



From the Manse

The other day I was listening to a programme about how to survive Christmas in our current uncertain financial climate. There were tips on how to rein in the spending on gifts and feasting.

And it was good sense stuff... basically, don't bankrupt yourself and remember Christmas is really all about families.

Hmm... family is lovely, family is to be enjoyed and cherished and I love family but actually Christmas is all about Jesus. Jesus.

There's no doubt Christmas is a time when families get together and when everyone makes more of an effort to keep in touch but Christmas is all about Jesus. Christmas marks that momentous, mysterious moment in history when the spiritual realm of heaven came face to face with our material, earthly world. Christmas is a celebration of the fact that God the creator of the heaven and earth came down to earth as man. He came not as a prince born in a palace but as a baby born in an inn byre.

Joy Webb told it beautifully ...

It was on a starry night when the hills were bright

Earth lay sleeping, sleeping calm and still.

Then in a cattle shed, in a manger bed

A boy was born, king of all the world

The words simply capture an image and amazingly we too come face to face with God. The nativity is down to earth in more ways than one. For God is found in human form, able to touch and feel, to see and hear and to live and die among the humanity he had created. Jesus came to the world to break through the barrier that had grown between us and God. The bright blazing star at Bethlehem exploded light over the earth as God came to be with man. So the shepherds at the nativity could kneel at the manger and look into the face of God and so can we... not through our own efforts but because of what God did for us that night in Bethlehem.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas let's remember that Jesus is the heart of our celebrations. It was in him that the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and it is through him that we are able to look into the face of God.

Wishing you all a happy, holy Christmas.

Yours in Christ,

Wilma

Rev. Wilma Johnston



Out of The Life

Also Remembered

Cilla Wood 14/10/16

Baptism

Ena Isabella Molly Brown 30/10/16

Fund Raising

Sponsored Walk raised a total £816.

Grateful thanks to the walkers and their sponsors.



COME ALL YE FAITHFUL



Harvest Thanksgiving 6th November 2016

The collection this year was for the Orkney Presbytery's Malawi Partnership which supports practical projects in Thyolo.



A symbolic display featuring the fruits of the land and sea, along with autumn themed flower arrangements by Inga Norquoy, welcomed us all into the Kirk for the annual Harvest Thanksgiving service, and the minister, Wilma Johnston welcomed everyone with thanks for the donations, charity shoeboxes and decorations in the kirk.



*Dear mother earth, who day by day
Unfolds God's blessings on our way,
O praise him, alleluia!
All flowers and fruits that in you grow,
Let them his glory also show..*

In her address to the children, Wilma shared her top ten of things she is thankful for, with Jesus at number 1.

The scripture reading came from Ruth 2 v1-23, delivered as a narration with four different voices, and the theme continued in hymn 226:

*God, whose farm is all creation,
take the gratitude we give;
Take the finest of our harvest,
Crops we grow that all may live.*



In her address Wilma talked of how giving thanks doesn't always come naturally, as demonstrated by Bart Simpson, and this was a day for us to take time to be truly grateful and to pick up the challenge of cultivating hearts that beat with thanksgiving.

Give thanks with a grateful heart....

In our giving we were passing on blessings to people we would never meet, a reminder of the interdependence of people the world over.

The service closed with the perennial favourite, *We plough the fields and scatter.*

Marlene Mainland





St Andrews School News: Mr Taylor

As term two begins I am beginning to wonder if I am losing track of time! The summer seems to be far behind us now as we feel the winter set in. The term has started with a flurry of activity, all our pupils are kitted out now with their high viz vests, all chanting 'Be safe, Be seen,' P1-3 reciting lines and practising songs with Mrs Keldie for the Christmas show and construction of our long overdue carpark going on around us.

In the midst of all this activity I will take a moment to reflect on Term 1. The session started well with our new starts settling in well to Nursery and P1. Our school role now stands at 230 including Nursery and Pre-school. It won't be long before we will be moving into the Church hall! Our Capital project continues to slowly move forward.

Harvest Thanksgiving

At the end of term Wilma and our parents joined us to give thanks for the harvest we had this year. We had a fantastic service with contributions of readings, poems and prayers from P4, P5 and P6. Our Thanks giving table this year was laden with a generous collection of food items from class donations.



Dear God

At this Harvest time of year I'm reminding myself of all the lovely things I have that some people don't have. I am very thankful for all of the education me and my friends get at home and school. I am also thankful for this lovely island that we live on. No war and lots of peace. Thank you God for friends and family and our homes. Amen.

By Sam Groundwater P4

This year our collection went to the Orkney Foodbank. Mary Cowieson, a volunteer from the Food Bank gave a short presentation to our children explaining the work of the Foodbank and why it is necessary here in Orkney.

Mary explained that the Orkney Food bank was established in 2013 and since then has provided support and food parcels to over 1,440 (25 Tonnes of Aid) people across Orkney and in May this year was established as a registered charity!

Enterprising P5s!

P5B and P5L have set up their own class social enterprise businesses and are busily working on creating a product for the Christmas market. Both classes have researched products, shared ideas and have come up with their own products to produce.



P5B are making their own hand made Christmas soap wrapped up beautifully in a facecloth to create a fuzzy friend character (reindeer, snowman and penguin). The perfect gift to add to your Christmas shopping list!

P5L are making their own hand made Christmas cards. There will be 4 designs contained in a pack (Santa, snowman, reindeer and robin) each highlighted with an attractive button. They are fantastic cards to give to your loved ones this Christmas season.

Please contact the school if you would like to place an order.



