

# Burnside Blairbeth Church



*There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens  
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

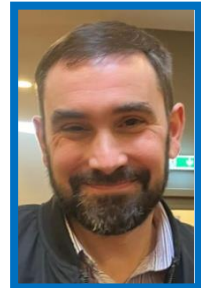
## Contact

No 171

October 2024

Greetings friends,

It is with a somewhat heavy heart that I write my final piece for Contact as my time walking with you all draws to a close. As I have tried to explain to those of you I have spoken to over the last couple of weeks, I feel a strange mix of emotions as my probation period comes to an end. Sadness that a wonderful time is drawing to a close, yet also excitement, mixed with a tinge of apprehension about what lies ahead.



However, as I have wrestled with this mix of emotions, and tried to explain it, I have come to the realisation that my ultimate feeling is one of thankfulness for everything I have experienced over the last 15 months as we have walked with God together. I feel I have been truly blessed by God and all of you over these past 15 months and I could not have hoped for a better environment to learn and grow in, for that I am truly thankful to all of you and to God. I would like to give special thanks to William, all the staff team, the session, and all of those who have given their time to talk me through what you do and guide and nurture me through my time here.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for making me feel so at home at Burnside Blairbeth. It has been a wonderful experience to learn and grow amongst such a loving, gentle, patient, encouraging, and wise congregation and church family.

As my probation draws to a close the next step for me is as an assistant minister in the Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale. I shall be based at Law Parish Church as an assistant minister on a 6-month rolling contract. The congregation at Law are joining with 3 churches in Carluke

to form one new congregation that will be served by 2 full time ministers. It is expected that this will take a year or maybe more to be fully enacted and as they are vacant at the moment they require a minister until all the components of the new union are agreed. My role will be 'holding the fort' whilst also preparing them and helping them to plan for their future and whatever that may hold as I look for what my more permanent next step will be. I am excited by the opportunities that lie ahead and look forward to seeing what God has in store in the next stage of both my journey and the journey of the congregation at Law.

I would just like to close with a final thank you to all of you for making my time at Burnside Blairbeth such a blessing, it has been a true privilege to serve beside all of you. I will stay in touch and keep you up to date with what comes next for me and I look forward to hearing about the exciting things I am sure God has in store for Burnside Blairbeth in the future as well.

I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Every blessing in Christ,

Jonathan

## Finance Update

Please see below the summary and key points for the 8 months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

### Offerings:

- Offerings totalled £175,073 – 1.8% more than last year but 13.4% below plan.
- Offerings to the General Fund are up slightly vs last year but aren't keeping track with the budget and our increased costs – particularly heating.
- Local Mission Fund offerings 9.1% ahead of last year. As I have noted many times, it is extremely important that we can meet the costs in this fund (employees and supporting Reachout) from direct giving.
- There has been a decrease in giving to the Missionary Partner Fund and it is important that we address this. Please continue to prayerfully support the work of our Missionary Partners.

### Other Income:

£11,242 vs £12,736 last year.

The decrease is due to a reduction in one off donations, last year we had a grant for the Fun Friday events and this year we didn't (council weren't running same grant scheme), and the interest received has reduced as the Special Fabric Fund was used for the new heating system.

### Expenditure:

Overall, it is 3.3% up on last year. Key points to not:

- We have now spent £9,000 of the Fabric Fund with commitments to spend the remaining amount of ~£25-£26,000 by the end of the year.
- Impact of heat and light costs really coming through due to increased charges. This is being offset by having one less employee meaning overall increase isn't as much as it would be otherwise. However, the cost challenge of heating and maintaining our buildings is going to increase not decrease.

### Fund Position

- The General Fund has a deficit of £22,469 vs £17,356 this time last year – impact of heating costs and income remaining level. The fact that we have commitments on our fabric spend already in place means that the deficit at this stage is in a more crystallised state than previous years.
- Local Mission Fund – small deficit of £2,067 vs £4,607 this time last year which continues to be encouraging albeit still a deficit.
- Missionary Partner Fund has a deficit of £2,139 with a further opportunity to specifically give at the Communion Service in December.
- The current projected deficit for the year across our 3 main funds is around £40,000.

