

Bennoch Parish Church of Scotland

# Newsletter

December 2017



We hope you all have a Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year.



Minister: 643518

Session Clerk: 200179

Church Office: 201723

Website: [www.bennochparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.bennochparishchurch.org.uk)

Registered Scottish Charity SC005628

### ***'From the 'Manse',***

I don't really want to say, 'it will soon be Christmas', but it is true! The first Sunday of Advent is just a week away, on the 3rd of December. It got me thinking, why do we have Advent calendars, and in church, an advent wreath? What are we actually counting down to? Or is it, 'up' to?

The word itself, a version of the Latin word meaning "coming" (*adventus*), is the translation of the Greek word *parousia*, commonly used to refer to the second coming of Christ. So for Christians, the season of Advent anticipates the coming of Christ from two different perspectives. Historically, in the flesh, at Bethlehem, as told in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, but also coming in glory, at the end of time.

*"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."* (Revelation 22:12-13)

The season therefore offers us the opportunity to share in the ancient longing for the coming of the Messiah, in nativity, and to be alert for his Second Coming.

In the four Advent Sundays, we focus on key people involved in this time of waiting. The ancient prophets like Isaiah, who foretold the coming of the Messiah, John the Baptist, who cried from the desert that the Kingdom of God was near and Mary the mother of Jesus.

In a busy world, Advent asks us to stop for a moment, and to reflect on our journey with Christ, to his nativity scene and to wait for his return. In our daily walk with God, Advent therefore speaks to us of both past and future; his birth and his Glory

As we light each candle in our Advent worship, may God be with you.



***Robin***

## **A new face at Bennochy -**

Hi there, my name is Gregor Aird and I will be visiting and taking part in worship at Bennochy Church over the next few months. I am looking to become a Church of Scotland minister, and to that end I am working through a period of discernment at Bennochy with Rev McAlpine to explore my calling to ministry and the many different aspects to it.

I am an elder at Auchterderran Kinglassie Parish Church, which is my home church. I live in Kinglassie with my wife Karen, my eldest daughter Alexis, who is 4 and my youngest daughter Danni, who is 2.

Through the day I work for a main UK bank supporting non profit organisations. During my free time I like reading, playing computer games and playing with my daughters.

Feel free to come over and say hi if you see me, and I welcome any words of wisdom you wish to share.

## **Hall Convener**

We are pleased to report that our new Hall Convener is now Diane White. For any communications/enquiries regarding hall use or hire please either speak to Diane or email her at [bennochyhallhire@gmail.com](mailto:bennochyhallhire@gmail.com).

Grateful thanks must go to Grace for all her hard work and dedication as convener for the past 8/9 years, and we trust she will now be able to enjoy some free time!

**Congratulations** to our Session Clerk, George Drummond, who at a recent fundraising event received an award for having raised £190,000 over the last 36 years for the Heart Foundation (with more than a little help from Jane!) Very well done to both!!



## PARTNERPLAN

# Jenny Featherstone - Zambia October 2017

Chodort Training Centre, Choma  
PO Box 630451  
Kitwe  
Zambia

Dear Church friends,



The Girls Brigade wait to deliver a small play for Mabel

This is a slightly longer letter, but as you can see as you read on, the last few months have been quite busy.

Recently I attended the reception at Mala for one of the Southern Presbytery Deaconess', Mabel Mukamo. Mala is around 100 kilometres North of Choma then another 18km along a dirt road. Even with a 6.30 start it was 9.00 before we arrived at the open air service, as the church was too small to seat all the guests, which included 5 choirs. These events take a while to organise, Mabel has been at Mala for over a year now and now has a 6 month old baby daughter with her, whilst their 4 year old son remains in Choma with her husband. The sort of dedication most of us would not recognise! The whole occasion finished with a grand meal around

3.00pm, just in time for us to get home before dark. These occasions happen 8 - 10 times a year and are very much part of the UCZ culture and Zambian hospitality.

600 kilometres to the North in Kitwe, Jane continues to develop Play4all and is now working with a former social work student of mine from 2011, Kabutu, in a compound called Kandabwe. His



Some of the older vulnerable people of Kandabwe

original project was with older people, many of whom have dependent grandchildren and they are now part of his project too. Jane is going twice a week at the moment and teaching the volunteers how to play the games with the children. There is a small lean to shelter which doubles up as somewhere for the homeless older people to sleep at night. Kabutu has been working tirelessly for about 7 years trying to get the local mine companies involved, he has had a lot of promises but little real support, but he remains hopeful for current negotiations though.

