

St Ninian's Church  
Corstorphine

# Quarterly



The Lent Lily

Spring 2021



**Edinburgh, Corstorphine St Ninian's Parish Church (Church of Scotland)**  
**144 St John's Road, EH12 8AY**  
**Scottish Charity Number SC016557**

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Office Hours: Tue/Wed/Thurs - 9.00am to 12 noon; Fri - 9.00am to 1.00pm

**website:** [www.corstorphinestninians.org.uk](http://www.corstorphinestninians.org.uk)

**At the time of writing, the Government has again suspended meeting in the Church for SUNDAY SERVICES. This may have changed by the time of publication, so please refer to the weekly Intimations on-line.**

**Sunday Services and Intimations are available on You Tube at:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW-OUJ0F3JL09vUD7KYMffA>

**Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the usual activities listed below are suspended until further notice.**

COMMUNION SERVICES are on the first Sunday in March, June, September and December at 10.30am and 3.00pm. Our less able members are particularly welcome at the 3.00pm Communion Services, following each of which there is an afternoon tea.

SUNDAY SCHOOL is held every Sunday during term time and all classes meet at 10.25am.  
Crèche: (0-3yrs); Beginners: (3-5yrs); Primary: (5-8yrs); Juniors: (8-12yrs); Alpha: (12+yrs).

STEP INSIDE is a youth club for our 10- to 14-year-olds and is held on the last Saturday of the month (except July and December) with games, music and craft sessions.

We offer a CHURCH TRANSPORT SERVICE for our less able members. Volunteer drivers pick up passengers before the service and return them home afterwards with the option of staying for tea/coffee. Reserved car parking is available at the rear of the Church.

The CHOIR leads the Praise under the direction of our Organist, Anne Kirkpatrick, and choir practices are on Thursday evenings from September to May.

The GUILD meets on a Tuesday afternoon between September and March, with interesting speakers, teas, and outings.

Men are invited to CONVERSAZIONE on the last Wednesday of the month between October and April, for fellowship and chat over a light lunch.

Many other Church and non-Church organisations use our premises throughout the week; contact details can be found on the back page.

*Dear friends,*

*“How did you go bankrupt?” Bill asked.*

*“Two ways,” Mike said. “Gradually and then suddenly.”*

Ernest Hemingway wrote those lines in his novel *‘The Sun Also Rises’*. The sentiment that lies behind them is true of many things in life.

If all goes to plan in the United Kingdom, then this sentiment is true about the pandemic - because that is how vaccines work. At first, we will see only a gradual decline in deaths, hospital admissions, and restrictions on our interactions with other people. Then, suddenly, we will notice that life is a lot like it used to be.

Of course, events do not always play out this way. Some people experience love at first sight, nothing gradual there. Others experience a blinding flash of inspiration, the sort of thing that Paul experienced on the road to Damascus. But, I wonder, perhaps even these experiences have a hidden drip, drip lying behind them.

As you read this, we are beginning the season of Lent, a six-week journey to Jesus’ crucifixion. The Gospels, particularly Mark - our focus this year - are sometimes described as Passion narratives with prologues attached. Over the six weeks of Lent, we will walk with Jesus as he gradually approaches Jerusalem and his sudden death. The resurrection is sudden, but it too is meaningless without everything that precedes it.

Most of life is gradual then sudden. That can feel traumatic because often we don’t notice the gradual nature of those small, daily changes. But there is hope in this experience. The daily commitment to living as a Christian will pay off, not always immediately, but eventually. Every small, daily act of generosity, kindness, mercy, joy, love and peace as well as of prayer and reflection, build up within us slowly, until suddenly when a crisis comes you find yourself well prepared, lovingly supported and surprisingly resilient.

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. How do you vaccinate a country? One person at a time. How do you find salvation? “One day at a time, sweet Jesus.”

Behold, I am going to do something new,

Now it will spring up;

*Will you not be aware of it?*

I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,

Rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)

Best wishes,

*James*

# Notices

## Kirk Session Meetings

2021 - 10<sup>th</sup> February; 12<sup>th</sup> May; 8<sup>th</sup> September; 10<sup>th</sup> November

## Deacons' Court Meetings

2021 - 24<sup>th</sup> February; 26<sup>th</sup> May; 22<sup>nd</sup> September; 24<sup>th</sup> November

These are the dates planned. The arrangements for meeting will depend on whatever rules for social distancing are in effect at the time.

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## Worship At St Ninian's

At the time of writing in early February, Church services continue to be suspended until further notice in line with the Scottish Government's regulations which the Church of Scotland supports.

Any changes will be communicated through the intimations, on the website and Facebook page, and via the minister's weekly email. If you don't already receive the minister's weekly email and would like to, please contact him by email on [jaitken@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:jaitken@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Quarterly Communion on the 7th of March will be celebrated online (and in the sanctuary if allowed).

Sunday services are available . . .

- **online** ... on YouTube and Facebook from 10:15am every Sunday.
- **on DVD or CD** ... hand delivered to your door every week prior to the 10:30am service.
- **on printed text** ... a text copy of the entire service can be delivered to your door every week prior to the 10:30am Sunday service.

