

# Christmas Tidings from Killearn Kirk

## A Different Sort of Remembrance

Remembrance Sunday presents me with the biggest challenge of the year – every year! To say something meaningful, and to meet as many of the different expectations that people come with as I can. This year threw in the added complication that our planned, social distanced, act of Remembrance at the War Memorial had to be cancelled due to the restrictions on gatherings placed on Tier 3 communities.

But I do feel it is important to mark that moment, a few minutes seems a very little to give in response to the cost our nation endured through conflicts long ago and more recently. As well as the ongoing cost that ex-service personnel and their families still pay each and every day. The Kohima Epitaph has these few words, 'When you go home tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today'



It would have been easy to cancel marking the 11am moment on the 8th of November, but for me, marking that hour is a way of 'telling' proclaiming and remembering and so I was resolved to mark it. At 10:55 I left the service to go to the memorial and speak the words of Remembrance and lay a wreath on behalf of the congregation, even if I were doing alone. As it was it turned out I was not alone. Craig played the Last Post and Reveille, and scattered around the memorial, socially distanced, a number of people had come to Remember, to mark that moment and even if they couldn't stop and chat or come to the service, they felt the need and the importance of being there. So, to all who gathered and stood in the rain with me, thank you.

Stuart.

## Communion

The December communion service will take place on Sunday, 6th December. Due to restrictions in numbers permitted to attend then you will have to book your seat. The elements will not be served but will be provided in a sealed container at the front of your seat.

For those who are unable to attend the church then please join us online with your elements prepared. Circumstances mean that we cannot gather with others as we would normally choose and to be able to share Communion together. We hope that you can still feel connected as God's Church spiritually, even if we cannot meet in person.

## Christmas Services

The usual pattern of services around Christmas will be different this year. The guidance about leaving spaces unoccupied for a period of time to allow any virus to become inactive. The Session has had to consider what might be the most appropriate adaptation of our usual pattern for this season. Currently plans are in place for the following.

Thu 24th Dec Christmas Eve	This will be an online Watchnight Service accessible via the website and YouTube
Fri 25th Dec Christmas Day	We will hold a short 10:30am act of worship, and people will have to book a place.
Sun 27th Dec	We will gather for our regular weekly Sunday worship at 10:30am

**We wish everyone a happy Christmas**

## Killearn Kirk People

Minister	Rev Stuart Sharp	01360 550101
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Roll Keeper & Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Kirsty Smith	01360 550654
Hall bookings	Sue Beck	01360 550485
	property@killearnkirk.org.uk	

## Personalia

### Wedding

Ruth MacMillan and Craig Heaney were married on Friday, 16th October with a very small number of family present. The service was conducted by Rev. Donald Michael MacInness of Gairbraid Parish Church, Maryhill. The bride is originally from Lewis and the couple have set up home in Glasgow.



### Funerals

Matt 5:4/ (Jesus said) 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.'

We are saddened to report the passing of the following (since the last magazine), who were members of Killearn Kirk or whose funeral/memorial service was taken by our minister. Obituaries can be found in the Killearn Courier: [www.kcfc.co.uk/courier.html](http://www.kcfc.co.uk/courier.html).

Catherine Kinnear, Graham Road

Maurice Rennie, Elder Road

Helen Munro, Forthbank Nursing Home

Charles Brown, Greenend Road

Flora Connal, Buchanan Road

Ronald Forrest, Lampson Loan

Agnes MacNeill, Antonine Care Home

May the comfort and peace of God be with all who mourn and feel the loss of one they have loved.

## Kirk Property

For over 7 months there has been little activity in the Kirk buildings. Despite this the fabric has been looked after ensuring that everything is all right. Gutters and downpipes have been cleared and tiles replaced, the gas appliances have had their annual service, some tiling has been done in the halls, electrical work has been done to ensure the boiler works and keeps us warmer during the coming cooler months and leaf clearance by volunteers.

Whilst the Kirk and halls have been closed there have been regular checks and the fire alarm tested to ensure the buildings are ready for use under the new conditions. The grounds have been well tendered during the months as they are every year.

The halls have been in use every Thursday evening by the Neighbourhood Balfron group for distributing ordered food. It is hoped that this will continue beyond the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic. The halls were also used in the summer by the Blood Transfusion Service for a session using a booking system. They return on 9 February so book your place now to avoid disappointment.

We continue to look at opening the halls in the New Year with all necessary precautions put in place, including cleaning between groups, and groups returning when it is safe to do so and complying with relevant restrictions which may limit the numbers that can meet.

## Poppy Scotland Appeal 2020

This year the door to door collection for the poppy appeal was not able to take place. We would like to extend a special thank you to all the kind and willing volunteers who positioned themselves outside Killearn and Balfron co-ops to receive donations in all weather conditions. A big thank you to all the people of Killearn and Balfron who gave so generously in their donations. Thanks, are extended to Killearn and Balfron co-op managers for permitting the weekend stalls.

The money, combined with other fundraising, is how Poppy Scotland can provide funding to thousands of ex-Servicemen and women as well as other vital services in advice, employment, mobility, housing and mental health support.

Donations will still be accepted by Poppy Scotland at [www.poppyscotland.org.uk](http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk) or to send just £3 text "poppy" to 70800.

