

Burnside Blairbeth Church



Contact

No 136

Christmas 2018

The Miracles of Christmas

Dear friends,

Often when a baby is born, particularly one which is born prematurely or in difficult circumstances, we pronounce it to be a miracle. Of course, what we are really saying is “it’s amazing”, but we could still come up with a scientific explanation. At the heart of Christmas is a miracle, but actually there is more than one.

The most obvious miracle that we think about at Christmas is the virgin birth of Jesus. The idea of a virgin birth wasn’t a problem to people in the ancient world – they believed in the supernatural, so it wasn’t a surprise to them that things happened they couldn’t explain. In more recent times the idea of the virgin birth has become more problematic to many people. At the heart of this is an unstated belief that unless we can explain something then it can’t have taken place. However, the virgin birth is important because it enforces the sinlessness of the Saviour and it points to Jesus as the Son of God.

A further miraculous element of Christmas is that God became human. Interestingly this was far more of a struggle for the ancient world to accept. People had a concept of distant gods and they thought there was a huge unbridgeable gap between the physical and the spiritual. However, the incarnation is at the heart of the Christian faith. It was necessary for Jesus to become human in order to die for us and to achieve our salvation.

Thus far the miracles I have outlined are truly amazing but obvious. There is a further less obvious miracle which is no less amazing. That miracle is that Mary should believe the angel’s announcement of the Virgin birth. Think what she was being asked to believe – that she had been chosen to bear the promised Messiah and to do so while still a virgin. When the angel made this announcement to her, Mary’s reaction was “how can this be since I am a virgin?” This was not an expression of disbelief but was an enquiry. The angel responded to her by explaining that “the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”

Think also of the contrast in Mary’s reaction to that of other biblical characters who heard miraculous news. Zechariah was told that he was going to be a father, but he thought that he was too old for this to take place. As a result, he was unable to speak until the birth of his son had taken place and he wrote down that the baby was to be called John (later known as John the Baptist).

The first two miracles that I have outlined are ones which have turned our lives upside down. We stand amazed that God should become human. The virgin birth perhaps puzzles us, but is another sign of Jesus’ divinity. However, the third miracle is one in which we need to participate. Believing God requires no less a miracle in us than it did in Mary. We need to believe the Good News concerning the child born all those years ago, so that we are able to commit ourselves wholeheartedly in trust and obedience. Just as the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, He needs to come upon us so that we believe.

The familiar words of “O Little town of Bethlehem” sum up what needs to happen



for each one of us.
O holy child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.”

May you know the peace and joy that the living Christ brings as you celebrate this Christmas.

Your friend and minister,
William Wilson

Christmas services

Quiet Christmas Sunday 9th December at 4pm in the Burnside building
A quiet reflective service especially for people who find Christmas a difficult time of year, followed by afternoon tea.

Messy Carols Saturday 22nd December at 5pm in the Blairbeth building
Carols, the Christmas story, sandwiches and cakes – for all ages

Christmas all age worship in the Burnside building Sunday 23rd 10.30 am
Christmas Eve all age carols in the Burnside building at 6.30pm
A short service especially suitable for families with young children

Christmas Eve carols and readings in the Blairbeth building at 8pm
Christmas Day all age service in the Burnside building at 10.30am

Contact needs a new editor!

Andy Campbell is stepping down from his role as editor of Contact – huge thanks to him for all that he has contributed during his time in charge – and so we need someone to take over. 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.

The Blairbeth Building.

The building at Blairbeth needs some work to make it structurally sound and in good decorative order. The Kirk Session has agreed that the best way forward is to look at putting the work together into a bundle and doing all the work over a relatively short period of time. Doing it this way helps in three ways. *Firstly*, it becomes a “project” for which we can seek financial help elsewhere and keep it separate from the general finances of the congregation. *Secondly*, we will be able to see the whole scope of required work and produce a well thought out overall plan. *Thirdly*, it may minimise the disruption to the use of the building.