*James*

# Congregational Register

## New Member by Resolution of Kirk Session:

Mrs Helen Leslie, 46 Craigs Park

## Funerals:

23 November 2020*	Mrs Nan Paterson, Struan Lodge NH
30 December 2020*	Mrs Enid Little, 53 Gordon Road
11 January 2021*	Mrs Elma Cairns, 23 Drum Brae South
5 February 2021*	Mr George Smith, 32 Burnbrae
15 February 2021*	Mrs Marion Wishart, 18 Tyler's Acre Avenue
February 2021*	Mrs Annie McQuarrie, Drumbrae House NH

\* Denotes member.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Mission Committee

The Mission Committee would like to say a big 'thank you' to all those who helped to deliver the Congregational Christmas Cards last year. I know many people were delighted to receive their card during these difficult times.

Sadly, this year, we were not able to hold our Annual Congregational Lunch. Let's hope we can get together and join in fellowship, food and fun before too long.

On behalf of the Mission Committee, I would like to send you our good wishes.  
Stay safe,

*Margaret Hunter*  
Convenor

\* \* \* \* \*

## Food for thought . . .

- If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. Whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward. *Martin Luther King*
- The best and most beautiful things in this world cannot be seen or even heard but must be felt with the heart. *Helen Keller*

# LENT BIBLE STUDY



## *30 Days with the Gospel of Mark*

This online on Zoom Bible Study leads us through the Gospel of Mark, focusing on individual passages for discussion and prayer. It is open to everyone.

You'll need to purchase the guide for £4.50 either using the link below, or contact the minister:

<https://www.preachweb.org/books-and-diaries/bible-month-colossians-30-day-study-course-2g4f2-6me4f>

Week 1:	<b>Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> March</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
Week 2:	<b>Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Mark 2: 1 - 12</b>
Week 3:	<b>Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Mark 6: 45 - 56</b>
Week 4:	<b>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March</b>	<b>Mark 9: 2 - 13</b>
Week 5:	<b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Mark 14: 12 - 26</b>

**7:30pm – 9:00pm**

To join email [james.aitken2@btinternet.com](mailto:james.aitken2@btinternet.com) or  
phone 334 1324

## A prayer for these difficult times

*We stand at that place, betwixt and between the old and the new.  
Looking back to a year now past, and forward to what is yet to be.  
But this is not a normal transition between old and new.*

*We look back on a year in which  
the normal patterns of daily life have been disrupted;  
where so much has been put on hold, postponed, cancelled.*

*We look to the new year with dread and anxiety,  
with its continued uncertainty.  
Lives still on hold.  
So much we would want to do, would plan to do,  
need to do, but afraid to look too far forward for  
fear of disappointment.*

*In all our uncertainty  
we come to you, Lord, for you are constant.  
In the midst of uncertainty your love is sure.  
In the darkness of disappointment, you never fail.  
In heartbreak and anguish your loving arms enfold us.*

*We see your constancy and love not only in our lives,  
but in the world around us.  
As year succeeds to year,  
as day follows night,  
as the seasons change,  
from the new life of spring,  
to summer's rosy glow,  
then autumn's harvest hew,  
to winter's sleepy rest.*

*Lord, we long for the world to awaken,  
not only from winter's rest  
but also from the shutdown we have endured  
for so many months.*

*As we wait expectantly for the brighter days of Spring,  
and for the world to live again  
so we turn to you.  
Continue to walk with us through these dark days,  
assure us of your light which  
no darkness can ever overcome,  
and of your love  
by which we are constantly surrounded.*

Amen.

*(This prayer appeared in the January 2021 edition of Life & Work)*

## "Wash one another's feet . . ."

I was a Sunday School teacher in the Junior Department for about 10 years from the early 1970s. When I started in 1972 with the late Jim Arthur as the superintendent, all the classes for the 400+ children were crammed into all corners of the accommodation. The situation improved enormously after the 7 new classrooms were built down the west corridor in the mid '70s. The experience I am about to relate happened in one of these rooms around 1979 with an older class of 10- and 11-year-olds.



The Church of Scotland was then looking for ways to revitalise Sunday School teaching and had published a book of ideas which sought to

stimulate the children's imagination in innovative ways. I fell for one of them - getting the children to wash one another's feet! This was seen as a way of emphasising Jesus' example in washing his disciples' feet at the Last Supper.

The logistics were demanding: how many basins of cold water to have for a class of 12? In the end I decided 2 were enough, 1 for the boys and 1 for the girls, as being controllable - probably the best decision of the day. Sufficient towels for the youngsters to dry themselves - maybe 2 to share round, one for each group? OK. Safety assessment? Unheard of in those days. Health and Safety now would have a fit and would probably insist on having warm water in the basins.

I had everything in place when the children came into the room. The look on all their faces when they saw the basins on the floor was an absolute picture. I had had

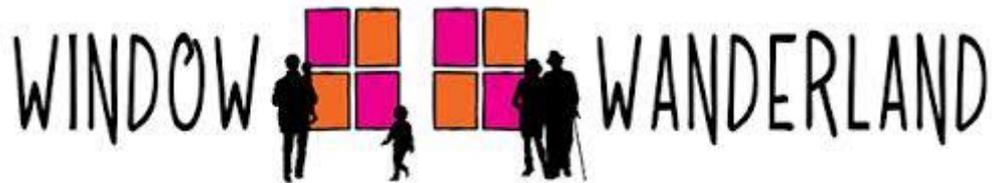
the foresight to warn the girls' mothers beforehand, so that their daughters would come wearing socks and not tights, otherwise they would not have been able to take part. When I think of it now! . . . Today I would probably be reported as a potential paedophile. But none of the girls' parents had objected so I went blithely on.

