



**Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Parish Church
linked with
Muiravonside Parish Church
Summer 2012**

**From the Manse
May 2012**



***Moses said to God, 'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh
and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'
And God said, 'I will be with you'*** ***Exodus Ch3, v11.***

Dear friends,

This month Rena Moore from Blackbraes and Shieldhill and I will be representing our churches and presbytery as Commissioners at the General Assembly in Edinburgh. This year it is particularly special as the Moderator of the General Assembly is the Rev Albert Bogle, minister of St Andrew's Parish Church, Boness.

I have known Albert as a colleague for almost ten years. I went to St Andrew's, Boness for my first placement as a candidate for ministry. It was a bold decision for me and one that did not come easy. As I was the only candidate in Falkirk at the time, the Ministries Council gave me the choice of where I could go for my first placement. I had always admired Albert's ministry and his vibrant worship, but at the time I was very shy and lacking in confidence so I decided that St Andrews, Boness was certainly not for me for a first placement. However, like my feeling of call to ministry, the feeling that I should go to Albert for my first placement would not go away, and so eventually I decided that I should go, but I was terrified!

My first Sunday at St Andrews was an eye opener. I had come from a very traditional church background, and here was a church that had a screen up instead of hymn books, played pop songs for the children's talk, had a worship band and a minister that walked down the aisle asking the congregation if they had any news that they wanted to share! I had never seen anything quite like it!

As I am a natural introvert, and Albert is more extrovert, I wondered how we would get on but I need not have feared. I remember the first time I preached which was at the evening service. I was so nervous, I hadn't eaten all day, and was visibly shaking, and my mouth was like sandpaper. I remember Albert noticing the state that I was in and saying to me before I preached that I had to remember that this was not all about me, it was all about God, and that God had called me and he would equip me. I have never forgotten those words, and they gave me the courage to preach that evening, because he was right, I wasn't confident in myself, rather my confidence lay in the God I believed in, and God faithfully saw me through. And so as the months passed I grew in confidence. Albert never pushed me, he went at my pace, and he was always very encouraging to me. I watched

him as he preached God's word with passion- it was not unusual for him to shed the odd tear, I noticed how he interacted with his congregation, with warmth and care and compassion. I observed how he successfully brought 21st century technology into worship, but still managed to craft a worship service full of reverence and holiness. I also noticed how Albert was an enabler, enabling his congregation in their own gifts and then allowing them to fully exercise their own ministries thus experiencing fulfilment and blessing.

I still keep in touch with Albert, I know he is there if I ever need advice. Occasionally David and I attend his monthly multi-media service on a Sunday evening with folks from our churches. When I heard that he had been elected as Moderator, I was thrilled for him and his wife Martha, for his congregation, and for the Church of Scotland as a whole. The other week there I received an unexpected surprise through the post, an invitation from Albert to be a shaker at the General Assembly, when the Lord High Commissioner attends on the final day. I hadn't a clue what a shaker was, but it's someone who greets the Lord High Commissioner as he leaves his car and enters the Assembly. I texted Albert to thank him for remembering me and also for granting me this privilege and honour. (The best way to contact Albert is always to text!)

And so next week, Rena and I head through to the Assembly which is to be moderated by Albert. One thing that Albert taught me which has been invaluable is the need to be yourself in ministry.

And Albert will be just that next week. There will be no airs and graces but there will be an abundance of reverence and holiness. There will be no excessive formality and stuffiness, but a relaxed and comfortable ambience. There will be times of seriousness and sadness, but there will also be warmth, and joy, and much laughter. But most importantly there will be passion, a deep passion for Christ to be glorified through the discussion and debate, and I would not be surprised if this passion, led our new Moderator, to shed the odd tear. Because as Albert said to me all those years ago, it's not about us, it's all about God, and it is he who has called us, and he will equip us to carry out the task. And I know that this belief will carry Albert safely through the Assembly next week and into the year ahead.

***Wishing you all a peaceful and relaxing summer,
God bless,***

***Your minister and friend,
Louise***

Baptisms

'Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name, welcomes me.'

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Mr Bobby Weir
adult baptism on the 6 May 2012

Muiravonside Parish

Sophie Ella McGuire
infant daughter of
Bryan and Lindsey McGuire

Baptized along with her mum
Lindsey McGuire on Easter Sunday

Funerals

*'The Lord will protect you
as you come and go,
both now and forevermore'.*

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Mr Kevin Woods

Mrs Susan Penman

Muiravonside Parish

Mr Martin Brown

Mrs Isabella Milne

Mr Archibald Brownlee

Mrs Sylvia Grieve

Ann Henderson wishes to thank all her friends at church who sent her cards and flowers when she was in hospital. They were very much appreciated. Thanks again.



