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Dear Friends,

As I write this there is condemnation from world leaders at the execution of a Japanese hostage by Islamic fundamentalists. The shadow of IS and the continuing fight against terrorism reminds us that we live in a world which is constantly faced with very real situations which threaten to destroy our sense of security. This sense of insecurity is also prevalent in our own communities where people have the perception that because of crime they are reluctant to venture out of doors after dark. There is no doubt that we do live in a troubled society.

I read recently in the newspaper that there are children as young as eight who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. Yes we live in a troubled society. And it is to this same troubled and bewildered society that we, the Church community, have been called to witness and serve Jesus Christ. A number of years ago, the Christian writer, Francis Schaeffer wrote; “We live in a post Christian world.” He then goes on to ask the question, “what should be our perspective as individuals, as Christian people, as those who would claim to be Bible-believing?”

Surely the only answer we can give is that we take seriously and put into practice the reason for the Church’s existence which we find in the words of Jesus, “Go into all the world and make disciples, teaching them to obey all those things I command you.” If we fail to be mission minded then we are disobeying the command of Jesus. We should find encouragement and assurance from the promise that the Risen Jesus gave to his disciples, a promise which is ours today; “I am with you always.”

As we prepare to celebrate Easter with its message of resurrection and power may we go in the name and in the power of our Risen Lord and share with others the tremendous joy and peace which is ours through Jesus.

May each one of you know and experience the real joy and peace of Easter.

With every blessing  
Yours sincerely  
Andrew R. Black

## KIRK SESSION NEWS



Congratulations to David Lindsay and Gordon Robertson who have marked 30 years as an elder this year. We acknowledge the tremendous amount of work they have done for the Church over these years and wish them many blessings in the years to come. In acknowledgement of their work they were presented with certificates on Sunday 14 December.

## **COMMUNION**

Our Communion Services will be held at **11am on Sunday 8 March** 2014 and on **Wednesday 11 at 7pm**. All welcome.

Communion Duty Team D – James Wallace, Janet Gibson, Joan McDermott and Mary Brown

Elders are asked to be at the Church on Communion Sunday for 10.30am

**The retiring collection** is for the Drop In Centre, Bourtreehill.

## **SPECIAL SERVICES**

**On Easter Sunday** we will be holding an informal service at **9am** with our usual service at **11am** including an informal communion service. **Breakfast** will be served after the informal service.

On **Sunday 19 April 2015 at 2.30pm** we will be holding our **Cherished Memories** service for those who have lost a loved one. All are welcome to join us at that service.

An **informal Communion Service** will be held on the afternoon of **Sunday 14 June at 2.30pm**. Tea and coffee will be served afterwards. If you would like to come but would need a lift please speak to your elder.

### **2015 Annual Stated Meeting of the Congregation**

The Annual General Meeting of Relief Church of Scotland (Relief Parish Church, Bourtreehill), Irvine will take place immediately after Worship on Sunday 22nd March. Copies of the 2014 Minutes will be available from Sunday 1st March. To save energy and trees please bring back any copies taken prior to the meeting. If you would like to participate more fully in the life of your Church by becoming a Board member, please give your name to Jean Clarkson. Please mark this date in your diary.

#### **Retiral of Church Treasurer: Belinda Singleton**

As intimated recently in Church our Treasurer, Belinda Singleton, is retiring at our next AGM. Belinda's retiral will be a great loss to our Church and to the Congregational Board. Belinda took on the role of treasurer back in 2007 and since that time she has been a credit and asset to our church members. Belinda has worked tirelessly and assiduously keeping our financial records in order which is no mean feat since the introduction of OSCAR! Most of us when we listen to Belinda's financial report at the AGM sit in amazement and awe that she can so easily understand and interpret the financial statements that seem so bamboozling to the rest of us! However, it is not just the meticulous keeping of the financial records for which we thank Belinda. Belinda has also been extremely diligent in saving our Church money by always looking at ways for us to maximise our income and reduce outgoing costs. Huge savings have been made in our church's expenditure as a result of Belinda's prudent financial management. On behalf of everyone we offer you Belinda our warm and sincere gratitude for all your time, hard work and commitment to the Church over the years as Treasurer.

## Alpha Course

Relief Church intends to hold an Alpha Course for members of the congregation and the community in the near future. The Alpha Course offers an opportunity to discuss life and the Christian Faith in a friendly, informal way. Details of the course will be coming soon.

