



Broxburn Parish Church

Bridge Newsletter - Winter 2023

FROM THE INTERIM MODERATOR

Rev. Derek Henderson



Dear friends,

Although Covid is still with us and some of our folks in the parish are still coming to terms with the after-effects of the pandemic, there are many ways in which our church life is moving forward. The refurbishment of the sanctuary during lock-down, and the improvements to it, have added to its flexibility as a worship space and for other activities.

We have enjoyed once again in recent times our monthly Coffee Bar, refreshments after a Sunday service, and occasional afternoon teas, the last of which proved very popular indeed. My wife Margaret and I have greatly enjoyed the times we have been able to join with you for services and these other events. We have always been made to feel welcome, so much so that we feel that we belong and are not just occasional visitors. It has been a real privilege to watch as things move forward in a positive way.

The other encouraging signs are the number of new people who are coming along to join us for worship and to take part in other events. The recent Caritas events were designed to provide a space where new folks and existing members were able to meet and to talk about the Christian faith. They were well-attended and well received, so much so that two individuals have come forward for Church membership and we hope to be able to admit them to membership at the Communion service in December.

The Presbytery Plan, which I have spoken about before, was finally approved in April of this year. The plan proposes a three-way union between Broxburn, Strathbrock and Uphall South. Each of us, at our Stated Annual Meetings, elected five people to represent us on a Steering Group. This group has now met on a number of occasions and at the time of writing a first draft of a potential basis of union has been prepared – this will require further consideration by the group and by Presbytery before it comes to the Kirk Session and congregation of each parish for a vote as to its acceptability.

I have been with you all now for four years and am encouraged by all that God has enabled us to do in the most difficult of circumstances. There are still challenges ahead but I pray that with God's help we will face these together and agree the path on which God intends us to travel. However, I cannot write this letter to you without thinking about all those in the Middle East, Ukraine and elsewhere, at this time of violent conflict, for whom Christmas will be filled with hatred and war; those who no longer have homes or livelihood; those whose days will be filled with sadness and pain, and those who will have to face what should have been a happy time without those family and friends who have been taken from them. Please find time to pray for this situation.

May God bless you all this Christmas and in 2024,

Derek



Sunday 24th December

**Broxburn Parish Church at 11am:
Christmas Eve Worship with Martin Pearce**

**Uphall South Church at 11.15pm:
Watchnight Service**

Monday 25th December

**Strathbrock Parish Church at 10.30am:
Christmas Morning Worship
with Rev Hanneke Janse van Vuren**

Sunday 31st December

**Broxburn Parish Church at 11am:
Morning Worship with Rev John Povey**

Sunday 7th January 2024

**No Morning Worship at Broxburn Parish Church
You are invited to attend either of the
following services:**

Strathbrock Parish Church at 10.30am

or

Uphall South Church at 11am

Treasurer's Update

Well, where has this year gone? It's hard to believe that 2023 is now drawing to a close. Although it has been a wee while since our last magazine update, I have been keeping the Board updated with our financial position on a month by month basis.

Our finances are in a better position than I predicted at the start of the year, thanks to your ongoing generosity, to a resurgence in hall lets and the success of our hospitality events. Having developed a Covid-safe way of operating, our monthly coffee bars on the first Saturday of every month continue to be popular, with home-baking delivered to your table – no more queuing!

We've also managed to hold three afternoon teas, in March, June and September, greatly enjoyed by all who attended, and we have been able to offer hospitality after church every Sunday. These have combined to bring in almost **£7,000!**

Our hall lets have added another **£5,700!**

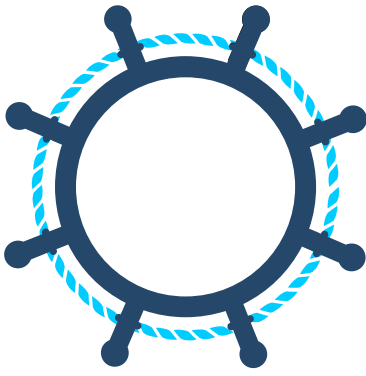
In most months this year (March, April, May and October being the exceptions), our income has exceeded our expenditure – a fantastic position to be in! The biggest deficits were in April (where we had the cost of the wall and path repairs) and in October with the cost of essential repairs to our heating system and renewal of the licences we need to allow us to play music, record and stream services.

