

Issue 35

The Link



**The magazine for the linked congregations and community of the
West Kirk of Calder and Polbeth Harwood**

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A Word From Our Minister

The Manse
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Sunday, 1 November 2009 – All Saints

Dear Friends

Autumn is well and truly here – at least it is today which is very dreich. But the leaves continue to look beautiful; though raking them up can seem like a chore!

A big ‘well done!’ is due to everyone who has participated in the Blythswood Shoebox appeal again this year. Today, after the West Kirk service folks made their way to Polbeth to fill, check and sort shoeboxes while the Polbeth service was taking place. After the Polbeth service was over some of the folks there joined in too. We were all glad of the lovely soup and sandwiches, which were provided to fortify the workers. We know that ‘our’ shoeboxes are going to India this time and we look forward to hearing more from Rhoda (I noticed Mark was keeping the stats!) at some point. Thanks for keeping us on track, Rhoda and thanks too to the folks who came from other churches to help today!



We have had our new Parish Assistant, Diane Stirling, with us for very nearly a month now and it is great to have Diane working alongside me. She has been involved on Sundays (preaching today!), been to our primary schools, and has visited some of you already. Look out for Diane’s letter in this issue of *The Link*.



Before long we will be in the Season of Advent and there are all sorts of things happening. Details of all our services throughout Advent, Christmas and beyond are listed in this edition of *The Link* also. Look out for the first in a series of ‘Winter Warmer’ services at the West Kirk (remember ‘Summer Sweeties’?!) and on the Sunday before Christmas, a Christingle Service at the West Kirk and the JAM (Jesus and Me) Club Christmas Service at Polbeth.

Best wishes and God’s blessings to you all!

David A Albon

Rev David A Albon
Minister of the Parish Churches of the West Kirk of Calder and Polbeth Harwood.



**Sunday Morning Worship takes place
in the West Kirk at 9.30 am
and in Polbeth Harwood at 11.15 am**

see special details below

Special Dates for Your Diary

Sunday 8 November – Remembrance Sunday

West Kirk – 9.30 am, Polbeth Harwood – 11.15 am

Sunday 22 November

‘Winter Warmer’ All-Age Service – West Kirk, 9.30 am

Morning Worship – Polbeth Harwood, 11.15 am

1st Sunday of Advent – Sunday 29 November

West Kirk Guild Service – 9.30 am, Polbeth Harwood – 11.15 am

‘In Between’ Alternative Worship, West Kirk Hall, 7 pm

2nd Sunday of Advent – Sunday 6 December

Sacrament of Communion:

West Kirk – 9.30 am, Polbeth Harwood – 11.15 am

United Communion at West Kirk – 6.30 pm

3rd Sunday of Advent – Sunday 13 December

Gift Service – West Kirk, 9.30 am

Morning Worship – Polbeth Harwood, 11.15 am

Friday 18 December

An Evening of Christmas Music – West Kirk, 7 pm

4th Sunday of Advent – Sunday 20 December

Christingle Service – West Kirk, 9.30 am

Jam Club Christmas Service – Polbeth Harwood, 11.15 am

Wednesday 23 December

Parkhead Primary School Christmas Service – West Kirk, 9.30 am

Christmas Eve – Thursday 24 December

Family Service – Polbeth Harwood, 7 pm

Watchnight Service – West Kirk, 11.30 pm

Sunday 27 December – Last Sunday of 2009

United All-Age Service – West Kirk, 9.30 am

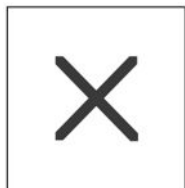
*(Please note: there will **not** be a service at Polbeth Harwood this morning)*

Sunday 3 January 2010 – First Sunday of New Year

United All-Age Service – Polbeth Harwood, 11.15 am

*(Please note: there will **not** be a service at the West Kirk this morning)*

West Kirk Fundraising Group



The Candy Bars are now well under way. A big thank-you to all who come or help us on these days. In September we raised £760 and in October the Kirk Session raised £611. Well done everyone!

We are now looking forward to the Whist Drive, run by our group member Margaret Lamb and we must thank her for all the hard work she puts into this. It is an important fundraiser.