I duly sat them down in the two groups and read them the story from John 13: 1-17. When I said that we were going to follow Jesus' example by washing one another's feet, there was bewildered consternation! The boys in particular were put out - "What, wash his smelly feet?" etc. But the girls seemed to take it in good part, perhaps because their mothers had been able to warn them in advance of what was going to happen. All of them, boys and girls, removed their shoes and socks as instructed and washed the feet of the boy or girl sitting next to them. It was rowdy but they did it. I have often wondered how much, if at all, they understood the symbolism.

Oddly, I don't remember that the basins were spilled, nor (astonishingly) was any water thrown. And at the end of it they all left in good order and I never heard another word about it. No complaints from parents, and not even a comment one way or the other.

Unfortunately, I do not recall the names of any of the children who took part, and I wonder if anyone remembers this most unusual Sunday School lesson from the days of his or her youth. But one lesson was learned by the teacher at least: you got off with it this time, having children of that age with two basins of water on the floor, and no misbehaving. But don't push your luck, and never try it again! Needless to say, I didn't.

*Andrew Broom*



## Corstorphine Window Wanderland - a first!

**27th to 28th February 2021 6pm to 9pm**

A Covid-safe way to connect people, transforming streets into magical outdoor galleries, Window Wanderland is designed to distribute the activity across the neighbourhood with no big central event that would concentrate a crowd of people in one location - an outdoor event to provide some much-needed joy as the winter comes to a close, with backing from the Community Council and the Corstorphine Trust.

Everyone in the area in and around Corstorphine is invited to transform their windows into a magical outdoor gallery between 6pm and 9pm on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th February.

We would love you to consider becoming part of the Window Wanderland trail by registering to create a display!

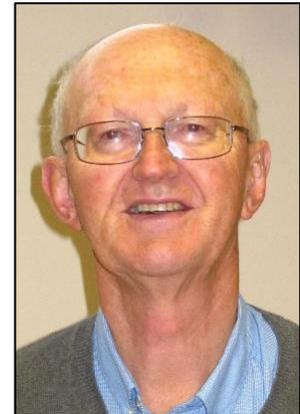
Taking part is free and you can use your windows/garden to do anything you want. It doesn't have to be complicated and there are loads of ideas to be found on the Window Wanderland website.



Check out the website: [www.windowwanderland.com/event/corstorphine-2021/](http://www.windowwanderland.com/event/corstorphine-2021/)  
or the Facebook page: [facebook.com/CorstorphineWindowWanderland](https://www.facebook.com/CorstorphineWindowWanderland)  
and have a look at this video: <https://vimeo.com/311233517> (filmed prior to the introduction of 'social distancing' rules).

If you've got any questions about the event, you can send an email via the website to the Corstorphine organiser.

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We at St Ninian's Church continue to support **Christian Aid** by fundraising within the Church and Parish enabling Christian Aid to help communities in the developing world.

### **Christian Aid Fundraising 2020**

With the spread of COVID-19, lockdown, and distancing restrictions, the Forth Bridge Crossing Sponsored Walk, Christian Aid Week (House to House collection, Soup & Sweet Lunch and Quiz) could not take place. The House-to-House Collection was replaced with a St Ninian's JustGiving page enabling the congregation and others to donate £3,322-75 including £556-55 Gift Aid for Christian Aid Week.

Normally, a retiring collection would have been held for the CA COVID-19 Emergency Appeal in April, but the virus meant the church could not be opened and so £900 was donated from St Ninian's Church Funds.

We held the customary retiring collection at the Christmas Eve Service for CA although the congregation was limited to 50. There was also a JustGiving St Ninian's page to donate online, with members without internet able to post donations to the church. This raised £1,145-70 which is around the amount raised in previous years.

To summarise, the total amount raised by Corstorphine St Ninian's for Christian Aid in 2020 was **£5,368-45**. Although less than previous years, given that we had to cancel many of the regular events, this is a creditable amount. Many thanks to everyone who helped and contributed.

We also learned lessons about other ways of fundraising for the future:

### **Christian Aid 2021 Fundraising**

CA will be celebrating 75 years of Christian Aid in the run-up to Easter. Here is the outline of fundraising plans for 2021:

1. With so much dependent on vaccine roll-out and government regulation, instead of the Forth Bridge Walk, CA are partnering with the Virtual Kiltwalk. This is a **unique way of charity fundraising** and The Hunter Foundation will add 50% to the total raised by us.
2. Christian Aid Week will be 10-16 May 2021, focusing on climate change. Virus restrictions are likely to rule out House to House collections but JustGiving is likely to happen.

*Alec Millar*    Tel :334 1471

[alec.w.millar@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:alec.w.millar@blueyonder.co.uk)



The Rock Trust would like to thank everyone who, over the last year, has helped them and the young people they work with. In testing times, your donations have made all the difference, allowing their services to remain fully operational so they can offer assistance to young people in need, with access to advice and emergency support including food and toiletry parcels.

Here are a few comments from some of the young people who have already had assistance from the Trust:

*“They’ve helped me with everything - they’ve changed my life.”*

*“They’ve helped me get my life back on track. I want to live a life that's full of joy. There’s a big difference between living and surviving.”*

*“I think they are doing so much that’s helpful. I wish they could help more people because I’ve had such a good experience.”*

At this time more than ever, continuing community support is vital and the best way to help is by a donation (however small) online at [www.rocktrust.org/donate](http://www.rocktrust.org/donate) or by cheque to Rock Trust, 55 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QY.

