

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

December 2015



Last year the historian Simon Schama gave a talk about his most recent book which was a history of the Jewish people. He shared his conviction that anti-semitism was on the increase. He memorably described it as 'a gathering, hideous drum-roll.' The reasons for this are complex but he mentioned the contribution that religious extremism played, something that many historians had failed to foresee. He cited the eminent historian, Eric Hobsbawm. Schama heard him give a lecture sometime in the 1960s in which he cast a rather gloomy eye on the future but stated confidently: 'At least we don't have to be worried about religious extremism.' Yet it is this that is casting a shadow over many lives at this moment in time.

This is not to hold Hobsbawm and others up to ridicule. Those with the surest grasp of human history could not have predicted the events that have caused so much pain recently in France and other parts of the world. Human wisdom, however, is limited. Many predictions concerning the future have been realised and celebrated but there is much that has been unexpected and horrifying.

Christians find the horrors of human experience as unsettling as anyone. Jesus himself stood before the tomb of a friend and was deeply disturbed. Yet we still speak of hope. Joseph Conrad once wrote of a great European city as 'a cruel devourer of the world's light'. There are movements amongst us that could be described in this way but still we proclaim the hope established by the Apostle John: 'The light shines through the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.' Jesus showed a way to live that challenges the darkness but in His death and resurrection He showed that the days of darkness are numbered. As He stood before his disciples as the Risen Lord He showed them their destiny. He was the first-born of a new humanity that would inhabit a new creation with the darkness of sin and death flushed out forever. The Apostle Paul saw human history moving towards that great climax. Now it is as if creation is in the throes of child-birth but the day has been appointed for the new creation to be revealed.

It is with this faith that we go forward and not as a people passively waiting for everything to work out as promised. We are called to live now as it will be then. We are called to be a people who show the world what the Kingdom will be when it comes. We are called to stand against the devourers of the light with the love of Christ which alone can radically transform priorities, attitudes, relationships and breathe decisively on the embers of hope.

I saw this in practice in the words of a French journalist whose wife was killed in the attack on the Bataclan theatre:

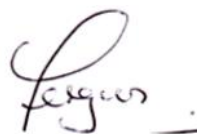
'On Friday night you stole the life of an exceptional being, the love of my life, the mother of my son, but you won't have my hatred.

I don't know who you are and I don't want to know - you are dead souls. If this God for which you kill indiscriminately made us in his own image, every bullet in the body of my wife will have been a wound in his heart.

So no, I don't give you the gift of hating you. You are asking for it but responding to hatred with anger would be giving in to the same ignorance that made you what you are. You want me to be afraid, to view my fellow countrymen with mistrust, to sacrifice my freedom for security. You have lost.'

The Season approaches when we remember the birth of our Saviour Jesus. The ancient people of Israel were encouraged to think of the Messiah as the Prince of Peace. Let everything within us focus on the truths concerning Him that will bring us peace as individuals and enable us to be that light of the world that He has called us to be.

Wishing you peace this Christmas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Trail', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Coffee and Mince Pies

The annual Coffee and Mince Pies event will be held in the Large Hall after the morning service on Sunday 20th December. This year the proceeds will be donated to Sense Scotland. As usual donations of mince pies and shortbread will be most welcome.



Sense Scotland:

Sense Scotland began as a charity to help children who were affected by deafblindness and now offers advice and support to disabled children and adults who have communication support needs and their families. Projects include supported living and residential breaks as well as outdoor activities and sensory arts sessions.

Frances Ireland and Liz Trail



Christmas and Advent Worship at St. Paul's

Saturday 5 December	8.00am	Prayer Breakfast (St. Paul's)
	9.30am	Advent Service– Christmas: A Time for Giving - ‘The Son’s Gift to the Father’ - Rev Douglas Campbell
	4.30pm	Sun Kids
Sunday 6 December	11.00am	Morning Worship
	7.00pm	Carol Service with the Salvation Army
Thursday 10 December	8.00pm	Prayer Meeting
Saturday 12 December	9.30am	Advent Service - Christmas: A Time for Giving - ‘My Gift to the Son’ - Rev. Ramsay Shields
Sunday 13 December	11.00am	Gift Service
	7.00pm	Evening Worship with the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
Wednesday 16 December	7.30pm	Douglas Academy Christmas Concert
Thursday 17 December	8.00pm	Prayer Meeting
Saturday 19 December	9.30am	Advent Service — Christmas: A Time for Giving - ‘The Spirit’s Gift to Me’ - Deborah Chestnut
Sunday 20 December	11.00am	Christmas Family Worship followed by Coffee & Mince Pies
	7.00pm	Christmas Readings and Music
Thursday 24 December	4.30pm	Carols in the Precinct
	7.00pm	Christmas Eve Family Service
	11.30pm	Watchnight Service
Friday 25 December	11.00am	Christmas Morning Celebrations (St. Paul’s)
Sunday 27 December	11.00am	Morning Worship
	7.00pm	NO Evening Worship

Brigade Blethers



I can hardly believe that this will be our last Blether for 2015. The year has flown past, partly because we have been tackling so many new things in the company.

