



The Power of a Smile

Dear Friends,

Occasionally, like most people, I travel by bus or by train or airplane to go further afield. People get off, people get on. In most cases however and rather sadly, no one smiles. No one looks directly at anyone else. Mostly they stare, captivated in their own private thoughts. Some numb themselves with earphones that tune them into a different world or simply they look at their smartphones to check their social media news or other means of distraction. You understand the deflected eyes. You know the fear, the apprehension. So many people, so close together, and yet scared to death of smiling.



I watch many people on board, some coming or going to work, others with shopping bags. Still others carrying books as they go to, or return from college or school. But no smiles.

Do you ever wonder the significance of a smile? A smile is a sign of humanity. A sign that we are willing to communicate. That our sadness, no matter how deep, will not overcome us. But for many on that bus, train or airplane journey, there is no joy. Their lives, I suppose, are full of pain and hopelessness.

Trapped.

Trapped in dead-end jobs they do not like.

Trapped in a cycle of unemployment and welfare.

Trapped in marriages.

Trapped in singleness.

Trapped in divorce.

Trapped in widow-hood

Trapped in ill health.

Trapped in life.

Trapped.

And without a smile.

But of course, a smile, too, is a sign of hope. Of hope in another person. Of trust. If I smile at you, if I let my personality bridge the distance between us in a packed city bus, perhaps you'll smile back. Perhaps you'll connect with me. And so, I smile in hope, and am met with eyes turned away, of body language that protects itself from those closest by, with a posture designed to avoid contact, personal contact, on a crowded bus.

The lack of a smile is loneliness personified, I guess. It is not letting oneself relate. It is being surrounded, but lonely — desperately lonely — yet afraid to smile, for that would break the loneliness and threaten the solitude. So, they do not smile.

They do not smile, I suppose, mainly out of fear. Fear of me, especially if I am wearing my clerical collar. Fear of the person next to them. They've heard stories of people who are not what they seem. And so, they do not smile. **Especially** on a bus full of people all headed the same direction. They do not smile. They are scared of smiling.

As I reflect on this, I wonder how Jesus greeted people? Was it with a sombre religiosity? With reservation? With a deliberate distance from a frail and stained humanity? No. On the contrary, Jesus felt the daily pushing and the jostling of the crowds. He touched the unclean. He stopped and inquired, **"Who touched me?"**

I don't think Jesus was afraid to meet people's eyes with his own. I think he smiled into their soul—a smile of hope that would ignite hope within them. A smile of friendship and acceptance to provoke and then gently unwind that tightly coiled loneliness. A smile of fearlessness willing to handle our pent-up hostilities and agendas and not-so-pure motives.

Jesus, is without doubt, God's smile towards his world, towards his very lonely and divided and fearful world. All heading the same direction on the same crowded bus.

This Man, by the name of Jesus, began to smile and refused to stop until he had the attention of all who dared lift their eyes to his. And then, one by one, the crowd of people began to smile, too, for his was a contagious smile, an open smile. And they began to smile with him in a new and friendly freedom.

My friends, God's smile in Jesus produces faith in us. God's smile through our faces communicates that faith, as well. And that fragile faith, that hope-filled faith, once rooted in a human heart, produces a joy that cannot suppress an ever-widening smile of its own.

Therefore, let me encourage you, like Jesus, to smile at others, to break down the barriers of hostility, the walls of suspicion and the many unwarranted fears. Let the love of God through Jesus, release the joy and the smile within your heart. Don't forget to shared it with others!

With every good wish and much blessing,

Benjamin (Minister)

Church Diary

Dates:



July 23rd	- Stewardship Service and Annual Stated Meeting, 11am
Aug. 6th	- Songs of Praise, Wellmeadow, 3pm
Aug. 25th	- Boys Brigade Taster Session, 6.30pm
Sept. 16-17th	Doors Open Days
Sept. 17th	- Guild Dedication Service, 11am
Oct. 11th-13th	- Children's Holiday Club
Nov. 4th	- Guild Coffee Morning
Nov. 5th	- Communion Service, 11am

Did you know?

From the church website you can access our:

- ⇒ weekly pastoral letter
- ⇒ monthly prayer diary
- ⇒ daily reflections
- ⇒ audio and video recordings of morning worship
- ⇒ daily Bible verse
and much more including:
- ⇒ a link to our Facebook page
- ⇒ worship resources
- ⇒ links to other Christian materials.

