“Thank goodness, it’s over! ”

But, is it?

Every year, it’s the same.

Come the beginning of January someone will tell me how much they have enjoyed their Christmas celebration and end up by saying “but thank goodness, it’s over!” No doubt, that’s something we can all readily understand. Christmas now seems to begin in the shops in late August and so, come early December, it has well and truly monopolised our thinking. By the time Christmas actually comes, we have made so much of it that we are relieved to let it go and turn our minds to that other celebration of the New Year.

But Christmas doesn’t actually begin until Christmas Day and then continues for the following twelve days. This means that when New Year arrives we are meant to be still celebrating Christmas faith and the Christmas hope. What difference do you think that makes? What difference would it make if we really did welcome the New Year with the message and promise of Christmas still in our minds and hearts? Would we really then say, “Thank goodness it’s over”? thought deeply moving. At the beginning of a year, do not think about God’s act of creation, but rather about ours; not about the aching vastness of the universe – 18 billion light years across – but rather about the joy and responsibility of bringing new life into the world. Don’t think of God as the ‘great master scientist’ devising systems of vast complexity, but rather think of him as a parent, loving and forgiving us, his children.

Jewish New Year

Some years ago, Dr (now Lord) Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, gave a talk on radio. It was about the Jewish New Year which falls, for them, in September. He spoke of how the Jewish tradition sees the new year as the anniversary of creation, ‘the Big Bang’ the moment the universe began. But he said, when Jewish people gather to worship at the new year, they do not do not read the story of creation at all. Instead, the read about the birth of the first Jewish child, Isaac, born to Abraham and Sarah after many, many years of waiting; and they read about Hannah and her prayer for a child which was also answered.

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So: how about YOUR New Year?

Just a few weeks ago at Christmas, we too thought about a child and the message of faith contained in the birth of that child. Do we not now need to allow that same Child to fill our thoughts still as we further journey into the unknown of this new year?

During the past twelve months there have been times when massive problems – Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East, the global economy, the environment – have seemed almost impossibly intractable. How can we ever get a grip on issues so difficult to understand, let alone solve?

Continued Page 2…….
From The Minister … Continued from page 1

Where do we even begin?

Maybe there is enduring wisdom in the experience and practice of our Jewish colleagues.

Since New Year follows on so quickly after Christmas, maybe it has something simple but important to say to us. Don’t think about the past, or even present, calculations of political interest or economic gain. Rather, ask instead what impact all that may have on future generations. Or they are your own creation. So: hold before you the image of a single human child.

Children are the sufferers of the 21st century.

113 million children have no schooling, 150 million are malnourished. 30,000 die each day from preventable diseases. They have no vote, no power of their own, no voice. Yet, they are the ones who will suffer tomorrow for the mistakes our generation makes today.

So: ponder this. The message of the Christmas we have all just celebrated is that greater than all our hopes and fears for the future is the ability to hear the cry of a child – and respond in love.

Jim Gibson
Minister of Bothwell

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**Church Register**

**Baptisms:** “By water and the Holy Spirit”
December 12th Robbie James Aird, son of David and Alison Aird,
87 Burt Court, Bellshill

**Marriages:** “Whom God has joined”
October 15th Donna Shaw and Neil MacInnes
72 Queensby Road, Baillieston, Glasgow
December 28th Sarah Louise Housley and Graeme Reid
23 Knowhead Gardens, Uddingston

**Funerals:** “confident of Life Everlasting”
The Minister invites the prayers of the congregation for the family and friends of the following who recently received Christian funeral:
November William (Bill) McKendrick Esq, 20 Fairfield Lodge, Green Street, Bothwell
December Roy Gillies Esq, 48 Loancroft Gate, Uddingston
Samuel (Alistair) Dinsmore, Hunting Tower, Fife Crescent, Bothwell

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**GUILD DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**February**
14th Britannia Panopticon Music Hall — Mrs Kitty Walker
28th Daffodil Tea — Salvation Army
Bellshill Sonesters

**March**
4th World Day of Prayer — Bothwell Evangelical Church
14th Hamilton Churches Drop-In Centre
Mrs Joyce and Jenny Bain
24th South Lanarkshire Council Civic Reception
to mark the 125th Anniversary of
Bothwell Parish Church Guild

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**Statement of Purpose**

Bothwell Parish Church is a congregation of the Church of Scotland and is part of the worldwide family of people belonging to the Christian Faith, worshipping God through Jesus Christ. In response to the love of God for all, we seek to serve our community through worship, friendship, care and education; and to promote Christian values of concern for others, forgiveness, healing and justice.
Church Membership Group

The Minister is willing to meet with those seeking to join the membership of the Christian Church here at Bothwell. Those wishing to participate in such a group should please inform the Church Secretary or the Minister as soon as possible (see front cover for telephone numbers).

