



Link Magazine Winter 2009

IS there Room in your Inn This
Christmas?



Support our partners in Malawi
Appeal
(Details inside)

www.st-ninians-stonehouse.org.uk

Hi Folks,

May Ali and I take this opportunity to use the Link Magazine to wish you all a very peaceful, warm and happy Christmas with your family and friends.

May we also encourage you all to donate to our World Mission Partners, the Mulanje Mission Hospital in Malawi, instead of handing out Christmas cards to one another, as we have done for a number years now.

With our very best wishes,

Paul, Ali, Julia, Jonathon and Miriam (The Manse Family)

Is there room at your inn?

By donating an amount of your choice, you have helped provide basic care and shelter at Mulanje Mission Hospital.



Shining light on their lives

Help us raise money to send to Mulanje Mission hospital to allow them to continue to provide basic shelter and care for those in need. A commodity we all take for granted in this country. Buy a voucher instead of a Christmas card or a gift this year and give the gift of love and hope to people for whom it means the difference between life and death. (Available after church services in the hall)

Thank you for your ongoing support. (St Ninian's World Mission Team promoted as Stonehouse Better World Group)

Minister's Letter

Winter admits the shortest glance of sunlight
To touch Decembers face.
Winter reserves its deepest dark for advent days.
By the time of December's solstice
The day barely opens its eyes from the nights sleep.
Against the darkness
Christmas offers its own light as relief.

But the light of Christmas
Is easily captured and imprisoned in a
consumer's lamp.
Here it is made to glare with
sentimentality;
The artificial fluorescence
Sweeping through the shops and
supermarkets;
The desperate bid to turn our every
festive purchase
Into something other than it really is -
buying more things.



But Christmas is not a present it's a *presence*.
The pure light of Christmas is more a candle than a sixty
watt bulb.
Christmas invites us to follow the spread of its gentle light
Around the shape of our own living.
Christmas invites us to pause over who we are,
What we've loved or lost,
What we truly hope for, have endured, yet fear.

Christmas invites us to take what we find in our lives
And shelter it under the light of its story:
Of a child in a manger,
Of a star, shepherds and a stable –
A story like a child's whispering in our ear the secret
Of how the Divine presence is closer to us
Than we have yet imagined or maybe even care.

May the flame of this Christmas
Bring a welcome simplicity to take you off the treadmill;

May the presence of Christmas
Light up your life with fresh recognition
That the real gifts you already have
In those you love, have loved, who love you;
May this light
Cause you to celebrate their company and cherish their
memory:
For by your loving and in your remembering
Christ waits to be born
As gently and unassuming
As a child in the manger of a stable.

Merry Christmas

Paul



Session Clerk

Hi Folks, well are you all looking forward to Christmas? I hope we can capture the true meaning in among all the activity.

We have been having a busy time as usual with all the different activities that go on in the church.

Ian White and Jacky Rodgers have resigned as elders due to work commitments and ill health and I would like to thank both of them for their hard work and dedication and wish them well. We will still see Jacky but Ian and Betty have transferred their lines to another church nearer home.

We have received some transfers from various churches and welcome Ann Masterman, Nora, David and Heather Carmichael, Andrew and Moira McIntyre. It's a pleasure to have you with us and I hope you all enjoy the praise and worship with the congregation at St Ninian's.

We also welcome four new Elders Allison Millar, Rosemary Clark, Gavin Ferguson and John Limerick who are all very much involved in the life of our church and I look forward to working with them in the years to come. May God bless them as they carry out their duties as Elders.

It's good to welcome new folks and we need the help and prayers of all the congregation as we carry out Gods work in our church and village. The church needs all who are members not just the leaders and the minister.

As you probably all know we wrote to folks who we hadn't seen for a time inviting them to a supper and a welcome home service, It was lovely to see those who responded and I hope they will enjoy and be enriched by the praise and fellowship now they are back among us. It can be difficult to come back through that door but a warm welcome awaits all.

