

March 2015

PARISH NEWS

EAGLESHAM PARISH CHURCH



Planning for the new Carswell is nearing completion.....

Musings from the manse

March 2015 !In September's magazine I wrote about the systematic persecution of Christians in the Middle East, and pointed out the importance of the "nun" sign painted in their doors to identify them as Christian. I thought about, prayed for and remembered them quite often – then, as these things do, it started to slip from my mind as other important (and unimportant) things took over.

Just because it's out of sight and out of mind, however, doesn't mean it isn't still happening. I was jolted back to reality a fortnight ago when, on a Sunday morning as we were worshipping in the ordinary way in Eaglesham Church, 21 of our Christian brothers were publicly executed in Libya by Islamic State militants. They were young Egyptian Christian men, forced by poverty to find work in a state that has now openly vowed to eliminate all Christian presence. Yet they still did not, and under pressure would not, abandon their Christian faith. The televised images of them in their red construction worker's suits, being marched along a beach by their armed captors, will stay with me for a long time (but probably not as long as it should). What happened next was not televised though their cries could be heard: Jesus, help us. The camera moved to images of a sea red with blood. News reports since then indicate that the slaughter is set to continue: apparently a further 35 Christians have been rounded up and are being held, with not even a pretence of any crime other than being Christian.

I am beyond angry that nobody seems able to stop this. We remember Christian martyrs in the Roman arena and burned at the stake in the Middle Ages but this is 2015 and we think we're civilized. All we can do is to refuse them the ultimate insult of ignoring them. Inadequately, we express our solidarity with these fellow Christians by caring for their situation, being informed, praying, and publicizing the atrocities in the hope of achieving intervention.

Thinking of this as Easter nears, I remember a verse of one of my favourite hymns:

O Cross that liftest up my head
I dare not ask to fly from Thee
I lay in dust life's glory dead
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be. (George Mathieson).

!I feel I have no right to sing this as it rings so hollow from me with my comfortable life and minimal sacrifices. But it does chime out the reality of the death of Christ and the breathtaking paradox of God's ability to bring the best from the worst, life through, after and even because of death. I've read the ending, and He wins. But today, not visibly and not yet. We are able to enter Easter's pain along with Christ confident of what will blossom and blaze from its ending.

Blessings to you all



Easter week services

Sunday March 29. Palm Sunday.
9.30 Traditional Service
11am Contemporary service

Thursday April 2. 7.30pm Maundy Thursday
Communion.

Friday April 3. Good Friday Vigil. 12noon to
3pm Church open for prayer and reflectio.
Come and leave as you wish.

Sunday April 5. 11am Easter Sunday celebration

Creche

A creche for under 3s is held each Sunday in the Carswell Hall during the 11am service. On holiday Sundays the crèche is extended to older children and we ask parents please to accompany their children up to the hall after the first part of the service.

Session Notes

Funding our Youth Work

The Carswell Project continues to be a major emphasis in Session Meetings, and by now you will know the exciting news that we are finally about to start this within the next few months. Looking back through Session minutes, I can see the doggedness and stickability of the Session in relation to this project over a number of years - well done to our Kirk Session for considering this so carefully, looking prayerfully not just at the positives, but also at the difficulties and challenges, and coming to a consensus about taking this forward.

Our budget for 2015 was presented to Session in December 2014. Our Team of Maureen Hunter, Elspeth Napier and David Reid have done sterling work (like the pun?) in looking after our finances. In these days of money difficulties, it is absolutely right that I should pay tribute to their work in making sure that our finances remain fairly strong, and that we are able, for instance, to continue our financial commitment to the national church and thus support churches who have far fewer resources than we have.

As a Presbyterian Church, the Church of Scotland places a considerable emphasis on the role of Elders, and the national church has recently produced a document on the Eldership with many interesting and thought provoking ideas. We have started as a Session to consider this in earnest in relation to how we serve our congregation - do we need to adapt and develop other ways of working? and if so what might these look like? But this is really about how we as Elders support and serve you as church members - so please feel free to discuss with your Elder as to how you feel we might do this better! Any ideas welcome.

Unfortunately, two of our Elders, Shelagh McHugh and Beverley Miller, have reluctantly decided they have to resign from Session. They will be a great loss, as they have both played very important roles - Beverley as Leader of Church Builders and Shelagh as our Safeguarding Coordinator. We wish them both well in the future.

Wendy Armstrong

Session Clerk

Our church has been blessed over the last six years with two talented youth ministers, Russell Shields and James Edgar. The overall objective has been to see the young people of our parish being exposed to the Christian faith. At present James has numerous points of youth contact, as outlined in the last church magazine. Whilst the number of young people attending our church service on a Sunday is small there are a sizeable number attending various events.