### Summary

The above information summarises our year-to-date position. We are in a similar position as we have been in recent years with a deficit at this stage in the year. However, our situation this year is slightly different as we approach year-end for two reasons:

1. We are likely to spend our full fabric budget. In recent years, we have seen an underspend meaning that our deficit hasn't ended up being as much as forecasted.
2. Our heat and light costs have significantly increased because our old contract came to an end, and we faced the same increases that we all personally have. The increases depend on usage but in this financial year they will be around £12-£15,000 more than they were previously.

As a Kirk Session, we have agreed to do the following –

- We will hold a Gift Day on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December to address the deficit we face. There will be no Pledge Day as we had one last year which covered a 2-year period.
- As a Kirk Session, write to the Church of Scotland setting out our concerns about the increased cost burden we face. The increased heat and light costs bring this front and centre because they are incurred through our General Fund. Therefore, increased income into the General Fund to cover these costs also means that our annual Giving to Grow (was previously Ministry and Mission) contribution will increase in subsequent years. It will be our request that increased giving to cover core running costs be excluded from the annual calculation.

It would be easy to be overwhelmed by the challenges we face but I would urge you not to feel that way and instead it is my prayer that we may continue to know the Lord's guidance, faithfulness and provision every day.

Andrew Telfer  
Treasurer

## The Guild

Our opening meeting took place on Monday 7th October and was a great success with 50–60 ladies and gentlemen attending. Our guest was the well-known Scottish singer Alastair McDonald who entertained us with some of his well-known songs and sparkling repartee.



Our strategy for the next three years is ‘ Let us build a house ’ . This has been chosen to encourage the Guild as it faces many challenges and opportunities in its service and operations. The first theme within this strategy is ‘Sure Foundations’ and we will be delighted to welcome our Assistant, Jonathan Lyall, to expand on the theme.

Our Christmas Fayre will take place on Saturday 23rd November from 10am till 12 noon with all our usual stalls. The hall will be open on Friday 22nd November from 2 pm until 4 pm and 7 pm until 9pm for receipt of goods.

We look forward to:

4 November	Karen Gillon, Guild General Secretary
18 November	Niall Illingworth - The Unintentional Novelist
23 November	CHRISTMAS FAYRE
2 December	Fiona Joyce - A career in opera
16 December	CHRISTMAS. LUNCH, Burnside Hotel

Jean Goldie

## Messy Church

### Autumn Lights



91 people packed into our gathering area on October 5<sup>th</sup> and enjoyed a chat and a warm drink as we waited to create our Leaf Lanterns.

Once everyone had arrived, we went into the hall and got covered in glue as we put our leaves on our glass jars (thanks to everyone who donated them!), fiddled about with our string handles, and put our little battery candles inside. We then went out the back door at the creche into our beautiful gardens which are now safe for all ages because of the excellent fence! We sat down on some tarpaulins and took part in a story all about dark and light in the Bible.

Here it is...

*“In the beginning the world was DARK. Then God said, ‘Let there be LIGHT!’ and there was LIGHT. God called the DARK nighttime and the LIGHT daytime. God said that the LIGHT was good, God said that the DARK was good.”*



Sometimes when bad things happen, or we are sad, we call it a DARK time. God's people went through a very DARK time when they were made slaves in Egypt, but God rescued them, and they felt full of LIGHT.

They had to travel across the desert to get to a new place to live. They had to travel during the LIGHT daytime, and sleep in tents at the DARK nighttime. To show them where to go in the LIGHT daytime, God sent them a pillar of cloud. In the DARK nighttime God sent them a pillar of fire to give them LIGHT.

Some people in the Bible brought God's LIGHT and joy and peace but some brought DARK times, and sadness and pain.

God sent a messenger to tell us that when life is DARK God will bring us LIGHT.

