

# News from the Pews

The Newsletter of Markinch and Thornton Parish Church  
November 2016



# Markinch and Thornton Parish Church



## Minister:

Rev. Carolann Erskine

A warm welcome is extended to all visitors and newcomers to the community to share in the worship, work and witness of the congregation.

## Church Services

Thornton Church - Sunday 9.45am

Markinch Church - Sunday 11.15am

[www.markinchandthorntonchurch.org.uk](http://www.markinchandthorntonchurch.org.uk)

Scottish Charity Number: SC003417

## Markinch and Thornton Parish Church The Glory of Christmas 2016

2nd Dec 7.00pm Christingle Service at Thornton

4th Dec 2.30pm Service of Bereavement at Markinch

11th Dec 11.00am Lessons and Carols at Thornton

24th Dec 6.30pm Family Service at Markinch

24th Dec 11.30pm Watchnight Service at Markinch

25th Dec 10.00am Christmas Day Service at Thornton

Everyone is Welcome

Your Elder is \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details \_\_\_\_\_

For many people, this is the time of year when the perfect Christmas appears. Well, at least it seems that way in some gifts and images. You know the ones I mean... on calendars and Christmas cards where we find the perfectly airbrushed Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. Flawlessly clean, not a speck of dust or dirt, no sign of Mary exhausted nor baby Jesus with colic. No sign either of worry from Joseph wondering how he was going to provide and we know this image of perfection is not quite right. Many other people may be taken in by the hymn writers' idyllic ideas of the sweetly sleeping infant, 'little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.' Really?



Rather like the peculiar relationships between those who want everything and those who struggle to provide everything, something feels wrong. For many youngsters, it has to be the perfect gift, the latest Wii game or iPhone to gain the right social standing and youngsters absolutely adore those who provide such gifts. But, does that make for lasting relationships?

The wonder of the miracle of Christmas is that God came down to dwell among us, to live as one of us, to give us great hope in the wonderful relationship that we can have with Jesus in life eternal. Some may find it peculiar that Jesus lived for thirty years or so, and also that many people who knew him had personal encounters with him and strangely, they never made it into the Bible stories. Yet, the crowds 'marvelled' at the things he said and did as their lives changed forever.

If only we could break free of the stereotypical images, free from the airbrushed Christmas, we might realise that our habitual interpretations of the Christmas story could be swamped with the wrong gifts. We are reminded of the overpowering sense of wonder and sheer delightful gratitude that comes when we realise that, imperfections and all, we are part of the crowd that marvels at Jesus. You and I are neither spotless, pure or holy, but rather like those who knew Jesus two thousand years ago, we are invited to come and meet the Christ Child just as we are. Marvellous!

*Blessings, Carolann*

## **Service of Bereavement**

We are planning to hold a Service of Bereavement at Markinch on Sunday 4th December at 2:30pm.

This service is primarily aimed at those people who have suffered a bereavement in the family in the last year, although it is open to everyone who feels the service would benefit them. It will be a short service of around 30 minutes.

## **From the Session Clerk**

### **Future Focus: A way forward for the congregation**

What are the marks of a healthy church? How do we do things here in Markinch and Thornton? What are our plans for our outreach? What is working well and what needs to be adjusted? What aspects of God are reflected here and what is missing? Where are the clusters of concern in our parish and how do we structure the strategy of looking at the bigger picture of working together? Together, we can further God's mission in this parish and beyond.

By understanding our congregational profile, we can reflect on our congregational life through worship, mission, outreach, service and Christian education in the community.

Earlier this year, the Kirk Session re-organised and formalised committees with designated responsibilities and remits. The committees are:-

Executive Committee

Education and Mission Committee

Finance Committee

Pastoral Care Committee

Projects Committee

Property Committee

Publicity and Communications Committee

Safeguarding Committee

Worship Committee

The remits of the above committees are now available for perusal in both church halls. Everyone now has the opportunity to see exactly how each committee contributes to the running of both churches. Committees are run by members of Session, although the convenors can appoint church members to help with any aspect(s) of the tasks involved. It is difficult to complete certain tasks without the help of church members.

If you feel that after reading the remits of the committees, you can help in any way, please contact me to find out more information.

*John Wood, Session Clerk*

### **Just Belong**

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed?

Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?

Do you attend at meetings and mingle with the crowd

Or just come from time to time, then moan both long and loud?

Do you take an active part to help the group along

Or are you satisfied to be the type to 'Just Belong'?

Do you ever give suggestions when the group is kinda sick

Or leave that up to quite a few, then talk about the 'clique'?

And when the meeting's scheduled, that means success, if done

Do you put your shoulder to the wheel and work with everyone?

So attend the meetings regularly and help with hand and heart

Don't be just a member but take an active part.

Think this over, member, Are we right or wrong?

Are you an active member, or do you 'Just Belong'?

