

News from the Pews

The Newsletter of Markinch and Thornton Parish Church
August 2017

You are warmly invited to our
Harvest Thanksgiving Service
On Sunday 24th September
Thornton Church 9.45am
Markinch Church 11.15am
followed by a Harvest Lunch in Markinch Church Hall



Markinch and Thornton Parish Church



Ministry Team:

Rev. Carolann Erskine

Mr David Murdoch

Rev Dr Douglas Galbraith

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

Scottish Charity Number: SC003417

Communion Sunday

You are invited to share in the celebration of

Holy Communion

in Thornton Church at 9.45 am

and Markinch Church **at** 11.15am

on **Sunday 17th September 2017**

If you are unable to attend these services and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact your Elder so that arrangements can be made.

Your Elder is _____

Contact Details _____

Giving for Growth

"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich for your sake he became poor that we might become rich." 2 Cor 8:9

Each year, we review our lives in many different ways; body, mind and soul. Visits to the hair salon or barber may be very regular. Health check-ups at clinics and dentists for many, are priority visits, as are visits to the bank to carefully manage our finances. We also inspect our homes looking for repairs or areas that require to be refreshed. Our pets have annual visits to the vet and our cars often require major or minor repairs too. When it comes to looking after our soul, faith can help us to review our relationship with God, with Jesus, with God's Holy Spirit and with one another. The integrity of faith accompanies graceful stewardship helping to create a balanced soul in our individual lives and in the shared work of the congregation through outreach.

So, be encouraged as you consider the **Christian Giving Of Time** which is a fundamental part of God's creation (Genesis 1:14-19). Reviewing how we spend time with God, with family and friends, for work, for rest and recreation and time for church might help us to spend our time wisely in a more soulful approach to life that is nourishing and sustaining.

The Christian Giving Of Talents reminds us that each person is unique. This theme is developed by Paul the Apostle (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Cor 12:1-31) when he refers to Christians as different parts of the body of Christ and he encourages them to use their particular gifts for the glory of God. From the pool of ability which enables God to be glorified here in this parish, members are invited to share their talents by joining one of our Working Groups - worship, pastoral care, property, finances, projects, publicity and communications and education and mission.

The Christian Giving Of Money is absolutely vital for the work of the church to continue. So, in Christian worship, there is an offering, not a collection. Jesus spoke of money and possessions (Luke 12:13-21, 18:18-25, 21:1-4) and some of the most practical comments in Paul the Apostle's letters are concerned with money (1 Cor 16:1-4, 2 Cor 8:1-15). These are very encouraging words as they remind us that we are accountable for what we do with ALL of our money.

Our dedicated Stewardship Group; Ian Johnston, Barbara Murray, Bryan Gould, Teresa Henderson and Ian Cowie have generously prepared the Stewardship Pack (envelope within this magazine) to help us review our giving. **We need these completed response forms to be returned by ALL of our church**

members to enable us to make realistic plans for the future. Meantime, please remember this group in prayer. Each time you switch on the kettle, pray for the Stewardship Group, our Property Convener, Robert Balfour and our Treasurer, Nancy Munro so that we may see the fruits of our labour in this church; body, mind and soul. Together, we make a difference.

Without our continued giving for growth, we might forget to receive God's gifts with gratitude. Or we might forget to cultivate those gifts responsibly and share them sacrificially. As we review our giving with interest, bless you for your commitment in all that you do for the glory of God.

Yours, very sincerely, *Carolann*

From the Session Clerk

Session Working Groups

Many of you may not know what goes on 'behind the scenes' so I wanted to let you know what our Elders and members of Session do for us all, ensuring all church matters are taken care of.

Some time ago, the Session set up separate Working Groups designed to deal with set areas, reporting to Session when required. This way, the Session can operate smoothly and quickly as these Groups have authority to deal quickly with matters that may arise without waiting until the next Session meeting.

