

KIRK NEWS

May 2024

No: 841



BLACKHALL
ST. COLUMBA'S
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

To Glorify God.....To Proclaim Christ.....and To Serve Others

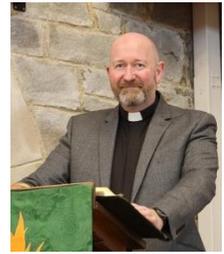
The Fruit of the Spirit
is
Love JOY Peace
Patience
Kindness Goodness
Faithfulness
Gentleness
and Self-control

Galatians 5: verse 22

May 2024

‘Suffer the little children’.

In the context of my title, the word ‘suffer’ was an admonition, by Jesus, to allow the smallest of children to access him and his teaching. However, the word ‘suffer’ has a clear, alternative meaning in today’s society and, unless you are a hermit or have nothing to do with any form of news outlet, you will be all too aware that, especially in areas of conflict, it is the children who suffer. We only need to think this year about the children in Africa abducted by Boko Haram, the Ukrainian children forcibly relocated from their homes in the Ukraine to foster homes in Russia and the children killed as a result of the sustained military campaign in Gaza by Israel.



All this and much more, leads people to ask the question; if there is a God, why does He allow suffering? The type of suffering I have mentioned is a direct result of the evil that humankind enacts. For some, the question about evil is the same as the question about suffering. The other day I saw an article on Facebook which addressed that very question.

Why did God create evil?

A Professor at the university asked his students the following question: ‘Everything that exists was created by God?’ One student bravely answered: ‘Yes, sir, everything was created by God. ‘Did God create everything?’ the Professor asked. “Yes, sir,” replied the student. The Professor asked: ‘If God created everything, then God created evil, since it exists. And according to the principle that our deeds define ourselves, then God is evil. ‘The student became silent after hearing such an answer. The Professor was very pleased with himself. He boasted to students for proving once again that faith in God is a myth.

Another student raised his hand and said: 'Can I ask you a question, Professor? "Of course," replied the Professor. The student got up and asked: 'Professor, is cold a thing?' He replied: "What kind of question is that? Of course it exists. Have you ever been cold?" The other students laughed at the young man's question. The young man answered: 'Actually, sir, cold doesn't exist. According to the laws of physics, what we consider to be cold, is the absence of heat. A person or object can be studied on whether it has energy or transmits energy. Absolute zero (-460 degrees Fahrenheit) is a complete absence of heat. All matter becomes inert and unable to react at this temperature. Cold does not exist. We created this word to describe what we feel in the absence of heat.'

The student continued: 'Professor, does darkness exist? "Of course it exists." replied the Professor. 'You're wrong again, sir. Darkness also does not exist. Darkness is the absence of light. We can study the light but not the darkness. We can use Newton's prism to spread white light across multiple colours and explore the different wavelengths of each colour. You can't measure darkness. A simple ray of light can break into the world of darkness and illuminate it. How can you tell how dark a certain space is? You measure how much light is presented. Isn't it so? Darkness is a term man uses to describe what happens in the absence of light.'

In the end, the young man asked the Professor: 'Sir, does evil exist? 'This time he was less certain, but the Professor answered: 'Of course, as I said before. We see it every day. Cruelty, crime and violence are observed daily throughout the world. These examples are nothing but a manifestation of evil.' To this, the student answered: 'Evil does not exist, sir, or at least it does not exist for itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is like darkness and cold it is a man-made word to describe the absence of God.'

God did not create evil. Evil is not faith or love, which exist as light and warmth. Evil is the result of the absence of Divine love in the human heart. It is the kind of cold that comes when there is no heat, or the kind of darkness that comes when there is no light.'

The Facebook article credited the student with being Albert Einstein, although I am not convinced that a) the story is not apocryphal and b) if it is true, that it was Einstein that was involved. Nevertheless, the story raises an important theological concept and one that, I believe, holds true to all we know about God. Much of what is wrong with the world today can be attributed to an absence of God. Indeed, there is one theological understanding of the concept of 'hell' - as a mere absence of God.

The apostle Paul indicated that the root cause of sin came from 'the fall', in other words from human beings' disobedience to God. Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)



Perhaps, if a few more people followed this instruction, then there would be a lot less suffering in the world.

Best wishes

Fergus

Youth Service



Fergus gives the address with the help of some assistants.

Here is a selection of photographs from the Youth Service held in the church on the 25th of March 2024. This service marked 'Thinking Day' for the uniformed youth organisations at Blackhall St. Columba's and Drylaw Parish Church. The Junior Singers performed for this occasion.



In good voice



The Junior Singers

Kirk Session Report – General Business

The Kirk Session

The Kirk Session met on Tuesdays 20 February, 19 March and 16 April 2024.

Asbestos Register

Lindsay Duguid, our Health & Safety Administrator, has produced a detailed Asbestos Register for all the church buildings. This is a live document which will be updated on a regular basis as is required.

Catering Co-ordinator

Lynn Bunney has volunteered to take on the role of Catering Co-ordinator from Elspeth Williamson.

Correspondence

Letters of thanks were received from:

Hopscotch in respect of the £10,000 presented to them by the Watch Committee.

