

FOCUS

Christmas 2011



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all readers of Focus from Cairngryffe and Symington Kirks.

Kirk and Community News
For the Parishes of Cairngryffe and Symington
Church of Scotland

Cairngryffe with Symington Parish Churches

Minister : Vacant

Session Clerks:

Cairngryffe - Mr Jack Meikle
Glenbow Cottage, Thankerton (01899 308397)
Symington - Mr Ross Russell
Spindrift, Main Street, Symington (01899 308240)



SUNDAY SERVICES

December 2011

9.30am Symington 11.00am Cairngryffe
January, February, March, April 2012
9.30am Cairngryffe 11.00am Symington

Christmas and New Year Services – Everybody Welcome!
CHRISTMAS FAMILY SERVICES

Sunday December 18th 9.30am (Symington) and 11am (Cairngryffe)

CHRISTMAS EVE CAROL SERVICES

Saturday December 24th 7pm Family Carol Service at Symington and
11.15pm Watchnight Service at Cairngryffe

UNITED YEAR'S END SERVICE

Sunday 25th December 2011 10.00am United Year's End Service at Symington
(no Cairngryffe Service that day)
Sunday 1st January 2012 11.00am United Start of Year Service at Cairngryffe
(no Symington Service that day) n.b. 11am is for this one day only at
Cairngryffe. The next 4 months will be 9.30am and Symington will be 11am.

Communion Services

Sunday March 4th 2012 9.30am (Cairngryffe) 11am (Symington)

MERRY MINCE PIES

Remember to pop into Symington Church Hall after the evening service on
Christmas Eve for mince pies, coffee and a chat with your friends. Mince
pies will also be served at Cairngryffe from 11.00pm, prior to their late evening
service.

Visit our websites at

www.symingtonkirk.com Webmaster Robert Carson
www.cairngryffekirk.org.uk Webmaster Jim Watt



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all readers of Focus

from Cairngryffe and Symington Kirks.

We invite you to join us for our special services during the festive period as follows.

Sunday 18th December. *Family services at Symington 9.30am.
Cairngryffe 11.00am*

Saturday 24th December. *Christmas Eve
Family Service at 7pm at Symington
Watchnight Service 11.15pm at Cairngryffe*

Sunday 25th December *Christmas Day joint service at Symington at
10.00am (no service at Cairngryffe)*

Sunday 1st January 2012 *Joint New Years Day service at Cairngryffe
at 11.00am. (please note 11.am is for this one day only at Cairngryffe.
The next 4 months will be 9.30 am and Symington will be 11am)*

From the Interim Moderator

The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-40)

Christmas is cancelled!

Those of you who haven't written your cards, bought socks, perfume and gift wrap will be mightily relieved.

Millions of turkeys will also be relieved. Evergreen forests will be saved, and retailers will go bankrupt. Christmas is cancelled!

Who says so? Birmingham City Council. Oh, the city will celebrate the festive season as usual with carol singing, fairy lights and street entertainment, but they won't be calling it "Christmas". Instead it has to be renamed "Winterval".

What a crass, insulting way to describe the time of Christ's birth. The thing that annoys me about stories like this is that it is not pressure from the Muslim world, nor any other faiths, that brings about such ludicrous

decisions – it is people with “political correctness gone mad” etched in their brains who make such decisions.

Good luck to the folk of Birmingham as they celebrate Winterval. In Cairngryffe and Symington we will be celebrating Christmas. Winterval may represent bright lights, jolly TV jingles, pantos and the rest – let's enjoy them. But they won't last. By the 26th December, they'll look pretty tardy.

Christmas, by comparison, represents our unorthodox God stooping down and touching our lives. If we accept His gift, it will last.

During Advent, we prepare ourselves to meet Jesus in a special way, and I pray that for each of us, those magical, spiritual, expectant moments as Christmas day begins, will be a time of genuine celebration. God has intervened in our world.

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas. May Christ be with you.

