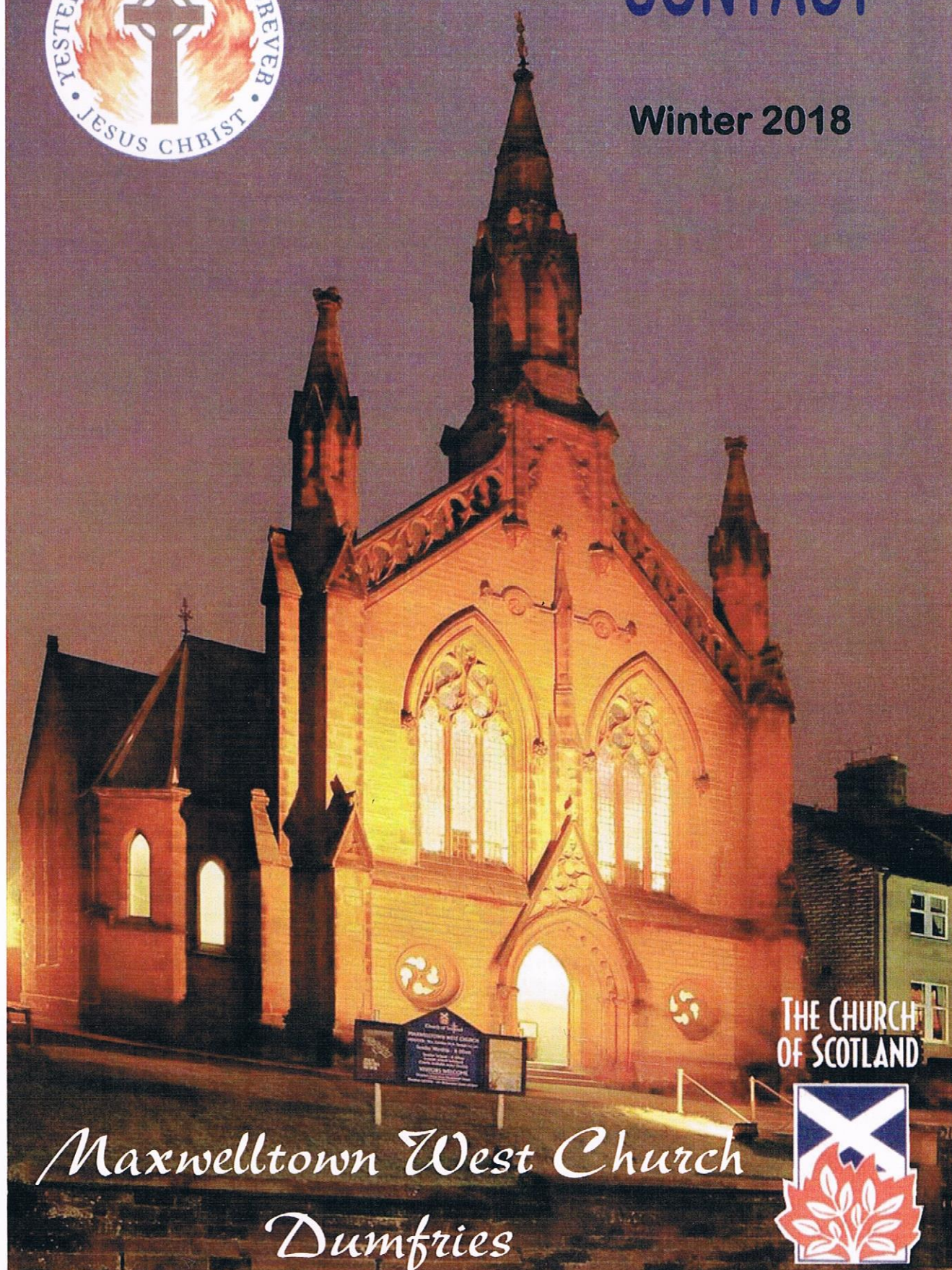


CONTACT

Winter 2018



Maxwelltown West Church
Dumfries

THE CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND



MAXWELLTOWN WEST CHURCH, DUMFRIES

www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk

<https://twitter.com/MaxWestChurch>

Scottish Charity No.: SC015925

Tel: 01387 255900

SUNDAY SERVICES: 11.00am.

COMMUNION SERVICE: 2nd December at 11.00am

SUNDAY CLUB: 11.00am during term time.

CRECHE is available during the morning service every Sunday.

