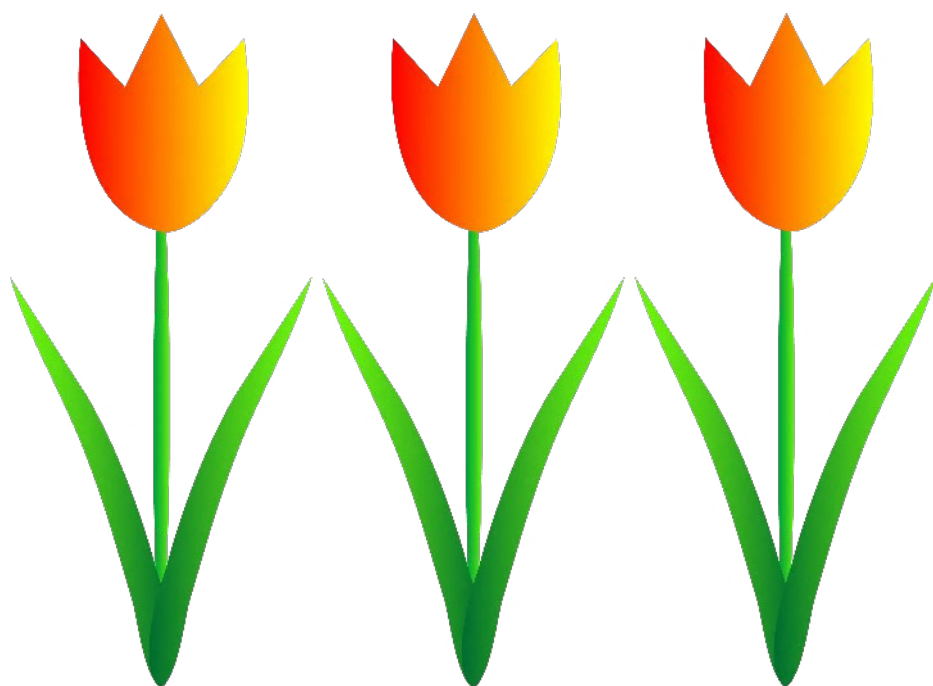




Tidings



March 2014

Dear Friends

I don't know how many times I have tried to write this – my last pastoral letter to you as your minister. It is just as well that nowadays I type straight on to the computer screen, rather than writing by hand as I used to do in the “olden days” – I would have destroyed half a rain-forest by now! Slowly it began to sink in just how much change has taken place since I was ordained and inducted into my first charge 36 years ago. For all of the ten years in Houston, and for a number years in Lanark, I wrote all my sermons and prayers using pen and paper – often with a fountain pen! Then I received a word processor and printer as a gift and after many months I was finally able to compose straight onto the screen – although to this day I still scribble notes and outlines on scrap paper. Old habits die hard!

But this letter is not about me – and all that has taken place over 36 years - that would take all the “Tidings” space for the rest of this year and more!

It is quite simply a letter, from me, on behalf of Marlene, Laura and Stephen, and our steadily increasing family, to say “Thank you”. Thank you for looking after us; thank you for sharing our joys, our sorrows, our high days and our mad moments; thank you for being who you are – a welcoming, friendly, caring and very committed congregation – a very special fellowship.

The late Professor Davidson, our Old Testament Prof at Glasgow University, told us in 1976 that he reckoned we were going to be ministering in one of the most exciting periods in the history of the Church of Scotland – and how right he was. I have had a most enjoyable and fulfilling time as your minister and indeed a wonderful, exciting and challenging time as minister of three superb charges over my 36 years.

Now your focus must be on the future as the search begins for your next minister. Give all your prayerful support to Norman McKee and the Session as they lead you into the next phase and also, when it is formed, to the Nominating Committee. And as Paul wrote in concluding his second letter to the Church in Corinth: “Agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

I wish you God's richest blessing for the wonderful, exciting and challenging future that beckons you.

John



What's On



March

Sunday 2	10.45am Family Service
Sunday 9	10.45am Holy Communion 6.30pm Joint Communion Service in the Old Parish
Tuesday 11	7.30pm Kirk Session [to be confirmed]
Sunday 16	10.45am Morning Worship
Sunday 23	10.45am Morning Worship [followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Congregation] 3.00pm Woodburn Court
Sunday 30	Mothering Sunday 10.45am Morning Worship [NB The Clock go forward – one hour's less sleep!!]

April

Sunday 6	10.45am Morning Worship 6.30pm Masonic Divine Service [This is an open service and a warm invitation is extended to all]
Tuesday 8	7.30pm Kirk Session [to be confirmed]
Sunday 13	Palm Sunday 10.45am Family Service Sacrament of Baptism

Holy Week

Holy Week services will be held in Cadzow Parish Church at 7.30pm
Full details will be available via the Intimation Sheets during March

Sunday 20	Easter Day 6.30am Dawn Service followed by breakfast 10.45am Easter Day Service [Communion will be celebrated at the end of the service]
Sunday 27	10.45am Morning Worship 3.00pm Woodburn Court 6.30pm "Songs of Praise" led by Area Mission Committee

May

Sunday 4	10.45am Morning Worship Presentation of Long Service Certificates
Sunday 11	10.45am Morning Worship Retirement of Rev John Thomson
Sunday 18	10.45am Morning Worship Conducted by Rev Norman McKee BD, Interim Moderator
Sunday 25	10.45am Morning Worship 3.00pm Woodburn Court

June

Sunday 1	10.45am Morning Worship
Sunday 8	10.45am Holy Communion 6.30pm Joint Communion Service (location to be confirmed)
Sunday 15	10.45am Morning Worship Father's Day
Sunday 22	10.45am Morning Worship 3.00pm Woodburn Court
Sunday 29	10.45am Morning Worship 3.00pm Woodburn Court

Summer Services

Details of Summer Services will be included in the next issue of "Tidings" and printed in the Intimation Sheets in June

A Celebration of Springtime



“From scenes like these, old Scotia’s grandeur springs,
That makes her lov’d at home, rever’d abroad:”
“ *The Cotter’s Saturday Night*”

In his famous poem Burns was describing the scene in a humble farm cottage - but he might well have penned the above lines if he had chanced upon this glorious carpet of Bluebells.

