

## MINISTER'S LETTER

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen  
His glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.  
(John 1:14)*

About four years ago, the John Lewis Christmas television advertisement was all about a little girl who is looking at the moon through a large telescope. What she sees is not what she expected. She sees that there is actually a man on the moon, so she tries to contact him first by sending him messages in a paper aeroplane, and then by shooting an arrow with the paper wrapped around it, but all to no avail; they just fall on the ground. The next scene you see is a present flying through the air with the aid of lots of balloons which makes it to the man on the moon. The video was retold by a man called Chris Rackham. His version of the story also includes a little girl and the large telescope. But in this version, the little girl tries to send messages to God, again by throwing paper aeroplanes and wrapping paper around an arrow, but they fall on the ground just as in the original. But this time, she does not succeed in sending the present: instead, a manger falls from the sky helped by the balloons and lands in the girl's living room and, when she looks into it, she finds a little baby there. There is a gift tag on the manger which reads, 'The best present I could give, Love God'. The words 'know you've been loved this Christmas' then come on to the screen.

The message is that God is not far off, where we can't reach him. He is around us and within. The message of Christmas is that God is not distant, but becomes present in all our human travails. God is present in all our laughter, and our love, in our sad times and in the good. It is what is called 'incarnation', Emmanuel, God with us – the belief that God's presence flooded Jesus' humanity, giving us a vision of human life filled with the divine, the holy.

This is what Christmas is all about. God entering our world, in all its division, all its sadness, all its grief, all that comes with a broken world. God is not far, God is near. We are called to be the same, to be there to weep with those who are weeping and to rejoice with those who are rejoicing.

You will find details of the Christmas services in this Newsletter.

Please come to celebrate Jesus' birth and Emmanuel, God with us.  
You will be made most welcome.

If I do not see you before, have a good and happy Christmas.

*Elspeth*

## FAIRTRADE GROUP

Since our last report the Fairtrade group has continued to hold a stall on the last Sunday of every month. We have been delighted to see your enthusiasm for ethically traded goods thrive and grow.

The generosity of our congregation in making regular donations for refreshments also allows us to restock regularly the basket in the Session House with Fairtrade tea, coffee, sugar and biscuits. In October we decided to use these donations, which had accrued considerably over many months, to purchase items from the Gavin's Mill 'Gifts that Change Lives' catalogue. The gifts we have purchased, to the value of £262, on your behalf are:

For smallholder farmers and their families in Malawi:

- ◆ one plough
- ◆ two school uniforms
- ◆ two school packs containing a school-bag, books, jotters and pens

To help the work of the Nepal Trust:

- ◆ Medicines for 1 family for a year
- ◆ Essential materials for farmers and vegetable growers
- ◆ A birthing kit to protect mothers and babies during childbirth
- ◆ A fully-equipped tool box to enable a Micro-Hydro Plant supervisor to maintain electricity supply and flour-grinding facilities to his/her village

We were also able to make a £50 donation to Gavin's Mill, who provide us with all our Fairtrade goods on a sale-or-return basis. We wish to support their fundraising efforts as they work towards their goal of buying their premises and building further on the work they do as a community hub and Fairtrade shop/café.

Your kind contributions as you enjoy your Fairtrade teas and coffees, and your change from purchases at the monthly Fairtrade stall, have enabled the purchase of the gifts above and the donation to the work of Gavin's Mill. We thank you for having made this possible.

In October, at the Church fundraising Silent Auction and Craft Fayre, the Fairtrade Group ran a Christmas gift stall with ethically traded 'stocking-fillers'. We were glad to see visitors to the event taking time out from their bids to stop and make some early Christmas purchases.

Finally, it gives us great pleasure to announce that, having met successfully the criteria, we were officially recognised as a Fairtrade Church by the Fairtrade Foundation in October 2019.

After more than a year of working with you all to raise awareness and promote the ethos of fairer and more ethical trade, we are delighted that our efforts have been rewarded. We congratulate you on making this happen through your support, your purchases and your generosity. We hope you will continue to work with us to support the aims of the Fairtrade Foundation and continue to put 'Faith into Action'.

The Fairtrade Group – Caroline, Ivar, Anne and Sandra

## **WORLD MISSION USED STAMP APPEAL**

The Kirk Session has agreed that, as we have done in previous years, the congregation will participate in this year's World Mission used stamp appeal over Christmas and New Year.

This year's appeal will support the Chigodi Women Centre in Blantyre, Malawi, which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. Through providing training in tailoring, fashion design and chicken-farming, the Centre improves the women's skills in marketing and entrepreneurship. By selling the produce made at the Centre, the plan is that when the funding finishes the project will be self-sustainable – able to continue to improve the lives of women in Malawi.

There will be a box in the church vestibule for your used stamps from Sunday 8th December until Sunday 19th January. Please cut the stamps from the envelopes and leave a small (1/4inch or 0.5cm) margin around each stamp. Thank-you!