During the vacancy

our Interim Moderator is **Rev. Sally Russell (01556 503645)**

and our Locum is **Mr. David Matheson (01387 252042)**

Congregational Office Bearers

SESSION CLERK: Mr. Crossan, Dumfries CLERK TO DEACONS' COURT: Mrs. Wood, Dumfries
ORGANIST: Mr. Crosbie, Dumfries TREASURER: Miss Allan, New Abbey
CHURCH OFFICER: Mr. Wilson, Dumfries FABRIC CONVENER: Mr. Miller, Dumfries
EDITOR OF 'CONTACT': Mrs. Saddington, Dumfries

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

5th August: Faith Rae Hannah, daughter of Mark and Lindsay

9th September: Leyla Louise McGill, daughter of Evan and Hayley

Deaths

13th July: Mr. John Poole, Dumfries

1st September: Mr. Jim Kelly, Dumfries

20th September: Mrs. Irene Russell, Dumfries

MAXWELLTOWN WEST MISSION STATEMENT

*Maxwelltown West Church seeks to be a place of welcome to all in our parish;
a centre of Christian worship and fellowship. We seek to provide a framework for family life and a
place where young people may be nurtured in Christian values.*

From our Interim Moderator

Hello to everyone.

We have enjoyed a wonderful summer, and celebrated another harvest. Time keeps moving, but it may seem that not much is moving with regards to full time ministry in Maxwelltown West. By the time you read this, we will have had our consultation meeting led by a member of the Interim Ministries Task Group - this is the group that oversees the recruitment and placing of Interim Ministers in the whole of Scotland. We will see what the result of that meeting brings and go forward from there. Please be assured that David and I will continue to work with you, and share your journey through this time of discernment and change.

Love and prayers, Sally

From your Locum

Greetings to one and all. I do hope you have all enjoyed a wonderful summer and that many of you have great memories of summer holidays. Autumn is definitely upon us and already we have suffered our first storm, bringing down many trees and damage to buildings. However, trees and hedgerows are in magnificent colour at the time of writing.

In church we have continued to reflect upon the Book of Acts and how we can be inspired to be a loving, caring, Church reaching out to those in need in our parish and beyond. It is often overlooked that St Paul travelled well over 5,000 miles by land and sea to tell and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Sadly, today that same message has been lost to so many. So many outwith our Church do not know anything about Jesus and his love for us all.

On Sept 30th our Church was beautifully decorated for Harvest Celebration, and Guild Dedication. My thanks to all who used their talents of floral displays and to all who contributed the flowers and gifts and helped distribute them to those unable to attend.

I wrote in my last article that this year's General Assembly sent a clear message to the Council of Assembly, to bring back a radical plan for Renewal of the Church of Scotland.

And so, as members of the Church of Scotland we too must take our responsibility seriously. We can all set aside a few minutes daily for PRAYER, seeking God's guidance and His Holy Spirit to lead us to be relevant in 21st century Scotland. We can share our faith by telling others as well as showing and sharing our faith in our Christian Love and in our deeds.

We enjoy the life God gives us. God sent Jesus his Son to offer us life - life in all its fullness. What a joy to know that God knows us and cares for each one of us personally.

My thanks once again to all who have welcomed me into your houses. I feel blessed every time you share life stories with me and I feel privileged and honoured to continue to be your Locum.

The uncertainty of BREXIT looms large in our thoughts and fills column after column in our newspapers. We daily move on towards March next year when we are scheduled to leave the European Community. Please keep our political leaders in your prayers.

And so the year is rapidly heading towards Christmas. Let this Christmas be a time of joy and love to all. But let us ALL put CHRIST first this CHRISTmas. Let us keep Christmas holy and not a commercial, meaningless time of jingly bells and tills. Let the baby in the manger speak to us all through the voices of the Angels, the Shepherds and the Wise Men. Let us in turn come together and worship God with thanks for His supreme gift of His only Son Jesus Christ. As ever, Laurieknowe School will be holding their Christmas Service in our Church on 21st December. Elsewhere you will find details of our own services including Christmas Eve and Day to which **everyone is very welcome.**

Come, now is the time to worship
Come, now is the time to give your heart
Come, just as you are to worship
Come, just as you are before your God, come.

These are the words of the wonderful rousing hymn of that name written by Brian Doerksen. So, come, just as you are, and join with the happy throng on 2nd December to remember and celebrate Our Lord Jesus Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Come just as you are and join us in our beloved Church as we celebrate God's greatest gift to humankind - Baby Jesus born in the lowly stable at Bethlehem.