*All things bright and beautiful,
••••All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
••••The Lord God made them all.*

*Each little flower that opens,
••••Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colours,
••••He made their tiny wings.*

*He gave us eyes to see them,
••••And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
••••Who has made all things well.*

IN CONCERT WITH THE COSMOS 7 JUNE 2014 at CLYDE AUDITORIUM, GLASGOW
KHARIS PRODUCTIONS in association with SEARCH FOR TRUTH ENTERPRISES LTD

The Event : In Concert with the Cosmos

It is a celebration of the wonders of the cosmos - with Springfield Cambridge Festival Chorus and Orchestra, high definition film, NASA astronaut Colonel James Dutton and international author, speaker and broadcaster, Professor John Lennox of Oxford University. The evening will be hosted by Justin Brierley of London's Premier Radio.

There is, of course, a wider purpose in this celebration of the cosmos. Appreciating its wonders leads to a bigger question: how can it all be explained? Are we all here by chance? Or is there substantial evidence of there being some purpose and meaning to life?

The evening will periodically reflect on those questions.

But it will also provide an opportunity to support life on earth!

Part of the proceeds of the evening will be given to CHAS and ECRAD, 2 Scottish charities supporting work among children in Scotland and in Malawi.

Among the "star" attractions of the evening are the guest appearances of Colonel James Dutton who has recently piloted the Space Shuttle to the International Space Station; and Professor Lennox, a world renowned speaker on matters of science and faith. The 150 voice choir and 45 piece orchestra will be led by Scottish conductor, arranger and composer Alan A. Craig.

This is a unique and original approach to a fascinating subject. It will combine entertainment with amazing information and allow the audience to experience something of the scale and extraordinary features of the universe that sustains life on earth.

There is the possibility that the event will be filmed for TV and transmitted in the USA, Germany, Finland, Holland, Australia and the UK. We also anticipate a radio broadcast on Premier Radio featuring the concert.

Even before entering the main auditorium, the cosmic scene will be set in the Forth Room where we can experience performances from young musicians, artists and poets.

The Context

This event is part of a broader process originating in a recently released TV and DVD series called The God Question. Aware of a huge public debate about whether or not God exists, the producers of this series have brought together a world class cast of scientists, philosophers and theologians in an attempt to provide the ultimate investigation of the truth. They do so in programmes which explore the Cosmos, Life on Earth and Human Mind and Consciousness. Both sides of the argument are presented in these high class documentaries and viewers are left to draw the ultimate conclusion for themselves based on the evidence that is presented. The June event is directly linked to the content and theme of programme 1 in The God Question series.

The God Question project is well known to ourselves at Hamilton Old Parish Church since some of us here participated in the trialling of the series before it was finalised and released last year! So what an opportunity now to support the project and the vision of which it is part, and also help to create momentum and encourage others to experience it for themselves. Why not consider taking friends and family along to support the event? In summary, here is the key information.



In Concert with the Cosmos : Event Details

Date: Saturday 7 June 2014
Time: 7pm
Venue: Clyde Auditorium, Glasgow
Event: In Concert with the Cosmos - Celebrating the wonders of our magnificent universe through music, conversation and high definition film!

Featuring

Springfield Cambridge Festival Chorus and Orchestra, led by Musical Director Alan A Craig
 With special guests:
 Jim Dutton, Astronaut - Pilot, Space Shuttle Discovery, NASA
 Professor John Lennox of Oxford University - international speaker, author and broadcaster
 Hosted by Premier Radio's Justin Brierley.
 Reflecting on the God Question: are we here by chance or intention?

Nominated charities: CHAS (Children's Hospice Associate Scotland) and ECRAD (Educating and Supporting orphans in Malawi).

Tickets: £15, £19.50, £23.50, £27.50 available from Bill & Sandra Craig, Carole & Alasdair Gordon, Karen Rollins (no booking fee); or from SECC - Box Office 0844 395 4000, www.ticketSOUP.com (booking fee applies for SECC tickets).

If there are sufficient numbers interested in bus transportation, an arrangement will be put in place and information about fares will be provided in due course.

Note that this isn't just "a concert" but is connected to a much larger vision and to encourage interest and ongoing discussion about the big questions of life. So if you like good music and you are interested in life's meaning and purpose, do come along and bring your friends, neighbours and family!

Olá, Amigos da Casa Semear (Hello, Friends of Casa Semear)



Happy new year to everyone and many, many thanks to those of you who supported the Casa Abba Project Gift Scheme at Christmas. Very generously, at the Old Parish alone, you managed to raise just under £600 for the many different elements of the work at Casa Semear. As always I can guarantee you that the items purchased will make a huge difference to the children in Sao Paulo.

I can also now confirm that I have booked my flight and will be heading to Brazil on the 28th•June this year for my 2 month stint working with both the Casa Semear community center and also the wider organization ABBA. While I fully expect to be involved in various forms of construction work that's happening at the house, I will also assist with the daily kids club, as well as visiting the families within the favelas and the other houses where the kids rescued from the streets are living.

