

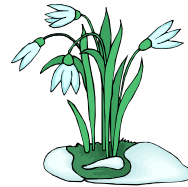
BLACKBRAES & SHIELDHILL  
PARISH CHURCH



SPRING 2010



**From the Manse**  
**9<sup>th</sup> February 2010**



Dear friends,

As I write this letter, I sit in my study, conscious that the nights are getting lighter and Spring is just around the corner. The starlings are once again preparing a nest for their offspring in our guttering and I just don't have the heart to have the nest removed. Last year there was a comfort in hearing the baby starlings chirp away in the morning, and it reminded me of new life, new birth and of course the Christian hope of resurrection.

In our churches I am conscious that there is a sense of new life and new hope. The newly formed Muiravonside Choral Society held its debut concert in December and was well attended despite the snow. We now have a church website and people are enjoying finding out about our linked charge on the web. Rendez-vous continues to be popular and many people are finding fun and friendship from the monthly gatherings. Both churches continue to support each other and also provide love and support to myself, David and the girls. At the moment we are very blessed to have a Student Reader- Mrs Monica MacDonald who is with us for her final placement. Monica's husband George is the minister at Bonnybridge, St Helen's and we look forward to Monica journeying and sharing with us over these next few months.

If you have not been at church for a while then I would encourage you to come along and experience for yourself the warmth and vitality of our congregation. Come and experience the friendly welcome at the door, the quietness of reflective prayer, the comforting yet challenging words of Scripture, the hymns both old and new. Come and hear God's word speak to you. Come and enjoy the fellowship, the friendship, and share in tears and laughter. Come and meet with God and receive refreshment for your soul and renewed strength to cope with the week ahead. The English poet John Donne once said that 'no man is an island'. God created us for relationship with him and with each other and it is when we meet together as Christians that we receive much needed strength

and encouragement. I am aware that for many of you, attendance on a Sunday is impossible due to illness and immobility. Please be assured that you are continually in our prayers and you are still an important and valued member of our church. If you are unable to attend church on a Sunday then we can now offer you a recording of the Sunday service for you to enjoy at home. If you would like regular recordings of the service then please phone your elder or telephone Mr Bill McKinnon - 636639 who will arrange for you to receive regular CD recordings. If you would like a visit from myself or your elder or would like to receive Holy Communion in the comfort of your home then please contact myself – 717757 and this can be arranged.

God is doing a new thing in our churches, the Spirit is moving and God is calling each one of us to serve him in whatever way that he has gifted us. Service to God is costly but he promises us that when we follow his call to serve him, abundant blessings will follow, and we will experience life in all its fullness. As Jesus says in Luke Ch6, v38-

***'Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.'***

Every blessing to you all,

Your minister and friend,

**Louise**

### **Deaths**

*Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life.'*

#### Muiravonside Parish

Mrs Jean Waters

Mrs Alice Morgan

Miss Annie Nimmo

#### Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Mrs Isabella Binnie

## Who Wants to Have Eternal Life?



Drew's  
view

It's funny but sometimes you can be watching the t.v. and see something that quite astonishes you. Something like this happened to me a few weeks ago. I had actually been in the other room for quite a while, catching up with some paperwork I had been putting off for ages. I had finally got round to doing it after convincing myself that it wouldn't go away, no matter how much I kept shuffling it around my desk. I had finally run out of places to hide it. So I resigned myself to the task in hand and was beginning to actually make some headway with it, when I thought, things would go even better with a cup of coffee beside me!

Of course, that was where I went wrong because I should have just carried on and not broken my train of thought. To make my cup of coffee, I had to go via the living room and to make matters worse, one of those game shows was on, where people have a chance of winning lots of money. This of course makes watching the show absolutely addictive. This time, it was the very well known programme, where contestants have a chance to win up to a million pounds by answering a series of fifteen consecutive questions which get progressively more difficult. As a result, the prize money reaches dizzy heights the further the contestant goes on.

