

SALTCOATS NORTH PARISH CHURCH RECORD – FEBRUARY 2011
MINISTER’S LETTER

Dear Friends,

On the 14th of this month of February, we celebrate Valentine’s Day. So let’s consider this wonderful thing called “love”. There are things which God can do that we cannot do, but love is one of the things which we can do like God! God loves and we love; indeed we can love with God’s love, not just our own love. In fact we have no love other than God’s love, according to the Bible (I John 4). This amazing chapter claims that the ONLY love in the world is God’s love, so that if the holiest person on the planet does not love then they know nothing about God, and if the biggest heathen-hooligan on Earth does love, then, in spite of themselves, they know God!

God’s love is like a diamond with many facets or characteristics to it. It is, like diamonds, precious, priceless and our best friend in a world that can be cold and loveless. So let’s think about some of the facets of God’s amazing love – the love which He gives us in order to love other people in turn. GOD’S LOVE IS.....

ETERNAL – from before the world was made. God said to Jeremiah that He loved him and called him to be a prophet even before he was born. We are each created by God’s love! We are loved from eternity to eternity.

UNIVERSAL – “God so loved the world that whosoever...should have eternal life”. “He’s got the whole world in His hands”. He loves everybody, without exception. His love also covers every aspect of life – He creates, sustains and redeems us in love.

FAITHFUL – loyal, steadfast, unwavering, continuous, constant, one thing “sure and steadfast, an anchor to the soul” in the swirling currents of life. We may forsake Him and forget Him but He never forsakes and forgets us.

PERSONAL – The Good Shepherd knows each sheep by name and comes looking for us when we get lost. Augustine said: “God loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love.”

UNCONDITIONAL – His love has no strings attached. It is not a contract, 50-50, you do this and I’ll do that; it is a covenant, 100% looking for 100% in return. He loves us even if we hate Him. It comes with no conditions or terms; it is complete commitment.

PRACTICAL - God in love, heals the sick, forgives the sinner, comforts the sad, reassures the doubter, binds up the broken-hearted, raises the fallen, champions the weak, helps the helpless and resurrects the dead.

SACRIFICIAL – His love cost Him dearly in Heaven, brought Him to a stable in Bethlehem and a cross on Calvary. He continues to be crucified by sin and sorrow. Only God knows how patient and long-suffering He has to be

CORPORATE – God loves me and God loves you; so we are connected by His love. If we can pray “Our Father” we become brother and sister; when the same Good Shepherd finds us we discover we are part of the same flock. He does “bind us together with love”.

UNDESERVED – “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”. The Prodigals are loved before, during and after their wanderings.

TOUGH – “God chastises those whom He loves”. His love is tough, pushing us on like parents, teachers or coaches do to get the best out of us.

TOTAL – It is all of the above and more! So enjoy God’s love on Valentine’s Day and always!

POWERHOUSE PRAYER GROUP
PRAYER LIST FOR MARCH 2011



Please pray for.....

Those who are Ill at home or in hospital:

Our members who are in Residential or Nursing Homes: Charlotte Savage, Mrs Olafsen, Nan Davidson, Nan Cook, Margaret Jones, Mrs Grandage, Jim McWhirter, Jean Anderson, Margaret Noble, John Fisher, Isobel Pettigrew, Matt Cowan, Elma Ralston, Beth Ritchie, Frances McDonald,

Those who are Bereaved:

The Congregation of Saltcoats North Parish Church: Sunday Services, Kirk Session, Congregational Board, Minister, Leaders, Creche, Sunday School, Youth Group, Girls' Brigade, Guild, Choir, Badminton, Dog Training, Julie Carson Dancing, Kelly McCrorie Dancing, Zumba, Prayer Group, Manse Groups, Friday Morning Team, Fabric, Cleaning, Office, Finance, Music, Recording and Broadcasting

The Wider Church: The Presbytery of Ardrossan, The Church of Scotland nationally, St.Cuthbert's and New Trinity Parish Churches, South Beach Home, Geilsland School, The Saltcoats Fraternal and other congregations in town, the worldwide Christian Church, Christian Aid, Bible Society, Our Missionary Partner Helen Scott in Malawi, Missionaries come to Scotland

The North Parish: Springvale Nursery School, Treetops Nursery School, Mayfield Primary School, Dykesmains Primary School, James Reid School, Beild Housing Residents, Arran View Nursing Home, Focus Centre, Snap Centre, 3TFM Local Radio, Shops, Post Office, Irvine Movements, McConnachy's Garage, New Residents

The Wider Community: Charities, Carers, Teachers, Social Workers, NHS, Police, Fire, Ambulance Services, Soldiers abroad, Youth Leaders, Immigrants

The Nation: Cut-backs, redundancies, unemployment, drugs, alcoholism, depression, domestic violence, child abuse, banks, small businesses, the Scottish Election

The World: Revolutions in North Africa and Middle East e.g. Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain; Earthquake in New Zealand; Flooding, Cyclone and Fire in Australia, War in Iraq and Afghanistan; Civil War in Congo and Uganda; Global Warming, People Trafficking, Drugs, Guns, Corruption, Dictatorships, Peace and Justice, World Leaders, UN

And we give THANKS to God for answered prayers:



SALTCOATS NORTH PARISH CHURCH

PARISH RECORD – MARCH 2011

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

To change or not to change – that is the question.

That is one of the biggest questions in life at any stage!

Change is not just an important part of living....

....change is what living consists of.

When you watch a hospital monitor graph going up and down you do not have to worry half as much as when it shows no change at all!

Every moment we are shedding old skin and growing new skin.

Every second cells in our body are dying and being created.

And consider this:

If you really could decide not to change...

If you really could keep things just the way they are....

- Would you have come out of the womb?
- Would you have gone to nursery and primary school and secondary school?
- Would you ever have left school?
- Would you have left home?
- Would you have started college or work?
- Would you have married...had kids...had pets...moved house?
- Would you have joined a group, an organisation?
- Would you have committed your life to Jesus and got involved in a Church congregation?

Just think how different your life might have been!

But would that have been a better life?

Would you not be still in the womb?

Isn't it true that, in spite of all the mistakes of the past, it has been worth it all?

But what about the future – for our life story continues – the question is a live one:

To change or not to change.

How ready are you for future changes?

Are you ready to leave the womb of earth for the adventure of Heaven and eternity?

God Bless

Alex B Noble

Saltcoats North Parish Church
PARISH RECORD – APRIL 2011

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter!

So what is Easter all about?

Well it is a great mystery and as such we will never fully understand it this side of Heaven. However we can delve into the mystery and gain wonderful insights which can be life-changing! Think of Easter as a diamond with many facets or aspects to it. Let me mention just some of them.

1 Easter is about God loving us so much that He was willing to die for us.

God loves us so much that He came down to Earth as a baby in a stable. He lived among us, as a fully human being. He suffered and died for us and rose again for us. In this way He showed and proved His love for us. He didn't just send postcards from Heaven, He came and loved us. His outstretched arms on the Cross are ready to embrace all who will love Him. Surely it melts our ice-cube hard hearts. When we survey the wondrous Cross on which the Prince of Glory died, surely love so divine demands our souls, our lives, our all!

2 Easter is about God reconciling us to Himself by taking all the hurt Himself.

We became estranged from our God by our sin (and we still do). Sinless God hates sin. Fortunately for us, He can bridge the gap. He can reach down to us who can never reach up to Him. He can win us back. However, it costs Him dearly. He has to absorb all the pain and hurt which we cause Him and then return love rather than hate. He has to endure being crucified by us and then offer us a fresh beginning in our relationship with Himself. He makes the first move to bring healing and reconciliation. Are we willing to respond likewise?

3 Easter is about God taking our punishment Himself.

There is nothing for nothing. Actions have consequences. Crimes incur punishment. God is loving and just. His love and justice demand that He does not "sweep our sins under the carpet". The wages of sin is death. The death has to be died. However the judge of all the earth HIMSELF steps down into the dock representing all the accused sinners and accepts His own verdict of death. He dies our death for us. He is our scapegoat and our substitute. He saves our life. We owe our life to Him two-fold for He both created us and now He has also redeemed us.

4 Easter is about God championing our cause and defeating evil.

We are broken people, in broken relationships with others, and estranged from our loving God. We are weak and wicked in ourselves and we face what Paul called "principalities and powers" from outside us. Who will save us from this wicked world and who will save us from ourselves? We need a hero and a champion to protect us and fight for us. Jesus is the One! He overcame all the things which defeat us including the last enemy death itself. So at Easter we sing "The strife is o'er, the battle done; now is the victor's triumph won". Jesus gives us resurrection power, bouncebackability, life after any kind of death.

So at Easter we celebrate the Good News of Jesus. We rejoice in the fact that we are loved to death by God, we are reconciled to Him, our sins are all forgiven, we have a new life and Jesus will be our champion leading us through this life and into eternity with Himself. We have at-one-ment with our God, our neighbours and ourselves. So come on and let's really praise and thank Him this Easter for all that He has done for us.

Rev Alex B Noble

POWERHOUSE PRAYER GROUP
PRAYER LIST FOR APRIL 2011



Please pray for.....

Those who are Ill at home or in hospital including: Marion Brown, Betty McCubbin, John Glen, Jim Anderson, Wilma Grant, Margaret Fraser, Mabel Carson, Helen Martin, Sheena Burns, Patricia Noble, Gillian Abercrombie, Gloria Smith, Ann Sloan, Molly Aitchison, Karen Mullen, Steven Smith, Sadie Little, John Crozier

Those who are in Residential or Nursing Homes including: Charlotte Savage, Mrs Olafsen, Nan Davidson, Nan Cook, Margaret Jones, Mrs Grandage, Jim McWhirter, Jean Anderson, Margaret Noble, John Fisher, Isobel Pettigrew, Matt Cowan, Elma Ralston, Beth Ritchie, Frances McDonald,

Those who are Bereaved including: the family and friends of Marion Wilson, Cathy Johnston, Joe McClurkin, Martha Ross and Robert Young

The Congregation of Saltcoats North Parish Church: Sunday Services, Kirk Session, Congregational Board, Minister, Leaders, Creche, Sunday School, Youth Group, Girls' Brigade, Guild, Choir, Badminton, Dog Training, Julie Carson Dancing, Kelly McCrorie Dancing, Zumba, Prayer Group, Manse Groups, Friday Morning Team, Fabric, Cleaning, Office, Finance, Music, Recording and Broadcasting

The Wider Church: The Presbytery of Ardrossan, The Church of Scotland nationally, St.Cuthbert's and New Trinity Parish Churches, South Beach Home, Geilsland School, The Saltcoats Fraternal and other congregations in town, the worldwide Christian Church, Christian Aid, Bible Society, Our Missionary Partner Helen Scott in Malawi, Missionaries come to Scotland

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The Wider Community: Charities, Carers, Teachers, Social Workers, NHS, Police, Fire, Ambulance Services, Soldiers abroad, Youth Leaders, Immigrants

The Nation: Cut-backs, redundancies, unemployment, drugs, alcoholism, depression, domestic violence, child abuse, banks, small businesses, the Scottish Election

The World: Earthquake/tsunami/radiation/hunger in Japan; Revolutions in North Africa and Middle East e.g. Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain; Earthquake in New Zealand; War in Iraq and Afghanistan; Civil War in Congo, Uganda and Ivory Coast; Global Warming, People Trafficking, Drugs, Guns, Corruption, Dictatorships, Peace and Justice, World Leaders, UN.