Webpage:

<https://www.blairgowrieparishchurch.org.uk>



find us on
Facebook

Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Mark 13:28

Fun In the Holidays

What happens in school holidays? Children are free, they love having fun, being able to play with friends and stay up late. Then boredom sets in, moans begin with pleas to go somewhere—usually expensive!

Parents look forward to having their children at home and doing things with them —playing, baking, gardening, walks, etc. But after a few days, tiredness sets in, the longing to have a cup of coffee in peace is high and the cost of going anywhere has to be counted.

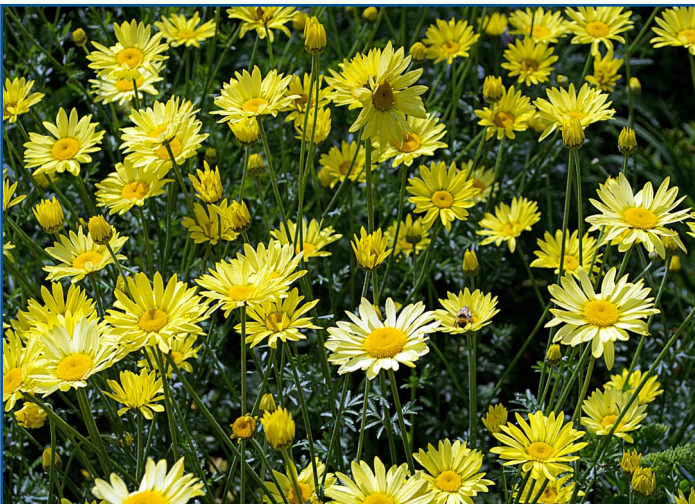
In the recent Easter holidays a number of families found an answer to all these problems: the children attended a Church Holiday Club for two hours each day for three days in the Parish Church in Blairgowrie. There the children had fun playing games, made new friends, enjoyed a snack, took part in craft activities, sang songs and heard and took part in stories from the Bible. Parents had time to go for coffee, meet friends or just rest in the peace at home. **AND** the cost **was nothing** to be at the Holiday Club!

Some parents have already asked “When is the next one?”

Answer to the above question: it is proposed that there will be a Holiday Club on Wednesday 11th Oct., Thursday 12th Oct. and Friday 13th Oct. from 2pm to 4pm in Blairgowrie Parish Church Hall. There will again be games, crafts, snack, stories, singing—and free time for parents! Again, there will be **no cost**.

More information and how to register will be publicised at the end of August. You can also contact me by e-mail at esther.dingwall@gmail.com if you need more information now.

Esther Dingwall



Hall Lets

The big news is that the main hall will be redecorated in July, finally covering the replaced plasterwork to provide us with a clean and attractive space for our users. Also the hall floor, which has been showing some signs of wear and some worrying damage in places through this year, is being repaired at the same time.



We have welcomed some new users as well as our regulars to the premises during this session. The halls continue to be well-used to the point that the large hall is very rarely free on any week day or evening during the week. It is only very occasionally used through the day at the weekend (apart from Sunday mornings), and it is never used during the evenings at weekends.

The target now is to increase use of the halls during the weekends and to increase the use of the Meeting and Session Rooms throughout the week. The Meeting Room has some regular users but the Session Room is not used at all, possibly due to the limited access to the kitchen and its lack of accessibility. Plans to address the kitchen aspect of this are in hand and there will be more information in due course.

Hall and room rental is an important part of our regular church income and using this important asset well can support other church activities, like mission or maintenance. We continue to work towards encouraging more users into our buildings.

Please share information about the halls with any contacts you have who may be interested and, for further information, please contact me by email at colleenajoslin@gmail.com or by phone on 01250 873701.

Colleen Joslin

Holiday House and/or Dog Care

For a contribution to the audio-visual fund Marjorie would be pleased to look after your home and/or your dog while you are away.

Please contact Marjorie on 01250 874114

Treasure Chest Appeal for the Audio-Visual Fund



In September last year we began a treasure chest appeal to raise funds towards our planned, prayed for and much needed replacement audio-visual system. The response has been incredible and we thank you all so much for your amazing generosity.

We are delighted that the Treasure Chest appeal has raised **£1197.25** to date. This outstanding result has raised our current total, and our spirits, enormously. The total so far stands at £11,550 towards our target of £35,000.

Since May we have been gifted more items for this appeal so it has been decided to continue it for a further year.

Do you have gold or silver broken chains, odd earrings or anything else that could top up our chest? If so, and if you are willing to donate, then please pop it in an envelope and put it in the plate on any Sunday, or pass it to your Elder, or contact **David** (david@thehowats.net) or **Colleen** (colleenajoslin@gmail.com) to arrange collection.