We were also delighted to have a visit from Rev Davis Nixon the former Principal this July. He stopped over on the way back from a delegation from the Methodist Church in Ireland to South Africa and was able to catch

up with old friends and see some progress at Chodort. We also appreciate the consignment of books he brought which will swell the food production library.

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## PARTNER PLAN

Other visitors this year have included Nora Dudderidge who came over for almost 3 weeks in August, and Bunmi Olayisiade from Methodist GB world church just last week.



Amongst the visitors this year, was Rev Davis Nixon, the original Principal for Chodort, seen here with Jane Mwenda from play4all and myself

This year has also seen the first changeover of volunteers from the German charity Bread for the world. Davis Horch, a 23 year old graduate in electronics and welding has proved a lively and tireless volunteer working in so many more areas than originally envisaged over his 12 month stay. He is replaced by Jacob Zenger, a thoughtful 20 year old auto mechanic, who has already bonded really well with the team, and is working on the brakes of the Izu su as I type.

Sometimes we face difficulties which seem insurmountable and it was so this year with our student intake. In carpentry only one person could afford the full fee and the others who were given bursaries, could not even find the roughly £2.50 a week which was required. The new food production course also faced profound difficulties with drop outs of students and staff, and that, along with the recession, inability to find legal wood for our carpentry production, and other issues, left us considerably in the red. I am sure you will all recognise it is at such times we turn to the lord saying, I see no way out of this, and ask for His intervention. So it should not have been a surprise that at the beginning of May TEVETA, our skills awards body,

asked us to participate in their programme of sponsored skills and entrepreneurial training for vulnerable people. Our proposal was accepted and we were chosen to give skills training to 55 people for 14 weeks. This short course began at the end of August and will finish in December. Whilst it is all hands to the deck we are very pleased to be fulfilling the remit of Chodort to train the vulnerable and also have an influx of cash which reflects the true costs of the course.



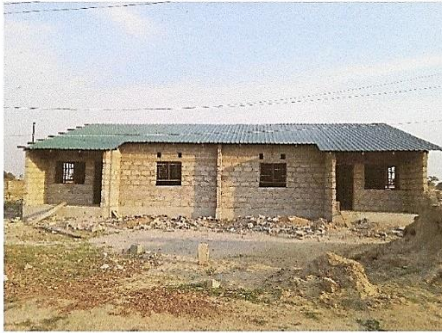
Charity Mwene (holding the pan) is teaching 25 sponsored students the art of catering

The generosity of our partnership with the Dortmund Evangelical Church has seen a great improvement in our resources because they helped us to build a wall around the new college site, which is about 2 hectares in all. This not only marks out our boundaries and stops people encroaching, but it has increased the security of our night guards. An unexpected spin off was that Jet who can now roam free on the site, caught a rock hare which Mr Chavula, our general worker, enjoyed for his dinner!

Another venture we have undertaken is the building of another 2 semidetached 2 bedroom houses for rent. Over the years we had been able to ring fence money for this and when the houses are finished this will take the number for rent to 8. A business plan shows that once we make 10 houses we will be able to build more through our own resources and become self-sustaining when all 18 are built. I thank God that in the 5 years I have been here we have been able to increase this resource, something which seemed unimaginable to me during my first few

## PARTNERPLAN

months in the job. Thanks are also due to Bennoch, Burnt Island and Abbotshall churches, who



have together raised over £1,500 towards fitting the kitchens in our new houses. And I will also take this opportunity to thank other friends who have helped subsidise students' fees, Kitwe projects such as play4all and those in Kandabwe, and sponsor orphaned children in Choma.

As temperatures here climb into the high 30's we are waiting for the rains to come in earnest, and hoping for another good harvest after 4 years of drought. I have found one way of coping with the muggy nights however in the form of my hot water bottle – from the freezer!

### Items for prayer

- The project in Kandabwe will flourish
- That our bid for a second allocation of sponsored training in 2018 will be successful.
- That our houses will be finished and ready to rent in 2018

### Items for Praise

- The completion of the wall around the new college site.
- For the inclusion of Chodort in the TEVTA programme in 2017.
- For the positive relationship with Bread for the World
- The visits of Rev Davis Nixon, Bunmi and Norah.

With every good wish to you all,

Jenny

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Websites [www.chodort.org](http://www.chodort.org) [www.play4all.org](http://www.play4all.org)



Rocky and Jet wait for their dinner – this time “caught” by me!