Many thanks.

*Susanne Hope (334 2489)*

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## And, for a quiet smile . . .

### A Special Poem for Senior Citizens

A row of bottles on my shelf  
Caused me to analyse myself  
One yellow pill I have to pop  
Goes to my heart so it won't stop

A little white one that I take  
Goes to my hands so they won't shake  
The blue ones that I use a lot  
Tell me I'm happy when I'm not

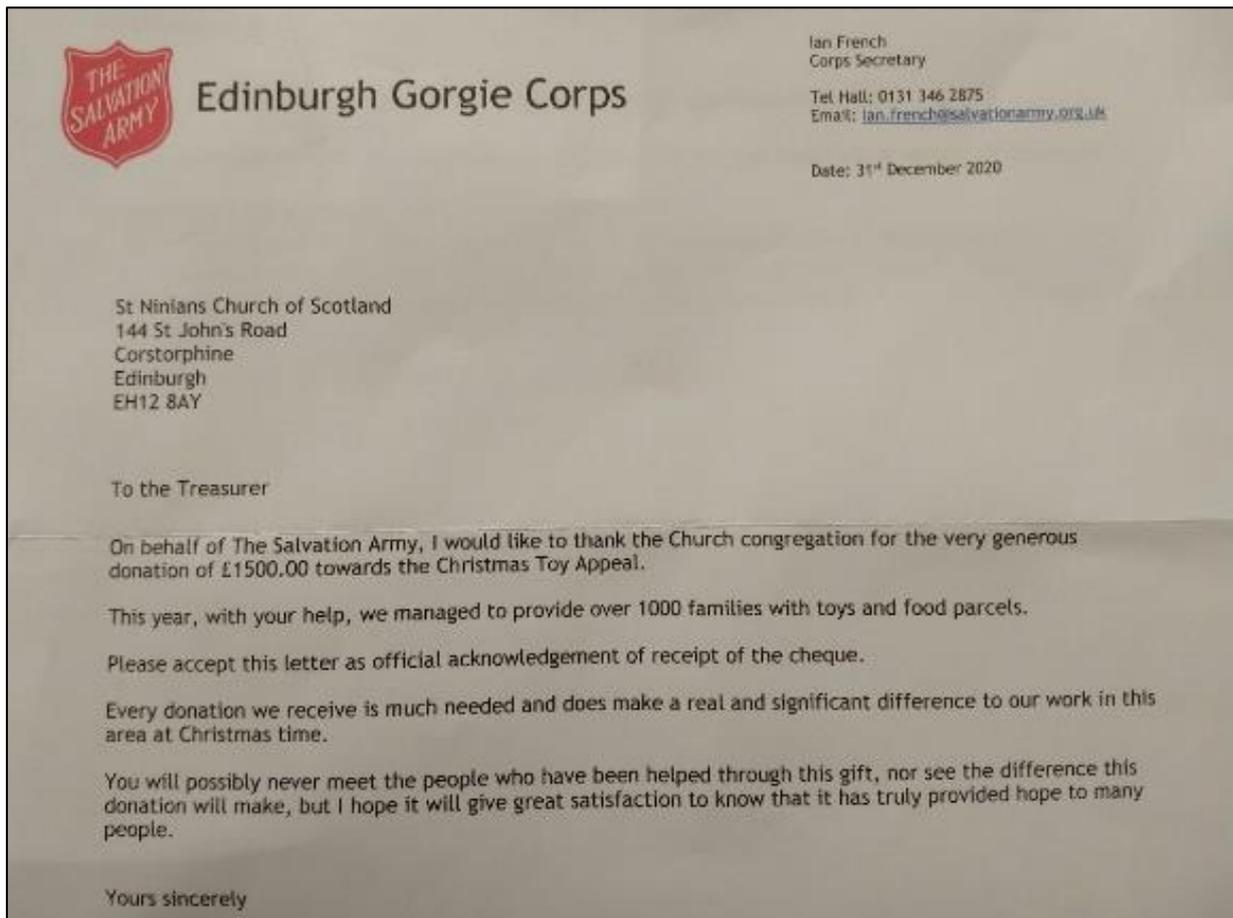
The purple pill goes to my brain  
And tells me that I have no pain  
The capsules tell me not to wheeze  
Or cough or choke or even sneeze

The red one, smallest of them all  
Goes to my blood so I won't fall  
The orange ones, very big and bright  
Prevent my leg cramps in the night

Such an array of brilliant pills  
Helping to cure all kinds of ills  
But what I'd really like to know  
Is, what tells each one where to go - ?

*Anon*

# Sunday School



A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to our appeal. The magnificent sum of £1,500 was raised and a cheque given to Barbara Wells of the Salvation Army by James. Whilst it has been a trying time for us all, St Ninian's Congregation has once again shown their generosity and many children will have had a happier Christmas because of it.

James has continued to involve the young people of the Church in the services each week and in particular the Nativity Service which was very much enjoyed by all those who watched or listened to it.

At the time of writing there is no indication of when the Sunday School will return. We are however actively looking for Leaders and Helpers for both Alpha and Juniors and, if you feel you would like to join us, please let me know. There does not have to be a commitment to do this on a weekly basis but perhaps on a shared basis.

