

Link Magazine

Winter 2015



St Ninian's Stonehouse (LEP)

(The LEP stands for local ecumenical partnership)

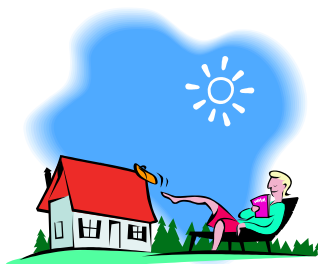


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Painting and Decorating

Just to say... this is the magazine where we say farewell to Rev Paul Grant. Inside you will be able to read tributes to Paul that were read out at his 'leaving doo' and take to heart Paul's closing message for us all in the community of St Ninian's. I will leave you to read on...

Dates for your diary:

- The Christian Aid yearly concert will take place again this year on Sunday 13th December at 6pm in St Ninian's and Paul will be leading the praise.
- The watch night service will be at 11.15pm on Thursday 24th December and Paul will be leading worship.
- The Christmas service will take place on Sunday 20th December.

Recycle your old Inkjet Cartridges St. Ninian's in association with The



Recycling Factory are recycling your old Inkjet Cartridges with all the proceeds going to church funds. We receive up to £4.50 for every Inkjet Cartridge recycled. (Please note no longer accepting mobile phones).

Special drop off points are available at The Post Office and The Back Road Pub, where recycling boxes and envelopes available. Recycling boxes and envelopes are also available within the church.

Cameron Weir

P.S. the church is still looking for a 19" Flat screen monitor. If you have one you could donate to the church; please contact Brian Tel: 01698 791 006



Don't forget to save stamps from your Christmas post and pop them in the box in the vestibule.

Paul's message

Firstly, a big thankyou to everyone; for the gifts and cards that were a lovely token of where you kept us in your heart. Thank you. We are so grateful to have shared the last 12 years of our lives with you. It's something that we won't ever forget. Who I am today is shaped from my time here in song and prayer, reflection and care, in the laughter and tears



we have shared together. Thanks too for the wonderful night of my leaving doo where so many people gave of their time and talents to help say goodbye.

I'm now working away at the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow as a healthcare chaplain, which is a bit like arriving in a new country where you have to pick up the local language in order to understand and be understood. I've discovered that the NHS loves acronyms e.g. MDT (ask Margaret Patrick what that means!). The chaplaincy office is in the old part of the building right next to the original chapel which is a beautiful space for reflection. Every day is different – to say the least! But I'm enjoying the challenge and know that this is the place I should be right now.

You know those mornings, when you wake and from your bedroom window you can see that a mist, thick and grey, dresses the morning in its vapour, as if the sky can't take the weight of the clouds anymore and the ground must offer them a home. Outside the next door neighbour's house has gone, the tree in the garden is a few bony branches as the village is all half shapes and suggestions, making what was once familiar seem foreign and strange. Maybe that's what it's like for you and I right now. We know well what our world looked like these past 12 years, but what will it become is still taking shape. But what hasn't changed? Who we are, made up of trust, memory, hope and fear – and this hasn't changed

either - the feet of God, as light as a feather, knows this ground, inch by inch. So what can we do, you and I, as we go into the mist? We can trust that the goodness which we've known, the generosity we have drawn on, the love that has held us together, is still the best compass through the wounds that mark us. We can with what little light we have look for the kingdom of God. How will we know when we've found it? The kingdom feels like compassion, it has the lightness to let go grudge and hold out forgiveness, it wants to share what it has; it refuses to see only the surface of a life or set of circumstances – but looks closer to find where hurt and fear masquerade as anger and strong opinion, looks beneath that to see the beauty that belongs to every person that might have been crushed between the pages of bad choices or harm done, but is still there. Lets you and I go into the misty morning of what might be and take the compass of Jesus' kingdom as our guide. We won't go far wrong with that.

If I could offer some bread for your journey I think it would be this. For the elders, your main task is to keep the peace and unity of the church – so any decision that has to be made shouldn't be based on what you want, or like as the most important criteria - but on where you think the congregation is right now and what they can cope with. For example, remember when we thought about changing communion to once a month. We felt that would be good to do (John Calvin wanted it once a week – me too!) but we also felt that perhaps there were some in the congregation who just weren't ready for that. So we decided to have it every second month – keeping the peace and unity of the church and taking a step towards what we felt was the right direction.

