

Tidings



**Christmas
December 2021**

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Dear friends,

“The best laid schemes o’ mice and men gang aft a-gley”

How well Burns observed the human heart and the vagaries of providence. Similarly, the bible is replete with examples of people making plans and them either going well or going catastrophically badly! Indeed, Jesus suggests that it’s foolish to avoid costing out our plans (Luke 14:28). A wise person is encouraged to seek advice (Prov.20:18) yet seeking God’s interests is less stressful (Matt.6:31-34), not least because God has plans to prosper his people (Jer.29:11-13).

A little over ten years ago, on instruction from the General Assembly, the then Ministries Council based in the central offices of the church at 121 George Street, Edinburgh, consulted with Presbyteries about how they might reduce the number of Ministries in the church from about 1200 to 1000. I was attending Lanark Presbytery at the time and asked the daft-laddie question: is that just a round number or is there some reasoning behind it? The emphasis was cuts. Consequently, up and down the land, there was an uproar as attempts were made to implement these plans. In Hamilton Presbytery we have only just about reached that target, with 57 Ministries for our patch.

Since then, not for the lack of innovation and trying, the numbers of Ministers, Elders, and Members have continued the slide from the high-water mark in 1959. The church is presented with the difficult choices of continuing to support the existing levels of paid Ministries and leadership or increasing its proportion of volunteer ministries. While the first few centuries of the church demonstrated how divisive a distributed leadership and scriptural interpretation could be, which was replicated throughout the Protestant Reformation, there is no doubt that there is a happy medium that needs to be sought. The workload needs to be shared, while maintaining the orthodoxy that is core to our Christian faith.

This year, in response to the Pandemic, the General Assembly established a new round of planning that once more involves cuts. It hopes to reduce to 660 Ministries but takes a different emphasis than mere cuts. With a radical re-drawing of how we operate, the focus is on Mission and how everyone can get involved in sharing the Gospel of Christ in word and/or action. It starts with the “Five marks of Mission”, below, then asks what ministries are needed to support this in any given area, before concluding with the emotive question of which/what buildings to we need to support that mission. Pun not intended, but cutting to the chase, for Hamilton Presbytery that means reducing to 34 paid Ministries, and for the Hamilton and Blantyre area that could represent as few as five Ministers – and the Old Parish is as much under scrutiny as any congregation.

So, that begs the question, “What are we doing about mission as a congregation?” Perhaps we recognise our part to play in the five marks of mission, without which the kingdom of God rarely grows:

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

To that end, the Presbytery has encouraged every congregation to enter into discussions with its neighbours to make some ground-up suggestions of the kind of sustainable options that might support mission in our area. In some ways, we're ahead of the game. We also have a small cohort of representatives willing to discuss these issues. We ought to make it a matter of prayer that God's will be done for our town and country, and that we might play our part in that, to His inestimable glory. Then, we trust, God will bless the efforts of our planning.

Your Minister and friend,

Ross



PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
we seek your will in all things.

Thy kingdom come, and
Thy will be done.

In facing the challenge of our times,

make us bold;

in devising our plans,

make us humble;

in talking with each other,

make us gracious;

and in all our concerns,

of life and of our present times,

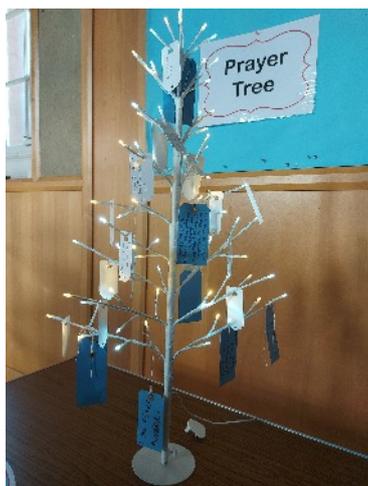
give us peace profound.

For, you are our God
and we are your people,
dependant on Christ.

Amen.

Blether Together

On Sunday 3 October after a shorter church service, the congregation were invited to a “Blether Together” in ‘The North’ Hall. Each member of the congregation received an individual bag which contained a cup for tea or coffee and an individual small selection of sweet treats. The bag also contained a prayer card, speech bubble and a pen. The congregation had the opportunity to write the name of a person who they wanted to pray for on the prayer card and write any news e.g. birthdays, holidays, births, bereavements, visitors etc, on the speech bubble.



The prayer cards were hung on the prayer tree and the speech bubbles were displayed on the wall for people to read and add to. Individual bags were also provided for children containing a drink, sweet treats and a small toy. Most importantly the congregation had the time to chat (blether) and catch up with each other (together) while enjoying the refreshments. This gave everyone the chance to re-connect with people they haven't seen due to the recent coronavirus restrictions. We hope to repeat this event on a regular basis.

Many thanks are given to the small group of volunteers who helped make this event successful and to Tunnocks, Lightbody and an anonymous member who donated the sweets treats for this event. All care was taken to comply with the current coronavirus guidance to ensure everyone's safety for this event.