The groups are noted below:

Projects

Pastoral

Education & Mission

Safeguarding

Finance

Publicity and Communications

Worship

Property

These groups operate very well under the guidance of the convenors, although some Elders and members of Session have yet to advise me of their group preferences.....at least one group, but usually no more than 2 groups. I hope to tidy this up soon, though.

Please give your support to the people who work away behind the scenes, whether they are visiting people in care homes, arranging a property repair, or organising a fund-raising or social event.

We always need help in many of these areas, so I appeal to all our members for their help. It does not need to simply be financial assistance, such as an increase in your giving, but may be getting involved helping with an event, pastoral visits, providing an article for the church magazine, or simply dropping material through letter boxes....the list is endless.

Our group convenors can co-opt members of the congregation to help out with certain areas, so if you feel you can contribute, please let me know, as this will be much appreciated.

John Wood, Session Clerk

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
16th August 2017	Summer Evening Service, Markinch Church, 7pm
31st August 2017	Markinch Youth Club resumes
3rd September 2017	Sunday School resumes
4th September 2017	Kirk Session conference
17th September 2017	Communion Sunday
18th September 2017	Kirk Session meeting
24th September 2017	Harvest Thanksgiving services 9.15am and 11.15am followed by Harvest Lunch at Markinch Hall
1st October 2017	Fellowship Meal at Beijing Banquet, Glenrothes.
18th November 2017	Winter Fayre in Markinch Church Hall

Property News

Every five years a Quinquennial Report is done by a building surveyor of all the Church Buildings in the Parish. It is organised and paid for by the Presbytery. The report is also costed, however all costs are only indicative. The report is very comprehensive and any repairs are prioritised as “urgent”, “essential” or “desirable”. The indicated urgent repairs for Markinch and Thornton are in excess of £50,000. These figures are quite scary on the face of it, however this figure includes things for which we are not responsible and many of the costings will be challenged.

The congregation must also be assured that we will not have to find all of this money, as on the face of it we would struggle to raise sufficient finance to repair our buildings. There are sources of money outwith the congregation. As an illustration, more than £25,000 was spent on the Session house and on the Tower in Markinch but we only paid about £1,500. The rest came from other sources including the General Trustees and Heritage Lottery.

We are fortunate that we have on the property committee people who in their day job are dealing with buildings on a regular basis and I am a General Trustee.

There is also evidence of “fake news” going around about us disposing of buildings. It is just that – “fake”, don’t believe everything you hear on the street.

Yes, we have to maintain our buildings properly, and I would contend that we do and as a church we are about Mission and not about buildings, but buildings must be fit for purpose.

We will not, and cannot, do anything about changing what buildings we have without consulting with the Congregation, Presbytery and the General Trustees. Presbytery are continually involved in reviewing buildings so that the right buildings are in the right places to deliver the Church’s mission.

The Property committee thanks you for your prayers and support in keeping the buildings of the parish fit for purpose.

Robert Balfour, Property Convenor

Contact Details

Minister	Rev Carolann Erskine Tel 01592 758264 Email CErskine@churchofscotland.org	
Session Clerk	John G Wood, 16 Loch Katrine Gardens, Glenrothes, KY6 2NW Tel 01592 750327 Email sessionclerk@markinchandthorntonchurch.org.uk	
Treasurer	Nancy Munro Tel 01592 743822 Email amunro6687@aol.com	
Church Officers (Markinch)	Jack Harley Suzi Hamilton	Tel 01592 758356 Tel 01592 611933

Sunday School

Sunday School

Sunday School ended for the season at the end of June with the Prizegiving followed by a visit to Bongos indoor play centre by the children and parents.

Throughout the summer there is a small display of photographs from previous picnics and parties, some recent and one or two from the 50's.

Anyone with photos they are willing to lend please see Helen, Moira or Suzi. All photos will be copied and returned.

The new session starts on Sunday 3rd September when all children are welcome.

Surafel

We have had no communication since May from Ethiopia but continue to send emails telling Surafel what we are doing at home and at Sunday School. These are sent to the Compassion centre where they are translated before the aid worker takes them to Surafel's project centre.

