

Burnside Blairbeth Church



Contact

No 140

Late Summer 2019

Dear Friends,

Some of you may remember the REM song from the 1980's "Losing my religion". As well as being a great song, at the time it created a minor controversy as some people thought it was an attack on religion (something that would have been deemed broadly unacceptable in the US cultural climate at the time). The title was nothing to with religion but was a phrase from the southern states which meant to "go mad".



Over the past few months there have been a couple of instances of high-profile Christians who have announced that they have "lost their religion". As I write this, certain parts of social media are humming with discussion about the worship leader who announced on Instagram that he no longer believed. In his post he cited his difficulties with the doctrine of Hell, perceived contradictions in the Bible and various other issues which he said nobody in the church talked about. Shortly after becoming public his post was withdrawn and many people made the point that many in the church had been wrestling with these issues for centuries, so his contention that these are issues on which the church is silent doesn't really hold water.

Nevertheless, this case and others highlights those who have walked away from their faith. These are the high-profile examples, but we can all think of lots of people who once professed faith but would now say they don't believe. What is this all about and what might we learn from them?

This demonstrates that western culture brings pressure. We do ourselves no favours when we portray Christianity as being persecuted in the west – compared to the horrors faced by brothers and sisters around the world that is patently nonsense. We also make it harder for ourselves if we don't acknowledge that there are subtler pressures which sometimes make walking away seem like an appealing option. "Religion" is no longer fashionable in the west and that brings its own difficulties (as well as opportunities). Being aware is a simple but practical starting point.

Then there is the nature of our faith. If we trust God simply because we think it's His job to make our life better, then our faith will fall away when hard times come or when we feel down. God's blessings are real but sometimes they are not immediately obvious. If we trust God because we think that will only bring us good stuff, then sooner or later our faith will fail because this is not the God of the Bible we are worshipping. The starting point needs to be trusting God for who He is rather than what faith does for us. Tim Keller

expresses it in these terms “faith is not primarily a function of how you feel. Faith is living out and believing what truth is despite what you feel.”

Following Jesus is an act of faith, but it is not an irrational act of faith. Our faith is certainly more than an intellectual exercise – trust in Jesus affects every aspect of our lives – but our faith survives intellectual dissection. We shouldn't be afraid of the hard questions, because they are real, but there are good answers. We need to think about why we believe and where we struggle with immediate answers, talk to those who might be able to help us.

We should also be careful about neglecting the “disciplines” of our faith. A regular pattern of prayer, studying the Bible and meeting with other Christians help us. We have been made for community and God wants us to spend time listening to Him and talking to Him.

We should be careful because one of the lessons of high- profile Christians who have walked away is that all of us need to be on our guard. Scripture puts in these terms “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!” There are ways in which we can protect ourselves, but, ultimately we do not hang on to God – He holds us. Our faith is not about us believing enough or being good enough. It is about what He has done for us and we rightly sing about “the love that wilt not me go.”

Your friend and minister,

William Wilson

Notes from Kirk Session Meeting on 5 June 2019

With the summer months intervening a number of the matters discussed at the outset of the June meeting have already happened or have been progressed over the summer. The principal matter reported at the start was that the application for a further grant from the **Go For It** had been successful with an award of £7,200 per annum being made over two years. The award is subject to a number of conditions and it is likely that the first payment will not be made until January 2020. The appointment of someone to be **Food Hygiene Co-ordinator** was still outstanding at the time (subsequent to the meeting Mairi Wilson agreed to take on this role).

Les Queen's retirement occurred on 30 June and at the Session meeting he was thanked for all his work over the years and for his valuable contribution to Session meetings.

The recruitment of a **Pastoral Assistant** to work along side William on a part-time basis doing pastoral work in the congregation has been progressed over the summer. It was advertised during June and July with a closing date for applications of 31 July. By the time this edition of Contact is published, interviews should have taken place, being scheduled for Saturday 24 August.