*Diana Fairgrieve*  
*Sunday School Co-ordinator.*

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# CROSS REACH

Care you can put your faith in

Goodbye and Hello: in June 2020 a virtual goodbye was said to the Social Care Council and a virtual hello to CrossReach Board followed. Formerly the governance body was called the Board of Social Responsibility and had 90+ members. Several ladies from our Guild were members and can recall attending their meetings during Assembly time. More recently and still in 2015-16 when I was on the Social Care Council there were approximately 30 members at their meetings - still an unwieldy number. In 2020 the CrossReach Board was created with only 12 members. Having a smaller board with a greater focus on the future strategy of CrossReach, which will work under delegated authorities from the Assembly Trustees, should help in the endeavour to be a more self-sustaining organisation with a bright future.

Many of the articles in the magazine promote the importance of Wellbeing. By the nature of their services, vital care and support have been continued throughout the pandemic; the young in residential care were home-schooled with specialist care for those with physical challenges and learning disabilities, the vulnerable were shielded and, sadly, end of life care was provided. Action was taken to protect the employees who like many others were experiencing the physical and psychological toll of the pandemic. Project 2020, already in place, looks at ways of (a) recognising and responding to signs of trauma and (b) developing resilience to cope with life's challenges. In addition, the Wellbeing Project Group was set up to ensure that employees have easy access to wellbeing resources, including counselling, and also to support "Wellbeing Champions" within services who can signpost staff to these.

The theme of wellbeing continued in the Moderator's Time 2020. The week was very different to the usual week when the Moderator meets people who have chosen CrossReach to support them, people who volunteer and people who work with

CrossReach and hears their personal journeys. The Rt Rev Martin Fair has a keen commitment and interest in mental health and showed support for the work for adults with mental health problems in day services and through Heart for Art. The article about his week was supplemented with additional reports on those tiny squares which seem to appear frequently nowadays and of course you need a QR (Quick Response) code reader to find what is included! More technology required on your phone!

I have copies of the Prayer Diary for February 2021 through to January 2022. If you wish one, please telephone or e-mail me. (Details in the World Day of Prayer article).

The response to the CrossReach appeal for funding to continue providing enhanced care services to some of the most vulnerable individuals during this unprecedented emergency has been amazing. It allowed CrossReach to keep services open and staff and clients connected and protected. Last year 55 of the services were visited by the Care Inspectorate and scored 100% for quality of care and support. This is only possible through the support they receive from funders, donors and the community.

With winter the demand for services increases - the need for care, counselling, special education and practical measures - and has been exacerbated by Covid-19. CrossReach are asking for continued support in their Winter Appeal. Should you wish to donate to it, this may be done online at <https://www.justgiving.com/crossreachchurch/donate> or to CrossReach, Charis House, 47 Milton Road East, Edinburgh EH15 2SR or by enquiring about donating on 0131 454 4374.

*Valerie Thomson*



The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women of various races, cultures and traditions symbolised by an annual day of prayer and celebration to which all people are welcome. This takes place on the first Friday in March - Friday 5<sup>th</sup> this year.

It is coordinated by an international committee and carried out through national committees in more than 170 countries. Founded in USA in 1887, gradually a global ecumenical movement has developed; it came to Scotland in 1928 and the first service was held in 1930. The Scottish committee promote the aim of the WDP, organise and arrange it each year and receive the basic Order of Service adapting it as necessary and issuing it with relevant support material.

The Order of Service is prepared by a different country each year and the themes and countries are chosen at an international conference which takes place every four or five years. In 2012 in New York, this year's country was chosen; it is Vanuatu with the theme "Build on a Strong Foundation". In Brazil 2017 themes and countries were planned starting with England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2022 right up to and including 2026. The WDP Scottish committee have been successful in their bid to host the international conference in 2022; from 12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> June approximately 200 delegates from around the world will be welcomed here.

Each year in Corstorphine we participate in the WDP service. Locally, we have a contact person in each of seven churches and our programme is organised so that services are held in one church and in six care homes or sheltered housing. Working with a rota this means that each church takes responsibility for the church service once in a seven-year cycle and uses a

shortened version in a smaller venue on the other six. In recent times we have missed out on only one occasion when the 'Beast from the East' kicked in but, alas, the decision has been taken to cancel all our services for Friday 5 March 2021 due to the ongoing restrictions of the pandemic.

The Order of Service written by the Christian women in Vanuatu tells stories which reflect their history and situation today. It provides a background to Vanuatu, a republic since 1980, a Y-shaped archipelago in the South West Pacific with 83 relatively small islands of which 65 are inhabited with approximately 300,000 people of Melanesian and Polynesian origin. The islands are volcanic. The languages are French, Bislama, English and Pidgin (tank yu, mi lovem yu). The religion is Christianity.

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the people experienced the devastating winds and heavy rain of Cyclone Harold. Efforts to bring relief were hampered by the fear of spreading the Coronavirus; people had to gather in evacuation shelters making it harder to social distance or for preventative measures to be in place.

The women writing the worship material have chosen one of Jesus' parables as the Biblical basis. Matthew 7: 24-27 illustrates the story of the housebuilders and in it Jesus is encouraging us to have a strong foundation in our lives. Over the past year our lives have been disrupted by the pandemic. Places are closed, events are cancelled, and our familiar freedom is lost. We must find ways to educate the children, work from home, embrace technology to communicate and find innovative ways to maintain wellbeing. The greatest loss is the inability to travel to be with families or friends. When the strains of life come, just like the pandemic, we can become windswept and

broken inside. We need a strong foundation on which to base our lives. Jesus can be that foundation for our lives if we trust Him more deeply and build our lives with Him at the centre. For the people in Vanuatu, we pray that they will have that strong foundation in Jesus as they rebuild their homes and continue to deepen their faith.

