

Link Magazine

Spring 2018



St Ninian's Stonehouse

Holy Week



Monday 26th, Tuesday 27th & Wednesday 28th March	7:00 - 7:20pm St Ninian's short services with words and silence
Thursday 29th March Maundy Thursday	7:00pm Paterson UF Church
Friday 30th March Good Friday	7:00pm St Ninian's Church
Sunday 1st April Easter Day	11:00am St Ninian's Church

Easter

As we make our way through Lent each year we have the chance to reflect on some of our choices. Some of us will give things up. These are mostly things we know aren't very good for us in the first place, like chocolate. So we give it up for a while in an exercise of self-will and self-denial. I can do (without) this!

And then when Easter comes we fill ourselves full of the stuff we have given up. That seems odd to me.

Fasting through Lent is a very ancient practice. People didn't eat during the hours of daylight. When they did eat, their meals were small and simple.

What we may not know is that every Sunday in Lent was a feast day. A celebration. A reminder that even in hard times come moments of joy.

Easter is, without doubt, the most important festival in the church. Coming as it does at Springtime, it's easy to see the connections to new life as the flowers grow and the lambs appear in the fields. We have even adopted eggs, the ancient sign of fertility, as part of our celebration.

But Easter is about something much deeper. Easter is about resurrection. Life where death once was. Re-creating what has gone before into something better.

Easter, and Lent before it, offer us all a time to think about who we are and what is important to us.

Easter gives us all the chance to change, to be renewed, re-created and re-born.

It feels to me that St Ninian's is in the middle of a time like that. A period where we are being renewed and refreshed. Where new shoots of life are springing up and where unexpected things are happening.

It's exciting!

Stewart

Hi Folks

Well where does the time go?

As I type this the snowdrops are out, the crocuses are pushing their heads through the hard ground and the daffodils are well up. God is good.

All our services over Christmas were well attended and I hope you will join us for our Easter services. The Maundy Thursday service will be on 29th March at Paterson Church and Good Friday at St Ninian's on 30th March. Both are at 7pm and of course our Easter Sunday service here at St Ninian's on 1st April at 11am.

We have been visiting the homes and sheltered housing where Stewart has conducted a short service and we sing some favourite hymns. We are trying to visit on a regular basis and if anyone would like to join in you will be very welcome.

Stewart has been visiting and sharing home communion with people who are unable to come to church. We have quite a list and are slowly working through it. If you would like a home communion please let me know, call on 01698 792552.

Sadly, we have had to say farewell to members as well as folks in the community. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of Mrs Richmond, Margaret Stewart, Janet Stevenson, James Anderson, Gavin Wilson, Jim McMeekin, Margaret Murdoch, Jimmy Payne and Nancy Hamilton. It has been a sad and busy time in the church over January and I hope you will keep Stewart in your prayers as well.

We are again hoping to organise some fundraising events, not only to raise much needed funds but to have an opportunity to share in fellowship and friendship. I hope you will support these events when you can.

Stewart is keeping us all busy with Bible Study, Book Groups, Night Church as well as Morning Prayers and Reflection on a Monday and Thursday at 9.15am. Please feel free to join in any of these events - you will find them very interesting. These, along with the usual meetings and all the day to day running of the church and halls, makes for a busy and sometimes hectic time for all involved.

By the time you receive and read this magazine, Stewart will have almost completed his first year as minister of St Ninian's and it has been a pleasure to work with him. He has been an inspiration and I hope you will continue to support him in the months to come.

God bless,
Margaret

Praying for Others

Each week we respond to the call to remember others in prayer and here at St Ninian's we pray for a street in the village each week. Below you will find the list from 1st April. If you can't attend the morning prayers, please take a minute in your busy day to pray for the folks in each street. Thank you.

Week	Street
01.04.18	Kirk Street
08.04.18	Green Street
15.04.18	Lawrie Street
22.04.18	McLean Gardens
29.04.18	Argyle Street/Trongate
06.05.18	Millar Street
13.05.18	Hill Road
20.05.18	Vicars Road
03.06.18	King Street
10.06.18	Townhead Street
17.06.18	Strathaven Road

A special thank you from the Link Committee

In the last issue of the Link magazine, I wrote that we did not know who was taking over from Lesley Barrie's district, however, by the time we went to print Willie Cowie had offered to take up the post. Miss Leishmann, who began the Link magazine and its organisation, would be proud of Willie's dedication to his duties; taking notes of changes in his district, popping his donations in a sealed envelope, with the amount and his name on it, and all with a cheery manner and enthusiastic approach. Thank you Willie for being a shining example of a Link Distributor!