And we give THANKS to God for answered prayers:



WHAT'S ON IN SALTCOATS NORTH PARISH CHURCH

Sunday -11 am Church Service + Sunday School, Creche, Youth Group; Tea afterwards.
6.30 pm Occasional Evening Services

Monday - Office open 10-12 noon
Girls' Brigade: 5.30 pm Explorers, 6.30pm Juniors and Seniors
9 pm Minister's weekly radio programme: "The Holy Half Hour" on 3TFM

Tuesday - 4.15 pm Julie Carson School of Dance
5.30-8 pm (in summer) The Work Party
6 pm Zumba
7 pm Kirk Session and Congregational Board

Wednesday – 4-7 pm Kelly McCrorie School of Dance
7.30 pm The Guild
7.30 pm Scottish Country Dancing
also Adult Christian Education Groups + Concerts + Special Events

Thursday – 10.30–11 am Prayer Together
6 pm Zumba Keep Fit
7-8.30 pm Choir
7.30 pm Badminton
also Meetings with Baptismal Parents, Wedding Couples, New Members etc.

Friday – Office open 10-12 noon
10 am Gleam Team

- * Most days we have volunteers doing jobs in the church.
- * We have disabled access and a loop system for the hard of hearing.
- * We have 330 members. About 130 attend each week.
- * It costs over £1,100 each week to run the church. All the money comes from local people
- * We donate thousands of pounds each year to Church work in Scotland and abroad, to charities (esp. Christian Aid). Recently we, and other local congregations, together raised £16,000 for Malawi and the Scottish Parliament topped it up to £160,000.
- * We give away flowers from the Church every Sunday.
- * We give away CDs made by the minister i.e. copies of his weekly radio programmes, ie 120 programmes so far.
- * We record every Church service then give away the CDs each week to housebound people and others. We also put recordings of our services on the minister's website: www.revalexbnoble.com so that we can bring the good news of Jesus to the whole world.
- * We give away free "The Parish Record" church magazine each month.
- * We have a free Church Library for people to borrow anything for as long as they like.
- * We circulate Prayer Sheets naming people who are ill in hospital or at home, and those who have lost a loved one. We ask people to pray for them.
- * We send cards to people who are ill or bereaved.
- * The Minister, Church Elders and Church Members visit people to see if they can help them in any way.

*** We see the Church as a great big family – part of the world-wide Christian family – part of the Christian family which has existed for thousands of years – part of the Christian family which also includes all those who have died and gone to Heaven.

Together we worship Jesus, learn, teach, and reach out in love to help everybody in the area.

You are welcome to join us in this (if you are not already doing so).

The Church belongs to Jesus. It is not my church nor your church nor anyone else's, but His.

SPECIAL SERVICES

| | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| New Year | Epiphany | Christian Unity | Communication Sun. | Lent |
| Palm Sun. | Easter | Christian Aid | Church Sun | Ascension |
| Pentecost | Trinity | Annual Thanksgiving | Bible Sun | Prayer Sun |
| Service Sun | Harvest Thanksgiving | Annual Dedication Service | Mission Sun | Remembrance Sun |
| Advent | | Christmas | | |

PLUS... Baptisms, Communion, Home Communion, Weddings, Funerals, Admission of New Members, Ordination of Elders, Inductions of Ministers, Holy Week Services, James Reid School Services, Mayfield School Services, Arran View Nursing Home Services, South Beach Nursing Home Services, Special Services with the Orange Lodge, Eastern Star, Girls' Brigade.

We also join with other congregations in Saltcoats for the Town Christmas Service and the Easter Walk of Witness and Outdoor Service on Good Friday.

SALTCOATS NORTH PARISH CHURCH HOLY WEEK 2011

Palm Sunday, 17th April, 11am
BAPTISM and ADMISSION of Linda Murphy
and Soup & Sweet Lunch for Christian Aid

Monday 18th April, 7.30-8.30pm
KILBIRNIE SALVATION ARMY BAND AND
SONGSTERS



Tuesday 19th April, 7.30-8.30pm
ADELAIDE COLLEGE'S MUSICAL DRAMA:
"LOVE SONG"

Wednesday 20th April, 7.30-8.30pm
AN EASTER VARIETY SHOW



Thursday 21st April, 7.30-8.30pm
COMMUNION SERVICE

Friday 22nd April, 7.30-8.30pm
AROUND THE CROSS ON GOOD FRIDAY
(An imaginative, participatory, multi-media experience.)



- - All services are followed by tea/coffee - -

Tuesday 21st April, Joint Schools Easter Service

Ecumenical Good Friday Walk of Witness from Melbourne Park
(11.30 am) to Hamilton St/Dockhead St/Melbourne Park Open Air
Service, 12 noon

EASTER SUNDAY, 24th APRIL

8am - Easter Morning Communion Service and Breakfast

11am - Easter Service

2pm - Arran View Nursing Home Easter Service

--- ALL WELCOME ---

BRING A FRIEND

SALTCOATS NORTH PARISH CHURCH RECORD - MAY 2011

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

HAPPY EASTER!

May you enjoy all the blessings which come with having the risen Christ with you.

So, what are the proofs that Jesus is Risen? How is anyone to know?

- 1 The tomb was found to be empty, the stone rolled away, the grave clothes neatly folded.
- 2 An angel (or two) told the grieving disciples: "He is not here. He is Risen!"
- 3 Prophets, and Jesus Himself had predicted it. The disciples should have been expecting it.
- 4 There were twelve resurrection appearances by Jesus.
- 5 The eye witnesses such as Mary Magdalene, Thomas, Peter, Paul, Cleopas, the Eleven Disciples in the Upper Room, over 500 people at one time (ICor.15v6) etc. Sometimes in life we have to trust the eye witnesses. These eye witnesses gave the rest of their lives and even died martyr's deaths to pass on to you and me the fact that Jesus is Risen and they met Him.
- 6 How else do we account for the fact that the defeated, dispirited and despairing disciples had a complete change of heart and had the boldness and strength to go into all the world to preach the Good News of the Risen Jesus?
- 7 The Early Christian Church's preaching was totally Resurrection centred, and for the next two thousand years it has remained so. Everything that Christians believe and proclaim is based on the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus.
- 8 Christians changed their Sabbath day from the Jewish Saturday, held as a day of rest, to a Sunday, held as marking the day on which Jesus rose again.
- 9 It was the certainty of the Resurrection of Jesus which founded the Jesus Christ Church, the Christian Church. That certainty that Jesus is Lord and God, not Caesar, caused Christians to worship Jesus and refuse to worship the emperors. Nero and Domitian, as Caesars, persecuted the Christians for this reason, but the Church never looked back. The blood of the martyrs has only served to spread the Kingdom of God on Earth.
- 10 Jesus being God, being "the Way, the Truth, the Life", being "the resurrection and the life", by His very nature just had to rise again like a cork by its very nature has to bob back up.
- 11 Resurrection is not that unusual. It happens all the time in God's natural world e.g. the sun rises, the seasons come round, trees get new leaves, grass reappears, seeds get buried then burst forth into full bloom, the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, water bugs become dragonflies etc.
- 12 As well as all this, the proof of the Resurrection lies in ourselves! The proof is not so much historical as experiential. In other words, the proof is in the eating. We know when we are praying if we are talking to the Risen Jesus or just talking to ourselves. We know when we have had answers to prayer. We know when we have had strength beyond our own strength, wisdom beyond our own knowledge and inner peace which defies our circumstances. We can testify to ourselves, and to sceptical others, that we have experienced divine guidance, love and forgiveness. The hymn puts it: "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."

So we ourselves become the proofs that Jesus is alive and kicking and making a huge difference in our lives and in the world today!!!

PARISH REGISTER

Baptism and Admission of New Member by Profession of Faith:

17. 4. 11 Linda Murphy 40 Anderson Drive, Saltcoats

Admission of New Member by Resolution of the Kirk Session:

29. 3. 11 Dora Scott 13 Jacks Road

Funerals:

1. 4. 11 Robert Young Cheltenham
5. 4. 11 William Wilson Arran View Nursing Home
20. 4. 11 Johann Anderson 2 Stanley Avenue, Ardrossan

NEWS

We had a very busy week during Holy Week. Each night was very different and excellent in its own way. We had the Kilbirnie Salvation Army Band and Songsters; Adelaide College doing music and drama; a whole variety of our own members using their varied talents to lead the worship of God; communion; and an imaginative, participatory experience at the Cross on Good Friday. On Easter Sunday we enjoyed an 8 am communion service and free breakfast with bacon rolls; at 11 am lots of people helped make the worship extra special and at 2 pm we led the residents of Arran View in Easter worship too. We are very grateful to so many of you in so many ways. Thanks for all the work in the grounds of the church, thanks for all the work done in the kitchen with the catering, thanks for the flowers, the brand new microphone, the door duty, the beadling (if there is such a word). As you can see, some people helped up front while others helped behind the scenes. Together we formed quite a close bond as a team. It is certainly true that "the more you put into things the more you get out of them"! Those who caught the vision of being pilgrims together throughout the week, really did feel the fellowship and sense of being part of something special. So whether or not you got paid, or got an easter egg, at least you have the reward of having been part of a very special experience of working and worshipping together.

Sunday 1st May 11 am – Rev Ross Mitchell

Sunday 8th May 11 am – Rev Alex Noble + 2 pm ArranView service in Sannox Bay

Sunday 15th May 11 am – Christian Aid Sunday

Sunday 22nd May 11 am – Church Sunday

Sunday 29th May 11 am – Annual Thanksgiving Service + Gift Day

Sunday 5th June 11 am – Ascension Sunday

Sunday 12th June 11 am – Pentecost Sunday

Sunday 19th June 11 am – Trinity Sunday + 6.30 pm evening service for everyone and our special guests, the Eastern Star.

Sunday 26th June 11 am – Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

*** Sun 15th May 11 am – Christian Aid Sunday kicks off Christian Aid Week. Thanks very much to Moira Smith for organising the door to door collection this year. Thanks also to those who have volunteered to do the collecting. Most of all thank you to all those of you who will be donating! We can make a difference in the world in Jesus' name.

*** Sun 29 May – This is all-age worship including the Sunday School and Youth Group prizegiving. At the start of the winter the congregation as a whole, its various groups and organisations, and each of us individually, dedicate all our activities and ourselves to God's glory and service; and at the end of the winter we thank God for all that we have experienced.