The Session also discussed the **Pastoral Networks** operating within the congregation recognising the importance of making sure that new people coming around the church were included. It was noted that not everyone who is a member had been allocated to a network and that this needed to be addressed. Les made some helpful comments about how we make sure that the 'system' is working and suggested that the new pastoral assistant would be able to provide support for elders and visitors in providing care within the congregation.

The scheduled meeting regarding **prayer** in the life of the congregation took place in June and a number of positive suggestions for encouraging prayer were discussed. These will be implemented over the coming months (*so watch out for further news about ways in which you can participate*).

We continued the discussion about our congregational life by thinking about **Small Groups**. The purposes of our small groups were noted as an opportunity for: getting to know one another better; deepening our knowledge of the Bible; sharing life's experiences as we search the Scriptures; and caring for one another – so they provide a context for fellowship and pastoral care. Their value was to be found in it being possible to learn better in a small group, to be able to support one another and to appreciate the strengths of other people. On the downside it was felt that at present the groups were a bit insular, that we don't communicate the existence of the groups very well, that one format doesn't fit all, and that we need to think how the groups can be developed with a purpose in mind. William commented that as a congregation our "Bible engagement" stats are not good and that we need opportunities to engage with the Bible together beyond a Sunday morning. Prayer and Bible study go hand in hand so we need to address how we encourage small groups. Training for leading a small group was also important. It was thought that Café Church in the autumn would be an opportunity to look at small groups as a congregation and to progress the discussion after that.

Andy MacArthur presented an excellent report on the work he leads among children, young people and families. His presentation was subsequently shown as the slides during the offering on one Sunday morning in June.

Property and **Finance** reports had been circulated. Alan Hudson reported that the completion of the repair works to the Main Hall and adjacent areas should be achievable by the end of August and that, provisionally, plans for organisations to be up and running again in September could be made.

As many will know from previous Finance reports a significant legacy has been received from the estate of Margaret Blake, denoted for use in connection with the refurbishment of the Burnside building or a connected project. It was acknowledged that there were many opportunities to use the legacy but that we needed to identify the key projects and prioritise them.

A defibrillator has been purchased by the **Guild** and an information evening about its use will be held in the autumn.

The next meeting of the Kirk Session will have taken place (on Wednesday 28 August) by the time this edition of Contact is published.

Alan Thomson - Session Clerk

“Thanks” from Les

I would like to take this opportunity through the pages of Contact to express my thanks and appreciation for the generous gift given to me on the occasion of my retirement at the end of June. I would also want to acknowledge other personal gifts as well as many cards, letters, and good wishes. The various expressions of thanks has been quite humbling and I have been deeply touched by the spirit of love which accompanied all your gifts.

Little did I realise thirteen years ago I would be with you quite as long. It has been a genuine privilege to walk with so many on our personal journeys of faith, through happy times, sad times, lots of laughter and much shedding of tears. For me, it has probably been the most rewarding and fulfilling period of my life. To come at such a stage in my life has been a bonus and a huge blessing. I have gained so much from within the life of the congregation and grown considerably in my spiritual life.

Thank you again for your kindness and my thanks to William, the members of Kirk Session, Office Bearers, Office Staff and all who have enriched my time with you as your Pastoral Associate.

Les Queen.

Treasurer's Report

Financial Position - 7 months to 31 July 2019

Freewill Offerings

Total freewill offerings of £158,916 for the 7 months to 31 July were £8,58 (-5.1%) lower than for the same period in 2018, and were £24,233 (-13.2% lower than the plan for the 7 months.

General Fund offerings of £114,727 were £2,538 (-2.2%) lower than last year and £15,340 (-11.8%) below plan.

Local Mission Fund offerings of £29,292 were £4,568 (-13.5%) lower than last year and £7,213 (-19.8%) below plan.

Missionary Partner Fund offerings of £14,897 were £1,481 (-9%) lower than last year and £1,680 (-10.1%) below plan.

Other Income, Donations & Legacies

During March £80,874 was received in respect of a bequest arising from the settlement of Margaret Blake's estate. This income has been excluded from the congregational account so as not to distort the overall total fixtures. The entire sum has been transferred to the Special Fabric & Communications Fund to be used for restricted purposes. The bequest is to be used for fabric purposes in line with the terms of the will.

