

Burnside Blairbeth Church



Contact

No 154

Christmas 2021

Dear Friends,

Soon we will hear once again the angels' refrain "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people" as we proclaim the coming of Jesus Christ during our Christmas celebrations. When we celebrate Christmas, we focus on that Good News



Good news is a regular theme throughout the Bible – when we talk about the Gospel it is simply another word for Good News. So, what does it mean to say that the coming of Jesus is Good News?

Firstly, it means something that has already happened. The news is a record of events that have already taken place. When the news comes on television straight after a drama programme, we know that we're moving from the arena of fiction to factual television. Therefore, the term "fake news" was such a contradiction in terms. Once the idea that news we are watching, listening to, or reading to may not be true has taken hold, then it is possible to say anything and present it as true, and conversely everything becomes deniable. That is precisely why "fake news" became such a pervasive theme. Powerful people thought they could go unscrutinised by the media by discrediting news that people had previously thought of as trustworthy.

Some people have decided that the events of Christmas are fake news. They have been convinced that the events are either only partially true, are exaggerated or are myth rather than fact. This year the theme holding our services together will be "Christmas- unbelievable?!" As part of that, we will consider whether these events are true, and people will have the opportunity to read a book which invites them to consider

the historical evidence for the events of the first Christmas in a short book called “Is Christmas unbelievable?” It’s not too much a spoiler to say that it’s not!

When we focus on Good News there is a second aspect to consider. The core of many philosophies and religions is teaching or even advice. At their heart is the belief “here is some good advice on how to live.”

From time to time, we all value good advice, but ultimately advice presents something we have to do. News tells us about something that someone has already done. So, at Christmas we celebrate Good News as we remember what God has already done for us.

To be a follower of Jesus means to follow a particular way of life. He tells us to take up our cross and follow him and He said, “if you love me, you will obey my commandments” But these all follow on from what has already been done for us. They are dependent on the Good News that in the person of Jesus, God has come into the world. We follow Jesus because of the Good News of what has already been done for us. The starting point is news – not advice. The Good News started with what God has already done for us – the command to follow a new way of life follows on from God’s action.

That comes as a relief to us because we all know that there are times when our capacity to follow advice is limited. When our salvation depends on what God has done for us then our salvation isn’t limited by our ability or otherwise to follow advice or even rules.

At Christmas we focus on a story. That story is that God has become human in the most unlikely circumstances. That is not a story which a human author dreamt up – it is a news story, not a fictitious story – the ultimate Good News story. The author is the one who holds history in

His hands, because He is the creator. This is the “good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”

I trust that once again this Good News will excite you this Christmas. May God bless you as you celebrate the Good News with those dear to you.

Your friend and minister,

William

Christmas Services – December 2021

Saturday 11th December at 4pm - Christmas at Messy Church

fun activities and afternoon tea, children must bring an adult

Sunday 12th December at 4pm - A Quiet Christmas

a quiet reflective service for everyone, but particularly those who have suffered loss or bereavement. Followed by afternoon tea

Sunday 19th December at 10.30am - All age Christmas service

Friday 24th December at 7pm - Christmas Eve service

for everyone, but particularly suitable for families with young children

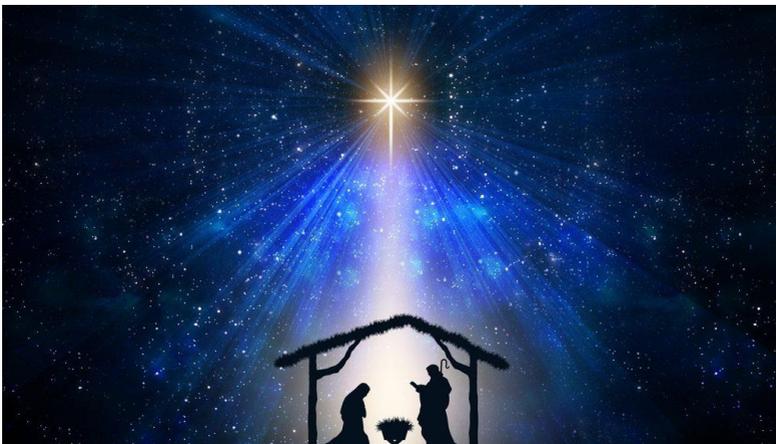
Christmas day at 10.30 am - Christmas morning worship

for all ages

Sunday 26th December at 10.30am - Lessons and carols

for all ages

All our services this year are taking place in the Burnside building.



