



Broxburn Parish Church

Bridge Newsletter - Winter 2021

FROM THE INTERIM MODERATOR

Rev. Derek Henderson



Dear friends,

Since I last wrote to you all in the summer, much has happened.

The refurbishment of the sanctuary has been completed and the church is now open again for Sunday worship, albeit with certain restrictions still in place. The current national vaccination programme is having a positive impact but sadly, Covid 19 is still with us. Thus, for those who are uncomfortable about returning to in-person services, I am continuing with the Sunday evening services on Zoom at 6.30pm for the foreseeable future.

By the time you read this there may (or may not be) news to share on the continuing vacancy. However, members and others need to be aware that if a sole nominee has not preached for the charge by 31st December, the vacancy process will be terminated, unless the Presbytery and the Faith Nurture Forum give permission for the process to continue. This is as a result of a decision taken by the General Assembly in May.

Linked to this is the emerging Presbytery Plan which now exists in draft form and which was noted by West Lothian Presbytery at its meeting on 2nd November. It sets out how West Lothian will reduce the number of paid ministry posts from the current 28.2 to 17, also a requirement of the General Assembly. At the moment, the proposal is that Broxburn would be linked with the congregations of Uphall South and Strathbrock, with 1.5 posts allocated. Much consultation, both locally and with the Church's national offices, remains to be done before this plan can be finalised, hopefully by the deadline of December 2022. As things develop, we will give you further information.

The other significant change which will happen on 1st January 2022 is that the Presbyteries of West Lothian and Edinburgh will merge into a new Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian. The final meeting of the Presbytery of West Lothian will take place in Broxburn Parish Church on 7th December and will be my last meeting as Moderator of Presbytery.

I was in the supermarket the other day looking for some Mini Magnams for our grandchildren only to find a large gap in the chill units were they are usually to be found. There weren't any! Due to Covid, Brexit, shortage of lorry drivers – you take your pick. No-one seemed to know.

But this is not the end of the world for us; most of us will still have food and presents at Christmas, unlike many around the world and even in our own communities. One of the comments made at Presbytery recently was that Food Banks were introduced at the time of the financial crash over 10 years ago as a temporary measure, but the demand for them is now greater than ever.



With all this going on in our Church and with issues in wider society and world (and I haven't mentioned COP26), it is hard to appreciate that this is the season of Advent. But I recently came across a poem by Christina Rossetti who will be known to you as the writer of the hymns 'In the Bleak Midwinter' and 'Love Came Down at Christmas'. This is what she wrote about Christmas to remind us that it is the coming of Jesus which is what matters...



**Brighter than the blazing noon,
Christmas hath a chillness
Warmer than the heat of June,
Christmas hath a beauty
Lovelier than the world can show:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
Brought for us so low.**

**Earth, strike up your music,
Birds that sing and bells that ring;
Heaven hath answering music
For all Angels soon to sing:
Earth, put on your whitest
Bridal robe of spotless snow:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
Brought for us so low.**

May God bless you all this Christmas time,

Derek

Treasurer's Update

How nice it is to be back at Church and to be able to share worship together again in our newly refurbished sanctuary.

Since my last magazine update there has been quite a lot of financial activity as our church renovations got underway. Although we received less of a grant than we'd applied for via Adapt & Thrive, thanks to your ongoing generosity we were in a strong enough financial position to carry on with our plans. Most of the bills for the work undertaken have now come in and been paid.

With the exception of May (when the grant was paid into our account) outgoings in each month up to August exceeded income by at least **£2,000**. With the Church reopening for Sunday worship from 12th September, we now have the benefit of Open Plate collections but also need to pay for pulpit supply for visiting preachers.

In September, when most of the renovation bills were settled, expenses exceeded income by over **£15,700**. In October, our income of **£4,735.05** was exceeded by outgoings of **£5,633.37**.

Our biggest monthly expense is our Ministry and Mission contribution to Central Funds (currently over **£3,000**) which we pay for ten months of the year. After November we have two 'free' months which should help bolster our funds again and we have a tax reclaim of over **£2,000** due to be paid in November. Some of our regular hall lets have also started back, with more due to start back by the end of the year, again helping to bring in some additional income.

Thanks again to everyone who has helped boost our Church coffers in any way, whether via donation envelopes, bank transfers, cheques or cash. You have helped make sure that we retain a healthy financial position. I look forward to sharing fellowship with you when you feel able to return to church. Until then, stay safe.



Sue Sneddon

Merry Christmas and all the best for 2022. May your

Sunday Club

Christmas be filled with happiness, fun, friends, family and love. May the love of our God shine down on you. Oh, and do try to remember its Jesus' birthday - not just the day that Santa comes!

From the Sunday Club leaders

Our Vacancy

Can you believe it is now over two years since our Church became a vacant charge? By now, under normal circumstances, we would have hoped to have secured or be well on our way to securing a replacement minister. However, as we all know, recent times have not been normal.

After an enforced delay, our Nominating Committee was set up earlier this year and immediately put together and published our Parish Profile. That aside, the work of the committee is confidential so as much as we would like to, we cannot share any information until we are able to do so.