Church Diary Summer 2012

Sun 27 May	Blackbraes and Shieldhill Baptism of baby Cooper William McGowan
Sun 3 June	Blackbraes and Shieldhill - Communion. Retiring Collection for Elaine Gray's trip to Al Shurooq school.
Sun 3 June	Muiravonside - Sunday Club meeting after church.
Mon 4 June	At 2pm - Haining Nursing Home service.
Wed 6 June	At 7:30pm - Bible Study in the Manse
Sat 9 June	From 10-12 noon - Blackbraes and Shieldhill Jubilee coffee morning in church hall.
Sun 10 June	Muiravonside Communion
Tue 12 June	11am at Louise Park's house - Prayer Group
Sun 17 June	11:30am - Muiravonside Stewardship Sunday Songs of Praise service – tea served afterwards in the church.
Tue 19 June	6:45pm - Falkirk Old and St Modans Parish Church Falkirk Presbytery Meeting
Wed 20 June	At 7:30pm - Blackbraes and Shieldhill congregational board and kirk session meeting in church hall.
Sun 24 June	At both churches - Sunday School/club prizegiving service.
Sun 8 July	At 10am - Annual Joint service at Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Tue 10 July	At 11am at Louise Park's house - prayer group
Sat 14 July	At 2pm, Blackbraes and Shieldhill Wedding of Sandra Brooksby and Steven Davidson
Sat 21 July	At 2.30pm, Blackbraes and Shieldhill Wedding of Cheryl McIntosh and Colin Wilson
Sat 28 July	At Dunblane Cathedral Wedding of Karen Manson and Martin Bell



Drew's
view

The Right Kind of Glue

I've never had much luck with glue!

Other people seem to be able to effortlessly stick their possessions together whenever these prized articles become broken or unstuck. Often this is done with such skill that you can't see the join! But not in my case, I'm afraid.

This rather "sticky situation" (or lack of it!) goes back a long time. From all the way right back to my childhood, until this very day, there is evidence all over the place of my abortive attempts to glue things. To make matters worse, when I was in my early teens, I loved the look of these "Airfix" model kits and longed to build my own model plane or boat. I would frequent the window of the Model Shop which used to be behind the Steeple in Falkirk. I loved to look for ages at these wonderful big boxes, with dramatic illustrations depicting battleships with all their guns blazing in heavy seas, or Spitfires locked in combat all over ominous and angry skies. I marvelled that I could possibly own one of these great legends of the sea or air if I saved my pocket money for a few weeks.

Of course, in all the excitement, I forgot that building these things involved an awful lot of glue! In addition to that, my finished article in no way seemed to resemble the model so imaginatively depicted on the box!

My main problem seemed to be measuring the flow of glue. I would either apply such a sparse and sparing amount that the model would only last a few days. Then gradually and increasingly, bits would begin to fall off and it would systematically disintegrate. Or, I would use far too much and the pieces would meet together with a loud, rich and resounding squelch.

This happened especially with the battleship which I decided to start first. The ship had some really detailed little sailors, as well as a captain, who were supposed to stand on the deck at various points. In reality, they all ended up together, rooted to the spot and up to their knees in a globule of dried glue, together with a miserable, mutinous expression on their faces!

As I progressed further, I found that large globules of cement would then run copiously down the side of the model. Of course, most of it would finish all over my hands and I would end up gluing myself to the project I was working on! This unexpected and rather disturbing turn of events was so successful that we were often inseparable for hours. I would come down to lunch and

enjoy the meal with a ship's funnel and two miniature sailors glued to my right hand!

I found that these adhesives seemed to be absolutely wonderful at gluing parts of the human body together, rather than the pieces of the models they were intended for!

With new respect and this in mind, when I started work on the Spitfire, I exercised utmost caution and was very sparing with the glue. However, I was too cautious. Once the Spitfire was completed, it tended to be OK, as long as you didn't ever attempt to move it. However the moment the majestic and proud plane was disturbed, even if it was ever so slightly, the propeller would immediately fall off. The plane also had a pilot, who despite being quite small, had very detailed features, including a sheepskin jacket - if he was painted properly. (That was another problem!)

