

## Thoughts from the Manse



Dear All

As I am writing this, the Remembrance Season is nearly over and Advent and Christmas cast their first shadows into everybody's lives. Christmas chocolates and tinsel in the shops, carols and Christmas songs in the streets, charities getting ready to sell their cards are all unmissable hints that the festive season is close at hand. And we at St James are no exception: we are already preparing for our Christmas Fayre and nativity, where we hope to see many of you. It is a busy time of the year, a time of excitement and anticipation but also a time of waiting, a time for patience.

The word advent comes from the Latin verb *advenire*, to arrive or to reach and I have always found the second meaning particularly apt. During the season of advent, while we wait for the arrival of our saviour Jesus Christ, we already reach out to the child in the manger, we get ready for Him. Christmas trees are decorated, the wooden manger is dusted off, candles are lit on the advent wreath – all signs that Christmas is not just about presents and Christmas dinners, all symbols to point to something altogether more significant and magnificent: a new beginning, a child that will change the world, a child that is the light of the world.

This new beginning – like any new beginning really - starts with hope, hope that something is going to change for the better, hope that this new beginning will make a real difference, has an impact on our world, on our lives. And as Christians it is our privilege to set our hope on the child in the manger, a child born to be the King of Kings, a child born to save the world, a child that brings hope and light into our broken world: hope for justice, hope for peace, a hope that the prophet Isaiah expressed when he said: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end" (Isaiah 9, 6-7). AMEN

*Every Blessing,*

*Barbara*

## A PERSONAL NOTE

Some 9 months ago I announced my decision to leave St James by the end of 2023 and so you might be wondering why a removal van has not yet been sighted at the manse. This is because the implementation of presbytery plans across Scotland takes a little longer than I had anticipated, and vacant charges elsewhere are simply not yet allowed to call a new minister. I do not anticipate this to be a long delay, but it would not be fair on you to give you a new date that may have to be changed in one direction or the other.

This does not materially change what I have announced a few months ago: that I intend to leave St James, so the union with St Quivox can take place. I will add a word of caution, however: The union will not take place immediately: a Basis of Union will have to be negotiated, a vote will have to take place and presbytery's approval will have to be sought. These things take time, and a time of vacancy will be inevitable. I hope that patience and trust in God will get the congregation of St James through this period of change.

Every blessing

Barbara

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Grateful thanks are extended to all the Church Organisations and to Members who have kindly given donations to Church Funds this year and to the Line Dancers, Tai Chi Group, Ayr Figure Skaters, The IRIS Centre and Senjokai Karate Group for donations for the use of the Church Hall. This has amounted to £5,795.20 between 1 January 2023 and 31 October 2023.

Gift Aid reclaimed (1<sup>st</sup> half of 2023) - £3,190.27

The monthly offerings for September: SO / DD - £1,790;  
Freewill Envelopes - £1,482.05; Open Plate - £226.65  
The monthly offerings for October: SO / DD - £1,830;  
Freewill Envelopes -£896.00 ; Open Plate - £166.90

At the Remembrance Day Service on 12 November 2023 the Retiring Offering raised the sum of £100 for Erskine House.

Bank Balance as at 31 October 2023 is £6,522.26  
Reserve Fund Balance as at 31 October 2023 is £7,300.69

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Henry Murdoch,**  
Treasurer  
December 2023



## **OUTREACH (INCL KIDS TIME AND CHRTIST IN ACTION)**

### **Christ in Action Foodbank**

The Foodbank continues to support the 4 homeless hostels in Ayr and Troon. Plus, we weekly support Newton School by donating fresh food including a sack of potatoes and other vegetables. Plus, items of clothing e.g., new Knitted baby clothes, baby blankets, good used clothing and various other household item. Sincere thanks to the folks at St James who do the knitting, plus those who give regular cash donations and food items. We also support needy families in the North Ayr Parish Grouping referred to us by Paul Algeo. We support families with kids in Dalmilling Primary School.

The members of the St James Foodbank Team number 8, 4 from St James and 4 who are friends of mine. Stuart and I are Foodbank Trustees. The number of bags delivered during our last week on deliveries 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November were 60 and this does not include deliveries to Newton School. We are here to serve people and families in need.

Moyra Smith Outreach Convenor.

### **Kids Time Community Playgroup.**

The group continues to be well attended which means the hall is a **HAPPY NOISY SAFE PLACE** each Thursday. We are open from 10am till 12 noon and we have a small number of spaces vacant just now. Sincere thank are due to the ladies who help run the Playgroup.

