

November & December 2016

THE MESSENGER



**The Magazine of St Michael
And All Angels
Episcopal Church, Helensburgh
www.stmichaelhelensburgh.org.uk**



Service Details

Sunday

8:00am Said Eucharist (1970 Rite)

9:30am Open Spirit Contemporary Worship

10:30am Sung Eucharist (1982 Rite)
Crèche and Sunday Clubs

6:30pm Prayer Book Choral Evensong

Tuesdays

10:30am Said Eucharist (1970 Rite) followed by refreshments

Thursdays

7:00pm Said Eucharist (1982 Rite)

For other services not listed here please see Diary (Page 10) inside



ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, WILLIAM STREET, HELENSBURGH

Charity Registered in Scotland SC006468

The Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway

Bishop: The Right Revd. Gregor Duncan

Diocesan Website: www.scotland.anglican.org/diocese/glasgow

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From the Rector

A few notes on the Calendar. Please note the celebration of All Souls', on November 3rd at 7.00pm. The first Evensong-Plus was well-attended, and well-received especially by some of our guests from other churches. Do try to join us for the second Evensong-Plus on November 13th. You are also very warmly invited to our Ecumenical Carol Service for Advent on the First Sunday of Advent. It is being celebrated at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church by kind invitation of Fr. John Hughes, and the Advent music should be well worth enjoying. On December 11th we are hosting our friends from the United Reformed Church at the 10.30am service. Unfortunately, it is also the day of our Annual General Meeting, but I had agreed to our joint worship some time ago, before the AGM date was finalised by the Vestry. So a bit of a busy morning that day - but a good reason for our able Vestry Secretary to whittle away at the AGM agenda to keep the meeting as brief as possible! Finally, please also note the Christmas arrangements. The usual Children's Big Christmas Celebration will start at 4.00pm on Christmas Eve. DO please invite any young children you may know; it might just be the only Christian input into their family's Christmas! Our Carol Service will be at 6.00pm on Tuesday Dec 27th the Feast-day of St. John the Evangelist. James Reed and I are really pleased that we can have the carol service within the Octave of Christmas, Christmas-tide itself (which is where it properly belongs!) We hope it will make a pleasant ending to the long Christmas Holiday Week-end. DO come, and DO, please, bring family or friends who may be staying with you over Christmas. It might be just the thing to remind them of what Christmas is really all about!

MESSENGER

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From the Rector (continued)

Many of you will now know that a few weeks ago I told the congregations that I will be retiring as Rector of St. Michael's and from full-time priestly ministry on Sunday, October 1st 2017. The main reason why I told you all so early is so that you have plenty of time to think about the sort of priest you wish as my successor. Vacancies are not good times for any church, especially as if go on a long time as many do. St. Michael's was very fortunate to have Ian Craston to help guide the church through the last vacancy. Most churches are not so fortunate and a vacancy makes a church like a large ship which is losing power and way in a moderate sea. So I want you, the church, to be as ready as possible for the start of the vacancy, so that you can 'hit the ground running' (as it were) on October 2nd 2017 and tell the Diocese exactly what sort of priest you are looking for to follow me. So will you all PLEASE start discussing the sort of priest you wish. Discuss with each other and with your Vestry members. Remember that you need somebody sympathetic to using the 1970 Rite at the 8.00am and Tuesday Eucharists, and the Prayer Book at Choral Evensong (and by-the-way, during the vacancy The Vestry needs to ensure that every effort is made to maintain the Tuesday morning Eucharist.) But you also need a priest who will do his/her best to reach out to and encourage younger families and children to come to St. Michael's. Hopefully this will be building on the work James Reed is starting through music and singing.

PLEASE do not close your collective minds to appointing a woman priest. Most ordained women are very good, if not excellent, and SHE could be just the person God wishes to give to St. Michael's to lead His church community.

Whatever you do, TALK about your wishes for my successor, so that Vestry members can tell the Bishop and the Dean precisely the sort of woman or man you would like as your next Rector.