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## **Report from Louisa Turner, Development Worker**

I was recently invited to speak at Bennochty Church to let the congregation know a little of the work which I am currently very happy to be involved in, both there and in the wider community.

Here is an insight.

- Applying for funding – community garden and a possible community event
- Attending trainings, meetings and networking
- Organising events; such as the recent Volunteers Thank You social and a First Aid course (well done on all who passed the course)
- Messy Church and Messy Church in the Mercat
- Participating in the board game club at Kirkcaldy North Primary school
- Being present in the Olive Branch to chat and listen to people

As someone who until recently didn't have any connections with Bennochty Parish Church -

What I see happening in Bennochty Church is a host of activity. In early November Rev McAlpine quoted the verse from Mathew 9:37 'Then He said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few."' Yes indeed, the harvest is plentiful and we need more workers, for all the enthusiasm and ideas for future projects, which I would like to explore with the community around Bennochty Parish Church. But I see God's disciples and workers working extremely hard and appearing happy in what they do. Well done to all who give of their time, talents and money, in everything related to the church and surrounding community.

What I see is that you do it with compassion and fellowship, touching people's hearts when they are in need.

What I see are many selfless individuals at Bennochty Parish Church.

My role comes under the remit of the Open Door Project. You may ask, what has this work got to do with the idea of an Open Door?

Open Door is what it says on the tin. Our door (Bennochty Parish Church) is open to work with the community and to fulfil their need as individuals. We listen to suggestions and consider whether, as a team, we can facilitate requests, by chatting to people in the café and wider community, finding out about what they would like to see happen in their community - such as the newly formed popular jigsaw swap group in the Olive Branch Cafe.

There is a need to continually promote the Open Door project. For some aspects we need to work with others to gain the funding, knowledge, skills and contacts, to support projects. Working with Asda has enabled us to gain an additional volunteer at the café and also monies towards raised beds in the Community Garden. By working with Enable Scotland we gained another café volunteer and possible monies from a hall hire. Connecting with Gingerbread Fife and the Salvation Army, a proposed upcoming community event will reach more individuals.

By attending trainings I gain the knowledge to learn that what we are doing in Bennoch is recognised and that we are on the right path in engaging with the wider community. Attending meetings and networking we are gaining recognition in the wider community. Working in partnership allows the Open Door Project to do more within the community but we cannot do it all on our own. We are here to serve and support the community with the community.

Our partners are the volunteers (within the church and community) and without them we could not deliver the project. We could also consider as our partners: Kirkcaldy Churches Working Together, members of the Fife Council local planning group – Fife Voluntary Action, Job Centre Plus, local primary schools, Generations Working Together, Fife College, other denominations development workers and community groups, such as; Growing Kirkcaldy, Abbeyfield and the Tenants' Association. The list goes on – as we have volunteering opportunities for the wider community, various organisations see the benefit of partnership, for their individuals and the community, whom we wish to support. Though, we still need representation from Bennoch Church members, as the Open Door Project is under the umbrella of the church and we are representing God in the midst of the community, rather than just another community group.

At a recent training; the trainer explained, since we are Christians and have the belief that Christ is within us, then we are doing God's work in any action we carry out. So where does God fit in with the Open Door Project? He fits in all of us as we carry out his work. He is everywhere, in our daily connections, the way we interact with others, having conversations with people from many walks of life, witnessing by being ourselves. However for some of us, we don't feel comfortable expressing our faith in words and express it in actions – such as preparing and serving food in the café, organising resources for the Quilting group; getting in a cuddle at Messy Church; helping God with his creation in the community garden; using our



talents to bring joy in song at the Community Choir; and in the background sweeping the floors, is all God's work by His people. God is everywhere to bring joy, peace, support, love and friendship. God is at work in the café too and we couldn't make connections without our volunteers.

Connections are being made over a bowl of soup. Conversations are taking place between family groups and friends when Thursday is the only day they can meet to catch up.

Connections are being made between the Get Together Group and Kirkcaldy North Primary school.

Connections are being made with people who may be seeking and searching their own faith.

Connections are being made supporting individuals through their grief of a loved one, or their grief of coming to the end of their employment when retirement appears daunting.

Connections are being made with individuals who reveal their loneliness and how they appreciate the café to see others.

Connections are being made in the ordinary conversations and much deeper conversations, as the Open Door Project has provided the space for people to feel relaxed and welcome and able to express themselves.

***Louisa Turner***

The links with Kirkcaldy North Primary School are also strengthening - pupils will be visiting the Get Together and hope to sing carols in the café on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December. Members of the church and community are welcome to come along.



