



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



**From the Manse  
November 2012**

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John Ch1, v14*



Dear friends,

The Presbytery Plan has recently been finalised and I am pleased to say that our linkage shall remain unchanged with each church continuing to share one full time minister. Our Parish is one of the biggest in Falkirk presbytery, and that together with the future development of Whitecross, and the fact that our linkage has been working well has meant that we will keep our present ministry allocation for the foreseeable future. Please remember in your prayers the other churches in the Presbytery who will have to be linked in the near future, and for the changes that will bring to them in relation to reduced ministerial resources.

Christmas is fast approaching and there is a variety of services on in both churches to cater for all ages. The popular Christingle service will be held in each church on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> December. There will be a Memorial service in each church early December for those who have lost a loved one whether recently or many years ago.

There will be a short afternoon Carol service held in Muiravonside Church on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December for those for whom morning worship is unsuitable and are unable to sit for the duration of a normal service. There will also be a variety of children's services including the Nativity service at Blackbraes and Shieldhill and also the popular Rainbow/Brownie and Guide Carol service. For service dates and times please see the Church Diary further on in the magazine.

Fund raising is always important for our churches as the cost of maintaining such beautiful buildings continues to rise. If you are able please support the Whitecross Christmas Fayre, and the Blackbraes and Shieldhill Christmas Brunch. Dates and times are in the Church Diary. By the time you read this magazine we will at Blackbraes and Shieldhill have dedicated the memorial bench to the local midwife Mrs Cockburn. This has been a Guide initiative and we look forward to the community being able to enjoy the bench at the front of our church for many years to come.

A recent happy occasion at Muiravonside was the ordination of five new elders on October 28<sup>th</sup> and we look forward to the gifts and ministry which Sheena, Etta, Tony, Mary and David will bring to our churches and parish.

I do hope and pray that all members can enjoy some of the services on offer at Christmas time. If you have not been for a while then please come along - you will receive the warmest of welcomes. If you are unable to attend church due to health or other reasons then you can receive a weekly CD recording of the service to enjoy in the comfort of your own home.

If anyone would like communion served at home then please speak to your elder or give me a phone - 717757 and we will arrange a date and time which is convenient for you.

I pray that each of you receive the peace and joy of the Christ child this Christmas and that your faith in him will transform your hearts so that you can know him in a new and deeper way.

For he is '**Our Emmanuel**' - we are not alone - God is indeed with us.

***Christmas blessings from your minister and friend,  
Louise***

### **The Meaning of the Christmas Wreath**

Every Christmas wreath is  
More than just a decoration  
It's a special reminder of Jesus  
The reason for our celebration.  
The circle of a Christmas wreath  
Is a never ending ring  
A reminder of eternal love  
From our Lord and King.  
The Christmas wreath is a sign of welcome  
Inviting all to enter in  
A reminder of Christ's invitation  
For all to come to him.  
The middle of a Christmas wreath  
Is a bare and empty space  
A reminder of what life would be  
Without Christ's love and grace.  
So each time you see a Christmas wreath  
Hanging from a door  
May your heart rejoice in the one  
That Christmas is truly for.



***Rita Braes***

**Baptisms**

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

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Riley Scott Mclsaac  
infant son of  
Arlene Flannagan and Scott Mclsaac  
on 9<sup>th</sup> Sep 2012

Leah Margaret June Innes  
infant daughter of  
Helen Harbinson and Liam Innes  
on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2012

Muiravonside Parish

Esmee Arella Johnstone  
infant daughter of  
Julia and David Johnstone  
on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2012

**Funerals**

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

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Mr John Duncan

Mr David Weir

Mr Paul Burgess

Muiravonside Parish

Mrs Mary Nimmo

Mr Peter Lees

Mrs Christine Jack

Tea, coffee and a chat are always available in the hall after services.

Please stay if you can.



**Weddings**

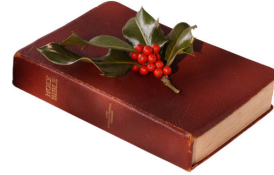
***'Meanwhile these three remain - faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.'***

Muiravonside Parish

Joanne Winning and Graham Campbell  
on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2012  
at Muiravonside Church

## Bible Study Group

The group continues to meet monthly at the Manse. There are around 10 or so from both churches who are presently attending. We would always welcome others who would like to come along and share in the time of fellowship.



The group have just finished the series entitled "Christianity Xplored" which took us through the Gospel of Mark. We have just started a new study which will run over 4 sessions and is entitled "Square Mile". There is discussion which flows from a DVD which the group watch first. The series guide asks the question as to whether anyone would notice if our church ceased to exist in our community. We hope of course that the answer would be a resounding YES.

The study exists to help us as Christians to think about mission in a joined up way and expresses it in 4 dimensions:

- Mercy (Demonstrating God's compassion for the poor)
- Influence (Being salt and light in the public of the community)
- Life Discipleship (Equipping Christians for missional living as workers and neighbours)
- Evangelism (Faithful and relevant communication of the gospel).