Wishing you and your families, a Very Happy, Joyful Christmas, and may 2019 bring you all good health and good cheer and be all that you wish it to be.

God's blessings be with you all,
Your Brother in Christ, David Matheson

Session Clerk's Notes

By the time the congregation receives this edition of Contact, the Congregational Meeting with the Interim Ministry Team will have been held. We may have a clearer idea of how and when our church can move towards calling a full-time minister.

It is important for us in anticipation that we pray for this blessing from our Father. And in the meantime thanking Him for the ongoing blessings of David, Sally and our own talented members who have also taken on to lead or assist in any and all areas of our worship.

We must also continue to present ourselves as a well organised and sustainable congregation with a fully engaged and active membership and with a fully operational structure of office bearers. This means a Kirk Session and Deacons' Court which has a full complement of officers/members, capable of assisting any future leader.

Joan is to be congratulated on an exemplary period serving as Clerk to the Deacons' Court and has advised that she will step down after the November meeting, having completed her agreed term of office. Joan will be on hand to help and advise the next serving Clerk as required.

David R has advised that he wishes to retire as an active elder due to personal issues. David has served as a diligent and reliable elder for 33 years, having been presented with a long service certificate 3 years ago. He has also been a long serving member of the Fabric Committee. I have accepted David's resignation reluctantly; he will receive the status of 'Elder Emeritus' as a reflection

of his valuable input to the life of Maxwelltown West. We wish David and Avril well and hope to have them worshipping with us for a long time to come.

In the light of these 2 instances, it is important that we highlight the need for committed members or adherents to help us to maintain an active and vibrant church organisation.

Our Tech team and Social group are to be thanked for assisting in the successful concert by the Dumfries Male Voice Choir and the Film night recently held. Both of these events helped us to raise much needed funds as well as providing enjoyable fellowship and shared buffet teas. More to follow soon.

D C, Session Clerk

Congregational Consultation Meeting

Saturday morning 27th October saw a gathering of approximately 50 members of the congregation in the church hall. The meeting began at 11am and was led by the Reverend Sandra Black and the Reverend John Collard who are both members of the Interim Ministries Team.

Following an introduction by Sandra and a short act of worship led by John, those present were spilt into seven smaller groups who then enjoyed a time of discussion. There were three questions given to the groups to discuss, relating to the progress that has been made during the last year and what there was – if anything - that still needed looking at. The groups came back together for a feedback session where the points from each group were collated.

During the feedback session it was clear that the feeling is that there is no longer a need for an Interim Minister. Sandra will write a report and send it to the Interim Moderator and also to the Interim Ministries Task Group. The Interim Moderator will approach Presbytery regarding the matter of the 'right to call' a minister being restored to the congregation. Further updates and more information will be available when we have the report from Sandra. If you have any questions, please contact the Rev Sally Russell 01556 503645

S R

World Church Team

Mathia Report

The latest news from John, session clerk at Mathia Church, tells of a growing congregation with many young people attending, who greatly appreciate our help towards their college or university fees.

Although the church is going well he tells of many problems in the community and country. The current situation is particularly affecting ordinary people in everyday essentials. Maize flour, sugar and other foods, as well as water, electricity, fuel and health insurance, have almost doubled in cost. They normally rely on their tea gardens and processing factory in the village for income. However, since the latest drought many plants have died. John reports "some shoots are appearing so we are praying for rain, otherwise we cannot tell what will happen to our tea production. The IMF is now considering the way forward. The country is now at the mercy of our Saviour".

Following this worrying news, our WCT have sent the community some funding to help in their crisis. We would greatly appreciate your support with our education project through the flyer accompanying your Contact this December. Many thanks from the WORLD CHURCH TEAM.

Pilgrimages 2 and 3

It was a rather damp group of 16 “pilgrims” and 3 dogs that arrived at Sweetheart Abbey and the Abbey Cottage Tearoom at the end of our second Pilgrimage Walk. We had walked from New Abbey down to Airds Point along the banks of Drummillan Pow as it meanders lazily on its way to the Nith, bordered by large mudbanks. The burn becomes more river-like and at high tide you can easily imagine boats coming up the pow with supplies for the monks at Sweetheart Abbey.

At Airds Point we headed north-west alongside Kirkconnel Merse to reach Kirkconnel Tower. Little can be seen of the inhabited 16th century tower as other buildings in different styles have been added around it. The chapel that the Maxwell family built here was in regular use until the middle of the 20th century.