I hope you all have a peaceful and happy Christmas and may God be with you in 2010

God Bless Margaret

St Francis de Sales wrote these words and I think they are quite appropriate as we approach a new year

Do not look forward in fear to the changes in life;
Rather look to them with full hope that as they arise
God, whose very own you are, will lead you safely through all things;
And when you cannot stand it, God will carry you in his arms.
Do not fear what may happen tomorrow;
The same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of
you every day.
He will either shield you from suffering or will give you unfailing
strength to bear it.
Be at peace and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.



I thought the time had come to bake
that rather special Christmas cake,
and so I started to prepare
and weigh the fruit and flour with care
I warmed the oven, greased the tin
and felt a certain pride within.
It smelled so good in just a while,
I thought it sure to raise a smile.
But later I was not amused -
I found the eggs I should have used!
So, bakers, now this warning take,
be careful with that special cake.
Iris Hesselden



I thought this was good, as I have been having rather a lot of senior
moments lately.
(Andrew tells me they are not Senior Moments, they are Intellectual
Interludes) sounds better, doesn't it!

Treasurer's Report

Dear All

This news article will probably be of concern to the congregation. In all the times I have produced reports for the Link Magazine and looked after the role of the Treasurer, I cannot remember a time that money was such a predominant worrying topic as it is in this Winter edition of Link - for the church and the country.

I will not be so naïve to think that you cannot remember the times I the year. Just to remind you of 'some' of the heavier hitters:

I am not going to add the column up or tell you the other sundries that have to be added on to the end of this calculation, I merely want to make you aware of what goes in and out the General Fund.

We have been extremely lucky with the church organisations funding the majority of the outside work this year. This money by in large has not come from the General Fund, we have drawn on some of our reserves in the Fabric Fund and if you remember the Gift Day was for specifically for this use. Additionally we have still funds available in the 'Repair Fund'

I mentioned above what goes in and out of the General Fund. Well can I say we have almost come to the point where there is more going out than there is coming in. We could depend on our church organisations to *in fill* the deficits we potentially face but this is not a final and lasting solution.

The Finance committee has jointly agreed to see how the end of the year plays out. Even though I am in an uncomfortable deficit with the General Fund just now I hope to form some kind of balance before the end of the year. We have no contribution to make to Edinburgh in December and in addition we have a Tax Recovery of £3139 already in the pipeline, plus some fund raising activities, which will have taken place by the time you read this article.

Could I just remind organisations not to put any money into the church account at the end of the year as this causes the Finance Committee problems and may not ultimately be a solution to our problems. See a member of the Finance committee if in any doubt.

Our chosen course of action to set us up a year planner, early in 2010 and thereafter every year at the same time.

This will list fellowship/fund raising events all clearly planned and set out throughout the year giving all organisations fair and dependable access to sustainable fund raising at specific points of the year, not to clash with other church or village activities. We already have some provisional ideas like a Spring Fair, Car Wash Saturdays, Gift Day, Concerts, Autumn Fair, Christmas Craft Fairs, Table top sales etc. to name but a few. (I must thank the Coffee Morning ladies for all their hard work. Without them you would not have the outside of the church looking as it does - please continue with everyone's thanks)

Why can I hear you ask are you not asking us for more money, well I am not saying I don't want everybody to give more but in the same breath I am saying **regular sustainable** giving makes the job a whole lot easier. The Congregation Demographics i.e. the age of the Congregation means we will have to resort to the plan above possibly sooner than we think!!! If there is a good attendance at church I am a happy man, and if the bags are full I am even happier man. Paul said the other night we need to pray so I will pray for full collection bags!!! What will you pray for?

With thanks for your help over the years

George M Burns (**Treasurer**)

THOUGHTS ON PRAYER



'What would you like for Christmas?'

That must be one of the most commonly asked questions at this time of year. If I were to ask you that question, I wonder what your answer would be. I expect I would get a whole variety of answers depending on whether you are male, female, an adult, a child or an adult who is just a child at heart. Your answer I'm sure would also reflect your hobbies and interests.

I wonder what our answer would be if God were to ask us that same question. Again I think there would be a wide variety of answers and I wonder what God would make of those.