**David McClements**

Please join us at our  
Christingle Services



Sunday 23 Dec at 4pm  
Blackbraes and Shieldhill

Monday 24 Dec at 7pm  
Muiravonside

Everyone is welcome at these  
wonderful family services



### Blackbraes and Shieldhill and Muiravonside Diary

Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov at 11am	Christmas Brunch Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> Nov at 7:30pm	Guild - Christian Aid
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> December at 11am	Muiravonside Christmas Fayre Whitecross Primary School
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December at 3pm	Annual Memorial Service Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December at ? ??	Rainbow/Brownie and Guide Carol Service Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> December at 1:30pm	Rendez-Vouz Christmas Party Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm	Congregational Board and Kirk Session meeting Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm	Santa Drive Maddiston Community Centre
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> December at 3pm	Annual Memorial Service Muiravonside
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> December at 11am	Prayer group followed by Christmas lunch at Beancross at Louise Park's house
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm	Session meeting Muiravonside
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> December at 2pm	Short service of worship Haining Nursing Home
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm	Guild Christmas Party with guest appearance from Santa! - Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm	Bible Study In the Manse
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> December at 6:30pm	Carol Service around the Christmas tree with members from Muiravonside Choral Society Maddiston Primary School

**Dates can also be found on the church website  
www.bsandm-church.org.uk**

Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	Nativity Service Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> December at 2pm	Short carol service for those unable to sit for duration of a normal service Muiravonside
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December	Christmas family service Both churches
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December at 4pm	Christingle service Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> December at 7pm	Christingle service Muiravonside
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> December from 11pm onwards	Watchnight service Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> December from 11pm onwards	Watchnight service Muiravonside
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> December	Lessons and Carols service Both churches



**Website**

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

You can also find photos, news, and the **Minister's Blog** on our website.





## Drew's view

### Pennies (and Pounds!) from Heaven

Back in the 1920's, a well known scientist by the name of J.B.S. Haldane once said, "The Universe is not only stranger than we imagine, it is stranger than we *can* imagine."

A few years ago, I found out this statement was true in the most unlikely of places. In mid December, I happened to be visiting some friends in Largs for a few days. I love going down there in winter because the town has a special beauty that the summer tourists never see. Not only is the popular resort very quiet and peaceful, but it is also wonderful to walk along the picturesque sea front. There is a quiet somnolence that is never seen during the hectic and crowded summer months.

On a crisp, sunny, winter's morning, the views over the water to the Isle of Cumbrae and further south to the distant mountains of Arran are crystal clear. Everything, it seems, appears magnified in the cool, clean winter air.

During these walks in such attractive surroundings, there is a gentle ambience about this piece of shoreline that has almost mystical qualities. There are certain places in the world where God feels very close to us. This is one of them. God seems tangibly close here. It is a place where an incredible amount of thinking and reflection can be done. A lot of healing takes place. Answers seem to effortlessly appear to problems which seemed insoluble at home. Because of this, I never miss my morning walk if I happen to find myself there in winter, especially if the weather is good.

Even if the weather is windy, I am not deterred, as I encounter a complete contrast from the calm of the day before. There is a new sense of excitement combined with a taste of salt, diffused through the spray filled air. There is also the exhilaration of watching an angry sea lashing mercilessly against the unyielding shore, while listening to the deep hollow boom as the waves crash against the defiant and resolute wall. The ferry battling back and forward over the waves to the Isle of Cumbrae, pitches and rolls on its short crossing, whilst seagulls huddle close to the shore, seeking shelter and swooping back and forward with indignant shrieks as the wind tosses them mercilessly around.

December the 16<sup>th</sup> was a day like this. To make matters even worse though, it was raining. That may be bad enough, but this wasn't a comfortable sort of rain which brushes lightly against your face with gentle spits and spots. It was absolutely pouring down and this watery deluge, combined with its comrade



in arms, the gale force wind, was hitting both my front and side like miniature liquid tracer bullets, saturating every square inch that it came in contact with. It looked too as if there would be no respite over the next few hours. A battalion of rainclouds which were enshrouding the Islands of Cumbrae and Arran were rapidly regrouping and heading towards their next onslaught and victory at Largs.

I wasn't in the least bit concerned about these disquieting developments though. I was already soaked to the skin, so a little more water wouldn't matter. In addition to this, I was practically at the end of my walk. The large ornate Art Deco building that is Nardini's Café, was in sight. There was a warm, welcoming glow emanating from the neat picture windows bedecked in Christmas lights which was reaching out and already reeling me in. This cosy refuge with its strong coffee and patisserie looked extremely inviting. The aromas of the coffee, combined with freshly baked bread and cakes were already wafting across the quiet, wind ravaged street to the shorefront where I was walking. They were beckoning me across like benevolent sirens whose motives were not dangerous or devious, but instead were to enchant and excite.

With rainwater running down my wind beaten face like small rivulets which were succeeding in freezing it even more, I knew there was no contest. The combined siren songs of the coffee and patisserie had done their job and had wooed me. Exhilarated by the thought of piping hot coffee, combined with something really delicious and sweet, I started to head off the shorefront and up the small path to the pelican crossing which in summer is normally the only way you can get across the really busy road. However, on this miserable winter's day, the crossing was purely academic, as the rain - lashed road was almost deserted with hardly a car in sight.