Order of Service / Intimations

It has been decided that for a trial period, a small number of Order of Service / Intimations sheets will be available at the rear of the Sanctuary.

Premises and Staff

Following the retirement of Frances Douglas as Premises & Staff Team Leader: -

- Dianne Fulton will take on Human Resource responsibilities.
- Ruth Laidlaw and Mike Whiteside will share the responsibility of premises as that area spans their respective roles of Halls Convener and Fabric Convener.

Kirk Session Report – General Business

Presbytery Elder

It was agreed that Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk, would continue as Presbytery Elder for another year.

Roll

The Kirk Session was pleased to admit to membership: -

By certificate of Transference:

- Mrs Fiona Marchbanks, Learmonth Avenue
- Mrs Norma Goodlad, Queen's Road
- Mrs Eileen Harvey, Queen's Road

By Resolution:

- Finlay McPherson, Columba Road
- Mrs Matilda McPherson, Columba Road
- Mrs Harriet Martin, Hillview
- Mr David Mowat, Orchard Road South

Wi-Fi across the halls

Work is in hand to have an effective Wi-Fi coverage across the Sanctuary and halls.

Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk



Church Family News

Congregational Changes

New Members

We welcome new members admitted by Certificate of Transference

Ms Norma Goodlad

Mrs Eileen Harvey

Mrs Fiona Marchbanks

New members admitted by Resolution of the Kirk Session

Mr Finlay and Mrs Matilda McPherson

Mrs Harriet Martin

Mr David Mowat



Deaths

Sadly, the following members have passed away. Our thoughts and prayers are with their family members and friends.

February

4th Miss Elizabeth Haddow

26th Mr Douglas Yuill

Sheila Mackintosh, Roll Keeper

Sakura



Have you been admiring the cherry blossom in the church grounds?

In Japan, cherry blossoms or Sakura, are much celebrated. Cherry blossoms are a symbolic flower of spring, a time of renewal, new beginnings and ephemeral life.

The Presbytery Plan

An update on the planned Union with Drylaw Parish Church.

Work towards the Union has been a slow process, but it is moving forward. The Basis of Union document (at the foot of this report) is, at the time of writing, more or less agreed by the various National Committees of the Church. Once we have final approval there are several steps for each congregation to take leading up to the Union. The plan (provisional) will be: -

1. Late May / early June both Kirk Sessions meet to discuss the Basis of Union
2. Mid-June both Kirk Sessions will vote on the Basis of Union. Presbytery representatives will be present.
3. In August, Edicts will read in each congregation over two Sundays. At the first there will be a presentation followed by an open discussion.
4. Later in August both congregations will vote on the Union under the supervision of Presbytery representatives. Drylaw will vote to accept the Rev. Fergus Cook as their Minister.
5. On the 10th of September a final approval will be sought from Presbytery.
6. On the basis that approval is forthcoming, both Kirk Sessions will come together and the real work starts.

The Basis of the Union

The congregation of Blackhall St Columba's Church of Scotland Edinburgh (SC008756) and the congregation of Drylaw Parish Church of Scotland Edinburgh (SC005744) will be united from a date to be determined by Presbytery, and that on the following terms and conditions:

Kirk Session Report – The Basis of the Union

1. **Name:** The name of the united charge will be Edinburgh: Blackhall Drylaw Church of Scotland and Scottish Charity Number SC008756 will be retained.
2. **Transference of Property and Funds:** The property and funds belonging to or held on behalf of each congregation will belong to or be held on behalf of the united charge and any transference necessary will be duly effected.
3. **Places of Worship:** Both churches at present used and occupied by Blackhall St Columba's and Drylaw, will be the places of worship of the united charge. Services shall be conducted each Sunday at times to be decided by the Minister and Kirk Session, subject to the approval of Presbytery.
4. **Territorial Responsibility:** The bounds to be served by the united charge will be the bounds of the parishes of Blackhall and Drylaw, or as the Presbytery will determine.
5. **Kirk Session:** The Elders of both Kirk Sessions will form, with the minister, the Kirk Session of the united charge.
6. **Congregational Management:** The temporal affairs of the united congregation will be administered by the Kirk Session in terms of the Unitary Constitution, the Delegation of Assembly being authorised to issue the appropriate Deed of Constitution to the said congregation.

Kirk Session Report – The Basis of the Union

1. **Minister:** The Rev. Fergus Cook, currently minister at Blackhall St Columba’s Church of Scotland, shall be the minister of the united charge in terms of Section 8.2 of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act 8, 2021).
2. **Manse.** The manse of the congregation of Blackhall St Columba’s Church of Scotland shall be the manse of the united charge. The manse of the congregation of Drylaw Parish Church of Scotland shall be sold, let or otherwise disposed of, subject to the titles on which it is held, and subject to the approval of the Presbytery and, if necessary, of the General Trustees or the General Assembly. The free proceeds of any such sale or let shall: (a) if falling within the scope of the General Trustees (Delegated Powers) act (Act 7, 1995), be credited to the benefit of the congregation in the Consolidated Fabric Fund; or (b) if not falling within the scope of the said Act, be held and applied for fabric purposes in connection with the properties of the congregation.
9. **Ministerial Support:** The stipend of the Charge will be paid in accordance with the terms of the National Stipend Scheme.
10. **Power to Readjust:** While the articles and terms will form the Basis of Union for the two congregations now uniting, the united charge will be free, like other congregations, to adjust arrangements under the authority of Presbytery as need may arise.