Something else I said to the congregations - and this is equally important - is that there is to be absolutely NOTHING to mark the end of my ministry; no collections, no gifts, no presentations, no special meals. I am a 'simple parish priest' (as we were told at seminary) and I have tried to exercise my ministry to the best of my ability. You have paid me on time and very adequately for 13 years and I have never worried about my stipend arriving. You have given us a lovely big rectory to live in, and it has been great fun and a blessing to all the family. These are all we have required and have been sufficient. Given the very serious financial decisions, accompanied by some very tense discussions, being made by Vestry members, I would be highly, HIGHLY embarrassed to think that people were being asked to give money to mark my departure. No, if you are wishing to give away money, St. Michael's needs it! My last Sunday will be exactly the same as any other ordinary Sunday. Please read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest this as I do mean it.

Thank you for giving this your attention. God Bless you all.

The Rector

News

November/December is a very special edition, starting with All Saints' and All Souls' days passing through Remembrance Sunday, on to the end of the Church Year and then Advent through to Christmas Day, which will be the publication day for the January/February edition. As you will all appreciate, I must go to print before Christmas or wait until sometime in January. Please let me have any contributions by 11th December.

Richard Smith, Editor

Notices

MONTHLY COFFEE MORNING

November's Coffee Morning is at 10:30am on Thursday 3rd November at Chris and Anne Packard's House, Kiloran, 14 Glasgow Street. December's Coffee Morning is at 10:30am on Thursday 1st December at Brian and Maureen Kyle's House, Dolphin Lodge, 2a East Montrose Street.

Maureen Kyle

DIOCESAN GROWTH STRATEGY See Page 10 for the next meeting.

MOTHERS' UNION MEETINGS See article on Page 8

ECO-CONGREGATION MEETINGS See article on Page 11

DIOCESAN ADVENT QUIET DAY See article on Page 12

The Preshal Trust

CHRISTMAS PRESENT APPEAL

As in previous years we are appealing for Christmas presents for the Preshal Trust. These are needed for both boys and girls from 'tots to teenagers'. They must be unwrapped but suitable wrapping paper would be greatly appreciated. The Trust has a team of volunteers that sort, wrap and distribute the gifts to deserving youngsters.

The presents can be brought to church any Sunday during November, for the attention of Barbara & Shaun Hoey, or delivered to the Hoey abode at 24 Kildonan Drive, Helensburgh, G84 9SA. (tel: 01436 671718). They will then be delivered to the Trust in Glasgow by the Kyles & Hoeyes during the 1st week of December. Your support in the past gave great pleasure to nearly a hundred youngsters each year. Can we pull out the stops again? Yes, we can!!

Kyles & Hoeyes

Vestry Report September/October 2016

The Vestry met on 5th September and again on 10th October specifically to approve the accounts for the financial year ending 31st August. These will be presented at the St Michael's AGM which will take place after the 1030 service on Sunday 11th December. After prayers for spiritual guidance, the meeting got down to business.

MAP BRIEF The September meeting was largely taken up by a presentation by our Lay Reader, Kevin Boak, updating the vestry on St. Michael's Mission Action Planning (MAP). This was the brief that had been used during the bishop's visitation, and a full version will be made available on the St. Michael's website. MAP is a derivative of the 'Diocesan Growth Strategy' and there are 7 areas of activity to our MAP:

- 1) Easter Vigil for young people.
- 2) Explore with young people what they want from church.
- 3) Ask hall users to share with us.
- 4) More regular services with URC.
- 5) Increase our corporate prayer life.
- 6) New musical settings for our worship
- 7) Increase our links with the community.

We should recognise that MAP is evolving and that we all have a part to play to nurture the growth of Christian faith in the community. The Vestry agreed that the presentation should be delivered to the congregation at a forthcoming Sunday service in lieu of the sermon.

Any inputs or comments on the MAP should be sent to the Lay Reader.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN. John Lewis reported that there has been some positive response (also reflected in a separate positive report from the treasurer), but that there were still a lot of forms to come back. Based on the gift aid forms and bank mandates received to date the expected increase in giving is about 10%.

If you haven't returned your stewardship response form yet, or if you didn't get a form, please contact the Stewardship Convener John Lewis, or the Vestry Secretary Nick Davies.