## Treasurer's Report

### Income to 31st October 2016

WFO	£23708
Standing Orders	£23973
Open Plate	£5071
Gift Day	£3418
Selkirk Trust	£1250
Weddings/Funerals	£2175
Tax Rebate	£14113
Hall Rents	£2985
General Trustees	£29152
Donations &	
Fund Raising	£4851
Misc. Income	£947
Total Income	£111643

### Expenditure

Ministries & Mission	£35445
Insurance/Council Tax	£6246
Heat & Light	£5315
Locum/Pulpit Supply	£4824
Minister's Travel	£588
Salaries	£9455
Church/Hall Repairs	£1285
Manse Expenses	£29039
Stationery/Postage/ /Telephone	£2237
Piano/Organ Repairs	£372
Grow	£3000
Misc. Expenses	£4018
Total Expenses	£103393

Ministry & Mission still due £11864

Insurance still due £1282

Grow still due £3250

I would urge anyone who pays tax and has not completed a Gift Aid Declaration to do so as we have claimed £14113 from Inland Revenue so far this year.

I have the necessary form if you are interested.

*Nancy Munro, Treasurer*

## Diary Dates

Every Monday	Coffee morning at Thornton, 10.00am-12noon
Every Monday	Prayer meeting at Thornton, 10.15am
Every Thursday	Coffee morning at Markinch, 10.00am-11.30am
12th November	Winter Fayre in Markinch Church Hall, 10.00am-12noon
13th November	Remembrance Day Services
	Thornton:- Church at 9.45am then Memorial at 10.45am
	Markinch:- Memorial at 10.45am then Church at 11.30am
25th November	Quiz Night in Markinch Church Hall, 7.30pm
3rd December	Christmas Teas at Thornton Church Hall, 10.00am-12noon
9th January 2017	Session Meeting, Thornton Church Hall, 7.15pm

## Contact Details

Minister	Rev Carolann Erskine Tel 01592 758264 Email <a href="mailto:CErskine@churchofscotland.org">CErskine@churchofscotland.org</a>
Session Clerk	John G Wood, 16 Loch Katrine Gardens, Glenrothes, KY6 2NW Tel 01592 750327 Email <a href="mailto:sessionclerk@markinchandthorntonchurch.org.uk">sessionclerk@markinchandthorntonchurch.org.uk</a>
Treasurer	Nancy Munro Tel 01592 743822 Email <a href="mailto:amunro6687@aol.com">amunro6687@aol.com</a>

## **Greetings from your soon to be Student Minister.**

Rev Erskine has asked me to share a few words of introduction to give you some background of how I came to this point.

‘The Church of Scotland will be holding an Enquirer’s Course for those who would be interested in working for the Church...so if anyone feels called to do so, or is just interested in exploring that, it is being held in...’ Each time I heard this announcement, my attention was caught, to the extent I can remember exactly where I was sitting, and thought, ‘I wonder how you would know if you should go to that?’

Now as a second year Candidate in Training for Full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, with The Church of Scotland, I have learned exactly how you know if you should go to that. If God wants you to take action, He reveals Himself, in all sorts of ways, and thankfully He gives the strength to execute His exciting plans. ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’ Jeremiah 29:11. Although not without challenges along the way, in transferring from 27 years of teaching, at Buckhaven Primary School, to becoming a full-time student, at the University of St Andrews, these words have become very close to my heart, as I journey in ministry.

I asked God, ‘Is there anything else you want me to do for you?’ I felt confident in my request, because in the ‘big’ transitions in my life, God had always clearly shown, with His perfect timing, when and where ‘new beginnings’ should take place, e.g. studying in Aberdeen, teaching in Buckhaven, teaching in Greenwich, Connecticut, USA, becoming an elder and visiting Lusangazi, Malawi, to name but a few. Training to become a minister has proven to be no different, with excellent placement experiences in Kirkcaldy Presbytery, in the congregations of Auchtertool linked with Linktown, and St Bryce Kirk. I also had the great privilege of working with different denominations, from June to August, this year, by sharing a wonderful ten-week summer placement with the First Congregational Church, in Rockport, MA, in the United States and was ‘on loan’ for a week to the First Baptist Church of Rockport, for their Vacation Bible School. I believe these experiences in my journey with Jesus, family, friends and colleagues, are all part of the wonderful life tapestry that God creates for each one of us. Experiences of high and lower points, and not without bumps in the road along the way. Such joy to know He walks with us through every one of these experiences, whether or not we understand the plan.

I am excited to be joining the ministry team, and sharing in the life of the congregation of Markinch and Thornton. As we meet together to worship and pray, listening to the ‘still small voice of God’ in all that we do, I believe He will have great plans for all of us, as we grow together to bring glory to Him. I leave you with these hymn words, which sum up my journey in ministry. ‘All that I am, all I can be, all that I have, all that is me. Accept and use Lord, as you would choose Lord. Right now today.’ (William Himes) ‘I’ll go in the strength of the Lord, in paths he has marked for my feet.’ (Edward Turney). I look forward to walking that path with you.

*Dawn Laing*

## Parish News

### Deaths

Isabella Watson  
Rev David Gatt  
William Ford  
Susan Adair  
William Crawford

### Wedding

James Martin and Debra Millar

### New Members

Rev Dr Douglas Galbraith  
Daphne Audsley



## The local Co-Op are supporting our Youth Club

As a Co-Op member, every time you buy selected Co-Op branded products and services, 1% of what you spend goes to local causes. We are asking that everyone who uses a Co-Op membership card nominates the Markinch and Thornton Church Youth Club as their preferred charity. From now until March next year, the Youth Club will receive a portion of the Local Community Fund. If you do nothing we will share the money equally with two other worthwhile causes - but if you register and nominate the Youth Club as your preferred charity we will receive the entire 1% of your spending.