Eddie Thorn
Session Clerk

Defibrillators – An Update

Following on from the article that appeared in the December 2023 issue of the Blackhall Bulletin, I can report that Anne Mitchell, lead trainer with St John Scotland, together with her team, has led four separate hourly CPR training sessions, in the coffee area of our Church Sanctuary. These sessions included demonstrations of both defibrillators and allowed hands on practice with the devices. **The emphasis always being on starting CPR and calling 999 first,** before going to fetch the defibrillator.

The sessions were very well attended, and we received a lot of encouraging feedback from people as they were leaving. Altogether, 61 people attended the sessions between November 2023 and March this year. Combined with 53 people who attended the sessions led by David Booth from Scottish Ambulance, before lockdown, the total stands at 114 people who would perhaps feel more confident now, of deploying a device in an emergency or talking someone else through the procedure.

Those who attended the training sessions were from both church and community and included some from at least two local businesses. We were very grateful that St John could afford us four training sessions, and pleased that the demand for training lived up to expectation. Since all the sessions were provided free of charge, the church has donated to the St John Scotland Charity.

I have been assisted in monitoring and maintaining the defibrillators throughout, by both Fiona Drinnan and Lorraine Maxwell, as well as Mike Whiteside for installation issues, however, since Fiona has now decided to step down, Isobel Morton has kindly accepted the offer to join our team.

Betty Watt

Church Diary

May 2024

4 th	4pm	Saturday afternoon Monte Cassino Service of Remembrance. All welcome.
5 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
12 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
19 th	10.30am	Morning Worship at DRYLAW Parish Church
	3pm	Cluster Churches Joint Pentecost Service on Silverknowes Foreshore. All Welcome.
26 th	10.30pm	Morning Worship

June 2024

2 nd	10.30am	Sacrament of Holy Communion
	3pm	Short service of Communion for those who struggle to attend the 10.30am service
	6 – 7pm	“Golden Oldies,” an opportunity to sing a selection of our favourite traditional hymns.
9 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
16 th	10.30am	Morning Worship. Family service marking Father’s Day.
23 rd	10.30am	Morning Worship
30 th	10.30am	Morning Worship

July 2024

7 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
14 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
21 st	10.30am	Morning Worship Joint Service at Blackhall
28 th	10.30am	Morning Worship

Sunday morning services can be joined on Live Stream at www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk.

Sunday worship at Drylaw Parish Church - please join on Zoom Meeting ID: 859 3565 5877, Password: 630348 from 10.20am.

WATCH Committee

This year's chosen charity is **Blood Cancer UK**. Who are Blood Cancer UK? "They are the UK's specialist blood cancer charity, working to beat cancer within a generation."

With an ever-increasing number of people being diagnosed with cancer, this affects most families across the country and folks of all ages. It was decided that this Edinburgh based charity would be a good cause to support. The research to date into blood cancers has changed so many people's lives. Many different types of cancers have been discovered and new treatments have been found and trialled although, at present there are still no cures. Blood Cancer UK is based in Anderson Street, Leith Edinburgh. They give support to those who have had a diagnosis of Blood Cancer. They have an online forum, which is very helpful, and Haematology Nurses who can discuss one to one treatment, side effects and outcomes.

To start our fund raising we will have a **Fun Coin Collection** starting on the 7th of July 2024. On Saturday 5th October, we will hold our fabulous **Coffee and Craft Morning** with lots of delicious baking, craftwork and plant produce stalls. (We seek stall holders, if you would like to help, please contact the WATCH committee. Any Crafters who can help - please contact Ishbel 07368 199310). In December, we will hold our amazing **Christmas Fair**. It will be held on Saturday the 7th of December, please pop the date in your diaries.

Now for something completely different.

We would like to make a Calendar for 2025 to sell and raise funds for Blood Cancer UK featuring your pets.

Do you have a photogenic pet? Would you like your pet to appear in a calendar?

Around St. Columba's

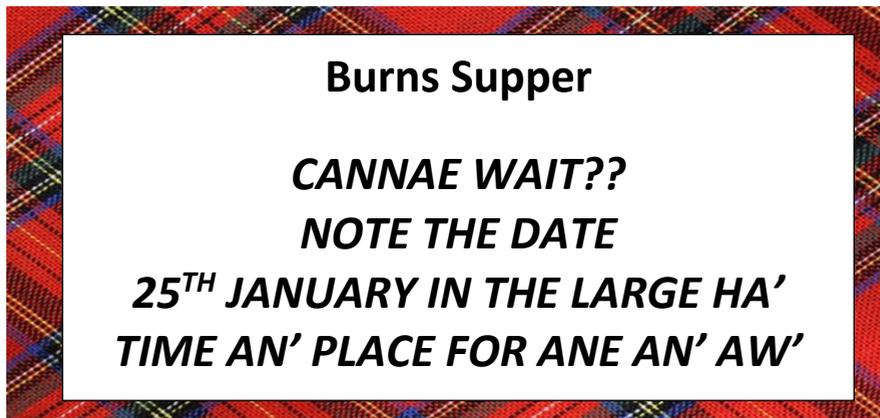
Calendar Competition Entries: Be it cat or dog, horse or mouse, tortoise or rabbit, start taking your photos and send or hand them in to the WATCH Committee at Blackhall St Columba's Church.