Normally I would have not paid much notice, as the show had already started. As a result, I did not have the same emotional interest in the events, as someone would who had seen it right from the very beginning and consequently would have built up empathy for the contestants. What stopped me in my tracks, as I was hurrying through to the coffee maker in the kitchen, was a particular question that was being asked. They were at the stage where there are ten people all sitting with fingers poised on the buttons, waiting to answer a simple question where they have to put the four parts of the answer into the correct order. The fastest person to answer would be given the chance of a life changing visit to the hot seat and possible wealth beyond their wildest dreams!

The question that had randomly been selected by the computer and caught my attention was that the contestants were to rearrange the Lord's Prayer into the correct order. It looked something like this:

- A. Hallowed be thy name.
- B. Thy Kingdom come.
- C. Our Father, who art in Heaven.
- D. Thy will be done.

Oh, that's really easy! I thought and waited back for the ten seconds while everyone worked out the answer. The thought that everyone will have a chance with this one, also went through my mind.

In the next few seconds, I was to be proved almost unimaginably wrong.

The correct answer was of course, C, A, B, D. When the results came up on the scoreboard, unbelievably only *one* person had managed to successfully answer the question within the ten second time slot. It wasn't even that the other nine people had tried and just weren't quick enough with nine slower times appearing on the screen.

*They hadn't even been able to complete the answer so that a score could be registered.*

The large answer screen, with all the contestants' scores was totally blank apart from the one successful person who had got it right. I was absolutely stunned. The man who successfully completed the answer had taken about four seconds. He looked stunned as well. Like me, he probably thought that he wouldn't have much of a chance as everyone was bound to know this and complete the answer very quickly.

I sat down hard and tried to analyse this in my mind. The contestants were just the usual cross section of the public from all parts of the country who appear on these types of shows. They all looked over thirty and seemed knowledgeable enough in other aspects of general knowledge and culture. To put it into context, the next elimination question that came up was to sort out chronologically when four very well known soap operas that were currently being aired on British t.v. had first appeared on our screens.

All of the nine remaining contestants answered this question in less than four seconds!

I thought to myself, how sad this all was. I also wondered, how could this be? I know that in my generation, this was one of the first things I can remember learning as a very young child both at Sunday school and at



school. I would imagine that almost everyone who is over forty in this country, would be able to recite the Lord's Prayer without even having to think what the next line is, whether they are a religious person or not. It is so much a part of our life, from earliest childhood right up to present day. It is a prayer that can bring so much comfort, no matter what situation the person is in. Even for people who find it hard to pray and just cannot think what to say, or how to find the correct words, it is just so apt and brings the Lord immediately close to a person to give them comfort when they need it most.

I felt so sad that these nine people have not experienced the comfort of knowing these sacred words or have experienced the strength and reassurance that these words can bring.

The irony about it too is that in these times of such materialism, where money and possessions seem to mean everything, where nothing is free nowadays and literally thousands of people are applying and queuing to go on these game shows to try and win a million pounds, there is a precious thing being offered to us all - to every single person in the world - a thing that costs absolutely nothing, but is so precious that it is worth more than all the money in the world. It is absolutely priceless. An offer of eternal life from our Lord Jesus Christ. People only have to accept him into their lives. Yet most of them turn their backs on this wonderful offer or simply don't want to know.

Going back to the show, you're probably wondering how this solitary gentleman got on. He actually did very well.

In many of these game shows the contestants are offered lifelines to keep them in the game. The word "lifeline" couldn't be more apt when it comes to accepting the Lord as your Saviour. On offer is a lifeline that never runs out, no matter how high the stakes are in the game of life and everyday living. He will stay close by your side, especially when you are losing. That is when you will feel him really close, giving you strength and comfort when you need it most. Your lifelines will never run out. He will never eliminate you, forget about you or disqualify you, even if you don't always win the game. Isn't it wonderful to have such a person by your side?

Who wants to have eternal life?

