

Burnside Blairbeth Church

# Contact



No 169

Summer2024

Dear friends,

I write this during the week when it's been revealed that, for the first time in Scotland's Census, a majority of people said that they had no religion. A total of 51.1% in Scotland's Census 2022 responded "no religion" – up from 36.7% in 2011. This is hardly shocking news, and feeds into the narrative of church decline which has been part of our national landscape for quite some time now.



And yet, alongside this, there may be something else stirring. In recent times some commentators have noted the "surprising rebirth of belief in God." Admittedly those writing about this phenomenon are writing in general terms and are not usually engaging with our Scottish context. Nevertheless, it's worth paying attention, just as we pay attention to other changes in patterns of belief which aren't specifically related to Scotland.

Inevitably the surprising rebirth of belief has had a celebrity focus. Comedian and actor Russell Brand has made headlines for all sorts of reasons, some of them unsavoury to put it mildly. A few weeks ago, he posted a photo of himself being baptised in the River Thames with Bear Grylls taking part. In a video Brand commented that he got baptised after realising that "the material world is not enough" and that chasing material pleasure has left him "cold" and "wanting more". He said his baptism was an act of "surrender, undertaken in gratitude and in sincerity".

Unsurprisingly, given his past, there has been a mixed reaction to Brand's baptism. For me it is once again a reminder of what a relief it is to be able to say that only God can know people's hearts. It is also

another sign that when it comes to belief there may indeed be something in the water (if you'll excuse an awful pun).

Russell Brand is not an isolated figure, either embracing the Christian faith, or at least openly questioning previous unbelief. Even the godfather of the New Atheism movement – Richard Dawkins – has spoken recently about the value of cultural Christianity, even though he maintains his belief that there is no God. I have often spoken about how the historian Tom Holland has reminded secular humanists that their beliefs in human rights, freedom and many of the other values cherished in liberal societies had their roots in the Christian faith.

Ayan Hirsi Ali is a Somali-born American activist, writer and politician who is known for her views critical of Islam and supportive of women's rights. For years she was an outspoken atheist but recently she has said that she is now a Christian, stating that "Atheism failed to answer a simple question: What is the meaning and purpose of life?" There are many other prominent examples of people at least exploring faith in Jesus.

So, what does this mean for us as followers of Jesus? Firstly, it reminds us that God is at work through His Holy Spirit. Amidst the decline of the church in the west it is possible to grow despondent and to wonder if we have got it all wrong. The slight shift in the culture may help us to lift our gaze and to trust in God.

It should also give us confidence that we have a great story to tell. People continue to seek meaning in their lives. Our secular materialistic culture has proposed all sorts of alternative sources of meaning but many people are finding these inadequate. That gives us an opportunity to Jesus who declares "I am the way, the truth and the life."

It should also encourage us to pray for friends and family. God doesn't work among the rich and famous – in fact Scripture and our life experience show us that this is the group who tend to resist the Good News of Jesus more vehemently. The stories emerging of people wanting to find out more about Jesus should encourage us not to give up on our loved ones who show no sign of turning to Jesus.

Only time will tell whether there is a genuine shift in our culture. Regardless of whether this is a turning point, or a blip in the road of increased secularisation, God is not dead but is still at work in the lives of all sorts of people. We all have our own stories to tell of how He is at work in our lives and our prayer should be that He will give us confidence in telling these stories.

Your friend and minister,

William

## Reflection from Jonathan Lyall

Greetings friends,

It is a privilege to be asked to write a short note on my time amongst you so far.

I'd like to begin by offering my heartfelt thanks to all of you. I have been made to feel so welcome since my first day amongst the church family here, that Burnside Blairbeth really does feel like a home from home. From Sunday mornings, visiting people in their homes, working with various groups and activities I have always been welcomed and encouraged. I feel extremely blessed to have had the opportunity to spend the last 10 months walking with you all.