It is hoped the group will meet for the first time after Worship on Sunday February 20th 2011. All are invited to attend without obligation.

Give With a Will

a legacy to the Church

Did you realise that Bothwell Parish Church is a registered Scottish Charity?

Did you know that giving a LEGACY is one very important way by which you can continue to support the work of Bothwell Parish Church after your death?

A LEGACY may be a specific sum of money, a property, share in a company or the residue of your estate. Through a LEGACY you can ensure that funds are available for the Worship Outreach and Service of YOUR Church here at Bothwell.

LEGACIES are exempt from Inheritance Tax and may provide vital funds for a particular project of our Church or may be invested to produce annual income for ongoing work.

All LEGACIES are only used in accordance with the donor’s wishes.

So why not speak with your Solicitor … and give with a will?

ALLOVUS

What’s happening in February?

3rd – Welcome back & bingo
17th – Burns Lunch

And in March….

3rd – Speakers Time
17th – Beetle Drive

Love and Happiness

There are moments in life when you miss someone so much that you want to pick them from your dreams and hug them. So dream what you want to dream; go where you want to go; be what you want to be, because you have only this one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do.

Always try to put yourself in others’ shoes. If you feel that it hurts you, it probably hurts the other person too.

Church Web Site

www.bothwellparishchurch.org.uk

Roy (George) Williamson

Mary, George, Anne and families wish to thank sincerely all members of Bothwell Parish Church and friends who attended the services for Roy and for the beautiful floral tributes, sympathy cards and letters which meant so much to us. Thanks also to the Flower Committee ladies for their beautiful floral displays.

Mary Williamson
Starting in the Spring of 2011 — a chance to join

“Living the Questions”

a new programme of learning for anyone who wishes
to explore faith in a stimulating and open way.

Living the Questions is a study for the countless people of faith who have suffered in silence as the voices of fear and certitude claim to profess the unchanging truth of Christianity. Its purpose is to provide a resource for the discussion of what I already believed by many faithful people still holding on within institutional religion, while harbouring a conviction that what the church teaches isn’t the whole story. It is an open-minded alternative to courses that attempt to give people all the answers and instead it strives to create a safe environment where people have permission to ask all the questions they have always wanted to ask but have been afraid to voice for fear of being thought a heretic. It is intended not only for church members, but also for those who have left the Church because of its refusal to take their questions seriously.

How does it work?

Living the Questions (LtQ) is a DVD-based programme exploring themes of Christian faith. We will be looking at the first unit of 7 sessions “Invitation to Journey”. Each section lasts about 20 minutes, featuring many prominent teachers and theologians and supplemented by participant guides with weekly reading and discussion questions (go to YouTube and type in “living with questions” for a useful taster!) Our meetings will be quite informal, built around discussion and sharing our responses to what we have watched. The Minister will lead each session.

What does it involve?

Meeting weekly in May / June 2011—dates to be confirmed. All meetings within Church Centre.

For this first programme there will be space for 16 people, on a first-come basis—it is hoped to repeat the programme at a future date and so provide further opportunity to take part.

Those wishing to take part are asked to commit to the whole series (inevitably there will be unavoidable absence, but the intention should be to attend all 7 meetings).

The programme is expensive to purchase. There will be a charge of £10 per person for the whole course.

If you are interested….

Please give your name and contact details, as soon as possible, to the Minister (Office 854903 / Manse 853189 or email bothwellparishoffice@btconnect.com).

Disclaimer:
The producers of LtQ say this programme is NOT for:

♦ those who personal faith requires them to believe that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible word of God.
♦ those who believe that the doctrines of the church are sacrosanct and never to be questioned.
♦ those who believe the reason the mainline churches have been losing members is because they haven’t been teaching ‘orthodox’ Christianity or preaching the true Gospel.