Thanks to all who have contributed.

Did you hear of the farmer whose mule fell into an abandoned well?

Since there was no way to get him out the farmer decided sadly that he'd have to bury him there. But the old mule had a different idea initially, when the shovels of dirt started landing on his back he became hysterical, but then the thought struck him 'just shake it off and step on it'. So he did that hour after hour as the dirt fell on him. He kept on encouraging himself with the words, just shake it off and step on it.

No matter how painful the blows or how desperate the situation he just kept on shaking it off and stepping on it until finally battered and exhausted he stepped triumphantly over the wall and out of the well.

Life can either bless you or bury you the difference is having the right attitude towards it, when life throws dirt upon you and it will, just shake it off and step on it. Use it as a fertilizer and grow stronger. If you do your part God will do his.

From Jean Kane, source unknown.

Photocopying and Printing Services

The church has a high specification photocopier in the Session House at Markinch which we use to produce the quarterly newsletter and weekly bulletins.

We are able to do colour or black and white printing up to A3 size at fairly competitive prices and we also have A4 folding and binding facilities.

If you or your club, organisation or business require leaflets, posters or programmes printed please give us a chance to quote. Any profits we make will go to offset the rental costs of the photocopier. Contact Ken Wilkie on 01592 760042 or email ken@kenwilkie.com

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 or call 01592 760042

The deadline for the November issue is 22nd October

Treasurer's Report

Income at 24-07-17

	£
Weekly Freewill Offering	16008
Open Plate/Donations	2845
Standing Orders	16416
Selkirk Trust	2500
Dividends/Bank Interest	589
Gift Day	5682
Fundraising/Hall Rents	4227
Legacy	5000
Tax Rebate	9102
Weddings & Funerals	880
Misc. Income	180
	63429

Expenditure at 24-07-17

Salaries	6310
Insurance/Council Tax	5481
Ministry and Mission Allocation	34873
Ministers Travel/Telephone	1210
Gas & Electricity	3949
Postages & Stationery	1335
Church/Hall/Manse/Clock repairs	3242
Organ/Piano Repairs	174
Copyright Licence	470
Pulpit Supply	949
Life & Work	491
Miscellaneous	503
	58987

Excess Income	4442
General Fund Balance at	3163
Fabric Fund Balance at 28/04/2017	16875

Ministry & Mission Allocation still due - £23248.00 Insurance still due - £3874.50
 Our regular monthly income is approximately £5510.00, expenditure £7440.00
 leaving a deficit of £1930.00.

As you can see from the figures and the current level of income, in order to pay all our regular bills we will have to use money from the Fabric Fund and possibly from our Savings Fund Account before the end of the year.

I would ask anyone who pays tax and has not signed up for Gift Aid, please do so, as this is a significant extra boost to our income. We can claim back an additional 25% on top of the money you give at absolutely no cost to you. Contrary to what some people believe, if you do sign up for Gift Aid, no one in the Church will know what your income is. The only details we need are your name, your address and a simple declaration that you do actually pay more income tax than you are instructing the church to claim back on your behalf. The only person who knows what you actually give to the Church is the treasurer. Each set of Weekly Freewill Envelopes costs us £1.40 therefore if you do receive envelopes please use them to reduce our costs, or change over to giving by standing order. Another fact not known by many is that we are charged £2.30 by Kirkcaldy Presbytery for each member who is on the roll of Markinch and Thornton Parish Church. We ask everyone to review their giving to the church and trust that we can rely on your support in the coming months.

Nancy Munro, Treasurer

Parish News

Parish Deaths

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Jane Bremner
Peter Drummond
William Ross
Rev Ivor Gibson
Robert Cairns
David Laing
Margaret Stevenson

Ordination of a new Elder

Paul Hamilton

Special Memories of the late Rev. Ivor Gibson

Ivor was the retired minister of Abercorn and Dalmeny churches in Edinburgh. Residing in Markinch, Ivor was a member of the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy and also a member of Markinch and Thornton Parish Church.

