

**Kirk Session Report**  
**Church AGM - March 2018**

Thank you everyone for remaining after worship to attend this Annual Stated meeting. I am aware that this is a requirement of Church law but I prefer to think of it as a time when we reflect on the year's events, highlights and achievements within our 'wee kirk' and rejoice in all that is good about it. It is also a time when we say thank for everyone's contributions. It is a privilege to be part of the Clarkston Church family and to enjoy the fellowship, friendship and support that we share together as we gather to worship and serve God in this place.

Today is also special because it's the first annual meeting with our new minister, the Reverend Hanna Rankine.

As a congregation, we work diligently and value the skills that everyone brings. This was validated in February 2017, when the Vice-Convener of Hamilton Presbytery's LCR Committee praised us on the clear strengths highlighted in our Local Church Review paperwork and commended our vision and life as a congregation

When our minister, Reverend Derek Gunn, intimated his intention to retire in September, we patiently waited for the LCR/Implementation Committee deliverance regarding status and tenure and our right to call a minister and subsequently Presbytery's decision. At the Presbytery meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017 we were absolutely delighted that the congregation of Airdrie:Clarkston was restored to Full Status and given permission to call a minister without restriction.

At the end of September, our minister the Reverend Derek Gunn retired after almost eight years at Airdrie:Clarkston. On the 10<sup>th</sup> September, Derek preached his last sermon to our congregation. This was followed by a beautiful lunch for all in the hall. It was a day filled with gifts, good wishes and joy but also one tinged with sadness at the close of a lovely chapter in our Church history.

And so the process of filling the vacancy began. Our Interim Moderator was appointed, the Reverend Alan Gibson, minister at Motherwell South. He preached the church vacant on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September and at the end of worship a Nominating Committee made up of thirteen elected representatives from the congregation was formed. We were heartened by the wide age range within the Nominating Committee. This gave us a balanced demographic of age, experience and life skills as well as hopes and vision for the future.

We were most fortunate that our own Joy Codona was willing to take on the role of Locum

during the time of our vacancy. Joy worked two days a week on Pastoral work within the parish and was responsible for worship on two Sundays each month. We were also very privileged to have Lorraine Gilroy to lead worship on the other two Sundays of the month. We are indebted to both of these ladies, Joy and Lorraine, for their huge contributions over the past six and half months and for their help in ensuring continuity and stability for our Church.

On behalf of the Congregational Board, the Kirk Session and our congregation, I would also like to formally note our thanks and appreciation to the Reverend Alan Gibson, for his help and for the professional, knowledgeable and understanding approach he took to all matters pertaining to the vacancy.

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The members of our Congregational Board and Session carry out their duties and responsibilities thoughtfully and diligently. They must be particularly commended for their excellent attendance at the plethora of meetings that have been held in the past year. Meetings are carried out with respect and difficult topics and decisions have been made after reflective debate and discussion. This year the Kirk Session decided to depart from the traditional view of the Church with regards to ministers in civil partnerships and same sex marriages and to accept applications from all ministers.

Pat Muir, was ordained and admitted as a new elder on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

Kate Adam carries out the duties of Safeguarding Coordinator most diligently and precisely and Joy Codona continues to be a dedicated and committed Presbytery Elder. Joy will also be a Commissioner at the 2018 General Assembly.

Clarkston Church fully supports the work of Hamilton Presbytery and actions all request from Presbytery timeously.

With great sadness, I report the deaths of two, loved elders and friends - Jim Gibson in March and Rae Hawthorne in May. Both Rae and Jim gave faithful service to the Kirk Session and contributed fully for many years to all aspects of Church life. Both are greatly missed by us but we also feel privileged to have known them and to have had the opportunity to work alongside them.

## Church Working Groups

The members of all our Church working groups work diligently have accomplished much this year.

**Finance** - we are extremely fortunate to have our church's finances and budgets managed so competently by Treasurer Calum Brown. The Finance group is most efficient, with members handling vital aspects such as Standing Orders, Gift Aid and Family Boxes and we are most grateful that these tasks lie in their capable hands. Betty Kennedy, although still remaining an active member of the Finance Group, has now given up the Assistant Treasurer remit. We appreciate Betty's long service in this role.