Halfway up this path with Nardini's Café and the large church beside it in sight, the wind which was blowing in from the sea behind me, suddenly changed direction again and dumped a huge downdraft of frozen rain which stung as if it had come down from a great height. What looked like on first glance, a piece of paper, was abruptly slammed down with great vehemence onto the path, just a step or two in front of me. It was then I saw that this scrap of paper was, in fact, a five pound note. I bent down and picked it up. Although soaking wet, it was instantly recognisable and in good condition.

I was sure it hadn't been blown across the street from Nardini's because I was facing the building and would have seen it scurrying towards me, carried along by the



gale force wind. In any case, the wind had been blowing in the opposite direction from the sea behind me, before abruptly changing direction into an almost vertical downdraft. Puzzled, I looked up quickly and was rewarded with nothing more than a face full of rain which even managed to penetrate through my glasses and ran into my eyes!

I paused for a moment and as I was looking at the five pound note with total fascination, as if I had never seen paper money before, another downdraft of air slammed down. A new piece of paper fell, this time about one foot off to my side. I saw its slightly bluish colour and immediately knew what I would find when I picked it up. Another five pound note. Now I had two!

This time I braved the stinging rain which was making my glasses almost opaque and rubbed the lenses with a piece of soggy tissue. I looked skywards with a combination of one part trepidation, two parts fascination and three parts naked excitement! I saw more pieces of paper whooshing down. I knew before they slammed down on the path just in front of me what they would be. And this time there were two!

Clutching the five pound notes as if my life depended upon them, I looked upwards at the heavens trying to find some sort of clue as to how this could be happening. Where was this money coming from? Alas, there was nothing to be seen except a sky which was pregnant with huge scurrying rainclouds. Even the quiet street yielded no clues. There was not a soul nearby and the only person I saw far in the distance was walking away from me quite unconcerned. He wasn't looking urgently around, or scrabbling desperately about on the ground as you would do if you had just dropped money and were in a panic trying to find it. The few cars that had passed did not stop and showed no signs of alarm, such as screeching to a halt near where I was standing.

The wind had changed direction again and there were no more downdrafts. I must have stood for a good five minutes, which at the time seemed like five seconds, gazing raptly up at the sky, while my mind searched in vain for a logical explanation. No more money fell during this time. I was glad that there wasn't much traffic passing by because the occupants would have seen on their left hand side a completely bedraggled guy with his head craned upwards, gazing comically at the sky as if he expected it to fall down at any second! They would have thought I was completely bonkers!

After five more minutes, convinced that no more money was about to fall from the sky, I dashed over the road into the warmth of Nardini's café, and grabbed myself a table in a quiet corner near the back. Whilst I waited on my coffee and chocolate shortbread to arrive, I spread out the four five pound notes on the wicker table to examine them closer.

They were just normal everyday Scottish five pound notes and apart from being a bit soggy, there was nothing out of the ordinary about them. The serial numbers weren't consecutive. I had checked this first of all, having watched too many detective programmes! They weren't even all from the same bank. It was as if they had fallen completely at random. The only thing they did have in common was that they had all landed so close to me that I could easily bend down and effortlessly pick them up!

My life saving cup of coffee arrived and the chocolate shortcake was just as delicious as I had anticipated – the sort that melts in the mouth. While I savoured this and slowly began to thaw out, I remembered how the notes had suddenly dipped down out of the sky from above and behind me - from the seaward side in other words. I had heard about people getting “windfalls” and now I knew the literal meaning of the word!

I looked across the elegant, sedate café toward the windows which on a nice day offer such a lovely view across the water to the islands. Had the notes somehow been whipped up by the wind on the Isle of Cumbrae and while being pushed ever higher, had they somehow blown across the couple of miles of water to the mainland? Or had they come even further from the Isle of Bute which was about six miles away?

I would probably never know the answer to this. One thing I was sure of was that they hadn't originated in Largs. For one thing, the wind was blowing in the wrong direction. Another reason was that I just had a gut feeling about it that I couldn't explain.

One thing I did know was that today I now had some extra spending money! But no! That was not true! This money didn't belong to me and I would be in effect, stealing from its rightful owner if I kept it. But who was its rightful owner? Where was he or she? Were they already missing it? Was it the last few pounds they had left for Christmas shopping or food? All sorts of thoughts like this raced through my head. But how could I ever find the owner?

I knew the first step was to hand it into the police station and without further ado, I paid my bill with my own money and entrusted the twenty pounds to them. I told the officer how I found it on the path and added that it seemed to have been blown along the street by the wind – probably the biggest understatement of all time!

I didn't mention anything about money falling from the sky. I thought perhaps they weren't ready for that! My details were duly noted and the officer said that although



it would probably be impossible to trace who owned the money, they would wait and see if anyone came forward to claim it. If not, the money would be mine. I had a feeling it would never be claimed, as I suspected the money had originated from nowhere near Largs, but I stayed silent, smiled and simply nodded.

I returned home the next week in time for Christmas and soon forgot about the day money fell out of the sky at Largs! Some time passed and in the New Year, I was notified that no one had claimed the money and if I produced my receipt, the money would be mine. I had been thinking on going back to visit my friends again and this provided me with a good excuse! I produced my receipt and sure enough, was given four five pound notes which still had a crinkly feel to them after being soaked.

This time it was a nice sunny spring day and after my stroll along the seafront, I went across the road to Nardini's and sat at the same table that I had on that stormy day back in December. I spread the notes out on the table again to examine them, realising I could treat myself to the most expensive Knickerbocker Glory that Nardini's could create, complete with sparklers fizzing from the top of it and still have change!