## **Community Choir**

The Community Choir has proved very popular, with well over 60 members now. We will actually be performing (non-competitively) at the Fife Festival of Music in February. We meet on Monday evenings from 6.30 until about 7.45. New members welcome.

This was initiated as part of Bennoch Church's Open Door Project.

## Bennoch Community Bunting

In October 2017, the community attached to Bennoch Church, was asked to create bunting to be displayed in the Methven Hall. The purpose was –

- To decorate the hall
- To hang outdoors in summer indicating a happy event is taking place
- To raise funds for new sanctuary lighting. (£5 per flag was collected)
- To hire to people who live in the neighbourhood for their events, weddings etc.

Many chose to sew their initials on their flag. People were very creative and thoughtful, making flags in memory of someone dear to them, for their grandchildren or naming their preferred charity.

The result is a beautiful splash of colour in the church community hall. A great example of how simple efforts by many individuals come together as one successful project.

### **73 flags were sewn raising £365 for the sanctuary lighting fund!**

It is hoped now that the bunting will last for ten years and will be enjoyed by all local people, both in church and at other events in the neighbourhood.

Anyone who wishes to hire the bunting, please make contact with

Mary Stark  
Aileen Buchanan  
Dianne Waddell

Rona Traill  
Sheila Morris

Thanks to all who took part.



## **Sleep in the Park – a mass sleep-out to end homelessness in Scotland. For Good. Saturday 9th December 2017**

Social Bite, a proactive charity working around Scotland with and for homeless people, is organising the world's largest ever sleep-out and are hoping to attract 9,000 people to Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens. The charity hopes that by raising funds and working together, the people of Scotland will create such an impetus that homelessness will be eradicated over a five-year period. The aim is not only to find provision for housing, but also to provide rehabilitation, job opportunities and support that will help people get back on their feet and find their place within society. The hope is that the many charities who work in these areas might also link up to provide ongoing support and care.

The vision is to make Scotland an example for the whole world to follow. We know we are a small country, but we are also a nation of innovators, explorers, and philanthropists. We are a small country with a big and generous heart.

At Christmas time there are many legitimate calls upon our time and our generosity. There are so many worthwhile charities and causes to support. But there is for Christians something compelling about the reality of homelessness that lies near the heart of the Christmas story. The homeless Christ-child, the refugee Holy Family.

Social Bite have gathered together a range of amazing people to the sleep-out. John Cleese, Deacon Blue, Rob Brydon, Sir Bob Geldof, Liam Gallagher and Amy Macdonald who will be present on the night.

You might not be able to take part yourself, a cold winter night in a park in December won't be possible for everyone. But you might know someone in your Church or workplace, a child or grandchild, a student friend or someone in a uniformed organisation, school, or a company who might be able to get involved individually or as a group. The challenge is for each individual to raise a minimum of £100 towards the cause. 2,000 people have already signed up. There's still some way to go to reach 9,000 people.

Find out more at [www.SleepInThePark.co.uk](http://www.SleepInThePark.co.uk) or register at [www.SleepInThePark.co.uk/register](http://www.SleepInThePark.co.uk/register).

## Blythwood Shoebox Appeal 2017

Many of the congregation and friends have been busy filling shoeboxes for people living in poverty throughout the world. Things which are everyday items to us are a luxury to people who have very little. Toothpaste, a toothbrush, soap, a hat, scarf and gloves, sweets, pencils and a notebook are just a few of the items that go into a shoebox and of course every child loves a toy as well.

This year at church 107 boxes were filled, and the pupils of Dunnikier School filled 44 boxes. People who were unable to fill a box gave a donation instead, so thank you to everyone who supported and helped with the Shoebox Appeal in any way.

The boxes from our area are going to Romania this year where the children there will not get anything other than a filled shoebox for Christmas and they will be so happy and excited to receive one. The adults who receive a box find it very hard to understand how a complete stranger can think about them by giving them socks, toiletries, a scarf and many other gifts and all in a shoebox.

I hope that you enjoyed filling your shoebox as much as the people of Romania will enjoy opening it. Thank you very much for being part of the Shoebox Appeal 2017.



- Thanks also to Angela and her team of helpers who covered all the shoeboxes in Christmas wrap while we were still enjoying our summer holidays – no mean task!

According to Frederick Lewis Donaldson, in a sermon in 1925, “The Seven Social Sins are:

Wealth without work.  
Pleasure without conscience.  
Knowledge without character.  
Commerce without morality.  
Science without humanity.  
Worship without sacrifice.  
Politics without principle.”