Photographs should be printed on A4 sized paper with your name and contact telephone number and not forgetting the name of your pet. (If you have a problem with the printing of these, please contact WATCH Committee). Photographs must be with us by the 30th of June. Thirteen photographs will be chosen by an independent panel. The winners will be notified and asked to provide an electronic submission.

So, looking forward to seeing all your lovely, cute pets.

Lynn Bunney WATCH Committee.

Burns Supper



Sandy Weir



Flower Ministry

Once again, it is the time to say thank you to all of you who help the Flower Ministry to flourish.

Those who donate funds to buy flowers, money is always needed, those who arrange them, your skills and time are so welcome, those who deliver them, your patience and commitment are special. We must also thank those of you who bring names of people who would benefit from a small bunch of flowers during a difficult time or a major celebration.

Without you the people who receive the flowers would not get them at all. The thank you notes, emails and telephone call calls explaining what a difference the flowers have made to the recipient are a testament to your Love in Action.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU.

If any of you reading this would like to help in any way, please get in touch with me. Alison Hewat rajahewat1@btinternet.com or telephone or leave a note with the church office. We will welcome you with open arms.

Sunday Worship at Blackhall St Columba's

Blackhall St Columba's Celebrates the Sacrament of Holy Communion



DINNER FOR EIGHT

Friendships are formed around food!

A new commandment I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you also must love one another.
John 13:34

We can't really love one another if we don't know each other properly and so the Outreach Team is launching a new initiative which we hope many of you will want to take part in to get to know other members of the family of God here at Blackhall St Columba's better.

Dinner for 8 is an opportunity for groups of eight people (four pairs in each group) to connect in a casual, relaxed atmosphere over a succession of four meals of some sort over a period of several months and get to know each other better by doing so.

If this is something that interests you, you can sign up as a couple whether you join in with your partner, family member or friend. Each group of eight will be formed thoughtfully, with a view to encouraging and forming new friendships or in the strengthening of mere acquaintances. No one should request to be placed in a particular group. The idea behind this initiative is to mix everyone together.

Once groups have been formed, the four pairs will decide amongst themselves when and where they will meet. Each pair will take it in turn to host one of the four gatherings before the end of the year. The meal to be shared can take any form at all. It could be a picnic, a BBQ, a dinner at someone's home, an afternoon tea, a coffee morning, food ordered in from a takeaway place, a potluck supper or anything else you wish. No one should feel any pressure about the food preparation as this is all about friendship.

Outreach

If **Dinner for 8** sounds like something you want to participate in, please give the names and email addresses of your couple to Shona Cook by 1st June. 2024.

(07981970054/shonacook505@gmail.com)

Shona Cook

Volunteers Required

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU

WE NEED YOU!

VOLUNTEERS required!



- When? - On Sunday mornings at coffee
- Wednesday PEACE Services 12 noon
- Friday Soup n' Chat 12noon to 2pm

Who? - We seek drivers, cooks, kitchen hands and companions.

INTERESTED?

Then join us for coffee and pastries on SATURDAY the 11th of May 2024 in the Sanctuary.

Come and meet and chat with the volunteers and find out what is involved. We will also discuss what we can do to improve our service.

We Look forward to meeting our existing teams and lots of new folks.

Ruth, Anne, Val and Lynn

Golf Tournament June 2024

Involvement 88 Cup

Once again, the Outing will be held at Ravelston Golf Course on Friday 28th of June starting at 1.30pm prompt.

Please reply by email to francesdouglas.1@btinternet.com with your Name, Handicap and if you would like to play 9 holes or 18 holes. Please also let me know if you would like to stay for a two-course supper after the game.

The Competition is open to all members of the congregation so do come along and enjoy an afternoon of golf, good food, fun and company.

The cost will depend on how many Ravelston members are able to play in order to sign in guests. If you do not have a handicap, we can organise this for you. Numbers for supper are limited to 30 so please reply soonest. Thank you.

France Douglas

Secretary

francesdouglas.1@btinternet.com , 07795204646



OUTREACH EVENTS – MAY to JULY 2024

The Outreach Team has created another programme of events for the next four months which we hope you will take note of and support as best you can. By having the dates well in advance, you can pop them in your diaries and keep the dates free.

As a family of God here in Blackhall, it is not only good but essential to get together regularly to socialise and enjoy a time of fellowship which encourages new friendships and strengthens existing ones. We cannot truly love one another unless we know each other.

