

St John's News

The Newsletter of St John's Church of Scotland: Carluke

St John's Church of Scotland: Carluke, is a registered Scottish Charity, No SC004066



December 2017

Pastoral Letter

Dear members

It is hard to believe that the first Sunday in Advent is already here with us. The season is one of joyful anticipation as well as a time to "prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight his paths", that is, to properly dispose our hearts and adorn our souls for his coming. Advent is a time to prepare our hearts and evaluate what is truly important in our lives.

Although surrounded by the somewhat "Christmas rush" around us, it is still possible to enter into the true Christian spirit of Advent during these short weeks preceding Christmas. Unfortunately, the approaching season of Christmas often brings unwelcome guests - anxiety and depression. The season presents complex demands - parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few. Yet, despite our best efforts, we may find ourselves feeling sad or anxious, unable to sleep, irritable and unable to face routine tasks. The Christmas season for some can be painful due to the deaths of loved ones and the feeling of loneliness can be overwhelming.

Nevertheless, God's people never need to fear abandonment. Even if people turn on us, friends forsake us, or circumstances separate us from loved ones, we are never alone. God has said, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you*" (Hebrews 13:5). This is not just nice words offering an empty sentiment. It is the promise of God to those who are the objects of his love. With Christ, we will never walk alone.

Thank you for the continuing giving of your time, talents and treasure to the service of our God within and beyond our congregation. May we use this season to build bridges of understanding, love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Hope, Peace, Joy and Love; these are my prayers for you and yours in this season of Advent and Christmas.

Rev Dr Elijah Obinna
Minister

Diary: December 2017 to March 2018

Regular Worship Times

Sunday Morning Prayers - 10:20 - 10:50 am, before morning service.

Normal Sunday Services are held at 11:00 am.

A short evening service, with prayers for healing, is normally held on the second Sunday of each month at 7:00 pm

A Praise Service is held on the last Sunday of the month, also at 7:00 pm.

A short, mid-week service is held on Thursdays at 10:30 am.

Minister's Vestry Times

Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Forthcoming Special Events and Services

December

- Sun 10:** 11:00 Guest Preacher: Very Rev John Turnbull
12:00 Soup Lunch in aid of *Glasgow City Mission*
19:00 Christian Aid Carol Service at St Andrew's Church
- Wed 13:** 19:00 Carol Service for the Bereaved at St Andrew's Church
- Sun 17:** 09:30 Christmas Breakfast
11:00 All-Age Service
- Thu 21:** 11:15 Crawforddyke Primary School Christmas Service
- Sun 24:** 23:15 Watchnight Service
- Mon 25:** 12:00 Christmas Lunch

January 2018

- Sun 7:** 11:00 Joint New Year Service at Kirkton Church
- Sun 14:** 19:00 Evening Healing Service
- Sat 27:** 19:00 Scottish Night
- Sun 28:** 19:00 Evening Praise Service

February

- Thu 15:** 18:30 CHOICES celebrates 25 years serving the community
- Sun 11:** 19:00 Evening Healing Service
- Sun 25:** 19:00 Evening Praise Service

March

- Fri 2:** 13:30 World Day of Prayer (at St John's Church)
- Sun 4:** 11:00 **SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Please watch Sunday bulletins, local press or visit the church website for and changes and more information as it becomes available.

Digital newsletter

Did you know that St John's News is available as a digital version? A "public" version (with personal and contact information removed) is available on-line (Visit www.carluke-stjohns.org.uk/news/newsletter/index.shtm) but a digital copy identical in content to the printed version can be sent to you by email.

The digital version has a couple of advantages over the print version: It will often be available before your print magazine has been delivered and any images will be in colour. If you were to opt for the digital version, it would also cut down on the number of print copies, so saving energy, time and resources.

If you would like to change to the digital version from the next issue in March, please email editor@carluke-stjohns.org.uk.

You can always revert to the print version if you don't like it!

Amendment to Church Directory, 2017-2018

The following changes/corrections have been made to the Church Directory. Please alter your copy of the Directory accordingly.