It is good to sing the praises of all our distributors and it seems this tends to get done whenever someone joins the team or leaves. We have one lady in particular who has gone beyond the call of duty and that special person is Margaret Cranston.

Margaret was Miss Leishmann's friend and has been on the Committee from the very beginning, over 36 years ago. Margaret was one of four typists presenting the articles for printing. She recalled doing this after work at home but then found it more efficient to also work during her lunch time in order to meet the deadlines set. Not only did Margaret help with the presentation she also became part of the collating team, heading off to the printers in the early morning with another group of ladies in the car for a day's work to staple the magazines together as they came off the printing press. Packed into the boot was the daily meal supply of tea and coffee, shortbread, pancakes, scones and jam, salmon or cucumber sandwiches, ham rolls, cake, gingerbread ... and mints to aid digestion! This feast was prepared lovingly by Miss Leishmann and once at the printers it was laid out on a linen tablecloth with china dishes, sugar and cream dishes and napkins. Margaret was also a distributor for the magazine in her own street but, with her love of driving, she volunteered to do the outreach districts. She enjoyed visiting the farms with the magazine and would spend time having a cup of tea and a catch up with the farming families around the village faithfully four times a year. To this day Margaret has still not totally retired and she continues to join the collating team socially.

We don't know how to say thank you Margaret for all your work with the Link magazine. Words just don't seem enough. May we all be inspired by your faithfulness to St Ninian's where you have served happily in the place God called you to be.

Ecclesiastes 3:12:

"I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live."

Margaret McMeekin

St Ninian's Book Group

The Book Group meets on
the 3rd Sunday of the month
from 7:30 - 9pm
to talk about our Book of the Month

Sunday 18th March

The Road by Cormac McCarthy



Sunday 15th April

Love Wins by Rob Bell



Sunday 20th May

Still Alice by Lisa Genova



ST NINIAN'S STONEHOUSE

coffee mornings

Tuesdays 10.00 to 11.30

The Guild

Go In Joy!

We had a good Christmas party in December with a lovely meal, Carols and some entertainment.

January was Andy MacArthur telling us about The Children's Hospital in Glasgow and about the good things they do to help the children in their care.

February was Caroline Curran Forensic Scientist who gave us a very interesting talk on how DNA etc. works. We also had homemade pancakes which were yummy.

On the 12th March we will have a visit from our minister, Stewart Cutler, who will share with us how his first year at St. Ninians has been for him.

On the 9th April we are having a Taylor Fashion Sale. Brian has been many times and it's an amusing night with him and his prices are very reasonable. Tickets will be on sale soon.

If anyone needs a lift to church please let us know and someone will collect and bring you home again. All the meetings start t 7.30pm and usually finish just after 9pm. If you haven't been before come along and you will be made very welcome.

See you all soon

Wilma Johnston
Secretary

Did you know that The Guild is one of Scotland's largest voluntary organisation with around 20,000 members. Although women make up the bulk of our membership, increasingly, men are becoming members and taking active roles at local and national levels.

The Guild's motto taken from Acts 27, verse 23:
'Whose we are and Whom we serve.'



Do you remember ...?

The summer edition of St Ninian's 1975 'Vision Magazine' came into my hands recently and I really enjoyed reading it. I thought you might too so here is a short extract written by the then minister, **Rev Dr Alexander Gemmell**, after a Guild outing. It's sure to bring back memories for some of you.

Woman's Guild

After a very successful winter session, with well-attended meetings, the members and friends enjoyed their outing to Girvan.

A new venture for the Summer was the entertainment of the Residents of Well Hall Eventide Home who were brought by cars, on a lovely afternoon, on July 16, and before being served with a high-tea, heard Mrs Ann Anderson sing a number of songs, accompanied by Miss Webster, and saw the slides of our Flower Festival, projected by Mrs Gemmell, while I told the story. Mrs Simpson, the new Matron, expressed warm appreciation and the Residents, among whom were our own Church member, Miss M Clark and the Revs W Millar and R Ross, told us of the great pleasure the outing had been. Mrs Ian Hamilton represents us on the Well Hall Committee and is very interested in this aspect of the Church's Social Service. The members of the Woman's Guild Committee provided home-baking, Mrs S Johnston gave a donation of tomatoes, while Mr & Mrs Cheetham very kindly paid the cost of the meat course.