James has an input within EPYC (our Sunday evening youth event), Mearns Castle High School Christian Union group for secondary 1 and 2 pupils, and JAFFA (at Eagelsham Primary School). He is involved in other initiatives with young people. For example the summer holiday club is one of the great successes over recent years providing the children with enormous amounts of fun but also a great understanding of the Christian faith. James has a key role within this in both setting up and fronting the programme. The 50+ youngsters who attend are often also seen around Church Builders and later come into EPYC. James also has a large input into our more recent ventures in Messy Church and the new Sunday morning contemporary service. The badminton club although not overtly Christian in outlook is an excellent contact to over 30 youngsters on a Saturday morning. James also attends the Boys Brigade company section and the guides.

Our church has benefitted hugely from the youth minister concept. Whilst many churches struggle with an absence of youth we have a significant contact with the young people in our village. The increase in work by James has seen his contract adjusted from 20 to 25 hours per week. This is run through a fund separate from the church's budget. A number of church members completed standing orders/direct debits (which allows for deeds of covenant reclaims). At present there is a surplus that will allow us to see the funding through to the end of the year and a little beyond. However, with the extension of his weekly hours and the hope to extend this ministry into future years there is a need to invite others to contribute to this essential aspect of our church life. Should you wish to join this funding a standing order/direct debit form is available at the back of the church and also can be downloaded from the church's website.

Stuart McClery

Youth Strategy Convener

News from the Youth Organisations.....

Boys Brigade

Our 60th Anniversary Camp is this year and we would like to buy new equipment to be able to continue to provide all boys with a fantastic summer holiday in Arran. To this end there is a Fundraising Races Night at the Eaglesham Bowling Club on Saturday 21st March. All (over 18s) welcome for £6 ticket including nibbles. There will be a full licensed bar so come along for a laugh. Tickets can be bought from any of the BB sections on their parade night or contact Richard Burt on 07714339779. Our other fundraiser was the annual jumble sale on Saturday 14th March. If you have missed the opportunity to contribute to this new equipment fund, Richard would still be pleased to hear from you! Many thanks,

Greg Cunningham O/C."

Junior Section

This session is continuing to run smoothly and the months of February, March and April are extremely busy for our Junior Section. Six of our Junior Section boys recently won silver medals at the district Superstars event. Several also picked up gold, silver and bronze medals at the battalion athletics and district swimming gala. Finally we were narrowly beaten in the final of the 5-aside competition and claimed another impressive set of silver medals. Busy times!

Each of the events have been well attended and our boys have taken part in true BB spirit giving their all and representing the company with pride. Our league football continues on a Saturday morning with an exciting title run-in expected! Big thanks to those who continue to support the boys so faithfully on a Saturday morning. Dates for the Diary:

Junior Section Annual Display: Thursday 14th May
Junior Section camp [P5 and 6]: May 29 - 31

Boys and staff look forward with great anticipation to the coming months!

Gary Rushworth / Mark Robertson

Anchor Boys

The end of 2014 saw an exciting couple of weeks at Anchor Boys. We had a visit from Santa at our Christmas party which was great fun! A group of us also went to the Royal Concert Hall to watch a Children's classical Christmas concert by the RSNO. We had a wonderful time listening to music from the likes of Home Alone & The Nutcracker and dancing & singing along to some of our favourite Christmas carols!

The new session got off to a great start and has flown in really quickly. At the moment we are trying our very best to do some good deeds every week. For each good deed the boys can add some colourful decoration to Jesus' cross and hopefully by Easter each squad's cross will be lovely and bright!

After Easter the real hard work will begin as we prepare for our Annual Display and Inspection in May. We are always busy at Anchor Boys but the fun never stops!

Elaine

3rd Eaglesham Brownies

We have been busy since the New Year with a varied programme of events. We started with a games night and then an evening celebrating Australia Day where the girls made boomerangs. The girls made cards and sand art key rings for Valentine's Day. We had a baking evening where we made truffles and pancakes. Over the next couple of weeks we are doing the Computing Badge. We have access to computers so the girls can work on the badge in the hall sharing one between two. We will also be celebrating Thinking Day.

Brownies are for girls between the ages of 7 and 10-11. If you wish any further information please contact Elaine Wallace

The Guild.....

