

Church Matters

West Kilbride Parish Church Magazine
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Bluebells at Portencross

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Minister: Rev. James McNay

Tel:01294 823186 Email:jjmcnay@gmail.com

Session Clerk: Miss Carol Fulton

Church Office: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10:00am to 12:00am Tel: 01294 829902

Email: office@westkilbrideparishchurch.org.uk

Web:www.westkilbrideparishchurch.org.uk

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Minister's Letter

How much does your faith mean to you?

That is a good question isn't it? Now, we all know that the correct answer is that it should be top of the list - and that God should be our top priority.

But I wonder if, although we affirm this in our head, whether this is really true in how we live out our lives. Is it true that often we profess one thing with our lips - but live out our life in a way which reveals something different?

I was very struck at the recent General Election as to the passion that people had in following one party or another. We all know that following the referendum last September that membership in certain political parties increased dramatically as people became engaged in the political process.

And what we had during the election were people attending hustings, giving out literature - passionate about their party and what they believe in.

Now, at one level, that is all very commendable. But it left me thinking - do we have the same passion for the church? And more importantly, do we have the same passion for Jesus - and to share that good news about Jesus?

You see, if people are excited about a political process that might bring positive change in a temporal sense - how much more should we be excited about a God who brings change for the better in an eternal sense?

The church in our nation faces many challenges at this time. The Church of Scotland faces decline in numbers, lack of ministers and division over moral issues. Serious problems!

And yet, we have a loving God who cares about his creation - and showed his care by sending Jesus - Immanuel - into the world. Jesus - the one who saves by taking our place and dying upon the cross, paying the price for our sin. Jesus the one who reconciles us to God and brings new life!

As individuals, and as the church - I wonder if we have lost our joy (Galatians 4:15) - the joy of our salvation, the joy of knowing God, the joy of being in His presence - and knowing that when we have God, then we truly have everything that we need.

We need to come back to God who is our first love, soak ourselves in His Word and be excited once more about the great Gospel hope that we have the privilege to share with our community, our nation and to the ends of the earth!

Yours in Christ,

James

Church Register

The following have sadly passed away recently, please remember the families in your prayers:

Patricia Howie, Headrigg Gardens, on 19th March 2015.
Lauder Reid, Glenview, on 26th March 2015.
Jimmy Kavanagh, Headrigg Gardens, on 27th March 2015.
Stanley Kellock, Well Street, on 1st April 2015.
Nan Cartwright, Portencross Road, on 6th April 2015.
Nancy Anderson, latterly Burnlea Nursing Home in Largs, died on 7th April 2015.
Margaret Barnett, Simpson Avenue, died 9th April 2015.
Grace Sweeny, Meadowfoot Road, died 14th April 2015.
Isobel McManus, latterly Caledonia Care Home in Saltcoats, died 15th April 2015.
Elizabeth Wardlaw, Craufurd Avenue, died 19th April 2015.
Ella McLean, Gateside Street, died 25th April 2015.
Mattie Armstrong, Meadowfoot Road, died 10th May 2015.
Martha Mack, Sandy Road, died 11th May 2015.



Baptism

Orla Rose Harper Murray, baby daughter of Niriana Murray and John Conway, Dumbarton, baptised on 12th April 2015.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

Editorial

The General Election took place while we were away on holiday and we have come back to a huge political change in Scotland. We must all pray for our MPs, that they carry out their jobs with integrity, wisdom and honesty, always keeping the needs of their constituents in mind. It is worth while noting that, at the General Assembly, the Kirk has hit out at the Government's treatment of the poor in our society, challenging the stigma of poverty, confronting the dangerous rhetoric that blames the poor for their poverty, dismissing them as skivers enjoying a benefits lifestyle, and says we need justice, not judgement. This is definitely something our new MPs should be fighting for.

Both of our ministers, James and Mandy, are attending the General Assembly this week and some of our church family attended the Heart and Soul event in Princes Street Gardens last Sunday, 17th May. I was disappointed that I missed this as we were away but I look forward to hearing about their experience and will see if I can persuade someone to write about it for the next edition.

It is with great delight that I can tell you that James is to be Presbytery Moderator for 2015/2016. We look forward to welcoming Presbytery to our church for the first and last meetings of his term. Please come along and support him.

Congratulations to our own Audrey Kolon from Portencross who is our Citizen of the Year. You are a worthy winner, Audrey! Last year another of 'our own', John Purves, won this award. Let's try to keep it in the family!

One of the great joys of coming home from a two week holiday at this time of year is the change in the garden.

Apart from the grass needing to be cut, the amount of growth in the plants and the wonderful array of colourful, fragrant flowers that are out now lifts my heart. I know there's lots to be done but God needs a wee hand to keep the garden beautiful.