Bible Study



The Bible Study Group has been studying the Psalms in its recent meetings. We meet most Wednesdays in the side chapel at 7.30 pm (apart from when Kirk Session and Board meets), and there is also the option of participating by Zoom. We have now finished our study for the summer but we will be running an 'Exploring Christianity' programme in autumn. Dates to be confirmed.

'Exploring Christianity' is a relaxed and informal way to read and study the bible and the course provides the space and time to think about the big questions of life from a Christian perspective. Over seven sessions we will study Mark's Gospel to find out more about the life of Jesus Christ, and to find out what He means for our life.

These sessions are for life-long Christians, new Christians and seekers alike.

If you would like to know more or would like to join us for this course then please contact **David Howat** on david@thehowats.net for further details and Zoom information.



In the grey summer garden I shall find you, With day-break and the morning hills behind you. There will be rain-wet roses; a stir of wings; And down the wood a thrush that wakes and sings.

From Idyll by Siegfried Sassoon (1986 —1967)

The Pastoral Care Group

Blairgowrie Parish Church has always had a Pastoral Care Group but Covid restrictions meant it was less active than previously so it is now building up again.

Pastoral Visitors deliver pastoral support to those in the congregation who are isolated, ill or in need of help. They are doing this on behalf of the Kirk Session and under the direction of the Minister. They are very helpful when the Minister and/or District Visitor may not be able to serve those in need due to time or other constraints.

Currently there are 6 visitors (Jane Blackburn, Ruth Brand, Dorothea Cooke, Martha Easton, Kenneth McKay and Elinor Smith) who support 28 people.

If you think this is an area where you could contribute, please speak to Benjamin, our Minister, or one of the visitors. We would be delighted to hear from you. In addition, if you know of someone whom you think would benefit from some additional support, please speak to one of us.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ" Galatians 6:2

LEX DUNLOP



Lex Dunlop must rank as one of the most loyal, conscientious and committed members in the history of our church. He was our organist for well in excess of forty years, a task he performed with complete dedication and considerable enjoyment. During his tenure the choir was the envy of many in the surrounding area. Choir members knew by Lex's gentle, persuasive, but in some ways quite insistent management technique that attendance at choir practice and at Sunday worship was a priority. The tongue-in-cheek story goes that any requests for absence would require a 'note from mum'! The old habits of the High School Rector prevailed!

When vacancies for other tasks in church became difficult to fill, Lex, already a hard-working member of the Kirk Session, willingly stepped in to help and he became our unofficial (and unpaid) church officer. He was invariably first to open the premises and after funerals or weddings Lex could always be found tidying and locking up the church. In addition he took on the position of ensuring that the central heating boilers were always operating, especially in winter. This often required his attendance well out of 'office' hours when weather forecasts showed significant drops in temperature.

As well as being very gifted musically, Lex's theology was a strong point and he was always aware of the appropriate hymns and anthems to suit the Christian Calendar, something that ministers taking services became quickly aware of.

The list of contributions to the work and benefit of this Church by Lex Dunlop is quite extraordinary. We are all so sad to lose him. He truly served his Lord and we give thanks for the privilege of having had this talented gentleman in our midst. The huge attendance in our Church at the recent Service of Thanksgiving for his life was testament to the affection and regard in which he was held, not only by Church members and friends, but also the local community.

Our loss can be nothing to that being felt by Elspeth and the family and our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time and for the times ahead.

Alisdair Drummond

MYRA WEBSTER

We are all saddened at the loss of Myra Webster. She had been in poor health for some years and although well looked after in Northlands Care Home, nonetheless her passing caused sorrow to those who knew and remembered her well.

An extremely caring and loving person, Myra could best be described as one of the pillars of our Church and a dedicated servant to her Lord. Her commitment to her duties and responsibility as a member of the Kirk Session was without doubt 100%. She ensured visits to members in her district were carried out more than regularly and those visited took great comfort from her attention. Although not at all vocal during meetings, Myra had a particular talent for ensuring her opinions on the interests and well-being of the Church were communicated tactfully but very clearly.

Myra Webster was one of those people who would go quietly about her business without fuss, volunteering for whatever was required and usually one of the first to put her name forward, whether for door duty, for the many other activities of the Church or even teaching chess to the Boys' Brigade. If Myra said she would do something we knew she would be there and it would be done. A true Christian indeed.

Alisdair Drummond

The Guild: Wee Seeds and Big Trees.