Our Company party is on Thursday 17th December which is quite near Christmas so we hope that Santa is not too busy to come. The great thing about being a Brigade Company in St Paul's is that no matter how busy they are, folk will always come along and give us a hand. Thank you all for your prayers and for all the practical support you give us.

The girls are starting to talk about what they are hoping to receive at Christmas but we are making sure that the girls know what Christmas really means and about the wonderful gift which we all received 2000 years ago. Part of our promise is to serve Christ and we are already gathering parcels to give to Chanan for the young folk who cannot pick and choose what they would like for their Christmas.

Wishing everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a good New Year.

The Brigade Team

The Girl's Brigade Quiz Night - and what a great night it was!

Anne Goodlet with her happy band of helpers welcomed us and looked after us.

The Quiz master was Neil Rankine - we complained about him and complained to him, but really, we were so amazed at the imaginative range of his questions - all 75 of them. We do appreciate you Neil—and your team.

BUT who won? Janice McLean and the Mighty Ark were worthy winners of the coveted silver cup. But didn't the boys do well? The Boys' Brigade and even the Men's Association with The Board trailing and looking a bit unhappy. The Book Group - well, we just managed to finish equal to the Guild! And a really lovely table was shared by the Girls' Brigade and the Girl Guides—I hope the Guides come again.

Thanks Anne and Neil, get your Chambers Dictionary out and start preparing for next year!

R.D.

Guild News



Our speaker on 26th October, Dr. Cam Donaldson, from the Yunus Chair in Social Business and Health at Caledonian University spoke about his department's research into the causes of poverty. He enlarged on the development of self reliant groups, such as those helped by WEvolution, a charity supported by our own Guild for two years.

There was no meeting on the 2nd November, as we paid our annual visit to St. Luke's Guild on the 3rd. There was an excellent turn out of our members to hear the Rev Alan Sorensen's very entertaining description of the links between broadcasting and preaching. He had learned to put the Gospel message into 1 or 2 minute slots - that was on the radio, not from the pulpit! Afterwards we were then given royal hospitality by the ladies of St. Luke's Guild.

Mon. 9th November saw a visit from our own minister. Taking the lines of the Gaelic blessing, 'Deep Peace', he used photographic images to highlight each one e.g. 'the running wave', 'the flowing air' and 'the shining stars'.

Mon. 16th was billed as 'The Shows' a talk by Yvonne Waring, who turned out to be an actress of considerable talent, and versatility, as she guided us through her on-stage career, changing character and accent with ease. She must be an inspiring and amusing teacher, which is her day job!

Upcoming event:

Dec. 7th Guild Christmas Dinner in Clober Golf Club - 7.00 p.m. for 7.15 p.m.

Date For Your Diary

Friday, 26th February, 2016. 7.30pm

The minister and the Kirk Session have very kindly agreed to allow the National Trust for Scotland Bearsden and Milngavie Members' Centre to hold their annual concert in St Paul's Church on the above date for a very particular reason. David Graham, now minister in the Abbey Church in North Berwick, was Assistant Minister in St Paul's. His daughter, Lucy, whom many of you may remember as a small child, is now making her way as a soloist. (Mezzo-soprano). She will be our soloist in the concert and will be joined by the choir of the Junior School of the High School of Glasgow. Lucy has said that for her it will be a homecoming, which is lovely. I hope as many of you as possible will join us. You do not have to be a member of the National Trust for Scotland to attend.

Tickets are available from Sandra on 07854 124 927.

Anne Ritchie

Japan Jottings



Dear Friends

As we draw to the end of another year we give thanks for your partnership with us as we serve here in Japan. These last few months seem to have gone past very quickly with a number of things happening and decisions to be made.

It has been good to be in touch with Daniel and Matthew regularly and hear how they're doing at Glasgow University. We are looking forward to both of them being back in Japan over the Christmas/New Year holiday. We plan to spend time away at one of the OMF holiday homes which will give us the chance to escape Tokyo for a while.