Well, this is a bumper issue of Church Matters for you as we have to cover three months so we do hope you enjoy it. Many thanks to all our contributors. Please keep the articles and news items coming in. Have a blessed summer!

Deirdre Murray, Editor

I must apologise for omitting to print this letter in the last issue.

I would like to say how much I have appreciated the love, prayers and sincere sympathy I have received following the loss of Albert. THANK YOU SO MUCH - what a blessing it is to be part of such a caring church family.

Jean Herd

Football Prayer

As many will know, I am Chaplain of Kilmarnock Football Club. One of the things I am commonly asked is whether I pray for the team to win - and why that doesn't happen! I found this poem which I thought was fun and helpful and expresses what I do pray for rather than praying to win. It was Bill Shankly who famously said:

"Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that."

However, we know that is not true. At the end of the day, football is just a game - and our faith in Jesus is something that is much more important!

James McNay

Football Prayer

It was right before the big one and the football player said,
"Excuse me guys for just a sec while I go bow my head."
And in the quiet of that room
The football player prayed,
"Oh God if nothing hear me now
I know that fate is made."

"So help us Lord to win this game,
It's the big one, man, you see,
If we lose this game that's it for us,
Please do this, Lord, for me."

And as his body knelt in prayer,
He looked up to the sky,
"And while I'm here, and have some time,
I need to ask you why?"

"They say you never help teams win,
Just do it once I pray,
We will pay you back in kinder deeds
Or in another way,"

“The reason why I can’t help you win,”
The Lord just then replied,
“Is as you’re asking me to win,
So is the other side.”

“I’m everybody’s Father and
I must not take one side,
So games are played all on your own
Or they would all be tied.”

“But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t pray,”
He answered him with care,
“You can pray that players don’t get hurt
And that all the calls are fair,”

And while the player heard this voice,
He bowed his head in prayer,
“I pray for fairness,” said the boy
“And for your tender care.”

“You shall be blessed,” the Lord replied,
“Your team and you the same,
And now will you excuse me boy,
I cannot miss this game.”

Author: Sandy Dow Mapula

Session Snippets from April

Our opening reading was from Luke 24 v13-35 – On the road to Emmaus. This was followed by praise, Amazing Grace, and opening prayer.

Our study of Philip Yancey's book, 'What's So Amazing About Grace?' continued with chapter 4, the Lovesick Father. We discussed some questions and agreed that Christianity is characterised by grace. The modern stories based on the Bible story of The Prodigal Son helped us to think about forgiveness. What blocks forgiveness is not God's reticence - 'But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him' – but ours. God's arms are always extended, we are the ones who turn away. God is the same today, yesterday and tomorrow, grace is available for anyone if we come to God.

Correspondence:

A letter was received from Nan McKie who wishes to retire from Eldership and a reply will be sent to thank Nan for her long years of service.

A PowerPoint presentation on Church Governance is to be delivered to all Kirk Sessions.

Teams:

Finance: report agreed.

Fabric: see separate report in this magazine.

Youth: A request was made to approve a family outing on Sunday 21st June, following the Junior Church Prizegiving. It is planned to go to Eglinton Park.

A Holiday Club to run from 29th June – 3rd July, with a closing service on Sunday 5th July.

The theme is Polar Explorers and is set in the North Pole. The congregation will be asked to donate clean plastic milk bottles to build an igloo.

Another series of Messy Church events to run from September 2015 – June 2016.

These requests were agreed.

Please pray for the Youth Fellowship now called XLR8 (Accelerate !)

People who applied to help various groups on the 'Talents' night were accepted unanimously.

Presbytery:

Rev. Lily McKinnon to be inducted at Lamlash Church and Rev. Christian Vermeulen to be inducted at St. Columba's Parish Church.

Presbytery dues are to be set at £3.30 per person.

New Members:

We welcome Paul Martin and Henny McClure (Martin) into our Church Fellowship and thank them for all the work they have been doing with the youth in our church.

Supplementary Roll:

With new and very complicated Data Protection Rules coming soon, it was agreed this roll should not be continued.

Presbytery Elder:

Our thanks go to Deirdre Murray who has agreed to continue in this role.

Presbytery Visit – Local Church Review.

The purpose of this visit and questionnaire is to help congregations plan for Mission, look at the Parish and its needs, and to help churches plan more effectively. The results of the questionnaire are still in the process of being finalised and James will discuss it at the next Business Committee meeting.

James and Mandy are to be Commissioners at this year's General Assembly in Edinburgh.

A flower planter was presented to Nan Brownlee as thanks for the many years service she has given the Church as Treasurer. We pray that Nan will now have time to enjoy her garden.

James is going to look at streaming Church services live over the internet. This has been done for weddings and funerals with family members across the world participating. A camera was used in the gallery and sound from the sound desk.