It will have been 4 years since I was last in Brazil with the group from Kirkintilloch Baptist Church and I'm excited to see first hand the developments that have been made since. I also plan to be living in the flats that over this time have been constructed to house visiting volunteers exactly like myself.



New Roofing Materials



Main roof being replaced



Work in progress

Back in December 2013 there was a major piece of work undertaken which will have real benefits for Casa Semear both now and for many years to come. Thanks to the generosity of a local Sao Paulo business man who owns a roofing business. The donation of all the materials to completely re-roof the entire property was received. This not only provided the house with modern heat insulation properties but also removed the health risks of the very old corrugated asbestos panels.

Looking forward to the rest of 2014, I now have to tell you about a slight change in plans. While previously I have been telling you of a group heading to Brazil this year, actually what will now be happening is that Robert Meikle and his family (opposite) will be coming to Scotland. Needless to say this changes things, however it will now give everyone a wonderful opportunity to meet Robert & Silvana first hand and hear directly from them about their work in Sao Paulo.

The group that originally planned to travel this summer have now opted to postpone the trip for a year, in the hope that the visit to Scotland this year generates new interest for a future group trip in 2015. Also this allows us to continue our ongoing hands-on involvement in Brazil.

I will keep you all informed when things are happening. Please watch the notice board and the intimations for details. Thank you all for your continued prayers and support. God bless you.



For further information or to receive newsletters or to arrange a presentation either at home or for an organisation, please feel free to contact me either through the website, on facebook or by email on craig.garrett@blueyonder.co.uk or call Craig Garrett on 00966 556802655.



Boys' Brigade

The past few months have been extremely busy for the Company Section.

Founder's Day Parade

There was a decent turnout for the Founder's Day Parade at Stonehouse Parish Church on 27 October 2013. Despite the poor weather the Parade went ahead as planned and it was a very enjoyable Service.

Battalion 10 Pin Bowling

Andy Walker, Sam Walker and David Chisholm represented the Company at the Battalion 10 Pin Bowling Competition on 28 October 2013. They played really well and came second out of the nineteen teams who took part which was a great result.

Building Your Skills Course

Callum, Hunter, Andrew Reynolds, David Anderson and Struan Wilson attended the Battalion's "Building Your Skills" Course on 2 November 2013. This is an introductory course to teach and encourage the boys to use leadership skills in the Company. It was a good course and participation will count towards their President's Badges and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Armistice

The Company was well represented at the Remembrance Service both at our own Church in the morning, with Callum Hunter and David Anderson reading the lessons, and at the Cenotaph Parade in the afternoon. These are very important events for the Company and for The Boys' Brigade generally. Boys from Lanarkshire District formed part of the Honour Guard at the Royal Albert Hall Festival of Remembrance.

World Mission Fund Cheque Presentation

Andrew Reynolds, Lewis McParlane, David Anderson, Struan Wilson, David Chisholm and five of the officers attended the World Mission Cheque Presentation on 15 November 2013.

The Boys' Brigade in Scotland presented the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Right Reverend Lorna Hood, with a cheque for £12,000 for the Roundabout Power project. The Moderator spoke very highly about The Boys' Brigade and the huge contribution it made to the Church and the boys themselves.

The Company Section was presented with both the Globe Trophy for the highest amount raised and the Best National Average Trophy for the highest amount raised per boy. The presentation was made at Ibrox Parish Church. Apparently it was the first time in a wee while that trophies were presented in the Ibrox area !





Battalion Badminton

Callum Hunter, Andrew Reynolds, Sam Walker, Lewis McParlane, David Anderson, Struan Wilson and David Chisholm all took part in the Battalion Badminton Competition on 16 November 2013. They played well especially in the team event though just missed out on the medals. It was a well attended competition played in a good spirit throughout.



Battalion Masterteam

Two teams were entered for the Battalion Masterteam Quiz on 16 December 2013 – Cameron Marks, Struan Wilson and Jack Anderson making up the first team and Callum Hunter, David Anderson and Iain Denholm the second. The boys had to answer questions on a variety of topics including Bible Knowledge, Boys' Brigade Knowledge, Entertainment, Sport, General Knowledge and a Film Observation round. It was a great night with eighteen teams and over fifty boys taking part. Again our lads did well finishing fifth and sixth in a closely fought competition.

Battalion Table Tennis

Jack Seaton, Cameron Marks and Jack Anderson represented the Company at the Battalion Table Tennis Competition on 18 January 2014. The boys finished second to the 2nd Hamilton following a tied finish and then a play-off. Jack Seaton won the Senior Individual and Jack Anderson won the Junior Individual. Overall the matches between ourselves and the 2nd Hamilton were extremely tight and - with some reluctance - we have to admit that honours even was a fair result !



National Table Tennis

Jack Seaton, Cameron Marks and Struan Wilson have competed this year for the first time in the National Table Tennis competition. After working their way through the preliminary rounds they came up against 3rd Falkirk on 20 January 2014. After a very close match they won by the narrowest of margins. Some of the play from both teams on the night was excellent and the match was played in a very competitive but excellent spirit. At times the boys were on the ropes but they showed tremendous character and determination to win against some very talented opponents. The win puts the boys through to the Scottish Quarter Finals and we await the draw for the next round to see who they will play.



McMillan Cancer Support

Our collection of aluminium drinks cans for McMillan Cancer Support is going well. The collection bin is at the foot of the stairs in the halls. Mrs Linda Richardson (also an officer in the 5th Hamilton) who is co-ordinating the collection, has advised that the total raised in the area over the past few weeks comes to about £600. Thank you to everyone who has contributed and please keep supporting a very worthwhile cause.