## Funerals

“I am the resurrection and the life.”

2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Joan Norrie	5 Gigha Place
5 <sup>th</sup> December	Mary Fernie	34 Barra Crescent
16 <sup>th</sup> December	John Bell	21 Mull Terrace
8 <sup>th</sup> January	Margaret Morrice	19 Bowhouse Rise
28 <sup>th</sup> January	Jean Smith	50 Sanderson Avenue



### *The Church Flowers*

There are still a few Sundays free on the Flower List. If you would like to donate flowers one Sunday to remember a special event or anniversaries then please speak to the minister or Morag Cooper to add your name onto the flower list. Thanks to Liz Benson who has been arranging the flowers recently. Flowers can be dropped off to Liz on a Friday night at the Church.

### *The Food bank Project*

The Kirk session continues to support the local Food bank. Many thanks go to everyone who regularly contributes to this cause. Discussions are ongoing and it is hoped that soon our Church will be a distributing centre where local people can come and collect food packages. Currently the North Ayrshire Food bank is looking for **long life fruit juice, UHT milk, tinned ham, corn beef, tinned meat balls, tinned mince, tinned chilli con carne, tinned stew & tinned curries.**

### *Christmas Angel Tree*

Olive Hamilton would like to thank everyone who kindly donated towards the Christmas tree. A total of £ 81.50 was raised for CHAS. Many Thanks

### **A Thank You Note**

Many thanks to the Session, the Board and the Church for the generous gift of vouchers presented to me as I stepped down from helping arrange the Church flowers on the occasions of Jean McKenna's absence. It was a big surprise but greatly appreciated.

Thank You to everyone.

*Sheena Singleton*

***As we reported in our last edition of the Messenger many of our congregation attended Pamela's induction to Bourock Church Barrhead. Here is a thank you letter from Pamela.***

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 was a day I was surrounded with support and love as I was inducted to my first full time charge as Minister of Church of Scotland at Bourock Church, Barrhead.

After entering into the sanctuary, during the first hymn, I looked around to see many faces and there they were, my friends from Relief Church. What a sight and encouragement for me to see those who had taken an evening off to come with family, the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley, friends and members of congregations from around Scotland. Another well kent face was Alistair Shaw, our Minister in the early 80s who offered to preach.

I want to thank each and every one of you for coming to Bourock Church to share in a special time for me and my family. Thank you too, for cards and gifts (some edible, yum!) To those who could not make it, but sent messages, thank you. It was an emotional evening – much happiness for all there but there was poignancy remembering those who were named and there in their own special way and had played a large part in my life at Relief Church and beyond.

My new home in Barrhead is cosy with my 'twa dugs' Harvey and Bobby. My address is:  
14 Maxton Avenue, Barrhead, G78 1DY.

Feel free to write and looking forward to seeing you at Relief Church soon.

Love, Pamela Gordon

# News from the Organisations

## **MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Session's end 2014

Well we have reached the end of our first session. It has been a good experience for the guys as we have come to know each other a little better. I would even say we have begun to bond as a fellowship and have come to interact with all the variants of each other's personalities.

We have had some visits from speakers who have broadened our experience and re-kindled our own memories, by telling us about their interests. From visits to Greek islands to an ex soldier from the British Legion. We also have fun at our games nights where it would surprise some of the congregation to know how competitive a game of scrabble can get and by whom!

We have had our day out, to Arran, a Christmas Dinner, a wonderful Burns Night even a Pie and Beans night! So all in all I think we have had a fun time.

We are looking forward to our next session; all we need to do is come up with some good ideas, and more members! Please come along and join us on a Tuesday evening at the Church.

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

March	10 <sup>th</sup>	Ten Pin Bowling
	24 <sup>th</sup>	Games Night
April	7 <sup>th</sup>	Speaker on Rifle Shooting
	21 <sup>st</sup>	Speaker – Barbara Graham
May	5 <sup>th</sup>	Games Night
	19 <sup>th</sup>	Speaker – Gideon's International
	30 <sup>th</sup>	Day Out – To be arranged



## *New Irvine Community Choir*

Well what a busy December it was for the choir in 2014!!

In my last article, I mentioned NICC were putting on a concert in the church on the 20<sup>th</sup> December (which was a resounding success) and that we were also booked to be carol singing in the Rivergate Shopping Centre on the 6<sup>th</sup> December. I had also mentioned that there may well be additions to the list, and boy I wasn't wrong!

