

Dalgety Parish Church Magazine
Spring 2016



Church Family

New Members

Mrs Myra Rodger
Mrs Rosemary McKenzie
Mrs Elizabeth Payne
Mr Stewart & Mrs Janet Mayne

Members Left

Mrs Jillian Schofield
Mr William McQueen
Rev Susan Cord

Deceased

Mrs Kate Ferguson
Mr David Lambert
Mrs Irene Flockhart
Mrs Nancy Greenaway

Baptism

Grace Callie Anderson, daughter of Ross and Clare

Who to Contact

Minister

Rev Christine Sime, 01383 822316, revsime@dalgety-church.co.uk

Session Clerk

Isobel Macfarlane, 01383 822990, isobel@dalgety-church.co.uk

Church Office, 01383 824092, office@dalgety-church.co.uk

Church web site: www.dalgety-church.org.uk

Find us on facebook - search for Dalgety Parish Church of Scotland

Dalgety Parish Church, Regents Way, Dalgety Bay, KY11 9UY



MINISTER'S MUSINGS

This WOW is being delivered around Mid-Lent and Easter is fast approaching with extra and maybe some different services and events at the church to prepare and to celebrate. However, I am writing this with Lent not yet begun. I am trying to see, think ahead to what will be relevant, meaningful when the weather has (perhaps) changed, spring is with us and lots of water (rain or otherwise) has disappeared down river.

Perhaps what is required are simple reminders. A reminder of the truth that the darkness of winter is past with longer days ahead. A reminder that no matter our journey through life and faith thus far, the promise of God's love remains as true and strong as ever. A reminder that we face different days, no matter who we are, but that the promise of God's presence assures us that we are never alone, never on our own. A reminder that even though Jesus died, the truth we live by today is that he is alive for us and in us.

Our communion is often described as a 'remembrance'. I tend to think it more as a "reminder". In the simple things of life, in bread and wine, in the ordinary of each day as well as the dramas, his blessing is with us, his arm around us.

On another tack we have appointed a new Parish Assistant or Ministry Development Officer as they are now known. Our new team member is Fiona Kerr, who is a member and an Elder of Dalgety Parish Church. Fiona's job description is not the same as Alasdair Campbell's. She will be more involved in connecting with the community, more mission focused to help others know of God's love for them. Reaching out to let the gospel be heard outside the church building and so will be taking 'church' out into the parish. Please support Fiona, this is a big change for her. Pray for her and the work she is doing, and be helpful and kind as we all help her find her feet.

Christine

Engcongolweni

Umoza mwachristu – Together in Christ

'Monire mose' is the greeting and 'Yewo' is the reply! Planning for the forthcoming September visit is well underway and fundraising is in full swing. ...and just in case you have missed what is going on - we will be hosting a visit from six people from Engcongolweni from 9th to 22nd September 2016. Our visitors are the new minister, Rev Nase Chunga, along with Geoffrey Simbeye, Vaison Nhlema, Joubert Soko, Dolisa Mtawale and Humphrey Chione. They are currently applying for passports and, once these are issued, the visa applications are the next step.

The visit is costing in the region of £11,500 (or, in Malawian terms over 12 million Malawian Kwacha) and so far we have managed to achieve grants and sponsorship for about half of that. To date, our own fundraising efforts and donations have added another £1,500, leaving us around £4,500 to find before September. You can help us and have some fun at the same time! We are offering free, yes, FREE! a tube of Smarties and/or a £10 note. For the first one, you eat the Smarties (great idea!) and return the tube filled with £1 coins (it will hold £35) or 20p coins (£12.60) and if you can gift aid your donation that will add 25% to the value of your gift. For the tenner (the talents challenge), the idea is that you use it for something that will generate more funds. Other activities coming up are an Engcongolweni morning at Café Connect on 29 March; a quiz & games evening on 8 April; a summer Fun Day, with sponsored bike ride on 16 July and a Bring & Buy stall on the last Sunday of each month from February – June and weekly in July and August. You can also help us by offering to provide hospitality (bed & breakfast) for our visitors and/or the occasional evening meal. To make it easier, we have split the visit into two separate weeks (9-15 September and the 16-21). If you can help during either of those weeks, please see Elma Doig or add your name to the list in the Hall of Fellowship. We will give hosting families specific details of the programme and some advice on how to look after our guests. We are also looking for help with transport for local visits; again, if you can help, please add your name to the list.

