

Howwood Parish Church

charity number SC003487



December 2015 Newsletter

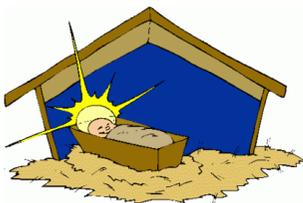
Letter from Rev May Bell



Here we are, now in the lead up to Christmas, although as all are aware, our shops and stores began their Christmas Extravaganza basically a good month or two ago. Every year I am saddened at what I see with regard the shops and stores. They have on show all that is relative to Halloween, and alongside this, they have the beginnings of their Christmas decorations etc. Sadly many do not see a problem with this, they do not see a great difference with regard each celebration, as it is all about having a good time, great fun and many parties to be organised for each celebration. With no real distinction between the two. They have not truly recognised that one is the celebration of what is dark in our world, what is not of God, and the other celebration is truly celebrating the Light that entered our world through God's Son Jesus Christ. What people have said to me is that they see many houses heavily decorated at the time of Halloween, but not so the case with the celebration of Christmas. Of course this should not surprise us, as we aware that Christ is very much being pushed out of this Christian celebration. In a sense you are spoiling the fun speaking about Jesus being born in that stable. On Facebook, a nativity scene was shown and under it a person wrote, 'It has been said that we are encouraged not to share the Christian message at this time of celebration because, well, we

have to remember that many other religions could be offended'. Is this not worrying? I think it is!

So let us look at what we Christians celebrate at this special time. Let us go beyond the glitter, tinsel and fairy lights etc, although in saying this I personally love all that also. The minute the glitter and fantastic decorations are shown in the shops, it is hard for me to keep away and then, when all the houses have their Christmas lights on, I love it. So much so that one year I was taking my walk around my street to really enjoy seeing the lit up windows, I was so busy looking and admiring that I did not see an ice patch on the pavement, and of course fell all my length and had to be taken to casualty with a badly sprained wrist!! Yes, I admit to love all this, but if that was all Christmas meant to me, I would have an awful empty heart. We who truly believe in the Christchild...the Son of God, we see a wooden crib and we also see the wooden empty cross. I say this because if you do not, through faith, believe in the resurrected Christ that baby in the wooden crib in the stable would be just another child born into our world. No need for all in the world to celebrate. Just another new born baby.





Yes, let we

Christians celebrate the Birth of the Christchild, not only celebrate but let others know what Christmas really means to you. Take every opportunity to invite friends and family to our Christmas services, that they too may share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Love, Joy, Peace and Goodwill to all men! If ever there was a time to share the Good News of Christ, it is now. Our world is a dark place, and we are reminded of this through the awful happenings in Paris. Again and again we are faced with terrorist attacks and are shocked again and again. No words can truly express our feelings. But what we do know, this is not of God. And that again is a reminder there is darkness in our world and because of that we should stand together in this our Christian country, stand together with all who desire Peace with their neighbour be across the road or across the world.

We who are Christians have our own message to give and that is to remind all that:

JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

And may we say also, God's Blessing be upon all who desire Peace in our World.

To you all I say:

This Christmas...'May God's Blessing touch your life and the lives of all who you love'

Locum and Friend

Rev May Bell

Law and Grace

Law manifests what is in man - sin

Grace manifests what is in God - love

Law demands righteousness from men

Grace brings righteousness to men

Law sentences men to death

Grace brings dead men to life

Law tells man what to do

Grace tells man what Christ has done

Law gives a knowledge of sin

Grace puts away sin

Law is a burden too heavy to bear

Grace points us to our burden bearer - Christ.

Oh to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be



Daily Bible Reading Notes

At the start of a new year why not begin each day with an awareness of God and His presence with us through His Word?

Bring the men and women of the bible to life and learn more of God's character and His plan for His creation through guided daily Bible reading. There is a variety of publications to help us with this.

If you would like to find out more, see Georgie Inglis or go online at www.scriptureunion.org.uk.



If you take Christ out of Christmas, all you're left with is M&S



Property matters

Thank you to everyone who came during the summer to help with the maintenance jobs needed to help keep our church buildings and grounds in a tidy state.

If you can wield a hoe or paint brush and spend a little time to keep our property in good condition, please make yourself known - you will be most welcome.



We had some encroaching bushes cut back during the summer and new gravel has been spread in front of the church which has much improved this area.

Security - an updated checklist is displayed at the front door to remind the 'Responsible Person' locking up to ensure basic points have been followed. Also, please report any suspicious activity in or around the church grounds/buildings to the police immediately.

Craig Crawford
Property Convener



What is the Prayer Group?

Jesus tells us we should pray, all the time, and that we should seek out His will to be sure we're asking for things that will help us grow, as we try to live and share the gospel.

So that's the role of the prayer group: a small team of persistent prayers who meet regularly to chat with each other and with God, asking for help and guidance, building a firm foundation in prayer for Howwood Parish Church. Our themes are international, national and local and cover a wide variety of topics from the war in the Middle East to concerns over a neighbour's hospital visit.

Amazingly, prayers are always answered, sometimes with a 'yes', 'not yet' or with 'I have a better idea!'.

Spoken or silent prayers are valued and we're regularly delighted by God's grace and mercy, so if you fancy coming along to find out more, you'd be very welcome.