The Kirk Session and Congregational Board and Minister thought that it would be a good idea this year to combine this with the Annual Gift Day which is normally held in early June. So we would encourage you to stay after the service for a special cup of tea cum light lunch and make your thanksgiving offering to God for all His blessings and to support His work. At the tea/lunch we will show you some of the ways in which we have been blessed as a congregation.

Holy Half Hours on 3TFM (103fm) – Mondays at 9 pm

9th May – The Local Christian Aid Committee (who have just raised over £150,000)!

16th May – Neil Gibson: The Accordionist

23rd May – Christianity is Something Else!

30th May – Secular Hymns

Remember you can get Thoughts for the Day, Mon-Fri, at 9.10 am on 3TFM

Mr Noble will be doing TFTD on Westsound Radio from Mon 9th May to Fri 13th 6.50/7.50 am

Thursday 5th May – The Scottish Election

Tuesday 10th May – Zumba starts meeting on Tuesdays at 6 pm as well as Thursdays at 6 pm

Tuesday 10th May – 7pm Congregational Board

Monday 23rd May – 7pm The Girls' Brigade's Annual Closing Display – All Welcome

Sunday 29th May – deadline for items for the June Parish Record magazine.

Tuesday 31st May – 7 pm Kirk Session

MINISTER’S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Here is a copy of something I did on Westsound’s “Thoughts for the Day”. A number of people have asked for a copy; so now you can all have a copy.

“A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the four pups and nailed it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of a little boy.

“Mister,” he said, “I want to buy one of your puppies.”

“Well,” said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck,

“These puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money.”

The boy hung his head, then reaching deep into his pocket he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer.

“I’ve got 39 pence. Is that enough to take a look?”

“Sure” said the farmer, and let out a whistle.

“Here, Dolly!” he called.

Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur. The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence, his eyes dancing with delight. As the dogs made their way to the fence, he noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse. Slowly another little ball appeared, this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid, then in a somewhat awkward manner, the little pup began hobbling towards the others, doing its best to catch up.

“I would like that one,” the little boy said, pointing to the runt.

The farmer knelt down at the boy’s side and said,

“Son, you don’t want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like those other dogs would.”

With that, the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so, he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg, attaching itself to a specially made shoe. Looking back up at the farmer, he said,

“You see, sir, I don’t do so well myself, and he will need someone who understands.”

With tears in his eyes, the farmer reached down and picked up the little pup. Holding it carefully, he handed it to the little boy.

“How much?” asked the little boy.

“No charge,” answered the farmer. “There’s no charge for love.””

Have a lovely summer!

Alex B Noble

PARISH REGISTER

WEDDING: “Those whom God has joined together...”

6 5 11 Jim McHarg and Sue Rainey 38 Keir Hardie Drive, Ardrossan

FUNERALS: “In sure and certain hope of Resurrection”

| | | |
|---------|-------------------|---|
| 28 4 11 | William Alexander | 28 Sannox Drive, Saltcoats |
| 9 5 11 | Nan Cook | Three Towns Nursing Home; formerly 30 Union St |
| 11 5 11 | Jessie Currie | Arran View Nursing Home; formerly Glasgow |
| 19 5 11 | Beth Ritchie | Arran View Nursing Home; formerly 12 Moffat Wynd |
| 20 5 11 | Nettie Brown | Abbotsford Nursing Home; formerly Ailsa Road |
| 20 5 11 | Douglas McCracken | 34 Ailsa Road [funeral Lanark; memorial service here] |
| 31 5 11 | Karen Winning | 28 Ailsa Road |

NEWS

1 The Christian Aid door to door collection in the North Parish during Christian Aid Week raised £1,550. Thank you very much all you contributors, all you collectors and Moira Smith for organising it so well.

2 We also say thanks to the intrepid volunteers who did a parish visitation exercise bringing welcome packs and Easter leaflets to new residents in the new housing within the parish.

3 We are currently running a series of Adult Christian Education meetings in the vestry during the month of June: Wednesdays 7-9pm.

4 We enjoyed an excellent Girls' Brigade Closing Display once again. The hall was packed and families and friends were drawn in to participate in the games. A good time was had by all! Thanks again to Capt. Evelyn Porter, the leaders and all the girls. Evelyn has now been Captain of the 4th Saltcoats Company for 47 years! (It must be a record!)

5 Congratulations to Nicole Fenton one of the Brigaders and a member of our Sunday School. She is a record breaker for she is the first person ever in the history of the 4th Saltcoats Girls' Brigade Company to achieve the coveted Duke of Edinburgh Award. Well done Nicole! She is not sitting on her laurels however, she is now talking the Queen's Award which is the highest award possible. We wish her well with that.

6 Thanks to all who so generously contributed to the Annual Gift Day on Sunday 29th May. As we go to print we do not have a total, but there were many envelopes received, so thank you all very much indeed.

7 On a financial note, the Congregational Board was informed by our Treasurer, Julie Jamieson that our expenditure exceeded our income by about £3,000 in the first third of the year, so we are slightly worried, but we also have faith in God and in your generosity too.

8 We had a great all-age worship service on 29th May – the Annual Thanksgiving Service – involving all the various groups in the congregation. It included the Sunday School prizegiving. It was particularly moving when Angus MacDonald announced that he was retiring as leader of the Sunday School. Tributes were paid and he received some surprise presents. Angus has been the leader of the Sunday School for 13 years (since November 1997), and before that he was a teacher for three or four years, so he deserves his rest and the ultimate accolade: “well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Sunday June 5th 11 a.m. – Ascension Sunday

Sunday June 12th 11 a.m. – Pentecost Sunday

Sunday June 19th 11 a.m. – Trinity Sunday (and Fathers' Day)

Sunday June 19th 6.30pm – Special evening service with the Eastern Star. (All welcome)

Sunday June 26th 11 a.m. – Communion

Sunday July 10th 11 a.m. – Baptism of Evan McKay

Sunday July 24th/30th 11am – Rev David Harbison (a retired minister)

PRAYER PAGE

Day of Month

- 1 The North Parish area of Saltcoats.
- 2 Saltcoats North Parish Church
- 3 Kirk Session, Congregational Board
- 4 Minister and his wife: Alex and Patricia
- 5 Cradle Roll, Creche, Sunday School, Child Safeguarding, Children in parish
- 6 Youth Group, Young People in the Parish, Young People around the World
- 7 Girls' Brigade locally, nationally and internationally
- 8 Schools and Nurseries locally and elsewhere
- 9 The Guild locally and nationally and its special Projects
- 10 Groups in the Church: Kelly McCrorie and Julie Carson Dancing, Zumba, Scottish Country Dancing, Dog Training, Badminton
- 11 The congregation's prayer time together on Thursdays 10.30-11am and learning together in Vestry discussions.
- 12 Sunday Services and other services: baptisms, weddings, funerals, schools, ecumenical, Holy Week etc.
- 13 The Office, Gleam Team, Work Party, Fabric Committee, Flowers, Magazines, CDs, Roll Keeping, Sunday Teas, Social Committee
- 14 Church Music: Organists, Choir, Other Musicians
- 15 Fabric and Finance
- 16 Elders in their Districts, New Elders, Parish Visitation
- 17 Mission: Elders and Members Lives, Broadcasting on 3TFM and Westsound Radio, Free CDs, The Church's and Mr Noble's Websites, Welcome Visits
- 18 Our Missionary Partner, Helen Scott, in Malawi and other Missionaries to and from Scotland.
- 19 Christian Aid, The Bible Society, Gideons, Charities, International Issues
- 20 Those who are ill, bereaved, in crises
- 21 Stewardship of Time, Talents and Money
- 22 Ecumenical Matters, Saltcoats' Fraternal, Other Local Congregations
- 23 Church of Scotland locally and nationally. Presbytery of Ardrossan
- 24 Residential Homes eg South Beach Home; Nursing Homes eg Arran View
- 25 NHS Health Care, GPs, Hospitals, Home Care, etc. Ayrshire Hospice
- 26 Housebound, Home Communion people
- 27 Visitors, Enquirers, New Members, New Leaders
- 28 Baptismal Parents, Wedding Couples
- 29 The Community of Saltcoats and the Three Towns
- 30 Scotland and the United Kingdom and the European Union
- 31 The World

Saltcoats North Parish Church Record - AUGUST 2011
Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

I hope you have all had a good summer and are now feeling refreshed and “raring to go” as we prepare to kick off another new season in our congregation’s life. At this time of year we are thinking a lot about our loved ones away on holiday and holidaymakers being here with us. So, here is an article from a church magazine from Fort Lauderdale in Florida, U.S.A. which was brought home by a Scottish tourist. It gives a glimpse of “ourselves as others see us”!

“Sunday morning in Glasgow, Scotland. The pews are empty, but last night the pubs were full. Only two percent of the population attends church on any given Sunday. Unable to attract young people, an estimated 500 traditional churches have closed in the last few years. Churches where evangelists such as D.L.Moody once preached have been converted into taverns, theatres, and apartment complexes.

It’s midnight in downtown Glasgow and the party is just getting started. Thousands of young people press into overcrowded pubs. Sidewalks overflow with teens clutching their favourite brew. A large cathedral has been transformed into a nightclub. God once moved in that place but, this night, hundreds of young people wait anxiously outside the sandstone building for an evening of binge drinking and dancing.

Teenage drug abuse is out of control. If a young girl gets pregnant, the government gives her an apartment and living expenses. So, you’ll see 14 year old girls pushing around baby carriages.

The following morning, we parked across from one church building that had been converted into a mosque. The cross in front, which once declared Christ’s gift of salvation, has been replaced by an Islamic symbol. From all directions, dozens of Muslims of all ages pour into the facility.

Arriving in Edinburgh, we rendezvous with friends at a large memorial in the heart of the city. The plaque on the memorial reads: “Men and women, nobles and plain folk, ministers, soldiers and others were executed at this place and elsewhere in Scotland between 1661 and 1688 for their adherence to the reformed religion and the covenants”.

This was the time when Covenanters signed covenants which said they would not bow down to King Charles’ decree to use the prayer book or to take Communion in a particular way. They insisted that Christ was the head of the Church, not Charles. These faithful people of God were banned from their Churches; ministers were removed from their congregations and forbidden to preach under threat of banishment or execution. They were forced to worship in the fields all across Scotland under fear of exposure and imprisonment. These secret worship services were known as conventicles. Many died, hanged for their faith.

THE STORY OF TWO CHURCHES.

On Sunday, we visited a traditional church. The people were warm and friendly but, as anticipated, there were few young people and the majority of the pews were empty. The robed minister preached from a lofty pulpit, but it was obvious that most weren’t listening. The pipe organ played, but only a few sang. There is no life – only scripted prayer and solemn ritual. It’s difficult to imagine this historic church once spilled over with parishioners, much like Glasgow’s pubs on Friday night.

But we visited another church and here senior adults and children raised their hands and bounced to the music. They were not mere spectators. The guitars, electric piano and drums gave way to a chorus sung a cappella. As the Scottish minister preached, the congregation listened attentively. Many took notes and held Bibles in their laps. At the close of the service, they lingered at the altar and prayed for one another. This was not just another Sunday obligation.