Since the beginning of the year, our Guild has met fortnightly, alternating between afternoon and evening meetings. Our first meeting of 2023 was led by the Rev. Brian Dingwall who shared some of his own 'Walk with the Lord', following our theme of 'Wee Seeds and Big Trees'

We then heard from David F. Wilson, a Blairgowrie sculptor who used a PowerPoint presentation to show us many of his amazing creations. Janet Reay of Perth and Kinross Council followed and she helped us to learn more about 'Scams and Frauds' in an informative session that left members and friends with much more understanding of risks. Starchild – one of the Guild's current projects - shared that every child deserves to be loved, cared for, clothed, fed and educated, and members also enjoyed an afternoon with Elaine Waugh from Cross Reach. Elaine is involved with Perth Prison Visitors Support and Advice centre. Kerry then spoke to us about the charity BEAT, which supports those with an eating disorder and is another charity which our Guild currently supports. Finally we watched a film about the work of the charity, 'Home for Good', who have a bold vision to find a home for every child in the UK who needs one, through fostering, adoption or provision of supported lodgings.

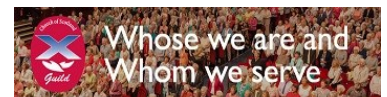
We closed with our AGM where we also celebrated the coronation of King Charles with cake and short-bread. This was followed by a super outing to Stirling for afternoon tea where we were joined by our former member, Marion Jarvie.



This

year our fundraising has allowed us to make donations to CHAS, the Turkey/ Syria Earthquake appeal, the church's Mission and Ministry (now Giving to Grow) and its AV fund, the Guild projects, the Boys Brigade and Alzheimer Scotland, to provide resources for the new local Dementia Support Group.

This is only possible because of the tremendous support the Guild has received from our members, Church family and friends this year, and we thank everyone for this. We invite members and friends to join us to share in our meetings, enjoy fellowship and Look Forward in Faith as we continue our Walk with the Lord and, as we look forward with enthusiasm to our re-dedication service on September 17th, may God bless us with His gifts to grow stronger, allowing us to flourish in Faith, Hope and Love. **Margaret Conroy** for the Guild Leadership Team



The Social Club

The Social Club held its last sessions at the end of May. We had a very good year and it has been such a relief to have had no further disruptions. We now have a break of three months when we can hopefully get out and about and enjoy the summer weather. As I write at 9.00 am, it is 18 degrees and sunny and the weather looks set for the rest of the week.

We recommence at the beginning of September with our badminton session on Tuesday 5th. Badminton sessions are on Tuesday (from 1.30 pm) and Wednesday (from 7.00 pm) and carpet bowls on Friday (from 10.00 am). We would be pleased to welcome new members to any of the sessions. **Anne Byres**

Easter Walk of Witness

On Saturday 8th April about thirty people took part in an Easter Walk of Witness. As we believe it is important to give a reason for the hope that is within us, we took as our theme the Resurrection of Jesus.

We remember how Jesus died on the cross. He made a perfect sacrifice for our sins and reconciled us to God. Jesus did this voluntarily; no-one made Him do it. God raised Him from the dead thus setting His seal on all Jesus did for us. After His resurrection Jesus was seen by many. The greatest proof we have of the Resurrection was in the changed lives of people at that time. Today God is alive in the lives of all those who believe and trust in Him and we pray that the message of Easter brings hope and encouragement to a needy world.



At three different locations in Blairgowrie we read from the Bible, prayed and sang some favourite hymns. We finished back at the Church Hall with refreshments. Warmest thanks to all who took part.



Sleeping Giant by Tommy MacNeil

You might well be asking what is the Sleeping Giant? It is the title of a book by the Rev. Tommy MacNeil, Minister of Martin's Memorial Church in Stornoway. It is also the title of a conference that David, Colleen, Brian and Esther from our Church attended early in June.

But what is the 'Sleeping Giant'? The book refers to the Church of God in Scotland as the 'Sleeping Giant' - the Church of God that is **all** Christian bodies in Scotland - and it is a call to all the Church to **AWAKE AND ARISE.**

The conference took place on Friday evening and all day Saturday in Perth. There were approximately 400 folk there, from early twenties to over eighty years old, and from several denominations. The speakers were the Rev. Tommy MacNeil (Church of Scotland), Rev. Kenneth Borthwick, (Church of Scotland), Donna Macneil and Morag Borthwick. Worship was led by Tommy's son, Matthew and 3 other young people on keyboard, drums and guitars. The worship was noisy and full of praise and prayer and each session was challenging but full of positivity.

