

Greengairs Parish Church / New Monkland Parish Church /

Caldercruix & Longriggend Parish Church / Airdrie High Parish Church

MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

I don't mind admitting that I am excited to think that is a four-way joint newsletter! So what shall we all talk about? The weather? Not much point: still pretty miserable. Politics? Not unless we want a giant rammy. Sport? Whatever the sport, I'd be bluffing, as I am woefully ignorant. Music? I've just finished listening to a wonderful album, "The Dufay Spectacle", of music by Guillaume Dufay (1397-1474). However, I'm aware that most people would prefer to listen to a pneumatic drill, so maybe not music. Art? Current events? This might be one of the rare occasions when it's safer to speak about Religion than anything else!

We are, of course, in the season of Lent, a time of preparation for Holy Week and Easter. I've always valued Lent for giving us that breathing space to wrap our heads around what Holy Week and Easter are really about. It's often said that Holy Week is there to prevent us from moving straight from the Triumphal Entry of Palm Sunday to the Triumph of Easter Sunday. Without Holy Week there is no sense of the drama of Maundy Thursday and the horror of Good Friday. The victory and triumph of Easter Sunday loses something of its impact. Likewise, Lent allows us to understand why Holy Week happens in the first place. The events of Holy Week, especially after the Last Supper, each represent a point of no turning back. But all of that tension, that determination of both Jesus and his enemies to reach Golgotha, didn't come out of nowhere.

That's where the finer details of Lent prove so helpful for me. Our most recent Lent study course involves watching scenes from 'The Chosen', and it's amazing how much of the detail of Bible narratives makes sense once its dramatized. There are of course special services for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, which allow us to focus on the drama of the Passion and the sense of destiny being fulfilled. And then there are the hymns that we associate with Lent: 'Praise to the Holiest in the height' and one of my favourites 'My song is love unknown'.

*Sometimes they strew His way, and His sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day hosannas to their King.
Then 'Crucify!' is all their breath,
and for His death they thirst and cry.*

That speaks to the fickleness of the crowds and how the glory of the Triumphal Entry ends with crowds baying for the crucifixion of the Christ.

*Why, what hath my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run, he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries! yet they at these
themselves displease, and 'gainst him rise.*

There is the great mystery: how can the ministry of the Son of God, whose every word and deed radiated the love of God, lead to such determination for his death? Lent allows us to ponder that very question, and more, as we move towards the Cross and then the Empty Tomb.

With every blessing, Ian

HOLY WEEK and EASTER: SOME JOINT SERVICES OF WORSHIP

In this most important week in the Christian calendar, let us remember the incalculable sacrifice our Lord made for us all and celebrate His glorious Resurrection. The first three worship services listed are for all four congregations. If you wish to attend but transport is an issue for you, please speak with your Session Clerk.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, 28 March at 7pm. **Evening worship including the Sacrament of Holy Communion**, followed by refreshments. This will be held in New Monkland Parish Church, 37 Condorrat Road, Glenmavis ML6 0NW; worship led by Rev. Dr. Ian McDonald.

GOOD FRIDAY, 29 March at 7pm. **Good Friday Service**, followed by refreshments. This will be held in Airdrie High Parish Church, 20 North Bridge Street, Airdrie ML6 6N; worship led by Mrs. Lorraine Gilroy.

EASTER SUNDAY, 31 March at 6am. **Dawn Service** in Airdrie High Parish Church, followed by a light breakfast.

EASTER SUNDAY, 31 March. **Easter Sunday Family Service** in each of the four Churches at the usual time. Some of these services will feature lively Easter egg hunts!

**Happy Easter to everyone
when it comes.
Our Lord is risen:
He is risen indeed!
We celebrate the risen Lord!**



Greengairs

Holy Week Services – joint services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday – see page 2 of this newsletter for further details.

Easter Sunday – 11.30am at Greengairs.

Greengairs is pleased to report that **Primary 3 children from Greengairs Primary** will be coming to church shortly before Easter, to practise and receive help with an Easter presentation which will be taking place in the school. The children will then have cakes and juice in our hall.

