



**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,
LARGS: ST COLUMBA'S PARISH CHURCH**

www.largscolumba.org

Scottish Charity No. SC002294

LANDMARK

VOLUME XIV NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2016



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MINISTER'S LETTER

Do you want to be right, or be in a relationship?

What I find exciting about my "religion", a word that has negative connotations in today's world, or as I prefer my "faith journey" is the liberating nature of following Jesus and his teaching. Christianity and most other "religions" are viewed as limiting and legalistic.

When you read Jesus' comments on laws as they appear in the Old Testament you can see how he challenges and changes them - see Matthew 5.

It was the present Dalai Lama who said "Know the rules well, so you can break them effectively." I also came across this Zen maxim, "First you learn the rules. Then you keep the rules. Then you break the rules. Then you are wise."

This seems to be the gist of Jesus' comments about the law in the gospel Matthew. Those who have walked the path of Christ following for some time will know that the religion of the heart is not so much about the rules as it is about the relationship which the rules are intended to enhance anyway.

The problem with human nature though is we tend to swap the priorities around then that is where the hypocrisy begins.

We have all met people who prefer to be right and keep the rules, than be in relationship. They are usually shining saints, brightly burning but usually without a flicker of compassion.

If I read Jesus correctly, he is saying relationships are more important than rules. Rules will lead you into a hell of minutiae and detail, but they will not deepen your humanity or your heart.

Rules will make you righteous, but relationships will make you real.

There's no doubt that Jesus lived this truth.

Perhaps we could too?

It is one of my desires in our Parish to build community and strengthen relationships.

Rev Chris Vermeulen

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for the people in our lives who have blessed us. We lift them up to you today and ask that you bless them in return. May they know your love and your joy, even in times of struggle. Thank you that through the actions of others, we learn more about your faithfulness, your compassion, and your strength. Help us to continue to remember the fruits of friendship and community. Amen.

by Caroline Leach

PRAYER CORNER

Pray for the victims of recent storms and flooding, and let them have a sense of security amongst the chaos.

Pray for people who are isolated and feeling lonely, and help them to feel God's presence.

Pray for those suffering from the effects of addiction, and those with physical and mental health problems, and give us the strength to offer our support, encouragement and practical help.

Pray for the bereaved, that they may find light in the darkness.

Thank God for the promise of spring, and longer, warmer days ahead.

VOLUNTEER

If you feel inspired to contribute to Landmark by submitting a Prayer and some thoughts for Prayer Corner, please let Linda in the Church Office know, on tel. 686212.

CHURCH REGISTER

Deaths

5th Dec Roberta Dorman, Haco Street
16th Dec Ann (Nan) Thomson, Glenfield Care Home, Greenock
17th Dec Robert Crawford, Sinclair Drive
28th Dec Janet Smith, Holywood
2nd Jan Karen Anderson, Haco Street
11th Jan Gladys (Gala) Duff, Burnlea Nursing Home
19th Jan Esther Bennett, Moorburn Road

2016 DATES TO NOTE

February

8 7pm Alternative Service, Fairlie Bowling Club
10 12-1.30pm Lent Lunch, Clark Memorial Church
10 7.30pm Kirk Session Meeting
17 12-1.30pm Lent Lunch, Clark Memorial Church
20 2pm & 7pm Come and Sing 'Messiah'
21 3pm Auchinlea Residential Care Home Service
24 12-1.30pm Lent Lunch, Clark Memorial Church
28 11.30am Annual Stated Meeting (after Morning Worship)
28 1-5pm Fairtrade Crafts and Foods, Lounge Clubroom

March

2 12-1.30pm Lent Lunch, Clark Memorial Church
4 tbc World Day of Prayer, Clark Memorial Church
6 11.30am Sacrament of Holy Communion
9 12-1.30pm Lent Lunch, Clark Memorial Church
16 12-1.30pm Lent Lunch, Clark Memorial Church
20 3pm Moorburn Manor Nursing Home Service
21-25 tbc Holy Week Services, Clark Memorial