The poor unfortunate pilot kept falling out of his plane, as I couldn't seem to access the point where you glued him in. One day, as we were preparing to move house, in all the pandemonium of packing and everything that involves, he disappeared completely. I must say that I can't blame him, but I was so sad about this. I felt personally responsible for his demise! But I'm delighted to say there was a happy ending to this. One day, about two years later, I was going through some boxes we had put in the loft, left over from the flitting and after emptying out some old discarded ornaments, I unearthed a pair of legs bedecked in flying boots, sticking out from under a plate.

Lo and behold, he was back!

By that time, I had become friends with a guy at school, who not only could make these models and glue them with complete perfection, but could even build model aeroplanes with small engines in them which actually flew using a remote control handset! He said they worked electronically with servos, or something absolutely mystical and intriguing like that. You can imagine, I regarded this mild mannered and bespectacled friend as some kind of god and got him to paint the little pilot properly. He must have spent hours working on this, because the work he put into restoring the pilot was so detailed, that the sheepskin on his jacket had a ruffled effect and his face was set in grim concentration, as if he was immersed in deep thought about the missions ahead.

Although the model spitfire has long since disintegrated, to this day, the little pilot still sits in a display case, taking pride of place among my favourite possessions in memory of those brave men who flew the Spitfires.

As I got a bit older, I sort of gave up with glue and managed to somehow avoid getting into “sticky situations!” I did once try some superglue when it first became popular and tried it out to stick together a small vase that had accidentally been broken. However, I was only to find that superglue is even better at sticking your fingers to vases, parts of the house, and bits of the human body than all the other glues put together and it was totally breathtaking watching just how fast it could achieve this!



Eventually, I forgot all about this until around three weeks ago. I had just settled down to drink a cup of coffee from my favourite mug that I had used for years when – Snap!

The handle and mug parted company, with the former resting on my finger and the latter spilling piping hot coffee all over the place.

I didn't want to throw the mug out as it has sentimental value. So this spurred me on to look in the set of drawers where my mum keeps all sorts of useful things, such as scissors, pens, batteries and of course glue! Sure enough, I found a small tube with the very encouraging name “Algesal” written on it. The glue was white in colour and looked tame enough not to bind me forever to my favourite mug, but at the same time would be strong enough to fix the handle. Alas, it was to no avail!

Remembering past experiences, I sparingly tried a small amount of glue. Absolutely nothing happened. The handle fell right off in seconds. I tried a bit more. No success. Finally, I squelched out the generous proportions that had kept the captain and crew of the battleship rooted to the spot forever. The handle still fell off within a few seconds.

“This stuff is absolutely useless!” I shouted in exasperation.

I noticed too that it was so ineffective, it hadn't even stuck my fingers together – a feat that the weakest of glues can effortlessly do!

I found out the reason the next morning. I had decided to give it another go and looking again at the small tube in the new light of morning, I noticed that I had misread the brand name which adorned the length of the tube of glue. It read “Algesal,” rather than “Algesal!” I had been in effect, attempting to glue the handle back onto my mug with a substance which is actually an ointment, that when applied liberally, would bring blessed relief to lumbago, a sore leg, or arthritis!

Oh dear!

I decided it was time to let sentiment go and went out to buy a new mug!

There is however, another type of glue that I love.

This sort of glue is very precious. It cannot be bought in any shop. It is invisible, but so strong that it is tangible and can be felt all over the world, wherever you may go. It brings people together. It unites you and me. It is filled with hope and such joy that it is sometimes difficult to fully comprehend the magnitude of what we are experiencing.

This glue is of course God's love. But it doesn't just stop there. Included in this glue are some knockout ingredients which make the bond even stronger. Added in with this love is compassion. There is also a generous sprinkling of forgiveness. The bond is made even stronger with lots of patience. These are all ingredients which God possesses in vast quantities.

One of my favourite hymns, written by Bob Gillman in 1977, always reminds me of this wonderful glue and its sense of permanence:

"Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken."
(Mission Praise: 54)

As 1 John chapter 4, verse 16 says:

"And we ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us. God is love, and those who live in love live in union with God and God lives in union with them."

This union, or bond, stretches out everywhere and criss-crosses the world through all of God's creatures. It reaches out from you to me and from me to you. It flows out from our church to the community, to other churches and the rest of the world, just as it is reciprocated and binds us to them. This glue will last forever. The "cords" will never break or falter, because they comprise of God's love and union to us as well as our love and union to him.

