

Church Contact List

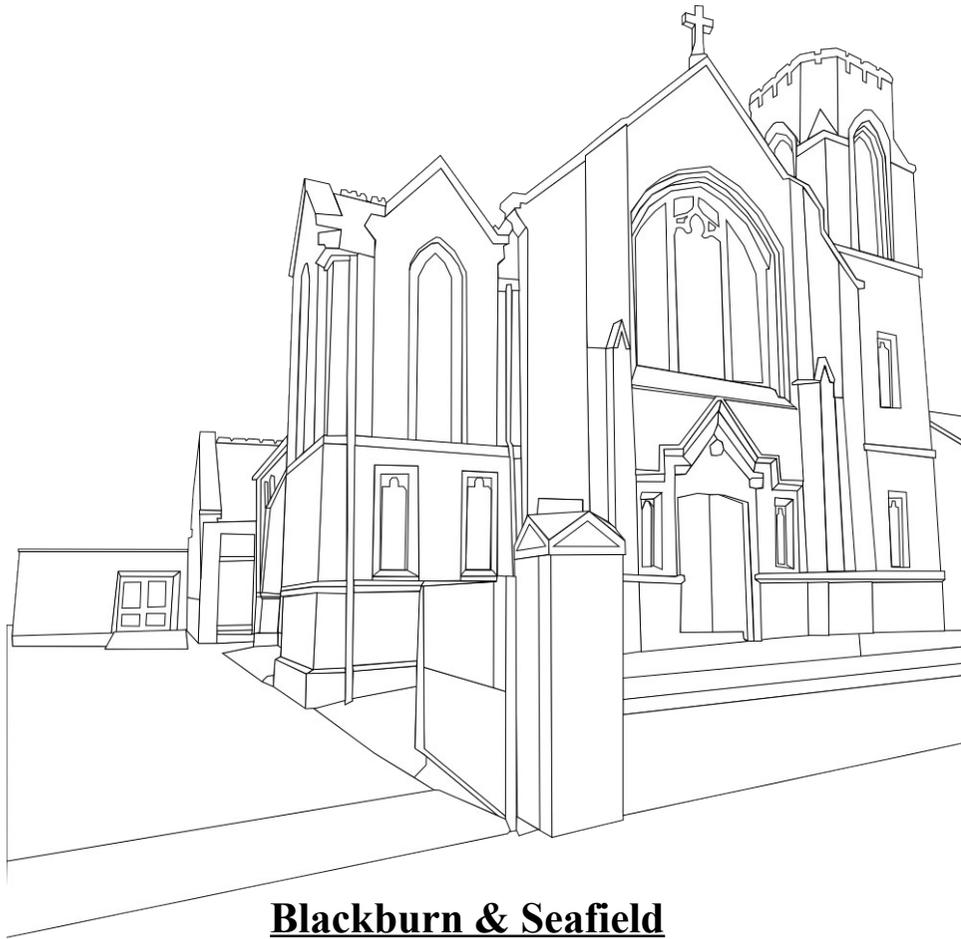
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Any contributions intended for the April Tally Lamp may be passed to the Editor, in writing, or emailed to carne.mcculloch@sky.com by Sunday 26th March 2017.

Blackburn and Seafield Church of Scotland
Scottish Charity No. SCO 24154
www.blackburnandseafieldchurch.co.uk



Blackburn & Seafield
Church of Scotland
Parish News
March 2017

Dear Friends,

After 19 years of ministry here I will be retiring next month. My last service will be on Resurrection Day, Sunday 16th April which is also Holy Communion. The passage of life and time is a great mystery. I remember seeing the classified advertisement in *The Scotsman* for this vacant charge. I drove out to have a look and passed the Church thinking that it was closed. Finding only the Catholic Church and the Brethren Hall, I then concluded that this was the vacant charge. I had a strong sense of call though and proceeded with the application. I came out for a visit and had a hearty brunch in Jean Lumsden's Mum's (Mrs Hamilton) house where I felt warmly welcome. The Church was packed at my induction and I made a joke about the manse being 5 star accommodation 'When inside and I look up – I can see them'.

I recall many wonderful and special spiritual occasions throughout the years. There were also trials and difficulties. Brutal bereavements are etched on my memory. I was regularly uplifted by the hilarious natural humour of so many. Ministry is a team effort and mine has been sustained by the gifts, skills, faith and commitment of some excellent people.

The congregation is stable and peaceful. The finances and properties are in good order. The new manse is fully compliant, energy efficient and always warm. This congregation is a going concern. It is my hope and prayer that these factors create a good opportunity to call a new minister.

