



HELENSBURGH
PARISH CHURCH



CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 2016



PUT 'CHRIST' BACK INTO
CHRISTMAS!



From the Manse...

I recall back in October my disbelief at coming across an aisle in a supermarket dedicated to Halloween whilst the next aisle was dedicated to all things Christmas: trees, lights, selection boxes and mince pies! I also recall speaking out loud in another well known shop on the 12 November having discovered the staff wearing Christmas jumpers! Don Cupitt, a British Theologian, once commented that "Christmas is the Disneyfication of Christianity". I've been thinking a little about that statement over these past weeks, ever since that trip to the supermarket really, and I have to confess I find myself in difficulty trying to disagree. Indeed, only the other week someone commented at a meeting that there was now no such thing as Halloween at all because we seem to jump straight from Easter to Christmas – again, hard to disagree.

We only have to turn on our television sets mid-October to see before us a multitude of Christmas Advertisements: "Buy one toy here and get another half price", "Why not buy your dream sofa and pay nothing for two years, delivered right on time for Christmas", "Great food, affordable prices – that's why mums shop at Iceland!" And the shops, well...how do the shop assistants cope with that music! The same old renditions of "All I want for Christmas" and "It's Christmas Time" played over and over and over again for all those weeks that lead us to Christmas.

But then, that's what it's all about is it not: the preparations for this great Disney production? We might decide we want to redecorate the lounge as a Christmas treat to ourselves, or perhaps the dining room needs done – I mean can the in-laws really dine with that old wallpaper! The celebrations and parties and get-togethers' all need to be perfectly planned. We're not all pragmatists. Isn't it great that we have two or three months of constant media bombardment? Isn't it just the abrupt reminder we all need: I mean, what harm can a little push do us?

The sobering truth is that we are all too easily swept away with the "Disneyfication" of the most significant birth in the history of humankind. I know too well how the excitement of buying gifts for our loved ones quickly takes over. We begin to think about their reactions as they open their gifts – and then what happens, we spend the rest of the days up until Christmas hoping that they will actually like it!

I don't know what Christmas is for you, but for me, it's about people coming together. It's about putting all of our differences and prejudices aside and meeting in a place... and this place may well be that dining room where you now wish you had kept the old wallpaper because your husband decided he would redecorate as it would be difficult to hire a painter and decorator this time of year! Christmas is about coming together and remembering the 'Reason for the Season', giving thanks to God for the greatest gift freely given to the world, His Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

If ever there was anything to prepare for, anything to remember, anything to celebrate, then surely it has to be that!

I look forward to journeying and worshipping with you throughout the Season of Advent and I wish a very wonderful, Christ-felt, Christmas celebration to you and to your family and friends.

Your friend and Minister

David T. Young



Pastoral care is simply sharing the love of God with one another, in encouragement and support, and by showing practical concern. Pastoral care is expressed when we pray for one another, when we offer a listening ear or when we visit someone at home, or in nursing homes and hospitals.

Do you think you could be part of the Pastoral Care Team? We urgently need volunteers for this essential part of ministry. If you are interested please contact Lindsay Spence 671 100 or speak to Rev. David T. Young or Rev. Tina Kemp for more information.



Worship December 2016 - March 2017

December

- Sunday 4th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Rev. David T. Young
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp
- Sunday 11th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Ben Thorp
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp
- Sunday 18th** 11:00am Nativity & Gift Service : Rev. David T. Young
3:00pm Service for the Bereaved : Rev. David T. Young
- Saturday 24th** 6:30pm Christingle Service : Rev. Tina Kemp
11:30pm Watchnight Service : Rev. David T. Young
- Sunday 25th** 10:00am Christmas Day Service : Rev. David T. Young

January 2017

- Sunday 1st** 11:00am United Service at Rhu & Shandon : Rev. Tina Kemp
- Sunday 8th** 11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. David T. Young
- Sunday 15th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp
11:00am Morning Worship : Ben Thorp
- Sunday 22nd** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Ben Thorp
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. David T. Young
- Sunday 29th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Ben Thorp
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. David T. Young

February

- Sunday 5th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp
- Sunday 12th** 11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. David T. Young
- Sunday 19th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Rev. David T. Young
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. David T. Young
- Sunday 26th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Ben Thorp
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp

March

- Sunday 5th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. David T. Young
- Sunday 12th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Rev. David T. Young
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. David T. Young
- Sunday 19th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Ben Thorp
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp
- Sunday 26th** 9:30am Contemporary Worship : Rev. Tina Kemp
11:00am Morning Worship : Rev. David T. Young

Creche Rota to December - March

December 4th

Louise Hughes
Lindsay McKechnie

December 11th

Barbie Paterson
Audry Walker

December 18th

Morag Kesson
Barbie Paterson

January 1st

June O'Neil
Mary Burn

January 8th

Barbie Paterson
Lindsay McKechnie

January 15th

Audrey Walker
Louise Hughes

January 22nd

Barbie Paterson
Morag Kesson



January 29th

June O'Neil
Mary Burn

February 5th

Lindsay McKechnie
Barbie Paterson

February 12th

Audrey Walker
Louise Hughes

February 19th

Mary Burn
June O'Neil

February 26th

Morag Kesson
Barbie Paterson

March 5th

Lindsay McKechnie
Barbie Paterson

Worship on Wednesday



The short services at 12.30 on Wednesdays have been a great success, with a regular turn out of between 30 and 40, all of whom have greatly enjoyed the relaxed nature of the services provided by our talented Ministry Team. The continued fellowship with soup and bread has added to the enjoyment. Warm thanks are due to Lindsay Spence, Jeanette McGugan, Janet Steele, Elizabeth McIntyre, Jane Thom, Jean Walker, Mary Loudon, Helen Turnbull, Neil Turnbull, Graham Philips, Mari Stewart, Margaret Stirling, Helen Caldwell, Bobby Caldwell, Shanny Newall and Jan Chisholm, all of whom provided delicious soup week by week. The last Wednesday Worship for the year will take place on **30 November** and Wednesday Worship will resume on **1 February 2017**.

