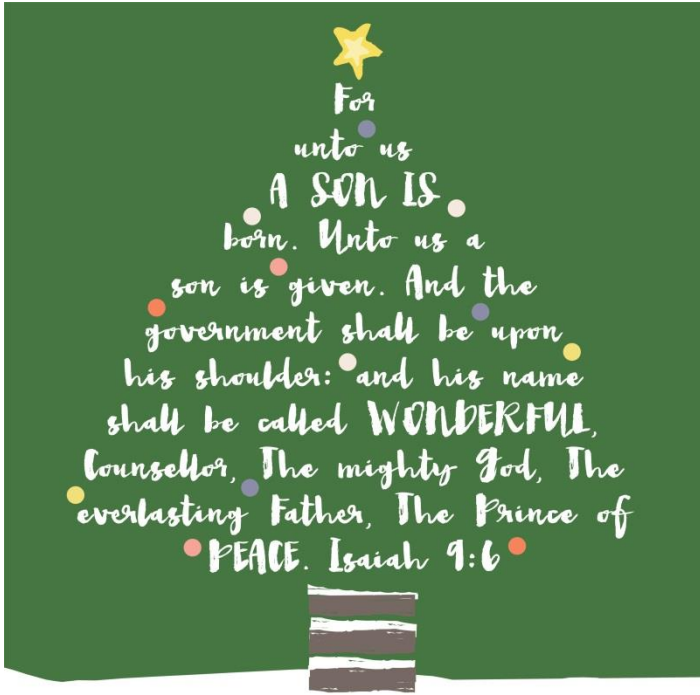


# Burnside Blairbeth Church



# Contact

No 148 November/December 2020

Dear friends,

Last Christmas seems like a lifetime ago. At the beginning of 2020 we could not have foreseen what the year would hold – which is a reminder that it is often a blessing not to know the future! There are now many people working from home who would happily lose the word “Zoom” from their vocabulary. Nevertheless, if we had said 30 years ago that “virtual meetings” (would we have understood the term?) would be so readily accessible I suspect we would have struggled to believe it.



So why does it still feel second best to be able to chat by Zoom, Facetime, Microsoft teams etc? Maybe it’s because we can’t choose what we see – the background may look great, but the reality may be that the person on the other end of the call is surrounded by clutter. There can be an element of deception in “virtual contact” that isn’t possible when we meet in the flesh. There are also the limitations of the call – when the broadband becomes unstable the person on the other end may become distorted or disappear altogether. Then there’s the lack of touch – we know the other people are not simply a picture on a screen, but we can’t reach out and touch them. Despite the things we are grateful for about technology, these reasons and more explain why the idea of a “digital Christmas” was so unappealing to so many people when it was first mooted.

Perhaps this helps us recapture some of the reasons that the incarnation is so important to us. At Christmas we give thanks that God was made flesh and bones in the person of a tiny baby. Jesus experienced all that we experience and lived a fully three-dimensional life at a particular time in a particular place. Empathy is a quality we value and so the fact that God empathises with us is a great comfort. The gospels show Jesus experiencing human limitations – hunger, sadness, temptation, stress and so on. The writer to the Hebrews put in these terms – *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin.”* (Hebrews 4:15) In terms of humanity’s fundamental need – which the Bible labels as salvation – that was something which only God could fulfil. In the Old Testament, prophets had looked forward to the day when God was to come in person for deliverance of his people and the establishment of his kingdom. The big surprise – and indeed the reason many people did not recognise Jesus as the Christ – was that when God did come in person He did so in such inauspicious circumstances.

As we remember that in Jesus, God became human we are pointed to the virgin birth. When He left the earth Jesus did so supernaturally, by His resurrection and ascension, so it is unsurprising and entirely fitting that He arrived by supernatural means too. The circumstances of His birth are miraculous too because the “second Adam”, which is a title we sometimes use for Jesus, was born from a woman who was, like all humans, a sinner, but He was sinless. This meant that He was able to undo the consequences of the Fall when the first Adam disobeyed God. Adam disobeyed God – Jesus obeyed Him when he went to his death, having said in the Garden of Gethsemane – “not my will but your will be done”.