Living the Questions does not try to provide easy answers, but to be a resource for people who are in the midst of a life-long conversation about the mysteries of religious faith and life.
The following is the address given by Dr. Harry Reid at the recent service to commemorate the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation. Many thanks to Dr. Reid for kindly permitting this to be printed.

Jesus Christ was not always meek and mild. In the passage we heard from Mark Chapter 8, Jesus is getting seriously angry with his disciples. They were ordinary decent working men who had given up everything to follow him around and commit to his ministry. These were the men who would go on and build the Christian church, who would spread the message that has taken such a hold over so much of humankind over the last 2000 years. Yet this was their reward, to be hectored and harangued by their lord and master.

Here, at this crucial stage in his short public ministry, Jesus is frustrated and angry that they are still only groping towards an understanding of who he really is, and what he is all about. He fires angry questions at them: Don’t you think? Don’t you understand yet? Have your minds been dullened? Having eyes, don’t you see? Having ears, don’t you hear? And again he asks: Don’t you understand yet?

Jesus is furious with them - not only for not understanding who he really is, but also for their lack of faith. Plenty has been going on, there have been many signs and deeds -- yet still the disciples have not recognised their significance. They remain puzzled, doubtful, and confused. And this contrasts with others, not his chosen disciples, who were already responding to Jesus with total faith.

This passage is most interesting in the context of Martin Luther’s emergence as the great begetter of the Protestant Reformation. Luther, a clever but mixed up Augustinian monk, was well aware that the old church, all around him, and of which he was of course a part, was failing and was not at all as it should be. But he was confused, he could not understand what to do, he could not see the way forward, he was in serious danger of losing his faith.

And then he suddenly understood. He understood that instead of being dependent on his own righteousness, he was dependent on God’s. He understood that the righteousness by which man is saved comes through faith in Christ. This apparently straightforward insight gave him a dramatic surge of confidence. He felt he’d been born again, that he had entered paradise through open gates. It gave him the colossal self belief he needed to take on the might and power of the old church. At first he wanted to be loyal to that church and indeed to the Pope, but soon he found himself impelled to move much further, in effect to found a new church. The reformer had become a revolutionary.

Luther’s German reformation was the first in a series of separate reformations which occurred in the sixteenth century right across Europe. Our Scottish reformation was one of the last, one of the least bloody, and one of the most complete.

I must at this point say that if we look at the overall movement we call the reformation there were many downsides, although overall it must surely be regarded as a positive and liberating movement.

One of the problems was that the reformers were obsessed with the word. This in itself was not a problem, indeed it was excellent. The reformers returned the Bible, which in the medieval period had been according to one historian, the church’s best kept secret, to the people. The reformers availed themselves of the new technology of printing – it has been said that the smell of printer’s ink was the incense of the Reformation. There were many new and highly successful translations of the Bible into the various vernacular languages of the people, right across Europe. Luther’s own great translation of the New Testament into vernacular German sold an incredible 200,000 copies in the first four years after publication in 1522. This gave a great impetus to literacy and the drive for democratic education right across Europe.

But this emphasis on the Word, while commendable and while handing the Bible back to the people, had its downside. This was the concomitant fear and suspicion of images. Most of the early reformers disliked and distrusted images, not just images of God but also almost any decoration or beauty in churches. On the one hand there was huge impetus towards education and universal literacy, although that took a long long time to be realised, and the Bible was effectively returned to the people. The other side of this was far too much wanton destruction of beautiful paintings and art and decoration.

Continued on page 6
Nowadays I suspect, after around 500 years of hegemony, the word – and alas literacy itself - is sliding away. Images are becoming supreme again. Some young people I know believe nothing is really real or authentic unless they can see it rather than read it - yet images too can deceive and confuse every bit as much as words can.

Meanwhile, whatever way we look at our own Scottish reformation, much of it based on legislation enacted by the Scottish Parliament 450 years ago, we must conclude that it was, obviously enough, a supremely religious movement. John Knox, the only one of the Scottish reformers to achieve the titanic status of a Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli – or indeed an Ignatius Loyola on the Catholic side -believed that the Christian religion was not something you could pick up when it suited to you, and then discard when it was inconvenient, only to pick it up again later. He believed that religion had to inform everything you did, every thought, deed, utterance, act, action, transaction. At the same time he and his colleagues wanted to use the Scottish reformation to roll out a great new society. I use the word advisedly, and please note that I did not call it the big society!