An interesting syllabus has been prepared for the coming session, with the Dedication Service on 5 October, a Domestic Night on Monday 6th and the first meeting with a speaker on 13 October. If you have not been in the habit of attending Guild meetings, why not start this Winter?

I have inherited many back copies of the church magazine ~ I wonder what else I might find!

Avril

A Carer's Story

Those of you who spend any time on Facebook will know that memories often pop up and we get a chance to remember what we were up to a few years ago. Recently, Stewart shared a memory from 2014. It was a blog post of mine. Since then, some of you have read it and asked me to share it because other people might relate to it and others find it helpful, hopeful even. This is taken from a personal blog I wrote over a period of a few years recording my dad's dementia journey from a carer's perspective. Dementia can of course rob us of the people we cherish but, for me, there were moments to treasure and which brought clarity to our relationship. I am truly grateful for those precious times. This last blog post reflects the hope I discovered through the man who was my dad.

Avril

a perfect waste of time

*Another sunrise with my sad captains
With who I choose to lose my mind
And if it's all we only pass this way but
once
What a perfect waste of time
(Sad Captains by Elbow)*

This is the last post.



I'm running out of miracles ... oh my soul

It was nothing short of a miracle that dad was still with us in the June. And, even knowing during that last surreal weekend, when an accident robbed him (and us) of the peaceful ending he so truly deserved, one more miracle was too much to ask. But we hoped nevertheless. We hoped that it would all make sense, regardless of how it turned out. Like many people, I'd been here before; another time, another hospital bed, another parent in another helpless situation, the same inevitability. Yet hope was present, in the middle of it all, palpable and invisible, like a blanket enveloping us.

Hope is a state of mind, not of the world; either we have it or we don't. It is a dimension of the soul and it's not essentially dependent on some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation. Hope is an orientation of the spirit and orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons ... hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out (Vaclav Havel, Disturbing the Peace).

From the day Dad was diagnosed with vascular dementia, he never mentioned it again. He just got on as he always did, trying to squeeze as much as he could out of the life he had left. His determination was unmistakable during those times despite his mind playing tricks and his deterioration apparent.

We tried hard not to let those times deter us in moving forward with each day, perhaps for the sake of one another. But we kept going. We prayed and we hoped that tomorrow would be better. It usually was.

So up until that point last June, we'd survived. Without consultation, and with silent attitude, we continued to ignore the ever present thief attempting to steal our past, present and future; our very souls. We clung desperately to our shared memories whilst at the same time adjusting to new realities occurring almost on a daily basis.

Like other carers I remember spells of hyper vigilance to the point of exhaustion, trying to anticipate every move then reacting to unforeseen forces that colluded to make our lives almost impossible; stretching our resolve to the limit. At other times, I gave in to the supernatural force at my back, pushing me forward or carrying me through times I wish I could forget. Mostly I made it up as I went along and hoped for the best. That's what being a carer is. If you've been there, you'll know. People look and wonder how you're managing to hold it all together but you keep going because it's not about you. It's about another human being. You need to look after yourself, they said. I try, I'd say. It's like looking after a child, they said. No, actually, it isn't, I'd reply. This is my Dad and if I start to think of him as a child then he is no longer my Dad and I'm clinging on to that as long as I can. It'll be a relief when it's all over, when the time comes, they said. Will it? I couldn't imagine it'd be a relief.

*And if it's all we only pass this way but once
What a perfect waste of time*

How could that precious and treasured time together, doing simple things or indeed doing nothing, a time that will never be repeated, ever be anything other than a *perfect waste of time*? It was during this time I got to know, properly, the man who happened to be my Dad.

We didn't always have the easiest of relationships but, in truth, dementia gave me an opportunity to get to listen to his life stories in his words, his perspective, his experiences, his happy memories, his regrets. I'm truly, truly, grateful for this time.