Rev Alan Gibson

Update from Presbytery

The Kirk Session has been kept informed from our Presbytery Elder on the on-going situation with regard to the Presbytery Plan. This is currently in a state of “check mate” – Presbytery has been unable to move in any direction since June of this year.

The reason for this is that currently there is no Presbytery Review Group – this body has the task of formulating a plan. The absence of a Presbytery Plan means we cannot form a Nominating Committee (i.e. a group who search for a Minister). Why is this plan important, and why is it proving a stumbling block for us in Symington and Cairngryffe?

The Presbytery Plan, if approved, will inform us at Symington and Cairngryffe of what shape our church is to take – we cannot call a Minister when we do not know what church we are calling a Minister to. For example, will the marriage between Cairngryffe and Symington be allowed to continue; or will it be severed to allow a union or linkage with another church? Only when we know *what* our church is and *where* our church is, can we then begin to nominate a representative body of people to seek a Minister for *that* church.

In short, it is a mess! However, there is light. Presbytery has been informed that we almost have a Review Group in place. What can we do at Symington and Cairngryffe in the meantime? Well, our Session Clerk has already written to inform Presbytery of the discontent we feel at the current situation. In addition, we must pray that God's will shall be done; we must pray that He will be guiding the right person already towards this Charge, and so we trust in Him.

Pastoral Help

In the absence of a Minister we do have some pastoral help that is available to everyone. If there is a pastoral emergency do not hesitate to contact:

Ann Lyall, Deacon in the Biggar Area: 01899 229443
Alan Gibson, Interim Moderator 01555871123

From Ann Lyall

29th November 2011

Dear Friends,

I have now been living and working in the area for 5 months and I feel as if I'm beginning to find my way round all the highways and by-ways of South Lanarkshire as well as beginning to put names to faces. I've appreciated very much the warm welcome received from so many of you.

I have enjoyed very much leading worship in both Symington & Cairngryffe especially on special occasions such as Harvest and Remembrance and looking forward very much to all the Christmas Services.

'Archie' and I have been made most welcome in Carmichael and Tinto Primaries and we thoroughly enjoyed being at the Official Opening of Carmichael School this week. The children were all involved in producing a wonderful show and also had on sale their Christmas Crafts which they have been making to raise funds. It is also great that members of Cairngryffe Church are collecting rags to help raise funds for the school as well. The school will be having their Christmas Service in the Church on Tuesday 20th December at 1.30pm

At Harvest time Tinto Primary School learned about the work of the charity 'New Beginnings' and presented their gifts for Harvest to Mary McLellan for the work of the charity.

For 'Children in Need', the children had a 'Dress down' day to help raise money for that worthwhile cause. They are very busy at the moment working towards their Nativity Play which will be taking place in the school on the 7th & 8th December.

I hope to keep you up to date with some of the things I'm involved in, in future issues of Focus.

Wishing you all a very peaceful Christmas and God's richest blessing for the New Year.

Ann Lyall

PRESBYTERY REPORT

At the September meeting, Rev Susan Ross, Forth St. Paul's, was installed as this year's Moderator.

Also at this meeting, vacancies were declared at Coalburn linked with Lesmahagow Old as Miss Aileen Robson had moved to South East Cowal, and at Blackmount linked with Culter linked with Libberton and Quothquan on the retrial of Rev Jim Cutler. Rev David Easton made a plea to get things moving in terms of all the present vacancies now existing. The Business Committee agreed to discuss this and to report back to Presbytery at the October meeting.

In October, some members of the previous planning group had a meeting to try to speed up the planning process and made proposals for a way forward. Among these was that Kirk Sessions in the various areas of Presbytery should have collaborative discussions as to how the allocation of ministries should be used in their area. Presbytery thought that this might lead to Kirk Sessions being blamed for any unpopular decisions made whereas Presbytery feels the responsibility is theirs and that they should take any blame. Presbytery then agreed that a new committee should be set up and that the Business Committee should report back with nominations at the next meeting.