As well as the Concert and the Rivergate, we were also singing on two occasions in the entrance of Tesco, Irvine on the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> December. Our last engagement of the year was a Wedding, of all things, on the 27<sup>th</sup> December, which was a delight and also something different for the choir.

I'm pleased to report that all of the above were a complete success and although it was lots of hard work, it all definitely paid off. The sum total raised over the Christmas period was **£920.15**.

The money raised will be of huge benefit to the choir without a doubt, however, we are now in the fortunate position to be able to donate some money back to those people who have supported us both at Christmas, and since the choir started in 2013.

- We will be donating money back to **Tesco** which will be passed onto their chosen charity "**Diabetes UK**", to say thank you for the opportunity to fundraise in their store.
- The **Church** will also receive a donation from us to say thank you for all the support the choir received at Christmas and before it.
- The choir will also choose a charity of their own to give money to.

Looking ahead.... NICC will be taking a back seat for now with regards to performances. Instead? We have lots of new repertoire to learn before we possibly put on a concert in the summer.

Dare I say, who knows what might crop up between now and then....

Sam Prescott  
Musical Director/Conductor

## BOURTREEHILL DROP-IN CENTRE

The Centre is approaching its **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** later this year. Many activities are being planned for the celebration of this and flyers will be distributed nearer the time.

The Drop-in-Centre is a lunch and activities club, open to all from 9.15 to 2.45 Monday to Friday. Tea and coffee are served in the morning and lunch is served from 12.15pm. Our minibus is available to pick up clients who are unable to make their own way to the centre. Meals are also delivered to the housebound.

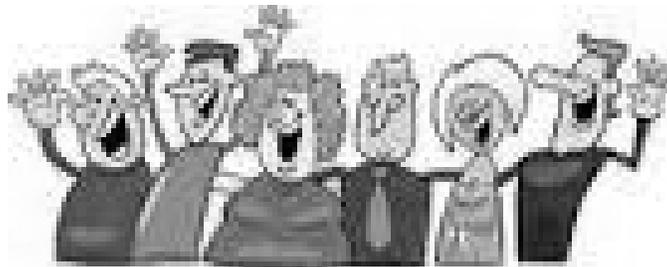
Various activities include, our choir, an art class and a general craft class will be starting in the near future,(this will be held on Thursdays after lunch). The choir meets on Tuesdays after lunch. For those not wishing to participate in these activities, they can play dominoes etc, after lunch. A keep fit class is held on Wednesday afternoons and clients are encouraged to join in. An Aqua -aerobic class is held at the Magnum Centre on Thursdays from 2 – 3 pm.

Throughout the year various bus trips are arranged for clients and volunteers.

Bingo is held in the centre on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 7 pm. Refreshments including home baking are available on these nights. Everyone is welcome to come along.

We have strong support in our community, but are always looking for new faces to join us!

Telephone for further information on 01294 212354 to speak to Betty Weir or Jean Reader.



*The following was written by one of the Drop-In members, in July 2014.*

I have been a member now for several years or more  
I have made many friends, terrific friends galore  
Betty Weir and all her staff are there to cook for you, and it's a treat  
Morning toast, tea, coffee and lunch to eat.

Monday is lunch and boy is it good  
Where else would you get such wonderful food.

Tuesday is lunch and then there's the Choir  
Which cheers us all up, for that's our desire.

Wednesday is lunch and then it's Keep Fit!  
It's all energy and strength I must admit!

Thursday is lunch and if you like 'Art'  
You can paint and draw, with all your heart.

Friday is lunch and that's it for now  
To Betty and Staff to you we bow!

I recommend the Drop In  
So don't be alone  
Come along and join us  
And not stuck at home.

So here's to the Commonwealth Games  
They now have begun  
To the people of Glasgow  
And all the good fun!!!

By Minette

## HIV PROGRAMME

Dear Friends,

December 2014

I am writing this on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, World AIDS Day, to thank you for the support which I know you and your church have given to the HIV Programme in the past, and to encourage you to continue with that support.

