

By the Way



The Magazine of St Augustine's Scottish Episcopal Church, Dumbarton

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Thanksgiving 2012



After so much preparation, and blood, sweat and tears, literally, the Friends' Big Fundraiser came to town in November! See Janette's Gossip, in this issue, for more details, but over £850 was raised on the night! Everyone seemed to have a great time, and we're looking forward already to January and the Haggis Bash!

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Kenny Comments....

It's not even Christmas yet, and here I am thinking about Easter! November brought the news that the Bishop is going to be with us in 2013 to participate in our



journey through Holy Week. This is indeed a great honour for us. He will be with us in everything that we do, from Palm Sunday all the way through until Easter Day itself. Not only that, but he'll do whatever I ask him to do!

You can bet that this will involve a good deal of preaching! I hope, too, that it will involve our brothers and sisters from the Reformed Churches in the town, and I hope they will want to join in as much as possible during this special week.

There will be services every evening in St Augustine's, except perhaps on Good Friday when he will preach in Riverside. So get the last week in March in your new diaries, and make sure you don't miss anything.

It has always been a dream of mine that I could arrange a proper procession for Palm Sunday with a real donkey to lead us. So, I'm looking for a donkey who is fit enough to walk up and down the High Street!

Many suggestions have been forthcoming like borrowing the DPT pantomime horse to sticking donkey ears on Archie, and visiting the Bet Butler stadium where Robert Ryan suggests I might find a whole team of donkeys, but, no I would like a real donkey! What a spectacle that would be!

Donkeys are central to biblical teaching, and they always seemed to have a grandstand seat. Not only did a donkey carry Our Lord into Jerusalem, but there were donkeys involved in the Nativity Story too! Certainly there were donkeys in the stable, and a donkey carried Mary to Bethlehem, then off to Egypt to flee Herod after the birth of Jesus.

Whether it be Christmas or Eastertide, let us all make sure we have a grandstand seat too, to breathe in the earthiness of the Incarnation. This Christmas be sure to come and adore Him. Your grandstand seat awaits you!

Kenny

Pat Says.....

Happy New Year. No, your curate is not going mad - the new Church year starts on the first Sunday in Advent, which this year falls on December 2nd. Advent is the season when we prepare ourselves for Christmas, the celebration of the birth of our Lord, but many people find it a time they want to rush through as they get ready for guests to arrive and parties to take place. We have already had weeks of shops and restaurants advertising Christmas deals; the decorations go up earlier and earlier each year (something I struggle with this, coming from a family where the Christmas tree only went up on the evening of Christmas Eve); and of course those with children in the family will probably have had innumerable hints about hoped-for presents, while soon that constant "I can't wait for Christmas Day" will begin.



Just as the turn of the calendar year can be used as a time for New Year Resolutions, perhaps we can use the start of the new Church year for some reflection.

First of all, as Christians we should spend some time thinking about what Christmas really means - are we merely celebrating what much of society simply sees as a mid-winter festival, that horrible "Winterval" which seems to have crept into our language, or are we giving thanks for God becoming flesh and entering into the reality of our lives? There is absolutely nothing wrong with fun and celebrations (after all Jesus' first miracle ensured that a wedding party went off well!), but if we are too busy partying to attend church over the Christmas season, or if our spending on luxuries means that we have nothing left to give to the needy, then something has gone wrong. So as we rush around making all the Christmas preparations let's pause occasionally to give thanks to God for his gift of himself to us in the form of Jesus, and think what gift we can give in return.

It may be a financial gift to a good cause but equally it may be an offering of ourselves, in practical help or loving words, to somebody who is in need of such support. Let's just remember to add this to our Christmas "to do" lists.

Pat

Smile Lines

Santa

I am terrified of the Santa at the shopping centre where I work. Our HR person talked it over with me, and has discovered I am Claustrophobic.

Christmas card

Rick, my husband, and I had a hectic holiday schedule encompassing careers, teenagers, shopping, and all the required doings of the season. Running out of time, I asked the stationer to simply print our name on our Christmas cards, to save me signing each one.

Soon we started getting cards from friends signed "The Modest Morrisons," "The Clever Clarks," and "The Successful Smiths." This baffled me until I looked again at our card. I had posted out a hundred cards neatly imprinted with "Happy Holidays from the Rich Armstrongs."

The Holy Family

A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "What was Jesus' mother's name?"

One child answered, "Mary."

The teacher then asked, "Who knows what Jesus' father's name was?"

Another child ventured: "Verge?"

Confused, the teacher asked, "Where did you get that?" He replied hesitantly: "Well, you know they are always talking about Verge n' Mary."