Alistair Buttery
Captain



Junior Section

We are now mid way through the BB year, and the boys are all progressing well with their badge work. As well as their badge work, we are also mindful of the forthcoming bible quiz here at the hall's on the 19 February, and practising for the Figure Marching competition at Blantyre Congregational on 7 March.

On the subject of competitions a massive thank you to Colin & Euan Davidson and Lewis Chisholm who were the only boys to represent us in the PE competition. Despite such few numbers, they performed very well on the night and came 5th.

I am delighted to report that the Juniors won the General Knowledge quiz for the 3rd year in a row! Euan Davidson, Greg McIntosh and Lewis Chisholm were the winning team, who won it by only a point. Our second team of Cameron Finlayson, Colin Davidson and Brohdan Nicol-Wood also did extremely well to come 3rd, only 2 points behind our first team. Additionally, Euan Parkes joined a team from 1st Strathaven and helped them to second place! A massive congratulations all round. As last year's winning company, it fell to us to host it. I would like to record my thanks to Gillian Davidson who provided a delicious chocolate cake, and to Mrs Gardiner who provided pancakes and scones and made tea & coffee on the night. Thanks also to Lt Graham Horne who ran the quiz and composed most of the questions.

Alan Brown
Leader in Charge



Anchor Boys and Bluebells



The session is now well under way and all the excitement of Christmas has subsided. The film night went very well and thanks go to Mr Graham Horne of the Junior Section for all his hard work.

The Anchor Boy section have arranged a puppet show for March and this has proved to be a hit with the children in previous years.

Boys and girls aged 5 to 7 years and in P1 to P3 are invited to join us at 5.30p.m. on Wednesdays for games, stories and crafts.

Nanette McLean
Leader in Charge



12th Hamilton Brownies

We have had a busy start to our new session in September with seven new girls joining us and taken part in lots of different activities. Our new Brownies completed their Promise Badge in November, so well done! We had our annual visit to the Motherwell Theatre Pantomime to see the Wizard of Oz which the girls and Leaders enjoyed very much. We finished up on 10th December with our Christmas party which again was a success. This year, 2014, is the Big Brownie Birthday which means Brownies are 100 years old. We have a variety of activities lined up.

We started off the year with a coffee/tea morning in the Church on Sunday 19th January, which was a great success and all funds raised will be used for the girls to do a group activity of their choice e.g. abseiling, canoeing. We are not sure yet what they will choose. The girls are also having a sleepover at the Brownie House at Gowanpark in Lanark in March. We are having a Brownie Birthday Party in May to be held at Hamilton College. So far it looks like it is going to be quite a busy time.

Any girls interested in joining us on a Tuesday 6.15pm - 7.30pm will be made very welcome.

Helen, Linda, Lynn

Sunday Live

The children were delighted to appear in their Nativity play at the Family Christmas Service. This was followed by their participation in our Christmas Pie Party for which they all received a Selection Chocolate Box as a thank you!!

We were delighted to hand over a cheque to the Session for £300.00 representing our offerings for 2013. These monies to go to those less fortunate than ourselves.

Mother's Day (30th March) and Easter are just two of the celebrations we can look forward to. Happy Easter to all our readers!!

Sandy Messer



Crèche

All babies and children up to approximately age 3 are made very welcome at our crèche which is held every Sunday at 10.30am.

We have a good selection of toys and books, and we meet in the halls, in the room next to the office.

Catherine Southgate

Monday Club

Our Christmas lunch took place at the beginning of December when over fifty of our members enjoyed good food, good company and good jokes (!) from our president, Charlie Duguid. We were delighted to hear Campbell once more at the electronic organ as we rounded off the afternoon with carol singing. Our financial AGM took place two weeks later and the club agreed to donate £200 to church funds, in recognition of heating and lighting costs. Members were then treated to a short programme of festive entertainment before the usual refreshments.

James McDonald, our first speaker in January, introduced us to his beautiful Old English Sheepdog, Willow and he explained how they worked together as volunteers for a pet therapy charity, visiting schools and nurseries, hospitals, care homes and prisons, seeking to help break down communication barriers and overcome phobias. Our second speaker, Margaret Clayton, talked to us about her life a journalist with the Sunday Post and entertained us with humorous tales of her many interviews. For our Burns afternoon, Alex Baird had the members in fits of laughter with a light hearted talk on haggis and some of his experiences at various Burns Suppers interspersed with some community singing, ably accompanied on the piano by Campbell.

Our programme for the remainder of the session is as follows:

17th Feb	Bob Dalziel	Glasgow and the Tobacco Lords
3rd Mar	Naida Meek	Musical quiz
17th Mar	Gerry McColl	The Gurkhas
31st Mar	AGM and social.	



At the time of writing the article, we are planning a trip to visit Rosslyn Chapel followed by high tea. Details will be made public once plans are finalised.

Nesella Barr
Secretary

Guild

Whose we are and whom we serve
A Fellowship to build



The Guild met on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month with an average attendance of 22.

Only four meetings remain and are as follows

5th Feb	Angela Bonomy
	Sensory Impairment in Scotland
19th Feb	Paula Biagioni
	South Lanarkshire Archives
5th March	AGM & Rev J Thomson
19th March	Karaoke Hymns
	J Irvine

If any meeting interests you please join us - you will be made welcome.

Avril Boothroyd
Coordinator



1970 Ladies' Club

The first meeting of 2014 took place on Thursday 16th January. Jim Murphy came to speak to the ladies about Corrie Ten Boom, a name many of the ladies had never heard. She was a Dutch lady who helped Jews escape the Nazis during the Second World War. What an awe inspiring story of faith. She was taken to a concentration camp where her whole family were tortured and her sister killed. Yet later in life, on coming face to face with one of the guards involved, she forgave him. It was a compelling story of the power of faith.

