



THE TORCH

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From the Editor.....

This year has fairly raced on, and so many things have happened, most significantly for our church community is the arrival of our new Minister, Rev David Nicolson!

Welcome from the Torch to you, David, Victoria, Finlay, Autumn and Isaac.

Do I detect a new spring in the step of EPC members, as we go forward together into 2020?

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and all the very best for The New Year!

Blessings to all

Jim Rutherford (aka "Ed")

(Remember our Christmas Eve Service on 24th December at 6.30pm)

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New Minister's Letter

A' charaidean chòir (Dear friends)

It is my sincere honour to write to you my first letter as your new minister at Erskine Parish Church. Having spent many years working out my calling, and then training for this role, I am delighted to begin ministering amongst you. Not only is it a great joy to begin to put my four years of training to use, but I am privileged to be in the midst of a warm-hearted church, and eagerly look forward to all the Lord has in store for us as His people.

I thought for this first bulletin it may be helpful to give you a little of my own personal story.

By way of introduction, I come from the Isle of Lewis, and spent most of my life there. I was raised there with Gaelic as my first language (hence the letter greeting!) As a family we attended the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland where I received a strong grounding in the reformed faith, which has stood me in good stead. Though I spent much of my youth sowing my wild oats, the Lord got a hold of me at age 20 through the Christian witness of a young lady, and I was saved and began following Christ as a result. The young lady is now my wife of 7 years, Victoria! I went on to do an English Literature degree at Stirling University, before a short career in Gaelic broadcasting for 5 years, mostly making programs for the BBC.

In 2014 I got the opportunity to fill a preaching gap at my local church, and then a desire began to stir to continue preaching, that simply would not go away. As I spent time working out my call with Victoria and other godly mentors, it became clear that the Lord was once again laying His hand upon me and my small family, with the calling of Ministry of the Word and Sacrament. I left my job and entered full time training in 2015 and have undertaken 3 placements, and completed a BA Theological Studies with Highland Theological College since then.

Our oldest, Finlay, is now 5 years old, and attends Bargarran Primary. The twins, Autumn and Isaac, are 3 and I can assure you, were a wonderful yet challenging surprise to be blessed with as I was in the midst of my training and studies!

As a family we have moved around a good deal, which has meant I ministered in a wide variety of contexts during my training.

Let me say, it is a joy getting to know each of you, and I thank God for the faithful witness to the Lord in Erskine Parish Church.

Please do come and speak to me if you would like to know any more of my story, or if I can serve you in any way.

My greatest aspiration as a minister of the Gospel is to preach the Word to you faithfully (2 Timothy 4), and serve each of you in as Christ-like a way as I possibly can, by God's Grace and help (1 Peter 5:2).

I will leave you once more with some of my mother tongue, one of my favourite Gaelic proverbs I try to live by:

Abair ach beagan is abair gu math e
(Say but little, and say it well)

Wishing you all God's richest blessing

David

The Kirk Session

The Session have been very busy with a number of organisational matters to attend to relating to an Ordination, Induction and Social, which events went very well indeed.....

Thanks are due to the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley for their appreciated organisation of Rev David Nicolson's Ordination and Induction on Thursday 10th October.

Our Church Family

We are all members of our Church Family, and this column is a regular feature in the Torch, recording and remembering Members who have passed on and new Members who have joined us.

We hope you will remember those who are now with God, and that you will welcome younger folks and their parents as well as adults who have joined us on our Christian journey at Erskine Parish Church.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you"

Members who have passed on into God's Loving Care:

Mr Charles McDonald (11.09.19) Mrs Agnes (Bobbie) Bell (22.10.19)

People who have joined our Church Family

Katie Murphy Burnett Victoria Heather Stewart

Rev David Nicolson Mrs Victoria Nicolson

HUGS

There's something in a single hug that always warms the heart.
It welcomes us back home, and makes it easier to part.
A hug's a way to share the joy and sad times we go through,
Or just a way for friends to say, "we like you, 'cos you're you!"

Hugs are meant for everyone for whom you really care,
Your Gran and Grandpa, your neighbour too, or even a cuddly bear.
A hug is an amazing thing, it's just the perfect way,
To show the love we're feeling, but can't find the words to say.

It's funny how a little hug makes everyone feel good,
In every place and language, it's always understood,
And hugs don't need equipment, special batteries or parts,
Just simply open up your arms, and open up your hearts.

(Anon)

Our Services of Worship

Erskine Parish Church offers a range of services as below:

Café Church: Second Thursday of each month in the Hub from 7 pm – 8 pm

Discussion on all kinds of life situations, perhaps using a video to illustrate, which is then the subject of discussion, led by the group leader.

“THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN ATTENDING HAVE GAINED SO MUCH FROM OUR SESSIONS AND WE ARE HOPING WE CAN ENCOURAGE MORE FOLK TO COME ALONG WHEN THE NEXT SESSION BEGINS”.

