



St John's News

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

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March 2019

Dear Members

Wednesday, 6 March, was Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the forty days of Lent, and the start of our journey towards the celebration of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection. Lent can be a time of renewal and fresh beginnings for believers in Christ. We should open up ourselves to let God cleanse us from all forces which distract us from that which is essential.

As God's people, we should seek to translate our faith into the practical choices which we make on a day to day basis: in our families, at our workplaces, and in our interpersonal relations. The Christian faith is a calling; a way of life that lays claim to our whole heart, mind, and strength. As disciples, our lives should be focused on and inspired by our faith in Christ, who is our Lord and Saviour. And as disciples, we are called to reach out to others with the good news of Christ's love, no matter who they are and from where they come.

This is my third year as your minister. I take this opportunity to say a sincere thank you to each one of you for the warmth of the welcome, prayers and love you have extended to my family and I over these past years. I am grateful to the almighty God for the privilege of journeying with you as your minister and look forward to the future with trust and hope in our God.

I wish to pay a special tribute to Anne Forrest, who has recently retired from her role as the manager of **CHOICES** after almost 26 years of remarkable service. Anne through these many years, demonstrated strong commitment, vision and leadership in the operation and management of **CHOICES**, to which we are most grateful. As we all embark on our Lenten journey, I pray that it may be a time richly blessed by God for you and your family, and that we will celebrate Easter renewed and strengthened in our faith journeys as individuals and a church family.

Yours in Christ,

Rev Dr Elijah Obinna
Minister

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

Regular Worship Times

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

Normal Sunday Services are held at 11:00 am.

Evening Services are held on the **SECOND** Sunday of the month (Healing) and the **LAST** Sunday of the month (Praise) at 7:00 pm

A short **Mid-Week Service** is held on Thursdays at 10:30 am.

Forthcoming Special Events and Services

March

Mon 11: 19:00 Kirk Session

Wed 20: 19:00 Trustees' Meeting

Sat 23: 09:00 Prayer Day

April

Sun 7: tbc Classes for New Members begin

Sun 14: tbc **Palm Sunday Service** tbc

Thu 18: 19:00 **Maundy Thursday Service** in *St Andrew's Church*

Fri 19: 19:00 **Good Friday Service** in *St Andrew's Church*

Sun 21: 08:30 **Easter Morning Service** at *Market Square*

11:00 **Easter Morning Service** (in *St John's*)

Sat 27: 10:00 BB Coffee Morning

Sun 28: 12:00 Soup Lunch after morning worship in *aid of Grace Notes*

May

Mon 6: 19:00 Kirk Session

Fri 10: 19:00 Watoto Children's Choir concert

Sun 12: 19:00 Christian Aid Week Service in *United Reformed Church*

Sun 12-Sat 18: **Christian Aid Week**

Sun 19: Heart and Soul

June

Sun 2: 11:00 Sacrament of Holy Communion

Thu 6: 10:30 Holy Communion at Thursday Service

Sat 8: 10:00 Gala Day Coffee Morning in *aid of St Andrew's Hospice*

Sun 9: 12:00 Soup Lunch after morning worship

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

Prayer Day 2019

Our Prayer Day this year will be on Saturday 23 March. The Church will be open from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm and all are welcome to come for as long or as short as they wish. The format this year will be different from previous years.

We are also proposing to have 3 Prayer Walks within the town starting at 10:00 am 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm.

We hope you will be able to join us for this important day within the life of our Church.

Prayer Team

Thank You

Earlier this year, a letter of thanks was received from Bethany Christian Trust for a donation from St John's of £171.80. Bethany Christian Trust exists to tackle homelessness and associated problems in Scotland, In the letter, Chris McNeil of the Trust wrote:

Donations such as this help Bethany to continue and expand our wide range of services including homelessness prevention services through community support and development projects from Aberdeen down to Dumfries, crisis intervention services like the Care Van and the Winter Care Shelter in Edinburgh (currently providing food and overnight shelter for over 50 homeless men and women every night), and visiting support services in many areas which help those at risk of losing their tenancy.

Much of Bethany's work with those experiencing or facing homelessness depends either largely or entirely on voluntary donations and many of our life-transforming services would not be possible without funding such as this very generous donation from your Church.

Find out more at www.bethanychristiantrust.com

Christian Aid Week 2019

All mums should live

When Ebola struck Sierra Leone, its government had little choice but to accept loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help it cope with the crisis. Now Christian Aid is asking our Chancellor to push the IMF to drop Sierra Leone's debt.

The country lacks funds for proper health clinics, health training and enough ambulances. This makes it the most dangerous place in the world to become a mum.

Debt repayments have left Sierra Leone with even less money to provide the healthcare so desperately needed to ensure mums and babies survive childbirth. The UK Government has a lot of power within the IMF to do something about this.

The focus, therefore, of Christian Aid Week 2019 is maternal and child health in Sierra Leone, the world's most dangerous place to give birth, and a country where one child in nine dies before the age of five.

Every day 10 women die from giving birth. Sawula district struggles with a clinic which has no electricity and only two delivery beds.

Jebbeh is heavily pregnant but as her baby grows, it's not joy that fills her heart, but fear. When Jebbeh's sister Fatmata went into labour, there were so few ambulances that Fatmata had no choice but to walk for three hours under the baking sun to the nearest hospital. The journey was long and with every step Fatmata struggled to keep walking. Jebbeh said: *'My sister was crying out with hunger. She died on the side of the road. She never gave birth.'*

This Christian Aid Week, with your help, we can make childbirth safe for mums and babies. Through our gifts and prayers, we can help give the world's poorest mums a chance to live.