I've known grief. I'm not ashamed to say I wasn't prepared for saying goodbye this way. Not long afterwards a chaplain friend of mine told me not that dying is the last hardest thing we ever do. I hadn't heard that before but it summed up my Dad's last couple of days with us.

No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness, the yawning. I keep on swallowing. At other times it feels like being mildly drunk, or concussed. There is a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me. I find it hard to take in what anyone says. Or perhaps, hard to want to take it in. It is so uninteresting. If only they would talk to one another and not to me (C S Lewis, A Grief Observed).

My Dad was laid to rest on a gloriously sunny day which was fitting because he loved days like that. We said goodbye in the sunshine and I was able to smile, memories fleeting through my head at the graveside; Equis ice cream and walking our collie and what a proud grandfather he was. Isn't it funny the things that pop into your head.

The last few months have given me the chance to reflect on those times and I've come to realise how hugely influential this man was in my life. He introduced me to black and white movies, Gene Kelly and a love of dancing, books and classical music, political and social awareness, mining ancestors and stories of union meetings, an appreciation of architecture, Frank Sinatra, Henry Fonda in Twelve Angry Men, the 4 horse accumulator and how to place a bet, Basil Fawlty and, of course, the wonders of Skye. Unfortunately I didn't inherit the green fingers of a gardener or the lightest touch producing tasty scones and cloutie dumpling. I also missed out on the ability to solve tricky crossword puzzles and never had his patience for jigsaws. What I did learn was how to be quiet and to listen. But more than anything I inherited his belief and hope that tomorrow would bring something better ... because it usually did.

*Oh, long before
You and I were born
Others beat these benches with their empty cups
To the night and its start
To the here, and now, and who we are*

He wasn't gregarious or an extrovert. He was quiet and smart and determined.

I'm here because he was here first. And I'm glad I got to know him.

If you fancy reading about what it's like waiting for dentures, the ups and downs of dementia or simply conversations, the blog is still live for a time - visit: <http://ateightyone.wordpress.com/>.

Avril



The Cafe is dependent on the goodwill of our volunteers. Would you like to volunteer with us? Even once in a while would help.

**Please contact:
Bob Millar.**

The Hope Cafe is a friendly, welcoming and supportive environment for everyone. Come along and rest for a while, chat, and enjoy some of the homemade soup and baking on the menu. There is also free access to self-help resources, activities, informal peer to peer support, all known to be good for your wellbeing.

**Open every second Thursday 10am to 2pm
at St Ninian's Stonehouse**



PHILOSOPHERS CAFÉ

Philosopher's Cafe (Stonehouse) Anyone?

Hands up who among us are perfect? Me neither. Hands up who among us have all the answers to the worlds problems? Nope. Want to get involved in conversation over a coffee?

Philosophers Cafés are a grassroots forum for open discussion founded by philosopher Marc Sautet in Paris in 1992. These meetings provide food for thought for people in everyday life encouraging discussion and inward reflection on our thoughts and views on life. So if you're tired of listening to the BBC news, fed up with social media, you've got a 1001 channels and nothing worth watching then maybe the Philosophers Café is for you?

Taking part in a Philosophers Café may help you become clearer about your own values, learn about the values of others and can help you achieve a greater level of self-understanding. Sharing open and free discussion can help you clarify your own thoughts. Taking part can make you a better listener or a better speaker or both. Hopefully you will gain intellectual stimulation from hearing a variety of views, whilst respecting and understanding different opinions. Interacting with others in discussion is enjoyable and informative. This is the tradition of the Philosopher's Cafe.

The Philosophers Café is a new initiative in Stonehouse providing a space to share our thoughts, frustrations and fears as well as our memories, hopes and ideas.

There is no charge, no agenda and no requirement to participate and is open to everyone regardless of age, politics or faith.

The café is open to all in the community and beyond, young and old, who want to see a better world and more caring society in our communities. Through listening, discussion and sharing our thoughts, the Café provides a space in our community to reflect, debate and encourage new thinking, that we might share our experiences and hopes for a better future for all.

The world is changing, for the better or worse but what do we think about it? Maybe we need to change too before change happens elsewhere ... every journey starts with a single step. Come and tell us what you think ... or just come along for a coffee! If you are curious and inquisitive then join us in a relaxed atmosphere whilst enjoying good conversation, coffee and fellowship.