Now it was a bit of a slog along the back road to New Abbey, brightened by the sign for “Faulty Towers”, and an atmospheric view of Sweetheart Abbey with a misty Criffel as a backdrop. The afternoon tea did not disappoint.

Hopefully our third Pilgrimage walk will have taken place by the time that you read this. The walk takes in Dundrennan Abbey, sister abbey to Sweetheart and Glenluce Abbeys, Abbey Burn Foot and Port Mary. That’s if there isn’t a red flag flying atop a pole by the gate to Port Mary bridge.

Nowadays Dundrennan is more famous, or infamous, for its weapons testing range than for its abbey. The Kirkcudbright Training Area was acquired by the Army in 1942 to help prepare troops for the invasion of Europe during World War 2. The area is not used as much now but the warning signs are still there. Port Mary is where Mary Queen of Scots embarked for England, hoping to gain support from Elizabeth I. Things did not turn out well as Mary was held under house arrest for almost 19 years, before being executed for her alleged part in a treasonable plot.

For a while, summer Sundays were busy at Abbey Burn Foot, when visitors and locals would make their own “pilgrimage” to the seaside. Football was played – on a Sunday!- on the grassy part of the shore and a hut would be opened up selling ice cream, ginger and biscuits. No longer, but the line, “There’s brandy at the Abbey Burn and gin at Hestan Bay” gives you a clue about what went on there, and it wasnae legal!

Max West Movies

The first of our Max West Movie nights continued the Pilgrimage theme with a screening of “The Way”, a film which uses the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the 800km route from France into Spain as the reason for four very different pilgrims making the journey of discovery. Our second film night on Friday 9th November will feature a trip to the cinema in the 1950’s, with Pathe News, a Tom and Jerry cartoon, “Look at Life”, Pearl and Dean adverts and the main feature, the 1959 version of “The 39 Steps”, with Kenneth More as Richard Hannay.

The current season of films concludes on **Friday December 7th at 7:30 pm**, with a showing of “Arthur Christmas,” a 2011 British- American computer animated Christmas comedy film, featuring Santa’s clumsy son Arthur, his ageing granddad, an enthusiastic elf, and an 8 strong team of untrained

reindeer. "It's as bright and twinkling as a Christmas tree decked with warmth and humour" – Rotten Tomatoes.

Please do come and support this new initiative for Max West. There is no admission charge but donations to offset the cost of our new audio-visual equipment will be welcome. Many thanks to Mike Marshall, our enthusiastic projectionist, for making evenings at Max West Movies a looked-forward-to event. Thanks also to members of our Social Group for refreshments during the Intermission and after the show. Ideas for future screenings will be most welcome.

D J

Maxwelltown West Church History- Ministers of Our Church

Henry Glen Alexander Simmons 1944-1983

As I was preparing to add the life story of Harry Simmons to the series of articles about the ministers of our church, I received the following letter from a former Missionary from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints:

"Let me share my story about meeting Reverend Simmons and my impressions of that remarkable man.

I met Reverend Simmons in early 1977. I was a 19 year old Missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints serving with another 19 year old missionary in Dumfries. We were both young and inexperienced and new to the area. One of the things we decided to do was to meet all the ministers in town. That was an interesting experience for us.

Some of the ministers were very nice, other ministers would have nothing to do with us, chasing us away and warning their congregation about us. Then we met Reverend Simmons. He warmly welcomed us into his manse. He offered us refreshment. He invited us to share our message with him. He invited us back to see him again.

I remember seeing books from our Church, including the Book of Mormon, on his bookshelf. I knew we were not the first missionaries he had been kind to. Indeed, he told us of many Elders from our Church that had visited him over the years. He was so gentle and kind to us and told us that he had always been impressed with the message the Elders had brought. I left feeling so good inside, having been the recipient of such true Christian Charity. Here I was this upstart young boy, working to convert his congregation to a different Church, and rather than chasing me away and challenging what we were doing like most others did, he showed love and kindness. I never have seen such true Christian Charity demonstrated to me any time before or any time after.

What a true follower of Christ, a man that practiced what he preached every Sunday, a man that even loved those who he could have called enemies. We made many similar visits. We were always warmly welcomed.

Friendly hellos were extended to us when we meet in the street. It was sad when I left the area in May of that year. Reverend Simmons kindness went with me. We exchanged letters and Christmas cards. In 1981 I brought my new wife to visit Dumfries and he graciously received her

telling her what a nice missionary I had been. I am eternally grateful for having met Reverend Simmons and how he taught me about Jesus through the way he loved.”