## **February**

February can be rather unpredictable and cold,  
temperatures are freezing or incessant rain falls.

A pleasant sunny day can feel like rare gold,  
a month when time stops or seems to just crawl.  
One consolation that we can all gratefully behold,  
this month is a little bit shorter - a relief for all.

However despite this there is some relief in sight,  
subtle things go on in the midst of all this gloom.  
At sunset there is just a little more remaining light,  
tenaciously clinging before darkness consumes.  
Almost as if trying with all its strength and might,  
to give some respite until the darkness resumes.

But in the background other things are going on,  
which are hidden but just around the next corner.  
Nature working away busily creating a new dawn,  
as we dream of winter days that will be former.  
Soon we will get another gift once winter is gone,  
Spring is just around the corner, which will be warmer.

So February is not entirely a cold month of gloom,  
subtle things going on just below our line of sight.  
Although bad weather and depression may loom,  
just over the horizon unseen is a guiding light.  
It may still be winter but it is not all gloom,  
better times will come – days that will be bright.

***By Drew Robertson***



**Christian Aid Week**  
**9-15 May 2010**



As you know, the house to house collection is key to the success of Christian Aid Week. Some of our faithful collectors in Shieldhill and California are now elderly and no longer able to help. If anyone would like to help during Christian Aid Week this year (and you don't have to be a Church member), either by collecting or delivering some envelopes through letterboxes, please let me know. We do need more volunteers!

The Welcome In Committee will also be organising a snack lunch at the start of Christian Aid Week on Sunday, 9 May in the Hall after the Service. Details will be announced later.

Finally, small Christian Aid money boxes for collecting loose change from now until June are now available.

**Marion Zacks, Christian Aid Organiser**  
**[www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)**

### **World Wildlife Fund's Earth Hour**

At 8.30pm on 27 March, Earth will suddenly become a much darker place, as lights go out all over the planet.

But there's no need to be frightened — because people will be turning out their lights to show how much they care about their world and to take a stand against climate change as part of WWF's Earth Hour 2010.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world, at 8.30pm on Saturday 27 March, will switch off their lights for an hour. Why don't you get the candles out and join them?

**8.30pm**  
**27 March**



# Thankyou

I would like to thank all friends of Blackbraes and Shieldhill Church for the flowers, cards and phone calls during my recent illness. They are very much appreciated.

Hoping I can be with you all very soon

Yours very sincerely

**Jessie Mitchell**



We would both like to thank all who sent cards and flowers during our recent illness. They are both slowly recovering.

Thanks to everyone

**Mr and Mrs Robert Hunter**



The Sunday School would like to thank all those who bought eco-friendly goods at the Christmas Brunch. The J-Factor were able to raise £61 for the World Wildlife Fund.



## **Jingle Jars**

I wish to thank everyone who collected their coins and filled their Jingle Jars. This year you have helped raise over £500 for church funds.

Most people who give by this means are church members but there are still a few loyal supporters who regularly hand in their Jingle Jars. This is greatly appreciated.

Thanks once again for your generosity

**Barbara Currie**



**Fairtrade Fortnight  
22 February - 7 March 2010**



For this year's Fairtrade Fortnight the nation is asked to join in The Big Swap. For two whole weeks you are asked to swap your usual stuff for Fairtrade stuff. Your usual bananas for Fairtrade bananas, your usual cotton socks for Fairtrade cotton socks, and your usual cuppa for a Fairtrade cuppa. Whenever you pop to the shops, you can use your wallet to make a stand.

Swapping your usual stuff for Fairtrade stuff is a brilliantly small step to making the world a fairer place. It means that you get to show your support for developing world producers through what you buy. Two billion people - a third of humanity - survive on less than \$2 a day. Unfair trade rules keep them in poverty, but they face the global challenges of food shortages and climate change too.

Fairtrade believes that developing world producers should be in control of their own lives, by getting a better deal for the work that they do. This is a different way of doing business. It's a way that puts the poorest of the world first.

