

Burnside Blairbeth Church

# Contact



No 137

Winter 2019

Dear friends,

“None of us are getting any younger,” “Things just aren’t like the old days”, “I remember when.....” All of these are common conversation starters when you get to a certain age. They are guaranteed to bring on nostalgia and perhaps gloom about the present. We can apply them individually, but if we are brutally honest, we can also apply them about the church.



The subject of church decline is one which often provokes one of two responses. People wallow in it and use the evidence of this decline to support their pet theories. “If only the church would...” then we would be in a much better place. That’s one way in which people deal with the issue. The alternative is to avoid it totally. It is the subject that dare not be raised because it is too depressing.

Church decline is real and has been slowly, and now not so slowly, affecting the church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland for decades. For a time, we could perhaps pretend we were immune in Burnside Blairbeth Church because there were always lots of people around and finances were healthy. For the last few years it has been more of a struggle to meet our financial targets and commitments, while the gaps have been obvious at worship and it is harder to find people to take on all sorts of jobs. When we haven’t struggled to find people, often it is because the same people have been doing the same job faithfully for years, sometimes long after they wanted to step down. Whatever once may have been the case, we certainly now can’t claim immunity from the reality of decline.

Perhaps you’re wishing by now that I’d stuck with the second response to this tricky church decline issue and avoided it entirely. However, avoiding hard truths doesn’t make them go away, and so the Kirk Session are currently in the process of looking at the change in size of our church. We can no longer consider our church to be a large church – medium sized would be a more realistic assessment.

I don’t know about you, but my first response to that change is one of sadness. I love Burnside Blairbeth Church and would love more people to join our church family as we worship Jesus together. It seems to me that if we don’t feel sad in some way about the decline of the church, then perhaps we don’t really value the church. That sadness should drive us to pray for our church and our community because it would be wonderful for the pattern to be reversed.

But it is not enough simply to feel sad and to remain there or even simply to pray and wait for reversal to happen – that will ultimately just lead to a melancholy apathy or despair. We need to grapple with what the change in our congregational demographics means. We need to acknowledge who we are now and what that means for the way we organise our congregational life.

There have been some positives in the changes that we have seen. It is now easier to know more people in the church – we can be more like a family because more people know each other well. All ages can be together more – both for reasons of principle and practicality. On principle, it is good for all ages to do more things together, because that is the way it works in healthy families and our children are as much part

of the church family as adults. On the grounds of practicality, the people who lead our work among children and young people work very hard, but there are fewer of them, so when we do things together it helps them. It is also easier to pastor one another as in a smaller gathering we notice when people are missing. These are some of the things that are already happening because of our changed demographics.

There will be other harder decisions to be made. As resources are limited, we need to prioritise in terms of people and money, so that we make the best use of what we have. One of the questions we have been asking as a Kirk Session is “Where is it obvious that God is at work?” Those are the areas we need to focus on. We should also be driven to evangelism – church growth, or even slowing the rate of decline, is impossible if we don’t share the good news with our friends and family.

I’m sure there are other issues raised by this subject. It is not an easy subject, but neither is it one to cause us to despair – Jesus promised that the gates of Hell would not prevail against the church. Please pray for the Kirk Session as we grapple with this, pray that God will bless the church in the west, but also pray that if He is saying something to us that we are missing, we will hear what He is saying before it is too late.

Your friend and minister,

William Wilson



### **Release International Film Event – Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> February at 6pm**

Release International are hosting a special event in the Burnside building to show the film **Tortured for Christ**. This is a cinematic retelling of the testimony of Pastor Richard Wurmbrand as written in his international bestselling book. This film was produced to honour the 50th anniversary of the book’s release. Filmed entirely in Romania, including in the very prison where Pastor Wurmbrand endured torture and solitary confinement, this powerful film uniquely presents the story as a dramatisation rather than through interviews.

We will be showing this film in aid of Release International – Voice of Persecuted Christians. There will be a retiring offering for the work of Release.