Our vision is that this project needs to be a real experience of guidance. We must be reliant on God through prayer and listening both individually and as a congregation and making best use of the God given talents available to us as a group of God’s people. How is God leading us to continue His work in and through that building?

However, there is a long way to go before we start! We need to know what the building is being used for and what it might be used for in the future. This then becomes the guide to the exact specification of whatever we do. To find this information out, we need to talk to the people and organisations who currently use the building and others who might use it particularly if it is a little different. Over the next months I will be trying to gather this information and view it through the lens of whatever God is saying to us. I will be delighted to hear your views.

We also need to know that the congregation is behind such a project. I will try and keep a two-way conversation going to keep you all included as much as possible and so that I can hear your thoughts. It is important that there is a very open discussion, or the outcome will not be the best possible one.

What actually needs to be done? The gable end wall is deteriorating (the wall ties are rusting) and this needs to be fixed. There is some further external concrete structural work to be done. There are several external repairs to be done to windows and gutters. The toilets need to be renewed and the kitchen improved. A comprehensive redecoration is required. All this should make the building both functional and welcoming. As I said before, the detail about exactly what is done depends on the decisions about how we use the building.

How much will it cost? The various elements are being costed at the moment and a working figure should be available by February 2019.

What is going to happen? The group which has done the work so far will be invited to continue, but in an expanded format. Please let me know if you would like to be involved and in what capacity. We will set up wider discussion about how to use the building and the specific requirements. There will be a section on the Burnside Blairbeth website with further information. We aim to reach a decision by November 2019 with the agreed actions to be completed in 2020.

Are there any other options? Whilst the preferred plan now is to look at a project of work, further discussion may show that this course of action is not possible or supported. We will then have to think again.

Our missionary partner Carolyn Boyd (Managing Director, Ecumenical Women's Initiative) was invited to take part in the Interfaith Conference run by Church of Scotland in September 2018. This article was published in the WM magazine.

Croatia Interfaith Dialogue Changes Lives – by Carolyn Boyd Tomasovic

The countries of the Western Balkans remain fragile despite ongoing processes of democratic transformation and regional stabilisation. Invisible barriers remain, consolidating the ethnic cleansing which destroyed one of Europe's most indigenously ethnically diverse areas. The region's main religions - Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Islam – are significant political and cultural forces, and so shape the identities of its citizens. I run a Croatian women's fund which over the last ten years has supported over 300 women-led initiatives focused on post-war peacebuilding and reconciliation, many of which are within an interfaith framework. Although we collaborate with allies in the religious institutions, our primary foci are grassroots women's groups. Through this experience, I have seen the most legitimate interfaith dialogue happening. For many, it forms the first steps which make reconciliation possible, for others it eases the challenges of living in ethnically mixed communities where, faced with the reality of rebuilding lives in divided and hostile communities, interfaith dialogue is a reality and a necessity. We work with many courageous women motivated by the values and principles they find in their faith. Women who have explored their own religious identities and peeled away the cultural norms and stereotypes supported by the region's traditions which constrain so many women. These are inspiring individuals who work across religious, ethnic and national divides to promote and build a culture of nonviolence. One initiative brought a group of Serbian Orthodox, Albanian Muslim and Catholic women from Kosovo to Sarajevo. The Bosnian women hosting the project shared the following: 'When we reached the tunnel, I showed them images of war-torn Sarajevo, how I carried drinking water home, how there was a sniper at each cross road and each corner. When we entered, I was overcome by a feeling of nausea. It all came flooding back, the war and the fear. Amongst the Kosovo women were many who had lost loved ones during the war. Unsurprised by my tears, they remembered their own pain. There we stood in that cramped tunnel and wept for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the youth that we lost to the stupid war. There is no 'ours' and 'theirs', only good deeds done by good people. It was an important turn-around. The senselessness of war and violence rose to the surface and smothered all our ethnic and religious divides.' Such actions demonstrate the power of practical interfaith dialogue to change lives.