This doesn't mean things can't change but it keeps in mind the peace and unity of the congregation – that's the first task of eldership. For everyone, remember it is the quality of the relationships we make and keep that makes St Ninian's the church it is. That's not just the relationships with one another, but also the relationship we have with the village. Remember, we decided to take seriously how Jesus said that *"it is by your love for one another all folks will recognise you as my followers"*? That means sharing and caring for the congregation **and the village** – even when that cost us (even financially). It means getting on with those we struggle with. It allows us to hold different views (even passionately) but without spitting out the dummy. It means sometimes holding back on plans we think are right because others aren't quite there yet. Above all it means we are allowed to disagree but have conversations over those disagreements. And when things go in the direction we want we remain gracious and understanding, and when things don't go in the direction we want – we remain gracious and understanding, in relief or disappointment, because Jesus gave only one criteria for being recognised as his follower, only one: not Bible knowledge, church law, vision, conservatism, only this – *love one another as I have loved you*.

Okay – enough rambling from me...

Finally to say to everyone – keep praying. Remember your church in prayer. Ask God for help in the vacancy. Why not make a habit of at least once a week praying for the Session Clerk Margaret, the Kirk Session, the vacancy committee when elected, Alan the Interim Moderator, the morning preacher (soon to be Eric Hislop)– holding the whole of the life of St Ninian’s before God in prayer – like a child offering a drawing to her mother, like a son offering a wound for his father to tend – offer the life of the church to the God who knows and loves this congregation. Come on, once a week. You can do that ☺

Okay, very last of all – if you are free any morning, Monday to Friday, then remember the Morning Prayer that happens in the prayer room: 9:15-9:45. That is a very special place in the life of the church, and perhaps the hearth that keeps the fire going to warm the whole of the church. It’s certainly where some of the best theology is being done. Amen already!

So, this last pastoral letter comes,

With all my love, respect, hope and gratitude

And with a deep trust in the God who loves us

And in Jesus refuses to stop looking for us with that love

who holds you and invites through the mist

to where you are going to be met with wonder, wound and great, great joy.

Paul ☺



From Margaret Macgregor

Hi Folks,

Well how things change in a short time, never for a minute when I wrote my last letter did I think we would be without our minister before I wrote the next one. I can only say it has been a very emotional few months both for us, Paul and the family and can I add the folks in the village, who have come to know him well. Paul will be a big miss both in the church and the village and I know his decision was not taken lightly but he felt it was the right time to move on both for himself and the church and we must wish him well in his new vocation and I say vocation because Paul's work for the Lord will never just be a job.

We had a lovely evening to say farewell to Paul and the family on Friday 1st October when we were entertained by groups from the church, lots of tears and laughter, a wee cup of tea and of course a good blether. I would like to thank everyone



who attended that night and to all who helped organise the tea, those who donated baking and the folks who helped move chairs, tables etc.

A big thank you also to those who donated to Paul's farewell gift the family were overwhelmed with your generosity

Paul preached his last service on Sunday 4th October 2015 when he ordained three new elders and we were proud to welcome Eleanor Brown, Yvonne Hamilton and Graham Orr into the fellowship of the session and I look forward to working alongside them. Paul also welcomed nine new members - By Profession of Faith – Jennifer Clark, Louise Cooper, May Fairlie, Claire Gemmil, David Gemmil, Julie Smith and Cameron Weir and By Transfer – Sarah Jane Ramsay and Joe Park, a warm welcome to you all.

So where do we go from here you might ask, there are many hurdles to be

cleared before we even get around to calling a vacancy committee and then a minister. As you are probably aware this will not be an easy task and can I ask for your patience, support and prayers.

Rev Alan Paterson has agreed to act as Interim Moderator during our time of vacancy we have been attending meetings with folks from the United Reformed church and the Church of Scotland to clarify the way ahead. Alan will also cover two days Pastoral Care, so we still have cover for funerals, baptisms and weddings on a part time basis.