ELDER DUTIES

February

7 **Mr Boyle (Convenor)**, Mr Hendry, Mr Murdoch, Miss Black, Mrs Counter, Mrs Houghton
14 Mr McNaught, Mr Jamieson, Mr D Jenkins, Mr I Jenkins, Mr Laing, Ms Gallettie, Miss Kennedy, Mrs Lyon, Mrs McEleny
21 **Mr Wallace (Convenor)**, Mr Currie, Mr Hewitt, Mr Lewis, Mr R Rae, Mr Welch, Mrs McManus, Mrs Rae
2 Mr Laurie, Mr Rankin, Mrs Bell, Mrs Butler, Mrs Jackson, Mrs Laurie, Miss McFarlane

March

6 **Mr Boyle (Convenor)**, Mr Hendry, Mr Murdoch, Miss Black, Mrs Counter, Mrs Houghton
13 Mr McNaught, Mr Jamieson, Mr D Jenkins, Mr I Jenkins, Mr Laing, Ms Gallettie, Miss Kennedy, Mrs Lyon, Mrs McEleny
20 **Mr Wallace (Convenor)**, Mr Currie, Mr Hewitt, Mr Lewis, Mr R Rae, Mr Welch, Mrs McManus, Mrs Rae
27 Mr Laurie, Mr Rankin, Mrs Bell, Mrs Butler, Mrs Jackson, Mrs Laurie, Miss McFarlane

April

3 **Mr Boyle (Convenor)**, Mr Hendry, Mr Murdoch, Miss Black, Mrs Counter, Mrs Houghton
10 Mr McNaught, Mr Jamieson, Mr D Jenkins, Mr I Jenkins, Mr Laing, Ms Gallettie, Miss Kennedy, Mrs Lyon, Mrs McEleny
17 **Mr Wallace (Convenor)**, Mr Currie, Mr Hewitt, Mr Lewis, Mr R Rae, Mr Welch, Mrs McManus, Mrs Rae
24 Mr Laurie, Mr Rankin, Mrs Bell, Mrs Butler, Mrs Jackson, Mrs Laurie, Miss McFarlane

ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP – ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY – ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

A group from Fairlie Parish Church and Largs, St Columba's Parish Church have been wrestling with an alternative to what you would traditionally expect church to look like. This struggle has forced us to zone in to what it means to be church and we believe that at its heart it's about community. The problem is that words like worship and church can be a put-off to those who have given up on exactly that. You may want to argue that we must not throw the baby out with the bath water.

SO OUR CHALLENGE IS TO 'BREAK THE MOULD' AND THE CHALLENGE TO OUR COMMUNITY IS TO 'GIVE IT A GO'

In the 1990s a movement called 'alternative worship' began in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. The US equivalent, arising in the early 2000s, used the term 'emerging church'. Both terms have their problems - 'alternative' to what? isn't it about more than worship? how can a church still be 'emerging' when it's

established? and so on. Many in the alternative worship movement found the term 'emerging church' more holistic, a better description of what was going on, and it looked for a while as though the older name would disappear. Currently in Scotland the term "Fresh Expression" is being used for the new movement.

Our thinking is more radical than any of these – even for us – as we have sought to remove barriers. Losing all the trappings of church we have opted to host our first event at Fairlie Bowling Club away from our normal places of worship. Our planning group concluded that we should not impose communal singing, Bible readings, and prayers. By doing this we allow both people of faith and not to express themselves freely – simply allowing the sacred to emerge among us. If on the night it is deemed appropriate we have times of reflection and silence we will facilitate this.

What we are hoping is that love, service and community will emerge as to what it means to be church. Hence "Alternative Service". We do not want to prescribe what the outcomes ought to be.

We believe that as humans we are all on a journey and that the divine will emerge among us and through us.

The theme for the first meeting on 8 February will be "Loneliness". We have invited a local GP, Health visitor, and a Citizens Advice volunteer to help set the scene for a conversation as we explore the issue around tables in a café setting. There will be something to eat and drink – details currently being worked out.