But I didn't feel comfortable. There was something just not right about this and my thoughts kept returning to the money's owner. I felt so sad for them and concerned that this could have been the only money they had left that week. Instead, I only ordered a coffee and silently asked God what to do. The answer came as I walked out of the side entrance at Nardini's. Just across the road is a beautiful church which is absolutely huge. There was a large banner which read, "Spring Fayre inside – All welcome."

I knew what God wanted me to do. It was then I remembered a piece of Scripture from 1st Chronicles that had been at the back of my mind, bubbling away, just below the surface, "Everything in Heaven and earth is yours and you are King, supreme ruler of all." (1st Chronicles Chapter 29, verse 11) In other words, "Everything belongs to God." I went inside. There was a donation box and I dropped the four fivers inside it. Although I was donating the money to the church, I knew that I was really entrusting it to God and I was convinced that somehow, someday, he would find a way of returning the money to its rightful owner.

At last, I was satisfied.



## Christmas

*C*hristmas day is my favourite time.

*H*earing the wonderful news again.

*R*ejoicing Christ our Lord is born.

*I*n a manger of straw so far away.

*S*uch a joyous day filled with hope.

*T*o every man woman and child.

*M*eaning just as much to us now.

*A*s it did on that very special day.

*S*o let us celebrate with joy and thanks.

*By Drew Robertson*

Bill and Helen McKinnon would like to thank the members of both congregations for the gifts, flowers and lovely cards we received on the occasion of our 50th wedding anniversary. Once again, thank you all very much.

***Bill and Helen McKinnon***

## Introducing ... Mrs Mitchell

**Mrs Mitchell, one of our oldest members, kindly looked back at her time here in Shieldhill and being a member of Blackbraes and Shieldhill Church.**



She was born Jessie Nash in Airdrie on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1918. Her parents originally came from Camelon so she was still quite young when her family moved back to Camelon.

The church played an important role in her early days. Her family worshiped at Trinity Church in Camelon and her grandparents had an association with Muiravonside Church.

She married her husband Robert 'Bob' Mitchell and it was in Nov 1955 she came up to Shieldhill and moved into the cottage on Crossbrae. Bobs mother and father stayed in the south end and Bob and Mrs Mitchell stayed in the north end and when Bob's parents passed away they moved into their house, the house she occupies today. Her mother in law was a church stalwart and it was to Shieldhill Church she came to sit in the 'Mitchell's pew' the same pew she occupies every Sunday.

She joined the Guild in 1956 which means she has been a member for 56 years, In these early days women wore hats and their shoulders would be covered with a shawl and the colours would be dark - no bright colours. The Guild meetings would be referred to as Women's Meetings and she can't recall any grand outings, but they were generally entertained by visiting speakers.

Miss Rennie took the women's meetings and the other ladies who assisted were Mrs Lawrence, Mrs Christie. Mrs Grosvenor and Mrs Peddie to name a few.

Not much has really changed since then - the people are still very friendly and while the time of the service has changed the congregation hasn't.



### **I'm Very Well Thank You.**

There is nothing the matter with me,  
I'm as healthy as I can be,  
I have arthritis in both my knees,  
Arid when I talk-I talk with a wheeze.  
My pulse is weak, and my blood is thin,  
But - I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.  
Arch supports I have for my feet,  
Or I wouldn't be able to be out on the street,  
Sleep is denied me night after night,  
But every morning I find I'm alright.  
My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,  
But-I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.  
The moral is this-as my tale I unfold,  
That for you and me who are getting old,'  
It's better to say 'I'm fine' with a grin,  
Than to let folks know the shape we are in.  
How do I know that my youth is all spent?  
Well, my get up and go'has got up and went,  
But I really don't mind when I think with a grin,  
Of all the grand places my got up has bin.  
Old age is golden I've heard it said,  
But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed,  
With my ears in a drawer, my teeth in a cup,  
My specs on a table until I get up.  
'Ere sleep overtakes me I say to myself ,  
Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf ?  
When I was young my slippers were red,  
I could kick my heels right over my head,  
When I was older my slippers were blue,  
But I still could dance the whole night through.  
Now I am old my slippers are black,  
I walk to the shop and puff my way back,  
I get up each morning and dust off my wits,  
And pick up the paper to read the 'obits',  
If my name is still missing I know I'm not dead;  
And so I have breakfast and go back to bed.

### National Stewardship Programme

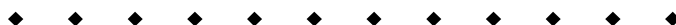
Here are the latest free will offerings for Blackbraes and Shieldhill:

	2011	2012
<b>July</b>	£1,739.90	£1,732 40
<b>August</b>	£2,092	£1,308.91
<b>September</b>	£1,419.20	£1,861.85

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.

Thank you

**Christine Jones**



Here are the Muiravonside offerings for 01/01/2012 - 31/10/2012 :

Weekly Free Will Offering	£7376.81
Gift Aid Offerings	£16402.39
Nota Bene Gift Aid includes two amounts of Tax Recovered:	
£2831.00 from 06/04/2011-31/12/2011	
£1898.74 from 01/01/2012-30/06/2012	

Any one who pays tax and is not registered for Gift Aid please speak to me as this is a vital part of the church income.

