

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As I write this, we have a baby boy due in the manse in January. Lesley, Emily and I are incredibly excited about all this bundle of joy will bring to our lives. As this is my first child, I have been in awe of the whole process. Lesley has been amazing through this all and the support the NHS has given us has been second to none.

For anyone who knows me, they will know I have an addiction to books, and when I found out we were expecting I was at Waterstones finding out “What to expect when you’re expecting”. I have seen and read things that have made my mind boggle. The human body is truly an amazing thing and something that continues to surprise me.

As I flicked through the pages, I have found myself in a range of emotions; these have gone from utter joy to mild terror. What will he look like, will he like me, will I be able to care for him, will I be a good father are some of the questions that have raced through my mind. I know these are somewhat normal, but it still doesn’t change the fact that the future, and with it, the unknown can be terrifying. With this in mind Christmas this year has taken on more profound significance. Mary and Joseph must have gone through similar questions about who Jesus would be and whether they were up to the task of being his parents.

Often when we see or think of the nativity scene, we see it as a peaceful moment where “the little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes”, however I think it must have been an extremely confusing and uncertain time for both of them. The story of Jesus is one where God enters into the messiness of the world. Jesus does not bypass all the anxiety and chaos around him but embraces it. That in the midst uncertainty of the future, we find God is birthing something new amongst us.

Friends, you might have noticed that the Shetland Presbytery (Presbytery is the regional governing body of the Church of Scotland) has decided to close twenty churches due to lack of attendees and ministers. They are trying to develop new ways of ministry amongst the uncertainty of the Church’s place in the future. Our Presbytery in Kirkcaldy has started conversations about what the Church will look like in the future in our area and what needs to change in our various churches. One of the staggering facts is that the Kirkcaldy Presbytery will move from 23 to 14 ministers in the next couple of years. One thing is for sure, we are in a period of uncertainty and we are asking questions about our future, and **no church is spared** from this conversation.

However, here is the good news, this is precisely the place where Jesus is born; in the chaos and uncertainty that we now face. There is something new being born in front of us, and like Mary and Joseph we need to be ready to receive it. Our hearts need to be open, our questions brought to the fore, and we need to be able to be flexible and desire the best for what is being birthed.

I know that this is a hard task, and one that will inevitably cause us much anxiety, but we can no longer bury our heads in the sand. We need to hold on to the simple fact, that we worship Emmanuel (which means God with us). God has not left the building but rather is with us on this journey.

May I be the first to wish you all a Merry Christmas. I hope it is one filled with joy and happiness and time spent with those you love. Can I also invite you, to look for ways that God is birthing something new around us and in us.

God Bless and Merry Christmas

Justin

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Saturday 24th November, Christmas Fayre -10am-12 noon

Wednesday 28th November, 2pm – Friendship Circle

Wednesday 28th November, 7.30pm – Session Meeting

Sunday 2nd December, 11.00am – First Sunday in Advent **Wednesday 12th**

December, 6.00pm – Young Church Snowman Drive

Saturday 12 January, 10.00am– Coffee Morning. Tickets £3.

ABBOTSHALL
PARISH
CHURCH

**CHRISTMAS
SERVICES**

DECEMBER

- 16th Christmas Gift Service 11:00 am
- 22nd Children's Church Disco 3:00 pm
- 22nd Christingle Service - 5:00 pm
- 23rd Nativity Service - 11:00 am
- 24th Watchnight Service - 11:15 pm
- 25th Christmas Day - 11:00 am

Abbotshall Rd,
Kirkcaldy,
KY2 5PH

abbotshallchurch.org.uk

  

Abbotshall Friendship Circle

At our meeting in August we covered shoe boxes for the Blytheswood Care Christmas Appeal. This was a lively and noisy afternoon when fun was had by all. About 20 boxes were done and taken up to the church where members of the congregation were able to pick them up. Over a welcome cup of tea, we discussed our programme for the coming year.

In September we welcomed Kay Wilkie who gave a talk on Dementia and associated conditions. This was an excellent talk by Kay and we all learned from her wide knowledge, with humour and sensitivity. Kay answered numerous questions from a well-attended gathering.

