

St John's News

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

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March 2020

Dear Members

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. The season of Lent which began on Wednesday, 26 February, is upon us once more, a season which overlaps with springtime and the rebirth of nature and new life. The forty days of Lent, which culminate at Easter with the Lord's passion, death and resurrection offers us opportunity to grow spiritually and experience a reawakening of our relationship with God. Lent is a call to self-examination and for taking a fresh look at our attitude and behaviour towards others. We are reminded of our need for God's grace and of our Christian duties to put others before ourselves. Lent further draws our attention to the power of prayer not only as a part of our Lenten exercises but as an important part of our everyday Christian living. The problems in our world can at times appear to overwhelm us and leave us with a sense of helplessness. Our hope in challenging times is to magnify the Lord, to see him as he truly is – which is always bigger than our problems.

During the Sundays in Lent, we would be exploring the "seven last words of Jesus on the Cross":

Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do";

Luke 23:43: "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise";

John 19:26–27: "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother";

Mark 15:34: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

John 19:28: "I thirst";

John 19:30: "It is finished"; and

Luke 23:46: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit".

Our God wants only what is best for us, and he has given us his only Son, the greatest of all gifts. May we journey through the season of Lent and Easter assured that Jesus Christ has defeated the power of death and sin.

With an assurance of my prayers through the seasons of Lent and Easter.

Rev Dr Elijah Obinna

Minister

<u>Vestry Times</u> - Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
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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 9 Kirk Session meeting, 7:00pm

Sat 14 Elders' Conference *in* Braehead house, 10:00am to 4:00 pm

Sun 15 Visit by Compassion UK, at morning service

April

Thu 2 Crawforddyke PS Easter Service, 11:15am

Sat 4 Annual Day of Prayer, 9:00am to 5:00 pm

Sun 5 Palm Sunday Praise Service *in* Kirkton Church, 7:00 pm

Thu 9 Maundy Thursday Service *in* Kirkton Church, 7:00pm

Fri 10 Good Friday Service *in* Kirkton Church, 7:00pm

Sun 12 Easter Morning Service *in* Market Square, 8:30am

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

Sun 26 Soup Lunch *after* morning worship, proceeds to tba

May

Mon 4 Kirk Session Meeting, 7:00pm

Sun 10 to Sat 16: Christian Aid Week

Sun 10 Christian Aid Service, 7:00pm

Sat 16 to Fri 22: General Assembly

Sun 17 Heart and Soul Sunday. Parish Grouping Service

Sun 24 *Fischy Music* Presbytery Event

June

Sat 6 Church Day Out, leaving church at 9:00am

Sun 7 Sacrament of Holy Communion *followed by* Soup Lunch, proceeds to *Moira Anderson Foundation*.

Wed 10 *Let's Get Together* (Stated Annual Meeting)

Thu 11 Sacrament of Holy Communion *at* Thursday Service

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

Session Clerk

Back in June 2019, Glenn Walker, who had been Session Clerk since August 2009, announced his intention to retire at the end of the year. Glenn was thanked for his ten years of faithful and dedicated service and Elders were invited to consider, prayerfully, suitable successors and to submit nominations to the Minister, Rev Dr Elijah Obinna.

After much deliberation, in November 2019, Session was informed that John Blair would take up the role of Session Clerk as from 13 January 2020. Session also approved the proposal that the appointment be for a fixed term of five years, with the option of re-appointment at the end of that term.

We congratulate John on his appointment and wish him every success for the coming five years.

GR

Jar of Grace 2020

As you know, the money raised in this year's Jar of Grace appeal will be sent to help UNICEF ensure that children who are put in danger because of conflicts or natural disasters receive the aid they need as soon as possible. Thank you to those who have already responded to this appeal.

It would be really helpful if you could bring your Jar of Grace to *morning worship on Easter Sunday, 12 April*. As usual, there is no need for you to count the coins you collect. That will be done for you. Can I also remind you that you can - *at no cost to yourself* - increase the value of your donation if you pay tax by completing a Gift Aid form and handing it in with your Jar of Grace. Just leave the amount blank and it will be entered for you once the coins in your jar have been counted. Gift Aid forms are available in the vestibule or at Time for Fellowship. If it is not possible for you to bring your Jar of Grace on Easter Sunday or if you have any questions about Gift Aid, please feel free to speak to me.

CS

Clydesdale Food Bank

At the January meeting of the Kirk Session, Liz Barthram gave the following report:

December was our busiest month ever with 161 referrals in total. This brought the annual total to 1241 referrals, which fed 2272 people, made up of 802 men, 720 women and 741 children - an average of 1.8 people/referral.