Further checks with Child Protection and Copy write services were recommended. This feature could be added to the WKPC Web site.

A.O.B.

Foodbank – A request was made that a ‘Donation Can’ could be placed beside the collection boxes to allow people to donate money rather than goods. The Finance Team will have to look into this.

James gave his holiday dates and by the time you read this he has been back a few weeks, suffice to say the family picked the warmest week in Spring to have a well deserved holiday!

Next Meetings:

Team Leaders – 12th May at 7.30pm.

Kirk Session – 2nd June at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Evelyn McFarland.



Lynne Paterson writes once again thanking us for our generous donation of £120 which was collected in our little boxes – a wonderful effort. She says, “This will change lives, like Qurban from Afghanistan who returned to his village of Jawzjan with little money or food, after having been driven out by fighting”. “We gave his wife a spinning wheel and training on how to use it.” “She now earns a healthy living making carpets.”

However, thanks to our donation, Tearfund were able to supply the family with a bio sand filter to give them clean water which prevents water – borne illnesses.

Qurban also received six kinds of vegetable seeds and tools which give them healthy food and some money for selling surplus produce. Qurban says, “Thanks, Tearfund.” “Your help has made us profoundly happy.”

Lynne says, “Tearfund is determined to follow Jesus – where the need is greatest.”

Regarding the Nepal earthquake, thousands of lives have been lost and the toll keeps rising. Getting life-saving supplies to the more remote areas is a particular challenge.

Oenone Chadburn, Tearfund’s head of Humanitarian Response said “Our work will see us go out of our way to find difficult and remote locations which bring a whole set of challenges.”

Dozens of volunteers from our partner Rescue Work Nepal are busy providing emergency help to communities in the central region of Makwanpur where they are providing emergency help with medical care, food, plastic sheeting, for shelter, and transporting the injured to hospital.

Please continue to pray for those affected, for Tearfund's partners and staff, for thousands living in tents and for a swift response as they follow Jesus to the areas of greatest need, where people are trapped and injured in destroyed buildings.

Thank you all for your great response to our retiring collections.

Audrey Brown

GOD IN MY LIFE

The weather forecast was for rain to arrive about 2pm. I had set myself the task of cutting the two lawns in the front garden, then scarifying them, trimming all the edges which, round the rockery, had large clumps of grass emerging from beneath the stones, which I was determined to remove. I also intended to spread Evergreen weed killer and fertilizer on before the rain came as it has to be applied when the weather is dry.

It's lovely to see members of the family arriving although a bit daunting when one is working against time! However as two different sets arrived at different times, I had no option but to "down tools". Thankfully they didn't stay too long.

By lunch time I still had a large proportion of the edges to finish. After having a quick bite, I went out again at about 1.45pm. Just after 2pm, the first large spots of rain arrived. I thought I shouldn't make it unless I sought God's help. "Please Lord", I prayed "You know I need to complete this". "Will you please keep the rain away?" It went off and I worked even harder, thanking Him. Ten minutes later more heavy spots arrived. I battled on thinking I had to trust God who wouldn't let me down. By 2.30pm I had finished the edges.

I ran round to the garden shed, filled the applicator with Evergreen, and began applying it as fast as I could. I had just finished when down came the rain, really heavily this time.

I was so thankful to God, as it is really necessary to have heavy rain after applying Evergreen, which helps to wash it into the grass without burning it.

Sorry wee lambs! We don't always like the rain. However sometimes it is very necessary.

Audrey Brown

Monthly Prayer Diary – June 2015

- Mon 1st We pray for the residents living in Simpson Avenue and Snowden Terrace
- Tue 2nd Thank You God for our families. We lift each one by name before You
- Wed 3rd Our Church Family. Thank You God for the loving fellowship of our Church
- Thu 4th We pray for family and friends to come to know Jesus and to love Him
- Fri 5th World Watch List Rank: 6 Sudan. Praise God that in spite of persecution the Church in Sudan is growing. Ask God to use the Church in Sudan to demonstrate the love of Christ to their nation.
- Sat 6th We pray for Church Family members no longer able to attend Church
- Sun 7th Lord of the Church, we pray for our renewing, to bring us nearer where a church should be.
- Mon 8th We pray for the residents living in South Road and St Brides Drive
- Tue 9th We give thanks for the success of Messy Church and pray for the preparations for the holiday club
- Wed 10th Please keep our children safe
- Thu 11th We pray for the girls who were taken captive in Nigeria. We pray for the women and children who have been released, for what life holds for them
- Fri 12th World Watch List Rank: 7 Iran. Pray for protection and wisdom for those who are reaching out to Muslims with the gospel in defiance of laws against this
- Sat 13th We pray for peace throughout the world.
- Sun 14th Lord of the church, we seek a Father's blessing to love & serve and care
- Mon 15th We pray for the residents living in St Brides Road and Stairlie Crescent