This is one glue which I love to possess and I know with delight that I can never go wrong. The bond will never break. It will always be just right, because God is in charge.

This is definitely "The right kind of glue."

Remembered

There's the table, wine and bread
To remember Him as He said
In compliance with His "This do"
We eat and drink with Him in view.

Lord I'm aware You must know
That my battery is running low
Rolling along on no wave crest,
Depriving You of my best.

The bread is solemnly passed around,
It's fairly quiet, not much sound.
One and another takes a bit,
What are they thinking as they sit?

Lord You gave your all for me,
That in the bread and wine I see.
Here am I remembering still
Won't You this poor vessel fill?

The bread replaced, the wine we take
Symbol of blood shed for our sake
Carefully passed, having taken some
We proclaim His death until He come

Lord it's over once again,
The service closes with "Amen"
Help me as I journey through
Always to remember You

Robert S. Thompson

June

June is one of the best months of the year,
long sunny days bring such delight and joy.
Days stretch out and evenings are so clear,
hopefully lovely blue skies, no rain to annoy.
No wonder people go about in good cheer,
doing everything during this month to enjoy.

So many things happen, so much to plan,
spoiled for choice we decide what to do.
A rare chance to go abroad and get a tan,
nice month to be at the seaside that's true.
A month with God's blessings that span,
across society - a chance for joy to accrue.

Throughout the land roses now in full bloom,
in gardens providing a welcoming committee.
All around we can sniff their beautiful perfume,
another pleasure enjoyed in town or city.
Rhododendrons in purple are a positive boon,
in garden or park they are equally pretty.

During this month celebrations will be made,
the Queen's Diamond Jubilee to mark.
Street parties, bunting, scones and lemonade
as well as lots of parties from dawn till dark.
With tea and coffee and cakes homemade
on a day of festivities we will all embark.

By Drew Robertson





South Africa Link



Dear Friends

Thanks to the generosity of Cumbernauld Old congregation's mission circle and a donation from Blackbraes and Shieldhill we have been able to employ someone to look after Shupi and an old friend of ours who had suffered a stroke many years ago has been giving what he can remember of the physiotherapy he had. Cumbernauld also paid for Shupi's mother to come from Zimbabwe to look after her, cutting the costs a bit (we no longer have to employ a carer) so that they could also buy food.

If you can remember, Shupi was the breadwinner for all of her extended family: nine orphaned children and herself and mother, now they have no income and she is stuck here in SA because of her illness. We are sending them as much as we can personally as well as what has been gifted but with so many to feed it does not last long! Please pray for Shupi's recovery and for all the children she has been supporting. Please also pray for our friends in the Eastern Cape who are doing what they can from their own meagre incomes.

We have been busy with the launching of another book co-authored by Graham and another academic which was based on the Federal Theological Seminary, a place whereby black students could be trained for the ministry during apartheid. Some of you who receive this letter will know well about Fedsem (as it was commonly called) and perhaps even involved at different stages of its development. Fedsem closed in 1993 and has left a great deal of unresolved hurt for many of the people and churches involved. The book is an attempt to start a discussion on the reasons for the closure and to perhaps motivate some healing.

We hope that you will continue to support our work with your prayers, and also your prayers for those who are in dire straits at this point in time. We also pray for you all and hope that this year will be better than the last.

***With lots of love
Sandra and Graham***

Tea, coffee and a chat are always available in the hall after services. Please stay if you can.





Guild Summer 2012



This session has been the third and last in the Guild's three year strategy under the overall title "What does the Lord require of you". Guild members were called to walk humbly with God and throughout the session in our meetings, we focussed often on "Thanking God for his creation", the discussion topic. Despite the credit crunch, in the last three years, Guilds have worked diligently raising nationally for the six projects the amazing sum of £640 000. Our Guild session's project donation went to "Terrify No More" with International Justice Mission's work on human trafficking in Cambodia.

In our daily lives, Guild members walk in faith with the Lord as we perceive God's call for us in these challenging times. These are the reflecting words by Ruth Harvey.

Lead us on our Journey.

God, our God you have called us to be a people
on the move; travelling light, dying to live,
ready to lose ourselves for the sake of the world.

You have called us to be a people with a purpose;
travelling without a map, travelling to where we are led, sustained by your
Spirit,
committed to the gospel for the hope of the world.

Move us on our journey from where we are to where you want us to go.
open our eyes on the way to the people of different cultures, continents and
countries
who can bring colour to our lives.