**Worship** - Monthly services at Wester Moffat Hospital continued throughout the year.

Other special services have included:

- A well-attended Armed Forces Service was held on Sunday 18th June with super representation from members of the Air, Army and Sea Cadets Corps as well as some members of the British Legion.
- Harvest Thanksgiving in September.
- Remembrance Sunday when two beautiful donations, a stained-glass panel from Betty McCrone and a new banner from Eileen Grier and Chrissie Gibson, were dedicated. Our sanctuary is enhanced by these beautiful and generous gifts.
- There was a good response to our annual Service of Hope which was held on 4th February 2018. Special invitations were sent to families who had suffered loss over the period.
- Everyone enjoyed the Nativity presented by our Sunday Club and Messy Church children on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December. Certain particular moments stand out, namely the beautiful solo by one of our youngest shepherds, the very bouncy sheep and our more mature 'Wise Woman'. This was followed in the evening by a Carols by Torchlight service organised by the Worship and Mission / Stewardship groups. These two groups also worked together to plan and deliver the service of Nine Lessons and Carols on the Sunday following Christmas. The Watchnight Service, led by Lorraine Gilroy, was most meaningful and was followed on Christmas Day with a short Family Service led by two of our elders - Andrew Milligan and Campbell Sefton. We are most grateful to all who contributed to our Christmas Worship events.
- Collaborative Holy Week Services with Jackson Parish Church continued.

Ryan Hanlon, our organist, is a talented musician and we are extremely grateful to have his support and help with music matters within the church. He must be particularly commended for his work with the choir and for giving up so much of his personal time to choosing music and leading rehearsals.

**Pastoral** - The group continue to provide most welcome visits to members on the care list. Pastoral Visit cards for highlighting those who are ill or housebound are now available. "Thinking About You" leaflets were designed by Brenda Robertson and decorated and

personalised by the Sunday Club children. These leaflets are now available to the Pastoral Group for distribution on visits. The car rota also continues to be well-used by older members of the congregation and our thanks go to Colin McKay and Archie Easton for coordinating this remit. Thanks also to the small sub-team of Nan Turner and Margaret Crane who take responsibility for distributing the Church flowers each Sunday.

**Mission and Stewardship** - The group worked in partnership with the Social and Fellowship group to deliver our 180<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration and lunch on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017. In June, the group met with Edith Scott, Stewardship Convener. She gave the group many ideas on how to progress Mission and Stewardship and next steps are now being considered by the members.

**Property** - the focus this year has been to create a schedule and costings for the work highlighted in the Presbytery Property Inspection and to seek estimates and subsequently issue contracts for the first phase of the work. Extensive electrical work has been completed in and around the manse. The Church Office has been fully renovated to provide our new minister with a secure, comfortable and functional working environment and the Vestry and Church toilets have been redecorated.

We are most grateful to the group for the work the members undertake to maintain our Church property and especially for their quick response and action in dealing with the quite extensive vandalism we have experienced this year.

**Social and Fellowship** - the members continue to work diligently to provide a variety of events which not only raises funds and provides fellowship and friendship but enriches our whole Church experience. Our sincere thanks to all for the delivery of this year's activities which included, a Musical Concert evening, and a mini Christmas Fayre and lunch on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent. The hospitality delivered by this group is always first class and many of these events are enhanced by the fabulous Clarkston catering.

**Dad's Army** - we are indebted to this group of men who meet every Thursday and diligently complete a host of tasks around the church, halls and grounds. Your contributions are invaluable, gentlemen!

**Communication** - The bi-monthly Church newsletter is of a high standard and is very well-received by members. Our appreciation goes to the Communication Group for producing, editing and collating each edition. To further enhance communication, a Church Facebook page has been introduced and a variety of coloured leaflets have been printed to intimate various church events to members and the wider community. We also appreciate the work carried out by Graham MacFall in keeping the information on our Church Website current and relevant.

Helen Keller was quoted as saying:

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

How true! This is the formula we use within Airdrie:Clarkston. The success of each group is primarily due to people working together and supporting each other in achieving a common goal.

We thank everyone involved in all the groups for their generosity of time, talents and resources and for their vision, innovation and commitment.

### **Provision for Young People and the Community**

There are approximately 120 children and young people involved in the life of the Church and we are striving to continually increase this number.

We have around eight members attending **Sunday Club and Creche** on a regular basis. Whilst the under-five's go to play in the crèche for the whole block of time, the Sunday Club youngsters are occupied with a bible lesson and related craft work before joining the others in the creche. Our thanks to Avril MacArthur, Margaret MacFall, Isobel Main and the team of crèche helpers.

**Youth Group** - This group, although small in number are enthusiastic. They are most willing to contribute to Sunday worship, other special services and as Messy Church leaders.

**Messy Church** - Messy Church has now been running in our Church since December 2014 and has grown into a most effective outreach within our community. The welcoming atmosphere and the fun and participation of all families is most apparent. I would like to thank all the gifted people in the Messy Church team for the commitment, diligence and energy they so willingly give to every Messy Church gathering. We are a team in every sense of the word, with each member using their individual skills and talents to ensure that everything goes smoothly and that the Bible message is shared and explored with the families who come along.

### **Youth Organisations**

Our Brownie Pack is extremely well-attended each week and provides a varied and innovative programme of activities. The Rainbows is also a thriving group. This year the Rainbows planted a cherry tree in the Church Memorial garden. Both groups have a very good relationship with the church.