Instead of the Christmas Hampers that we had provided over the last few years, we decided this year that all clients in December would receive an extra bag of festive foodstuffs and this was well received and very well supported by the public. Some of our referring agents had not picked up that we were not doing the hampers so we had 20 referrals mostly for families. They each received one of the Christmas bags.

Although the number of referrals continues to rise, the tiny bit of good news is that the rate of increase is slowing down. If the current rate continues throughout 2020, we may see an increase of slightly under 10%.

We also submitted 191 applications to the Scottish Power Hardship fund.

As from the very end of December, we are now able to access the Fuel Bank, previously administered by Npower. We have been trying to access this for about 3 years. Previously Npower had insisted that there should be match funding supplied by the area being helped and this had proved too difficult to arrange. That stipulation no longer applies so we are now able to assist clients who are customers of any power company, not just Scottish Power. The systems are very similar except that the Fuel Bank one at present is working with paper vouchers so our further flung clients have to have theirs posted to them. The other difference is that they can access the Fuel bank 3 times in any 6-month period rather in 12 months for SP. Thanks are due to Councillor Julia Mars who has worked been very helpful with this.

LB

Christmas Lunch

Liz Barthram also reported to January Session on the Christmas Lunch. This was her last report on the Lunch as she is now stepping back. Thanks are due to her for her work over the years. Thanks, too, to Gillian Forrest who has agreed to take over the administration of the lunch. There is still a need for a volunteer to take over the coordination and cooking.

Around 60 guests, 12 of them children, sat down to lunch and 2 couples had theirs in their own homes.

As in previous years there were many volunteers, both from within and outside the church. Huge thanks to all those who gave up time on Christmas Eve to set up and prepare vegetables, on Christmas day to cook, serve and provide transport and on Boxing Day to clear up.

Thanks also to Ramsays, Brian Clark, Station Inn, Tesco and Crawforddkye Primary School for donations of food. Letters of thanks have been sent to all concerned.

In addition, we received £264.55 in donations of which £102.65 was spent. The remaining £161.90 was donated to Clydesdale Food Bank.

LB

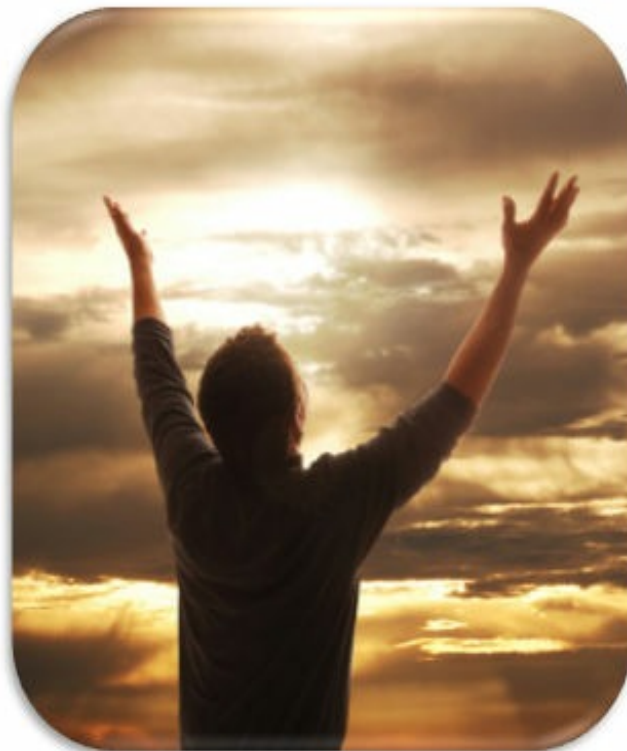
Parish Grouping Christmas Card

A Christmas leaflet/card was put together to advertise the various services taking place in the churches around Carlisle at Christmas. All the worshipping communities were contacted and those who responded were included. The cost of this exercise was £232.30 for printing and £559 for distribution, a total of £791.30. Parish Grouping has paid for this.

There is a suggestion that we repeat the exercise for Easter. Your comments would be appreciated.

LB

St John's Church, Carlisle Prayer Day 2020



**Saturday 4 April 2020
9:00 am to 5:00 pm**

**Community Prayer Walks at
10:00 am and 2:00 pm**

**For more information, visit the church website,
www.carlisle-stjohns.org.uk and click on the
Contact Us tab**

All Welcome

Situations Vacant

The day to day management of our congregation, including financial matters and the maintenance of our properties, is carried out by an army of dedicated volunteers. Unfortunately, many of these volunteers are "getting on a bit" and are less and less able to carry out the tasks they have performed, sometimes for many decades.

The stark reality is that several vital posts are becoming vacant as the Old Guard feels unable to continue. It is essential to the survival of our congregation that a New Guard steps up to fill these vacancies. Without adequate volunteer involvement, our church **will** suffer.