One of the names Jesus was given was Immanuel which of course means “God with us.” This year we have perhaps developed a deeper understanding of what it means to be “with” people. Whatever Christmas holds for you and those you love this Christmas, may you have a renewed sense of the presence of God through His Son Jesus. May God help us to live out the joy of being followers of “Immanuel.”

Your friend and minister,

William

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## **Meeting for worship**

When we are able to meet in the Church building, you can register by contacting Marjory Maclean

If you have any questions or concerns about registering to attend worship or how we will maintain our records, please contact Marjory or Alan Hudson.

## Christmas Services at Burnside Blairbeth Church

Due to Covid-19, there are lots of changes to our usual Christmas services, but you can watch online!

- ❖ every Sunday morning at 10am
  
- ❖ **Quiet Christmas – a reflective service**  
On Sunday 13th December at 4pm
  
- ❖ **Christmas crib service for all ages**  
on Christmas Eve at 6.30pm
  
- ❖ **A traditional Carol Service**  
on Christmas Eve at 8pm

All of these services live-streamed on our Facebook page and YouTube channel, and available after that on YouTube.

Check out our website for details and updates

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



## Finance Update

### Treasurer's Report

As we approach the end of our financial year, please see below the financial update for the 10 months to 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Currently we have a shortfall in all 3 funds and below summarises these and the purpose of each fund. Please prayerfully consider these over the next few weeks as we look to end the year without having a shortfall.

**General Fund** – The current shortfall is £12,684. We have taken a number of steps this year to mitigate this as much as possible including making use of the job retention scheme and minimising costs such as heat and light with the buildings being used much less than usual. The General Fund covers the day to day running costs of the church along with our contribution to the Church of Scotland. This contribution has never been more important to support congregations across Scotland and ensure that the good news of Jesus can be heard by all.

**Local Mission Fund** – The current shortfall is £2,020. This fund covers the costs of the mission happening in Burnside Blairbeth and the surrounding area and is important to ensuring we have the resources available to be alongside those in our local community.

**Missionary Partners Fund** – The current shortfall is £920. We support a number of partners across the world and are committed to financially assisting them. During the course of the year we regularly hear from each of them and most recently heard from Andrew in Bolivia and Carolyn in Croatia. We continue to hold all of them in our prayers.

#### Pledge and Gift Day

It is 2 years since we had a Pledge and Gift Day and we will be doing something similar this year albeit in a slightly different way. This year it will take place over the 2 Sundays 29<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> December. The purpose of the Gift Day is to focus on the current year shortfalls noted above and the Pledge Day being our commitment to giving over the next 2 years.

You will receive an email or letter ahead of this, but it will be a very informal process acknowledging the restrictions we face. If you have any questions once you receive the information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

I'd like to thank you all for your continued giving during what has been a very difficult year. We give thanks to God for his provision and praise him for his faithfulness to us as a congregation over the years.

#### Financial Position - 10 months to 31 October 2020

##### **Freewill Offerings**

- Total freewill offerings of £213,231 for the 10 months to 31 Oct were £7,701 (-3.5%) lower than for the same period in 2019 and were £35,814 (-14.4%) lower than the plan for the 10 months.
  - General Fund offerings of £146,586 were £11,361 (-7.2%) lower than last year and £25,754 (-14.9%) below plan.
  - Local Mission Fund offerings of £42,421 were £1,198 (+2.9%) higher than last year, but £9,374 (-18.1%) below plan.
  - Missionary Partner Fund offerings of £24,224 were £2,462 (+11.3%) higher than last year and £686 (-2.8%) below plan.

##### **Offerings for Special Purposes**

- With the building being closed, there has been very little additional giving for special purposes since May as the vehicle for that would normally be our regular Sunday morning worship.
- Offerings and donations for the 10 months in respect of sponsorship of children at Rhema School, Kampala, Uganda, amounted to £1,170.