Pancakes and great commandments

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, five and Ryan, three. As the boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake, their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here," she said, "He would say, 'let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'"

Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

Shhh!

A teacher asked her children, as they were on the way to the village Christmas carol service:

"And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"

One bright little girl replied, "Because so many people are sleeping."

Good home

After the christening of his baby brother in church, young Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That minister said he wanted us to be brought up in a good Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys."

Lord's Prayer, updated

I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord's Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime, she would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word right up to the end of the prayer: "and lead us not into temptation," she implored, "but deliver us some e-mail."

Church officials

Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in church."

"Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel demanded.

Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers."

US elections

Edward Hale, while chaplain of the U.S. Senate, was once asked if he prayed for the senators. He quickly replied, "No. After getting to know the senators, I pray for the people."

Visiting Father Christmas

A mother took her young daughter to visit Father Christmas in his grotto at the garden centre. He greeted the youngster merrily, and asked: "And what would you like for Christmas?" The little girl stared at him, open mouthed with horror. Then she gasped: "Didn't you get my email??!!"

Alternative Sunday Worship

It all started early in the morning on Sunday 11th November, at Novacon – the Science Fiction Convention held in Nottingham recently - that I attended - when the organisers came round to tell us there would be a 2 min silence at 11 am to remember those who have died in conflict.

But suddenly a small group of us realised that somehow the organisers missed the mark and it was now 11.20 am (apparently there had been a crisis at 10.55)

Peter, in his 90s and still going to conventions!, wearing his medals and his poppy was a bit upset by this. We suggested holding a silence right then but “it wouldn’t be the same”. So then we decided: Lets do our own thing and hold a small act of remembrance and worship combined in the afternoon. Notices were hastily written and put up around the hotel and plans were made.

And so it was that at 3 pm, a small group of sci-fi fans gathered in a corner of the hotel bar in the comfy armchairs. There weren’t many of us

– Peter, myself, 2 other Scots who had travelled down, an Irishman, a guy who was half Greek and half Swedish, and a Seikh!

All of us with completely different church backgrounds but that really didn’t matter. We attempted to sing a verse of “Praise My Soul the King of Heaven”, and I mean attempted!

Peter then led us in a short act of remembrance; instead of having a silence we were all asked (if we could) to name someone we knew had died as a result of war or conflict at any time, and every one of us had someone we could mention.

We then had a short prayer and finished with the blessing in English, Irish Gaelic and Swedish. And a Seikh equivalent used at the end of their worship.

It only lasted about 10 min all in, it was totally informal, the singing was appalling; but none of that mattered. What was important was that, during the laughter and busyness of a typical convention, God was present and His people worshipped Him.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International Greetings Cards. We will be hosting this event again this year , in the church, on Saturday December 15th from 11. am to 1.30. Cards and information about Prisoners of Conscience will be provided. More info from Tim

Town Centre Carols

Dumbarton Churches Together has organised this of 12 noon on Saturday December 15th. Sing some carols then warm up by signing cards for Amnesty !

Christian Aid -The annual Inter-Church Quiz will take place on Friday January 18th 7.30 at St Patrick's hall. Bar and raffle. Well known local quizmaster Mike Taylor will be in charge. See Tim if you would like to be in a team for St Augs (we won the trophy last year!

Christian Aid are also holding a Silent Auction and Coffee Morning on Saturday January 12th at Riverside Halls from 10 till 12 or 1pm. Admission is £2 including refreshments. This is an ideal opportunity to pass on surplus Christmas presents.

See Tim if you can help or provide baking.

Co-op Taxis

West Dunbartonshire Taxi
Drivers Co-operative

76 Main St, Alexandria

01389 753376

I asked for strength and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for wisdom and God gave me problems to solve.

I asked for prosperity and God gave me brawn and brains to work.

I asked for courage and God gave me dangers to overcome.

I asked for patience and God placed me in situations where I was forced to wait.

I asked for love and God gave me troubled people to help.

I asked for favours and God gave me opportunities.

I asked for everything so I could enjoy life.

Instead, He gave me life so I could enjoy everything.

Cursillo

There are no meetings in December. The meetings in January, 2013 are as follows;

Tuesday, 8th at 7.30 p.m. in St. Augustine's small meeting room – discussion 3 from the book.

Saturday, 29th at 12 noon in St. John's, Johnstone. This will be a "bring and share" lunch, followed by a time of fun and fellowship together to celebrate the opening of a new year. We should all be home in time for tea.

I hope see many of you at one or other of these. Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Ultreya,

Evelyn.

St Augustine's-Revisited

On opening the Community Hall early one Saturday, I was greeted by a visitor to Dumbarton. Geoffrey Perry had been a choir boy at St. Augustine's in the olden days and was revisiting after fifty years to show off the town to his wife and dog en route to a holiday in Skye.