We will also be having an **Easter service in the church** which the whole school will attend. We have organised an Easter card competition for each primary stage. The winners of this will be presented with Easter eggs whilst every child in the school will also receive an egg in appreciation for their efforts!

Beetle Drive and lunch (pies, sausage rolls and beans) on Monday 11th March 12- 2pm in the hall.

New Monkland and Greengairs Guild meet fortnightly in New Monkland Church hall at 7.15pm.

Dates for forthcoming Guild meetings:

Tuesday 12th March - "Hope for Autism"

Tuesday 26th March – Holy Week service

FUNNY THINGS CHILDREN SAY ABOUT EASTER

A 'vox pop' survey on an American city street asked children what Easter means. Here are some of their less theologically sophisticated replies:

Jesus got toys – Lego!

Jesus made a bunny

Jesus led some people somewhere, I'm not sure

Everyone was watching and, sooner or later, Jesus died

The bad guys killed Jesus

Jesus died of drugs, I think

Jesus was in heaven for a few days on his computer project, then he came back to see the bunny

When Jesus came back, he gave people Easter eggs

Jesus told the bunny not to hide Easter eggs

When he came back to life, Jesus did a dance



Airdrie High

GET TOGETHER GROUP

At our last meeting we were entertained by a silver flute orchestra: it was a very enjoyable evening. Our next meeting on **Monday 4th March** is our annual charity meeting, when we have a collection in aid of a particular charity. This year we are supporting Parkinson's Disease and have arranged for a speaker from the local branch of the charity to come along. Our meeting on **Monday 1st May** will be a musical evening and we will be joined by Steph and friends. We look forward to seeing our usual friends and, as usual, extend a warm invitation to anyone who would like to join us.

STATED ANNUAL MEETING: **Tuesday 12 March** at 7:30 pm. We hope that as many of you as possible will come along to this very important meeting. We need to stress that this is a meeting for ALL OUR MEMBERS, not simply another forum for the Board and Session. So please come along and find out what is happening in our church and feel free to ask questions or express your views. We do want to hear from you. The tea and biscuits after the meeting is, of course, a further bonus! Owing to our Stated Annual Meeting taking place in March, there are no Board and Session meetings scheduled for this month.

Retiral of a minister well-known to us

Reverend John Murning has retired as a minister. An Airdrie man, John grew up in the High Church and served as Bible Class leader in the 1980s. John has had an eventful and varied career in ministry, serving as a padre in the British Army (including a period serving in the former Yugoslavia), at Denny Parish Church and most recently, at Sherwood Greenlaw Parish Church in Paisley. We wish John well in his retirement and hope it affords him more time with his family. His father Dick was a faithful member of the High, as is John's sister, Mrs. Elaine Grant.

The Biscuit Club



Our Spaces of Warmth initiative - '**The Biscuit Club**' - takes place every Thursday from 12:30 to 3pm. We are putting out tables for crafts / knitting / embroidery, encouraging members who enjoy these pursuits to come along and take part in our nice warm lower hall. Tea, coffee, soft drinks and – of course - biscuits are on offer. Come along and join us for fellowship and a right good blether! Our club offers a blue riband experience, a chance to breakaway from life's ups and downs! (Sorry for lame puns).

Media Market Thanks for donations of books, CDs and DVDs. Books are either placed in the bookcase for members to borrow or will be donated to an Oxfam Bookshop, with the Gift Aid coming back to the Church. CDs and DVDs are donated similarly to an Oxfam Bookshop, or we have the additional option of selling them directly on Music Magpie or a similar site. Funds raised have been going to the Church, as well as raising considerable money for Oxfam's work with the world's poorest people. Donated books and music media have now raised (2017 – 24) more than £2 500 for Oxfam GB and more than £600 for Church funds. Well done!