After reading Mark Packard’s letter I thought it would be an opportunity for members of the congregation who knew Harry or his house keeper, Miss Kennedy, to contribute to the article. If you would like to add a personal memory please write to me or tell me and I will endeavour to include them in the article about Harry’s Life.

B W

REPORTS FROM ORGANISATIONS

Good Companions

Good Companions meet fortnightly at 2pm in the Committee Room. This is a small group who enjoy friendship and fellowship and would welcome new members.

At present, David Matheson is leading us in Bible Study and other topics will be arranged throughout the session. On 31st October we had a session of armchair exercise and other subjects asked for by the members are being organised for future meetings.

Dates of meetings until the end of the year – **28th November and 12th December.**

E R

The Guild

Welcome to Maxwelltown West Guild news update with our new strategy “One Journey, Many Roads”. The Guild has been journeying since its beginning in 1887 and continually changing with the times, as now with new ideas, new ways of working and new theme “Seeking the Way”. The Guild Council has changed to “Nithsdale Guilds Together” encompassing all registered Guilds in our area. Locally we enjoyed our Dedication Service and Harvest Thanksgiving together at the end of September, also including a special presentation of Long Service Certificates to Mary McLeod, Olive Woods and Mairi Savage, together totalling 106 years of service to our Guild.

By the time you read this, on **Saturday 17th November, Afternoon Tea** will be served from **2-4pm** with **Christmas and baking stalls** in aid of our church and Guild funds, so please come and enjoy.

The December, January and February meetings will commence at 2pm - hopefully dry weather and no snow to allow easy access.

The programme will have music, an assistance dog and a project speaker.

We have chosen the **Boys’ Brigade** as our project for the session. The Boys’ Brigade is a volunteer-led youth organisation which provides youth work to the Christian Church. Founded by Sir William Smith in Glasgow in 1883, they provide a space and a place where children and young people can learn, grow and discover. They are committed to ensuring lives are enriched by helping children and young people reach their full potential by providing opportunities to meet together and engage in a range of fun and development activities and experiences.

Today the Boys’ Brigade and the church face the same challenge of being visible in our outreach and engagement with the wider community. The Boys’ Brigade has a unique role to play as a mission partner for the Church of Scotland. For many churches, the Boys’ Brigade provides the bridge into communities that they otherwise might find difficult to access, providing opportunities to engage

young people and also their families. This new partnership with the Guild focuses on growing the Boys' Brigade across Scotland. We think this is particularly fitting to launch during 2018, Scotland's Year of Young People. This partnership will focus specifically on three areas; growth in faith, community partnerships and young people.

Looking forward to **Sunday 10th February, a Soup and Sandwich Lunch** will be held after church in aid of our project so please come and enjoy this to help The Boys' Brigade.

Stamps from Christmas cards for charity can be brought to church where you will find a box in the Simmons hall. Also **unwanted toiletries** will be gifted to **Women's Aid** locally and can be given to any Guild member to bring to a meeting.

Everyone is welcome to visit or join the Guild, and membership to new members is free this year. Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy Guid New Year.

A D, Convener

Scout Group

Since the Summer AGM, we have managed to create a new Scout Group Committee.

We are intending to make up a hamper to be raffled at Christmas time and do bag packing at one of the supermarkets, to raise funds for the Group. We are going to place a fundraising chart in the main hall.

Also since the summer, S S (Scout Leader) was awarded a 5 year service award and H MacD (Group Scout Leader) 20 years' service.

G L was awarded for services to the District for being the Secretary for many years.

We still need an Assistant Cub Leader to help John and Beaver Leaders to restart the Beaver Colony.

H MacD GSL

Brownies

Since returning after the summer holidays, we have all been learning about the new Girlguiding programme. The new themes are Express Myself, Know Myself, Be Well, Have Adventures, Skills for my Future and Take Action. These themes are to be followed in every age group of Guiding. There are Skills Builder badges to work on at Brownies and 18 new Interest badges to work on at home. The Brownies were pleased to hear all about Kirsty's trip to India which showed them the opportunities available in Girlguiding.

We held a Promise Celebration for Mia and Olivia in Dumfries museum. The girls were excited to be the first to make their Promise at the museum. After the Promise Celebration, everyone was able to explore the museum and complete some of the trails.

Our last meeting before the October holidays was a sponsored silence for one hour in aid of the new audio/visual equipment in the Church. Some found it quite a challenge not to speak for one hour. We will be collecting the sponsor money during the holidays.