In October we had some Halloween treats at our meeting as it was on 31st October. These were enjoyed by the members and we briefly talked of Halloween in our childhood and then had a lively chat round the table on many topics. Our last meeting for 2018 will be on 28th November when Margaret Cranston, one of our members, will talk about missionary links with Malawi and St Kenneth's Church, Kennoway when she was a member there.

ABBOTSHALL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING GROUP This group meets on a Monday evening in the church hall between 7.30pm and 9.00pm. We are a friendly group with an excellent teacher. Scottish Country Dancing has been proven to be beneficial to both physical and mental health. New members are most welcome. For further information please contact Christine Browning, telephone 01592 267239 or E mail cm.browning22@gmail.com

Abbotshall Craft Group

The group had two more successful open mornings this year. The craft group resumes on Wednesday 16th January 2019 at 10 am in the Kennedy Hall. We would still like to see more people attend both male and female. If you have a craft hobby or a project you are working on (e.g. modelling, art, sewing, knitting etc.) please bring it along and enjoy fellowship and refreshments. For further information contact Bett Duncan.

WALKING GROUP

On 15th September and 20th October the Holy Strollers (Anne, Jane, Jenny, Margaret and Morna) made a return visit to Edinburgh to walk along by the Water of Leith. This is one of our favourite walks and it's the 3rd time that we have done it. The complete walk from Balerno to Leith is 13 miles and on our first visit in 2007 we completed it in 1 day but for our subsequent walks in 2014 and this year we took 2 days. The walkway starts in Balerno by the High School and at the beginning follows the path of the Old Balerno Branch railway line which closed in 1968. Along the route there are many points of interest including the remains of many mills which produced grain, flax and paper and were powered by the Water of Leith. After Balerno we passed through Currie which has a very distinctive looking church which was built in 1785 on the site which has housed a church for more than a thousand years. The next areas along the way are Juniper Green, Spylaw Park, where we stopped for a coffee break, Colinton Village and Dell, Craiglockhart and Redhall Estate. We stopped at the Water of Leith Visitor Centre on Lanark Road, which houses information and an interactive exhibition, to have our picnic lunch. Suitably refreshed we continued on our way through Slateford, Saughton Park, Saughton Rose Garden, Murrayfield Rugby Ground and Roseburn Park. We left the walkway at this point and walked back to Haymarket Station.

In October we resumed the walk at Roseburn Cliff and passed under Coltbridge Viaduct to reach the Dean Village. The village itself is sited in a deep sided gorge and was the original crossing point for travellers travelling to Queensferry and the North. From this vantage point and looking upwards the Dean Bridge looks very impressive. The next landmark which we stopped to admire was St Bernard's Well which was discovered in 1760. In 1789 the present circular Roman temple structure was added with Hygeia, the Goddess of Health, at the centre. The walkway

continues through Stockbridge, originally a rural community, although many of the population found work with local flour mills and tan pits. The Royal Botanic Gardens are situated nearby. The Stockbridge Colonies stand on the south bank and were built between 1861 and 1911 to provide low cost housing for artisans in a healthy environment. We continued through the Canonmills which was established here in the 12th century when King David I granted land to the Canons of Holyrood Abbey, for the construction of mills. Continuing along the way we passed through Warriston, St Mark's Park and Bonnington where the Water of Leith crosses the boundary between Edinburgh and Leith. Bonnington was an important crossing point on the toll road to Newhaven. Industrial activity in this area included skinworks, a tannery, a corn and meal mill, a paper mill, soap-works, bleachfields and dyeworks. The final section shows ample evidence of the area's industrial and commercial past. The river is flanked on both sides by industrial buildings both used and derelict. The walkway ends at the Shore which has only recently risen from a state of severe dereliction to become a vital part of Leith with a lively mix of houses, restaurants and bars. We stopped here and had a very enjoyable lunch in a Turkish restaurant. Suitably refreshed we walked up Leith Walk to Waverley Station.