A great big thank you to all.  
Molly Parsons and Nigel Kelly

Visit us online at [www.killearnkirk.org.uk](http://www.killearnkirk.org.uk) or visit our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/pages/Killearn-Kirk/116334885136784](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Killearn-Kirk/116334885136784)



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## From the Minister's Study Desk

Luke 2:1-7 (NIV) - In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

I had considered titling this short piece, 'A COVID Christmas Crisis' but that would have simply reflected some of the overblown media comments at the current time. We find ourselves in a time where there are rules, regulations and guidelines along with the threat of legislative force is people don't toe the line. When we read back to the Advent narratives in the gospels, Luke's account expresses a similar scenario.

A ruling government's edict would force a pregnant woman and her husband to make a long and potentially dangerous journey to register that they exist. Why? So they can be taxed. The 'rules' applied to us at the moment are not so much to make us do something, but rather to deter us from doing some things. Mary and Joseph had to leave their support group and extended family, and travel to a place they may have had no direct knowledge of, to go the ancestral home to sign up and comply with the law.

Many of us are struggling with the notion that we may not be able to have Christmas as usual. The usual being, with family and friends, good food and indulgences of all sorts, possibly an afternoon nap and a post dinner argument when everyone gets a little fractious. I'm not sure that first Christmas was 'normal' their routine was upset and enforced restrictions. I'm sure we all hope that there will be some easing of restrictions by December, but we are making alternate plans for four Christmas dinners if we can only see each of the boys and their families separately. I will probably eat enough turkey boost sales in that sector to record levels, not to mention cruciferous vegetables (sprouts!).

As we get a little upset at what the impact of COVID might be on our Christmas, it might be a good opportunity to re-evaluate what Christmas actually means for us. That first Christmas, God came in solidarity with his creation. He didn't come to a banquet, or born in a palace, or even in a place of peace. Born into a lowly family, making a life working with their hands, in an occupied land. Very different from the Christmas Card depiction of still nights, starry skies, snow scenes and Victorian carollers. If Christmas was, in part, about God standing in solidarity with humanity, who will we stand with and for this year? What about those living alone, when we keep going on about family. Those who can't pay their bills and afford food, when our tables groan under the weight of too much food, a lot of which will end up thrown away. What about those working in care homes and Covid wards, when we are concerned about those couple of days with family.

There was an old campaign slogan, 'A dog is for life, not just for Christmas', you know the one I mean. The campaign started to address the huge numbers of puppies abandoned in January and February when the novelty of a puppy wears off and the routine of walks in the rain and picking up poo has lost its appeal. There can be a temptation to distil the whole Christian message into the tinsel of Christmas – this is what it is all about! But it is not, our faith is there for the whole year and each year of life, a long journey in the same direction as Eugene Peterson put it. There are highlights on the way, seasons of celebration. Perhaps this year is an opportunity for us to make it a different Christmas, a restatement of its truth and power, that will not get thrown out with the wrapping paper, but a solidarity to proclaim, that God is with us, today, tomorrow, always.

This year how can we make it a Christmas unlike any other, dare I say an unprecedented one!

May God richly bless you this advent season, may we all welcome Christ into our hearts and lives afresh and truly understand what Immanuel – God with us – brings to our lives.

Stuart

## Service Update

Services in the church have resumed to an extent. We can now hold services but there is a limited number allowed to attend. We can have up to a maximum of 50, socially distanced. We have created a number of spaced seating zones, some for individuals and others for couples or family groups (including bubbles). We have worked it out that we can get close to the maximum depending on booking, but so far numbers have been in the mid 30's. If you would like to come to one of the services you will have to contact our booking agent, Dan, to reserve a seating space. You can call or text a booking from Tuesday – Thursday each week and Dan will give you a seat number which identifies your seating zone in the Kirk. Hand sanitisers are available at entrances, and we encourage their use as well as the need for face coverings to be worn, we are doing all we can to keep the Kirk a safe place for anyone to be.

The booking hotline can be contacted on 07709 213342

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## Moderator's Visit to Killearn Kirk

The Moderator of The General Assembly of The Church of Scotland is the minister or elder chosen to moderate (chair) the annual General Assembly of The Church, held for a week every year in Edinburgh. At this gathering attended by ministers and elders Church business is debated vigorously and policies considered for the future well being of the Church.

The Moderator is a minister or elder of considerable experience and held in high esteem in the Church of Scotland. He or she is nominated by the "Committee to Nominate the Moderator", which consists of fifteen people elected annually by the General Assembly. The Moderator must, however, also be formally elected by the commissioners (i.e. all representatives) at the start of the General Assembly, their term of office runs from one General Assembly to the next.

Several women have been elected to this role in the 21st century. The first in 2004 was Alison Elliot, the first elder in approximately 400 years to be elected Moderator. Three years later the Very Rev. Sheilagh Kesting became the first women minister elected to the office.

If the Moderator is a minister, he or she is styled the Right Reverend during their term of office and the Very Reverend thereafter. This gives no further status beyond that of teaching elder.

Following the week of the General Assembly, the Moderator effectively acts as ambassador for the Church of Scotland, frequently being invited to represent the Church at official events or visiting congregations and projects in Scotland and overseas.