On the 8th of July, 2017, after a period of illness, Ivor died peacefully in the Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy. A special tribute was given by Rev Scott Marshall where aspects of Ivor's life and ministry throughout the years were shared.

Ivor was born and brought up in Kirkcaldy with his first Charge in Kelty North. He then decided to enter Kirkcaldy Technical College as an administrator for adult education. He transferred to teach at Stirling High School, Glenwood High then James Gillespie's. He returned to Parish Ministry in 1980 to serve as minister at Abercorn and Dalmeny Churches where he contributed to the Third Statistical Account of West Lothian. Very much interested in mining history, Ivor delighted in publishing his book, *Lassodie: A Mining Village*. He was also a member of the Markinch Heritage Group and the Probus Club.

Ivor's service of thanksgiving was held in Abercorn Church, South Queensferry on Thursday, 20th July. The service was well attended with a good representation from our congregation there to pay respects. Those who remember Ivor have been blessed by their association with him. We extend our deepest sympathy and assure Fiona, Rodger and the wider family of our prayerful remembrance. Ivor was a hard working faithful and committed servant of God. A full tribute will be given at the next Presbytery meeting in September.

Summer Evening Service

in Markinch Church on Wednesday 16th August 7pm

Songs and Silences – 'A Celebration of Memories'

Perhaps you or your children were baptised here. Perhaps you attended Sunday School here or were married here. No doubt, you will have precious memories of special occasions.

All ages welcome

During the morning service at Markinch on 9th July, Mr Paul Hamilton was ordained as an Elder of Markinch and Thornton Parish Church. Here is his personal story, in his own words...

I first started attending Markinch Parish Church in early 1999, having met Suzi the year before. We were married in the Church on 27th December 1999, one of the last Scottish weddings of the Millennium. It was, as far as we are aware, the first time a bride has been piped down the isle at Markinch.

John was born in 2002 and Christened in the Church the same year on 3rd Advent. In 2007 I was Christened in a private ceremony, on 3rd Advent, having never been christened as a child. In 2008 Jack came along and was Christened in October that same year.

I had been asked a few years ago if I would consider becoming an Elder at Markinch Parish Church, however at that time I did not feel the calling and declined the offer. My interest in the Church and faith continued to grow over time, leading me to attend my first Session meeting last year. The meeting was not at all what I had expected, it opened my eyes to just how much goes on behind the scenes. I am a very practical person and used some of my free time to help out where I could, fixing this and cleaning that. The most challenging task I took on was to fix the winch that holds the cluster lights up above the pulpit. John Sinski, Jack Harley and I had a very scary couple of hours slowly trying to lower the light to allow us to fix the winch. It was a real 'Only Fools and Horses chandelier' moment. We managed to do the repair and get the light back working, thankfully there were no Health and Safety officers there.

When I was approached again recently to consider being an Elder I knew that the time was right for me. With the support of Rev Erskine I progressed through the dreaded vote and subsequent 2 weeks praying I would not be blackballed.

On the day of my Ordination I received such support from all the Elders and members of the church, it was a very humbling experience and a very proud day for me and my family.

One thing kept going through my head, as is always the case on a Sunday, was something my youngest Jack said to me in the morning. Seeing me in my suit and tie he asked me if I was getting a promotion at the Church. I explained I was going to be made an Elder to which he replied - I thought only old people were Elders!



Robert Balfour, Rev Carolann Erskine, Paul Hamilton, John Wood, Gordon Michie and John Sinski.

Youth Clubs

Markinch

We are now closed for the summer months but the youngsters had a great deal of fun in the final weeks. As well as our trip to the bowling alley which we mentioned in the last issue, we had someone come along to involve the kids in 'Sand Art' which everyone enjoyed. We then had Stuart and Betty from Youth 1st along to give us a motivational talk on their 'B:Activ' programme, which we intend to start after the holidays. It is aimed at promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles and enabling the youngsters to organise and run their own exciting events. The final evening of the session was rounded off with a barbecue with hot dogs, juice and other snacks, courtesy of Morrisons Supermarket, Glenrothes. Thanks to Jennifer Watt for preparing the food for us that evening.