- Tue 16th We pray for people struggling with finance
- Wed 17th We pray for people struggling with mental health issues
- Thu 18th We pray for all who have been bereaved
- Fri 19th World Watch List Rank: 8 Pakistan. Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws are frequently abused to attack minority groups including Christians
- Sat 20th We pray for people with disabilities
- Sun 21st Lord of the church, please open our eyes to the need all around us and fit us for service, following the example of Jesus
- Mon 22nd We pray for the residents living in Summerlea Road and Tarbet Avenue
- Tue 23rd Our Minister James, Anna his wife and their sons John and Alasdair. We pray and give thanks for them and for Mandy in the time she has with us
- Wed 24th We remember our Session Clerk Carol and all our Elders in our prayers
- Thu 25th We pray for the school holidays!!! May we all be blessed and refreshed during the summer months
- Fri 26th World Watch List Rank: 9 Eritrea. Christians are considered a threat to the State; their houses have been attacked, and they have been tortured, beaten and imprisoned in horrific conditions.
- Sat 27th All who are making last minute preparations for Polar Explorers! We pray in preparation too for the children who will attend
- Sun 28th Lord of the church, we pray that Christ may reign over all that we seek to do for Him
- Mon 29th We pray for residents living in Well Street and Wellbank Gardens
- Tue 30th If I don't pray for my neighbours and love them like Jesus, who will?

Monthly Pray Diary – July 2015

- Wed 1st We pray God's covering and protection over every aspect of our holiday club – for a great atmosphere and for strength and stamina for all the helpers. May God to reach into the heart of every child
- Thu 2nd All whose lives were affected by the earthquake in Nepal, the cyclone in Vanuatu, and natural disasters in other parts of the world
- Fri 3rd World watch list Rank: 10 Nigeria. Thousands of Christians have been killed or abducted by Boko Haram
- Sat 4th Young families who live in the village and those who are part of our Church Family. We pray for children who attended holiday club to be able to share their experiences at home
- Sun 5th We pray for all on holiday and attending our church this summer, may they feel welcomed. We remember those who are away on holiday visiting other churches. May all receive a blessing
- Mon 6th We pray for the residents living in Weston Terrace and Woodside
- Tue 7th We remember families in Africa who were affected by Ebola
- Wed 8th We pray for World Leaders and for all who are in authority over us
- Thu 9th All we know who are unwell, waiting for test results, receiving treatment. We pray also for their loved ones
- Fri 10th World Watch List Rank: 11 Maldives. Being Maldivian is equated with being Muslim. Converting to another religion from Islam means losing your citizenship, and being found to have a Bible results in a prison sentence
- Sat 11th God bless West Kilbride Parish Church. "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain." Psalm 127 v 1
- Sun 12th We pray for summer Christian outreach events, especially CLAN Gathering taking place in Kelburn Country Park this week

- Mon 13th We pray for residents living in Yerton Brae and Yonderfield Cottages
- Tue 14th Our friends. May we be kind and loving towards them and appreciate them
- Wed 15th We pray for all we know who are housebound and pray they do not feel forgotten
- Thu 16th We give thanks for the saints who have gone before us and for all they taught us and all we shared together
- Fri 17th World Watch List Rank: 12 Saudi Arabia. It is illegal to evangelize Muslims. There are many reports of God revealing Himself to Muslims through dreams and visions.
- Sat 18th We pray for the church throughout the world
- Sun 19th We give thanks for all who give the leaders a break during the summer weeks and provide a programme of activity for the children during our services
- Mon 20th We pray for the residents in Yonderton Place and the farms that surround West Kilbride
- Tue 21st James our Minister, Anna, John and Alasdair, and also Mandy
- Wed 22nd All who work in our local GP Surgery
- Thu 23rd We pray for comfort for all who are grieving
- Fri 24th World watch List Rank: 13 Libya. Since the downfall of Gaddafi, the situation for Christians in Libya has deteriorated. It is illegal to bring Arabic Bibles into the country or to evangelize
- Sat 25th We pray for our Government and the Scottish Parliament
- Sun 26th We give thanks for all the work done behind the scenes that aids the smooth running of our church programmes
- Mon 27th We pray for local businesses and for the people who work there
- Tue 28th We give thanks for the beauty we see all around us
- Wed 29th Local hospitals, hospices and Care Homes
- Thu 30th If I don't pray for my neighbours and love them like Jesus, who will?
- Fri 31st World Watch List Rank: 14 Yemen. Pray for protection and wisdom for Yemeni secret believers