The film lasts 70 mins and tea and coffee will be served following this.

Marjory MacLean, World Church Team Leader

## THE GUILD

### ONE JOURNEY, MANY ROADS

A Happy New Year to all our members and friends.

#### Looking Back:

Our Christmas Fayre took place in the church hall at Roger Memorial. We were blessed with a fine dry day and an amazing turn out. The magnificent sum of £1,500 was raised. Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way, to help make it such a success.

Due to the ongoing work in the main hall, Burnside building, the Burnside Hotel was the chosen venue for our annual Christmas dinner. 60 ladies attended and enjoyed a delicious festive meal and an evening of Christmas themed entertainment.

#### Looking forward to 2019:

By the time you read this article, our opening meeting will have taken place. 70 ladies attended on 7th January when we were treated to a wonderful evening of fun and laughter from Liz Robertson who read some of the poems she had written. She then challenged us to compose a poem of our own starting with the line "I would like to get a valentine". Many members rose to the occasion and the results were quite hilarious.

Our next meeting is on Monday 21st January when Irene Dick will deliver a 'Handful of Burns'. We look forward to an interesting evening

#### Dates for Your Diary:

- |               |                                   |                             |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| February 4th  | Trades House                      | Jan Dobson                  |
| February 18th | Dear Green Place                  | Mr D. Atkins Glasgow Parks  |
| March 4th     | Hymns and Stories                 | Ruth Hodgson                |
| March 9th     | Spring Fayre                      | probably at Roger Memorial. |
| March 18th    | AGM followed by a musical evening |                             |

### TUESDAY COFFEE MORNING

The donations received at the Tuesday coffee mornings from August to December amounted to £835.72. This money will be shared equally between the Beatson Hospital and Carolyn Tomasovic. Thank you to all the ladies who give so freely of their time and talents to provide and serve the morning coffee and home made treats. Thanks also to all the people who turn up regularly to support us.

## Notes from Kirk Session Meeting on 7 December 2018

One of the consequences of the passage of time between Kirk Session meetings and the next issue of Contact is that some of the matters discussed relate to events which have already happened by the time Contact is published.

An example of that is the review which the elders undertook regarding our experimenting with **Intergenerational Worship** and **Café Church**. The feedback from Café Church at the end of October had been good and as a result another morning service in Café Church format is taking place on 27 January which is the Sunday on which this issue of Contact appears.

We have already engaged in the first stage of the **Community Bible Experience** and the Session decided to continue with it but using the 16 week, rather than the 8 week, format. This means that it will take 8 weeks to read through the second half of the New Testament and this will be done in two slots, the first of which will be the four Sunday evenings starting on 3 March.

It has already been announced to the congregation that **Les Queen** will be continuing in the role of Pastoral Associate under his current arrangement until the end of March, and that he will be working reduced hours from then until the end of June when he will retire.

The **Food Hygiene** report was tabled and it was thought that there should be opportunity for members to participate in another food hygiene course. The importance of ensuring that food hygiene standards were maintained at all times was emphasised, particularly for those who were using the kitchen as part of a hall let.

John Redshaw spoke to the **Environment Report** which he had prepared and the recommendations contained in it were approved. (A copy of the report is available from John for anyone who would be interested to read the detail.)

In relation to **World Church** matters Marjory MacLean informed the Session that Andrew Robertson had applied to Latin Link to go on a short term assignment to Bolivia.

Alan Hudson reported on behalf of the **Property Team** and Alan Robertson reported on **Finance**. The financial position as reported then has, of course, changed substantially and Alan's report regarding the year end outcome appears elsewhere in this edition of Contact.

Lesley Mackintosh spoke about a **Trauma Healing Course** which she plans to run. This course is Biblically based and anyone interested can get more information from Lesley.

The need for a new editor for **Contact** was emphasised. (Since the need was made known Ian Macdonald has agreed to fill the role on a temporary basis until the summer; but a permanent appointment is still required.)