Take us on our journey from where we are to what you want us to be;
so that we become a community where all are welcomed and no one is
excluded,
all are valued and no one is made to feel inadequate,
all are forgiven and no one is ashamed to belong
all are encouraged and no one is too hurt to come among us.

Lead us on our journey from who we are to who you want us to be;
so that patience is built into us, kindness is assumed in us, gentleness is
part of us,
compassion flows from us, truth is second nature to us.

Lorna Coulter

Spring Harvest 2012 – Church Actually

11 people from both Shieldhill and Muiravonside attended and enjoyed the visit to Spring Harvest at Minehead during the first half of Holy Week this year. This was the third annual trip to SH but the first to the Butlins site at Minehead. There was something for everyone during the week from the fellowship of others in sharing meals together, to the worship in the Big Top with 5,000 other Christians, to the teaching from inspirational speakers and the entertainment of musicians, dancers and comedians. There was still time however for a quiet walk along the beautiful Somerset coast or a wander around the town of Minehead.

The theme of the week centred on the church and asked the questions “what God actually intends the church to be” and “how are we doing, actually, as churches in a post-modern context”. We were reminded that the church is God’s brilliant idea as his chosen means to bless the world by shining through his people, empowering them with his spirit, helping them show his love to the world and bringing them together as one family in union through their belief in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. Krish Kandiah spoke powerfully as to why the church is still so central a part of our communities when he asked us which organisation offers most support to pre-school children and their parents in the UK; which organisation provides most youth work in the UK and which organisation provides most care for older people and their families in the UK and to each question we answered **THE CHURCH ACTUALLY**. It was inspiring and motivating and for me I left with the message ringing in my ears that nothing we do now for God during our lifetimes is done in vain as anything done in his service and done in love will live on into eternity.

For those there as the week ended one thing was sure we all vowed to return next year to SH at Skegness when the theme will be The Source – Encountering Jesus Today. We will be planning shortly for next year’s trip and if you are interested and thinking about whether to go please speak to me or to anyone else in the group who has attended before. It would be wonderful to have 15, 20 or even 25 people journeying to Spring Harvest next year.

David McClements



**Volunteering with the
Al Shurooq School
for the Visually Impaired**

On Wednesday 13 June I fly out on my 4 week volunteer programme with the Al Shurooq School for the Visually Impaired Beit Jala, Bethlehem.

The first couple of days will be spent at The Scottish Guest House in Tiberias before meeting up with Helen Shehade and the children. We will then drive further north for a the children's summer camp at Tabgha on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. The children will spend a week there enjoying the opportunity to go swimming and various other activities that we take for granted. We will then head back to the school at Beit Jala, where I will be involved in various with the children and other students teaching english and IT skills.



I am sure Helen will keep me busy with other tasks as always and it will be a wonderful experience to be back after all these years. I will be taking with me a donation from the church and from the Brownies for the school, thank you all for your generosity and support. I will be collecting recipes and creative writing up until the end of August for the book that I plan to put together to raise additional funds for the school, hopefully in time for the christmas rush!!

**Thank you
Elaine McDiarmid**



Website

Our magazines are now available on our website www.bsandm-church.org.uk. If anyone would prefer to access them this way, instead of paper format, please let your Church Elder know.

As well as saving paper, and trees, an advantage of using the internet is that you would receive the magazine in colour. It could also be enlarged if you need to see it in large print.

Notes From a Shieldhill Garden



Psalm 96 verses 11 and 12
Be glad, earth and sky!
Roar, sea, fields, and everything in you;
Be glad, fields, and everything in you!
The trees in the woods will shout with joy

I was reading my RSPB magazine and was reminded that Sunday 6th May is national dawn chorus day. This made me think about Rachel Carson's book 'Silent Spring'. In the mid 1990s I did a postgraduate science course for my work and one of the tasks that I had to complete was that I had to write an essay about pesticides and their effect on wild life. I lent quite heavily on Rachel Carson's book because she outlined the effect some of our worst pesticides were having on wildlife. At the time when she wrote her book, many of our iconic birds of prey were in decline and our songbirds were showing signs of following behind. Many hedgerows were being uprooted and insecticides and pesticides were in regular use. What she did was to give the western world a wake up call and so, today, our spring is not silent and some of the very worst of the insecticides and pesticides are no longer on the market. Some people say the Rachel Carson was behind the modern environmental movement. Bird of Prey numbers are rising; some have been successfully reintroduced to certain areas. In recent years farmers have been encouraged to leave bits of land that will support songbirds, butterflies and insects.