At the November meeting, the Business Committee also reported that they had approached a number of members of Presbytery to serve on the new planning group but only six had accepted so far. The Business Committee will report again in December.

As you can see, events are not moving very quickly which is very frustrating.

Place for Hope – This is a group set up by the Church of Scotland to resolve areas of conflict in the church. Presbytery asked for their group's support after the problems associated with the meeting of 2nd June. Presbytery agreed to have a meeting with representatives from the group on 8th November. This was an excellent meeting and was an attempt for Presbytery to regain the atmosphere of mutual respect, support and trust and Christian love that should exist within it.

A Stewardship Conference was held in November with representatives from our churches attending. The National Project requires every congregation to take some action as far Stewardship every year with the focus on the giving of money every third year. Presbytery has been instructed to make sure all congregations follow this. It will be necessary for us to take action next year.

Lambert Allan, Presbytery Elder for Symington Kirk

New Beginnings – Clydesdale : 2011 Update

Since our last update, New Beginnings has made substantial progress in the operation of the Group. We have become a Scottish Registered Charity, and have established sound partnerships within South Lanarkshire Social Services and Housing Departments, Blue Triangle and we are now following the same process with Women's Aid. We have provided support to 35 homeless families in recent months and the number of referrals is increasing.

In the current climate we have found it difficult to attract grant funding but we are steadily pursuing every opportunity which presents itself. We continue to operate on donations from the public and have been delighted to receive the proceeds from several local fundraisers.

We are also increasing our volunteer base and are very lucky to have Jennifer Paisley acting as our co-ordinator for the Carluke Churches. We continue to be supported Choices which is the Carluke Churches Charity Shop and Kettle's On, which is based in Carluke St John's. The Harvest Season brought in donations from two Clydesdale Primary Schools; Sandra Stewart ran a "Coffee 'n Cake fundraiser in Cairngryffe

Kirk over four weeks and Charlie Todd has organised a Musical Evening for December 9, which we are looking forward to at the time of printing.

Over the course of this year it has become increasingly obvious that there is a great need for a "Clydesdale Furniture Initiative". A formal feasibility study has been carried out by Scottish Churches Housing personnel, who have confirmed our feelings and, although this will prove to be a huge commitment, this will be the next "big" project for our Group. We are currently being offered items of furniture and, more recently, have been offered the opportunity to carry out a couple of house clearances. Our main difficulty at this time is of course storage – so if you know of any local property which is currently unused but wind and watertight, I would love to hear from you.

As always, we depend of your support for this worthwhile project and I thank all those who have so generously contributed to the work of our Group. If you would like to hear more then please contact Mary McLellan on 0755 473 6015

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

Cairngryffe Funerals

William Adamson, formerly of Grange Farm, Pettinain, died on 13th October and was buried in Pettinain Cemetery on 19th October 2011.

Baptism

On 20th November 2011 in Cairngryffe Kirk, Maisie Taylor daughter of Tom and Elaine Taylor from Northholm of Grange Farm, Pettinain.

New Member

Mr David Millar. 4 Cairngryffe Street Pettinain.

Symington

Deaths October - Elizabeth Hargreaves, Boat Road, Thankerton
November – David Miller, 48 Main Street, Symington

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CAIRNGRYFFE

This is to keep all our members up to date with what is happening in the Kirk Session at Cairngryffe.

* Presbytery Plan Review Group. It appears to me that we are no nearer getting a decision on this as we approach the end of another year. We can only hope and pray that a decision is reached during 2012 to allow us to call a minister.

*We should always look on the bright side and as a result of us not having a minister we have had to work hard and do a lot more for ourselves to keep our church going smoothly. Two weeks ago Denham and I attended a training day in Perth to enable us to moderate at Kirk Session Meetings. Four of our elders attended a course recently on Reflective Worship and two of us attended a Bereavement care and funeral course. All this helps to better prepare us to keep our church in good health during our vacancy. The congregation has supported us very well by continuing to attend worship when it is taken by the worship team of elders, the feedback has also been very encouraging. The numbers on the roll have remained steady with new members replacing any we lose and financially as you will see from our treasurer's report we will end the year with a small surplus.