These men, led and inspired by Knox, had a magnificent vision for the new Scotland. It was driven by a democratic integrity that was I believe unique in Europe at the time. As well as the celebrated emphasis on education for all, the famous school in every parish, there was to be a new system of social welfare and poor relief enacted thought the Kirk sessions.

The minister was to be elected and was to be among equals in the Kirk session. The kirk session was to keep an eye on each and every aspect of life in the community. There was officiousness and snooping and in some ways this was a repressive society without much privacy, and one that many of us today would find disagreeable. But true communities were created.

Might I add that this word community is bandied around far too glibly today. In the Logie Green area of Edinburgh, two years ago, an old lady was found dead in her tenement flat, with a common stair right outside the door. She had been lying dead for five years. When the body was at last discovered it was reported that “the community” was in terrible shock. The point, my friends, is that it could not have been a community, in any meaningful sense of the word, if one of its members had lain dead in its midst for five years and no one had even noticed.

In these early years of our Scottish Reformation genuine communities were created. If a wife was being abused, it was noticed and something was done. If child was being mistreated, ditto. If an old man was failing and needed help, ditto.

For all this, and for all the intensity of his faith and his belief in himself as a true prophet, John Knox could not find the political guile or the energy to bring about all the change he craved. Much was accomplished between the enacting of the reformation legislation by the Scottish Parliament in 1560 and Knox’s death 12 years later.

Yet as he approached death, Knox felt himself a failure. In the beautiful words of Professor John McEwen: “John Knox coveted peace, but lived amid strife. His last years were tarnished by saddened visions, and shattered hopes. He had seen, with dreaming gaze, a promised land, but he had never quite found the means to lead his people into it.”

I have to say that if he felt himself a failure back then in 1572, I shudder what he’d think if he arrived here in today’s Scotland. I think he’d be appalled by many aspects of the state and condition of our nation. I think he’d conclude that we are in many ways a godless society, and that our national Scottish Kirk, which he did so much to create, has entered into a period of grievous decline. In short, I think he’d evince quite a lot of that divine discontent that Jesus showed with his disciples.

And yet there is one positive that I can see, and it might be an unlikely one. I was impressed when Pope Benedict visited Scotland in September and spoke in such a clear spirit of kindness and conciliation.

He was certainly not interested in scoring any points against Protestantism. And indeed during this year of events to mark and celebrate the 450th anniversary of our Scottish reformation, I’ve been impressed by the goodwill and respect shown by leaders of the Catholic Church in Scotland.

Continued on page 7
Russell

On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to thank everyone for the many cards letters and flowers sent to us during our recent sad bereavement. Your thoughts and kind support are much appreciated. Many thanks to Revd.Gibson for his visits and also a lovely service.

Maureen Russell

Dear Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a good 2011. I’d also like to express my gratitude for all the kindness shown to me in the past year. A big “thank you” to those who took time to write, send cards and send flowers - including the Guild, Church Choir and members of the Bowling Green. Thanks also to the bakers among you who let me taste your wares, and last but not least to those who have popped in to see me. I may take an age to answer the door but I eventually get there!

Thank you everyone.

Jean Crichton

Afraid to die?

A sick man turned to his doctor as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, “Doctor, I’m afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side ?” Very quickly the doctor said, “I don’t know.” “You don’t know ?” replied the patient, “but you are a Christian and you don’t know what is on the other side ?” Just then, on the other side of the door was the sound of scratching and whining. Once the doctor opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leapt up on the doctor with an eager show of gladness. Turning to his patient, the doctor said, “Did you see my dog ? he’s never been in this room before. He didn’t know what was here. Yet, when the door opened he ran in eagerly without any fear. I know little of what may be on the other side of death, but I do know one thing, I know my God is there and that’s enough for me.”

Article taken from ‘Life & Work’

The Socializers

….would like to wish everyone a very happy new Year and hope that you will socialise with us again soon. We are delighted to tell you that our ‘Christmas Ladies Come To Tea’ event raised £650 and we have been invited to contribute towards the purchase of a new sound system for the church thanks to your support. Looking to the new session we have decided to organise informal short walks for the last Sunday of every month, beginning in January. We shall meet in the church centre car park at 2pm and everyone is welcome. Finally a list of upcoming events:

♦ Family Ceilidh - Saturday 26th February

♦ Guided Tour of Paisley Abbey and a trip to Harry Ramsdens - March - date to be confirmed

♦ Easter Ladies Come To Tea - April - date to be confirmed

Looking forward to socialising with you soon !!

