

Christmas 2013

The Bridge



Communion will be celebrated on

Sunday 8th December at 11am & 6pm.

Everyone is welcome

From the Manse



The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep
darkness
a light has dawned.
Isaiah 9 : 2

On the first of November driving into Darvel I really did think I was seeing things, 'was that a Christmas tree?, no it can't be, but it was a Christmas tree, in all its glory, lights, tinsel, baubles and topped with the star! For some the season can't come quick enough, for others it will be here all too soon.

I smiled to myself as I drove on, smiled as I remembered the year our eldest daughter didn't take her tree down until well into January, in fact I may have this wrong but I do believe it was Valentines Day before her tree was packed away.

But this early tree got me thinking..... I'm sure that many will have passed and been taken aback just as I was, at this prematurely decorated tree - some to shake their heads in disgust with such thoughts as 'it's far too early for that... tut tut tut' others to smile at the silliness of the whole thing, a quiet smile, perhaps feeling slightly above all that kind of festive nonsense.

I imagined children out for a walk with parent or grandparent and the adult, who had perhaps tutted in disgust or smiled at the silliness taking great delight in pointing this tree out to the young child. For Christmas trees are such childish things are they not? Yes? No?

Childish or not those lights of the tree were shining brightly – reminding us that Christmas will soon be here. And then I think of Isaiah’s prophecy about the birth of Christ, he was not coming into a world of bright lights and tinsel, he was coming into a world of darkness and despair. And our world is still full of darkness and despair, as I write this I am mindful of the people in the Philippines who are suffering terribly at this time. I am mindful of those who are bereaved and living with great sorrow, mindful of those who struggle financially and feeding their children day to day brings such worry, mindful of the soldiers serving abroad who will not be home for Christmas, yes this world is full of darkness and despair. But it is to such places that Christ comes, bringing his light and life to those in dark places.

The story of the first Christmas is a wonderful story, but just as some adults tut tut at the early tree but are happy to show it to the children, just as some adults think the early tree is just a bit silly but love to point it out to children, so too many who have never really considered what God was doing in sending his son to live among us are happy to tell this wonderful story to their children and grandchildren – separating themselves from the wonderful truth that this story is for all people, young and old, sick and well, rich and poor.... all people it is not just for the children, it is for all of us who live with darkness in our lives.

May the light of Christ shine in the dark places in your life and by his grace may you share that light with those who are experiencing the darkness.

Terry

Prayer Corner

At the start of October I had the pleasure of escorting Dr Ruth Shakespeare, our Missionary Prayer Partner, around various congregations in West Lothian where she was sharing something of her work in the Mulange Hospital in Malawi.

I was touched by her humble and graceful manner as she spoke of the many challenges that face her and her work in providing a medical service in this poor, very poor country. Yet despite these challenges she was not one to complain about injustices but thanked God for what she was able to deliver to these folks. Please read Felicity's article for an insight to soon of these challenges

She was very grateful for the pledges that congregations made during her visit to the ongoing work in the hospital and its environs and asked that we continue to uphold her work in our prayers.

It is so much easier to feel pity for those in need when someone is able to speak personally of their suffering, more difficult for the silent majority who suffer in silence with few aware of their challenges.

As I walk with the dog or on my own I am encouraged to pray for people and services that come to mind as I pass them in the street. I pray silently as I pass the nursing homes, schools, the police station, fire station, the homeless unit etc. Or for individuals who look down in heart, troubled and those possibly behaving in an anti social way.

I know my prayers are heard by our Heavenly Father and that God will address these needs. We have a God who loves all in this community and longs for them to respond to his calling.

It is important that we open our eyes, our hearts and our mouths to those in needs around just as Jesus commanded of us. It is pleasing to Jesus that we show compassion for others.

May God bless you in the season of Advent.