Currently we have spaces for Brownies to start in 2019. If you know anyone interested, please get in touch.

J McEwan

Children's Corner

Hello again boys and girls. I hope you had a lovely October break and are building up for our run up to Christmas and all the accompanying festivities with your families. Of course before that you may well be taking part in dressing up for Halloween with parties and trick or treating round the doors. Have you ever wondered why we do this, as many Christians are very much against celebrating in this way?

Well, Halloween is a word that has come about to celebrate 'All Hallows' Eve' on the evening of 31 October as a precursor to 'All Saints Day' and 'All Souls Day'. This Christian celebration stems from the belief that there is a powerful bond between those in Heaven and the living. This is generally mainly celebrated by the Catholic Church, and many other Anglican and Methodist churches, but not all, as its aim is to thank God for the lives and deaths of all Saints. Many Protestants believe that all Christians (not just saints) should be remembered on this day, both past and present including those who were members of the local congregation.

What about costumes and pumpkins, I hear you ask? Well, it is thought that making lanterns at Halloween began in Ireland in the 19th century. Turnips carved out with grotesque faces (called Jack-o-lanterns) were used in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands to ward off evil spirits by displaying these lanterns in the windows of their houses. In America where Pumpkins were readily available, and much easier to carve, they began to be associated with Halloween around 1834 and are now readily available in Britain too. Americans delighted in adapting the Jack-o-lanterns story, carving big smiley faces on their pumpkins, serving to celebrate thanksgiving. The Jack O lantern story was an old Irish folk tale from the mid eighteenth century telling the tale of 'Stingy Jack', a lazy yet shrewd blacksmith who used a cross to trap Satan. He makes Satan promise that when Jack dies he will not take his soul. Of course when he did die Jack found that he had been too sinful to be allowed into Heaven and Satan did not want him either, giving Jack a burning coal. Jack placed it into a turnip to light his way while he forever wandered the earth looking for a resting place.

This story is the reason we call our carved turnips Jack-o-lanterns. Boys and girls in America also wore evil costumes to fool the bad spirits into staying away from the living. This was because the boundary between the living and the dead was said to be fragile on 'All Hallows Eve'. Of course now-a-day's children in Scotland wear all variety of costumes friendly and evil with no thought as to why they are dressing up. It has become very much a community activity to have fun and gather treats from all the neighbours.

At Sunday club we looked at how we can carve Christian pumpkins, and say a prayer whilst doing so. Try this at home:

Activity: Take a small pumpkin and place it on a firm table.
Ensure you have an adult to help you. Then say:

Dear God, as I carve my pumpkin help me say this prayer:

Open my mind so I can learn about you (Cut open the top of the pumpkin)
Take away my sins and forgive me for the wrong things I do (Clean out the insides)

Open my eyes so your love I will see (Cut the eyes out in heart shapes)

Forgive me for turning up my nose at all you've given me (Cut the nose in the shape of a cross)



Open my ears so your word I will hear (Cut the ears in the shape of a bible - rectangles would do)
 Open my mouth so I can tell others You're near (Cut the mouth in the shape of a fish)
 Let Your light shine in all I say and do! Amen (Place a tea-light inside and get a grown-up to light it)
 Remember, when Jesus lives inside you, you can glow. He said; **'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'**.

See you all soon. Sunday Club starts back again on Sun 5th Nov 2018. Bring your friends. All are welcome. Any queries you can contact me. Thanks.

D McL ☺

	Church Flowers	Memorial Vase
January		
6th	Mrs. E. Riddick	Mrs. L. McWhan
13th	Mrs. O. Woods	Mrs. A. Milligan
20th	Mrs. M. McLeod	Mrs. M. McLeod
27th	Mrs. R. Slack	Mrs. E. Wilson
February		
3rd	Mrs. M. Wallace	Mrs. S. Robin
10th	Mrs. Mgt. Wallace	Mrs. F. Saddington
17th	Mrs. M. Kingan	VACANT
24th	Mrs. M. Wallace	Mrs. S. Aird
March		
3rd	Mrs. I. Johnstone	Mrs. P. McKenzie
10th	Mrs. J. McEwan	VACANT
17th	Mrs. E. McNay	VACANT
24th	Mrs. O. Woods	Mrs. E. Riddick

If you would like to take a vacant date or help to arrange church flowers, please contact AD



**Mathia
Students
after their
Bursary
Presentation**