

From the Manse

As I write this it is not even Guy Fawkes and it seems Christmas is in full swing already with supermarket shelves lined with tins of biscuits and the kids' selection boxes and the trays of gold-covered chocolates. I'm not going to mention the obvious.

I was shopping for Christmas cake ingredients and looking at the fantastic variety of goods on offer and I wondered about our Presbytery Partners in Mangunda Parish, the Congregations of Mchenga, Matapwata and Namabango in the Thyolo Highlands of Malawi. I wonder what Christmas is like for them?

I am ashamed that I know so little about Malawi so there's lots to learn, but I've read that Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world because of years of political tension and because many rural Malawians survive just by subsistence farming.

Farmers everywhere are liable to complain about the weather, however, Malawi's climate is more precarious than most with hot dry spells followed by torrential floods. Some of the proceeds from the Christmas Card Appeal 2017 will go to repair flood damage.

And then there is the human tragedy of the spread of HIV-Aids, which has catastrophically affected society, leaving over one million children orphaned – unimaginable... and yet Malawi is called "the warm heart of Africa" and I see why from watching videos of women cooking, and listening to them singing, and singing joyfully.

Malawi has strong connections with Scotland starting with David Livingstone and so the link has continued meaning 80% of the population are Christian and the remainder mostly Muslim.

So I wondered as we are preparing for a Christmas dinner what might a Christmas feast Malawi-style look like? I soon found Malawian recipes online for special occasions like Christmas or any special family 'do' - Nsima served with a pumpkin leaf relish and a tomato omelette.

Nsima is made very simply often with maize flour added to boiling water until it looks like semolina and it is boiled for 4 mins before more maize flour is added to make a really thick consistency. It has to be thick and hold its shape, because it's made into patties or quenelles, which are dipped in the pumpkin leaf relish and eaten with the tomato omelette.

Nsima is the staple food of Malawi and the richer folk might have meat - goat or chicken. Watching a video of the women cooking, whether in the kitchen or outside there were chickens running around and when the omelette was the centre, piece of the special feast it became clear why our Chickens for Africa are so important.

There isn't a Christmas tree to be seen, no robins, tinsel baubles or snow. Christmas presents are often simple home-made gifts or essential clothes for children & adults. And off to church to meet and worship on Christmas Day, sometimes sharing a meal together, but especially to sing and dance and praise God for the gift of Christ.

I'm looking forward to the year ahead and our new link with Mangunda Parish and learning about their life and faith and sharing something of Orkney and Scotland.

May the peace of Christ be yours this Christmas.

Wilma

Fundraising - Small Change – Big Change

We are always trying to think of ways to raise funds for the Kirk. The idea of "Small Change – Big Change" was suggested at the Congregational Board Meeting in August and it was agreed to give it a go.

The idea is to collect your small change in a 500g butter/margarine tub and hopefully if enough people take part it will be a painless way to boost the funds.

The tubs will be handed out, for those who want to take part, with the Spring newsletter and then be collected with the next issue.



Blythswood Care - Christmas Shoe Box Appeal 2017

Once again, a huge thank you to everyone who donated filled shoe boxes or items for the recent appeal.

47 shoe boxes were collected in the church before being passed to McAdie & Reeve for onward delivery to needy children, young people and adults in Eastern Europe and Pakistan.

Blythswood received 121,474 shoe boxes last year which were distributed in Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Pakistan, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.



Tommy's Presentation (Words by John Muir)

Tommy has served this congregation as Session Clerk for 30 years.

During that time he has seen a considerable turnover in elders and only a few are still serving from the time Tommy was appointed in 1987.

He has had to deal with four vacancies following the departure of Alan Taylor, Peter Brown, Joan Craig and Miriam Gross and that certainly involves a very considerable increase in workload for the Session Clerk. Tommy has guided the incoming ministers into the dos and don'ts of the parish and I'm sure you, Wilma, will have appreciated Tommy's guidance when you took up duty in the East Mainland.

Tommy was one of the original members of the Worship Group and played a very active role in that. Not only in sharing in the service but also persuading others to participate.

He was very heavily involved in the Union of the three congregations and in the renovation work done at both the Manse and in this Church building.

At the time of the Union Tommy took the '*Oath de fidei*' when he promised to be faithful to the duties of Session Clerk, to which Tommy responded '*I do*'.

It goes without saying that Tommy has fulfilled that promise. He has dedicated his time and energy to so many aspects of this congregation and for that and for everything you have done, Tommy, to benefit this church, we the members, wish to express our very sincere thanks.

And out with the Church Tommy, has played a very active part in this community.



Although he can no longer claim to be in the 'Young Farmer' category he was active in that organisation long after he became a more mature farmer.