The direction and purpose of my calling here from its outset has been to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to proclaim his death and resurrection and to affirm his eternal Lordship. I have tried to

Blackburn & Seafield Parish Church of Scotland
Scottish Charity SCO 24154

February Parish Record

Marriage Service

Sean Hannah and Sharon Williamson - 20th February

Funeral Services

William Nicol 55 Heatherwood Seafield - 3rd February

Ann Patterson Crofthead Care Home - 10th February

March 2017 Calendar

Sun 5th Mar – 11 00am – Morning Worship

Wed 8th Mar – 7 00pm – Mid-week Service in the Manse

Sun 12th Mar – 11 00am – Morning Worship

Wed 15th Feb – 7 00pm - Mid-week Service in the Manse

Sun 19th Mar – 11 00am – Morning Worship

Wed 22nd Mar – 7 00pm – Mid-week Service in the Manse

Sun 26th Mar – 11 00am – Mother's Day Service

Wed 29th Mar – 7 00pm - Mid-week Service in the Manse

Elder's Rota

5th Mar – R. Dunlop, A. Simpson, M. Brown, F. McLennan, K. Burnett

12th Mar – J. Muir, A. Muir, D. Anderson, T. Stockman, M. Savage, M. Mason

19th Mar – J. Lumsden, J. McAloon, J. Ewart, G. Todd, C. Naylor.

26th Mar – I. Henderson, L. Graham, M. Shields, S. Merry, L. Thomson

Tea Rota

5th Mar – A. Gilfillan, C. McCulloch, M. Mason, S. Merry

12th Mar – G. Anderson, E. Brown, M. Millar, M. Todd, M. Boyd

19th Mar – I. Culpin, S. Milligan, S. Stevenson, I. Henderson, M. Shields

26th Mar – J. Lumsden, M. Arnott, H. Lind, K. Burnett

Flowers for the Sanctuary

5th March – Mrs. M. Duncan

12th March – Mrs. I. Henderson

19th March – Flower Fund

26th March – Mrs. M. Miller

Fear not for I am with you be not dismayed for I am your God;
I will strengthen you I will help you I will uphold you with my
victorious right hand. Isaiah 41 : 10

Prayer

Father in heaven we thank you that you are our Father and that we may have you with us. We thank you that we can know you are leading us by the hand. Give us your Spirit of understanding so that we may always see your mighty and powerful hand guiding us on all our ways. Help us where we fall short. Help us for we are weak and are often in situations where we cannot help ourselves but you are strong, you give light to our hearts through the Saviour Jesus Christ, we can direct our lives cheerfully, joyfully and patiently toward the great goal set before us as children and before the whole world. Amen.

interest everyone in Jesus Christ's forgiveness and salvation and to lead people out of cultural Protestantism to New Testament Christianity and to our Saviour and Lord, away from second-hand faith to personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. "*There is no other name under heaven given to humanity by which we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:12).

Christine and I were married here and we have had a happy family life for which we are all grateful. We will miss everyone and remember you often in our prayers. Thank you for allowing me to be your Minister for so long. I ask the Lord's blessing on everyone.

Robert Anderson

Jesus – Liberal and Conservative

Jesus is an enigmatic figure. Traditional Christian doctrine describes him as being perfect. Sinless. Jesus knew the stresses and temptations of human life but Christianity has always said that he never gave into these as we do. This is explained by him being a divine – human being, God incarnate among us, different from us. Yet the humanity of Jesus is very obvious in the Gospels. Jesus gets tired. He gets angry. He gets scunnered. He gets disappointed. He wells up with compassion and sheds bereavement tears like us. There is nothing fake about his suffering, spiritual, mental and physical. As we begin to look forward to Holy Week and to Easter which we should always call Resurrection Sunday, we will share some of these things from the Gospels. But we can look in more general terms about Jesus' interpretation of life and of our relationship with God.

The first thing to say is that Jesus believed in God. That seems ridiculously obvious but there are many people who are willing to

say that they admire Jesus and his teaching but that they do not believe in God. Atheists who think that they are being generous of mind say this kind of thing. Within the Churches there are also plenty of people who want to call themselves Christian who actually only follow Jesus as a human example of living a good life and have little faith in anything more. It is important then to emphasise that no-one can separate Jesus from God. God was the foundation and purpose of his life. Neither could Jesus live a human life without all that that entails among us.

