived and also looked very handsome, as he watched her carrying out her work. He turned round to face her, smiled and said something. She couldn't hear him, but she didn't need to.

"I love you Big Sis!"

He then walked back to the other figure that looked immensely radiant and just as proud as he watched this scene. She realised she was

looking at Jesus. Then the whole scene faded gradually and the mirror was showing what it normally should - her own reflection, as she stood there in her evening gown. A woman who was now weeping with joy.

She sat down heavily on the comfortable chair near the mirror. Had she dreamed all of this? No. She thought not. It was all too vivid and crystal clear. She happened to look over at the bed and needed no more convincing. The little teddy bear that she knew had been in its usual place in her handbag – the place she always carries it when she is off duty – was sitting on top of her pillow. Still weeping, she hugged the little bear.

Her brother was safe and happy with the Lord. He had survived death. He looked so happy. He had been watching over her all along and was so proud of what she had done. But now she knew that her brother wanted her to use her talents elsewhere. A place where they were desperately needed. She realised now of course that the Lord wanted this as well. Amanda knew what to do. She phoned the hotel in the city centre and told them to pass on a message that she wouldn't be attending that evening. There is a group of Doctors called *Médecins Sans Frontières*, which literally means, "Doctors without Borders," who treat the sick in third world countries. She had been making all the necessary arrangements to join them just before Dan had arrived at her flat.

She wanted Dan there because firstly, she needed to tell him how wrong she had been. She had shut out God after her brother's untimely death. She had, in a sense, blamed him as well, for taking a brother, she loved so much, away from her. But now things were different for her. She was so happy about what life held in store for her. She knew as well, there was nothing to fear about death. She also knew that her brother was happy and did not blame her for what had happened. She called Dan, not only because he was the best friend she had in the world, but also because she remembered he had great faith in the Lord and just had to tell him what happened.

Dan was so happy for her and told her that it was just what Jesus would do. He knew that Amanda's great talents were urgently needed elsewhere and that she needed directing towards that. But he also knew that he would have to somehow convince her that her brother was well, before she could continue successfully with her life. Dan told her of

how the Lord could do anything to guide a person towards him. Sometimes, it can happen quietly and his gentle presence can be felt in the background. Sometimes, the Lord can manifest in a really spectacular way, as was what happened in her case. Whenever it happens, it changes the recipient's life forever.


They had a happy reflective meal. Then she showed Dan the application forms that she was filling in for her new job. They both knew she was actually filling in forms for a new life – a life that wouldn't have been conceivable a few days ago. Amanda paused a moment and tried to look casual, as if she wasn't hoping against hope. Then she mentioned that she had noticed there were openings for freelance photographers where she was going. The group of doctors she was going to be working with would be needing a publicist to design brochures, highlighting what they do to attract funds. She asked if Dan if he might be interested in doing this. Her actions were casual, but her eyes told a different story. She obviously was hoping against hope that he would go with her. Dan looked at this truly wonderful woman and didn't hesitate.

“Of course I'll go with you. There's nothing more in this world that I'd rather want.”

But first, he had to do something. He went out and bought her a very small teddy bear, so that she would have a matching one in the top pocket, at the other side of her white coat.

The two little bears are loved just as much by the children of the Sudan.

Guild Dates	
6 March	Camera Club Joy Bell
19 April	Crossford Accordion Band Fund raising



National Stewardship Programme

Here are the latest free will offerings for Blackbraes and Shieldhill:

	2011	2012
October	£1,594.20	£1,405.50
November	£1,311.50	£1,476.95
December	£1,799.70	£1,806.90

To put these figures in perspective, we send £1,780.20 to Ministries and Mission in Edinburgh each month as our contribution to the wider work of the Church.

Thank you

Christine Jones

Mother Knows Best

My mother taught me TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE:
'If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning'.
My mother taught me RELIGION:
"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."
My mother taught me about TIME TRAVEL:
"If you don't behave yourself, I'll knock you into the middle of next week!"
My mother taught me LOGIC:
"Because I said so, that's why."
My mother taught me about STAMINA:
"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."
My mother taught me about CONTORTIONISM:
"Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"

Ve hav vays...