Monthly Prayer Diary – August 2015

- Sat 1st We pray for all who are away on holiday to come back refreshed and strengthened. We pray for people who cannot get away for a break
- Sun 2nd We pray for our Church Family and give thanks for the freedom we have to worship together today
- Mon 3rd Pray for our witness in WK. Lord protect us from gossiping
- Tue 4th Please pray for the continuing recovery of the people of Vanuatu and Nepal, for the rebuilding of lives, homes and incomes. (Tearfund)
- Wed 5th James our Minister, for all aspects of his ministry. Anna, John and Alasdair, for protection over their family life. We also pray for Mandy & her family
- Thu 6th The Ardrossan Presbytery and all local churches
- Fri 7th World Watch List Rank; 15 Uzbekistan. Homes are bugged, phones tapped and groups infiltrated to monitor unregistered churches, who are in constant danger of being raided
- Sat 8th We give thanks for the men's cookery classes, a 10 week course, learning to cook from scratch. (Glasgow City Mission)
- Sun 9th Look around in church today, and give thanks for all the gifts and skills God has given to our Church Family. May we use them for His glory
- Mon 10th Pray for our witness in WK. Pray for opportunities to bless others through our words and actions during this week
- Tue 11th Teamwork! Mission & Discipleship, Finance, People & Policy, Worship, Catering, Youth, Pastoral Care, Fabric, Communication & Technology
- Wed 12th We pray for men women and children who have been tricked or coerced into slavery, suffering physical, emotional & sexual abuse. (Care)

- Thu 13th All we know who are unwell and those who care for them.
- Fri 14th World Watch list Rank:16 Vietnam. Praise God that the Vietnamese Govt has been in talks with the Catholic Church. Pray that this will lead to greater freedoms for all Christians
- Sat 15th Pray for Asialink in Iraq & Syria as they quite literally day and night care for the displaced people in one of the worst ever humanitarian crises.
- Sun 16th We pray and give thanks for all who are involved the music for our Church services. We ask for God's anointing as they lead us in praise and worship
- Mon 17th Pray for our witness in WK. Pray for the families who live around you. May their relationships be strengthened
- Tue 18th Lord, You have promised to comfort all who mourn. We pray for those known to us who are grieving at this time or for times long passed
- Wed 19th We pray for the new school year. May our schools be safe places where children can reach their full potential
- Thu 20th Pray for a new season of SU groups in our local schools. "Let the beauty of Your life – giving light transform every aspect of life in our schools" (SU Scotland)
- Fri 21st World Watch list Rank:17 Central African Republic. If Seleka militants find someone reading a Bible, they often kill them immediately
- Sat 22nd 2015 sees the 40th anniversary of the start of the Khmer Rouge genocide. Now after a dark period of history the Church is expanding at an extraordinary rate. Thousands of Christians are waiting for a Bible. (Scottish Bible Society)
- Sun 23rd Revive Your Church Lord, let it begin with me
- Mon 24th Our witness in WK. Pray for chances to offer practical help to someone this week

- Tue 25th We give thanks for Rendezvous, for the ladies who serve there and the drivers who make it possible for people to attend
- Wed 26th We pray for all who struggle with mental health issues. May they get the help they need when they need it
- Thu 27th Pray for staff in their work of supporting children whose parents have an alcohol or drug dependency. (Crossreach)
- Fri 28th World Watch list rank: 18 Qatar. Pray for protection and spiritual growth for believers, particularly Muslim background believers who must keep their faith secret.
- Sat 29th If I don't pray for my neighbours and love them like Jesus, who will?
- Sun 30th Pray for all aspects of youth work within our church. We give thanks for the dedication of all the leaders and we pray for inspiration and encouragement
- Mon 31st Our witness in WK. As we learn about God's goodness to us, pray for more opportunities to live it out in our day to day lives.

Pray PrayPray!!! Prayer *Changes* Things.

For this summer edition of Church Matters, as last year, prayers written by the congregation have been included in the Prayer Diaries. In case you don't remember doing any such thing, you may remember writing a prayer on a slip of paper at one of our recent Family Services. The slips were put together to form a prayer chain and it is this that has been used. None of the names have been included but God knows who you were thinking of.

You may notice two new regular items included in these prayer diaries. On Mondays we will continue to pray for our streets. When we have completed covering the whole village with

prayer, we will change it slightly, to focus more on our own Christian witness. We could use this for our street, our workplace or your own neighbourhood, if you do not happen to live in West Kilbride.

On Fridays, the Open Doors World Watch List is being used to help us to focus on prayer for our brothers and sisters who live in the 50 countries where it is most difficult to live as a Christian. During the month of May in the weekly intimations we have already seen that North Korea is the most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian, followed by Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. It puts into perspective the freedom we are so fortunate to have, and should give us a greater desire to be witnesses for Jesus in our own wee corner of the world. Please pray.