One of the big decisions we have been making (and which will likely be made by the time you read this) is whether to move house. At the moment we live right next to the OMF offices here which has its pros and cons. However, in a way that is too long a story to tell here, a house became available in an area which is much nearer to where Calum will be for High School and also nearer to the football club of which the boys will both be a part from next April. It is not too far from where we are now but will give us a little distance from permanently living on site and also hopefully give the chance to be more involved in a local community.

OMF here in Japan continues to look for new workers as we seek to share the gospel and work in partnership with the Japanese church to see people come to know Jesus and grow as followers of Jesus. There is still quite a bit of interest in Japan in many places around the world and we are becoming increasingly diverse as a team of missionaries here. We look forward to seeing what God will do as he continues to send workers here.

We trust you will all know the joy of Christmas and the Lord's leading in the coming year. Thank you for your continued support for us here.

With our love

David, Lorna, Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair

Flower Donations - December

Mrs. E. Easton, Mrs. W Douglas, Mrs. H. Kelly,
Mrs. M. Mackay.

Please put donations in the Flower Rota pigeon hole at the back of the church or send to:-



Mrs Wilma Douglas, 34 Braeside Ave., Milngavie G62 6LJ Tel 956 2630

December Edition - Life & Work



‘On the First Day of Christmas’

The Rev Colin Dempster explores the religious roots of the well-known Christmas song.

The Pain of Loneliness

The work of the charity ALTERnativity in offering a different Christmas.

Lemon Ice Cream

An Advent-themed story from poet and author Kenneth Steven

Behind the Scenes

A Lanarkshire teenager’s work experience with a Church of Scotland minister

‘It’s a Miracle I am Here’

Jackie Macadam learns about the work of Glasgow City Mission in dealing with the increasing numbers of asylum seekers, relating one man’s harrowing journey from Africa to Scotland

Bombed, Rescued – then Arrested

Bruce Cannon relates the untold story of a Church of Scotland chaplain 75 years on from his escape from a sinking ship during World War 2.

70 Peaks for Christian Aid

Thomas Baldwin joins the walkers tackling Schiehallion, the final event of Christian Aid Scotland’s 70th anniversary 70 Munros challenge.

A High View of Prayer

In the final part of his reflections on the book of James, the Rev Dr Martin Fair considers the power of prayer.

The Superhero Youth Room

Jackie Macadam reports on a mural with a difference at an Ayrshire church.

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Men's Association

Our programme of meetings continues in December with a presentation on Tuesday 1st. by Gordon Morrison. Gordon will be talking about the charity WaterAid.



"Every minute a new-born baby dies from infection caused by a lack of safe water and an unclean environment" is a quote from the charity's publicity material that I found shocking.

Hopefully, Gordon's presentation will inform us how we can help to give women the safe water they need to deliver life. Do come along to our meeting to learn more about this very worthwhile charity.

On Tuesday 15th. December our annual Christmas lunch will be held at Cyan restaurant. Members and friends wishing to attend should meet at the restaurant at 12 noon for a 12.30 pm start to the meal. Please contact Robert Gow or committee members for further details.

St. Paul's Holiday Fellowship 11th-14th August, 2016

CHANGES to Oberammergau programme

As a result of feedback, I have contacted Alistair McCabe who has added a day at leisure at the beginning of the holiday. before the busy programme begins. Dates will now be 10th-14th August, 2016. The new brochures are now available at the back of the church. If you have already taken the original, please exchange it for a new brochure.

There is a cable car from the village itself which allows walks on the level at the top. You can either walk back down to the village or descend by cable car. There are lovely shops and wood carvers in Oberammergau itself, as well as a swimming pool.

Anne Ritchie

Leader

World Mission Stamp Appeal - 2014 Total

Last year's stamp appeal was a great success raising £4,627 for Dorcas Refuge House, a refuge in northern Greece for victims of domestic violence and their children. THANK YOU!

World Mission News

Nepal - worse than an earthquake

After suffering massive earthquakes in April, the small nation of Nepal was briefly in the global spotlight. As the rebuilding began, the news cameras left; many short-term humanitarian relief agencies have also come and gone.



Now Nepal is facing another, worse crisis with little international attention or assistance. All over the country, Nepali people are struggling to buy anything that would normally be imported from India. The India-Nepal border crossings have been closed for more than two months, hurting far more people than were affected by the earthquake. This disaster stems from a political dispute that has spun out of control. Now all sides are finding it hard to back down or compromise.

Multiple-day queues to buy petrol are among the most visible signs of the blockade, but some of the hardest impacts are behind the scenes: people who are unable to afford medicines, or enough cooking fuel for their customary meal of rice and lentils. In the quake-hit hill areas, the lack of truck fuel means that even fewer materials will be available to rebuild homes before the coming of winter.