We started our 2014/15 Session with our fund-raising event for the Carswell Hall when the Stonehouse Male Voice Choir presented an excellent concert in the Church. We have continued to have a varied and interesting selection of speakers over the year, held our Christmas Cracker Coffee Morning, had a Jean Armour Supper on a very snowy evening and considering the weather that night there was an excellent turnout. Our recent Charity Coffee Morning in February raised the excellent sum of £826. We are now on the run down to the end of our 2014/15 session and will look forward to our World Day of Prayer on 6th March and Afternoon Tea to be held at the end of April (date to be confirmed).

We are very fortunate to have three leaders who take turns in leading us on Wednesday evenings (Margaret, Valerie and Pat) and a huge thank you must go to these ladies for all their hard work and on keeping us afloat. Thank you 'girls'.

Fiona Hamilton
Secretary

Toddlers Playtime



Toddlers Playtime continues to run in the Carswell Hall on a Friday afternoon from 1.15 to 2.45. All parents and carers of young children are welcome to come along for a cup of tea and a chat while the little ones play.

Intelligent Design-a credible idea?

- a letter from Ronald MacLean

On March 2 Carsbridge Evangelical church hosted a meeting addressed by Dr Alastair Noble, former chemistry teacher and now Director of the Centre for Intelligent Design, and Prof. David Galloway, President Elect of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. Four of an audience of around 100 were from Eaglesham. Both talks were stimulating and well presented. Dr Noble concentrated on what he described as "Neo-Darwinism", and argued that there was "overwhelming" evidence for design in such as the DNA helix and the "just right" conditions present on Earth. He illustrated with many quotations from philosophers and scientists, some demonstrating unreasonable refusal to consider design in creation.

Surveys have shown that present day young people are becoming increasingly atheistic with fewer than 30% having faith in a Creator God. The speakers attributed this to Education systems refusing to allow teaching of Intelligent Design. Science lessons adopt Richard Dawkins' teaching

that "life began on Earth without any supernatural input". Alan McKay in discussion felt that the Christian Church does not cope well with the subject of evolution with a serious risk of alienating scientifically educated youth.

This was part of a series 'Science & Faith in a sceptical age'. It includes a James Gregory Lecture by Dr Rowan Williams in St Andrews on 13th April, and another seminar, "The Devil's Delusion" to be held in Mearns Castle High School on Monday 11th May at 7.30pm.!

It was a worthwhile and challenging meeting and it would be good if Eaglesham Church had a bigger representation in future. This could help when we are considering, "The God Question".

Easter Week...Charles Kingsley

See the land, her Easter keeping,
Rises as her Maker rose.
Seeds, so long in darkness sleeping,
Burst at last from winter snows.
Earth with heaven above rejoices;
Fields and gardens hail the spring;
Shaugh and woodlands ring with voices,
While the wild birds build and sing.

You, to whom your Maker granted
Powers to those sweet birds unknown,
Use the craft by God implanted;
Use the reason not your own.
Here, while heaven and earth rejoices,
Each his Easter tribute bring-
Work of fingers, chant of voices,
Like the birds who build and sing.

The Carswell Project - Fundraising Success

During a meeting of the congregation held after the Sunday Service on 8th February, the Minister paid tribute to all those who had helped to organise events and who played a major role in achieving the successful conclusion to our Year of Fundraising.

Earlier, Hugh Green had clearly explained our financial situation prior to embarking on the building and conversion project scheduled to commence in late May this year. Hugh stated that by taking the contribution of £114,000 from congregation and community, a combination of income from events held, donations, pledged money and gift aid, adding it to grant money received and funds from the sale of the Lesser Hall, the result was a grand total of £512,000. This is an extraordinary total sum which, viewed from our position almost exactly a year ago seemed unattainable. During the year, the efforts of several key individuals, through their organisational skills and in driving the fundraising project forward, have been remarkable and much is owed by many to those few in achieving this total figure. Thanks are, of course, due to everyone in the congregation and wider community who contributed in any way, baking, supporting events, giving of their time, etc. Without this wider support, the end result would not have been possible.

Fundraising continues as Jim McLean, our resourceful and hugely knowledgeable Grants Expert, approaches remaining grant funders to bridge the projected cost gap of £115,000. Jim is confident of raising this sum, perhaps a little more, which could deliver a useful buffer of funds in the latter stages of construction. At that point we must turn our thoughts to furniture, fittings and aesthetic issues of decor and lighting which will transform our architect's vision into a stunning and welcoming suite of new accommodation.

At that point, too, an opportunity may present for those in the congregation who have been unable to contribute so far, to consider a smaller donation in the form of a dedicated chair or table or some other item of furnishing. We have not yet given time or thought to those matters but as the year progresses and the new Carswell takes shape we must ensure that the final result is enhanced by the way we approach those final important touches.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Fundraising Team over the last months.

