



# CONTACT

Spring 2011

*Maxwelltown West Church  
Dumfries*

THE CHURCH  
OF SCOTLAND



## **Maxwelltown West Church, Dumfries**

### **Sunday Services:11am**

COMMUNION SERVICES: March 13<sup>th</sup> 11am and 5pm

Sunday School (J-Max & K-Max) 11.00 term time

Crèche is available during the morning service every Sunday.

Tots "n" Tunes\_(babies and toddlers) - committee room - 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month at 10am

MINISTER: Rev Gordon M A Savage, M.A. B.D.

Maxwelltown West Manse 11 Laurieknowe, Dumfries DG2 7AH

During the Rev. Savage's illness the Interim Moderator is Rev Donald Campbell

Pastoral care will be provided by the Rev. Colin Sutherland

ASSISTANT MINISTER: Rev. Sandy Geddes M.A.B.D.

CHILDREN'S & FAMILY WORKER: Mrs Rachel Lyagoba

### **Congregational Office Bearers**

SESSION CLERK: Mr T Bryden

ORGANIST: Mr S Crosbie

CHURCH OFFICER: Mr R Wilson

EDITOR OF "CONTACT": Dr S Christie

CLERK TO DEACONS' COURT: Mrs E Riddick

TREASURER: Mr D McNay

FABRIC CONVENOR: Mr B Riddick

### **Congregational Register**

#### **Baptisms**

Lori Beth Sturrock infant daughter of Neil and Rhona Sturrock

Ella-Rose Margaret Wilson infant daughter of Howard and Fiona Wilson

#### **Deaths**

10<sup>th</sup> November: Mr Ian Pagan

26<sup>th</sup> November: Mr Stewart Bryson

18<sup>th</sup> November: Miss Eileen Bryson

28<sup>th</sup> November: Mr George Beattie

#### **New Members by Transference**

Mr E Fraser and Mrs M Fraser

#### **Message from our Minister**

Dear Friends

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you all for your continuing good wishes and prayers as I recuperate following my treatment. The cancer is in remission and this means that it should be possible for me to begin a "phased return" to work in the near future.

I should also like to express my thanks for the many messages of sympathy and support following my mother's passing in December.

Sincere good wishes to you all

*Gordon M A Savage*

## **From the Interim Moderator**

Last year was an interesting year of ups and downs for Maxwelltown West Church. One of the highlights of the year was completing a successful stewardship programme while, of course, one of the lows of the year was losing your minister for a while due to illness. As Interim Moderator I have been impressed by the way that members of the congregation have responded in love to the Rev. Gordon Savage and his family during his illness. I have also been impressed by the commitment given by the office bearers to the work of Christ in Maxwelltown West as they continue to meet and work together for the good of Maxwelltown West.

This year will probably be no different. There will be ups and downs. We don't know what the "downs" will be but we hope that the great "up" will be the return of Gordon as minister; we'll just have to wait and see. Regardless of all that will happen this year we can be sure of one thing - God is in control. The message of Easter; the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his Resurrection from the dead demonstrates that God is in control. Even sin and death could not beat God; he has it beaten. The great message of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, is in control and always has been; Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

That's the message that we are called to appropriate for ourselves and if we have, then we can move on into the future with the confidence that whatever happens God will not let us down. He never has before and he never will. We might not get our own way but then that's not what we should be seeking if we have responded to the call of Jesus to follow him; we should not be seeking our way, we should be seeking God's way.

*Donald Campbell, Interim Moderator*

## **Editorial**

I would like to use the penultimate editorial of my spell as editor to outline the changes of regime for Contact which are now underway. Mrs F Saddington will co-edit the next two editions and will take over completely thereafter. J Brown and I are standing down to be replaced by C Murray and R Fraser. D Crossan is staying on and completes the new editorial team.

Outwith the changes in personnel, other important changes are afoot. The Session has agreed that henceforth Contact will be printed commercially. The cost of having this done is unlikely to greatly exceed the revenue from retiring offerings on Communion Sundays - this point notwithstanding, a boost from this source would not be unwelcome.

The new regime will, I have no doubt, lead to changes but that is in the nature of things and is certainly to be welcomed. I for one look forward to improvements.

