Hi Folks,

I have to say that I'm looking forward to a wee break. In the past year I've attended more meetings than ever before; been very busy with a heavy pastoral workload, and kept going with all the services that I have conducted. On top of all those things, my time has been taken up with lots of other Church related activities and, if truth be told, I'm needing a rest. However, in saying all that, I've not been the only busy person in our Church. Some folks are almost full time part timers, and unpaid! The amount of time they give to the Church is incredible. Others are doing all sorts in a regular committed way. The work of the Church is being undertaken by a wonderful group of people, without whom much of what has taken place in this past year wouldn't have. To them, my sincere thanks and hope that all of you have a good summer break, though I know that you will still be doing Church work as well.

The amount of busyness reflects all the good things that are going on and also speaks of the changes that are taking place within Mearns Kirk. Some of what has kept myself and others busy, has been charting the way ahead for our Church, thinking about and planning the changes that we need to make. One big change will be the one Sunday service at 10.15 which will begin on the first Sunday of September. I know that not everyone will be happy with this, but at this time in our life as a Church, I feel that this will be helpful. There are many challenges before us as so much change has, and is taking place in life in a relatively short space of time. We need to ask ourselves, what does Church need to be for today and tomorrow, rather than yesterday? All Churches are facing the same challenges as us; here in Mearns Kirk we are already seeking to meet them.

In the midst of all that is happening, God is the Constant, His love, our abiding source of faith and hope. The Church belongs to God and we must not forget that in all of our thinking. As we move forward we commit ourselves to Him, entrusting all things to Him, seeking His Way, Truth and Life.

Have a good summer and may you know the loving presence of God wherever you find yourself.

Joe
This beautiful landscape is the community of Ifumbo, where our Church congregation is located. Our Church has 680 members and 99% of our members are farmers—which mean they depend on crop production for their income. This land is blessed with good soils, good vegetation and wonderful streams with fresh water, amazing mountains that surround the community and receives good rains throughout the year. Yet, despite this great potential that exists in this land, most families are living in great poverty and can hardly feed their families. We are in the 21st century, yet members from this community are still drinking unsafe water.

There is hope that where there are problems, always solutions will be found and God gives us wisdom to solve such problems. We believe that some people exist so they be a solution to the problem of their neighbour and, as a Church here in Ifumbo, we are embarking on a project which we believe will take this community out of this bondage. We will start training people better methods of farming, try to raise funds in order to dig well protected wells therefore providing safe drinking water to the community. This year the Church will cultivate some crops to set a good example to the community to fight hunger. Please join us in prayer so that we could raise enough funds to buy fertiliser.

VOTE OF THANKS TO FRIENDS IN MEARNS KIRK CHURCH

The entire congregation of Ifumbo are very thankful for the support we have been receiving from our brothers and sisters in Christ from Meams Kirk,

We don't have right vocabulary to express our gratitude, - may God bless you so much. It is our prayer that one day God will give us an opportunity to come to your Church in Scotland and meet the beautiful people who have been supporting us.

Reverend Godwins

ELDERS COFFEE MORNING

Our Elders' Coffee Morning was a great success again this year! An amazing sum of £1,123 was raised, which will go towards the cost of transporting our donations to Ifumbo later in the year.

Thank you to everyone who came, gave donations and helped with the event.

Marje Gillies
Recently I attended a service that was different from what we are used to at Mearns Kirk. Yet there were many familiar features – the Lord’s Prayer, a sermon, readings, hymns and a collection. Scale is one difference. There were about 3,000 people worshipping at St Michael’s and All Angels, Blantyre, Malawi. Not that the number remained static: some people arrived an hour late and others left early. It is worth reflecting that when Rev. Clement Scott, a Scottish missionary, built a brick church for 400 people in the 1890s he was questioned because there were only 40 African communicants in his congregation at that time. Today the congregation has comprehensively outgrown that building. However, the original church is cherished and well maintained. It now houses the Sunday School. The main service took place in a large and modern Multipurpose Hall funded by the congregation themselves. The duration of the service – 4.5hrs - was another feature that seemed unusual from a Mearns Kirk perspective. However, it would be misleading to suggest that it was dull. There were two excellent choirs and an energetic praise band which produced music that guaranteed that everyone would get up on their feet and join in the dancing and clapping. In fact, there was an atmosphere of joy and thanksgiving that was both uplifting and inspiring. It was interesting as an outsider to observe the large number of children and teenagers in church (or in the vicinity of church). Many sat with their families. Others, especially the younger ones, moved around. When they wished, they could go outside to play. It seemed as if those attending Sunday School were a scholarly group, prepared to focus on Bible study albeit not for the entire duration of the service. The service was conducted in both Chichewa and English – approximately 75% in Chichewa. As I do not speak that language, it seems inevitable that I will have missed some of the nuances of what was being said. Nonetheless, my overwhelming impression remained that of being welcomed into the worldwide family of the church. Perhaps I should add that Ifumbo Church (with which we are twinned) is bound to be different from St Michael’s and All Angels, Blantyre in material terms. Blantyre is the commercial heart of Malawi and many of the congregation at St Michael’s and All Angels have good jobs and give generously to their church. Ifumbo, being very remote and entirely rural, faces real hardship. And yet, I would hazard a guess that a visitor to Ifumbo would experience much the same warm welcome that I found in Blantyre.