I love Taiwan Youth Camp



Two representatives from COSY (Church of Scotland Youth) recently attended the annual international mission conference in Taiwan. It was hosted by the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, who were celebrating their 150th birthday.

Sarah MacDonald and Rachel Walker spent 3 weeks exploring what mission is; sharing stories and experiences of God's grace with people from over 40 countries.

Rachel summed up her experiences;

"I feel blessed to have been part of such an amazing experience and would encourage anyone who gets the opportunity to visit the PCT in Taiwan to do it. I have made friends and memories I will forever cherish whilst growing closer to God and seeing his grace at work through what was an unforgettable mission experience. I can now truly say I Love Taiwan."

PVG Scheme

The Scottish Government wanted all voluntary organisations to have their volunteers registered with the PVG scheme by 31st October 2015. Since this date has now passed, all volunteers and paid staff involved in regulated work with children and protected adults must be registered with the PVG scheme. Failure to do so puts vulnerable groups at risk of harm – we know that this is a real risk. It also exposes the Church to legal action for failing to comply with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

Whilst the majority of our existing volunteers are now on the PVG scheme there are still some who need to join. Volunteers who are new in post need to join. Volunteers who have already joined the PVG Scheme through other occupations still need to update their membership to link it with the voluntary work they do for the Church. They need to be registered as volunteering within St Paul's Parish Church.

Please contact Elizabeth McEwan or Malcolm Boyd should you need an application form or any further advice.

Book Club

Our book is "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou, which is the first book in her six volumes of autobiography. This book is listed as one of the classics of 20th century literature. As a black woman she has known discrimination and extreme poverty but also hope and joy, achievement and celebration. This first volume evokes her childhood with her grandmother in the American south of the 1930s. She learns the power of the white folks at the other end of town and suffers the terrible trauma of rape by her mother's lover. The strength of her faith and determination are major factors in helping her overcome the many obstacles that come her way. In many ways we felt the book was a bit laboured and contrived with half of the group enjoying it and the other half struggling to finish but this is still an amazing story.



She dedicates the book to her son, Guy Johnson, and "all the strong black birds of promise who defy the odds and gods and sing their songs".

This comment from the book did however resonate with many of us:
"I find it interesting that the meanest life, the poorest existence, is attributed to God's will but as human beings become more affluent, as their living standard and style begin to ascend the material scale, God descends the scale of responsibility at a commensurate speed."

Our next book is Brooklyn by Colm Toibin and we are meeting on Tuesday 15 December 2015 at the usual time.

Joyce Clark



I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped in the Church garden for another year. The weather was not all that great at times but the garden was full of colour and greatly appreciated by Church members and the public who commented on it. While working in the garden a gentleman approached me and asked, "Who cuts the hedge?" I told him the Church Officer cuts the grass and also keeps the hedge looking great to which he asked, "Does he use a spirit level?" I am sure Hugh will appreciate the sentiment. It is now time to put away all our garden tools and have a well earned rest ready for another year. Thank you all once again for your hard work.

Sheila Dickson
Garden Convener

From the family of Mary Walters

Thank you to the St Paul's church family for their prayers, cards, flowers and messages we have received on Mum's death. We have been greatly blessed and comforted by the love and support we have received from family and friends.

Sincere thanks to both Fergus Buchanan and David Graham for their pastoral support and friendship and to all who attended Mary's funeral. A special thank you to Derek Norval and the church choir for their most fitting tribute at the service of thanksgiving.

Mum very much valued the fellowship and friendship of the church family and was always grateful to Fergus for his timely visits. She also appreciated receiving flowers from the church, letters, cards and phone calls and welcomed the visits made by many of you when she was not so able to attend church.

With our grateful thanks,

Edith & David Walters & Family

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Copy date for the December issue is Sunday 27th December if using church pigeon hole or Wednesday 30th December if emailing. Please send to st.paulslifemagazine@gmail.com

Date	Flower Deliveries	Crèche Rota	Traidcraft Rota	Vestibule Rota
6th Dec	J. Ford C. Tanner	Richell	L. Cowie C. McKinnon	Team 6 R. Easton
13th Dec	J. Clark S. Stenhouse	Chapman	R. Raeburn H. Reid	Team 7 R. Deuchar (EC)
20th Dec	P. Barlow S. Robertson	Goodlet	B. Watson M. Conway	Team 8 J. Pirie
27th Dec	S. Anderson M. Adams		M. Ure J. Mill	Team 9 N. Cattanach