Offerings for Special Purposes

£1,675 has been donated specifically for our missionary partners, £1,313 for Satish and Bhumika Chettri, £275 for Carolyn Boyd Tomasovic and £87 for Andrew Robertson.

£1,250 has been donated to the SU Holiday Sponsorship Fund (grants amounting to £648 have been paid out in support of young people in the area attending SU Holidays).

Offerings for the 7 months in respect of sponsorship of children at Rhema School, Kampala, Uganda, amounted to £796.

The Well retiring offering at the March Communion amounted to £1,041 including gift aid. This has been donated to the Well together with £1,000 from our General Fund.

Expenditure

Congregational account expenditure for the 7 months to 31 July at £82,297 was £23,116 (-21.9%) lower than for the same period in 2018 and £14,763 (15.2%) lower than plan.

General Fund expenditure was £4,655 (-9.6%) lower than last year and £10,586 (-19.5%) lower than plan.

Local Mission Fund expenditure was £18,486 (-32.4%) lower than last year and £4,162 (-9.7%) lower than plan. The reduction from 2018 follows the departure of Melanie as our Outreach Worker.

Fabric Fund expenditure amounted to £5,410 for the 7 month period.

Allocations / Distributions

Year to date £88,213 has been provided for in respect of our contributions to the Church of Scotland (Ministry and Mission contribution: £83,374 / Glasgow Presbytery dues: £4,839).

Year to date Missionary Partner Fund distributions of £20,417 have been provided for, with £10,000 of this total having been distributed to Carolyn Boyd Tomasovic. Further distributions from the fund will be made during the coming months.

For the 7 months to 31 July the year to date Local Mission Fund distribution to the Reachout Trust is £5,833.

A General Fund distribution of £1,000 to The Well has been made together with the £1,041 donated at the March retiring offering.

Main Fund Balances / Shortfall

General Fund: For the 7 months to 31 July there was a shortfall of £4,940 £3,966 below plan.

Local Mission Fund: For the 7 months there was a shortfall of £2,601, £5,88 below plan.

Missionary Partner Fund: For the 7 months there was a shortfall of £2,00 £2,005 below plan.

Alan Robertson

Youth and Childrens's Work

Messy Church - 5th Birthday - 10 August 2019



The last 5 years have past in a blur of fun, chat, creativity, celebration, eating, learning, welcoming and worshipping. We have moved from month to month and year to year – discovering as we have gone what works well for all the people who are part of our Messy Church, trying new

things and getting to know Jesus better and his love for all of us along the way! Human 5 year olds move into a new phase of life in Scotland, so we need to pray and consider what the years ahead look like for our Messy Church as we share Jesus through hospitality, creativity and celebration while doing it all in an all age context.

BackPackers Holliday Club 5-9 August 2019



We had a fantastic time at Backpacker Holiday Club on the week of 5-9 August. We opened The Blairbeth Building every evening for P1-P7 as we backpacked through different countries learning about the

journey of Jesus during his last week on earth.

We averaged around 25 children each night, and learned about the story through games, songs, story and creativity. The children, as they entered the building, enjoyed various activities based on the country of each day. They built a train for Gard du Nord station, ate from a Swedish smorgasbord and made passports and flags. We then sang and enjoyed some group challenges before engaging with the days story through four 10 min zones of prayer, story, games and creating.

The children had a fantastic time on a great adventure with God! Thanks to the congregation for postcards, baking, support and prayers.

And a big "Thank You" to the team of volunteers who served in the kitchen, helped with registration and leading groups.