The outing for this year has been arranged for 8th May to the Ellisland Hotel in Ayr.

Margaret McKinnon



Saffronhall Singers

Rehearsals are well under way as we strive to create an entertaining programme of music in a variety of styles. We now have thirty members attending regularly and it is encouraging to note that everyone seems to be mixing well. Practices start at 7.30pm and finish around 9 15 pm, with a short break for tea, coffee and a blether. Members have come not only from within our own church, but also from some of the other churches in the town which have closed. Others have joined because of personal friendships with some of the members. It is certainly obvious that everyone loves singing and although there is much fun and laughter, there is also a lot of dedicated hard work put in each evening.

Our Carols by Candlelight seem to have been well received and enjoyed by those who attended and a retiring offering added to the Christmas charity collection. The new sound system was put to use, recording the evening and is available to listen to on the church website. This was a first attempt at using the recording facility and lessons have been learned for the future. Many thanks to Paul McCrudden who helped out at the mixing desk. We were also grateful to Karen Rollins who accompanied the group so well not only on the actual evening but also at several rehearsals in the weeks leading up to the carol service.

The first performance of our new programme will be at the 1970 Ladies' Club in the church on 13th March and we are grateful to Mrs Lilian Barrie for agreeing to accompany us on the evening. I must also thank Lilian and Karen for helping out at practices over these last few weeks, allowing me to work more closely with the different sections in the group. Our final practice of the session will be on Monday 31st March.

Campbell Barr

Choir

The closing months of the year found the Choir fully involved in preparation of music for the Christmas season. Our final meeting took place on 18th December when we were able to lighten the load of music folders and return processed music for filing. I am grateful to Sandra Nicholson and Helen Lyon for their valued support as “unofficial” Secretaries to the Choir. We have a good library of music, and with 26 members, we need an organised filing system. Both ladies give me valued help in this area.

At the last meeting we enjoyed a light supper, and on this occasion, were able to show our appreciation to two of our stalwart members, who have been part of the choir for many many years.

Miss Retta Mullen has been a member of the Choir for most of her life, and it is a very difficult decision to stand down from something which you enjoy so much. Over several months she found the challenges of the choir routine more demanding, and decided to move back into the Congregation. She is the finest example of dedication, commitment and loyalty that I could have asked for, and she is warmly regarded by us all. Retta will always remain within the friendship and support of the Choir.

Mrs Georgina Keir has also been a strong member of the Soprano section of the Choir for some considerable time, but recently felt her voice was not behaving as it should. Georgina has also given her heart to sharing her talent with others and over the years has always been committed to all the work of the choir, both within solo and ensemble pieces. It is also difficult for Georgina to return to the ranks of the Congregation, but I know she continues to enjoy our music, and we will always continue to consider her “one of us”.

At the start of December, we were able to welcome Mrs. Carole Gordon to the Soprano section, and already Carole has shown the same commitment and dedication that Retta and Georgina have given. I am grateful to her for her willingness to join us, and trust she is already experiencing the friendship and fellowship which we enjoy each week.

Two particular anthems in January, have met with very favourable comments. The Anthem chosen for the Anniversary service for the Union early in the month was “This is the day” by John Rutter – and this piece was first performed at the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in Westminster Abbey, London.

The second was entitled “Inscription of Hope” by Stroope – which was particularly written for Holocaust Sunday at the end of January. If anyone would like a copy of either set of words please let me know.

Finally thank you to all those who found my article on “Organ Preludes – a time for Preparation for Worship” to be thoughtful and considered.

Helen C Simpson (Mrs)
Organist and Choir Director



Old Kirk Dancers

We are now well into our 22nd year here at Hamilton Old Parish Church, and this with a good number of very keen dancers taking part each week.

Country Dance weekends away from home are a great experience, with the opportunity to meet fellow dancers not only from the UK but also worldwide. You may have noticed this from a television broadcast shown recently.

New members are always welcome, with tuition being given by our teacher who is a qualified member of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

We dare you to try it. Tuesdays 7.45pm.

Irene Mathieson



Thoughts for Lent

Beginning 40 days before Easter, Lent has traditionally been a time of looking inward, a time of self-evaluation and self-examination in order to identify one's sins and go through a process of repentance and renewal. Lent commemorates the time that Jesus spent alone in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil.

Based on Jesus' refusal to be tempted into making bread out of stones, many Christians have fasted during portions of Lent, others have found ways to mark the days by "giving up" something that is particularly delightful to them, even if not sinful. For some it's giving up sweets or red meat, for others cigarettes or alcohol, habits which oftentimes are picked up again when Easter rolls around.

In recent years, there has been less emphasis on *giving up* and more emphasis on *taking on*. Some will choose to go to church more often, or offer of their time and skills in the service of others. But remember – Lent is not just the time for *thinking* about these things – it is the time for *taking action*.

Read the account of Jesus in the wilderness, facing up to the enormous responsibility of what he was about to embark upon, and being so severely tested by the devil. Jesus defeats the power of evil by countering every temptation with a direct quote from Scripture. Matthew Chapter 4, verses 1 – 11.



the desert wilderness of Judea (photo by Don Schwager)

Prayer for Lent

Guide us Heavenly Father through the difficult days of Lent,
and encourage us along the way.

We pray that as we move towards the darkest day,
you will not forsake us
but remind us of our Saviour's ultimate gift and promise
of new, abundant, eternal life
for all who believe and trust in him, even Christ our Lord.

