

CAMPSIE PARISH CHURCH



**WINTER
NEWSLETTER**

December 2019 – January 2020

A Saviour is Born



Peace on Earth

The Story Behind the Carol

Silent Night



On Christmas Eve of 1818 the young priest of St. Nicholas parish church in Obendorf faced disaster. The organ had been incapacitated by mice. The chance of fixing the instrument before the evening service was nil. Father Joseph Mohr was not a man to just give up, however. He pulled out a poem he had written several years before called "Stille Nacht". Mohr took his poem to the schoolmaster and organist of a nearby town, Franz Xavier Gruber. He asked that Gruber write a melody to accompany the poem on guitar. In several hours, Gruber had the music done and the carol was played for the first time that night at the Christmas Eve service.

The words were not translated into English for another 50 years. Episcopalian bishop John Freeman Young published the English translation that is most frequently sung today in 1859.

The story behind the writing of this song is unique enough but there is another interesting fact which makes this carol special.

In 1914, during the famous, and unofficial, Christmas truce, the song was sung in French, English and German simultaneously.



How appropriate that it was, apparently, the one song that all the soldiers on both sides knew.

As they celebrated Christmas together, having laid down their arms, the night was silent and imbued with a heavenly peace.

Dear Friends,

As I write Christmas is fast approaching, and by the time you read this, the general election will have come and gone. Whatever the results of the election the country is unlikely to be united over it, with some of us rejoicing and others despairing. It is ironic that this should be the case at the time of year when we celebrate God's gift of the Christ child and peace on earth. As such, perhaps we should reflect as a congregation and as individuals on how we can act as peacemakers and bring reconciliation into a situation where even families are at loggerheads over the future of our country.



It is our responsibility as Christians to bring the peace of God to those who don't yet know it and as we move forward into 2020 it will become ever more urgent to consider how, as a congregation, we interact and engage with our community, bringing God's love to those outside our walls.

Part of this engagement has to be improved communication, both within and out with the congregation, and at our recent Coffee, Cake, and Chat events, communication was one of the things which was highlighted under, "could do better." In that spirit, I hope you will find this newsletter packed full of information about the life of our congregation and its future. There are articles about Coffee, Cake, and Chat, the Path of Renewal, and our Local Church Review. These are all events which affect the whole congregation and the more of us who are involved in the conversations around these events the better our reflection on the future will be. However, communication is a two-way process, and although this newsletter, and the website, and intimations on a Sunday morning aim to give information to as much of the congregation as possible, you all have a responsibility to communicate with me as the Minister or the Kirk session regarding your thoughts and responses to all that is communicated.

As we enter a New Year in the life of the church let's make a New Year resolution. Let's resolve to talk more to one another, to discuss more with one another, to be more open about our joys and our sorrows, our successes and disappointments, and consider how we can contribute to the development of a vibrant fellowship which shines as a light in our community; a beacon to the love of God which unites us in spite of differences and even disagreements.

At this time, it is appropriate to take a moment to thank Muriel Connell for so ably editing our newsletter over the past 2 or 3 years. I think we can all agree that she has done a fantastic job. Muriel has decided that the time has come to pass on this responsibility to someone else and we are delighted to welcome Melanie Henderson to the role.

In this season of peace and goodwill to all, I wish you all a joyful Christmas, a happy New Year, and the blessings of the Christ child in whatever 2020 holds for you.

Your friend and minister

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jane".

PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care Group met recently to review their outreach to the congregation

Various aspects of their remit were discussed - visiting, services in the local nursing homes, flower and card distribution. It was lovely to welcome Anne O'Donnell from Alzheimer Scotland who enthusiastically outlined different options of ways in which we could become involved as a church. She explained how to become an Alzheimer friendly church.

We could join a programme, organised throughout the local area providing monthly meetings with activities for those with Alzheimer's and their carers - singing, art, games, cafes etc.

A meeting will be held later to discuss what we could offer. It was agreed that this could be a village project involving the other churches and the schools.

Please pray for guidance as we seek the way ahead.