In the church and in politics and society there is a perpetual distinction between being liberal and being conservative. The meanings of these words have changed over the years. The Liberal Party in politics however can be defined as advocating policies which knock down boundaries of accepted behaviour. Political liberals seek more and more freedoms for everyone. Conservatives in politics always want to set boundaries and maintain social rules. In all Christian Churches there are liberals and conservatives. The Roman Catholic Church is riven by struggles between such groups and factions. The present Pope has presented himself as a liberal having once been an arch-conservative. But The Vatican is in turmoil as different people with power and influence vie with one another to get the upper hand. A German journalist recently wrote... "In a very small circle, Pope Francis is said to have self-critically further explained himself as follows: 'It is not to be excluded that I will enter history as the one who split the Catholic Church'. Walter Mayr describes a pope who is isolated, "boiling with rage" at the resistance to his reforms, and running out of time, writing that the Holy Father is increasingly lonely, weakened by resistance in the Curia and demoralised by the lack of courage to change.

Centenary Quips

GENESIS

The True Beginning of Salvation for Men

Genesis 1:1

O E H O A R A H P I X L F W G O
 R B A C I R C U M C I S I O N B
 C A L R D E H F H J L K D B G I
 M B G E N O M A P G L Q R N S S
 U E V A A B E L O T A W X I Y H
 A L B T H M T S C N D R D A P M
 J C M E L C H I Z E D E K R R A
 F A G D H E U S T I E J C K O E
 H A C G N G S N O A R P R A M L
 A S J O L Y E O B I R A S B I C
 D I C P B P L R D L E A F G S N
 U H L H R T A H K E R N R M E O
 J O S E P H H M S A P S V A V R
 U W S R A B G A H R C H O R E S
 I V O M E N U D T S O D O M S O
 A C B H L R O A J I B D L W I N

CREATED	RAINBOW	JUDAH	EGYPT
ADAM	GOPHER	SARAH	SODOM
EVE	SERPENT	HAGAR	LOT
CAIN	ARARAT	MELCHIZEDEK	JOSEPH
ABEL	BABEL	ISHMAEL	ISRAEL
ENOCH	ABRAHAM	CIRCUMCISION	PHARAOH
METHUSELAH	ISAAC	GOSHEN	GOD
NOAH	JACOB	LADDER	
ARK	ESAU	PROMISE	

Minister

Isobel Henderson (leaving Church) – “Dull as ditchwater!”

Minister – “Did you mean the sermon?”

Isobel – “No – the weather!”

Minister (at Mid-week Service) – “Welcome to West Lothian’s answer to Lourdes”

Minister – “Man does not live by microwave alone”

Sally Stevenson – “The Minister looks quite normal in his suit”

Rory Cameron (Director of Lighting, West Lothian Council, speaking at Men’s Club) – “I go out at night to inspect street lighting”

Minister – “Does your wife believe you?”

Minister (saying Grace) – “Bless this food, O Lord we pray”

Christine – “And make me thin”

Minister – “I’m needing a break”

Donald McFarlane – “So are we”

Irene Milne – “That was inspiring”

Minister – “That makes a change”

Irene – “Yes, it does”

The Anglican Church's recent Synod also evidenced the struggle between liberals and conservatives on the issue of homosexual marriage. The conservatives have so far held the line on the nature of Christian marriage being between a man and a woman. They would also say that that is the ordained nature of marriage for all men and women. Liberals want to change that and allow homosexual and lesbian people to get married in church and also that homosexual and lesbian priests may be enabled to marry and continue to function as priests. They think that the Church will soon change to their way of thinking.

In the Church of Scotland a compromise was achieved at the 2013 General Assembly between conservatives and liberals which affirms the Christian position that marriage is between a man and a woman. But it also allows homosexual men and lesbian women to function as ministers in the Church of Scotland. However – and here is the heart of the compromise – no congregation is obliged to accept a homosexual or lesbian minister. In a vacancy the Kirk Session has the right and duty to express its unwillingness or its willingness to take a homosexual or lesbian minister and whatever it decides is conveyed to applicants. There is no question then of any cases of sexual discrimination arising. This compromise was not good enough for conservative evangelicals many of whom left the Church of Scotland leaving it deprived of world famous congregations such as St George's Tron in Glasgow, Gilcomston South in Aberdeen and Holyrood Abbey in Edinburgh and other strongly witnessing congregations in other parts of Scotland.

How did Jesus manage to be both a liberal and a conservative? Can we even describe him in such terms? Was he perhaps not more fairly a radical, thinking and acting 'out of the box' as we say today. Was he not the bluest of blue sky thinkers? After all, he said this: *"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise,*

the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins." The context of this was that *John (the Baptist's) disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.* Here Jesus acts as a liberal towards the custom of fasting. We know that he also acted liberally towards dietary requirements and ritual washing of hands and arms before eating food. He acted apparently liberally towards keeping the Sabbath, healing sick and invalid people and causing anger and opposition to arise in conservatives for doing so on the Sabbath.

