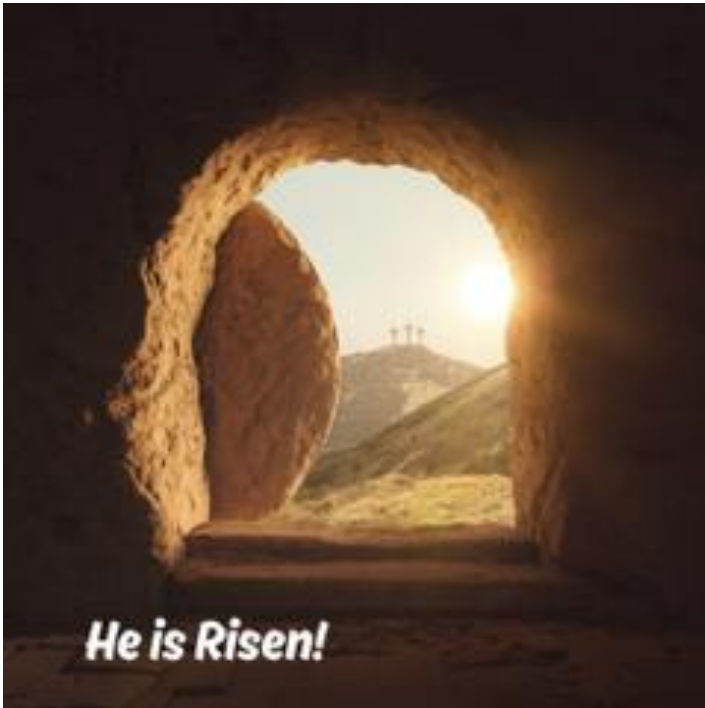


Burnside Blairbeth Church

Contact



No 168

Easter 2024

Dear friends,

When we think about a scandal our minds turn to news headlines, broadcast, and social media obsessing about the issue for days and journalists looking for new angles to report the story. It often involves public figures although it may sometimes be a grave injustice which has affected many people.



In 2 Corinthians Paul refers to the cross of Christ as a scandal. We get a flavour of what he meant when we learn about the earliest known visual depiction of Christ's crucifixion – dated at around AD 200. It is a bawdy cartoon depiction of a man with a donkey's head nailed to a cross, accompanied by an inscription which, when translated reads "Alexamenos worships God." We don't know who Alexamenos was, but the idea that he would worship someone who died on a cross was obviously being ridiculed.

The cross of Christ takes the ultimate symbol of Roman power and brutality and turns what it represented then upside down. Instead of representing the power of the Roman state and instilling fear, the cross has become synonymous with love and service. We are pointed to a man dying for his friends and, we are given the explanation "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15; 3). The Christian poet Malcolm Guite puts it like this "His final breath breathes and bears us through the gates of death."

In the time around Christ's death and shortly thereafter it seemed scandalous that any God would achieve His purposes through such a brutal and humiliating instrument of torture.

However, I would suggest that in today's world, which considers itself sophisticated and scientific, it is the resurrection that is more scandalous. We cannot understand how someone can rise from the dead; therefore, significant swathes of western society refuse to accept that it could have happened.

That is one of the reasons why the scholar Christopher Watkin comments "To take account of the resurrection of Christ is to wake up in a new reality, strikingly different to the world inhabited by those for whom Christ rising from the dead is a myth or a hoax. It transforms our sense of who we are in the world, what we are to do, and why we are to do it." If death is not the end, then everything is turned upside down.

Among the things turned upside down is our attitude to danger. Fear is overcome. Humans think of death as being the ultimate threat. If death is no longer the worst that we can face – which is the message of the resurrection – then that gives courage. This explains why over the centuries, and in various parts of the world today, followers of Jesus have been prepared to die rather than deny Him. Death remains an enemy, but one that has been defeated.

The resurrection also transforms our view of the world. Far from making us believe that social change is impossible or irrelevant, the resurrection gives us a manifesto for social change. The way things are now is not the way they will always be as "we cannot cease to fight against the death which mars the world" (C S Lewis). Since all of creation has been affected by the death produced by sin, then followers of Jesus are called to fight against every area where sin has its effect. The manifesto for social change implied by the resurrection includes a call to care for creation and to believe that God will ultimately redeem the natural world.

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Your friend and minister,

+++++

As I've visited elderly people in our congregation, I've become aware of the number of people who find it difficult to be ready in time for a service in the morning, but for whom an evening service isn't suitable either. We have therefore decided to experiment with a short monthly afternoon service at 3pm on a Sunday. We will be using well known hymns, and it will be shorter than our morning service. The first of these will take place at 3pm on Easter Sunday and thereafter the service will be on the second Sunday of the month. Please spread the word and if you're able to help friends by offering lifts etc, that would be great.