Because the Church of Scotland is Scotland's national Church, and a Presbyterian Church has no bishops, the Moderator is a prominent figure in the life of the Church of Scotland and will be invited to attend many civic events, representing the church on national occasions such as Remembrance events, state openings and the like. The Moderator will also serve as a chaplain to the Queen for the year of their office and be available to her majesty any time she is in residence in Scotland. There are a number of Queen's chaplains, so this is not something they do on their own..

Killearn Kirk congregation were delighted when the present Moderator, Rt. Rev. Colin Sinclair made time in his busy schedule to join us in worship on Sunday, 16th February. The weather was kind enabling Colin and his wife, Mrs Ruth Sinclair, to arrive in good time from Edinburgh. The moderator was resplendent in his Scottish outfit of Sinclair tartan kilt and jacket complete with lace jabot. The traditional moderatorial dress entails breeches, lace cuffs and jabot which mustn't obscure the clerical collar, the lace is white everything else is black – this is a continuation of 18th century court dress which enabled the moderators of that period to be given an



audience with the monarch. Wearing it is now optional for moderators.

The splendid service had been planned by Stuart our minister and Helen our organist. It opened with an Introit beautifully sung by the choir. One of the highlights of the service was an interview of the moderator by two of our young people, Bethany and Eva. It was light hearted and probing at the same time. It's difficult to guess who enjoyed the grilling most, all three seemed totally at ease and enjoying the interrogation thoroughly.

We learned many things including the history behind the lace jabot. In the 18th century C of S mission workers had been instrumental in improving life for the people of Chingleput, in India. They were particularly interested in providing education for girls and helped them to set up a factory to make lace so that they would have a means of supporting themselves. Until the factory closed a number of years ago each moderator was presented with a personal set of lace by mission taught workers there.

We learned that during his year as moderator he is relieved of parish duties and stays in a grace and favour apartment in Edinburgh's west end. We learned the path of his Christian journey and on a lighter note how much he enjoys his grandchildren and in particular their joint passion for Harry Potter.

The Rt. Rev. Colin Sinclair's sermon on the topic "Don't you care" was simply put, totally sincere and thought provoking for us all.

We sung choruses accompanied by guitars, trumpet and even a set of drums.

After the service we enjoyed a buffet lunch in the halls. Colin and his wife, Ruth, circulated, talked individually to us all, answering any further questions we cared to ask. He was a warm, God loving man and it was a privilege to spend a short time with him.

What did he think of us? Let me quote his Facebook entry later that day. He enjoyed being thoroughly grilled by two of the young people and of being given the privilege of preaching to us. He then said "there was a real sense of warmth and of moving forward together, adjusting to change and reaching out to the community with the love of God and living out the reality of "We are the Church."

A truly memorable day in the life of Killearn Kirk.

If you would like to hear the service, you can access an audio recording through the church web site and listen to Colin's message for yourself.

Doreen Snadden

## Killearn Guides

Killearn Guides started the year in January having been first registered in 1920. The can we do for ourselves, what can we do beyond our community. They came up heading but most have had to be put have achieved planting snowdrop bulbs bluebells behind the Kirk halls in the



looking forward to celebrating 100 years girls decided to look at 3 headings – What do in the community and what can we do with a number of suggestions for each on the back burner until next year. We in the community and plan also to plant spring.



Since lockdown began in March the unit has been meeting online weekly with occasional gaps for holidays. During these meetings we have had some chat, played quizzes and escape rooms as well as some programme activities and various badges have been earned including 4 Bronze Awards. We have also had reptiles (gecko, corn snake, tarantula, African bullfrog and boa constrictor), at the meeting and I, for one, was happy to have them at that distance! The girls took part in April in the Camp at Home



World Record attempt organised by the Northumberland Scouts where they had to camp out in the house or outside to be part of breaking the record for a virtual camp. There were nearly 84000 participants from 67 countries and the record was smashed!

In August Girlguiding allowed us to meet outside and planned to have one outside meeting a month around the village doing various activities such as following QR codes which are clues to the next QR code and another evening seeking all the opened Advent calendars in December. The evenings may be dark but it gives another sense of adventure allowing the girls to meet up together. In October we were allowed to start indoor meetings if we wished. The Brownies did start to meet indoors in the Village Hall but have had to suspend indoor meetings whilst we are in tier 3.

Looking about our county there have been a number of units who have met digitally, some who have just sent home activities and some who have felt that meetings are beyond them at the moment. We remember that we are all different with different responsibilities with work, home and beyond that no two units are doing the same but finding ways to enable contact and support the girls through this time. Most girls in our Brownie and Guide units have kept in contact. Both units have the ability to take girls into the unit (Brownies aged 7 – 10 and Guides 10 – 14+).



Interested? Go to [www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/) to register your interest. Girls aged 14 -18 could be part of a Ranger unit and we are looking to open one next year in the village. As we do not have one opened yet please contact Sue at [1stkillearnguides@gmail.com](mailto:1stkillearnguides@gmail.com)

## "Snow is falling . . . all around me!"

The start of a well known song that is probably airing frequently on the radio just now and it is my reality as I sit and write. Its early November here and this is our second significant snowfall since moving to Prince George, BC, Canada in July. In some ways July feels like a really long time ago and in other ways the day we left Killearn feels like yesterday!