##### **Expenditure**

- Congregational expenditure for the 10 months to 31 Oct at £113,441 was £996 (0.9%) higher than for the same period in 2019, but £21,270 (-15.8%) lower than plan.

- General Fund expenditure was £5,194 (-8.5%) lower than last year, and £17,227 (-23.6%) lower than plan.
- Local Mission Fund expenditure was £6,283 (+12.3%) higher than last year and £3,946 (-6.4%) lower than plan.
- Fabric Fund expenditure amounted to £11,040 for the 10-month period (full year plan of £20,000).

### **Allocations / Distributions**

- For the 10 months to 31 Oct £127,634 has been provided in respect of our contributions to the Church of Scotland (Ministry and Mission contribution: £120,623 / Glasgow Presbytery dues: £7,011).
- £30,833 has been provided for in respect of Missionary Partner Fund distributions. The distributions from the 2020 fund will continue in the coming weeks.
- For the 10 months to 31 Oct the year to date Local Mission Fund distribution to the Reachout Trust is £8,333.

### **Main Fund Balances / Shortfall**

- Overall, across the 3 main funds there was a shortfall of £15,624, £16,981 behind plan.
- General Fund: for the 10 months to 31 Oct the shortfall was £12,684 compared to the planned surplus of £1,360, £14,044 behind plan.
- Local Mission Fund: for the 10 months there was a shortfall of £2,020, £2,020, below plan.
- Missionary Partner Fund: for the 10 months there was a shortfall of £920, £918 below plan.

Andrew Telfer  
Treasurer

## Burnside Blairbeth Guild



### “Going the Extra Mile”

We are now well into Autumn, a time of change. The Autumn leaves have given us a glorious display of browns and golds this year, but are now gradually falling to the ground. This year not only have the trees changed colour, but our day to day life has changed and many might say life has lost its' colour. This is a challenge we never anticipated, however, we believe in a God who is the God of yesterday, today and all our tomorrows.

By this time in the Autumn, we should have been well into our Guild programme of activities, but not this year, and we are all missing meeting together. Some of us have managed to attend the church service on a Sunday since it has resumed, and others have watched these services online. Others have “Zoomed” together at coffee time, and yet others have kept in touch by phone, or by a conversation over the garden wall. But it is difficult to keep in touch.

The challenge for us as Guild members this year, when we are not able to meet together, is to think of ways in which we can keep in touch and look out for each other, help one another and continue to uphold one another in prayer as we all try to “go the extra mile”. We are sorry to hear that some of our members have been going through difficult times, with illness, bereavement and other challenging circumstances. So if you need help, please do get in touch with us and we'll try our best to help - even if it is just to lend a listening ear. And as these challenging times continue, let us remember God's words in Isaiah 41:13 “I am the Lord Your God, who holds your right hand, and I tell you, don't be afraid. I will help you.”

Thanks to all who responded to the appeal in the last magazine for donations to the Blythswood Christmas Shoebox Appeal and knitting for the “Fish and Chip Babies”. Both projects have been well supported, and I am sure your efforts will be greatly appreciated by the recipients in due course.

I leave you with some weekly prayer suggestions from the Guild Newsletter:



- Monday:** Lay all that you are anxious or concerned about at the foot of the cross, and ask God to give you peace in these uncertain times.
- Tuesday:** Pray for those involved in chaplaincy across Scotland; in schools, prisons, hospitals and with sports clubs. Ask that God will open up opportunities for them to minister to people.
- Wednesday:** Pray for the National leadership of the Guild, asking God to give them inspiration and encouragement for the days ahead.
- Thursday:** Give thanks for all who work within the NHS and ask for protection for them.
- Friday:** Think particularly of our project partners working here in Scotland - Boys Brigade Scotland, CrossReach and the Sailor's Society.
- Saturday:** Ask that God will root out hatred wherever it raises its head.
- Sunday:** Ask God to protect our friends in the Bori Children's Home in India where cases of COVID-19 have come in large numbers to the village next to them.