Throughout the year Muiravonside has also made the following donations to deserving agencies.

Seagull Trust	£	1	0	0	.	0	0
Al Sharooq School	£	5	9	.	0	0	
Alzheimers Falkirk Branch	£	5	0	6	.	0	0

Further donations are about to be made to Alzheimers Falkirk Branch & Poppy Scotland.

Your continued support is very much appreciated.

**Moir Sharp Treasurer**





**Romain Wendla from Sida Nana**

I was able to send £50 to our sponsored child Romain and his family last year on behalf of the church.

They were delighted with the money and were able to buy a goat, a chicken, a large bag of corn, clothing and underwear.

I am going to send a similar sum to the family soon, as we have a little extra.

***Thank you and God bless  
Carolyn***



**Dear ANCESTOR:**

Your tombstone stands among the rest  
Neglected and alone  
The name and date are chiselled out  
On polished marble stone  
It reaches out to all who care  
It is too late to mourn.

You did not know that I exist  
You died and I was born  
Yet each of us are cells of you  
In flesh and blood and bone  
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse  
Entirely on its own.

Dear ancestor..... the place you filled  
One hundred years ago  
Spreads out among the ones you left  
Who would have loved you so  
I wonder how you lived and loved  
I wonder if you knew  
That someday I would find this spot  
And come and visit you.

***Contribution made by a Canadian correspondent***

## Harvest Thanksgiving

The children and young people led worship at Shieldhill in October during the harvest season. The young people reminded the congregation that whatever happens within our world God is there watching over us and loving us despite everything that happens. They presented the story of Job in mime to illustrate that at times we often forget that God is there and working through us in this World which he created.

As part of the Service the congregation were invited to respond in 2 ways. Firstly by noting down what they could do individually to protect God's creation and secondly to record their prayers and they were invited to attach them to the globes that had been placed on the Communion Table.



Some of the personal actions to protect the environment were as follows:- Recycling; Use less chemicals; Turn off the tap and save water; Use less electricity; Not to waste food; Walking to school rather than by car; Using litter bins rather than the throwing rubbish all over the countryside; Plant some new flowers and trees.

Here is also a flavour of some of the recorded prayers:-

“Dear God please end all famine and drought and make the world a better place to live”

“Lord help us to care for your world and remember those who suffer due to our greed”

“Loving God help us to take more care of the earth and appreciate all you have done in Jesus name”

“Thank you Lord for the beautiful earth, bright flowers, bubbling burns and sparkling fish”

“God please let the peoples of the world learn to live in peace and friendliness”

“Lord we pray for all the people on the earth and may there be peace among all the nations”

“Father, hear my prayer today, please help the people of this world who are in need of food and help of any kind”

“God help the people in Africa”

“May our Lord and Saviour look after and protect the children through the famines and wars – I love God”

**David McClements**



## Guild



Since beginning of the session in October, we have been busy marking 125 years of the Guild. Invitations arrived from Polmont, Brightons and Laurieston and some of us have been able to attend local celebrations. Our special event is on Wednesday 21 November when we hope that friends from sister Guilds will be able to join us along with friends from the congregation.

We planned our event for Guild week. Nationally Guild week is always the third week in November. The first Guild one was in 2004. The aim of this special week is to encourage guilds to raise awareness of the work the Guild does. Since then all over Scotland groups and councils have planned events to show what an interesting and diverse organisation we are. We're not only tea makers now although that was our reputation in the past. The core of Guild week is prayer. During this week in our prayers we will be mindful of our church, the community and beyond.

At our first meeting in October, David M,cClements gave us an account of his work with FDAMH, a helpline for people with mental health problems and at our next evening, Elaine McDiarmid told us of her visit to the Al Sharooq school in Bethlehem, a school for blind and visually impaired children. Both talks gave us an interesting insight to situations of which we know little but are willing to learn more.

On 31 October we boarded a bus and headed for Falkirk Town Hall to see "Boogie Nights". The toe tapping music and energetic cast kept us chatting all the way home. Christmas beckons and other events are planned. Please give your name to a Guild member if you would like to join us.

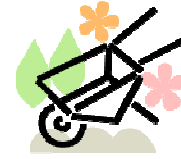
We have an attractive programme to begin 2013. Come and join us Wednesday evenings 7.30pm in the church hall. A warm welcome awaits.

Best wishes to all as we prepare to celebrate our Saviour's birth.

### 2013

23 January	Theme/topic Night	
6 February	Seeds of Lavender	Patricia Todd
20 February	Out of Africa into Malta	Guild Project
6 March	Camera Club	Mrs Nancy McArthur
20 March	ABM	

## Notes from a Shieldhill Garden.



***I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. Matthew Chp. 25 V 35.***

At the beginning of October we had our annual holiday in Ireland. We were based in Ulster but visited and ate on both sides of the border. I have learned over the years to decline the usual portion of champ, as usually there is sufficient provision of everything else not to need champ. On one occasion I asked the waitress to package up the leftover green beans and potatoes and we used them as part of the next evening's meal. Frequently the portions were huge which made me wonder what their provisions were for the disposal of the leftovers as I did notice plates going away with food still on them.