Do we, I wonder at this very special time of year, ask God what He would like from us? Perhaps He would just like us to give Him a little more of our time – time spent reading His word, talking to Him in prayer, listening for what He wants to tell us.

As Christmas time approaches and the shops increase the hype by displaying festive goods and decorations and playing Christmas music over their sound systems, it is so very easy to get caught up in the atmosphere and forget what Christmas is really about. God sent us a very special gift at Christmas in the form of His son, Jesus, so surely the least we can do is to give Him a little more of our time and attention.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy and Blessed Christmas.

Ann Woods

The next month will be very difficult for many people who are still reeling from a loss in this past year. The crippling hurt caused by the absence of a loved one can cloud holiday gatherings and even dim the desire to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Poet Ann Weems has written:

Some of us walk into Advent tethered to our unresolved
yesterdays,
the pain still stabbing,
the hurt still throbbing.

It's not that we don't know better;
it's just that we can't stand up anymore by ourselves.
On the way to Bethlehem,

Will you give us a hand?



I am writing to thank everyone for their kindness shown to me and my family at the bereavement of my wife May.

For all the cards and flowers and baking and especially for your prayers.

*Many, many thanks,
Jimmy Anderson.*

ST. NINIANS BREAKFAST CLUB

The first difference you will notice in this report is the name. The Sunday School as was, is now 'St. Ninians Breakfast Club'.



The next difference you will notice is that we don't appear in church at the beginning of the service – that's because we're having breakfast at that time! We come in at the end – timing yet to be perfected!

As a group we were concerned that children were drifting off to other pursuits on a Sunday and our numbers were dropping, so we decided that a change which we have been discussing for some time now required to be put into action.

Sunday 4th October was the date chosen and so we took our leap of faith. The format is not greatly different from what we did before – we just do it in a slightly different way. The children all stay together as a group. We start at 10.50am sharp. We gather round a small table, on which sits our candle and offering basket. We start off by lighting our candle, which represents Jesus, the Light of the World, and have our opening prayer and offering. The children then move over to the tables and we say Grace before they tuck into, among other things – the dreaded Coco Pops! They have cereal of their choice, apple or orange juice and toast.

After breakfast we have a game, which is relevant to the topic for that day. This helps get rid of some of the excess energy - of the children that is – not the leaders!

Next is craft time, which again is tied in with the same topic. This varies according to each child's ability.

The children then gather round and we have our story, which can be based on an Old Testament story, a New Testament story or a parable, which Jesus told.



We then come into church and share what we have been doing with the congregation before ending the service with our 'sending out'. We, as a group of leaders, are enjoying this new challenge in trying to reach our youth and encourage them to come regularly.

We would value comments from parents and members of the congregation on this new venture.

We would like to wish you all a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

The Breakfast Club Team.



Prayer and Spirituality Team.

Prayer Teams

We are looking for willing volunteers to join the teams who lead us in prayer at the Sunday morning service. If this is something you may be interested in please speak to Paul or any member of the group. The prayer rota for 2010 will be available soon.



Living the Questions Course.

We intend to start a weekly course in February follow a programme of DVDS and discussion questions.

This looks very exciting and thought provoking. More information will follow but please think about coming along -cup of tea and biscuits will be provided.

Every blessing for the coming season,
Yours prayerfully
Anne Thompson
Team Leader

The Gift

I believe we are each born unique. Each with very individual Gifts.
How we use these Gifts is paramount.

With my life I have been given a Gift that has taken me many years to recognize and understand.

It has taken many years of soul searching, counseling, medication, research and trust to understand and finally come to my own conclusion that it is a Gift and not an affliction.

My Gift is depression.

I believe it was and always will be a part of me a `Gift`, to live with it, know it, understand it and help others do the same.

Reflecting on my life and research has taught me that I have been living with it since I was quite young.

Many periods over the years of terrible confusion, anxiety, despair, erratic behaviour, self-destruction, damage.

Depression consumes every aspect of your being and for some, there is no happy ending, no light at the end of the tunnel.