Overall expenses have so far been less than budgeted for, but with winter fast approaching heating and lighting expenses will soon start to ramp up. However I'm hopeful that we will still end the year in a much stronger financial position than anticipated at the start of the year.

Our biggest fundraising event, the Christmas Fayre, takes place on **Saturday 2nd December** and our craft group has been working all year to make items for our craft stall. We look forward to seeing you there.



Sue Sneddon



Steering Group Update

Work has started on joining together the three congregations of Broxburn, Strathbrock St. Nicholas and Uphall South. Five representatives from each of the Churches meet every month with a view to producing a Basis of Union document. We

started in July this year and will continue to meet in 2024.

All three Kirk Sessions and Congregations will need to agree whatever the Steering Group finally come up with. As discussions are ongoing and confidential we are unable to provide you with any updates just now - however our conversations include things like:

- **What should the name of our new Church be after the union?**
- **What happens to our respective properties and finances?**
- **How will our weekly worship services operate when we join together?**

Our representatives are Sue Sneddon, Andy Carter, Jim Borland, Bob Pattison and David McWilliams. We look forward to being able to share information with you next year and ask that you pray for the combined group as we work to shape the future of our Churches in the areas of Broxburn and Uphall.

David McWilliams, Session Clerk

Don't forget Gift Day is on Sunday 10th December. Please bring an UNWRAPPED present to church. These will be distributed to children who might not otherwise receive a gift on Christmas Day. Thank you.

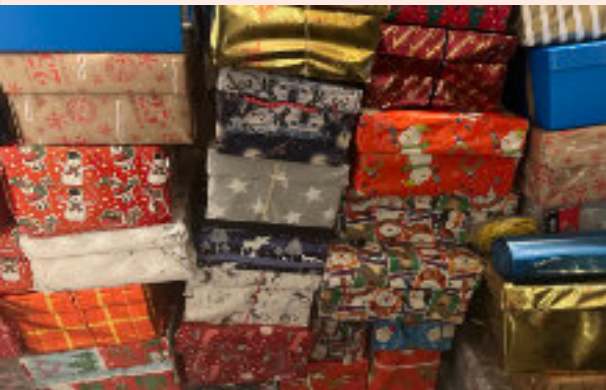
Blythswood Shoebox Appeal



A huge thank you to everyone who contributed in any way towards the shoebox appeal 2023. Over 60 shoeboxes were picked up – along with over £150 in cash – which excludes the money placed in Blythswood envelopes inside the boxes.

There were also bags of knitted goods and other items which will be added to boxes at the main depot in Edinburgh.

The boxes are this year heading for Kosovo, and will be appreciated greatly by those who will probably receive no other gift this Christmas.



As most of you know, during Covid, sadly our Churches had to close and as a result our Sunday Club was no longer in existence. The good news however is we're up and running again on the first Sunday of the month when we have activities, music and crafts as well as learning about Jesus.



We'd love to see more children - every child is welcome, even if it's only for an occasional visit.

And if you're willing to help, please speak to me. There's no preparation involved as I'll see to that. All we ask is that you're on the Congregational Register.

All that leaves me to say is have a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful, healthy New Year.

Many blessings,

Elaine Gilmour

S.O.Y.A. (Special Offers Young Adults)

On behalf of all the young adults that we are trying to help I would like to express a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to S.O.Y.A this year. You have managed to raise a magnificent **£855** and along with the bonus payment from ASDA this takes the total to **£900** which has been passed over on your behalf. The Spirit of the Lord certainly moves among us in Broxburn Parish Church. God bless you all.

Bob Pattison

At our Christmas Fayre on Saturday 2nd December and also at our Sunday services we will have memory 'baubles' available to write a message for someone who is no longer with us. We will then place your bauble on our Christmas tree as a way of remembering that special friend or family member.



A CHRISTMAS PRAYER FOR HOPE

"Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth, may we begin to see the world in the light of understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart.

May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. Amen."

Karen L. Oberst

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an important part of church family life. We currently need someone to support our Co-ordinator to ensure that relevant procedures are followed.

If you feel you might be interested please speak to Elaine Brown or call: 07936 363939.