The Fairtrade range started small. Like one bar of chocolate small. Now there are over 4,500 products bearing the FAIRTRADE Mark. A glorious array of products that spans pineapples and footballs to duvets and rice.

For further information, visit [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

**Webb Ivory**

Liz MacGowan and Margaret Gow would like to thank all their customers who helped in their fundraising at Christmas. A grand total of £500 has been donated to church funds.

### Falkirk Homeless Project

Falkirk Homeless Project continues to provide starter packs and furniture to people who have found themselves in the unfortunate position of being homeless. They are short of items such as curtains, 3 piece suites (with fire certificate attached) and free-standing electric cookers. They take all household items (in useable condition) to provide free to homeless people. To donate items, call 01324 829138, 24hr answer service.

They also continue to need items such as cutlery, plates, towels, bedding etc. If you have anything small to donate, please see Bill McKinnon or Robert Paterson.



OFFERING ENVELOPES – are now ready for distribution for the 7th March 2010 and for those who do not already give by this means and would like a set of envelopes please see Jim Currie or any office bearer.

GIFT AID - If you pay income tax, you might like to consider using Gift Aid to increase your Church givings without any cost to yourself. Gift Aid allows the church to reclaim from tax you have already paid. You must pay an amount of income tax at least equal to the tax that we reclaim on your donations, currently 25p for every £1 you give. If you give by Freewill Offering numbered envelope, Standing Order from your own bank account or by personal cheque and would like to consider Gift Aid, you can contact either Jim Currie or Marion Zacks. Arrangements can then be made for a Gift Aid declaration form to be signed.

Finally, please note that you must also let us know if you stop paying tax.

Your generous contributions last year received an added boost of £4798 of Tax recovered by Gift Aid Donations.

THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

**Jim Currie and Marion Zacks**



## Notes from a Shieldhill Garden

Snow gave a uniform whiteness at the beginning of the year, the Lord's pallet being well hidden. Yes, hidden but not at rest. As the snow receded snowdrops were heralding the Spring days to come, bulbs were poking their first tentative fingers through the earth and flashes of green herald promise of colourful days to come.

I try to garden holistically - I try to live in harmony with the other creatures that share my garden. I like to get stuff for free and, in doing this, reduce the amount this family puts into its green and blue bins. Some food cartons make excellent seed trays and some of my planters are recycled containers. The compost bins and heaps take vegetable peelings, garden waste and cardboard which in time becomes compost, black gold. On one very cold February day the temperature inside my big bin was 10 degrees centigrade, well above freezing. By midsummer I will have compost to dig into my garden. There is a compost bin to fit all gardens; no garden is too small to have one.

Cold weather brings birds into gardens, especially if food and water are on offer. This Shieldhill garden enjoyed a visit from a small flock of Bramblings, beautiful wee finches who favour farmland. Blue, Great and Coal Tits join the flocks of starlings and house sparrows.

We all have a part to play in preserving this wonderful planet that God put us in custody of. Happy Gardening.

**Catherine Moore**

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



### **Dates for your diary**

Wed 3 March	Guild—The Glasgow Gospel, Jamie Stuart
Thu 4 March	Board and Session meeting
Sun 7 March	Communion
Wed 10 March	Rendez-vous
Fri 12 March	Ceilidh
Wed 17 March	Guild AGM—Let's talk about justice
Thu 18 March	Annual General Meeting
Sat 27 March	Earth Hour
Wed 31 March	Guild—Cathie Peatie MSP
Sun 4 April	Easter Day
Thu 15 April	Board and Session meeting
Wed 28 April	Rendez-vous
Sun 9 May	Christian Aid Lunch

### **Flower List**

The flower list for 2010 is now in the foyer, and there are still dates to be filled. If you have a special occasion you would like to remember then feel free to enter your name against the appropriate date.