Catherine Nelson

## Church Worker's Report

Hi everyone,

In what has been a challenging time for everyone, I have felt so blessed to see how God has continued to move in our children and families work. God is not in lockdown and he is still at work, and it feels like an exciting time of him refocusing and reshaping how we do things. Part of this includes me taking part in a year-long mentoring scheme called **Growing Young Disciples**.

I am being personally mentored by Mel Lacey, who has an abundance of experience in Youth and Children's work. This includes meeting with her on Zoom, weekly reading with a focus to use this to re-strategize how we develop and grow young disciples as a church. I would really appreciate prayer as I am on this course and I look forward to updating you all on its progress.

Below is an update on all that has been happening over the past few months and an exciting few new announcements.

### Switch

Switch youth group has met in person fortnightly since October, meeting outdoors around a fire pit and now moving towards indoor meetings due to the winter weather! Even with restrictions each meet up has been a special time together, please pray for the young people and the volunteers as we continue.



## **Sunday Clubs**

With Covid restrictions Sunday clubs has been unable to run as it did in the past. However, we have are now able to run a group for the children alongside our second Sunday morning service, with the children included in the 50 registered for the service. We meet in the creche and learn together around the craft that follows the all age talk. It has been so great being together again and for the children to be able to see each other! Please pray that God continues to bless our time together for the children as they try to adapt to these difficult times. Below is a picture of us meeting outside to draw what we have learned from the book of Philippians.



## **Youth Bible Study**

As of Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> of November we started a youth Bible study group on Zoom for those in high school. We will be meeting fortnightly to learn together around the Bible, talk about the tough questions and let Gods word shape us and guide us. Plus, there is cake!! Pray for the young people and leaders, that God would take us to a

deeper understanding of him and his word. If you want any more info please get in contact.

### **Virtual JUMP**

We had a very special time in August, meeting on Zoom together after a long time apart. As of Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November, JUMP will be meeting fortnightly on Zoom. We will hang out, learn together from the Bible, play some games, and get crafty. It will be from 6.00pm – 7.00pm for P1-P7. More info will be released soon, if you are interested in your child coming along please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Andy McArthur  
Church Worker

### **Tearfund Quiz**

On behalf of Tearfund can I thank everyone who took part in the quiz on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> Nov, and for all of the contributions to their work - over £400 so far.

Thank you also to Andrew Polson, our MC, and Ross, our IT guru – we look forward to future events.

Message from Tearfund: “Every pound raised will transform the lives of people like Alaya from Malawi. Alaya can no longer feed her family. Weather patterns that have guided her farming for generations have changed. Crops are failing and floods are bringing sickness and disease.”



Lives are at risk – more information at

<https://www.tearfund.org/about-you/fundraise/the-big-quiz-night/running-on-empty/>

Many thanks again

Marjory MacLean

## Messy Christmas - Christmas Windows

We are putting together Messy Church Advent bags to give out to all our Messy Church families. These will be delivered to homes during the last weekend of November just as the season of Advent begins.

In the bags will be ten cards with ten days of advent readings and fun activities which will help us consider the nativity story. Every day we will add an element to our Christmas Windows in our homes – a display from the inside will remind us that in the busyness and difference of this Christmas period, Christ has come for us. And from the outside, neighbours walking by will see and be challenged by that message of hope that is as true and as needed in this year as in any other.

The bag will also contain some special treats to go along with the activities. If you know of someone who would like a bag, please get in touch!

We also plan to hold a Messy Christmas physical get together on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 4.30pm in the Burnside Building. This will follow all the guidance which has been sent to us by the Church of Scotland to safely run Messy Church within the current restrictions. Households will need to book into this Messy Church and if there is enough demand we will repeat the event on the following Saturday at the same time.

Messy blessings

Jen Robertson



## **Our Missionary Partners**

### **Update from Release International - November 2020**

Greetings to all at Burnside Blairbeth Church and thank you so much for your ongoing prayers, and support for my work with Release International.

