

The Link

The magazine of Auldearn & St. Ninian's
Church of Scotland, Nairn
SC015361

Christmas 2015

From our Minister



What I believe.

As Christmas approaches, Remembrance Sunday is upon us and I have a little book sitting on my desk called 'What I believe'. It is an interesting book which has given me the idea for this small article.

It covers the beliefs of a number of well known authors and distinguished men and women of the 20th century including Lord Boothby, Rosemary Haughton, J. B. Priestly, and Edward Glover. Using their own words, it reflects upon what they believe. It basically asks 'What do you believe about life in an age of scepticism?'

I highlight this little book because the amount of people who genuinely do not know what they believe is bewildering. With over 170 distinct religions in the UK today, the religious make-up of our country has become exceedingly diverse, complex and multicultural.

In 2014 'YouGov' undertook a census which showed that there had been such a steady growth in minor and alternative religions that Christianity was no longer the leading religion in this country. We now live in a country where over 77% of the British population has said that they were not very, or not at all religious and less than 50% said that they believe in God. As a result it indicates that we are becoming more and more a soulless society.

My small book highlights the views of the liveliest minds of the 20th century, including some cogent humanist statements from Lord Boothby of Buchan, secretary to Churchill, J.B. Priestly who served during the 1914-18 war and has written a large number of books and plays and Rosemary Haughton, Queen's College who's an author of ten children's and seven adults' books.

Despite our good fortune to have some of the best education in the world it seems religion in Britain has suffered an immense decline over the last 50 to 60 years where half of all Christians have stopped going to church on a Sunday altogether. And while we continue to brow beat ourselves into submission, the secularisation of Great Britain and the emergence of Islamic radicalism continues to grow - putting us in line with most European countries such as France.

In John 21:1-14; ⁴ Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. ⁸ The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, about a hundred yards off.

The haul was said to be miraculous, and it was, and determines for us that God has a hand in everything. God compels. While we beat our heads over empty pews, I often wonder if we really do know what we believe. For if God has a hand in the miraculous catch then surely he has a hand in the miraculous drought we are facing today.

In the days of David, it was Absalom who was responsible for the miraculous drought that spread across Israel. When he was asked to repent by the prophet Nathan and refused, God smote the country with a drought that lasted over 3 years. Christmas is coming and I just wonder how many of us will ask ourselves 'What do I believe?' Do you believe in the virgin birth, the coming of Jesus Christ and life everlasting or do you believe in pixie dust, the Coke-a-Cola Company and Santa Clause. Have a Merry Christ-Mass and a Happy New Year.

Rev Tommy Bryson

The Leprosy Mission Scotland—Ardclach Memorial

The Leprosy Mission is an International Christian development organisation, working with, and for, people affected by Leprosy. It's goal is to defeat leprosy and transform lives.

The Leprosy Mission Scotland works to raise awareness of leprosy in Scotland and to raise resources to support this global work.

The Sunday School recently gave their Harvest Thanksgiving pennies towards this charity and put on a performance about the 10 lepers healed by Jesus. Together with a retiring collection on the same day, the sum of £294.01 was raised.



Members of our congregation have also handed in blue boxes full of silver and copper. Since April, and the Ardclach Memorial Day, the total sum paid in to the Leprosy Mission Scotland bank account is £467.23.

Watch out for World Leprosy Day on the last Sunday in January, which this year, is the 31st.

Norma McIntyre, St Ninian's Point Person.

Harvest Thanksgiving Service 2015 -

The Sunday School

The children told the story of the 10 lepers that Jesus healed at this year's harvest service.

They also collected money for Leprosy Mission which was gifted during this service. Afterwards, they carefully counted the money!