New Monkland



This March sees a new venture for New Monkland with our first **messy church**, which will take place on Thursday 21st March: registration 5:30-6pm. We will start with dinner for all attendees and then we will have games, crafts, songs, and stories. Fun for all the family come and join us. It would be helpful to have rough numbers for catering. Free to attend. email: helenmarshall@blueyonder.co.uk or register on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/cosnmpc/>



This year our **community outreach café** will have served the community for over 20 years, what an achievement. Over the years we have had wonderful volunteers who provide a warm welcome and great bacon rolls, French toast, cakes etc., and unlimited tea and coffee. Come along bring your friends and join us between 10-12 every Wednesday in the hall. Our community councillor has a surgery here 1st Wed of every month.



The New Monkland Community Songsters is now well established with 34 members from Glenmavis and the Airdrie area. It originally came from an idea from our Worship group. It has gone from strength to strength and has a growing membership along with its growing reputation. It had three concerts in 2023 and occasionally performs at church services. We mainly perform contemporary worship music with some secular music to mix things up a little. Our next performance will be on Tuesday 28th May in New Monkland Church. Pop this great concert in your dairy. Entry is free with a donation of food for the Airdrie foodbank. Want to join the songsters? Or want us to perform in your church? Contact Matt Shanks

<https://churchmusic209779473.wordpress.com>



Our youth organisations are very important to us. This time we will concentrate on our **Boys Brigade** (next time our Guiding family). Our BB company has around 50 boys' a bit smaller than in previous years, so new members are welcome from Glenmavis and surrounding villages that don't already have a BB company. The photo enclosed shows that we are linked with the 1st Trinidad company and the boys are enjoying learning about similarities, differences and opportunities for boys. We have a lot of boys working on their president and Queens badges. Many have been volunteering in the café, after church tea and helping with church clear-outs, community litter picking, etc., thanks boys.



New Monkland Parish Church supports a well-used **Warm Space**. Born out of the government drive to provide warm places due to high cost of fuel etc. we opened our hall and, armed with a few volunteers and lots of enthusiasm, we have grown and developed, so we have renamed our group, **the Bite and Blether Group**. We meet every Thursday of the year between 11-1pm. All are welcome. We have found that it is a lovely place to come together, have a chat with a bite to eat (usually tea, toast, soup and cakes) all provided free by our volunteers. It's free to attend and there is great companionship. Many of our attendee's pop in a voluntary £1 donation into a black box which meant we were able to fund a Christmas meal out, enjoyed by all who attended. Again thanks to our volunteers who we couldn't do without.

Caldercruix and Longriggend

Caldercruix Girls Brigade

We continue to have 12 girls on a regular basis and have been continuing with our badgework. The Juniors have decided to support the foodbank with food and Easter eggs and we are looking forward to hearing more about the work that they do and we greatly appreciate the support of the congregation with this.

Following on from our fundraising Snowman Drive we raised £90, which has helped with our yearly capitation fees which were £35 per girl and an officer. This year has come around so quickly and we will be finishing at the end of April, before the divisional trips for each section. This year the Explorers and Juniors will be going to Innoflate in Cumbernauld at a cost of £7.50 each, we will cover some of this expenditure from our funds.

We thank the congregation for their support.

Leeann Campbell

WOMEN'S GROUP

We meet on the last Friday of the month at 7pm. So far this year we have had Mandy Cahill, who gives of her time voluntarily at Airdrie Citizen's Advice Bureau and also Jacqui McGrath, who told us about her job as a Link Worker in a medical practice. Both ladies gave interesting information and the group enjoyed the evening.

Due to Holy Week, we will not meet in March. Our next meeting will be on Friday 26th April, when Lorraine Gilroy, who is Deacon in New Monkland and Greengairs churches, will speak to the group. An invitation is extended to all ladies to come and enjoy an evening of fellowship.

Margaret McLean

ONE WAY CLUB

The One Way Club returned after the Christmas break and we currently have 27 kids registered with the weekly average attendance of 17. We started this session with looking at different parables: the good Samaritan, the lost coin, the lost sheep, the fig tree, the Sower and we will conclude with the parable of the prodigal son this week. Then start learning about Jesus and concluding with the Easter Story.