The Outreach Team

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 4th May - "Movies @ St. Columba's"



The Third Man

Please join us in the **Sanctuary at 3pm** for a classic film noir described as “a British movie masterpiece” starring Joseph Cotton and Orson Welles.

Refreshments will be served. No charge for this event but donations towards the treats will be gratefully received. No ticket required.

Saturday 25th May – “Art and Culture @ St. Columba’s”

The Burrell Collection: Treasures Great and Small by Dr Maureen Park

Please join us in the Sanctuary at 2.30pm.

In March 2022, the Burrell Collection reopened to the public following a 5-year closure and a £38m transformation. In 2023, it was named 'Art Fund Museum of the Year'. Sir William and Lady Constance Burrell's remarkable gift to Glasgow, in 1944, of almost 9,000 works of art, dazzles visitors with its wonderful treasures. This illustrated talk will provide a brief introduction to Sir William and his collection before we examine in detail a small selection of its highlights - including paintings, sculpture, stonework, carpets, tapestries and stained glass from around the world - dating from ancient times to the 20th century.

Our speaker Dr Maureen Park, in her early career, was Assistant Keeper of Fine Art at Glasgow Art Gallery and Curator of Hags Castle Museum. She has retired as Senior Lecturer in History of Art at Glasgow University's Adult Education Department. For more than 40 years, she has lectured at the university and for many art, historical and medical societies and she has published widely. Her PhD led to the publication of her book, *Art in Madness*, in 2010, and an exhibition on the art produced by 19th century patients at Crichton Royal Hospital in Dumfries.

Refreshments will be served. No charge for this event but donations towards a charity of Maureen's choosing will be gratefully received. No ticket required.

Saturday 29th of June- “Music @ St. Columba’s”



Ben Kearsley on acoustic guitar

Please join us in the Sanctuary at 12.30pm. Ben Kearsley is returning to perform for us. Ben will perform a selection of music by J S Bach on the acoustic guitar. He will amaze and delight you with his skill and expertise in this one-hour performance.

Saturday 7th of July - “Movies @ St. Columba’s”



The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Please join us in the Sanctuary at 3pm. This film is based on the children’s story by C.S. Lewis. The story reveals the gospel message

of Christianity through the conflict between good and evil, the presence of sin and the power of overcoming it.

Refreshments will be served. No charge for this event but donations towards the treats will be gratefully received. No ticket required.

Saturday 27th July- “Dessert Island Discs”

Please join us in the Sanctuary at 7.30pm to be whisked away to a desert island to meet with our latest shipwrecked adventurer who will share their choices of music and chat about their life. This will be followed by the sharing of some delicious, sweet treats and desserts and a time of fellowship. No charge for this event. No ticket required.





Soup n Chat
Blackhall St Columba's
Every two weeks from
Friday 10th May
12 noon to 2pm
All Welcome

“Soup n Chat”

Soup n Chat has been running every fortnight on Fridays for a year. It is much enjoyed by over 40 people. A band of “Chat hosts” and a very efficient kitchen team help make it an informal & friendly meeting place. Great chat, lovely soup, biscuits and coffee make it a social occasion to boost our wellbeing and reduce the loneliness some amongst us experience.

On Friday 24th May at 12noon, our scheduled meeting will be our first birthday bash. We do look forward to welcoming our regulars and those who have thought about coming to Soup n Chat but just never got around to it.

For more details contact me on 07875 558977.

Michael Cockburn - Lead and admin volunteer.

Around St Columba's

The Prayer Circle

Do you know someone in need of prayer? A friend or relative perhaps who is unwell, grieving or find themselves in a position where they don't know where to turn?



Blackhall St Columba's Prayer Circle is a small team of people who will pray frequently for anyone in need of help in complete confidence. We are also happy to accept prayer requests giving thanks for a happy event or asking for God's help with any forthcoming personal endeavour or challenge. Please contact Prayer Circle secretary Betty Watt at lzbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk or Fergus Cook at Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk or 0131 466 7503. Alternatively, please put your request slip into the locked box on the table in the church vestibule.

Spring blossoms in our Church Garden



Around St Columba's

The "Buon Appetito" Club

Calling all ladies

Whether you are a relatively new member of our church or have been at Blackhall St. Columba's for years, it is always good to gather over delicious food for a time of fellowship with friends old or new and to get to know each other better.

Hence, the "Buon Appetito" Club, which meets periodically throughout the year to enjoy the delicacies of Italy. Our next outing will be for dinner at **7.00pm on Friday 24th May 2024 at Gordon's Trattoria, 231 High Street.**

If you are interested in coming along, please contact Shona Cook by email (shonacook505@gmail.com) or mobile (07981 970054) by 10th May 2024. No deposit is needed.

We normally are around twenty in number or it becomes too big a group and so we operate on a first come first served basis. So don't delay. Get in touch and secure your place.

Shona Cook

Edinburgh Floral Art Club

A warm welcome awaits members and friends at our Coffee Morning at St. Margarets. (We were too late to book the large hall at St. Columba's!)



Edinburgh Floral Art Coffee Morning
St Margaret's RC Church, Davidson's Mains
on Saturday 22 June.
Timing yet to be finalised, look out for posters.
All welcome.