Mike Loudon Convenor Worship and Discipleship Team

Hello!

Hopefully in the weeks since I started as Parish Assistant most of you will have seen my face at one point or another. Certainly the welcome I've received from you all has been extremely warm, and you have been just as welcoming to my wife, Heather, and our 2 children, Mira (9) and Jamie (7) on the occasions when they have been visiting. Thank you.

Coming to Helensburgh is part of a grand new adventure for me. Alongside my working role here, I'm also in the process of 'discernment' with the Kirk, hoping to start training as a Minister of Word and Sacrament next year. Big changes are afoot in my life and the life of my family. Big changes are also a key theme I hear within Helensburgh Parish Church. The last couple of years have seen huge upheaval and change, with the union and the new building development. I can imagine that there is still a certain amount of unease, much like the feeling you get when you move into a new house but haven't yet found a home for everything!

But, like a new house, this isn't just the end of something old and cherished, it's also the opportunity for something new and exciting. Much of the old furniture is still there, but maybe you want to move the china to a new cupboard, or swap round the sofas? But as homely as HPC is, it is a church - an institution that, as William Temple famously said, exists primarily for the benefit of it's non-members. So we can open our eyes to the opportunities outside these walls to spread the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Let's finish unpacking the boxes, and start to meet the neighbours!

Ben Thorp
Parish Assistant

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Advent Bible Study



The Ministry Team are holding a four week Bible Study throughout Advent. To make these informal gatherings as accessible to as many as possible, there will be an afternoon study each Wednesday from 30th November to 21st December at 12:30pm in the Gathering Space at HPC (bring your own lunch) and on each Tuesday from 29th November to 20th December at 7:30pm within the halls at Rhu & Shandon Church. The same materials will be used at both venues and all are welcome to come along.



Helensburgh Parish Church Guild

Helensburgh Parish Church Guild are looking forward to their Christmas Lunch at the Ardencaple hotel on **6th December**.

We will be visiting the United Reform Church Christmas Tree display on 14th December.

We restart on 10th January with a Bring and Buy table top sale, 17th January Marjorie McLeod tells us The Story of Fans, Tea and Chat on 24th and a speaker from the Project we are supporting this year, All Friends Together on 31st January. You will be made most welcome at any of our meetings." Helensburgh Parish Church Guild are looking forward to their Christmas Lunch at the Ardencaple hotel on 6th December. We will be visiting the United Reform Church Christmas Tree display on 14th December.

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Chinese Whispers



As a child, I frequently played a game called Chinese whispers at parties. You may know it by other names but, in essence one person started off a message which had to be relayed by whispering from one person to the next in what was often a line of ten or more. The last person then announced the message received, followed by the first person reading out the original. For reasons that I never established, the example frequently cited was that of "Send three and four pence. We are going to a dance" having been derived from an original "Send reinforcements. We're going to advance." I was reminded of this over recent weeks when our congregation seemed to be going through a similar experience. Then, as now, there were always those who were not averse to a deliberate distortion of things for the entertainment provided. For the record then, the Kirk Session has not decided to leave (depart from) the Church of Scotland. Nor has it decided that the Associate Minister must be in a same sex relationship.

What the Session decided was that it would not discriminate against anyone in such a relationship during the selection process. The examples quoted are but two of a number of variants that were circulating. Those that sought clarification did the correct thing. Whatever views one holds on this issue of ministers in same-sex relationships, it is a matter of conscience and calls for respect to be shown to those of a different persuasion. The background to all of this is that we are now a huge charge that needs a small ministerial team. Ministers are in very short supply and we do ourselves no favours if we limit the possibilities for recruitment.

Sandy Kerr

The Sunday at Seven concerts :



December 11 (Note earlier-than-usual date!) Come and Sing!

The 30th annual Carol Concert featuring augmented choir, with Saltire Brass and Walter Blair (organ). There will be a retiring collection in aid of Macmillan Cancer Care, and mince pies and mulled wine will be served in the halls after the concert.

January 29- Andrew McTaggart (baritone), Laura Sergeant (cello), Derek Clark (piano)

A miscellaneous programme featuring songs and instrumental music

February 26 - Helena Gourd (flute), Derek Clark (piano)

A return to Helensburgh for the young flautist, who is now making a name for herself with orchestras such as the South Bank Sinfonia, and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. She will present a varied selection of music to confirm her growing reputation as one of the finest flautists of her generation.

March 26 - Pupils from Lomond School

The biennial visit by pupils (and staff) from this local school, presenting a wide selection of vocal and instrumental pieces for all tastes, under the guidance of their Director of Music, Douglas Fleming

LINK GROUP

The Link Group has had an excellent start to the winter season with three well attended meetings in October.

Margaret McAllister led us in a fun-filled and tricky musical quiz !

The Rev. Dr Charles Stewart kept us spellbound and often humbled, with his fascinating tales from his experiences as a Naval Padre, often in war torn places around the globe.

It was such a joy and pleasure to be in the company of Betty Balfour, aged 90.

An amazing raconteur with a wonderful memory, Betty enthralled us all with her stories about her life, especially her time at Bletchley Park .

Looking forward to the Festival of Christmas, we are delighted to have Kate Bennet come along on **12th December** to show us some Christmas Floral decorations.