Details of our first "Alternative Worship Service":

Date: Monday, 8 February 2016

Time: 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Venue: Fairlie Bowling Club

Theme: Loneliness

MONDAY'S ALTERNATIVE CLUB

MAC started back on 11th January with a planning session over coffee followed by the usual annual debate over who would draw the short straw and have to prepare the turnip for our annual Burns Supper on 25th! We also decided our tearoom date of 7th May which this year we are holding in aid of Calums Cabin-please put the date in your diary.

We duly had our Burns Supper which was as enjoyable as always. Choosing which of the two deserts to have was too difficult for most of us so we went with a bit of both before finishing with coffee/tea and mints. Food features strongly in MAC!

Our next meeting will be a craft evening led by Johann McIntyre on 22nd February, as we have cancelled our next meeting on 8th due to clashing with the Alternative worship at Fairlie Bowling Club to which some of us are planning to go. March meetings will be on 7th-treat night and 21st-Fulton Murdoch (topic to be confirmed).

We continue to have a small membership of 8. We have decided to follow the example of the Guild and not restrict ourselves to women. Any men or women who would like to join us will be made most welcome at our meetings.

Alison Tunnickriff

CRADLE SERVICE ON CHRISTMAS EVE

At Christmas Eve tea time, in St Columba's Church, the Cradle Service showed, in a child friendly way, the Christmas Story to an all age group of people gathered together. Chris Vermeulen and Bonnie shared the dialogue, with lots of children fetching numbered parcels from under the Christmas tree. Unwrapping them revealed the characters of the Nativity.

Enormous bean bags placed round the tiny stage in the centre of the Church enabled the children to see the figurines close-up, as could we adults (on chairs thankfully) Carols were sung, glow sticks lit, babies slept, toddlers bounced on the bean bags, whilst the older children shared their impressive knowledge of the real meaning of Christmas.

Liz Clark, Fairlie Parish Church

KAREN ANDERSON



Friday 15 January 2016 was a very sad day in St Columba's Parish Church when the congregation, friends and family celebrated the life of Karen Anderson. Karen was ordained an elder in October 2011 and had held the post of Presbytery Elder since June 2012, a job she carried out with distinction. Her feedback to the Kirk Session on Presbytery matters was told in her particularly unique manner, making such matters "alive and entertaining". A member of the Largs Christian Aid committee for a number of years, she was a devoted Christian and an excellent district elder, updating the minister or Session Clerk on situations requiring pastoral support or assistance.

Always in attendance at the Summer Fayre and various other Church events, she was a regular and popular helper at the Saturday Tea Rooms. Karen was close to so many members of the congregation, in particular Christine Gallettie, who read the lesson, and John Macdiarmid who provided the wonderful floral arrangement for the service. The cushion highlighted was given to John by Karen returning from a trip down South. Another small example of the kind of person Karen was in the Church and Community.

Aged 74 Karen was a striking lady and popular reader at Sunday services. A former teacher of English, she worked in Tabeetha School in Jaffa, Israel, her favourite location, for 14 years. A member of the Choir since 2001, she will be missed in so many ways. She was a true example of how a Christian should lead their life. God bless you Karen.

John Lewis

COME AND SING 'MESSIAH'

Greenock Philharmonic Society would like to invite members of St. Columba's Parish Church congregation to join them for a "Come and Sing "Messiah". This event will take place on Saturday 20th February in Clark Memorial Church, Largs. There will be a rehearsal for singers at 2pm and a Concert Performance for all at 7pm. Tickets, available at the door, cost £8.00 for singers and audience alike. Singers should bring their own copy if they have one. There will be professional soloists including well-known local soprano Helen Lothian. Bill Hutchison, organist, will accompany the singers.



YOUNG CHURCH

We started back in January by gathering together to watch the DVD of our nativity "A miracle in town". As always the children enjoyed rehearsing and performing it for you and we hope you enjoyed watching it. If anyone would like to purchase a copy for a small fee to cover costs, or would like to borrow a copy if they missed seeing it then please let myself or Fulton know.