Alistair Tough

**AN AFRICAN SERVICE in ST MICHAELS & ALL ANGELS BLANTYRE, MALAWI**

**CHURCH GUILD**

This session has proved to be very successful. We had an Open Night when we were delighted to welcome some gentlemen, to hear Liam from Medecins Sans Frontiere, making light of the life threatening situations they find themselves in when they take their medical skills to trouble spots.

We had a most enjoyable evening with Joyce Grenfel (in the person of Yvonne!) telling her tales in every accent under the sun, which was truly hilarious.

Valerie came along from Ella Bulloch’s Hat Shop, bringing with her four elegant ladies who modelled breath taking hats—some of which seemed to defy gravity. Jewellery and bags added to the glamour of the most enjoyable opening evening.

We had a most interesting evening with Professor Stan Paliwoda from Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) who fly into the most inaccessible places with medical supplies and aid. The pilots really do put their lives on the line.

The world Day of Prayer was held in Maxwell Mearns Church Hall. This is always a poorly attended service, but our Church can be proud of our Guild who never fail to attend.

We spent an evening with Joanne from Jecc’s Hair Design. Joanne is a member of our Church and known to many of us. She told us about training as a hairdresser, and how to care for our hair. Again we had six models and hopefully we will be able to recreate some of the styles!

Last year we had a Craft Evening which revealed talents our ladies did not know they possessed, so we decided to repeat the experience! Each lady made an Easter wreath and three cards of varying size and design. We had invasion of bunnies with Easter eggs, lots of laughter, but also a bit of learning so who knows what works of art may appear!

Our last meeting will be our AGM where decisions have to be made regarding the future of our Guild.

We have missed Doris so much at our meetings, both as a leader and as our pianist. We thank her so much for all that she has done in the Guild—and ALWAYS with a smile! Her presence has always been a joy, and, yes, we miss her immaculate music, but we pray for her return to good health and that she will soon be back among us.

Sheila Goldie
The Kirk Session has decided that we should change to one service on Sundays - at 10.15am. This will start on Sunday 3 September 2017.

Our usual summer services will be at 10.30am for June, July and August

A lot of thought and discussion has been had to reach this decision which has been made because we see that numbers are falling in attendance at both 9.30am and 11am services. We have heard varying views about different service time options and it was felt that 10.15am was fairer to people who have attended both 9.30am and 11am services (45 minute difference to each congregation). In the wider Church, membership numbers are decreasing and so to maintain and grow our church we need to consider doing things differently. A new service for younger families is being explored, Cafe church will continue from time to time and traditional worship will carry on weekly at 10.15am

The long-awaited repair to the wall around the Church (the part between the Church and halls) will start in August and should last for around six weeks.

Our Ministries and Mission contribution to the Church of Scotland for 2017 is £124,222, of which £104,346 goes to Ministries and £19,876 to Mission. For every £10 of the total, £4.20 is kept by the local Church, £4.88 pays for ministry with the Church of Scotland and 92p goes to congregations needing help as well as supporting the mission of the Church.

Our Church halls have been a great asset to us, but thinking to the future we need to consider how to make the best use of hall space. Mearns Kirk Helping Hands hopes to make more use of our halls and in order to plan this, while keeping existing bookings, we wanted to speak with hall users. A meeting was held recently with hall users about their groups’ use of our Church halls and what they would like to see (in an ideal world!) in the future. The information we now have will form part of our work to take forward a possible refurbishment of the current building or a possible new build.