Carolyn Boyd - Managing Director, Ecumenical Women's Initiative, Croatia Interfaith Dialogue



The Guild

Our opening meeting on Monday 1st October was a great success with about 70 members attending. Our guests Arietta performed a varied programme with something to appeal to all tastes. The guest soloist Brian McBride, baritone, sang superbly.

On 15th October Rev. David Easton gave us a most interesting and informative talk expanding on our theme ' One Journey, Many Roads', Seeking the Way.

The 29th October was our evening to be entertained by our resident Guild pianist, Anne Cowan. We had a most enjoyable meeting and it was very well attended.

By the time you read this article our annual Christmas Fayre will have taken place in the hall in the Blairbeth building due to essential maintenance work being carried out in the main hall, Burnside building. I have also been told that the hall is likely to be out of commission at the time of our annual Christmas dinner, so we are investigating other possibilities at the moment. More information at the Guild meetings.

Our meetings have been taking place in the sanctuary, and we are indebted to the wonderful gentlemen who have operated the sound system for us namely John Gordon, Jim Suttie and Ross Galloway. Thank you.

We were saddened to learn of the deaths of two of our members, Lissa James and Sadie Robertson. Both ladies were regular attenders and enjoyed the friendship and fellowship of our meetings. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families and friends at this sad time.

LOOKING AHEAD

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Monday January 7 th | Few of Me Poems | Liz Robertson |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|

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|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| Monday January 21st | Handful of Burns | Irene Dick |
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A big thank you to everyone who works so hard to ensure that our evenings run smoothly, and also to all our loyal members and friends turn out so faithfully, whatever the weather, to support us.

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

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 contact the office.

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

Notes from recent Kirk Session Meetings

The last meeting of the Kirk Session took place on 24 October and these notes pick up on matters of importance arising from it and previous meetings.

A general feature of Kirk Session meetings is the review of our congregational life – events, developments, what has gone well, what we could do better and so on. The feedback gathered from the **Intergenerational Worship** on 17 June was generally positive although it was reported that one or two comments had been strongly negative. **Holiday Club** and **Summer Teas** at the Blairbeth building during July and August had been good. The small group which carried out a review of **Link Groups** had met and the recommendation was that we should engage with the **Community Bible Experience** as a congregation, involving reading through the whole of the New Testament in the order in which it was written over an eight week period. The particular feature of this is that it uses a version of the Bible set out like a normal book without any of the familiar chapter and verse numbering. The various services to be held during December in relation to **Christmas** were agreed (notice of these appears elsewhere). As will be evident to everyone who is able to attend the services on a Sunday, the decision to replace the existing NIV Bibles with the **New International Version 2011 Edition** was affirmed by the Session and copies sufficient for our normal Sunday morning attendance were purchased and are now in place. The old set of Bibles was given to another congregation for their use.

At an additional meeting on 12 September the elders met with Hilary McDougall, the Congregational Facilitator from Glasgow Presbytery, as part of the **Local Church Review** process. She will be reporting back in due course.

As part of the work done in connection with setting up the **Pastoral Networks** the Kirk Session has been reviewing the Congregational Roll and a number of people on the roll who have not been engaged in the life of the congregation for a long period of time, or who have moved away, have been sent a letter inviting them to re-engage with us. In the absence of any response to this letter the names of those concerned will be removed from the Roll by the end of the year.

It will be noticeable to many that, on average, fewer numbers of folk have been attending worship on a Sunday morning. There are a variety of reasons for this – the number of deaths amongst our members, older folk who are now in nursing homes or who are otherwise unable to get out, as well as a number who have moved away and joined other congregations. The Kirk Session is conscious that, as a result, we are becoming more of a 'medium sized' rather than a 'large' congregation and at its recent meetings has started to consider what implications this may have for us, and will discuss this further at the conference in November.