We are currently arranging a full and entertaining programme for our visitors. As well as sharing in our Communion service on 11 September and our Harvest Thanksgiving the following Sunday, our visitors will be involved in various Church activities and groups, as well as some in the community such as visiting the primary schools and the Rotary Club.

It will not be all work, of course, and we plan to share the beauty of the Fife landscape with our visitors. Under the guidance of the Dalgety Bay Friends of Engcongolweni, they will spend a day in Edinburgh visiting the Scottish Parliament, St Giles Cathedral and Edinburgh Castle amongst other things.

Pigs are also on the agenda! The Dalgety Bay Friends of Engcongolweni are helping the Engcongolweni community to set up pig farms and the Kirk Session has agreed that this year's Harvest Appeal will go towards the Friends' project – more of that nearer the time. While the visitors are here, it is planned to arrange a visit to Puddledub to see pig-farming in operation, an experience they can take back to Engcongolweni.

Their visit to us will, in all probability, be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. They will see, hear and experience a different world to the one they inhabit. They will see a 'land of plenty' but will not understand the undercurrents of our society and the pressures which we face. In Malawi, there are different undercurrents and different pressures. For instance, there is currently a shortage of food in the country caused by heavy rain and floods in January last year. These disrupted their planting season and subsequent harvest. The Malawian National Anthem has a phrase that says, "Put down each and every enemy - hunger, disease, envy." Since that was written for their Independence in 1964, hunger and disease have been fairly constant factors in Malawian life. Through our twinning, and with the help of the Friends of Engcongolweni, we have been trying to address these issues with the water and pigs project and, with God's blessing, make a difference.

This visit will make a difference, not only to our visitors, their families, church and community when they return home, but to us as well. We will all have learned a huge amount from each other, seeing things from a different perspective. We hope our visitors will go home knowing that they have been made welcome with a warm hand of friendship and that our twinning relationship has been immeasurably deepened.

Robin Arnott





The Guild

Be Bold, Be Strong!

The Guild invites Ladies and Gents to meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month, from September to April, in Dalgety Parish Church at 7:30pm. The Guild encourages members to support projects from a range chosen by its Projects & Topics Committee. The success of this scheme has been proven not only by the raising, to date, of over £3,000,000, but also in expanding knowledge of different issues of concern worldwide.

Meet the National Guild Team



Our Projects for the current year, 2015-2016, are Care for the Family and Prospects.

We enjoyed a visit from a speaker from Care for the Family, who explained how this charity helps promote strong family relationships, with special emphasis on the difficulties faced during the early years of Parenthood. This was a fascinating insight into the charities research and findings about the pressures new parents face and the programme they have put together to help keep relationships, which are under stress, on an even keel. A 40 minute presentation is delivered free by volunteers in a variety of settings, including church toddler groups and ante-natal classes, with participants receiving a goody bag with the 'Let's Stick Together' book and additional resources, invites to local parenting classes, and details of couple counselling schemes.

We look forward to a visit from a member of the Prospects team, on 2nd March, who will give us more information about "All Friends Together". This project is about helping churches to welcome people with learning disabilities, helping to include them in all aspects of church life and to build friendships. Come along and hear more about this worthwhile project.