Margaret Lindall

PASTORAL CARE:

Christlike Life in Action

PASTORAL COMMUNITY:

A Caring Fellowship

**PASTORAL
Life**

PASTORAL CORE:

Biblical Foundation



As a congregation we have been accepted onto the Path of Renewal. This is a process not a programme and aims to bring ministers and church members together to discuss and reflect on the big picture and explore new approaches to church life.

Groups from congregations across the Church come together to share their experiences of discipleship in everyday life and how faith might be shared in places of work and play.

Rev Liz Crumlish, who coordinates Path of Renewal, said:

“Path of Renewal does not provide a blueprint for how church should be today but encourages ministers and congregations to work out - together with God - how God is inviting them to be in and with the communities they serve.



To do that demands a shift in mind-set – moving from having answers to asking questions. It also involves an element of risk taking, cultivating an environment in which experiments are welcome and one where, if something doesn't work, that's OK – we have something to learn from.

Rev Scott Cameron, minister at Stevenston High Kirk in North Ayrshire, who has participated in the Path of Renewal said: “The most remarkable part of my three year journey with Path of Renewal was to find that it was not a journey into a new programme or project, but a journey back into a newness of life with Christ. At the beginning of my journey I felt spiritually dry and drained. Path of Renewal gave me the opportunity to pause and return to Jesus my ‘first love’.”

Path of Renewal cont'd

Rev John Murning of Sherwood Greenlaw Parish Church in Paisley, reflected on his church's journey through Path of Renewal by writing:

I have noticed that ...people are smiling more, and talking more in our church. Some people are praying more, others are caring more, and some are thinking more.



I have noticed that people are willing to give things a try, and experience something new. People want to get involved, and we now have a number of babies and young families coming regularly to church on a Sunday morning.

And more parents have supported the Remembrance Day, and the uniformed organisation services.



I have noticed people being kind, and saying thank you for what other church folk have done for them. Not many folk fall asleep during the sermon, and people in our community recognise some of the things we are doing as a church to be good and healthy and wholesome.

I have noticed new people joining our choir. And the fun that the Time out Group have at the manse. People are being generous with their time, talent and money.

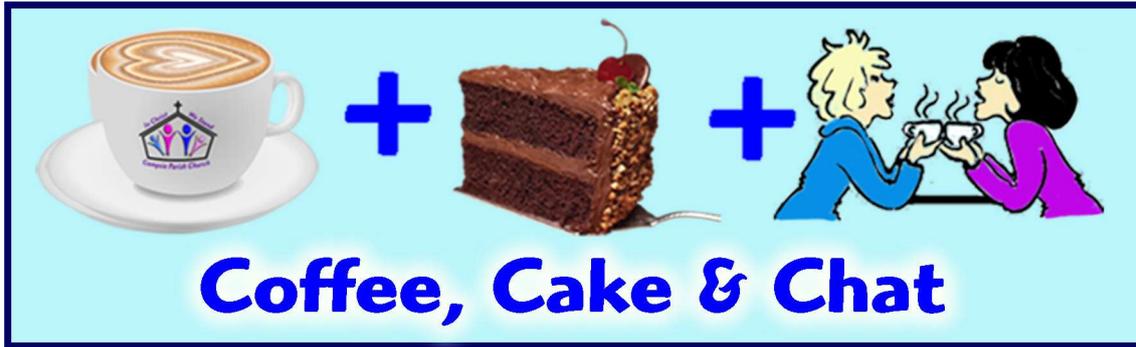
People are asking questions, and probing for a deeper understanding about God. I have noticed, faithful men and woman, who come week in and week out to worship, and bring something of themselves to Sherwood Greenlaw, and offer themselves for the work of the Kingdom of God.

I have noticed, growth and optimism in people, and a real willingness to take on board new opportunities as they arise, that expand the Kingdom of God in this place. All this suggests to me that God is not dead here. That something of His Spirit is afoot in what we do, A little spark of the Spirit; that seeks to kindle a deeper fire for God and this Kingdom work.