These believers were there because they wanted to be. They were a spiritual family with a purpose – to reach their community for Jesus.

It is our prayer that Scotland will not become what it once was, but rather that it will become greater than it has ever been. May it once again be the Land of the Book!"

That's how others see us. I wonder how Jesus sees us! How do we see ourselves?

God Bless

Rev Alex B Noble

PARISH REGISTER

FUNERALS: "In sure and certain hope of Resurrection to eternal life"

| | | |
|---------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 10 6 11 | Lottie Freeman | 2 Nigel Henderson Court, Sanquhar |
| 24 6 11 | Ian Irvine | 75 Dalry Road, Saltcoats |

NEWS

1 Thanks to all who organised and supported the Strawberry Tea on 21st July.

2 We are starting new series of Manse Groups (adult Christian education). They are held in the Manse, 25 Longfield Avenue, and sometimes in the Vestry in Church. They last for four weeks only then we start another series. Sometimes they are in evenings and sometimes in afternoons. This is to give everyone a chance to come at a time suitable to them. Regulars can come as often as they want but others prefer to do a series every now and again. We each need to keep growing in faith, and we all need to grow together as a congregation. How we do it is very flexible. Each group chooses its own topics to discuss and how we deal with the matter depends on what it is we are discussing and how the group wants to look into it.

Series 1: Wednesday evenings (7-9pm) 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st August

Series 2: Friday evenings (7-9pm) 16th, 23rd, 30th September and 7th October

Series 3: Wednesday afternoons (2-4pm) 19th, 26th October and 2nd, 9th, November

3 New Members' Classes – for anyone thinking about maybe joining the Church. Come and hear all about it. Ask any questions. You are not signing up by coming. Some join, some do not. It is a case of look before you leap. Bring a friend if you like. Please advertise these meetings to anyone who might be interested. It is about six meetings. At the first meeting we work out suitable dates for the others. To get it started the first meeting is on Tuesday 23rd August 7-9pm in the Manse, 25 Longfield Avenue. If you are interested but that date is unsuitable please contact Mr Noble. Anyone who already is a Church member but who would like a refresher course, or would like to accompany a possible new member, is welcome.

4 Special Sundays:

Sunday 14th August 11am Worship + 2pm Arran View Nursing Home Service

Sunday 21st August 11am Worship + 3pm South Beach Residential Home Service

Sunday 28th August 11am Baptismal Service

Sunday 4th September 11am Bible Sunday (Celebrating the 400th anniversary of the King James or Authorised Version of the Bible 1611-2011)
(There will be a retrieval offering for the work of the Bible Society)

Sunday 11th September 11am Prayer Sunday

5 The Sunday School and the Youth Group both restart on Sunday 21st August (ie when the Schools resume).

6 The Girls' Brigade restarts with Enrolment on Monday 5th September at 6 pm

7 The Prayer Group begins again on Thursday 1st September at 10.30 am. This is not a specialist activity for a holy huddle of experts who like that sort of thing. Prayer is the most wonderful God-given privilege, pleasure and responsibility of every single Christian and Christian congregation.

8 The Choir restarts on Thursday 1st September at 7 pm.

9 The Guild restarts officially on Wednesday 14th September, but the previous week they are going for a meal out at the Corran Inn on Wed. 7th. If you would like to join the Guild here is a flavour of the sorts of things they will be doing. (The dates may be subject to alteration nearer the time). They meet on Wednesdays at 7.30pm in the hall.

September 7th – a getting to know you meal out together in the Corran Inn

September 14th – Rev Alex Noble

September 21st - not sure yet

September 28th - Maureen Pettigrew: “The Bowen Technique” (bone therapy)

October 5th - Mr Keith: Slide Show about “Austria”

October 12th - Ian and Emily Paterson: “Auchengrie Farm and their Shop”

October 19th - Fish and Chips Night

October 26th - Neil Gibson talking about “Old Saltcoats”

November 2nd - Discussion Night

November 9th - Linda Redmand: “Reflexology and Armchair Aerobics”

November 16th – The Von Crapp Singers/Musicians

November 23rd - Betty’s Table, Bring and Buy Night

November 30th - Wester Highgate Farm (including sales of their own ice cream)

December 7th – Mr Fraser: talking about “Hiroshima”

December 14th – Christmas Dinner in the Corran Inn

(Here’s hoping all that whets your appetite)!

THANK YOUs

I would like to thank Mr noble for his visits after my recent operation. My thanks also to the congregation for the flowers, their good wishes and for keeping me in their prayers. Yours sincerely, Mary Menzies.

Just a short note to thank you all for the lovely flowers which I received from the church. They fairly cheered me up after my time in hospital. God bless, Wilma Grant

USEFUL INFORMATION

The Scottish Government has produced lots of information about care services to support older people and their carers. The helpline phone number is 08456 001 001 and the website is www.careinfoscotland.co.uk It is well worth contacting them.

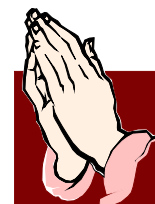
If you are over 75 years old ask about Scottish Gas and Electricity’s “Essential Tariff” on 0800 048 0101.

Members of the congregation recommend Wiltshire Farm Foods microwaveable meals. Ask for their catalogue. The national number is 0800 773 773. The local number is 01294 551734.

Free loft and cavity wall insulation is currently available for anyone aged 70 and over or on qualifying benefits. There are also grants of up to 70% for all homeowners and private tenants, whatever your income. The manse and the church have both benefited from this Government initiative. For a free, no obligation home survey, call Tony on 07977-057070

If you want to stop nuisance, junk phone calls just call BT's Telephone Preference Service on 0845-0700707. It takes one minute and 28 days to process, then no more pestering calls!

POWERHOUSE PRAYER GROUP
PRAYER LIST FOR AUGUST 2011



Please pray for.....

Those who are Ill at home or in hospital:

Our members who are in Residential or Nursing Homes: Charlotte Savage, Mrs Olafsen, Nan Davidson, Margaret Jones, Jessie Grandage, Jim McWhirter, Jean Anderson, Margaret Noble, John Fisher, Isobel Pettigrew, Matt Cowan, Elma Ralston, Frances McDonald, John Crozier

Those who are Bereaved:

The Congregation of Saltcoats North Parish Church: Sunday Services, Kirk Session, Congregational Board, Minister, Leaders, Creche, Sunday School, Youth Group, Girls' Brigade, Guild, Choir, Badminton, Dog Training, Julie Carson Dancing, Kelly McCrorie Dancing, Zumba, Prayer Group, Manse Groups, Friday Morning Team, Fabric, Cleaning, Office, Finance, Music, Recording and Broadcasting

The Wider Church: The Presbytery of Ardrossan, The Church of Scotland nationally, St.Cuthbert's and New Trinity Parish Churches, South Beach Home, Geilsland School, The Saltcoats Fraternal and other congregations in town, the worldwide Christian Church, Christian Aid, Bible Society, Our Missionary Partner Helen Scott in Malawi, Missionaries come to Scotland

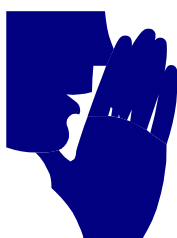
The North Parish: Springvale Nursery School, Treetops Nursery School, Mayfield Primary School, Dykesmains Primary School, James Reid School, Beild Housing Residents, Arran View Nursing Home, Focus Centre, Snap Centre, 3TFM Local Radio, Shops, Post Office, Irvine Movements, McConnachy's Garage, New Residents

The Wider Community: Charities, Carers, Teachers, Social Workers, NHS, Police, Fire, Ambulance Services, Soldiers abroad, Youth Leaders, Immigrants

The Nation: Cut-backs, redundancies, unemployment, drugs, alcoholism, depression, domestic violence, child abuse, banks, small businesses, the Scottish Election

The World: Revolutions in North Africa and Middle East e.g. Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria; Earthquakes; Flooding; Cyclones and Forest Fires a, War in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya; Civil War in Congo and Uganda; Global Warming; People Trafficking; Drugs; Guns; Corruption; Dictatorships; Peace and Justice; World Leaders; the U.N.

And we give THANKS to God for answered prayers:



Saltcoat North Parish Church
PARISH RECORD – SEPTEMBER 2011
Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

I hope you have all had a good summer...and hopefully September will include an "Indian Summer" too. It is good to relax on the deckchair and unwind. On the other hand it is also exciting and thrilling to get off the deck chair and get stuck in to chosen activities – not as burdensome work but as passionate causes, vocational service, devotional worship. People sometimes lose the plot or lack the vision and you can hear them moan and groan "ach well, it's back to working claes and porridge".."back to the grindstone"..”another cycle on the treadmill of life.” Other folk, with a bit more appetite for life, look forward to “the kick-off to the new season”, “starting new projects”, “taking up new challenges”.

I hope that you view life as a privilege and a pleasure, brim full of new adventures and unexpected opportunities. It is our way of thanking our Creator when we fully live and “be all that we can be”. It is part of our worship to passionately, lovingly, joyfully and faithfully serve God and our neighbour. It is an honour to work with our brothers and sisters in Christ, in the Church and in our community. Life is a privilege and Church life is an even more special gift, given to us by our loving Heavenly Father. So enjoy it and let your enthusiasm rub off on others. Let's all shine our little lights, or rather let's all reflect the infinite light of Jesus the Light of the World, and so brighten up the three towns in general and the North Parish in particular. Let us delight in being a congregation together – a group of fellow believers, a disciple band, a family, a salvation army, members of the Body of Christ. Let us reach out to others too and introduce them to Jesus. Let's share the joyful Christian life with the people around us. Let's draw people in to Church and also encourage each other to go out into our daily lives as (in Paul's phrase) “ambassadors for Christ”.

So, in the light of all this the Kirk Session would like every Church member to go out and invite someone in to Church. We have designated Sunday 25th September as BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY. This is not just a Saltcoats North Parish Church thing. Churches all across Presbytery, all across Scotland, the UK and in several countries will be promoting September 25th as Back to Church Sunday. It has been going on for a few years now and it has become “the largest single local-church invitational initiative in the world” (to quote the official blurb)!

Many congregations report that they have had lots of folk coming back to church on the designated Sundays in recent years. Many people are looking for an excuse and an invite to come back to Church. The congregations which have reported the most success have three secrets of success: (1) they prayed about it and prayed for the people they were going to invite to Church; (2) the invitation was made personally, person to person, friends inviting friends; and (3) the congregations gave the visitors a very warm welcome indeed.

We at Saltcoats North Parish Church intend to do all that, and besides that, we will have a tea after the service so that you can have a friendly chat. The service on September 25th will also be very special because it is our annual Harvest Thanksgiving Service. This will be very appropriate because we are trying to harvest souls for Jesus. Jesus said that the harvest is ripe but the labourers are needed to bring it in. So please bring a friend to Church and in so doing bring them to Jesus; and if you receive an invitation, please consider coming. Let us all thank the Lord of the Harvest.