Amen





Property Committee

When Auchingramont Church closed in 1980 a window was designed by Anita Pate and placed at the rear of the Church. Anita has designed a new window of the North Church and this will be placed at the opposite window from the pane showing Auchingramont.

Drawings are being prepared for the new Halls' lift, this will be entered from the Session Room and will give access to the Office area and Upper Floor. When approvals from Presbytery and the Local Authority have been obtained and funding secured, a date will be set for the work to commence.

Dislodged slates to the Halls' roof have been replaced and rainwater pipes and gutters repaired.

John Downie
Convener



Finance Committee

At the beginning of the year I took on the role of Finance Convener which Bill Nelson has held for 10 years. • I would like to thank Bill for his continuing help and support as I learn all about the finances of the Old Parish. • The experience I gained serving as the North's treasurer for the past 20 years will be very useful as will serving on Presbytery's Stewardship and Finance Committee. • This gives me an insight into the financial problems faced by many churches in our area today and also of the church nationally.

At the time of writing, the accounts for 2013 were being prepared and will be presented to the congregation at the meeting on 23rd March.

Marilyn Henderson
Convener



Fellowship Committee

Since our last Tidings contribution, we have had a busy time with the Christmas Congregational Lunch, visit to the Lion King at the Edinburgh Playhouse and our "One Year On" afternoon tea, celebrating a year since the union of the two Churches. We hope that everyone who attended on at least one of these had an enjoyable time. At present we are looking forward to the Burns' Supper to be held on 7 February. Thereafter we are looking at the annual golf day, and the possibility of a trip to Mount Stuart House on the Isle of Bute. The current plan is to arrange this outing for Saturday 14 June. It is not possible to book for this trip until after 4 April, when we will give more information. However, to save some time we will be asking for the names of anyone interested to be given at the usual place following the morning service. The first date for names will be given in the intimation sheet soon.

Can we ask yet again if there is an event or a place you think could make for a day or evening out, please let any member of the committee know so that we can give the suggestion our consideration.

Iain McLean
Convener



Robert Meikle Scotland Visit

Another piece of information I need to make you aware of is that Robert Meikle and his family are now planning to be back in Scotland in June and July of 2014. Robert and his wife Silvana are the missionaries from Casa Semear in Brazil. Robert originally from Kirkintilloch is returning primarily for his sister's wedding, however this will give the family and opportunity to catch up with relatives still in Scotland and also to visit the many church congregations and groups that have supported them over the years. We know that the timing for this trip will affect the already planned group trip to Brazil in 2014 and this will be further explained once confirmed.

It is my hope that the Session would be supportive of Robert's visit to Scotland and could become involved during this time to maybe host an event for him, or his whole family, to attend or even to have them be involved in a Sunday service during their time in Scotland. Exact arrangements will become known nearer the time.

The Casa Abba Project and other organisations are currently discussing with them the level of financial support that might be needed to assist the family to be able to visit Scotland, more details should be available in due course.

Craig Garrett



Safeguarding News

I am sorry to report that, at the session meeting in January, Bruce Cruickshank regrettably tendered his resignation from the post of Safeguarding Coordinator as a result of pressure of work. We are very grateful to Bruce for the work he has done during his time in post and wish him well in the future.

Together last year, we were able to make considerable progress with the task of updating the church safeguarding register and I am happy to report that we are now up to speed with the timetable issued by the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service. All those engaged in regulated work with children or vulnerable adults who did not previously have a Church of Scotland Disclosure Scotland check, have now been "PVG'd". This means they successfully joined the new PVG scheme (Protecting Vulnerable Groups).

In order to meet the Scottish Government's target of everyone joining the PVG scheme by October 2015, the next step is to enable all those who have Disclosure Scotland to join the new scheme, so gradually, I will be approaching the relevant people and asking them to complete the application form.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support as we have worked through this process over the past year.

Reminder to all those who have already joined PVG scheme.

Applicants have a responsibility to advise Disclosure Scotland when they cease to do regulated work in the Church of Scotland.

Applicants have a responsibility to advise Disclosure Scotland if they change their address.

Nesella Barr

Safeguarding Coordinator

Gift Aid

Gift Aid was introduced by HMRC to encourage charitable giving. For every £1 donated, HMRC would pay £0.25 to the charity, this being the tax already paid on the £1. So a donation of £10 yields a further £2.50, a donation of £100 means an additional £25 to the funds and so on. This additional payment is coming from HMRC, not from the individual and is a very effective way of boosting the charity's income.

I have just completed my first claim on the congregation's behalf. Over the last year tax paying members contributed £77,032.58 in offerings, either by standing order, free will offering envelopes or by cheque. (These are the recordable methods of giving acceptable to HMRC.) This sum will yield £19,258.15 - a magnificent addition to church income. As you can see, it makes sense to ensure we maximise this potential additional revenue, especially as costs continue to rise.

If anyone contributes by one these methods, pays tax (income tax and / or capital gains tax) and does not have a Gift Aid Declaration in place, I would be very happy to explain it to you.

The system for making a claim has been revised in the last year, and for the very first time, I have to include a house number and postcode for each donor. Consequently, it is really important that the church has up to date contact details. I have been checking and re-checking all the forms I have and, at the moment, I am confident the information I have submitted is correct. However, there are some issues to clarify and I have not included these in the claim until I can carry out further checks. Please bear with me if I have to speak to you on this matter in the near future.

Please, please remember to let me know if your circumstances change with regard to paying tax.