Easter

Every year recently, at this time, I find myself trawling through my computer seeking out images suitable to use for the cover of the Easter copy of Contact and/or an Easter card. As I do this I try to search for an image which contains an “authentic” image of Easter amidst the fluffy bunnies, chocolate chickens and snow-white lambs skipping through green fields. I am not a killjoy – I am no stranger to a Lindt chocolate bunny myself. However the routine images for Easter are not representative of what Christians know as Easter – that is the Crucifixion of Christ and the miracle of His rising on the 3rd day which assures believers that there is life after death. There is no cute, cuddly bunny in any of the biblical images of Easter. There is nothing cute and saccharine about the crucifixion image – indeed it is brutal and, let’s face it, unappealing.

I was thinking of the word Easter itself and cannot find it in any Bible apart from the King James version in Acts 12 vs 4 which refers to Paul in prison. The same verse in the NIV UK, the version we use, does not mention Easter at all but refers to “Passover”. This might be confusing as Passover is a Jewish festival and takes place around the time of our Easter but it is not the same at all – Passover recalls the sparing of Jewish male infants from the final plague in Egypt as death “passed over” the doorways marked by the Jewish families with blood. There are a few explanations of where the word “Easter” comes from – an old Germanic word for the East or a reference to the goddess of Spring (Eostre) are but two.

Who knows really but “Easter” has come into our language to reference the time when we remember Christ’s journey to the cross and beyond. And the point of this article is that this is what we need to hold in our minds when we celebrate Easter – Christ’s sacrifice for

us, and not the hijacking by a commercial circus of the central point of Christianity.

Susan Gordon

Easter services

Date	Time	Location
Monday 25 th – Friday 29 th March	7.30pm	Holy Week services in Stonelaw Church
Monday 25 th and Tuesday 26 th March	4.30pm – 7pm	Drop-in at Burnside Blairbeth Church
Friday 29 th March	11am – 12.30pm	Messy Easter Communion, Burnside Blairbeth Church
Sunday 31 st March	9.30am	Communion, Burnside Blairbeth Church
	10.30am	Easter All Age Worship, Burnside Blairbeth Church
	3pm	Easter Songs of Praise, Burnside Blairbeth Church

Treasurer's Report

Our year end accounts have once again been independently examined by Milne Craig during February and subsequently approved by the Kirk Session. My thanks go to Milne Craig for carrying out this important role for us again and I can confirm that there were no changes to the financial statements that they were presented with.

Each year continues to bring its own financial challenges and this year was no different, however, we continue to give thanks for the gifts bestowed upon us and pray that we use these to focus on bringing the good news of Jesus to our local parish and beyond. Below sets out the key information relating to this, and I would encourage you to attend the Annual Stated Meeting on 24th March. In the meantime, copies of the accounts are now available from either Eleanor Crawford or me.

Before we get into the detail, I would like to record my thanks to the following people –

- ❖ Eleanor Crawford for the huge amount of work that she does throughout the year.
- ❖ For the support and advice of the finance team.
- ❖ Lesley Mackintosh for bringing together the Trustees Report which brings to life all that happens in our congregation throughout the year. Please continue to pray for each area of work and those that are involved in leading it.

I've tried to keep the summary below short with key points for your information rather than lots and lots of numbers. Once you have been through the accounts, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch by dropping me an email at andrewctelfer@yahoo.co.uk

Financial Summary

The financial challenges that we face as a congregation continued in this financial year. We were faced with a deficit in excess of £30,000, however due to a Gift Day (with gifts pre-Gift Aid of £19,167) and an underspend in our Fabric Fund, we were able to finish the year with a surplus of £7,877 in our General Fund.

The focus is on our 3 main funds -

General Fund

- Ended the year with a surplus of £7,877.
- The closing balance last year was £26,660 and this increases it to £34,537 but still well below our position from a few years ago.
- The rolling position since I took over as treasurer prior to this year was a deficit of £29,157 so this surplus improves it to a deficit of £21,280.

Local Mission Fund

- Due to increased giving and gifts from the Gift Day, there was no deficit this year meaning this fund was self-sufficient without a General Fund transfer. It is important that this continues.

Missionary Partners Fund

- Our commitment of £35,000 for the year was met in full and disbursed along with £913 received as additional giving for our Missionary Partners.

In total for these 3 main funds –

Income

- Total income increased from £347,540 to £368,531 (up £20,991 / 6.0%).
- Offerings (including donations) at £275,629 increased by £19,167/7.5% from £256,462.
- Adding tax recovery, total offerings, donations and gift aid increased by £24,758 to £342,663.
- There were legacies of £5,051.
- Other income totalled £19,577 vs £13,634 – an increase of £5,943. The main reason is that we now have a tenant in Church Avenue, which has been great.