It was a Sunday morning and the Vicar announced to his congregation that he'd written 3 sermons. One was a £100 one that lasted 5 minutes. One was a £50 one that lasted 15 minutes and one was £10 – and lasted a whole hour. "Now I'll take the collection and I'll see what one to give."

I enjoy reading poetry and I discovered this one in a book by Gerard Kelly, a speaker at "Spring Harvest" in 2012. Although it was written for a wedding in 2011, it is relevant for us today in the church.

What Shall We grow?

What shall we grow
In this garden God has given us?
What seeds shall we in this safe circle?
What fruits can we have faith for?
What wonders might we work?
In this polochrome parade
Of newfound names
That claims and frames us?

If we merge
Our minds and muscles
What marvels might we make?
What miracles can our creator craft
From our surrendered strengths?

In this walled place of waterfalls
And wells in the wilderness
This green gathering
Of growth and goodness
This cathedral of branches and light
Describing
Designing
Defining sacred space
This folded fabric of trailing vines
This joy of undiscovered pathways
This innocent exuberance of safety

Our secret Sabbath
Our hidden home
Our Eden
What shall we grow here?
We shall grow old together
What shall we sow here?
We shall sow love.

What will we do together with the wonders God has given us?

Lorna Coulter

Grace

Work your fingers to the bone, strain every muscle in endeavour,
These for sin will not atone, though you struggle on forever.
Try and try hard as you might, to compensate for sin
Such time and effort in God's sight is work that will not win.

Oh must I labour on in vain and find it's not worthwhile
And at the end not even gain a heavenly Father's smile?
It's so, it's so, it's even so, work's not the ground to stand upon
It's better for you to know, it doesn't lead to pardon.

Must I approach unknowing, the threshold of death's door
And at my time of going, be ignorant of what's in store!
Take heart! Take heart! There is a light. Lift up your anxious face.
From God's throne a word beams bright, which we pronounce as grace.

Grace, it is a lovely word because of what it says,
Especially when about the Lord and all that it conveys.
Christ has paid the price for sin, to us salvation's full and free.
For those who put their trust in Him, God pardons graciously.

Robert Thompson

Diary dates for Rendezvous

13 March Shieldhill school pupils entertain.

24 April entertainment by Peter McQuade.



A man asked a neighbour, "Can I borrow your lawnmower?"

The neighbour replied, "She's out shopping."

Introducing Margaret Grant

I remember the Salvation Army singing in the street on a Sunday afternoon after church and loved listening to them from our kitchen window.



McCracken's Gospel hall in California played a big part in my life, not so long ago I met Alex McCracken in the Meadow Bank Surgery and said, 'Hello Alex'. His reply was, 'sorry you have me at a loss'! When I said who I was he could rhyme of my whole family and was delighted that I had stopped him. I remember a story relating to my brother Jim when at McCracken's Gospel Hall he came home one Sunday and asked, ' Do artificial flowers grow?' Well we have never let him forget it!! Jim is the first born and should have known better!! If you were very well behaved you received a Tanner or Thruppence or a packet of Polo's. I tried- I really tried but never succeeded!!! But Jim did and he has never let us forget it!!!

When I was very little and at primary school the earliest memory which made an impression on us was when 'JESUS' came to my village in California.

He came in a trailer caravan; there must have been posters in the village to inform the villagers of his coming! Or perhaps our School had told us!!! I so desperately wanted to go, I clearly remember where I was sitting not quite midway and on the conclusion of the event we were invited to come forward and join Jesus! I so desperately wanted to, but was afraid that I would never see my family again!! And I remember coming home with the feeling that I had lost something.

Through the years you did the normal things, I remember being Baptized, I remember joining the church with Emily Heaton. I remember the Rev John Paterson who did Bible study with me, a man who I have admired all my life. I also remember my Elder Mr Kennedy who lived across the street from us in Mamre Drive and who was one of life's nicest people .I remember being a Sunday school teacher; I also remember to my embarrassment accidentally taking the children out of the church one Sunday before the Minister gave them their address!!! I did wonder why they were looking at me with puzzlement on their faces!!

I remember being married in California Parish Church by the Rev William G Neill and to this day it still means so much to me! It also pains me that when I pass where my church used to be, it is now a private housing development.