I wish to thank all who have lent their support over nearly ten years. It is perhaps invidious to single anyone out but I must mention J Brown who has shared with me the agony of watching our aged risograph struggle to complete the printing of the last few editions. The sense of relief when the last copy of the last page came through was palpable.

SC

## **The Session**

The Session met on the 9<sup>th</sup> November with an extensive and diverse agenda. Changes to the editorial team of Contact were discussed and the likely necessity of amending the printing and stapling procedures. At the time of this meeting details of the new procedure were not available.

The question of future use of our Church buildings was also on the agenda. The need to make maximum use of our facilities was widely supported.

The Church roll was reviewed. We have lost three members by death and a further one, Mrs D Mairs, a former deacon, has left the area. Two new members were added to the roll by transfer. The World Church Team reported on our extensive activities in Kenya (see Contact December 2010). The next meeting of the session has been provisionally arranged for 13/1/11.

The Session met again on the above date. As required the Church books were attested. This process along with the Church statistics revealed a decline in our numbers from 655 to 645. We gained 11 by profession of faith and transfer but lost 17 by death and 4 by transfer. Disappointment was expressed that 283 of our members failed to attend Communion at least once in the year. The World Church Team reported acknowledgement of our gift of £500 to Mathia.

B Riddick reported on the conference on "Ministries and Planning". The essential thrust of his report was the need to accept change due to financial and manpower restraints in the near future. He stressed that this will be painful for a traditional organisation like the Church. The Session co-opted Mrs D Alexander and Mrs E McNay to the Deacons Court. The Session meets again on the 19<sup>th</sup> April

*T B & S C*

### **The Deacons Court**

The Court met on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

It was reported that the repairs to the manse roof have been completed slightly under budget. Plans are afoot to have a new Church Handbook ready for distribution in the spring.

The treasurer reported a significant increase in the income for the two months following his last report. This improvement he attributed to the Stewardship Campaign. There was also an improvement in our "Gift Aid" income. We are indebted to W Little who has worked hard in this area on our behalf.

On the down side it was reported that our allocation to Ministry and Mission would rise by some £3,000 per annum.

The overall favourable position raises the possibility that we may soon be able to start the process of replacing the £30,000 drawn from the Fabric Appeal Fund for the repairs to the manse roof.

*E R & S C*

### **Kenya Report**

This short update follows the two comprehensive reports in the December Contact.

I'm glad to report a very enjoyable and successful concert in November by Brighton's Choir. They kindly travelled and performed for us at no charge at all. Grateful thanks for this and to everyone who attended, provided food and helped in any way which allowed our final total of £615.00 to be achieved.

Our Mathia friends thanked us for £500.00 sent toward their Gift Day in October to raise funds to complete their new church. A partial success was achieved this time. They have been building for eight years to replace their small overcrowded tin roofed church which is inadequate for their expanding congregation.

The Bondo community is progressing slowly and enjoying the challenge of becoming more self-sufficient. Winnie is planning to visit us sometime soon and wishes to personally meet and thank the people who have helped "to give her community so much hope in life".

We wish our Kenyan friends well in our thoughts and prayers.

*A D, WCT Convener*

### **Ian Pagan**

Ian Pagan died in Edinburgh on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010. We have been invited to reproduce comments at the subsequent funeral. For reasons of space it has been necessary to condense and edit the original.

Ian was born in Dumfries in 1928. His father ran a Joiners and Funeral Directors business which Ian took over on the sudden death of his father in 1961. Ian subsequently revised the business to focus on the Funeral Director's side.

Ian was a devout member of the Church serving as an elder for over 50 years. Through his interest in singing he met Hazel and their marriage lasted 53 years, producing three children and ultimately ten grandchildren. Ian is described as gentle, kind, generous and dependable but a stickler for punctuality and attention to detail. His brother-in-law talks of him as wise, conscious of his fortunate position in life and wedded to Christian principles which he applied throughout a long and happy life with family always at the forefront. Not surprisingly Ian combined his personality and his beliefs in his handling of the bereaved with whom he made sensitive contact in the course of his work. The list of those who feel a debt of gratitude to Ian Pagan must be lengthy.