* The elders will be conducting the Watchnight service again this year on Christmas Eve, this service was well attended last year despite the very bad weather. This is my favourite service of the year, to be able to sing all our well known hymns and carols up to midnight then ring the kirk bell and welcome the arrival of Christmas day and end up by wishing each other a Merry Christmas and thank God that we had the health and strength to be able to be present at the service.

* The Elders will continue to lead worship in our church about once a month and our interim moderator is in favour of this. The next times will be on Christmas Eve and on New Years Day. We can see challenging times ahead and must continue to pray to God to help us find a new minister when we eventually get to the stage of being given permission to look for one.

* Cairngryffe Kirk will be decorated as usual for Christmas and I want to thank all the people involved in this operation. It always looks magic when we attend our services over the Festive period. Thank you for all the work we know goes on behind the scenes.

Jack Meikle. Session Clerk at Cairngryffe

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SYMINGTON

Pulpit Supply

As Presbytery continues to debate the issue of readjustment we are still in a state of suspense in regard to the future. As always, things have to be kept going however and we continue to be grateful that we have Rev, Alan Gibson of the United Parish of Carstairs and Carstairs Junction as our Interim Moderator. We are also indebted to Ann Lyall for the support and leadership that she is giving us as our Deacon.

A very sincere thank you is extended to all the members of the Board and Session for their untiring work in keeping the flame burning in Symington Kirk, We are indebted too, to the many loyal and committed members of the congregation who attend week by week and give us their support –we could not keep going without this.

Thank you

Ross Russell, Session Clerk

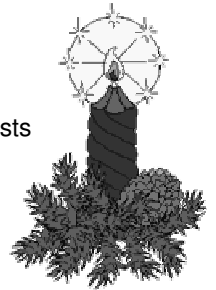
THE GUILD

Cairngryffe Guild

We meet at 7:30 pm in Thankerton Village Hall on the second Wednesday of each month from September to April.

We are looking forward to welcoming members and guests to our Christmas

Celebration on 14th December at 7:30 in Thankerton Village Hall when we will be having a musical evening All are welcome to come along and join in our festivities.



In the New Year we look forward to getting to know our new Deacon, Miss Ann Lyall, who will be speaking to us at our meeting on February 8th 2012.

Date for your diary: All will be welcome at the service for The World Day of Prayer which will be held in Cairngryffe Kirk on Friday 2nd March at 7:30pm.

Feb 8 th	One More Step	Deacon Ann Lyall
March 2 nd	World Day of Prayer	Cairngryffe at 7.30pm
March 14 th	Accordion and Chat	Charlie Todd
March 14 th	Spring Rally & AGM	Greyfriars at 7.30pm

April 11th Guild Dinner and AGM Tinto Hotel at 6.30pm

Symington Guild

Our September meeting was Chaired by Margaret McGregor who introduced our Deacon, Ann Lyall, who had kindly come to our rescue, at short notice, when we learned that our speaker had retired due to ill health.

Ann spoke about her work involvement and experiences with 'the homeless' in Glasgow. We heard of different circumstances which could lead to people finding themselves in that position, and how Ann helped them, help themselves, to become worthy citizens.

In October our invitation to Cairngryffe Guild was enjoyed. We were updated on re-cycling by three ladies from South Lanarkshire Council. The evening was rounded off with a lovely supper.

The November meeting was chaired by Peggy Prentice. Mr Bob Dalziel was the speaker for the evening. He gave a wealth of information on 'The Royal Mile', its history and that of surrounding streets and buildings. His talk was very interesting and much appreciated.

Please note that the next meeting takes place earlier in the month – 15th December – Christmas Carols / Readings and Quiz. Would members each bring food for "one"?