Like everyone else, over the past 9 months I have had to adjust to a new way of working. The main part of my role for Release is church engagement which involves preaching and speaking in churches across Scotland, sharing about the work of Release and encouraging Christians here to stand with our persecuted brothers and sisters across the world. Thanks to video-editing software and video-conferencing platforms I have been able to continue this work largely uninterrupted.

There have been some challenges to this new way of working and there is nothing that can quite replace face-to-face in-person contact. However, there have also been opportunities: I am now able to be in more than one place at the same time, I can speak to a church in the Hebrides on a wet Thursday night without leaving the house, and I have been able to bring international partners into more direct contact with our supporters. I am thankful for all of these positives and I am sure a lot of what we learn during this period will continue to be useful on the other side of lockdown.

One online event I recently helped to deliver was the virtual tour of Release partner Rev. Hassan John from Nigeria who spoke at our Scotland event on Tuesday 3 November. Hassan told us about the terrible suffering Christians are experiencing in North and Central Nigeria, being killed or forced off their land by Boko Haram and militant Fulani groups. The scale of the violence is difficult to take in. But he also spoke about the courage of Christian pastors who choose to remain in the region to share the gospel of peace. They are seeing people from all backgrounds come to faith in Jesus. After his presentation I was able to put some of the attendees' questions to Hassan which included the observation that Christians in the north of Nigeria may well have a much better understanding of what it really means to follow Jesus than we do. (You can still watch the Northern Ireland version of the event using this link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXYF-X3BnE&ab\\_channel=ReleaseInternational](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXYF-X3BnE&ab_channel=ReleaseInternational))

Since March, the global pandemic and varying degrees of lockdown have impacted many of our international partners and projects. The ability to travel both internationally and in-country has been limited with some areas being completely closed off for periods. I have had to cancel a planned trip to visit ministry partners in Asia twice. In some countries the authorities have used lockdown to further

persecute the church and discriminate against Christians. In other places, such as Egypt and Pakistan where the Christian minority is often poor and marginalised, daily wage workers have been left without any source of income to feed their families. Release partners have been able to provide direct help to vulnerable Christians in both those countries as well as to Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia and displaced Iranians in Turkey.

James Fraser

Release International is an inter-denominational Christian ministry working through local church partners in more than 25 countries, helping persecuted Christians prayerfully, pastorally and practically.

## Blythswood Shoebox Appeal

A big 'THANK YOU' to all the members in our church family who supported the Christmas shoebox appeal this year. The response has been amazing with so many full boxes, money and extra fillers being donated.

Our young people who go to Switch on a Sunday night have also been able to join in with filling shoe boxes for those in need. They have enjoyed being part of making a difference for those less fortunate than themselves.

Despite the difficulties we are all experiencing at this time it is wonderful that we are able to continue to show God's love through our giving to others.

As we launched the appeal this year, I had no idea the number we would reach would be 101 shoeboxes, which is just wonderful.

Many thanks again to you all.

Andrea Thomson and Kay Dalby





## The Lodging House Mission

The Lodging House Mission is running an appeal to support homeless people in our city with a Winter Weather Pack

A Winter Weather Packs contains;

- ❖ gloves,
- ❖ hat,
- ❖ scarf,
- ❖ face mask,
- ❖ and a phone number providing access to support and chaplaincy services.

Each pack will be delivered to an individual who finds themselves isolated and affected by homelessness this festive season.

You could sponsor the cost of a Winter weather pack at £12 or simply make a donation to our Christmas Appeal and help us to continue to care for and support those who are isolated and without a home over the festive period.

Donations can be delivered to the Lodging House Mission, 35 E Campbell St,  
Glasgow G1 5DT between 7:30am till 4pm, Monday till Friday  
or can be delivered to Gus Smeaton at 17 Kincath Avenue, Burnside.  
No wrapping required.