Vestry Report (continued)

FOOD SAFETY. The Food Safety sub- committee consisting of John Hanks, Anne Cook and Nick Davies have completed a draft Food Safety Policy for St Michael's church, which has been sent to the Argyll & Bute Public Protection and Environmental Health expert for input and endorsement.

INTERIOR NOTICE BOARD. The Interior Notice Board will be a free standing quality piece of furniture to be placed just inside the West door. The order has been placed, deposit has been paid, and it will be a few months before we see it installed.

CHURCH INTERIOR DECORATION. 3 different contractors had quoted for the project. The cheapest is £18,000 from a local contractor which includes a reduced rate for scaffolding provided the job can be done in January/February next year. He could also complete the outstanding external redecoration for an additional £2,750. The Treasurer had been consulted, and had declared that the total cost of £20,750 for the church redecoration project could be funded from the Charities Deposit Fund (COIF).

It was agreed that church redecoration is long overdue. Furthermore, we will need to repeat the exercise in approximately another 5 years, and funding this will be another financial challenge. After some discussion, and with one abstention reflecting a minority view that interior decoration is not necessary, it was agreed that church interior redecoration, together with completion of external redecoration should go ahead. This will mean that we will have to use the United Reformed Church for our services while interior redecoration takes place in the New Year.

DRY ROT. The property manager reported the bad news that dry rot had been found in one area of the crypt. Putting this right was judged to be a high priority, and the vestry decided that the external notice board project, which had been approved in principle but will cost £2,400, should be deferred until the extent of the dry rot problem had been ascertained and costed. Fortunately, it turned out that the contractor only found one area of dry rot which was subsequently treated at a cost of £1800.

It was noted that the dry rot problem is compounded by the amount of stuff stowed in the crypt areas, specifically cardboard boxes full of music sheets and various items of defunct furniture. User groups responsible will be asked to review their stuff, and if necessary we will then form a volunteer working party to do a clear out.

Vestry Report (continued)

The Vestry hope to authorise the Exterior Notice Board once affordability has been confirmed, noting that it is important to outreach aspects of our MAP.

CHURCH PATH. James Ashby had led a volunteer working party to lift and replace the gravel and underlying membrane to the path which leads to the church hall. This is a huge improvement, and the Vestry thanked James Ashby and his volunteers for a job well done.

NEXT MEETINGS: Monday 7th November and AGM Sunday 11th December.

Nick Davies, Secretary

Mothers' Union

This season's meetings began with an enrolment service on Tuesday 6 September. The subject was this year's theme 'A Celebration of Faith' and we were pleased to welcome Ann, Jill, Rachel and Ivan into membership. May has also joined us from St Giles Exhall. Our next meeting was 'Inspiring or Despairing' and many members brought their ideas and feelings on these subjects with suggestions how to deal with them, the most important one being faith in God. On 4 October Jim Murdock spoke about painting and how he came to be interested in this hobby as he painted 2 pictures for us. It was most enjoyable.

Our first fundraiser of the season was 'Tangible Texts' on the Stall-in-the-Hall on 2 October. The princely sum of £190 was raised and our thanks go to all who contributed in any way.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Tuesday 1 November at 1.45 pm: A New Game? – how much do you really know about Mothers' Union? **Wednesday 9 November** at 2.00 pm: United Guilds' Meeting in Cardross Church with the subject 'Dumbarton Presbytery Holy Land Bursary Scheme' which supports Palestinian Christian children in the West Bank. This meeting is open to everyone not just MU members. **Thursday 17 November** at 10.00 am: Enigma. Learn about Bletchley Park in World War II. **Tuesday 6 December** at 1.45 pm: Party Pieces.

As always our meetings are open to anyone who would like to come along. Watch out for other events coming up next year under the auspices of Mothers' Union.

Joan Thompson, Branch Leader

Eco-congregation

It is almost a year ago that the Scottish Interfaith Group was meeting to prepare and hand over its statement to Dr. Aileen McLeod to take to the Paris Conference on Climate Change and Climate Justice. The Eco-Congregation Baton was still doing the rounds and raising huge interest up and down the country ready for its first trip abroad. The Interfaith Group this year is even bigger with events right across the UK on every possible aspect of interfaith dialogue. The reason I mention this is that a great many of the events, talks, displays, and other gatherings, relate to the Creation, our appalling damage to it through greed, exploitation and apathy, and the particular way in which religion or faith can help bring change for the better. However different the outward trappings of belief there is very often a common moral sense of obligation to care for the Earth. It is interesting to note that all the events which involve food, require it to be vegetarian. This not only avoids arguments over humane rearing and killing of animals, but underlines the fact that for health and sustainability, there could be enough food for all, if we adopted this simple practice.

