

## **MINISTER'S LETTER**

I can't believe that it is nearly Christmas already. It really doesn't feel as though it is eleven months since I was writing my piece for the last Christmas newsletter.

Christmas has a regularity; it always comes once a year. Every year, the Christmas goodies come into the shops just after Halloween. Every year, I complain that it is far too early even to be thinking about Christmas. The Christmas adverts have just started on television (although we still are awaiting the big ones such as John Lewis and Marks and Spencer). My favourite at the moment is the Aldi advert with Kevin the carrot! The stress has already started about what should be bought for presents and we are, as I write, only in the first week of November.

All this stress, what is it for and why are we putting ourselves through all this? I think that we have perhaps lost the point as to why we are celebrating Christmas. The story of Christmas is one of humanity. Whatever we receive this Christmas, it is important to remember that the present at that first Christmas was a little baby. Perhaps the arrival of a baby, God incarnate on earth, wouldn't be at the top of our Christmas lists, but sometimes what we want isn't exactly what we need! At Christmas, God comes down to our world, with all its muck and messiness. Unlike some other presents we are given at Christmas, when January comes upon us, however cold and miserable the weather is, the gift that we have been given by God does not fade or fizzle out. God's present is one given to all and it is a gift that is far too precious to let ourselves be distracted by the busyness and commercialisation of Christmas.

At Christmas, the gift from God tells us that we are all deeply loved, just as we are. We are loved and challenged in equal measure so that we can be the best that we can ever be. God is speaking to us in the only in which God can, from a stable, in a child born into poverty, and child who was born to show all of us the love of God.

Elsbeth

## **VILLAGE CARE HOME**

We will be starting a monthly service at the Village Care Home on the last Sunday of the month at 3pm as from Sunday 25th November. Can I please ask that, to save me singing a solo, I can have some company? It is just a short service, no more than half an hour with readings, a short reflection and three hymns. Thank you!

Also, I have arranged for us to go over to the Care Home on Thursday 13th December at 6.30pm to sing some carols and perhaps some festive poems and readings too. Please do try to come to this as the more the merrier!

Elsbeth

## WORSHIP AT CHRISTMAS

Sunday 9th December	Festival of Light	Sacred Heart, Kildrum	7.30pm
Thursday 13th December	Carols at the Village Care Home	Village Care Home	6.30pm
Saturday 15th December	Carol Singing	Cumbernauld Town Centre	1pm
Sunday 16th December	Nativity / Gift Service	Village Church	11am
	Rainbow Service	Village Church	3pm
Thursday 20th December	Boys' Brigade Carols	The Forge, Balloch	7pm
Sunday 23rd December	Morning Worship	Village Church	11am
Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve)	Family Service	Village Church	4pm
	Watchnight Service	Village Church	11.30pm
Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day)	Christmas Day Worship	Village Church	10.30am
Sunday 30th December	Morning Worship	Village Church	11am

## **FESTIVAL OF LIGHT**

The annual Festival of Light will be held this year in Sacred Heart Church in Kildrum on Sunday 9th December at 7.30pm.

This ecumenical service, which has again been organised by a committee formed from several churches in Cumbernauld, is a very special evening in the run-up to Christmas. The familiar story of the birth of Christ is retold, well-loved carols are sung and Croy Silver Band will lead the congregational singing. We will be joined this year by the Columban Singers from Kilsyth and also by the choir from Abronhill Primary School. Representatives from the secondary schools in Cumbernauld will also be making a contribution to the proceedings.

It would be great if as many people as possible from Cumbernauld Old could come along and support this event. If transport is a problem, please speak to either Liz Dalling or Lesley Littlejohn and we will try to help. As an added incentive, our minister Elspeth is going to give the Reflection at the end of the service – this is bound to be worth hearing!

There are no tickets, but donations taken at the end of the service will be shared between the Third World Group from Sacred Heart Church and Christian Aid.

Elizabeth M. Dalling

## **BB CAROL CONCERT**

The fundraising group is delighted to be supporting the BB at their annual Carol Concert on Thursday 20th December. We will be holding our Christmas hamper raffle as usual, so keep an eye out for a wish list of hamper donations in the Church Vestibule. Due to your generosity we have been able to raffle three hampers full of Christmas foods and treats for a number of years now.

Anne Morrison

## **CUMBERNAULD OLD SMART SAVERS**

We will shortly be launching Cumbernauld Old Smart Savers. We will be giving everyone a tube of smarties to enjoy and ask that, after you have eaten them, you use the tube as a 20p bank. Once you have filled it, pop it into the basket in the church vestibule and, if you wish, help yourself to another tube to enjoy before filling it with 20p coins. This will be an ongoing fundraiser for church funds.