Expenditure

- Reduced by £15,366 to £336,484. The main reason for the decrease is the reduction in national church costs ('121' and Presbytery) of £24,355. This was offset mainly by an increase in staff costs of £8,107.
- Local staff costs increased by £8,107 to £99,763.
- The independent examination fee increased to £2,200 from £1,860 and is reflective of a general increase in professional service fees over the last 12-18 months.

In summary

- Our income base, excluding one off gifts from Gift Days, is flat.
- We continue to see an increase in our costs and this will continue in the coming 12 months as we have to face increase gas and electricity costs. I will talk more about this at the Annual Stated Meeting.

- We must continue to ensure that the Local Mission Fund remains self-sufficient.

Please continue to pray for the finances of both our church and the national church in Scotland. Please also pray for those that have difficult decisions to make around the finances of the national church and that as I've noted earlier, our collective focus is on spreading the good news of Jesus.

Specific prayer points this month:

- Local Mission Fund – this fund covers the work of our Church Worker, Pastoral Assistant and Facilities Coordinator along with supporting the important work of the Reachout Trust.
-
- Missionary Partners Fund – for each of the partners that we support and that we can continue to do so this year and beyond.

Andrew Telfer
Treasurer

Burnside Blairbeth Guild



"New Wine, New Wineskins"

January 22nd was a wet, windy day but our hardy guild members braved the elements to attend our meeting and they were very glad they did. We enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of music, fun and laughter led by Christine and Alec, members of the group Luckenbooth. They entertained us with songs and stories, old and new, just the right tonic for a dull, miserable January afternoon.

On February 5th, Rev Jill Clancy gave us an insight into her role as part of the chaplaincy team at Barlinnie Prison. The team conduct worship and provide pastoral care for staff and inmates within the establishment. Jill is a very engaging speaker and she delivered a most interesting and informative talk.

Our next meeting was taken by our own member Kay McDade who gave us an enlightening talk about make-up and how to keep young and beautiful!!! She also demonstrated how make up should be applied, using your truly as a model. I must admit I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

We are now drawing near to the end of the Guild session, and while fundraising is not the aim of the Guild, the efforts we make allow us to give practical help where required. The generous support we have received this year has allowed us to give donations as follows:

Burnside Blairbeth Church	£1,000
Kazunzu a Vine Trust Project	£800
City Mission	£400
LEAP	£370

Our Tuesday coffee morning has been very successful, with between 30 and 40 people joining us for a cuppa and a chat. Donations amounting to £1000 have been received and given to the following:

Rutherglen Food Bank £500

Victim Support £500

We give a huge thank you to all the ladies on the rota who give so freely of their time and baking talents and, of course, to everyone who comes along to support us.

Finally, we look forward to something different this year. Instead of our annual Easter Fayre we have decided to have an evening of light entertainment. This concert will take on Monday 11th March at 7.30pm in the sanctuary and our guests will be a theatre group called Studio 32. Tickets price £7.00 are available from members and we hope this will prove to be a very successful evening. Tea, coffee and goodies will be provided at the interval . Proceeds from this venture will be shared between The Lodging House Mission and Wateraid. Hope to see you there.

Jean Goldie

Transforming Work Group

Over the past eighteen months, a group of twelve people from the congregation have been meeting every few weeks to eat together and work through the LICC course Transforming Work. The course aims to equip Christians to live out their faith in their place of work, and allows a space to consider what it means to be a Christian in a secular workplace. Often we subconsciously separate our lives into church life and 'everything else', but God has called us to work in places where we can get alongside others on a daily basis. What that looks like is different for everyone, and Transforming Work provides an opportunity to gain insight into each other's daily challenges and opportunities.

Each session included:

- A ten-minute 'table talk' video on a key workplace topic.
- Interviews and stories from working Christians
- A Bible passage and teaching on how to read it 'through workers' eyes'
- Discussion questions, assessments, and activities
- Suggestions for prayer and reflection exercises

Accompanying each session are materials on the app for going deeper and preparing for the next session.

At the end of the course, the group felt the benefit of deeper fellowship and shared journeys. It was amazing to be able to reflect on the past eighteen months and see God's hand in our life.

There may be an opportunity to get involved in a future group, and if that is of interest to you, please contact **Carolyn Sampson or Leigh Galloway**.

A message from Christian Aid



“None of what we do would be possible without your ongoing support, and for that, we are truly grateful. Your donations and prayers bring us one step closer to providing life-saving support to those in desperate need.”

This week I joined the annual ‘Christian Aid Scotland’ Webinar. The presenters shared information about some of the projects they have supported this year, and their plans for the next year. These were inspirational, challenging, daunting and often quite depressing as problems of war, climate change, famine etc were raised.