I am told that St Michael's has done enough to obtain a second award so I shall put in for it this winter. The stall in the Hall on the first Sunday in November will be for Eco-Congregation, and some of the money raised will go to buy new tubs and shrubs for the small back garden which we look onto from the Lower Hall. It started well but is need of some TLC. Of course we are not in the same league as Alexandria Parish Church which had a very large area of ground behind it, and thanks to Eco-Congregation, now has a flourishing series of allotments including a small orchard and raised beds planted by the local primary school.

Please check your Christmas decoration plans and try not to use too much plastic and artificial material, as the making of it is simply using up valuable energy and adding to the carbon in the atmosphere. It is an opportunity to be inventive with cardboard, wood and string and to find natural stuff outside to use for decoration. The wonderful displays in the church this Harvest Festival should inspire you. And don't forget to do an audit on home cleaning materials. So many of the sprays and fluids are toxic, not to mention artificial perfumes and sprays which are not necessary. They land up poisoning the ocean and killing the minute organic life forms which create most of our oxygen! Happy Healthy Christmas.

CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 1st November - Feast-day of All Saints

10:30am Said Eucharist followed by refreshments

1:45pm MU – A new game?

Thursday 3rd November – Commemoration of the faithful departed

7:00pm Said Eucharist

10:30am Monthly Coffee Morning

Sunday 6th November – Third Before Advent

Monday 7th November

10:30am Local Eco Network Meeting Helensburgh Parish Church

7:30pm Vestry meeting in Rectory

Wednesday 9th November

November day of Prayer for Mission Action Planning

2:00pm MU - United Guilds' Meeting Cardross Church

Sunday 13th November – Second Before Advent (Remembrance Sunday)

6:30pm Choral Evensong–Plus!

Tuesday 15th November - Feast-day of St. Margaret of Scotland

10:30am Said Eucharist followed by refreshments

Wednesday 16th November

From 6:00pm church in use for Contraflow Prayer Evening

Thursday 17th November

10:00am MU - Enigma

Saturday 19th November

9:00am Rambling Club – Cochno Loch

Sunday 20th November – Feast-day of Christ the King

Monday 21st November

7:00pm MAP meeting in Rectory

Saturday 26th November

10:30am-12:30pm Messy Church at St. Margaret's, Churchill

Sunday 27th November – First of Advent

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHURCH YEAR CYCLE A

3:00pm Advent Carol Service at St. Joseph's, East King Street

6:00pm Contraflow Youth Praise – No evensong

Monday 28th November

7:30pm NWRC meeting St. Silas

Tuesday 29th November - Feast-day of St. Andrew Patron of Scotland

10:30am Said Eucharist followed by refreshments

DECEMBER

Thursday 1st December

10:30am Monthly Coffee Morning

Friday 2nd December

4:00pm Wedding in church

Saturday 3rd December

Diocesan Advent Quiet Day – Holy Trinity and St Barnabas, Paisley also St Ninian's, Castle Douglas

Sunday 4th December – Second of Advent

Tuesday 6th December

1:45pm MU – Party pieces.

Saturday 10th December

9:00am Rambling Club – Pub Walk Arrochar

Sunday 11th December – Third of Advent

10:30am Joint Worship with URC in St. Michael's

12:30pm ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

6:30pm Choral Evensong-Plus!