Flower Rota

January—June 2016

January

3rd Mrs. G. McCloy
10th Mrs. J. MacIntosh
17th Mrs. E. Main
24th Mrs. Robertson
31st Mrs. J. Burnett

February

7th Mrs. I. Sharp
14th Mrs. S. Forbes
21st Mrs. S. Waugh
28th Mrs. B. Borthwick

March

6th Mrs. Mo Scott
13th *available*
20th Mrs. P. Gordon
27th Mrs. M. Scott



April

3rd Mrs. M. MacDonald
10th Mrs K. Dunlop
17th Mrs. P. Gordon & Mrs Macrae
25th Mrs. D. Cooke

May

1st Mrs. I. Sharp
8th Mrs. M. Asher
15th Mrs. S. Forbes
22nd Mrs. S. Barron
29th Mrs. I. Bryce

June

5th Mrs. K. Dunlop
12th Mrs. M. Bunker
19th *available*
26th Mrs B. Borthwick

Please contact Betty or Grace if you can take the 'vacant' weeks.

Organ Restoration Update— December 2015

As you may recall, we have five criteria we need to meet in terms of our Heritage Lottery Funding award conditions. An update was recently sent to the funding body and main points are summarised below.



The church organ will be fully restored bringing it back to its original operational condition by specialists who will be procured through a tendering process.

The organ has been restored to full specification - with some additional works found during dismantling being overtaken too. It was commissioned and rededicated on Saturday 1st August 2015 at the first of our planned recitals. It will now be serviced on a 6 monthly basis by the specialist firm who undertook the works. This criterion of the project has now been completed.

School sessions will be delivered to 40 pupils on the restoration and science behind the church organ.

In excess of 40 primary and secondary pupils have been involved throughout this project. The primary pupils based their class project around this restoration over 2 terms. The secondary pupils attended a recital and had opportunities to play the organ prior to dismantling. Both sets of pupils contributed to our full colour visitors' booklet which has now been published. A further mini-recital is planned in January 2016 for pupils who again will have the opportunity to play the organ. The primary pupils learnt to play the penny whistle (as a wind instrument) undertook science work on the restoration, met with the restorers throughout the project and interviewed the oldest church member about her memories of the organ being installed 91 years ago. They also recorded the restorer asking questions about his work and life. The primary pupil's art work was also used by the church. Audio editing lessons were delivered in school with these children so that they could edit the recorded interviews they had conducted. The Senior Academy pupils are leading communal singing at our community Christmas lunch on 1st December, and afterwards the organ will be available for their use.

16 volunteers will be given training on tour guiding and 100 visitors will attend monthly open days on the restoration of the organ.

11 volunteers have undertaken training as Church and Organ Guides. They were given a tour of the restored organ, learnt some of its history and science behind its operation and talked about how to meet and greet visitors. They have indicated when they are available to be on duty and a regular rota is now required. As our display boards are not yet ready, official openings have yet to take place. The 16 page booklet for visitors has now been published and distributed to these Guides so they can become familiar with contents meantime. Five fur-

ther volunteers (or more) will now be sought to complete this aspect. Following the first recital with the organ some 300 people had the opportunity to view and play the organ, as well as speak to the organist and composer of our dedication piece called, "Nairn St Ninian's".

A digital record will be kept on the restoration of the organ which will be available online and an exhibition will be produced on the history of the organ.

A full digital record is available on our Facebook page which has been maintained throughout the project. This page will be kept live for further recitals and events. Key posts are also now shared on the local community Facebook page, "Nairn Rocks!". Our main website contains a history of the organ and a link to our Facebook page. 1,500 copies of our full-colour organ project booklet have been published. These are for the benefit of visitors to the church but copies have been given to both local schools and church attendees to encourage wider family and community members to visit. The organ display for the church is outstanding. Discussions with our nominated printer have been held and content and final costs are identified. The final contents of display boards is yet to be finalised. These boards are expected to be completed by the end of December 2015.

Organ lessons will be provided for those who wish to try the instrument and recitals will be delivered regularly once the organ has been restored.

Following our first recital, one Academy pupil now regularly practises on the organ as a new instrument for him. He has encouraged some of his peers to come along and hear him play. He has been issued with his own church key to facilitate this. He has agreed that he will play the organ for a forthcoming Highland Hospice Service that the church is hosting on 7 December. Lessons are available, with the organist's cards on display at the organ so these can be handed out to anyone expressing an interest in learning or developing further. Nairn Academy has agreed that its senior pupils will be the main focus of our Easter 2016 recital - using the organ and other instruments. Meanwhile, our second recital featured the choir from Herriots School (Edinburgh) and our own organist is giving an Advent Recital on 5 December 2015.