One DARK night, God's LIGHT came into the world as a baby. Jesus was born in the DARK of a stable and under the LIGHT of a star.

When Jesus grew up, he turned the DARK things of pain and sadness into the LIGHT of love and forgiveness. He turned the DARK times of loneliness into the LIGHT of being friends with God and with other people.

When Jesus died on the cross, the whole world went DARK, but when he came back to life on Easter Sunday, the world was filled with LIGHT. This LIGHT shines on and on and on and nothing will ever stop it shining. Jesus is the LIGHT of the world, and he is with us now and always.



We then enjoyed homemade soup and hotdogs while enjoying the beautiful October Day God had given us. Lots of marshmallows were toasted and new friends were made. We had 7 new families, and over half of those there were people who don't come to Sunday Church. Messy Church has been happening for 10 years in November and this was a vibrant reminder that it is still a brilliant way of sharing Jesus together.

Jen Robertson



Making Autumn Lights

## If Prison Walls Could Speak



On the evening of Sunday 6 October, we were immersed in an excellent performance by Artless Theatre, telling the story of Petr Jasek, a Czech national and Christian aid worker who, in 2015, was imprisoned in Sudan and tortured for assisting the underground church in Sudan. It was a compelling piece of storytelling about the persecution of Christians in our time. And it was a challenging drama which told of the horrors Petr endured in prison without it becoming too graphic.

Yet it was also a remarkable and uplifting story. Petr was a man who trusted God in the face of the most awful beatings and cruelty, and yet was able to speak of how he came to understand God's purposes in putting him in the various prisons he was in, and of the experience of God's blessing in the darkest of dark circumstances. Others in prison with him became Christians because of his witness. And in the last prison he was in, he regularly ministered to over 200 believers in the prison chapel. It took four years for his release to be negotiated.



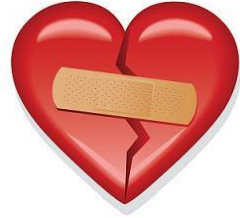
The drama fitted perfectly with what William had been saying that Sunday morning when speaking about Hagar. It is God who determines how he blesses us wherever he chooses to put us and in whatever difficulties we face. When Petr came to understand and accept that, he found peace and purpose in spite of his circumstances.

A total of 99 tickets were sold and 89 people attended, including four young adults. 10 people who had booked were unable to be there for various reasons. Approximately half of the audience was from Burnside Blairbeth.

Chris and Jon from Artless were delighted with our venue and the help they received. They said they would love to come back. There may be opportunity for that because they are presently writing a drama entitled “Prodigal” – about the prodigal son – which is planned to go on tour next Autumn. We hope that we might be able to host them for that production.

Alan Thomson

## Healing Hearts Course.



There is a plan to hold another Healing Hearts course in the New Year, the time to be decided depending on when suits the people who want to take part. The course consists of 6 lessons, each lasting about 2 hours, and this time we thought that that we would do one each week for 4 weeks, finishing with a Saturday with 2 sessions either side of some lunch.

The course looks at some big issues – if God loves us, why do we suffer?, what about forgiveness?, and grief – what does the Bible have to say? Elizabeth Nairn did the course in Burnside Blairbeth, and here’s what she had to say:

*I did the Healing Hearts course hoping that it would help me, initially, to care more effectively and with greater empathy for friends I knew who were finding life difficult. I came at it from a Christian standpoint, never realising that during the course my own faith would be tested and ultimately greatly strengthened as we used Scripture to work through the many and varied traumas the human heart can experience. Each week we confronted different situations and in a non-threatening way were asked to work through them - members of the group opened up and grew together in Christian fellowship as the course progressed. It was the first Church based course I had participated in but now think of it as my first brick in a growing wall! Practical, at times challenging, but life affirming and for anyone wanting to walk closer with God and their fellowmen totally worthwhile.*

If you would like to take part, or would like some more information, please send an email to the office, or speak to Tom Nelson or Lesley Mackintosh.