The 09.30 Service: at 09.30 am fortnightly in the Hub from 9.30 – 10.15 am

This service is an open exchange of issues as decided by the group, with no designated leader as such.

Prayer Group: Last Sunday in each month in the church 10 am to 10.30 am

Using and developing prayer

Traditional Sunday Worship: in the Sanctuary every Sunday 11.00 –12 noon

While this service is in the traditional mode, it is indeed a very positive, happy service, where there is interchange – smiling, laughter, and children are encouraged!

(A Crèche is now available during 11.00 am morning service)

The J.A.M. group: 4-weekly on Sundays in the hall 6.30pm to 8 pm

A church-based worship group for adults with learning disabilities

Order of Service Sheet

Good to see the return of the Order of Service sheet on Sunday mornings – very useful too as an information document about other church events!

Lifts to Church

Please contact Elizabeth McIntosh who has taken over from Georgy Rae. Thanks go to all who have supported us over the years. Keep up the good work!

SOFT PLAY GROUP

This group meet on Tuesdays from 1.00pm - 2.30pm in the big hall of the church. This is a small group and anyone who would like to come in will be made welcome. The toys are out and the children enjoy playing with them. Children have juice & biscuit and the adults have a cuppa & biscuit. The fee is £1.50 for one child £2.00 for two children & £2.50 for three or more children.

BABY & TODDLERS' GROUP

We meet on a Wednesday morning from 9.30pm to 11.15pm in the church Hall and we have quite a good number of Adults & Children attending the group which is great.

If anyone who would like to come to see this group would be made welcome.

There is a Registration of £3.00 & then it's £2.00 for the morning. Children have a snack & Adults have a cuppa & a biscuit.

If there is anyone who could help with the group could you speak to me or phone 0141-561-0661
Carol Dobbie

JUNIOR CHURCH

It has been heartening to see our numbers in Junior Church building up during last session and we are grateful to the parents and grandparents who faithfully bring the children along to learn about the Christian message of love.

We are also grateful to the volunteers who have joined the team of leaders on a Sunday to ensure that the children are looked after and helped.

We look forward to joining the rest of our church family each week.

Jean Inglis – Coordinator

(Ed: Wonderful to have this article to read about something so positive and it really gladdens the heart to see the young folk with us sharing and enjoying worship!)

The Guild



'Whose we are and whom we serve' - (Acts 27 v 23)

Theme for 2019/2020 - 'Companions on the Road'

The Guild is a movement within the Church of Scotland which invites and encourages both men and women to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and enables them to express their faith in worship, prayer and action.

Theme for 2019/2020 – 'Companions on the Road'

This year for the first time, Guild Week was held in September, the week before our first meeting so we decided to mark it by holding an Afternoon Tea and Handbag Sale to welcome back our existing members and encourage others to join us. After an afternoon of chatting over tea and cake with friends, many ladies left clutching lovely new handbags, having raised the fantastic sum of £485 for church funds. Of course, the Guild is no longer only for women and we were very pleased that quite a few men decided to join us. Our thanks go to everyone who contributed to the success of the afternoon.

Our attendance at each meeting has averaged around 45-50 and it has been a great encouragement to share in worship and fellowship with so many 'Companions on the Road'. Through the programme of speakers and activities, we have tried to reflect the theme and look at how we can put our faith into action by learning about and supporting organisations tackling important issues both at home and abroad.

So far this session, we have been entertained by Renfrewshire Carers Centre Choir, heard about the vital work of Scottish Ambulance Service and listened to inspiring and moving accounts of the work being done by Comfort Babies in Rwanda, Veritas in Romania and Malawi Fruits, one of the Guild partner projects we have chosen to support with our fundraising this year.

Malawi Fruits is a small Scottish charity based in Wishaw and their Guild partnership project 'Growing the Future' is aimed at supporting young farmers in Malawi to develop skills and grow crops to earn a decent income and provide a better standard of living, education and medical care for their families.

One of the key elements in producing sustainable crops is irrigation and Malawi Fruits working in partnership with Guilds across Scotland are providing solar powered irrigation pumps. Since the partnership started, Guilds have raised over £33,000 for this project alone and there is still 18 months of the partnership left to go.

We also heard that the United Nations Organisation has undertaken to match pound for pound all funds raised by the Guild for Malawi Fruits so together we can make a huge difference to the lives of families in Malawi.

The second project we are supporting in Erskine Guild this session is **Crossreach – Join the Dots**, an initiative by the Church of Scotland's social care department, aimed at providing support to people in times of loneliness and isolation, a major issue in our society today. We look forward to hearing from a speaker from the project at our January 15th meeting and we extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to come along and hear more about this important work.

We are planning two fundraising evenings in support of these projects, the first on 27th November when we will be entertained with Music by Malky, and the second on 26th February 2020, with the ever popular Jimmy Blair Accordion Orchestra. Look out for notices and tickets for these events and why not come along and join us.

Our Guild session runs until the end of November and after a break for Christmas, resumes on Wednesday 8th January at 7pm until 1st April. We will also be planning a summer outing in June so there's plenty more in store over the next few months. All meetings are intimated in church and on the noticeboards so if you haven't been to a Guild meeting before, why not give it a try.