HMRC have introduced a new scheme – The Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme – which will allow me to claim an additional £1,250 (maximum) from cash donations in the weekly offering plate. Signed declarations are not needed and individual amounts must be £20 or less. The limit per year is £5000 in donations. This will be another piece of good news for our treasurer!

Finally, thanks are due to the team of people who week by week count the offerings and record the figures, and to Bill Nelson, who collates the FWO figures and passes them to me. As a team, we work together to ensure we manage this aspect of the finances as effectively as we can.

Nesella Barr

Gift Aid Convenor

01698 329177

nesella.barr@blueyonder.co.uk

giftaid it

Hamilton Churches Drop-In Centre

As a result of donations to the Centre having dropped by almost two thirds following the setting up of food banks in the area, the Centre is already running short of certain items. Last year the congregation donated in excess of £100 and over 120 cans of soup. Can we appeal again to your generosity and ask for donations of tinned potatoes, brown and red sauce, salt, pepper, sugar, diluting orange juice, cleaning materials etc to supplement the low stocks? • Session agreed at the last meeting that members could be asked to contribute on a couple of Sundays in March, so could I ask that you bring whatever you feel you can give on Sundays 16 and 23 March to the Church and the donations will be taken to the Centre as soon as possible thereafter.

Thanks to everyone in advance.

Iain McLean

Prayer Letter

Week beginning Sunday 20th April

WELL HALL CARE HOME, HAMILTON

Well Hall is a care home for 36 older people in Lanarkshire

- Pray for the service users at Well Hall that their experience of the care provided is good and that they can find a home from home here. We pray that each day would be fulfilling and enjoyable and for a blessing of health and happiness for each of them.
- Remember staff at Well Hall who have experienced a year of challenges and changes. We ask that they would continue to move forward with a spirit of enthusiasm and determination to provide a good service for the people in their care and that their efforts will be fruitful and recognised.
- Give thanks for the Friends' Group at Well Hall; for the work they do in raising funds for the home and the service users and for their continued commitment to support our work.
- Pray for our activities co-ordinator and that the programme which has been started can continue and be developed so that service users and staff can find fun and enjoyment every day. We pray that as the spring and summer time approaches we will be able to enjoy the outdoors, benefitting from the gardens and outings.
- Pray for the families of those who live at Well Hall. We remember what a difficult decision it is to commit a loved one to the care of others. Help us to continue to build good, open and honest relationships with families so that they can have confidence that their loved one is being looked after in a way that they would wish.

Thanks to all who purchased the Circle of Care calendar thus supporting the work of Crossreach.

Betty Smith
Congregation contact

Scottish Bible Society



Report from meeting on 20th January 2014:

Flag Day

Collection in Hamilton Town Centre 10.00am – 2.00pm. Volunteers to collect for an hour would be greatly appreciated on Saturday 26th April. Our time is 10.00am – 11.00am but if that doesn't suit any time will be ok from 10.00am – 2.00pm. Cans can be collected at St John's Church Centre. Please give me your name if you can help!

Bible World Visit

Monday 6th October 2014 to Friday 19th October 2014. Bible World is booked and the deposit paid. Visits will be arranged for primary schools linked to Hamilton Grammar, Hamilton College and Faith•Schools. The location will be either Holy Cross School, Hamilton Accies Car Park or Hamilton Racecourse. Visits and talks are taking place to verify the venue.

Local volunteers will be needed to help the Bible World Coordinator run sessions.

Please pray for the success of this venture to bring God's news to the children of Hamilton.

Freewill offerings are requested from Churches to cover the costs of the Bible World visit.

Thank you all for your continuing support.

Muriel Eadie

Easter Thoughts

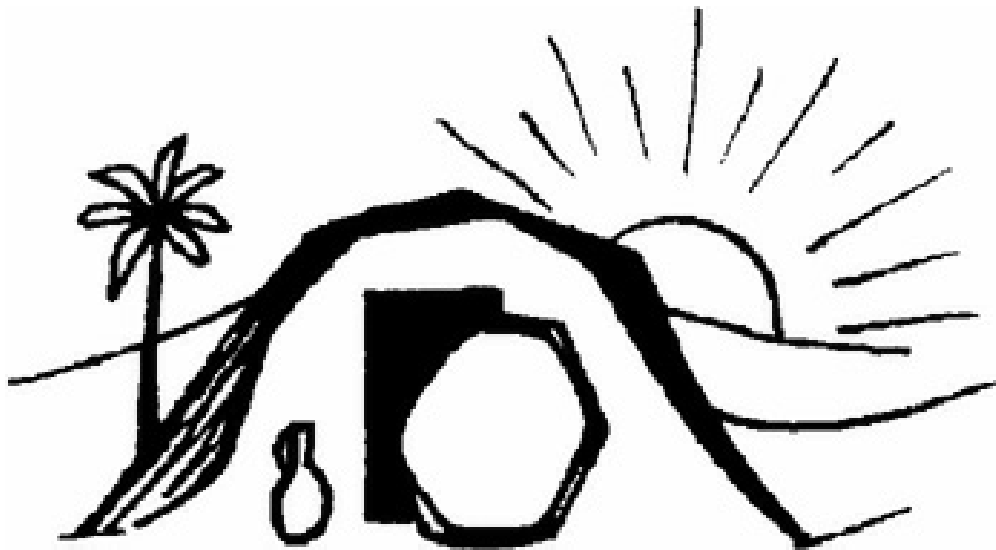
Across the Christian traditions Easter is celebrated in many different ways. In the Russian Orthodox Church the service begins about 9.30 to 10.00pm on the Saturday, continues through to midnight, when clergy and congregation process outside and round the church three times, before coming back in to move on to the Communion. The service will end about 2.00 to 2.30am!