Project Timescales.

Most aspects are now completed. The production of the display boards in the final aspect to be overtaken. Coasts are now expected to be under budget so the Treasurer is working to calculate final costs so Heritage Lottery Funding can be advised that their final payment is not required. Indeed, we may require to make a small refund to this funding body!

Please see separate advert for our next concert!

Guild News

The new session began on 7th October when we welcomed 25 members.

Agnes and Jean joined us for the first time but it was with sadness we recalled Muriel who died recently and Barbara who is no longer able to come due to ill health.

As is the usual pattern, the Guild works on a Theme, a Topic and a Project. These are provided centrally but it is up to each Guild to provide speakers and use the subjects to provide interesting meetings in order members express their faith in worship, prayer and action.

Our minister Rev Thomas Bryson was our first speaker of the year. He spoke on the Theme - Go in Peace - Be Bold, Be Strong. His talk was thought provoking and helped us all to get to know him and his background better.

Our Dedication Service is usually in November but this year we decided to have it at the beginning of our year. It was a lovely service with members on duty at the door and uplifting the offering. Norma read the lesson.

Our second speaker was Mr Peter Dunn from Relate, talking of his work counselling couples. Couples can be parent/ child as well as married and same sex.

November is a busy month for, as well as our meetings, we welcome the Quakers and visit Whinnieknowe. We have our coffee morning which was well supported by the congregation. We also are invited as guests at Nairn Old Guild on the 11th November.

I do urge anyone in the congregation to join us on the first and third Wednesday afternoons over the winter months. Everyone is always welcome.

Sheena Proctor.

Mission International: HAITI PROJECT

Mission International is a Christian charity based in Dundee. Executive Hugh Henderson started Mission International in 2006 with a desire to be ambassadors for the poor across the world. The Guild has chosen to support this charity's work in Haiti for 3 years. Our guild will be supporting it for 1 year.

You may remember that on January 12th 2010 a massive earthquake struck Haiti just outside the capital. It lasted for only a few minutes but it left 200,000 people dead and more than 1 million people homeless. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere. Many Haitians live on only \$1 a day and only 48% of the population can read and write.

Mission International together with the local church in Haiti plans to build a new multipurpose facility for the people of Ouanaminthe. This building will be a school, community centre and serve as a church sanctuary as well. The primary school will provide education for up to 200 children to help break the cycle of poverty in this country.

In July 2015 Mission International was able to provide the first instalment of the purchase price for the land for the building project. A start has been made on this project and hopefully with the help of the Guild the building will make good progress. Thanks to all members of the congregation who help us in our project work. Check out:

<http://mission-international.org/projects/places/haiti/>

<http://mission-international.org/projects/the-haiti-project/guild-information/>

Isabel Bryce, project partner.

Advent & Christmas Services

7th December	Light Up the Highlands @ 7pm
13th December	Elder led morning service @ 10.15am
20th December	Morning Service including Nativity @ 10.15am
24th December	Christmas Eve Service @ 8pm
25th December	Christmas Morning Service @ 10.30 am

Why Have an Active Pastoral Care Group?

A healthy Christian community is one in which people know that they are loved, visitors are welcome and young and old alike are valued and feel safe. The care that we offer, both at times of crisis and in everyday life is an active proclamation of God's love in Christ and for all the world.

In Acts 20:28 the Apostle Paul urged the Ephesian Elders to, 'Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.' Thanks to our very pro-active team!



PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NINIAN, NAIRN

**RECITAL ON THE NEWLY RE-FURBISHED
1924 HENRY WILLIS & SONS AND LEWIS & CO. LTD ORGAN**

SATURDAY 5th DECEMBER 2015, 7.00pm

Recital given by

DONALD MACLAGAN

Music for Advent and Christmas

Prelude on *Veni Emmanuel*

P C Lutkin
(1858-1931)

Pastorale from the *Christmas Concerto*

Arcangelo Corelli
(1653-1713)

A Christmas Pastorale on *Quem Pastores Laudavere*

Eric H Thiman
(1900-1975)

Three arrangements from 'Messiah'

Pastoral Symphony
Behold the Lamb of God
Hallelujah

G F Händel
(1685-1759)

Three Songs Without Words

The Coventry Carol
God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen
Good King Wenceslas

William Lloyd Webber
(1914-1982)

Marche des Rois Mages

Théodore Dubois
(1837-1924)

This event is the third in the 2015-16 series of concerts making use of the newly re-furbished organ and will take place on Saturday 5th December at 7.00 p.m. when Donald MacLagan, our own Organist, will give an organ recital of Music for Advent and Christmas.