The Guild provides friendship, fellowship, worship and an opportunity to show our faith in action by supporting each other, our church and others in need in our world.

A warm welcome awaits you and we look forward to sharing the journey with many more 'Companions on the Road'

For more information, please speak to **Aileen Robb** (0141 812 5894) or **Amy Renwick** (0141 581 5437)

CHURCH WALKING GROUP

We are having a break in the run-up to the Festive Season – hope to see you all in 2020!

If you have a pair of walking boots and would like to give it a try, come along and join us. Our main object is outreach and of course some fun too.

For any more information please contact me on 0779 064 7412.

Ana Fernandez

(Ed): Oh I would walk 500 miles and I would walk 500 miles...)

The Girls' Brigade



Bring a friend to Girls' Brigade - the place to bee!

Girls in Primary 1 - 3 are **Explorers** & they meet from 6.30pm to 7.30pm

Girls in Primary 4 - 7 are **Juniors** they meet from 6.30pm to 8.00pm

Girls in S1 - S6 are **Brigaders** & they meet from 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

Our badge-work covers a wide range of subjects that will interest and be fun for the girls to do.

We meet on a Wednesday evening from 6.30pm -8.00pm in the church.

When we enrolled in August we didn't have a lot of new girls which was very disappointing. If there is any girl who would like to come along and see what it's like they would be made welcome, or if you have a Granddaughter you could mention it to her.



We have a wide range of subjects that we do for our Badge work & play various games so it's fun for the girls

There is still time to enrol in the Girls Brigade – why not get in touch and find out more!

Also - If there is anyone who would like to help could you please speak to me, **Carol Dobbie**. Telephone 0141-561-0661 Sent from my iPad



Wednesday Nights

Explorers P1-P3 6.30 - 7.30
Juniors P4-P7 6.30 - 8.00
Brigaders S1 - S6 6.30 - 8.30



www.girls-brigade-

Girl Guiding



Requests for places can be made online at www.girlguiding.org.uk



Girls age 5 and 6

Tuesdays, 6.25pm to 7.25pm. Guider in Charge is Barbara Jackson.



Girls 7-10

Mondays, 6.30pm to 8pm. Guider in Charge is Tracey Corrigan

Tuesdays, 6.45pm to 8.15pm. Guider in Charge is Marion Menabney.



Girls 10 -14



Girls 14 -18 Yvonne Thomson runs **Guides** on Tuesdays from 7.30pm to 9pm, and **Rangers** on Thursdays

1st Erskine Boys Brigade

We enrolled about 45 boys this year. Although we are not taking part in as many competitions, we will take part in the Drill at the end of February 2020 as we are hosting it at Erskine Parish Church.

On Remembrance Day, three of the Company section and one of the Juniors took part in laying wreaths at the Cenotaph. The rest were at our own church for Remembrance Service.



RENFREWSHIRE CARERS CENTRE

A Lifeline for Carers in Renfrewshire

Caring at Christmas - As workers wind down for the festive period, it is important to remember that Renfrewshire's 17,759 unpaid carers are still providing their loved ones with endless support throughout the festivities. Carers, unlike paid workers do not get a break from caring and cannot simply stop for the holidays and put their feet up.

With carers making up around 10% of Renfrewshire's population, it is crucial that they know what support is available to them.

A Carer is someone who looks after or intends to look after, a partner, friend or relative who are unable to cope without support due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction.

'You can't pour from an empty cup' - We would like all carers to give the gift of self-care to themselves this Christmas. It is important to look after yourself. Carers often prioritise the person they care for and allow their own health and wellbeing to deteriorate. You can take small steps to look after yourself such as ensuring you attend routine health check-ups and getting your FREE Flu Jab – that all carers are entitled to, visit www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/vaccines/flu-vaccine for more information on this.

You could also attend one of Renfrewshire Carers Centre's Support Groups for emotional and peer support.

Know your rights! - Carers have new rights under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. This means that the Local Authority has a duty to support carers by preparing Adult Carer Support Plans.

An Adult Carer Support Plan helps you to think about what support you may need to help you to continue to provide care. It also looks at ways that you can be supported to have a life outside of your caring role. An Adult Carer Support Worker from Renfrewshire Carers Centre or a member of Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership Team will work with you to complete an Adult Carer Support Plan. Please call us on 0141 887 3643 to find out more.

For more information about Renfrewshire Carers Centre and how we can support you please visit – www.renfrewshirecarerscentre.org.uk You can also find us on Facebook, by searching 'Renfrewshire Carers Centre' or follow us on Twitter @Rcarers.

Prospects : Celebration Saturday 26th October 2019

As many of you will know, there has been a group of adults with special needs (the J.A.M. Group) meeting in our church once a month for worship for just over a year. The charity which supports groups like this across Scotland, and provides us with worship and teaching material is called Prospects Across Scotland. This year six of us, two from Erskine, two from Inchinnan and two from Bishopton were able to attend the annual Prospects celebration, hosted this year by the Aspire Group at Strathaven Evangelical Church.