Craig Wishart

Stuart MacGill adds.....

2013 was the year of planning; 2014 the year of fundraising; and 2015 will be the year of building. Tenders for the complete project are due back in early March with a view to starting work in late May as soon as organisational activity has begun to tail off for the summer. The bulk of the work will be carried out over the summer months to minimise disruption but it will spill over into the autumn so please look out for information about alternative locations for activities in September/October. Work should be complete in time for a formal opening in December.

This is a really exciting time for Eaglesham as we look to make positive use of our new facilities to advance the work of the Church. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a real difference to our mission as God's people in Eaglesham. We hope you will all be keen to get involved in the new initiatives. This is just the beginning.....

And from the Fabric Team....

It's an exciting time in the Fabric with the prospect of the Carswell Project being within our grasp. The refurbishment will mean a lot of extra work for the team in preparation for the builder's arrival, but hopefully it should mean a lot less work in the future once the job is completed. Our main task will be emptying the building and finding storage for everything that currently 'lives' there.

But, back to immediate plans. We are going to press ahead with the external repairs to the church which we had to drop from last year's budget due to more urgent repairs. So as soon as Spring arrives, look out for the scaffold and the completion of the decor by a contractor. As we wait for the clocks to change, we have no shortage of external works to tackle.

We are monitoring water ingress to the steeple, and we have problems with the floodlights also from water ingress. With the wet winter, we've had our share of storm damage in all our buildings.

On the good news front, the steeple clock has had its annual service and is in good shape. The on-going problems with the multi media have been repaired Free of Charge, so we hope that this issue is behind us.

Jim Alexander

A Financial Report from the Admin Team

At the end of another financial year for our Church we have both good and bad news. The budget for 2015 has been passed by the Kirk Session and follows this article. The good news is that our income did not decrease at the same rate as it has in the past – and as a result we will have a small surplus at the end of 2014.

The bad news is that, while we estimate our income will remain reasonably constant in 2015, we have had to budget for an increase in expenditure in various areas – primarily in our Ministry and Mission allocation which has increased by around £6500 – and this will result in a projected deficit of around £3000. (Ministry and Mission is the amount we pay to the Church of Scotland. It covers the employment costs of our Minister and subsidises the costs of Ministry in areas which are unable to meet the total cost themselves). The Finance Committee did check the calculation of the figure which is based on Church income over the last 3 years and, although it seems high, it is correct.

So, thank you for our income in 2014 but we are asking everyone to review their Church givings in 2015 – a recent analysis of givings shows that a staggering 34% of our members do not appear to give regularly to the Church! If you belong to that group, please consider making a regular donation through FWO, or by cheque or Standing Order – our FWO Convener, Ian Gray, or our Gift Aid Convener, Ronnie McIntyre, would be delighted to hear from you. If you are a taxpayer, signing a Gift Aid form enables the Church to claim back 20% of your donation from HMRC!

The audited accounts will be presented at the Stated Annual Meeting which will take place immediately after the morning service on Sunday, 22nd March. They will be available on our website (password protected) with some paper copies available at the back of the Church.

Maureen Hunter, Admin Convener

BUDGET 2015	ACTUAL (EST)	BUDGET	BUDGET
	2014	2014	2015
	£	£	£
INCOME			
Offerings	122,182	113,000	120,000
Tax Recovered	24,683	21,000	23,000
Other income	1,301	1,000	1,000
Weddings and funerals	150	1,000	500
Use of premises	11,203	12,000	12,000
Contributions from organisations	2,000	2,000	2,000
Interest	1,768	0	1,700
TOTAL INCOME	163,287	150,000	160,200
EXPENDITURE			
Ministries and Mission Allocation	81,500	81,508	88,364
Presbytery Dues	4,627	4,384	4,800
Minister's Expenses	3,153	2,250	2,500
Pulpit Supply & Locum	0	250	0
Other staff costs	16,089	15,688	16,500
Fabric repairs and maintenance	23,048	20,000	20,000
Council Tax	2,193	2,300	2,300
Water charges & Insurance	7,807	8,222	8,500
Heat and light	12,041	14,139	12,600
Local Outreach	1,035	1,850	1,050
Office Costs	1,853	1,841	1,900
General expenses	1,263	1,789	1,800
Cleaning and Laundry	617	0	625
Pastoral care	200	400	400
Music and Worship	441	500	400
Youth	263	250	300
Faith Development	110	200	250
TEAR FUND	1,200	1,200	1,200
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	157,440	156,771	163,489
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	5,847	(6,771)	(3,289)