During the winter months the series will be suspended but in the spring we plan to have a concert given by pupils of Nairn Academy and Millbank Primary School.

We can give advance notice that on Sunday 5th June 2016 at 7.30 p.m. there will be a concert given by the Badenoch Chorale with John Crombie Director and Alan Buchan Organist.

Their programme will include the Coronation Mass by W A Mozart and other choral works, ensemble works and solo organ works played by John Crombie and Alan Buchan.

A date for your diary!!

Bible Readers

January—June 2016

December 2015

6th Patsy Forbes
13th Elders Service
20th Sunday School
27th Clifford Cooke

January 2016

3rd Betty Borthwick
10th Norma McIntyre
17th John Waugh
24rd Grigor McKay
31st Judy McIntosh

February

7th Dorothea Cooke
14th Rose McKendrick
21th Patsy Forbes
28th June Ranscombe

March

6th Andy Paton
13th Betty Borthwick
20th Clifford Cooke
27th Norma McIntyre
(Easter Sunday)

April

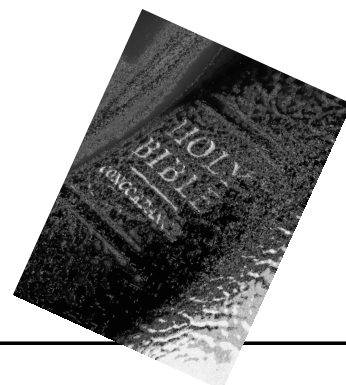
3rd Dorothea Cooke
10th Grigor McKay
17th Judy McIntosh
24rd Rose McKendrick

May

1st John Waugh
8th Patsy Forbes
15th June Ranscombe
22nd Andy Paton
29th Clifford Cooke

June

5th Betty Borthwick
12th Norma McIntyre
19th John Waugh
26th Grigor McKay



A Reflection on the Past Year

Dear Friends,

As Christmas and the New Year approaches I would like to take this opportunity to reflect over the past year.

In May we said farewell to Fraser and Margaret and welcomed Tommy and Jean to St. Ninian's and their grandchildren Amelia and Matthew who attend the Sunday School. There was also a new addition to the family, Jamie.

Our Food for Thought Lunch continues on the first Tuesday of the month and Coffee Break every Thursday morning apart from the break during the summer.

We started up our Stewardship Campaign with an Afternoon Tea on the 16th September. This was very well attended and a good time was had by all. Our next event takes place on Tuesday, 1st December when we will be having a Christmas Lunch with entertainment.

A successful Elder's Training Day was held on the 31st October 2015.

What is Christmas? by Helen Steiner Rice

Is it just a day at the end of the year –

A season of joy, merrymaking and cheer?

Is it people and presents and glittering tree?

Ah no, it is more than any of these,

For under the tinsel and hidden from sight

Is the promise and meaning of that first Christmas night.

When the shepherds stood in wondered awe

And felt transformed by what they saw.

So let us not in our search for pleasure

Forego our right to this priceless treasure.

For Christmas is still a God-given day,

And let us remember to keep it that way.

Let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas and remember those who have passed away and also those who are ill.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Grace McCloy, Session Clerk

PS. Church Flowers

On behalf of Betty I would like to thank everyone who provide flowers for the Sunday morning services. They really do brighten up the Church and afterwards they are delivered to members of the congregation who are ill or have had a bereavement. There are still a few spaces in the rota so if you would like to add your name please let me know.

Graham Thain— Bike Ride 2015

Dorset to Somerset the hard way!