The Philosophers Café will be open from 7pm on to 9pm, on the first Wednesday of each month (venue advertised locally).

“Our time here is magic!
It’s the only space you have
to realise whatever it is that is beautiful,
whatever is true, whatever is great,
whatever is potential, whatever is rare,
whatever is unique, in.
It is the only space.”

Ben Okri



communion

13th May

11:00am

St Ninian's



Morning Prayers

monday & thursday

9:15 - 10:00am

From Bill ... Up to my eyes in year end accounts!!!

It's head down time as I get ready to present my first set of Accounts to the Board for their approval. This on the back of a very successful foray into our first Burns Supper and something tells me it won't be the last.

It is my intention to outline some of the year-end figures in the next magazine. Not everyone can attend our AGM but I think it is important that people are aware of how St Ninian's is functioning from a financial perspective. What I can say at this point is that in terms of our day to day running expenses we are sailing very close to the wind. In fact our year end figures will depict a situation where expenses outstripped income. Obviously we cannot continue in this vein for any length of time, however I am confident that as we go forward into the new financial year, our first full year out of vacancy, that we can turn things round.

There is much to look forward to as we plan ahead and implement the improvements required within our wonderful building. As previously mentioned this work will be on-going but since my last article we have already carried out major repairs to our hall roof and the re-wiring project, an absolute must in terms of safety, looks likely to commence sometime in the summer.

As always if anyone has any questions regarding our finances then please feel free to ask. It is your church and I am simply the custodian who makes sure that the figures all add up at the end of the day. Fingers crossed that they will for year end!!!!

God Bless

Bill Storrie

Treasurer

COMPETITION

Design a CrossReach Christmas Card for 2018

We will print the winning entry as a card and sell it through the CrossReach Christmas Card & Calendar Collection 2018 catalogue and website. The Winner will receive a certificate and a supply of their winning design as printed Christmas Cards.

Competition Guidelines

- › The card must be an original design
- › Submit your card design on a sheet of paper/card no larger than A3 size
- › Computer generated designs must be original and printed out as a hard copy
- › Avoid textures, 3D effects or metallic colours, which can be difficult to reproduce in print
- › You can suggest a Greeting and/or Bible verse for your design
- › Please enclose an appropriate stamped addressed envelope if you wish your design(s) returned to you

The competition is open to all supporters of CrossReach of any age.

Remember to write the name of the person or group who designed the card, age (if age 16 or under) and a contact person's name, address and telephone number on the back of each entry.

While copyright of all entries remains with the entrants, by submitting an entry, each entrant agrees to grant an irrevocable, perpetual and worldwide licence to CrossReach Trading Ltd to use it for the purpose of their Christmas cards and any promotional material connected to that.

Closing date: Tuesday 3rd April 2018

Send your entry to:
Christmas Card Competition
CrossReach, 47 Milton Road East,
Edinburgh EH15 2SR



The Church of Scotland
Social Care Council

Operating as CrossReach, Scottish Charity No: SC011353





Sunday School

Last term at Sunday School, we took part in the Candles and Carols event at the light switching on ceremony in the village. We definitely have some future choir members among us!

We were also working very hard on our nativity which we performed for the congregation.

Everyone did extremely well, learning their lines and their songs.

Our painted board, which we were working on last term, now has pride of place on one of the burnt out building on New Street. All the boards look fantastic and certainly help brighten up the village.

This term, we will be, visiting Canderavon, having a visit from the Lego lady, hosting an afternoon tea and having an Easter party and egg hunt.

We will continue to use Spill the Beans as we journey through Lent and into Easter.

Please feel free to come into the hall after service and see all our hard work on the display boards.

May Fairley

A Year Out ... in Kitega

Kitega community centre started with a dream to help children who were invisible. It was set up to provide education but also to show the value and worth of children with disabilities. A few people within the community wanted to bring these children out of being hidden away by their parents into the daylight of a new school environment where they, and the rest of the community around them, would realise that they were children who mattered, had their own personalities, and who had a valuable role to play in society.

Today Kitega community centre has grown into so much more; a centre that provides education for adults and children alike, teaches English and vocational skills, and provides a hub for community resource banking and business start-ups.

We are taking a year out of our life here in Scotland to go and volunteer with the centre, working alongside the staff there to help address poverty and inequality within the local community. The centre has big plans in its sights with the aim of building a new centre for vocational training.