After a quick view of the High Street, Geoff was delighted to be given a tour of St. Aug's.

He reminisced about how it had been in the past and was impressed with our restoration. I remembered his Father who had been an actor in DPT in the sixties.

So Geoff signed the Visitors' Book and was given a complimentary copy of 'By the Way' which he said would be of interest to his Mum in Rochdale. He left his e-mail address in case anyone remembers him – it is Geoffperry1@btinternet.com.

November

Congratulations go to Drew Dyer for growing a rather chic moustache for Movember. A lot of men these days do so to raise awareness of testicular cancer, and get their top lip sponsored for cancer charities.



Coming in heavily this year was Kenny's son, Graham who at the end managed this effort. No idea why neither smiled! Perhaps it hurts?



December

There will be a Service of Taize Music and Healing on Sunday 9th December at 7pm. This is a great opportunity for you all to bring a friend or someone new to something a little different. As it is Advent the theme will ponder darkness and light. Please make an effort to be in church if you can.

Christmas Service times will be on your Christmas card which you should all receive, but essentially, the Carol Service will begin at 6pm on Sunday 23rd December, the Sung Eucharist of the Nativity is at 11pm on Christmas Eve, and Holy Communion with Carols will be at 10am on Christmas Day.

Sunday Services are all at the usual times.

The Carol Service should be fun this year, as our **Girls' Group** have taken over the responsibility of producing a Nativity Play a la Dumbarton!

Again, this is an opportunity to bring along someone new, or someone who hasn't been in church for a while.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Dumbarton Churches Together have organised a Unity Service on Fri Jan 25th, 2013, at 6.30pm in St Michael's, Cardross Road.

All are very welcome to attend. I would love us all to up the ante in the Unity stakes this coming year, especially now that we have the URC congregation worshipping with us in our hall.

Lord Matthews Cheques in with Beanfeast cash for Hospice

By BILL HEANEY

Lord Matthews, the High Court judge, did the honours when yet another cheque from Beanfeast, the voluntary group who run the cafes at the local courthouses, handed over a cheque for £10,000 to the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS), bringing the total raised for charity to a remarkable £117,000.

Most of the money earned in the courts of Dumbarton, Paisley and Greenock – more than £95,000 – has gone to making life more comfortable for the young patients in the state-of-the-art Robin House Hospice at Balloch on Loch Lomondside.

But considerable sums, amounting to almost £20,000, have also been gifted to smaller charities in Greenock, Johnstone and Paisley.

The driving force behind Beanfeast is our own Georgie Duncan! (pictured below with Lord Matthews and Debbie Mooney from CHAS) Georgie launched the charity in co-operation with Johnstone solicitor Charles McCusker when she retired from her work at Strathleven Bonded Warehouses in 1995.

It was then she took up a voluntary post with the WRVS who ran the tea and coffee bar at Dumbarton Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court in Church Street.

After the WRVS pulled out, Georgie decided there were worthwhile local charities that could benefit greatly from the money earned from keeping the court catering facilities open --- and running them entirely with the help of a dedicated band of volunteers.

Lord Matthews, who had been presiding at an important trial in Dumbarton, gave up his lunch break to join sheriffs, solicitors, court staff and Beanfeast volunteers to hand over the cheque to Debbie Mooney, the Fundraising manager for CHAS in the West of Scotland.

The judge paid tribute to Georgie, a former Citizen of the Year in Dumbarton, and the band of dedicated volunteers at all three courts who give their time and energy to raise money for the local charities which did so much excellent work in Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire.

He said: "I am delighted to be here to give public recognition to the work done by these dedicated volunteers.

"The court staff and the public who use the courts benefit greatly from the service they provide and the local charities benefit too."

All of us at St Auggie's are proud of her!



Moving out and moving on!

That was the theme of the very moving service some of us were able to attend on the afternoon of Saturday 3rd November "marking the closing of the present building and beginning a new chapter in the story of Dumbarton United Reformed Church".

Opened just four years after St Augustine's, despite the opposition of local churches and the local builder going bust, the building in Leven St was already too big and there were soon structural concerns, concerns that have continued throughout the church's 136 years.

Carefully chosen hymns gave us the opportunity join with the URC congregation to sing praise, commit to mission and, for me the most moving, Sydney Carter's One More Step along the World I Go:

And it's from the old I travel to the new:

Keep me travelling along with you.

By special invitation Ricky and Ghislaine sang two hymns in their own inimitable style, many members of the congregation silently speaking the words and saying their own prayers, especially during Amazing Grace.