There was a generous response from folks in St. Ninian's in giving to the Bike Ride that Graham Thain did in June of this year in support of the Indian Ministries Fellowship.

Graham and his wife often worship in St. Ninian's when staying with his mother in law Mrs. Marwick. Some people might not know Graham's connection with St. Ninian's Church and with the India Ministries Fellow-



ship.

Graham was brought up in Forres, studied Law at Glasgow University and practised in a law firm in Nairn. Along with his friend David Ritchie another lawyer and Jonathon Turner, he ran the Youth Fellowship in St. Ninian's. It is understood that Graham first met his wife Mary in the front room of the St. Ninian's Manse.

It was in St. Ninian's that Graham felt a call to the ministry and studied divinity in Aberdeen. There, along with a group of students, he supported the work of the India Ministries Fellowship, latterly becoming one of the trustees.

This year the Scottish Trustees have handed over responsibility for financing Indian Divinity Students to the Trustees in India, but the Scottish Trustees wanted to give their funding a final boost this year. This was the reason for a final big effort to give money to the India Ministries Fellowship. The total raised was £160.00 plus tax reclaimed.

India Ministries Fellowship began in Aberdeen in 1984 when a group of divinity students wanted to be involved practically in world mission. They were stimulated by Siga and Nalini Aries from India, who shared their burden for the millions of Indian children who live their lives without love, without hope and without God.

<http://www.indiaministriesfellowship.co.uk/>

The Tale of the Three Trees

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!"

The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!"

The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain.

The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell.

"Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest. I shall hold wonderful treasure!" the first tree said.

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell.

"Now I shall sail mighty waters!" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven.

But the woodcutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me," he muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feeding box for animals.

The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, nor with treasure. She was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead, the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail on an ocean, or even a river; instead, she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard.

"What happened?" the once tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God..."

Many, many days and night passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her new born baby in the feeding box.

"I wish I could make a cradle for him," her husband whispered.

The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and the sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful," she said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveller and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveller fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake.

Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through with the wind and the rain.

The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun.

And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hands to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel.

But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that

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Childhood Memories

The minister of the United Free Church (now St Ninian's) in the 20's and 30's was the Revd. James Little who presided over 'A Children's Hour' in the church hall every Friday evening from 6pm. Not only did the kids of the Sunday school attend but it was open to everyone in the town. They came to hear Mr Little tell, with great dramatic flair, the familiar Bible stories and the dear man would stay all evening as long as the kids wanted and sing the Lord's praise.

On one occasion I remember as many as ten of us up on the stage singing 'Jesus is tenderly calling today'. We had two very kind accompanists, the Misses Nessa and Janie MacIntyre, one of whom was always there to help us if a difficult word turned up in a hymn.

The Sunday school superintendent, Mr Roddie MacKenzie, often came to Children's Hour to see what we got up to. He was the man who bought the tickets for us to board the train at Nairn every June holiday, to take us to Brodie Station for the annual Sunday school picnic at the castle. (Needless to say, we waved flags and shouted "hoorays" until we saw the rhododendrons come into view!).

After a picnic tea and sports, Roddie would bring out a big brown bag of sweets which he tossed into the air for us to catch or scramble for on the grass. He also organised the Spring soiree when our parents were invited to come and hear what went on at 'Children's Hour' and on going home we received a 'baggie' of Roddie's sweetmeats for he had a bakery and when it came to the magical time of Christmas, he would play Santa Claus!

When I grew up and attended the Academy the pupils were wont to visit his shop (it was on the site where Asher's now is) and for a 'play piece' he would have baked a fresh batch of Nairn buns coated with icing sugar costing a halfpenny;. As he tore them off two or one at a time, he pronounced 'one or two Nairn buns (as the case may be) for one Nairn girl'.



But an earlier memory was far sweeter than that. I would have been five or six and had sung at Children's Hour 'Jesus Bids Us Shine'. On approaching the counter with my mother, he leaned over saying 'Is your lichtie still burnin?'. After all those years that have passed, I would like to think that it is.