This is where some of the children with disabilities, who are now young adults, can learn skills such as tailoring and baking, in order to help provide for themselves and their families. The longer-term plan is also to open a retail unit in the nearby town where small businesses, supported by the community banking scheme, can sell their wares and become self-sufficient. We are trying to raise funds before we go in order to help bring these plans closer to fruition while we are out there. We hope that by living with the community in Kitega for a year we can bring learning and resources from Scotland to Kitega, and in turn new experience back from Kitega to Scotland again. Any support with this project will be gratefully received and will go directly towards helping vulnerable children and adults develop skills and resources to become valued members of their society.

We wanted to keep everyone in the church up to date with our plans and we're also looking for fundraising ideas! We have also created a fundraising page ~ all donations, however small, are appreciated.

JustGiving™

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ourbigyearout>

Thank-you!

Sarah-Jane, Peter, Samuel, Nathanael and Mara

WILLIAM COWIE IS RUNNING THE LONDON MARATHON

"I am running the London Marathon on 22nd April 2018 in aid of funds for Alzheimer Scotland. If anyone would like to sponsor me, it would be greatly appreciated. I have sponsor sheets and also a fundraising page."

Visit the fundraising page:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/make-a-donation/>
and search William Cowie.

Thank you!



Alzheimer Scotland



"If you want to run, run a mile.
If you want to experience a different life,
run a marathon."

Emil Zatopek



Thank you for saving your stamps!

Big thanks to everyone who popped their used stamps in the box in the vestibule of the church. I have forwarded them to CrossReach where they will be used to help projects in Scotland. Please keep saving and if you are working, maybe your workplace could collect them too.

Thanks again.

Norma

Church Diaries

Thank you to everyone who purchased our small church diary. I was able to pass £125 to our treasurer, Bill Storrie, who is doing a sterling job (pardon the pun!) of balancing the books in these very difficult economic times. Any fund raising, however small, will be put to very good use in the life of the church.

Thanks again.

Anne Law

“Kindness is a gift you are meant to give away
So offer it to all who pass along your way
Its worth can never dull
Its charm can never coy
It cost you not a thing
And brings you naught but joy.

For kindness is a gift
The sweetest and the best
The more that you bestow
The more your path is blessed.”

by Margaret Ingall



Church Flowers



Flower Arrangers and Helpers for Spring

March	Jillian Storrie	01698 791414
	Rosalind Blake	01698 207676
April	Greta Struthers	01698 791507
	Christine Blackwood	
May	Susan Whitelaw	01357 521224
June	Joyce & Bob Millar	01698 792736

Thank you to those who have gifted flowers to the Church

January	7th	Ann Golder and Eleanor Brown
	14th	Wilma Johnstone and Jean Grant
	21st	The Cowper Family
	29th	Summers and Anderson Families
February	4th	Wilma Johnstone and the Plendeleith Family
	11th	Margaret Mair
	18th	Ann Cowan
	25th	Jean Robertson
March	4th	Sheena McLean
	11th	Norma Johnstone and Marion & Jack Clark
	18th	Elizabeth Bridges
	25th	Fiona Letham and The Whitefield Family

Flower Committee

Here we are again at the start of a New Year. It doesn't seem that long since I was writing to you last year. It must be an age thing!

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who helped in anyway to decorate our church for Christmas. It was really good to see everyone working together to get it done and it was also a great time of fellowship. The tea, coffee, shortbread and mice pies were a very welcome break and enjoyed by all.

We would also like to thank all the people who gave us money or flowers each week to beautify the church and enable us to give out flowers to anyone we hear about who is in need of comfort, whether illness or bereavement. We also appreciate hearing about happy occasions so thank you for sharing good news stories with us.

I would also say a big thank you to the ladies and gentlemen who buy, arrange and deliver the flowers each week, a big job well done and very much appreciated by all who receive them.

We believe it is a very important ministry in our church.

God bless you all.

Love
Ann

Words of Thanks

I would like to thank all my friends for the lovely birthday cards, flowers and gifts I received for my 90th birthday. I was overwhelmed as it was very unexpected.

Thanks to you all
Betty Neil

We at the Link Committee are very grateful to those who have kindly given donations to Link. Your generosity is much appreciated.