The first thing to say is that **HIV and AIDS have not gone away**. There is heartening news that there are fewer new infections each year, fewer children are being born with HIV, and medication is now available for those who can access it. But there are still some major challenges, and our partner churches overseas are still responding to the effects of HIV in their own communities. Our HIV Programme is committed to supporting them in these efforts. Thanks to the generosity of individuals and congregations throughout Scotland (and beyond, sometimes) **our HIV Programme is currently supporting 29 projects in 15 different countries**, including Scotland.

These projects vary from providing practical support for families infected and affected by HIV, training local volunteers as home-based carers, meeting the emotional and spiritual needs of people living with HIV, helping churches and pastors to become 'HIV-competent', training young people as peer educators to spread the message of prevention, encouraging community-based child care centres to support orphans and vulnerable children, providing training and loans for income-generation for people living with HIV, challenging stigma and discrimination – and so much more. Each in its own way is encouraging and enabling people living with HIV to live positively, and to enjoy 'life in all its fullness'.

Of course, in order to support these projects, we need to keep raising awareness and raising funds. One of our most successful ventures has been **Souper Sunday**. Now entering its 6<sup>th</sup> year, this combination of an elder-led service and a simple soup lunch has raised over £326,000 – an incredible sum, I think you'll agree. And every penny has gone to support the vital work of our partner projects here and overseas. But if we want to keep that support going, we need to keep raising the funds!

So I am delighted to announce that Souper Sunday resources for 2015 are now available. We can offer you and your congregation

- ***A complete order of service (2015's theme is "setting the captives free")***
- ***A Craft Church resource for using with young children***
- ***Background information and visuals in a variety of forms, about HIV and AIDS and the Church of Scotland HIV Programme***
- ***Some specially designed soup recipe cards with 6 different recipes from around the world***
- ***Gift Aid envelopes (to make any donations go further)!***
- ***Red ribbons***

Some of these resources are available for download from the Church of Scotland website, under

the Speak Out pages; others can be ordered by contacting [hiv@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:hiv@cofscotland.org.uk) or phoning Mary McGinley at 0131 225 5722

Congregations which have held Souper Sundays have been enthusiastic in their feedback. “A great sense of fellowship emerged” says one. “We all agreed that this was a very worthwhile event and would recommend this to any other congregation,” says another. Someone observed “Our minister enjoyed being part of the congregation for a change”, and one minister reflected that “I had a real sense of God blessing people as they serve Him”.

We do hope that you and your congregation might feel the same. If you haven’t done a Souper Sunday for a while, please will you consider doing one again in 2015? And if it is now a regular feature of your annual calendar of services, can we say a huge Thank You for your commitment and support for the work of the Church of Scotland HIV Programme; we really do appreciate it.

With warm wishes for a meaningful and peaceful Christmas.

Marjorie Clark & Elena Sarra  
HIV Programme Co-ordinators  
World Mission Council  
121 George Street  
Edinburgh EH2 4YN

Tel: 0131 225 5722

Email: [hiv@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:hiv@cofscotland.org.uk)

*(To see more information, see the leaflet on the notice board)*

To all at Irvine Relief Church

*Season’s Greetings and a very special Thank You for your continued faithful commitment to Souper Sunday over the years.*

*With Best Wishes  
Marjorie & Elena  
HIV Co-ordinators  
World Mission Council*

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**Articles for the next edition of the magazine should be ready for  
Sunday 26 April**

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1<sup>st</sup> Irvine Company Boys'  
Brigade

Parents' Association Coffee  
Morning

Saturday 14 March

10am to 12 noon

### Coffee, Cake and Scones

If you're like me and really enjoy good coffee, scones and cakes then read on. If you're on a diet keep this for when you've reached your target weight!

Here are a few places I'd recommend;

**Cucina Minucci** at The Junction, Lochwinnoch - good coffee and cakes, especially Joanna's chocolate & beetroot cake with rose petal icing, bakewell tarts and chocolate brownies.

**Mojo**, 18 West Portland Street, Troon - good coffee and good speciality scones e.g. raspberry, blueberry, chocolate, cherry & coconut.

**The Barony Centre**, West Kilbride - good coffee and cakes, especially the bakewell tart, coffee cake and brownies.

**Su Casa**, Ayr - good coffee (they roast their own beans) and the chocolate and courgette cake is delicious.

Finally, if you enjoy an empire biscuit, buy them at Grant's Fruiterer in Prestwick. He'll even make them up if they've run out.

