***WESTBURN PARISH MAGAZINE***



***SPRING 2022***

**Holy Week and Easter**

This year we journey through Holy week and Easter in the company of our neighbours and learning together from the stories in the gospels.

Sunday 10th April - 11a.m. Worship for Palm Sunday at Westburn Parish Church

Sunday 10th April - 4p.m. Connect Palm Sunday Event at Old Gourock & Ashton Church

Monday 11th April - 7p,m, Joint Worship with Lyle Kirk at Westburn Parish Church

Tuesday 12th April - 7p.m. Joint Worship with Lyle Kirk at Lyle Kirk ( Union Street)

Wednesday 13th April - 7p.m. Joint Worship with Lyle Kirk at Westburn Parish Church

Thursday 14th April - 7p.m. Maundy Thursday Worship, including communion at Lyle Kirk

Friday 15th April -7p.m. Good Friday Worship at Westburn Parish Church

Saturday 16th April - Easter Treasure Trail starting from Annexe Park (Fox Street) anytime between 11a.m. and 12 noon - Dotty the Donkey Trail

Or staring from Tower Hill anytime between 2p.m. and 3p.m. - Muddy Church Trail

Sunday 17th April - 7a.m. Dawn Service on Lyle Hill followed by breakfast at Lyle Kirk

Sunday 17th April - 11a.m. All Age Easter Celebration at Westburn Parish Church

**Questionnaire – Follow up**

Let us begin by thanking all of you who took the time to complete the questionnaire that we sent out with the last quarterly magazine. The results are being used to inform the way forward and to allow us to set up new Districts, with members being kept informed in the way that they have chosen.

If you did not complete the questionnaire but would still like to inform us of your choice, it is not too late. One of the benefits of this new system, is that members can move more easily between district types as their circumstances change. No-one is committed to their choice for ever and a simple phone call or e-mail message to the Session Clerks or your Elder can allow a change to take place.

You will understand that there is a lot of work required initially in order for this major change to take place, so we are hoping to work on the church roll over the coming months and have the new arrangements in place for September 2022. We will of course keep you informed of our progress.

If you wish to discuss this in any more detail, please feel free to speak to either Liz or myself in the first instance.

Thank you for your continued support.

Liz and Hazel

Joint Session Clerks

**Fabric Update**

The Church and Centre Premises were broken into in Autumn 2020. Due to theft of copper piping, extensive water damaged occurred in Centre Building resulting in all floor coverings, main Hall floor, kitchen units, sanitary fittings and vanity units in toilets requiring to be removed, disposed of and replaced.

Due to lockdown and presence of asbestos it was June 2021 before estimates could be obtained. Three estimates, the lowest being just under £130,000, were submitted to Church’s Insurers in July 2021. It was November 2021 before we were advised by Insurers that a Clause in our Policy limited damage claim to £50,000. After much discussion and correspondence, our Insurers agreed to offer £105,000 in full and final settlement which was accepted. This sum included £22,000 for loss of revenue. At current costs this leaves us with a shortfall of approx. £56,000. It has been agreed that the work will be carried out in three stages.

Stage1: Foyer, Hub, Toilets, Main Hall, Store, Church Officers’ Office. Some work has started already and it is hoped that it could be completed by early May. This will allow some use of the Centre.

Stage2: Kitchen and Lounge where all reusable items are stored. No date has been set for this, but it is hoped that it could be completed for September, subject to funds being available. Completion of this work will restore the Centre to full usage.

Stage3: Lower hall area. Will be subject to available funds.

It is hoped that some costs can be offset by using voluntary labour.

Bob Seggie

**Guild Report**

The Guild had a very successful Afternoon Tea at our last meeting before Christmas.

We were due to start meeting on 20th January 2022 but due to the increase in Covid, it was decided to wait and we were able to restart on 10th March. This was in the format of a business type meeting, where the ladies heard about the ongoing problems after the break-in and the way forward for the Guild, who decided they would meet fortnightly on a Thursday with, when possible, a speaker. It was decided that we should invite Guilds recently disbanded & the Greenock churches who do not have a Guild to come along and join us.

I attended a meeting in Perth on 12th March looking forward for “The Vision of the Guild in the Future”. Around 80 Guild members attended, the meeting was facilitated by Ishbel Smith, who had been involved when the Guild instigated an Action Plan. There was plenty of talk, so it’s hoped that the Guild will have a Vision for the Guild.

There is a Regional Meeting for Guilds Together on 23rd April in Springburn Church, Glasgow. All Guilds are being asked to send members to this meeting, where we will hear about one of our projects “Chocolate Heaven” and entertainment.

Our local Inverclyde Guilds Together are holding a meeting on 9th May in New Parish Church, Port Glasgow. This is only our 2nd meeting for session 2021/2022, and are looking forward to meeting up with our local Guild members.

Patricia Robertson

**Messy Church**

Messy Church is a form of church for children and adults that involves crafts, celebration, and a sit down meal together, and it’s fun.

Westburn’s Messy Church has resumed meetings and our Messy families have enjoyed being back together. The next meeting is planned for Saturday 14 May, 4 - 6pm, why not come and join the fun.

**Sunday School**

Linda Capon and Janis Parker both decided that the time was right for them to finish their term at Sunday School. We’d like to say a huge thank you to Linda and Janis for the many years service they have given. Both were able to come along to the Nativity service in December where they received flowers as a token of our thanks.