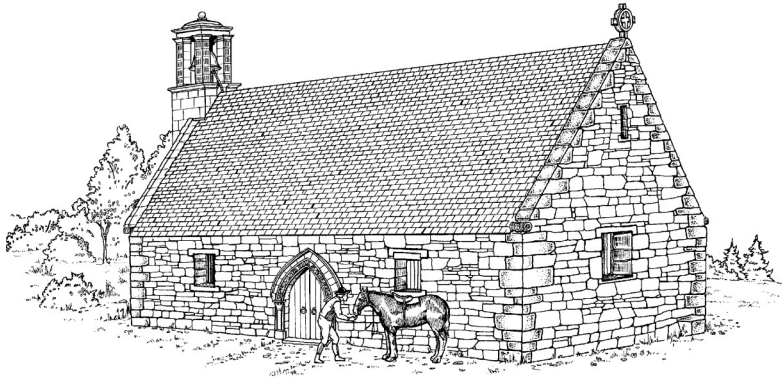
Avril

Auld Stonehouse

Ecclesiastical Account of Parish Church

article and drawings by John Young

Although Stonehouse's ecclesiastical history can be traced to at least the 9th century, the sessional records can only be recorded to the days of Rev. Archibald Foyer around 1696. Documentation prior to this period may have been lost during the covenanting conflicts, or the early days of the Jacobite uprisings. What remains, provides valuable and enlightening information on the discipline, organisation and educational influence of the church in Stonehouse.



The records depict the strict authority of the church by ensuring parishioners compliance with the teachings and principles of such. The ecclesiastical leaders of the day held considerable influence in civil disputes, whereby the church was able to exact punishments, or fines, on persons for minor offences, or acts against the church. Although there are no records of such punishment being carried out by the parish church in Stonehouse, in some parishes an iron collar was affixed near the door of the kirk to reprimand parishioners, not complying with fines imposed.

Drinking was frowned upon and closely monitored by the congregation. This led to the establishment of local organisations such as the Total Abstinence Society (1858), which publicly rebuked those who dabbled in the demon drink. In more serious crimes, such as incest, the perpetrator had to stand at the kirk door, bare footed and legged, from the ringing of the 'second bell to the last', at every church in the presbytery.

Prior to 1752, the minister and his session were predominantly responsible for providing education within the parish. An Act of Parliament in this year ensured that the parish kirk provided a building, until such times as a school house could be found. This provision also ensured healthy numbers of congregations, that would be the envy of every minister today.

Early extracts indicate several schoolmasters appointed by the church including; John Watson (1697), Alexander Cochrane of Avondale (1698), Richard Steil (1701), William Walker (1702), Gavin Hamilton of Vicars (1707), Walter Weir (1718) and Thomas Clark (1722). A school house was procured in 1708, provided by Thomas Cure.

Other indications of the authority of the church include a document in September 1696 stating, "the session unanimously appoint that no persons within the congregation be married out of the church unless a fourteen pence levy be given to the poor". Complying with such principles, and in particular the day of the Sabbath, was to be strictly adhered to in every respect. In November of the same year a complaint was made with regards to, "servants wandering up and down among their friends on the Lord's day, to the dishonour of God and offence of people", further intimating "that both masters and servants be warned against such an evil publicly, with certification of censure to be inflicted upon the disobedient".

The power and influence of the church was all too apparent in January 1698, when the parish records stated, "John Fleming and Robert Wilson being called, acknowledged their playing cards, for which they professed their sorrow. The session rebuked them both. Both of them promised amendment, and Robert Wilson engaged himself to burn the cards when they went home".