Using these funds, our youngsters and volunteers can undertake training to develop skills in taking a leadership role in their community through programmes organised by Youth Scotland. Please promote the youth group within our community, which will attract more youngsters and hopefully more volunteers too. Support our youngsters to aspire, challenge themselves, have a wide range of experiences and purchase new resources as required.

## Church Hall Bookings

Anyone enquiring about booking the Markinch church hall should contact Karen Wood on 01592 750327 or email [hall@markinchchurch.org.uk](mailto:hall@markinchchurch.org.uk) You can also collect a booking form from the notice board in the church hall.

To book Thornton church hall please contact Margaret Colville on 01592 774295

## Thornton Prayer Meetings

Our prayer group meets at 10.15am on a Monday morning. If you would like us to pray for you or any of your friends or relatives, we have prayer slips available with a box to put them in. These are available in the quiet room which is just before you enter the worship room .

# Sunday School

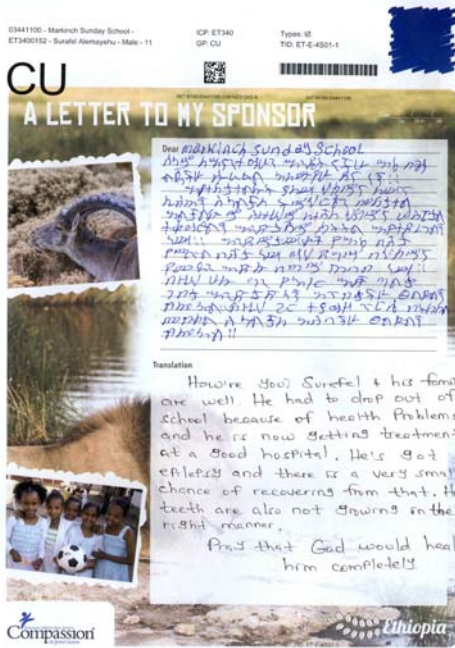
## Sunday School

We welcomed the children back in September and were happy to see how they had grown.

To tie in with the readings and sermons we have covered the stories of the Lost Sheep and Zacchaeus amongst others.

At Harvest we heard about a little boy who gave away the shiniest, biggest apple from his tree to an old man who was no longer able to work in his own garden. The wall was covered with pictures of trees groaning with apples that week!

In December, once again we are visiting Funbox in the Rothes Halls and are looking forward to joining in with the action songs and maybe a glimpse of a famous person!



## Surafel

Here is the latest letter from Surafel. The translation reads...

"How're you? Surafel and his family are well. He had to drop out of school because of health problems and he is now getting treatment at a good hospital. He's got epilepsy and there is a very small chance of recovering from that. His teeth are also not growing in the right manner. Pray that God would heal him completely."

Thanks to all who have contributed.

## Don't Leave Things Until It's Too Late!

Many years ago I had lost three relatives in a very short time and I developed panic attacks, then agoraphobia. It made it difficult for me to go out of doors shopping or going anywhere as the panic attacks were terrifying.

I had a favourite aunt that I used to visit a few miles away, but as it was difficult for me to go out I kept putting off the visit and the weeks went by. Then one day, I felt I would be able to cope.

It felt good to have made up my mind to do this. Mid-morning the phone rang and my cousin told me her mother had died. I could not believe that I had put this visit off for so long and now I would never see her again. I feel God was prompting me to visit her but I made excuses not to go.

We can often leave things too late and regret not doing something.

*Jean Kane*



# **Lynn Cunningham Chartered Accountant**

**Markinch & Cupar**



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# CHURCH VISION

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The vision of The Church of Scotland is to be a church which seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities. God will bless all of our offerings of time, money and talents. Together, we can make a difference.



### **Moving with the Times**

We are honoured that Her Majesty The Queen is the Patron of the Scottish Bible Society. She is known for moving with the times and over the years, she has supported the work of the Scottish Bible Society.

This year, Her Majesty celebrated her 90th birthday and we are delighted to send our loyal greetings to wish Her Majesty a happy birthday and our commitment to uphold her in our prayers.

To mark this special occasion, you may be interested in the following:

### **The Servant Queen and the King she Serves**



Our sister Bible Society in England and Wales has produced a book that explores and celebrates the place of Her Majesty's Christian faith in the context of her formal role, public ceremony, her personal and family life, in times of celebration and in the face of adversity. The Queen herself has provided the foreword for this book.