I suffered extreme anxiety at my best and at my worst I was in such a pit of black despair that I could no longer face living.

1 in 4 people will, at some time in their life be affected by depression.

Look around you. Someone you know will understand. Reach out to someone, it will astonish you how many people have been touched by it in some way.

That is why I know it was given to me as a Gift.

I have come out the other side and my Gift is to raise awareness and help other people overcome this terrible disorder.

I will never become complacent and know that I will have to manage my condition probably for the rest of my life.

At some of my worst times suffering with depression I felt I was living in Hell.

But in comparison to other people I know who have suffered from depression I feel incredibly lucky to have experienced all I have been through, come out the other side and can write this story full of hope.

Depression has made me appreciate true joy. Renewed my faith, learn to trust again. Have hope; appreciate nature, people, relationships and simplicity. Things that really matter.

Getting caught up in the cold, material outside world had a profound affect on me and during all those very dark years, I had been lost in a wilderness.

But, as I've already said, I believe those dark years were given to me for a reason.

To experience true joy I had to experience true despair.

It is hard to define in a few pages exactly what kind of effect this experience has had on me and my life but it happened to me for a very special reason.

My recovery was slow but full of revelations and I feel compelled to pass on this `Gift`.

As long as I am able I will do everything in my power to pass on my experience to others.

To comfort, understand, listen, connect.

Depression robs you of so many things. Faith, Trust, Hope, Joy. These can be renewed, restored. If you read this and connect in some way with what I am saying, either personally or someone you know is suffering reach out and help them. Reach out for help.

Do not feel alone.

If you have been given a `Gift` pass it on.

In faith Lisa

Pastoral Care Team

The Pastoral Care ladies are once again preparing and making arrangements for the decoration of St Ninian's for Christmas!

It is difficult to believe that another year end is almost upon us – a year which has had its share of mixed emotions, the sorrow of losing many dear and loved friends from our community but always mixed with the blessings of happier occasions. It has always been our privilege to share with all concerned, at these times, to bring the message of God's love and compassion.

The Team wish to make acknowledgement of cards and letters sent from recipients of church flowers. We know that in some small measure the joy and comfort a 'bunch of flowers' can express as we bring them to your homes.

Many thanks is due also to the ladies who continue to visit those who can no longer attend church, who are in hospital or ill at home.

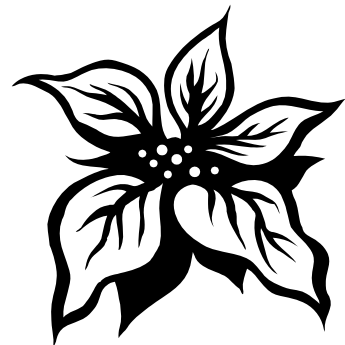
Once again, we ask everyone to inform the Team if they feel someone requires a visit.

I mentioned previously the preparation for decoration of the church for Christmas, as in the past we extend a warm invitation to all who could assist us in this task! No experience required! Just many willing hands especially gentlemen's'.

May the blessings of the Christmas Season be everyone and continue into the New year with the certain knowledge that no matter what lies ahead in our journey through this life, God is always near to guide and protect.

God Bless,

Elizabeth Bridges
for P.C. Team.



Coffee Morning



Despite the dreadful weather this year, our faithful Tuesday Friends have come along every week for coffee, tea and a friendly chat.

Last year we were able to donate **£7,000** to help with the tarmac around the church. This year we are well on our way to help meet the cost of repairing the main door of the church, which was badly damaged a few months ago. We are really very grateful for the continued support we receive from all our friends.

Our last Coffee Morning this year is on **Tuesday 8th December 2009**, but we will be back and looking forward to welcome every one again on **Tuesday 2nd February 2010**.

We wish you all every blessing for Christmas and the Year ahead.

Peggy Anderson.

St Ninian's Art Group



Winter has arrived at last and Christmas is getting nearer. Time for those of us who make cards to be busy making Christmas cards!

Also all the various hobbies and crafts are coming to the fore.