FreshStart Helping people make a home for themselves.

Already, just four months into 2024, demand for home starter packs of household items has surged. The cost-of-living crisis is still very much with us.

FreshStart is short of pots, pans, plates and bowls. If you are spring cleaning and you have some to spare, please use the Friday drop off session at the church halls (Friday 10am to 11.30am) or bring them with you to church on Sunday morning and place them in our collection boxes. If you have surplus towels, bedding or small electricals, FreshStart can find a new home for them. We can assure you that they do value the support they receive from Blackhall.

The Pantry Shop continues to gain members (currently just short of 300) and provides support to low-income families. This scheme allows low-income families to put good food on the table. The Pantry Shop can only operate if it receives donations of long dated food (packets/tins). We appeal again, can you please help support this charity with donations of food items. We do appreciate that the church is also assisting the food bank at Ferryhill School (a very good cause) but if you wish to direct food and personal hygiene products to FreshStart, please deliver these items to the Friday drop off as detailed above.

FreshStart also maintains a “wish list” on their Amazon account (search for Fresh Start Scotland wish list). When shopping on-line, look at the wish list, decide what to order and purchase your choices and donations will be delivered directly to FreshStart. You can donate from the comfort of your own home!

We thank you for your continued support to help those in need in our city.
Lilian & Michael Cockburn
FreshStart Co-ordinators
(cockburn_carfrae@yahoo.co.uk)

Tuesday Topics

Since I last wrote about our meetings we've had some more splendid talks. Our festive lunch was a great success and I think we all enjoyed Howies. Our local Community Policeman came in January to tell us and warn us about Scammers - a most interesting talk. We also had an excellent talk about Eco-agriculture from Rob Davidson who is one of the workers at Lauriston Farm and who is building up a community garden.

Maurice McIlwrick told us about the secret Tunnels under and around Edinburgh and then Susan Malin came and gave us an informative talk on Power of Attorney and wills. The 26th of March saw us singing with Anne Ritchie of the Cheyne Gang and learning to use our lungs, while Shona Cook kept us greatly amused with her tales of being a tour Guide on the Edinburgh Buses on April 9th.

The last meeting in our present session will be on the 23rd of April. This is our AGM. We will be entertained by our own Jenny Logan and Margaret Donaldson and their wonderful, if sometimes different songs!

We are not sure about next year as that is to be decided at the AGM; will we continue as we are or change to an afternoon, or have monthly meetings, I cannot say.

All I can say is that I hope Tuesday Topics has a future. For those who are interested, keep an eye on the Kirk News and the Blackhall Bulletin in September and thanks to all those who have kept us going this year and years gone by.

Lyndy Paton Secretary
01313327377

Data Protection

As you are all aware, there are many computer scams going around as well as cases of identity theft. You may even have been affected by such scams.

This is all possible because we are generally a bit lax about protecting our own and other people's data. The purpose of the Data Protection legislation is to help us to keep our data safe.

Our Church has a Data Protection Policy. If you have on-line access, you can look it up on the Church website under Policies, which is in the Section called Resources. If you are interested and do not have access, ask your Elder to provide you with a copy or me - your Data Protection Officer.

Generally, within what data we hold, when working in and around the church is a rota or a list of our fellow Volunteers. This allows us to telephone or email people to arrange swaps of duties. This all perfectly reasonable and we can retain and maintain all the information of names, telephone numbers and email addresses if it is not visible to others. We don't keep it in a prominent place where Visitors may see it. We keep it in a folder or drawer. When you come off a rota, destroy your list of names and details. You must NOT keep it. Delete your computer copy and distribution list if you have one, shred your paper copy. Remove email addresses from your Contacts List if they are only there because of the rota you are deleting.

Some of you feel that this is a bit over the top. It isn't. The Church of Scotland has given us guidance to help us to implement the law. We can be audited at any time. If we are found to be in breach of the law, there are penalties.

Please contact me if you have any questions. rajahewat1@btinternet.com or a telephone call or note to the Office.

Scammers can access carelessly held data and use this information to destroy other people's lives. Please, don't help them.

Alison Hewat, Data Protection Officer

Around St Columba's

CAMEO

At our meeting on the 3rd of March a special thank you was given to Margaret Brown who was "stepping down" from her role as Convenor after twelve years and as a general volunteer for twenty-three years. We also thanked Pat Duffin who has also been a helper since Cameo began 26 years ago. Both ladies have given remarkable service. They were presented with bouquets and gift tokens. Margaret and Pat were also given a musical tribute from our entertainers that day, the Currie Kirk Singers. As well as our thanks for jobs well done, the ladies received an ovation and our best wishes for a more relaxing pace of life ahead.

Cameo continues with a Summer Outing to Pettycur Bay on the 17th of May. Before that, on 19th of April we will have had the musical group "Sing for Fun" entertaining us and on the 3rd May we will welcome Marie and Robin Leach with some Summer themed music.

New members will be welcome at any of our Friday fortnightly meetings at 10.30am in the large church hall. (N.B. that we will be away on the 17th of May).