The main topic for discussion at the meeting was in relation to matters which had been discussed at the Kirk Session conference in November when the elders had started thinking about the implications of our church being more a 'medium sized' rather than a 'large' congregation. It was acknowledged that for a variety of reasons the overall size of the congregation is diminishing and that, as a result, it was important to ask, as a starting point, where God is at work within our congregation and parish. The elders divided up into groups for discussion and feedback about 'where God is presently working' included Little Creations, Messy Church, in relationships and conversations amongst people, people talking and eating together, events such as the Weekend Away@Home, engagement with shopkeepers in Burnside and Spittal, Reachout Trust, in families and so on. The Session will be continuing to think about the implications for us being a 'medium sized' congregation having regard to the work we do, the resources available and the expectations we have. Any member of the congregation is most welcome to provide input to this discussion and if you would like to do so please speak to me or to William.

The next meeting of the Kirk Session is on Wednesday 6 February at 7.30pm.

Alan Thomson - Session Clerk

## **MARCH ISSUE OF CONTACT**

The deadline for copy is

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March**

**Copies will be available for distributors on**

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Items can be handed in to the church

office or e-mailed to the editor:

**contact@burnsideblairbeth.church**

Burnside Blairbeth Church

Scottish Charity No. SC006633

Church of Scotland Congregational Reference: 160844

## **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.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### *Financial Position - Year to December 2018 / Gift and Pledge Day*

The annual accounts for the year to December 2018 are currently in draft form, being reviewed by our independent examiner, Sandy Mowat, to be approved by the elders, as trustees of the congregation, at the Kirk Session meeting on 6 February. The trustees' annual report and financial statements will be available at the Stated Annual Meeting on Sunday 17 March or on request prior to the meeting.

Meantime, I am able to report provisionally that we ended the 2018 financial year in surplus with no shortfalls in our three main funds. Following our Gift and Pledge Day, held at the end of November, we received 82 additional exceptional offering gifts for the 2018 year amounting to approximately £46,000 including gift aid. We praise the Lord for his faithfulness and for his continuing provision, giving thanks for each and every gift which was made.

Looking forward, we have also received 99 pledges relating to 2019 and 2020, with the total amount of £178,281 pledged to date for 2019, equating to an average offering pledge of £1,801 before adding gift aid. We also give thanks to God for these offering commitments. If you have not had a chance to complete a pledge form there is still opportunity to do so. If you would like further information please speak to Eleanor Crawford, Marion Boyd or me.

On behalf of the finance committee and the Kirk Session I want to thank everyone who made an offering during 2018 and also to all who made an additional gift and / or pledge in response to our Gift and Pledge Day.

We pray that as we continue to learn to give ourselves to the Lord that we may know his grace.

*“And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.” 2 Corinthians 8:1-5*

Alan Robertson - Treasurer

## **David Mitchell**

David Mitchell died on 27<sup>th</sup> December aged 90. He was born in Kirkcaldy but was one of the original residents of Larchfield Drive. He worked for Rolls Royce – mainly in the East Kilbride plant – for most of his working life. David married May, having met her on holiday at Whitley Bay, in 1954. May died earlier in 2018. David was father to Myra and Colin and was very proud of his four grandchildren. He was a quiet cheery man who always seemed to have a twinkle in his eye. He served on the church board for around 40 years and was very faithful in his attendance there and at Sunday worship when he was still able. We give thanks for his service and continue to remember the family in prayer.

## **James Stewart**

On behalf of myself and the family I would like to thank William for his pastoral care and support following the sudden death of my husband, Jim Stewart in September. Thank you to all our Church friends for the many cards, flowers, visits, gifts of food and especially prayers which helped sustain us all at what continues to be a difficult time.

Christine Stewart

## **Contact editor required!**

We need a new Editor to compile the Church magazine six times a year. You need to be someone who has good written communication skills, is regularly around the congregation and not afraid to go out and commission articles when required! Good word processing skills would also help, and ideally someone who is familiar with Publisher, although this is an easily acquired skill.