We have had various ministers lead us in worship over the last few weeks and I thank them for their support, this will continue until the end of the year then from January on Eric Hyslop has been appointed as Locum and will cover pulpit supply on a regular basis so there will be a bit of continuity on a Sunday. We are all still suffering a wee bit from shell shock but I am sure God has plans for St Ninian's.

Everyone has been saying it will be hard to find someone to fill Paul's shoes and my reply has been we will find someone who will walk in his or her own shoes, he or she might take us a different path but it will be the path that God has planned.

It is important that we all work together and support one another through this difficult but exiting time in the life of our church and our work in the village.

Session were a bit concerned at the poor attendance at the Communion on Sunday, there could be various reasons for this but we would ask that you come along when you can on a Sunday morning and support the visiting ministers.

Your church needs you.

I will endeavour to keep you up to date with all that is taking place; any information will be intimated on a Sunday morning.

The Christian Aid yearly concert will take place again this year on Sunday 13th December at 6pm in St Ninian's and Paul will be leading the praise.

The watchnight service will be at 11.15pm on Thursday 24th December and Paul will be leading worship.

I would like to wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year and may God be with you

Margaret

He called the unknown best from Peter, James
And lent their lives to his amazing grace
Once they had been helpless for the task
Til Christ up caught in them the gold he sought –
Can he do this again if we have Faith to ask?
He surely can
He has done this often and is still able and eager
To do it for those who asks, believing.

Are you an active member?
The kind who would be missed
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list

Do you attend the meetings?
And mingle with the crowd
Or do you often stay at home
And grumble long and loud

Do you ever go and visit
A member who is sick
Or leave the work to just a few
And talk about the “Clique”

Come to the church more often
And help with hand on heart
Don't just be a member
Please take an active part

Anne Law & family would like to thank everyone for cards and messages of sympathy on the recent death of my father. My Dad was 97 and had a good and well lived life, he was known to lots of friends in St Ninian's and used to enjoy the concerts here, especially he & my Mum enjoyed the Burns Suppers which were organised many years ago by the Social Committee. Thanks again for all your kind thoughts and prayers.

God Bless

Anne Law



Streets to pray for

In the last magazine I explained that we had started a prayer and reflection group which meets

Monday – Friday at 9.15am
in the Prayer room.



All are very welcome to come along any morning; you don't have to attend every morning but can dip out and in as suits your days.

Part of the things we do is pray for folks in need and also we pray each week for a street in the village. The last list took us up to December and below you will find the list from 11th January 2016 so if you can't manage to join us you can still pray for each street on the given week

There is now a prayer box in the vestibule of the church so if you know of someone in need you can put a wee note in the box and they will be added to the list.

11/01/16	Lawrie Street	18/01/16	McLean Gardens
25/01/16	Argyle St / Trongate	01/02/16	Millar Street
08/02/16	Hill Road	15/02/16	Wellbrae
22/02/16	Vicars Road	29/02/16	King Street
07/03/16	Townhead St	14/03/16	Strathaven Road
21/03/16	Sidehead Road	28/03/16	Caledonian Ave
04/04/16	Bramble Bank	11/04/16	Weavers Court
18/04/16	St Ninian's Place	25/04/16	Newfield Road
02/05/16	The Holdings	09/05/16	Patrickholme Ave
16/05/16	Paterson Place	23/05/16	The Nuek

Paul Grant – An `Ordinary` Man

It is with a heavy heart that I write this tribute on the departure of this `Ordinary` man, our minister and friend Paul Grant.

I write this tribute mainly as a representative of the Hope Café Lanarkshire to thank Paul for inviting, encouraging and supporting our charity to find a home within the community of St Ninian's.



I first met Paul Grant over eight years ago when I paid my first visit to St Ninian's church for a Sunday morning service.

The service was a mixture of traditions I was familiar with like hymns, bible readings and a monetary collection but the thing that struck me most, the thing I vividly remember as I sat within the congregation was listening to this `ordinary` looking, un-shaven guy called Paul Grant talking about a God that was a complete stranger to me!

To be honest during the service I thought Paul was a bit `aff his heed`, a bit radical!