**Moyra Smith Playgroup Leader**

## **FUNDRAISING/SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

### **CHRISTMAS FAYRE**

This is our biggest fundraiser of the year and it is on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December from 10am till 12noon. There will be the usual stalls - Baking, Crafts, Books, Christmas Goods and Gifts, Chit Chat Group will be having a Chocolate Stall, there will also be a This'n That Stall. As usual we will have a Tearoom serving Breakfast Rolls, tea coffee etc. Donations for the various stalls will be gratefully received. The church will be open from 6pm till 7pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December to receive donations (please enter by church main door as the Boys Brigade will be using the hall. We are unable to accept used items such as e.g. clothing etc. Please support church funds by coming along on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Should anyone need donations uplifted please contact me 07729331511.

We look forward to seeing everyone on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

### **CONGREGATIONIAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

This is on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December from 1pm till 3.30pm. As well as good food there will be entertainment. Should anyone need transport please contact me. There is no charge for this event as it is funded by The Kirk Session.

For catering purposes please let me know if you will be attending.

There is an attendance slip in this newsletter.

**Moyra Smith - Fundraising/Social Convenor**

## **ST JAMES' JUNIOR CHURCH**

Sadly, we do not have many kids attending but those who do are amazing. Their number is small but they are looking forward to presenting their Nativity Play on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December. It won't be an easy task but they will do it!! I am sure. You are invited to join the kids and teachers in the hall for coffee, tea and goodies after the service.

Our Annual Gift Service is on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December and the recipient of the gifts will be Children First once again. Please do not wrap your gifts as the support workers distributing them would have to open them before distributing them. I've been asked to mention that are older children who need gifts as well as the young kids.

We thank the people of St James for supporting the Junior Church and because of your generosity we will be taking them to LA Bowl on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December at 3 pm where they will bowl and then have a meal.

Moyra Smith  
Junior Church Leader

## **CHIT CHAT GROUP**

Our Group have been enjoying a variety of meetings and as usual we "have put the world to rights!" We have welcomed visitors and new members - still plenty of room for more of you to join us on Wednesday afternoons at 2.15 pm. in the Church Hall!

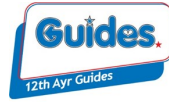
Our next project is to take part in the Church Christmas Fayre on Saturday, 2nd December 2023. We will be running the "CHOCOLATE STALL" again and would be pleased to accept Donations of all sorts of Chocolate items for the Stall! Anything "Chocolate" e.g. Sweets, Bars of Chocolate, Chocolate Spread, Drinking Chocolate, Biscuits etc., etc., in fact anything chocolatey will be gratefully received!



Thank you in advance and hope to see you all there - it's all for Church Funds!

**Ina Mackie - Group Leader**

## 12TH AYR GUIDES



We've had 13 girls attending regularly. At the beginning of November, we were joined by three new girls from Kingcase Brownies. They are thoroughly enjoying Guides and are very enthusiastic. Later in November we had a visit from 5 of our own Brownies – to see what Guides are all about. They enjoyed their visit and will hopefully join us in January.

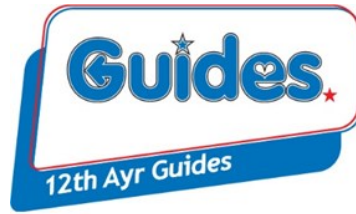
We held a Hallowe'en Quiz on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October and raised £150, which we donated to the Church. Thanks to everyone who supported this event.

On 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Brownies and Guides celebrated their 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. On Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October we had a special birthday party. Everyone had a great time.

We will be running the home baking stall at the Church Christmas Fayre on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December from 10am – 12.30pm, in the Church Hall. There will be other stalls including books, toys, Christmas gifts, chocolate and crafts.

We are planning a Christmas Fun Holiday Weekend from 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> December at Nether Auchendrane. The girls will get the chance to make some crafts and enjoy other activities, including a Christmas dinner. We've also invited our Brownies to join us on the Saturday to do some crafts and have lunch with us.

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December the Church will be holding their annual Gift Service. Although the Guides will not be attending this service, as we're at Nether Auchendrane, we would still like the girls to bring gifts which will be passed on to Children 7<sup>1st</sup>. This year we would especially ask the girls to bring gifts for teenagers, as Children 1<sup>st</sup> have advised they are the age group who get missed out.