JAFFA meeting dates:

JAFFA Club P4 - P7 - meets on Tuesdays, **6:15-7:15** pm

JAFFA 2 S1 to S6 - meets on **Saturdays and Sundays**

Bible Reading Notes

Thank you to those who have ordered Bible Reading Notes or Study Materials over the past year. As a result of your orders and donations the sum of £42 has been sent to the Clydesdale Food Bank. A number of people in the congregation have regular orders for Bible Reading Notes which they find to be a helpful and structured way to study the scriptures. If anyone wishes to place an order or to find out more please speak to Janice Webster.

Next Edition of St John's News

Material for the next edition should be in the hands of the editor, George Reid, NO LATER THAN Sunday 18 February, 2018.

[**editor@carluke-stjohns.org.uk**](mailto:editor@carluke-stjohns.org.uk)

Carlukelisteners

In 2010, The Church of Scotland in Carlukel initiated an audit within the town to investigate ways of reaching out to the local community. As a result of this audit, it was decided to investigate the possibility of developing a listening service.

A program of listening training followed, and when the Rev Elizabeth Clelland from Braehead House, herself a very experienced listener, agreed to act as our supervisor, a *Listening Ministry* was offered. Currently, in Carlukel, we have 10 fully trained, supervised listeners working for the mission of the Church of Scotland in Carlukel.

What is listening?

Sometimes we have a need to talk over what is on our mind, tell our story or tell someone how we are feeling. At those times, we need to know that the person, who listens to us, will not judge us, interrupt us or hijack the conversation as their own. But instead, will value and respect us, treat everything we say in strict confidence and empower us to reach our own decisions.

Listening allows the speaker to explore and express their feelings so the listener must ensure that the speaker knows the space is safe and non-judgemental. As the listener reflects back to the speaker the feelings and thoughts expressed, this helps the speaker hear what they are saying and brings together their emotions and their thinking.

Through the use of set questions, listening empowers the speaker to reach their own conclusions, make decisions and hopefully move forward.

Listening is **not** counselling - no advice is given, interpretations and assumptions are not made. The speaker sets the agenda.

Carlukel
Listeners

Of course, all that is shared during the listening session is strictly confidential unless it is outwith the law or the listener is concerned for someone's safety. Even after a period of time, all that is heard remains confidential

So, why listen? What are the benefits of listening?

Good listening can contribute to the health and well-being of individuals and society. Consequently, listening initiatives have been set up nationally within organisations such as churches, GP practices, hospitals, prisons, universities and schools.

Good listening shows you value the person and care about what they are experiencing, feeling and thinking.

Here in Carlisle, one to one confidential listening sessions are available:

each Monday in Kirkton Church at Crossroads Café between 12.00 noon and 1.30pm

each Thursday in St John's Church at Kettle's On between 10.00am and 12 noon

A listening in homes service is also offered in exceptional circumstances where the client is unable to attend one of the usual venues because they have become housebound

Listening sessions are available on a drop-in basis or by appointment. If you would like to find out more or make an appointment, please call 07434 843 518

AW

Christian Aid News

During this Advent time, we will be sharing the Christmas message of the gift of Jesus, joining together in singing carols, sharing food with family and friends, exchanging presents and in our own church on Christmas Day, we will be sharing food and fellowship with people in the community. At this time of plenty, we have an opportunity to include those with less - to feed the hungry and help those in trouble, then your light will shine (Isaiah 58:10).

This year's Christian Aid Christmas Appeal focuses on children across South Sudan and Burkina Faso who face the horrors of hunger.

"I used to go to work at the mines, but sometimes I couldn't make enough money to feed my family. Life was very hard. I carried my child Eulalie on my back, but with the lack of nutritious food, she became very sick. Healthcare workers measured and weighed her and said she was malnourished. It was very serious."

Just when her future seemed bleak, Colette found hope through a market garden project supported by Christian Aid.

"Since I started working in the garden, Eulalie is healed and we no longer suffer from malnutrition. If I sell some vegetables, I can buy vitamin-fortified flour to make porridge which helps to fight malnutrition. I buy it twice a week, it's healthy and the children like it."

Colette's story shows that a family can be saved from malnutrition, but other mothers and children in Colette's province haven't been as fortunate.

The Carlisle churches and thousands of other churches across the UK will try to make sure as many malnourished families as possible have enough to eat this Christmas. Under the Christian Aid banner, they will hold carol services and take an offering which will be sent directly to Christian Aid. For every pound raised, the UK government will add a pound.