On Sunday 27th November "The Guild" had their annual coffee morning and sales-table after church. The sum of £313 was realised and thanks go to all who donated goods, who attended, and who gave donations.

Meetings in the new year are as follows :-

January 26th – Talk on Cairn Foods by Duncan Turnbull

February 23rd – Communion tokens and customs by Rev Rachel Dobie

March 22nd - Short Stories by the Author Dr David Carvell

April 26th – Closing dinner t.b.a.

Contact Helen Anderson 308598 or Martha Cowan 308657.

FLOWER LISTS

SUNDAY	CAIRNGRYFFE	SYMINGTON
4th December 2011	Lily Borthwick	Linda McKay
11th December 2011	Sandra Stewart	Muriel Knight
18th December 2011	Christmas Flowers	Janette Hope
25th December 2011	Christmas Flowers	Christmas Flowers
1st January 2012	Christmas Flowers	No flowers
8th January 2012	Christmas Flowers	Jessie Duff
15th January 2012	Christmas Flowers	Jessie Rodger
22nd January 2012	Warnock Girls	Isobel Grierson
29th January 2012	Nancy Galloway	Noreen Johnston
5th February 2012	Margaret Edge	Hazel Howat
12th February 2012	Dorothy Scott	Rena Mitchell
19th February 2012	Nancy Nicholl	Margaret Cleland
26th February 2012	Moirra Jarvie	Sheena Carlyle

CAIRNGRYFFE SUNDAY SCHOOL

After a well earned Christmas break, Sunday School restarts on Sunday 15th of January 2012.

We meet in the church for the first part of the service and then go to our Sunday School room.

We study bible stories by discussion and related arts and craft activities. There will be no Sunday School on the 12th of February (mid term break).

We will take the same break as the local schools in early April.

For further information please contact **Rosmairi J Galloway 01555 880779**.

SundayZone @ Symington



Merry Christmas!

Sunday Zone started back at the beginning of September. We have been looking at various Bible stories and taking part in bible based activities.

We are now getting organised for our big performance on the 18th December called 'The A to Z of the Nativity'.

We will return on Sunday 15th January 2012 - hope to see you there!

Donna & Susan

FROM OUR KIRK TREASURERS

Symington Church

Treasurer's Report

Our expenditure continues to exceed income as outlined below. However the tax rebate, resulting from the "Gift Aid" scheme, has significantly reduced the previous deficit.

Income to date 2011

Expenditure to date 2011

Offerings	£22,935	Ministry & Mission	£17,830
Other Income	£1,082	Staff Costs	£4,526
Special Income	£334	Building Costs	£5,815
Gift Aid	£5,809	Joint Cong Costs	£1,500
		Other Costs	£2,870
		Pulpit Supply	£930
TOTAL INCOME	£30,160	TOTAL EXPEND	£33,471
Deficit y-t-d	£3,311		

Robert Carson, Treasurer

Cairngryffe Church

The financial year ends on 31st December so I would just remind anyone who has money to go into the church funds before that date or any Invoices for payment to get them to Treasurer as soon as possible in order to finalise this years accounts.



Cairngryffe Financial Report from Jan 2011 to Nov 2011

Income

Expenditure

Offering	£16,003	Church of Scotland	£9,495
Tax Back	4,202	Travel Expenses	110
Calendars	378	Joint Cong Account	1,500
Social Comm	350	Salaries	2,352
Donations	450	Printing & stationery	242
Weddings	400	Insurance	1,020
Tea Committee	331	Calendars	831
		Presbytery Dues	384
		Misc	655
Total Income	£22,114	Total Expenditure	£16,589
		Surplus y-t-d	£5,525

Linzi Struthers, Treasurer

CAIRNGRYFFE EVERYOUNG CLUB

On **December 15th** members will enjoy a hearty **Christmas Lunch at Cornhill House Hotel** (12.30pm for 1.00pm).