### Safe in the Arms of Jesus

Not very long ago I was asked what was my favourite hymn, and on other such occasions I paused in case I'd had a change of mind. The pause, however, was short as it has so impressed me since Sunday School days. Yes it is "Safe in the Arms of Jesus", one of Mrs Frances Jane Van Alstyne's great hymns. She is also well known by her maiden name of Fanny Crosby.

To say she was versatile and hard-working is a great understatement. She was blinded at only six weeks old when a warm poultice was wrongly applied to her eyes. Eventually educated at a specialist school for the blind, she married a musician who was also unsighted. As a devout member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York she became interested in hymn writing, after some success with producing a variety of popular –usually sentimental- songs.

Such though, was the demand for hymns in the middle of nineteenth century America, as well as in the UK, that a New York firm worked with her to produce three hymns a week every year for a given period and she managed to honour the contract without difficulty. As well as serving the more main stream churches she wrote further hymns for more evangelistic collections, including Ira Sankey of Moody and Sankey fame.

The hymn was in our Church Hymnary - Revised Edition (1929) along with two others by the same writer. "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" was next dropped by CH3 but we were given another inspired and inspiring hymn in the form of "To God be the Glory" (Hy374). By the time CH4 was introduced, "To God be the Glory" was accompanied by "Blessed Assurance" and I often wonder why it took so long for these two hymns to be introduced in Kirks. However, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" (707 in the Revised Church Hymnary as I still remember from Sunday School and Bible Class days of yesteryear) remains my favourite.

On returning home from National Service in 1956 I spent two short spells at a camp for underprivileged children and young folk. After evening prayers, popular hymns were chosen by the children, and invariably that hymn was requested and sung without great skill but with great gusto and feeling! I too was smitten by it, particularly the final verse and chorus.

But in what particular circumstances was it written? Mrs Astyne was in a room in her New York home one day when a very musical acquaintance called with a fine nameless tune he had composed and requested suitable words. He played the melody to her on a small organ and her immediate reaction was – *"that tune says, safe in the arms of Jesus"*. She slipped through to another room for barely half an hour, appeared with these fine words and that hymn and the tune "Refuge" combined to produce what I would deem a masterpiece.

V3 Jesus, my heart's dear refuge,	Here let me wait with patience	<i>Chorus:</i> Safe in the arms of Jesus
Jesus has died for me;	Wait till the night is o'er	Safe on his gentle breast
Firm on the rock of Ages	Wait till I see the morning	There by his love o'ershaded
Ever my trust will be.	Break on the golden shore.	Sweetly my soul shall rest.

W O

## **Important Notice**

**Would contributors please note that henceforth material must be in the hands of the editor six weeks before Communion. This change is to ensure adequate time for liaison between the editor, the printers and subsequent distribution to the Elders.**

## **Reports from Organisations**

### **The Guild**

The winter session is almost over and we look forward to lovely spring flowers in our gardens and summer sunshine. Due to the severe weather our December meeting was cancelled so we are still looking to have the Ruthwell Singers at a future meeting.

Our afternoon meetings in January and February were greatly appreciated and better attended than cold snowy evenings would have been. In January Cyril and Dorothy Wise gave an interesting talk with a photo display of the worthwhile and successful work the Civic Pride voluntary group is doing to smarten up Dumfries.

Marie Curie Cancer Care was the topic in February. This, presented by Ruth Barton, was very informative. The Coffee Morning on 26<sup>th</sup> February will fund this year's project "*Terrify no more*" run by the International Justice Mission to help street children in Cambodia who are forced into prostitution and slavery. We hope this will prove to be as successful as other projects we have helped.

The Guild Presbyterial Council which is the link between each Guild and head office in Edinburgh will hold two events in our church in March. At the Spring Rally on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March the speaker will be the Rev. John Chalmers, former Principal Clerk to the General Assembly who will focus on "*Forgiveness and Mercy*" as in the Guild Discussion Topic this year. Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March Theme/Topic will be led by National Convener Helen-May Bayne. March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting and AGM will be followed by a textile tour of India.