Dates for the future are:

Meetings

2nd March 2016 - Prospects

16th March 2016 - Easter Flowers

6th April 2016 - A visit from Maureen Campbell

20th April 2016 - AGM – Guest Speaker, John Chalmers, Ex Moderator of the Church of Scotland

Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided at every meeting

Events

Saturday 12th March - Fun and Quiz Night (Fundraising for Projects)

Tuesday 15th March - Café Connect – Coffee Morning 10-12

Saturday 2nd April - Coffee Morning 10-12 (Fundraising for Projects)

Saturday 16th April - ANNUAL TRIP TO DUMFRIES – Bus to the venue, High Tea and coffee stops are all included in the price of £20. If you are interested in joining us, please give your name to a Guild member or add it to the notice board list.

Why we come to the Guild

Fellowship, interesting topics, supporting worthwhile charities

A chance to help others, interesting speakers and topics for discussion

The Guild is very Friendly

Congregational Development Group



Cong Dev is a great group of people with a vast knowledge of church life and who have a real commitment to growing Dalgety Parish Church as a congregation; not just in numbers, but in what we experience and enjoy in our lives as Christians. We feel it is extremely important to reach out to our members and offer different styles of worship, new ways of meeting together and additional experiences so that we can make everyone feel there is something for them at Dalgety. Sometimes we feel slightly uncomfortable trying something new but before too long it's like second nature and we wonder why we didn't attempt it sooner!

A new event will be taking place soon – the Seder Meal planned for the evening of Maundy Thursday, 24th March. Christine will explain to us the significance of this special meal, which celebrates the beginning of the Jewish Passover and we will then eat together. Please sign up on the ***Don't Pass by Table***. The more familiar we are with other folk from our church the more likely we are to try something new, take part in helping with other events and ensuring our Congregation Develops. If you feel this one's not for you perhaps the next new thing will be.

While it is all very well to include fresh ideas we must still attend to what we do already and ensure we do it well: not stretch ourselves too thin. That is first and foremost what Cong Dev does.

Each of the church groups who meet in the buildings and beyond are visited by a representative from our group annually, not to check up on them, but to understand and appreciate what they are doing and to give encouragement to continue. In addition to this we are the connection to Junior Church, The Discoverers, Messy Church as well as Youth Zone and Enjoy. Cong Dev is also involved in the planning of services at Easter and Christmas with local churches.

I feel we are often asking for volunteers within the church for the activities we do but with willing hearts and God's help these things always get done and are successful: after all, we are doing it for Him. Thank you to all who take part and help to run the many and varied events we offer. I am sure there are many in our congregation who appreciate what you do, I know I'm certainly one of them!

Veronica Simpson
Convener
Congregational Development Group



Are we developing as a congregation? I hope so. We are very fortunate to have so many talented people within our parish who are extremely able and, thankfully, willing to take on a myriad of roles to provide a wide and varied programme of worship, training and social events so that we can develop. Are there others out there who are hiding their light under a bushel? I imagine so. We all agreed, on becoming members of The Church of Scotland, to use the gifts we have to celebrate God and encourage others to learn of His love for everyone. However, I am sure there are folk hiding in the woodwork, or are perhaps in full view, who could contribute a little more to this happening in our congregation and beyond.

Are we frightened that by taking on a new role we would not be able to fulfil its requirements? What we need to remember is that God never asks us to do something He doesn't think we are capable of.

Are you perhaps looking for a new challenge? Sometimes a role we have done for a while comes to a natural end or we may find that we now have an urge to try something new or re-visit an old talent.

Are you someone who enjoys chatting with people and sharing your understanding of being a Christian? Perhaps you are one of the people we are looking for who could be a Discoverers leader on a rota basis. The Discoverers are a small group of predominantly High School age youngsters who want to learn more of the Bible and how to live a Christian life. They are lovely, don't bite and are keen to continue meeting as long as enough volunteers come forward to help.