What a cheerful occasion it was! Participants arrived between 12.30 and 1.30 for a hearty Gregg's lunch of sausage rolls and pies, followed by a choice of tangerines, grapes and apples. This was a good opportunity to chat to others, find out where they had come from and what their group does. Fifteen groups were represented from all over Scotland.

The Aspire group led us in worship and we made a joyful noise with drums, guitar, piano plus musical instruments distributed among the congregation. The topic was how God was with Daniel in the Lions' Den from Daniel chapter 6.

The scriptures were read by a group of Strathaven members, some of whom have been having lessons in how to read aloud and project your voice. The story was told with lots of action by the local pastor, and then acted out by volunteer members, splendidly dressed as Darius the King, Court officials and an Angel. This was such a helpful visual way to tell the story and kept us all entranced. Some of the audience members also got to play the part of the lions, roaring in the company of the screen Metro Goldwyn Mayer lion at the appropriate time!

After prayer we were all invited to dip a fingertip in paint and put our fingerprint on a paper cross, reminding us that we are all unique and that God knows and loves us all. Participants could then make a lion's face mask by colouring in and adding a brightly coloured mane. We finished up with a drink and a doughnut and another chance to talk to those from other groups. Our group had a great time. One of the praise songs we sang had the line 'We want to see Jesus lifted high,' and at Saturday's celebration we did!

Morag Moffat

(Ed: Sounds like everyone had a lot of fun, with an inspired take on the well-known Bible story!)



J.A.M. – Jesus and Me

Our J.A.M. worship group for adults with learning disabilities continues to meet **every fourth Sunday evening from 6.30 – 8.00 pm in the Hub.**

This is a joint group with members of Inchinnan Parish Church and although we are a small group, we are certainly not short of enthusiasm.

Our group meetings are an informal worship time when everyone can participate, if they wish, through singing, prayer, Bible stories, drama, and crafts. Members and helpers alike bring a mix of gifts and talents and together we share a happy time expressing our love of Jesus by worshipping together. Our meetings end with a social time over a cup of tea or coffee and an opportunity to chat and get to know each other better.

We usually begin each meeting by singing the song, 'Welcome Everybody' together and we would love to welcome more people to join us. Coming to church can be daunting when you don't know anyone or you are not sure what happens there and so it is important that people with learning disabilities are given the opportunity to take part in worship in whatever ways they are able. Groups like J.A.M. were set up to help people with special needs to express their love of God and be part of the church and so if you know anyone who would like to be involved, please encourage them to come and join us.

You can visit our Facebook page at **Prospects Erskine – JAM** and if you do, we would ask you to like our page and share it with your friends to help us spread the news and reach as many people as possible.

All adults with learning disabilities are welcome, regardless of where they live and whether they are a member of a church or not. All we ask is that anyone who has personal care or medicals needs should be accompanied by a carer or support worker and everyone will be made very welcome.

The charity Prospects across Scotland has given us fantastic support to make our vision become a reality and we are planning a fundraising event on Saturday 25th January 2020 in the church. This will take the form of a Tartan Tea and more details and tickets will be available soon.

Meeting dates are: 8th Dec, 12th Jan, 9th Feb, 8th March, 3rd April, 3rd May, and 31st May.

Aileen Robb

The Quizmaster asks –

“Can ye dae this withoot usin’ serendipity –
hoo weel dae ye ken about the Nativity?”

How well do you know the gospel story of the Nativity? It’s not always as depicted in the traditional nativity plays.....

1. Which of the synoptic gospels does not give an account of the nativity?
2. Where did Mary go when after the angel told her she would give birth to a son?
3. When Joseph found out that Mary was expecting a baby what did he plan to do?
4. How was he persuaded against this?
5. Why did the angel instruct Joseph to name the child Jesus?
6. Elizabeth also gave birth to a son, what did she name him?
7. What is the name the Roman emperor who ordered the census?
8. Which Old Testament prophet foretold that out of the town of Bethlehem will come a leader who will guide God’s people?
9. Where were the shepherds when the angel of the Lord appeared to them?
10. According to the gospels how many Magi were there?
11. Before arriving at Bethlehem where did the Magi go?
12. What instructions did Herod give to them?
13. What their response to that instruction?
14. Where did Joseph and Mary take the baby for the ceremony of purification?
15. What was the name of the God-fearing man who was told that he would not die before seeing the Messiah?

(Ed): Hope you will enjoy this further challenge by our Quizmaster – we trust you not to look up the page where all is revealed before trying to work out the answers! Enjoy!

Sam's Story.....

Sam Crooks was born in Anderston, Glasgow on Christmas Day 1919 as the newest member of a large family.

In due course it was time for Education, and he attended Washington Street Primary, then Finnieston Secondary - his parents would have liked him to attend Woodside Secondary but it was just not possible as they could not afford to buy the books and things needed for that establishment. Sam joined the Lifeboys and later the Boys Brigade based on Claremont Street Church.