Many of the Western Churches hold Dawn Services, or, as we do, set a particular time like 6.30am, and these can be inside the church or outside, perhaps in the church grounds, or in public parks – such as here in Hamilton at Chatelherault. In Lanark of course they do things differently and they climb up Tinto and hold a service on the summit, sometimes in the snow!

In the town of Epworth-by-the-Sea, in Georgia, USA, in 1977, the churches held a dawn service on the pier, which was oriented east/west. Tables, from which the local ministers and priests conducted the service, were placed at the eastern end of the pier, and row upon row of chairs were provided for the worshippers. We all sat quietly, on what was thankfully a clear and calm morning, watching the dawn break as the sun rose up out of the Atlantic Ocean. As the sun cleared the horizon the ministers proclaimed “Christ is risen!”, and the congregation responded “He is risen indeed!”

Churches in Pakistan will be decorated with white lilies, narcissus, tulips and iris, and, after a short sunrise service, many will hold two services, one in English and one in Urdu. In India, after the Easter services in the churches families and friends host lunches and dinners, and exchange coloured lanterns.

Clearly there is a rich variety in the celebrations of Easter, with all sorts of ancillaries practices, from painted hard-boiled eggs, to Easter bunnies, palm crosses, coloured lanterns and hot cross buns; but underpinning all of this is the unmistakeable sense of rejoicing in the message that the stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty and Christ is risen in power and glory.



“You have nothing to fear. I know you were looking for Jesus who was crucified; he is not here. He has been raised again, as he said he would be.”

Flower List 2014

March	02	Mrs Renwick	17 Nethan Gate
	09	Mrs Laird	9 Portwell Mews
	16	Mrs Wright	20 Rowellwn Avenue
	23	Miss Mullen	47 Cameron Crescent
	30	Mrs Hunter	55 Wellhall Road
April	06	Mrs Gardiner	16 Lilac Hill
	13	Mrs McLean	2 Hepburn Hill
	20	Mrs Shearer	34 Lauder Court
	27	Mrs Condie	23 Brouster Hill, East Kilbride
May	04	Mrs Cunningham	19 Luss Brae
	11	Mrs Ronaldson	31 Calderglen Avenue, Blantyre
	18	Miss Adams	1 Brandon Court
	25	Mrs Gibson	5 Scott Grove
		Mrs Wilkinson	29 Iona Ridge
June	01	Mrs Dick	16 Chantinghall Road
	08	Mrs Irvine	25 Forrest Gate

Donations to the fund are always welcome since they assist with the special occasions such as Harvest and Christmas.

Thank you for your generosity and co-operation.

E Gardiner

01698 427852



Flower Delivery

March	02	Mrs G Keir	6 Mauchline Court
	09	Mrs M McLean	2 Hepburnhill
	16	Mrs M McKinnon	61 Silverrtonhill Avenue
	23	Mr B Clarkson	35 Cameron Crescent
	30	Mrs N McLean	28 Rosevale Crescent
April	06	Mrs C Elder	4 Pine Park
	13	Mrs J McHarg	3 Auchincampbell Road
	20	Mrs F Moffat	101 Townhead Street
	27	Miss E Sorbie	11 South Park Grove
May	04	Mrs P Scott	Marshall Grove
	11	Mrs N Garrett	7 Bent Road
	18	Mrs L Macintyre	1 Lilac Hill
	25	Mrs A Cunningham	19 Luss Brae
June	01	Miss D Hastie	60 Cameron Crescent
	08	Mrs E Gardiner	16 Lilac Hill

Flowers are usually delivered after the Morning Service. If the date is unsuitable, please try to re-arrange or contact:

Kate Morrow

01698 420748

Rose Bowl List 2014

March	02	W Wilson
	16	E Reid
	23	E Stoddart
	30	E Hunter
April	06	E Irvine
	20	M Eadie
	27	A Boothroyd
May	04	B Smith
		E Sorbie
June	25	F Hunter
	01	G Dobbie



The Rose Bowl

The Rose Bowl only requires to be filled every second Sunday as the roses are lasting. There are however Rose Bowl spaces still available.

E Gardiner

01698 427852



Flower Circle Easter

Would the members of the Flower Circle and anyone wishing to help please meet on Friday 18th April at 9.30am in the Halls so that the Church may be decorated for Easter.

Thank you

E Gardiner



Thank You

I would like to thank Mr Thomson for the comfort I received from his visits while in hospital recently. In addition I would also thank everyone, the Monday and 1970 Ladies' Clubs for their cards and best wishes. They were gratefully appreciated.

Thank you also for the beautiful floral arrangement which I received.

Marilyn Stenton

We would like to thank all our friends at the 'Old' for the kind expressions of sympathy received following our recent bereavement.

Bill & Morag Wilson



Entered into Eternal Life.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life"

*God of grace and peace, in your Son Jesus Christ
You have given us new birth into a living hope.
Strengthen us now to live in the power of the resurrection
and keep us united with our loved one
from whom is death we are not divided;
for You live and reign forever and ever. Amen*

4 November 2013

Annie Young, Avonbridge Nursing Home

5 November 2013

James Dickson, 18 Forrest Avenue

12 November 2013

Mary Bayne, 9 Old Avon Road

14 November 2013

Irene Bunce, Avonbridge Nursing Home

19 November 2013

Jean Kay, Kirknowe Nursing Home, Wishaw

21 November 2013

James Plenderleith, 17 Dunure Drive

29 November 2013

Elizabeth Halliday, 10 Woodburn Court

16 December 2013

William Gibson, 23 Moore Gardens



At Easter time

At Easter time



How glad the world

At Easter time