Are you able to spend 30 minutes once every 8 weeks chatting with these young people on a Sunday morning? If so, please speak to Christine or myself; we would be delighted to provide you with excellent material to discuss and add you to our list of 8 people which will hopefully grow to 16 people very soon. I know those who have already led the group with the new materials have found it a rewarding and interesting 30 minutes. Yes, the materials are provided and are very easy to follow with little (or no) preparation required. You really would find it stress-free and satisfying.

Surely you want to see the Discoverers continue and develop? Come and talk it over with me and I can explain more.

Veronica Simpson, Convener, Congregational Development Group

NYA Planning Weekend

At the beginning of February I spent a weekend up in Arbroath at the planning weekend for the National Youth Assembly (NYA). The aim of this weekend was to come up with ideas for the upcoming NYA in August 2016. This year we also had a Burns Supper on the Saturday night followed by a quiz and a short ceilidh.



On Friday we spent some time discussing what we thought had been good about previous NYAs and also what we thought could be improved on. We then spent the majority of our time coming up with the main discussion topics for the National Youth Assembly weekend, that would be fed back to the General Assembly in 2017. On the Sunday we spent a lot of time discussing other aspects of the event such as: hospitality, worship, socialising and workshops.

We had at least one session of worship a day and each one was led by a young person attending the weekend. Each person led their session differently and used a variety of different songs from traditional hymns to Chris Tomlin.

Following the discussions that we had I am looking forward to the weekend in August.

Hannah Dunlop



Why Fairtrade Fortnight?



Every year, the last week in February and the first week in March are designated Fairtrade Fortnight. Why?

Well, in these two weeks we hope to remind people about the ongoing work of the Fairtrade movement and the work that is done with the extra pennies that you pay for Fairtrade goods.

Here in Dalgety we have, among other things, held a coffee morning, spoken at a Nursery school and stood at the railway station giving out Fairtrade bananas. Some years we stand in a supermarket or talk to Primary school children. We remind folk that people in developing countries are being given skills to help them climb out of poverty that young mothers are getting health care and that children are able to go to school.

If the coffee morning runs at a profit... and it should since all of the cakes and biscuits are donated..... the money is sent to the Traidcraft 'Let it Grow' appeal. This year's project is training women in Bangladesh to grow and process tea to sell locally, thus giving them sufficient income to feed and educate their children.

Please try to support the Fairtrade movement by buying goods with the Fairtrade logo whenever possible, from the supermarket and from the stall in the church on the first Sunday of the month.

What is Dementia?

Guidance for carers of People with Dementia.

Tips for visiting People with Dementia.

Musical Play lists and Memory Books - how can they help?

EMBRACING THE DEMENTIA JOURNEY

Speaker:

Linda Kelly

(CrossReach, Dementia Development & Research Officer)

Monday 4th April, 2016 @ 7 for 7.30 pm

Dalgety Parish Church

All are welcome to attend this meeting

The Day Dalgety Invaded the Black Isle

Rev Susan Cord, Parish Minister of Killearnan and Knockbain

On 23rd January, over 50 people from Dalgety Parish Church headed up the A9, to the Black Isle, to help celebrate the ordinations of Susan and her husband James. It was like a spring day with no hint of rain, snow or gales. Whoever arranged that did good!!

Both ceremonies took place in Knockbain Church: a beautiful traditional style church set in the village of Munloch and surrounded by breathtaking countryside.

When we arrived we were welcomed by Susan and James, sporting matching red clerical shirts, and the people of Killearnan and Knockbain Parish. It was a real joy to be part of the congregation as Susan became their Parish Minister and James was ordained as a Local Ordained Minister (OLM), which means he will work for the Presbytery of Ross on a voluntary basis, for 10 hours a week. It was a real service of celebration and a happy day for all who took part.

The only groans heard that day were the groans from the giant table, laden with food, which awaited us in the community hall. Highland hospitality was abundant and was much appreciated by all. It was a great opportunity to meet and chat with some of Susan's congregation and to wish her and James the very best for the next stage in their life together. This is an exciting time for both of them and the congregation of Killearnan and Knockbain parish.