Footnote: It is an interesting fact that Mr. Nigel Copland who came to Nairn in with his wife, Eleanor and his family of two boys to become the manager of Boots the chemist, was the grandson of the late Mr Little, and acted as Session Clerk in St. Ninian's from 1983 to 2006.

Kathleen Dunlop



Unable to Get to Church? Would you appreciate Home Communion?

Home Communion is now being offered in the week following Communion in church. For 2016, Communion is being held the last Sunday in January, April and September.

If you'd like home communion just after these dates, please speak to your elder who can arrange this.

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God's love had changed everything.

It had made the third tree strong.

And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God.

That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

The next time you feel down because you didn't get what you want, sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something better to give you.

A traditional folk tale, retold here by Angela Elwell Hunt.

June Ranscombe

Taken for Granted

We take so much for granted don't we?

Practical everyday life would be impossible without the services we expect - transport, shops, light and power and so many other things.

The relationships we experience with others have an element of "taken for granted", the love and loyalty of our family and friends and the expectations we have of them. Parents take their children for granted - there is no one more trusting than a child who takes for granted his parents' love and devotion and there is nothing more aggravating than the teenager who takes the home and parents for granted!

Do we perhaps take people too much for granted and neglect the words of praise or thanks; do we neglect to listen to our friends and really hear what is being said?

In this changing world there is so much we cannot take for granted - peace, safe international travel, moral standards; even family relationships break down. We are left with asking what can we rely on when all around us there is turmoil.

The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 103 v -17)

Mary Heggie

URGENT HELP NEEDED FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES ARRIVING IN HIGHLAND AFTER CHRISTMAS

Syrian Refugees are arriving from camps in Lebanon and Jordan after Christmas - approximately 100 people (families and vulnerable people) comprising around 25 families.

Where will they be placed? There is incredible pressure on housing services within Highland at present. More housing is available in Caithness but is this the right place for them? (Lack of services/jobs.) Living in a remote, rural area, they might not be able to access the services they need. Refugees also need somewhere to get together for support - this may also be harder in rural areas but unless sufficient accommodation can be found in the Inverness area, the refugees will have to be housed in Caithness.

Accommodation is urgently required. Possible sources of accommodation currently being looked at include:- empty military homes; looking to Moray Council to provide services which could be hosted by Highland; second homes; empty 'granny' flats, holiday homes.

People are not expected to give up their holiday homes free of charge. The refugees will be entitled to housing benefit and will therefore be able to pay rent.

Offers of accommodation are urgently required— please telephone the Highland Third Sector Interface on 01349 864289 if you can help.

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A Prayer for those Suffering

The Church of Scotland prayer published after Friday 13th November's deadly attacks in Paris by gunmen and suicide bombers who hit a concert hall, a major stadium, restaurants and bars, almost simultaneously - leaving at least 129 people dead and hundreds wounded.

'Turn away from evil and do good; strive for peace with all your heart' (Psalm 34:14, Good News Version)

God of the suffering,
our prayers this day are for all who suffer and especially this day for the people of Paris
in their pain and grief
in the midst of evil.

We pray for parents grieving the loss of their children;
children mourning the loss of their parents;
neighbours stricken by the loss of friends;
lovers torn apart through shocking violence.

We pray for those who today begin the long road to recovery:
those deeply injured and fighting for life;
those who have witnessed unspeakable horrors;
those who heroically sought to save lives and those already working to rekindle the embers of hope.

God of the suffering,
our prayers this day are for all who strive for peace
and for all those who are especially fearful this day,
those who don't know which way to turn,
those who fear being unjustly blamed.

We pray for peace makers
not the empty peace of keeping warring sides apart
but the deep peace in which enemies embrace
the peace of your community of love,
the peace of your Son,
the Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Stewardship Report—Food, Fun & Fellowship Afternoon Tea

The Stewardship Committee continues to work to help everyone use their time and talents for the good of our church and its members. It was decided to have an Afternoon Tea in September, and invitations were sent out with



the offer of transport.

The Community Minibus, with Dorothea Cooke at the wheel and Dot assisting, duly collected members, some of whom had not been able to church because of mobility issues.