So, Dawn Chorus Day is on May 6th. It begins at 4.45am and ends at 7.30am. Just how noisy the mornings are depends on the weather because birds, like us, don't sing in the rain. It is male birds that sing and they are singing to advertise that they are there, to attract mates and to lay a claim on territory.

The dawn chorus is heard throughout the spring and early summer. In Shieldhill, the noisiest birds that you may hear are chaffinches followed by robins, chirping sparrows, great tits shouting "tea-cher" and wrens who scold all who care to listen. People who live near to The Bings will hear the wailing Willow Warblers. Some birds make a sound that tells us their name. Chiffchaffs say their name and Stone Chats sound as if they are hitting a stone on an anvil.

There are various web sites that will let you hear bird song. Over the past year ago the British Trust of Ornithology has been recording pairs of similar birds so that you can compare them and listen to them. I have found this to be useful as identifying some similar birds is tricky. When I am counting birds for The British Trust of Ornithology, I have to justify that I have identified rare

birds, should I be lucky enough to see any, and often the noise that they make often is a good point to confirm just what you have seen. A few years ago when I was counting birds for the BTO, I saw a Marsh Tit. This bird looks a bit like a Blue Tit but is black and white; it also looks very like a more common Blackcap. As it was a singing male, I was able to confirm that the bird was a Marsh Tit.

Our spring is not silent although some of you may say that dawn choruses were noisier in years gone by; it is hard to say. Should you wake early, listen; what can you hear?

Happy garden watching
Rena

National Stewardship Programme

As part of the National Stewardship Programme, we are being encouraged to give our time and talents as well as money to support the church. The Minister and Board of Blackbraes and Shieldhill thought it would be useful to publish the monthly free will offering amounts in the magazine.

Here are the latest figures:

January £1715.75

February £1467.60

March £1912.50.

To put these figures in perspective, we send £1646.90 to Ministries and Mission in Edinburgh each month as our contribution to the wider work of the Church.

This makes it even more important that we give our Time and Talents to fundraising throughout the year - to continue our upkeep of the Church so that it continues to be warm and welcoming to all who visit.

Thank you

Christine Jones

Introducing . . . **Norma Jack (67)**

I was born in Prestonpans, East Lothian, in 1945, and was christened in the Grange Church, Prestonpans. I started Sunday School when I started school and then this was held in the afternoon and the Session Clerk was in charge. Later it was changed and became as most Sunday Schools are today, children's address in Church first then Sunday School in Hall. When I was Bible Class age I became the pianist in Sunday School. As the Bible Class was taken by the Minister before Church began I was able to attend both. When I was old enough I became a Sunday School teacher and eventually Sunday School Superintendent.

I married my husband, Robert, in 1968, and we moved to Walsall in England (just outside Birmingham) in 1971 due to his change of job. As my job had always been clerical/secretarial I was able to get a job quite easily as was the case then. Over the years I have worked in Edinburgh Police (CID), Prestonpans Primary School, Architects' office (Edinburgh), Heating Engineers' Branch Office (Walsall) and after having my family, Callendar Estate Office, Falkirk.

My son Gordon was born in 1974 in Livingston after we came back from Walsall and my daughter Jennifer was born in 1977, the only "Falkirk Bairn" in the family. Gordon has 2 daughters aged 6 and 3 and Jennifer has a daughter aged 5 and a son just about to become 1.

When we lived in Walsall, there was no Church of Scotland in the area and, having been brought up quite strictly regarding Church, did not think I could attend any other Church. My husband and I did attend a nearby Methodist Church once or twice but it did not seem quite right at the time. I realise now that this was when I knew that the Church was a very important part of my life and I missed it greatly. The nearest Church was only in the next street, St. George's Church of England, and although it was very High English, I think that just going in and sitting during a Service would have brought great comfort.

The Church we attended in Livingston was ecumenical and a completely different way of worship. Very casual both in appearance, dress and attitude – no hats!! This really was a "Church without Walls". Open Monday to Friday for tea, biscuits and a "blether" and all age groups came, which was a good thing as Livingston was just being built and could be a very lonely place. We then moved to Falkirk when my husband came to work in the Refinery and our daughter was born when we lived in Hallglen and was christened in the gym hall of the Primary School as there was no Church building there at the time. It was a lovely ceremony, very small but welcoming. Completely different to our son's where 6 babies were baptised at the same time in

Livingston, all different denominations - both different but equally loving.