## POPPIES – A FINAL WORD!

This has all the makings of an Oscar Speech where I thank everyone, but every single person who contributed to the 'We Will Remember Them' project certainly deserves it.

When I realised that this year was going to be the centenary celebration of the end of the First World War, I thought we just had to mark it in a special way or we would regret it come November.

Inspired by the river of poppies cascading from the Tower of London, my original idea was just to have a simple panel of poppies hanging down from the Laird's Loft stair. However, I happened to mention it to my daughter and she said 'Great, but why don't you...' and so the idea blossomed and grew wings. Lisa applied to the National Lottery and we were delighted when we were awarded nine and half thousand pounds to take our ideas forward.

Both the Kirk Session and the Village Community Council fully backed the proposals and I'd like to thank them for their encouragement and support throughout the whole process.

The main thrust of the project for the church was a display of poppies and our appeal for knitted or crocheted poppies resulted in thousands of them being handed in. I also received many through the post from all over the country and frequently found bagsful on the doorstep. They were a variety of patterns, sizes and shades of red but each one was made with love and care and I can guarantee each and every one was used. By then we had decided to sew them onto camouflage netting and so we had about eight sewing sessions where 12 to 15 ladies came along each time and the chat brought lots of laughs and a tremendous feeling of fellowship. Thanks to you all.

You know who you are!



All your hard work allowed Anne Louise and Julian from Culture NL to create the wonderful displays spilling over from the balconies and much admired by everyone.

Thanks also to the ladies who decorated the window ledges with appropriate poems and items relating to the war, and to those who painted and drew WW1 pictures which were kindly displayed by householders in Baronhill.

We applied for and were awarded 10 'There but not There' silhouettes of soldiers which we placed throughout the church and Lisa attached little lights to their base so the effect was dramatic and poignant.

Another strand of the project was to produce a booklet telling the story of each of the men from the Cumbernauld area whose names appear on the memorial. Even though the cross is situated on the busy junction of Main Street and Baronhill, I'm sure most people walk past it without giving it a second glance, let alone stop to read the names of the men who fell on foreign fields. I felt that on this special anniversary, it was important to find out a bit about each one so that they became real people with jobs and families whose sacrifice affected whole families and communities. I didn't want them to remain just a list of names on a wall. I am indebted to Mr Howard Dent who very kindly and generously allowed us to use his research which formed the basis for our stories and to

the little team of Anne Bryans, Mary Weir and Elspeth McKay for adding further detail. Ivar Struthers stepped in at the last minute and really helped me by formatting and collating the booklet. We have a few copies left so please contact me if you want one.

Finally we wanted a permanent reminder of the sacrifice made by so many local men and I am very grateful to John Colqhoun of Dullatur who designed, made and installed the bower near the war memorial. In recognition of the 61 men's sacrifice, he hand-crafted and painted 61 beautiful poppies to adorn the sides and top of the arch. John voluntarily gave up many hours to complete his labour of love and I am so grateful to him for his skill and patience. We completed the area with a special WW1 bench.



If I have forgotten anyone, I'm really sorry but as I write this on the eve of the armistice celebrations, I am all 'poppied out'.

A very final thank you to Elspeth who took all the strands of the project and wove them into her superb Remembrance service and for her support throughout these last months.

I hope someone else is thinking about WW2!

Elizabeth

## CUMBERNAULD CRAFTERS



Our poppy making craft sessions were such a success with everyone having fun working together and enjoying the chat over tea or coffee and crafts that a craft group is being organised to continue the fun and fellowship. We will meet in the Session House from 2:00 – 4:00pm on Thursday afternoons and everyone will be most welcome.

It doesn't matter if you are a novice or an experienced crafter as we can share our experience and learn from one another while helping others. You can bring your own projects along or knit or crochet items for the baby bank, the premature baby unit or any other charities suggested by the group. Looking forward to seeing you all at the Session House on Thursday 22nd November for our first meeting.



Anne Morrison

## VIMY RIDGE

I read with great interest the booklet, 'lest we forget' especially the item on Vimy Ridge, and this brought back so many memories of my time as a schoolboy on the pupil exchange scheme in 1951.

I attended Coatbridge High School, which participated in this annual event, and I found myself in the town of Lens in the Pas de Calais region of Northern France at the college Condoursie.

On Saturdays, cycling was the order of the day as our hosts were keen to show us the surrounding countryside, and on one of these excursions we went to Vimy Ridge. A silence surrounded the trenches, some of which had been reconstructed showing the conditions in which the men fought and lived. A monument built tells of 150,000 dead. In the final action the Canadians suffered heavy casualties which would have been even greater had the wind not changed direction at the beginning of a German gas attack.