On **9th January** Rev. Tina Kemp is talking to us about Israel, and on **Thursday 12th January**, we have an outing to the Theatre Royal for a matinee performance of the Ballet, Hansel and Gretel. Lots to look forward to!

The two Fund Raising Events for the year are the Allander Jazz Band on **Saturday 25th February** and the Coffee Morning on **Saturday 11th March**. Both events in the Main Hall . Tickets for the Jazz Band will be on sale in the New Year. Price £8.

The Link Group meets every other Monday at 7-30 p.m. in the Small Hall. Visitors are always welcome. The Sunday Order of Service will carry intimation of the upcoming meetings.

Eileen Drummond. President



Messy Church is a not-on-Sunday special time for families of all shapes and sizes on the last Saturday of the month 10:30am -12:30 pm. All children must be accompanied by an adult who is responsible for them. We enjoy crafty fun activities with a story, prayer and song and finish with a hot meal together. Messy Church meets alternate months in St Margaret's Churchill Square and United Reformed Church, West Princes St.

These are the dates for this session. To be able to run these sessions we need more volunteers, you do not need to do every month. You do not need PVG or disclosure, you will not be alone with children. If you can sit behind a table and chat to people please volunteer.

28th Jan 17	URC	Feeding 5000
25th Feb 17	St Margaret's	Jairus Daughter
25th Mar 17	URC	Easter
29th April 17	St Margaret's	Elisha
27th May 17	URC	Hannah

If you would like more information please contact :-

Phone: Elizabeth 01436 679565

Reclyffe_lambert@yahoo.co.uk

Please visit our Facebook page which will show you what kind of activities we get up to: [www.facebook.com/Helensburgh Messy Church](http://www.facebook.com/HelensburghMessyChurch)

JARS OF GRACE FOR UNICEF

I would like to say a big THANK YOU to everyone who very kindly donated to this year's appeal. Over the year the magnificent sum of £1,314:87 was collected.

The focus for 2017 is still the crisis in Syria and Iraq. I look forward to your continued support. Thank you very much.

Rosemary McGinley



CHEER UP!! Its Gloomy January Party Time!

Come to the party on **Saturday 21st January 2017 in the Large Hall 7:30pm -10:30 approximately. All Members and their friends are invited**

Participation by as many as possible with willing helpers needed to decorate the hall.

Come and bring a dish which will be laid out on a central table buffet style. Food from 8:00pm. Coordinated by Liz Smith and June O'Neil
Tea/coffee/squash provided. Bring your own wine or beer (no spirits!)

Entertainment by everyone present!

Party partner quiz

Table Games; Charades;

A short 'piece/sketch by 'young, middle and older' members or a mixture of all three!

Short Ceilidh interspersed with 60s – 80s music

Save the date and join the Party



1ST/2ND HELENSBURGH COY

A huge thanks to all who came along and supported the Big Breakfast, over £400 was raised. The boys have taken part in the previous events reported other than the sponsored walk which has been delayed till the Spring. The Battalion Carol Service takes place in the West Kirk, Dumbarton on **Sunday 11th December at 6:30pm**. Our last evening of 2016 will be the **14th December** games night and we restart for 2017 on **11th January**.

Iain Talman
Captain

Christians Against Poverty

Many are asking "Who will show us any good?" ' Psalm 4:6 (NLV)
When we watch the news, it can be hard not to feel depressed at the state of the world. Who hasn't cried out at the TV, just as the psalmist did, 'Who will show us any good?' However, I know with my journalist training that bad news is easier to find. Send a journalist to court for the day and he will come back with a raft of stories. Get them to call the emergency services, attend the Coroner's Court, the same applies. It's an efficient way of filling a newspaper but it means we get an unrealistic view of our community.

What does this mean for Christians? We are called to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14-16). The story of what the Church is doing needs to be told. Who is telling this? My passion at CAP is to help the local Church see that what they regard as normal and everyday is actually distinct and life transforming, and should be shared with the world!

Let's not be shy about what God is doing, or wait for the media to come to us. Let's fill our local media with stories of kindness: statistics about people helped by food banks, stories of rescue by Street Angels, Christmas hampers for needy families, people finding work through CAP Job Clubs, people going debt free through CAP Debt Help. When people long for good news, let us be the ones to bring it in Jesus' name. (CAP Love like Jesus)

Marianne Clough, National PR Manager CAP UK

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FWO Envelopes



I now have a delivery of FWO Envelopes for 2017. Should you wish to adopt this method of giving, please leave your name and telephone number at the church office and I will get the envelopes to you.

Jean Ramsay
F.W.O Convenor Tel: 672656

Report From The Congregational Board

The Congregational Board is responsible for all matters relating to the fabric and finances of the Church. It is made up of elected members of the congregation and elders elected from the Session. The Board normally meets four times a year, though additional meetings can be called to deal with urgent matters.

Over the past few weeks the Church heating system has been commissioned and a list of snagging items requiring attention in the new halls is being attended to by the contractor. The cost of repairs to the Sanctuary is under budget and the repairs to the stained glass windows completed. Sound insulation tiles have been fitted in the small and large halls.

Regarding Church finances, although the deficit at the half year was £630 worse than budget, the outlook for the full year should see a deficit less than the budgeted figure of £14,750.

A special meeting of the Board held on 2 October agreed to allow expenditure up to £4,000 for the installation of digital monitor signage in the window of Room 1 in the new halls.

If any member of the congregation is interested in joining the Board, please contact David Mitchell (674076) or Bobby Caldwell (676758) to discuss.