P6 Trip to Corrigan Farm and Skail House

By Matthew and Euan P6



At the end of last term we went to Corrigan farm and Skail House because we were learning about the Victorians. We had a tour of Corrigan farm and then tried some activities - rope making, water carrying using a yoke, washing clothes and using a Quernstone to grind oats. It was really interesting and we enjoyed the activities. We had learnt a lot about Skail House in class so it was good to get to go there and see round. The house is huge and a lot of people say that it's haunted. Luckily we didn't see any ghosts while we were there! We look forward to joining you all for the Service on the 20th December from 10

-11am to celebrate Christmas as a community.

Mark Taylor



East Mainland Church Guild

August

The Annual Guild Outing venue was the Sands Hotel where all enjoyed a lovely lunch and fellowship on Wednesday 24th.

The Rededication of the Guild took place on 28th August during the Service with participation from Members. Mabel Eunson read from Luke 14: 7-14. Maureen Tait read a poem – 'A sure way to a happy day', and Joyce Johnston talked of work of the Guild today in Scotland.

September

On Wednesday 7th September, Members sang Hymn 226 – 'God whose farm is all creation' and heard Morag Shearer read from Lev 26: 3-12. Joyce offered prayer and, after Minutes were read and approved, welcomed and introduced the speaker, the Rev David McNeish. Excerpt from Minute - David spoke about the project "Walking with Magnus" a project to develop a pilgrimage walk as part of the 900 years commemoration of the death of St Magnus, which is being commemorated next year. The walk will trace the supposed route taken to retrieve St Magnus' body from Evie to Birsay and on to Kirkwall before being placed in the then new cathedral. David discussed different aspects of pilgrimage- a journey or search of spiritual significance, a chance to connect with God; the significance of pilgrimage in medieval times and the potential of developing pilgrimage as part of the tourism experience of Orkney. He spoke about the significance of Mansie Stones in discovering the best route for the walk and also taught us a pilgrimage song 'Walk with me for the journey is long.' The Orkney Pilgrimage Group has developed a walk of 51 miles which could be tackled in four sections. They are currently in discussion to get funding to establish the route with way markers etc. and are looking at further ways to make the route accessible to all.

Maureen voiced the appreciation of Members to David for this very informative talk and to Nancy Omand and Jean Smith for the ever welcome cup of tea. The evening ended by singing Hymn 153 'Great is Thy faithfulness' and Benediction.

October

The East Mainland Guild met on 5th October when the evening opened with a sketch acted by Maureen and Morag entitled 'On the Bus' – two women journeying to the meeting.

Joyce welcomed everyone and told of her attendance at the Guild Roadshow where she heard fresh ideas for conducting meetings, moving forward to the 130th year of the Church of Scotland Guild.

Hymn 530 'One more step along the world I go' was sung before Minutes were read and approved. A warm welcome was extended to the Linties, guests for the evening, and they then provided a very enjoyable programme of songs, spirituals and hymns along with anecdotes, puzzles and poems. Many prizes were awarded to winners.

After Isobel Clouston read a Reflection from Ps 126, Linda Ferguson voiced the appreciation of members to the Linties before Maureen and Morag served a welcome cup of tea.

Nancy read a Prayer, then Hymn 120 'You shall go out with joy' and Blessing brought a memorable evening to a close.

Joyce Johnston



Shoe Box Appeal 2016

Last year, Blythswood's Shoe Box Appeal resulted in 116,576 gift-filled boxes going to children and adults in eight East European countries and in Pakistan. Hundreds more were produced by donors within Romania, inspired to show care towards the poorest in their own country.

New clothes, toiletries, jotters and felt-tipped pens – such practical gifts bring more than just their own usefulness. To children, and especially to adults, they bring the message that somebody cares, that somebody wants to show them kindness.

Blythswood News

The shoe boxes have been gathered over the past few weeks, and were displayed at the front of the kirk during the harvest thanksgiving service on Sunday 6th November. A total of 62 boxes have been delivered to McAdie & Reeve to begin their onward journey. A huge thank you to everyone who donated filled boxes and individual items; this is the largest number of boxes gathered to date.

Katrina Tait





Month	Date	Time	Event
December	4 th	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School + Tea in the East Mainland Church
	4 th	7:00pm	Guild Carol Service in the Deerness Community Centre with Guest Artistes – The Pupils of St Andrews School
	7 th	7:30pm	Guild in the Session Room
	11 th	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	18 th	11:00am	Worship with Sunday School Nativity in the East Mainland Church
	20 th	10:00am	St Andrews School End of term Service in the East Mainland Church
	24 th	7:00pm	Christingle Christmas Eve Service in the East Mainland Church
	25 th	11:00am	Christmas Day Lessons and Carols in the East Mainland Church
January	1st	11:00am	Worship + Tea in the East Mainland Church
	8 th	11:00am	Worship, Remembering & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	15 th	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	22 nd	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	29 th	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
February	5 th	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School + Tea in the East Mainland Church
	12 th	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	19 th	11:00am	Worship with Guides and Brownies Thinking Day in the East Mainland Church
	26 th	11:00am	Worship with the Sacrament of Holy Communion & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
March	1 st	7:30pm	Guild in the Session Room

For more News and Photos etc. see our website on

www.eastmainlandchurch.co.uk

Editorial Team:

Sheila Eunson, Kathleen Gaudie, Laurence Tait and layout compiled by Russell Manson

Please email articles, preferably using **Times New Roman size 12**, for the next newsletter to

eastmainlandchurch@gmail.com by 8th February

Church of Scotland

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