Some 50 or so years later, Elizabeth and I were touring the New England states and the North Eastern Canadian Provinces and in the latter we came upon the small lakeside town of North Hately. We walked along the lakeside path and came upon a sheltered bower which housed the local war memorial on which were the names of the various battles and of the fallen.

There were two or three elderly men seated on the nearby benches and we chatted away. I mentioned that as a schoolboy of 14 I had been to Vimy Ridge and described the trenches and how close they were to the enemy, the wall of the names of the fallen and the heavy silence that hung over the battlefield, some of my schoolboy memories of some 55 years ago. Just before we left, one of the men mentioned to us that most of the names on their memorial had been schoolboys in this small lakeside town.

David Kerr



## FOODBANK NEWS

As Autumn delights us in all its glorious colours, I'd like to pass on grateful thanks to all who so generously donated at our recent Harvest Festival Service. A huge thank you also to all those who support the food bank throughout the year by donating or volunteering.

Without your compassion we could do little to help those in need – and there are many households in need. Requests for help have significantly increased at the Village food bank with numbers roughly doubling so that around 400 food bags have been given out over the last year. Recently, Condorrat Parish Church opened their own food bank, like ourselves a satellite of Cornerstone.

Looking forward to Christmas, once again there will be a special Christmas event held at Cornerstone when Craighalbert Church will serve a hot Christmas meal when food parcels and gifts will also be distributed. At the Village we have our own Christmas event with treats and tea, to share fellowship and hope.

May I invite you to share in our endeavours by continuing your support? Following last year's success of the Good Gift concept, we are planning to repeat this appeal where cash donated in advance of Christmas can be used to buy and distribute fresh items on the day of the festive event. Cash donations can be placed in the jar / tin in the vestibule / Session House. Donations of non-perishable festive foods and treats are of course also welcome. These can be placed in the box in the vestibule.

What do your donations actually mean to everyone at the food bank?

Of course, all donations are very much appreciated, but sometimes in unexpected and special ways. The joy and hope your kindness can bring to those who can feel lost and forgotten in their distress is wonderful.

One such occasion happened at Christmas a few years ago. We had a few small, unwrapped presents which allowed those attending the food bank to select a gift for a loved one. A young man was going through a difficult time, but he was amazed and overjoyed when he realised that he would be able to give his mum a Christmas present after all. The delight on his face was a joy to behold. Thank you for enabling this outreach.

Wishing all our supporters, volunteers and friends a Christmas of joy, peace and hope.

Sandra Graham

## **BABY BANK NEWS**

I have been collecting the items donated in the church, and dropping off at the Baby Bank at Lennox House, Seafar every week. The Baby Bank supplies clothing and footwear for babies and children up to 10 years' old. They also supply cots and prams, sometimes at short notice. It is run by volunteers and opens just a few hours a week.

I was told that families needing clothing or nursery items are referred by either their health visitor, GP, social worker or through their church. No-one can just turn up and ask for clothing or goods.

It is not always families on benefits that are referred. It can include families on low income or on reduced hours or facing job losses. I was told that changes to the Universal Credit mean that someone can wait four or five weeks before receiving any payment. The centre is very well organised, and items are stored in huge plastic boxes with labels showing ages, clothing types and whether for a boy or girl.



The volunteers have asked me to pass on a huge thank you to everyone who has donated.

Anne Murphy

## **THE 'J' TEAM**

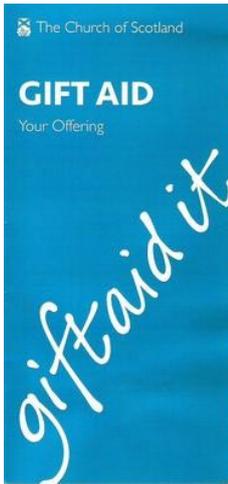
The 'J' Team have been looking at ways in which to support the congregation through prayer and have found a solution through Vicki's aunt's church, who have a JAFFA Cross. JAFFA stands for 'Jesus A Friend For All'. We are busily making the cross and will share it with the congregation as soon as it is ready.

The Christmas season is fast approaching, and we will have our usual presentation of our take on the story of Jesus birth. As always, we try to show the events of that night through the eyes of the participants, and this year we are looking at it from the perspective of the Inn Keeper.

A few dates for the diary: on Saturday 15th December the children will have breakfast with Santa and on Sunday 16th December will be the nativity. The 'J' Team will then finish until Sunday 13th January 2019.

Finally, we would like to thank members of the congregation for the support that they give to the 'J' Team, and wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and health and happiness in 2019.

The 'J' Team



## **Calling All Taxpayers!**

Do you pay tax?

Well, how would you feel if you could get a refund on some of the tax you have paid?

Pretty pleased, I expect.