We start back at the end of August (date to be confirmed but probably 31st) and would welcome any youngsters aged 8 or over who would like to join in on the fun on a Thursday evening from 6.30 to 8.00pm.



Thornton

By the time you read this, a new Junior Youth Club will have started in Thornton Church Hall for children from class P7 to S1. It started off with an afternoon quiz on 1st August and there was a movie night on 3rd August. During term time it is intended to have a weekly café-style youth club plus other monthly events, and it aims to provide a safe place for youths to have fun. Further details of the club and the planned activities will follow on the church website and Facebook page.

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



Lynn Cunningham Chartered Accountant

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Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to share some reflections on this placement. I am so grateful for the warmth, the encouragement and support I received from the congregation in both settings, when I participated in morning worship, and at the services during the Christmas Season and Easter Week. I very quickly began to feel at home, and very much part of the Church Family, which made me feel very sorry to find that my last Sunday as part of the Ministry Team, here at Markinch and Thornton Parish Church, had arrived so quickly.

The wealth of experiences went far beyond participating in worship. Over the past eight months I had opportunities to participate in wedding meetings, a baptism meeting, a funeral meeting, also participate in and attend funerals. I've

visited people in their homes and hospital, visited the hospice and spoken with the hospice chaplain, and visited behind the scenes at the crematorium. On a happier note, I took the opportunities, when possible, to attend the coffee mornings and events at both settings, where I enjoyed the time to speak with many of you and to get to know more of you in a more relaxed context.

At the end of May, I attended the General Assembly, which I found to be a positive, fascinating experience, much to the surprise of some of the folk I have shared this with. It's worth having a look at the podcasts, if you haven't already done so. In the wider community I attended two of the Heritage Trust events, and I'm impressed by the great work they are doing.

This was a fabulous placement, during which I learned so much about parish ministry, and can honestly say, you have no idea just how much a minister does until you are involved in it, because I didn't, and was an elder for 24 years. As I progress through the process, I realise that this will always be a learning journey, and what a journey!

Almost every week Carolann and I met for pastoral supervision. During this time, she challenged and inspired me to think more theologically, develop spiritually, and learn a lot more about myself, and how God is shaping me into the person He wants me to become as a minister in His service. Over the placement, I learned to see myself as 'a minister who was once a teacher', rather than 'a teacher who is training to become a minister'. The necessary transition was due to the in-depth and reflective discussions with Carolann, to whom I will always be very grateful for her patience, her laughter, wisdom, support and encouragement throughout the whole placement. I laughed and I cried, the latter



usually due to my own frustrations, which were thankfully always resolved. I can only give praise for Carolann's diligence, attention to detail, prayer support and for all that her gift in this field of supervision encompasses, which has added so much to my 'toolkit' in the field of ministry. I had a wonderful time, and continue to feel greatly blessed for being placed with such a fabulous supervisor and caring church family, in this parish. I pray that you will continue to grow together in the love of the Lord.

Pray for your minister, support her and her team. Share the vision, as she leads you on this spiritual journey, as she has so much to give. Pray together so that you may become a blessing not only to each other, but become a powerful force of believers in the service of the Lord, as the congregation of Markinch and Thornton Parish Church, in your community.

Please accept my very grateful thanks and appreciation for the very generous gifts and flowers. I was especially touched by the individual messages, cards and pictures from the Sunday School.

Grace and peace,

Dawn

Getting To Know You

As wonderful as it is to experience God in our lives so that we transform and live more meaningful lives, we would like to invite you to tell your story of how you became a Christian. Please send your article to Ken Wilkie by email to ken@kenwilkie.com or call 01592 760042.