David Mitchell

Chair of the Congregational Board

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Local Gideon Branch

Did you know that the Bibles you see in Hotels around the world are not part of a corporate image by those Hotels ? They are placed there by individual Members of the Gideons movement. On Sunday the 9th of October, the local Gideons branch took the Contemporary Worship service and gave a presentation of the work of local distribution of Bibles & Testaments to the local schools, hospitals, hospices, retirement homes, hotels & B&Bs in this area. We would like to thank the Contemporary Worship attendees for their retiring offering which will be used in this area.

Thank you.

Clive Charters, on behalf of the Gideons



Getting close to Christmas again, all of the tell-tale signs are there. The adverts are filling the TV screen, garden centres are stocked up with Christmas trees and you are being constantly reminded that you should have been making payments on a wonderful food hamper, but don't worry, you can still start paying for next years. I have not yet witnessed any reference to what Christmas is really about. Has it become so politically wrong now that we cannot mention Christ's birthday in all this. I wonder if God had waited until now to bring his son into the world and chose Helensburgh as his birthplace, what sort of impact would this have. 2000 years ago, Mary and Joseph did not have it so good. Mary was an unmarried expectant mother betrothed to Joseph who was not the father. A terrible thing in those days. Just over a century ago she would have been shunned, sent to the workhouse and quickly removed from society. Joseph was enlightened to Mary's circumstances and married her becoming the stepfather to Gods child. 33 years later after a brief ministry, Jesus was put to death on a cross so that man could find forgiveness in God's eyes.

So, imagine Mary and Joseph are on their way to Helensburgh in their Ford Fiesta and Mary is near full term in her pregnancy. Although Mary is pregnant and Joseph is not the father he has stayed with her. Attitudes to unmarried mothers have changed and the emphasis is on the wellbeing of the unborn child. It is a quick trip to the social, register for benefits and temporary accommodation in a homeless unit. I don't think so.

Helensburgh would have no Christian community for a start. No church buildings, Woman's Guild, Choir etc. Probably no welfare state and no Christian based laws. No Beacon Trust either. For without Park Church as its birthplace there would have been no Beacon Trust. If Mary and Joseph needed furniture for their Helensburgh home, they would have to try some of the other charities in the town and yes their needs would be taken care of on a commercial basis.

I believe God knew what he was doing 2000 years ago when he decided that then was the time for his son Jesus to enter the world. He knew how man would evolve, he had seen man's corruption from the start and the expanding gulf between man and himself. Through Jesus' sacrifice he hoped to close that gap. Have we failed to take this opportunity? I say we have, when we become afraid to stand up for our Christian beliefs in case we upset someone else. When Christmas has become a commercial money spinning venture and the true meaning is eventually dragged in from the background.

The Beacon Trust is still here, just. The generosity of the Churches and our friends are keeping us alive. We give you all our heartfelt thanks. The volunteers are not as young as they used to be, age takes its toll. Our commercial rent is crippling but the passion to serve is still there. Many a person comes to the shop seeking help. We give as much as we can and try to supply their needs. That is what we are there for, to show Gods love in a community by giving. If we lost sight of that goal, the true mission of The Beacon Trust would fade into the background but at least the commercial sector will jolt our memory to celebrate Christmas each year.

Trevor McGrath MBE Chair Beacon Trust

A Note from the Session Clerk

Session have had 2 business meetings; 22 September and 20 November and a specially called meeting on Sunday 9 October. There are currently 73 'active' elders making up the Kirk Session.

It was good to see a small number of the congregation took the opportunity to come along and observe the meeting on 22 September.

At the recent Core Team meeting it was agreed and approved by session that meeting dates for both session and board would be set to increase the flow of information between the two, also allowing for regular updating to the congregation through the magazine.

Do you know that session have 3 working teams? They are; Christian Action, Congregational Life and Worship & Discipleship. The session agreed that these session teams will have annual budgets to assist them in their work, vision and mission. The only team who previously had a budget was Christian Action, who allocate and distribute gifts to various projects.

It is November already and it may seem daft to be talking about summer but the Congregational Life Team have been asked to review the summer weekly coffee mornings, the session teams will offer some feedback, however just as importantly they would love to hear feedback from congregation members. Please submit any feedback to the office marked "FAO Congregational Life Team" no later than 30 December. The Team have recently appointed a new team leader, Tony Kent who will be supported by two deputies, Elisabeth Sammon and Karen Mullen.

Recently the session noted that Mary Burn had stepped down as the congregation's Safe Guarding Co-ordinator and would like to thank her for all her hard work. This role will now be under the care of Elaine Craddock and Neil Turnbull.

In September, the session learned that John Stephen had stepped down from the role of Church Officer. Currently, while the board explore staffing possibilities, the role is being covered once again by volunteers who are on "duty" from Saturday morning – Sunday evening. It would surprise many of you how much work goes on behind the scenes and to the volunteers we say thank you.

Session agreed that the now as building development was coming to an end, the discussion of the pews for the north and south transept would be

deferred to sometime in the New Year. As with all matters, the elders when voting are ever mindful to consider the views of congregation members along with their own. With this in view, if you have any wish to comment please do so in **writing** to your district elder, an elder or the Session Clerk.

The session learned that there will be a visit by the Moderator of the General Assembly, Church of Scotland to the Presbytery of Dumbarton and there will be a concluding service to the trip held in Helensburgh Parish Church on Sunday 2 April 2017, we look forward to hosting this event giving us the opportunity to show all the recent building and refurbishment developments.

The session was delighted to hear that our minister, David, was attending a monthly ecumenical breakfast meeting of local ministers and that there will be an ecumenical advent service on **Sunday 27 November** at 3pm in St Joseph's. It is hoped there will be a good representation from HPC.