The group's next big event is the Christmas Candy Bar on Saturday 5 December. Tickets will be on sale for both sittings at the Guild Coffee Day on Saturday 7 November (just like the Candy Bar, but traditionally for their funds) and from Margaret Greenhorn (01506 871139).

This is our major fundraising effort of the year so we hope you will come along and enjoy a morning coffee and browse round the stalls followed by a delicious, festive lunch. It's a great start to the main Christmas festivities!

See you for some or all of the day!

*Jill Murray
(Convener)*

All-Age Worship Services in the West Kirk

Following on from the successful "Summer Sweeties" services held over the summer months, the Worship Committee will be organising another series of services taking place over the winter months entitled "Winter Warmers".



The dates of these services are as follows:

- 22 November 2009
- 24 January 2010
- 21 February 2010

Evelyn Paterson

A Prayer for Christmas

Eternal Father, who on that first Christmas night sent a little child to bring light and gladness into a human home and all the world, send today His healing radiance into the hearts of men and women everywhere.

*Open our hearts to receive Him,
Teach us humility,
to find delight in simple things,
to see the glory of Your Kingdom in the eyes of children,
to walk the way of peace,
for Your love's sake, Amen.*



West Kirk History

Do you have any historic items, photographs or stories to tell about the West Kirk which would be of interest to other church members or members of the public.

The Kirk session are proposing to organise a display of artefacts, photographs etc to tell the history of the West Kirk.

If you have an attic full of memorabilia, which is part of the history of the West Kirk, we would be grateful if you could lend it to us for a short time. If you have an interesting story to tell about the West Kirk we would also like to hear from you. You can call me on 01506 415435, email me at angusbaxter@westkirkoftcalder.co.uk, or write to me at Angus Baxter, 8 Talisman Rise, Livingston, EH54 6PH

Angus Baxter

Church Dance



The dance was well attended with about 50 people there, including some of our young people also joining in. We all enjoyed a buffet supper supplied by some of those attending. Dancing to Willie McFarlane's Band followed this.

Marian Kinsman

Have you heard the news

The news on the streets

Well, the news is Rev Albon, Polbeth Harwood together with West Kirk of Calder have a new Parish Assistant yes that's right a new part-time Parish Assistant and that new Assistant is me. Since starting in my new position on Sunday 4 October I have undertaken many varied tasks of parish work and it has to be said, it has been fantastic and I'm enjoying every single moment of it immensely. I thoroughly enjoy the diverse aspects of the post including working alongside parishioners and Rev Albon who has continued to encourage, teach, support and guide me throughout my new role. I'm sure we will all get to know each other better as I continue to grow, develop and travel forward in Christ's name into 2010 in both parishes. I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks for all the well wishes, emails, cards and messages, flowers and gifts I received to welcome me into the parishes, I have been very humbled by it and it has been very much appreciated. For some time now I have wandered around looking for the perfect fit and here I feel the fit just right. Originally brought up a local lass, I can honestly say "It's so good to be home!!" So, if you're still a little unsure who I am, come along on a Sunday Morning and see your Ministry Team in action.

I hope you all have a blessed Christmas! So, this is me signing off for this time from one ½ of your Ministry Team!!

Diane (Stirling)

The Parish Record

Funerals

7 October – Mary Saunders, Polbeth Gardens

2 November – Florence McDonald, Langside Crescent

West Kirk Guild Report

Monday 5 October

Theme: "Justice"

Our speaker was Jim Milne, well known in the church. Jim was a prison officer, then a Governor before he retired; we enjoyed hearing about Jim's career, stories, funny and serious, an insight into working in the prison service. This was a very responsible and challenging job. All had a most enjoyable evening.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

November 2009

Monday 2nd "Memories of The West Kirk" (Young and Old)

Saturday 7th Guild Coffee Day

Monday 16th Guest Night: Evening at the Cinema

Sunday 22nd Guild Week

December 2009

Monday 7th Christmas Outing: Wizard of Oz – Howden Park Centre

Thursday 10th Christmas Rally: St John's, Bathgate, 7.30 pm

January 2010

Monday 11th Bargain Hunt: Effie Halliday and Pat Erskine

Monday 18th Vine Trust: Liz Dyer

Moira Jack (Secretary)

Rudolph's Star

Daniel aged 4, returned from Sunday school with a new perspective on the Christmas story.