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 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. 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



Pastoral Request Card

The Pastoral Care Committee have recently introduced a new card for anyone wishing to request home and hospital visits for family members or neighbours, or to inform the church of anyone who's day would be brightened by receiving some flowers.

The cards can be found on the pews in both churches, alternatively you could cut out the copy of the card, shown below, complete it and hand it to your elder or the minister.

<i>Pastoral Request</i>	
 <i>Welcome to Markinch and Thornton Parish Church</i> 	
where we grow in Christ together, aspiring to be a caring church in the community within a Spirit of Christian love.	
<i>If you would like to nominate anyone for the following, please feel free to tick one or more of the boxes and pass this card to the Rev Carolann Erskine or another member of the Ministry Team as you leave the church.</i>	
Pastoral home visit <input type="checkbox"/>	Pastoral hospital visit <input type="checkbox"/>
Home Communion <input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital Communion <input type="checkbox"/>
A bouquet of flowers :-	
For illness <input type="checkbox"/>	Thinking of you <input type="checkbox"/>
Bereavement <input type="checkbox"/>	Birthday or Anniversary <input type="checkbox"/>
Help with transport <input type="checkbox"/>	
Name of the person you are nominating	
Their address	
Requested by	
Scottish Charity Number: SC003417	

Church Flowers

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

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

Do you shop online at www.amazon.co.uk

If you shop online you can help our church raise extra funds by using the link on the church website to take you to the Amazon website. Commission will be paid to the church on every purchase you make. **www.markinchandthorntonchurch.org.uk**

General Assembly 2017

The caricature view – and one not confined to those who have no connection with the Kirk! - of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is that it is a boring annual event in Edinburgh attended by fuddy-duddies who drone on about matters which have no relevance to the world outside the walls of the Assembly Hall.

Like many caricatures, this is not only cruel, but so removed from reality as to be an utter distortion of the truth. I say that after having attended this year's Assembly, as a representative of Markinch and Thornton Parish Church

Two months since the event, it would be pointless to go over the details of every report and every debate (even if I could remember them!), but I will say that I was never bored, although I did find some subjects more interesting than others.....

The Moderator, the Right Reverend Derek Browning, controlled proceedings with a lightness of touch, but at the same time an underlying firmness, which allowed all who wanted to have their say to do so without monopolising the discussion.

Keynote elements for me – in no particular order - would be:

- Princess Anne's address to Assembly as the Queen's representative, the Lord High Commissioner
- Holy Communion
- Daily acts of worship, and the joining together of over 700 voices in the singing of the hymns.
- The contributions of members of the National Youth Assembly – confident, committed, young Christians whose faith was clear in every word they spoke
- The address to Assembly by Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan, a Muslim scholar, the day after the terrorist attack in Manchester.

The Moderator's daily Reflections were thoughtful, pertinent, and thought-provoking. His prayers in response to the two atrocities which took place during the week – in Manchester and in Egypt – were clearly heart-felt.

As we all know, some contentious matters – in particular, the question of same-sex marriage – were discussed. I admired Professor Iain Torrance for the calm way in which he presented the report of the Theological Forum - an unenviable task, given the strong views held on both sides. Again, the Moderator allowed all who wished to express their views to do so, and a democratic decision was reached.

A poignant touch was the deliberate leaving empty of two seats, to mark the absence of two delegates – from Syria, and from South Sudan – who had been refused visas. Here was a reminder that while we are the Church of Scotland, we share so much with fellow Christians in the international community.

On a lighter note, it was good to see commissioners catching up over a cup of tea with people that they hadn't seen for a while – whether they had been parishioners or colleagues. Even I managed to bump into an old acquaintance from my student days in St. Andrews – who is now the minister of a triple linkage in Ayr Presbytery.

Personal reunions aside, it was heartening to see that the General Assembly still has something to say to those outside, as well as inside the Church, and although it has many cherished traditions, it has also moved with the times. There were podcasts and twitter-feeds, as well as Facebook references, and attendance was recorded electronically, as was some of the voting.