Please continue to keep them in your prayers.



Let's Pray Together Event

On Saturday 23rd January, Dalgety Parish Church hosted the "Let's Pray Together" event. Two hours were filled with prayer, positive interaction and personal encouragement. Our own church has several opportunities for prayer, which are highlighted on a pin board in room one. If you wish any additional information please speak to our minister Rev Christine Sime, or our prayer co-ordinator, June Wright.



We were delighted to receive the following message from the co-ordinator of the Let's Pray Together event.

I would like to thank the minister, Kirk Session and congregation of Dalgety Church for allowing the Mission & Discipleship Committee of Presbytery the use of your beautiful Church and halls to hold the 'Let's Pray Together' event. We had a wonderful morning and about 40 people came along representing 17 churches. There was a spirit of quiet meditation which was inspired by the various prayer rooms. We had an activity prayer room, a meditative prayer room, a silent prayer room and a room for spoken prayer. Most people stayed for the whole morning while some popped in for one of the sessions only, due to time constraints. They moved from room to room spending time to enter into the spirit of each room while in between sessions they met and chatted in the Hall of fellowship over coffee with old friends and new. People were uplifted and blessed as they spent time in prayer, and in fellowship. Since the event I have had reports that a few churches have taken away ideas to incorporate into their home church's prayer programme.

I am aware that many of you were off to Susan Cord's induction but I wanted to thank you for providing your church along with the tea ladies and the door keeper and try to give you a flavour of the event. I wish you God's richest blessing.

Mary Hunter, Presbytery Prayer Coordinator

Christian Aid Week

As you will be aware, Christian Aid is an ecumenical organisation, which aims to help the poor throughout the world. It helps victims of famine, floods, and war but is best known for helping poor communities to set up projects that enable them to work their own way out of poverty.

This is the 70th anniversary of Christian Aid and your local Christian Aid Group is keen to make this year's collection week especially successful. There is an ongoing need for new collectors and, if you feel nervous about calling at doors on your own, ask a friend to go with you for support. We also are looking for new group members to lead the teams of collectors. The work is not too arduous and is a chance to join a successful team that is making a real difference to the lives of some of the poorest people on earth.

This year's house-to-house collection for Christian Aid will take place during the week 15 to 21 May 2016.

Please note this in your diary and please give serious consideration to helping your local Christian Aid group make this 70th anniversary year a huge success.

Contact Malcolm Lappin (01383 820158) or any of the Christian Aid Group.

Kirk Session

At the end of November 4 new Elders were ordained, bringing the total number of Elders on the Kirk Session to 48. There are 4 Kirk Session groups, Congregational Development, Community Outreach, Mission and Support Services and each Elder is a member of one of the groups. Each group have a meeting before a Session meeting and they then report on their activities to the Session.

Last year there were changes to the convenorship of 2 of the groups. Alan Dunlop took over from Bruce Marshall as Convener of the Support Services Group and Veronica Simpson took over from Winnie Wood as Convener of the Congregational Development Group. We are indebted to Bruce and Winnie for their dedication and commitment in their time as Conveners. In April we will be saying goodbye to our present Convener of the Community Outreach Group, Norman Kurzman, and we wish Norman and Judy all the best as they head off to Australia. May God bless them both.

2016 promises to be an exciting year for DPC with the appointment of our new Parish Assistant, Fiona Kerr. Together with Fiona we plan to make our church more visible by taking it out into the community. Watch this space.....

Isobel Macfarlane, Session Clerk

The Peace Banner

A fairly new group has been formed to take on the mantle of reflecting our church seasons, themes or events, by displaying encouraging and welcoming messages on banners in our building. The creative group's first project coincided with the visit of The Moderator, The Right Reverend Dr Angus Morrison and his wife, who opened the Peace Garden in our grounds back in October.