All too soon, formal education was finished, and Sam had to leave school at 14 to find a job, which he did with Reid's in Osborne Street as a message boy. He liked to keep fit and at 16 he joined the Victoria Harriers, doing lots of training in and around the Victoria Park area.

Between the ages of 19 and 26, Sam was enlisted in the Army, in the Cameronians 12th Battalion, linked to the 1st Battalion, the Royal Fusiliers. In common with many many young men at that time he found himself at war, and one campaign he remembers particularly was the battle for Monte Casino in Italy.

By the end of the war in Europe in 1945, Sam had gained medals –The Victory Star 1939-1945; The Italian Star; the Defence Medal and The Victory Medal 1939-1945.

After demob he returned to civvy street once more, meeting his wife-to-be Nancy, to whom he got married in 1946. They moved to Springburn and in due course of time their little family grew, with the arrival of 3 children, Margaret, Bob, and Alistair.

Sam became an elder in St Rollox Church, and found employment with Todd's the Printers as a buyer. The family moved to Toryglen in 1956, and attended Toryglen Parish Church. In 1970, Sam took up employment with Glasgow Corporation, working in the Printing Department.

Nancy had a stroke at age 54, and Sam took early retirement at 60 to be her carer. They moved to Erskine in 1977 where Sam just loved his garden! A great family man, he has 5 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

Sadly, Nancy passed on in 1995....
In due course of time Sam married Mary and they enjoyed married and family life until Mary passed on.....

Sam has enjoyed two recreations, namely swimming and bowling and he and the family are looking forward to celebrating his 100th birthday soon. He certainly has had a very interesting and at times very challenging life so far, and his religious beliefs are important to him giving him strength when needed in times of stress, and contentment in life's better days.

(Ed): Thank you for sharing some of your memories with us Sam, and thanks to you Margaret for your input too! Look forward to seeing you both again soon at the Hub!)

Erskine Parish Church Hub Coffee-Shop



The Hub is a great place for a cuppa, a bite to eat and a blether. It is our outreach to the people of Erskine and beyond. Many of our customers have no connection with the church yet come regularly because they have found our café to be a place where they feel welcome and can relax in pleasant and friendly surroundings. But you may have noticed that the Hub was closed for a week in October. That was because some of the volunteers were tired and needed a break but if we had more volunteers then we could have remained open. Could you be one of our volunteers?

Although the Hub was never primarily intended to be a fund-raiser, last year it raised £18,000 for church funds and we are on target to raise a similar amount this year. And that is because we have a group of willing volunteers but we need more.

If you want to come on board speak to anyone connected with the Hub. Even if you could offer to help for part of a day or maybe be willing to be available to help when we have shortages then that would be great. Its enjoyable, you'd be working alongside a great bunch of people and engaging with our customers.



So think about it, working in the Hub is our ministry to the people of our community, come and be part of our ministry team!

John Renwick

Congratulations!

Eleven members of the Hub volunteer staff attended a Food Hygiene Course on Saturday 26th October, and it is good to note that all 11 passed with flying colours.

(Ed): Well done all of you!

And thanks! Sometimes customers leave a small donation, such as change, as a “tip” for the Hub staff and this is disbursed by them to nominated and agreed charities. The 3 donations to charities from the Hub “tips” in 2019 were to Lamont’s Farm, CHAS and Erskine Eagles Basketball Club. Each received £100.

Finding Faith.....

Hello, my name is Thomas. I'm 47 years old and from Paisley.

Due to my drug addiction I've been in prison for long spells since 1989 and once in prison the drug taking didn't stop because I had access to drugs there also. The first thing I did on my release day was to buy more drugs which in turn led to another prison sentence. That was my life back then and it also caused me great pain because I didn't have my kids in my life and I took more and more drugs to deal with that pain.

Then in 2001 I was given a 10-year sentence and you would think that would stop me. I was sent to Shotts prison where I was back on the chase and that was how I was going to deal with my sentence. Then after I was released I was out for only 8 months and I was straight back in again with an 11 year sentence and by now a broken man. I found it hard to get my head around that I was doing another big sentence.

Then one day a fellow prisoner called Paul asked me if I'd go to the prison church with him which I did and heard them talk about God and how He changed people's lives.

I had always believed there was a God and that night I went back to my cell and on my knees asked the Lord into my life as it was a mess. That night I felt so at peace and since then I've always attended church.

You would get some guys calling me Bible thumper and so on, but I'd just laugh it off. I'd felt that peace in my cell that night a peace I hadn't felt for years.

While going to church I got talking to a volunteer called Irene and her husband Billy who were Christians and Irene asked if she could come and visit me which I said yes to and she would visit me every week for over 3 years and on my last release Irene and Billy would come and take me to their home and I'd help Billy do some jobs round about their home like painting the fence.