Dr Harry Reid’s address from the 450th Reformation Service – Continued from page 6.

Meanwhile Pope Benedict has actually been engaged, controversially, in trying to rehabilitate Martin Luther within the worldwide Roman Catholic family. This is a Pope who clearly sees the enemy not as Protestantism but rather as the aggressive tendency for militant secularism, even the desire to dechristianise our society.

And indeed I think that in that regard John Knox, if he were back with us today, might well agree with the Pope -- if not on very much else!

Perhaps we now need a new Reformation, in which the unthinkable will happen, just as it happened in the sixteenth century – this time our Christian traditions will join together to confront a new and more insidious enemy that is all around us.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your attention, which I greatly appreciate.
**A SHORT HISTORY OF BOTHWELL**

The third instalment of the notes prepared by the late Rev. S. J. Hamilton, B.A., on the history of the parish.

**III. THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD**

The century following the Battle of Hastings (1066) saw great changes in Scotland as well as in England. The principal cause of the changes in the Scottish church and state was the large immigration from England of people who were dissatisfied with Norman rule, and also of Norman nobles who were seeking fresh fields for adventure and plunder. Chief among these immigrants was Margaret, an English princess, who sought refuge north of the Tweed and who ultimately became queen, having won the heart of the rude Scottish king, Malcolm Canmore. Young, lively, learned and pious she played an important part in the revolution which transformed Scotland in the latter half of the eleventh century. Above all, her influence was paramount in the religious revival that took place. By her saintliness and wisdom she persuaded the leaders of the old Celtic church that they were in error in standing outside Catholic unity, and won them over to conformity with the rest of Christendom on such points as the due commencement of Lent, the Easter communion and the observance of Sunday. The change brought new life into the church and by the time of her son, David I (1124—1153), monasteries and abbeys as well as parish churches were springing up all over the country.

So far as Bothwell is concerned, the most important of the many Anglo-Norman families which settled in Scotland where the Olifards or Olifants, who hailed from Northamptonshire. When King David I was Earl of Huntingdon, the Olifards became his close friends and he stood godfather to the young heir of the house who was named after him. In later years David Olifard rendered his godfather a signal service, securing his escape from the siege of the city of Winchester in the autumn of 1141. The service was not forgotten. Soon we find David Olifard at the Scottish court, taking a prominent part in state affairs and receiving large grants of land.

Whether he or one of his sons received any grant of the lands of Bothwell is uncertain. At any rate, the first concern of the first baron would be to provide himself with a residence. This he probably did by building a wooden palisaded moat castle on what is now the estate of the manse and was doubtless the site of a native chiefs stronghold long before the time of the Olifards. His next concern—in accordance with the custom which the Normans brought with them from the south—was to build and endow a church suited for Catholic forms of worship and becoming the dignity of His barony. Naturally he selected the site which had been rendered sacred through many centuries of use by St.Bothan and others, and thereon he built a church of local sandstone in the Norman style. This church served the needs of the large parish for over two hundred years. At the end of that time—in 1398—there was added to it, by way of a chancel, St.Bride’s, the Kirk of the Grim Earl, and together these two edifices constituted the parish church for a further five hundred years, until in 1832 the older Norman structure was taken down and the present New Church erected. It might justifiably be said that for almost seven centuries (c. 1150-1832) the church built by the Olifards was the parish church of Bothwell.

This Norman church was along building, 22 feet wide and together with the apse probably about 80 feet in length, with small two-light Norman windows. There appears to have been an entrance porch on the south side, some distance—probably 20 feet—from the west end. The pulpit, both in Roman and Protestant times, stood in the middle of the north wall. The apse was separated from the nave by an arch with finely carved respond capitals, one of which is still preserved in the sacristy and indicates that the church was a substantial structure of artistic value.
This year the Flower Committee decided to design and create a Nativity Scene to be placed inside the Church. As many of you will know, the scene was placed on top of the pews beside the Christmas tree. It turned out extremely well, so well in fact that a number of you thought the figures were actually bought. We did however make it ourselves and quite a few of you asked how it was done. The project was started at the end of October to be ready for the Advent season. Many skills were used during the whole project and it was indeed a team effort. Here is a step by step guide:

1. A visit to the flower wholesalers in Glasgow was the first step to purchase tall flower pails for the bodies and floral balls for the heads. Wire coat hangers were used for the arms.