We are keen to add to our bank of volunteers, particularly if you can help with driving. Please contact Fiona Drinnan 343 6762 for further details.

Fiona Drinnan

Pilrig Equalities Project (PEP)

The Pilrig Equalities Project (PEP) was the WATCH Committee Charity for 2023. PEP is now looking for volunteers. Please see the poster for full details about volunteering. George Miller in our congregation is a member of the WATCH Committee and is now a Trustee of the Pilrig Equalities Project. You could seek him out and ask him more about his work with the charity.

Looking for a new challenge?

Got a few hours to spare?
Want to help older and vulnerable people
in your community?



Volunteering Opportunities

Minibus Driver

Passenger Assistant

Trustees

Contact Diane Palmer at Pilton Equalities Project

Tel. 0131 315 4466

Or email me at diane.palmer@pepscot.org

Website www.pepscot.org



PEP



PEP

Scottish Country Dancing

After nine weeks of classes, with several new dancers joining us



along the way, we had a lively “Spring Fling” to end our session before Holy Week.

With live music from Matthew McLennan, an accordionist much in demand in Edinburgh and beyond, we enjoyed a programme of twelve dances. As well as some all-time favourites, we had also practised new dances, chosen in honour of some of our members – Aileen’s Reel, Joan’s Joy, Helen’s Reel and Elizabeth’s Fancy – and it was so good to have Elizabeth Stewart back with us for the evening.

We finished with a buffet supper and, of course, a few cups of tea. Perhaps you will recognise some of the dancers in the photographs and you can see others displayed in the large hall.

Traditionally, the classes run through the Autumn to the Spring, so we are now on our “summer” break, resuming Thursday 19th September.

New members are always welcome and we come not just from Blackhall but from Silverknowes, Cramond and further afield. Some of the dancers have years of experience, while just as many are rediscovering skills first learned in school. Some have even come as complete beginners, but the class is suitable for all and everyone encourages one another. No special gear is necessary – just an interest in meeting other people for a wee workout for brain and body. Perhaps you will try the first couple of weeks, to see if Country Dancing is for you, too.

Muriel Stenhouse 07908805364

Scottish Country Dancing Spring Fling Photographs



Midweek Peace Service

We are almost at the end of the 2023/24 session but there are still two more meetings and we would love to see you there. We meet at 12 noon in the Sanctuary.

Wednesday 8 th May - A review of the year led by Shona Cook
Wednesday 22 nd May - Communion led by Rev Fergus Cook

We will return in the autumn. The start date will be published in the August Edition of the Kirk News and the next edition of the Blackhall Bulletin, so keep an eye out for that!

We would like to thank everyone involved in the PEACE service, all our speakers, our musicians, drivers, soup makers and to everyone who comes along and shares in fellowship, we couldn't do it without you.

Shona Cook
Ruth Laidlaw

A date for your diary: -



Christian Aid



With baking and Plant Stalls

Saturday 18 May 2024

10 am – 12 noon

Blackhall St Columba's Church

Tickets £4

Please come and support us!

Donations of home-baking to be sold would be appreciated.

Christian Aid Scotland

Registered Charity SCO39150

General Assembly 2024

The 2024 General Assembly will be held from Saturday 18 May until Thursday 23 May.

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church of Scotland. The Assembly meets annually to hear reports from the councils and committees, make laws and set the agenda for the national Church.



The Assembly was first held in 1560, the year of the Scottish Reformation, which marked the beginning of the Protestant Church of Scotland.

The Assembly takes place at the Assembly Hall, The Mound, Edinburgh. Around 500 ministers, deacons and elders are commissioned to attend the Assembly each year. Delegates and visitors are also invited from partner churches from around the world. A new Moderator is appointed each year to chair the Assembly. The Rev Dr Shaw James Paterson is Moderator this year. The King is represented by the Lord High Commissioner, this year Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, is Lord High Commissioner.

You can attend online. Search General Assembly 2024 at www.churchofscotland.org.uk.

Music @ St Columba's

The music ministry of St Columba's has many aspects. It provides a regular, somewhat varied diet for the congregation of Anthems, Introits and Benedictions sung by our faithful choir. We aim for a mix of traditional well known and loved material, but we also try to introduce music that speaks in today's language about the Christian faith and life. The hymns are chosen weekly in a collaboration with me- Donald Cameron -and our minister, Fergus Cook. A bit of negotiation here and there usually results in a selection of hymns that follows the sermon topic and the theme of the bible readings for the all-age talk.

There are also *the special events* presented under the banner of Music@St Columba's. These events range from Gospel Choir to a solo country singer, to classical quartet or piano soloist. The idea is that these all have some Christian element to them, either because the performers are Christians or they perform Christian material. The artists are always available in the interval time to meet and chat with the audience and we avoid *prima donnas* wherever possible! We are all God's creations and we all have gifts, just some are more obvious than others!

Easter is always a busy time musically and this year we had a special event on Palm Sunday at 6pm when a band and a group of singers led us through ten Easter songs, many of which were new to our church. Interestingly, there were 60 folks in the audience/congregation (not quite sure what we called them) and by all accounts they all loved all the songs. Two of these new songs made it into the Easter services the following week. We will do a similar event in the run up to Christmas but in June I hope to do a "Golden Oldies" version where we sing ten of your all-time favourite hymns so look out for that.