He coached teams of speech makers and stock judging teams and helped in the production at the concert competitions. I have no recollection of seeing Tommy in the front row of the chorus – nor indeed in parading in front of the judges at the fashion shows, but the Young Farmers was always very close to his heart.

In addition to his everyday farming duties Tommy regularly showed his famous Suffolk sheep at the East Mainland and County Shows with considerable success and in fact your considerable expertise is recognised by other societies being asked to judge at other shows. You also find time to compete in the vegetable and flower section of the industrial show. And now that you will have more time on your hands maybe next year it will be knitting and crochet.

For all that and so much more we, the members of the Kirk, wish to say a really big and genuine 'Thank you'.

We had what is known in modern parlance as a 'Whip round'.

From the proceeds I suggested that we might present you with a pure bred Suffolk Ewe, but I was over ruled and instead I have real pleasure in inviting you to come forward to accept this set of IT equipment. This goes with our grateful thanks for all you have done and to wish you good health in the years ahead.





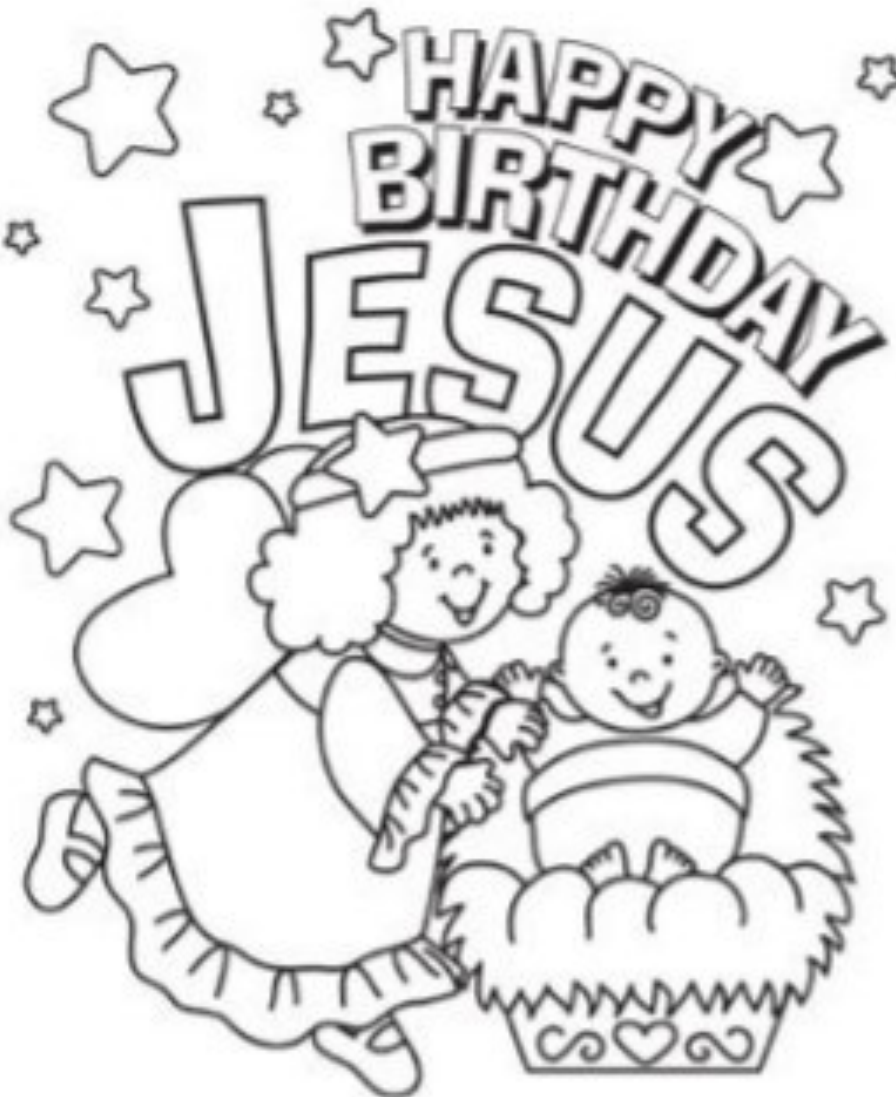
I wish to take this opportunity to thank the congregation for the generous gift of the laptop and printer I received on my retirement as Session Clerk. It is something I greatly appreciate and am now getting to grips on how to make best use of it.

Often when someone steps down from a post they have held for a number of years they will say “it doesn’t seem that long”. With all that has happened over close on thirty years, having been through four vacancies, it does seem a long time.