2. Once holes were made in the pails for the arms and the balls glued securely on top, old plain cotton sheets were cut to size and dipped in Polyfilla mixed to a thin solution with water which was then draped around each one to resemble clothes, headgear etc. The one shown is a kneeling Mary.

3. After waiting about a week for the material to dry out thoroughly, painting was the next step and deciding which colours would be used for each figure.

4. The folds of the clothes were then all highlighted in gold for effect.

5. Accessorising each figure was great fun, with crowns being painted and glued to the Kings' heads, and sourcing objects to represent gold, frankincense and myrrh.

6. Sheep were knitted, and crooks and a stable door were also made.

7. Best moments of all was putting the whole scene together. Boards were laid on top of the pews and covered in grey material and sacking and then covered with bits of straw. A star was placed in the middle at the back with material which looked like the night sky draping from it. Then the stable door was put in place along with the donkey looking through.

Once Mary, Joseph and the Baby in his manger were in place, the Shepherds and Kings were arranged round them.

A few flower arrangements were placed at the front and it was finished off with the placement of lights to enhance the whole scene.

The Minister is delighted to express the appreciation of many for the time and skills so obviously put into the creation of such a magnificent and unique Nativity; and thanks the members of the team involved for such dedicated and inspired work.
There are few of us who have not been affected by cancer in our circle of family and friends. It is an illness that provokes great fear and anxiety. While many cancers are very curable nowadays, the initial diagnosis can feel like a tremendous blow. Sometimes the cancer has been having little impact on a person’s health or sense of wellness, but the treatment procedures can be challenging, invasive and frightening. There is a vast amount of information now available to help people understand about different types of cancer and different treatment regime. My purpose here today is to talk to you about the emotional demands of cancer on both patient and loved ones.

A cancer diagnosis can come out of the blue or after a period of ill health. Either way, on that day everything changes. Something fundamental is shaken. Our sense of trust in life is rocked. A “dark stranger” has married the heart. This initial period is typically one of shock, confusion and emotional numbness. Fears, questions and different anxieties quickly follow. It is curable? Will I survive? What will happen to me during treatment? How will I cope? Suddenly life as it was assumed, all the plans, big and little are altered. There is a whole new set of unwished for challenges to be faced. Sadness, tears, withdrawal or depressed feelings are common. Alongside all these emotions can be bravery, determination and courage. All of this is normal, natural and human. Different days bring different experiences. It is as if the very ground we stand on is in flux and turmoil.

This is the time of deep strain for everyone. Why does cancer provoke such a huge emotional response?

There are many reasons, but one key one is that it brings in its wake deep uncertainty. An internalised sense of trust and safety is fundamental for human beings. This has been laid down within us since we were babies by the love and containment of parents, family and friends. This security forms the bedrock of how we think, feel and are in life. Our first home is our own body. When this “home” is threatened it is deeply disturbing. Our foundations are shaken at a primal level. Security and safety, once assumed with relative ease, now give way to deep vulnerabilities. Cancer can be painful and difficult; treatment can be hard and invasive. Our sense of self and how we are in the world is now changed. A tremendous fragility has entered the heart of our life.

Whether articulated or not, questions and feelings about mortality are now at the doorstep. We are all defended against the overwhelming complexities of our own death most of the time. This is healthy and natural, like a psychic veil that softens reality and shields and protects us from being overwhelmed. A cancer experience places the question of death closer to our feet. How do we navigate this most painful and intimate of encounters? Where do we turn within ourselves, to whom do we turn outside ourselves? We all want to protect those we love. To speak of our fear of death can seem just too difficult. Dreams hold the shadow of the turmoil. Silence holds the weight, until the time when words can find their way.

People with cancer and their loved ones need great emotional support. Even with full recovery, cancer is intensely emotionally challenging.