Two other men came into my life whose names are Robert and John who took me to their church in Renfrew and before long I was helping in the food bank which was great. It was filling my day and it felt good to give something back.

Sometimes my old friends would ask me why I go to church and I just say to them I want a better life and I'll find that through knowing the Lord and going to church.

God Bless.

Thomas.

(Ed): Thank you for sharing your thoughts with the Torch, Thomas – God's blessing be with you.

EPC Bookshop – Books for sale via the Hub ***(Located on the shelf counter where the raised stools are)***

“Rhymes and Readings” - This is a compilation of poems and ponderings penned by members and friends of the congregation.

Many folks have bought copies, and there are only a few remaining - still very good value at £5 for some 50 pages containing a wide spectrum of informative, amusing and emotive thoughts.....

If you wish to obtain a copy, please contact Angus Cochrane, or Jim at the Torch.

”A Collection of Short Stories and Poetry” - This little book has been published by Margaret Reid, a member of our Church.

I had previously a preview of the draft of the book, and it contains a number of very interesting pieces of work indeed, the contents expressed in Margaret’s easy to read style.

The work can be obtained online through “Feedaread” at the very reasonable price of £3.49.

To purchase, go on to freedaread.com click on Books then scroll down to Poetry and Short Stories Author M.R. Houston Then click on Buy

The Christian Faith - "Would you like to know more about the Christian Faith? Well, Rev Iain Ramsden has written a wee easy-to-read book which he has called **“A Whistle-Stop Tour of the Christian Faith”** in which he runs through the important points in our Faith which will help you understand the complexities of our Christian faith – in a simple, straightforward and understandable way.

There are only a few copies left, at the amazing price of only £5 to you! And a real winner at £6 if you want it signed by the author - All monies to Charity”. (You will find copies in the Hub or speak to Iain himself or Jim at the Torch.)

Paperbacks and other books are also available as usual in the Hub at the excellent rate of 3 for £1 – stock is frequently changing, so you might find something new to interest you – have a look!

Jim Rutherford

Fabric - As a member of Erskine Parish Church, I would like to thank the ladies and gentlemen of our church who have worked tirelessly during the last few months to decorate and clean our church. They have given their time willingly and the results of their labours are visible for all of us to see. To each one of you THANK YOU. There is still more to be done, and with a few more hands this can be achieved. This is our church, which needs all of us to do what we can to keep it maintained.

(A member)

"Mony a Mickle maks a Muckle." (Ed: *This old Scots saying is true indeed!*)

"Jan's Tabletop Sale" - **Jan Pigott** (Tel. 07790357226)

Good quality items for the monthly Tabletop Sale. The sales are held in: **Bargarran Community Centre 12-2 pm on the second Saturday of each month.** Anyone who wishes to donate "small items" for forthcoming sales, please do speak to me. You can help to support our Church in this small way. My thanks also to my helpers, Janet, Chris and Betty, who keep me company and help to pack up at the end of the session.

"Mile of Pennies" - **Stewart Renton**

Once again I thank the congregation for the donation of the pennies and for the silver coins also. God Bless.

In the next edition of the Torch, I will try to give you an idea of the kind of things that the Mile of Pennies has helped us to do in and around the Church.

Freewill Offering & Gift Day envelopes

At time of writing, most of you on FWO envelopes will have received your new ones for 2020. Some of you will have received a new FWO number. Please remember to put this number on your quarterly white envelope, so that if you pay income tax, we can reclaim money back from the Inland Revenue department.

Anyone wishing envelopes (not already using them) please contact me and I will delivery before the New Year begins.

At this time of year, let us remember the members who have passed away this year. Gone but not forgotten! God Bless.

Sincerely Maureen Burnett
(FWO Convenor) Tel: 0141 812 2343

“Money, Money, Money.....” Update from our Treasurer – thanks again Kathy.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE - JANUARY – SEPTEMBER 2019

INCOME RECEIVED			EXPENDITURE	
RECEIVED	AMOUNT		PAID	AMOUNT
OFFERINGS	£52,740.05		EDINBURGH	£40,666.32
HMRC	£12,814.87		STATIONERY	£1,714.20
DONATIONS	£4,946.95		INSURANCE	£1,947.99
HALL LETS	£6,584.00		GAS	£1,733.74
MISC	£333.80		ELECTRIC	£3,678.38
			SALARIES	£13,159.29
			MANSE COSTS	£1,364.98
			FABRIC	£2,972.78
			TRAV. EXPS	£108.00
			PULPIT SUPPLY	£810.00
			PRESBYTERY	£1,407.86
			WORSHIP	£1,813.99
			PHONE	£367.17
			CLEANING	£2,868.07
			TRANSFER	£4,000.00
TOTAL	£77,419.67		TOTAL	£78,612.77

“To judge a man by his weakest link or deed is like judging the power of the ocean by one wave”

(Found in a Bible of Elvis Presley)

(Submitted by Angus Cochrane)

The 12 Days of Christmas – try singing it over to yourself!

On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me
A partridge in a pear tree.