Our final total collected for Water Aid last year was £244. This has been sent off to the "Deliver Life" campaign which the UK government has promised to match any donations to. This means our total will be doubled to £488. The campaign is trying to help ensure there is clean water available for birthing mothers and their new babies. More information can be found on the notice board outside the library. Thank you for all your donations throughout the year. We will continue to collect small change for Water Aid this year and hope you will continue to support us.

Our other project of collecting items of food for the North Ayrshire Foodbank has had an amazing response from you this year. Thanks to your continued support we have been able to donate **1189** items this year. Thank you! Due to the fantastic response we are going to start taking items down to the foodbank in Ardrossan on a monthly basis. If you would be able to help with taking the items down even once or twice a year then please put your name on the list on the board outside the library or let me know.

Alison Tunnicliff

PEREGRINES

Fortunately we had a dry day for our first walk of 2016 on Saturday 23rd January. Eight of our group met for coffee at Morrison's cafe in Stevenston.

From there we drove to a parking area at the level crossing near the railway station and set off down New Street towards Stevenston Cross. New Street was formerly known as Coorodden as it was the route used in the past by villagers taking their cows to graze on the common land near the dunes.

On the hill up to the High Kirk we passed the Champion Shell Inn, the oldest inn in Stevenston. As we walked on the roads round and behind the church, we passed the end of the road which leads to Kerelaw Castle but decided to leave that exploration for another day.

Back at the main road we took the route north on the footpath opposite Auchenharvie Academy which led us onto the path skirting the Golf Range in Auchenharvie Park which has the ruins of the old Beam Engine House which, unsuccessfully, was used to pump water from the coal pits below.

As the coastal path has been closed for repairs, we walked through part of Sandylands Holiday Park and took the footbridge to the opposite side of the railway line. The path, parallel to the railway, led us back to where we started.

We then crossed the road and enjoyed the more open outlook through Ardeer Park which has been developed as a nature reserve on the site of the old quarry. The remnants of the canal and various pieces of equipment testify to the area's industrial past. If you would like to join us at any time you will be made very welcome.

Christine Gallettie

The Peregrines Walking Group has commenced a new session covering the period to Easter. A copy of the programme displayed outside the Session Room provides walk details and identifies the Leader who can provide further information.

Bill Puckrin

CHRISTIAN AID

Once again it's that time of year when we start to think about Lent Lunches. The first Lent Lunch starts in Clark Memorial Church on Ash Wednesday (10th February) and will continue each Wednesday for six weeks. The final one is on Wednesday 16th March. The cost is £3 per lunch. Lunches commence at 12 noon till 1.30pm.

The Christian Aid Concert held in the church in November with Largs Operatic and the Strathspey Reel Band raised the sum of £780. Thanks to all who participated in this event.

The sum of £580 was raised for Christian Aid from the two days of carol singing at Morrison's prior to Christmas. This was brilliant, thanks to all who came along to sing.

Jean Jackson

GUILD REPORT

Our grateful thanks go to all those who helped in any way to make our Christmas Cracker such a success. There was a wonderful atmosphere on the day and I'm sure that everyone who took part had a lovely time, especially Santa and his elves! We were delighted that we were able to raise the sum of £1300 which will go towards, as yet undecided, projects in the church.

We were happy to start our new session on 11th January 2016 when we caught up with friends after the festive break. A most interesting talk by Tom Lawton on the History and Renaissance of the Forth and Clyde Canal was enjoyed by all who attended.

Our turnout was quite low as, unfortunately, a number of our members were ill, in hospital or at home.

Sadly, we lost two of our Guild during the break, Nan Thomson and Karen Anderson. They will be greatly missed.

We look forward to some world travel in the coming session when we hear of mission work going on in Peru and Bolivia.

We will also learn about the work being carried out locally by Teen Challenge, hear about Hairdressing through the Ages and be entertained by Largs Accordion Band.

If you would like to join us at any of these meeting, the details of which appear on the notice boards, we would be delighted to see you.

Christine Gallettie, Convenor



NEXT ISSUE

Please send any articles for the March 2016 edition of Landmark to the church office by Monday 22 February at the latest. The March edition of Landmark will be available for uplift on Sunday 6 March.

Linda Beveridge, Church Secretary