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## **Missionary Partners**

### **Update from Satish and Bhumika**

Greetings in the most wonderful name of Jesus

In 2005 Burnside Blairbeth church sponsored Bhumika, Joash and me to visit Scotland for 22 days. We were taken care of by the church - we have no words for how grateful we are even today. We visited several people and had fellowship. One day David Easton took me to the General Assembly in Edinburgh. In one of the Sessions, the moderator informed us that almost 40,000 people were leaving the church including lots of young people. I was deeply concerned, and I know it's not just in Scotland. I always add this point in my preaching, because the Church of Scotland sent missionaries to our country. In 1800/1900 they brought the gospel, started schools, hospitals and clinics. I was educated in a Scottish Mission Institution. Many of the missionaries died serving the Lord in our Land - they were so committed and won thousands of souls - you have such a rich history of missionaries. We will cry out to God for another wave of revival to move through your Land - we must reclaim young people for God and for the purpose they are made for.

In the Grace Children's Home, the girls are growing and maturing in faith and education. Many of them have reached teenage years therefore counselling is important for them. The best thing is that they love the Lord.

Joash is briefly working, before he starts his studies. I am encouraging him to undertake a Discipleship training course with YWAM before he starts an MBA.

Jerusha is in year XI studying commerce subjects. She is learning piano now, as is Bhumika.

Bhumika has been leading a literacy course for women aged 17-78 who had never been to school. After three months of learning they have slowly started to read the Bible and Bhumika leads in Bible study from the book of Ruth. This had become a double impact ministry, helping them read & know Christ. We named this project RENEW which stands for **Restore- Empower- Nurture & Educate Women. ( Rom12:2).**

In June we held the WISE (Women In Sustainable Enterprise) training event to restore, empower, nurture and encourage women in poverty, widows and the unemployed. Please continue to pray for these women.

We held a Bible quiz day recently. 8500 people participated in various centres after reading the Bible. Next year we plan to hold a day for age 5 to 20 yrs - pray that God will give us wisdom to do it, to bring young people back to the word of God.

We can get a good deal in buying a car during festival time in October & November so thanks to the donation from Burnside Blairbeth we will be buying during this season.

Thank you for all your prayers and encouragement.

Love and prayers from all of us here

Satish & Bhumika Chettri, Bangladesh

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## Update on Kitega

As the patrons of the Kitega Community Centre here is a wee update. The team at Kitega have been working hard since 2022 building a hospital in Katungulu (a very rural neighbouring village from the centre at Kitega) There was no medical facility there before and in the past the villagers have had to travel for miles just for basic medical help such as paracetamol and a child actually died of an asthma attack as it cost too much for the parents to pay for a boda boda (motorbike) to take them to buy an inhaler for the child.



This hospital has been a long time in the planning stages and it was originally meant to be a small hospital but there is now a waiting room and reception; a maternity ward; a women's ward; a men's ward; a children's ward; two doctors consulting rooms; a treatment room; a pharmacy and a counselling room. There are indoor and outdoor toilets. The treatment room is called "The West Highland Way Treatment Room" after my mum and sister walked the WHW and raised all the money for it. This hospital will benefit thousands of people over a large area. It is built and ready to go BUT we need to ensure they can sustain a doctor's salary before it can be opened.

It costs just £350 a month to pay a full doctor's salary and if we could find 70 people to commit to £5 a month this would cover the cost of the doctor's salary and mean this brilliant facility can be finally opened. Payment can be made by setting up a standing order or through Stewardship which means your donation can have gift aid added to it and 100% of everything you donate goes to Kitega.

Please speak to Amy or David Samson for more information or visit [www.friendsofkitega.org](http://www.friendsofkitega.org)

Amy Samson

## The next Issue of Contact

**Copy Deadline: 16 November 2024**  
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Articles can e-mailed to the editor - **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**

- **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**

## 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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**[www.burnsideblairbeth.church](http://www.burnsideblairbeth.church)**