We have gone from three separate congregations to the United Congregation of the East Mainland Church and a single church building. As far-reaching as these changes have been, the outstanding memory I have is of the people I have met and worked with. Their friendship and dedication is what I remember most. It has been a great experience, thank you for everything.

Tommy Delday

Christmas Colouring In Picture



**Out of the Life**

Bruce Johnston 16/8/17

Also Remembered

John Humphreys 4/10/17

Fergus Wylie 31/10/17

Baptism

Georgia Maggie Tait 24/9/17

Newsletter Team

We were sorry to learn that Kathleen was standing down after over ten years on the newsletter team. We are so grateful for her dedication throughout that time gathering and contributing to items and proof reading before the newsletter went to print. Thank you, Kathleen.

We were soon to hear of an offer of help and are very happy to welcome Joy Tait on to our team.

Bird Quiz

Isobel Clouston's bird quiz raised £346

Sponsored Walk

The total for the Sponsored Walk was £911.01 and the total for the Orkney Presbytery Malawi Project Christmas Appeal was £339.57.





St Andrews School News: Mr Taylor

It's the winter term here at our School; we are raring to go and looking forward to watching the children's excitement build towards Christmas!

Much has happened since our last article in the newsletter – we have proudly watched another P7 class move on to Kirkwall Grammar School and we have welcomed 20 new pupils in to our P1 class. They have settled in really well – this year is the first time that the children have attended for full days from day one.



Over the summer holidays, many children took part in the 'Finding Magnus' treasure hunt created by our P5-7 children. This was based on the St Magnus Way and there were boxes placed in 6 different locations, each with a book to sign and a stamper to stamp a 'Finding Magnus' passport. Children who completed the challenge were awarded a Viking pendant as a reward. This was a fun conclusion to all our learning related to the 'Magnus 900' celebrations.

Our two P6 classes took part in outdoor activities trips to Hoy in September. Despite some challenging weather, the children (and school staff!) donned dry suits and protective gear and headed outdoors for confidence - boosting activities, including coasteering, and bush-craft; a great experience!



At the beginning of October we had a visit from Theatre in Schools, Scotland, who performed 'Up to Speed' for our P3-7 classes. The themes were bereavement, family break-up and friendship; two actors played a multitude of roles using excellent scenery and props to give a very engaging and thought-provoking performance for our children.

At our Harvest Thanksgiving Assembly, P7 spelled different words using the letters in 'harvest', e.g. eat, share, rest, and used them to think of all we have to be thankful for at this time of year. They also spelled 'starve' and highlighted the suffering of the victims of hurricanes Irma and Maria. Parents generously donated £128.26 to the Red Cross Hurricane Appeal.

Winter extra-curricular activities have begun for the children and we are pleased that there is now girls rugby training here at the school every week. We are very lucky here to have an excellent team of parent helpers/coaches who are able to provide these opportunities for our children.

We are already hearing Christmas songs coming from the music room – I don't want to give away any secrets ahead of our Christmas shows and carol services, but the children already sound great!



Guild News



August Outing

The Guild met at the Stenness Hotel for lunch on Wednesday 23rd August at 1.30pm.

Soon some delicious meals were served and enjoyed. This was followed by coffee and conversation.

Re-dedication - Sunday 27th August

The annual re-dedication of the Guild took place during the morning service, when members gave the prayers and readings. A report was given on Guild activities in this its 130th year. A welcome was extended to anyone thinking of coming to meetings.



A surprise presentation of a Long Service certificate (55 years) took place to Joyce Johnston, to mark her faithful, dedicated service to Holm and East Mainland Guilds and also to Orkney Presbyterial Guild Council. As Convener of the Guild Council she represented Orkney at meetings in Edinburgh. Maureen Tait remarked that this did not mean that Joyce was retiring from Guild duties, rather, she is one of the 4 members of the new leadership team. Rev. Wilma Johnston then presented Joyce with the certificate.

The Guild stood for the dedication and after the hymn "This is the day," the minister gave the blessing.

Maureen Tait



September Meeting

With Margaret Sparkes leading she welcomed members and we began by singing 'Rock of Ages.' Nancy led in prayer and Joyce followed with the bible reading taken from Psalm 8.

Business matters were dealt with and it was decided to hold the Songs of Praise on the 15th October.

The speaker, Julie Gibson the County Archaeologist, was introduced. Her talk was a round-up of what is new in the very ancient topic of archaeology in Orkney. Julie outlined the very broad reach of the Institute of Archaeology in the County. The Historic Environment record, planning applications, the curation of historic monuments, education, from primary schools to University of the Highlands and Islands level, as well as research. She spoke about ongoing digs and finds on the Mainland and in the smaller isles: everything from Pictish stone crosses, to coins and chambered tombs.