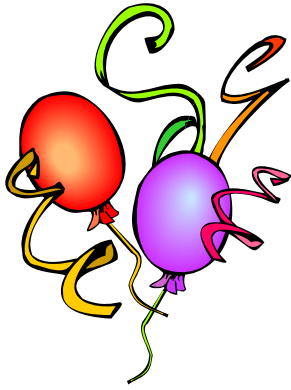
If you have a free Tuesday afternoon how about joining us at St Ninian's each week to practice your craft.

Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided for a small charge.

Classes are held on Tuesdays from 1.30pm – 3.30pm. We look forward to seeing you.

A Merry Christmas to you all when it comes.

Janette Sandilands.



I would like to thank everyone for the cards,
flowers and gifts I received for my 90th
Birthday.

They were very much appreciated.

Mrs. Elizabeth Richmond

CHURCH DIARIES ARE AVAILABLE FROM ANNE LAW AT
USUAL PRICE OF £1.50

These handy little diaries are neat enough to fit in a pocket or
handbag and have added bonus of having all office bearers phone
numbers for easy contact and reference.

All funds raised from the sales goes directly to our church funds so
please buy one (or two) to help with funds.

Thanks. Anne Law.

WEBB IVORY CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE

Our usual Christmas card & gift catalogues are doing their rounds
if you would like a look at one (NO OBLIGATION TO BUY)
please speak or contact Anne Law (793591)

There's not much time left! But many thanks to all those folks who
have already purchased cards or gifts.

In the present economic climate every pound we raise is very much
needed just to keep our church from going further into the red.

Thank you, Anne Law

Flower Rota for December

06		
13	Violet Dempster	In Memoriam
20	Sheena Mclean	In Memoriam
27	Agnes Cook & Joan Sonnenstein	In Memoriam

Arranger/Distributors

Anne Anderson (792124) Margaret Hannay (791163)

Procedure for donating flowers

The flowers in church each Sunday are gifted for a special occasion or In Memoriam. The person donating the flowers should contact the arranger/distributor by the Wednesday preceding the chosen Sunday to make arrangements. The names of those responsible for the arranging and distributing are listed in the "Link" magazine. Each Sunday after consultation with the minister, the flowers are distributed to members, friends, and others in the parish and surrounding area as an expression of the wishes and prayerful support of the people of St Ninian's.

Flower List 2010

The new Flower List will be available in the Church vestibule early December to allow members to select a date. Please fill in name, address and telephone number. Members unable to attend church, but who wish to donate flowers, can choose a date by telephoning either Margaret Hannay on 791163 or Ann Anderson on 792124. We would like to thank everyone who has donated flowers or money in the past year. This has been very much appreciated by everyone who received flowers.

Church Decoration

The church will be decorated for Christmas on the afternoon at 1pm and the evening at 7pm of Wednesday 9th December, and any help would be most welcome. Donations of greenery would also be much appreciated.

A Special Thank you

Thanks to everyone who has donated flowers and money throughout the year. It has enabled us to bring comfort and pleasure to so many people over the past year.

We must also thank the ladies and gentlemen who arrange the flowers that enhance our beautiful Church week by week.

We look forward to our continued support next year.



Wishing everyone a healthy and happy Christmas and New Year.

God Bless You All,

Ann.

Save Those Stamps

Don't forget to save your stamps from Christmas & place in the box in the vestibule!



Please Note:

The Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals section of the Link magazine will be restored once the Church Records have been transferred from one system of recording to another. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Link Magazine Team

As I write this, the magazine is almost in place now ready for printing! I must admit since we have started receiving copies of articles by e-mail, what a difference it makes to the time involved in putting the magazine together.

Long gone are the days when folk used to take the articles to their homes, type them, and then hand them to the Editing Team to glue them onto a master copy page. In those days the printing also happened in Hamilton and a group went off for the day to the Printing office to put together the pages as they came off the Hot Press! - Now we spend a cosy time chatting in the vestry while the machine churns out the full issue in one.

However there is one part of the organization that has kept the same since Link began away back nearly thirty years ago and that is the way the Link magazine is distributed.