*I have been - and remain - very grateful to you for your prayers and to God for his steadfast love. I have indeed seen his faithfulness.*

***Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II***

The book has been published together with HOPE and LICC. To purchase the book, visit the Christian Publishing & Outreach website at [www.cpo.org.uk](http://www.cpo.org.uk)

**Markinch and Thornton Parish Church**

## **Christmas Meal**

**Balbirnie Golf Club, 9th December 2016, 7.00 for 7.30pm**

**£25 per person (3 course meal)**

**Call Karen Wood on 07717023906 by 27th November to book your place**

**Transport is available by telephoning Marianne Sankey  
on 07801 279899 to arrange**

# Why Pray?

**“Prayer is the human response to the perpetual outpouring of love by which God lays siege to every soul.” Richard Foster.**

*Why does prayer come so easily to some and not to others?*

*The Prayer Vision of the Church of Scotland, Mission and Discipleship is that the people of Scotland, in all its parts, may hear clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ, see the life of His Spirit among His people and come to know the love of God the Father.*

*Consider it then a privilege to be in a position where you can help and lead others into a deeper communion with God through the gift of intercession.*

**Let us have confidence, then, and approach God’s throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us just when we need it. Hebrews 4:16**

So, why pray? We pray because of the example of our Lord Jesus Christ who taught his disciples to pray (Matthew 6:5-14), he offered prayer to his Father for himself, for the disciples and for the church, (John 17), and, Jesus took time out to pray (Luke 6:12). “Pray on every occasion as the Spirit leads...” (Ephesians 6:18).

Prayer, therefore, is the channel through which we love, seek justice and strive for peace. As a church family, when we gather in prayer as part of corporate worship, we reaffirm the resurrection power of Easter. Prayer is absolutely central to our journey of faith with our risen Lord. (Acts 2:44-47)

Isn’t it astonishing that God, the Creator of all things, wants us to build a personal relationship with him through Jesus by the mystery of prayer?

Prayer is the conversation that underpins that relationship and is a dialogue that is both speaking and listening.

*In 1984, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed this deliverance; “Instruct Presbyteries to appoint Prayer Co-ordinators, and to encourage the appointment of Congregational Prayer Promoters”, with the remit to, “The development of prayer in the life of individual members, congregations and Presbytery.”*

*Within Markinch and Thornton Church, Jean Kane is our Prayer Promoter. Each individual Kirk Session is responsible for appointing a **Prayer Promoter** and, at present **we are seeking people to join our prayer group**. What would it involve? Simply developing prayer within all aspects of the congregation and community. Helping people to understand that prayer could be an active and normal part of life, organising opportunities for people to gather to pray and to learn more about prayer and, to convince people that prayer works!*

*What kind of qualities are we looking for in those who might join the prayer group? People firm in their own faith, of good listening ability, sensitive to people, held in respect by others, able to hold people’s confidence and most importantly, encourage others to pray.*

## Prisoners Week, 20th - 27th November 2016

His name is not known, his words have never been forgotten. One of the prisoners on a nearby cross calls out to Jesus, "Remember me".

Prisoners Week is an initiative of the Churches that aims to stimulate discussion, highlight concerns and share hope, in prisons and communities across Scotland. It takes place in the third week of November and offers a time to remember all who are affected by crime: people in prison, people who have been hurt by the actions of others, those who work in prison, families and the wider communities in which we live.



The National Launch Service for Prisoners Week will take place at 18:30 on Monday 21st November in St Margaret's, Drip Road, Stirling FK9 4UA, followed by refreshments. The Service is ecumenical and all are welcome. Local community and prison events also celebrate the week. With many thanks and every good wish, Revd Bill Taylor, Scottish Prison Service Chaplaincy Adviser (Church of Scotland) [bill.taylor@sps.pnn.gov.uk](mailto:bill.taylor@sps.pnn.gov.uk)

There are many kinds of prison, not only the ones with high fences, cameras, bars and locks. People can feel trapped by circumstances, pressurised by demands, locked down by fear and limited by lack of opportunity.

Maybe the prisoner's cry voices something we all want, to be thought of from time to time, to be seen as the person we are, to be remembered.

Prisoners Week is a time to remember all who are affected by crime: people in prison, people who have been hurt by the actions others, those who work in prison, families and the wider communities in which we live.

*You are remembered* even if you are behind a locked door.

*You are remembered* in prayer because we understand it still hurts.

*You are remembered* for your patience and care.

If this brief encounter is anything to go by then we can remember too that forgiveness can be received, healing can begin and we can have a better future.

Details can be found at the website [www.prisonersweek.org.uk](http://www.prisonersweek.org.uk) where there are worship resources – written this year by Revd Donald Scott, Chaplain at HMYOI Polmont – a calendar of events, further information and contacts of organisations that offer support and advice.

### **The Prisoners Week Prayer**

Lord, you offer freedom to all people.

We pray for those who are held in prison.

Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist.

Support with your love: prisoners, their families and friends,  
prison staff, chaplains and all who care.

Heal those who have been wounded by the activities of others,  
especially the victims of crime.

Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, to love mercy,  
and walk humbly together with Christ  
in his strength and in his Spirit,  
now and every day. Amen.

## Coin Box Appeal

2017 sees a new focus for Markinch and Thornton Parish Church. There is an ongoing need for maintenance and upgrade of all church buildings. This comes at a significant cost to the parish and we are launching a new coin box appeal to help with this.



We have small wooden coin boxes available in both parish locations. We would like as many members as possible to take a box home, to work or your social activities and ask as many people to contribute to this appeal as possible. All of the monies raised through this appeal will go into the Fabric Fund to be used to upgrade the facilities within our buildings as well as the buildings themselves.