This banner is now displayed above the pulpit in the Worship Area and announces the message, "May Peace Prevail on Earth", the same message as on the Peace Pole outside. In addition to this there is also a dove carrying a twig in its beak as it flies over the representation of a Peace Pole (no, it's not a candle or a chef's hat!) with the old Gaelic word "Siochain" (Peace) along its height. The falling Autumn leaves draw the eye to the wording below, where The Moderator signed his name on the cloth. It was sewn over afterwards and yes, it really is his signature. Under instruction from his wife he had a quick practice on a spare piece of cloth before doing the real thing!



We have learned many things from tackling our first banner, which we will take on into future projects already in the pipeline. The visual impact from a distance is first and foremost very important, but we would encourage you to go up into the pulpit to stand below it to enjoy the beautifully hand stitched wings of the dove and the lovely veining on the leaves, as well as the carefully appliqued lettering; you will be rewarded for your closer examination!

Fiona Kerr, Margaret Lappin, Morag Welsh and Veronica Simpson

Messy Church – What's the Point?

We all know a church isn't a building, isn't confined to a time, place or a fixed format. God doesn't just move on a Sunday morning between 10.30 am and 11.30 pm.

Sometimes we need to be open to different ways of worshipping, allowing God to work among us in His way. It's good to do things differently, to step out of our comfort zones now and again. No, really, it is!!!

Church is people of all ages, from all walks of life, walking many different paths. They don't necessarily fit into our nice, neat wee boxes of what we think a "church-goer" should be like. They may have no previous experience or knowledge of the bible or of church or they may have been coming forever!

Messy Church is full of all sorts of people: some who already play an active part in church life, some who have only just begun to think about what church might mean to them, some who will never be comfortable enough to come along to a "normal" Sunday morning service and some who are really struggling to belong and work out where they fit into life. Messy Church is a time for all these different types of people to spend time together, to enjoy being part of a loving church family, learning, exploring and discovering what church might mean for them. Messy Church, like any church, needs a real mix of people of all shapes and sizes, ages and backgrounds. It needs people who can support others, encourage, care: just be there for each other and accept each other.

Recently at Messy Church we have had around 50 people coming along and that's not counting helpers. Why do they come? Well for a variety of reasons. Someone recently said they had come along because they'd heard it was brilliant! Some come to spend time with family and have fun and to meet people. Others like it because it's an opportunity for adults and children to mix together and because it's informal and welcoming.



Many people reading this will be thinking "Messy Church isn't for me!" Maybe it's not, but then again, maybe it could be. Please don't think you have nothing to offer. God can use each of us, we just need to be willing to let Him. There's always something you could do, you might even enjoy it and it's a fantastic and incredibly rewarding way to serve God and our community.



We would also really value your prayers as we seek to bring our community closer to an understanding of what Jesus means to us and of how much He and we care for them.

Our next Messy Church is on Sunday 20th March, 3 – 5pm and our theme will be a Messy Easter.

Forthcoming Services

13th March is Communion at 10.30 am with 6.30 pm come and sing, and 7.30 pm our evening service.

Holy Week

Monday 21st March – 6.30 pm at Dalgety Parish Church

Tuesday 22nd March - 6.30 pm at St Fillan's, Aberdour

Wednesday 23rd March - 6.30 pm at North Queensferry

Thursday 24th Maundy Thursday - 7.00 pm Service with Seder meal
Dalgety Parish Church (~1 hour)

Friday 25th March Good Friday - 7.00 pm Dalgety Parish Church

Easter Sunday (27th March)

8.00 am a Braefoot Pier, meet there, or walk with others from the Manse leaving at 7.30 am

10.30 am Family Celebration for Easter

7.00 pm quiet evening service with Communion

Stewardship 2016

The Stewardship team encourages and supports the Church to take part in the national stewardship programme.

Each year a theme of either Time, Talents or Money is focused on. This year our theme is Time.

Time for **Jesus**

Time for **Others**

Time for **You**



Your stewardship committee has arranged a variety of activities to help you to focus and spend time on the above. We hope you will find them both interesting and thought provoking.