A particular blessing has been the opportunity to observe some of the work that goes on behind the scenes. I want to give a particular thanks to those of who have taken time, out of extremely busy schedules, to talk me through some of the work they do. There is so much that goes on in the life of the church that is only made possible by the commitment and dedication of so many hard-working people. The public facing aspects of ministry and church life get the most attention however, all of this is only made possible by so much that gets done unseen.

Overall, it has been a wonderful experience for me to spend so much time with a church family that is committed to following Jesus and growing into his likeness. It has been a wonderful environment for me to grow and learn in. My prayer is that I may have been some small benefit to you during my time here, as I feel that I have learned so much and benefited greatly from my time here. You are very blessed to have so much talent, ability, wisdom, and dedication amongst you.



In a time of such uncertainty and upheaval in the national church it has been a refreshing and energising experience to observe and participate in the life of a church family that is thriving. It warms my heart to see that despite the negative national picture that God is still working amongst his people and the Spirit of God is still moving in and through them.

I am now closer to the end than the beginning of my time with you. I still have no real inclination of what the future holds. I will be able, hopefully, to begin looking for a charge from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, although I will still be here until the end of October.

Beyond that, for now it just a case of trusting in God and waiting for the right doors to open at the right times. Throughout my training I have had a strong sense that God has always had me in the right place at the right time and I am sure that will continue as His plans for the future fall into place.

In the meantime, I look forward to enjoying my last few months with you as we continue to walk with God. I am sure we will have plenty more opportunities to learn and grow together. As we continue to grow into the likeness of our saviour.

I will close with my heartfelt thanks and the words of encouragement Paul offers to the Thessalonians in 1Th5:11:

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

May God bless you all.

Yours,

Jonathan

## Kirk Session

### Meeting notes from Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Please note, there is another Kirk Session meeting on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June, some of the points from the April meeting may have been actioned or may have developed by the time you are reading this update.

### Matters Arising

#### ➤ CAP – Christian Against Poverty

The Session has been investigation working with this organisation. Money Matters had welcomed the potential for another debt support group to be working in the area, and contact was still to be made with CAB. After discussion, the decision was taken to see if the matter had progressed any further and review at the June meeting.

#### ➤ Easter Services

There was discussion about the Easter services, it was acknowledged that while some people were away, there were lots of people still about, with over 110 attending Messy Communion on Good Friday which was great. Our Easter services were at Stonelaw Church. There was positive feedback on the Reflective space. Songs of Praise on the afternoon of Easter Sunday was also a very positive experience with many coming who might not have managed to a morning service.

#### ➤ Strategy

Some work has been done on this ongoing issue, eg the gazebo has been taken away, but the tables are still there for young people. William had and has been asking families for feedback which has been positive, there

was other good feedback from a visitor about us being a child friendly church, but we acknowledge there is always room for development. There was discussion about provision of banners and how they enhance worship and what can be done in the future to perhaps create some new banners.

➤ Worship and Prayer

The Session spent some time in groups talking about three areas, and then praying together for these areas – something we were grateful for, something we would like prayer for and something we would like to pray for, for our church. This was an opportunity to share and build relationships.

➤ Summer Ministry

There was discussion on a variety of areas for over the summer. Jonathan will be leading the services on the first three Sundays. Andy reported the plan to create a pack for the children and young people to use with parents during the services. The creche is a space that could be used by children and families. There will be one Fun Friday, there is no date yet, this will be based on availability of those able to help. There will be a Joint Cluster Holiday Club, date tbc. There will be more discussion at the June meeting.

### The Kirk Session

➤ Safeguarding

Gary pointed Elders to the Safeguarding report regarding the livestreaming of services. There was discussion around the importance of emphasising there is livestreaming, so people can make a decision about where to sit. William highlighted that the specifics of these issues are for the Safeguarding panel and those who work with children, but it



is important that Session is aware of them and to direct any questions to the panel.

➤ Presbytery Elder

Leigh thanked Chris Mackintosh for his service as our Presbytery Elder. She asked if anyone else felt able to take on this role, to let her know by the June meeting.