Andy MacArthur

Missionary Partner News

Uganda

Dear Friends from Burnside Blairbeth,

As we prayed for you this morning, Alice remarked that we have taken a bit of time without communicating with you (our long-time partners in ministry). I am therefore very happy to share some up-date with you:

i) Family: - Our eldest daughter, Faithful and her husband (Abel), are well. they were blessed with a baby girl on 30th June. They have called her "Brook." If you want to know the meaning and the reason why she is called so, you may ask Faithful herself! For your interest, "Brook," looks like Faithful when she was a baby. Some of you may remember when we first visited Burnside church with her, as a baby in 1980s. it is amazing seeing her doing what we were doing to her! We praise God for making us grandparents. Abel is a designer, does his work at home and therefore able to babysit. Meanwhile, Faithful is having her maternity leave. She sends her love to you, especially to Marjory and her family who looked after her when she visited Burnside as a student from Brighton university in 2011.

-Timothy (the second born), a man of few words, whose umbilical cord was cut by God Himself at birth, is now a grown up medical doctor, helping mothers deliver their babies safely. He works at Mengo hospital in Kampala and stays with us. Whenever I see him, I just marvel at God's mighty works, because Timothy is a miracle man! I hope he know it!

- Peter, (the last born), is a grownup man, qualified as an Engineer, but for over two years, he was keeping chickens. You could find him reading his Bible in the chicken house, perhaps prophesying to them! In God's time, God blessed him with employment as a water Engineer in a place called Fort Portal, about 300 km west of Kampala. So, he stays at his work, but visits us at least once a month. Recently, he surprised us with the news that God has shown him a Christian girl (Soniah) to marry. In May Peter took Alice and me to visit Soniah's parents and they demanded the bride price of 8 cows before they can give her to Peter for marriage! He has by faith set aside 11th January 2020 as day of their wedding! Meanwhile he confessed that "God who owns cattle on a thousand hill" will provide the 8.

Alice: my wife of the last 34.5 years, is growing younger and stronger as I do. We praise God for His faithfulness, His mercies and His grace to us.

ii) Rhema Junior School: The number of children continues to grow with 290

children. We limit the number because of limited space. We have 14 teaching staff and 4 non-teaching staff. Right from the beginning, we insist on Bible-based education putting more emphasis on Christian values.

Kindly pray with us that God will continue protecting and providing for this school to grow and to influence many lives for Christ.

With love and prayers , Bernard and Alice

India

Dear praying friends,

One of the undeniable desires of our heart is to win souls through everything we do in ministry.

Today is a day that the Lord has made, and we will rejoice and be glad in it as we baptise eight new more souls as they obey the Lord in Baptism.

Over the last few years we have invested a lot of time in this part of West Delhi in a small colony. Week after week we have been sharing the good news, chatting, praying for sick, visiting people who needed help of various kinds. At times we faced many disappointments as many heard but did not respond, many backslid. Bhumika and I did not give up. I use this phrase often, " winners never quit, and quitters never win". This group of people make Momos (dumpling) to sell on the roadside. They live in small houses, and work 12-15 hours a day. Many take up wrong ways once they are in a big city like Delhi. They come from Darjeeling and other parts of India. But they all need Jesus.

Bhumika has spent many hours with the ladies in this area praying, sharing and counselling them. We thank you for praying for our ministry. We believe you too have played some role by praying for us and our ministry.

Eight of them will be baptised today, not only that from 1st week of May (Sunday) we are starting a morning service at 7:30 for them. For many of them Sunday is a business day, but they want to go to morning Church.

The Lord is at work. This is the first bunch of a group to be baptised, but I believe there are many that will follow them. Kindly pray for my ministry team and especially those who'd are baptised today.

" When man works, man works, when men pray, God works". We value your prayers as always.

Satish & Bhumika Chettri, Grace Ministeries

The Guild

Whose We Are and Whom We Serve

Companions on the Road

On July 23rd, 30 of our members enjoyed a most interesting and informative tour of the Trades House in Glassford Street. This was followed by a delicious lunch at the "Mediterraneo" restaurant. A very pleasant outing and much appreciated by all who attended.

New Session

Summer is almost over and as the nights draw in many of us are looking forward to a new session of the Guild. Our opening meeting will be on Monday 7th October and will be held in the Sanctuary. Our syllabus will include a variety of subjects and musical evenings, which we hope will suit all tastes.