He had learned all about the wise men from the east who brought gifts to the baby Jesus.



Daniel was so excited he just had to tell his parents, 'I learned in Sunday School today all about the very first Christmas. There wasn't a Santa Claus way back then, so these three blokes on camels had to deliver all the toys. And Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer with his nose so bright wasn't there yet, so they had to have this big light in the sky to find their way around'.

Make Someone Smile This Christmas

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal 2009



All charities are feeling the widespread effect of the current financial situation that the country finds itself in during the recession. Some may even suggest that charity starts at home and maybe we should miss out the Shoebox Appeal this year. Many others said they would miss not doing it, for even if we have less money to spend we still have a life where most of us can live above the breadline and have occasional treats. The

recipients of the boxes often don't even have the basics of daily living to exist. So this year I emphasised to people not to feel obliged to fill a whole box by themselves but to hand in donations which would help fill a box or to join up with a friend and make a box together.

The spirit of unity spread into the wider community by friends from neighbouring Churches, Dedridge Health Centre, Dedridge Dental Practice and the residents of Dickson Court all contributing. In particular a special mention to the residents of Dickson Court who invited me to talk to them about the project and then successfully fundraised to complete filling 50 shoeboxes.



On Sunday 1 November the hall at Polbeth Harwood Church played host to the "Soup, Sandwich and Shoebox Sorting Sunday". Approximately 40 - 45 people called by to help with checking the completed boxes, making up boxes with the donations handed in and to write a Christmas message to put in the boxes. There was a really feeling of teamwork and co-operation between members of the local

congregations; all age groups were represented. It was a great social gathering and the work was completed in 3 hours and that included time for the important bowl of soup, sandwich, tea and a chat.



Special thanks to Katie and Kathryn for running the catering service on the day and to Jean, Katie, Moira and Olive for helping in providing the soup and sandwiches. Thanks to Eleanor for giving up Friday evening to set up the "Donations Shop" and for running it efficiently on the day. Thanks to Aonghas who despite sporting his "Mummy's Little Helper" apron was really Daddy's Little Helper on the day

walking endlessly up and down the hall taking the completed boxes to his Daddy. Rachel was also an endearing helper on the day and kept a watchful eye on the proceedings. Mark was the human calculator/statistician and packer of the completed boxes on the day. Mark, Sam and Jessie Craig deserve a special mention for their Shoebox Wrapping Service, which culminated in 200 boxes being wrapped - they are officially exempt from any further Christmas wrapping this year!!

So to the Statistics!

Total Completed Shoeboxes = 228
Monetary Donations = £212.10
Ready Wrapped Shoebox Sales = £115.00

Girls age 3-7 = 42
Girls age 8-12 = 12
Teenage Girls = 25
Woman = 41
Elderly Women = 11

Boys age 3-7 = 22
Boys age 8-12 = 4
Teenage Boys = 13
Men = 53

Well done everyone, for a second year in a row the men have not been the forgotten group. Maybe next year we will have to work on the Boys age 8-12 group.

The money raised from the sale of the ready wrapped shoeboxes will go towards Blythswood Project to build a second orphanage in India.

The boxes are in transit to North Eastern India to be there in time for Christmas. They will be distributed amongst children living in orphanages, those suffering from leprosy, those who are persecuted for their Christian beliefs and families who are displaced due to the effects of a changing landscape due to Global Warming, recent flooding has catastrophically affected many communities.



Thanks for all your support and prayers ... same time, same place, same project, see you all in 2010 God Willing.

Yours in the Lord's Service

Rhoda, Mark, Kathryn, Eleanor & Aonghas Lawton

West Kirk Pew Bibles

The Kirk Session has been considering replacing the Pew Bibles for some time now and the Worship Committee were asked to look at alternatives. We have finally decided to replace the current New English Bibles with the New International Version. The Lectern Bible is also to be replaced with the New International Version and a member of the congregation has kindly offered to donate this. If you would like to donate a Pew Bible (£7.50) and have it dedicated to someone please give your name to Evelyn Paterson.