The internal distress is as real as the physical illness. Some people feel like they are in emotional freefall. Others describe an “as if” life. “It is not really me it is happening to somebody else…. yet I know it’s me”. Life has suddenly no map or a map so alien and unwanted, it offers little solace. Learning to bear the known and the unknown, to live with both certainty and uncertainty is a very difficult challenge psychologically. Yet with support and kindness and understanding, people do. They come to bear the unbearable. True strength comes from meeting the underbelly of vulnerability. Rigid strength leads to brittleness. True courage comes from meeting the underbelly of fear, not from trying to be heroic. In supporting the vulnerability that cancer evokes we deepen our encounter with our own humanity.

This may come as a surprise to many, but often the most vulnerable time for a cancer sufferer is when treatment is over and finished with. It may even be after the scans suggest that all is well. Friends and relatives are relieved and joyous. It may even be after the scans suggest that all is well. Friends and relatives are relieved and joyous. Inside the patient there can be a sense of deep loss, aloneness and emptiness. This may come as a surprise to many, but often the most vulnerable time for a cancer sufferer is when treatment is over and finished with. It may even be after the scans suggest that all is well. Friends and relatives are relieved and joyous. Inside the patient there can be a sense of deep loss, aloneness and emptiness. This may come as a surprise to many, but often the most vulnerable time for a cancer sufferer is when treatment is over and finished with. It may even be after the scans suggest that all is well. Friends and relatives are relieved and joyous. Inside the patient there can be a sense of deep loss, aloneness and emptiness. This may come as a surprise to many, but often the most vulnerable time for a cancer sufferer is when treatment is over and finished with. It may even be after the scans suggest that all is well. Friends and relatives are relieved and joyous. Inside the patient there can be a sense of deep loss, aloneness and emptiness. This may come as a surprise to many, but often the most vulnerable time for a cancer sufferer is when treatment is over and finished with. It may even be after the scans suggest that all is well. Friends and relatives are relieved and joyous. Inside the patient there can be a sense of deep loss, aloneness and emptiness.
THE DARK STRANGER

There has been so much loss and uncertainty, that the reality of all that has been experienced now needs time. It is a kind of grieving, or allowing heartbreak and anxiety to be felt and encountered and made sense of. Energy can be low, body image can be changed, and one’s sense of self can be altered with no return door. People often say “I am not who I was before”. This is a complex emotional time.

Suffering changes people. Many people with cancer experience it as an event that is permanently life changing. It is hard to come closer to one’s own mortality without somehow questioning the meaning of life. It forces a new perspective.

Old choices can be questioned, values are changed. A deepened sense of life and its meaning now enter the consciousness. Often old unresolved issues from the past now require our attention. Past losses present themselves for healing. Old relationships that hold the shadow of hurt need to be made sense of. Why this is so is something to do with the deep encounter with our own humanity that cancer brings. In an ironic way, cancer can give us a chance to become more of who we really are. It sorts our priorities. Things we were afraid of before can now seem less important and that can be liberating. “To what do we now want to belong?” is the question in the inner world.

Sometimes recovery is not possible and prognosis lays open the path towards increased illness and death. I never cease to be touched and humbled by the way people can learn to manage this. It is so easy to feel overwhelmed by loss or fear. We all need frames and frontiers to contain us. When instead there is only the unknown, the vastness can be terrifying. With deep kindness and emotional support we can help people to find a way to bear the unbearable, and find meaning amidst all the suffering. The heart and spirit take on what the body cannot bear. Life contracts with illness, but the tenderness of presence changes everything.

Living in the wellness of the moment and not in the fear of the future, is what shapes the day. Reassurance about pain relief and comfort is important to assuage unnecessary anxieties. Not being able to control the final outcome does not mean we cannot have control and choice about the way we want to live the days.

Cancer is not just a medical issue. Everyone touched by it, whether sufferer or carer, faces significant psychological challenges. Understanding the reality of this can mean the difference between feeling overwhelmed and lost, or held with warmth and safety. We can be afraid of words, afraid of emotions, afraid of being afraid. Some people will negotiate the challenge of cancer in a very private way. Others need the bridge of connection, of talk and support. Assumptions can be limiting and prevent meaningful contact. A single sentence can mean the world. A simple touch can bring solace to a heart in turmoil. We cannot fix everything but we can be there for each other.

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Red Sea 4 Noah’s Ark Club

December was a very busy time for our children. They enjoyed taking part in an ‘impromptu’ nativity Play despite having had no rehearsal or practice. Our main party was lively affair with entertainment provided by Future Stars and of course a visit from Santa. Finally the Christingle service, back to its former time in the evening, was a perfect was to round off the Christmas celebrations.