/DECEMBER 2016

Wednesday 14th December

December day of Prayer for Mission Action Planning

Sunday 18th December – Fourth of Advent

Wednesday 21st December

10:00am Parklands School Christmas Celebration

Saturday 24th December – Christmas Eve

4:00pm St. Michael's CHILDREN'S BIG CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

11:00pm First Eucharist of Christmas

Sunday 25th December – Feast-day of the Birth of Jesus Christ - Christmas Day

8:00am Said Eucharist

10:00am Christmas Day Celebration and Holy Communion

Tuesday 27th December – Feast-day of St. John the Evangelist

10:30am Said Eucharist followed by refreshments

6:00pm St. Michael's Christmas Carol Service

Wednesday 28th December – Feast-day of the Holy Innocents

9:00am Rambling Club – Walk off the Turkey – Bowling Basin to Dumbarton

Sunday 1st January – Feast-day of the Naming of Jesus

All services as usual

"Christ asks for a home in your soul where you and He, alone together. can laugh and be silent and be delighted with one another."

Caryll Houselander

Eco-congregation (continued)

Dates to remember:

Sunday 6th November Eco-Congregation Stall in the Hall (some of the money to go towards new shrubs and tubs for church garden)

Monday 7th November Local Eco Network Meeting 10:30 Helensburgh Parish Church. Anyone who is interested is always welcome.

Remember that the word *salve* (ointment) is the same root as *salvation* and simply means health. Our salvation means health in the deepest and most far reaching sense of the word. Faith in God is for our healing: physically, mentally and spiritually, but we cannot be healthy in an unhealthy world. Our salvation therefore depends on a healthy Creation.

Selina McGeoch

Director of Music

Our first Choral Evensong sung by a slightly enhanced choir of 15 adults on October 9th was a great success, with the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis sung to the setting in d minor by T. A. Walmisley, the Introit was *If ye love me* by Thomas Tallis, and the Anthem was *Lord I trust thee* by G. F. Handel. There were several visitors in the congregation from the Roman Catholic church at the C of S Parish Church, and some of our own congregation from the morning Eucharist who don't frequently attend evensong! The next one will be November 13th at 6:30pm, and the music this time will be Harris in a minor for the

Director of Music (continued)

Magnificat/Nunc Dimittis, From the Rising of the Sun by F. A. Ouseley, and Teach Me O Lord by Thomas Attwood. Do consider coming and enjoying these lovely musical offerings in the context of a very prayerful and relaxing evening liturgy using the beautiful language of the 1929 Prayer Book. *James Reed*

Contraflow

Contraflow is the Christian Youth Project between schools and churches in Helensburgh – the youth worker being Helen Buchanan. I have been on the Management Committee for 16 of its 17 years and a Trustee for 6. I would like to retire from the Management Committee at the end of the year and would be delighted if someone in the church family would volunteer to take over the role. We are the largest donating church to the project and I would be unhappy if no-one replaced me. I have approached four people personally to no avail, so this is why I am appealing via the Magazine. Please speak to me if you are interested (each church involved has one or more members on the Committee). Meetings are held once a month – the Baptist Church is happy to let us use a room. Scripture Union oversees our work and we have a line manager to whom Helen refers. All the stamps I have collected from you over the years have gone to Scripture Union and they are happy to continue to receive them.

Margaret Gilbert

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY

DIOCESAN ADVENT QUIET DAY

"ENCOUNTERS" 03/12/16 from 10 for 10.30 am - 3pm at Holy Trinity & St Barnabas, Paisley. Led by Maureen Brough

and "ADVENT: AN END AND A BEGINNING" at St Ninian's Castle Douglas. Led by Bishop Gregor Duncan

For further info <http://www.stjohnsdumfries.org/worship/creative-worship> diocesan-advent quiet day 2016 poster Participants are asked to bring their own lunch, but tea and coffee will be provided from 10am. Please apply to Jennifer FitzGibbon (secretary), Development Team for Prayer and Spirituality, e-mail j2fg@aol.com ; phone 01294823992, before 25th Nov if possible or write to the Diocesan Centre (mark envelope 'Advent Quiet Day')

The Rebirth of Two Candlesticks

As some of you may know, the ceramic bowl in one of the Wrought Iron candlesticks in the side chapel broke. Callon Smith who is in charge of looking after and lighting the candles in the Church, called on me and asked me if I had an answer to what could be done.

To replicate a piece of ceramic to fit into an existing piece is no mean feat. I knew that I certainly could not do it but I have a friend and colleague that I knew, would possibly accept such a challenge.

I emailed George Young who is the potter behind the St. Andrews Pottery in Fife. He is a kind and willing man and agreed to take up the challenge.