Yours sincerely

Rev Alex B Noble

PARISH RECORD

Baptisms: Jesus said: "Let the Children come to me"

28 8 11 Evan Douglas McKay 90 Auchenshangan Drive, Ardrossan

Funerals: "In sure and certain hope of Resurrection to eternal life"

| | | |
|---------|-----------------|---|
| 15 7 11 | Nancy Thomson | Canal Court, Saltcoats |
| 16 7 11 | Abbie Kempshall | 8 Craigs Place, Saltcoats |
| 18 7 11 | Margaret Jones | Arran View Nursing Home, formerly 63 Sharphill Road |
| 21 7 11 | Jean Borland | Arran View Nursing Home, formerly 5 Kennilworth Drive |
| 22 7 11 | Isobel McCaa | Arran View Nursing Home, formerly 109 High Road |
| 4 8 11 | Sheena Burns | Ayrshire Hospice. 70 Fleming Crescent, Saltcoats |
| 10 8 11 | Sadie Gilmour | 14 Corrie Crescent, Saltcoats |
| 23 8 11 | Jim McWhirter | Caledonia Nursing Home, formerly 19 Harley Pl., Saltcoats |

NEWS

1 We have just completed a series of Manse Groups discussing the recent rioting, morality and the ways in which Christians are living differently from most other people. There is a new series starting on Friday evenings (7-9pm) on the 16th, 23rd, 30th September and 7th October; and following that, another series on Wednesday afternoons (2-4pm) on the 19th, 26th October and the 2nd, 9th November.

2 Special Sundays:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Sunday 4 th September | Bible Sunday (400 th Anniv. of King James Version of the Bible) |
| Sunday 11 th September | Prayer Sunday (2pm Arran View Service in Sannox Bay) |
| Sunday 18 th September | Service Sunday |
| Sunday 25 th September | Harvest Thanksgiving + Back to Church Sunday |
| Sunday 2 nd October | Annual Dedication Service inc. Girl's Brigade + Guild Enrolment |

- 3 The Girls' Brigade has its enrolment night on Monday 5th September 6-7pm
- 4 The Prayer time for the whole congregation begins on Thursday 1st September 10.30-11am
- 5 The Choir resumes on Thursday 15th September at 7 pm.
- 6 The Guild is having a social night out at the Corran Inn on Wednesday 7th September and the first meeting is on Wednesday 14th September, 7.30pm. The speaker is Rev Alex Noble.
- 7 The Sunday School and Youth Group both restart on Sunday 4th September
- 8 The Dog Training has new times on Friday evenings: 6pm, 7pm and 8pm.
- 9 Zumba now meets twice per week: Tuesdays and Thursdays 6-7pm.
- 10 Kelly McCrorie's Dance classes are on Wednesdays 4-7pm
- 11 Julie Carson's Dance classes are on Tuesdays 4.15-5.45pm
- 12 The Scottish Country Dancing is on Wednesdays at 7.30pm
- 13 The Badminton continues on Thursdays from 7.30pm
- 14 The Office is open on Mondays and Fridays from 10am till 12 noon

15 The Holy Half Hour continues on 3TFM (103fm) on Mondays at 9pm. Mr Noble has now made 135 of these weekly broadcasts. Recent programmes included "Hymns and their Stories"; "Heroic Failures"; "The Stand-Up Theologian"; "Jesus is God"; "Hooligans"; "Secular Hymns" and "Estonia". You can get free copies of the programmes at the front door of the church. Please pass on these free CDs to other people and spread the Gospel. (By the way, if you value this free ministry you might like to make a donation towards it because it costs hundreds of pounds to produce all the CDs. If you would like to support this work please see Mr Noble). Coming up are programmes on the "400th Anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible"; "50 Ways to Pray"; "Dancing" and "Harvest"

16 There are daily Thoughts for the day on 3TFM (103fm) at 9.10 am and on Westsound's Kenny Campbell Show at 6.50 and 7.50 am.

17 Welcome Packs are available in the office for you to give to any new residents in our parish
18 Bereavement packs, containing a video entitled "Surviving Bereavement"; a CD of two Holy Half Hour radio programmes on "Bereavement"; a book of comforts for the bereaved entitled "Sunshine Through Shadows"; and several leaflets is available on request from Mr Noble

19 The Kirk Session meets on Tuesday 27th September at 7pm.

THANK YOU

We would like to thank the congregation for the lovely flowers which we received. We appreciated it very much and it made our day. Robert and Nancy Stirling.

PRAYER INVITATION

The congregation meets to pray together every Thursday morning for half an hour i.e. 10.30 – 11a.m. We re-start on Thursday 1st September and you are invited to join in.

This is not a specialist activity for a holy huddle but the most wonderful privilege, pleasure and responsibility of every single Christian and congregation. Consider the following reasons for doing it:

- 1 We each need spiritual nourishment.
- 2 We need mutual support from each other.
- 3 The parish people need our prayers.
- 4 The life of the congregation depends upon prayer.
- 5 Where people pray miracles happen; where they don't, they don't.
- 6 God wants us to pray. God wants us to ask so He can answer.
- 7 We like it when other folk pray for us.
- 8 It is a matter of Life and Death.
- 9 The victories are won in prayer, then we mop up in action,
- 10 Future planning is discerning God's will, not our plans.
- 11 I was attracted to SNPC because you had a prayer group.
- 12 Prayer works.
- 13 Christians and Christian congregations are praying people.
- 14 Be role models for others – show we believe in prayer.
- 15 Prayer is a natural impulse; don't stifle it, work on it.
- 16 It is only half an hour!
- 17 Those who come say they feel the better for it.
- 18 Prayer is something we all can do to change the world.
- 19 Prayer is natural and easy but we also give prayer helps
- 20 Just do it! Don't delay. Start Thursday 1st September 10.30

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

I woke up this morning a bit tired from the night before....(no, not socialising, working! – “burning the midnight oil” as they say. In fact “the end of my wick” came a good bit past midnight). While still coming round to semi-consciousness, I was slightly surprised to find myself drafting this letter in my head! Sometimes my brain works on a circuit of its own! You could of course interpret the same thing as being God inspiring me – just not at a moment of my convenience! So whether this is God’s inspiration or whether it is the ramblings of my befuddled mind, you can decide!

God is a one hundred per-cent-er (100%er) “to coin a phrase”, (and a bit of text-talk) all in one! God is a one hundred percenter Himself and He is always looking for one hundred percenters. “The Carpenter of Nazareth seeks joiners” said my car sticker and it is true. He is always looking for like-minded folk who will give their all working hard for the benefit of others. Jesus said “Love one another as I have loved you”. That means loving the way of the manger, the towel and the Cross....incarnating our love, getting alongside people, humbly washing their feet, doing menial service, and ultimately spending our lives and maybe having our life spilled in serving God and our neighbour. Agape love, God’s love is different from the world’s idea of love. God’s way is to say: “I love you, one hundred percent.” He then expects us to reply, “I love you too, one hundred percent.” Such a covenant relationship has two times one hundred percent in it! (The world’s idea of love is to say “I’ll cut the grass if you wash the dishes” i.e. a fifty-fifty contract deal).

I had a friend in school, called George McIntosh, who was a real genius at most subjects but especially maths. One day he came storming out of an exam, fuming with himself. I asked: “What’s wrong?” George replied angrily: “I’ve lost four marks! I even know which four marks! And I could have corrected it! But I can’t get back in! It’s too late!” Sure enough George got 96% when the exam result came out. Most mortals would have settled for anything above the 50% pass rate, and when it comes to maths, I tended to look upon anything over 0% as a bonus! George however occupied the upper-echelons, the nose-bleed height of orientating around the 100% mark. There is a lesson there for all of us when it comes to life! Don’t settle for second best, average, getting by, mediocrity! Nothing but the best for the Master! Let us strive for excellence in much more important aspects of life than maths exams. Don’t be a loser, be a winner. Don’t “shove in the winter” (as one man put it to me); live a little...live a lot! Live with all the fullness of Christ welling up within us.

God hates lukewarm people. He sent Elijah to Mount Carmel to tell the people to stop limping from pillar to post trying to hedge their bets by worshipping both God and Baal at the same time. Amos, Isaiah and other prophets told their people, in God’s name, to stop playing at religious ceremonies and “get their finger out” when it comes to social justice. Jesus called the Pharisees every name under the sun for reducing the love of God to a cold, formal, legalistic, goody-goody set of do’s and don’ts. In Revelation God threatens to “spew out of His mouth” anyone who has been lukewarm in their discipleship.

So don’t give God just some of our time, talents, money and our whole lives...don’t try to split it down the middle...give Him nothing less than one hundred percent. That is the only language He understands, the only wavelength He is found on, the only deal He offers. Bear in mind, of course, that one hundred percent of all our time, talents, money and life are a gift from Him in the first place. Also bear in mind that He fully intends, indeed already has, committed Himself – and one hundred percent of Himself (which is quite considerable!) – to us!

God Bless, *Alex B Noble*

HOW TO PRAY

(Part 1 of a series)

1. Ask ourselves why we are reluctant to be still. The momentum of life is not easily arrested, but if we do not apply the brakes, sooner or later we will crash. God Himself says: “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46 v 10 RSV). So the first prayer exercise is to just make time and space for prayer...just do it!
2. Pick a Bible text...any one....for example, God’s words (Isaiah 43 v 4 RSV):
“You are precious in my eyes, and honoured, and I love you.”read it over and over...chew it, savour it like meat, then swallow and digest it. It is a meaty verse and it will nourish our souls. Think of other such texts e.g. (Psalm 23 v 1 RSV):
“The Lord is my Shepherd”
3. Tell God what we are thinking or feeling. It might be thoughts like –
“Thank you Lord for loving me”....”How loving you are”....”I feel loved and accepted”
4. Pick a picture of God to focus upon. e.g. the Creator, the Judge, the King, the Good Shepherd, the Father, the Bridegroom, the Head of His Body the Church. Note how the pictures are increasingly intimate. Focus on one picture at a time like we would study a photograph or a painting. Look at the overall picture, look at the fine detail; what are our first impressions and what are our considered reflections. Speak to God in the light of that.
5. Remember God is in this place. Put that in your pipe and smoke it! Wow! As a child I have Abba Father (daddy’s) undivided attention. This is as holy ground as Moses’ burning bush (Exodus 3) or Isaiah’s temple (Isaiah 6). This is better than having a private audience with the Queen or a few minutes alone with whoever is your great hero. Augustine said: “God loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love”. God has all the time in the world for me (and all eternity in the next world too)! Wow! Savour that thought!
6. Normally we think of God as outside us. However, we can never really know Him as an outsider. Thank God that the truth is that He is inside us. Prayer is an inner dialogue and an internal conversation. It is private and secret with total confidentiality (unless we make things public). Think of Him as near, not far; as intimate not formal; as internal not external, as personal not impersonal. He knows us better than we know ourselves; he knows all our thoughts and feeling; we are totally wedded to Him with absolutely no secrets between us. Together we share many secrets from the outer world of other people. God is the insider in our lives. He is in our thinking, feeling, imagining, intuiting, sensing, willing. Paul went so far as to say:
“You are not your own” (1Cor.6v19 RSV)
“None of us lives to himself” (Rom.13v7 RSV)
“I live, yet not I, it is Christ who lives within me”
7. Whole being prayer is the best. It is much deeper than simply saying words or articulating a passing thought off the top of our head. When we tell someone “I love you” they can easily tell if it is just a platitude or if it is really true in our deepest inner being. Isn’t it wonderful to know that God gives us His whole being in prayer – His undivided attention, His full concentration, His heartfelt affection, His total commitment! Prayer is not simply a meeting of two minds but an intercourse of two total beings!