The idea is that you take a box and return it when it is full, simply put it into the box in the vestibule which is labelled Coin Box Appeal and take an empty box away with you. Every penny counts for the upkeep of our buildings.

If you would like a box but are unable to visit one of the church buildings to collect on, or to have it emptied please contact Marianne Sankey on 0780 1279899 to arrange to have one delivered.

We thank you in advance for your support in this appeal for 2017. God Bless.

## Social Networking with Markinch and Thornton Parish Church

We now have a Facebook page and many of us share church events and world news via the Facebook account.

You can join us to find out what we have planned, view photos of events and make comments on a variety of topics.

Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for **Markinch and Thornton Parish Church**

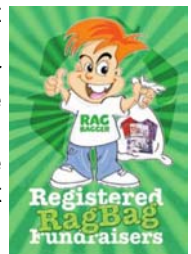
## Rag Bag Collection

The Rag Bag Collection continues to provide us with a continuous income, but we continue to look for textiles, curtains, bed linens, towels, clothes, bags, belts and shoes. Please ensure that donations are placed in a tied plastic bag.

Please ask your neighbours, family, colleagues and friends to have a clear out and help this appeal by contributing as well.

Markinch Church have been collecting for some time but collections are now being made at Thornton Church as well. A large box has been placed in the choir room for your contributions. Please speak to Betty Gray if you need more information.

If you cannot transport your collection or have a large donation that you need assistance to move, please do not hesitate to contact Marianne Sankey to arrange collection. Tel. 07801 279899





# trypraying.

PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO  
DON'T DO CHURCH



Our Kirk Session recently agreed that we could launch this event but we needed to raise funds to buy the booklets and banners and so we had intended to hold a coffee morning. However, to our delight and surprise, someone kindly donated these funds so that the booklets could be given out before Christmas.

Trypraying is the work of a traffic planner, a shop manager, a writer, a designer, an entrepreneur, a civil engineer and others.

A conversation on a train went like this. The guy in his 20s was asked, "Do you ever pray?" His reply was, "Yes. I prayed for two people who were seriously ill. One died and the other got better." He concluded he'd had 50% success.

This reflex – the desire to reach out to God – is basic to many, many people. Trypraying is a resource for people like that: no church connection or interest, but open to find out about God. The trypraying booklet is a 7-day prayer guide and is now being used by many to pass on to friends and family with a few words of encouragement – 'Why don't you try praying for a week and see what happens in your life?' Use it and then lose it somewhere that someone else will find it and hopefully use it too.

Trypraying contains stories of answered prayer, ideas of things to do, important themes about how to connect with god and honest prayers. It is an outrageous exposure to the grace and power of God. It's an invitation to start a conversation with God over seven days. Each day is composed of four parts. Read something to get you thinking. Read a story of someone sharing how prayer worked in their life. Think about some wise words then, pray.

There is a place to write your big issue. A place where some common questions are answered, and some bright ideas that might help you to try praying. At the end of the 7 days you have the opportunity to go further and pray some more. You can also contact us at trypraying for help.

There are also booklets for children and youths available. If you want information about the project that has grown around this you can go to [www.thereishope.co.uk](http://www.thereishope.co.uk) or [www.trypraying.co.uk](http://www.trypraying.co.uk) or you can speak to our Prayer Promoter, Jean Kane, on 01592 774725.



## Markinch and Thornton Parish Church Fife Women's Aid Christmas Appeal

Help us to support this local charity. We are looking for gifts for women; gifts for children of all ages and gifts for teenagers

Deliver them to either church building before Sunday 17th December. Please do not wrap the gifts but gift wrapping and tape is very welcome. We can collect gifts if you are unable to get to either church building by calling 07801 279899

Please give a Christmas surprise to someone in need, who won't otherwise have a Christmas gift. Many thanks for supporting this appeal



Fife Women's Aid is a charity and a company, which supports women, young people and children who are experiencing domestic abuse.

They provide:-

- ◇ Confidential support for women and children listening to them and supporting the choices they make
- ◇ Information about rights, legal issues, housing and benefits, and liaising with other agencies on your behalf
- ◇ Safe temporary refuge accommodation
- ◇ A 24-hour emergency helpline
- ◇ Confidential counselling services
- ◇ Outreach work with women who come to FWA for support, who may remain in their own home, or have not been admitted to refuge
- ◇ Follow on work enables women, children and young people to receive support once they have been re-housed into their new community
- ◇ Training, development and awareness raising on the effects of domestic abuse on women, children and young people, including talks to community groups.
- ◇ Refuge accommodation
- ◇ Individual support, and group support.





## **Special Memories of the late Rev. David Gatt Minister at Thornton Parish Church until 1995**

On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2016, it was a great privilege to share in the Service of Thanksgiving for the like of the late Rev. David Gatt.

Special tributes were given by his dear friends, the Rev Dr Angus Allan and the Rev Alex Forsyth. The Moderator of the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, the Rev Andrew Donald was in attendance as were many colleagues in ministry, family and friends.