The challenge is as follows:

First you must throw the accurate shape, this is in wet clay, then the clay shape must dry which means it shrinks quite a considerable amount. Then you must fire it, once again it will shrink; you then glaze it and fire it again, and again it will shrink. So how big do you throw it in the first place to be sure it achieves the required fit at the end?

You can calculate percentages of shrinkage but without an experienced eye and knowledge of your clay and years of experience and meticulous note taking through the years you do not get very far.

George is the most competent precision craftsman potter I know, so he was the obvious choice and he has managed to do it with flying colours and we now have two candlesticks back to their former glory. I am sure we are all grateful to him.

If you want to see his work you can Google 'St. Andrews Pottery'. His workshop is perched on top of Blebocraigs outside St. Andrews, with a most fantastic view.

Berit Vogt



CHURCH FINANCES SINCE 2000

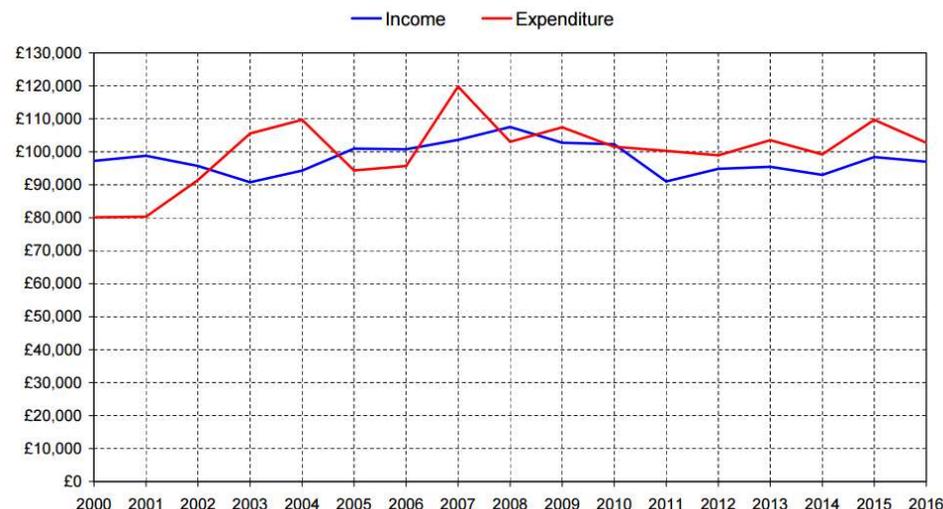
The charts show the income into and expenditure from the Unrestricted Funds of the church over the last 17 years. The Unrestricted Funds have to meet just about all of the routine day to day running costs of the church. However, they do not include money given for specific purposes. For example, the charts do not include the money given specifically for the conservation of the church, nor, for example, for the installation of the wheelchair lift. Similarly, the expenditure on these special projects is not included in the charts.

The charts take account of inflation as measured by the Consumer Prices Index. It can be seen that over the last 17 years' income has more or less kept up with inflation but that expenditure has increased at a faster rate.

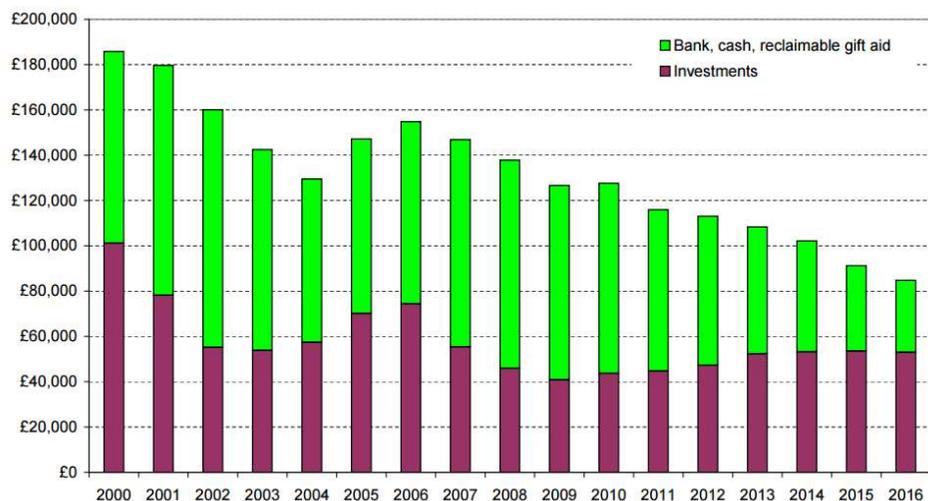
Since 2008 expenditure has exceeded income in 7 years out of 8. In the one year in that period when income exceeded expenditure it was by less than £800. As a result, our bank and cash reserves have reduced by almost 2/3rds between 2008 and 2016.