The process begins for us as Jane goes to a conference at the beginning of January. At that point she will find out more about how to take things forward and what the process means. It also means that there will be opportunities for some individuals to be more involved and it would be a good time to think and pray if there is something that God is calling you to do, and to be open to responding to that call as new possibilities become available.

This is an exciting time for us in Campsie Parish Church and we very much look forward to seeing what God will do in the years to come as we reflect, and experiment, and grow in faith and fellowship.



In September and October, we had two opportunities to meet together as a congregation and discuss our future as the church here in Campsie. Our thoughts were guided on 7th September by Rev. Graham Duffin, and on 6th October by Rev. Dr Doug Gay. Both brought a different perspective on the crisis facing the church in general and the Church of Scotland in particular, and gave us much food for thought in their presentations.

Graham pointed out that society is changing at a remarkable pace, including a mistrust of authority, religious pluralism, and a move towards informality, and that the church is failing to keep up with it. However, there was also hope in his presentation. He pointed out that all organisations are facing the same crisis, and also that all organisations follow the same pattern, or life cycle. They begin full of life and hope but as they become established and organised, they begin to lose momentum and creativity. At the point where they have become an institution there are two possibilities: they either close in and ultimately die, or they take the path of renewal and begin anew. In Campsie, those are the choices facing us. In January we will embark as a congregation on the process called Path of Renewal. This will enable us, with support from the centre and other congregations, to take a long hard look at ourselves and consider ways in which we can be renewed, and revived, so that the church will still have a place in the life of the village. More about the Path of Renewal elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Doug outlined the challenges facing the national church, but also our congregation. He challenged us to look at how we come across to outsiders. We are friendly and welcoming, but what is our image? How do we come across on Facebook and on the website? Where is our presence on Twitter and Instagram? These are the places to connect with young people. He challenged us to see our place in the village as part of the organisation of the village and consider the Council's Lennoxton Place plan when we look at our future. What part can we play in the regeneration of our village?

In addition to the two presentations, we asked lots of questions, sought to identify priorities and gave the opportunity for ideas and comments. The full report of the results of the consultation is available on the website and a meeting has been organised for 7:30pm on 19th December in the church for anyone who wishes to come as we consider all that came out of the two days and how we might take forward some of the ideas and suggestions. Please come along on the 19th; ***it's your church, have your say.***

FROM THE KIRK SESSION

It will come as no surprise to anyone that we live in a constantly changing world where some of our long established habits and practices may seem to have become a bit cumbersome or even less relevant than they once were. With this in mind, from time to time we like to review the way that we carry out some of the practical things that affect the way we communicate with members of our congregation.

As part of our responsibility for pastoral care in the congregation we are in the habit of visiting each member twice a year in advance of communion. This visit is carried out by one of the elders. However, we are aware that not everyone would like a visit and there are many ways in which we can keep in contact with everybody in the congregation. Some of you enjoy your elder's visit, and if this is the case, you will continue to receive this visit. Some of you, however, might prefer a text or an email or a phone call to keep you in touch with what is going on in the congregation. Others of you might prefer to get your news on the website, or through the newsletter.

The newsletter can be distributed in hardcopy through your letterbox, or by email, or accessed on the website. We are keen that everybody has the contact that they prefer. Please let us know, either to Jane, the minister, (Jane.Denniston@churchofscotland.org.uk) or George, the session clerk, (geojkelly@btinternet.com) about your preferences.

Pastoral care is very important to us as a Kirk session. We would like everyone who is on the roll to feel that they are a valued and important member of our church community. Please let us know how you would prefer us to keep in contact with you.

In addition, you may not know that as Kirk Session **meetings are now public**: you are welcome to attend. Meetings are held at 7:30 PM on a Tuesday evening in the church, roughly every two months, and dates are intimated in advance at the morning service and through the website. In the meetings you are very welcome to make contributions and to take part in discussions, although only the elders are allowed to vote if that should be required. This is because, as a congregation, we are a charity, the elders are its trustees and therefore it is our responsibility to ensure that regulations and procedures are adhered to.