### Team Reports

➤ World Church

Alan Thomson spoke about the World Church Team's request that permission be given for ourselves and Release International to host the play 'If Prison Walls Could Talk' – on the persecuted church. This is by the Artless theatre company and is a challenging play to watch. However, those who had seen it, felt it was an important play for others to see. After discussion a vote was taken and the majority supported the request. This is expected to happen on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October**, in the evening.

### Communication

Lesley spoke to the update paper that had been circulated. She encouraged Elders, if they are visiting someone who gets the printed version of Contact, to show them pictures on their phone, due to the difficulty in getting photographs of the specific quality, for printing. 75% of those getting the email updates, open them which is positive.

She promoted the podcast and acknowledged the work that John MacLean puts into this. We are still looking for someone to help with work in the church office, and Lesley acknowledged all that Eleanor Crawford does in this area. There was discussion over WiFi provision for the whole of the church building.

## Property

Gary summarised the report, and highlighted that work on the dampness is due to begin in May.

A quote for a wooden fence has been received, although it may be preferable for a metal fence to tie in with the existing metal work.

## Blairbeth Building

We await a decision by the General Trustees to put Blairbeth on the market, in its current condition.

## Presbytery Mission Plan- Request to Review Decision

Our case was rejected by the Review panel. It was highlighted that while the preferred linkage was not imposed, change could be imposed if Neil Watson or William stepped down, it is important to remember this, although we are limited in what action we might take at the moment.

Please get in touch with Gary Wylie or Leigh Galloway if you have any questions about the Session.

## **Finance Update**

### **Income**

Offerings – Offerings totalled £94,802 – 4.2% more than last year but 6.2% below plan.

As noted in previous issues, it is important that the Local Mission Fund and Missionary Partners Fund are self-sufficient.

- Offerings to the General Fund are higher than last year – 7.3%/£4,169. This is needed as our cost base increases, particularly our heat and light costs due to the previous contract coming to an end and the new one kicking in at a higher unit cost.

### **Other Income**

- £4,825 vs £5,890 last year.

- We continue to enjoy the rental income from 11 Church Avenue and the overall decrease vs last year is due to a decrease in one off donations.

### **Expenditure**

Overall, it totals £130,504 vs £125,373 (4.1%/£5,131) and helpfully just below plan (0.3%/£362).

- Our central church costs (121 and Presbytery) are £40,953 vs £40,310 last year.
- Our biggest year on year cost increase comes from our heat and light with the cost for the first 4 months being £12,904 vs £7,873 last year.

## Fund Position

- The General Fund has a deficit of £7,530 vs last year of £5,993 and assuming the trend continues, we will have a deficit of around £25,000 - £30,000 this year.
- Deficit in Local Mission Fund is currently £504 vs £1,363 last year. Please continue to pray for the work that is carried out and supported by this fund.
- Missionary Partner Fund has a deficit of £683. We have a retiring offering after our June communion service. There will be a plate at the door or bank transfers can be made to the church account. For anyone making a cash offering, please can I encourage you to use the envelopes provided so that we can claim the gift aid.

Overall, the deficit is currently £8,717 vs £6,709 last year.

Andrew Telfer  
Treasurer

## Burnside Blairbeth Guild



*Let us build a House. A sure foundation.*

It is hard to believe we have come to the end of another year of the Guild. We look back on a year of inspirational speakers, marvellous musical evenings, fellowship, friendship and lots of good fun. We have been well supported throughout the year by our own members and the wider congregation.

Our AGM was held on Monday March 18th when Catherine Nelson was re-elected as co-ordinator. We welcomed Eileen Packer and Irene Lauder to our leadership team, and expressed our thanks and appreciation to Jean Buchanan and Enid Walker who are stepping down this year.

Our fundraising events have been most successful and although it is not an aim of the Guild, the efforts we make allow us to give practical help where required. So far this year, with the approval of our members, we have donated to the following organizations:

Kazunzu	£800
Glasgow City Mission	£400
LEAP	£370
Lodging House Mission	£600
Wateraid	£600

These donations are given as well as supporting our own church.