This is one method, which cannot be improved on, as it lends itself to allow fellowship to form, as the Distributors nip around their district popping the magazine through the doors stopping for a chat at some homes as they exchange a friendly greeting.

Thank you to our very conscientious Distributors who sometimes worry they have not got folk in when they call. Also to all the conscientious and loyal readers of Link, who search out Margaret Murray or myself and slip us a donation for Link saying, ' I am very sorry but I was out when my Link was delivered'.

The other question that arises frequently since Link began, 'Is there a charge for Link?' Should I give a donation? The answer has always been the same from the beginning. We leave the decision with the receiver.

Imagine how you would feel if you were really struggling financially and you had to hide behind closed doors from the Link Distributor because you knew you had to give a donation. In today's financial crisis this is extremely relevant.

Imagine all the messages inside this magazine being missed by the person who may be feeling really sad and down. The messages written may just be the Word they need to hear. So if you don't see anyone ever at a home don't be disheartened, please carry on delivering, we never know someone may well look forward to seeing the magazine on their doorstep when they get back.

However can I say 'Where would the Link magazine be, if it wasn't for everyone's generosity?'

The Link Magazine donations range from £300 -£500 per Issue. This pays for all the paper used by the minister for all services and meetings, Link Magazines, World Mission Newsletters, and other church printing purposes, the ink and servicing of the Church printer. Our Magazine also receives fees and many donations from all the Advertisers in the magazine. Miss Leishmann knew how to run a newspaper and we are benefiting from her experience even today, as our magazine is now very popular as a local phone directory. We generally have a profit of £1,000 per annum. This year we donated £1,500 to the Church garden.

Without everyone's support this would not have been possible. Please continue to support us in any way you can to allow us to carry on with the work of Communicating with each other.

(If Distributors could remember to place any monies received in an envelope stating their district and the amount enclosed it makes Margaret Murray's work a lot easier). Thanks!

The Link Magazine Team wish you all a very happy Christmas, a peaceful New Year and a special thank you for all your generous donations you have given over the year.

Editor's note!

Can I draw your attention to two new adverts within the magazine? The **SMILE DENTAL SURGERY** within the advert pages - A great new service to enhance our village.

And another new advert below: (Is that Bob Millar I hear you say? The answer is YES). Good Luck Bob with your New Venture!

Millar Taxis

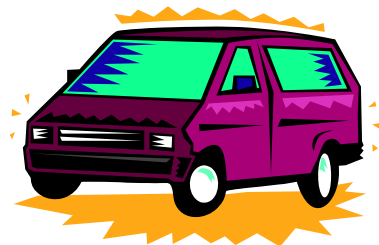
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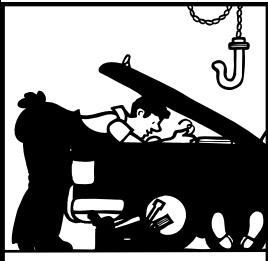
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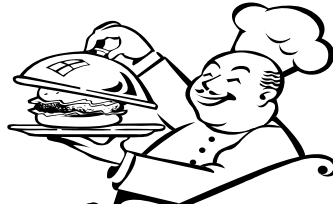
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Iona Construction Limited

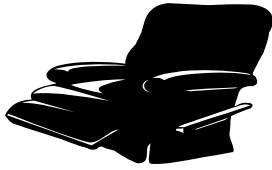
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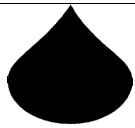
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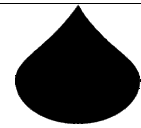
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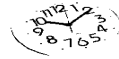
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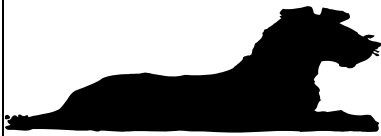
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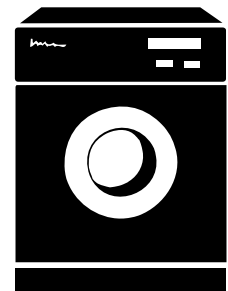
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