We will then finish till after the Easter school holidays returning for the last few weeks to complete before the summer break. The children who have attend are very good at listening to the story and enjoy the snacks but love the games and the time seems to go so fast. We have had an issue with the behaviour of 1 or 2 of the boys, but this has now settled. I must thank the volunteers for the continued support in attending each week and supplying snacks for the kids. Thank you to everyone who has come along, who has prayed for the One Way Club and the children it has really been appreciated.

Lorna Gilmour

Dance Classes

I am very pleased to announce that Thomas and Katrina, who attend the Caldercruix Dance Class were the winners of the St Andrews Hospice Charity Strictly Dance event at the weekend. We are delighted as they have practiced very hard over the last few months. The event raised the sum of £77K. A brilliant weekend for all the dancers and a big thanks to everyone who donated to raise funds for the Hospice and the excellent work that they do. Well done!

Lorna Gilmour

Each year, Christmas Day falls on 25th December. Why does the date of Easter change so much?

The followers of Christ did not record the date of Jesus' resurrection almost two thousand years ago. Ever since the early church, determining the date of Easter has been quite controversial. Unlike Christmas Day, which can fall on any day of the week, Easter Sunday is always celebrated on a Sunday. So it couldn't have one fixed date.

Instead, there are many possible dates for Easter Sunday. In the Western Church, it has fallen as early as 22nd March or as late as 25th April. It can fall on any date between these two extremes, so there are 35 possible dates for Easter; it falls in the month of March in only 23% of years. In other words, the date of Easter Sunday ping pongs backwards and forwards across a five week period in the spring. The range of dates is, however, statistically weighted. Easter very rarely falls really early or really late in the range of dates. Easter Sunday will be as late as possible in the calendar (25th April) next in 2038 and as early as possible (22nd March) next in 2285!

So why is Easter a moveable feast? Early believers in the church of Asia Minor (now Turkey) wished to keep the observance of Easter correlated to the Jewish Passover. The Gospels make clear that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ happened after the Passover, so Easter should be celebrated after this Jewish feast. And, since the Jewish holiday calendar is based on solar and lunar cycles, each feast day has a date which shifts from year to year. At the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, the Western Church decided that Easter would always be celebrated on the Sunday immediately following the Paschal Full Moon, a date specified in Ecclesiastical tables, drawn from astronomical data. Easter Sunday will fall on 20 April 2025, 5 April 2026 and 28 March 2027.

A VIEW FROM THE MANSE (CAT BASKET)

I thought you might all learn something important if I tell you what my daily schedule is like. **7am**: Ian feeds me (if he knows what's good for him). **7.05 - 7.25am**: make sure Janet and Hester are awake and dressed, otherwise they'll never get to school on time. **7.25 - 8am**: mooch around for a bit, giving Ian meaningful stares so he remembers to give me some treats.



8am - 5pm: A combination of sleep, mooching about, snacks, more sleep and occasionally staring out of the window. I sometimes see other humans, often with their dogs. I'm never very sure who's taking who for a walk there. There isn't that much variety: wind, rain, grey clouds, sometimes the sun comes out. I have noticed some changes though. There are more and more little birds fluttering in the bushes outside. When that happens, for some reason I can't explain I start drooling and getting very hungry. The other thing is the plants outside are starting to look a wee bit different, some of them even have green bits on them. There's no point in asking anyone what this means as they never seem to understand me. But I did hear Janet (the sensible one) and Ian (the larger and less sensible one) say it was a sign of something called 'spring'. From what I gather, that means this horrible dull, grey weather disappears. At least there's less of it, and it might even become warmer. I have to admit, I like the thought of nicer weather. It puts me in a better mood and I can face my (prolonged) daily nap with renewed vigour. I very much it makes you all feel the same way.

5pm - 9pm: This gets a bit complicated. I get fed a proper meal again and the others come home so I am not on my lonesome. But they are a noisy bunch and they don't half watch some rubbish on the TV. Never anything about cats. **9pm - 7am**: I like to lull them all into a false sense of security by sleeping under one of the beds. Then at about 1am I wake up and run around the manse all night and make a racket. It's great fun!