On 3rd November Elspeth and Jenny joined the Moderator (Right Reverend Susan Brown) and members of congregations in Kirkcaldy Presbytery to walk along a section of the Fife Pilgrim Way. Following in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims our walk started at Kinglassie Church and progressed via Trinity Church in Leslie, past Fettykill Paper Mill, through Riverside Park in Glenrothes (with a short stop at the duck pond), Christ's Kirk, Gilvenbank Park, Balbirnie Park and ended at Markinch Church. We were warmly welcomed and given refreshments at every church and there was a tremendous atmosphere of fellowship throughout the journey.

A prayer

"Lord, when I am wrong make me willing to change,
And when I am right make me easy to live with"

The Next Chapter

I find it very difficult when reading a book to stop at the end of a chapter – I always want to find out what is coming next! Abbotshall has entered a new chapter in its history and it could be a very exciting one. There are many changes and challenges facing the Church of Scotland today and as a congregation we must rise to the challenges.

We are fortunate indeed that we have been able to call Justin as our minister and I know a lot of you are enjoying his services and pastoral visits. It is good to see numbers increasing on a weekly basis and many people have commented on the atmosphere both in church and at the fellowship in the Hall after the service.

We must not become complacent, however, as we need to have even more people supporting Abbotshall both by their presence on a Sunday and by their financial contributions as, like most churches these days, we are spending more than we are earning.

It would be so heartening if everyone could make an extra effort this Christmas to attend church, especially the Nativity, Watchnight and Christmas Day services, and

strengthen the feeling of togetherness that has been growing over the last few months. We owe it to Justin to let him see what a supportive and “family” church we can be, as he, Lesley and Emily look forward to a new arrival in the Manse family in the New Year!

May God bless you all in this Advent Season

Morag Michael

Session Clerk

This article was written by a member of our church, John Miller, for the parish magazine of Colvend, Southwick and Kirkbean, Dumfriesshire some years ago and he has now shared it with us. Thank you John.

The Dominie’s Boy “Remember -your faither’s the dominie!” Many times, these words were used to curtail my activities while a pupil at Colvend Primary School, Dumfriesshire in the nineteen forties. However, as I look back through the years, perhaps the words were used to highlight the continuity of my family life as well as to keep my “wings clipped.”

Our family was evacuated from Glasgow to Colvend at the start of the 2nd World war. My first memory is arriving at the Public Hall dressed in a kilt and having a yellow label round my neck bearing the letters “SOPL 16/4”. What these meant I never found out except that ‘4’ denoted that I was the fourth and youngest child in our family. There were many people milling about the hall presumably organising where the evacuees, who had come by train to Dalbeattie and then by bus, were to be billeted. I still recall the many tins of Libby’s corn beef that were stored under the stage.

Our family was accommodated in Oaklea, Douglas Hall. This was an unoccupied semi-detached house. My father became head teacher of the Primary School, which occupied the Public Hall as well as the small school. The other teachers were Miss Paul and Walker.

How did we, as urban children, cope with this rural transition? We were fortunate to be accepted with affection and friendliness and had little difficulty in adapting. Perhaps the austere background of the war helped in this process.

The occasions dreaded us were the visits of Miss Jean Miller (no relation), the school dentist, known as “Miller the Killer”. I recall quaking at my desk while hearing the screams from the kitchen, knowing that it was my turn next to face the dreaded foot-operated drill.

The war hardly affected our young lives, Major Ingram from Kippford taught us how to wear our “Mickey Mouse” gas masks. My father also used to take us to the forestry at Newbarns to cut the bracken between the trees using sickles, as there were few foresters available.