In January we will hold our annual Burns Supper, when we will eat traditional foods, recite Burns poems and try some Country Dancing.

In February, we will hold our Thinking Day Service, thinking about Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Senior Section, Rangers, Young Leaders, Leaders and Trefoil Guild members around the world.

If you know any girls aged 10-14yrs, who would like to join us; contact us through the Girlguiding website or through Gillian Hay, Guide Leader – 5 Falkland Road, Ayr. KA8 8LN.

Email:- [12thayrguides@girlguidingayrshiresouth.org.uk](mailto:12thayrguides@girlguidingayrshiresouth.org.uk)

Tel:- 01292 283924 Mobile:- 07763 821013.

Gillian Hay  
Guide Leader



## 8th AYR BOYS' BRIGADE COMPANY

It has been a busy and quick first part of our session so far. There are 5 boys in the Anchors, 9 boys in the Juniors and 8 boys in the Company Section, all regularly attending.

If anyone knows of any boy in the P1, P2 or P3 age group who would be interested in coming along to the Anchor Boys then please let us know. Also, any P4 to P6 boys for the Junior Section.

The Boys' Brigade celebrated their 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. All our three sections took part in the events organised to celebrate this. The Anchor Boys had a challenge night in the hall, the Junior Section a sleepover in our Church Hall and the Company Section was a Monopoly challenge held in Glasgow.

During October we held a family evening (for parents and friends) in the Church Hall on Friday 13 October. This event was a success and well supported by Parents & Friends. All three sections had Halloween themed nights at the end of the month.

During November we took part in the Remembrance Day Service at the Church. Some of the Company Section Boys & Leaders collected for the Poppy Appeal in Ayr Town Centre and Heathfield Retail Park. The sum of £830 was raised for this worthwhile cause. Some of the Junior Section Boys and Leaders will attend a sleepover in Glasgow Science Centre. This is a national event for the Boys' Brigade and takes place from Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November.

During December we will help at the Church Christmas Fayre, put up the Hall Decorations and attend the Church Gift Service. At our final night of the year (Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December), all three sections will hold a movie night.

Stuart Hyslop  
Company Captain



## CHURCH FLOWER FUND

Thanks to everyone who has donated money for flowers in the Church.

I am pleased to hear the lovely comments about the flowers from the congregation.

If you would like to have flowers placed in the Church, please check the Flower Lists, in the Vestibule for availability. Contributions/donations to the Flower Fund can be made in cash or by bank transfer (please contact me for bank details).

Do you know someone who is unwell, unable to attend Church, has a special birthday or anniversary and would appreciate some flowers from the Church, please let me know.

Thanks to Lilian and Jean for their beautiful flower arrangements and to Lorna and Ina for helping make up the flowers to be delivered to members.

Any questions, please get in touch.

Gillian Hay

Flower Convenor

[Tel:- 283924](tel:283924)/Mobile:- 07763 821013

Email:- [gill.ayr@btinternet.com](mailto:gill.ayr@btinternet.com)

Address:- 5 Falkland Road, Ayr. KA8 8LN



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## **CHURCH ROLL**

**Blessed are those who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours and their works will follow them.**

Since the last Newsletter the Church has sadly lost Mrs Joan Kirkland and Mr Charles Ross. Our thoughts are with their family and friends.

**Gillian Cunningham, Roll Keeper**

## **CARPET BOWLS CLUB**

The Club has seen an increase in numbers this Session. This has allowed us to re-introduce playing for points on a weekly basis. In addition for the first time recently we are able to use two carpets. We can anticipate in the New Year being able to play competitions.

We continue to support the Church with financial donations. Also we make regular donations to the Flower Fund.

New members always welcome on Mondays from 2.00 pm.

Thanks to our members for their commitment.

All the best for 2024.

*Bill Mackie*  
*Club Leader*  
*Tel: 01292 281163*

## THANKS FROM MRS M ROSS

Marisheen would like to thank everybody for the flowers and cards on her bereavement of Charlie.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



2 December: Christmas Fayre

9 December: Congregational Christmas Lunch

10 December: Gift Service

13 December: Newton Park Ct 12 noon

17 December: Nativity – St James (with our friends from St Quivox)

24 December: Christingle Service (11am)

24 December: Watchnight Service at Auchincruive 11.30 pm

31 December: 9 Lessons and Carols – St James (with our friends from St Quivox)