To sum up, I saw no fuddy-duddies and heard no-one droning on. Instead, I heard discussions relevant both to our Christian heritage and to a Church facing the challenges of 21st. Century society. Long may this tradition continue!

Bryan Gould

Markinch and Thornton Parish Church Fundraising and Social Diary Dates for 2017

24th September	Harvest Lunch (Markinch Hall)
1st October 2017	Fellowship Meal (Beijing Banquet, Glenrothes)
18th November 2017	Winter Fayre (Markinch Hall)

Harvest Lunch – 24th September After the Harvest Thanksgiving services, a fellowship lunch will be served by our Projects Group in Markinch Church Hall from 12.15pm. Cost will be £5 per person for a two course lunch.

There are a number of other events in the planning, so please keep yourself updated on our Facebook page, Website or the weekly bulletin.

Many thanks to everyone who has volunteered to help with the fundraising effort, if you can spare some time to help at any of the events above or have any other ideas for fundraising activities please get in touch.

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.

Rag Bag – The next rag bag collection is on 19th September, please can you deliver any donations of clothes, towels, bed linens, shoes, curtains, bags or textiles to Markinch Hall prior to that date. If you need transport for your donation, please contact Marianne on 07801 279899 to arrange an uplift.

The Project Team

The project team continues to be busy and would welcome additional help. In particular, we are very much in need of people who are willing to join the coffee rotas for both Thursdays and Sundays in Markinch. It would be with much regret that we will reduce the frequency of our fellowship events if we cannot find more people who are willing to join or rota and organise coffee events. These do not have to have a specific format, and what is served and how is up to each person on the rota. It is possible to run these as a single person.

The next big project that we are organising is the Winter Fayre which is on Saturday 18th November 2017. We very much need help to organise and run this event, anyone willing to donate their time, talents or energy with this event should please contact Marianne Sankey (0780 1279899). We will need people to organise teas, run stalls and make donations for craft, home baking, tombola or any other suggestions.

As convenor, I would like very much too express my thanks to everyone who has dedicated their time and talents to our mission in 2017, and look forward to working with you going forward.

Many thanks, *Marianne Sankey*

“MacDuff’s Kirk?” - a new book by Bruce F. Manson

“An investigation into a remarkable building linked to one of Alba’s seven places of justice and the family behind the Scottish throne”

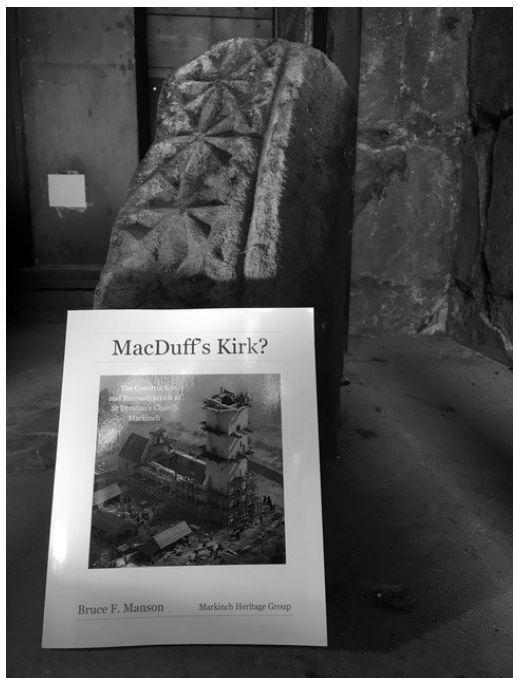
A couple of years ago I reported on the survey of stonemasons marks on the tower and the other finds such as the section of the old 12th century chancel arch laid aside next to the Balfour graves just at the back of the vestibule entry. Other reports have mentioned the construction techniques used and the axle holes for the big wheel that drove the tower’s crane. It may well have been the same crane that was depicted on a piece of graffiti on the top floor of the tower. It is hoped to replace the temporary exhibition currently on display in the tower with a more permanent interpretive display.