Throughout his Ministry, David shared in peoples' everyday lives so easily because he was so approachable, so easy to talk to. This remarkable gentleman was quiet and unassuming but full of warmth and good humour through his ministry of preaching, praying and for all that he accomplished through weddings, baptisms, services of communion and funerals.

David died peacefully on the 8th September 2016. We recall the strong faith that he lived through the conviction that never left him, the conviction that God wills unity, reconciliation, justice and peace, and those things are at the heart of the Gospel.

Those who remember David have all been richly blessed by their association with him. We extend our deepest sympathy and assure Jeanie and the family of our prayerful remembrance. Truly David was a shining example walking in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ.

David Gatt, a humble, faithful and committed servant of God.

### **Printed or Digital ?**

A significant number of our members and friends now receive *News From The Pews* in an electronic format (PDF) by email, rather than a printed copy.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list and receive the electronic copy instead of having your elder deliver a printed copy please contact Ken Wilkie confirming the email address(es) you wish the newsletter to be sent to. Call 01592 760042 or email [ken@kenwilkie.com](mailto:ken@kenwilkie.com)

### **Church Flowers**

To arrange for flowers to be put into Markinch Church contact Teresa Henderson on 01592 754892.

To arrange for flowers to be put into Thornton Church contact Margaret Colville on 01592 774295.

We would also ask if members of the congregation could inform us of the elderly, sick, bereaved or anyone who they think might like a visit. so that we can brighten up their Sundays with a lovely bouquet of flowers.



## A CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE – Do You Hear What I Hear...

Christmas is on a Sunday this year and because we are a family church, we can *joyfully* remind one another that whatever plans we make for Christmas, they should be made around worshipping God with our church and community family. In short, Christmas means that we are reminded to bring our focus to where it belongs. Sometimes, we don't do that very well, especially when it comes to the time and place realities of faith. So...

*"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)*

Church attendance is a matter of indifference to some people because they think that they can worship God anywhere, anytime. Some feel they are not missing anything if they don't make church on a particular Sunday, or on Christmas Day. Many people make excuses not to attend and many more will be visiting, or working, so it just won't be convenient to be at church on Christmas Day.

Tears have been trickling, brows have been furrowed and many people have been 'tweeting' over the controversial decisions of some churches cancelling their worship service on Christmas Day to allow members to spend that time with their families. Someone said that having a service on Christmas Day, *"Would not be the most effective use of staff and volunteer resources."* Another said, *"If our target and our mission is to reach the un-churched how likely is it that they'll be going to church on Christmas morning?"* Since the doors of their church will be closed? Not very likely!

From the standpoint of efficiency and the effective use of resources, perhaps churches choosing to cancel Christmas services have made that decision for themselves. I struggle with that because efficiency is not the point. If we feel cannot find room for worship in our crowded schedules, then perhaps it's because we've forgotten that **our schedule is not God's schedule**. If we don't have a valid excuse, or time for worship on Christmas Day, then perhaps we ought to rethink our definition of how we spend the time our God given time.

I know that many people are not trying to exclude Jesus from Christmas just as surely as I know that every Christian who gathers for worship that day is doing so out of a desire to include him. But, I feel that decisions about how we spend our time on Christmas Day really matters. I know that we can worship God anywhere, anytime, but, I also know that not going to church doesn't necessarily equal worship.

Christmas calls us to celebrate Christ becoming human and living among us while waiting in expectation for him to come again. One of the ways we wait in expectation is to join together for worship and encourage one another.

Services here before Christmas are all busy services. So, a church that is open is certainly not a waste of time. It can be efficient for those who are church-ed, de-churched and un-churched, where ever people are in their journey of faith, **ALL ARE WELCOME**.

So I will be at church on Christmas morning at Thornton and I can't think of a better way to celebrate Christ's birth while sharpening my anticipation for his return than to meet with his people to worship the Lord, the One to whom we answer and of the One who gives our lives purpose through his Son, our Lord, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Tweet yourself this Christmas - O Come, All Ye Faithful... Will I see you there...?

## Glenrothes and District Food Bank

Thank you to those who have contributed food over the past months. If anyone would like to add some items to the container in the vestibule we would be most grateful.

Tins and non-perishable goods, especially macaroni, dried pasta, UHT milk and fruit are needed, as are washing powder and toiletries for men and women.

You can get more information from Joan Grant (01592610396) or you can email [info@glenrothes.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@glenrothes.foodbank.org.uk)



## Rotary Shoebox Appeal

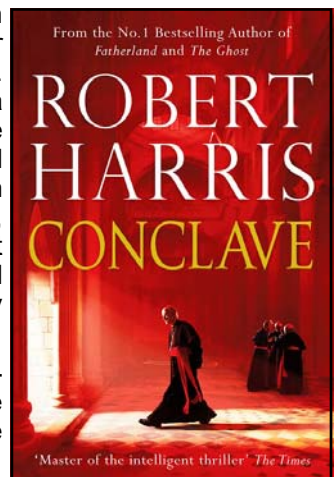
Once again we are supporting the Shoebox Appeal at Markinch and Thornton Church. If you would like to take part, please collect a box from Markinch Church Hall or Thornton Church Details of what can be added to a box is printed on the lid of each box. Please write the age and who the items are suitable for on the outside of the box and if possible sellotape £1 to the lid to help with transport costs. Please return all filled boxes to either Church. More information about the Rotary Shoebox Appeal at [www.rotaryshoebox.org](http://www.rotaryshoebox.org)