We very much hope that you will take every opportunity to make your voice heard and support both the Minister and the Kirk Session as we look to the future here in Campsie Parish Church.



Local Church Review

Every 5 years or so the Presbytery sends a team of ministers and elders out to visit other congregations to help them to reflect on their life, their work, and their witness, to identify areas of strength and to address areas of weakness. It is a process in which faith and vows of membership should be highlighted and strengthened throughout. There are various principles behind the review process:

- 1) It is a congregational review rather than a Presbytery review and should encourage good working relationships between the two.
- 2) It invites a cross section of people (gender, age, length of time in the congregation), to be involved. Meetings are open to all and the more people who attend the more effective the meetings are.
- 3) It should feed into the vision of the congregation, and Presbytery must be equipped to support the outcomes.
- 4) Its purpose is to encourage, support and enable the congregation itself – taking into account the past but, more importantly, the future.
- 5) It is aspirational and an on-going process and measures the point at which the review takes place. The past is the legacy on which the future is built.
- 6) It leads into other things in the life of the congregation.
- 7) It aims to be visionary and to encourage new relationships within and beyond church.
- 8) It is specific to the congregation – its hopes, its aspirations, its needs to fulfil the work and vision of the gospel in that place.
- 9) It is something that is revisited each year by the Session, asking ‘Where have we got to in our plan?’



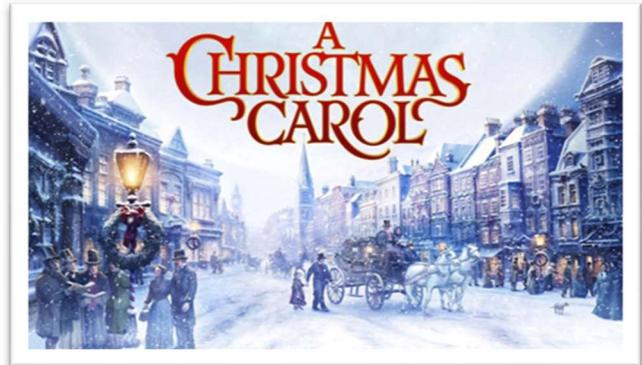
The fact that our congregation is having its Local Church Review just after we have had the consultation through Coffee, Cake, and Chat and just as we embark on the Path of Renewal process is very good timing.

Everything in which we are engaged at the moment is concerned with reflecting on our future and how we better serve our community that we might build the

kingdom in this place. Please look out for intimations regarding times and places of meetings, and come along!

How 'A Christmas Carol' came to be written ...

In May 1843, the writer Douglas Jerrold invited a host of wealthy men to a fundraising dinner in aid of the Charterhouse Square Infirmary, which looked after elderly impoverished men. Among those invited was author Charles Dickens.



On seeing the company for the evening, Dickens later wrote a contemptuous letter to his friend describing his fellow invitees as sleek, slobbering, bow-paunched, overfed, apoplectic, snorting, cattle. Dickens, though being equally wealthy, had a genuine desire to make changes in society. He was stricken when, in the same year, he heard about Britain's child labourers, and considered writing a pamphlet, under his name, titled, 'An appeal to the people of England on behalf of the poor man's child.' However, he decided that a pamphlet would have little impact, as his idea was to write something that would strike a sledgehammer blow on behalf of poor children. He wanted to write something which would have twenty thousand times the force of a pamphlet.

He travelled to Manchester to address donors who had gathered in support of the Athenaeum, an educational charity for working men and women. In Manchester he stayed with his sister Fanny Burnett who had two sons, one of whom, Harry, was disabled. Staying with his sister, Charles saw first-hand the realities faced by impoverished disabled children. Harry Burnett was the seed from which 'A Christmas Carol' germinated, the real-life Tiny Tim. Unlike his fictional counterpart, Harry didn't survive, despite Charles' valiant efforts to get the best medical treatment for the boy.