40acts-Do Lent Generously is our first event. Michael Yarney presented the details of this on line or small group programme to the congregation on 31 January and details are also on the Church website. Even though we are well into the period of Lent, that doesn't preclude you from having a look at the programme and joining in now. It is never too late.

Your favourite/ special verse, "the book", is an idea we are all very keen on and we hope you will like it too. We are asking that you write down your favourite bible verse and, in about 150 words, tell us why that verse is special or speaks to you. We will make the contributions into a book which will be published by 31 August 2016. A template for your use is has been inserted into your magazine. They are also available on the Church's website or from the Church and a post box for completed contributions is in the Hall of Fellowship.

Café Church will be held on Sunday 10th April at 7pm and this is a new venture for Dalgety Parish Church. As the name suggests, the congregation will enjoy a service of music, readings, prayers, conversation etc, while seated round tables with tea, coffee, juice and food being provided at specified points of the service.

Mini Retreat Walk has been scheduled for 11 June at 10.30am, walking from Dalgety Bay to Aberdour. The aim of this event is that we walk in twos/threes taking the opportunity to share our Christian journey in a relaxed environment. We ask that you bring a picnic, which we hope to enjoy in the fresh air, though we have booked the St Fillans Church hall in case the weather is not in our favour. If sharing your Christian journey in this way is not "your thing" we hope you will still come along for the exercise and friendship. We will give more details nearer the time.

Cheese & Wine evening on Friday 11th November is the finale of the Stewardship programme for 2016. More details will be given nearer the date.

Finally, contact the Stewardship team if you have any questions and please take the opportunities to spend some on **time JOY**.

A date for your diary

Special Service - 24th April 2016 10.30 am

Of course every service is special as we join for worship and in that respect this one will be no different. What could make this one slightly different is that we hope that as many as possible of our family and friends and their family and friends will come on that particular Sunday. Sometimes we get out of the habit of coming to church, sometimes someone has caused us a hurt that has kept us from coming to church, sometimes we have questions and doubts about our faith or whether or not we are actually welcome. We would appreciate the chance to let you know, see and experience the fact that you are indeed very welcome. It doesn't mean we are perfect, that we won't say the wrong thing at the wrong time and that we will always get it right. But we do know that God's love is for everyone. And we do want to try and share Jesus' grace and mercy as best we can.

Nearer the time we will be bringing invitations for each one of you, which you can extend to family, friends, neighbours to come on 24th April to worship, to 'check us out', to come just as you are to what will be a service much the same as every other week.

ADVENTURERS

Our new Adventurers group meets during the morning service on a Sunday morning, catering for children between the ages of 3 and 5. We enjoy singing, hearing a Bible story, doing an activity and still find time for a snack! Below are 2 pictures from our activities.



This photo shows the donkey masks we made at Christmas time.



This photo is one was taken on 31st January when we made lion masks after we saw the story of Daniel in the lion's den!!



Peace Garden

The Peace Garden was completed last October in time for the moderator's visit and it is much admired and good comments are made about it all the time. The congregation was asked if they would donate money to cover the cost of the plants, which was over £300. There is a chart on the notice board beside the vestry door, which shows that around £35 has been donated so far. This is slightly out of date. I think the figure is nearer to £70. The notice is obviously in the wrong place and I have been tardy in that I have not been asking the treasurer for updates on the donation situation.

Anyway, even £70 is less than a quarter of the value required and the garden has been established for four to five months now. At some point soon there will be a "Blue Peter" style chart displayed in the Hall of Fellowship to remind the congregation of the appeal. Look out for this and please give generously.

Michael Gourlay

Peace Garden Plants

Our Peace Garden area, as it is, has now been planted up and the plants in the garden and planters are listed below. A third planter will be installed soon. The total cost of the plants so far is £306.91. If you would like to give a donation towards the cost of these plants, please put it in an envelope marked "Peace Garden" and hand it in to the church office.