It makes you realise that being together makes us stronger, when we support each other, this way we survive as a church especially in these changing times. When Blackbraes suddenly closed, the village was stunned and very unhappy and it was a very difficult time for all! I was 3yrs old when my family moved into to a new house in the village and left when I married aged 21yrs.

Not to have been married in my own church would have been heartbreaking and I thank God that this was never my dilemma. And many years later we have survived, we are strong, we share, we care, we love. This is God's house!

Where would we be today, if we had not?

As the years pass you come and go, do this and that, you attend church of and on. You work, then you find yourself retired and now you are free to do as you wish, then you find yourself back home-belonging in your church.

Margaret L E F Grant (Nee Jack)
Muiravonside Parish Church



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.

You can also find photos, news, and the **Minister's Blog** on our website.

Ceilidh
15 March 2013
at 7.30pm
Welfare Hall,
Shieldhill



Notes from a Shieldhill Garden



By looking at a tomato seed, you would never guess what sort of plant was going to grow.

'And what you sow is a bare seed, perhaps a grain of wheat or some other grain, not the full-bodied plant that will later grow up. God provides that seed with the body he wishes; he gives each seed its own proper body.' 1 Corinthians; chapter 15 verses 37 and 38

One of our favourite vegetables is the tomato. It would not be a salad without the red tomato and where would we be without tomato soup. Tomatoes are part of our modern diet as a result of those early, intrepid explorers.

Originally The Aztecs and The Incas of South America grew tomatoes. There is evidence of tomato cultivation as early as 700BC. It was the early explorers, such as the Spanish explorer Cortez, who brought tomato seed to Europe. The first British tomato grower was Patrick Bellow in 1554.

The word 'tomato is derived from 'tomati' from the language of The Aztecs. The English word 'tomate' first appeared in 17th Century and quickly became 'tomato'. Most of the early fruits were yellow and were thought to be poisonous and were used as decoration. They were grown as decorative, climbing plants. In Europe, the rich people used lead rich pewter plates. The acid in the tomatoes caused the lead to leech out and into the fruit. This, of course, poisoned the eater with lead, which resulted in death. Poor people who used wooden plates could eat tomatoes and enjoy good health and so tomatoes were the food of the poor.

Tomatoes were thought to belong to the same family as deadly nightshade. In German folklore it is claimed that witches used plants like nightshade to summon werewolves and it is from 'lycanthropy', the name for this practice that the botanical name for tomatoes; *Lycopersicon Esculentum*; which translates as wolf peach; is derived.

The first cultivated tomatoes were small and yellow and so in French they were known as pomme d'or (golden apples), in Italian as pomi d'oro and goldapfel in German. The Italian for tomatoes today is pomodoro.

During the French Revolution in 1783, the patriotic republican citizens of Paris wore red caps as a mark of faith in The Republic. Their main aim, of course, was to behead aristocrats, but they also needed to eat. One faithful chef urged the crowds to eat red food to show their commitment to the revolutionary cause. By this time tomatoes were being eaten in the south of the country but were not the favoured food of the aristocracy. Tomatoes became a popular food with the Revolutionary hordes and were eaten as cooked side dishes and in salads.

In the late 1880s a restaurateur, so it is thought, created the first pizza in honour of a visit by Queen Margherita, the first Italian queen after Napoleon. The chef chose the colours of the new Italian flag: red, green and white. The red was tomato, the white: mozzarella cheese and the green: basil. The pizza margherita was born and this has become the standard for all pizzas.

Because of their high acid content, tomatoes became a favourite vegetable to be canned. In 1897, Joseph Campbell came up with a recipe for condensed tomato soup. By reducing the water in the can, storage and shipping costs were reduced. Andy Warhol used the image of a Campbell's soup can in over 100 of his pop art pictures.

Species of tomato grow wild predominately in Peru and Chile. These species are used to breed varieties of tomato for commercial use and for home growers. Tomatoes were not grown commercially until 19th Century with the first large glasshouses being erected in Essex and Kent. This followed the ability of glass manufacturers to produce large sheets of glass. Tomatoes are the most widely grown vegetable; being grown as far north as Iceland and as far south as The Falkland Islands. Tomatoes have been grown in outer space and seed have spent six years in a satellite and grew when they returned to earth.