We hope to have a “Swinging Sixties” themed afternoon tea party on **Tuesday 30th July at 2 pm** in the main hall. Hope to see you there. Fancy dress is optional.

We look forward to a welcome break over the next few months, returning refreshed in the Autumn to enjoy our meetings. Our new theme will be “Let us build a House” with this year’s topic A Sure Foundation.

Jean Goldie

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### **Christian Aid Week**



Many thanks for all of the contributions made during Christian Aid week. The money raised will go towards small businesses training in Burundi where over 70% of the population are affected by malnourishment and poverty. This training has enabled people to get the skills and knowledge they need to fulfill their hopes and ambitions.

Marjory Maclean

## Pastoral Brunch – Croissants Galore!

On Saturday 11 May, 35 of us met for a morning of celebration and discussion around how we can become even better at caring for all ages and stages in our church family. It was a wonderful mix – the youngest was still in their first decade while the eldest was in their ninth. Some had been involved in pastoral care for many years while others were just starting and wanting to learn. Around half of them were elders, but all were enthusiastic about loving and serving our congregation.



We started by recognising that there are always going to be tensions when we start talking about pastoral care. We have to deal with constant change – in the congregation, in the needs among our members, and in our capacity to serve – and we all have our own expectations of how it “should” work. While the elders have pastoral responsibility to make sure it happens, we all have a role to play in caring for each other. But despite those tensions, there is so much to celebrate, share and learn from all that is currently happening in our church.

We spent most of the morning discussing a range of topics in small groups, moving round so that we all got a chance to talk to each other. Some of the topics and questions we tackled were:-

- **Lamentations** - In hard times Christ is there. *How can we be there too? If you have been through hard times – how were you supported by your church? What would have helped more?*
- **Communication** is about building relationships with each other in our church family.
- *Who do we communicate with in our church family? Do we mostly talk to the people we know well? How would you start a discussion with someone you don't know very well?*
- **Welcoming & Including** *When you first arrived (no matter how long ago that was) what made you want to stay? What makes a good welcome to church?*

It was a very fruitful day, listening to and learning from each other while we recognised and celebrated all the different forms that pastoral care can take. There were many suggestions for how we build and extend our relationships within the church family even more and these will be reported to the Session, with some suggestions for what happens next.

Two things are planned as a follow up from this event:-

- A **summer book group** reading “Side By Side” by Edward Welch. This is a simple but profound book which takes the ordinary things we say to each other, shows us how important they are and how we can build on them to draw us all closer in wisdom and love. This will take place on-line, so you can take part no matter where you are.



- A similar **discussion event** after the summer – many who would have liked to attend were busy that day and there are hopefully many others who would like to take part in a morning of sharing



and discussion, continuing our growth as a sharing and caring congregation.

If you are interested in taking part in either of these, please contact me.

Kate Airlie

07787 558 790

Or [kate.airlie@burnsideblairbeth.church](mailto:kate.airlie@burnsideblairbeth.church)

## Missionary Partners

### Update from Craig and Amanda Cunningham, Bolivia

Craig and Amanda are preparing to move from Santa Cruz in Bolivia to Canada on 10<sup>th</sup> June. As you can imagine, they are juggling finishing work with clearing the house, packing, dealing with paperwork, selling the car etc.



They have also been handing over their youth ministry, pastoral care and children's ministry, and Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May was Craig's last week preaching in the church.

Amanda has been receiving training for her new role as 'LAM Canada member care worker' and has undertaken an intensive online course provided by 'See Beyond'.

Craig is continuing to investigate opportunities for pastoral work in Canada and hopes to have confirmation about a new job soon after they arrive.

They give thanks that they have peace about their move to Canada and ask for prayer for the energy to cope with the final 2 weeks and for opportunities to share with friends before they depart.