There are new Sunday School volunteers working on a rota and everyone is enjoying taking a turn of preparing material and working with the children.

Sunday School usually enjoys an outing at the beginning of the year. Unfortunately the trip has been delayed by various Covid related issued this year but everyone is looking forward to a trip to Elev8 Trampoline Park in the next few weeks.

**Update from Venda**

On the 13th of March, I gave an update to the church on the Vhutshilo Mountain School in Venda, South Africa, a project that Westburn has been supporting for 17 years and which we continue to fund. I wanted to say thank you to the congregation on behalf of the children, their families and everyone associated with the school.

Vhutshilo means ‘life’ in the Venda language. From a small caravan with 6 AIDS orphans, we now have 73 children from the ages of 3 to 8/9. We have grown into a school that has official recognition with the Nation Department of Basic Education, and we employ 4 full time teachers, 2 administrative staff, 5 garden workers/cooks and one security guard. The ripple effects of this employment is difficult to quantify, but it is safe to say that we are rooted firmly in the rural educational landscape of the Venda region.

Sue Anne Cook, known as ‘Suzi’, was the inspiration behind the school. She tragically passed away in 2018, but she had prepared her deputy, Khatu, to take over the running of the school. Some of you may remember Suzi and her daughter Vhuwavho (‘woo’) from their talk at the church many years ago. Suzi was too nervous to speak on the day, so Woo, at the age of 8, calmly told her that she would talk on her behalf.

And talk she did. Although I was in Venda at the time, people still tell me of the impact she made. I was so proud to inform the congregation that this year Woo will graduate with a First-Class degree in Social Work and Criminology from the University of Pretoria. Indeed, 4 of the first-year intake of HIV positive children at Vhutshilo will graduate from university this year. This is possible only thanks to your continued support of our school.

But Vhutshilo is more than a school. It is a community project. We provide water for neighboring households (there is no water in the houses in the area) which helps women and children directly, as they are the ones who are expected to collect water, clean, cook, and perform general household duties. We also have a very healthy community garden, and every Friday children at the school take home a food parcel. Sometimes the cabbages are bigger than the children, and it takes two of them to cart them away for the weekend. We are moving with the times, and our most recent development is to establish a WiFi connection. This will also be open to the community, and we hope that it will eventually function as a center for people to write job applications, connect with the world and have access to information that will help them to grow, in all senses of the term.

Many members of the congregation will have fond memories of visiting the school in Venda. Now that the world seems to be opening up after the Covid lockdowns, perhaps it is time for another delegation to come out? But be warned. As anyone who has been out before, you will be put to work!

So, on behalf of everyone associated with Vhutshilo Mountain School, I would like to say thank you for your continued support. It means more than you could imagine, and we are very, very grateful.

For more information, you can contact me directly on [fraser.mcneill@up.ac.za](mailto:fraser.mcneill@up.ac.za) for information on how to sponsor a child or general financials, you can contact Monica McNeill on [themcneilltribe@gmail.com](mailto:themcneilltribe@gmail.com) and if you would like to contact the school directly please do not hesitate to contact khathu on [vhutshiloschool@gmail.com](mailto:vhutshiloschool@gmail.com)

Please visit our website at [www.vhutshilomountainschool.co.za](http://www.vhutshilomountainschool.co.za)

Best wishes

Fraser

**Inverclyde Youth For Christ**

Hi. My name is Charlene Mitchell and I’m the new Youth Worker for Inverclyde Youth For Christ. Inverclyde Youth For Christ is a Christian Youth Work organisation who have been operating in the Inverclyde area for 33 years. Our mission statement is, “Taking the Good News relevantly to every young person in Inverclyde.” We do that through Youth Work, Schools Chaplaincy and Church Support.

I applied for the role because I am excited about the opportunity to share the gospel message with young people. To me the chance to go into churches, and schools; and meet young people in our community is terrifying but exciting at the same time. What a privilege it is to be able to share the love that Jesus has for young people with the young people in our area.

All my previous experience has been based in the Church of Scotland as a volunteer with the uniformed organisations, so this role is going to be a new challenge for me. I’m sure I’ll face things that will put me out of my comfort zone, but I’m willing to learn and try new ways of sharing the gospel with the next generation.

In the run up to Christmas last year, I got to volunteer with the Clydeview Academy Chaplaincy Team to run Bubblegum N Fluff. This is a 2 hour interactive workshop which teaches Primary 5 aged school children about the true meaning of Christmas. The children come to the local church and experience a variety of activities throughout the morning. It was great to get an insight into the work that goes on with the schools. I also got a taster of what it was like to work alongside local ministers who share our heart to see young people’s lives changed by Jesus.

Now that I’m in the role, I’m looking forward to being a part of the Team to deliver the Easter Code coming up in a few short weeks for the Primary 6 aged pupils from the Clydeview Academy feeder schools.

I will also be working alongside our Centre Director, Jen, to establish a new detached street work project called Reach Out in upper Port Glasgow; while supporting some local churches with their existing youth work projects; holiday clubs; and camps.

I never thought I’d have a role like this but I’ve always desired to know Christ and make Him known and I consider it a real blessing to be given the chance to do this as my day job as well as with my volunteer hat on.

Charlene Mitchell