#### **Bon appetit!**

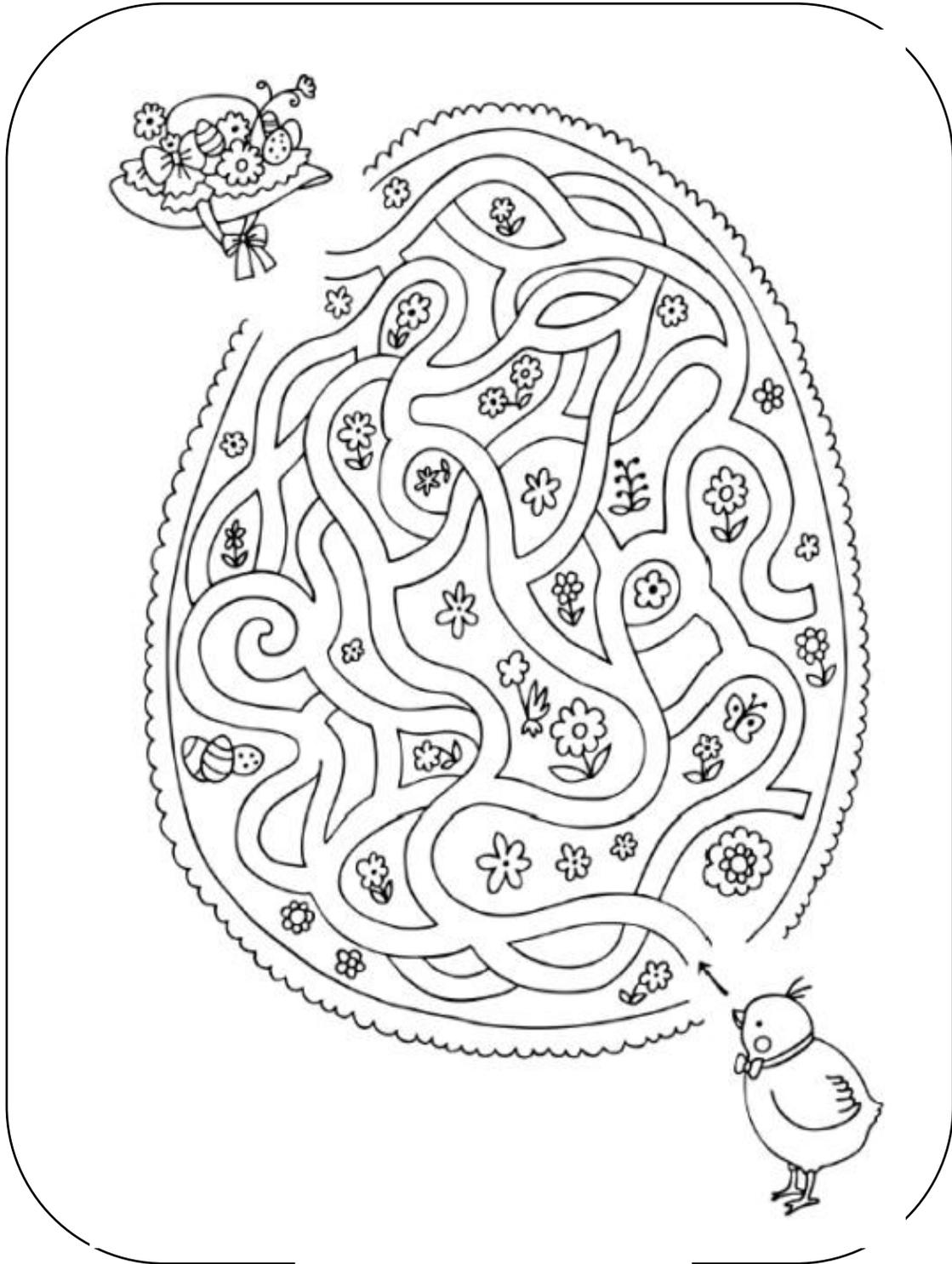
If you have any more recommendations please share them with us in the next edition of the magazine.

*Jean Clarkson*

*We wish everyone a happy and blessed Easter!*

# Children's Corner

Solve the Maze



## How Many Eggs?



### Jokes

Why shouldn't you tell an Easter egg a joke?

*It might crack up!*

How can you tell where the Easter Bunny has been?

*Eggs (X) marks the spot!*

What do you call a rabbit that tells good jokes?

*A funny bunny!*

How does the Easter Bunny travel?

*By hare plane!*