When we moved from Hallglen we changed to St. Modan's Church and I became involved with the Sunday School, eventually becoming Superintendent. Many years later St. Modan's joined Falkirk Old Parish Church and again I eventually became Sunday School Superintendent both in the Parish and also Hallglen. I also became a member of the Women's Guild in both St. Modan's and Falkirk Old, which was new for me as I had only been in the Young Wives and Mothers Group in Prestonpans. After retiring from Sunday School I was honoured to be asked to become an Elder and took up duties in Hallglen Church.

I have made many dear friends in all the Churches I have attended and none more so than when I joined Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish Church. It is definitely one of the most friendly and welcoming Churches I have ever attended. You walk through the door and smiles greet you everywhere. I am now an Elder and member of the Guild, and help out in Sunday School when I can. I am also secretary for the Motor Neurone Disease Scotland Central Branch, involved mostly with fundraising at the moment.

I was once at a discussion group many years ago and we were asked to name three people who influenced your thoughts regarding your faith. Most people put their parents and grandparents, as did I, but I also put the Sunday School Superintendent who asked me to play piano for both Sunday School and Girls Guildry (Brigade) as it was then. Her name was Miss Jolly and she was a teacher of children with special needs. She was kind, gentle and very understanding, and she also taught us to consider and understand those children she taught by bringing them to Sunday School and showing that they were no different from any other children. The other person was the Minister who took Bible Class, Mr. Taylor. He was a missionary in Calabar, Africa, who had been carrying out wonderful work there especially in education, but had to come back to Scotland when his elderly mother's health started to fail. I was lucky to have his guidance during my early teens and he explained a lot of things about the Church that were not in the teaching manuals. He later went to Jamaica to teach at Kingston University and then retired to St. Andrews.

I often think of my faith as my way of life, and as a child my parents taught me to treat others as I would like to be treated. It doesn't always work that

way and there have been many disappointments but I think that there has been more happiness than sadness. If I come to Church feeling a bit down I go home feeling so much better. I love the hymns, the children and having somebody and somewhere to turn to when needed. I have tried to pass on a little of this to the children and I have received much more back from them. I have favourite hymns and readings just like most people, and I still have questions from time to time, but they usually get answered eventually.

Rob and I have been blessed with a wonderful family and we look after our son's two girls 2 days a week and our daughter's children when needed and they are now all attending Sunday School, as their parents want them to have the enjoyable experiences that they had when they were young. Many people have said to me that they want their children to make their own choices when they are older, but surely they need something to choose between and some guidance as they are growing up. I hope I have been able to help, just a little, the many young boys and girls I have met in Sunday School in the past as there have been times when they have made me think by asking some difficult questions as children do.

I think my favourite time of the Church year is Christmas, with the Nativity, the wonderful story, Christingle, the carols and Midnight Service, and I never tire of reading and hearing the Christmas Story. Although I have been with the children mostly I have also had the pleasure of meeting quite a lot of elderly people while visiting and they are the ones who have quietly kept the Church alive over the years. The children may be out future and we must move on but our parents and grandparents were the ones who built up our Church for the future.

Hymn 365

A minister was completing a temperance sermon. With great emphasis he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

And then finally, shaking his fist in the air, he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

Sermon complete, he sat down.

The song leader stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, nearly laughing, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn 365, 'Shall We Gather at the River.'"



**Sponsored child
Romain Wedla Sida Nano,
Burkina Faso**

It has been almost a year since the sponsorship for Romain commenced. It provides him with Bible teaching, hygiene education, medical check-ups, group games and social activities. The centre staff teach the children reading and writing skills before they commence school.

Powerful transformation occurs when the children come to realise that someone outside of their immediate environment cares about them, helping them to feel loved and valued.

Church members who choose to sponsor Romain annually and wish to continue to do so are reminded that the £12 is due in May.

***Thank you for your continuing support.
Carolyn Marshall***

Rena's Porridge Oat Biscuits

Ingredients

125g/4oz marg
125g/4oz sugar
250g/8oz porridge oats
2 level dessert spoons flour
2 level dessert spoons milk
Pinch baking powder

Method

1. Line a flat tray with greaseproof paper or baking parchment (I find that I have to do this or they stick to the tray).
2. Cream marg and sugar
3. Work in the oats, flour, baking powder and milk.
4. Roll out about 1cm thick and cut with a small cutter.
5. Bake in a mod oven; 160°C for about 20 mins.