Our Boys Brigade Company continues to be a very successful Church organization with our dedicated, Captain - Archie Easton at the helm. Twenty-four boys regularly attend the Anchor Boys and have enjoyed a wide-variety of activities this year including a visit to a Soft Play area at Christmas, the Battalion Fun Day in May and a visit from the Fire Brigade complete with tender. Ross Edgar and Susan Heggerty attended Officer Training in February. The Junior Section, of 18 boys, also have a wide and varied programme including badge work and 'homework' tasks such as building flying machines or four-wheeled vehicles

and even baking pancakes. The Company Section of 8 boys enjoy activities such as drill, P.T. , badminton, tennis, bowls, football and cricket. Three boys must be particularly commended this year - Ross McArthur who will gain his Queen's Badge in June, Adam Bell who will achieve his President's badge in May and Calum McDonald who will complete the King George V1 training in June.

We were very proud when one of our former BB's, Jack Haugh, was Hamilton Presbytery's Youth Representative at the 2017 General Assembly.

Both the Junior and Company Sections will be going to the annual camp at Nethybridge in June. Our gratitude to all the, dedicated and energetic leaders who give their time to make groups such as Sunday Club, Creche, Messy Church, Youth Group, BB's, Brownies, Rainbows so appealing and interesting for the young people in our Church Community.

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### Other Church Groups

**The Guild** continues to be popular with 17 members attending each fortnight. Although there is no President this year, the members decided at their AGM to share the task with each taking the lead at one of the meetings. The syllabus has been most entertaining and informative with talks on a variety of subjects such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, highlights from Derek's year as Moderator of Hamilton Presbytery, the Fistula Foundation, St. Andrew's Hospice and a presentation on old Airdrie and Coatbridge. The Guild have also enjoyed an outing to the Pantomime, restaurant visits, attendance at the Songs of Praise during Assembly Week and participation in the Guild Convenor's Challenge held at the Kelvingrove Bowling Club - which they won. Probably the biggest challenge for the Group was the Sponsored Silence in March 2017. However the members rose to the task and raised £798 which when added to existing funds allowed our Guild to send an amazing donation of £1200 to the National Guild Projects.

**Carpet Bowls** - the Carpet Bowls club is enjoyed each week by members of the church and wider community.

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### Ministry to the Wider Community

A variety of charities have benefitted from our efforts this year:-

The final amount given to the **St. Andrew's Hospice New Build Appeal** through the 'Smartie Box' fundraiser organised by Isobel Main and Nan Turner was £2500. This was an amazing achievement!

As a Church we are aware of the great need of many families in our wider community and to this end continue to support '**The Trussell Trust UK Foodbank Network**'.

### **Shoebox Appeal**

Once again we took part in the Samaritan's Purse Shoe-box appeal collecting an amazing 105

boxes of which St. Serfs Primary filled thirty-nine. Two hundred pounds was also donated to help with transport costs. Thanks to Liz Easton for organising this project every year and to everyone who gave so willingly to this worthwhile cause.

### **Syrian Refugees**

The Church continues to support the appeal for warm clothing for Syrian Refugees. We have now made five, substantial deliveries to Old Cathcart Church that works closely with the coordinator of the appeal - 'Glasgow the Caring City'. Our thanks for all the support given by the folks in the Church and to those who have encouraged relations, friends and neighbours to give donations. This work is ongoing and is as vital as ever.

Our retiral collections this Christmas were shared between the charities 'Medicine Sans Frontiers and Christian Aid' and we also held a retiral offering at the Harvest Service on behalf of Tearfund.

### **Yearly Statistics**

Our roll at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 was 332. We welcomed 8 new members by Profession, 2 by Certificate, one by Resolution of the Kirk Session and 4 new adherents also by Resolution of the Kirk Session. Sadly sixteen members died this year and three left by certificate. Seven weddings, four baptisms and fifty-nine funerals were conducted. Our number of elders totals thirty-five with a further five members (not elders) on the Congregational Board.

At last year's Annual Meeting I finished my report by talking about the challenges that a vacancy can bring but I also stated that I was confident that we, as a Church family, would continue to work together with diligence, respect and care for each other to overcome any challenges. Little did I think that I would be standing here with our new minister the Reverend Hanna Rankine. God has answered our prayers. Hanna has been called to us and our Nominating Committee were called to Hanna and this was confirmed when our congregation's vote was unanimous.

A new chapter in the life of Airdrie:Clarkston is about to begin. It is up to us, working together, to make it an exciting one where the main focus is on sharing God's message and love.

As I said in my welcome to Hanna on 13th March -

“Welcome to the family,

We are glad that you have come to share your life with us,

As we grow in love,

And may we always be to you

What God would have us be,

A family always there,  
To be strong and to lean on.”

In conclusion, I would like on behalf of the Board and Session, to thank you for your support in all Church matters and activities and once again for your attendance here today.

Barbara Sefton

Session Clerk

March 2018