May I take this opportunity to wish all the Congregation every blessing for the forthcoming festive period from the Kirk Session.

Every Blessing,

Karen Lyll
Session Clerk

The Knitting Group



The last meeting of the Knitting Group is **Thursday 1st December** and we restart **Thursday 2nd February** at **1:30pm** in Group Room 2. The group have been very busy and I would like to thank the ladies for all their hard work.

I would also like to thank some ladies from the congregation who haven't come to our meetings but have very kindly donated knitting to us which is very much appreciated.

Most of the yarn we use has been donated but we now find ourselves in the situation of running out of full balls of yarn. We really would be grateful for donations of **new double knitting yarn with labels still on**. To knit toddler size jumpers it takes 200gms of yarn. If anybody would like to donate some to us it would really be appreciated and can be left at the church office. We do not need odds and ends - we have plenty!

Thank you.

Church Flowers

I would like to thank all those who have donated flowers for Sunday services during the last year. Thanks are also due to the ladies who so willingly arrange them. After the service on Sunday the flowers are given to those who have been bereaved, ill or housebound and this is done by another group of ladies to whom thanks are due.

The Flower Calendar for 2017 will be in the entrance to the church from 1st December for anyone who wishes to donate the flowers on a specific Sunday.

There are three ways to donate the flowers:-

1. Donate and arrange the flowers yourself, in which case you only need to put your name and 'self' in the space for arranger.
2. Donate the flowers and make your own arrangements to have them done, in which case put the name of the arranger.
3. Donate the flowers and allow me to make arrangements for someone to do them. In which case a cross in the space for the arranger will let me know and I can contact you.

In every case it is important that you leave a contact telephone number because church events may mean alterations have to be made sometimes at short notice and nowadays more and more people are ex-directory.

If you do not feel able to donate the flowers but would like to make a donation to the flower fund this is always very welcome and helps to cover blank Sundays.

If you have any queries about anything to do with the flowers please do not hesitate to contact me.

Dorothy Reid Flower Convenor

Tel: 673546

Flower Distribution Team

It is so nice to receive flowers but even nicer to see a persons face light up when you deliver flowers to them!

The Flower Distribution Team consist of seven teams of three volunteers who deliver the flowers following the 11:00am service. We still need at least two people to volunteer to be part of the team but more would be welcome. If you would like to be part of this ministry please contact Liz Glover 671068 or leave your name and contact details at the church office. Thank you.

Were the coffee mornings worth the effort?

What with all the changes, building and congregation amalgamations over the last couple of years we have kind of lost touch with Saturday morning coffee mornings. As most groups finish during the summer months it is important to run our coffee mornings then.

It was David (DTY) who pressed the start button in the spring, challenging the Congregational Life Team to get things going and inspire some of the different Church organisations to take the reins of their own coffee mornings during the summer months. Some may say that trying to inspire a church group leader to run a coffee morning in the summer, has been aligned to trying to get your teenage son out of bed on a weekend morning. Not so! 13 leaders stepped up and our first batch of 13 Summer Coffee Mornings in the new halls were set in place.

There are three groups of folk involved in our Summer Coffee Mornings; those that prepare and organise, those that come and the recipients of the funds that are raised. There are also three groups of folk involved in our Summer Coffee Mornings that truly benefit; those that prepare and organise, those that come and the recipients of the funds that are raised! Funny that!

On the Sunday following each coffee morning, the minister in the pulpit reports on the outcome of the event on the previous day. "I am pleased to report that yesterday's coffee morning was a great affair and £XXX was raised....." almost as if the money raising aspect is what it is all about. It is not! True a total of £2500 was raised and that is fabulous, **But the fun of working in a team to make it happen or coming to the coffee morning for a cuppa, biscuit and blether is pure community that is impossible to value.**

A huge BIG thank you to you all for organising and hosting and baking and serving at the Summer Coffee Mornings. Those that attended really enjoyed the fellowship they had with you. The Congregational Life Team are delighted that they went so well, some of you hadn't hosted before and were maybe a little hesitant, I know most weeks someone with experience tried to be there to assist and we thank those who turned up regularly to help, Also our wonderful Kitchen Managers Eileen Drummond and Liz Smith who were brilliant at keeping us within the guidelines and replenishing the vitals. Again a big THANK YOU to everyone.

So was the coffee morning worth the effort? SURE WAS and here's to next year, let's try and bring a friend who has never been before and maybe new to the church.....

Congregational Life Team

Dumbarton London Corner Nursery School

Since I returned to Helensburgh many of you have been asking about the little school in The Gambia in which I have been involved for a number of years.

It's fair to say the school is enjoying mixed fortunes. From an educational point of view it continues to thrive and we now have a waiting list for places. Academic standards are high and the school is held up as a beacon of excellence within the Gambian educational system.



However success has come at a cost. An unpredictable world economy, together with rising prices in The Gambia due to inflation, and a weak pound, the school has never been in greater danger. Our monthly income through standing orders no longer comes close to covering the cost of staff wages, food and medical treatment for the children in what is one of Africa's smallest and poorest nations. At present, with costs running at over £1500 a month, we will be struggling to complete the existing educational year.

A recent coffee morning in Dumbarton raised more than £700 which is a fantastic sum – but it's a drop in the ocean. We are also aware of the demands on people's finances in this uncertain climate, so the future is very uncertain. But fantastic news has come from our Young Church who this year are giving the proceeds of their charity Christmas card sales to the school. Our committee is delighted and we look forward to seeing the artistic efforts of the young folk whose generosity will give school funds a much needed boost.



May I take this opportunity to thank those of you who continue to support the school financially. Churches – and individuals – in Helensburgh have always been generous contributors to the school for which we are extremely grateful. Thanks also to those of you who still faithfully pop pennies in your GamJars!