Anyway, that's a little insight into my hectic and very demanding schedule. Talk to you all later. All the best,

Fluffy xx 🐾🐾

LENT STUDY GROUP 2024: Airdrie High Church, Monday evenings – 4, 11 and 18 March - at 7:30pm

So far, we have had two study sessions. We are looking at a few of the key episodes in the life and ministry of Jesus as described in familiar Bible passages and as dramatised in episodes of *'The Chosen'*, an American TV series which is reaching hundreds of millions of viewers via Netflix and other streaming platforms. The first week, we looked at Jesus and Nicodemus: this encounter with a Pharisee who was seeking the truth allowed Jesus to explain salvation and God's love in very striking ways. The second week, we considered the changing of water into wine at the wedding in Cana. We first read the Scripture passage, then discuss it; then we look at how *'The Chosen'* has treated this episode in Jesus' life. Clearly, drama requires some additional dialogue and gaps filled in. The final discussion has been stimulating, and participants commented on how authentic the disciples seem, each with his idiosyncrasies, feeling towards the truth and difficult to manage individually, never mind as a team. At the wedding, when the host tastes the new wine, just miraculously changed by Jesus from water, he expresses surprise and jests that, normally, the best wine is served first, with the poorer vintage being kept back and served when guests would be too drunk to notice. Yet, at this wedding, the very best wine is being brought out after the cheap plonk has been consumed. One group participant pointed out that 'keeping the best till last' is a metaphor for Jesus: God sends a series of prophets, from Moses to John the Baptist, the final one in the line being His only Son. **All are welcome – tea, coffee and biscuits are served.**

Now that we are on the subject of **LENT**

What is Lent? Lent is a season of preparation before the feast of Easter. Many Christians observe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, self-denial and spiritual discipline in the weeks leading up to Easter. They reflect on the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, his arrest, conviction, execution, burial and resurrection. Christians who observe Lent typically commit to give up something. This could be a habit (such as smoking, watching TV or swearing) or a food or drink (such as sweets, chocolate, alcoholic beverages or coffee). Some Christians also take on a Lenten discipline, such as reading the Bible and spending more time in prayer. The goal of such spiritual discipline and self-denial is to strengthen one's faith and develop a closer relationship with God.

When does Lent start? In Western Christianity, Ash Wednesday starts the season of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, Roman Catholics attend mass, where a priest lightly rubs the sign of the cross with ashes onto their foreheads. In the Bible, ashes are associated with repentance, suffering and death.

Is the last day before Lent special? The day before Ash Wednesday is Shrove Tuesday. Traditionally, pancakes are eaten on this day to use up rich foods like eggs and milk in anticipation of the forty day fast season of Lent. Shrove Tuesday is also called 'Fat Tuesday' or in French 'Mardi Gras'.

How long is Lent? Forty days: treat Ash Wednesday as day one and count all the way to Easter Saturday, missing out the six Sundays in between. The forty day period of Lent is based on two episodes of spiritual testing in the Bible: the forty years of wilderness wanderings by the Israelites after the Exodus from Egypt (see Deuteronomy 1:3); and the temptation of Jesus after he had spent forty days fasting in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13).

How did the observance of Lent start? Lent is not mentioned in Scripture. However the practice of repentance and mourning in ashes is mentioned in the OT (2 Samuel, Job, Esther and Daniel) as well as in Matthew 11:21. Early Christians felt the importance of Easter called for special preparations. The first mention of a forty day fast in preparation for Easter is found in the Canons of Nicaea (325 AD). This tradition may have arisen from the early church custom of baptismal candidates undergoing such a fast in preparation for their baptism at Easter. Eventually, the season evolved into a period of spiritual devotion for the whole church. Centuries ago, the Lenten fast was very strict, but the self-denial expected in food and drink has relaxed over time.