We all have our favourite tomato recipe. I freeze some of my surplus fruits. If peeled before they fully thaw, they peel easily and are ready to be turned into sauce or soup. I have been asked for my tomato sauce recipe and so have included it here.



Tomato Sauce



Ingredients

Tomatoes (skinned)

Chopped onion

1 or 2 cloves of garlic (crushed)

Herbs: thyme or origami or mixed herbs; about a teaspoonful if dried;
2 tablespoons if fresh

Tablespoon or so of oil

Things you can add: tomato pureé, tomato ketchup; brown sugar

Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Heat oil and add chopped onion and garlic. Let the cook until soft. Watch they don't catch and burn.
2. Add the tomatoes and dried herbs if using. Cook until soft.
3. Taste the sauce. Pureé and ketchup makes it more tomato tasting and add sugar if it needs sweetening.
4. Add fresh herbs if you are using them.
5. Season

You can leave it like this. I use this to top pizzas and to go into lasagna or use with spaghetti. I often cool the mixture and blend it to make a smooth sauce.

If I have fresh basil, I tear it and stir it in at the end. I sometimes add a splash of balsamic vinegar .

I sometimes add mushrooms or grated carrot. I cook the carrot and the onion for a few minutes before adding the tomatoes to give the carrot a chance to soften a bit.

Tinned tomatoes can be used instead of fresh.

Lets hope for a better tomato-growing season this year.

Rena



Wedding Epistle Part 2

After leaving Los Angeles behind, we headed for Las Vegas to Craig and Arlene's wedding on Wednesday September 12th. The journey would take about 3 hours. The scenery changed very quickly from green and succulent covered in Joshua Trees, to sandy rocky desert, when at any moment you expected to see some famous cowboy in a shoot out with one of the local Indian tribes. Again Mrs Sat Nav was a godsend, taking us straight to the wedding venue and our hotel for the next 4 nights - Caesars Palace.

For anyone who has not been to Las Vegas it is something else to say the least. Wall to wall people and hotels. Valet Parking is the order of the day, with the bell hops taking umbrage when you move your own luggage. Once safely in our room we unpacked. This was the first time the wedding gear got unpacked and after travelling all those miles, there were very few creases in my dress or Johns kilt, thank goodness.

The first evening was a ladies night, with the bride, her mum Janet, sister Sarah Jane who was bridesmaid, the best men's wives and four of the female guests, plus my friend Elizabeth and myself. After an enjoyable meal, we all headed for a cocktail bar within the Caesars Palace complex. However, with not one of us being under thirty, we were asked for identity proof of age before we could purchase a drink. I for one was very flattered by this, as were a couple of the other more mature ladies. When eventually, the younger girls returned with passport identity, all was solved and we went on to have a most enjoyable evening.

The next day was a 06.15am rise as Elizabeth, Hugh, John and I were taking a helicopter trip over the Grand Canyon. I was very nervous at first. However, as we got into the flight, I began to relax and enjoy the ride. The pilot was very informative and told us about the local Indian tribes, who still own the land, their cultures and how they are fighting to preserve the natural beauty. We followed the Colorado River to the Hoover Dam, flew over Lake Mead and caught a glimpse of the glass Sky Walk weaving through the Canyons which were approximately 3,200 feet from top to bottom. The constant changing colours were amazing. Over 1,000,000 visitors a year make visits to the Canyons. After stopping to refuel, we returned by a different route, taking in all

the residential areas that surround the actual city. The pilot flew over the strip itself pointing out all the major hotels. In the afternoon, one of the local hostelrys was showing the Scotland - Macedonia game, so needless to say, the men left en masse to go and watch it. I think the game ended in a draw. I myself did a little shopping and went for some pampering in the hotel spa. As other friends had just arrived that day, Elizabeth, Hugh, John and I met up with our good friends Moira and John Nicol and June and George Stewart, who had all travelled out for the wedding, but like us were making a once in a life time holiday of it. After a most enjoyable meal, we all departed to our separate hotels as the next day was the wedding and some beauty sleep was required.