Of course I didn't tell him that as I shook his hand, thanked him and quickly exited the building that Sunday morning but he had my attention.

I was curious to know more about this God he was talking about.

I continued attending Paul's services and each time I came I left comforted and up-lifted but always hungry to know more about the God Paul talked about.

Paul Grant conveys a relevant loving God who loves us all equally, unconditionally right where we are in life. He believes we are all created exactly the way we are meant to be, faults and all.

Paul Grant talks about a forgiving God who delights in every human being. A God who loves us all whether we go to church and God loves you even if you don't go to church!

Paul Grant believes in a God who sees every human being as a blessing, created exactly the way they are meant to be. No need to wait till you are `fixed` of all your flaws and failings, no need to wait until all your questions about God have been answered, just come and engage with Him, just as you are and receive His un-conditional love.

Before I experienced one of Paul Grant's services my images of God and who He was were quite obscure.

I believed God was too great (and too busy), too far away to touch or have time for someone like me. I believed God was there to keep us religious folk in 'check' and was keeping an ever-watchful judging eye on us Christians. I viewed God as Big Brother type deity. Always watching and waiting, tut, tut tutting at all my mistakes and keeping score of all my wrong-doings and my chances of getting to heaven were pretty slim! I believed God's purpose in my life was to make me feel bad and guilty about all my failings.

Paul Grant has helped me and come to believe that God delights in who I am and loves me exactly the way I am with all my questions, faults and failings. So I come to St Ninian's and join others who have questions and we learn together about who God is by listening to the stories Paul conveys about Jesus in the Bible. Paul interprets the Bible with breath-taking simplicity and that is a special thing.

Before I came to St Ninian's and started engaging in the services I didn't feel worthy enough to call myself a Christian. I then went through a period in my life when I was trying way too hard to be a Christian but with Paul Grant's help and guidance I learned to love and accept myself just the way I am and I learned to be just me, a beloved child of God. No 'Christian' label, just Lisa.

I have had many conversations with different people in Stonehouse who have encountered Paul in some way whether they've been a guest at a wedding, funeral or a baptism that he's been celebrating or just chatting to him in the Co as a fellow human being and a common theme always emerges from these conversations. Lots of people say "Aye that Minister Paul Grant is a lovely bloke isn't he? Dead 'ordinary' just like the rest of us."

That is one of the special things about Paul he is just an 'ordinary' man living out an extraordinary calling on his life. He relates to people. He really sees people and their value no matter who they are or where they are in life. He conveys love without 'preaching' about God. He doesn't try to shove the 'message' down peoples' throats by preaching the message. He has made God relevant and reachable to everyone by becoming the message.

Paul Grant has welcomed me, baptised my children, married my husband and I and most recently he has welcomed my beloved Hope Café to find a home here in St Ninian's but the greatest gift I have received from Paul is his guidance through some very dark periods in my life over the past eight years. He has enriched my spiritual journey beyond description, has been my minister and good friend who has helped me and my family grow into and understand God's love for us all and for that I thank you Paul.

So here's to this 'ordinary' man who has done extraordinary things for me, St Ninian's Church and the community of Stonehouse. The man, the minister and my friend Paul Grant.

An Ordinary Man

So here we are you're leaving us
Paul Grant, what can we say?
You've been a special minister
In your own very un-organised way!

You've helped us on our journey
Of that there is no doubt
But forgetting stuffs your forte
We have to give a shout!

An `ordinary` minster
You came to show us the way
You're good at `winging it` & changing your mind
Many folks would say

You leave things till the last minute
And you cannot drive a car
But who needs wheels when you have the Holy Spirit
He knows you will go far!

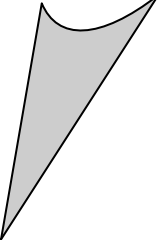
Visual Liturgies are your trademark
The Message clear for all to see
And some folks are glad they're going
But I have to disagree

A loving God you've shown us
Accepting us just as we are
God also delights in you Paul
He knows you are a star

You welcome everyone who worships
No one is turned away
Your door is always open
No matter the time of day

You're humble and your honest
And you have questions just like us
And you are a regular passenger
On a Whitelaws' 254 bus!