Good Friday is always a special time and this year we presented ten readings. The readers were asked to give a two-minute comment on the passage they read. They all did a great job leaving us to think, with a fresh perspective on some very familiar parts of the Easter Story.

Music @ St Columba's

Easter Sunday morning was, as ever, a lovely climax to the week of preparation and we sang all the old favourites. The choir sang a beautiful rendition of The Lord's Prayer. (If you missed Easter morning, you should go to YouTube and look for Andrea Bocelli singing 'The Lord's Prayer' with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra).

On Saturday, June 29th at 12.30pm, we have Ben Kearsley coming back to play Music by J S Bach on the acoustic guitar. Bach's music is particularly well suited to the guitar, when expertly played. Ben has taught in many of Edinburgh's schools and universities. He also performs in concerts all over the country. This performance will be a one-hour event that will amaze and enthuse you with the skill of this performer. No tickets required, just turn up and be generous as always.

I hope to have a choir sometime in the autumn but that is still the subject of negotiation. We have a concert pianist in October and a Church of Scotland Swing Band, Heart and Soul, in March next year.

If you have younger family members who could be persuaded to play or sing with the band, please let me know and I'll encourage them to join us. The choir is always looking for new members, especially men, but as long as they are warm and breathing, we will be delighted to have new volunteers. We all appreciate your support and feedback and count it a privilege to serve Christ in this very practical way.

Donald Cameron OBE LLCM
Director of Music Blackhall St Columba's Church of Scotland

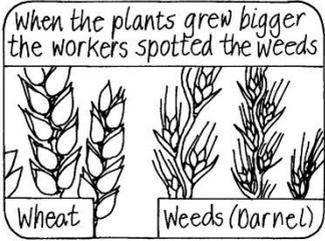
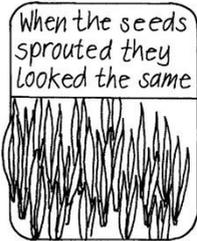
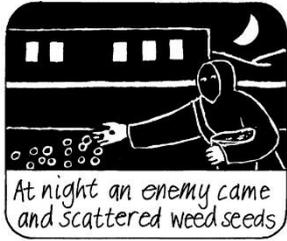


Bible Bite

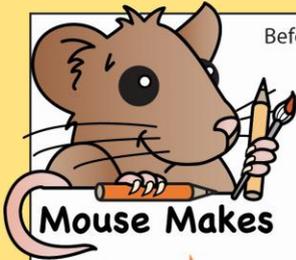
A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Matthew chapter 13: 24-30, 36-43

Jesus told this story to help explain what his Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, is like...



Mouse Makes



Before Jesus ascended to heaven he told his disciples
 "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit
 has come upon you, and you will be my
 witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea
 and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"...

...When the day of Pentecost arrived,
 they were all together in one place,
 and they were all filled
 with the Holy Spirit."


READ the story
 of Pentecost
 in Acts 1-2
 Look up the Bible
 verses to find
 the answers to the
 crossword clues.

How many
 words can you
 make from
 the letters of:
 DAY OF
 PENTECOST



- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 After Jesus ascended into heaven, which city did the Apostles return to? <i>Acts 1:12</i></p> <p>5a What did the Apostles devote themselves to? <i>Acts 1:14</i></p> <p>6 Who was chosen to replace Judas? <i>Acts 1:26</i></p> <p>5d Which special day was it? <i>Acts 2:1</i></p> | <p>8 What rushing sound came from heaven? <i>Acts 2:2</i></p> <p>2 What appeared? Tongues of ...? <i>Acts 2:3</i></p> <p>4 What were the disciples filled with? <i>Acts 2:4</i></p> <p>9 What did they start speaking in? <i>Acts 2:4</i></p> <p>3 Who spoke to the crowd? <i>Acts 2:14</i></p> <p>7 Who had prophesied this? <i>Acts 2:16</i></p> |
|--|--|

 <p>BLACKHALL ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND</p>	 <p>@ BStCC_EH</p>
<p>Website</p> <p>https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk/</p>	 <p>Blackhall St Columba's Church</p>

<p>Minister Rev Fergus Cook 5 Blinkbonny Cres. Edinburgh EH4 3NB Tel: 0131 466 7503 fcCook@churchofscotland.org.uk</p>	<p>Session Clerk Eddie Thorn Tel: 0131 332 5702 sessionclerk@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk</p>	<p>Church Secretary Joy McGonigal-Paget Office: T/W/Th 9.15-12 Home : Mon/Fri 9.15-12 Tel: 0131 332 4431 secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk</p>
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Publication deadlines

For contributions to Blackhall Bulletin:
(bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk)
September 2024 issue contributions by 27th July 2024

For contributions to Kirk News:
(judith.mair@hotmail.co.uk) or to the Church Office
August 2024 issue contributions by 19th July 2024

We are happy to accept articles on any relevant subject.

Thank you to James Burr our Church Photographer.

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