## A holiday snapshot ...

I was in the Italian Dolomites on holiday recently. We have been there before and each time enjoyed visiting what is described as ‘the biggest crib in the world’. It is in Santa Christina, a tiny village where woodcarving is a major source of employment. The crib is larger than life size and, over the 12 years we have visited, more and more figures have been added.

This time there was an unexpected extra added, right next to the site... a striptease nightclub! Only in Italy I thought, and I felt a bit disappointed that this was so, but then I had a rethink.

After all, Jesus was born in a smelly outhouse of an inn on the outskirts of Jerusalem. If its ruler, Herod, was typical of its inhabitants then events much worse than watching people dance and take off their clothes were part of daily life. He had members of his family murdered and historians have no problem believing he would order the death of all male children under two in Bethlehem.

And Jesus in his life was criticised for associating with sinners of all kinds, shapes and sizes.

Maybe we are too quick to sanitise Christmas and the real Gospel experience?

What do you think?

*Nancy Gilmartin*





## Refugee Aid

Dear Friends – Re-Act won't be having a donation day in November or December. As soon as the truck returns from delivering humanitarian aid to Samos in Greece, it will quickly re-load and head for France. However we will be glad to continue to receive donations on Tuesdays between 10.30 a.m. and 8 p.m. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Winifred Crescent, Kirkcaldy, KY2 5SX. Now that temperatures have dropped, warm winter clothing and sturdy shoes (no heels) are being sought for all ages. Joggers and sweatshirts are especially welcome; new underwear; warm socks; toiletries and sanitary items (no tampons); Ibuprofen and Paracetamol; disposable nappies; wipes; tents; sleeping bags; blankets; mobility aids and buggies. Countless individuals and families, displaced by war or violence, are existing, both within grossly overcrowded camps or living rough in precarious and squalid conditions without access to basic amenities or a safe place to sleep. Any donation, however small, is gratefully received.



***Sylvia Brown***  
***Volunteer***

## Gift Day

The total amount given at the October Gift Day was £2,747.50. Thanks to all who donated so generously.

The amount raised for Poppy Scotland at the Remembrance Day service was £306.72. Once again thanks to all who donated to this worthy cause.



## Bruce Davies - Songs for the Season.

Bruce is once again doing a series of Christmas concerts around the country. On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December he will be performing in Leven Baptist Church and on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December he will be at St Margaret's Parish Church, Glenrothes, both 7.30 p.m. For more details see the poster on the church notice board or visit [www.brucedavies.com](http://www.brucedavies.com)



## SUNDAY SCHOOL

### CHRISTMAS SERVICE



We are currently practising for the Christmas Service. The performance will be on Sunday 10th December, a little earlier than normal due to teachers and children being unavailable later in the month. Our Christmas Party will be on the same day, immediately after our performance; food, games and fun hopefully enjoyed by all. We are also trying to arrange a visit from a very special person.

### BIRTHDAYS

During this session we have celebrated the following birthdays.

Sarah was 5 on 13th October

Mollie was 9 on 24th October

Callum was 7 on 24th October

Rebecca was 12 on 11th November

We also have birthdays to celebrate in December

Brodie will be 15 on 15th December

Reece will be 7 on 22nd December.

We again wish them all a Happy Birthday.

## HOLIDAYS

We will be on holiday on Sunday 17th, 24th and 31st December, starting again in the New year on Sunday 7th January. We are looking forward to seeing everyone then.

## OUR CHRISTMAS WISHES

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

During this busy time we should all try to remember **Jesus is the reason for the season.**



## Christmas Calendar

December 3	Gift Service for the work of the Salvation Army. (Gifts are required for children over 3½ years old, and must be new)
December 9	‘Sleep in the Park’
December 10	Family service with contributions from the Sunday school. Meeting of the Congregation Messy Church
December 17	Service of carols and readings with the choir.
December 24	Christmas service with contributions from the Bennochty Bell Ringers Watchnight Service
December 31	Joint service at Abbotshall Church



### The Olive Branch Café

Open every Thursday in the Methven Hall from 1100 am – 2.00 pm for teas,  
coffees & home baking. Lunches served from 12 noon.  
Our internet café is also open from 11.00–2.00.



**Free Wi Fi.**

- ❖ The Café will be ***closed*** on Thursdays ***21<sup>st</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> December*** and ***4<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> January***. It will reopen for business on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018.  
A very Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year to all our patrons.



- Next Newsletter: March 2018