*“Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”*

Luke 3: 11

## Book review

### “Jennifer A Life Precious To God” by Karen Palmer

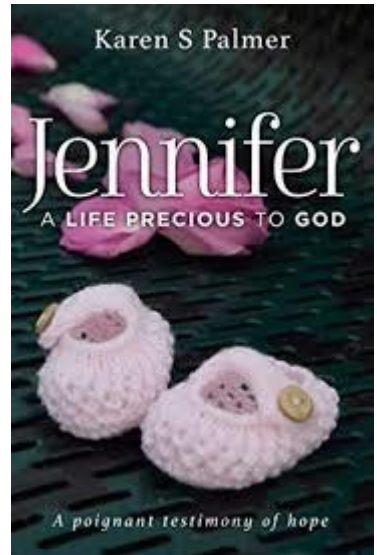
This is a beautifully written, honest book in which Karen (a retired doctor) describes the journey she continues to travel with her husband Gordon (a Church of Scotland minister) following the ultrasound finding of serious abnormalities in their unborn baby in 1993; the delivery of their daughter Jennifer who died a few hours after birth, cooied in their arms and the many blessings Jennifer’s short life has brought to them and others.

Karen shares many different emotions including hope and disappointment; love and confusion; the joy of being a mother and the grief and suffering of bereavement being comforted in the knowledge that each life is precious to God whose heart aches for all who grieve. Karen’s faith shines throughout the book with the reminder that we can trust God who always keeps His promises and who loves us more than we can possibly imagine, despite our mess, weaknesses and failures – all praise and glory belong to Him.

As well as being a deeply moving true story, I would commend this book to professionals working in general practice, maternity and neonatal care; and to friends, family and those who support and care for individuals faced with making difficult decisions in pregnancy.

Marjory MacLean

The book is available from the church library - contact Lesley Mackintosh.



## **Announcements:**

### **Obituary - Geoff Fielding**

Geoff Fielding died on 4<sup>th</sup> November aged 86. Geoff was born in Manchester and grew up in Halifax before the family moved to Clydebanks in 1947. He did his national service as an Air Gunner in the RAF. He worked in the Clydesdale bank for many years, retiring as manager of the Merrylee Park Branch in 1987. Retirement was merely an opportunity for Geoff to do other things. The organisations he was involved in were too numerous to mention, but included Glasgow City Mission, Church House Bridgeton, Glasgow Presbytery and Rutherglen Probus. Often, he served as treasurer and it seemed that he very rarely got involved in anything without ending up serving on the committee!

When Geoff and Helen came to Burnside in 1961, he became part of Burnside Church as it then was. He became a member of the board in 1965, an elder in 1967 and Session Clerk from 1982-2002. Geoff was at the heart of the Regnal – both in our own congregation and nationally. His interest in history meant that it was natural for him to maintain our church archives and write a history of the congregation. We fondly remember and give thanks for his faithfulness, loyalty, encouragement, hard work, gentle nature and so many other godly qualities.

We extend our sympathies to Helen, Douglas and Anne, as well as Geoff's four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Although the last few years were hard for Geoff and the family, we give thanks that he has gone to be with the Saviour who he loved and served.

### **Thank You Message**

Helen, Douglas and Anne would like to express their thanks for the many cards and thoughtful messages they received after the death of Geoff.

Their kind words have brought much comfort knowing how highly he was regarded.

Helen Fielding



## New Baby

David and Amy Samson are delighted to announce the safe arrival of **Isaac David** on Saturday 14 November 2020.



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During this Lockdown period sermons are available on the Church Facebook page at:

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

And on YouTube – search for:

**Burnside Blairbeth Church live stream**

CDs and/or DVDs will be available as soon as possible after the live 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 or [Kate.Airlie@burnsideblairbeth.church](mailto:Kate.Airlie@burnsideblairbeth.church)**

**Contact** magazine and **Weekly Notes** are 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)

**The next Issue of Contact**

**The deadline for copy is**

**Sunday 17 January 2021**

**and will be available for distribution**

**Sunday 31 January 2021**

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