With readings from Psalms, Hebrews and Matthew's gospel, Rev John Humphreys* preached

about the homelessness of Abraham and Moses and Jesus speaking about foxes having holes and birds their nests, whilst the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head.

The work of the UR Church in Dumbarton now has the chance to be about mission, not fettered by Victorian architectural taste. The congregation should now relish the opportunity for vocation to follow Jesus and not be distracted by a building.

We welcome the members of Dumbarton URC to St Augustine's, now they've moved out and on to continue their worship and mission as a church without walls.

* Moderator of the United Reformed Church's Synod of Scotland

First Christian Service for Centuries makes History on Dumbarton Rock

History was made when the first Christian service of worship since 1571 took place beneath a cold winter sky on Dumbarton Rock high above the River Clyde on Saturday 25th November.

A golden but watery November sun shone down on the bleak, rain-sodden terrace site of an ancient chapel, where church representatives gathered for an open air ecumenical service to celebrate the life of St Andrew, Scotland's patron saint. The storm that was forecast thankfully stayed away as a congregation of around 60 people, representing 12 local churches, braved the elements to sing hymns, pray together and listen to readings by senior clergy, including Archbishop Philip Tartaglia, the RC Archbishop of Glasgow; Bishop Gregor Duncan, the Scottish Episcopal bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, and the Rev Ian Miller, of Bonhill, representing the Moderator of Dumbarton Presbytery of the Church of Scotland.

Canon Gerry Conroy, of St Patrick's, Dumbarton; the Rev Elaine McKinnon, of the West Kirk; the Rev Kenny Macaulay, of St Augustine's Episcopal

Church, elders of the Rock Community Church and the Rev Brian Mulrairie, of the Dumbarton and Vale of Leven Baptist Church, also took part in the service. The civic representatives present were Provost Douglas McAllister, of West Dunbartonshire Council; Gemma Doyle MP; Jackie Baillie MSP and Lord McFall of Alcluith.

They were welcomed by Tim Rhead, of St Augustine's Church and Tom McFadden, chair of Dumbarton Churches Together, the group who organised the service in co-operation with Brigadier Donald Hardie, Keeper of Dumbarton Castle, and officials of Historic Scotland, who granted special access to the Castle to allow it to take place.

Tim Rhead later revealed that Historic Scotland had given permission for two other services of worship to take place on the Rock in honour of St Columba and St Patrick, whom some historians have speculated may have been born in Dunbartonshire. He added: "I hope that these services will help to connect us to our Christian heritage and foster links between the people of Dumbarton and the Castle."

*Best wishes for a very merry
Christmas and a brilliant New
Year
with love from
Margaret Swan*



*Merry Christmas
and best wishes for 2013.
With love from*

Morag and Evelyn



Roberta

*wishes everyone
at St. Augustine's
a Happy Christmas
and a peaceful New Year*



*Kenny and Linda
wish all our readers
lots of love, peace and joy
this Christmas*



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

In the no waiting area outside the entrance to Hamburg Central Station a car was parked. A passing policeman was just about to put a parking ticket under the windscreen wiper when he noticed a man sitting inside. So he knocked at the window, which made the man – a curate incidentally – sit up in a fright and wind down his window. The policeman asked him rather rudely, what on earth he was waiting for in this place, to which the man, still in his thoughts, answered: “I am waiting for the kingdom of God” The policeman was so puzzled by this answer that he went on his way forgetting even to hand over the ticket.

This is a true story, told by Pastor Ute Ehlert-In of a Hamburg parish in her Christmas letter last year. And she did ask her congregation what they were waiting for during Advent.

Just at that time of the year when we are waiting for the coming of Christ, we are concerned with a full

diary of events and waiting for so many things to happen up to New Year. Especially children are waiting for Christmas Day and the presents to come, helped by an Advent Calendar which, with every window opened, brings them closer to the big one. And December feels as if it were as long as two months! The grown-ups often expect very little from Christmas, except for parties and fun. But who among us is really waiting for the Kingdom of God?

Former generations of Christians thought differently, expecting the Kingdom to come, maybe even during their life time. They waited with great expectations for the time when justice and peace would come to this world. They prayed for all suffering to come to an end, and that hope gave them strength. But in the end it might only have given rise to the saying: ‘waiting till kingdom come.’

Yet, we also need such a ‘perspective of hope’ which should last into the New Year. Without this longing for the better we get stuck in the present. So: What are you waiting for?

Extra Smile Lines!

Spotted in a toilet of a London office:

Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.

In a Launderette

Automatic washing machines: please remove all your clothes when the light goes out

In a London department store:

Bargain basement upstairs

In an office:

Would the person who took the step ladder yesterday please bring it back or further steps will be taken

In an office:

After tea break staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board

Outside a second-hand shop:

We exchange anything – bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?