If anyone wishes to find out more about the school and ways in which you can help support it for as little as £10 a month then please get in touch.

Abaraka

Tina

Samaritans

It's odd how a word can transport you back in time, almost into another world, into a time when one decision could affect one's whole life. The word Samaritans took me into that area. Sixty years ago the Samaritans took me into that area. Sixty years ago the Samaritans existed as a small, but important, base in the City of London, led by a powerful and thoughtful priest. Today the Samaritans are probably the biggest voluntary organisation in the supporting charity world.

My wife and I often listened on a Sunday evening to Radio Luxemburg and we heard Chad Varah tell of his work in dealing with the problem of suicide. We were both impressed and felt that we might have something to offer and I wrote offering any help. An immediate reply from Chad took me to provide help to a family in Edinburgh and an invitation to attend a meeting in Edinburgh looking into the possibility of setting up a branch in Edinburgh. I was a rugby enthusiast and I had a film of a Lions tour to South Africa to see that same night!

I was lucky, or was I? That the film was brief and I found myself in the Samaritan meeting and welcomed as an "expert"! That night changed my life and taught me never to trust ministers. Four local ministers had agreed to set up a branch in Edinburgh, but being very busy themselves, they needed a layman to act as secretary, and I would be ideal.

I am not going into any detail of that further process but it saw the establishment of the first branch of the Samaritans outside that bomb blasted church of St. Stephens in London, in fact an initial four in Scotland. It saw the creation of a new system of organisation, basically lay and offering huge changes over the years with the offer of one national telephone line, supported by help on line or by letter.

Samaritans are a very different body to many others. Its leaders are expected to take their share of work in the office. While the initial call may be by phone there is the 24/7 day office available in most areas, manned – all on a voluntary basis.

I think the secret of the Samaritans success lies in the emphasis on what we called "befriending", no pushing, no forcing, giving people the chance to talk it through, and perhaps seeing some way out of their difficulties, yet always there to offer support, and never leaving them with that awful feeling of being a failure.

So sixty years on it is so good to see that one word, and to look back with a feeling of having some measure of success, yet remembering oddly that one feature of the office, and the body was the comradeship to volunteers, and the abiding sense of humour.

David Arthur

Young Church



The Young Church has undergone quite a lot of change in the last few months.

We have reduced from four groups to two, we now have All Stars P1-P6 and Columbans P7-S3. We are using a DVD for our music session which means we are learning new songs with lots of actions.

We use Scripture Union material for our lessons and the groups have really enjoyed learning about Old and New Testament characters such as Jonah and Zaccheus, through drama, games and discussion.

Christmas Cards

We are looking forward to Christmas and have been busy designing Christmas cards to raise money for the **Dumbarton/London Corner Community Nursery School** The school provides free nursery education to 90 children, a daily feeding programme for every child, and a clinic where the children are examined free of charge and administered medicines where necessary. They also run adult literacy classes each afternoon and at weekends.

We hope the Congregation of Helensburgh Parish Church will support us by buying our cards.

James Field - Bronze Award Duke of Edinburgh

James has chosen to spend 6 months volunteering for one hour a week at Helensburgh Parish Church. He hopes to be involved in all aspects of the work of the Church including door welcoming, Messy Church, flower distribution and packing the Wellbeing Packs. If you have a role at Church you would like to mentor James in, or an event you think he could assist at, contact Elizabeth Lambert 679565 and we will see if it can be done. Please give James your support and encouragement as he undertakes different roles.

A diary note 30th October 2016 - Don't blame the BMW, blame the driver!

Flossie and I are transiting in Istanbul on the way to Delhi. We chose to stay over for a couple of nights because the intrigue of the city "where east meets west", the city once called Byzantine (the eastern capital of the then Eastern Roman Empire), Constantinople and now called Istanbul was just too much for us to miss. An easy going but well packed day of site seeing was capped with a visit to the Hagia Sophia Museum. Hagia Sophia is a phenomenal architectural beauty and a monument both for Byzantine and for Ottoman Empires. Once an Orthodox cathedral, then a Roman Catholic cathedral, it was later turned into a mosque, and now, as a museum in the Turkish Republic, it proudly boasts a staggering history of withstanding shocking political and religious conflict.

We used a guide, Khalid, he was Kurdish, which, in itself, carries a certain stigma in the Turkish political scene today. He was well versed in the history of Turkey and proud to be a Turkish national of Kurdish origin and felt quite safe in the hum drum of Istanbul life.

Khalid provided a snap shot of events covering the last 2000 years and some of the conflicts (and there were many of them) that have taken place. Religion is at the heart of the conflict, explained Khalid, "I guess it all started with Abraham and his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael" he said. "Islamic traditions consider Ishmael to be the ancestor of Arab people and the forefather of Mohamed the prophet of Islam".

Christianity was the predominant religion in the Byzantine Empire and, at one time, the church excommunicated the pope as he refused to leave the shores of Rome to officiate over the coronation of the new Emperor for the Eastern Roman Empire. Then, much later, in 1453 the cathedral was converted into a Mosque.

Can you imagine one day going to church and the next to a mosque! How confusing, you can imagine what internal conflict people must have felt.

"How do you rationalise this?" we asked.

Khalid rubbed his chin and grinned saying "We have an expression here in Turkey, 'Don't blame the BMW, blame the driver' it is always the people in charge and we are left to get on with it and, it is the same today as it was then!"

"A bit like home" I whispered to Flossie.