Plant	No of Plants in Garden
Bellis – Variety – 1 Tray	20
Choisya – White Dazzler	4
Cyclamen – Hardy	24
Dianthus – Mixed	8
Eucothoe – Scarletta	4
Euonymous – Aurea	8
Festuca – Elijah Blue	8
Herbs – Variety	8
Penstemon – Southgate Gem	4
Pieris – Little Heath	4
Sedum – Variety	4
Skimmia – Rubella	8
Total Plants	104



Plant	No of Plants in Planters
Cyclamen – Patio	2
Lavendula – Dark Blue	8
Pansies – Variety – 4 Trays	48
Total Plants	58

A Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort...
at easy answers, hard hearts,
half-truths, and superficial relationships.
May God bless you so that you may live
from deep within your heart
where God's Spirit dwells.

May God bless you with anger...
at injustice, oppression,
and exploitation of people.
May God bless you so that you may
work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears...
to shed for those who suffer from pain,
rejection, starvation and war.
May God bless you so that you
may reach out your hand
to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with
enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference
in this world, in your neighborhood,
so that you will courageously try
what you don't think you can do, but,
in Jesus Christ you'll have all the strength necessary.

May God bless you to fearlessly
speak out about injustice,
unjust laws, corrupt politicians,
unjust and cruel treatment of prisoners,
and senseless wars,
genocides, starvations, and poverty that is so pervasive.

May God bless you that you remember
we are all called
to continue God's redemptive work
of love and healing
in God's place, in and through God's name,
in God's Spirit, continually creating
and breathing new life and grace
into everything and everyone we touch.

A CHURCH IN AMERICA

Summer 2014 until summer 2015 was spent in Amherst, Massachusetts where my wife, Fran, was interim minister in South Congregational Church. Amherst is 100 miles West of Boston nestled in the Connecticut River valley. It is a beautiful small farming town but with a huge student body in its three universities-all of whom open their library facilities to the public.

We lived in a large clapboard parsonage straight across the street from the Church that was first built in the 1820s but has since been much extended. At one time there were two congregations in the building-not because of pressure of numbers but because they had fallen out and one group would not worship with the other.

Thankfully peace and unity now prevail in this warm and welcoming congregation which, as it gathers for worship, is invited to make announcements about family events, sick friends and upcoming events. It is a lively time which can lead to much laughter and tears. Services are well attended, even in the winter, which was the worst in living memory, with 6 feet of snow and with ice on the ground for 4 months.



Interestingly the Congregation is very diverse. Many brought up as Congregationalists, Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, even Presbyterians have found their way to this tranquil part of town and to this busy congregation. The standing joke is that it is such a welcoming place because they eat a lot. Post service snacks are only one part of this. Regular Wednesday night live events involve a dinner and a speaker. The annual barbecue on the common across the road

involved grilling 180 half chickens! The most financially productive part of the annual Sleighbell Fair is the kitchen which manages to produce enough sustenance to the keep the 1000+ attendees nourished.

Alcoholics Anonymous and various similar bodies, including Clutterers Anonymous, meet in the church buildings but the hoped for synergies between these organisations and the Church have not developed. As in so many churches the Congregation is aging and the Sunday School is quite small so the challenge for the future is to find ways to attract younger people to worship. There is a wide range of Church organisations the most active of which is the Crafty Ladies who meet regularly and produce arts and crafts which are sold at the Sleighbell Fair. In my humble opinion the world champion shortbread baker is Beth (whose family origins are in Dundee).

Towards the end of our time there the Search Committee found a new minister in New York and she has now been inducted. On our last Sunday there, in July, Fran and I stood in front of the Congregation as they sang 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee' to us. It was a very moving moment.

Charlie Munn



You are invited to join with us to celebrate the
Sacrament of
Holy Communion
Sunday March 13th 2016
10.30 am

All are welcome at the Lord's Table