Stewart MacRae

New England in the Fall - Across the 'Pond' in Luxury

At the beginning of October Mary and I set off on our annual visit across to New England to stay with our son Brian but this time it was a wee bit different - for two reasons. Firstly Mary was still recovering from a double fracture to her leg and secondly we were travelling in the Business Class cabin thanks to a lovely Golden Wedding present from our family. The two complimented each other as it allowed her to get much more legroom to stretch out and also to elevate the leg whilst in flight. This coupled with great comfort and catering which was superb made the flight over a great experience. I would like to share some of our experiences with you.

Brian met us at Boston Logan International and we drove north to his home in Dover in New Hampshire for our three-week stay. Dover is a lovely sprawling township straddling the Cochecho River and was settled in 1623. Brian had just returned from a 6 week survey of the American continental shelf off the coast of Alaska aboard the US Coast Guard Ice Breaker 'The



Healy'. The survey was a joint one with the Canadian Coast Guard Ice Breaker 'the Louis S. St Laurent'. It was interesting to hear his comments on global warming when he explained that this year the Healy was just pushing the ice flows aside as they sailed north whereas last year they were breaking ice in the same region. It appears that the legendary North West Passage and the North East Passage are

now ice free at certain times in the year, which in turn allows cruise ships to venture there. The survey also hit a high when the Healy's scientists discovered a so far unknown Seamount coming up from the ocean bed.

The recession is hitting America just as bad as over here. Unemployment was rising in many states and the figure of 9.5% was quoted in one of the daily papers. Foreclosures are taking place on homes and in most of the big stores discounting - as much as 70% in some cases - is prevalent. Even the shopping Malls did not seem to be as busy as last year. However it is not getting the people down in the least. They are still enjoying petrol prices of \$2.35 - \$2.45 a gallon - about one third of our prices. Neither wonder they tend *not*



to walk a lot. In fact often Mary and I were the only ones walking on the pavements down to Downtown Dover, which was about one mile from Brian's home. We were ever worried in case a patrol car drew up and the officer would suspect we were two vagrants!!

Walking was the recommended therapy to strengthen the leg muscles so we often walked into Dover to have lunch and then walked back again or we took the bus to the Shopping Malls in Portsmouth and walked around there. Public transport was an hourly service but was only 75 cents a journey anywhere within the region for seniors. It is amazing what you see when you are walking - a lorry with the notice 'Construction Vehicle DO NOT FOLLOW' - who would want to anyway. Or the useful sign on another lorry - 'If you cannot see my mirrors then I cannot see you'. Other sightings were the assortment of number plates which people can cobble together to suit themselves. Best one was 'Late 4 Work' closely followed by a hearse with 'Morbid' on the plate.

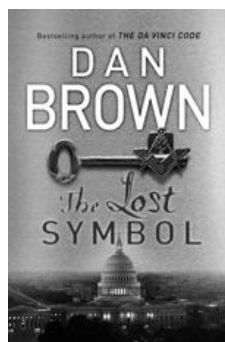
The weather was also different from last year with more cloudy days and two or three VERY wet days. I found the people extremely friendly especially when you were crossing a road - they stopped about 20 yards from you to allow you to get over. One wonderful experience was one day we were waiting for the bus and it was throwing it down. I left Mary under some trees sheltering and I stood at the stop waiting on the bus. Next thing I knew was a young lady standing beside me with a large umbrella over both of us. She said that she worked in the shop along from the bus stop and that I could have the umbrella until the bus came when she would run across and get it back. Could this happen over here?



English is the first language in America - Spanish is the second - but often I just could not make out what they were saying. Mind you, the reverse was also true as one day when an Assistant came and asked if she could help us I said that we were 'just having a wander around'. That floored her! Flu clinics were sprouting everywhere and the people were treating this seriously. Boston Logan International were actually recruiting people to train in clearing the runways of snow should the regular teams be struck down with Swine Flu. One firm had also told its employees that any



candy, which they were bringing in to the office for a party had to be wrapped at home!