On Friday, 19th October, I went to The Scottish Food Show that was held in the SECC in Glasgow. The Love Food Hate Waste people had a large area where they had guest chefs cooking and giving advice. Brian Turner, of Ready Steady Cook fame, was the guest late on Friday afternoon. He was talking about food waste as he was cooking and he had tips to help the audience to use up leftovers. He said that restaurants do not waste food because, if they did, they would be throwing away their profits and would go out of business. In recent years I have noticed smaller portions when I have been eating out; I have to say too that I have emptied my plate and had enough to eat.

Food waste is upmost in my mind just now because of the bins that we have had given to us by our council – another bin to add to the collection that we have already. Cooked and uncooked food, bones, peelings and packaging that has been around meat.

The council have an obligation to cut down the amount of waste that goes to landfill. There is a landfill tax that is imposed on councils and this tax is calculated against the amount of landfill waste. When the green bins are emptied, each load is weighed before it is dumped. This tax is added to the cost that the landfill site charges so that the council can use it, because the landfill site operates as a business. Our waste goes to the Avondale site that is just as we join the M9 at Polmont. The food waste is put into revolving drums and is held at a high temperature for a length of time. The end product is ready to be used as fertilizer and the methane gas that is created can be used to generate electricity.

When I am out and about with my red Love Food Hate Waste apron I find that many of the people that I talk to have food saving ideas and when we

are at a big event we have cards that people can write their food tips on. There usually is a prize for the best one and some of them are put onto their web site. That web site is quite a good one and, amongst all the other information, there are recipes and ideas for meals that can be made from bits of food that are left in the fridge. I like the BBC Food website too because it is possible to enter a few ingredients and get recipe ideas.

When this magazine goes out it will be close to Christmas and the traditional foods that are linked with the celebrations. I hope that you all have a lovely Christmas and tasty Christmas dinner.

**Rena**



### **Chocolate and Beetroot Cake**

I've been asked for this recipe quite a few times. If blind tasted, very few people can guess that it contains beetroot.

**Janie Allan**

3 eggs	250g caster sugar
200ml vegetable oil	1 tsp vanilla essence
75g cocoa powder	180g plain flour
2 tsp baking powder	250g beetroot, cooked and roughly grated
Icing sugar	crème fraiche

Preheat the oven to 160°C/gas mark 2.5. Mix the eggs, sugar and oil in a bowl with a whisk until the sugar has dissolved. Add the vanilla essence and mix. Sift the dry ingredients and fold them into the mix, followed by the beetroot. Put the mix in a greased cake tin and spread evenly.

Bake the cake in the oven for 50-60 minutes, then skewer it with a knife. If it comes out clean, the cake is ready. Leave to cool on a wire rack at room temperature, dust with icing sugar and serve with crème fraiche as a dessert (or a cup of tea).

Don't be alarmed by the amount of oil in the recipe - it will keep the cake nice and moist and extend its shelf life.

### Her Ocean Deep Eyes

The girl I know  
Her eyes like oceans deep  
Roundly sparkling still with love  
Keeps our spirits high  
Despite this mask of pain

Those tender eyes can tell  
Of happy days with children  
When our world was young  
And she would sing our life  
In fresh and graceful tones  
Constant and steady as a mother's strength

And all these things her eyes do breathe  
And all these things her eyes do say  
And all these precious things are in her eyes  
To feed our hopes from secret depths  
Beyond the rhythmic, saving mask  
And gently chase our fears away

The girl I know  
With eyes like sparkling oceans  
Calms us with soothing, tender waves  
As from a living, breathing sea of love  
She whispers softly with her eyes  
All is well, my truest darlings  
Our souls in faith united  
By even this, cannot be parted.



This poem was published in the Motor Neurone Disease Scotland magazine - Aware. You can view it on the MND Scotland website if you want to see the accompanying photo. MND Scotland asked people to send in poems they have written as to how they and their families feel about MND and this was the one they published. It was written by the husband of a lady suffering from MND and it proves that even if you cannot communicate by speech you can still convey your feelings by other means and can even comfort your family at difficult times. I hope you like it .

**Norma Jack**

### The Perfect Church

If you should find the perfect church  
Without one fault or smear  
For goodness sake don't join that church  
You'll spoil the atmosphere.

If you should find the perfect church  
Where all anxieties cease  
Then pass it by lest joining it  
You spoil the masterpiece.

If you should find the perfect church  
Then don't you ever dare  
To tread upon such holy ground  
You'll be a misfit there.

But since no perfect church exists  
Made of perfect men  
Let's cease looking for that church  
And love the church we're in.

Of course it's not the perfect church  
That's simple to discern  
But you and I and all of us  
Could cause the tide to turn.

What fools we are to seek so far  
In that unfruitful search  
To find at last where problems are  
God proudly builds his church.

***Submitted by Rita Braes***



## **A Wonderful Journey**

The Engagement had taken place spring 2010. The next decision was the wedding. After lots of thought by the young couple, Craig & Arlene my son and his now wife, the decision was made. The wedding would take place in Las Vegas September 12<sup>th</sup> 2012. The invitations were sent giving folks who wished to make the journey plenty of time to save up. The original uptake was about fifty, however when the day finally dawned, there were twenty eight including their young son Riley who was by then, eight months old.