Notice in a health food shop window:

Closed due to illness

Spotted in a safari park:

Elephants please stay in your car

Seen during a conference:

For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is day care on the 1st floor

Notice in a farmer's field:

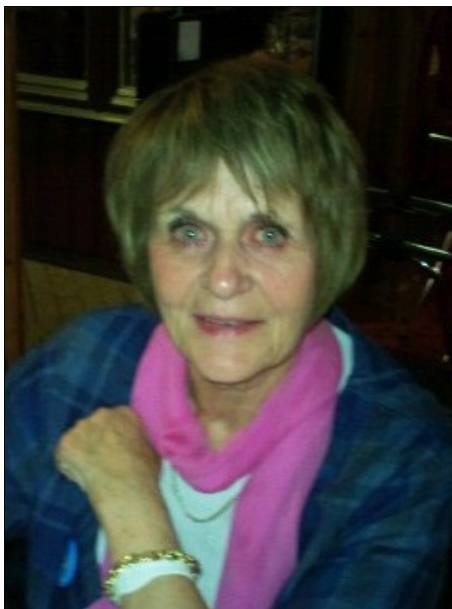
The farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free, but the bull charges.

Message on a leaflet:

If you cannot read, this leaflet will tell our how to get lessons

On a repair shop door:

We can repair anything. (please knock hard on the door – the bell doesn't work).



Wait Till I Tell You

The Gossip Column

Janette looks back on a November of posturing politicians, a presidential panic and a plethora of poverty predictions. Now it's onwards to a December of pantomime, presents and parties.

A 'TAKE YOUR PICK' MONTH.

The month started off with the much publicised presidential race in the USA. The media had been trying for ages to create some global excitement with innumerable polls and a series of destructive debates. But it was hurricane Sandy that grabbed the headlines on 29th October and stayed there to show the world the meaning of real power.

However, the 'no change' result was certainly a popular anti-climax. Then over on the other side of the world in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing a confusing display of sartorial elegance was assembled for the Chinese leadership race. Where did they get all those matching suits?

The eventual winner was Xi Jinping but I suspect Dumbarton folk will be more familiar with the names of other Chinese V.I.Ps – the Pandas at Edinburgh Zoo!

And it's exhausting for the ordinary punters faced just now with the responsibility of selecting winners and losers on Strictly Come Dancing and the X Factor – to say nothing of deciding who leaves the jungle and all its delicious wildlife encounters. Of course, now that the politicians are getting in on the act we are obliged to take this programme seriously. It's so pretentious labelling oneself a 'celebrity'. If Nadine Dorries MP, this year's very first loser, got on the Westcliff bus would you recognise her?

THE WORST DAY OF HIS LIFE.

To the energy chief who said that the day he had to raise his charges was 'the worst day of his life', I can only say 'that'll be right!'. No mat-

ter how bad it was for you, the day we receive the bills will be a whole lot worse - for us!

THE HAPPIEST PLACE IN THE UK.

Continuing with the superlatives, we had the results of that really useful survey commissioned by the Westminster government, to find out the happiest and least happy places in our realm. And what do you think? Donald and Kirsty up there in their draughty But and Ben in the Western Isles, lacking in many of the 21st century luxuries, can't stop laughing. Perhaps 'if they didnae laugh they wid greet!'

And even Aberdeen, with its cold north east winds and drab grey buildings is also high in the hilarity stakes - at number three! Dumbarton would have no doubt been up there too if only the pollsters hadn't ventured out onto our High Street! Now isn't that just what our government wants to hear? Being content with little is great in a recession. Believing that life is just a bowl of porridge!

Strange that the folks who are least happy with their lives are languishing in Central London with all its excitement, wealth and places to go. And with the Chancellor's autumn statement due out soon let's hope he heeds this important survey and ensures that any new tax increases will take the southerners out of their misery.

THE GREAT AMERICAN DREAM

Preparation for this Friends' event took up almost the entire preceding week and had members of the executive losing sleep, trying to balance costs, worrying about recipes and in a

blind panic over numbers. Indeed, we didn't actually know how many meals we were serving until Margaret Hardie counted the last plate on the evening of the 'do'.

And TBag O'Neill downed a record quantity of her favourite brew while agonising over how the Broadway dancers from Balloch would manage on our carpeted surface. Linda was exhausted searching for broken arrows to put in her Flaming Arrow Soup and a hit squad was organised to make at least three trips to ASDA in case any vital part of the meal was missing. Then Chris-sie roped in her nephew, Robert, of Venue Catering, who assured us that all would be well - and it was!