Dear God,
If you watch in Church on Sunday, I will show you my new shoes.

Dear God,
I went to this wedding and they KISSED right in Church. Is that okay?

Dear God,
We read Thomas Edison made light. But in Sunday School they said you did. So I bet he stole your idea.
Our FIRST EVER Plant Sale in aid of Christian Aid saw the new hall transformed into a plant and bedding nursery—as you can see from the above photos! There was a great atmosphere and people were very impressed with the protective flooring—which proved very durable and provided the carpet with a protective layer.

The scent in the room was truly wonderful and it was such a huge success—raising £740 for the charity!! - this event will definitely be returning next year so put the date in your diary!

Jesus said to them “come and have breakfast.” John 21:12

We think this quote from John’s Gospel bears repeating. Just as Jesus brings his disciples around a table before his crucifixion, when the resurrected Christ appears before them, He again invites them to eat together.

He is showing us how we can build a community; love each other; share what we have with those that have less.

The Big Breakfast, in conjunction with Café Church, again returned this year and proved to be another way to raise funds whilst enjoying a delicious breakfast with friends and learning about Christian Aid and the word of God. Money raised from this event was £507.50.

The Final Total raised for Christian Aid this year was an astounding £4,284.73.

Truly all events were well attended and I hope folks enjoyed the diverse range of events and it will encourage us to help build community and fellowship amongst our Church Family.

I would like to thank everybody who donated and for everybody who helped me and helped make all the events such a success. I am absolutely delighted with the money raised and the feedback received.

Mandy Stewart

Swingfellas returned for another sell out concert on Friday 19th May and the Church Hall was jumping to the big band sound and the wonderful vocals of Sam Lapping. The evening was another wonderful event and raised £2565.08 for Christian Aid.
This month the Walking Group set off from the Church Car Park to Eaglesham. After parking the cars, we started to walk along the road towards Strathaven, but as there was quite a lot of traffic on the road, and because there was no pavement, walking on the grass verge became increasingly difficult, so we decided to turn off the main road, and started to walk up a really lovely country road. We stopped to admire a beautiful garden full of daffodils and pretty Spring flowers. We then continued to walk up the road until we reached a stile which we all clambered over into a field, and at this point the scenery was breathtaking. Beyond the green fields we could see the reservoir in the distance and blossom was starting to form on the trees. In between the April showers and the high wind, we eventually reached the Water Works at the top of the Orry in Eaglesham. We then walked down Montgomery Street and into the Wishing Well for very welcome tea and coffee before making our way back to Mearnskirk.

May is always one of the most pleasant months to enjoy our countryside with all the new lush green foliage everywhere. Nine of us set off and drove to Paisley to begin our walk on the Gleniffer Braes. There are various approaches to these walks which we have done before over the years, all offering slightly different perspectives, but on this occasion we started at the lodge house which is the nearest. Initially the path is a parkland one and rises through the trees until we pass through a Glen with a waterfall finally meeting the road which divides it from the next section of the Braes. On crossing over at this point the path opens up and very soon as you take the rise, wonderful open views abound. Firstly below lies the whole of Paisley and the Airport, with aircraft taking off and landing, and Glasgow itself where we enjoyed identifying various landmarks. As it was a clear day we could also enjoy the views of the distant hills and Ben Lomond itself.

June is the month when we venture a little further afield for our summer outing. This year we are going to Dumfries House in Cumnock to explore its lovely grounds and formal walled gardens and hopefully the sun will shine for us.

Irene Graham
0141 639 4192

Two Mearns Kirk members are joining a 78-year-old friend as he attempts to climb the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales in just 24 hours. Neil Leslie and Alan Wilkinson will be part of a team led by the remarkable Jimmy Munro as they scale Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Mount Snowdon in a bid to raise funds for the Marie Curie cancer charity. They will be joined in the venture by Jimmy’s son Andy - who also regularly attends Mearns Kirk - and Fraser Ainslie. The group will start at the base of Ben Nevis at 5pm on Friday June 9 and hope to have completed all three by 5pm on the Saturday. They will be driven between the hills by Andy’s colleague David Young, 25. The group were inspired to take on the challenge after seeing Marie Curie nurses care for Jimmy’s dying brother-in-law Tam McGlone, who was also Alan’s father-in-law.