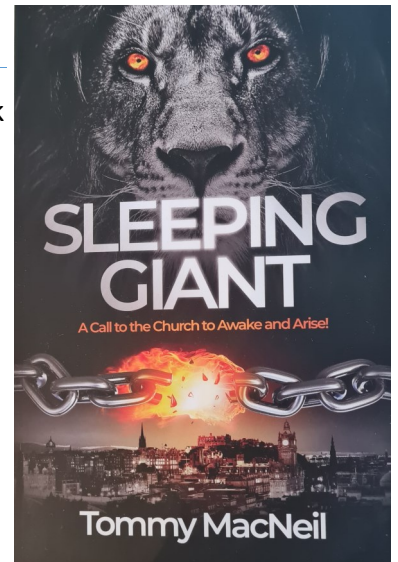
What **is** God asking of us as the Body of Christ? Every speaker based what they said on the Bible and on experience. There was also a stress on the fact that small things which we do grow and spread the news of God's love. It was an experience hard to describe but each of us felt God's presence and knew that He was talking to us.

On Saturday afternoon there were speakers from Tear Fund, Scottish Bible Society, Safe Families and the Church of Scotland "Seeds for Growth Fund". All very interesting and biblically based.

There are copies of the book on the bookstand for borrowing. It is very inspiring, challenging and exciting and it really makes you think. We would encourage you to read it. One chapter is about the fact older folk have lots to give and there is no place for retirement from serving God!

If another opportunity comes to attend a Sleeping Giant event we would certainly encourage you to be there.

Esther Dingwall



Our 22/23 session ended on Friday 26th May 23 with our annual display and presentation of awards. It was a great evening of fun shared by all! The boys were very happy with their Badges that

they had worked hard for, and some special awards were handed out. These were:

Best Boy

Ben Duncan, Junior section boy who moves up to Company Section.

Luke Croll, Anchor section boy who moves up to Junior Section.

Best Attendance and Inspection

Kayden Gowrie, Junior Section

Shay Grant, Anchor Boys

This year Kayden Gowrie won the swimming trophy for best overall Junior at the Battalion Swimming Gala. We were so proud of him and of Finlay McNee who also took part.



We have had a successful year covering Bible stories from the Nativity to the Easter story, we had a great day out at Airlie where we made dens, sang songs around the campfire, and drank hot chocolate. We took part in the UK wide Team Challenge and had a Cake & Candy stall at the Christmas tree light switch on.

The Company Section explored the topic “Criminal Exploitation”, a real life difficult subject to look at, but they handled it very maturely. The Juniors had their annual chip night with former captain Bruce Dow coming along to give a games night and we had Mrs Cooke along organising a treasure hunt around the church. The Anchor boys got dressed up as kings for the Kings Coronation and enjoyed learning new Scottish words during Burns night.

We congratulate Mrs Nicola Watts for completing her officers training. Ms Abigail Crawford-Ireland is currently completing her training, so next session we will have two new officers. I have completed my Company Management Training for Captains and Officer’s in charge.

I must thank Blairgowrie Parish Church for their continued support and interest in us. We plan to start again with a taster night on Friday 25th August 2023 at 6.30pm.

Carol Annand, OIC Junior Section, 1st Correspondent 2nd Blairgowrie BB

Knitted Goods

The Family Centre at Perth Prison held an Open Day recently, and 3 members of our congregation were given a warm welcome. The staff members there are very happy to receive the huge variety of goods, from knee rugs for the elderly to baby clothes. The Centre is run by Crossreach, so if the items are not required for pram covers they are passed on for use in care homes.



For several years, the Somervilles have enjoyed delivering the beautiful knitting donated by our members, but decrepitude has overtaken them both so they were delighted when Elinor and Charlie offered to relieve them. In future, please deliver your knitting to them (870618) or leave it, labelled clearly, on the pew in the lower hall. Moira and Jim have enjoyed their visits to the Family Centre because the staff there show Christian dedication towards all they do for the families of prisoners within the prison. Many thanks to everybody, including Eleanor and Charlie. **Moira Somerville**

YOUR Unitary Constitution

Last year the congregation agreed to move to a form of governance known as The Unitary Constitution. Simply put, the Session will continue to have full responsibility of oversight of the life and work of the church and will be assisted by a number of working groups to replace the existing Congregational Board, the members of which are being asked to decide which working group they prefer to join. To date, the Session has agreed the number of groups needed and a remit for each, and will, at the end of June, consider the Standing Orders which will apply to all. *"Oh well..."*, I hear some say.