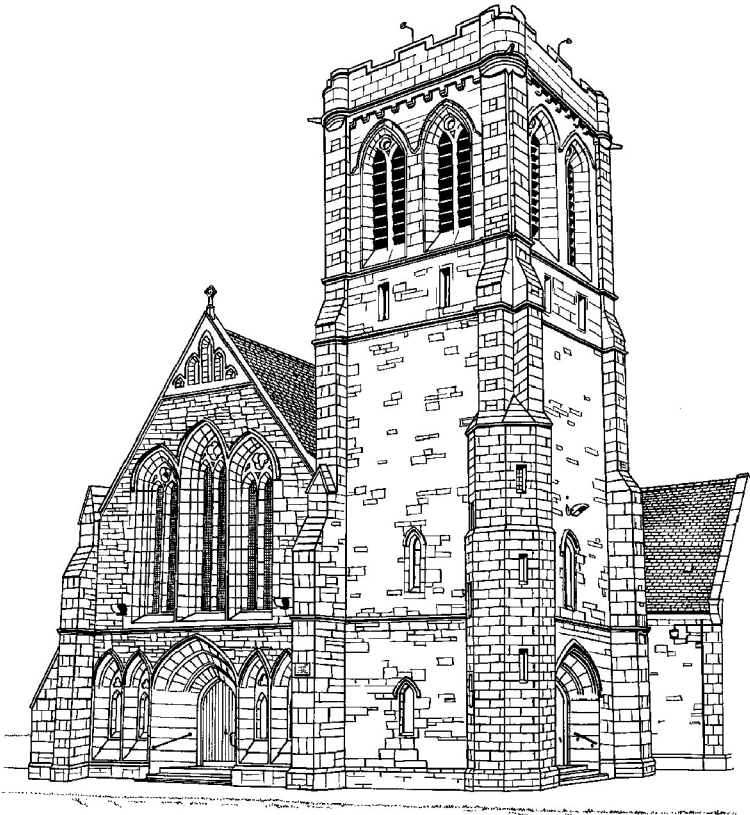
The church, however, not only provided for the educational and spiritual needs of the parish, but in times of hardship, charity and understanding. In June 1697, "Thomas Robertson, the kirk treasurer, declared that he had got a sentence against some who had not paid their fines for their fornication, but the session, in regard of their extreme poverty, delayed to exact anything for the time".

This reflected the generous nature of local dignitaries of the period, for in 1790, Rev. Morehead stated, "The produce of the year 1782 fell short of what was necessary, for the consumption of the parish. The deficiency was made up, by some of the more wealthy inhabitants, who purchased foreign grain, and sold it without profit". He further observed, "none of the parishioners are allowed to beg, though we are troubled much with beggars from other parishes".

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, it was uncommon not to be a member of a kirk. In 1836, Rev. Hugh Dewar wrote, "The due observance of the sabbath is likewise a characteristic mark of the inhabitants of Stonehouse. The hallowing of the Sabbath day is here most scrupulously attended to, by all ranks of persons, both in town and parish; except in going to and from church, you will hardly see a person on the street. All public houses are shut on the Sabbath, unless to the traveller for refreshment".

In Scotland today, around 12% of the population are members of a church, a figure that has halved over the past 70 years and is still declining. In 1891, over 33% of the population of Stonehouse attended a church regularly on the Sabbath.

Stonehouse today retains two churches and the Chapel hall in Wellbrae, serving the community. These churches still play an integral part in the rural life and affairs of the village, promoting community participation and the welfare of the people of Stonehouse. 'Wha's like us?' provided a brief history of the churches origins and the influence of Ninian in the parish. The following time lines of the local churches, past and present, provide an easy to understand account of the ministry of the church and important events in the history of the various congregations.



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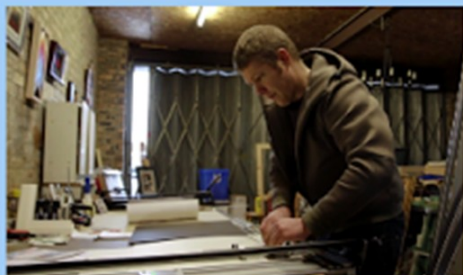
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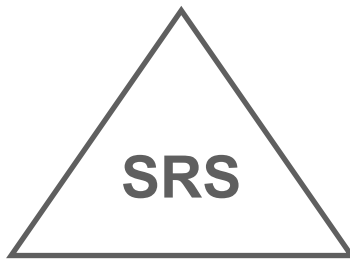
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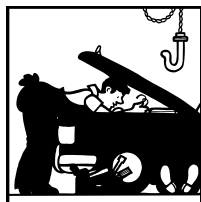
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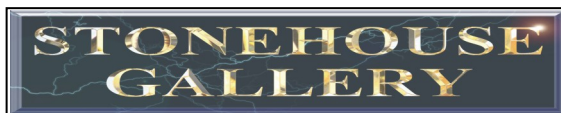
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