Gift Aid



Gift Aid can increase our church income by a 25p return from the Government for every £1 given by any taxpayer who signs a Gift Aid declaration.

If you are a taxpayer and you haven't already done so, please consider signing a Gift Aid declaration - it's really easy and it means your 'giving' is increased by 25% at no expense to you. If you stop paying tax, you should let us know.

The money you give must be identified as coming from you. Therefore, you have to pay by Freewill Offering numbered envelope or by Standing Order/ Direct Debit from your own bank account or by personal cheque. All information is dealt with in the strictest confidence. Only the Recorder knows a person's givings. You don't need to reveal details of your finances and you don't have to commit to giving a fixed amount.

If you would like a Gift Aid form or to find out more, please speak to Marion Zacks, Gift Aid Convener.

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Four worms in church

A minister decides that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon.

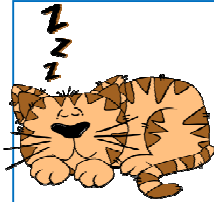
Four worms were placed in four separate jars.
The first worm was placed in a container of alcohol.
The second worm was placed in a container of cigarette smoke.
The third worm was placed in a container of chocolate syrup.
The fourth worm was placed in a container of good, clean soil.
At the conclusion of the sermon, the Minister reported the following results:

- The first worm in alcohol - DEAD
- The second worm in cigarette smoke - DEAD
- The third worm in chocolate syrup - DEAD
- The fourth worm in good, clean soil - ALIVE



So the minister asked the congregation, "What did you learn from this demonstration?"

The old dear in the back raised her hand and said, "As long as you drink, smoke, and eat chocolate, you won't have worms!"



A cat died and went to Heaven. God met her at the gates and said,
'You have been a good cat all these years. Anything you want is yours for the asking.'

The cat thought for a minute and then said 'All my life I lived on a farm and slept on hard wooden floors. I would like a real fluffy pillow to sleep on. God said, 'Say no more.' Instantly the cat had a huge fluffy pillow.

A few days later, six mice were killed in an accident and they all went to Heaven together. God met the mice at the gates with the same offer that He made to the cat.

The mice said, 'Well, we have had to run all of our lives: from cats, dogs, and even people with brooms! If we could just have some little roller skates, we would not have to run again.' God answered, 'It is done.' All the mice had beautiful roller skates.

About a week later, God decided to check on the cat. He found her sound asleep on her fluffy pillow. God gently awakened the cat and asked, 'Is everything okay? How have you been doing? Are you happy?'

The cat replied, 'Oh, it is WONDERFUL. I have never been so happy in my life. The pillow is so fluffy, and those little Meals on Wheels you have been sending over are delicious!'



Some trivia questions

- Q. What is God's name?
A. Howard - Our father, who art in heaven, Howard be thy name
- Q. What animal could Noah not trust?
A. The cheetah
- Q. When was the longest day in the bible?
A. The day Adam was created, because there was no Eve
- Q. What's the strongest day of the week?
A. Sunday - the rest are week days

Submitted by A McDermaid, Muiravonside

Childrens Page

Childrens Page

Go on a bug hunt



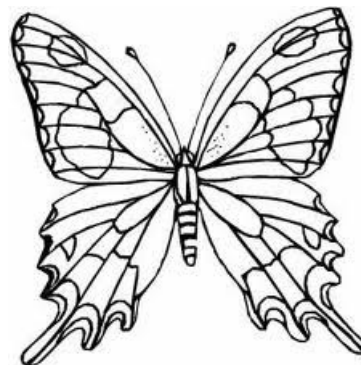
Our gardens are full of creepy crawlies. Can you find any?

Some may be hiding under stones, some may be flying around, others will be on plants. If there is a compost heap there will be creepy crawlies there. A magnifying glass can be a useful tool and that will help you to have a close look.

bbc.co.uk/springwatch has a bug bingo game that can be downloaded and good pictures to help you to identify things that you find.

Things to think about:

- 1 How does it move?
- 2 Does it have antennae?
- 3 How many legs does it have?
- 4 How many parts does it have?
- 5 What kind of place does it live in?
- 6 Is it smooth or rough?



Keep a note of all the bugs you find and take your list into Sunday School.

Don't take the bugs in - there won't be enough seats!