Theme

For some of our members the summer has been a happy one, while others have experienced sadness and uncertainty. We hope, in our fellowship and in our in our programme, they will find much to lift their spirits as we concentrate on our theme ' Companions on the Road , the second part of our 3 year strategy One Journey, Many Roads.'

Guild Scottish Conference

On Saturday 7th September, some of us will attend the annual Guild conference in the Caird Hall, Dundee. The principal speakers will be the Moderator of the General Assembly, Rev. Colin Sinclair and Carolyn Boyd Tomasovic from the Ecumenical Women's Initiative in Croatia.

Welcome

We meet in the Burnside building at 7.30pm on alternate Mondays starting on Monday 7th October. Our meetings are open to all, so do come and join us. You can be sure of a warm, friendly welcome , a cuppa and a chat with friends old and new.

Visit to Luwero School in Uganda, July 2019

George, Jean and Fiona Wynne visited Luwero School in Uganda with a large group of volunteers this July. These are some of the highlights from their visit:

The group (including a Dentist) were involved in 6 main projects

Dentistry

Callum, our dentist, extracted 427 teeth from 380 patients! He reckons this is more “detothing” than he has done in his practice in the last decade. Callum hopes to put in place a series of yearly visits involving himself and his colleagues from the practice, to ensure that the improvements in dental health will be sustained.

Teaching The team of 3 secondary school Geography teachers worked collaboratively with colleagues from Luwero Community Secondary School to plan and deliver a series of lessons on climate and weather.

Boys Dorm The major physical project was the preparation of the boys’ dormitory. It was extremely dirty, dusty, hot work – but we managed to persevere and get it completed.

Sports Facilities The sports facilities received particular attention. When we arrived, these consisted of a football pitch and an area for playing netball. During this visit the group managed to measure out and line full-size basketball, netball and volleyball courts. The netball hoops were replaced with regulation-sized hoops and the stands painted – one in Scottish colours and one in Ugandan colours. With the help of several of the upper primary and secondary boys, we managed to dig and lay foundations for new volleyball posts and new basketball stands. The backboards were painted with a Saltire and a Ugandan flag to emphasise our partnership.

Crafts We had arranged with Gabriel to have sewing machines serviced and ready in one of the college rooms and Jean was involved in this project. Our philosophy was to leave a legacy and not just provide a brief distraction. The boys and girls were shown how to cut out from patterns and sew the parts together using the machines. The biggest hit of the handicrafts, however, was the PomPoms that the pupils could create quickly and easily.



Pattern cutting



In the sewing room

If you would like to see more about the project you can visit it by using the address below.

<https://luwerocommunityprojects.org/>

Obituary

Chrissie Thompson

Earlier this year on 26 February 2019 my mother in law Chrissie Thompson sadly passed away she was 91 years old. She had been ill for a long time and lost her brave struggle in Hairmyres Hospital, her cremation took place on 05.03.19 and Rev Wilson conducted the service at the Linn Crematorium. It was a lovely service and befitting of a special lady.

Chrissie moved with her family to Alloway Drive Spittal in 1951 and shortly afterwards joined the congregation at Rodger Memorial Church. She stayed in the family home for 68 years and was latterly one of the oldest and longest staying residents in Spittal. She was a keen church goer and all her six children attended Sunday School as well as the Brownies, Guides and Boys Brigade.

She was a good daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother who was very proud of each and everyone of her family. She lived her life to the full and overcame many tragedies during her lifetime including the death of her mother when she was only a young girl as well as the early death of her husband Peter and her son Billy. Throughout all her trials and tribulations she approached life head on and always showed tremendous moral fortitude and strength of character.

Chrissie was very talented. First and foremost she was an excellent cook and baker. I always thought that she had the ability to make a dinner out of fresh air and her scones and pancakes were of Mary Berry quality. As well as her ability in the kitchen she was a dressmaker, and a first class gardener. Her garden would not have looked out of place at the Chelsea Flower Show. Even in her eighties you would find her pottering about in her flowerbeds. In her later years she enjoyed dancing and socialising with her friends at tea dances. Once again her skills were to the fore on the dance floor where she could dance the lead if required.