Our next Blether Together was on Sunday 7 November and again proved successful and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended.

We look forward to our Boys' Brigade hosting our next Blether Together on Sunday 5 December 2021. Further information to follow nearer the time but please do come along and support the Boys' Brigade.



Carole McCrudden

Being kind is more important
than being right.

What people often need is
not a brilliant mind
that speaks
but a caring heart
that listens.

Finance

As we come to the end of the year I am pleased to report that once again we have managed to meet all our commitments locally and nationally without having to use any of our investments. We are still looking for help on a Sunday morning to count the offerings after the service. Please speak to me after any service or contact me using any of the details inside the front cover if you think you would be able to help.

I will soon be submitting our claim for Gift Aid to HMRC. Can you please remember to let me know if you have moved house during the year, have stopped paying tax or there has been a change in your circumstances which might affect the claim?

Can I once again thank each and every member of the congregation for your financial support especially during closure and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Marilyn Henderson
Finance Convener



Guild

Theme - "Look Forward in Faith" – 2021-2024
Year 1 - "Lights and Bushels" – 2021-2022

I hope you are all well. By the time you read this you will all have received your Flu and Vaccine Booster jabs.

The Guild will not meet until Spring 2022 when hopefully things will be more settled.

As we adapt and embrace changes, let our lights shine as we Look Forward in Faith. We do so in the knowledge that God, with his guiding hand, is our constant companion.

Whose we are and Whom we serve.

Blessings to all!

Avril Boothroyd
(Coordinator)



Scottish Bible Society

Despite the pandemic the work of the Bible Society has been ongoing! It operates in so many countries giving hope through God's Word. Part of our mission work is to support their wonderful work. I hope you will keep them in your prayers and if you can – please send a donation to: Scottish Bible Society, 7 Hampton Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5XU. Many thanks to those of you who already support their work!

Sunday Live!

What a great start to the session with the children of Sunday live being able to meet face to face! It has been fantastic to see the children playing together and having so much fun. We have started an "Achievement Tree" and each time we meet everyone adds a tag with their achievement. The tree even made an appearance at our recent Blether Together! Halloween falling on a Sunday this year, was the ideal opportunity for dressing up and for the children (and leaders) to enjoy some spooky fun.

With Christmas just around the corner, our attention is now turning to rehearsing for the Nativity which we look forward to be presenting on Sunday 19 December in the Church.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support.



Sunday Live Leaders



Saffronhall Singers

Virtual rehearsals are in full swing! We meet every Monday evening via Zoom when Campbell leads us through some of our repertoire. Attendance on average is around 24. Many don't have access to the technology while others find singing in isolation very difficult or not enjoyable. It is hoped that we will be able to meet in the new year as we are making enquiries about alternative accommodation – somewhere large enough to take our numbers, with the necessary mitigations in place.

Numbers are still healthy, but we were sorry to hear from Rona and Jim Maxwell and Louis Munn that they were giving up their membership. They have been faithful members since the Singers started in 2013 and all made significant contributions to the success of our group. We wish them well! We did however gain a new member, Frances Naismith, in the alto section and she has been joining in the online meetings. Hopefully she will get to meet everyone in person soon.



Initially we were revising various items each week, but we have now moved on to Christmas music, especially some of the pieces we have not sung for some time. It is disappointing that we will not be able to host our Carols by Candlelight this year, however the online version is still available on the church YouTube channel if anyone needs some additional festive cheer!

In the meantime, best wishes to everyone for the festive season and for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2022!

Campbell Barr



Studies with Paul

Our studies with Paul continued on 26 October with the third missionary journey – if you haven't seen it yet do catch up! A very dramatic journey, taking in riot, imprisonment, shipwreck and snake bites...but all the while we can learn from Paul's courage and determination to spread the gospel.

The series on Paul concludes with a look at his letters on 30th November. The Drama Kirk approach as always will be to bring the characters in these letters to life. Why not join us as we explore how the letters to the Corinthians might have landed. We will also look at some of the more pastoral letters, Titus and Philemon in particular. These letters share Paul's encouragement for the young church.

Our Christmas resources are almost ready! This year we have:-

Bob Hartman's Rhyming Bible

A delightful series of four performed poems to take us through the Christmas story, with the familiar nativity characters in the background telling the story visually.

A Woman Called Mary

Our first poem depicts Mary meeting the angel, who has unsettling news! See how her faith is strengthened at the very start of the Christmas story.

Joseph, Don't Worry

We then join a very worried Joseph, on a sleepless night – interrupted by his visit from the angel.

It Begins in Bethlehem

And now Shepherds, on a hill, have their encounter with the Angels; leading to their journey to find the new born King.

One Hump, Two Hump

Enter the Wisemen! They follow the star and visit Herod, who hatches an evil scheme.