While staying at Oaklea our milk was delivered to us by John Dalglish of Barend Farm. He measured the quantity from an aluminium can directly into our milk jug. One winter the community was indebted to John for braving the snow when he

travelled on horseback to get food from Dalbeattie. This impressed my sister, Marion, so much that she dedicated the following verse to him:-

*"I'm John of Barend, the Co'en folks' friend.
In the hour of need I mounted my steed
And went to DA'B'AT'IE
To get them some breid!"*

There was always a constant quest for news of the progress of the war. The bus used to turn at Douglas Hall and the driver and conductor would come into our house to be updated on progress from our wireless. Since we never had any fuel such as coal or oil, we relied on wood for heating and cooking. This wood we either obtained from the shore or by burning the greenery off whins and then sawing them up. My grandfather used to attend to this and on one occasion managed to set fire to the hillside. We children fought the blaze "manfully" with basins of water. I remember that a much relieved grandfather paid us all 1/6d (one shilling and sixpence) for services rendered. I noted recently that there is now a firebreak across the hillside. We were taught basket making by a local tinker who showed us how to cut the willow wands and boil them to remove the bark. After drying we were shown how to weave the baskets.

Picking brambles in the autumn was a source of revenue for the family. The price per pound was 2½d and the brambles were taken to Meiklejohn's shop in Rockcliffe where they were emptied into a barrel for delivery to Robertson's.

Although the evacuated children came to the parish by chance, they seemed to mix well with the local children. Perhaps we were not the brightest of pupils. I do recall Miss Paul asking one of the pupils "What does three added to three make?" The answer was "Ask Julie, she kens." I remember answering a question on surnames which were the names of jobs. My answer was "Gass", the surname of Doreen who lived at Sunnybrae. No doubt there was some amusement that the dominie's son had been caught out.

However, at the end of the war my father was promoted to head teacher at Wellpark Primary School in Glasgow, so the family had to return to the city. At that time, I was the proud owner of an autograph book which I took to Miss Paul before leaving. This is the poignant verse that she wrote in the book:-

*"Have you ever seen the Solway in the early morning sun?
Have you ever seen the Solway when summer day is done?
Have you ever seen the Solway when night begins to fall?
Have you heard the whispering waters and the distant seabirds call?"*

Thereafter we returned to Colvend for our annual holiday until I was eighteen years old. My parents rented Whitehill, Portling, for the full year paying £3 per month for the privilege. We would go down for Easter and for two months in the summer. We carried on as though we had never been away. My parents still continued to go on holiday and my wife and myself and our three children spent several happy holidays with them.

After over 60 years, our family still continues to visit Colvend. I often ask myself what makes us do so. Is it the beautiful scenery, the friendly people or even the challenge of the golf course? However, I have found these things present in many other parts of Scotland. There has to be some other explanation. Can it really be these childhood memories? Is it a coincidence that my cousin and her family have retired to Portling to a house the rear of which looks on to a field? Nothing significant about that except that it happens to be the same field into which she landed after going over the handlebars when a hen crossed in front of her bicycle, too many years ago to remember. Is it a coincidence that my granddaughter, Lucy, has the same name as a ship wrecked on the cliffs at Whitehill in 1803?

But there is one thing I am certain is not a coincidence – “My father was the dominie”.

Treasurer’s report for October 2018

This time, a summary of our financial position, some words of encouragement, a mention of Gift Aid, a tale of woe and some thanks.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In the spring of this year our budget was published and indicated we would overspend our 2018 by over £64,000. This was hardly surprising as we still had to pay to finish the significant items of Manse refurbishment. By the end of September, we had spent over £37,000 on the manse and, although we were £32,000 overspent, our expenditure was staying within budget. On the other hand, we are confident enough to predict a significant increase in Giving which would result in a reduction of our end-of-year overspend down to £46,000.

ENCOURAGEMENT

I want to take this chance to sustain increased Giving by recommending to you two special occasions for fundraising: our Christmas Fayre on Saturday, 24th November and our annual Christmas Appeal (see the special envelope distributed with this newsletter).

GIFT AID

We have claimed £8,678 income tax on donations received within the first nine months of 2018. A general thank you is certainly due to members who have signed Gift Aid Declarations in favour of Abbotshall which enabled us to do this. Some of the Declarations date as far back as the year 2000 and, while they will continue to be active for years to come, it is about time that the Gift Aiders were thanked individually. To this end, over the coming weeks, I intend to issue personal letter of thanks. I will also be issuing personal letters of invitation to other members to consider taking advantage of Gift Aid. Please forgive me for adding to the mail coming through your letter box. If you receive a letter of thanks, then there is nothing to do apart from receiving our gratitude. If you receive a Gift Aid invitation, then please give it your generous attention.