The project isn’t over yet but the results so far have been brought together in a book entitled “MacDuff’s Kirk” now on sale. The funds are being held by Markinch Heritage Group and will be channeled into further investigative work on the building. Talks on permissions are currently underway. Having found an interesting carving of a cross on the east side of the tower arch above the west balcony we hope to reveal more information by temporarily removing a small section of plaster underneath the balcony.

Mary MacArthur is selling copies of the book from her hairdresser’s shop in Commercial Street and it is hoped to put the book on Amazon shortly, priced £17. This edition traces the history of successive church buildings on the site from the 11th century onwards when we have the first charter mention of a church in Markinch right up to the 19th century. The church was referred to as “MacDuff’s Kirk” as late as the 19th century and the book attempts to assess how much truth there is the link with the MacDuffs, one of Scotland’s most powerful families, second only to the Scottish Royal Family from the 11th to the 14th century.

In the book the lives of the Earls of Fife and successive MacDuff clan chiefs are examined in some detailing an attempt to identify the church builder. Means, motive and opportunity are all examined alongside recent historical research and archaeological evidence. The project shows how a team of volunteers can work alongside professional archaeologists and historians to reveal more about a church that is part of Scotland’s fascinating and little known 12th century history.

The book asks “could Markinch Church tower be Scotland’s oldest building still in continuous use?”



In a recent sermon, David Murdoch made mention of an article written by his wife Ann for another church magazine. With her permission it is reproduced below.

I often wonder how many of us are guilty of living in the past and thinking and actually believing that the good old days' were so much better and more enjoyable than the world in which we now live. But, the past is always safer because it's behind us and can't spring any unpleasant surprises for, in actual fact, the past is the only thing which we possess with certainty.

In all our lives I am sure that at some point we have all been fearful of what lies ahead of us. And yet we must learn to live in the present with all the demands of the twenty first century and all its new opportunities. Accordingly we must try to make the most of every moment of our lives while utilising our talents to the very best of our ability.

As Jesus reminded us in the Parable of the Talents, to waste our God given talents by sticking our heads in the sand and dreaming of times now long past, we are, in fact, simply sticking our heads in the sand and allowing these self same talents to wither on the vine and eventually die.

Just last week David and I visited a dear old friend in Edinburgh. He insisted on taking us out to lunch in the city. Five years ago he was given a terminal prognosis of just six months. For him this was utterly devastating news.... devastating indeed. But as John Lennon of The Beatles fame put it so brilliantly 'Life is what happens when you're busy making plans'. So was our friend in any way daunted by this unexpected news? Not at all.

For five years later he is very much alive and kicking and living life to the full. For he was determined to keep going and is now looking forward to celebrating his 100th. birthday in August. Not for him a cosy tea party in his Edinburgh flat...oh no. Instead he is off to London to host a celebratory lunch for his large extended family at The Ritz !!!! His mantra is obviously 'It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness'. He is a truly remarkable human being who has experienced both good and bad times but who has packed so much into his long and fulfilling life. His positive approach to 'living for today' is an example to us all.

So when we feel down or depressed or uncertain or fearful, remember these wonderful words from the Book of Psalms which surely inspire us all:- 'This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it'.

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 .

Church Hall Bookings

Anyone enquiring about booking the Markinch church hall should contact Suzi Hamilton on 01592 611933 or email 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

Coin Box Appeal

We would like to update everyone on the success of our ongoing money box appeal. This simple act of filling a coin box between communion services and handing it in at church when it is full helps us greatly with our ongoing fabric fund which pays for the upkeep and improvement of our buildings.



The boxes are available in the vestibules of both churches and also in the hall at Markinch.

If you would like a box but are unable to visit one of the churches to collect one or to have it emptied please give Marianne Sankey a ring on 07801 279899 to arrange to have one delivered. Please can we count on your ongoing support with this simple ongoing activity?

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 information from Joan Grant on 01592 610396 or email info@glenrothes.foodbank.org.uk



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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.

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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

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