A NEW AUTHOR Darren Philip, from the Kirk's National Stewardship Service, gave a presentation at the High Church last year. Darren wrote a stimulating article in the February issue of 'Life and Work' and has written his first book, which is published in April by Saint Andrew Press. "*Living Generously: A Whole-life Response to God's Love*" considers all aspects of stewardship as a response to God's grace, including rendering service, donating money and investing what we have in the kingdom of God. Well done Darren, more power to your pen!

BOOK REVIEWS

Ian Stewart, **Do dice play God?: the mathematics of uncertainty**, Profile Books, pbk, £9.99

Jordan Ellenberg, **Shape: the hidden geometry of absolutely everything**, Allen Lane, pbk, £11.95

reviewed by David Kennedy

Please do not think me odd. But I like mathematics so much that I often read maths books for fun. OK, that's the embarrassing confession over with. I genuinely love discovering mathematical patterns throughout everyday life. Now I recognise that many people are quite the opposite: hating maths, they seek to confine it to school classrooms they will never set foot in again and to textbooks they will definitely not open. I get that. But for me, maths embodies deep truths hard-wired into the cosmos.

Ian Stewart has made a career of writing over thirty maths books. He is a kind of Johnny Ball for adults. Jordan Ellenberg is Professor of Mathematics at the University of Wisconsin. I can have confidence in these ultra-numerate minds. 'Do dice play God' is of course a reversal of Einstein's scepticism over the weirdness and slipperiness of quantum physics: 'Does God play dice?' Stewart reveals that mathematicians have a long history of trying to quantify the uncertain and, as well as quantum theory, he considers statistics, probability, extreme events, forecasting, opinion polls, censuses and medical studies. As his title suggests, he does discuss gambling and offers fascinating insights. He says that uncertainty isn't always bad: most of us quite like surprises, as long as they are pleasant ones! However, he recognises that, even with highly uncertain events, we prefer comprehensibility over cluelessness; and he introduces us to scientists and mathematicians through the ages who have replaced wild unpredictability with probability distributions and rational statistical inferences. It read like a thriller.

To my shame, I had consigned geometry to sheets of paper and computer-based designs. I have always recognised some shapes as closed, symmetrical, patterned and therefore pleasing to the eye and mind; while other shapes I find unsettling or ugly. But Ellenberg shows geometry as a living subject, developing rapidly and full of challenge. One might even say it is 'cutting edge', to use a geometry-inspired metaphor! And geometry gets everywhere. Who would have thought that the spread of coronavirus, the rise of artificial intelligence and the fair drawing of constituencies for a parliament would depend on advanced geometric analysis? Ellenberg takes the reader on an exciting 3-D journey, full of strange turns.

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The Scottish Poppy Appeal 2023

Airdrie local organiser Mrs. Margaret Jack would like to thank all those who collected for the Poppy Appeal in Airdrie Morrisons and Tesco. (Among the collectors are many Church members). These collections, up to Remembrance Sunday 2023, raised the impressive total of **£10 088.80**, a tribute to the generosity of Airdrie shoppers to such a good cause.

MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP (MAF): Commissioning service

We attended what was a very special and moving act of worship. The High Church has had a relationship with Mission Aviation Fellowship for more than a decade. MAF is the world's largest humanitarian organisation operating by aeroplanes - it takes the gospel and delivers the essentials of life to the world's most remote poor communities.

Two new MAF workers were being commissioned prior to setting out for their work in Guinea, West Africa. Eddie and Rosie Watt told their stories. Eddie is from Shetland and at 65, has just retired as a pilot with Loganair, the Scottish airline. He and his wife Rosie were planning their retirement but decided to ensure decisions taken reflected the will of God. So they put a blank sheet of A4 and waited for God to give inspiration as they read the Bible or prayed. They had served with MAF thirty years ago, so the phone call they received came out of the blue. It said there was a non-salaried West African vacancy with MAF: could they serve in this?