For anyone who has been on a desert island and hasn't heard, this was an All-American Thanksgiving Dinner organised by Friends for the 16th November - a stupid date when at least half the Exec members were going to be indisposed. Roberta, on the sick with stitched up toe, had to convalesce in the kitchen and find a sitting job! Margaret Swan and Sharon had had the best idea - they left the country - but not without contributing to the feast.

Fran brought Mickey Mouse to each carefully placed table - a difficult job logistically especially when combined with cooking the Sweet Corn Chowder and the Idaho Potato Bake! Making the aperitifs took all morning since I don't measure metrically and hadn't a knife sharp enough to cut up and skin the melons! Although, it did work perfectly well on my finger! All we could say at this stage was 'we'll be thanks giving when it's over!'

Oh, and we still had to dress up! The Disney Parade would start the evening off and the Lennox Herald photographer was coming. There were two Pocahontas's, a plague of Minnie Mice, a Peter Pan crocodile complete with alarm clock, Snow White with a blue rinse, Dorothy with a bad foot, Cruella de Vil with a tortured puppy, not quite 101 Dalmatians, a very pretty Alice and a wonderful White Rabbit - the latter were late and missed the parade. And, of course, Elvis was there and Ghislaine dressed up as something other than herself.

We paraded round the Church behind the cheer leading dancers to the appropriate music of Ken Watters. Ken and Cathy then chose the fancy

dress winner - Maggie as Cruella de Vil who'd had trouble not only spelling it but getting into the outfit!

Amy and Megan, our dancers from Lomond School of Dancing, performed some Broadway numbers with style and imagination and Tartan Harmony, our guest singing group, sang some favourite songs from America. How the audience marvelled at their wonderful harmonies. The acoustics of St. Augustine's added greatly to this performance especially in 'Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory...'. Sandra and Ghislaine struggled with the microphone to organise the Sing-a-Long and the traditional theatrical hook was needed to get them to stop!

In all, this Thanksgiving Supper - six days early - was well received judging by the amount of favourable comments. And Friends' Exec members much appreciated the assistance of Irene Telford, Cathy Hoatson, Maggie, Barbara, Alan Mailley, Derek and Sharon, Ghislaine and Ricky, Linda and Tam Jenkinson....and the amazing Matilda who made an art of serving the meal. And Robert Mills helped us maintain our sanity. Oh, and we made a profit of £840 for the Church Funds. As we danced out the Church at 10 o'clock to 'There's No Business Like Show Business' we agreed that it had been a good wee night.

RANGERS 1 TAXMAN 0

There is no doubt that this result will be a delight to Rangers fans and it will absolve the club of any dodgy financial deals in the tax arena. The HMRC man is '*ferr beelin*' as we say in the West of Scotland. What with Rangers and Starbucks and Amazon and Google all now paying less he is turning his attention to an easier prey - the tax avoiding pensioner!

My return was duly submitted by 31st October and I've now received a letter informing me that my result for the year is £132.05 underpaid! The letter in the ominous brown envelope is warning me that it hasn't been checked yet - and it is not confirmation that my return is complete and correct! '*Help ma boab! Is he going to find the money I've got stashed away in that off-shore account?*'

THE NEW ARCHBISHOP.

Well C of E's new main man was certainly fast tracked for promotion! This whiz kid has only

worn the mitre for a very short time and has the reputation for being a financial wizard. Oh, and his speciality is resolving situations of conflict – a necessary virtue in Church circles!

However, the wheels fell off this month with the refusal by some of his committee sitters from the previous century to agree that women should become Bishops. Why not, for goodness sake? They've been serving on Tea Rotas for years! And to think that some of these quaint voters were actually of the female sex!

Women would have no problem wearing the mitre – they have been hatted for years. They can simply take the mitre along to the hairdressers and have the stylist give them the best cut and blow dry to compliment it. And with practice, they can learn how to process down the aisle elegantly in ceremonial vestments enhanced by high heels.

But.....what do they do with their handbags while carrying a crozier and blessing their flocks? My suggestion would be to add it in to the offertory procession where it would be carried reverently up the Bishop's throne in time for the collection or a quick nose powdering job before the blessing. It would also be available for Mrs Right Reverend to 'handbag' any clergy who were not paying attention. Yes, all obstacles can be overcome with a little imagination and all will be revealed soon when the Scottish Episcopal Church elects its first female to the job.

PANTO PROBLEMS.

The tickets are nearly all sold, the cast are ready for opening night and a script problem arises. In one scene the well-known Dallas signature tune was included to herald the arrival of the infamous J R Ewing and what do you think? He dies. No, sadly he won't be coming back to life for this panto or for any future Dallas episodes. He has to be written out. Ah well, that's life....or even death! R.I.P Larry Hagman.