With restrictions on amount of walking we found lots to do in the house. Mary managed to crochet a large Afghan Throw and I got to grips with many Soduko puzzles but also found time to read Dan Brown's latest novel 'The Lost Symbol'. I would recommend this to anyone who enjoys a good adventure story. Interestingly enough the symbol turned out to be the top of a pyramid which would fit onto its base and when I looked at the reverse of a \$1 note what was there?

Well you get one and see! A much lighter read was a book about the German occupation of Guernsey titled 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society'. How is that for an unlikely title? A very good story nevertheless.

Before finishing perhaps I could recount a tale I heard over there about Credit Card fraud. Some firms have a corporate card where employees can charge items to the firm and on the back of the card instead of the person's signature there is written 'Check ID'. The story goes that this man went to purchase something in a shop in Asia and when he got the slip to sign, he of course signed his own name and then handed over the card for the assistant to check that he was whom he said he was. Sale was refused. Eventually after a lot of trying to explain to the girl who was having language problems he thought of a great idea. He signed the slip 'Check ID'. Sale confirmed!!

All too soon our 3 weeks drew to a close and when we looked at what we had bought to bring home and the size of the Afghan Throw we decided that we would have to buy another case to bring it all home. The journey back to Amsterdam and then on to Edinburgh was once again done in comfort. After a lovely dinner we were able to press a button and the seat became a bed, which enabled us to enjoy about three hours sleep on the way over. What a difference this made to the so-called 'Jet Lag'

We got back to the usual rain and dull skies ready to sort through all the mail then get ready to bring all the Kirk accounts up to date, get the FWO envelopes ready for issue, prepare for the November exam invigilation, sort out school runs - quick pass me the timetable for the flights to America!

Bill Calder

Life & Work – November Issue

LIFE AND WORK

The Editorially Independent Magazine
of the Church of Scotland

www.lifeandwork.org

Hope for the future

Exploring the work of the Church of Scotland in Scottish prisons and with young offenders.

A Questioning Faith

Profile of Alex Fergusson MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament and a Son of the Manse.

Living in Humanity

The Moderator reflects on the month of saints and Remembrance.

A Life in Service of Country

Donald McGilp reflects on Remembrance Sunday.



What Does the Lord Require of You?

Lynne McNeil reports from the annual meeting of the Guild.

Field of Dreams

Two first-timers and an old hand look back on this year's National Youth Assembly.

Allowing Children to Flourish

The work of the Office of Child Protection in Thailand, which is headed by Scots Mike Fucella and Alistair Muir.

A Privilege to Care

Dr Murdo Macdonald offers a focus on end of life issues.

Mrs Knox's packing

Jane Dawson discovers the roots of a 'start-up' kit for the Reformation in Scotland.

Scottish Weather?

Thomas Baldwin's latest reports from Malawi focus on the work of the Livingstonia Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.

Plus Presbytery of Europe, St Nicholas Uniting Kirk in Aberdeen, all the regular columnists, news, letters, reviews and crosswords – all for just £1.60.

A Stranger for Christmas



Visits from strangers at Christmas began with the arrival of wise men from a foreign land. You could carry on this tradition, by inviting an international student to spend Christmas in your home.

HOST is a well-established charity, backed by the Foreign Office and many universities, which links adults studying in the UK with hospitable volunteers throughout Britain. Guests come from all over the world, including many from China. They speak English, are keen to share their own culture, while longing to know more about our way of life. They are prepared to travel to stay with a host far from their university.

Welcoming a student who might otherwise spend Christmas on a deserted campus, fosters international understanding, and will make Christmas special.

See www.hostuk.org or call HOST's volunteer regional organiser in this part of Scotland, Anne-Marie Ringler (01698 386100). HOST arranges visits throughout the year, so if your 'inn' is full this Christmas, you can still offer an invitation at another time.

Rev David Albon

Contributions for the next edition ...

The next edition of *The Link* will be published at the end of January 2010. Contributions can be **submitted at any time**; however the latest submission date for Issue 36 is Sunday 17 January 2010.

Thank you to those who submitted articles for this edition after a special request at short notice. It is crucial that there are always a variety of articles for publication.

Paws... for thought



"If you do not wish to be prone to anger, do not feed the habit; give it nothing which may tend to its increase."

Epictetus (Greek philosopher AD55-135)