In denims we mostly see you
You're not fond of a shave
But we all think you're magic
It's priceless what you gave



Weddings, funerals and baptisms
You've done your share it's true
But being an 'ordinary' human
Is by far the best thing you do

The Hope Café you've welcomed
For that I say thank you
But now you are no longer the minister
You'll have to pay your due!!

So what's in store for your tomorrows
We're sure you'll find your way
We only pray that Glasgow
Will help you through your days!

So thank you for your service
You've shaped us beyond compare
One thing you'll leave behind though
Is your ever receding hair!!

So tonight we all salute you
You 'ordinary' bloke
Please know that here there's always a place for you
Of that there is no joke

So think of us with fondness
And visit us sometimes
You're always welcome at St Ninian's
Whenever the church bells chime

A very big thank you to everyone for giving me such a lovely "send off" in May. I have settled well into my new home with Elizabeth and Steve and have enjoyed the summer in Macclesfield. But I do miss all my friends in St Ninian's and in Stonehouse and think of you often.

Thanks again. Flora



The Guild **BE BOLD BE STRONG.**

As I am writing this we are looking forward to our Guest Night which will be busy with Guilds coming from Strathaven, Larkhall and Quarter and with Trilogy playing it should be a good night.

The BIG SING is on in Dunfermline Abbey on the 20th November and we have a bus of ladies from our Guild going. Guilds from all over the country are coming to sing hymns and songs to celebrate Guild Week.

Monday 14th December is our annual Christmas Dinner if you would like to come along and join the fun please see one of the committee to put your name down for catering purposes.

Monday 11th January, Aileen Neilson will be giving us an interesting talk.

Monday 8th February, Janice McInnes will be giving us a demonstration of arranging flowers and we will be making pancakes as well.

If you haven't been to one of our meetings and would like to attend come along on any of the evenings for 7.30pm or speak to myself or any of the committee.

See you soon.

Wilma Johnston
Secretary

"COIN IN BOX"

On behalf of the Finance Team, I would like to thank all you loyal and generous donators, so many of you do it anonymously, that I do not get a chance to say thank you personally.

If anyone would like a box for coins (any size or colour!) you should find them in the book case at the front door,

If you cannot find a box please ask myself or anyone on door duty and they should be able to help.

Thank you all very much once again.

With Best Wishes

Pat Thornton

WEBB IVORY

Thanks to everyone who has taken time to look through the catalogues again this year. By the time you read this I will have completed most of your orders and I can't believe how quickly Christmas will be upon us (definitely a sign of old age!!)

In the next edition of Link I will let you know how much I have been able to donate to the church funds, but thanks again everyone for your support.

CHURCH DIARIES

The church diaries have now arrived and you are now able to buy our small church diary at the still reasonable price of £1.50.

For anyone who hasn't had one previously they are a very handy pocket size and contain details of principle folks in our church. Please ask to see one with no obligation to buy, I can be found most Sundays at church or contact me Anne Law 01698 793591.

Thanks again for your support,
Anne Law

THOUGHTS ON.....GIFTS

This is the time of year when our thoughts tend to turn to gifts – giving and receiving.

It's always nice to put some thought into what to buy for whom and to know that others have done the same in choosing what they give us.

Ann Woods

Sunday School

We have continued the session using Spill the Beanz material. The children enjoy the crafts sessions which relate to the story.

We had our Charity clothes collection in October and realised the sum of £231.20, so a big thank you to all who contributed in any way. We greatly appreciate the help of George and the boys who move the bags down to the corridor and the kind gentlemen who came and helped load the van.

We visited Canderavon House on 1st November. The children enjoyed making up little arrangements of flowers and handing them over to the residents.

The residents were delighted with them and joined the children in a 'sing-along'.

The next outing will be to the Pantomime in East Kilbride on Saturday 5th December. This year's show is Dick Whittington.

The Christmas service will take place on Sunday 20th December.

The Team would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

The Sunday School Team

I would like to
thank you all for cards,
flowers etc

I received for my birthday.
They were very much appreciated.

Elizabeth Richmond



On behalf of everyone at Team Hope Café I would like to thank the community of St Ninian's who have welcomed and helped us find a home here in the village of Stonehouse this year.