June 2<sup>nd</sup> will be the Annual Songs of Praise, this year in New Abbey Church and hopefully followed by another sunny summer outing. We look forward to welcoming anyone interested in joining us. You will be made most welcome

*A D Convener*

P.S. In her report Anne has omitted to mention information that she presented to the last meeting of the session. In 2010 the Guild made donations totalling over £1500 to a variety of worthy causes. The Guild Project received £543, Max West Ministries and Mission £500, Max West Fabric Fund £300. Christian Aid, Scottish Bible Society, Chest Heart and Stroke Association (Local Branch) and the Leprosy Mission each received £50.

### **The Brownies**

Before Christmas the Brownies had great fun at the Panto at the Theatre Royal. We attended on the same night as Max West Scout Group. As a result a high proportion of the audience were from our church. The girls wanted to hold a disco so we made masquerades and had a masquerade disco before going on our Christmas break.

We are working each week on our Brownie Adventure and have a varied programme of events planned leading up to the summer. Evenings will include food detective challenge, Scottish night, and Chinese New Year crafts.

The older brownies recently joined Max West Guides for a trip to DG One in the leisure water. This was a link event to make the move from Brownies to Guides easier.

Should you know of any girl who would like to learn more about joining Brownies please get in touch with me.

*J McE Brownie Leader*

## **Scout Report**

The Scout section has been working hard with 16 scouts - two new boys having joined. Both have come from a non-scouting background. In the last week two further boys have expressed a desire to join, bringing our numbers up to 18. We now form three patrols.

The boys had a good time at the Theatre Royal pantomime before Christmas. In January we took part in a Brass Monkey camp with three other groups - Noblehill, Annan and Georgetown. It took place during a weekend of hard frost. It was decided therefore to hold it in the wood at Lady Park Farm in order not to damage the ground at St Anne's. This gave the boys a more realistic camping venue right in the woods, with each group having their own fires to light and keep lit.

Maxwelltown Bowling Club will be giving us four lessons in the art of Bowling. We should be competing against each other by the end.

A Mass has settled in well and she and Jonathan work well together.

It would be helpful if we could find another potential leader. Let me know if you are aware of any budding leaders. With the large numbers we will need a third member when I leave.

The Beaver section has two young leaders who are doing teacher training. There are six Beavers. Jim Denholm has had to give up regular leading due to work commitments. Now that the new leaders are in place, more Beavers can be recruited.

J McNaught and A Ainslie run the cubs with sixteen boys.

My thanks go to all the leaders who help every week and to the church family for letting the organisations use the halls. We are deeply indebted. Also our thanks to K Eggo and the parent committee.

*H McD, Scout Leader*

## **After Eights**

In November Brian Corr, head gardener at Threave Gardens, gave a most interesting power point presentation showing how the gardens have changed and evolved over the years. From the days when they were privately owned and then given over to the National Trust.

An excellent Christmas dinner was enjoyed at the Edenbank Hotel at the beginning of December which put everyone in a festive mood.

In January Colin Mitchell, a former leader of the Moffat Mountain Rescue Team, gave a fascinating presentation detailing some of the situations which the volunteer members of the team have to deal with. He also gave examples of the training and equipment necessary for this vital work.

We are looking forward to a talk on the subject of weddings by Ella Pennington in February.

*J M*

	Church Flowers	Memorial Flowers
3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Mrs H Campbell	Mrs O Geddes
10th	Mrs J Grant	Mrs M Allison
17th	VACANT	Mrs M Savage
24th	Mrs S Muir	Mrs P Williams
1 <sup>st</sup> May	Miss D Hill	VACANT
8th	Mrs J Sloan	Mrs Forsyth & Mrs Scott
15th	Mrs Pearson	Mrs J McEwan
22nd	VACANT	VACANT
5 <sup>th</sup> June	Mrs Donkersley	Mrs Sommerville
29th	Mrs K Brown	Mrs A Milligan
12 <sup>th</sup>	VACANT	Mrs J Johnstone
19th	Miss Biggar	Mrs D McWhirter
26th	Mrs M Wallace	Mrs Adamson

If you would like to fill a vacant date or enquire about church flowers please telephone A Dunbar.