Parish Register

Funerals: "...In the sure and certain hope of Resurrection to eternal life."

6. 9. 11 Mrs Linda Fearn 19 Corrie Crescent, Saltcoats

Changes of Address:

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Lauren Clarkson | from 15 Knockrivoch | to 2A Taylor Place |
| Ann Davidson | 24 Prospecthill Road | to 3 Braehead Place |
| Alison McCauley | 24 Mayfield Road | to 24 Prospecthill Road |
| Margaret McBride | 2 Harley Place | to 31 Lambie Court |

Thank You's

Just a short note to thank you all for the lovely flowers which I received. They fairly cheered me up after my time in hospital. Wishing you all well. God bless, Wilma Grant.

To "the North Parish", many thanks for the lovely flowers. Love from Betty and Neil Gibson

To all at the North Parish Prayer Group,

Thank you so much for keeping us in your prayers while Holly was in hospital. It was very comforting and greatly appreciated. Holly is now 9 months and doing very well despite her worrying start in life. Thank you again, God bless, James, Nicola and Holly.

Stewardship Season 2011

The Congregational Board designated Sunday 18th September through to Sunday 9th October as our Stewardship Season. This is part of a national initiative promoted by the General Assembly and the Presbyteries up and down the country.

Sunday 18th September – Service Sunday

Sunday 25th September – Harvest Sunday and Back to Church Sunday

Sunday 2nd October - Annual Dedication Service

Sunday 9th October - Stewardship Sunday

This magazine has a Stewardship flavour as have the Orders of Service on Sundays.

We also include a special letter on Stewardship by the Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

Monday 26th September – The minister broadcast a radio programme on "Harvest".

Monday 3rd October – The minister broadcast a radio programme interviewing our Girls' Brigade Leader, Captain Evelyn Porter.

Monday 10th October – The minister broadcast a radio programme about Stewardship.

The Treasurer has been checking that all Gift Aiders are willing to continue.

You are each asked to personally think about your stewardship of your time, talents and money for God's service.

We are grateful to everyone for everything you do and for all that you are.

NEWS

We are very grateful to Mrs Nettie Brown for giving the congregation the very generous legacy of £1,000! Nettie recently died in Abbotsford House. Prior to that she lived a long time in Ailsa Road. She used to be very active in the Church until ill health prevented her attending. We give thanks for her life and ministry and for continuing her good work even yet.

The CrossReach Christmas catalogue is now out so have a look at it at the front door and use your Christmas shopping to help support the Church of Scotland's extensive social work.

If you choose to make your will with Will Aid this November, you can donate the fee to participating charities (including Christian Aid) instead of paying the solicitor. For details phone 0300 0300 013 or go online: www.willaid.org.uk

If you need free uplift of unwanted, re-usable furniture, call the Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company on 01294 – 475650, which is a charitable subsidiary of Cunninghame Housing Association Ltd.

The British Red Cross Medical Loan Service provides short-term loans (i.e. up to 12 weeks) of wheelchairs and commodes on a donation basis. Phone 01292 – 263946 10am-1pm, 2pm-4pm.

North Ayrshire Council's Throughcare Project at 41-43 Kinnier Road, Saltcoats is asking if you could offer accommodation and support for a young person aged 16 years old and over? If you might be interested in the Supported Carer Scheme, please call Anne Duncan on 602527.

Recently we celebrated the 400th Anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible 1611-2011. We had an exhibition of KJV Bibles and a retrieval offering for the Scottish Bible Society's appeal for Bibles for Cuba. It raised £162 so thanks very much.

We also had Prayer Sunday in Church and in Arran View plus a radio programme on 50 ways to pray (which was quite an achievement since it was only a 30 minute broadcast)!

On Service Sunday we considered the parable of the Talents and how we could all use our God-given talents for the building up of the congregation, parish and Kingdom of God.

The new moderator of Presbytery is Rev Martin Thomson of Dalry Trinity Parish Church. Roseann McLean is our new Presbytery Elder. May we take this opportunity to thank Jim Forsyth for being our Presbytery Elder for the past few years. We are all very indebted to you Jim for your faithful service in this capacity, especially in the light of all your other work.

We had a good Manse Group Series recently which began discussing the riots in England and from that looked into moral matters. The following series has continued from there discussing particular ethical issues. It is good for us to get opinions from each other and to think consciously about our daily Christian living and the difficult choices we have to make at times.

The next series of four Manse Groups begins on Wednesday 19th October, 2-4 p.m.

Mr Noble has now recorded 140 Holy Half Hour programmes. Recent ones have included: "Jesus is God", "Secular Hymns", "Trip to Estonia", "the 400th Anniv. of the KJV". Forthcoming programmes include: "Evelyn Porter" (specially repeated), "Stewardship", "Dancing", "Helen Scott: The Missionary Returns" and "Joy". Free copies are or will be available from the front door. Please take and enjoy them then pass them on to others as a mission exercise.

The congregation is invited to join together to pray for half an hour each week on Thursdays from 10.30 a.m. till 11 a.m. Please come and don't leave God stood up!

Congratulations to Mrs Margaret Wales, our oldest member, who is 98 years young.

The Congregational Board meets on Tuesday 25th October at 7 pm.

Our missionary partner, Helen Scott is back home for a while before going back out to Malawi for what is probably going to be her last period of service. She will be talking about her work during the Church service on Sunday 23rd October. She will also be on 3TFM's Holy Half Hour on Monday 24th October. Not to be missed – a Dalry girl who commutes to Malawi to work!

Communion is on Sunday 30th October at 11 a.m.

Remembrance Sunday is on 13th November at 10.55 a.m. precisely.

Saltcoats North Parish Church – Parish Record – November 2011-10-29
MINISTER’S LETTER

Dear Friends,

I am dying to tell you about one of the most exciting things to happen to the congregation in a long time. We’ve got some new members by profession of faith! Five of them at one time no less! Young people too! Most amazing of all, they are all related to each other! They are from the same family! They are also bringing their children for baptism, so we have three baptisms to look forward to as well! It is great for Church statistics, but much more important than that, it does wonders for congregational morale! What a boost all this gives us! We are delighted to see signs of new life.

It is always special when even one person is willing to stand up in public and profess that Jesus is their Lord. Here are five and they are bringing their children too. More than that, it is not just five individuals but one family. It is one whole family – all of them. Often we get one or two members of a family attending while the rest of their family do not, but here they all are, coming together!

It is like back in the earliest days of Christianity, in New Testament times. Often we read that so-and-so and his household became Christian. Jesus’ first miracle was changing the water into wine in Cana of Galilee. His second miracle was back in Cana – when He healed a government official’s son from a long distance without even meeting him. The incident ends with the words “so he and all his family believed” (John 4 v 53)

Remember also the time when Paul and Silas were in Philippi, in prison, singing hymns at midnight, when an earthquake freed all the prisoners. The jailer was about to kill himself because the Romans would kill him if any of the prisoners escaped! But Paul said not to worry, the prisoners were all still in the prison. The jailer fell at Paul’s feet saying: “What must I do to be saved?” and Paul replied:

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your family”

We read: “He and all his family were baptised at once...He and his family were filled with joy, because they now believed in God” (Acts 16 v 22-34)

You can see why I am so excited. I must say that the new members’ class this time was a very special experience for myself. I have conducted these enquirers’ classes twice per year for 30 years, but his one was one I will remember for a long time. It was held not in the church or the manse but in their family home – on their home turf, where they were “at home” and comfortable with the surroundings. It did mean that the dog and cat were included too. This was also the first class ever in which one of the participants had to nip off to hospital to have a baby! The first few nights we all kept a wary eye during the meetings to see if the onset of labour was going to interrupt proceedings. The last couple of meetings we kept an eye on the cot in the room wondering if the new baby would waken and again steal the show. Actually everything went so well that we only missed just one meeting because of the birth. Baby Ellie did steal the limelight but ever so quietly!

So, let me introduce you to the newest members of Saltcoats North Parish Church, the newest members of the Church of Scotland, and the world-wide Christian family, and the Church of Jesus Christ which has existed for centuries and extends to the saints going marching in to Heaven singing the great Hallelujah chorus. There is Margaret McGuinness (John and Margaret Glen’s daughter)....Margaret’s son Martin McGuinness, his partner Catherine Lockhart and their little toddler T-Jay. Then there is Margaret’s daughter Stacey McGuinness and her partner Jamie Torrance and their 3 week old baby Ellie. Margaret will also be bringing her other daughter, Kimberley, for baptism. The baptism and admission of the new members is planned for Sunday 6th November at 11 am and the baptisms of the children will be later, sometime in 2012.

Rev Alex B Noble

HOW TO PRAY (Part 2 of a series)

8. Be open and honest. There is a difference between communicating occasionally with someone by e-mail or text message, and meeting a friend face to face, eye to eye, heart to heart, live! Prayer is face to face live encounter. It is intimate. So “do not lie to God” as Martin Luther famously said. (As if we could)! Don’t even try to hide from God. Be frank and honest. Honesty is good for the soul. Without honesty and openness there is no real communication. Don’t waffle, but pour out your heart and soul to Him, lay bare your feelings, doubts, fears, hopes and joys. Be willing to be seen through God’s x-ray eyes. Be willing to be known intimately by God, warts and all. And the reward is that we begin to know God as He really is and we develop a close relationship.

9. Prayer can lift us out of ourselves. One of the ways of doing this is by means of our imagination. Look at something beautiful or recall something beautiful or imagine something beautiful. For example focus on a symbol, a sunrise, a loved one’s face, a baby, a remarkable scene, Jesus’ face.....then go on looking till you find that Jesus is looking back at you!

10. Make journeys of the mind. Walk with Jesus into any kind of situation you care to think of...eg. down your High Street, into a famine relief camp in Africa, into your staff room, into your church, into this week’s problematical situation.

11. Sometimes a wise friend can help us to see ordinary, familiar things in a totally new light. Together with Jesus, look at today – its people, its tasks etc. Look at who we are, where we are, why we are and what we are.

12. We cannot come to the place of prayer entirely alone. The lives of each of us are deeply involved with others. We cannot help but think of others when we are in God’s company. So we pray for them. This is called intercession. Picture the people in your mind. Go further and see with imagination what their issues and needs are. Hold your pictures and thoughts up to God. We all need each other’s prayers and it is a wonderful experience to feel mysteriously upheld.