We decided, (this is the "royal we," my husband John and myself) that as we were going so far, we would make a once in a lifetime holiday of our trip. The journey would take us down the west coast from San Francisco to Los Angeles, on to Las Vegas, from there up through Death Valley, Yosemite State Park, Napa Valley, then back to San Francisco - twenty five days in total.

The first half was shared with our good friends Elizabeth & Hugh. We arrived in San Francisco after a ten hour flight which seemed to pass quite quickly. San Francisco was sunny but cool and we were glad of the warm fleeces we had taken with us. My eyes were opened with the amount of beggars on the streets. If you did give them a coin, they were so grateful. But it was impossible to give to them all. The captions they held up as to why they were begging were in some cases hilarious and unrepeatable in a church magazine, however the majority were really quite sad.

We took the cable car to the Wharf. Health and safety is obviously not important where the cable cars are concerned, with passengers hanging on for grim death while standing on the running board. They still had to pay the fare. We walked up to Lombard Street. This is the winding street seen in many films. The houses were very quaint and the surrounding gardens and communal areas very well kept, but one would have to be very fit to live there as the street is almost vertical. We were entertained with a little old lady coming down Lombard Street on her disability scooter, shouting at all the cars in front of her to get a move on in order that she could get up some speed for her descent. Whether she was a resident, or there like many of the cars just to say they had driven down this famous street, we will never know. We next headed off to the Mission district in order to try and find the wall art Graffiti, as it is said to be very artistic and world famous. However after much trailing we never did find it.

After 2 days, it was time to move on. We picked up this massive 4 x 4 and switched on Mrs Sat Nav and off we went. She was a godsend.



The next stop was Santa Cruz which was beautiful and our hotel was situated directly on the beach. The board walk was something to behold with every spine chilling ride you could imagine, not that I went on any. Given as we were 4 Scots, talking to people came very easy. This was how we met up with Royston who was a one man peace camp. With his battered old red van and camper, he had set up his bill boards in the main square of Santa Cruz promoting peace. He also gathers clothing and small household goods and passes them on to the homeless. Five days and several hundred miles later, we passed him on the interstate travelling south. He was a very well read and intelligent man. In the same way, after speaking to two different ladies, we were told of the village of Capitola and the Begonia festival. This is an annual event which takes place in Capitola and raises funds for charity.

Surrounding Capitola, there are begonia nurseries. Some years ago, a lady called Peggy Mathews, wishing to do something for charity, was made aware that once the begonias have matured, the flower head is no longer required. Only the tuber which goes to be exported around the world. She asked if she could pick some of the flowers for a charity venture. This was in 1952. Every year, since the festival has grown, you can buy a straw hat for 3 dollars and decorate it with as many free begonias as you like. Lots of events take place leading up to Labour Day Weekend. The highlight of which is the rafts which are sailed down the river. Built by several different local agencies, they are all to a very high standard. One of the stipulations is that the float must be able to sail under the bridge. There was a steam boat, an air balloon, a country and western scene. Even Elvis made an appearance. The entries were all very technical with many moving parts. The local church presentation was Noah's Ark, with six little children all with their furry animal heads on peeping through the windows of the raft. Mr Noah was at the bow with his crook in hand. The outboard was manned by an adult. We later found out they had taken third prize. A lovely day and one we would have missed, had it not been for our



talkative nature.

Our next stop was Monterey and the hotel Pacific. We set aside three hours to visit the famous Aquarium on Cannery Row, but ended up staying for six, it was so vast. Sadly, because of the amount it costs to maintain them, the Sea Horse exhibit is being replaced in 2013. The guides who give information and point you in the right direction are all retirees and volunteer a couple of days a week, but they definitely know their stuff. This was a short stop over after

which we headed for Carmel in search of Mr Clint Eastwood. We were advised that he can be seen regularly at The Ranch House Inn he owns in Carmel. However we never did find the Inn or him - his loss!

Off again this time to Cambria, travelling south, parallel to the Big Sur with its magnificent scenery. From Cambria, we visited Hearst Castle built by the famous newspaper and publishing magnate Randolph Hearst, a magnificent edifice built on the top of a mountain with its sumptuous rooms and beautiful gardens. The indoor and outdoor swimming pools can be hired for private parties. As for the cost, who knows? The journey up was hair raising, as you are taken up in this rickety bus, going round corners with a sheer drop to the side. Not one of my better journeys. On our walkabout in Cambria, we came across this house made entirely of scrap called Nitt Witt Ridge, built by Art Beal. He collected the items used to build the house in and around Cambria as he was the local trash man. It was built into the hillside which he dug out with only the use of a pick and shovel. He used re-cycled nails and screws and had everything methodically arranged in jars. It was on three levels. He created arches, terraced gardens, fountains and walkways. The locals called it the poor man's "Hearst Castle." Sadly, in 1989, due to age and ill health, Art had to leave his beloved home. It is now owned by Michael & Stacey O'Malley, who only own but do not live in it. Guided tours can be booked.