Christmas Word Search



N P O V N I J C W K X D M G A L I L E E F B X D
 I J B I C F N R I L U V Z K Y N Y L R Y D F R A
 B X E C W R T Q S B Y W N W H K T P T R Y D M B
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 D Y S F O X J M N X X M S X M E H E L H T E B K
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David	inn	clothes	swaddling	Emmanuel
Matthew	Luke	Messiah	men	wise
three	angel	Galilee	Nazareth	Bethlehem
frankincense	myrrh	gold	camels	sheep
cows	nativity	star	Shepherds	manger
stable	Joseph	Mary	Christmas	Jesus

Recipe Corner *with* Sue Sneddon

Stir-Fry Chicken Curry

If you enjoy home-made curries but can't face the prospect of slaving over the cooker for hours, then this could be for you – a lovely curry cooked in a fraction of the time.

Ingredients:

- 4 boneless chicken breasts skinned
- 6 tbsp strained Greek yoghurt, or plain yoghurt
- Juice of 1 lime
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed (or garlic powder)
- 5cm piece of ginger root, peeled and chopped (or ground ginger)
- 2tbsp medium or hot curry paste to taste (I use madras!)
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 5 tbsp ghee or vegetable oil
- 1 onion, peeled, quartered and split into layers
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1cm pieces
- 1 green pepper, seeded and cut into 1cm pieces
- 60g/2oz/half cup of unsalted cashews (optional)
- 4tbsp water
- Snipped chives or spring onion leaves to garnish (optional)



Method:

1. Cut the chicken breasts into 1cm wide strips and place in a bowl. Add the yoghurt, lime juice, garlic, ginger, curry paste and paprika and mix well together.
2. Heat the oil in a wok or large saucepan, add the onion, red and green peppers and cashews and stir-fry over a moderate heat for 2 minutes. Remove from the wok and reserve.
3. Stir the chicken mixture into the wok and stir-fry for 4-5 minutes until well sealed and cooked through
4. Add the water and mix well, then return the vegetables to the pan, reduce the heat and cook gently for another 2 minutes. It's now ready to serve, sprinkled with the snipped leaves if using. Great with basmati rice and naan breads.

You can substitute thin strips of pork tenderloin or rump steak for the chicken, and courgette or celery instead of the bell peppers, and blanched almonds instead of the cashews. Enjoy!

○ ○ ○ **POINTS to PONDER** ○ ○ ○

Introduction:

As I write these thoughts, the Middle East is in turmoil once again and people's lives are being turned upside down by forces outwith their control. It was the same 2,000 years ago when Jesus was born. The Roman authorities decreed it, and Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to be registered.

Text: Luke 2:1-7 - The Birth of Jesus Christ

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

Points to Ponder:

Whilst we as Christians may not indulge in all the excesses of eating and drinking which characterise so many Christmas celebrations, our experiences are still very far removed from the stark reality of that first Christmas. Then there was no glitter, no decorations, no overeating, no games, no slumping in front of the TV. Yet on the other hand, there was no commercialisation, no greed to dull real affection and joy. There are many good things about Christmas as we know it, but I believe that there are also attitudes and behaviours that we still need to give thought and prayer to. It is so easy to leave Christ out of Christmas. Look at Verse 7 and think of the love that was there, think of the poverty. A borrowed manger was just the beginning of Jesus' poverty – "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Luke 9:58) Most of all, think of the incalculable riches which that poverty bought. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Prayer:

Loving Father, help us to remember and to appreciate the rich blessings which we enjoy because of the great sacrifice you made for us. Amen.

Action:

Enjoy your Christmas, but don't let the fun and laughter drown out the message of Jesus' great love for you. Don't let your heart be so crowded out with other things that there is no room for him. How might you help others less fortunate enjoy Christmas this year?

Broxburn Parish Church of Scotland

Christmas Fayre



**Saturday 2nd
December
12 noon - 3pm**

**FREE
ENTRY!**

Christmas hampers

Home baking

Stalls

Tombola & Raffle

Christmas crafts

Books, CDs and DVDs



Tea Tickets: £3

(includes tea, cakes and home baking)

● **FRIENDLY** ● **FAMILY** ● **FELLOWSHIP**

Scottish Charity Number: SC 017180



Live streaming

If you are unable to join us in person on a Sunday morning at 11am, you can watch a live stream of the worship service on our website:
broxburnparishchurch.org.uk

**We are all members of our church family.
So if we can help you in any way,
if 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

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FRIENDLY ○ FAMILY ○ FELLOWSHIP