The Kirk Session had intended that another **Intergenerational Worship** service would take place on 28 October. For a variety of reasons this did not happen and instead the morning service took the form of **Café Church**. Another

Intergenerational Worship service is now planned for 27 January 2019.

As the congregation will be aware our Outreach Worker, **Melanie Ziegler**, came to the end of her time with us at the end of September. One area of work where members of the congregation have stepped in to continue what Melanie had established is the contact with the local shops in Burnside and Spittal. We will maintain these relationships and continue to pray for the owners and shopkeepers of our local shops in the months ahead.

Under Marjory MacLean's guidance as **Safeguarding Co-ordinator** our **Safeguarding** practice, procedure and training have been brought right up-to-date and there are now 59 people in the congregation who have received PVG certification for working with children or vulnerable adults.

The review of teams and team leaders is ongoing and the intention is that the review will be completed and any changes put in place by the end of 2018. In the meantime **Finance** and **Property** have been the main focus of the Team Reports. By the time Contact is published we will have had our **Gift and Pledge Day** which now carries even greater importance because of the ongoing **Property** issues, principally the dry rot which has been uncovered at the corner of the Main Hall where it meets the Small Hall and in the adjacent corridor. The remedial work is going to disrupt the use of the Main Hall, Small Hall and Kitchen for a number of weeks. The cost of the repair works is going to have a significant impact on the fabric fund for 2018.

A team headed by Chris Mackintosh has been set up to conduct a review of the fabric and the strategy for our use of the **Blairbeth** building. His report on their work so far is in this edition of Contact. In the meantime, as previously reported, with a generous anonymous gift from someone in the congregation, a new dishwasher has been installed in the kitchen at the Blairbeth building together with the provision of new crockery.

Chris Mackintosh has been appointed **Presbytery Elder** and, in that capacity, will attend meetings of Glasgow Presbytery along with the minister.

Data Protection policies and procedures have been prepared for implementation within the congregation. A Data Audit is to be carried out to ensure that all personal data being processed within the various parts of the congregation is done in accordance with the new **General Data Protection Regulation** which came into force on 25 May 2018. As a congregation we need to ensure that we are compliant in all aspects because a breach can have significant consequences by way of financial penalty imposed by the Information Commissioner.

The next meeting of the Kirk Session is on Wednesday 5 December at 7.30pm.

Alan Thomson Session Clerk

Robina Henderson

Robina died on 8th November aged 90. She was the second child of four born to Fleming and Ruby Henderson. She was born near Paisley, but the family moved to Crawford Road when Robina was a child.

After Burnside Primary she went to Rutherglen Academy and then to Jordanhill to do teacher training. Robina taught in a variety of schools including Bridgeton and Oatlands. She continued to teach following marriage and only stopped when her children – Iain, Rona and Sheila were born. Robina then returned to work part time at Burnside Primary.

Robina married Jack in 1953 and they were the last couple to be married in the Burnside hall church. She also cut a sod for the new church building. Family life was full of fun and Robina was a proud grandmother and great-grandmother.

Robina lived most of her life around Burnside although she and Jack spent some years in Kent through Jack's work. The house in Crawford Road was in the family for around eighty years. Following Jack's retirement, they had all sorts of holidays in many parts of the world. Robina's latter years were spent in Clarkston House nursing home.

As a child Robina was involved in the Brownies and Girl Guides. She was also a founding member of the youth fellowship at Burnside church. She taught Sunday school when the Sunday school was still meeting at Burnside Scout hall. Robina was involved in the Young Women's group and then in the guild.

We are grateful to God for Robina's faithful service as part of Burnside and then Burnside Blairbeth congregation over many years and remember Jack and Rona, along with the rest of the family, in prayer.

Sadie Robertson

Sadie Robertson died on 3rd November aged 87. She was born to John and Annie Prentice, had one sister and her childhood was spent at Langside and then Shawlands. As Sadie was growing up during World War 2 she was evacuated for a short time to Ayrshire, which she loved.