Please don't think that it doesn't matter to you as a member or adherent. It does. Why?

- This model of governance does NOT require membership of a group to be for life. Each member contributes their skills and talents for a limited time, and some can be asked to join a working group for a specific purpose. These groups will be active contributors to the development of our church life.
- All members, adherents and those out-with the church are encouraged to take part in a specific aspect of the life and work of our congregation. It's not just down to the Elders and Board members.
- In this time of difficulty in our National Church we need the skills, talents and time of as many as are able to ensure that we have a future here in the town and surrounding area. This is particularly so, as we know that Benjamin plans to retire from Parish Ministry next summer and this congregation will have to demonstrate that we are alive and active in mission. We need to demonstrate to ourselves, Presbytery and any new minister that we have the drive and capacity to flourish in changing circumstances.

What does it mean to YOU? Well...

- Each elder and current Board member is being asked to prayerfully consider which working group would best match their skills and talents.
- Each member and adherent is asked the same question. In which area of the church life might you contribute – either as a group member or willing to be called upon for a specific purpose?

Subject to Session agreement, several awareness-raising steps are planned for over the summer.

- A stall showing details of the groups will be set up in the Vestibule as an encouragement to all to find out more and participate.
- A Stewardship Service is being held on 23rd July which emphasises the need for people to support the life and work of our congregation.
- Church groups who operate under the aegis of the Kirk Session will be asked to nominate a representative to serve on a Working Group.
- An autumn Dedication Service will be used to launch the groups.

The following groups are being formed. *Which one might be the one for you?*

Worship: supporting and developing all forms of worship within and beyond the church family.

Mission & Outreach: developing and implementing (with others) a practical and achievable mission for the church family and in the community.

Communication: promoting and supporting the congregation's communication links, internally and externally.

Finance & Stewardship: monitoring, controlling, and reporting of income and expenditure.

Fabric: care and maintenance the heritable and moveable properties of the congregation.

More details are available on the church website or by speaking to those on duty on the Vestibule Stall each Sunday. Please give this your support and active consideration.

Clifford Cooke: Session Clerk



Doors Open Days 2023

16th and 17th September 2023

We are again opening the church to welcome visitors for the above event in Perthshire. The theme for 2023 is 'Living Heritage' and we look forward to showing how our incredible history is very much part of our own 'living heritage'.

Please look out for more information on the website or through church notices.

From the Treasurer

I am glad to report that this year to date our finances look quite good.

We purchased new efficient boilers before they were fitted as there was a significant cost saving that way, and they have now been installed. We now await the cost of the installation and repair work to some of the older parts of the heating system. We face a moderate sized bill for hall repainting, but the totals of the painting bill and the likely boiler installation costs will be minor in comparison with the near £100,000 net costs of repair work in 2022. We have a wonderful building but as all of us responsible for property upkeep are aware, unpleasant surprises may – or may not – be around the corner.

Our contribution to the Church of Scotland under a new scheme called Giving to Grow will amount to around £64,500 this year. This is a little less than our contribution under the old Ministry and Mission system. These contributions meet the work of the Church centrally and support for congregations less fortunate than us. Ministers are not paid directly by congregations; the detail of that is handled by the Church of Scotland centrally. Ministers stipends are very modest so only just over half of the Giving to Grow contribution is required for our Minister's stipend, pension arrangements and other costs.

We are a generous congregation. This year to date we have given almost £1,200 to worthy causes both national and local, with just over £600 to Christian Aid and smaller sums to the Church of Scotland HIV programme and local charities including the Christmas appeal, Churches Action for the Homeless, Riding for the Disabled, the Freedom Coach and the Guides new hut. The great work of the monthly soup team and those who sup and pay brings in each time almost £100 on average for the local charities. Most of the cooks also sup and donate!

The AV fund needed to upgrade our sound system and add video is slowly growing. To date, including last year, you have donated either in cash or goods to be sold, a sum of £11,500. I have been advised that the monies should, ideally, be in a separate account and again, ideally, an interest bearing one. However, as the funds are in the general account, they act as a buffer against the cost of boiler installation and hall painting as mentioned above. Following a decision at a recent Board meeting I wrote to Presbytery to seek guidance on this.

As I said last time, we must all continue to give thought to our donations. Of course, that includes the possibility of reducing donations because of changes in personal circumstances but where possible we must all consider greater generosity.

I hope that we may "balance the books" this year but there is a probability of a need to draw further from our reserves.