On the second day of Christmas, my true love sent to me
Two turtle doves
and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the third day of Christmas, my true love sent to me
Three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me
Five gold rings.
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings.
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
Seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings.
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
Eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings.
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
Nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings.
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
Ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six
geese a-laying,
Five gold rings.
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
Eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans
a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings.
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
Twelve drummers drumming, eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight
maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings.
Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves
And a partridge in a pear tree.

But did you know what is represented within the words of this much-loved Carol?

The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ;
Two turtle doves are the Old and New Testaments;
Three French hens stand for faith, hope and love;
The Four calling birds are the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John;
The Five gold rings recalled the Torah, or Law, the first five books of the Old
Testament;
The Six geese-a-laying stand for the six days of creation;
Seven swans a-swimming represent the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit...
Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy;
The Eight maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes;
Nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit...Love, Joy, Peace,
Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control;
The Ten lords a-leaping are the Ten Commandments;
The Eleven pipers piping stand for the eleven faithful disciples;
The Twelve drummers drumming symbolizes the twelve points of belief in the
Apostles' Creed.

So, there is your history lesson for today. **MERRY CHRISTmas!**
Yes, I said MERRY CHRISTmas because Christmas it is not Christmas without
CHRIST!

Poetry for your delight.....and contemplation.....

(Ed: Poetry has often been described as nurture to the soul.

I do hope you will find something to interest you in this Torch December selection!)

I'm going on a journey,
Where all have gone before,
I know not what awaits me,
I'll simply knock the door.

And if I am admitted,
I hope and pray to see,
All of my dear loved ones,
Who meant the world to me.

(MB)

Thanks to [Selkirk Parish Church](#) 'Open Space' for sharing this prayer:

*I will light a light
In the name of the Maker
Who lit the world
And breathed the breath of life for me.*

*I will light a light
In the name of the Son
Who saved the world
And stretched out His hand for me.*

*I will light a light
In the name of the Spirit
Who encompasses the world
And blessed my soul with yearning.*

An anonymous author once penned these words:

- I was hungry and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger.
 - I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release.
 - I was naked and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.
 - I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health.
 - I was homeless and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.
 - I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me
 - You seem so close to God; but I am still very hungry, and lonely, and cold.
-

When you are old

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

(W.B. Yeats)

In this Edition of the Torch, our featured poet is W. B. Yeats

Born in Dublin, Ireland, on June 13, 1865, William Butler Yeats was the son of a well-known Irish painter, John Butler Yeats. He spent his childhood in County Sligo, where his parents were raised, and in London. He returned to Dublin at the age of fifteen to continue his education and study painting, but quickly discovered he preferred poetry. Born into the Anglo-Irish landowning class, Yeats became involved with the Celtic Revival, a movement against the cultural influences of English rule in Ireland during the Victorian period, which sought to promote the spirit of Ireland's native heritage. Though Yeats never learned Gaelic himself, his writing at the turn of the century drew extensively from sources in Irish mythology and folklore. Also a potent influence on his poetry was the Irish revolutionary Maud Gonne, whom he met in 1889, a woman equally famous for her passionate nationalist politics and her beauty. Though she married another man in 1903 and grew apart from Yeats (and Yeats himself was eventually married to another woman, Georgie Hyde Lees), she remained a powerful figure in his poetry.

Yeats was deeply involved in politics in Ireland, and in the twenties, despite Irish independence from England, his verse reflected a pessimism about the political situation in his country and the rest of Europe, paralleling the increasing conservatism of his American counterparts in London, [T. S. Eliot](#) and [Ezra Pound](#). His work after 1910 was strongly influenced by Pound, becoming more modern in its concision and imagery, but Yeats never abandoned his strict adherence to traditional verse forms. He had a life-long interest in mysticism and the occult, which was off-putting to some readers, but he remained uninhibited in advancing his idiosyncratic philosophy, and his poetry continued to grow stronger as he grew older. Appointed a senator of the Irish Free State in 1922, he is remembered as an important cultural leader, as a major playwright (he was one of the founders of the famous Abbey Theatre in Dublin), and as one of the very greatest poets—in any language—of the century. W. B. Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1923 and died in 1939 at the age of seventy-three.

(This article was sent to the Torch by our Contributor in Bangladesh, Asif)

More Congratulations!

To a very special couple – Tommy and Rena Yule, whom I have been privileged to know since shortly after Erskine Parish Church came into being (In those days known as New Erskine Parish Church.)

Tommy and Rena were married in Priesthill Parish Church Manse on 29th December 1950.

On the last Sunday of the year (29th December) they will celebrate their 69th Wedding Anniversary.

I am sure members of Erskine Parish Church will wish to join in thanking them for all their service to the Church in so many ways over the years, and to wish them both “All the best!”