13. Don’t just pray for “the sick” in general – be specific, name them.

14. This also applies to thanksgiving. Don’t just thank God for “everything” – be specific, say precisely what you are thankful for. Tell God why you are particularly grateful for it at this moment. You could also discuss with God if there is a way of expressing your gratitude in practical action.

15. Be specific also when it comes to confession. It is not enough to confess the world’s general sins such as pride and greed; we need to specifically confess our particular sins.

16. Be thankful. The attitude of gratitude is the key to prayer and life in general. It is the characteristic note of Christians. It keeps us humble. It reminds us of our dependence upon God. When you feel depressed, like the good old Scottish saint, Halyburton, go out on a dark night and look up at the black sky until you see a star, then another one, and another, until you loose count of the number of twinkling stars, and then you will realise that the night is not as dark as you first imagined! “Count your blessings, name them one by one and it will surprise you what the Lord has done” as the chorus says.

PARISH REGISTER

Wedding: “Those whom God has joined together”

23. 10. 11 Wilma Grant Gilfillan Ave and DanRussell Greenock

Funerals: “In sure and certain hope of resurrection”

17. 10. 11 Jean Ferguson 24 McKillop Place, Saltcoats

21. 10. 11 John Grant Arran View Nursing Home, formerly 3 New England Road

We are sorry to announce the death of Michael Stephanian in New York on 29th September. Michael was 97 (would have been 98 on 5th November). He was an annual visitor to our congregation and we loved him very much. He was here only last year at 96 years old! He travelled alone to London, Saltcoats and Budapest every year for many years. Irene and John Crozier adopted him into their family for the past 20 years but he was coming here long before that. His first wife was from saltcoats.

THANK YOU

Arran View Care Home would like to thank Rev Alex Noble and the Church Choir for all your continued support over the years. – From all the Residents and Staff.

Thank you for your good wishes on my 99th birthday. Thank you for the beautiful flowers. Everyone has made this day really special for me - Best regards Margaret Wales.

NEWS

The “CrossReach” Christmas catalogue is now out and available at the Church front door. Anything you buy will also be supporting the Church of Scotland’s social work programme.

The Christian Aid catalogue is also out. You can buy more unusual Christmas Gifts like seeds or goats or a teacher’s pay – gifts which really do affect lives.

If you choose to make your will this month of November – certain solicitors will donate the cost to Christian Aid and other charities. For further details including participating solicitors, phone 0300 0300 013 or go on-line: www.willaid.org.uk

If you need a free uplift of unwanted, re-usable furniture which could be a real blessing to people lacking these things, then call the Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company on 01294 – 475650. It is a charitable subsidiary of the Cunninghame Housing Assoc. Ltd.

The British Red Cross Medical Loan Service provides short term loans (i.e. up to 12 weeks) of wheelchairs and commodes etc. for a donation. Phone 01292 – 263946

If you need financial help and advice, you can go to “Turn2us” to access benefits and grants. They are a charity which exists to help people make the most of their limited income by helping them get welfare benefits, charitable grants and other help. Their website is: www.turn2us.org.uk

Prisoners Week is 20 -27 November. Check out www.PrisonersWeekScotland.org.uk

Could you offer accommodation and support to a young person aged 16 or older? If you might be interested in the Supported Carer Scheme, please call Anne Duncan at North Ayrshire Council’s Throughcare Project, 41-43 Kinnier Road, 602527.

Beild Housing at Wheatley Gardens is looking for volunteers to come and chat with the residents and be a friend to them.

The Harvest Thanksgiving retiral offering raised £337 for Christian Aid. The Soup and Sweet Lunch on Palm Sunday raised £248; and the door to door collection during Christian aid Week in May raised a further £1,620. This means that we have raised £2,205 this year for Christian Aid's work around the world. This was at the same time as the joint ecumenical exercise with the other local congregations of raising £16,000 for Christian Aid in Malawi. The Scottish Parliament then topped it up ten fold to £160,000. So, very well done all of you!

Last month we congratulated our oldest member on being 98. Actually she is 99! Apologies Margaret for our mistake. It must have been your youthful looks which fooled us.

On Sunday 2nd October we held our Annual Dedication Service with all the different Church groups taking part. It was the enrolment services for the Guild and the Girl's Brigade. As examples of dedication, we had Courtney Muir baton twirling, Linzi Smith playing the violin, Anita Loudon with her garden gnome, the minister with his five iron and Helen McGivern and Sam Dickie bowling a bowl down the aisle with pin-point precision! Well, it's different!

From mid-September to mid-October we had our Stewardship Season as part of a national initiative. It involved four special services focussing on the wise use of our time, talents, money and lives in Jesus' service. We also focussed on stewardship in the October magazine and it was the subject of three radio programmes during that month.

Our missionary partner, Helen Scott, visited us on Sunday 23rd October and gave us a wonderful insight into the work which she does in Jesus name and on our behalf out in Malawi. She is the Deputy Head Teacher of a girls' secondary school in Ekwendeni. Helen informed us that only 4% of Malawian girls get a secondary education. Her girls go on to play key roles in their society as teachers and nurses etc. Malawi is one of the world's ten poorest nations. Often the whole country runs out of petrol, or suffers power cuts and food shortages. Without petrol food and medicine (eg insulin for diabetics) does not get distributed round the country and so people die. She has over 200 girls in her Girls' Brigade Company and her church on Sunday morning has to have two sittings of the service both of which fill the 300 seater church. She finds it interesting to hop back and forth from poor Malawi to rich Scotland! Helen was also interviewed by Mr Noble on the "Holy Half Hour" on 3TFM so you can get copies of the interview at the Church front door.

We have just completed a series of classes for people considering Church Membership. As a result, we are delighted to announce that we have five new members and amazingly they are all from the same family! (See minister's letter for details). The admission Sunday is Nov. 6th.

Remembrance Sunday: 13th November. Service starts at 10.55 prompt.

The service on Sunday 20th November will be conducted by Rev Ross Mitchell. He will also be supplying the pastoral cover from Mon 14th to Mon 21st November.

The Kirk Session due on Tuesday 29th November has had to be changed to Tuesday 22nd Nov.

The Rev Morag Garrett will be Ordained and Inducted to Mansefield Trinity Parish Church on Wednesday 23rd November.

Mr Noble is currently organising the rota for all the Thoughts for the Day on 3TFM in 2012.

Our choir has been invited to sing to the residents at Caledonia Nursing Home at Christmas.

The Congregational Board has created a new post – Health and Safety Person – and appointed Alex Hiddlestone as that person. Alex is so enthusiastic that he has already completed his first annual report!

The Congregational Board has also appointed Barry Fisher to succeed Julie Jamieson as Treasurer of Saltcoats North Parish Church. Julie will see out the year and present the annual accounts at the Stated Annual Meeting in March, but in good relay race style, Barry has already started to get his hands on the baton and is learning the job from Julie. It is a lovely example of a smooth change-over and a good model for other posts too.

Thanks to all our Gift Aiders, we have already received £3,800 back from the tax man. At no extra expense to the givers, we are getting 25p in the £1 as a bonus, just because some of you tax payers signed gift aid forms. So thank you all very much. (There is nearly 100 of you). Are there any more of you who pay tax and who haven't signed up yet? Let us know.

It was mentioned at the Board that we needed 150 watt light bulbs. Within two days it seemed like all the Board members had gone out and bought some. Now we have enough for the next 20 years! Your generosity is most commendable. Truly “many hands make lights work”.

We would like to thank Betty McFall for doing a lot of work behind the scenes to arrange for all the advertisers in this magazine. Their sponsorship pays for the magazine all year. As they are doing us a favour, please consider doing them a favour the next time you need their various services.

The Board would also like to thank Alan and Marion Brown for donating a huge jar of coins.

*** Thanks to Angus MacDonald, we as a congregation have a new website. Log-on to and browse on www.saltcoatsnorth.co.uk There you will find all kinds of interesting things. More than that, we want you to contribute all kinds of interesting things. Websites need to be kept up to date and fresh, so please help Angus by giving him material any time. Thanks Angus for helping our congregation to “get with it”, “be cool” or whatever the latest phrase is!

The next Congregational Board Meeting due on Tuesday 27th December has been rearranged to meet on Tuesday 10th January.

The 2011 Christmas Programme

Sunday 27th November 11 am – 1st Sunday of Advent
Sunday 4th December 11 am – 2nd Sunday of Advent
Sunday 11th December 11 am – 3rd Sunday of Advent: Joint Service of Lessons/Carols with the Kilbirnie Salvation Army Band and Songsters and Saltcoats Salvation Army.
Sunday 18th December 11 am – 4th Sunday of Advent: All-age Worship with Sunday School
Sunday 18th December 2 pm Saltcoats Town Carol Service in Adelaide College
Sunday 25th December 11 am – Christmas Day Service
Sunday 1st January 11 am - New Year's Day Service

The “Holy Half Hour” on 3TFM (103fm) – Mon 5th Dec 9 pm – “Trees”
Mon 12th Dec 9 pm – “A Musical Christmas”
Mon 19th Dec 9 pm – “Christmas Background”

Saturday 17th December 7-9 The MACKAN Christmas Party
Tuesday 21st December 1.45pm – James Reid School Christmas Service (All welcome)
Saturday 24th December 7pm – Christmas Eve All-age Worship
Saturday 24th December 11.15 pm – Carol Singing in the Church
11.30 pm – Late Christmas Eve Service

Saltcoats North Parish Church Record – December 2011
Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

Patricia and I wish you all a very happy Christmas season and all God's fullest blessings in the new year, 2012. Have you noticed that all the characters in the Bible account of the Birth of Christ, are people whom we know and recognise. In fact they are the types of people that we are ourselves! Let me show you what I mean.

The Wise Men represent all those who are seeking they know not what. They only find God because God has already found them! He steers them to Himself – in their case by means of a star, a dream and some prophecies.

The Humble Shepherds represent folk going about their daily work, minding their own business, when they get high-jacked by life's events. Suddenly they find themselves thrust into the full glare of the limelight. To their credit they seize the moment when it comes and they rejoice ever after because they see God in ordinary surroundings.

Mary represents those rare souls who say: "Thy will be done"...even though it makes no sense to them at the time. They become God-bearers to the world around them.

Joseph represents those who try their best to do the right thing in difficult circumstances when they are getting buffeted about by life's events. They take their fatherly responsibilities seriously and soon realise that God is fathering them!

The Donkey represents all those who feel honoured to be of humble service. Though often overlooked, they find that their finest hours are in serving the King of Kings! Even God chooses to need their help. Even the smallest actor with the smallest part to play does have their moment centre-stage.

The Inn-Keeper represents those who are too busy and therefore find it difficult to see who Jesus really is. Consequently they give their God little or no house-room. Yet somehow He still gets in!