Our unrestricted call ends on Hogmanay. Next year, the new Presbytery Plans that Derek Henderson refers to on page 1 could add another level of difficulty to any new call we have - and how that then fits into future planning.

Please pray for the work of the committee to help us find the right person to lead us in our future worship - or perhaps it should be to pray that they find us!

David McWilliams, Convener, Nominating Committee



'Light in the Darkness' is the theme of this year's Church of Scotland online Advent calendar, which runs from 1st December until Christmas Eve. The theme is inspired by John 1:5 "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Each day during Advent, a new window will be available to open with a themed prayer, video, or story. Go to:
www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/advent

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal



Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to the Blythswood shoebox appeal 2021. The response from our congregation and other Churches, local people and friends and family was phenomenal – as shown in the photograph.

We were also able to handover to Blythswood a cheque for **£342.90** from our retiring offering and donations. This is in addition to the money people put into envelopes with their bags and boxes to help towards transport costs.



These filled boxes and bags bring real joy to people who have so little in countries like Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

By supporting this appeal you have made a real difference to Christmas for people who may otherwise receive nothing.



SOYA (Special Offers Young Adults)

Back in 2009, The Guild started giving £1 a month which was put onto ASDA cards to buy personal gifts for vulnerable young adults - perhaps the only Christmas gift they would receive. Since then, thousands of pounds have been donated to SOYA. Organiser Bob Pattison said: "I would like to restart this for next year. Prices have risen sharply over the last 12 years and with dwindling numbers and a growing need we would like to increase the donations. Having spoken to a few people the consensus is for £2 per month. Thank you in advance!"

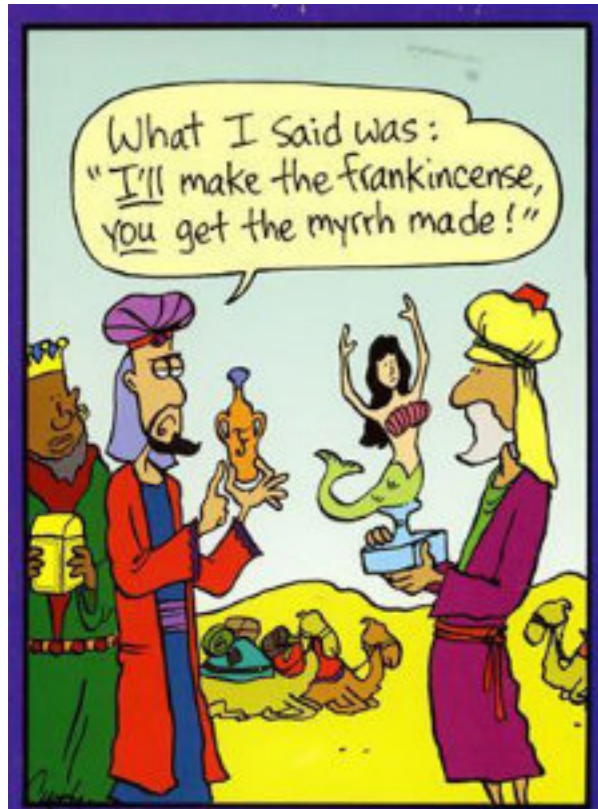
If you would like to start donating, please speak to Bob Pattison.



Christmas Cartoons



"They say they are three kings."



PRAYER

December God,
this is the month of Nativity,
of expectancy,
of the shortest day
and the longest night;
nights that are testament to your creative power
of eclipses silently appearing over southern seas and land
of Super New Moons dipping close to our home
of the bright Geminid showers and the final sparkling Ursids of the year.
The dark of the northern hemisphere lit with the Cold Moon
and the fireworks of the cosmos
putting to shame the paltry shows of humankind.
Month of the Narcissus and the Holly
fragrant, dangerous, berries blood red
offering a portent of what is to come
and the ground hard with mid-winter chill.
The nest-building Heron, mirroring your mother
announcing Advent
as she prepares for new life.
What are we that you care for us
in the midst of such grandeur?
You have told us!
We are brighter to you than the brightest star.
We are unique and loved,
gifted with life and burgeoning potential.
Help us to celebrate the birth of life
to lay aside the beads and baubles,
the scattered wrappings
and look to the arrival of hope
for all that crawls and creeps
for all that cries and cradles.
Creation's children Born anew.
Amen.

(Courtesy of Life and Work magazine)

The next chapter...



On Sunday 12th September, we finally re-opened our doors, having been closed for an unbelievable 546 days – or 78 Sundays!

For those of you who have not yet been in the sanctuary, you'll see from the photograph that it looks very different. With some assistance from funding through the Adapt and Thrive

scheme, we removed the pews and replaced them with comfortable seats, most of which have arms as well as somewhere for your Communion cup. The sanctuary is also now carpeted and has been completely redecorated.

The sound system has been moved to the back of the church and live streaming facilities installed, which will mean that those who can't be with us or are housebound will be able to watch services and other events such as funerals.

This makes the space much more flexible for what it can be used going forward both by ourselves and other groups - and it should also be cosier in the Winter too.