We will continue to support Craig and Amanda financially until the end of 2024 by which time we hope they will have settled into their new roles in Canada. Craig has replied to say how much they have appreciated the partnership with Burnside Blairbeth, including our care

for them as a family; and for the financial and prayer support. They hope to visit us again when they next visit Scotland.

### Satish Chettri, India



Bhumika Chettri teaching village women, who have never been to school, to read and write.

Satish, Bhumika and their daughter, Jerusha, recently returned to Kalimpong, a town in the foothills of the Himalayas in West Bengal. Satish preached at a church founded by Scottish Missionaries 150 years ago.



**Scripture**

## **Union – Summer Camp**

### **Kings Cross (KX1), Arran**

We are in the preparation stage of planning for KX1 again this year. This is the Scripture Union Scotland Holiday run by Ross Murray and Alison Kennedy at Kingscross campsite in



Arran. This is open for young people in P5 to S2 and mostly from the local area although there are some booked in that come from further away.

We have a really strong team this year with lots of enthusiastic trainee and young leaders which is excellent and we have a lot of returning leaders from previous years too.

At the moment we have 20 young people booked in which is a smaller number than previous years, but this can also have advantages like being able to create a family feel faster than a bigger camp and logistically makes planning groups, pods, travel groups easier too.

The theme for the year is Cinema and the teaching is going to be based on different movie genres everyday and covering different people such as Daniel, Ruth, Noah and Jonah and how we can live for God in today's world.

### Prayer points:

- **Travel** – the last few years there have been quite a few travel disruptions due to the weather and Calmac's ferries (team travel on the 29<sup>th</sup> June and young people arrive on 30<sup>th</sup> June, we all come home on 5<sup>th</sup> July)
- **Safety** – we are a mostly outside camp with lots of different activities including gorge walking and travelling around Arran so safety in all these things
- **God's presence** – that we can all feel God's presence on the beautiful location and while we are doing activities as well as bible teaching time
- **The Team** – Ross and Alison are leading the camp, Amy and David are in charge of the day to day running of camp, Andy and Steph are planning and leading teaching times, the kitchen team, group leaders and trainees, the general helpers and Isaac. Everyone has something to prepare before camp whether it be the teaching, programme or organising a game or activity.



- **Weather** – we are mostly outside and we rely on dry weather to be able to run lots of the activities.

Amy Samson

# Cambuslang and Rutherglen Christian Reachout Trust



## Thank you!

On behalf of the Management Committee of the Reachout Trust I want to express our grateful thanks to the congregation for your support during the past year and in particular to thank you for the financial contribution from the Church.

The annual support from the congregation at Burnside Blairbeth is greatly appreciated as Reachout seeks to reach out and support children and young folk in our area.

## Financial position

For the interest of the church fellowship please note that for the financial year to 31 March 2024 Reachout's income was aligned with our expenditure as we reported a small surplus of £253 for the year.

However, during the past year our second Youth and Schools Worker, Andrew McAlees, left Reachout for another position with his own church. In addition, our Administration Assistant, Greg Senior, moved on from Reachout after a number of years supporting the Trust. We are delighted that Shona Baird, from Stonelaw Church, was appointed in March to succeed Greg as our Administration Assistant.

We are still seeking to recruit the second Youth and Schools Worker in order that Ross Murray is supported fully in the day to day work of Reachout. We are currently re-advertising for this position, and it is hoped that interviews will take place during the month of June.

Once this position is filled, during the coming financial year to March 2025 we will need to increase our income base. As a result, in addition to the donations received from individuals and the local churches, which form the foundation of Reachout's income base, we will also be aiming to secure additional funding from grant awarding bodies with a view to specifically aiming to procure grants to produce income over a three year period and thereby ensure the security of employment for the staff going forward.

The Management Committee would greatly appreciate your prayers for the work of Reachout at this time, not least for the recruitment of a suitable replacement for Andrew, but also for Reachout's finances going forward.