But Jesus was not a 1960's flower-power free love advocate. Listen again to the words from Matthew's Gospel. *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.* When Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath he was

We are still low on numbers, so again, if you know of any children who would like to come to Stepping Stones, please bring them along. All children will be made very welcome.

God bless, Tracy

March & Stepping Stones Rota

Sunday 5th March 2017 - Christine Anderson

Sunday 12th March - Moira Brown

Sunday 19th March - Agnes Muir

Sunday 26th March - Elaine Wood

Sunday 2nd April - Stepping Stones is on holiday

Sunday 9th April - Stepping Stones is on holiday

Sunday 16th April - Stepping Stones is on holiday

Sunday 23rd April - Moira Brown

Sunday 30th April - Elma Stockman

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Facebook



Dear friends of Stepping Stones,

Wow! February has been a quick month! Our highlights this month include the lovely christening on Valentine's Day where lots of children came back through to the hall to make Valentine Cards and we also had a heart hunt, which was great fun. February has also seen us looking at how God Keeps His Promises and we made some rainbow cakes which turned out lovely. We also finished off with some Shrove Tuesday pancake fun ☺

March will be another quick month, we will spend some time on Easter and will also make some nice Mother's Day gifts. Then before we know it, it will be the Easter school holidays when we will have a few weeks off and no doubt many Easter eggs will be eaten too!

fulfilling its true meaning as the special day of the Lord. When he and his disciples did not fast it was because they were doing much

more important things such as preaching and teaching and caring and healing around the villages and towns of Galilee and Judea. When his disciples did not ritually wash before eating, it was because Jesus wanted to show that ritual in itself is of no consequence or benefit. Reconciliation with God must occur at a much deeper level of our consciousness and understanding.

In relation to the woman caught in adultery Jesus acted as a liberal. But he also fulfilled the ancient law. *You who are guiltless cast the first stone.* In relation to the woman who brought perfume and poured it over him he acted as a liberal. The conservatives wanted to sell the perfume and give the money to the poor. But the implication is not that they cared for the poor but that they were jealous and offended by what they saw as a waste of a lot of money. Jesus however was glad to have this recognition of who he really was and what was really going to happen to him. For him it was a precious moment when someone showed that she cared about him. Jesus did not abolish the morality of Judaism. He set it on a new path to greater heights. There as indeed a commandment *'Thou shalt not murder'* but he changed it to *'Thou shalt not be angry with anyone'*. It was written *'Thou shalt not covet'* but Jesus changed it to *If someone wants to sue you and take your suit, let him have your coat as well.* The people of the Old Testament lived by the standards of retaliation. *Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.* We see this often in the Psalms where devout love of God is accompanied by blood-curdling cries for the destruction of enemies. Psalm 56 says *When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? All day long they twist my words; all their schemes are for my ruin. They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, hoping to take my life. Because of their wickedness do not let them escape; in your anger, God, bring the nations down.* Jesus though changes this

completely. *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Jesus takes us out of our comfort zones, out of our long held prejudices, out of what we think is right and wrong. Robert Burns has that wonderful description of Tam O Shanter's wife. *Where sits our sulky sullen dame. Gathering her brows like gathering storm, Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.* The wife enjoyed the prospect of having excuse and reason to berate her irresponsible drunken husband. Men have a wonderful capacity for holding grudges too. The historian Henry Adams wrote *Politics, as a practice, whatever its professions had always been the systematic organisation of hatred.* That may seem a cynical point of view until you see the antagonisms at Westminster and Holyrood and witness hate filled demonstrations on behalf of some cause or other on our streets and in many places throughout the world.

Jesus cannot be described as a liberal or as a conservative or merely as a combination of both. What is liberal or conservative about crucifixion? What is liberal or conservative about resurrection. Jesus is universally, cosmically and eternally relevant and we cannot pigeon-hole him as we might wish. Jesus can never become like us. We however can become like him.

1st Blackburn Girls' Brigade

01506 631833

He **gb** ryone,
Scotland



The girls have all been busy in February doing Valentine crafts, and had a hectic night when they all did team games together.

I think the highlight of the month was a visit from Sandie of Edinburgh Zoo who came to speak to the girls about Pandas.

She brought with her soft toy animals and a giant jigsaw of China showing how the bamboo forests have been decimated, which is why Pandas are a dying breed. Sandie also brought with her several games which the girls enjoyed playing.

Best wishes,
Moira & all at GB.