Most of the pews were given to The Brock, a local charity based at the Strathbrock Partnership Centre which works with people with mental health issues. Their woodworking group used some of the wood to craft a cross incorporating our dove logo and beautiful wooden bowls which we will hopefully be able to use in future for Communion, as well as key rings for the congregation as a reminder of the pews.

The next chapter for Broxburn Parish Church has well and truly begun. We look forward to YOU being part of it!



Recipe Corner...Recipe Corner

If, like me, you leave making your Christmas Cake to the last minute (my latest was Christmas Eve!), I'd like to share a recipe I was given by a friend. This can be made as a simple sultana loaf or, with a slight change, made as a Christmas cake. Even better, the cake can be mixed in a saucepan – no food mixer needed!

Ingredients

4oz Margarine
8oz Self Raising Flour
16oz Sultanas
1 Cup Sugar (I use dark brown)
1 Cup Boiled Water*
1 teaspoon Mixed Spice
1 teaspoon Bicarbonate of Soda
2 Eggs



Method

Preheat your oven to 160 degrees Celcius

Grease and line your loaf tin (2lbs) or cake tin (8" round)

In a large saucepan put the margarine, sugar, Bicarbonate of Soda, Sultanas and water*, and boil up for 5 minutes.

Remove from heat and add the flour, spice and 2 eggs and mix everything together.

Put the cake mix into your prepared tin and bake for 1 hour or until a skewer pushed into the centre comes out clean.

Leave to cool in the tin for a while then remove from the tin and cool totally on a wire tray.

This cuts much better if left for a few days and stores well (depending on how quickly you eat it).

I used to bring this cake to some of the soup lunches so you may well have tasted it before (it's very more-ish!).

*If making this as a Christmas cake reduce the water to half a cup and add half a cup of brandy or sherry, adding this with the water. You shouldn't then need to 'feed' the cake.

I hope you enjoy making it and eating it as much as I do!

Sue Sneddon

Bridge Choir Bows Out

Normally at this time of year, the Bridge Choir are busy preparing for Christmas but sadly we have taken the difficult decision to disband after 10 happy years. Our conductor Alan is having to stand down and regrettably the number of people unable to return for various reasons meant that we were not able to sustain the choir. We are all very sad, but also very glad that we can look back on some wonderful times sharing fellowship and making music together. We are also grateful for the times we sang at St. John's Hospital, Dobbies and Livingston Centre as we were able to raise substantial amounts for charity, as well as being invited to sing in several churches to share our music.

Without a doubt though, our highlight was performing every year in Broxburn Parish Church along with our amazing Junior Choir, who I have to say, stole the show every time. We hope we provided you with some of your favourite songs - because without you, our audience, we wouldn't have had the pleasure of singing them.

A huge thank you too to all our helpers throughout the years, our front of house teams, our team of wonderful ladies serving teas, supervisors of the children, sound, lighting as well as support from our Kirk Session for allowing us to rehearse every Tuesday and Thursday. Without you all, our concerts couldn't have happened.

I think I can safely speak for all of the Bridge Choir in saying we've had the most amazing 10 years, and who knows perhaps one day it will all begin again because as one of our members so aptly said: "Music never dies!"

It leaves me to say in the midst of these still very uncertain times, have a wonderful, blessed Christmas and of course a 'safe' one.

Many blessings,

Elaine Gilmour

2010

2019



Name that Christmas Carol

All of the words listed below are contained within well known Christmas Carols. How many can you identify? Not all are complete full lines of text and no carol appears more than once. Good luck!

- 1. Where they lay keeping their sheep**
- 2. Born the king of angels**
- 3. To save us all from Satan's power**
- 4. Glory to God in the highest!**
- 5. The stars in the bright sky**
- 6. On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day**
- 7. Let men their songs employ**
- 8. Deep and Dreamless Sleep**
- 9. A voice as big as the sea**
- 10. With heart and soul and voice**
- 11. Star with royal beauty bright**
- 12. From Heavens all gracious King**
- 13. Join the triumph of the skies**
- 14. Fear not he said for mighty dread**
- 15. Mary was that mother mild**

1. The First Noel
2. O Come, All Ye Faithful
3. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
4. O Come, All Ye Faithful
5. Away in a Manger
6. I Saw Three Ships
7. Joy to the World
8. O Little Town of Bethlehem
9. Do You Hear What I Hear?
10. Good Christian Men Rejoice
11. We Three Kings of Orient Are
12. It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
13. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
14. While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks
15. Once in Royal David's City

Answers





Task Group members:



Rev. Derek Henderson
Anne Gunn
Andy Carter
David McWilliams
Sue Sneddon
Hugh Brown

We are all members of our church family. So if we can help you in any way, or you have a Prayer Request, or perhaps you just need a listening ear, please telephone: 07934 073349. Calls will of course be treated confidentially.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



The Kirk Session and Congregational Board of Broxburn Parish Church would like to wish all of our members, as well as their friends and family a very happy and blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Broxburn Parish Church of Scotland
broxburnparishchurch.org.uk

Scottish Charity Number: SC 017180

FRIENDLY ○ FAMILY ○ FELLOWSHIP