For more info call Alison Purse on 01505 703799

Guild



We are now well into the new season of the Guild, attendances have been good and the fellowship warm. 'Go in Peace' is this year's theme which was introduced at our opening meeting by Sandra Maxwell, a Reader and friend of Howwood Church. Sandra spoke about the achievements of the Church of Scotland Guild in the past, and it's Action Plan for the future. She concluded by leading a short act of dedication for the new Guild year.

On October 26th we were entertained by Mairi Warren who told us the story of Scots missionary Mary Selsor in word and in song, and succeeded in bringing this determined, feisty and dedicated woman to life.

Jim Carruth, a local writer, was our guest on November 9th. Jim's poetry reflects his background in farming and country life, and we enjoyed readings of his work and congratulated him on being appointed Glasgow's Poet Laureate this year.

The Church of Scotland Guild is encouraged to 'Be bold, be strong', not to seek conflict, but to 'Go in Peace'. This was illustrated by our meeting on 23rd November, which highlighted one of this year's Guild projects, Street Pastors. They are amazing people who work late at night in the towns and cities of Scotland, including Paisley, listening, caring, helping and radiating the love of Jesus where people are.

Finally, we look forward to enjoying a Christmas night out on December 14th and a short break before resuming on January 11th, when Nan Robertson will describe the exciting day when she was honoured by the Queen with an MBE.



It takes a lifetime to learn
How to live, how to share, how to give.

How to face tragedy that comes your way;
How to find courage to face each new day.

How to smile when your heart is sore,
How to go on when you can take no more.

How to laugh when you want to cry,
How to be brave when you say goodbye.

How to still love when your loss is so great,
How to forgive when your urge is to hate.

How to be sure that God's really there...
How do we find Him - seek him in prayer.

ARK Sunday School

At present we are busy preparing for our nativity Service on Sunday 20th December. We have been making props for our drama and practising our lines. Look forward to an interesting service! At our recent Christmas Fayre and Coffee Evening one of our young children Kaitlyn who is only six made things to sell at her stall and raised £12.50 for church funds. Well done Kaitlyn!!!!



Friends and Heroes

THANK
YOU!

Sadly this session of Friends and Heroes will be the last one for the present. Our numbers have fallen significantly this session and it is no longer viable to continue. The club has been running for nearly six years now, led by Dougie Adam of West Renfrewshire Youth Trust (WRYT) and we would like to thank Dougie for his hard work over these years. Thanks also to all the volunteers who have helped Dougie bring the stories of Jesus to the children of Howwood in a fun way through video, singing, games and activities.

1st Howwood Brownie Unit

We have started the year with a total of 25 girls...a mixture of girls from Howwood and Lochwinnoch.

In August a number of girls went to South Newton for B-in-The-Park...an afternoon of music, craft, games, hair braiding and lots more. We were so lucky with the weather on the day...the girls who attended really enjoyed it.

This set us straight back into the thick of it, when we welcomed a new guider in our Midst - Corina Cameron. Corina has a number of years experience as a Brownie Guider, is very enthusiastic and has lots of fresh ideas.

We recently enrolled our new recruits, attended Remembrance Sunday service and are currently working towards our World Guiding Badge. We held a 'fairytale' theme party at the end of October, and all the girls dressed as a character from a well-known fairytale. We had Pinocchio, Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs, Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Ugly Sisters and many more. Brown Owl and Snowy Owl dressed as Brownies...much to the amusement of the girls.

We have had many more fun nights since the start of the session too...pjs and pamper evening, games night, visit from Gayle Pollock who spoke to the girls about her adventures at Our Chalet and edible campfire building.

We are hoping to start 2016 with a Sleepover at The Science Centre. Watch this space.....!!

1st Howwood Guides

We have been busy this session. We have 3 Guides working on their BP Challenge Award, Nicole Avril, Melissa McConnachie and Beth Miller. We went on an enjoyable spooky walk at Kelburn Country Park. The guides made jewelled poppies which were worn at Remembrance Sunday Parade. Heather, the assistant Leader will be taking her indoor camp licence at the end of November at South Newton. The unit also welcomed new members, which brings the unit to a healthy 20.



At Christmas-time, when we receive presents we don't really need, God offers a gift we cannot do without.



Semple Ranger (Senior Section) Unit

We are now 15 members strong. Most of the unit plus 3 of our Guides and Leaders went to Adelboden, Switzerland in July of this year. It was an amazing experience for all with wonderful memories and making friends. Rachel Fitzsimmons gained her Bronze DOE. Kathryn Maclean gained her Saltire Award. Karla Sinton gained her Chief Guide Award. We have a few members who are working towards their Commonwealth Award and also gained the First Response Award. We have a member, Channi Pollock, working on her Adult Leadership Qualification (ALQ) to become a Ranger Guider. Kathryn Maclean and Claire McKinnon are also working on their ALQ.

Next year, 2016 the Senior Section will be celebrating their Centenary.

Happy Birthday!!



DEATHS

I am the resurrection and the life. John 11 v 5

W Norris	28.07.15
D Dickie	15.09.15
S Hill	09.15

MARRIAGE

Laura Crawford to David Mayne	17.10.15
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Christmas Services

Sunday 13 December	10am	Gift Service led by the Choir
Sunday 20 December	10am	Nativity Service
Thursday 24 December	7.30pm	Christmas Eve Service
Friday 25 December	10am	Christmas Day Service