Currently, there is urgent need for a Property Convenor and a Church Officer, but there are other posts which are vacant now or are likely to become so in the near future. The Youth Church is also keen to attract new staff.

With the move to the Unitary Constitution, all aspects of congregational life are now under the aegis of the Kirk Session but there is no restriction on who may fill our vacancies. Anyone, whether Elder or not, is eligible to undertake these roles.

Please consider what you might be able to offer *your* congregation in the form of service, please talk to the Minister, Session Clerk John Blair, or any member of the Management Team.

GR

Journey through Lent

Reflections for Lent at Braehead House

Fridays from 28 February 2020

A soup and bread lunch will be served at 12:00 noon (£5.00 per week) followed by a time of reflection at 12:30 pm.

For further details, contact Rev Elizabeth Clelland on 860715

Kettle's On

Kettle's On runs every Thursday from 10:00 am to around 12:00 noon. Those attending the short Thursday service at 10:30 am can enjoy a cuppa and a chat either before or after the service (or both). Others, who are not attending the service are welcome to drop in at any time.

Kettle's On is run by a group of volunteers, arranged into teams who are on duty in rotation every four weeks. A fifth team of reserves provides replacements when members of the regular teams are not available.

Although there is no formal pricing structure to the refreshments on offer, nevertheless, those making use of the service are generous in their donations. In 2019, a total of £2056 was received. After expenses of £356, the balance of £1,700 was passed on to worthy causes as follows:

Nigeria Education	£600
Carlisle Listeners	£200
Scott Murray	£200
Food Bank	£150
Grace Notes	£150
Gala Day	£100
Moir Anderson Foundation	£150
Street Level	£150

MB/GR

Blacksmith's Prayer

The December issue of St John's News carried an article by Moira Elliott about the joys of Blacksmithing. The following prayer accompanied that article but lack of space prevented it's inclusion in that issue.

With this interest in the art of the smith now in our lives, we came across a short blacksmith's prayer. Describing a life under the moulding and direction of the master blacksmith that is our great God, we would like to share the words here with you now:

*I am proud to be a blacksmith
And this is my prayer.*

*Thou art my smith, O God.
Forge me to be the servant Thou would have me be.
Heat me hot enough to brush teh
Scale and impurities from my life.*

*Draw out my life to the length Thou would have it.
Make me tough enough to resist persicution,
And temper me so I am hard enough
To withstand my temptations.*

*And, Lord, as I go through life,
Put me back into the fire from time to time
To repair me as i get blemished with sin.*

*And when my life is over, and
The fires of life are all quenched,
Grant me a home with Thee in Heaven.*

Amen

ME

JAFFA2

At our meeting on 16th February, we were very fortunate to have a special guest speaker. Yvonne Young, St John's very own Scottish Ambulance Service paramedic, joined us for the entire evening to speak about her work. Yvonne generously gave up one of her off duty nights for us, and arrived not only in full uniform, but along with the superb area car, laden with hi-tech lifesaving first responder gear.

Our gentlemen JAFFA2 members, Aaron and Jamie, kindly volunteered to help in the transfer of some of the gear into the large hall. Two things were immediately apparent; this kit is very heavy, and very expensive! Thankfully, no unplanned equipment accidents happened in the move, and Aaron also stepped up as a volunteer to have his ECG taken. He passed with flying colours, a picture of heart health, and he has a 12 lead ECG 'receipt' to prove it. Not to be outdone, Jamie also volunteered to be a demo subject, and found himself in a leg fracture brace, from which there would be no easy escape.



Aaron waves the evidence of his health ECG as Jamie finds himself immobilised in a leg fracture brace

Yvonne fielded all of our numerous questions using her many years of experience in the job. She has a back catalogue of interesting stories from what is a challenging but equally fulfilling vocation. As she said, she will think one day that she has finally seen it all....., and then the next day dawns.



**Yvonne with her victim
...er...patient**

Of benefit to our young adults' group was to hear from Yvonne about putting her faith into action, and how as a Christian she deals with the practical duties of her chosen profession. Yvonne led them in thinking about being non-judgmental – access to emergency assistance or first response healthcare is for all, no matter what has led an individual to their particular circumstances. Yvonne also had some words for our young folk when a situation doesn't work out, where catastrophic events may lead to severe injury, and despite application of high skill and modern medicine, our paramedics cannot in every instance restore their patient. Yvonne shared how her faith sustains her in these times, gently pointing to God as the one in

control, the one with the plan for all of our lives.

It was an interesting, practical, fun experience to have our own paramedic for the night. For our JAFFA2 young people, it also shone a light on being a practical Christian in a very 'real life' job.

We would like to thank Yvonne for gifting JAFFA2 this experience, and we would sincerely like to have her back again in the near future!

ME