The fun doesn't end there as the fortnightly meetings in Thankerton Village Hall at 2.00pm resume on :-

12th Jan 2012 Quiz Day with Irene Watson

26th Jan 2012 Talk on the New State Hospital by Stephen Starrs

9th Feb 2012 Campbell Armour - Auctioneer

23rd Feb 2012 Talk on Auchlochlan by Jillian Robertson

8th Mar 2012 Life in the Manse by Mrs Cutler

22nd Mar 2012 BBC Reporter – Sheena Graham

For more information contact **Sadie Campbell at 01899 308328**

PROBUS CLUB OF BIGGAR

The Probus Club of Biggar will hold their annual Open Meeting on Tuesday 6th December when they will welcome a 'Young Person's Forum' comprising senior pupils from Biggar High School, each giving a short talk on a subject in which they are interested. The meeting is open to all and has, in the past, proven to be a very enlightening and stimulating highlight of the Club's year. The meeting is in Biggar Municipal Hall starting at 10:30am, with tea and coffee served from 09:45 – 10:15, when all will be made welcome.

On 20th December our speaker will be Rev R.S.Blakey on 'Ah yes! I remember it well! Following our Annual New Year lunch on 3rd January, the meeting of 17th January will feature Murdo Morrison speaking on Harris Tweed.

Further details from Jim Watt 01555 663394 or via the Club Website www.biggarprobusclub.org.uk.

THE UPPERWARD PARISHES HISTORY PROJECT

The latest additions to our local history series are :-

Carmichael Primary School Photo Book 1900-2000 £7.50

Pettinain Primary School Photo Book 1890-1990 £7.50

A history of Ponfeigh/Douglas Water in 2 volumes £15

Available from the Editor on 01899 308327

Previous publications which are still available from William Fleming on 01555 661386:-

Carmichael – a Parish and its Peoples – 2 Vols - £15

Covington & Thankerton – a Parish etc – 2 Vols £15

Libberton and Quothquan – 1 Vol - £8
A Life in the Landscape – 1 Vol – covering Abington, Crawford,
Crawfordjohn, Elvanfoot & Leadhills - £13
+ many time-saving transcriptions of various census records since 1841
(including Strathaven)

Editor's Note

Thank you to all contributors who provided the information contained in this newsletter.

The Spring edition of FOCUS will be issued late in February 2012.

Contributions from both village and church organizations and groups, covering the period from March 2012 to the end of May 2012 should be sent to me by **Sunday 12th February 2012 at the latest.**

I can be reached at: - Charlie Todd, 63 Station Road, Thankerton, ML12 6NZ Tel: 01899 308327 or by email at mtb345@aol.com

Prayer Page

Prayer and Praise Services

Do you really expect your prayers to be answered? Or has prayer become a religious ritual, a duty to be done? Remember God has committed himself to answering our prayers when we call to him in faith.

'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you will honour me.' (Psalm 50:15)

God wants us to come to him confident that things can change. If you pray about something be ready for God to change you, not just your circumstances! His priority might be different from yours – so be ready for it!

'Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.' (Hebrews 10:35-36)

The joint Cairngryffe and Symington Churches Prayer and Praise Services continue to be held on the third Monday of every month and we invite everyone to come along and be a part of it. We would like to thank all those who have been attending these services, and we look forward to welcoming more of our members joining us for prayer, praise and fellowship during the coming winter months.

The next service is in **Cairngryffe Church on Monday 19th December '11 at 7.30pm** then at **Symington Church Monday 16th January '12 at 7.30pm**

Then at **Cairngryffe Church Monday 20th February '12 at 7.30pm**

If you find coming difficult because of transport issues please contact either Sandra Stewart or George Mathew and we will try to arrange a lift.

God wants to hear our requests and wants us to believe that things can change as we bring them to him.

'He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him' (1 Chronicles 5:20)

Prayer Promoters

Symington – George Mathew Tel: 01899 308648

Cairngryffe – Sandra Stewart Tel: 01555 880655