## Book Review by Grant Taylor

*One hundred cardinal's get together to choose a new pope in a deft tale of Vatican intrigue*

A conclave of cardinals charged with choosing a new pope after the incumbent dies seems to fit this tradition nicely. The men are locked in a chapel within the Vatican to cast the series of ballots that leads to the selection of a new pope and the puff of white smoke from a chimney. Even the word conclave itself, from the Latin clavis, or key, suggests confinement. There is one difficulty. Cardinals are not obvious crime suspects, so a mystery set in a conclave has a flaw. Where there should be deception, violence, even death, instead there is a group of devoted men who keep on praying to God to be guided by the Holy Spirit. That, at least, is the idea. The picture of the Church that emerges is wholly persuasive, with the liberals and conservatives slugging it out from what they consider the best of motives.

Until, that is, the final and biggest twist of all - which, for my money, is pitched somewhere between the entirely unconvincing and the hopelessly silly.



# The Kohima Epitaph

When Armistice Day, November 11th, is observed, and Armistice Services are held on Remembrance Sunday, November 13th, many people will hear the words of the Kohima Epitaph;

When you go home,  
tell them of us and say,  
For their tomorrow,  
we gave our today.

These words were originally attributed to John Maxwell Edmonds, and became famous after being inscribed on the Kohima Memorial in India. They are a poignant tribute to all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their nation, in war or conflict, in any part of the world. Often, the third line will read 'For your tomorrow'.

This month marks the centenary of General Douglas Haig ordering the ending of the Battle of the Somme, on November 18th, a Battle which saw over one million casualties, dead, wounded, or missing, from the Allied and German Armies, from its commencement on July 1st, 1916. The territory which the Allies gained in the battle is marked now by innumerable Cemeteries and Monuments, for casualties of both sides, where people can look for the grave, or name, of a deceased relative, or simply visit the ground over which one of their family fought one hundred years ago. We have visited many of these, over the years, and returned home to tell people of them, just as John Edmonds wrote would happen.

It was very interesting to read, this weekend, articles in the Raith Rovers F.C. programme for the match v Queen of the South. Marshall Bowman tells his story of the visit to Contalmaison this year for the Centenary, and of some of the cemeteries which his group, from McCrae's Battalion Trust, visited, paying tribute to men connected to East of Scotland football clubs, including Raith Rovers and Dunfermline Athletic, and coming home to tell of them now. Davie Hancock also has an article, about his cycle journey to Contalmaison for the same Centenary. Thanks to Jane O'Harrow for bringing me a copy of the programme so that I could read it.

Markinch and Thornton lost many men in 'The Great War'. Markinch has 85 names on the Town Memorial, Thornton has 40 with their name on the Memorial at Memorial Park, and, between the two, is Coaltown of Balgonie, with 22 on the Memorial there. Some of the casualties typify the 'Pals Battalions' which became synonymous with the War, but not in every instance. Markinch has casualties from Scottish, Australian, Canadian and U.S.A. Regiments, and the R.A.F.. The majority of the names on the Coaltown Memorial record the Black Watch as the Regiment, as did Markinch, and in Thornton there are 10 from the Black Watch, and 10 from K.O.S.B., with English, Irish, Canadian, and Australian involvement also recorded, and so the 'pals battalions' theme is there. Indeed, three from Thornton were drivers with R.A.S.C..

During the summer, the idea of laying a Wreath at the Menin Gate on Armistice Day, at the Last Post Ceremony, on behalf of the Church, suddenly came to me, and the idea was approved by the Kirk Session.



The website [www.lastpost.be](http://www.lastpost.be) has a section for Ceremonies, and there it lists the participants for each daily Service. Included on the list of participants for Armistice Day is Markinch and Thornton Parish Church, so people who read the Ceremony Calendar at the Menin Gate, or who check on the website, [www.lastpost.be](http://www.lastpost.be), will find the name, and hopefully some of them will refer to the Church website when they have the opportunity to do so.

At this time, thanks should be expressed to Gordon Michie, who was of great assistance in getting a wreath, with inscription, from Poppy Scotland in Edinburgh.

We remember with thanksgiving  
those who lived and died  
in the service of our country.

In honesty of heart,  
we seek the Lord's renewing grace  
to deepen wisdom and heal memories  
with peace that echoes eternity.

*Rev Carolann Erskine*

This wreath will be laid, on behalf of Markinch and Thornton Parish Church, at the Menin Gate in Ypres, during the Last Post Ceremony, at 8.00pm on Armistice Day, 11th November 2016. That evening is the busiest of the year at the Menin Gate, and follows the Morning Poppy Parade and Service, and the Armistice Concert in Ypres Cathedral in the late afternoon, as thousands of people pay tribute to those who 'gave our today', and then 'go home to tell them of us'.