We heard about **survivor and community led response work** in Ukraine, which Scottish Government has helped to fund.

A presentation from **Burundi** highlighted the challenges due to high population density, with over 40% of the population under the age of 15 and few opportunities for employment for those of working age. Change through communities allowed 25 women to put their dreams into practice with the purchase of land in which beans, cassava and maize were grown then sold and the money used for medical bills, feeding and educating the children leading to a significant reduction in malnutrition.

Christian Aid’s **Education and Youth Officer** told us about several projects with children and youth in schools and churches. These included the **Get Creative For Climate Justice** project encouraging art work which was then shown at a global day of action during COP last year. The young folk will be given the opportunity to show the best of the art at parliament in September where they can discuss their

concerns with MPs and MSPs. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/creative-climate-justice-scotland-resources>

Christian Aid have also been working with **Fischy Music** and have produced 3 songs for justice. Supporting materials are currently being produced which can be used alongside the songs.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/global-neighbours/fischy-music>

The **Campaigns and Advocacy** coordinator has been undertaking training with university students, helping them to put their faith into action.

Last year £84,000 was raised in Scotland, and as Christian Aid week approaches in May we are being encouraged to take part in this year's fundraising events. Further details of how we can give by digital envelope will be intimated next month.

Thank you to all who have supported the fundraising events over the past year.

Marjory MacLean,
Burnside Blairbeth Representative on Rutherglen Christian Aid committee

Messy Church

“Out of the Box” are a theatre company based in Inverness who travelled all the way to Burnside for our Messy Church in February.

Through games, music, puppets and a box containing a very special surprise we were reminded together that each of us is “...God’s special treasure.” (1 Peter 2:9). There was dancing, wondering, fun, and laughter.

After the show we enjoyed burgers and sausages, with some great cakes to follow.



Once again Messy Church was busy, with around 100 people of all ages taking part, and it was great to welcome so many from our community.

The values of Messy Church are celebration, creativity, hospitality, all age, and Christ-centred. Each time we host a Messy Church we aim to meet all these aims.

The next time we gather together will be on Good Friday (29 March) for our Messy Communion. This will start at 11am. We will remember Jesus dying for us and we will have a soup and sandwich lunch together.

Jen Robertson



Families enjoying “Out of the Box” at Messy Church in February.

CAFOD



We had a presentation on Sunday 3rd March from **Gabriel Umoren** who works for CAFOD.

CAFOD is an international development organisation which offers support to people across the globe who are living in poverty whatever their religion. The work is focused in work in 40 countries across the regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

There has been plenty to deal with in recent years including climate change, natural disasters, war and conflict in many locations, COVID and the cost of living crisis.

CAFOD rely heavily on the expertise and knowledge of local organisations and give grants to those who need most help and also to local organisations to assist them with their work.

In 2023 CAFOD made 594 grants of partner organisations totalling £41.8 million and these funds reached more than 1 million vulnerable people.

There has been a particular focus since 2012 in Syria which accounts for more than 25% of the global refugee population since the civil war began. Other key areas of support are the Ukraine, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and most recently Gaza. Situations in these locations are desperate and the people at the bottom of society, women and children always suffer.

Afghanistan is a country which has been in turmoil for many years and is one of the poorest countries in the world. CAFOD gives support to local farmers to grow crops and sell them at markets in vulnerable communities.



They try to promote women's empowerment by working with self-help groups and teaching women leadership and business skills. They partner with local experts to challenge some of the systems which keep Afghan families in poverty.

I am sure in the places where CAFOD works their support is a positive light in many dark situations and we give thanks for organisations such as CAFOD whose work in dangerous places can provide hope.

If anyone wants to find out more about the work of CAFOD please speak to Gabriel.

With thanks to Gabriel for the information on which this article is based.

185th Scout Group

Coffee Morning
Sat 27th April 24
10am - 2pm

185th Scout Group will be hosting Coffee Morning at
Burnside Blairbeth Church,
Church Avenue,
Burnside, G73 5BX

We will have following stalls:

Baking, Axe throwing, Beat the Goalie, Face Painting, Create your own Craft and a Hot Dog stand which have an additional cost.

Entry: Adult £3, Children £1.50
Entitles you to a Drink and a Cake

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Announcements

Say it with flowers

The Church flowers on Sunday 3rd March were kindly donated by Mrs Joan Low in memory of her son David who died in a climbing accident in Glencoe.

If you would like to commemorate a loved one or mark a special occasion the Flower Guild will be happy to help.

Should you wish to do so please contact Mrs Rose Beattie in person or telephone 0141 647 3447.



The next Issue of Contact

Copy Deadline: Sunday 26 May

Available for distribution: Sunday 9 June

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, 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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