The flowers are distributed to members of both communities, to those who are sick or have lost a loved one, and are very much appreciated by those who receive them.

Helen McKinnon and Mary Conn would like to thank everyone who donated flowers or contributed to the flower fund in 2009 and look forward to your continued support in 2010.

***Helen McKinnon and Mary Conn***



## South Africa Link



Dear Friends,  
We hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas despite the awful weather we have heard that you have had to endure, and a very Happy New Year to you all.

Thanks to the generosity of you, our friends in SA link, we were able to enable others to have a very joyous and wonderful Christmas.

On Christmas Day at Mamelodi the service was in the form of a Christmas party particularly for the children who have been orphaned by AIDS. Some of them are being looked after by grand parents, mostly widowed grandmothers, and others by the eldest sibling in the family. The problem is so vast that there are not enough facilities to assist these children.

When Alison Elliot (former Moderator of the Church of Scotland) visited us she and her husband gave us a gift which enabled the manyano (women's guild) to start a support project for these children and so enabling many of them to be fed regularly and even get into school. So with your generosity we were able to give the manyano some money to make this party a memorable event and we even had Santa and every child was given a Christmas gift!



We were able to make Christmas wonderful for a Zimbabwean family that we have assisted personally and from money sent from Cumbernauld Old congregation on a regular basis for a number of years now. Shupi is the last surviving adult of her family; all her siblings have died of AIDS and there is only her and her elderly

mother left with 9 children to care for. She travels back and forth to South Africa selling crafts and when she is in South Africa she often stays with us. Her elderly mother looks after most of the children and recently she has managed to get 3 of them into school here in SA thanks to Cumbernauld Old who have paid the fees in the past.

She usually visits us on her way back to Zimbabwe for Christmas and I phoned her to find out when she would be coming as we always try to buy her groceries to take home with her. She told me that she was unable to go home – the bus fares have doubled because of the soccer coming to SA! We were so glad to be able to tell her that she would go home for Christmas and to give her a huge food hamper to take home with her for the children. We have since heard from a friend in the UK, who sent a generous amount of money to assist refugees. We have decided to use this to pay the school fees for another year to enable the 3 children to continue their education here in SA.

A great big thank you for all your support, prayers and correspondence over the past year and we look forward to more of the same for 2010.

With lots of love  
**Sandra and Graham**

[www.southafricalink.org.uk](http://www.southafricalink.org.uk)

### **Ceilidh**

There will be a ceilidh in aid of Church funds on Friday 12 March, 7.30pm till 11pm, in the Welfare Hall, Shieldhill. John Morgan will be entertaining us.

Tickets are £8, which includes a supper, and are available from Marion or Lorna.



## ***Children's Page***

### **The Unveiling**

All the children in the whole school were sitting in the courtyard. Connor was bored and uncomfortable on the stone paving. What was all the fuss about? On the wall in front of him, there was a large, plain sheet. The headteacher had said they were going to see their mosaic unveiled, but where was it? Connor had made a tile, and so had every other child. His was plain green, with a tussock of darker green grass. Dead boring!

The Headteacher stood up and started droning on about what an exciting day this was. 'No it's not,' thought Connor. Then the minister from the local church started talking. He said something about each child only knowing part of the picture. They had each made their own tile and made a special contribution, but only now would they see how it fitted in with the whole creation. 'What is he on about?' wondered Connor.

The Town Mayor was there, wearing his furry robes and golden chain. He pulled a cord, and the sheet fell to the ground. There was a moment of silence, and then all the children gasped in amazement. It was beautiful! It was a wonderful, colourful, shiny picture of the school, with the sun rising in the background, children playing in the playground, and birds flying overhead. And there was Connor's green tile, not very exciting on its own, but an important part of a very special picture. Connor's face lit up as he began to understand what the minister had meant.



#### **A Riddle**

Take the seventh, and then the twelfth,  
add a vowel all by itself.  
Next try texting 'are' to see  
The last's like a question – what can it be?