Paul and I first lived in Prince George from 2002-2008 and loved our time here. We are glad to say that not too much has changed in this small city of about 80,000 in the twelve years we have been gone. We are immensely grateful that many of our friends still live here and we have been able to pick up where we left off with those friendships. This was very evident by the fact that we arrived at our rental house to a fully stocked fridge, freezer, and cupboards!

The familiarity of our surroundings and relationships have definitely aided us in settling Samuel, Andrew and Emma to their new surroundings. All three have settled well at school and are making new friends. Thankfully they have been able to start up some activities here: Samuel is enjoying playing cornet in a band, Andrew has started with a local football team and Emma is enjoying being part of a competitive dance class that runs out of our church. They miss their friends in Killearn immensely though and are grateful for technology that enable them to stay connected.

Paul is enjoying his return to GP work. He is working alongside 2 other physicians and they share coverage of the practice throughout the week. There are a lot of opportunities to pursue different avenues of work here so he is also working at a specific adolescent clinic and will soon be starting with the local palliative team assisting with a pain/symptom management clinic and covering on-call for palliative patients. There is not quite the same demand for specific paediatric palliative medicine here but his skills and expertise will still be put to good use.

The search for our new home continues. We finalised the sale of West Barn a short time ago. Finding a home that can match what we had in some way is proving difficult but we have faith that the right home will come available soon.



Our faith has certainly sustained us through this tumultuous time. Embarking on an international move is stressful at the best of times but during a pandemic certainly made it harder. God provided for us every step of the way and we continue to trust in him as we continue to settle into our new home.

We think of everyone we have left behind in Killearn often and look forward to returning for a visit once this pandemic we are all living through now becomes a memory.

The picture shows us on weekend break at Jasper, Alberta.

Lynne and Paul Boutcher

## Poem from a Young Staff Nurse

May 2020

Tonight I held you,  
As I fought back the tears,  
And grieved with your family,  
Who have loved you for years.  
You became unwell,  
There was nothing we could do.  
We watched you through the window  
And we increased your O2.

I called your family,  
To see if anyone could attend.  
Your family needed to know  
That this was the end.

But this virus is terrifying,  
And people are shielding.  
How can they be there  
When Covid is so unyielding?

I held your hand,  
I wiped your face,  
My gloved hand on your skin,  
As your breathing slows pace.

You'd still smile behind your mask,  
And I'd try to smile back.  
To comfort and reassure you,  
Is now my one and only task.

Your family called  
To say their goodbyes.  
We stood with the phone,  
And listened to their cries.

With tears running down our faces,  
Into the masks we all wear.  
We really wanted to help them  
And show them we care.

We woke you up,  
So you could hear their voice.  
We described your actions,  
We had no other choice.

Their words filled with sorrow,  
Their hearts laid bare.  
They wanted the time,  
To show you they care.

You looked peaceful,  
And smiled at their call.  
I hope it brought you comfort,  
Standing there took my all.

We deal with death,  
But not like this,  
No family allowed,  
To give one last kiss.

But the next family will need us,  
We will need to do the same.  
I hope I gave you good care,  
And I will always remember your name.

I shared this poem with you, not to make you sad but to bring a tiny degree of consolation to those who have lost loved ones in a similar situation. Be assured there are hundreds of nurses like this young lass, in every hospital in the land who give love and compassion to every patient right to the end.  
Doreen Snadden.

## Kirk Finances

### HOW ARE WE DOING FINANCIALLY?

Well, inevitably, we are down quite a bit on last year.

A snapshot of our GENERAL FUND for the 10 months to 31st October, 2020 which covers the day-to-day running of the Kirk shows the following-

	£ This Year	£ Last Year
Income excluding legacies	62,228	81,907
Legacies	5,000	16,666
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>67,228</b>	<b>98,573</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Ministry & Mission	49,358	50,019
Local Staffing Costs	2,151	5,158
Building Costs	20,328	23,019
Other Local Costs	2,689	4,045
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>74,526</b>	<b>82,241</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(7,298)</b>	<b>16,332</b>

Cost savings have to some extent offset the fall in income. The Ministry & Mission payments to the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh covers the cost of not only our ministry but contributes to other churches which cannot afford their minister and also to the work of the wider Church at home or abroad.

We are very fortunate to receive the substantial legacies and thank you to all our congregation who have been able to contribute in such a difficult period.

Now that the Kirk has re-opened we should be in a better position financially but for those who are unable to come at present can use the QR (quick response) button on our website as Stuart has mentioned in his article or, as not everyone can do this, simply give your donation to any of the elders or regular attenders.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

Bob Ballantyne, Treasurer

## Ups and Downs of Lockdown.

Sometime in February a friend and I were discussing the difficulties of finding time to 'declutter' and I remember saying that what I needed was a month or maybe two without interruptions such as meetings, babysitting requests etc., well you should be careful what you wish for as a few weeks later we were in lockdown and not only did we have two months but six and still have continuing restrictions about where we can go, who we can meet and how many. What was I going to do with two months to myself?