She attended Shawlands Academy and from a relatively young age loved sport, particularly tennis. It was at a tennis club dance that she met John Robertson and they were married in 1960. Wimbledon fortnight became a time when you would find Sadie glued to the tv.

When David and Alan were born family life included holidays in Northumbria and Ayrshire. Sadie had worked as a typist and when the boys grew older, she returned to doing this for agencies – she also typed up lots of dissertations for family friends.

Sadie was a kind and hospitable grandmother who loved having Andrew and Fiona come to her for lunch, and who regularly went through for events involving Heather and Isla. She was well known for her love of dogs and although she only had two dogs of her own, she regularly looked after dogs for friends. When John's health deteriorated Sadie was committed in her care for him over a number of years.

Sadie grew up in a Congregational church and following her marriage became a part of Burnside church. She was heavily involved in the Young Women's group and the guild. She also served as a pastoral visitor and lived out her faith practically through neighbourliness and care for others. We remember David, Alan and the rest of the family in our prayers.

Jim Stewart

Jim Stewart died suddenly on 23rd September aged 54. He grew up in Langside, then Mount Florida and was one of three boys. On leaving school Jim went straight to work for the gas board and was about 2 months away from retirement at the time of his death.

He was an outgoing person who served for some time in the Royal Navy reserves. He liked to talk about his adventures – his audiences were often unsure which were fictional and which real!

When he was a young man Jim had Hodgkin's lymphoma resulting in the removal of his spleen. This made him think about faith and he was baptised at Mount Florida church when he was aged 40.

Jim came into the life of Burnside Blairbeth church when he married Christine. He revelled in the role of stepdad and also being "papa" to Christine's grandchildren. Jim and Christine worshipped as part of the Blairbeth congregation and then at evening services at Burnside. He became involved in work among young people as a leader of the Way where his cheery, outgoing nature, along with his ability to talk to anyone, made him very popular. It was typical of Jim that he was looking for ways in which he could serve the church following his retirement.

As we mourn Jim's death, we continue to remember Christine and the rest of the family in our prayers.

Jim Neil

Jim Neil died on 29th October aged 65 after taking ill very suddenly. Jim was born to Charles and Peggy in Mount Florida, and had one sister. Charles died when Jim was aged 7.

After primary school Jim won a scholarship to Allan Glen's school and then went to Glasgow University where he gained a first-class honours degree in microbiology. He gained his PhD and then went to California on a post-doctoral fellowship. When he returned to Glasgow, he worked at the Beatson Research institute and the vet school. Through his working life Jim was involved in research into viruses, particular with reference to their role in cancer. He was Professor of virology and molecular oncology and played a pivotal role in ensuring funding for Glasgow University's Centre for Virus Research. He was awarded the OBE for the advance of biomedical science.

Jim met Una when they were both teenagers and they came to Burnside following their return from the USA. He was a proud father to Ailsa, Charles and Lucy and loved being a grandfather.

Jim was committed to the community and served as chair of the Community council. He got involved in many practical aspects of community life and willingly

took of the causes of many people around Burnside.

He became a church member at Mount Florida while still a teenager and became heavily involved in the life of Burnside Church on moving into the area. He served for many years as an elder and loved being part of the music group and the Celebration choir. He was faithful in service and wise in counsel. Jim passionately believed that science and faith are not adversaries, and lived out this conviction through his participation in Christians in Science and 'Grasping the Nettle'. His faith was strong and carefully thought out.

As a congregation we mourn the loss of Jim and commit to praying for Una, Ailsa, Charles and Lucy along with the extended family.

Margaret Blake

Margaret Blake died at Abbeyfield Extra Care, Rutherglen on 17 September, aged 90.

Margaret was an only child and following her education at Glasgow High School for Girls, she joined the Royal Insurance Company where she worked for over forty years.

She enjoyed travel especially to visit family in South Africa and nearer home she delighted in spending time along the Northumbrian coastline and at Pitlochry. She was an excellent needlewoman and during the early 1990's was part of a small group who produced some wall-hangings for the church. Prior to this she transferred her membership to Burnside Church having previously been a member at Stonelaw. She was a stalwart and secretary of Cambuslang Flower Club for a time.