*Harry Gould*

## Remember - This is **YOUR** newsletter !

If you have any interesting news, stories, poems etc, please hand them to

Ken Wilkie or email [ken@kenwilkie.com](mailto:ken@kenwilkie.com) or call 01592 760042

## Markinch and Thornton Parish Church Fundraising Diary Dates for 2016

12th November 2016	Winter Fayre (Markinch Church Hall)
25th November	Quiz Night (Markinch Church Hall)
3rd December	Christmas Teas (Thornton Church Hall)
9th December	Christmas Meal at Balbirnie Golf Club

**Craft Stall** – Handcraft items for sale in Markinch hall. Please feel free to make a donation to church funds in the dish provided. We welcome donations of handcrafts, baking, plants, jams, chutney's etc. Please note that the craft stall is now in what was previously the book cupboard near the hall door.

**'Cross in my Pocket'** – These keepsakes are available in the vestibule at a cost of £1 each.

Markinch and Thornton Parish Church

### Christmas Fayre

Saturday 12th November

Markinch Church Hall

10am-12pm (doors open for set up from 8am)

Fantastic choice of different stalls including jewellery, crafts, cake and candy, candles, cards, wrapping papers and activities

We are looking for donations for the craft, tombola, chocolate tombola and cake and candy stalls. These can be given to any of the Sankey family, Karen Wood or Betty Gray any time prior to the Fayre. Sandra Ewan will be organising the refreshments. The hall will be open from 8.30am the morning of the Fayre for any cake and candy or donations to be delivered. If you are available to help at this event at all please contact any member of the team directly or call Marianne Sankey on 07801 279899.

### The Project Team

Introducing the project team, we are what were formerly the fundraising committee and the hospitality committee. Our remit is to plan, organise and oversee all social and fundraising activities within the church community and also any special projects that arise. Our committee includes both members of the Kirk Session as well as other members of the congregation. All meetings of the project team are public and all are welcome. If you feel you have something to contribute to our mission, you have some free time to help with our events and activities or are simply curious about what is happening, please feel free to join us.

As convenor, I would like very much to express my thanks to everyone who has dedicated their time and talents to our mission in 2016, and look forward to working with you going forward.

Our next meeting will be in the Session House in Markinch on Tuesday 17th January at 7pm. Many thanks

*Marianne Sankey*

## **Jigsaw Lending Library**

Markinch and Thornton Parish Church has an extensive library of jigsaws which are available to borrow at a cost of £1 per jigsaw.

These are available in the hall at Markinch every Thursday and Sunday at coffee time.

If you would like to make use of this service but cannot get to the hall please contact Meg Sankey to arrange delivery of your choice of jigsaws.

Contact Meg Sankey on 07834 729420 for more information



## **Christmas Teas**

**Christmas Teas** will be held in Thornton Church Hall on **Saturday 3rd December** from **10 am to 12 noon**. Tickets for this event are priced at **£2** or you can pay at the door.

Stalls will include **Cake and Candy, Books, Christmas Gifts and Tombola**.

As usual, we would appreciate donations to the stalls, mincemeat pies for the teas and some helpers on the day.

## **Markinch and Thornton Parish Church Quiz Night**

- 
- Markinch Church Hall
  - 7.00pm
  - £2/ person
  - 6 people/ team
  - Bring your own refreshments
  - Transport Available  
(Phone 07801279899)

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016**



# Taking care of the detail

There is never a right time to lose someone we love, never a right time to have to make arrangements for their funeral, to say goodbye in a way most suitable to them and those left behind.

In the midst of grief the responsibility of making arrangements can seem overwhelming. Crosbie Matthew Funeral Directors can help you shoulder the burden. We are an independent family-run business with over 70 years experience of supporting bereaved families in Fife and beyond. Arrangements can be made at our purpose built premises in Nicol Street, Kirkcaldy which offers comfortable arrangement rooms and a dedicated service room with lift access. Alternatively we can visit you at a time suited to you in the comfort of your own home.

## Professional

Crosbie Matthew's professional team of funeral directors are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to personally answer your calls and guide you sensitively at your time of loss.

## Support

Practical advice and support can be given on paperwork required for registration, and covers everything from press notices, floral tributes and catering to order of service sheets and attendance cards.

## Personalised

We can help you with the type of service you require, your choice of officiant who may be a minister, civil celebrant,

family member or friend; your options for music, poems, hymns; personalised order of service sheets with photographs if you wish. We are here to discuss any other ideas you may have to make the funeral a more personal tribute.

We pride ourselves in listening to you and helping you to arrange a funeral best suited to your and your loved ones wishes.

## Memorials

We have a comprehensive range of granite stones, vases and markers which can be tailored to your own design. We can also help with renovating, cleaning and adding inscriptions to existing stones. We also have a variety of traditional and more modern urns, jewellery and ornaments for cremated remains.

## Pre-paid Funeral Plans

Golden Charter pre-paid plans are available. More people are finding that a pre-paid funeral plan eases the financial and emotional burden on their families. It means they are paying for a funeral at today's prices and leaving written details available for that time of need.

## Payment Options

We request a deposit for the disbursements (payment made by us to third parties on your behalf). Payments can be made in full by card, cash or cheque. With flexible payment options available we offer you a first step to peace of mind ....

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