The back of the garage needed clearing out and tidying up, in winter I tend to put things away in a hurry as it's cold, wet and windy. My 'office' needed reorganizing, tax sorted etc. What have I actually achieved?

I would like to say that all my cupboards and drawers etc., are all beautifully cleared and organised but had I done so there was nowhere to take them as all charity shops were closed like everything else. I spent time on the telephone to friends and family, I didn't even look at the bill. I am able to use skype but zoom is a completely different learning experience. I have caused a lot of hilarity at my attempts to master it, on one occasion having to telephone to Edinburgh so that I could take part in the meeting on sound only, I won't try that again when I spoke I could hear an echo of myself on the other person's picture and a delay in what was being said to me, then I managed to join a meeting when there was only 20 minutes left, (that wasn't my fault - honest). I will not bore you with the rest of my zoom disasters. I feel more confident now, especially with the help of a few technical advisors, my son, Bethany and one or two others, in fact I found myself instructing one friend on how to join a zoom meeting with a Canadian friend, we both gave up and used skype, then she told us that while she was involved on zoom - her cat had eaten her dinner!

My garden, not to mention my suntan, was greatly improved. I managed to grow potatoes, courgettes, strawberries, gooseberries and paint an old garden bench, every slat a different colour. I did miss a much anticipated 90th birthday party (not mine) which had to be postponed, in fact I have missed a lot of parties this year, but I have managed to master shopping on line, I appreciate the order coming to the door without having to take it from the trolley via checkout, car then to the house, although I miss not choosing the goods myself.

What I have missed most is not cuddling and hugging my grandchildren. My daughter said I could cuddle them if I liked but I might end up dying so just wait till this is over and you can cuddle them as much as you want. That was me told. I thank God every night that I have a warm home with a roof and 4 walls to keep out the wind and rain, a small garden to sit in (many people don't have that) and friends and family to talk to. I have organised my spare room and now have space to keep my sewing machine out.

As for the office - I have shredded enough trees for a mini forest, it's amazing how you discover papers, guarantees for goods long consigned to the dustbin when going through the filing cabinet. I'm getting there but (like me) it's still a work in progress. This won't last forever, God gave man and women brains to work out problems and they will work out this one.

Elizabeth Mathieson

## Killearn Thursday Club

We're back - if a little altered. Normally the Thursday Club was held weekly in the church halls from 2 to 4pm. It's a social culminating in Afternoon Tea. Currently - due to Covid 19 Virus - meetings had to be cancelled and we were feeling isolated. Last month we began by contacting our members on Thursdays. Our normal festive lunch will be replaced with a surprise alternative. See you on the doorstep in the New Year.

This month we celebrated Bert Atkinson's 90th Birthday with a doorstep cake.

Yours in friendship, Maureen Royston

## 90 years young

Margaret Gibb (nee McNeil) was born in the same house as she lives in today. A feisty lady whose community spirit outshines us all. Margaret will help anyone and everyone and only recently stopped driving various members of the community to the bingo and whist nights in Stirling and various villages. Having worked for most of her life she now loves the opportunity to get out and about and lives life to the full. Still game, still smiling and still running (albeit a little slower)! Happy 90th birthday Margaret or should we say happy 18th with 72 years of experience!

One day separates the birthdays of Margaret and Bert. Both started Killearn Primary School together and both have many stories that they can share. We wish them our best wishes and health and happiness for the future years.

## Pastoral Support

At different times in our lives we need some support, both spiritual and practical. Traditional pastoral care involves visiting the sick, praying for members and their families, a listening ear and helping folk to work through the many changes and challenges of life. With Covid-19 and social distancing we are needing to come up with new ideas that allows us to provide the care that enables us to chat. We have an opportunity to provide care in unique ways through technology, emails, cards and phone calls and to make provisions when necessary. In this season we will have opportunities for personal growth and congregational growth through teaching, preaching and ministry.

Many in our community have shown their own strengths during this time of the pandemic, they have shown compassion, a willingness to assist, do shopping, phone a neighbour, use technology and social media to keep in touch. Each little thing we do makes a big difference in someone's life.

God sustains us through difficult times through our relationship with God, our faith, our prayer life, and our knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. In times like these, we find the strength to hold on and are called to encourage others to do the same. The "ministry of presence" becomes a powerful witness.

For some though they may still feel 'left out' or may be struggling with the changes in their lives and if you need someone to talk to then please contact the minister or session clerk and we will listen. It may be that we will ask one of our pastoral team to contact you. All calls will be in strictest confidence and we will represent God's grace and care to you in a non-judgemental and loving manner.

As we navigate through these uncharted waters may we take strength from each other and know that everyone in our community are trying their best to help and support each other during these times.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

Carole Young



## Web Worship.

Since lockdown acts of worship have been placed on-line. If you have missed these, you can access them in a couple of ways. One the Kirk website there is a tab at the top marked 'Video', if you click on that it will take you to the list of previous services.

Alternately, you can go direct to YouTube and a search for Killearn Kirk will bring up our posts. If you do go this route, can I ask you to subscribe to the page. If you do this, you will get notified of up coming posts or streamed services. If we can get 100 subscribers, we get a more prominent place in YouTube's ranking, so even if you don't want to watch us that way, subscribe anyway and boost our rating.