In your personal prayers please pray for

- Our minister and office bearers that God will protect and lead them and their families
- For families where there may be division that there may be reconciliation this Christmas
- Pray for our Queen and her Government as they rule over us in these seeming never ending difficult economic times.
- Gordon, his new assistant youth worker and the BUSY project for their youth work in the schools and the wider community
- For the political turmoil in Syria, that there might be stability, pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in these lands.
- For the unemployed, especially amongst our young folk, that they might find work.
- The sick, anxious, lonely, estranged and the bereaved that they will find God's peace and love.
- Our armed forces and their families, relief organisations that strive to bring peace, justice and relief to all in need.
- For Dr Ruth Shakespeare, our Missionary Partner and her work in Malawi.

David Wilkie

Congregational Prayer Secretary

01506 238644





Friends of Chernobyl's Children
West Lothian



FOCC

The planning for our 2014 visit from the children is already underway !! Since our 2013 visit our activities team have had 3 meetings and our provisions team are getting organised too. By the end of December we hope to have a draft of our activities programme for the month, ready.

Our fundraising is already in full swing and with 20 children in our group for next year we will need to raise £20,000 to support them in all that we do for them throughout the year. We have a great team of hardworking host families and helpers and we will be well organised and with the necessary funds in place well in advance of the children coming. The children will be based in our halls every week day during the period 23rd May to 21st June 2014. Its hard to believe that this will be the 5th and last visit for our original children. It has been great to see them grow from where they started as small, skinny, shy 7 year olds and they will hopefully leave us as healthier, bright, confident 11 or 12 year olds having had 5 great visits, 5 years of support to them and their families, having had 5 great adventures that have broadened their horizons and knowing that there are people from Scotland who love them very much. We look forward very much to making their final year very special.

I visited Belarus recently from 18th – 25th October and I am happy to report that all the children on the programme are doing ok. Dennis – a favourite of many in the congregation, continues to behave well and its great to see the transformation in this lovely wee boy. They will all receive a large food parcel from us just before Christmas and a further one on our official visit to see them at the end of March, along with much needed other supplies. We hosted a joint party for the Edinburgh and West Lothian groups when we were there and they all ate as much as they could, took home any leftover food and had a great time playing with us.

Our 2014 group will see our numbers reduce from 22 to 20. This has been planned. 2 of the children will transfer to our Forth Valley group and 1 girl – Small Sasha will stop as her hosts have done their minimum 3 years. That leaves us with 19 returning children. The extra space will be taken by a new girl called Karyna who is 9. Karyna lived in an apartment in the city of Mogilev with mum, dad and baby brother who is 18 months. Mum went into hospital in May this year with a sore stomach and died very suddenly at the age of 28. A beautiful lady taken so young. We can never be sure if it had anything to do with the

radiation, but it happens all too often within the families we are in touch with. Karynas dad found it difficult to cope with the situation and with no job Karynas gran who was retired, got a job sweeping the streets, as well as looking after Karyna and baby. The situation has changed again as Karyna could not continue to live in the flat as she had too many memories of mum there and found it hard to cope. She is now living with her mums mum in a village while her dads mum is looking after her baby brother in the dads flat. Dad now works away in Russia. They meet up at weekends. Karyna was hosted in our Edinburgh group in September this year just to get her on the programme and we agreed to take her into West Lothian for her remaining 4 years with us. Despite all that has gone on in her very young life she is a such a happy, smiley and positive girl and it is great that we have the opportunity to bring some happiness to her life.

2014 will see another member of our congregation becoming a host parent. Krystina who has been with us for 4 years was due to stop as her host was stopping. However Krystina lives in a terrible situation in a very remote contaminated village with an alcoholic mother and no father. Grandmother, who lives nearby, provides some stability in her life. Krystina is such a lovely girl, who has been hosted by a lovely grandmother figure in Whitburn for the past few years and I am delighted to be able to re-host her with another lovely grandmother figure in Broxburn, Helen Cunningham, for her final year with us.