If you think this is you, please speak to Lesley Mackintosh.

## **“Contact” details**

Our **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 contact the office.

If **emailing the office or any church-based email** please ensure that you use the **new addresses** ending in [@burnsideblairbeth.church](mailto:@burnsideblairbeth.church) as the old ones may no longer work.

## World Church Partners – an update

Over the last couple of years, there have been quite a few changes in our list of World Church Partners (otherwise known as Missionary Partners). Some of our long-standing partners have retired and have been replaced by new ones, three of whom are featured in this edition of Contact.

To keep you up to date, here is the current list of partners with website details where they are available. Some more information is available on our own church website.

Bernard and Alice Bakunda	Rhema School, Kampala, Uganda
Janie Beattie	Barcelona, Spain
Carolyn & Miro Tomasović	Croatia with Ecumenical Women's Initiative <a href="http://www.eiz.hr">www.eiz.hr</a>
Satish & Bhumika Chettri	India with Grace Ministries
H Murray Humphreys	Lecturer Nairobi, Kenya Jomo Kenyatta University PO Box 62000-00200 City Square Nairobi, Kenya
Craig and Amanda Cunningham	Latin Link – Trinity International Church, Santa Cruz, Bolivia <a href="http://www.latinlink.org.uk">www.latinlink.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.cramandaham.blogspot.com">www.cramandaham.blogspot.com</a>
Morven Collington	New Destiny Adventure Centre, Brazil <a href="http://www.ndaventura.org">www.ndaventura.org</a>
Jerry and Stacy Kramer	Love for the Least – sharing the compassion of Christ with an unreached world <a href="http://www.lovefortheleast.org">www.lovefortheleast.org</a>
James Fraser	Release International – helping and campaigning for those imprisoned around the world for their Christian faith <a href="http://www.releaseinternational.org">www.releaseinternational.org</a>

News from **Craig and Amanda Cunningham**, Missionary Partners in Bolivia

## **From Trinidad ..... to Trinity**

NINE YEARS AGO, we embarked on something of a step of faith, leaving behind our jobs, our family and friends, and laying down roots in this unique corner of Bolivia. In that time, we have experienced the full range of emotions that go hand-in-hand with frontline Christian ministry. We have borne witness to the messiness of life in a less than straightforward city. But through it all, God has been faithful.

This has been evidenced, in particular, in the growth of the foundation and the church. When we arrived in Trinidad we were one of five missionary couples involved in these ministries. But for most of the last three years, we have been the only overseas workers left. And yet, both ministries are now largely standing on their own two feet.

For this reason, and others, we have felt convicted in recent months that our time in Trinidad was drawing to a close. And a few months ago, we began prayerfully investigating other ministry possibilities. We knew it was time to leave Trinidad, but we were keen to remain in Bolivia.

Well, long story short: as we write, we have just returned from Santa Cruz, where Craig has been approved as executive pastor for Trinity International Church. Trinity is the only English language based church in Santa Cruz, comprising a mix of native English speakers working as missionaries or in other employment, and an increasing contingent of Bolivian families, many of whom have come to faith through the church's English language teaching programme.

We will get to know the church better fairly soon, as Craig is due to start in February. A busy few weeks of packing lie ahead of us and we will need to sell our house in Trinidad.

Santa Cruz is a city we have come to know very well over our time here, and so we pray that the transition will be aided by settling in a place that is both new and familiar. Craig is also keen to explore possibilities in Santa Cruz with Langham Preaching at an appropriate juncture.

God has very clearly opened up this path to us. And so, just as we did nine years ago, we take this new step of faith, not yet knowing all of the answers, but trusting in his faithfulness.

## **Prayer points**

Give thanks for - The Lord's clear signalling of the way ahead for us in Bolivia.

Pray for - The many things we have to do as we prepare to move home and a smooth transition to Santa Cruz for all three of us: the church, the city, the new pace of life.