It is with regret that I have had to indicate that I am standing down as your Treasurer by October at the latest. There is therefore an urgent need for a new Treasurer. The Church cannot function without one. I am willing to assist the new treasurer in any way I can and support is now available from Presbytery to make this important task more manageable. I would be happy to chat to any potential volunteer about the challenges of the position.

Dr A D Shaw: Treasurer

The Craft Group

We have continued to meet every Wednesday from 10.00 – 12.00 in the Church Hall but we are stopping to have a break over the summer. Our final meeting will be on the 28th June and we will restart on Wednesday 6th September.

We are planning a trip with the Freedom Coach to Karelia House near Aberfeldy on 2nd August – this is a delightful craft/fabric wool shop in a stunning setting, so it promises to be a lovely experience.

Our Mouse Hunt proved to be very popular at the Doors Open Event last September so this year we will be thinking about “lost sheep”.

Most weeks we have between eight and twelve people who come along with their individual projects and who are very willing to share their expertise. Some just come for the chat and cuppa. Whether you are a novice, an expert or somewhere in between, you will always receive a very warm welcome from our group.

If you would like more information, you can always speak to Dorothea, Elinor, Marie or Morag. Elinor can be contacted on 01250 870618 or esbrymor@hotmail.com.



Easter Chicks.

The Church Newsletter



The newsletter is produced 3 times each year (March, July and November) and until now over 350 copies have been printed ‘in-house’ for each issue. This is hugely time-consuming and expensive, of course. It is also a little disappointing because considerable time is taken to produce a colourful, attractive, engaging newsletter that is then turned into a black and white version for distribution—because it is only possible to print it in black and white ‘in-house’. We are also aware

that the excessive printing is not showing due consideration for our need to conserve resources, to be sustainable, to reduce our carbon foot print—and so to play our part in protecting our God-given world. We must, however, meet the needs of **all** of our members too, and we would want to make sure our plans do not impact on that.

We therefore plan to provide the newsletter electronically, by email, for anyone **who would like it** that way and it is also available on the church website at <https://www.blairgowrieparishchurch.org.uk>. Information about this was delivered to households in early June along with the means to register for the e.newsletter, and many of you have responded. Thank you.

If you haven’t yet but would like the email version then please contact me at colleenjoslin@gmail.com to be added to the register for the autumn newsletter. If, however, you prefer to have your newsletter delivered as usual - as a paper copy - then please know we will continue to deliver it to you in that way. There is no need to take any action.

I would also like to encourage contributions from more members of the church to add to the ‘news’ and features aspects of the newsletter. If you have an event you would like to share with your church family (photographs welcomed), or an opinion or a book review or anything else then we’d be very pleased to hear from you. Ideas for developing the newsletter would be appreciated too. Thank you.

Colleen



Messy Church & Family Services

The theme for the May Messy Church was Pentecost, the time sometimes called the birthday of the Church. To celebrate the children decorated a cake with a candle. The event, celebrated 50 days after Easter Sunday, was when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples. The young people learnt the words for "hello" in many different languages, they made windmills and bubble pictures.

The June Messy church was held outside and was like the traditional Sunday school outing but, being held in the morning, bacon and sausages replaced the usual sandwiches! And the sun shone...



Children decorating their 'birthday' cakes



Parachute Games



Breakfast

After a successful Easter morning service, monthly family services have been held on the first Sunday of the month. The May service was on the coronation weekend and celebrated the King of love.

There will be an Early morning service on the 6th August at 9.30am in the hall and everyone is welcome to join this short service for families.

Susan Whiteford

Mary's Meals

Mary's Meals, the global organisation which makes sure that children are given a daily meal as long as they attend school, has a dedicated group in Blairgowrie. It is led by Margaret Young.

On Saturday, June 17th, in the Town Hall, the group held a Coffee morning. The coffee was accompanied by a great variety of home baking, and the stalls were well patronised as usual. Margaret was delighted to announce the total of £1,700 was raised. The next major fund raiser will be the always well supported Ceilidh which will be held on the 14th January 2024.

Margaret is always happy to meet new volunteers to help in this wonderful charity. Her phone number is 01250 875086.



Property Update: Fabric Report



Boilers before insulation put on the pipes.

At last, the new boilers have been fitted and appear to be working well after some teething problems mostly caused by air locks in the system resulting from the whole system having been drained. The new boilers are very neat and take up much less space in the boiler room. It is anticipated that the heating system will be much more efficient and so will save energy in the future. We are fortunate that the Church is on a fixed tariff and hasn't had to cope with the recent increases in energy costs but that will change so our new boilers are a timely development to minimise increased costs over time.