Walking around the post-industrial revolution Manchester, Dickens was also horrified to see starving homeless families. His words at the Athenaeum, therefore, were fuelled by his fury, railing against the upper class of wealthy men who never shared their wealth with their disadvantaged brethren. When Charles returned to London, he knew what he had to write. Six weeks later the novella was complete, however, his publishers, Chapman and Hall, were very unsupportive of this particular work, and an angry Dickens decided to fund the project himself. While his finances were initially devastated by this project, 'A Christmas Carol' was an unmitigated hit, published, as it was, just in time to catch a Christmas renaissance with a plot that showed that Christmas had lost its sole purpose - charitable giving. Six thousand copies flew off the shelves and a reprint was soon in order. The book has, since then never been out of print.

Dickens was 31 when he wrote 'A Christmas Carol'!

Upcoming Services

December 2019 to January 2020

Date	Event
DECEMBER	
22	11am Morning Worship <i>Please note no JAM CLUB</i>
24	11pm mince pies, tea and coffee 11.30pm Watch night Service
25	10.30am Christmas Day Family Service
29	11am Morning Worship. <i>Please note no JAM Club</i>
JANUARY	
5	11am Morning Worship - Songs of Praise <i>Please give Jane song and hymn choices by Tuesday 31 December</i>
12	11am Morning Worship with JAM Club 6.30pm Evening Worship : <i>New Beginnings</i>
19	11am Morning Worship with JAM Club
26	11am Morning Worship with JAM Club



Give Way / Make Way?



At Church this morning (24/11/19) we sang the hymn Make Way and because of that I might have to admit I was slightly mistaken. You see when Helen and I visit her Aunt on Sunday afternoons we sometimes discuss church matters and I had been asking her what were the longest book in the Bible or what is often thought of as the shortest sentence (John 11:35) in the Bible, she does not know, but to be fair, neither do I.

During the drive we stop at 2 give way signs and I always sing, give way, give way, for the king of kings and encourage Helen to join in with the harmonies. She said the Hymn words are actually “Make way, Make way” which of course I knew was just wrong, I pointed out that folk often quote parts of the Bible or words from a hymn without realizing where their quotes actually come from, and that’s why they had Give Way signs, from the hymn of the same title. She exclaimed! “Brian sometimes you can be so exasperating”. But I can’t be exasperating, as I don’t know what that means, and I can’t

be something if I don’t know how to do it. Though I will confess to having some natural talents for other things.

Anyway I said to her, don’t try to confuse me using fancy words, to prove how better educated than me you are. If you were so clever you would know what the shortest sentence in the Bible was. Do you know it? I was vindicated when she said no!



She bowed her head and said silently to herself. “Jesus Wept”

Brian Marshall

Prayer in Campsie Parish Church



As we look back over 2019 we consider the many requests we have had for prayer and it is with grateful hearts that we recognise the many answers we have received. Sometimes, in fact very often, the answers were not what we thought we wanted, but always, in hindsight, we recognise God's answer has been the right answer!!!!

We have prayed for healing and seen amazing recoveries, but sometimes when there has been no healing, the answer to our prayers has been a strengthening of faith; which has helped ease the burden of sorrow.

Often we do not understand the journey God is laying before us, and there are many times in our prayers we do ask '**WHY oh Lord?**' Especially when we see those we love and care about, suffering. However, we cling to the promises of God Our Heavenly Father, who has promised never to leave us; never to forsake us. He who is 'The Rock' we cling to in times of trouble, and the One whom we worship every day of our lives.

The Prayer Circle has also been actively praying for our nation in these troubled times. During the 30 days prior to the General Election a few of our members accepted the challenge to pray daily for specific concerns/topics related to the election.

Every morning we received a bulletin from 'The Stand ' which is a 'Pray for Scotland' organisation, and it was interesting to find that many of the prayer notices have been written by local people, ministers, pastors, elders and deacons.

While following the guidelines suggested, we each committed this time to pray for unity among all people regardless of political leanings, asking that honesty and integrity will prevail in the new parliament....and asking above all that 'God's Will' be done!