It is just the latest in a series of challenges Jimmy has taken on since retiring. The remarkable pensioner has crossed the Sahara, climbed the highest Mountains in Europe, South America and North America, cycled from Land’s End to John O’Groats and last year completed the 175 mile Great Outdoor Challenge for Alzheimer’s Scotland.

Jimmy said: “Tams son-in-law Alan, myself and my son Andy, together with two of Andy and Alan’s friends Neil and Fraser decided to do something to try to raise awareness of this magnificent organisation and hopefully raise some much needed funds for them along the way.

“As Tam battled bravely with cancer everyone rallied round to his aid, but we knew it still wasn’t enough. Step in Marie Curie nurses. They were absolutely amazing. They were at Tam’s bedside from 10pm in the evening until 7 am next morning tending to him and keeping him comfortable through the night. They even took a little sponge to moisten his lips now and again.

“Sadly Tam passed away but it was very peacefully, mainly down to Marie Curie. Neil’s Mum and Dad were also cared for in the final days of their lives in a Marie Curie hospice for which he says he’ll be for ever grateful.

“It’s very comforting to know that these fantastic people are there for all of us at these times.

There’s one more motivation for the lads to get finished in time on the Saturday – the Scotland v England World Cup Qualifying tie kicks off at 5.10pm. Anyone wishing to donate to the cause should go to www.justgiving.com/jimmymunro
In 1990, Blue Peter followed a British Hovercraft Expedition up the Yangtze River. My brother, Robert, was selected to be a Captain on the crew. At one point repairs were needed to the Hovercraft and Robert managed to travel with the address to the town where Eva lived. Initially, there was caution about allowing a white stranger into Eva’s home as she had already suffered imprisonment for her faith and for fraternising with foreigners. Eventually Robert was allowed in and they had a very emotional reunion. It was short, but very sweet, and no repercussions followed!

My husband John had wanted to take me back to my roots for many years, but it was not until after the death of both my parents that the right opportunity came up. The tour had an interesting itinerary within China, but of most interest to us was that it visited the town of my birth. I asked my brother for Eva’s address—he thought it better that I should write to her nephew who could pass on my letter to her. This I did, but had no response from either. We went ahead with our holiday.

Each time we arrived at a new destination we were given a new local guide. In Tali we were given Aaron, a young Communist. He asked if anyone had been to Tali before. John told him that I had been born there. He laughed! I showed him my passport, but he tossed it back with a casual “Not same place!” I was not amused! I suggested that he should check with his friends about Missionaries in the 1940s and the Protestant Church there. Next morning, at breakfast, it was a very different Aaron who approached us. He was desperately apologetic and most eager to do all in his power to help me find my roots. When all our “official” tours were finished he took us to the Protestant Church. A Chinese girl directed us to the home of elderly church members who might remember the Missionaries. We went to the address and an old man answered the door and claimed that he did remember them but, to my shame, I feared he was saying that hoping for some money!!

We were invited in and chatted about the past. The old man, Timothy, (the name given to him by the Missionaries) convinced me of his authenticity when he pointed at me and said “You must have brother” I was SO ashamed that I had doubted him. His wife, Faith, joined us. She asked if we knew Eva. She and Eva were good friends and phoned each other every month. She promised to pass on our travel plans to the crew. At one point repairs were needed to the Hovercraft and Robert managed to travel with the address to the town where Eva lived. Initially, there was caution about allowing a white stranger into Eva’s home as she had already suffered imprisonment for her faith and for fraternising with foreigners. Eventually Robert was allowed in and they had a very emotional reunion. It was short, but very sweet, and no repercussions followed!

Our holiday continued. Each place had much of interest, but nothing matched Tali. We were heading back to Kunming where I hoped to meet Eva in the airport. I wrote a placard “Diane for Eva”, feeling that it was not incriminating, but would convey to the right person who I was. We came off the plane into the Arrivals area and I held up my card. Nobody came forward. A new guide appeared and directed us to our next flight. We followed her and pushed our luggage through. In a last ditch attempt to see Eva we returned to the Arrivals hall, now far less busy.