The poems are fun and engaging, especially for children. Help us spread the word!

“Shepherd's Christmas” by Jeannette Walters

This lovely short film tells the story of a young boy on a farm, helping his Dad with chores. A little reluctantly. His Dad tells him the story of the Shepherds that very first Christmas, the first visitors to Jesus. This will be performed by a cast of professional actors and our own Colin and Stuart Davidson.

Both Christmas projects will be available free for schools, churches and community groups to use, so please do help us spread the word about these resources.





The Boys' Brigade

This September the Boys Brigade started back after a 17 Month hiatus.

During our time away we suffered a few resignations. Alistair Buttery has resigned as Captain, as well as Alan Brown and Nanette McLean who have resigned from their positions as Officers in Charge of the Junior Section and Anchor Boys respectively. First of all, I want to put on record my gratitude to all the staff who have moved on this year. The combined service of the 3 people who have resigned is truly astounding with all 3 having in excess of 20 years service each. This means that from a staff point of view it is a new look Brigade that started back so some introductions are in order.

The new Captain of the 1st Hamilton Boys' Brigade is myself, Graham Horne. I will take over this role from Alistair. I am confident that everyone who knows Alistair will have a great deal of sympathy for me as Alistair was an outstanding Captain and the thought of having to follow him and inevitably being compared to him is daunting. In fact, when I look into the company's past and you see names like Frank Gardiner, Jim Simpson and Alistair Buttery the name Graham Horne just looks like a spelling mistake.

The rest of the staff are as follows:

- Alan Young has taken over as Officer in Charge of the Anchor Boys. Alan is ably assisted by Lynne Young and Gillian Buttery.
- The Officer in charge of the Junior Section is at this moment in time myself assisted by Ross Smart, Craig Horne, Euan Davidson and after years of being vacant we have filled the position of Tuck Shop Lady (yes, it is a valid position in Hamilton BB) with Lyndsey Cuthbertson.
- I will be assisted at the Company Section by Alistair Buttery and Iain Gray.

The main task over September and October was just to get the boys used to coming out every Wednesday night and having fun.

But as we get to the end of October, we are getting back into the badgework this means that the older boys from the company section will be helping out at both the Anchor Boys and Junior Section as part of their leadership badgework.

Parents of Junior Section will already have taken possession of their hand made CD clocks.

While we did not while ask the Junior boys to dress up for Halloween, we did have plans to have a party with all the games you would expect. However, it appears that the boys met at school and decided amongst themselves to appear at the Company night in fancy dress a good time was had by all with everyone ending the night covered in treacle, flour and water from their participation in the traditional Halloween games.





November the 10th saw our annual firework show for the Anchor Boys and Junior Section. Along with the fireworks and fire pits the children enjoyed playing with sparklers and as well as the treats that the Junior Section had made what seemed to be a ton of marshmallows was roasted and consumed.

Both Halloween and Firework Night was enjoyed by all concerned.

The Boys Brigade will again be represented at the Remembrance Sunday Service within the Church on 14th November this year after missing last year because of Covid.

Many thanks for your time.

Graham Horne
Captain



Anchor Boys

The Anchor Boys and Bluebells have had a great start to our session with lots of fun games and colourful arts & crafts, with some on display in the North Hall and regular photo updates on the church social media feeds.

The boys and girls also really enjoyed their recent Halloween party and are now asking if Santa will come and visit.

If you know any boys or girls (5yr-7yr) wanting to join us on a Wednesday night, please contact me {alan@alany.co.uk} or the church office for more information.

Alan Young



Monday Club

Just a short update to advise members that the committee has not yet made a decision regarding a start back date for club meetings. Many folk are still going at their own pace, regarding going into gatherings; shopping; public transport etc and that is understandable.

Here we are at the end of another year and Christmas is only a few weeks away now! May I wish you, on behalf of myself and the committee, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

God Bless Everyone.

Charlie Duguid





Entered into Eternal Life.
"I am the Resurrection and the Life"

*God of grace and peace, in your Son Jesus Christ
 You have given us new birth into a living hope.
 Strengthen us now to live in the power of the resurrection
 and keep us united with our loved one
 from whom in death we are not divided;
 for You live and reign forever and ever. Amen*

*21 August 2021
 Mary Macintyre*

*29 August 2021
 Margaret Street*

*3 September 2021
 Elsie Taylor*

*22 September 2021
 Gordon Dobbie*

*24 September 2021
 Mary McConnell*

*29 September 2021
 Jane Gilmour*

*30 September 2021
 Margaret Gemmill*

*5 October 2021
 Helen Tait*

*24 October 2021
 Mary Shand*

*28 October 2021
 Fiona Brown*

Baptisms

*3 October 2021
 Sophie Charlotte Thompson*

*24 October 2021
 Indie Hewitt*

*7 November 2021
 Callum James David McKie*



Wishing you a
Merry Christmas



and a
Happy New Year