If you didn't manage along to our Carol Service on Sunday 10 December and want to make a donation to Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal, it's not too late. Speak to Iris Nelson, Sandra Peat or Wilma Watson. Alternatively you can donate on-line by going to www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas.

IN

UNICEF Jar of Grace Appeal

In 1946 the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was founded to meet the emergency needs of children in post-war Europe. Today UNICEF works in 190 countries and territories to help protect children in danger. That danger can take many forms - war and conflict, natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and typhoons, hunger and malnutrition, exploitation and abuse, preventable diseases such as measles, polio, diphtheria and whooping cough.

The money raised in this year's Jar of Grace appeal will help UNICEF support some of the world's most vulnerable children.

Here are some of the ways the money raised through our Jars of Grace could help:

£3 could provide a snug blanket to keep a baby warm in a hospital or refugee camp

£4.50 could protect 100 children from tetanus

£5 could provide life-saving food for a week, to help bring a malnourished Syrian child back to health

£12 could provide hats and gloves for 4 children OR protect 100 children from polio

£15 could provide exercise books for a class of 50 children to help them continue their education in times of crisis

£16 could provide warm winter boots for 2 children

Here is a reminder of how to use your Jar of Grace to help UNICEF's work:

In January you can collect a label to attach to an empty jar;

Before you eat a meal, in thanks for the food you are about to eat, you are asked to put coins into your Jar of Grace;

After Easter the money you have put into your jar will be collected, counted for you and sent to UNICEF.

Please look out for the labels which will be available early in the New Year. Thank you again for all your past support. We hope that you will once again feel able to help UNICEF's work for children caught up in emergencies around our world.

CS

Grace Notes

As most of you will know Grace Notes once again attended Rocknations Youth Conference in Bradford this summer. The girls and leaders are very grateful for the generosity and support of the congregation of St. John's which helped to make the trip possible. So please accept our heartfelt thanks.

Here are just a few comments from the group about our trip:

I went with huge expectations after last year and wasn't disappointed, another fabulous few days of fun, worship, fellowship and a few tears. I left feeling truly blessed to have been part of such an inspirational, faith building event.

Rocknations for me was such an eye-opening experience. Seeing so many young people worship in different ways and bond over their faith was breath taking.

I loved Rocknations again another great year of worship and fun I felt involved this year more than ever and loved every bit of it

Rocknations 2017 was just as positive and inspiring as 2016, tightening our bonds and bringing everyone to worship together and strengthening our faith.

My first year going to Rocknations and it was absolutely mesmerising. All the different youths from all over the world combining their faith with ours was amazing! The vibes were so positive. I had such an amazing time getting to grips on where I stand with Jesus and how he'll never fail me.

Another brilliant time was had by all. The speakers were very uplifting and the music very loud, which they loved. Although weather wasn't always kind to us you can't keep a good team down and they took part in everything and won.

Rocknations 2017 was just as inspiring and empowering as last year if not more so, it was truly inspirational listening to other people's perspectives and helped me see things in a different light.

When I think of Rocknations, I think of a safe and welcoming environment where I express my religion openly and don't have to worry about being judged. This is my second year of going and every time I go I feel my self

being pulled closer to Jesus. Due to this, on the 9th of August I decided to make a massive commitment and carry my cross. One of the pastors preached that we should lay down our earthly crowns (wanting material things, needing to be popular, gathering likes on Facebook, etc.) and pick up the cross. The only thing is that your cross will not fit through the door of places that are bad for you. Pete told us that, “Your cross won’t let you in,” For example he told a story about going to a club with his friends and for some reason he got the feeling he couldn't enter. While he waited outside for his friends to return he realised that because he had picked up the cross he couldn't enter. Now I think carefully about where my cross will fit.

We hope you have enjoyed this small taste of RN17. If you see any of us in the church please feel free to come and ask us about our experience we would love to talk to you about it.

On Saturday 28 October, Grace Notes were invited to take part in the Salvation Army Parkhead's Talent Evening for the second year.

Unfortunately not all of the group could make it but most of us set off on the journey to Parkhead in the leaders' cars. Once again, we received a very warm welcome and sang two songs as a group with Cara and Euan both singing solos as well. There was more than one tear shed at Cara's performance and Euan's first Grace Notes solo was amazing. Euan and Reece both received a cheer and a round of applause when the audience found out that we had finally attracted some male singers.