A tiny Chinese figure in typical Chinese attire carrying a very small bright yellow umbrella was walking towards us. Her face was worried and sad. I felt she HAD to be Eva. I held up my card. The worried expression suddenly transformed. A huge smile shattered the gloom and a thousand smile line/wrinkles lit up her lovely face. It was Eva. An American Missionary had driven her to the airport and was with her (we still communicate with Lisa)

Lisa told us that Eva had been put in prison for spreading Christian literature given to her Church by American visitors. Now in her 80s, her fellow Christians were praying for her release knowing that the conditions in Chinese prisons were harsh in the extreme. Eva was undaunted. If prison was where she was to be then that was where she was to witness to her Faith and she refused to shut up! The guards decided that she was more trouble in prison than out so she was discharged long before her sentence was fulfilled. What a lady, a faithful saint. It was an emotional reunion and parting but oh, so worthwhile. The following year an email from Lisa told us of Eva’s death. Great would be the rejoicing in heaven over such a dedicated and faithful servant entering into the joy of her Lord.

Returning to Tali (which is close to the Burmese border), to discover my roots was the fulfilment of a long hoped for wish of my husband (especially my husband!) and me. However, for both of us the real miracle was our meeting with Eva at Kunming Airport. In the VASTNESS of China, the God of miracles brought about this totally unexpected, but glorious, reunion. If we take God out of the equation, this meeting would have been impossible, but with Him ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Diane Spiers
Many years ago, Jean Binning (who was our Church organist) responded to a plea from Margaret Courts, to bring some of her Choir members to entertain the Friendship Club.

This gave Jean the idea to form a little group which could go round care homes etc, and sing for them. This she did, and we have gone from strength to strength.

There are now 17 of us, including Jean who plays for us and arranges our programmes. We are a happy group who meet on Monday mornings and sing for approximately one hour. Our music is all “sing alongable” ranging from Scottish songs to folk songs, from show songs to more serious pieces, all interspersed with solos and comic poetry. We do not call ourselves a Choir, but we have been known to sing 2-part songs! We have also been know to make the odd mistake, but happily, our audiences make allowances and laugh along with us.

We started off going to the Guilds Clubs and care homes, but our preferred venues are care homes where we feel we can do most good, leaving our audiences happy and brighter. Our only problem now is trying to squeeze us all into available space—and, of course, carrying our keyboard around.

We are greatly indebted to Jean for her patience and to our compere, Alison, who travels up from Ayr every week, researches all our songs, and then gives a little potted history of each piece—and then sings along with us!.

We all love what we do and hope to go on singing as long as we can!

Sheila Goldie

The Club is currently taking a break for the Summer and will resume on 29th August, meeting as usual, in the Main Hall from 1.45 p.m.-3.15 p.m. Additional information below:

29th August Mary Kathleen Burke Singer, Guitarist
September 12th Alex Proctor – Easy Listening Singer, Guitarist
September 26th Pete Christie with his “Band in a Box”

All are welcome.

Aileen Fyfe

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the donations for the Flower Fund received in recent weeks totalling £100.

Margaret Withycombe

So far this year we have collected £270 for the Eastwood Dementia Project which is held in the Stables at Eastwood Park.

Thank you so much to everyone who has donated. Please keep collecting your small change and see if we can reach last years total of £663. I am sure you all know someone who is suffering from dementia and all money collected will certainly be put to good use. Please leave all donations in the box in the vestibule.

Many thanks

Mary Deas
**AT REST:** Jesus said “I am the Resurrection and the Life”

February 24: Norrie Andrews, Mearns
March 17: Jimmy Watt, Mearns
March 27: DOREEN GEORGESON, Mearns
March 27: Thomas McGlone, Giffnock
April 4: Betty Hall, Mearns
April 20: Maisie Beggs, Mearns
April 26: Alastair Glen, formerly Mearns
April 28: Tommy Cruickshank, Mearns
April 28: Jim Perrat, Mearns
May 4: Pearl Potter, Mearns
May 22: Joyce Mackenzie, Mearns
May 31: Anne Mackie, Mearns
June 3: Ella Chudleigh, formerly Mearns

**BEREAVEMENT GROUP**

Eastwood Bereavement Group meet in the Church Hall at 7pm on the 1st Tuesday of each Month. If you are struggling with the loss of a loved one, please join us in the Small Hall, where you will be made most welcome.

This Community Group is for ALL people trying to cope with the pain of bereavement and our aim is to try to offer support at this very difficult time.