Such willingness to put your future in God's hands and be prepared to take a leap of faith was so inspiring. It all runs so much counter to most people's thinking: rather than retirement being a time to put your feet up and think about your own pleasures, it can be a time to move out of your comfort zone and serve God in exciting new ways. It was moving, being part of all this, and we hope to keep up by receiving Eddie and Rosie's regular newsletter, with the splendid title 'Watts Next?' (*DK – I pointed out to Eddie that, for most jobs, there is no retirement age. Granted, there is a State Retirement Pension entitlement age, but this is a separate concept: you can go on working when you are over 65 and pick up wages and a pension at the same time. But what about pilots? Could I be flown by a 75 year old in the cockpit? Eddie said no, that 65 is the retirement age for UK pilots. African countries, however, are far more flexible.*)

Elaine Hunter, MAF representative, Airdrie High / David Kennedy

World Day of Prayer 2024 The WDP 2024 service for Airdrie took place in the Salvation Army Hall on Friday 1 March. It focused on the experiences of the women of Palestine and their stories were very interesting. The worship was based around the theme of 'bear with one another in love' from Ephesians 4:2. Hymns were well chosen, concluding with 'The day Thou gavest Lord, is ended.' There was a good attendance and afterwards, worshippers enjoyed a time of fellowship and refreshments. Thanks are due to Mrs. Margaret Muir, our local organiser, for making it all run like clockwork.

Bite-sized Bible

"When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home." John 19: 26, 27 (*English Standard Version*)

This is one of only a few recorded statements Jesus made on the Cross, known collectively as '*the seven last words of Jesus*'. Before we rush into celebrating the resurrection part of Easter, we need to consider the last words of Jesus on the cross. Until we understand Good Friday, we can't understand Resurrection Sunday.

As Jesus hung on the Cross for the sins of us all, He recognised His mother and could not but think of the years ahead. He entrusted His mother's welfare to the disciple John, standing near the cross with her; He made Mary's well-being John's responsibility. Jesus established a new relationship between His beloved mother and His beloved disciple. He said to Mary, "Woman, behold John, for whom, from now on, you must have a motherly affection," and to John, "Behold Mary, to whom you must pay a sonly duty." And so from that hour, that hour never to be forgotten, that disciple gave Mary the security of living with him in his own home. Mary and John would also be a comfort to each other in their loneliness, once Jesus was gone. There is something infinitely moving in Jesus, in agony on the Cross and at a point where the salvation of the world hung in the balance, thinking of the loneliness of His mother in the future and making provision for her. He was Mary's eldest son, and even in this moment of cosmic battle, He did not forget family duties close to Him. Even on the Cross, Jesus was managing to think more of the sorrows of others than of His own.

A Message from Lorrain Gilroy New Monkland and Greengairs *Deacon*

Dear Friends

I really enjoy this time of year as the seasons change. There are so many signs of new life as spring approaches. It is also the season of Lent, a time for reflection in our Christian year.

During these challenging times facing our national and local churches. May we take time to reflect on the majesty of God's creation which reminds us of a loving, creating and transforming God. As we reflect on the story of Christ's passion and resurrection, may we all find renewed strength and hope.

I would like to thank you all for your support, encouragement, dedication and commitment. It is a privilege to serve along side you as your locum minister.

In the coming months let us embrace change , walk forward in hope and trust in God.

With every good wish

Lorraine

Family (A Poem)

A family is a deeply rooted tree with branches of different strengths,
all receiving nourishment from an infinite source.

A family is where character is formed, values are learned,
ethics and society are preserved.

A family is where all members contribute and share, cooperate and work,
and accept their responsibilities toward the good of others.

A family is where holidays are celebrated with feasting, birthdays acknowledged with gifts
and thoughts of days gone by kept alive with memories.

A family is where each other can find solace and comfort in grief, pleasure and laughter in joy and kindness and encouragement in daily living.

A family is a haven of rest, a sanctuary of peace and most of all a harbour of love.

A family is a gift from God, So give thanks.

Family, something that some never experience.

So please remember them in your prayers.

Margret Taylor

Sheltered Housing Update New Monkland Parish Church

Sharing God's word in our local community with outreach Services to Glenmavis Sheltered Housing complex.