## **COFFEE JAR OFFERINGS**

If you have been saving your small change in coffee jars, or other similar containers, the Kirk Session has decided that proceeds for this year's collection will again go to Toilet Twinning. See [www.toilettwinning.org](http://www.toilettwinning.org) for more details.

Sunday 19th January will be the date when we'll collect your Coffee Jar Offerings and we invite you first to transfer the coins into a small plastic bag or similar and hand that in, rather than the actual glass jars themselves. Thanks!

## **CUMBERNAULD & KILSYTH BABY BANK**

The Baby Bank is run by volunteers and is open for a few hours every week.

I usually pop in regularly to drop off donations from the congregation. Over the past few weeks, the number of referrals has been increasing, and on one of the days I was there, the volunteers were making up bags for collection by Social Workers or Family Co-ordinators.

The volunteers work from a list of required items, and the Baby Bank is set up like a shop, with boxes of items labelled with boys or girls, age ranges, and what each box contains.

The families and volunteers are very grateful for our continuing support.

Items for babies and children can be left in the vestibule. All clothing should be freshly laundered and in good condition. Brand new socks, underwear, nappies, wipes and baby toiletries are also needed.

*Anne Murphy*

## **FESTIVAL OF LIGHT**

You are warmly invited to the annual Festival of Light service which will be held this year in St. Mungo's Parish Church at 7.30pm on Sunday 8th December.

The Festival of Light is an Ecumenical Service of nine Hymns and four Lessons that has become a Cumbernauld Christmas tradition. As always, it will feature Croy Silver Band as well as local choirs and favourite Christmas Carols. The organist this year will be our own David Smith. The theme is spreading the Light of the World.

The Festival is in its 29th year and is organised by the committees of Sacred Heart's 3rd World Group and Cumbernauld Christian Aid volunteers, including Liz Dalling and Lesley Littlejohn from our own congregation.

Admission is by donation with all proceeds going to Christian Aid and 3rd World Group. Looking forward to seeing you there.

*Lesley Littlejohn*

## **CUMBERNAULD CRAFTERS**

The Craft Group meets in the Session House on Mondays from 1pm to 3pm, so if you are interested in crafts and want to join us for crafting, a cuppa and a natter, then why not come along? It doesn't matter whether you are a novice or an experienced crafter, we really enjoy sharing our experiences and learning from others.

We recently took part in a Crafts and Silent Auction fundraiser for the Church and we were thrilled to raise £375. We had lots of fun knitting Christmas novelties, such as Christmas puddings hiding chocolate oranges or bath bombs, Santa and his elves, skaters, snowmen and even a sleigh drawn by a reindeer. As well as all the Christmas items, we had baby cardigans, hats and scarves, bags, dolls and soft toys, and a range of tartan items for sale. We hope to have a pop-up craft sale before Christmas, and the small festive items will be available from now until Christmas.

Anne Morrison

## **DAYTRIPPERS**

In August the Daytrippers had planned a seaside trip to Ayr, but due to inclement weather we went instead to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. We had a most enjoyable day, and were fortunate enough to hear the daily organ recital.

In September we visited the Britannia Panopticon in Glasgow, the world's oldest surviving music hall. It opened in 1857, and many famous performers appeared there, including Jack Buchanan, Sir Harry Lauder, Marie Loftus, Dan Leno and Stan Laurel. In 1938 the building closed as a music hall, but is now entertaining the public again with shows, films and as a museum of music hall history.

We will now "hibernate" for the winter months, but will resume our day trips in April 2020.

## **FOOD BANK: WINTER 2019 UPDATE**

Let me start by thanking everyone in the congregation and community for their steadfast and generous support of our Food Bank since we opened our doors four years ago. When we began, we were issuing just under 200 grocery bags per year to those in need in our midst.

A basic bag contains milk, bread and cereal plus a tin of beans, a tin of spaghetti, two tins / packets of soup, a bag of pasta or rice, jar of pasta sauce, two tins of vegetables, two tins / packets of desserts and three main meals – e.g. hot dogs, chicken curry, ravioli. In the last year or so, due to Fair Share, we have been able to supplement dried goods with fresh foods including fruit, vegetables, dairy produce and other fresh items. If available, we like to include a 'treat' item, such as jam or biscuits or tea/coffee. We also provide basic toiletries and household cleaning items if required, and liaise with the local Uniform and Clothing Bank.

Numbers have steadily risen over the last couple of years, so much so that by the end of September 2019 we had already issued 340 bags. Thus, we have already exceeded last year's total and still have three full months to go. A sobering thought – especially with Winter yet to come.

The Food Bank would not be possible at all without the continued support and donations of the congregation and wider community. Local businesses have been keen to get involved and individuals have been compassionate in their giving too. Your generosity was clearly evident at our recent Harvest Thanksgiving Service.

Harvest is behind us now as we look ahead Christmas. For many, Christmas can be a challenging time for all sorts of reasons. At the Food Bank, we try to bring some relief to those in need and share in the joy, love and hope of the true Christmas.