Kirk web address: <https://www.killearnkirk.org.uk/video/>  
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/>

We are presently trying to develop a live stream of our Sunday Services, so people can join us virtually, if not able to join us in person. Like our initial efforts with on-line materiel, it is a work in progress, and we are looking to continually improve the image and sound quality. We would welcome constructive comments.

## Iain Armstrong

There are some of you who know who I am, and remember me from my younger days in Killearn Kirk, but for those who are wondering who the strange man is that has appeared in your Church a few weeks ago, here is my story. I was brought up in Killearn, living at 3 Rowan Crescent until I left home at 17. I worshipped at Killearn Kirk and attended the Sunday School and the Open Doors Youth Group. I loved Open Doors as a teenager and grew as a young Christian under the teaching and guidance of Miriam & Paul Johnson, Agnes & Scott MacIntosh, Tony & Sue Kidd, and Peggy & Craig Gardener.

At 17 I applied for a new course being run by London Bible College which was a blend of theology and worship training. I was awarded a place, but as the average age of their students was 28, they suggested I take a year out and take up my place at the college when I had turned 18. It was during a weekend camp with Open Doors that I met Iain Clyne and his team from Inverness Youth for Christ. They took me under their wing for a year of discipleship training and youth work. It was a steep learning curve, being away from home for the first time and thrown in the deep end working in schools, churches, camps, and street work. It was thoroughly enjoyable however and was a great stepping-stone to my time at college.



After my year in Inverness I moved to London, studying at LBC for three years achieving a Degree in Theology. It was during this time that I became aware of God's calling to ministry. However, I felt a real sense of God saying, "not yet". So, I remained in London, working as a Project Manager in a homeless trust, running a winter night shelter. I would love to tell you that I had a hot line to God and always knew exactly what he wanted for me, but I'd be lying. I also had my own agenda (don't we all?) While in London, I had joined a rock band and was enjoying playing the London club circuit. I knew better than God you see, I was going to be a rock star!

Thankfully, it was during this time that I made the best decision yet. I married Jill. She was very gracious and stayed by my side while I chased my dreams of rock n roll adventures. Sadly, reality bites, and after a few years I realised that I had been chasing my own dream and trying to ignore God. We moved back to Scotland in 2000. Since then I have had various jobs in sales and settled into a job in the music trade, selling instruments for the last thirteen years.

The greatest change (and challenge) in my life since then has been the arrival of our family. We have two boys and a girl. James (15), Grace (14) and Fraser (11). Life has never been dull, or quiet since! We moved to Balforn in 2006 and have worshipped in Balforn Church since then. I have been an Elder and, in the last three years become Deputy Session Clerk.

A few years ago, Balforn Church needed pulpit supply and our Session Clerk asked if I could help fill the gaps when he was struggling to find available ministers. I will be honest; I was very nervous. I had not had any experience in preaching or leading services before, but it was at this time I felt God prompting me again. Whereas before it was, "not yet", it had changed to "now". Thankfully, I believe that God does not 'call the qualified', but 'qualifies the called'. After more prompting from various minister friends, I approached the Church of Scotland to respond to my calling. After six months spent in 'Discernment' with an excellent mentor (Rev Alan Hamilton of Killermont Parish Church) I passed the Local Review and the National Assessment Conference. It was decided that I would become a Candidate in Training for the Ordained Local Ministry, which means I would serve the church in my local Presbytery while maintaining my day job in the music trade.

I have commenced studying in Theology at Highland Theological College from home (my theology degree from LBC was the wrong flavour for the Church of Scotland), and part of my first year at college includes a placement. It feels like coming full circle being offered a placement with you at Killearn Kirk.

I look forward to our next six months together and hope that you will bear with me as I continue with my formation. I know there will be 'bumps in the road' along the way, but I trust in God and know he has put me in good hands with Stuart and the good people of Killearn Kirk.

So, that's you caught up. Let the adventure begin!

## Leprosy Mission

Jim Fallas continues to help this charity to combat the horrible affliction of leprosy by collecting used stamps, postcards, and foreign coins.

Also obsolete mobile phones (no sim cards wanted), which are reconditioned and sent to Nepal to be used there to aid communication in that 3rd world country.

Please place in the BB stamp box in the entrance to the Church.

## Malawi

Killearn Kirk has had a link with Rev Levi Nyondo in Malawi for many years and has, and continues to, support some of the work he is involved with. On this page Tidings reproduces his recent eMails to Jen Barratt who is his main point of contact in the Kirk.