Notes from the Kirk Session Meeting – 20th October 2021

Gary Wylie and Leigh Galloway

Gary and I had the privilege of minuting our first Session meeting last month. We are very grateful to Alan and William for supporting us as we start out in this new role.

We have included key points from the meeting below. If there is anything though that you would like to speak to us about, please catch up with us at church on a Sunday morning or contact us sessionclerk@burnsideblairbeth.church. We also wanted to highlight again that Session meetings are open to the congregation, should you wish to join us.

October's meeting was held in person in the building but with the option to attend via zoom for those who were unable to come in person. We thank John Gordon, Jim Suttie, Alan Hudson and Ross Galloway for helping to make this happen.

Christian Aid

We started the meeting reflecting on matters arising. This included the search for a new Christian Aid representative, Marjory MacLean is attending these meetings at the moment.

Communion

We discussed the Communion service in September and decided that we would continue with the same format for the December Communion service.

Safeguarding

Marjory MacLean spoke about Safeguarding and noted that Leigh Galloway will take over from Alan Thomson on the Safeguarding panel. It was also raised that when we are visiting care homes and offering lifts to people in our capacity as Elders or as members of the church, we

would need to have a PVG. If you think this is something that impacts you, please speak to Marjory MacLean for more information.

Planning the Way Ahead

We spent some time thinking about our services. There was discussion about tea and coffee and while we know that some people are missing the biscuits particularly (!), a decision was taken not to reinstate this at the moment as Covid restrictions remain in place. We also hope to put the necessary equipment into the creche in the coming months, to be able to stream the service. William updated the Session with information regarding Covid regulations. Regular meetings were taking place between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Government and the situation is being kept under review. We also took time to reflect on the meeting we had in September with Andy's mentor, Mel Lacy. It has been exciting to hear her talk about intergenerational worship and to see the ways we are developing this in our own context.

Christmas Services

There was discussion on William's proposed services and these were agreed. See the list included in the magazine.

Operational Risk Register

There was acknowledgement that we have a need for more volunteers and this along with the impact of Covid has increased risk in some areas. After discussion the Operational Risk Register was passed.

Pastoral Care

Kate Airlie gave an update on Pastoral Care, with particular focus on ChurchSuite. It was highlighted that there are people without an Elder and this is something that we will be looking at in the weeks to come.

Communication

Christmas Cards - these were discussed and these should be available for delivery to all the houses in our Parish in the coming weeks.

Mission Statement – for the website and other forms of communication – this is to be changed to Knowing Jesus and Making Him Known.

Church Family Prayer news email

This will come out to those who want to receive it, and will include prayer points – this will be more specific than the email update that comes out at the moment and will allow us to help further support those in our church family who need particular prayer. This will replace the prayer WhatsApp group.

Mission and Discipleship

Chris Mackintosh spoke about the ACORN groups, he will be starting one of these in the coming weeks. Please see Chris for more information.

Staff Committee

Alan Thomson will approach people who have been suggested as new members.

Finance

Andrew Telfer particularly highlighted the National Giving Day which has now taken place. He asked that any suggestions for projects, should be passed on to himself or other Elders.

Property

There was discussion regarding the flat at 11 Church Avenue. Work will be carried out on the dry rot. It was acknowledged that there would, in due course, need to be a decision made about the future of the property. There are many factors to consider here and William is looking in to some of them for the next meeting. Points were raised including the Presbytery Plan and the potential implications for our

buildings. Please note, if you have particular thoughts on the future of 11 Church Avenue, please speak to myself or Gary, or any of the Elders.

AOCB

Margaret Russell is stepping down as our representative on Rutherglen Churches Together. We are looking for someone else who would be willing to take on this role. The meetings are during the day and usually once every 2-3 months.

Our next Session meeting will take place on Wednesday 8th December.

Leigh Galloway and Gary Wylie

Joint Session Clerks

Treasurer's Report

On 31st October we participated in the Church of Scotland National Giving Day. I must admit that I had a little trepidation about us taking part mainly due to the fact that we had a Giving Day last year and as far as possible we try to have these every 2 years, however, I have been astounded at the generosity.

I'm delighted to announce that, including gift aid, we have received gifts of £21,217.50. We give thanks to God for this provision. Can I please encourage you to consider how we can use these funds over the coming months and to give any suggestions either to me or another member of the Kirk Session.

Please pray that we use these funds wisely and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

We are now approaching the end of another financial year and start preparing the new financial year. In the next edition of Contact I will update you on how our financial year has finished and what the financial commitments for the next 12 months look like. I can confirm that we will be able to meet all of our financial commitments for this financial year.