CASH FLOW WOE

In view of our budget projections it was anticipated that we would have to sell our Alliance Trust shares to be able to transfer funds into our bank current account. In July, we tried to start the share sale process. Unfortunately, over the 3 or 4 months since, we have been subjected to inappropriate responses from our share broker with the result that we have made no progress – we still own the shares; our bank account is in need of funds. The broker has recognised some of the shortcomings

and has offered a commission-free sale in compensation. At the time of writing, our latest sale request has been re-issued, on the terms offered, but at least 3 business days have now passed without a response.

THANK YOU

Towards the end of August, our cash flow problems became critical. At that point, I was very relieved to have the prompt and practical help of three people: our own Justin Taylor; Archie McDowall (Depute Treasurer) and Jennifer Hamilton (Depute Solicitor). We were allowed to defer our monthly Ministry & Mission payments, amounting to £14,500 and enough to tide us over. So, my thanks go unreservedly to them.

Prayer Group

We meet in the Vestry on the second and last Sunday of the month except in December for about 15 minutes at 10.10 am. A warm welcome is extended to anyone who would like to join us on any of the dates below:- 25th November, 9th December, 16th December- 2019 – 13th January, 27th January, 10th February, 24th February, 10th March, 24th March.

If there is someone or something you would like the Prayer Group to pray for, please put a note in the prayer boxes in the Church Vestibule or the Church Hall. Anne Gardner – Prayer Promoter – 01592 265876

BEREAVEMENTS

We were saddened at the passing of
Jenny Horsburgh in September.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Suzanne & Sean Docherty celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary in
September;

Isobel and Andrew Anderson celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in
October;

MANY THANKS

Thanks to all who responded to our food bank appeal at our Harvest Thanksgiving service. The staff at the food bank were grateful for our donation.

Once again the boxes for Blythswood has been a successful appeal, they are now on their way to give joy to others less fortunate.

Thanks Bill Page



The date this year is **Saturday 24th November.**

All the usual stalls, home baking, jams, confectionery, tombola, craft, greeting cards, cosmetics, bric a brac, water or wine and raffles, all will be there.

WE HOPE YOU WILL BE TOO.

All donations and enquires please to Bill Page on 262009.

Tickets on sale at £2.50.

Please note that the hall will be open on Friday 23rd November between 2pm to 7pm to receive donations for the stalls.

Please note the next coffee morning will be on Saturday 12th January 2019. Tickets on sale at £3.

Thank You Bill Page



Young Church Snowman Drive



The Snowman Drive takes place on Wednesday 12th December at 6 pm.

Tickets are priced at £2 for adults and £1 for children. The cost includes refreshments after the drive. Tickets will be on sale soon. See you there.

YOUNG CHURCH CHRISTMAS DISCO

As in previous years our Young Church are holding their popular Christmas Disco on Saturday 22nd of December from 3pm to 5pm.

Children and grandchildren of members are welcome.

Please inform any of the young church staff Suzanne, Diane or myself or uplift a leaflet from the vestibule in the church. This is so we are able to cater for the buffet.

There is no charge for this function. We then proceed to the church for the Christingle service.

Bill Page

LIFE & WORK MAGAZINE – 2019

The Life and Work Magazine is again available in 2019.

Why not place an order and read the Church's views both nationally and internationally. The magazine price is £2.80 per copy. If readers wish to subscribe for 2019 the annual cost is £33.60 cash, or cheque which should be made payable to "Abbotshall Church" and given to **Diane Murray, Life & Work Distributor**, as soon as possible.

Next Newsletter – Lent and Easter Edition 2019

Thanks to all contributors who sent in material for this present issue. It is much appreciated.

Please continue to think about something of interest for inclusion in the next issue in FEBRUARY 2019. Closedown will be Sunday 27th January 2019.

Please send your contributions to Diane Murray on e/mail at dianemurray953@btinternet.com or by post to 97 Mellerstain Road, Kirkcaldy KY2 6UD or leave in our basket in the church vestibule.