Just as people in countries around the world will share the same service, we too in Scotland can share a service on Zoom on 5<sup>th</sup> March. (Joining details are available

from Valerie on 339 6115 or by emailing [valthomson@btinternet.com](mailto:valthomson@btinternet.com).) A Bible study group will be on Zoom from 10 am - 12 noon on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February. Daily prayers will be online from 23<sup>rd</sup> February for 10 days. The website for more information is <http://www.wdpscotland.org.uk/>. If desired donations can be made there or by cheque to the Treasurer.

*Valerie Thomson*  
Co-ordinator for WDP in Corstorphine

## The Guild

Whose we are and Whom we serve.  
Strategy: "One Journey Many Roads" 2018-21  
Theme: The Extra Mile

As we approach the end of our three-year strategy and its final theme 'The Extra Mile', it is hard to believe that at the start of our journey, 3 years ago, just how much we would be going that extra mile and more!

None of us could have envisaged 2020 would be so very different and that we would have to put our Guild on hold and put our theme into practice. The Covid 19 restrictions have been difficult for each and every one of us but, looking on the bright side, it has shown how we can all pull together in time of need. Be it shopping for members who have had to shield or self-isolate, or telephoning each other to chat and offer support.

The Committee have been holding Zoom meetings on a regular basis and it was during one of these meetings when Marion suggested a Guild newsletter. During our phone around we asked members to submit articles and very quickly 'Our News' was brought to life. The first edition was sent out in early December quickly followed by a special Christmas edition. Both were very well-received and articles soon came flooding in, thus allowing us to issue a January copy and work on a February copy too.

A huge thank you to all who have sent contributions so far. We have enjoyed reading all of these interesting and adventurous stories and look forward to reading many more. Please keep them coming - there are lots of stories to be told and we would like to hear them.

Take care, stay safe and please go that Extra Mile.

*Irene McCartney*



## Not quite “44 Scotland Street”, but a serialised story nonetheless . . .



### Trinidad & Tobago, Part 2:

*In Part 1, we learned about the establishment of a Church of Scotland charge in Port of Spain, Trinidad in 1837.*

Now on to Part 2!

I mentioned that the first part was history. However, to fully understand what was going on, we need to look at the Trinidadian history as it has a direct bearing on events. It might have been an idea to subtitle this and the following parts as “History is the enemy of change”. More of that later!

Trinidad was originally a Spanish colony, being seized by Britain in 1797. At that time the dreadful scourge of slavery existed, and the sugar plantation owners were very dependent on slave labour. That all changed with the Slavery Act 1838. Not surprisingly the emancipated slaves were unwilling to return to work on the sugar plantations. As a matter of necessity, labour had to be found to work the plantations. As a result, an alternative work force had to be found and that resulted in an immigration scheme which to a large extent resulted in the arrival of a very large number of what were then East Indians on an “indenture scheme”. As a result, many tens thousands of East Indians arrived in Trinidad and became a

heterogeneous population. That, as you will learn in due course, had a significant bearing on the events in 1999 at Greyfriar’s/St Anne’s. But more of that later.

The sugar industry in Trinidad collapsed in 1889. Trinidad became independent in 1962, and it became a Republic within the Commonwealth in 1976.

As I mentioned earlier, the Trestrail sisters arrived to brief me as to what the issues were in the Port of Spain. They came with their married sister from London. They were formidable ladies. I cannot even recollect knowing their first names. They had spent all of their long lives in Trinidad. Their father had owned the emporium on the island, the Harrod’s of the Port of Spain. However, the History of the church mentions they were both Elders and their first names were Jocelyn and Yvonne. Yvonne had been President of the Greyfriar’s Woman’s Guild, and a Mrs Norma Cameron had been President of Greyfriar’s/St Anne’s Benevolent Society! There had been a Mission at Arouca. Rev. Felix Barrow ministered there from 1932 until 1956. His daughter was the Organist at St Anne’s Church. The church at Arouca fell down on the day of Rev. Barrow’s death! A Mission Station had continued at

Sangre until the time of my visit and was ministered to by a young Canadian minister who I recollect was on the evangelical wing. More about him later but he had friends in high places in the Government.

Well, what was the problem? Trinidad is situated far to the south of the Caribbean, and you can in fact see the coast of Venezuela from the coast of Trinidad. It is over 1,500 miles from the nearest Church of Scotland, which is to the north in Bermuda. The Board of World Mission in Edinburgh had resolved that it made sense to merge the Greyfriar's/St Anne's congregation into the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago. Well, many of you may remember the Cuban missile crisis in the 1960's - that had nothing on this!



*Greyfriars/St Anne's Church  
and Hall*

There was massive resistance to this proposal for historic reasons which I will disclose later! The Board of World Mission decided again perhaps perfectly sensibly that they would send a retired Church of Scotland Minister and his wife to Trinidad for some months "with a view to facilitating Union with the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago".

So, a minister employee of the Board of World Mission was sent out to introduce to the congregation this Minister and his wife at a Sunday Service. All went well and the Minister and his wife got the flight to Port of Spain. However, on the Sunday morning, there was no sign of the Minister, but his wife arrived. The congregation were advised that regrettably the Minister was

not with them as he had been detained and was in the cells at Piarco Airport as he did not have a work permit- which he did not need - and that he was not in a position to be introduced! Remember the Canadian assistant Minister at Sangre who had friends in high places!