A word about the Church Prayerchain. There are now 28 people who have who are contacted to pray when a request is received. It really is a privilege when we are asked to pray and we are blessed by God's faithfulness again and again. ***The number to contact is 07826652331.*** If you would like to join the Prayerchain, please speak to me or contact me on the same number.

Please remember our regular prayer meetings. Tuesday, Women Who Pray meet at 9.30am and the Church Wednesday Fellowship meets at 7.15pm. We long that more of you would join with us. Remember too, the house groups, where we can find support and friendship, pray together in a small group and grow in our personal faith journey.

Finally, look out for the prayer 'Radiating Christ,' included in this edition of Church Matters (page 25). It was a favourite of Mother Theresa's. I hope you love it as I do!

Lynne Seal, Prayer Co-ordinator.

A prayer loved by Mother Theresa.

Radiating Christ/Fragrance Prayer

Dear Jesus

Help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with Your spirit and life,
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly
That my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me
That every soul I come in contact with
May feel Your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus!

Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine,
So to shine as to be a light to others.
The light, O Jesus will be all from You, none of it will be
mine,
It will be You, shining on others through me.

Let me thus praise You the way You love best by shining on
those around me.

Let me thus praise You without preaching, not by words but
by example.

By the catching force of the sympathetic influence of what I
do,

The evident fullness of the love my heart bears to You.

Amen

John Henry Cardinal Newman

CRACKPOT BEAUTY

There was once an old woman who had to walk a long way every day to fetch water from a stream. She collected the water in two pots that were strung on either end of a long pole that she carried across her shoulders. One of the pots had a small crack in it but the other was perfect. At the end of her daily walk she always arrived home with just one and a half pots of water as the cracked pot slowly dripped out its contents all the way home.

A few months later the old woman's friend asked her why she didn't throw out the old cracked pot that only brought half the water home. The old woman smiled and said, "Did you notice that there are flowers on the cracked pot's side of the road and not on the other side? That's because I have always known about its flaw, so I planted flower seeds on that side of the path and, every day as I return home, it waters them. For months I've been picking beautiful, fragrant flowers for my kitchen table. Without the cracked pot I wouldn't have this beauty to grace my house."

None of us are quite perfect: in fact, it's the cracks and flaws we each have that God can use and make our lives together so interesting and rewarding.

So, look for the best in everyone and, to all the crackpots reading this, have a great day and don't forget to stop and smell the flowers along your path!

Deirdre Murray

MARY SLESSOR

As a former Dundonian I have always been fascinated by the life of Mary Slessor who went out to Calabar in Southern Nigeria as a missionary to follow in the footsteps of David Livingstone. I remember as a child visiting the museum in Dundee and finding out about her there and seeing her large Bible with all the notes she had written in it, in every available space she could find.

On a Friday evening in the middle of April this year I was delighted to be given a ticket for Dundee Repertory Theatre's presentation of Mary Slessor's life to celebrate 100 years since her death in Calabar in 1915. The play told in action and song the story of Mary's life. She was born in 1848 in Aberdeen. There were 7 children in the family but 3 died at a young age. Her father was a shoemaker, but also an alcoholic and the family moved to Dundee so that he could make a new start working in one of the jute mills there. Sadly his alcoholism persisted and the family struggled in very poor conditions in a slum area of Dundee. (As a young child I remember being frightened crossing over at the top of the very steep road leading down to these tenements.)

When Mary was 11 years old she went to work in one of the mills as a "half timer" spending half the day at school. Her mother, who was a Christian, also worked in the mills. When Mary was 14 she worked 58 hours a week, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning! Her father died and then later her remaining brother. Conditions in the poor area of the city were very bad and tuberculosis was rife.

Mary became a Christian and was actively involved in a Mission being run in the poor area in which she lived. She was sometimes teased by some of the boys – one boy once swung a string with a weight on the end in front of her face, bringing it closer and closer, but she never flinched. Many years later, when she was a missionary in Calabar, she received a letter from a married man – he had been this boy – to tell her he was now a Christian too.

She was a great admirer of David Livingstone and, although Calabar was known as “the white man's grave”, due to so many deaths of missionaries there, she was determined to go. Her two remaining sisters were now working so, as Mary had studied hard and knew her Bible very well, she felt she was now ready. She set off for Calabar on 5th August 1876 and arrived there a month later. Life was very different from what she had left in Dundee, but had many very hard challenges for her there too.

As we sat in the theatre in Dundee we were reminded of how Mary set about practically and in teaching to display her Christian faith. We were told of how they were all soon singing together in Calabar “Stand up, stand up for Jesus”. As our pianist started to play this old well-known hymn for the actress to sing, the audience spontaneously joined in. Wow! Imagine the Dundee Rep resounding to “Stand up, stand up for Jesus”!