'YOU RAISE ME UP'

Our new St. Auggie's staging, designed exclusively for the Music Group, is now completed, raising them to greater heights and concealing their internal wiring. We can now be considered as an X Factor venue. They'll be requesting spotlights and special effects soon!

WHO DRANK ALL THAT?

Anne Dyer is arranging for the attractive and colourful mural crafted by the Girls' Group to be mounted on the wall of the Community Hall. It is the image of a butterfly made up almost entirely of bottle tops which Anne assures me were collected by the girls and that they did not consume the contents!

NOW FOR CHRISTMAS.

On 23rd December this year Friends will be organising the Annual Party, Santa visit and Carol Service. There will be the usual delicious party food, wine and games and arrangements will commence as soon as Sharon recovers from her jet lag. Watch out for a notice in the Community Hall. And if you're one for forward planning and have already received your new diary, make sure you enter January 20th for St. Auggie's very own Haggis Bash.

So a Merry Christmas to all my readers and I look forward to lots more gossip in 2013!



**Janette says to all
her friends at St.
Augustine's....'**

***Wait till I tell you to
have a Merry
Christmas and a
Happy New Year'.***

Tina's Traumas

Ever seen 400 Santas dancing Gangnam Style? Ever tried to preach a sermon in the middle of them? I suspect your answer may be 'no', which is indeed what mine would have been until recently.



There I was, just entering the pulpit, when all hell - well, when Helensburgh Winter Festival's Santa Dash madness - broke loose. The event, in which hundreds of Santas charged along the seafront for charity, ended with a significant number of the red-suited racers joining in the bizarre dance craze which it seems has gone viral. Virus might describe it better. Of course, you can't dance without music. And it seems you can't have music without having it turned up at the loudest possible volume, despite guarantees that there would be no amplification before noon so as not to disturb us peaceful, prayerful Christian folk.

A valiant dash outside by an elder - who doesn't remotely resemble Santa so thankfully wasn't dragged into the melee - failed to temper the tempo. So I did what all preachers do when faced with such a challenge - I bellowed at the top of my voice. I was tempted to thump the pulpit and set my notes ablaze with the Advent candle for maximum 'fire and brimstone' effect but managed to resist.

Afterwards, I was met with sympathetic glances and encouraging pats on the back for soldiering on with the gospel message of tolerance and tranquility in the face of secular and aural assault. Yay, Brownie points for what was a rather rubbish sermon anyway if truth be told. Besides, it's Christmas, the season of goodwill and, it seems, bad timing. Let's face it, as Christians we spend a significant part of our lives shouting against the noise and distraction of competing lifestyles and values. Often, no matter how loud and clear we try to be, there's always something more attractive to turn heads and draw crowds. That's not a challenge exclusively for the festive season.

I expect it would have been noisy in Bethlehem that night as travellers passed to and fro, caught up in their own lives and responsibilities. But it wasn't a huge crowd which gathered at a stable - a few curious shepherds maybe, and one or two random onlookers. And no-one dared raise their voice as a new born baby and his weary mother slept. Yet that night, in the silence of a straw-strewn barn, God shouted his presence among his people and the world in all its madness listened. May we listen still, this Christmas. And may we never tire of shouting its truth in our lives. Have a peaceful and blessed Christmas.

Tina Kemp

St James the Least of All

The Rectory,

St. James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

I had been slightly surprised that in your ministry so far, you have never been asked to give an after-dinner speech. Now you have delivered your first one, I can understand why. Speeches after any dinner come at the point where stomachs are dealing with a little too much food and brains with about the same quantity of wine. They should be short and witty; sadly, yours was neither.

An hour-long speech on the Herodians and Second Temple Judaism at the time of the birth of Christ was not quite what we had expected. Of course, I applauded your enthusiasm, but I was the only one; the rest of them were asleep. Long after you had left, the catering staff gently vacuumed the carpets around the audience and it was only when the night security guard arrived that the last diners were woken and politely sent home. I suspect you will have put many marriages under strain as husbands, returning home in the early hours of the morning, had to explain to wives why they were so late. Their truthful answers would have been unbelievable.

When the head waiter appeared in a dressing gown and started placing chairs on tables, even you must have suspected that hints were being dropped and I have never heard of a hotel manager interrupting a speech to place his keys on the top table and asking if the last person to leave would kindly lock the main door.

I know that your clerical attire is more usually T-shirt and jeans, but borrowing the curate's dinner suit from your next-door parish was also not a good idea. He is a foot taller and several stones heavier than you. The result was quite worrying - several people wondered if you had just recovered from some dreadful disease that had made you shrink.