Andrew Telfer
Treasurer

The Guild

Burnside Blairbeth Guild

“Look forward in faith”

Guild members have been enjoying their Monday afternoon meetings in November with an average turnout of around sixty. We have been pleased to welcome a few men to our meetings, although they are still somewhat outnumbered by the women!

A presentation entitled “Who we think we are”, gave us a resume of some family history research during Lockdown, which uncovered some events of local and social history. Michaela Foster Marsh, founder of the charity “Starchild” spoke to us about one of the new Guild projects in Africa, entitled “Finding the light in every child”.

At the end of the month we are to have a musical afternoon presented by Hugh and Diane Levey, a couple of talented musicians and a Christmas lunch is planned in December, which will round off the meetings for this year.

The change of timing to the afternoon has proved very popular, so we intend to continue with this into the New Year with our first meeting of 2022 planned for the 10th of January.

Catherine Nelson
(0141 534 7834)

Messy Church

We hadn't celebrated anyone's birthday at Messy Church for 18 months so the first thing we did at Messy Church in October was have birthday cake for everyone! The main hall was full of people as we ate and celebrated together.



We then explored the whole church building as we planted bulbs, made and sailed paper boats, had an animal hunt, played some balancing games, and created some big Messy pictures of the day, the night, the sea and the universe! Our theme was "God's Wonderful World" and every activity was based on a different part of Psalm 104. We discovered how God holds the whole world together. We got together for a joy filled celebration in the sanctuary where we thanked God for his wonderful world. There was over 70 people of all ages there and lots of new families too!

Our next Messy Church is Messy Christmas on **11th December**.

Sunday Clubs

It has been a joy to see the return of so many of the younger members of our church family to Sunday morning services. This has meant Sunday Clubs is back to being busy and full of activity. Since real-life services restarted in the springtime, we took the decision to align the teaching in Sunday Clubs to the preaching programme, to allow the whole church family to learn together. We hope that this provides opportunities for people of all ages to discuss the bible passages and learn from each other. We have also enjoyed more regular all-age services, which eases the pressure on the small team of leaders who run Sunday clubs, and also helps foster inter-generational connections within the church family.



Running Sunday Clubs remains a challenge as many of our team have had to step down from leading over the last year or so. The leaders that we do have are already serving in other areas of church life and as a result there is significant pressure on the small team. If you feel able to

help run children's activities on a Sunday morning, an extra pair of hands is always welcome! You don't need to prepare lessons or come up with activities, we just need adults to help with crafts and general supervision. If that's something you are willing to help with please speak to myself or Andy McArthur.

Our Christmas party is going ahead this year on Saturday 18th December from 230-430pm, and we are very excited! After the severe restrictions we had last year, it will be fantastic to celebrate together once again. If your little people are able to join us, it would be helpful if you could let us know in advance to assist with preparations.

Thank you for your prayerful support in nurturing and discipling our children.

Carolyn Sampson

Blythswood Christmas Shoebox Appeal

Thank you to everyone who donated a Shoebox as a gift for a child. We received over 60 boxes which are now on their way to a deserving child.

Andrea Thomson

Missionary Partners and Christmas Offerings

This year our Christmas offerings will be go towards **Tearfund** and **Release International's work in Afghanistan**.

Our missionary partner James from Release International will share more at our communion service on 12th December. There will be an opportunity to give at our Christmas services or via bank transfer.

Tearfund's Update On Afghanistan

While the headlines may have moved on from Afghanistan, the reality is that the situation remains critical.

Breaking Point

The main challenge that people are facing is hunger. There are heart-breaking reports of parents selling their children because they cannot afford to feed them. This is partly due to bank closures and currency shortages across the country. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has banned the use of foreign currency within the country, which is likely to make the problem even worse. The severe drought – the worst in more than a decade – means that hoped-for harvests have failed. Many families were relying on these to see them through the winter.

Coronavirus

A growing threat in the country is Coronavirus. Cases and the number of deaths are increasing as the virus is spreading rapidly. With resources dwindling, more and more people are unable to afford healthcare once they are taken ill. Hospitals and health centres are also operating at a limited capacity due to the uncertainty in the country. Many healthcare professionals have fled following the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's return to power.

Some of Tearfund's local partners have been able to restart their programmes. This work has included reaching hundreds of people with emergency food provisions, as well as sharing accurate information about Coronavirus to help slow the spread. However, there are uncertainties around the new government structure, and so some of the projects remain on hold.

Please keep praying for Afghanistan in this time of uncertainty.