She concluded her talk by mentioning some of the problems that the archaeology of Orkney can bring, as regards to wear and tear of the environment, and issues with the volume of tourism on the small islands.

The vote of thanks was given by Mabel and then a welcome cup of tea was served by Jean and Nancy. We all gave voice to the hymn 'O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder' and closed with prayer.

October Meeting

Morag Shearer welcomed everyone to the meeting and we began with 'One more step along the world I go.' The bible reading from Luke ch24 v13-19 was read by Maureen and Morag followed with prayer.

The speaker Rev. John Butterfield was introduced and with the aid of slides spoke about a trip he and his wife made to Norway this summer. They were walking with a Norwegian Trekking Association on the Hardangar Vidda, a plateau in the south of Norway. With the walking group they covered between 8 and 18 miles a day accompanied by a guide. Overnight stays were in a variety of cabins set up for this purpose. The group had to organise and cook their own meals from stored food at the cabin. Having finished their trek, John and his wife did the 'Norway in a nutshell' tour by train and boat before returning to Bergen and the flight home.

Julia then gave the vote of thanks and tea followed served by Netta and Nancy.

The hymn 'The Spirit lives to set us free' and the Lord's prayer completed the evening.

Songs of Praise

In the absence of the minister, Joyce Johnston welcomed everyone to the evening of Praise. The Guild was celebrating 130 years since its beginning, by Rev. Dr Charteris. Using the current Guild Theme "Go in Love" the first two hymns spoke of Joy and Love. Mabel Eunson gave the bible reading from 1 Corinthians 13 and Margaret Sparkes gave a meditation on "Exploring Love." Everyone sang 'We sing a Love' and 'At the name of Jesus' with Ruth Harvey accompanying.

The guest artistes included Laurence and Maureen who sang two songs, accompanied by guitar. With two guitarists, the Linties gave a delightful programme with beautiful harmonies.

Poetry was also read by Nancy from a Helen Steiner Rice piece. Joyce gave a story to make us think, about the "Two Bibles" and this was followed by a modern hymn 'How deep the Father's Love for us.' With the vote of thanks and a prayer the evening drew to a close. Two further hymns including 'To God be the Glory' gave everyone a good sing to finish with. The company was invited to stay for tea, served by the Guild.

Maureen Tait



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Brian Archibald	781483
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Colin Delday	874979
Tommy Delday	861311
Mabel Eunson	741325
Sheila Eunson	861367
Alastair Foubister	781288
Kathleen Gaudie	781231
Laurence Irvine	741304
Annabell Laird	861375
Jack McIntosh	781352
Jan Moar	741350
Nancy Omand	861286
Kenneth Rendall	877976
Maisie Rendall	861325
Bryan Scott	861205
Joy Tait	781267
Laurence Tait	876743
Grace Wylie	741342

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Gracie Laughton	781387
Thora Moar	781274
Sheena Ritch	741206
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Safeguarding Coordinator

Marlene Mainland	781395
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Guild

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Secretary

Julia Archibald	781483
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Treasurer

Morag Shearer	873579
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Organists

Isobel Clouston	741297
Ruth Harvey	872261
Joy Tait	781267

Sunday School

Katrina Tait	861233
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Month	Date	Time	Event
December	3 rd	11:00am	Worship on 1 st Sunday of Advent & Sunday School + Tea in the East Mainland Church
	3 rd	7:00pm	Guild Carol Service in St Andrews Community Centre with Guest artistes – The Pupils of St Andrews School
	6 th	7:30pm	Guild Festive Evening in the Session Room
	10 th	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	17 th	11:00am	Worship with items from the Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	21 st	10:00am	St Andrews School End of Term Service in the East Mainland Church
	24 th	11:00am	Worship in the East Mainland Church
	24 th	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Service in the East Mainland Church
	31 st	11:00am	Worship in the East Mainland Church
January	7 th	11:00am	Worship and Remembering + Tea in the East Mainland Church
	14 th	11:00am	Worship and Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	21 st	11:00am	Worship and Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	28 th	11:00am	Worship and Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
February	4 th	11:00am	Worship & Sunday School + Tea in the East Mainland Church
	11 th	11:00am	Worship and Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
	18 th	11:00am	Worship with the Sacrament of Holy Communion in the East Mainland Church
	27 th	11:00am	Worship with Thinking Day & Sunday School in the East Mainland Church
March	2 nd	TBA	World Day of Prayer
	7 th	7:30pm	Guild AGM in the Session Room

Editorial Team:

Sheila Eunson, Joy Tait, 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 10th February

Church of Scotland

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