In the light of your qualified success, thank you for offering to come to repeat your speech after our annual Christmas dinner, but no thank you. The verger's son wants to share with us how many potholes he has counted in and around the town, and that should be most interesting.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Sunday Rotas

Sunday December 9th

11am Eucharist

Readers: Tim Rhead & Jean Carr
Intercessions: Fran Walker
Chalice: Janette Barnes
Sidespersons: Linda Jenkinson & David Ansell

Sunday December 16th

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Barbara Barnes & Gavin Elder
Intercessions: Peter Cairns
Chalice: Sharon Rowatt
Sidespersons: Roberta Mailley & Jean Carr

Sunday December 23rd

11am Eucharist

Readers: Linda Macaulay & Sharon Rowatt
Intercessions: Maggie Wallace
Chalice: Margaret Hardie
Sidespersons: Linda Jenkinson & Tim Rhead

Monday December 24th

Sung Eucharist of the Nativity 11pm

Readers: Maggie Wallace & Margaret Hardie
Chalice: Barbara Barnes
Sidespersons: Chrissie Ashman & Roberta Mailley

Sunday December 30th

11am Eucharist

Readers: Ghislaine Kennedy & Morag O'Neill
Intercessions: David Rowatt
Chalice: Tim Rhead
Sidespersons: Margaret Swan & Gavin Elder

Sunday January 6th 2013

11am Eucharist

Readers: Evelyn O'Neill & Peter Cairns
Intercessions: Tim Rhead
Chalice: Maggie Wallace
Sidespersons: Linda Jenkinson & David Ansell

Sunday January 13th

11am Eucharist

Readers: Janette Barnes & Fran Walker
Intercessions: Margaret Hardie
Chalice: David Rowatt
Sidespersons: Chrissie Ashman & Roberta Mailley

Sunday January 20th

11am Eucharist

Readers: David Rowatt & Tim Rhead
Intercessions: Linda Macaulay
Chalice: Peter Cairns
Sidespersons: Margaret Swan & Ronnie Blaney

Sunday January 27th

11am Eucharist

Readers: Linda Macaulay & Sharon Rowatt
Intercessions: Margot Rhead
Chalice: Margaret Hardie
Sidespersons: Gavin & Ross Elder

NO FLOWERS DURING ADVENT

Flowers for Christmas:

Monday 24th Dec Maggie Wallace Moira McGown
& Irene Telford

JANUARY 2013

Wk ending Jan 5th Linda Macaulay
" " " 12th Barbara Barnes
" " " 19th Maggie Wallace & Mgt Hardie
" " " 26th Moira McGown & M Wallace





MERRY CHRISTMAS
& A HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO EVERYONE
AT ST. AUGUSTINE'S
LOTS OF LOVE
FROM
JEAN CARR





HAPPY CHRISTMAS

AND A JOYOUS

NEW YEAR

FROM MAGGIE AND KANDY KAT

**A Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to all at St.
Augustine's
From
Cathy McKechnie**



Remembering

Again we came to remember those who have died in conflict on Remembrance Sunday.

There was special input from our Girls' Group who made lots of individual poppies for the War Memorial in church.

Service of Remembrance 2012

The church was full again this year as we had our annual Service of Remembrance for those who have died as a result of addiction.

Yet more names were added to our Book of Remembrance, and this year, parents were anxious to be more involved.

A little plaque, remembering our children and friends was blessed and will be mounted in "George's Chapel" with the other memorials we have mounted there.

There was also a "Heart of Roses" which mums from the community came to lay at our altar.

A group of young men in recovery came along from Jericho House to join us all and pay respects to friends they had lost. Together with mums and dads they had a chance to name them and light a candle for them - so many that we almost ran out of candles. God was very near, and a lot of hearts were touched on this special evening.

It's a wonderful, yet heartbreaking service to lead, but one that is necessary for this community. There is one place now where their souls will always be remembered - in St Augustine's Dumbarton.





**TO ALL AT ST. AUGUSTINE'S
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND
ALL THE BEST FOR 2013
LOVE FROM
BETTY GORDON**



**Happy Christmas
to all my friends at
St. Augustine's
From Barbara**



Throughout this Magazine there are several photos, some without captions! The wise will know the difference between the Historic Castle Service from the American Dream photos. (Hint - there were no Disney characters at the Castle Service.) We also have pics from Georgie Duncan's big day, and Remembrance Sunday, including, too, the Service of Remembrance for those who died as a result of addiction. Add to this Christmas Greetings and finding space for everything has been a nightmare! However, we hope you enjoy this special edition!



Lord Matthews hands over the cheque to CHAS, and Georgie Duncan with her team!