Well, that is 'sort-of' how Gift Aid works. The difference is that the 'refund' comes to the church, or any other charity / charities you choose. All you need to do is sign a Gift Aid Declaration – copies are available at church and from the Treasurer, Robin Cantlie.

**Gift Aid** is a government scheme which allows the congregation (as a registered charity) to reclaim the tax you have already paid on the money you give in your offering, whether you give by the WFO Envelopes, Bank Standing Order or by cheque. You do not need to promise to give a particular amount each week or month, nor do you need to promise to give for a specified period of time. You can also cancel your Gift Aid Declaration at any time. Also, please let us know if you have changed your name or home address, or if your circumstances have changed, e.g. if you cease to pay tax or the tax you pay is less than your giving to the church.

**Giving** your offering as a Gift Aid contribution increases the value of your offering by 25% at no further cost to you. So, let's say someone gives £5 a week in their offering, Gift Aid will turn that donation to £6.25. If someone gives £40 a month, Gift Aid will turn that to a donation of £50. An annual gift of £1000 becomes £1250 and so on.

**More** money coming in to the Church means more sharing of the Good News through the work of the Church. It is good stewardship, it makes a big difference and it's all so straightforward. Will you please consider Gift Aid if you haven't already done so? Thank-you!

Cumbernauld Old Parish Church of Scotland is a Registered Scottish Charity, Number SC000877



## DAYTRIPPERS

In August the Daytrippers visited Dunfermline. We enjoyed a walk through Pittencrieff Park, known locally as 'The Glen', which was gifted to the people of Dunfermline by Andrew Carnegie. The park covers 76 acres, and is well known for its peacocks.

After lunch in the Peacock Rooms café, we visited Dunfermline Abbey, which began as a priory founded by Malcolm's wife, Queen Margaret. It was re-established as an abbey by her son in 1128 and is the final resting place of King Robert Bruce, notably minus his heart, along with seven other Scottish kings.

Our next stop was the Andrew Carnegie Museum, which was fully refurbished in 2009. The museum is in two parts. The original Birthplace Cottage where Andrew Carnegie was born, built in the 1770s, has been restored to look as it would have done during Andrew Carnegie's childhood in the 1840s. The Exhibition Hall tells the story of Andrew Carnegie in America and his transition from a bobbin boy to a capitalist, and his determination to give away nearly 90% (\$350 million) of his personal fortune to various organisations and world peace initiatives.

Our planned trip to the People's Palace in August was cancelled due to stormy weather, but in October we visited the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. This was formed in 2006 with the merger of the new Museum of Scotland, with collections relating to Scottish antiquities, culture and history, and the adjacent Royal Museum, with collections covering science and technology, natural history, and world cultures. There really is something for everyone!

## CUMBERNAULD MUSICAL THEATRE SOCIETY

We were very fortunate to have Cumbernauld Musical Theatre Society offer to do a fundraising event for us. ***Lullaby of Broadway*** was held at The Forge on Thursday 1st November and was a sellout, raising £530 for church funds. It was a wonderful evening of songs from musicals old and new, a mixture of very well know tunes to some less familiar ones.

Cumbernauld Musical Theatre Society really is a very talented group of people who sent everyone home with a song in their heart and a smile on their face.

Their next big production will be *Sister Act* at Cumbernauld Theatre in February and they have offered us a block booking, so anyone wishing to go please contact Caroline Edwardson at 724933.





Once more we are participating in the Church of Scotland **World Mission Stamp Appeal** over Christmas and New Year.

We're inviting members to cut out and keep the postage stamps from any Christmas Cards they receive. These used stamps can then be put in the collection box which will be in the Church vestibule during December and the early part of January.

The Reformed Church in Transcarpathia (Ukraine) helps run a number of day-care centres providing educational, emotional, and physical support for children and young people with disabilities. This year's appeal will support the young people to live life in all its fullness and to enjoy opportunities to participate in society and family life.

When cutting the stamps from your envelopes please leave a small, at least ¼-inch (0.5cm), border around the stamp. Thanks!

The Kirk Session has decided that this year's **Coffee Jar offerings** will go to an initiative called 'Toilet Twinning'. The money donated in our 'coffee jars' will help those in desperate poverty to have access to a proper latrine, clean water and the information they need to be healthy.



The World Health Organisation estimates that 2.3bn people don't have somewhere safe and hygienic to go to the toilet, while the UN states that almost 1,000 children die every day from preventable diseases linked to dirty water and unsafe toilets. Toilet Twinning is an initiative by TearFund and our donations will be used to provide clean water, basic sanitation, and hygiene education.

In turn, we'll receive a certificate for our church toilet, complete with a colour photo of its twin and GPS coordinates so we can look up our twin's location on Google Maps.