John Sadden

Unrestricted income & expenditure adjusted for inflation by CPI



Unrestricted funds year end balances adjusted for inflation by CPI



Unrestricted funds surplus/deficit adjusted for inflation by CPI



ST MICHAEL'S RAMBLING CLUB

WALKS NOVEMBER 2016 TO JANUARY 2017

Walks are on Saturdays and start outside St Michael's Church at 9 am unless otherwise indicated by the leaders of the individual walks.

DATE	GRADE	WALK	ORGANISER
19 th November	Medium/ Hard	Cochno Loch and Kilmannan Reservoir	Richard Horrell 01436 676936
10 th December	Easy/ Medium	Pub Walk – Arrochar	James Ashby 01436 675541
28 th December	Easy	Walk off the Turkey – Bowling Basin to Dumbarton	Ethnee Ashton 01436 676959
14 th January 2017	Easy	Dinner Walk – Hillhouse to Rhu and return	Pete Ashton 01436 676959

The grade (or the walk) may change after a recce. There will normally be an easy(ish) option.

Further information will be sent out nearer the time of each walk and copies put on the notice board in the Church Hall.

The committee members are now: James Ashby 01436 675541, Frankie Hanmer 01436 678490, Richard Horrell 01436 676936 and Jo Scott 01389 849145.

If you would like to lead a future walk or to suggest one, your committee would be delighted to hear from you.



1- Walkers above Callandar

LECTIONARY – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

Sunday	Eucharist	Evensong
6 th November 3 rd before Advent	Job 19:23-27a 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5+13-17 Luke 20:27-38	Isaiah 10:33-11:9 John 14:23-29 Psalm 46
13 th November 2 nd before Advent	Malachi 4:1-2a 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 Luke 21:5-19	Daniel 3:13-30 Matthew 13:24-30+36-43 Psalm 95 or 97
20 th November Christ the King	Jeremiah 23:1-6 Colossians 1:11-20 Luke 23:33-43	Daniel 5:1-30 John 6:1-15 Psalm 110
27 th November Advent 1	Isaiah 2:1-5 Romans 13:11-14 Matthew 24:36-44	No evensong
4 th December Advent 2	Isaiah 11:1-10 Romans 15:4-13 Matthew 3:1-12	1 Kings 18:17-39 Luke 1:1-25 Psalm 40:11-17
11 th December Advent 3	Isaiah 35:1-10 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11	Malachi 3:1-4:4 Luke 1:57-66 Psalm 68:1-8
18 th December Advent 4	Isaiah 7:10-16 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25	Isaiah 42:1-12 John 3:16-21 Psalm 72:11-19
24 th December Christmas Eve 11:00pm	Isaiah 52:7-10 Hebrews 1:1-12 John 1:1-14	
25 th December Christmas Day 8:00am	Isaiah 52:7-10 Hebrews 1:1-12 John 1:1-14	
25 th December Christmas Day 10:00am	Informal Christmas morning celebration – no reader required	
27 th December Carol Service 6:00pm	Readings to be posted later and readers allocated later	

READERS' LIST – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

DATE	8:00am	10:30am	6:30pm
6 th Nov	John MacCallum	James Ashby	Jill Braid
13 th Nov	Chris Sanders	Jill Braid	David Ronald
20 th Nov	Selina McGeoch	Trevor Quickfall	John Sadden
27 th Nov	Penny Johnston	John Lewis	Contraflow
4 th Dec	Nigel Allan	Michael Blake	Joan Sadden
11 th Dec	Liz Sanderson	John Hanks	Margaret Gilbert
18 th Dec	John MacCallum	Chris Packard	Penny Johnston
25 th Dec	Chris Sanders	11:00pm 24th Tom Allison	

Thoughts for November and December

"Christ has no body now but yours.