Around sixty people attended and all were treated to a tasty feast which was provided and served by a band of loyal and generous helpers. During the event, Mrs Judy McIntosh entertained the crowd with hilarious monologues.

The atmosphere in the hall was wonderful as people enjoyed fellowship with some they hadn't seen in ages! All agreed it had been a great success—and were looking forward to the next event.

SO.... HERE'S A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY...

Tuesday 1st December, 12.30 till 2.30pm. It's our free Fellowship Christmas Lunch. Donations are welcomed for The League of Friends of Nairn Hospital.

Sandra Paton.

Light Up The Highlands

This year the this annual service will be held in Nairn St Ninian's on Monday 7th December at 7pm.

To 'Light up the Highlands', all you have to do is sponsor a light on the tree. Make a dedication for someone special or simply in support of the Hospice. If you do this online then this will then appear in Highland Hospice's online dedication book.

The online dedication book will remain open for dedications until Friday 18th December, and to view until after Christmas.

In any event, PLEASE join us to celebrate the lighting of the tree here in St. Ninian's.

This year the Hospice has 23 trees all over the Highlands - from Wick to Brora, from Inverness to Kyle and Nairn to Newtonmore!

Fabric Update

The works on the Manse are all completed, with one bill outstanding. The final sum spent between both congregations is around £15,000 with a further £2,500 for removal expenses. The Manse requires an annual inspection which will be undertaken by members of the Joint Fabric Committee.

In St Ninian's Church, the external guttering on Queen Street continues to get blocked and agreement has been given to get these cleared again. A cherry picker may be required. Heat blistered paintwork in the sanctuary will be recoated by Billy Hosack (thanks!) the hall gable window on the Millbank side requires either repair or replacement. We are currently looking at removing rotten sills and inserting hardwood replacements and making good other wood, putty and paintwork.

The kitchen boiler thermostat has been replaced but the pipes continue to vibrate, so a plumber has been called to investigate further. *Andy Paton.*

Some Thoughts on the Journey of Life

Childhood years are full of enthusiasm; we have lots of energy, we are eager to learn, inquisitive, full of fun and laughter, everything is new and exciting for us.

Teenage years are impatient years; time passes so slowly, we can't wait until we are adults, until we get a driver's licence, until we earn some money, when I can do what I want!

The 20's are the uncertain years; is this the kind of job I want to do? Is it time to leave home and live on my own? Can I afford it? The formation of relationships? Will I get married? We are so unsure of our future.

The 30's are the years of responsibility, we are settled into our workplace, we may have family commitments and a mortgage to pay - we need to plan ahead.

The 40's are years for consolidation when we build on what has been achieved so far, we have more confidence, undertake some retraining and perhaps more study, maybe even a promotion to an executive position.

The 50's are rewarding years. The children have left home, we have more time to please ourselves, spoil ourselves a little. Travel to distant horizons.

The 60's are the careful years. We need to watch our health; if things are going to go wrong, this will be the time. We need to watch our spending; can I afford this or should I forget about it?

The 70's and beyond may be a combination of some of all the preceding years. It is also a time for reflection, for sharing the memories and experiences we have had, of the people we have met along the way and the influence they have had on our lives, as well as how we have touched the lives of others. But, above all, it is a time to "count our blessings" and be thankful. Through good times and bad, God has shared our journey, walked with us and guided us as we travelled.

Philippians 4 vv 11-13

"I am not saying this because I am in need, for, I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

Let us be content with the life God has given us and be thankful.

Mary Heggie

Church Transport

The Stewardship Committee are proposing to run a minibus once a month to allow those can't get to church to worship with us due to lack of transport.

Can you drive a minibus?

Can you be an escort?

Can you help bring these people to church?

If you feel moved to assist by either driving or being an escort, please contact Sandra Paton (454219) or Grace McCloy.