IN

Christian Aid Week 2019

12 to 19 May

St John's day at the café is Thursday 16 May

Used Stamps Appeal

The total raised in the World Mission Council's 2018-19 Appeal, up to end of January 2019 was £2500, which is £100 better than at this time last year. The Appeal continues to 31 March 2019 so, hopefully, this total will increase. Many thanks to all who have kept a steady supply of used stamps coming. All proceeds will go to support centres for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities in the Ukraine. For more details, visit



www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/world_mission/get_involved/campaigns/stamp_appeal. *(All in one line)*

This year will see the 50th anniversary of the Used Stamps Appeal, when the 2019 appeal starts on 1 April. St John's have participated faithfully over the last 30 years and, hopefully, will continue to support this initiative especially during the Anniversary year.

The Church of Scotland will be promoting the 50th Anniversary and one of the initiatives will be small cardboard boxes in the shape of a post van designed to encourage young people to collect used stamps, each box will be capable of holding 50 Stamps.

The proceeds from the 2019 Used Stamps Appeal will go to a Women's Centre in Malawi. The reason for selecting this Centre is because they are also celebrating their 50th anniversary in the same year.

Please continue to support this worthwhile project. When cutting stamps from envelopes, please remember to leave a margin of 5 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) round each stamp as stamps damaged in any way cannot be sold.

GS/JS

Malawi 2019 Work Trip

In summer 2014, Karen Gillon organised a trip to Malawi for a number of young people from Carluke to spend two weeks working on projects and visiting a childrens' home run by Open Arms, Malawi. Some photos of that trip can be viewed on the church website at

www.carluke-stjohns.org.uk/galleries

This summer, Megan Hoey, one of the 2014 group, and her brother, Cameron, are planning to return to Malawi and take part in similar activities. They will be flying out on Saturday 29 June for a few weeks working in Open Arms orphanage, Blantyre, Malawi.

Cameron writes:

I had decided that while they were out there I would like for them to arrange for me to sponsor one of the children in the orphanage. As promised by Karen, after only a week of them coming home Neville from Open Arms contacted Karen with the details of the wee boy I would be sponsoring, Boyce.

I always knew that I would like to go over to experience the same work trip as Megan had undertaken but was too young, so last year we started fund raising so that we would be able to go over this summer. Although this time it is only Megan and myself going over, so the projects that we will be working on will only be with Open Arms but I am hopefully getting to meet Boyce and his father and we are both looking forward to the life changing experience.

Fund raising is going well, with our flight now paid and our aim for £1500-£2000 extra funds looking like it is going to be achieved, we will be transferring all extra raised cash straight to the orphanage to help with any projects we will be working on or whatever they are needing at the time.

We would both like to say a huge thank you to everyone of St John's congregation who have so generously helped in our fund raising efforts over the past 18 months and know that your money will be going to a very very good cause.

God Bless

Cameron & Megan Hoey

Christmas Dinner 2018

This year 48 guests, many of whom were folks who had been coming along for several years, enjoyed a full, cooked dinner and entertainment. As always, the response from the community in terms of volunteering and support in donations of both money and food was amazing. The major challenge as always was transport and matching guests with volunteers but that all fell into place in the last couple of days before the event.

The business community of Carluke, as always, came up trumps and are due a big thank you for their generosity. Individual letters of thanks have been written to all who donated. These include: Ramsay's for turkeys, ham, sausages, bacon and stuffing; Clark's for rolls and for cakes; The Station Inn for desserts and drinks; Tesco for vegetables. Other donations came from: Janet MacKay (Gift bags); Crawforddyke Primary School (a large amount of assorted food). Ambulance service (large number of boxes of sweets); Broxburn Academy (tea light stands, given to guests as gifts).

Financial donations from ranging from £5 to £100 either handed in or through Paypal amounted to £400. Because so much of the food had been donated only £191.01 of that was spent. The remaining £208.99 was donated to the Food Bank along with unused non-perishable food stuffs (Donors were made aware of and agreed to this action).

It should be noted that £60 of the expenditure was to replace 2 buffet servers which have disappeared at some point since Christmas 2017. Luckily, a hostess trolley and another buffet server were offered on loan so that made sure the meal was served hot. (If anyone knows of the whereabouts of the missing trolleys, Liz Barthram will be happy to know - no questions asked!)

It was an excellent day. A very big thank you to all the team who worked so hard on Christmas Eve to prepare the vegetables and to make the hall look so festive and welcoming, to those who helped with transport, cooking and serving on Christmas Day and to the much smaller team who helped with the clear up on Boxing Day.

LB

Food Bank



November and December 2018 were an exceptionally busy months for the food bank with 119 referrals in November and 103 in December. This brought the annual total to 1102 compared to 926 in 2017, an increase of 19%. As of 28 February, number of referrals this year was 228. This is a 13% increase on the same period last year.

One of the regular workers in the food bank, Ronnie Muirhead, had been off ill but he is now much better and has been back in helping to unpack donations and make up boxes for satellites.

There has been an amazing outpouring of generosity from the public, schools, churches and businesses to the extent that we have been unable to store everything at our premises. So much so that arrangements were made for some items to be temporarily stored at St John's. These will gradually be moved up to the food bank premises as space allows. This flood of donations was, of course wonderful, and gratefully received, and would go a long way to ensuring adequate resources if it were spread more evenly throughout the year.

The Christmas hamper project saw a big increase in uptake as well with 99 referrals filled compared to 63 last year. We are grateful to John Moonie and to Steven Noon for allowing us the use of the Clyde Street premises for storing and packing the hampers and to R & W Scott for assisting with delivering the hampers.

As always we must pay tribute to the wonderful volunteers who give their time so faithfully to sort, pack or to deliver the food. Thank you to all involved and may you all have well stocked pantries and the promise of a meal tomorrow.

LB