Our ‘Meringue Sunday’ raised nearly £130 for the children in Place of Restoration. Many thanks to all who contributed so generously. We received a letter of thanks from Monica MacDonald who keeps us informed about our friends in South Africa. Now its down to planning our next fundraiser so watch out for news. We know we can rely on your support.

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Christingle

Children who made Christingles at the Service on 9th January.
Picture by Jonathan Fleming.
### SUNDAY WELCOME / DUTY ROTA

Officebearers unable to be present on allocated Sundays should arrange cover. Elders on duty are expected to arrive at Church before 10.00am.

| FEBRUARY | 6th | Boys Brigade | 13th | J Cumming | J Dalziel | E Dempsey | Dr Fairlie |
|          | 13th | Mrs M Williamson | 20th | B Gillespie | J Gilmour | T Goodsr | S Greenshields |
|          | 27th | Mr B Ryrie | 27th | K Hamilton | L Horn | I Henderson | J Henry |
| MARCH    | 6th | J Hart | 13th | G Moore | M Hutchison | M Jack | D Lee |
|          | 20th | L McLean | 20th | L McLean | C McMurdo | C McQueen | Dr Ritch |
|          | 27th | R Robertson | 27th | R Robertson | B Sharp | J Shaw | K Simpson |
| APRIL    | 3rd | E Terrace | 10th | G Whitton | E Buttery | J Carson | M Clark |
|          | 17th | S Cook | 24th | Easter Communion Arrangements | Dr Thomson | A Watt |

### SUNDAY COFFEE ROTA

As usual, volunteers are asked to please swap any inconvenient dates with each other. New volunteers are most welcome to join the list and should please contact Sara Crichton - 854421.

| FEBRUARY: 6th | Boys Brigade | MARCH: 6th | Mrs M Cumming | APRIL: 3rd | Mrs C Cahill |
| FEBRUARY: 13th | Mrs J Hamilton | MARCH: 13th | Mrs E Buttery | APRIL: 10th | Mrs J Craig |
| FEBRUARY: 20th | Mrs N Carson | MARCH: 20th | Mrs H Gilmour | APRIL: 17th | Mrs S Crichton |
| FEBRUARY: 27th | Mrs A Thomson | MARCH: 27th | Mrs E Dempsey | APRIL: 24th | Mrs J Hamilton |

### Church Flower Calendar

| FEBRUARY: 6th | Mrs M Williamson | War Memorial |
|               | Mr B Ryrie |
| FEBRUARY: 13th | Mrs N Carson | Mrs V Pringle |
| FEBRUARY: 20th | Mrs R Wright | Mrs B Fairley |
| FEBRUARY: 27th | Mrs B Sinclair | Mrs E Mackie |
| MARCH: 6th | Mrs A Shaw | Mrs C Cahill |
| MARCH: 13th | Miss M Gordon | Mrs D Ardrey |
| MARCH: 20th | Mr T Hogg | Mrs A Freeland |
| MARCH: 27th | Mr S McCarte | Mrs I Miller |
| APRIL: 3rd | Mrs E Horn | Mrs I Parsons |
| APRIL: 10th | Mrs L McLean | Mrs M McWhinney |
| APRIL: 17th | Mrs J Lee | Mrs M Brown |
| APRIL: 24rd (Easter) | Mrs S McDermid | Mrs E Brownlie |

### Sunday Crèche

| FEBRUARY 6th | Elspeth Hamilton | Elizabeth French |
| FEBRUARY 13th | Eleanor Barr | Elaine Gibson |
| FEBRUARY 20th | Suzanne Smith | Shirley Frew |
| FEBRUARY 27th | Eleanor Terrace | Nan Carson |
| MARCH 6th | Janet McDougall | Jaynie Craig |
| MARCH 13th | Pat Maxwell | Gillian Ormiston |
| MARCH 20th | Elspeth Hamilton | Elizabeth French |
| MARCH 27th | Eleanor Barr | Elaine Gibson |
| APRIL 3rd | Suzanne Smith | Shirley Frew |
| APRIL 10th | Eleanor Terrace | Nan Carson |
| APRIL 17th | Janet McDougall | Jaynie Craig |
| APRIL 24th | Pat Maxwell | Gillian Ormiston |