The hospitality and generosity you have shown our project has been quite overwhelming.

So what can you expect to find when you visit The Hope Café in Stonehouse?

Well we are primarily a café serving affordable, home-made, hot food but we are also a community café with a difference as we promote positive mental health and well-being. We provide information, opportunities and activities proven to improve people's mental health and well-being. Most of our staff and volunteers have their own lived experiences of mental illness and they positively share their experiences to inspire others.

If you have any questions about Stonehouse Hope Café please contact Lisa Cameron on:

07851823683

At Hope Café we focus on what's strong, not what's wrong!

Together let's keep talking about Mental Health

www.hopecafelanarkshire.org.uk

Hope Café Stonehouse

December Dates

Thursday 10th Dec 10am - 2pm

Thursday 17th Dec 10am - 2pm (Christmas celebration)





Church Register

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them .
May the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.**

*Mrs Jenny Cayton, Ballantyne House, Larkhall ;
Mrs Joan Wilson, Angle St;*

Mr Alec Sloan, Sorbie Drive; Mr Kenneth Welsh, Muirhead

The Coffee Morning

Christmas is almost here and our ladies are busy preparing shortbread and mince pies for our 'Free Day' to thank everyone for their loyalty and friendship during the year.

This year, with your help, we have raised over £4,500 to help with church repairs. We are very grateful for the continual support we have received from all our friends.

Our last Coffee Morning, this year, is on Tuesday 24th November 2015 and we look forward to welcoming you all on Tuesday 2nd February 2016.

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

Peggy Anderson

*Greta Struthers would like to thank
everyone at St Ninian's for the
beautiful flowers and cards
given to her for her birthday
and new home.*



Link Committee

We would like to take this

opportunity to thank Lisa for all her hard work overseeing the Advertisers in the magazine for the last eight years and so ably finding a replacement for her duties by herself, so as not to let the team down. We are not losing Lisa as she is still part of our team helping with the printing of the magazine. However, you will all appreciate just how busy Lisa is and this is one of her commitments she felt she could hand over to someone else.

So we now welcome Caroline McInally to the team and she will now deliver to and gather in fees, from the businesses advertising in the magazine. In the Link committee, we all see to our own little responsibilities and it runs like clockwork so we are sure Caroline will slip into her new role as she has already made some good suggestions to stimulate further revenue for the magazine.

Generally at this time of year, Margaret Murray is in the vestibule a week earlier for any donations, as everyone tries to get their magazines delivered quickly before Christmas. So you will find Margaret at the front of the church on Sunday 13th December'15.

Peggy Anderson handed me her original copy of 'Guidelines for the Link Distributor' given out by Miss Leishmann 33 years ago. I found it really interesting and I will try and share it with you in the next issue of Link. I am afraid I have run out of space in this copy.

Did you know that the first Link magazine was free but subsequent issues were 5p a copy? I never knew that. I thought it was simply a donation. May I thank all of you who give either a £1 coin or even a £2 for the magazine as without it we couldn't run the magazine and give a donation to the church fund as well. Your support is really appreciated.

May peace be with you this Christmas, Margaret McM

We just want to say a big thank you to all who called and paid us a visit and presented us with flowers. Also we would like to say a big thank you to John Limerick for his visits and support during Ken's illness.

Avril Welsh and young Ken



Church Flowers

December 6th	Helen Spence, Kate Stewart, Rosemary Middleton, Elaine Kennedy Mary McKay, Helen Scully	In Memoriam In Memoriam In Memoriam
13th	Maggie Sharp	
20th	Myra Pate, Sheena Mclean	Both in Memoriam
27th		

Arranger/Distributors: Anne Anderson (792124)
Margaret Hannay (791163)

**The new Flower List will be in the Church Vestibule from
the 1st December until the end of January.**

Decorating the Church for Christmas

The church will be getting decorated on **Thursday 10th December** in the afternoon 1pm and in the evening from 7pm. A date for dismantling will be announced.

We shall be pleased to have helpers to assist, especially gentlemen to place decorations on pillars etc. Even if you are only available for part of the time - many hands make light work so please come along and enjoy the fellowship and also the mince pies and shortbread!