Christina Shafi

**PASTORAL CARE**

The Pastoral Group makes visits to the elderly, infirm, house-bound, those in care homes etc. Please call Margaret Gray on 0141 644 1606 if you know of anyone who should be on our list. We will be delighted to visit them.

Margaret Gray (Convener)

Please inform Joe if you are ill, in hospital or facing particular difficulties. If he knows about your needs, he will endeavour to offer every possible assistance. Contact him at the Manse or by phone on 0141 384 2218

**A TRIBUTE TO MAISIE BEGGS**

Maisie, who passed away on 9th April 2017, was a hardworking and much loved member of our Woman’s Guild for many, many years. She played the piano at every Guild meeting and founded the Woman’s Guild Singers.

Originally rehearsals were held in the Church Hall, but moved to Maisie’s lounge where we had many happy times. She baked constantly for the Guild and her truffles were delicious! Easter would not have been Easter without the flotilla of Maisie’s lovely yellow knitted chickens holding an Easter egg—over the years she must have knitted hundreds!

Maisie devised programmes from her vast collection of music and laboriously wrote out a copy of all the words for each singer. She wrote descants for lots of the songs too. Nessie Hydes recited gems of poems like “The Clootie Dumpling” and “The Cludgie” Maisie’s singers were the first group to sing at Wellmeadow Lodge when it opened. This was followed by Thornhill St Jones Home, Mansionhouse Unit, Mearnskirk Hospital and once a year we performed at Seamill Hydro for the Glasgow Rotary.

Maisie always kept us enthralled with her tales of Belfast during the war. Once a year, Maisie and George threw open their doors, and we were plied with sherry and a magnificent afternoon tea.

We missed her greatly when her health broke down and she was unable to attend Church or the Guild, but she will live on in our hearts, playing the piano and telling us to “Sing Up!”

Sheila Goldie
Mearns Kirk Helping

Hands is a new charity which has evolved from the good work carried out over the last three years by groups in Mearns Kirk targeting disadvantaged individuals in the Newton Mearns area who are suffering the early effects of dementia, suffering social isolation and the emotional effects from the loss of a loved one. Following a review of the charities activities and discussions with funders and our volunteers the charity has produced an ambitious strategy plan in not only developing our existing groups, building on their strengths and achievements to date, but developing other support services aimed at disadvantaged groups in the community.

Isobel Dawson, one of the charity’s Trustees, who has led the Lunch Club over the years for those supporting individuals and their carers living with the effects of dementia said: “we are delighted that the ASDA Foundation have awarded us these funds to acquire a new mini bus as we and other groups in the charity, such as our Friendship Group recognise how important transportation is not only helping people to get to us but also for organising regular outings which is an important part of the support we give our groups”.

Ann Sword, long standing volunteer with the dementia Group said, “we provide well-structured support to our groups by providing high quality services by well trained volunteers liaising with national recognised experts such as The Centre for Dementia Studies at Stirling University. We also use social media to communicate with carers and other support groups”.

Elizabeth Harris, group leader of the Friendship Group said, “many of the individuals we help are isolated in our community so transportation is very important and with our club being over 25 years in existence we have seen that problem grow over the last couple of years as our average population age grows”.

Robert Paton, Chair of the Charity, said “we are so grateful to the ASDA Foundation for the award of the grant, it will make such a big difference to the people we support”. The charity plan to develop and grow the Dementia and Friendship groups over the coming years as well as reinforcing the good work of the Bereavement group who plan to carry out more training and development of our volunteers for this much valued support service. We also plan to introduce additional services promoting health and wellbeing such as improving our physical and mental health and we are receiving external support for this important area of work.

Sunday Club News

I can’t believe we are once again at the end of another eventful and busy session. Our focus this year has been to use the book “Who is God?” The book poses a number of challenging questions such as:

“What is God’s real name?”
“What does God look like?”
“Does God ever get cross?”
“Does God ever make mistakes?” and
“How does God hear everyone?”

Real questions that not only children ask but also as adults challenge our thinking too. We have had great fun exploring the questions and have done this through bible stories, prayers, games, craft, baking, collages and big art.

As a wee reminder, we will continue with the Africa collection of children’s clothes, children’s shoes and old bras.