A forthright and erudite lady, and a woman of principle, Margaret's life was underpinned by a well-grounded and mature faith, characterised by many Christian values and qualities. We remember Margaret's extended family and circle of friends in their sad loss.

Lissa James.

Following a short stay in Mearns House Care Home, Waterfoot, Lissa formerly of 3 Cedar Gardens died on 26 October. Born and raised in the east end of Glasgow in 1937, Lissa trained as a Comptometer Operator. In 1965 she married Tom James who died in 2017; she was also mother of Stewart.

Lissa was an excellent all-round musician who held the qualification of LRAM. In the late 1970's she decided to pursue a music teaching career, gained her teaching qualification at Langside College, and from then until retirement was principally part of the music department at Bellahouston Academy.

Lissa was an active and committed member of Burnside Bowling Club which she joined in 1992 and she was part of our church family dating from around 1972. She was a member of the church choir when it was functioning and was a loyal member of the Guild. She was a woman who had a solid, unpretentious faith. We remember her with gratitude and prayerfully uphold her son Stewart and her three brothers and their wives in their time grief.

Blythswood CareShoebox Appeal

A big thank you to everyone who filled a shoe box, gave a donation or bought items to put in shoe box. We really appreciated your generosity and support in this appeal.



This year, covering shoe boxes was an activity at Messy Church in October; many boxes were covered and taken home, filled and brought back. This encouraged us to help others less fortunate than ourselves and to share Gods love with them this Christmas.

Kay Dalby and I took the shoeboxes to Blythswood where they were unloaded and added to the many other shoe boxes in the warehouse. We had 68 this year and we were thanked for our contribution to a very worthwhile appeal.

So well done to everyone who took part, Andrea Thomson



Healing hearts

The Scottish Bible Society has brought to Scotland a course which was first developed in some very troubled areas of the world – it started life 20 years ago in Rwanda following the genocide there, and is currently being used extensively with refugees in the Middle East. The material is however also entirely applicable to the sort of traumas that we all face in our every day lives. The course runs over 5 or 6 sessions,

and seeks to address such questions as ‘if God loves me, why do I suffer?’, and ‘can a broken heart be healed?’. It looks at what the Bible has to say about God’s response to our suffering, and how we can move forward with our lives following trauma.

As well as helping us as individuals, the course also seeks to equip us to help others by becoming good listeners, knowing where to find help for others, and what the bible has to say whether that person has a faith or not.

Burnside Blairbeth church is looking at the possibility of running a course in January – February 2019. If you would be interested in being involved, please email the office or speak to William.



1st Burnside Rainbow

LOOKING FOR NEW LEADERS

Victoria and I have been part of the Girlguiding family for over 12 years. 1st Burnside Rainbows has a long

history with the church currently running term time, every Tuesday 6pm-7pm.

As the years have passed, our personal and family circumstances have evolved, and it is with a heavy heart that we have taken the decision to stand down as Leaders. To secure the future of the unit, we are actively seeking to recruit 2 new Rainbow Leaders to take over the running of the unit from September 2019. We will not be taking on any new Rainbows until this happens, however the unit will continue to run as normal until the end of May 2019. If we are unsuccessful in finding new Leaders the unit will unfortunately close at the end of May 2019. If you know of anyone who would be interested in gaining their Leadership qualification and taking over a thriving unit, please get in touch with myself Joanne (07947 599320) and/or Janice Sharp (Commissioner – Rutherglen Division 07742 527867).

Kind Regards

Joanne Reilly & Victoria Allan

1ST BURNSIDE RAINBOW LEADERS

JANUARY ISSUE OF CONTACT

The deadline for copy is

SUNDAY 13 January

and will be available for distributors on

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

contact@burnsideblairbeth.church

Burnside Blairbeth Church

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