All's well that ends well though, in 1932 it was converted into a museum of breath taking proportions. Indeed, since its transformation renovation has slowly progressed with the painstaking removal of the plaster coatings that were applied to the walls, doors and domed ceilings back in 1453 to hide the

Christian imagery of Jesus Christ, Mary Magdalene, angels, crucifixes and such like. So today one can see a mix of extraordinary totems of the different Muslim and Christian religions, led on high by a glistening mosaic of Mary the mother of Jesus with Jesus on her lap shouldered each side by Islamic emblems heralding Mohamed on the left and Allah on the right engraved on huge 30' diameter wooden dishes. Christianity and Islam, side by side, almost as if it is the same God.

Tony Kent



A diary note 10th November 2016 ... and so on to Chilianaula in the Himalayas

Flossie and I left Istanbul and headed for Delhi in India. We arrived at 05.15, teamed up with a Ukrainian couple and climbed aboard a pre-ordered car with driver and headed north for the Hills. We were all booked into an Ayurvedic Clinic for a 9 day programme of treatment.

At 16.00 we arrived, rather travel weary but safe and sound, to find the Ayurvedic Clinic was part of an Ayurvedic hospital complex and attached to an Ashram and Hindu temple all embraced in a strong spiritual atmosphere. After a consultation with the Doctor in charge, we started our daily routine of two treatments (mostly massage of different varieties), supported by a mix of herbal potions.

On day three, we ventured into the temple to experience what looked like a Hindu version of morning worship. It starts with *everyone* present making an extraordinary cacophony of bells, trumpets, drums and Indian maracas, which I thought was to wake everyone up! What followed then was a mix of chants (prayers and Hymns?) mixed in with some religious rituals involving a small plate of fire, water sprinkling and what seemed like a local version of holy communion using milk and berries. Both Flossie and I were embraced into their worship for which we felt both honoured and intrigued.

By reading a bit and talking to fellow Ayurvedic participants, we found out that the worship was based on the doctrines of Haidakhan Babaji. It transpired that in 1970 Haidakhan Babaji was discovered in a cave and in 1984 he died and his spirit left his body. Interestingly, one of the Ayurvedic group from America met him back in 1981 and was totally struck by the power and simplicity of his spiritual presence, resulting in her starting a Babaji Ashram in Nebraska. Babaji said that he came to change the hearts of humanity, away from materialism and selfishness, and while he is attached to Hinduism, Babaji does not carry a religious hook of any kind!

Chilianaula is a Hindu religion area and while Hinduism provides the platform for Babaji, he carries no religion himself. He says, "do not attach to any religion, attach only to God"

In not representing a religion, Babaji encourages the seeking of a religion that suits **you** best, and, **all are** welcome into the temple and **all are** fully included, no matter what.

There are two basic philosophies on which the Haidakhan Babaji doctrine is based:-

Get people to live in TRUTH, SIMPLICITY, LOVE and SERVICE

The mantra he gave OM NAMAH SHIVAYA – Lord thy will be done (a mantra is a chant or can be just a simple quiet prayer of repetition, maybe using beads to hold the discipline)

These two totems are the platform for everything that Babaji stands for. When you attend the temple for the simple morning or evening service or AARATI conducted by a Pujari (Priest) – you are embroiled in 5 elements as a form of worship (AIR EARTH FIRE WATER and ETHER)

The processes that herald each of these elements, use a nominated physical image or Deity (which becomes a representation of God for the day). They are:

AIR – The Pujari waves a red cloth around in the form of an infinity symbol offering the air to the Deity

EARTH – a food is offered like nuts or berries which are offered and blessed in front of the Deity

FIRE – this is a ghee lamp which is offered to the Deity and then to all those worshiping in the temple representing purification

WATER – is a cup of water sprinkled round

ETHER – the fragrance of flowers and incense

So on our penultimate day in the Ayurvedic centre, we joined again the simple morning service at 07.00 and felt most comfortable in a spiritual atmosphere, which both respected and embraced our Christian beliefs.

Tony Kent



A fund which helps the education of Christian children in Palestine received a welcome boost recently thanks to Helensburgh United Guilds.

Members, including representatives from our congregation, attended a service at which Tina and a colleague Norma Moore spoke about the Presbytery of Dumbarton Holy Land Bursary Scheme.

The initiative was set up by Tina and Norma, minister at Jamestown Parish Church, in 2008 with the support of the Presbytery. Congregations within Presbytery contribute annually to the scheme which currently pays for the education of four students in the West Bank. Tina and Norma explained how important the scheme is to families living under Occupation, not least because it is helping to ensure a Christian presence in the land.

An offering during the service, hosted by Cardross Parish Church, raised £225 for the fund.

Tina said: "Norma and I are very grateful to the Guilds for giving us the opportunity to talk about the bursary scheme which is doing vitally important work in Palestine. We were delighted with the very generous contribution and wish to thank everyone for their kindness."

Tina and Norma visited the four current students in March this year while in the Holy Land as part of a Church of Scotland World Mission Council delegation. They are Jiries Qawas, Aleen Qashou and sisters Laayar and Taleen Moussa Koury who are all pupils at the Episcopal Evangelical School in Ramallah and who are photographed here with Tina, Norma and the school principal, Iyad Rafidi.

Any individual or group wishing to find out more about the scheme or to arrange a presentation should contact Tina.



All Age Christmas Word Search

All the words listed below are in the puzzle - left, right, up, down or diagonally. Find each word and circle from first letter to the last letter to highlight it. After you have found all the words there will be letters left over and in the correct order will form the **mystery answer**.