- Pray for people's provision of food, clean water, a safe home and opportunities to work. Pray also for safety – especially for women and girls.
- Ask God to resolve the currency problems in Afghanistan so that people can have access to the resources they need to flourish. Pray for wisdom for international leaders and policy leaders for how they engage with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan on addressing the economic issues.
- Pray for an end to the spread of Coronavirus in Afghanistan.

Release International also asks for prayer for Christians in Afghanistan. Many have been seeking safe passage from the country as they fear for their lives while others plan to remain.

- Pray that Afghan Christians will experience the peace of Jesus and His guidance and reassurance
- Pray for Release's partners as they minister to Afghans everyday, and for safe refuge for those who are fleeing

Thank you very much.....

Many people contribute their time and talents to our Church and we gave thanks to 4 people who have steadfastly done this over many years in different roles.

- ❖ **Alan Robertson** was our Treasurer and passed the baton to Andrew Telfer after 20 years of service.
- ❖ **Andrew Polson** continues to share his musical talents and provides leadership in all things musical for our Church family
- ❖ **Liz Johnston** continues her work as cleaner in our Church which has been all the more essential during the pandemic.
- ❖ **Alan Thomson** was our Session Clerk, handing over to Gary Wylie and Leigh Galloway in September 2021 after almost 13 years.



Alan Robertson, Andrew Polson, Liz Johnston and Alan Thomson

Note of Thanks

I would like to give a huge "Thank You" to all the members of the Church who contacted me after my accident when I was in hospital and after I came home again.

It makes a big difference when I live alone to receive a phone call, a get well card and a visit.

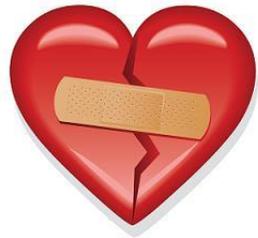
Thank you very much to all those friends.

Elizabeth Cherrie

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Healing Hearts Course

We have held two previous healing Hearts Courses in Burnside Blairbeth, and there is a plan to run another one in the new year. The course consists of 5 sessions, each lasting 2 hours, sometimes with a little reading or reflecting to do in between.



The last course was held on Zoom, but we're hoping that this one will be in person, in the Burnside building from 7pm – 9pm on 5 evenings in January. The plan is to try to do it two evenings each week, so lasting under 3 weeks. We look at some big questions! Why does God allow suffering? How can we help others? What is grief? What is forgiveness? It works best when you can manage to come to all 5 sessions if possible.

If you would like to find out more, or take part, please speak to **Tom Nelson** or **Lesley Mackintosh**, or email the church office and your email will be passed on. theoffice@burnsideblairbeth.church

New Premises for The Well

The Well is delighted to announce that we are going ahead with a move to a fantastic new building in 2022! We plan to long-term lease part of a new-build on Allison Street, in the heart of Govanhill. We have the unique opportunity to fit out the building according to our needs and, of course, those of our clients.



This new building will give 50% more space, increasing our capacity to help more people every day. The additional space will also allow more room for group activities, such as digital workshops and craft activities.

The location of the building is perfect: within easy walking distance for the vast majority of our clients, most of whom do not own cars. Our landlords, Southside Housing Association, are also well-known to us as we have worked in partnership with them for many years to offer a Welfare Rights Surgery. With the building housing both organisations, it is expected to create a bustling community hub where many in the community come for support and advice. We are looking forward to being able to offer a genuinely warm, welcoming and accessible environment to our clients.

The fit-out is expected to cost around £140,000 and fundraising is underway. We have launched a New Building Appeal on social media (@TheWellGlasgow), called 'All we want for Christmas'. You can be among the first to donate now at:

www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/allwewantforchristmas

Announcements:

Baptism

We welcomed Abigail Freeman to our Church Family on Sunday 7 November. Abigail is the daughter of Lynne and Mark Freeman and sister to Emily.



Services are available on the Church Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/BurnsideBlairbeth>

And on YouTube – search for:

Burnside Blairbeth Church live stream

- CDs and/or DVDs will be available as soon as possible after the Sunday morning services and will be delivered to homes. If you, or someone you know, would like to have a copy delivered, please contact:

Kate Airlie Mob: 07787 558 790 // kate.airlie@burnsideblairbeth.church

- **Contact** magazine is available to view on our website, www.burnsideblairbeth.church, under ***What's On/News*** tab.

If you would like to view Contact this way rather than have a paper copy delivered please send a message the office
theoffice@burnsideblairbeth.church

The next Issue of Contact

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Data Protection Act, 1998

It is normal practice to include the names, addresses and telephone numbers of our office-bearers and other individuals in our church publications. If any person does not wish to have their personal details included they should inform the Communications Team Leader, Lesley Mackintosh.

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