No hands, no feet on earth but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world.

Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good.

Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world."

St. Teresa of Avila

"To avoid anxieties which may be caused by either regret for the past or fear of the future, here in a few words is a rule to follow: the past must be left to God's mercy, the future to His loving providence, and the present must be given wholly to His love through fidelity to His grace".

Jean Pierre de Caussade

Church Group Leaders

People's Warden

Rector's Warden

Sunday School

Crèche

Infants, Juniors and Bible Class

Sidespersons

Bellringers

Reading (Lessons) Rota

Cleaning Co-ordinator

Visiting Co-ordinator

Flowers

Intercessions Rota, Laundry, Soft

Fabrics and Chief Sacristan

Sunday Coffee Rota

BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship Notes)

Mothers' Union Branch Leader

Us (formerly USPG)

Keep Fit/ Hall Convener/

Monthly Coffee Morning Rota

Eco Congregation

Hill walking and Rambling Club

Badminton Club

Traidcraft

Vale of Leven Hospital Tea Bar

St Michael's Art Group

Magazine Editor

Collation / Distribution

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Ask how to join or help. Perhaps bring new ideas for new activities
You will be welcome. Please let the editor know if any changes are needed.

The Beacon Trust

Getting close to Christmas again, all of the tell-tale signs are there. The adverts are filling the TV screen, garden centres are stocked up with Christmas trees and you are being constantly reminded that you should have been making payments on a wonderful food hamper, but don't worry, you can still start paying for next years. I have not yet witnessed any reference to what Christmas is really about. Has it become so politically wrong now that we cannot mention Christ's birthday in all this. I wonder if God had waited until now to bring his son into the world and chose Helensburgh as his birthplace, what sort of impact would this have. 2000 years ago, Mary and Joseph did not have it so good. Mary was an unmarried expectant mother betrothed to Joseph who was not the father. A terrible thing in those days. Just over a century ago she would have been shunned, sent to the workhouse and quickly removed from society. Joseph was enlightened to Mary's circumstances and married her becoming the stepfather to Gods child. 33 years later after a brief ministry, Jesus was put to death on a cross so that man could find forgiveness in God's eyes.

So, imagine Mary and Joseph are on their way to Helensburgh in their Ford Fiesta and Mary is near full term in her pregnancy. Although Mary is pregnant and Joseph is not the father he has stayed with her. Attitudes to unmarried mothers have changed and the emphasis is on the wellbeing of the unborn child. It is a quick trip to the social, register for benefits and temporary accommodation in a homeless unit. I don't think so.

Helensburgh would have no Christian community for a start. No church buildings, Woman's Guild, Choir etc. Probably no welfare state and no Christian based laws. No Beacon Trust either. For without Park Church as its birthplace there would have been no Beacon Trust. If Mary and Joseph needed furniture for their Helensburgh home, they would have to try some of the other charities in the town and yes their needs would be taken care of on a commercial basis.

I believe God knew what he was doing 2000 years ago when he decided that then was the time for his son Jesus to enter the world. He knew how man would evolve, he had seen man's corruption from the start and the expanding gulf between man and himself. Through Jesus' sacrifice he hoped to close that gap. Have we failed to take this opportunity? I say we have, when we become afraid to stand up for our Christian beliefs in case we upset someone else. When Christmas has become a commercial money spinning venture and the true meaning is eventually dragged in from the background.

The Beacon Trust (continued)

The Beacon Trust is still here, just. The generosity of the Churches and our friends are keeping us alive. We give you all our heartfelt thanks. The volunteers are not as young as they used to be, age takes its toll. Our commercial rent is crippling but the passion to serve is still there. Many a person comes to the shop seeking help. We give as much as we can and try to supply their needs. That is what we are there for, to show Gods love in a community by giving. If we lost sight of that goal, the true mission of The Beacon Trust would fade into the background but at least the commercial sector will jolt our memory to celebrate Christmas each year.

Trevor McGrath MBE