S	S	T	N	A	E	G	A	P	C	I	S	U	M	Y
T	M	S	E	A	S	O	N	R	E	Y	A	R	P	L
O	A	U	R	Y	L	O	H	C	N	M	N	O	E	L
C	R	S	D	E	Y	D	E	R	S	W	O	N	S	O
K	Y	E	L	L	D	W	E	E	U	B	I	R	T	H
I	T	J	I	A	N	I	H	C	S	T	A	R	H	P
N	U	M	H	D	A	L	Y	H	E	L	U	Y	G	E
G	A	D	C	V	L	L	A	E	L	M	O	D	I	S
F	E	O	R	E	R	G	D	V	C	J	B	R	L	O
L	B	R	U	N	A	T	I	V	I	T	Y	E	A	J
T	M	E	H	T	G	B	L	V	C	T	G	H	R	C
R	A	H	C	H	E	V	O	L	I	N	S	P	E	A
E	G	T	S	A	E	F	H	M	A	N	G	E	R	R
E	I	Y	R	R	E	M	S	L	E	I	G	H	F	D
S	A	T	N	A	S	P	T	C	H	R	I	S	T	S

Advent, Angels, Beauty, Birth, Cards, Carols, Census, Children, Christ, Church, Creche, December, Family, Feast, Festival, Garland, Giving, Goodwill, Herod, Holiday, Holly, Holy, Icicles, Jesus, Joseph, Joy, Lights, Love, Magi, Manger, Mary, Merry, Music, Nativity, Noel, Pageants, Peace, Prayer, Santa, Season, Shepherd, Sleigh, Snow, Star, Stocking, Trees, Yule



Helensburgh Parish Church Choir News

Please come and join the augmented church choir and "Come and Sing" on **Sunday 11th December at 7 pm**. Derek has arranged a programme of carols for us all to sing, and festive music for us to enjoy. Walter Blair is at the organ and the Saltire Brass will entertain us again. Admission is free, but we hope you will contribute towards a retiral collection in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

On **Saturday 18th December** the choir are carol singing in Waitrose from 12 noon-1pm. We are raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support, so, please plan your shopping and come along to support us!

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Seeking Information

I have been asked to write about the lives of the people commemorated in the stained-glass windows in the church, so that people today have an idea as to who they were, when and where they lived and what they did. I have already done quite a lot of research on this, but I am appealing for more.

Can anyone give me further information about the people? Are there any relatives of these people still in the congregation? In particular, what role or roles did they play in the Church?

We have plenty of information about the ministers commemorated, and about John Logie Baird and Bonar Law, but what about the other people? For example, does anyone remember William B Jeffrey? A window was given in memory of him in 1960.

I have managed to glean quite a bit of information from the Scotland's People website, the old Helensburgh Directories in the Library, and back numbers of the Helensburgh and Gareloch Times in the Helensburgh Advertiser. But nothing beats a bit of personal recollection, so please let me know if you can help. Either phone me on 01436 675484 or send me an email to snoble84@gmail.com<<mailto:snoble84@gmail.com>>

Thank you!

Stewart Noble

Pastoral Register

Baptisms

Let the little children come to me



25th September Macie Adeline Malcolm
Hallie Jessica Malcolm

Marriages

There was a marriage and Jesus was there



24th September Louise Gould to Ross Dallas

New Members

Mr Robert Watson
Mrs Helen Watson
Mr James Reed
Mrs Dorothy Rankin
Mrs Irene MacLeod
Mr Graham Hardy



Disjunctions

Go now in peace, may the love of God surround you everywhere you may go

Mrs Doreen Allan
Mr Paul Allan
Mr Antonio Lopez Jordan
Mrs Catriona Lopez
Mr Nigel Mansfield
Mr James Milne
Mrs Christine Milne

Deaths

I go to prepare a place for you



11th August May Rae, Baird Avenue, Helensburgh
20th September Christine Thorburn, Sinclair Street, Helensburgh
20th September David Cameron, Townhead Road, Helensburgh
15th October Catherine Boyde, Jeanie Deans Drive, Helensburgh
8th November Robert Ernest Petrie, Loch Drive, Helensburgh
11th November James Gorie, Argyle Care Centre, Helensburgh
12th November Mary Murray, Waverley Court, Helensburgh

We extend our deepest sympathy to those who know the pain of loss

Due to the number of deaths within the community of Helensburgh, and to ensure that no family is ever left out, the Ministry Team have decided not to announce individual deaths during worship. Funeral details - if required - will continue to be announced. All other information can be obtained either from your Elder or from the Church Office.

Grass Cutting

Throughout the year the faithful team of grass cutters keep the church grass neat and tidy. Warm thanks are due to David Forrest, Euan Forrest, David Reid, Hugh McColl, Robin Irvine, Kenneth Speirs and Keith McIntosh. There is always room for additional volunteers and grass cutting will resume in April 2017.

Mike Louden

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To be able to produce a magazine it is essential to have items to put in it therefore the editor would be delighted to receive newsworthy items. It would really be appreciated if some of the Young Church members could send in items too! Thank you to those who contributed to the contents of this magazine.

Items for the next issue of Connections to be in the hands of the Editor by **14th February**. Items can be sent to the dedicated magazine address **magazine@helensburghcos.org** or be handed in to the church office addressed to the Editor. **Please do not send items to the office e-mail address but use the dedicated Connections address.** Thank you.

Please note that the church office will be closed from 1pm on Friday 23rd December and will re-open 9.30am Wednesday 4th January 2017



**Merry Christmas
and a
Blessed New Year
to All**



THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Helensburgh Parish Church

Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh

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Church Office, Colquhoun Street,

HELENSBURGH G84 8UP

Open: Monday—Wednesday 9:30am –12:30pm

Thursday 9:30am-12:30pm and 5:30pm-7:30pm Friday 10:00am-12:30pm

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