Blog [cramandaham.blogspot.com](http://cramandaham.blogspot.com)

With love, Craig, Amanda & Sam

## **News from New Destiny – Morven Collington – Missionary Partner in Brazil**

Dear friends at Burnside Blairbeth,

Thank you so much for your faithful support to me as I continue in my role as international director of New Destiny Adventure Centre, Brazil. Your support enables me to continue heading up the ND Leadership Team full-time, represent ND in the UK, speaking about the work and raising more support. It will also finance my next trip to New Destiny Brazil, in April 2019, which is going to be a vital three weeks, as I will be able to encourage the staff in person, give individual and team support and mentoring, spend time with the children and the families we serve, and evaluate in person how the work is continuing to grow and develop. I can't wait!

Another reason for this one being such an exciting trip, is because my second oldest son, Rafael (24) will be getting married to his fiancée Tamara, on the farm, when we are there! Rafa heads up site maintenance and administration at ND and is on the leadership team.

We have just finished our ND camp season for our Transformers children. We also ran our annual mum's camp (TransforMUMs) last weekend, and we had 12 mums this year, which is the most to date! Praise God! In all these camps, there were opportunities for the children to accept Jesus as Lord and saviour, to go deeper with Him and to just enjoy His presence, not to mention all the fun activities and challenges that they took part in. The older girls had a special party to celebrate all of the 15th birthdays in the group. In Brazil, a girl's 15th Birthday party is traditionally a very special one. But for most of our girls, it will come and go without much of a mention. So, you can imagine how much this party meant to them! The girls and staff spent the afternoon decorating, making food and planning it all, followed by the party at night.

One of the things that I love so much about ND is that it's not just a place the children and their families come for activities and clubs, it's a loving family. We celebrate their special life moments, cry with them when they are sad, and just try to help them to walk through this life, holding onto Jesus hand.



Our team are now preparing for our church retreat on the farm this weekend, a special day for all the children who come to kid's church in the slum, and their families, some of whom come to our church services at the farm on Sundays. Then it's the Christmas parties! We would so appreciate your prayers for the children and staff.

Thank you for enabling me to do the job and for being so committed to the work at New Destiny. What a blessing you all are! Thank you so much.

God bless you all!

Yours affectionately,

Morven xx



## **Glasgow City Mission donations**

As well as supporting our local food bank, we have two boxes in the gathering area of the Burnside building which are for donations of food to Glasgow City Mission. We've been doing this as a congregation for many years, and several people are still in the habit of bringing along a tin or two every week. When the boxes are full, the contents are taken to the GCM building in Crimea Street. GCM still use our food tins for occasional emergency food parcels for guests, and for residents in The Haven in Kilmacollm, a Christian centre for men recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, but they are also doing something new with our food donations. The chef there makes delicious, nutritious meals for guests who use the centre's services, and foodstuffs which are ingredients are now also useful. Large packs of pasta, rice and couscous, tins of tomatoes and jars of passata, bags of flour and sugar, and oils, herbs and spices can all be used by the kitchen staff – anything which is non-perishable and with a reasonably long 'use by' date.

Our donations are hugely appreciated – do keep them coming!



**Homelessness Service – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019 at 6.30pm**

**35 East Campbell Street, Glasgow, G1 5DT**

The Lodging House Mission's Homelessness Service will be held on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at 6.30pm. The Guest Speaker will be Right Rev Susan Brown, Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

Refreshments will be served after the service when there will be an opportunity for fellowship and discussion of homelessness issues and to see how we are hosting and supporting the Glasgow Winter Night Shelter.

Please come along and support us on this evening.

Following a sustained period without a chaplain at LHM, a good attendance would be valued to demonstrate to our service users how much the church community in Glasgow cares for them.

*If you give of your own food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the wretched, then light will rise for you out of darkness and dusk will be for you like noonday. Isaiah 58.10*



The next Messy Church will be on **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019** from **4.30 to 6.30pm** in the Blairbeth Building.

Come along and enjoy!  
Come along and help.