The show boasted an eclectic mix of talent including two monologues, a gymnastic performance by two Scottish Gold Medallists, a sung testimonial as well as singers and musicians. Janis' mum, Betty, gave a wonderful, moving rendition of a Scottish Poem about the Bible by an unknown author.

Grace Notes continue to praise the Lord and bless their audiences with their singing. A great time was had by all.

Roll on SA Parkhead Talent Night 2018!

JH

How *Bad* is Christmas?

What is it about Christmas that requires us to consume and waste with such abandon? If we took seriously the traditional message of the season, that a stable is a suitable birthplace for a God, that the powerful will be brought low, that even princes only need three gifts, Christmas might be good for the planet. Instead we eat and drink and spend as if we were celebrating the birth of the free-market economy.

Mike Berners-Lee, the inventor of the world-wide web, calculated the contribution to climate change of unwanted presents, wasted food, travel, fairy lights and cards:

- 4 kg *CO₂e per adult low-carbon scenario
- 280 kg CO₂e per adult UK average
- 1.5 tonnes CO₂e per adult high-carbon scenario

For comparison, a banana is 80g CO₂e and a return flight to Hong Kong is 3.4 tonnes CO₂e.

Ruth Jarman
(www.christian-ecology.org.uk).

*CO₂e is short for carbon dioxide equivalent which is the overall contribution to global warming of carbon dioxide plus all the other global warming gases emitted such as nitrous oxide and methane.

(Data and inspiration from *How Bad are Bananas? – The Carbon Footprint of Everything* by Mike Berners-Lee, 2010).

In 2016, the average UK household spent spend £378 on presents (many of which are not wanted), £183 on food and drink (wasting a third of it), £109 on partying and £83 on the tree and all its trimmings and other Christmas festivities.

Source: www.gocompare.com/press-office/2016/cost-of-christmas

The Murrays in Thailand

After a successful interview at the US consulate in Chiang Mai on 19 July, Shane was granted a visa to study Aviation at the Moody Bible College in Spokane, Washington state. Arrangements were made and the family left Thailand on 6 August for Seattle. In Spokane, Shane is sharing with 7 other young Christian men, three of whom are on the same course as Shane. So far, he is finding the studies interesting.

At the end of July, Nok was interviewed by the principle with a view to moving to the teaching side. she was asked to help out part-time with grades 1 and 2 while continuing in the nursing department. Unfortunately, friction arose between her and the head nurse who seemed to feel her position was being challenged by Nok. Despite her attempts to appease the head nurse, Nok felt so badly treated by her that she issued an ultimatum to the principle: If she were not moved wholly into the teaching department, she would resign. Being valued by the other teaching staff, she is now a full-time teaching assistant, working with various grade 1 to grade 6 groups throughout the week.

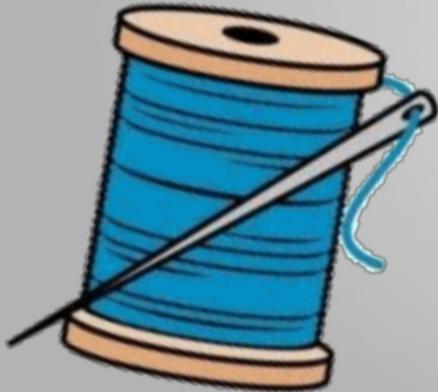
Scott made plans to spend some time at the beginning of October in the Jungle School of Medicine in Burma. After 2 days teaching on the Thai side of the border, he had a half-day boat trip followed by a, normally, 3-day walk, so everything they need had to be carried in! Some of the clinic staff walked out to assist. In the end, they managed to squeeze the last part of the journey, on foot, into 2 days to give a bit longer at the clinic. Scott taught some simple surgical procedures and provided training to some of the more experienced staff in hernia repair.

Conditions in the clinic were very spartan, with electrical power from solar panels and an emergency generator. Cooking was over wood fires and surgery took place in a "theatre" whose walls were made from mud. Gaps and windows were covered with mosquito netting. Bathing and laundry in the river. Despite the very basic conditions, surgery was successfully carried out without infection! The clinic are keen for Scott to return, possibly in the Spring.

Read a full account of Scott's Burma adventure at:

<http://www.carluke-stjohns.org.uk/downloads/index.shtm>

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