During the summer holidays the hall is to be painted. This is a big job with scaffolding being used to get up to the roof. It will take up to two weeks to complete but it will be worth the inconvenience.

The lights in the lower hall are being replaced as they keep failing and it means getting the scaffolding out each time to replace a bulb. Hopefully the new LED fittings will last longer. The light by the door is being changed to a movement sensor so there will be light as soon as you enter the hall which will be especially useful for those who don't know the building and where the light switches are situated.

The plasterer should be back soon to finish of the plaster in the Sanctuary and at the front entrance. This should cover the problems we have had from various leaks. Please let us know if you see anything that isn't right so we can get on top of it before damage is caused. Thank you.

Susan Whiteford: Fabric Convenor

From Presbytery

The newly formed Presbytery of Perth and its committees continue to meet, both virtually and in person.

The Presbytery Mission Plan submitted by the legacy Dunkeld and Meigle Presbytery has been approved by the Faith Nurture Forum, subject to conditions. Work will now commence (in fact has now started), led by the Planning and Deployment Committee, to put plans in place commencing with those charges currently vacant. Blairgowrie Parish Church is not affected at this time.

Presbytery has decided to employ a Congregational Support Officer and a Presbytery Chaplain to provide pastoral support to Ministers and work is ongoing to employ a Buildings Officer and a Communications Officer. These posts will all be part-time.

Presbytery reported that Blairgowrie Parish Church member Keith Redwood has completed training as a reader and arrangements will now be made for a service in which Keith will be 'set apart' as reader. Congratulations to Keith.

Alisdair Drummond: Presbytery Elder

Used Stamps

I am still collecting used stamps and the box is filling well.

I still haven't had news about the project recently but please keep saving up your used stamps, which are worth thousands to support overseas projects that are overlooked by World Mission. Please put them in my pigeonhole in the Lower Hall. Thank you!



Moira Somerville



Summer Songs of Praise

The Wellmeadow

Sunday 6th August: 3pm

All Welcome

Sing praise to God; sing praise to our King! Psalm 47:6

Malawi—Levi and Ruth Nyondo

Levi Nyondo was a minister at St Andrews CCAP church in Mzuzu, Northern Malawi. His wife, Ruth, was a primary teacher who later re-trained as a secondary school teacher. They first visited us about twenty years ago when they were in Scotland for six months. They spent three in Pitlochry and three in Blairgowrie as a Presbytery of Dunkeld and Meigle with Malawi Partnership. They were originally linked with the former St Andrews Church and Rattray, but quickly endeared themselves to members of other congregations in the area. They have been back several times, over the years. They used to be based in Ekwendeni in Northern Malawi, but later moved to more central Mzuzu.

The Churches Together Group used to be able to store goods waiting to be sent out at Proctors on Dunkeld Road. We would then spend half a day, putting goods into boxes and labelling, before filling a van to take to Strachur on the west coast, to be later loaded onto a container by the Raven Trust. The Raven Trust has now stopped this part of its work, but a new group, based in Dundee, called the Banana Box Trust, under the leadership of Alan Laverock, now loads and sends out our boxes. It costs about £20 to send an average sized box to Ruth and Levi, so we try and give the Banana Box Trust a donation to help with transportation costs.

We therefore need to be sure that what we send out is useful, although they have said that they need everything!

What we particularly want are:-

Sewing machines and knitting machines. A machine given to a widow means that she can set up a small business and become financially independent. Some, but not all, villages have electricity so both manual and electric machines are needed.

Wool and material, in fact any craft materials again create independence.

Hand tools for carpentry and engineering and metalwork. This helps young men become independent.

Books. Any type, but I would rather limit it to children's books, English literature, technical books, religious books (Bibles and Hymn Books etc.).

Clothing, especially for babies, children, and men's suits (for trainee ministers). Boxes of clothing should be marked as used clothes, along with the age group. There is also a need for children's shoes.

School materials, such as paper (blank and lined), note books, pencils, pens, rulers etc.

Ruth has set up a craft centre where she will have several knitting machines and sewing machines for use. She also wants to have facilities to print materials for use by the six local primary schools.

Levi is at present the Malawi Ambassador to Brazil, where he is with Ruth, but the School in Mzuzu that they set up is now run by their daughter. Ruth and Levi hope to come to Scotland in August, so if this happens we will try and set up a reunion for old friends, and a meeting for new friends. If anyone has materials they want collected to send out, or if anyone wishes to discuss any aspect of this programme then they can contact David P. Howat.

Phone 01250 874715 or e-mail david@thehowats.net