We are really blessed to have a great relationship with our local Sheltered Housing Complex. For many years we have been hosting short seasonal worship services in their hall in Waddell avenue, with our locum minister, Lorraine Gilroy, sharing a short reflection with those present, and our outreach team doing bible readings, leading us in prayer, and singing the hymns. The reflection is normally based around the current Christian season for example, at Easter, Harvest or Christmas. The services are well supported by the tenants, and the warden is always very welcoming, and happy to help and support us when we go along. The hall has a maximum capacity headcount attendance, which means that unfortunately, we are unable to issue an open invitation to the congregation to join us. However, we try to invite as many folks as we can. The services, which on average are held 3 to 4 times annually, take place on an agreed Sunday afternoon. The outreach team consists of around a dozen church members, one of our members takes along his keyboard to accompany us while we sing a selection of hymns. We all enjoy singing, and the tenants really like to sing along with us. We then share a cup of tea and some delicious treats, cakes and biscuits, with a good old blether!

Jesus said to his followers, (Mark chapter 16 verse 15.)

Go everywhere in the World and tell the Good News to everyone.

Margaret Croall, Elder, NMPC.



Flower Group NMPC

Now I know we have just had Christmas but..... all you who crochet or knit!! We plan to hold a Christmas Tree festival in December next year. Could you help by making granny squares in festive colours to make a crochet/knitted Christmas tree, you rose to the challenge in 2018 with our poppy display. Can you help again? Patterns can be provided if helpful.

NMPC Easter Service

The children will again have their end of term service in the church at easter, they will lead the service, it is always great to have the children in the church and we look forward to hear and see what they have to say.

A SPECIAL VISITOR

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Right Rev Sally Foster Fulton, is visiting our Presbytery between Saturday 9th March and Monday 18th March. A programme of public worship and events has been published by the Presbytery: there are great opportunities to meet local Kirk members and have a chat with the Moderator, who - by all accounts - is an approachable, engaging and inspiring person. Among the eye-catching happenings are:

Worship @ Coatbridge New St Andrews Parish Church: Sunday 10 March at 6:30pm

Walk and fellowship @ James Hamilton Heritage Loch, East Kilbride: Monday 11 March at 2pm
Singing hymns @ St. Ninian's, Stonehouse: Tuesday 12 March at 7:30pm, followed by refreshments
Coffee and a chat @ Falkirk Camelon Parish Church: Thursday 14 March at 10:30am
Worship @ Hamilton Hillhouse Parish Church: Sunday 17 March at 7pm

For more information on these and other events and services, see the posts on the Facebook page for The Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale. fb.me/fvandcpres

Surely not? weird stories from the media

Run run run run runaway!

A train in India travelled more than 43 miles and reached speeds of 62mph without a driver. The runaway goods train sped through five train stations (and was filmed going through one of these stations) on 25 February 2024. The train left from Kathua, India, bound for Hoshiarpur 84 miles away but when it stopped for a crew change, it rolled down another track and gathered speed. Both the driver and assistant had disembarked when the train set off, before it was eventually stopped by Indian Railways staff. **Metro**

Cold meat – phone home!

A shopper's social media posting has gone viral after she shared a photo of a packet of chicken breasts which bear an uncanny resemblance to E.T., the extra-terrestrial. The face of the friendly alien was spotted in sealed chicken breasts, which shopper Melissa Mendez bought and photographed. **Metro**

Get into the groove

Music lovers can now be immortalised by having their ashes baked into vinyl records, thanks to a new service from Gedling Crematorium, Nottinghamshire. The bespoke discs feature recordings and images of a loved one, and each contain a small amount of their ashes. The memorial can include a special message or soundtrack, or the sound of silence – aside from the unmistakeable pops and crackles of a vinyl record. **Gedling Eye newspaper**

Cold sweat

A runner training to do the London marathon with a 4 stone fridge on his back was stopped by police – as they thought he had stolen it. Daniel Fairbrother, 34, from Hertfordshire, explained he is hoping to raise £10 000 for Diabetes UK in support of his best friend, Sam. Officers joked: *"You do know, if you order it from Currys they will deliver it for you!"* **Metro**

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