### 30 Years of Reachout

Reachout was created by the local churches in Cambuslang and Rutherglen in 1994 and later this year we will celebrate the Trust's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We give thanks to God for His faithfulness and provision during these past 30 years as Reachout has sought and continues to seek to engage with and support our local young people in increasing their understanding of the Christian faith, exploring the Bible, and putting their faith into action. We will be celebrating the anniversary on **Saturday 26 October** – a date to put in your diary.

### Reachout Update & Prayer Requests

Below is the latest update and some prayer requests from the Reachout team:

Reachout is currently involved in two projects, 'It's your move' and 'Buddy-up'. Both these projects are being delivered to all of the primary schools in the Rutherglen and Cambuslang area and so far are going very well.



As well as these projects and the normal activities we are in the preparation stages for the King's Cross (KX1) SU Holiday in Arran which takes place at the end of June. Ross and the team had their first preparation meeting at the beginning of May.

We would appreciate prayer for:

- Ross, Shona and all the volunteers involved with Reachout.
- Guidance on the recruitment and appointment of a second Youth and Schools Worker
- Successful delivery of 'the 'It's your Move' and 'Buddy-up' Projects.
- Bookings for the KX1 Holiday, as the number of young folk booked to attend are a little lower than normal.
- Good preparations for the KX1 Holiday, for the team of volunteers and for Ross as he leads the team.
- For all of the young people attending the 'It's your Move' and 'Buddy-up' events and the KX1 Holiday.
- Reachout's finances as we seek to fund the ongoing work.

Our thanks, once again, for the continuing support of the congregation.

### Giving Directly to Reachout

If you would like to give financial support directly to Reachout, you can either make a bank transfer to the Reachout Bank of Scotland account:

Account Name: Cambuslang and Rutherglen Christian Reachout Trust

Sort code                      80-22-60

Account no.                    20215967

or you can send a cheque, made payable to the Reachout account name above, to Alan Robertson, Reachout treasurer, 69 Springfield Park Road,

Burnside, Rutherglen, Glasgow G73 3RG. Gift Aid and Standing Order forms are also available from Alan (e-mail address: treasurer.crrt@outlook.com).

Alan Robertson  
Reachout Treasurer

## Announcements

*"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.' "* **John 11:25-26.**

### Deaths

**Louie Donald** was aged 91 years when she died. Apart from the final years she spent in Duncraggan care home, she lived her entire life in Highburgh Drive. She formed strong friendships at Burnside Primary school and some of these friendships lasted her entire life.



Louie worked as a classics teacher, before going back to study and becoming a solicitor. She was fascinated by Scottish history and loved Shakespeare. Louie was a private person who maintained her independence through most of her life. She was a woman of strong, practical faith and was part of the Iona community. We give thanks for Louie's life as part of the Burnside Blairbeth church family.

**Cathy Whiston** died on 12<sup>th</sup> May aged 83. For many years she and her late husband Joe were part of the Blairbeth congregation and then Cathy came faithfully to worship at the Burnside building. She would always arrive well before the beginning of the service, giving her a chance to catch up with her many friends.



She was a member of the Burnside Bowling Club and also helped with the teas at the Autumn Club which meets in our building. Cathy was a warm, friendly, hard-working woman who had a strong faith. We commit her sons Steven and Alan and their families to your prayers.

## The next Issue of Contact

**Copy Deadline:** 25 August 2024  
**Available for distribution:** 8 September 2024

Articles can e-mailed to the editor - [contact@burnsideblairbeth.church](mailto:contact@burnsideblairbeth.church)

Services are on YouTube – search for:

**Burnside Blairbeth Church live stream**

- CDs 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](mailto:kate.airlie@burnsideblairbeth.church)**

- **Contact** magazine is available to view on our website, [www.burnsideblairbeth.church](http://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](mailto:theoffice@burnsideblairbeth.church)**

### 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.

**Burnside Blairbeth Church \* Scottish Charity No. SC006633**

**Church of Scotland Congregational Reference: 160844**

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