For many years she was on the committee at the Spittal hall and helped her neighbours and friends whenever she could. Throughout her life she always showed the virtues of true Christian fellowship and we as a family will miss her greatly. In her latter years when she was unable to attend church due to her failing health she always liked to read the *Contact* from the church.

Andrew Rae

Golden Wedding Anniversary



Congratulations to Rene and Pat May who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary this summer. Rene And Pat were married in Lylesland Parish Church in Paisley



Welcome Rota for September

1 September	8 September	15 September	22 September	29 September
Chris Mackintosh Elizabeth Cherrie Eleanor Crawford Jean Goldie	Chris Mackintosh Elizabeth Cherrie Eleanor Crawford Lesley Mackintosh	Chris Mackintosh Elizabeth Cherrie Eleanor Crawford George Wynne	Marjorie Maclennan Elizabeth Cherrie Eleanor Crawford Susan Gordon	Marjorie Maclennan Margaret Russell Una Neil Tom Pollock
Evening				
Linda Suttie	Alan Thomson	Chris Mackintosh	Gwen Brown	Helen Morrison



CDs of the full morning service are available to collect after the service. If you, or someone you know, would like to have a copy delivered please contact the church office.



AUTUMN ISSUE OF CONTACT

The deadline for copy is

SUNDAY 15 September

and will be available for distributors on

Sunday 29 September 2019

Items can be handed in to the church
office or e-mailed to the editor,

contact@burnsideblairbeth.church

The Big Weekend—At Home!!

Friday 27—Sunday 29 September 2019

Our Big Weekend At Home will start at 6.30pm on Friday 27 September and runs through until the morning service on Sunday 29 September. There will be lots of different events at different times, and the weekend is for EVERYONE! You can come to all of it, or just a bit of it.

Worship times, the quiz, mealtimes and the ceilidh will be for all ages, but there will be activities for children and crèche available as alternatives during Elaine's talks.

Friday 27 September

6.30pm	Welcome, praise, and Elaine Duncan's
first talk	
7.30pm	Supper
8pm – 9pm	Quiz



Elaine Duncan,
Scottish Bible Society

Saturday 28 September

8.00 – 8.30	Time for Prayer
8.30 – 9.30	Breakfast
9.30 – 10.30	Plans for the day and praise Elaine's second talk

10.30 – 11.00 Depart for **Beebraigs Country Park**, West Lothian [bring your own picnic lunch] – Group Games, walks, play area, returning to church around 4pm.

OR

2.30 – 4.00pm	Afternoon tea at church and Crafts (for those not wishing to go to Beebraigs Country Park)
5.30 – 6.00pm	Dinner together in the Burnside building
6.30 – 7.30pm	Praise time and Elaine's third talk
7.30 – 10.00pm	Ceilidh and Supper



Sunday 29 September

9.00am	Breakfast at church
10.30am	All Age morning worship led by Elaine

We hope you can come along and it would help our planning if you could complete the form on page 3 of the Big Weekend leaflets which are available on the Welcome table just inside the Church doors.

If you have any dietary needs or allergies please let us know.

About Contact

We are always very happy to receive news stories and / or pictures for the magazine. These can be handed in to the Church office or e-mailed to the editor at:

contact@burnsideblairbeth.church

Deadlines for Contact

The deadline and distribution dates for the remainder of the new session year are listed below.

Autumn - deadline 15 September, distributed 29 September
Christmas Edition - deadline 10 November, distributed 24 November
Winter Edition - deadline 12 January 2020, distributed 26 January 2020
Easter Edition - deadline 15 March 2020, distributed 29 March 2020
Summer edition - deadline 17 May2020, distributed 31 May2020

Our **Contact** magazine and **Weekly Notes** are 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 message the office theoffice@burnsideblairbeth.church

Burnside Blairbeth Church * Scottish Charity No. SC006633

Church of Scotland Congregational Reference: 160844

www.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