Door and Offering Duties to June 2016

January

3rd	Jim Main & Judy McIntosh
10th	Norma McIntyre & Sheena Welsh
17th	Roberta Stuart & Sheena Proctor
24th	Bill Kennedy & Andy Paton
31st	Harry Scott & Bill Welsh

February

7th	Iain Colquhoun & George Proctor
14th	Jim Main & Grace McCloy
21st	Norma McIntyre & Judy McIntosh
28th	Roberta Stuart & Sheena Welsh

March

6th	Bill Kennedy & Sheena Proctor
13th	Harry Scott & Andy Paton
20th	Iain Colquhoun & Bill Welsh
27th	Jim Main & George Proctor

April

3rd	Norma McIntyre & Grace McCloy
10th	Roberta Stuart & Judy McIntosh
17th	Bill Kennedy & Sheena Welsh
24th	Harry Scott & Sheena Proctor

May

1st	Iain Colquhoun & Andy Paton
8th	Jim Main & Bill Kennedy
15th	Norma McIntyre & George Proctor
22nd	Grigor McKay & Grace McCloy
29th	Roberta Stuart & Judy McIntosh

June

5th	Bill Kennedy & Sheena Welsh
12th	Harry Scott & Sheena Proctor
19th	Iain Colquhoun & Andy Paton
26th	Jim Main & Bill Welsh

Those on rota duty are asked to let June Ranscombe know when you have "done a swap", so that the details in the Sunday Sheet are accurate.

If you'd like to assist with door duties, please speak to Harry Scott.

Church Volunteers Wanted!

PAY POOR

HOURS LONG

RETIREMENT—OUT OF THIS WORLD!

APPLY NOW!

Know Your Elder

Earlier this year, the Kirk Session revised the Parish boundaries with the agreement of Nairn Old and Inverness Presbytery. After that, districts were “tidied up”, renumbered and allocated to existing active elders.

If you require support from your elder at any time - including home communion - please do contact him or her.

District	Elder	District Boundaries
1	Bill Kennedy	Bounded by George, John and Elizabeth Streets, Queenspark Gardens & Academy area.
2	Andrew Paton	Mill Road, Mill Road Terrace, Whinnieknowe Home and Gardens, plus Firhall.
3	George Proctor	Boath Park & Sandown
4	Jim Main	Lochloy Road & Lochloy Avenue, Merryton Gardens & Merryton Crescent, Sutor View and Park area.
5	Betty Borthwick	County east of River Nairn towards Auldearn, plus Broadhill, Riverbank & river side of High Street.
6	<i>Vacant</i>	Fishertown - Harbour, Union, Burntisland, Simpson, Society & King Streets, plus Roseneath Terrace and Park Street.
7	Grigor McKay	Links Place, Cumming & Firth Streets. Marine area including St Ninian's Road, Bath Street, Duncraig, Ballark, Lochiel Place, Glebe Road & Crescent & Claymore Gardens
8	Isabel Bryce	Seabank & Manse Roads, Seafield Gardens, Young Street & Seabank Gardens.
9	Patsy Forbes	Fraser Park, Woodville Gardens, Forbes & Chattan Drives, plus Lodgehill Road.
10	Dorothea Cooke	Wellington, Waverley & Westbury Roads, Cawdor Road and Street, Lodgehill Park & Gate, plus Inverness Road & Mrs Borthwick
11	Harry Scott	Achareidh
12	Sandra Paton	Wyvis Road, plus Tradespark

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Also required are people who could provide a 'Greeter Service' for the Refugees. This would not be paid although volunteer expenses would be met. The 'Greeters' would help the new arrivals with things like accessing public transport; providing language help; introducing them to the Police (important, since their experience of police in their homelands may be very different to our Scottish police force); where to buy food; how to get a job; how to get their children into school; the best play parks; which pub not to go to, etc. Basically imparting local knowledge and helping to make the newcomers feel at home. **Please phone the Highland Third Sector Interface on 01349 864289 if you can help.**

Got any free time?

The Highlands Supports Refugees urgently need volunteers with a van, lorry or large car to transport donations for the refugees when they arrive from a location near Inverness to a new centre in **Dingwall**. **Please see their Facebook Page or telephone Vivian Roden on 07887 704 915 if you can help. They also need people to fundraise.**

Deadline for next Link Magazine

Articles are welcomed from both congregations, so do think about how you can contribute. Items can be e-mailed at any time. For the next edition, please have them to clifford.cooke@talktalk.net by **Sunday 13th March 2016**.