HELLO JENIFER, WE ARE NOW OFFICIALLY RETIRED FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE AFTER BEING THE GENERAL SECRETARY FOR 12 YEARS, SYNOD MODERATOR FOR 4 YEARS AND MINISTERING IN PARISHES FOR 18 YEARS, TOGETHER 34 YEARS OF SERVICE. ANY NEWS ABOUT WHAT THE SYNOD WILL ASSIGN ME WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO YOU. THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL FOR THE SYNOD IS REV. WILLIAM TEMBO. WE ARE NOW STAYING IN JAMIESON HOUSE AND FORTUNATELY WE HAVE AGAIN ERECTED/BOUGHT ANOTHER HOUSE CLOSE TO JAMIESON HOUSE WHICH SHALL BE USED TO ACCOMMODATE ALL FRIENDS FROM OVERSEAS. THANK YOU KILLEARN MALAWI TEAM FOR BEING SUPPORTERS OF OUR PROJECTS HERE IN MALAWI SINCE 2002 UP TO NOW. HAVING SAID THIS BE INFORMED THAT NOW WE SHALL BE FULLY DOING THE WORK OF HELPING THE NEEDY IN VILLAGES, HENCE WE STILL NEED MATERIALS FROM YOUR TEAM STRONGLY FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS LIKE KILENI SCHOOL, HILLTOP WOMEN CRAFT CENTRE, AND COMMUNITIES. LAST WEEK ALAN LAVEROCK IN DUNDEE INFORMED ME THAT THE CONTAINER FOR BANANA BOX IN DUNDEE IS NOW HALF FULL AND IF YOU HAVE SOME BOXES IN YOUR WARE HOUSE [KILLEARN CHURCH], SEND THEM TO DUNDEE. LAST MONTH THE CONTAINER FROM DUNDEE ARRIVED VERY WELL. KEN AND JENIFER, WE STILL NEED : BOOKS, BIBLES, SECONDHAND CLOTHES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS, PENCILS AND PENS, KNITTING AND SEWING MACHINES, ETC. ETC. KEN, WE ARE KINDLY, REGARDLESS OF COVID 19, LOOKING FOR £1500 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FENCE BRICK AROUND THE HOUSE. CHRISTINE ZINDAWA NYIRONGO IS STILL NOT VERY WELL. JENIFER, PETER AND JENNY WILKS, YOU ARE 100% WELCOME TO VISIT US AND SEE SOME OF THE THINGS WE ARE DOING AS KEN DID ONE TIME. YOU WILL STILL BE ACCOMMODATED IN EITHER JAMIESON HOUSE OR THE OTHER HOUSE. COME AFTER COVID 19 PANDEMIC SLEEPS. OUR SON WAMAKA IS STILL WITH US AND HE MIGHT BE GOING BACK TO EDINBURGH FOR HIS SECOND MASTERS DEGREE. HELLO JOANA, AND PEGGY. STAY BLESSED ALWAYS. REV. DR. LEVI AND RUTH NYONDO.

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD. GREETINGS TO YOU ALL FROM EKWENDENI, MALAWI. BE INFORMED OFFICIALLY THAT THE CCAP SYNOD OF LIVINGSTONIA HAS APPOINTED ME AGAIN TO BE THE PRINCIPAL OF EKWENDENI CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVINGSTONIA WHICH HAS THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS: NURSING COLLEGE, SCIENCES SECTION AND FACULTY OF THEOLOGY SECTION. THE UNIVERSITY HAS THREE CAMPUSES: EKWENDENI, LAWS CAMPUS AT THE PLATEAU AND KANING'INA CAMPUS IN MZUZU. HOPING TO CONTINUE WORKING TOGETHER AS WE HAVE BEEN DOING IN THE PAST. YOURS, REV. DR. LEVI NYONDO, PRINCIPAL.

Dear Jeniffer,

Greetings from Mzuzu, Malawi. My name is Wamaka Nyondo, son to Levi and Ruth Nyondo. I believe this email finds you well during this period of uncertainty due to coronavirus pandemic.



Dad and Mum asked me to share the attached pictures with you. Its some of the items made by the Hilltop Craft Group in Mzuzu, Malawi.

Thank you very much for the donation of various items that have been used in the craft work of these items. Through the sales of these handmade mats, pillow covers, table clothes etc, women are able to support their families and to a large extent, be able to educate their children.

May God continue to bless all of you who contribute to this noble cause of helping the needy in Malawi.

With love,

Wamaka Nyondo



## A Walk with God

Shortly after I came to Killearn in 1996 I renewed my vows as an Elder and two years later I volunteered my services as Treasurer of the Kirk Hall Development Fund. This was when I got to know Elsie Bouffler who I believe was the youngest member of Session and was Convener of the Resources Committee. While most Elders attended the meetings there was a core of four, Bruce Montgomery - Smith for his building experience, the late Robin Robinson for his wise counsel, myself as Treasurer and Elsie as Convener.

The Committee was charged with putting together plans for the suite of halls which we have today. There had been an earlier attempt to obtain planning permission for a more elaborate plan but this was thwarted by a misguided campaign of certain residents to resist this objective. These objections continued but the steely determination of Elsie to obtain planning permission was eventually successful. Building started early in in 2002 and by the end of the year the Halls were ready in time for Christmas celebrations. The official opening was a year later. Throughout all the comings and goings Elsie conducted herself in a Christian like manner and we all followed her example.



In 2004 The Kirk held a Family Meal in Gartmore House at which Elsie gave a Personal Testimony revealing how she came to Christianity and the following are excerpts : "Always felt part of a family with her church congregation. Only in her 20's she began to realise that she had a personal relationship with GOD." "For many years reluctant to let God direct her life completely." "We strolled along quite nicely, God and me" but in the Spring time she hit a crisis which "made her question her faith, felt she wasn't good enough" One beautiful June morning as she walked through the woods above the village "I had the strongest sense of God asking me to trust Him completely and so that is what I have done" "It has been an amazing walk and the more I take time to listen to Him and look for Him the better my life is. In 2007 the Bouffler family left Killearn for the U.S.A. Where Jonathan took up a post in Atlanta, Georgia. They returned to the U.K. in 2010 and settled in Essex.