Cornerstone will be hosting their annual party where a festive meal will be provided by Craighalbert Church and gifts will be distributed. As in previous years we will be supporting this effort. With this in mind, from the beginning of December we will be appealing for:

- ◆ donations of festive fayre – mince meat pies, trifle packs, puddings, cakes, sweets etc.
- ◆ cash – this allows us to buy fresh foods such as chicken, fruit & vegetables etc. on the day.

**Please note that donations of Christmas gifts – toys, socks, gloves, hats and toiletries etc. (unwrapped if possible) will be collected during our annual Gift Service on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December.**

It is a very rewarding and humbling experience to be involved with our Food Bank. At times it can be challenging, but it's always worthwhile. Our guests get so much more out of their visit than just the food bags and so do we! It's amazing what you learn! If you want to join us or simply find out more, then please just ask.

*Sandra Graham*

## MEN'S GROUP PROGRAMME 2019-20

### 2019

Wed 6 Nov	13:00	14:00	Visit: Hampden Park Tour (£5.00 each)
Tue 19 Nov	19:30	19:30	Speaker: Lisa Snedden, <i>Scottish Waterways</i>
Wed 4 Dec	19:00 for 19:30	Christmas meal at Railway Inn	

### 2020

Tue 7 Jan	19:30	19:30	Speaker: Andrew Pearson, <i>Audio/video presentation</i>
Wed 22 Jan	18:30 for 19:00	Burns Supper at Bowling Club (estimated cost of tickets, £10)	
Tue 11 Feb	17:00	18:00	Visit: Tunnock's Factory Tour (free – max number 12)
Tue 25 Feb	19:30	19:30	Speaker: Craig Mains, <i>Real Glasgow characters</i>
Wed 11 Mar	13:40	14:00	Visit: Cumbernauld Theatre or Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum (TBC)
Tue 24 Mar	19:30	19:30	Speaker: Margaret McGinty, <i>Pox, flu, measles</i>
Wed 15 Apr	13:00	14:00	Visit: Bo'ness Car Museum (£5 each)
Tue 28 Apr	19:30	19:30	Speaker: John Ferguson, topic tba
Wed 13 May	13:15	14:00	Visit: Grangemouth Museum (donation)
Tue 26 May	19:00 for 19:30	End of session meal: details tba	
Tue 2 Jun	Central station – a lot of walking! Details tbc, with names by early May 2020		

### Notes

1. First time is at Church / second time is visit/speaker start time
2. Costs are indicated where applicable
3. Speaker events: members' fee is £2

## **FUNDRAISING NEWS**

The Fundraising Team planned a varied programme of events for this year. We hope that we had something for everyone and we would like to thank everyone who came along to the events and helped us raise money throughout the year. We hope with your continued support to reach or even pass our £5000 target this year.

By the time you are reading this we will have only one final event left this year – Carols by Candlelight in the church on Friday 20th December. Much as you would expect, this is a chance to join in singing some favourite carols; Advent never seems long enough to fit in everyone's favourites. There will also be some poetry and readings to get us into the festive spirit and seasonal refreshments will be served.

Thank you to everyone you helped with or came along to our autumn events, Cookie Sunday, Silent Auction and Crafts, and St Andrew's night.

We especially wish to thank the craft group who raised the magnificent sum of £375 at the auction and crafts evening and donated it all to our fundraising, helping us to reach the stupendous total of £900 raised at the silent auction and crafts fundraiser. They really are a very talented group of ladies who produce some beautiful crafts.

## **CUMBERNAULD OLD SMART SAVERS**

Last December we launched Cumbernauld Old Smart Savers. We gave everyone a tube of *Smarties* to enjoy and asked that once you have eaten them that you use the tube as a 10p and 20p bank. Once you have filled the tube, pop it into the box in the church vestibule – you can't it – it's covered in *Smarties*-coloured paper!

If you wish, please help yourself to another tube to enjoy then fill that with 10p and 20p coins.

This will be an ongoing fundraiser for church funds.

## **LOOKING FORWARD TO 2020**

We look forward to your continued support next year, when our first event will be a musical evening in February, featuring the Bruadar Duo, who specialise in guitar and flute music. Lynn Strang, one of our organists is half of that duo.

*The Fundraising Group*

## CHRISTMAS AT CUMBERNAULD OLD

Sunday 8 December	Sacrament of Baptism	11am
Sunday 15 December	Nativity / Gift Service	11.00am
	Rainbow Service	3pm
Thursday 19 December	Boys' Brigade Christmas Carols <b>at the Forge</b>	7pm
Sunday 22 December	Morning Worship	11am
Tuesday 24 December	<i>Follow the Star</i> – an interactive event for all the family	3.15pm at the Village Bus Stop, Roadside, finishing at the Church around 4pm
	Watchnight Service	11.30pm
Wednesday 25 December	Christmas Day Worship	10.30am
Sunday 29th December	Morning Worship – service of Lessons and Carols	11am