The People of Bethlehem represent the people of the world this Christmas who will sleep through all the dramatic miracle of God being with us or who will be too busy and preoccupied to notice. But it will not stop God coming down into our midst! He doesn't need an invitation.

King Herod represents all those who do not want the baby God to threaten their own selfish rule. They are prepared to massacre whatever poses a risk to their self-centred lives. They do wreck many people's Christmases and indeed lives, but they cannot succeed in killing God.

The Angels represent all those who spread The Good News of Christ Jesus to everyone – that the Saviour of the World is alive and kicking, with us and for us, and much nearer than we think!

Jesus the baby represents us for we are each babies come from Heaven who find themselves in a messy world with all these sorts of people around us!

What we are celebrating at Christmas is the fact that God comes to us, and keeps on coming to us, whoever we are, whatever type we are – whether we are looking for Him or not, whether we welcome and worship Him or try to massacre Him, whether we are wise men or humble donkeys – He comes to us. He loves us. He wants us. Let's celebrate that!

How to Pray
(Part 3 of a series)

17. We cannot pray until we are willing to accept God's forgiveness and willing to forgive those who have sinned against us. A lack of repentance and confession cuts us off from our own reality, from other people and from God. An unforgiving attitude and a proud heart which will confess no sin in ourselves make us unable to relate with the merciful and forgiving God. On the other hand, humble penitence and an acceptance of mercy leads to reconciliation, wholeness, healing and health making us closer to God and others. Receiving forgiveness removes a burden of guilt and giving forgiveness removes a burden of hate. Confession makes room for new beginnings and for love.

18. "To err is human, to forgive Divine". To forgive is the highest of human acts; and correspondingly, to be forgiven, is the deepest of human experiences. To feel the need of God's forgiveness is the beginning of a real relationship with Him. Then to feel the forgiveness of God is such a blessing and an enrichment in our relationship with Him. Unconditional forgiveness and unconditional acceptance of forgiveness forges real relationship. Prayer is the channel through which we say "sorry" and God says "I forgive you" and we say "help me to forgive like you do" and God says "I will". Jesus teaches us how to pray – as they drove the nails into His hands, He prayed: "Father forgive them".

19. The Samaritans, (the counselling organisation), have a slogan for their counsellors:

"Don't just say something; sit there!"

This also applies to prayer. Don't just rabbit on and on, drowning God in a sea of verbiage.

"Be still and know that He is God" (Psalm 44v10). In other words, "shut up and listen to God!"

20. Take time to pray. It does not always take long to pray, but sometimes it does. It can take a fraction of a second or it can take years. Jesus spent whole nights in prayer (and He was quicker than us)! If He needed to, then surely we need to even more. Also, make space to pray; make it a priority; switch off other distractions; focus on it. Nothing is more important than quality time with God. The only thing we do on Earth which we shall do in Heaven for all eternity is have quality time with God – so get used to it, now!

21. We can pray at any time – God has a 24 hour service! However it is a good discipline to set aside a favourite time to pray. The force of habit helps us to keep praying. Having a regular time helps us to make time for prayer. Otherwise we have to hum and hey about when to do it. You will notice that we usually fall into a pattern with anything which we do daily such as brushing our teeth, meals, exercise etc.

22. The same logic pertains to setting aside a favourite space to pray. Use décor to help establish the pattern of prayer in your daily life. If you use the same chair, facing the same picture, or with the same candles or symbols, you can create your own little church in the house. Everything becomes so familiar that you don't have to daily settle yourself down to praying as if it was the first time ever. The fixed time and space and décor triggers the automatic response of prayerfulness.

23. Sometimes we need to be alone together. It is certainly true of two people in love – a chance to just be intimately alone with each other. Mums and dads need time alone together uninterrupted by children or telephone. We need quality time if we are to develop and keep deep relationships. We are human beings, not human doings, so we need time for relationships rather than tasks. Alone with God we begin to intuit, sense, understand and perceive things from His point of view; we learn how He ticks, we attune to His wavelength. Someone once said: "a person is what they are standing naked and silent before God."

Parish Register

Baptisms: "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

6. 11. 11 Stacey Louise McGuinness 12 Kilbrannan Avenue, Saltcoats
6. 11. 11 Kimberley McGuinness 12 Kilbrannan Avenue, Saltcoats

New Members by Profession of Faith: “By grace are you saved through faith.”

6. 11. 11 Margaret McGuinness 12 Kilbrannan Avenue, Saltcoats
6. 11. 11 Martin Hugh McGuinness 9 Firth View Terrace, Ardrossan
6. 11. 11 Catherine Margaret Lockhart 9 Firth View Terrace, Ardrossan
6. 11. 11 Jamie Torrance 64 Central Avenue, Ardrossan
6. 11. 11 Stacey McGuinness 12 Kilbrannan Avenue, Saltcoats

The Christmas Programme

“Wise men and women worship Jesus”

Sunday 27th November 11 am – First Sunday of Advent

Sunday 4th December 11 am - Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday 11th December 11 am – Joint Service of Lessons & Carols with the Kilbirnie
Salvation Army Band/Songsters + the Saltcoats Corps.

Sunday 11th December 11 am – Arran View Nursing Home Christmas Service (Lamlash)

Saturday 17th December – Sunday School Christmas Party 2 – 4.30 pm

Saturday 17th December 7 – 9 pm – the MACKAN Christmas Party

Sunday 18th December 11 am – All-Age Christmas Worship with Sunday School,
Youth Group, Choir etc.

Sunday 18th December 2 pm – Saltcoats Town Christmas Carol Service in Adelaide
Bible College in Nineyard Street.

Tuesday 21st December 1.45pm – James Reid School Christmas Service in Church (all
are most welcome).

Saturday 24th December 7 pm – Early, All-Age Christmas Eve Worship

Saturday 24th December 11.15 pm – Carol Singing in Church

11.30 pm – 12.15 am The Late Christmas Eve Service

Sunday 25th December 11 am – Christmas Day Service (Bring your presents with you).

Sunday 1st January 11 am – New Year’s Day Service (Begin the year with praise).

Please come and worship Jesus and bring a friend or two as well to meet Him.

NEWS

Recently we received a legacy of £1,000 from Mrs Nettie Brown who passed away in Abbotsford House in Ardrossan. She used to live in Ailsa Road. Since then we have received another legacy of £1,000 from Miss Abbie Kempshall of 8 Craigs Place in Saltcoats. Abbie was a regular attender of Church services and the Guild even in her nineties and everyone will remember her dancing! We are very grateful to both ladies for their generosity even from beyond the grave. The Church lives on in the future because of their contributions from the past. Even yet they are still playing their part in the team and are serving their Master.

Recently a number of our members have received child safeguarding certificates so we say congratulations to: Jim Forsyth, Evelyn Porter, Helen McLuckie, Moira Smith and Amanda Muir.

Helen McLuckie also got a special certificate in her capacity as our Child Safeguarding Organiser.

We are delighted that four persons have started Girls' Brigade training for leadership. They are Jean MacDonald, Roseann McLean, Amanda Muir and Nicole Fenton.

We have had a whole series of special services recently: the Baptism of Evan McKay; Bible Sunday celebrated the 400th Anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible; Prayer Sunday; Service Sunday; Harvest Thanksgiving which was also Back to Church Sunday; the Annual Dedication Service; Stewardship Sunday; Mission Sunday with our missionary partner Helen Scott back from Malawi; Communion; the Admission of new Members by Profession of Faith: Margaret, Martin, Catherine, Jamie and Stacey and the Baptisms of Martin, Stacey and Kimberley McGuinness (all one family); Remembrance Sunday Service; Ross Mitchell and now we have four special Advent Services followed by Christmas, New Year, Epiphany and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. That is quite a run of special services, is it no? Who said Church is boring!

On the first Sunday of Advent George Murray was presented with a glass trophy engraved with the picture of a painter in Wild West pose going for his guns – in this case his paintbrush and roller. The words on it are “Presented to Mr George Murray “the Friendly Painter” for services rendered to Saltcoats North Parish Church. George has faithfully painted the church for many years now and everyone in the congregation is very grateful for all the quiet, behind the scenes, unsung work which he has done. People outwith the church have also noticed his work and commented on it. So thanks George for giving of your talents for the North Church and Parish and for serving God by decorating His house. Mr Noble commented that George was like Michaelangelo, another church painter. Michaelangelo famously said to his dad after completing the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican: “I’ve finished painting the church job I was doing, and the boss seems quite happy with the result.” All of us, and God our boss, say thank you very much George for all you have done, and feel free to chip in occasionally any time you are able. We are grateful to Alex Tulloch, George’s longstanding partner in the work, for presenting the gift to him on our behalf.

Advent Sunday was also made extra special by the presence of Joshua John Muir and his family: dad Robert, mum Amanda and big sisters Courtney and Ellie. Joshua was born just 12 days previously, so here we had a brand new baby boy in Church for Advent as we celebrate the coming of God into the world as a baby boy. It is even more remarkable when you consider that “Joshua” is the Hebrew name for the Greek name “Jesus”. Throughout the service there was extra meaning in familiar words e.g. we sung “Come thou long expected Jesus (Joshua)” and we read Isaiah 9: “A child is born to us! A son is given to us!”

The next Congregational Board meeting has been rearranged for Tues. 10th Jan. at 7pm.

The next Kirk Session meeting is on Tuesday 31st January at 7 pm.

The next series of Manse Groups begin on Friday 20th January 7 – 9 pm at 25 Longfield Avenue. They run for 4 weeks i.e. Friday 20th Jan – Friday 10th February. Every member is invited to engage in Christian education and to bring others too. Worship, education, mission and service are the basic four features of discipleship, so how about getting the new year off to the best possible start in this respect.

Recent Holy Half Hour radio programmes on Mondays at 9 pm have included “Remembrance”, “Loneliness”, “St. Andrew’s Day”, “Trees” and forthcoming ones include “A Musical Christmas”, “Christmas Background”, “First Encounters”, “Christian Unity”, “Loneliness (2)” and “What If”. There will be no broadcasts on 26th December and 2nd January due to holidays.

The next New Members Class begins on Wednesday 11th January 7 – 9 pm in the Manse, 25 Longfield Avenue. These six classes are for anyone interested in finding out a bit more about joining the Church. You do not have to join, just hear about it before you decide. Bring a friend if you want. Members are welcome as a refresher course. Subsequent dates will be arranged on the first night. The last class produced five new members from the same family! We even held the classes in their house!

This year is very unusual in that Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on Sundays. It does not happen very often. Can you remember the last time this happened? What better way to celebrate Christmas than in Church and what better way to begin a new year than by first footing God's house and worshipping Him? Please grasp this wonderful opportunity because it will be a long time before it happens again.

Mrs Marie Gibson and Mrs Dora Scott, two of our members (and sisters), are also members of the Quilter Club in Saltcoats. They have very kindly and generously given Mr Noble two hand made quilts on the theme of Christmas. They are works of art and they will add to our Christmas decorations this Christmas and be a useful teaching aid. So well done Marie and Dora and thanks very much for all the skilful work which you put into these quilts.