



Ferintosh Focus

Church Newsletter

March 2014

Serving the communities of Conon Bridge & Maryburgh www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

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As always, we welcome any comments, questions or suggestions about the newsletter. Submissions are now invited for the next edition of the Focus - these can be made to members of the editorial team, or sent by email to strathdrynie@tiscali.co.uk

[&]quot;The one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:13-14

Contents

Churches and individuals have been studying the Bible for a long, long time. We dive into the depths and intricacies of the way God communicates with us and draw conclusions about how He wants us to apply each and every verse. How often have you opened the Bible yourself, or with someone else, and decided that the message is entirely simple?

"The one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:13-14

This beautifully simple message reassures and convicts each of us. Give thanks for the resurrection of Jesus which offers each of us the opportunity to be saved. Join together as a Church community in proclaiming this simple message to the many that live without the same hope in Maryburgh and Conon Bridge.

Look out for the "Congregation Contributions" in this edition, and have a think about submitting some for the next issue.

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[&]quot;The one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:13-14

Minister's Message

Over the past weeks many of us will have given up, or have been trying to give up, something for Lent. I am proud to say that no chocolate has passed my lips - but it has not been easy! Temptation is of course always present, but it is at Easter that we think of what Jesus gave up for us.

We hear the story every year, but do we think of it just as a story or do we allow the Easter story to change us, challenge us and encourage us. It's a story to inspire us into a new life with Christ Jesus, to take stock of our life today and look at how much better it could be tomorrow



and the next day and the next. Easter is a time to look forward and embrace all that comes our way to glorify our Lord and Saviour. A time to be thankful for all that has and is being provided for us through His wonderful creation and for the ultimate sacrifice of His life for our sins.

So let us all work together to glorify His name in our community and in the wider world. Let's ensure that we are able to echo the sentiment of those who welcomed Christ into Jerusalem, 'Hosanna to the Son of David...Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord...' (Matt. 21:9) as we bear witness to our Lord and Saviour in all that we say and do. That through this witness others will come to know how much better life could be tomorrow and the next day and the next with Jesus in their heart.

With every Blessing this Easter, Andy

Easter Services @ Ferintosh Parish Church

Thursday 17th April @ 7.00pm Communion Service in the Church

Friday 18th April @ 7.00pm Good Friday Service in the Church

Sunday 20th April @ 8.30am Early Morning Easter Service Followed by breakfast in the Church hall

Sunday 20th April @ 11.00am Family Easter Service No evening service tonight

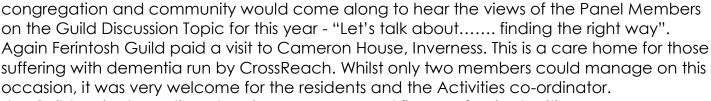
"The one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:13-14

Simply serving one another...

The Guild programme for this season is almost over. We look forward to perhaps meeting up with our Guild Link friends from Hamilton - Bardrainey, Port Glasgow, sometime in June. We have been keeping in touch by letter via our link representatives. We have had a couple of enforced less formal meetings this session, one at Janette Steele's and another at Margaret Liddell's home. They were most enjoyable.

Recently, we had a speaker from PoppyScotland who told us about the work with ex-service personnel and their families and the reasoning behind opening a contact point in Struthers Lane, Inverness.

Our April meeting on the 7th at 7.30 pm will take the form of a Panel Evening and it would be really good if members of the



The Guild Projects continue to raise awareness and finance for six charities.

Grand Total	270,077.10
Out of Africa into Malta	£48,397.15
Julius Project (Scottish Churches Housing)	£50,437.79
Passage from India (priority area dev.)	£31,867.36
Mary's Meals (Liberia)	£62,394.56
CrossReach Heart for Art	£84,668.09
Comfort Rwanda	£55,320.30

This is really amazing! It shows what can be achieved when we work together as a movement in the Church.

We are small in numbers at our Guild but it was pleasing to welcome two new members to our last meeting. We are also fortunate to have one man coming along to the meetings regularly. It would be lovely to have more join us.

The Pastoral Care Team still continue to help people in the community who find it difficult to get to appointments or visit the doctor either at the Health Centre or Raigmore, and to visit people in their own homes or care homes. Again the Team is quite small and we would be very happy to have more volunteers to be part of it. Even if you could be called on only occasionally, we would still like to hear from you.

As always the prayers of the Christian Family are very important in sustaining us in this valuable service. So even if you can't be a volunteer, please remember our work in your prayers. The co-ordinator, Janette Steele, can be contacted on 01349 861591.

