

KIRK OF KEITH: ST RUFUS, BOTRIPHNE AND GRANGE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Dear Keith, Botriphnie and Grange friends,

Being an Interim Moderator is one post where the workers try very hard to do themselves out of a job. At my first meeting with your office bearers, someone said (in a kindly way), 'I hope you won't be around for very long with us.'

In Caithness Presbytery I was the IM for eight different congregations at one time or another. I served one church for only four months before the vacancy was filled, but another post lasted for seven years. It is now the norm for ministers in rural areas to be an IM for a neighbouring congregation as well as minister to their own. It makes better use of time to serve a local church rather than one at a distance.

Another good reason for me to serve my neighbouring congregation is the chance to strengthen the spirit of co-operation that already exists between our two Keith and district parishes. That friendship was evident during the summer when we shared the holiday week services. We have revived the joint churches' choir for the Rotary Club carol service on 18th December.

If we are to all have a share in the diminishing number of full time parish ministers in the rural parts of our country, then the combined service of ministers, locums, Ordained Local Ministers (as our Scottish non-stipendary ministers are called), parish assistants, youth workers, readers, elders willing to conduct services, and worship teams need to work together to both lead worship and provide pastoral care.

So I look forward to working with your locum, David Whyte, your youth worker, Michael Newlands, others who may provide pulpit supply, your office bearers and musicians, as all part of a team ministry. And I look forward, in our Lord's perfect timing, to another full time minister being called to your congregation, and to the combined forces of Christian leadership in our parish areas.

With best wishes for this coming Advent Season, Rev Alastair Gray. North Manse 01542 886840

Sunday Club

We have around 25 children who attend regularly and two youth group helpers and we're very grateful for their assistance and ideas. We have seven leaders who turn up every week, regular as clockwork and are a great asset to myself and Margaret. At our meetings, we have learned about Abraham and his family and made associated artwork to decorate the hall. We made posters for the church at Harvest Thanksgiving service and visited hospital on Remembrance Sunday to give out small gifts and poppies and sang a song which was enjoyed by old and young alike. We've been busy making festive decorations for the hall in time for the Christmas party and are now practising for our part in the Christmas service.

Beth Inglis, Leader

Bible Study

In Bible Study started, we've been looking at the "hard sayings" that Christ taught us. It's been a great opportunity to look and study them in depth, often pulling in the historical, societal and political reasoning behind these difficult sayings that can leave us confused or conflicted.

We've looked at sayings from Jesus saying that he came not to bring peace but a sword, to the notion of plucking out our eyes. We've had some really interesting conversations around these sayings but also some conversations of how they fit into our lives nowadays, the church as a whole and also the ideologies of the different denominations within Christendom.

I'd highly recommend this group to anyone who wants to study the Bible in greater depth, anyone interested in speaking about modern day theological issues within the church and just anyone who wants to come have a cuppa and a blether in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

Michael Newlands

News from the Guild

During the last three months the Guild has had varied and lively meetings. In September John Sherry gave an informative talk on the Biblical Garden in Elgin which has encouraged many of our members to visit the Garden in the spring. Rev David Whyte gave a talk on this year's Guild theme which was enlightening and thought provoking and much enjoyed by everyone. Another guest speaker was Majorie Clark who gave a very comprehensive talk regarding the life of Mary Slessor and her work in Nigeria. Our annual quiz night was the usual fun-filled evening which was hosted by Fiona and Charlie Simpson. We invited guests from other clubs in Keith to our flower arranging meeting and new members are always welcome. We meet every second Monday in the church hall at 7.30pm.

Dorothy Matthews, Secretary

Youth Group

It doesn't seem like too long ago I was writing about the Youth Group and telling you all what we've been up to. Well, we're still just as busy with no sign of slowing.

At the start of November we did our sponsored Wake-a-thon. Despite how tiring that was, it was well worth it. We camped in the church hall and turned it into our own private cinema. We set up the laptop and projector and whipped out the popcorn to watch movies. The boys of course commandeered the small room and set up a little man cave, complete with three TVs, three games consoles and countless games. At the start of the night however, because we were raising funds for the North East Sensory Services (NESS), we had Bruce Cruickshank come and visit us again so that we could have a blindfolded dinner. Our challenge was to eat pizza and sticky toffee pudding without the use of our eyes. Between pizza sauce on our hands and toffee sauce in our hair, it's safe to say that we began to understand the challenges that so many in this world face through lack of sight. Fortunately we had removed the blindfolds before we started playing giant Jenga and Twister. I still feel my disqualification from Twister was unfair. I got hair in my mouth!

We don't quite know the total of our collected sponsored money yet but watch this space and we'll be handing over the cheque to Bruce for NESS at our Christmas party.

As one year ends, another begins and I'm sure we will continue to have lots of fun and stories to tell. As always, our youth group is a fine example of how thoughtful and conscientious young folk can be. I don't believe I'd be out of turn by speaking on behalf of all our leaders when I say that they are a great bunch to work with, a group any church would be proud to have and certainly a hope for the future.

Michael Newlands

Christmas Services

Sunday, December 18 – United service with nativity and lunch, St Rufus, 10.15am

Sunday, December 18 – Rotary Carol Service at St Rufus, 7pm

Saturday, December 24 – Christingle at Botriphnie 6.30pm; Watch Night at St Rufus 11.30pm

Sunday, December 25 – United Christmas Day service at St Rufus, 10.15am

Sunday, January 1 – United New Year's Day service at St Rufus, 10.15am

Parish Register to 30th November 2016

Funerals

October - William Youngson

Betty Holt

November- William Jamieson

Betty McIrvine

Jim Thomson