The day dawned bright and sunny and after all the titivating and beautifying, we were all dressed in our wedding gear, long dress and kilt being the order of the day. Nibbles and champagne had been ordered for our room. The groom had been left in the safe hands of the two best men and their wives. The friends we dined with the evening before, were coming to our room for the pre wedding nibbles. With modern technology to hand, in the shape of an I Pad, we were able to contact friends Evelyn and Grahame Anderson who live in Carron via Skype. it was 15.15pm USA time and 12.00 midnight UK time and there were Evelyn and Grahame sitting with glass in hand in their night attire. Evelyn was decked out in her best wedding hat. We were sorry they were unable to join us for real. Hilarity over, it was time to set off for the wedding venue. The Venus Garden is situated within Caesars Palace and is a lovely secluded and private space in which to celebrate a marriage. Arriving at the same time as the bride with her Mum Janet, Dad Donald, sister Sarah – Jane and her now fiancé Craig, Janet will never get mixed up with her sons in law and of course, our darling little grandson Riley. To say the bride was nervous was an understatement. However as the music started, and everyone was in their place, even the groom who looked very handsome in his new modern kilt outfit, everyone relaxed. The celebrant who conducted the marriage was excellent. You would have thought he had known them all their lives. But all too soon, the ceremony was over. Quite short, but very personal. After what seemed like hundreds of photos, we all headed off to the Venetian Italian Restaurant, where a beautiful meal had been prepared. The groom and bride's father both made very short speeches. It was then up to the two best men,

Darren Murray and Neil Lawson, Craig's friends since schooldays. to entertain us with their speech. They were very well organised, with lap top and speakers and took us on a musical journey through Craig's life, informing the company of escapades on foreign holidays that had never previously been divulged. As a memento of the occasion, the bride, best men's wives and myself were all presented with Tennents lager tins with our photos. On this was a reminder to the men in our lives that their days of looking at the lager lovelies were well and truly over. Mine takes pride of place in my living room unit. After the meal, we gathered in one of the many lounges for chat and socialising. But all too soon, the day came to an end and at 01.00am in the morning, we all dispersed to bed.

Our final day in Las Vegas was spent sightseeing, looking at all the different hotels, each with their individual features. in the afternoon, we took a taxi down to Freemont Street. This is the older part of the city. We passed many wedding chapels en route and even the Little White Chapel, where Elvis can appear at your wedding if you so wish. Not the real one of course. He is no longer with us. We were also shown the Pawn Shop where a well known American TV program is filmed. The queue outside was enormous, with people just waiting to go inside for a look, not necessarily to pawn their worldly goods. I was advised by my good friend Rita that there was a zip wire that went from one end of the street to the other. Me, being a very daring person, just had to try it out. it was a fantastic experience and I did not want to let Rita down after her telling me all about it. The evening was again spent in the company of Moira , John, June and George. We met in Moira and John's room on the 48th floor of the Vidajio hotel and from here you get the most fantastic view of the water fountains at the Belagio Hotel. They play every half hour and are wonderful sight music playing in the background.

Alas, our four days in Las Vegas were at an end. We said our goodbyes to the new Mr and Mrs Sharp, who were leaving Riley in the safe arms of his other grandparents. They were off on honeymoon, travelling up the west coast we had just come down. We also bid farewell to June and George who were heading home the next day. However in the next part of our trip, we were again going to meet up with Moira and John at two separate places which I will tell you all about the next time.

Moira Sharp

Easter Blessings

Every Easter time is so special

As we remember how Jesus

Suffered and died for us on

The wooden cross at Calvary

Ensuring that we would live

Redemption for every soul

Because Jesus died for us, his

Love paid the ultimate price.

Ensured by such unimaginable

Sacrifice and pain of which we

Simply have no comprehension

Instead we can only give thanks

Now and forever as we ask

God for his blessings at this

Sacred and very special time

By Drew Robertson

Thank you from Girlguiding 1st Braes Senior Section for all the help and support the church and congregation gave us in fundraising and opening Mrs Cockburn's bench. Especially to Jim Currie, we could not have done it without him. We are incredibly grateful for everything the church does for our Girlguiding units throughout the year and this project was no different. Thanks again to everyone involved.

Emma Guthrie