Pismo Beach was a one night stay just to do a bit of relaxing. However, while out on a stroll a young couple noticed John was wearing a t-shirt with a Scotland logo. They stopped and had a chat, saying it was great to hear Scottish voices. Where did they hail from? 'Bathgate.' They were on their honeymoon. We parted company as though we had been friends for life. While at Pismo Beach, Hugh received an e/mail from an old colleague. When Hugh told him where he was, the colleague passed on information about the town of Solvagn. This was built by Danish settlers. All the houses are of wooden Danish style. There are many individual shops, no multi nationals are allowed and the sweet shops and bakers are to die for. Needless to say, we had to go in and have a taste - yum yum. This was again a great find, outwith the planned itinerary.

Onward, our journey takes us to Santa Barbara. The weather by now was extremely warm. We visited the famous mission, one of ten missions to be established by Spanish Franciscans, Padre Junipero Serra who had founded the other nine missions had planned to establish a mission in Santa Barbara, but sadly died in 1784 before this came to fruition. Padre Fermin Francisco de Lasuen succeeded Serra and on the day of the Feast of Saint Barbara, December 4<sup>th</sup> 1786, he raised the cross at the site of the future Santa Barbara Mission. It was a very quiet, serene and calming place, although from the amount of vehicles in the car park, you would not have thought this to be the case. There was a wedding taking place in the large church. There

are many residential courses and retreats which take place at the mission, so it is very well used.

The next stop was Los Angeles. Elizabeth and I were going to take a city tour again. Mrs Sat Nav took us right into the heart of the city and stopped outside the tour office. The boys then went on their way to find the hotel. Before we were able to board the tour bus, the police arrived and advised that a suspicious package had been found a short distance up the street. The building was to be evacuated through the back door. As we were the only two customers in at the time, the young men did say it would be better if we stayed with them. However on exiting the rear door, they proceeded to climb up the fire escape to the roof to watch the goings on in the street below. The four lane, one way street was cleared and taped off. Within minutes, if there was one police car there must have been about fifty. Where they all came from and how quickly beats me. Before the emergency was over, our tour bus managed to get into the rear parking lot via a back route. We boarded and were ready to go. Our guide pointed out lots of places you see only in films, like the building Richard Gere climbed to get to Julia Roberts in Pretty Woman. The shop that rejected her. We saw the Hollywood sign from a view point high in the hills. We were shown all the rich and famous people's houses. Vinnie Jones has a Union Jack outside his. Robbie Williams lived nearby. One suggestion I would make to the folks who live there is re tar the road. Beverly Hills was a much nicer area. We later heard that it had been an empty suitcase that had caused the alarm. In the evening, we took a taxi to the Hollywood walk of fame. Obviously, when a celebrity is having their star laid on the walk of fame, they clean up the surrounding area and hose down the pavement. Not one of cleanest areas we visited.

The next stop is Las Vegas, the wedding and our onward journey. But more about that in the next newsletter.

### ***Moira Sharp***

Nicola Hay has been developing her card ministry and is delighted to see increasing demand for her cards. She asks that if anyone knows of anyone who would appreciate a card from both Blackbraes & Shieldhill and Muiravonside congregations, then please give details to Nicola anytime – in person or alternatively you can email [Nicolahay\\_cards@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Nicolahay_cards@yahoo.co.uk) with details. Cards can be made for anyone and for any situation and can be sent in the post by Nicola or handed to you if you wish to give the card yourself. Cards would be charged at £1 each to cover the cost of materials.

### **The Perfect Teacher**

Is a dove a doo Dad?  
Is a doo a dove?  
Is a cow a coo Dad?  
A sparrow jist a spyug?

And is a wall a wa' Dad?  
Is a dog a dug?  
She's gonnie warm ma ear Dad,  
Instead o' skelp ma lug!

Ma new teacher's awfy posh Dad,  
She changes a' oor names.  
Wee Shuggie is now Hugh Dad,  
And Jimmy's ayeways James.

You learnt me a' wrong Dad,  
You called a ball a baw.  
Yur wife is now my Mother.  
You said it was ma Maw!

Ah'm no sure how tae spell Dad.  
Ah'll niver pass ma test.  
And whit is this ah'm wearing Dad.  
A simmet or a vest?

Ah gave ma nose a dicht Dad,  
When it began tae dreep.  
She gave me sich a fricht Dad,  
A near fell aff ma seat.

"Haven't you a handkerchief?"  
She roared as if in pain.  
"Naw, a jist use ma sleeve Miss"  
And ah wiped ma nose again.

Ah cawd a mouse a moose Dad,  
Ah should huv held ma tongue.  
That's manure on yir bits Dad.  
Nae longer is it dung!

It's turnips and potatoes,  
No tatties noo, and neeps.  
She said I'd ripped ma trousers,  
When I'd only ripped ma breeks.

There's twa words fir awthin' Dad,  
They're jumbled in ma heid.  
How can I be well bred Dad,  
When ah keep sayin' breid.

Now is a crow a craw Dad?  
Is a bull a bul?  
Ah'll try tae get it richt Dad,  
I will, I will, ah wull!

©Jim Douglas  
**Submitted by Andrew McDermott**

### **Jokes**

There was a bit of confusion at my local supermarket this morning. When I was ready to pay for my groceries, the cashier said "Strip down, facing me." Making a mental note to complain to head office about security running amok, I did as she had instructed. When the hysterical shrieking and alarms had finally subsided, I found out that she was referring to my credit card. I have been asked to shop elsewhere in future! They need to make their instructions to us aged people a little clearer!

**Submitted by Andrew McDermott**