Jim Rutherford

Answers

1. Mark
2. The house of Zechariah and Elizabeth [Luke 1 verse 40]
3. Break off the engagement privately [Matt 1 v 19]
4. By an angel of the Lord who appeared to him [Matt 1 v 20]
5. Because he will save his people from their sins [Matthew 1 verse 21]
6. John [Luke 1 v 60]
7. Augustus [Luke 2 v 1]
8. Micah [Micah 5 v2]
9. Tending their flocks in the fields [Luke 2 v 8]
10. The number is not stated
11. Jerusalem [Matt 2 v 1]
12. Go and make careful search for the child and let me know [Matt 2 v 8]
13. They returned to their country by another road [Matt 2 v 12]
14. Jerusalem [Luke 2 v 22]
15. Simeon [Luke 2 v 26]

“Identity”

Julie Andrews burst into the music scene with a one-of-a-kind voice. Born in 1935 in a London slum, she grew up in poverty. Her parents divorced, but she could sing. Most people have a vocal range of two octaves. She sang effortlessly over a span of four. She had a very pure, thin voice.

When she was 13, Julie became the youngest soloist ever to perform for the Royal Family. By 18, she had become a star in London's West End. At age 29, she won the Academy Award for Best Actress in her role as Mary Poppins. In 1965 she arrived on screen as Maria in the Sound of Music. Her rendition of the film's opening bars "The hills are alive" qualifies as one of the great movie moments of all time. Her voice carried her through a diverse, successful career on stage and screen.

Then came 1997. Andrews chose to have surgery to remove noncancerous nodules on her vocal chords. It was disastrous. She awoke to discover that the range and quality of her voice was gone forever. It was devastating because she had lost her identity.

At one point she turned to her daughter and said "What am I going to do now?" Her daughter answered "Mum you'll simply need to find a new voice". That she did. Andrews and her daughter have now co-written more than 30 children's books, many of which have been adapted for screen and stage.

Now 83 years old, Julie reflects on one of the most memorable lines from the Sound of Music. "What I said in the movie is true, "when God closes a door he opens a window.""

What would happen if you lost the use of your signature gift? That one part of yourself that you define yourself by? Stay at home mums' children grow up, career people retire, athletes' bodies give out. Sooner or later it is bound to happen.

Everything we have slips through our fingers. The day will come when we are too old to do what we used to do. But that doesn't mean we lose our identity. We will always be deeply loved children of God. Meanwhile during the changes of life, God will always open a new avenue to express His love in this broken world.

Karen Bain

(Ed): Many thanks Karen for this article from your church in Florida, USA.

"Afore we go....."

Fair Trade IS important!

See the next edition of the Torch for more information about Rainbow Turtle in Paisley

Your Torch Team for this Edition is Jim Rutherford, with Jackie Burnett (for the printing process). Additional help was given by Elizabeth McDade, Val Marquis, John Leonard, Jack McBeth and John Renwick. Thanks to you and all of our contributors! Future articles can also be emailed please where possible to torch.epc@gmail.com

We would also like to thank you, our readers, for reading the Torch and we hope you have enjoyed it! Watch out for new articles, thoughts and issues, and remember we are very happy to have contact with our readers, so get that e-mail ready, or write/ type out what it is and leave it in the Torch Box in the Hall of Fellowship! (Remember to give a contact in case we need to call you).

If you are unsure about writing for the Torch, do not worry, help will readily be given. We do not know all the answers, but are happy to chat things through and help if we can!

Jim Rutherford

(Torch T1219 21-11-19) *(All information is correct at the time of printing)*

Looking East.....



Looking West.....



Menu consultation.....





Monday	Hub Coffee Shop	1030-1330	What's on at Erskine Parish Church
	BEI Lunch Club	1130-1430	
	Brownies	1830-2000	
	Line dancing	1900-2100	
Tuesday	Zumba	1000-1100	
	Hub Coffee Shop	1030-1330	
	Soft Play	1300-1500	
	Rainbows	1825-1925	
	Brownies	1845-2015	
	Guides	1930-2100	
Wednesday	Parent & Toddlers	0900-1115	
	Girls Brigade	1830-2100	
	Guild	1900-2100	
Thursday	Hub Coffee Shop	1030-1330	
	BEI Lunch Club	1100-1500	
	Slimming World	1500-2100	
	Guides Ranger Section	1830-2000	
	Café Church	1900-2000	(2nd Thursday of each month – see page 07 for details)
Friday	Choir	1930-2100	
	Zumba	1000-1100	
	Hub Coffee Shop	1030-1330	
	Anchor Boys	1815-1930	
	BB Junior Section	1815-2000	
	BB Company Section	1945-2200	
Saturday	Walking Group	0900 - (Fortnightly & Weather permitting)	
	Jan's Tabletop Sale	1200-1400 (In Bargarran Centre , on second Saturday of each month)	
Sunday	9.30 am Service	0930-1015	(Fortnightly)
	Prayer group	1000-1030	(Last Sunday each month)
	Sunday Service	1100-1200	(Weekly) (Crèche now available)
	J.A.M. Group	1830-2000	(4-weekly - See pages 07 & 15 for dates & information)

(Services of Holy Communion are held at 1100 on second Sundays in March, June, September and December)