Kenny Turnbull

Co-ordinator

Friends of Chernobyl's Children, Edinburgh West - West Lothian Group





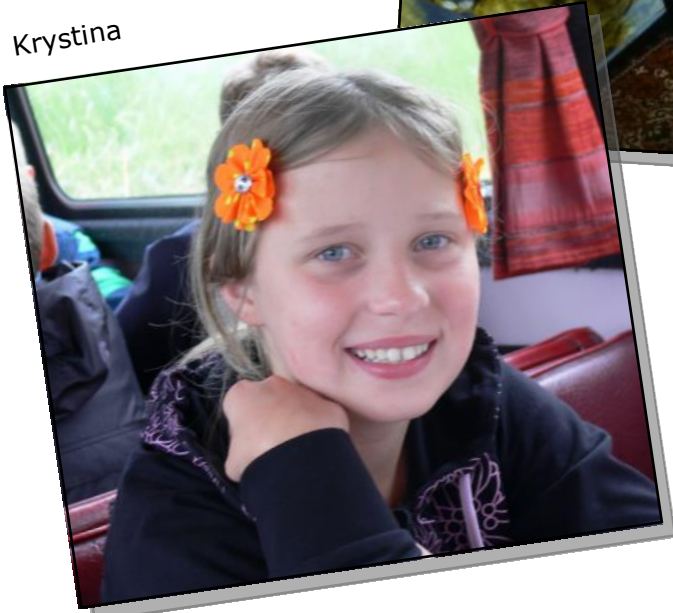
Karyna's mum



Karyna



Krystina



Congregational Quiz

Pictured below is the Bridge Choir team of Andy Duncan, Robert Paul and Alison Hunter who narrowly beat the Kirk Session team by just half a point to win this year's quiz in October.

It was a great social and fundraising night.

Thank you to everyone who entered a team or helped to prepare and serve refreshments on the evening.



The Bridge choir at Dobbies



Dennis

We are well into our new session and the girls are having lots of fun.

We are currently practicing for our carol service on Friday 6th December at 7.30pm in the church to which everyone is invited to.

Many thanks to everyone who came along to our MUMS night. We raised £150 and also £150 worth of goods were sold. It was lovely to see so many people there.

We are going to the panto in Livingston for Christmas which we hope goes smoothly. Taking 100 girls in one big group should be fun!!

For further information please contact:

Alison Turnbull

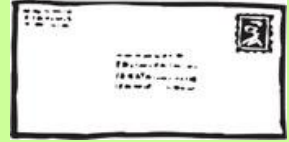
01506 852171

07984 315250

alit@blueyonder.co.uk



CHRISTMAS POST



Dates of pick ups are- 1st, 8th and 15th December.

Last date for Uphall cards is Sun 8th Dec.

All cards must be in before church service on Sunday 16th December.

Stamps cost 25p each which is still a great saving ocost of a 2nd class stamp. Stamps can also be bought and cards posted at the Fotocard shop and Brian Curries until Sat 14th Dec.

This year the proceeds will go to supporting the Foodbank.

You can post cards for-

Uphall, Broxburn, Uphall Station, Dechmont and Ecclesmachan.

If you are able to help with the deliveries please see Alison Turnbull- both regular and new "posties"- we can never have too much help.



Christmas Card competition

Congratulations to Hollie Russell (aged 9) from the Girls' Brigade who won the competition to design our Christmas Card.



Diary Dates

14th December	Torchlight procession
22nd December	JAM Nativity
24th December	Watchnight Service
Christmas Day	10am service



Tea & Coffee served in the manse afterwards - All Welcome

7th January 2014 Congregational Board meeting



Soup Lunches

There will be a soup lunch on Wednesday 18th December in aid of the local Foodbank.

Dates for the first quarter of next year are as follows:

15th January	The Leprosy Mission
5th February	FOCC
19th February	Mulanje Mission Hospital
5th March	The Busy Project
19th March	Mums - Malawi Underprivileged Mothers



Remember to visit our website:

www.broxburnparishchurch.org.uk

or like and share us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/BroxburnParishChurch

The Bridge Choir

Goodness, how time flies! It is hard to believe that, here we are again in the run up to Christmas!

We spent a lovely evening in October entertaining the ladies of the Guild at their Friendship Evening. There were many ladies from other local Guilds present also and I do believe a good night was had by all. I must say the Guild did us all proud with the supper they provided – thank you ladies.

We are busy rehearsing for Christmas now, learning our new numbers for this year. As of the last few years, we have been invited back to sing at St Johns Hospital. This will be on Thursday 12th December around evening visiting times. Dobbies have also asked us back again and this will be on Sunday 22nd December from 2-4pm in the Garden Centre, after the Christmas Nativity Service in the Church. If you are around for any of these events please do come and say hello.