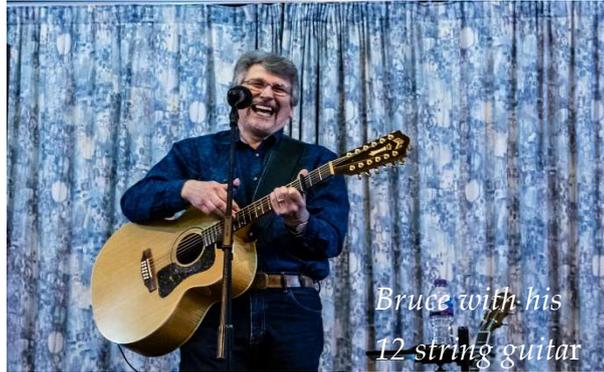
Joan Thomson Prayer Secretary 07719553829

jjthomson62@btinternet.com

Bruce Davies

in Concert

Sat 7th December 2019



After what seemed like a long time of preparation and advertising for ticket sales, Bruce's concert was upon us! We sold 74 tickets for the event – obviously hoping for more, but not too bad a final total.



obviously hoping for more, but not too bad a final total.

The concert was very well attended on the night considering the diabolical weather which brought a new meaning to the word 'wet'!

All who attended were rewarded by an excellent performance by Bruce whose powerful, yet gentle voice was accompanied by his excellent guitar playing. (Not many guitarists can play a 12 string like that!)

All our concert goers were also rewarded with a fantastic tea with some just incredible home baking. (I'm still coming down from the sugar high!)

I would like to thank everyone for their support whether by attending or by bringing home baking and helping out with the tea.



Looking forward to next time we can get Bruce back again!

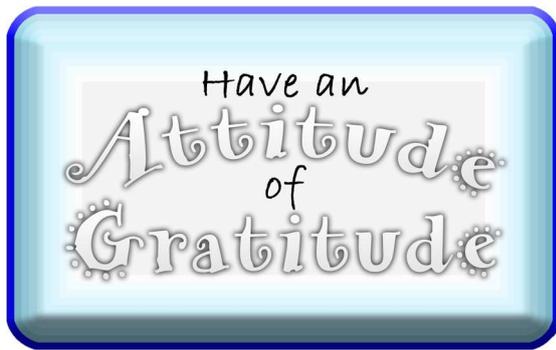
Robert Neilson

Future Events

Date	Event
Tuesday 17 December - 2pm	<i>Guild – Fun & Frolics (Milton of Campsie Guild joining us) Entertainment (Kirkintilloch Ladies Concert Party) - All Welcome!!</i>
Tuesday 17 December - 7pm	<i>BB Carol Service – bring your own mug!</i>
Thursday 19 December - 7.30pm	<i>Meeting to discuss Coffee, Cake and Chat feedback, and begin to draft the Local Church Review Report</i>
Saturday 21 December - 11.30 - 12.30	<i>Carol singing outside the Hub</i>
Monday 23 December 7pm	<i>Carol singing – meet at Station Rd end of Calico Way</i>
Tuesday 24 December	<i>Carol Singing meet at church 7pm Tea/coffee and Mince Pies 11pm Watchnight Service starts 11.30pm</i>
Wednesday 25 December - 10.30am	<i>Christmas family Service</i>

SNEAK PREVIEW FOR 2020 – Sheila Jones is organising another Scottish evening in early 2020 – Full details coming soon!!





THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR

The mess to clean up after a party

Because it means I have been surrounded by friends.

The taxes I pay

Because it means I have something to do.

The clothes that fit a little too snugly

Because it means I have enough to eat.

My shadow who watches me work

Because it means I am out in the sunshine.

A lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning and gutters that need fixing

Because it means I have a home.

Thankful



Campsie Parish Church

130 Main Street, Lennoxton G66 7HA

Tel 01360 310939

Website: www.campsie.org.uk

Scottish Charity Number: SC000835



*Have a happy christmas, and great year ahead
with good health and many blessings*