Matters were not helped when the congregation were advised of this and the Kirk Session cheered and left the Sanctuary to hold an alternative service in the hall. When word got back to Edinburgh, perhaps unsurprisingly, the entire Kirk Session was suspended.

I learned all this from the Trestrail sisters. I was told a Congregational Meeting had been fixed "by Edinburgh" to vote on the issue of Union with the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago. and it was to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1999, and I was asked to go out to give advice for that meeting. A Committee was masterminding opposition to the vote for Union!

I would have to be in Trinidad for a week as, after the meeting on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> April, I would not be able to get a flight back from Trinidad until the following Saturday. I took a week's holiday, the Committee paid my air fare, and I stayed in the hotel in which one of the main opponents of the Union was the Finance Director. I settled in on the Saturday evening 3<sup>rd</sup> April, and attended Communion on Easter Sunday, the following morning.

A meeting of "the Committee" had been fixed for the Sunday evening and I met members of the Committee at Church on the Sunday morning. One of them stood out. He was an indigenous Trinidadian, was 91, a retired lawyer with a shock of white hair. Did he make his presence felt at the Congregational Meeting? Well, he most certainly did! You will need to wait to find out why!

To be continued . . .

*Andrew Gibb*

# Past Times in St Ninian's

## The Rev George Burns DD, 1790-1876



The first minister of Corstorphine Free Church in 1844 was the Rev Dr George Burns who faithfully served during its vital first two decades to establish it firmly in Corstorphine during his ministry between 1844 and 1865.

George Burns was the youngest of four sons born in Bo'ness in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to John Burns, Land Surveyor of the Customs, and Grizzell Ferrier, his wife. The local parish register shows George's birth date as 12 October 1790. From his job description, John Burns clearly held an important post at Bo'ness and accordingly his family would be comparatively much better off than many of their contemporaries. This doubtless assisted all the Burns off-spring in their education.

After studying at the University of Edinburgh, George was ordained by the University of Aberdeen in 1816 at the age of 26, suggesting that the family was well enough off to enable him to continue his studies until well into his twenties. The culmination of all his hard work came in the following year, 1817, when the University of St Andrews conferred on him the [presumably post-graduate] degree of Doctor of Divinity (DD). This explains why, in the records from the outset, George is always referred to as the Rev George Burns DD and known as Dr Burns.

His first ministerial appointment in 1817 was an adventurous one, to the first Presbyterian church in St John's, New Brunswick, in what was then known as British North America. A source in St John's suggests that the first church was named St Andrew's in honour of their first minister's university, though the truth of that may be treated with caution, since St Andrew's was a name adopted by many Presbyterian churches in honour of Scotland's patron saint, which seems more plausible.

Dr Burns seems to have served acceptably in St John's for well over a decade. By 1827 he had returned to Scotland temporarily to marry Esther Crawford White Struthers, a daughter of the Rev James Struthers, minister of College Street Church, Edinburgh, as entered in the parish church marriage register of St Andrews and St Leonards. The bridegroom is carefully recorded as "Minister of the Scotch Church in the city of St John, New Brunswick". Soon after that the couple must have made the long voyage back to New Brunswick as their first two children, Jane and Esther, were born there. Perhaps the parents then had a yearning to return to Scotland, for the records show that in November 1831 George was admitted to the charge of Tweedsmuir in the Borders, a small village which still straddles the main A701 road between Edinburgh and Moffat - later at the heart of John Buchan's country.

The 1841 Census for Tweedsmuir shows that George and Esther had three additional children between 1833 and 1839: George Ferrier, James John and Millikin Pryor. We have no information about the success or otherwise of Dr Burns's ministry in Tweedsmuir, except to say that he clearly agreed with the aims underpinning the movement which led to the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 over the long-standing dispute as to who should have the right to call a minister - the heritors (landowners), or the congregation. It must have taken a good deal of courage for Church of Scotland ministers, especially those like him aged 53 with a wife and family, to abandon their manses and stipends for a wholly uncertain future in the newly established Free Church of Scotland. Yet from his call in January 1844 to be the first minister

of the new Corstorphine Free Church, his energy and enthusiasm produced startling results from the outset. Only four months from the laying of the foundation stone, a new church on our current site seating about 260 was dedicated on 19th May 1844. Accounts show that by mid-1845 seat-rents for 190 seats had been paid - a measure of the early strength of the Free Church congregation.

Dr Burns then from his own means had a fine new house built as a manse for himself and his family in what is now Ladywell Avenue. The 1851 Census shows that it was the first house to be built on that line of road, named Estherville after Mrs Burns. The Free Church later bought the house from Dr Burns to serve as the manse, which it continued to do for well over a century until 1983 when it was sold, and the current manse was acquired in Templeland Road.

The photograph of Dr Burns at the head of this article was clearly taken towards the end of his life. Attempts to find an image of him at an earlier age have been unsuccessful. He served as our minister from 1844 for a period of 21 years until his retirement in 1865 on the grounds of failing health, thus setting a standard of long service which has been a demanding yardstick for all our ministers since then to follow. Dr Burns survived in retirement until 12<sup>th</sup> February 1876 when he died at the age of 85. An obituary states: "By the death of the Rev George Burns DD the Free Church has lost the last and youngest of four brothers whose names have been for generations associated with both the Established and Free Churches as the zealous advocates of everything which it is a Christian Church's duty to maintain and promote."