After the New Year it will be back to rehearsing for next year's concert. We propose to have the concerts in June subject to being agreed by the Kirk Session. We have provisionally agreed the dates as Thursday 5th and Friday 6th of June. Watch this space for further news.

As the Festive season approaches, the Choir would like to extend their good wishes to all for a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Janice MacPherson

Secretary

News from Malawi

Once again we have had the pleasure welcoming our Missionary Partner to Broxburn.

Dr. Ruth Shakespeare was on deputation to West Lothian in October where she was able to share her experiences with other partner churches.

We were fortunate to have had three visits to our area, on the Sunday evening, as part of the Council of Churches, we met for supper in Strathbrock Church Hall. This was followed by an illustrated talk. On the Tuesday evening, Broxburn Parish Church hosted the West Lothian Presbyterial Guild Rally where Ruth was the guest speaker. On Wednesday Ruth spoke at our midday service in the small hall.

It was lovely to hear, first hand, about all the work that has been done in Mulanje Mission Hospital since Ruth's last visit but as she said, there is more to do.

We were able to present Ruth with £600 from our 'Mission Money Box' for which she expressed very grateful thanks.

We wished her a safe return to Malawi after, hopefully being able to visit a new grandchild.

Felicity Murrie

Liz Orr has been with us on placement since October, Liz is training for the Readership and this is her final placement. She is also completing her academic study by distance learning at ICC in Glasgow. The placement consists of five hours per week plus a Sunday, so Liz will be a familiar face participating in and leading worship during her time with us.

I know she has appreciated the warm welcome and encouragement she has received from the congregation. Please remember Liz in your prayers as she undertakes her placement commitments and her study.

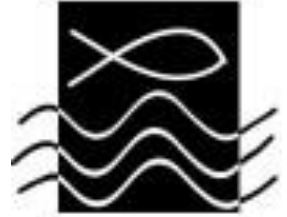
Funerals

The following funerals were omitted from the last magazine. Sincere apologies to the families.

May – Margaret McDevitt

June – Isaac Carson

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August

Easton Reid

September

Carole Kenny

Alexander Fairlie
Readdie

October

Thomas Munro

Ann Queen

November

Gordon Hughes
May Sives

Reminder

- All intimations need to be with Elspeth by Wednesday 5pm to ensure they are included in the following Sunday's intimations.

elspethrodger@blueyonder.co.uk

- Items for inclusion in the next issue should be submitted by early February 2014 to either Hugh Brown or Stuart Cunningham, or emailed to:

hughb92@blueyonder.co.uk or stu.c@tesco.net

Who's Who



Minister

Rev. Terry Taylor BA, M.Th The Manse, 2 Church Street 852825

Session Clerk

Mr. John Macaulay 137 East Main Street 852947

Congregational Board

Chair: Mr. Hugh Brown 92 Gyle Park Gardens 0131 334 1384
Corstorphine

Clerk: Mrs. Anne Gunn 3 Kirkhill Court 856984

Treasurer

Mrs. Sue Sneddon 15 West Hall Road 07758 195274

Gift Aid Convener

Miss Jean Weir 135 Houston Gardens 855626

Roll Keeper

Mr. Brian Short 28 Newhouses Road 857540

Prayer Secretary

Mr. David Wilkie 55 Goschen Place 238644

Pastoral Care Group co-ordinator

Mr. Nat Beggs 6 Grange Road 852170

Organist

Mr. James Lawrie 13 Queens Avenue 856609

Church Officer

Mr. John Macaulay 137 East Main Street 852947

Hall Convener

Mrs. Alison Turnbull 21 Queens Road 852171

Property Convener

Mr. Robert Pattison 12 Houston Gardens 855505

Communications co-ordinator

Mr. Hugh Brown 92 Gyle Park Gardens 0131 334 1384
Corstorphine

Safeguarding co-ordinator

Mrs. Elaine Brown 92 Gyle Park Gardens 0131 334 1384
Corstorphine

Social & Fundraising Convener

Position vacant