Mary endured many hardships. She contracted malaria and, 3 years after going to Calabar, she had to return to Dundee to recover. After 16 months she returned. She was able to stand up to the witch doctors and saved many lives, particularly those of many twin babies who were left to die because of superstitions. She adopted several children.

Throughout her life she always made a point of telling the good news of Jesus Christ which was her passion.

When she was told her mother and remaining sister had died she deeply felt her loneliness and said that “Heaven is now nearer to me than Britain and no-one will worry about me if I go up country”. In 1888 she travelled north to Okoyong and lived there for 15 years. She became known as the “White Queen of Okoyong” and settled disputes, encouraged trade and established social changes. In 1913 she was awarded the Order of St. John of Jerusalem which she reluctantly accepted. For forty years she suffered from ill health but bravely continued her work. She died on 13th January 1915 aged 67.

In the theatre in Dundee was a little African hut and a backdrop of a brilliant African evening sun. As the actress playing Mary went into the little hut for the last time, the hymn, “Nearer my God to Thee” was sung. When it came to the line “E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me” a cross appeared on the backdrop.

This play was a very touching tribute to Mary Slessor 100 years after her death. At the end two of the actresses (one acting an older Mary and the other a young Mary) found it hard to hold back their tears. In the audience were the Lord and Lady Provost of Dundee and an elderly lady who was a direct descendant of David Livingstone.

Who would have thought that a poor girl brought up in terribly hard conditions in the middle of the 19th century could be used by God in such a wonderful way! What an encouragement it was to me to be present at such a

powerful portrayal of her life and this has made me to want to share it with you too.

POSTSCRIPT

At the beginning of March the Scottish Parliament honoured Mary Slessor on International Women's Day. Two MSP's highlighted the impact Mary Slessor had made because of her Christian faith. One SNP MSP said "We must not forget that she was first and foremost a follower of Jesus Christ". One Conservative MSP agreed and said "we should never underestimate the impact of Mary Slessor's Christian belief." Amazing to think that two members of opposing political parties could agree so wholeheartedly on what true Christian faith can achieve.

A commemorative Standing Stone has been erected and unveiled at the beginning of 2015 outside the Steeple Church in Dundee. Also at Scotland's Jute Museum at Verdant Works in Dundee there is a free exhibition entitled "Mary Slessor: Mill Girl to Magistrate" which runs from 11th April to 1st November 2015. I have visited the exhibition and found it very informative and interesting.

Helen Ferguson

Money Management

Debt is a great factor in causing poverty. It can be useful to know where to turn for help at no cost.

The two agencies are Citizens Advice Bureau and North Ayrshire Council.

Debt advisers provide expert advice, assistance and where appropriate representation on any debt issue.

An adviser can help you decide if you are able to make any payments to creditors, how much you can pay and which creditor should be paid first.

They will take account of all your circumstances – priority commitments, regular income and expenditure, level of indebtedness, health and personal circumstances to help you decide on the best option for you. This could involve negotiating sustainable payments to your creditors, freezing the interest on outstanding loans or as a last resort applying for bankruptcy.

Debt Advice staff assist with emergencies such as:

- gas or electricity debts
- wage or bank account arrestment
- court action being taken against you

Debt advice staff can also provide advice, assistance and representation with:

- considering liability for debt
- advice and where appropriate representation regarding court proceedings
- negotiating repayments with creditors
- advising on Bankruptcy and Trust Deed applications

Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS)

The Debt Advice staff of NAC & CAB are accredited to support people who wish to apply for the [Debt Arrangement Scheme](#).