It is good to believe that in his retirement years he would be able to see for himself the remarkable re-development of his church in 1870 from the basic, probably wooden, building of 1844 to the fine stone-built church with the high-pitched A roof, rose window and bell tower, built in the early years of his successor, the Rev James Morrison. Dr Burns was buried in Corstorphine Old Parish Church graveyard beside his wife, Esther, who had predeceased him in 1870. Our Burns Hall, built in 1888, is named after him.

It is pleasing to recall that as recently as Easter Sunday 2019, Ian and Cathy MacKay, of Ottawa, Canada, attended Morning Service and afterwards came round to the Martin Shields Hall for coffee and a chat. To our great and totally unexpected pleasure, Cathy identified herself as the 3 x Great-Granddaughter of Dr George and Esther Burns. For a report of their visit and more details of our earliest history as a Free Church congregation see the Summer 2019 edition of the Quarterly which contains articles marking the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of our first church in May 1844.



*Andrew Broom*

*James with Cathy and Ian MacKay.  
She is a direct descendant of  
Dr George and Esther Burns*

# Some highlights from recent meetings of Corstorphine Community Council

## 1) POLICE REPORT

Housebreaking to domestic homes is down 55% on last year in Corstorphine and Murrayfield.

## 2) TRAFFIC and COVID-19

At the December meeting three options were presented on extensions to the existing Spaces for People provisions for Corstorphine High Street. The least draconian option was chosen which would involve extending eastwards and westwards and would include priority to oncoming traffic provisions at either end. The revised option was presented at the January meeting at which additional measures were suggested; as these are outwith the scope of the Spaces for People programme they will be referred to the proposed South Corstorphine Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme. It is hoped to implement the extensions in Corstorphine High Street by the end of February.

## 3) WEST CRAIGS etc. UPDATE

The West Craigs site is allocated within the Local Development Plan for the delivery of 1,700 residential units. The site is split in ownership between West Craigs Ltd. and Taylor Wimpey.

Planning permission was granted for Taylor Wimpey to construct 250 dwellings on the site. Taylor Wimpey will directly deliver improvements to the Craigs Road/Maybury Road Junction. Taylor Wimpey will also make a proportionate contribution to improvements at the Barnton and Maybury junctions. Within the West Craigs Ltd part (the largest proportion of the site) detailed planning permission has only been granted for the delivery of 300 affordable residential units. The contribution for road and associated improvements will be based on a cost per residential unit.

Apparently, in the next Local Development Plan, these areas to the west of Edinburgh will be deemed to be of strategic importance due to ready access by train, tram, bus and cycle.

## 4) COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

In response to concerns about road and pavement conditions in the recent snow and ice, the Lord Provost stated that the type of grit currently used needs to be compressed into the road surface so that it is effective and currently there isn't enough traffic to do this; a different type of grit will be considered for the future.

## 5) PLANNING

Mactaggart & Mickel have confirmed that St. John's Road redevelopment will be starting towards the end of 2021, after current leases expire.

*Ian Kirkpatrick*

**ST. NINIAN'S PARISH CHURCH**  
**GENERAL FUND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**  
**AND BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2021**

	<b>Budget 2021 £</b>	<b>Actual 2020 £</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
<b>Ministry and Mission</b>		
National Stipend and Mission and Renewal Fund	88,600	100,459
<b>Congregational expenses</b>		
Presbytery Dues	2,088	3,120
Pulpit Supply	420	60
Minister's Travel and Expenses	960	720
Local Salaries	37,140	33,726
Fabric - Renewals, Repairs and Maintenance	10,870	9,404
Hall Running Costs	11,884	11,515
Property Insurance	5,003	5,376
Manse Council Tax	3,456	3,355
Office Expenses	6,850	7,243
Other Expenses	6,750	7,414
	<b>85,421</b>	<b>81,933</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>174,021</b>	<b>182,392</b>
<b>RECEIPTS other than Offerings</b>		
Use Of Church Halls	19,000	20,567
Investment Income	3,254	4,942
Other Receipts	750	9,957
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,004</b>	<b>35,466</b>
<b>Amount to be met from Offerings</b>	<b>151,017</b>	<b>146,926</b>
<b>Offertry and Tax Recoveries</b>		
Congregation Offerings	120,401	122,610
Tax Recovery on Gift Aid	25,284	26,284
	<b>145,685</b>	<b>148,894</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) to date</b>	<b>(5,332)</b>	<b>1,968</b>
<b>Before Legacies Received</b>		<b>£10,000</b>

For the year to 31 December 2020 the surplus (before legacies) was £1,968 (2019 - £15,277). The reduction of **£13,309** between 2019 and 2020 was entirely due to the impact of the Covid 19 epidemic which is explained as follows:

- **Lower income (-£22,082)** – arising from reductions in Offerings (-£9,616), Hall Income (-£17,274), Investment Income (-£978) offset by an increase in other income (£5,066) largely from the government Job Retention Scheme to cover salary costs during furlough
- **Lower general expenditure (£9,493)** – arising from reductions in almost all areas of cost

The Budget for 2021 was based on the assumption that the impact of Covid 19 would continue for at least part of the year and that the likely outcome would be a deficit on the General Fund of **£5,332**. The budget was prepared in October which was prior to the current set of Covid restrictions so the position is subject to change.