As most of you will be aware, this is my final year leading Sunday Club. I want to thank all my loyal helpers who have stood by me and the work we do with so much love and dedication. I know I say this, every year and it is worth saying again. I could not have done half of what we have achieved without them. The Lord has really blessed me with the individual gifts and talents that each of them bring. None of us are experts but we do come with open and loving hearts. Thank you also to all the parents, grandparents, friends and relatives who have continued to bring their children to us and entrust us with teaching them.

It has been a real pleasure and a privilege to have supported our children to grow in faith. I have truly loved working with and being with all our boys and girls over the last 5 years. I could not have asked for a better way to have served the Lord than to have had this position.

Everything we have done has been grounded in prayer and we have often found that when we asked for help or guidance or resources, we asked the Lord for help and invariably He provided for us. At the time of writing, there is as yet, no-one to take over from me. I cannot think of a more important task than working with our young people today, as they are surely the church of tomorrow. I pray that God will call forward the people he needs to enable the work we have done to continue. I pray that you will listen and hear His voice call you.

God bless, Fiona
Use of Foodbanks rising.

The number of people using food banks has risen to record levels, and our East Renfrewshire Foodbank is no exception. At March 2017, 10,429 people had been fed, and 4,379 packs of food given out. This was made up of 1,557 Singles, 1,049 Couples, 1,048 Small Families and 726 Large Families. This three-day food supply is given to people in crisis, benefit delays and changes being the biggest cause of referral. Referrals are made by doctors, social workers or jobcentres as individuals can’t just walk in off the street and receive food supplies.

Stocks of certain items at our Foodbank are low, and it’s surprising how quickly some items run short. At the moment we need sugar, coffee, jam, UHT milk and juice, and tinned fruit. Tinned soup and beans are in plentiful supply at the moment!

Churches, supermarkets, businesses, schools and individuals are our main donors and here at Mearns Kirk we have so far donated just over 3 tonnes of food. We are very grateful to those of you who continue to think of the need of those less fortunate than ourselves. Churches, supermarkets, businesses, schools and individuals are our main donors and here at Mearns Kirk we have so far donated just over 3 tonnes of food. We are very grateful to those of you who continue to think of the need of those less fortunate than ourselves. It’s hard to imagine the distress of those who are unable to feed themselves or their families, and often must decide between paying the rent, heating the house, or eating.

The yellow tub in the Church vestibule labelled East Renfrewshire Foodbank is there each week for your donations, which are taken over to the Foodbank every week, so do please continue to support us.

Elaine MacNiven

Our Church’s Facebook page now has over 250 followers so to all who follow us, ‘like’ the posts and more importantly ‘share’ them, a huge Thank You! We have many overseas followers, people who once lived in Mearns and like to keep in touch with home. A few months ago I posted a picture of the Church covered in snow with a beautiful blue sky in the background. I received a message from a lady in Canada saying how homesick it made her feel when she saw it. It brought back lovely memories for her.

If you haven’t yet had a look at our Facebook page what’s stopping you? You don’t need to be on Facebook to have a look at our page. Just enter www.facebook.com/mearnskirk on your smartphone, tablet or computer or just Google Mearns Kirk Facebook and that will take you to the Church’s page. If you have a Facebook account just enter Mearns Kirk into your search option on Facebook. Let’s try for 300 followers by the end of the year!

Liz Ronald

Have you tried the new Website yet? Every Friday, the Order of Service for Sunday is uploaded to the Website—so you can look up the Bible Readings beforehand, or you can read through the intimations. The You Tube video of each Service is added a few days later. Other new features are the News and Calendar sections, showing what is on every week. All the different Groups have their own sections and can send in their events/news/photos to: webmaster@mearnskirk.church

Are you a Group Leader? We want to hear from you, or a nominated person who can send us your calendar of events and news. A lively Website reflects a lively Church and anyone moving into the Mearns area will do their research online before coming through the Church doors.

Is the Website working for you? Does it have all the information you are looking for? What other types of information would be useful?

In the next phase, the Media Team (Renee Grieves, Marianne MacGregor and Alison Berry) are looking for Groups and Individuals to send in more photographs from events and activities. We hope to update the Calendar section—to be more informative and useful. We also plan to build a more in-depth History Section over time.
Finally

Even to your old age and gray hairs,
I am He.
I am he who will sustain you.
I have made you
And I will carry you,
I will sustain you
And I will RESCUE you.
— Isaiah 46:4

Wishing you all a peaceful, restful and reflective Summer. Till next time.
God bless. Alison