Further Information: - North Ayrshire Council: - 01294310456

Citizens Advice: - Saltcoats:-01294 467848 Largs:-01475 673586

Margaret Morrow, M & D Team

Diary Dates for Jun 2015

1 Jun 7:30 PM	Church Choir Practice
2 Jun 9:30 AM	Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
2 Jun 10:00 AM	Rendezvous – Lower Hall
2 Jun 7:00 PM	Kirk Session Meeting – Small Hall
3 Jun 7:15 PM	'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall
7 Jun 10:30 AM	Morning Service And Junior Church
7 Jun 2:00 PM	Afternoon Service Headrigg Gardens
7 Jun 6:00 PM	XLR8 – Bill Penny Hall
9 Jun 9:30 AM	Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
9 Jun 10:00 AM	Rendezvous – Lower Hall
10 Jun 7:15 PM	'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall
14 Jun 10:30 AM	Morning Service And Junior Church
14 Jun 6:00 PM	XLR8 – Bill Penny Hall
14 Jun 7:30 PM	Evening Service
15 Jun 7:30 PM	Church Choir Practice
16 Jun 9:30 AM	Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
16 Jun 10:00 AM	Rendezvous – Lower Hall
17 Jun 7:15 PM	'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall
21 Jun 10:30 AM	Morning Service And Junior Church
21 Jun 6:00 PM	XLR8 – Bill Penny Hall
21 Jun 7:30 PM	Evening Service
23 Jun 9:30 AM	Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
23 Jun 10:00 AM	Rendezvous – Lower Hall
24 Jun 10:00 AM	Craft Group - Lower Hall
24 Jun 7:15 PM	'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall
28 Jun 10:30 AM	Morning Service And Junior Church
28 Jun 6:00 PM	XLR8 – Bill Penny Hall
28 Jun 7:30 PM	Evening Service
29 Jun 6:00 PM	Holiday Club – WKPC
30 Jun 9:30 AM	Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
30 Jun 10:00 AM	Rendezvous – Lower Hall
30 Jun 6:00 PM	Holiday Club – WKPC

Diary Dates for Jul 2015

1 Jul 6:00 PM Holiday Club – WKPC
2 Jul 6:00 PM Holiday Club – WKPC
3 Jul 6:00 PM Holiday Club – WKPC

5 Jul 10:30 AM Morning Service And Summer Group
5 Jul 2:00 PM Afternoon Service Headrigg Gardens
7 Jul 9:30 AM Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
7 Jul 10:00 AM Rendezvous – Lower Hall
8 Jul 7:15 PM 'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall

12 Jul 10:30 AM Morning Service And Summer Group
14 Jul 9:30 AM Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
14 Jul 10:00 AM Rendezvous – Lower Hall
15 Jul 7:15 PM 'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall

19 Jul 10:30 AM Morning Service And Summer Group
21 Jul 9:30 AM Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
21 Jul 10:00 AM Rendezvous – Lower Hall
22 Jul 7:15 PM 'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall

26 Jul 10:30 AM Morning Service And Summer Group
27 Jul 9:30 AM Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
27 Jul 10:00 AM Rendezvous – Lower Hall
29 Jul 7:15 PM 'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall

Diary Dates for August 2015

2 Aug 10:30 AM **Morning Service And Summer Group**
2 Aug 2:00 PM Afternoon Service Headrigg Gardens
4 Aug 10:00 AM Rendezvous – Lower Hall
4 Aug 9:30 AM Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
5 Aug 7:15 PM 'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall

9 Aug 10:30 AM **Morning Service And Summer Group**
11 Aug 9:30 AM Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
11 Aug 10:00 AM Rendezvous – Lower Hall
11 Aug 7:00 PM Kirk Session Meeting – Small Hall
12 Aug 7:15 PM 'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall

16 Aug 10:30 AM **Morning Service And Summer Group**
18 Aug 9:30 AM Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
18 Aug 10:00 AM Rendezvous – Lower Hall
19 Aug 7:15 PM 'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall

23 Aug 10:30 AM **Morning Service And Junior Church**
23 Aug 6:00 PM XLR8 – Bill Penny Hall
23 Aug 7:30 PM Evening Service
25 Aug 9:30 AM Women Who Pray – Prayer Room
25 Aug 10:00 AM Rendezvous – Lower Hall
26 Aug 7:15 PM 'Wednesday Fellowship' – Lower Hall

30 Aug 10:30 AM **Morning Service And Junior Church**
30 Aug 6:00 PM XLR8 – Bill Penny Hall
30 Aug 7:30 PM Evening Service

House Groups

Currently three house groups usually meet fortnightly on Monday/Wednesday evenings. For dates and times of meetings, please speak to either Helen Ferguson, Audrey Brown or Margaret Morrow.

Water Into Wine Window

Paul Lucky and his wife Susan Bradbury, partners in the Stained Glass Design Partnership, worked together on this new window. Originally the window was to be based on the blue glass Rose Window left behind at Overton designed by Paul. Due to illness Susan took over and the design progressed from two streams flowing together to mark the Union of the churches, into the theme of the 'Marriage at Cana' which celebrates the idea of Union and which tells the story of Christ's first miracle, when He changed water into wine.

John 2,v 1-11. The water was taken from jars that were used for ceremonial washing and so an element of 'being cleansed' is also in the window. In this story the request was not only answered, but exceeded expectations and was the best!

So the design now shows a stream of sparkling lenses flowing down from heaven to earth and gradually changing from crystal clarity through shades of palest pink to deep rich burgundy. It is a fitting subject to mark the Union of the churches in West Kilbride.

The design was carried out entirely in handmade glass using the traditional lead calme technique.

This window is the last that Paul worked on as he has Motor Neuron disease.

Please pray for Paul and Susan at this difficult time.

Evelyn McFarlan