Elsie started her studies to become an Anglican Priest in 2017. On 13th September this year she was Ordained as a Deacon in Chelmsford Cathedral prior to becoming a Priest in one years time. The threat of the Covid 19 virus prevented me from accepting her kind invitation to be at the Cathedral but fortunately this very moving Service was streamed live for all to see.

The photograph shows the Rev. Elsie after her Ordination with Jonathan, their two girls Jenny on the left, Amy on the right with their partners. To begin with Elsie will be part of a "Team" in the area where she lives and we wish God's blessing on her, her Ministry, and her family

## Your Kirk needs your Support

The current pandemic has led to words like unprecedented being used in an unprecedented way! But it is true, very few alive today will have any experience of this kind of event sweeping the nation, and I'm sure we hope that it passes quickly, and we do not see its likes again. In this period the Kirk has still had its usual outgoing to pay, though we saw some fuel bill reductions, the main impact of the lockdown was over the Spring and Summer when we would expect to reduce these costs anyway.

We really appreciate the generous support we receive that helps keep the roof on the building and pay our bills and meet our other costs. It has not been a surprise that with the services being suspended so suddenly, and it likely to be sometime until 'normal' services is resumed, that we have seen a drop in our regular giving's. These who would have normally used the Free Will Offering envelopes when they came to church have not been able to make the donations. Even with the first three months of our financial year being 'normal' we are currently seeing approximately a 24% drop in income.

We are encouraging everyone who may have found themselves in this position to consider an alternate way of expressing their support, whether that is by Standing Order which gives us the best way to manage our income and expenditure or simply by sending a cheque to the Kirk with your envelop details and we will sort that out. You can also make an online donation through the web site's secure donation button near the bottom of the home page.

We have all heard the upsetting and worrying news that a number of businesses have not and will not survive the lockdown restrictions and the loss of income they have experienced since March. We simply invite you to remember that the Kirk, too, depends on the support of the congregation.

A huge thankyou is extended to all who have been able to continue to give their support to the Kirk over recent months. It is so appreciated and 'thank you' does not seem enough, and so stress it THANK YOU!

## The Guild

While I composed the Chairperson's report for the session ending 17th March, the only fly in the ointment was the knowledge that I would not be giving that report in person because that was the long awaited day I was due to get my new knee. How quickly things can change.

We did hold our last scheduled coffee morning on Saturday, 14th March. Even then we did have some apprehension about it, but since so many members had been busy baking all week, we decided to go ahead. While less people than usual supported us, and we fully understood your reluctance, it was still a happy successful morning and Covid -19 kept away!

However the AGM planned for Tuesday 17th March, was too concerning. We did not go into Lockdown until Monday 23rd March but as I phoned around to cancel our meeting , all the members were supportive and I got the impression, relieved.

Prior to the arrival of Covid we had enjoyed a very successful session. No adverse weather had caused a cancellation. We had our usual mixture of topics, much enjoyed by all. Notable were a Musical Evening with Stuart , our minister, entertaining us, fascinating memories of a Police Officer from Ian Dickie, an enthralling talk on Guatemala from Ann Roy and an enjoyable Dancercise with Yasmin from Balfon.

Our two previous coffee mornings in October and December enabled us to contribute, in our usual generous fashion to Killearn Kirk and to support our two chosen Guild Projects for this year, namely , The Scottish Sailors Society and The Free to Live Trust.

In late spring Elizabeth and I put our heads together to plan a syllabus for session 2020- 21. We were conscious of the ever increasing problems caused by the virus and it became obvious that we would not manage to meet in October. We hoped for November, then December, then January. Members of the Guild I am so sad that none of these dates are going to materialize. It is looking increasingly likely that session 2020-21 will be a write off. I assure you The Guild WILL recommence as soon as it is safe to do so.

The good news for many of you is that next session we are going to try afternoon meetings. This will make it easier for those of us who come out with some reluctance in the evening.

Sadly a couple of our valued members died last year but we attracted three new members, making out total a very healthy forty three.

The Guild Office in Edinburgh have weekly sent us newsletters full of encouragement, advice and kind words. I have sent these onto Guild and Church members whose email address I have. Those who haven't received these and would like to, please send me your email address and I will forward the messages to you.

The telephone wires have been red hot with all of us trying to keep in touch and encourage each other in this difficult time. Adversity has shown the strength of our village as people have worked together for the greater good. Well done Killearn.

New members will be very welcome in 2021-22.

Doreen Snadden, 550834.

### Christmas Crossword

Make all the words fit into this crossword.  
Each word is only used once.



**JOY**  
**LORD**  
**MARY**  
**JESUS**  
**KINGS**  
**GLORY**  
**PEACE**  
**JOSEPH**  
**ANGELS**  
**CHRIST**  
**MANGER**  
**SAVIOUR**  
**SHEPHERDS**  
**BETHLEHEM**