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This charity is run by Church folk who have close connections in Malawi. All the trustees have direct experience of Malawi and maintain a link with every project the Trust supports. It has no paid staff with administration costs being kept to a minimum.

Despite encouraging economic development in the first decade of this millennium and an admirable response to the challenge of HIV and AIDS in Malawi:

- the per capita annual income is considerably less than the UK's weekly minimum wage
- life expectancy is rising but is currently only 53
- water, sanitation and electricity infrastructures require urgent investment
- recurrent droughts and floods often lead to poor harvests and threatened livelihoods.

The Charity assists hospitals and home-based community care schemes in providing high-protein food for children at risk of malnutrition and try to improve the lives of vulnerable children through the support of extended families and the wider community.

Thanks are due to the members of this congregation who donate regularly to this charity and the sum of £50 was recently sent to help in this great work.

"The one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:13-14



Following the twinning of Ross Presbytery and Ekwendeni Hospital, Malawi, the Guild invited Bob and Jan Baxter from Alness, who had recently been to Malawi, to address the February meeting.

They spoke of the amazing HIV/AIDS outreach programme co-ordinated from the hospital. An army of workers and volunteers, many themselves living with HIV, work in Ekwendeni and the surrounding villages, providing education, testing, and care at home, and facilitating peer support groups and local programmes of support for orphans and their carers. Bob and Jan also told us that the children's ward at the hospital had recently been refurbished, but that bed linen and towels for the children were urgently needed.

The Congregational Board therefore agreed that we would collect bed linen and towels over the coming months. This can be new or used, as long as it is clean and in good repair. If new, please buy **single** sheets, pillowcases and towels only (duvets and duvet covers are not used). All sizes of used bed linen, including duvet covers, and towels can be used, as the hospital tailors will alter items to suit the ward's needs. Items can be brought to Church and placed in the laundry basket in the annexe, or collection can be arranged. Phone Janet on 01349 865308.

Bob and Jan also brought up to date information on the programme set up by the congregation at Viyele and supported in the past by our congregation, providing 12 malnourished elderly people at a time with two nutritious meals per week, plus food to take home. Many of these have lost to AIDS the children who would otherwise have supported them in old age, often leaving them trying to support grandchildren as well. The

pictures showed how well many of these people now look, and how much joy they find in the food, medical assistance and fellowship offered by the programme. Much of this work is supported by the efforts of the congregation, who for example have set up a maize farm and a vegetable garden, and the programme receives assistance from local agencies, but the people of Viyele are still very grateful for any help from outside the country to allow them to continue this successful programme.

Janet Winchester, Mission & Outreach Convener

Information has just been received from the World Mission Council about the 2014 Used Stamp Appeal. The money raised this year will go to help the Greek Evangelical Church continue to run a "Refuge House" for victims of domestic abuse. In response to need, and in spite of the huge economic problems we have all heard about, the Church managed to buy, renovate and equip a house, which is offered free to those who need this type of support, but funds are required to continue to provide this accommodation rent-free to users. The Greek Evangelical Church has only 33 congregations and a total of 5.000 members.



Time is marching on, Spring is in the air, and plans are afoot for this year's fund raising for Christian Aid.

Cononbridge and Maryburgh have been extremely generous in giving to this charity, and again I am appealing to the congregation to consider helping with a door to door collection. I appreciate the support given to me by volunteer collectors in the Cononbridge area and am once



again requesting help in 'shaking cans' during the above week. Last May the total collected in Cononbridge and Maryburgh was over £2,225, a magnificent sum.

This year Christian Aid are responding to the issue of poverty and injustice in countries such as South Sudan, Colombia and Iraa.

Please take a copy of the current Christian Aid Magazine from the church to learn more of the work of this inspiring charity.

Chat to me, to learn more about C.A.'s work, or to volunteer to help in some way, after the Sunday morning service, or in the hall over a cup of tea or coffee.

Many thanks,

Joan MacKenzie Contact details: imackenzie 10@btinternet.com 07733196633



The **community choir** led by Miranda Neall has completed its first year. Around 20 men and women of a wide range of ages have met in the Church hall for an hour on Wednesdays nights, when they have practised a variety of songs: songs from the shows, traditional Scottish songs, popular songs, Christmas songs. There has been much fun and laughter, and new friendships have been formed. Practices have now ended for the summer, but we look forward to meeting up again in the autumn, and hope that more people will join us.

Simply reading His Word...

Read Luke 15:1-10

What prompted Jesus to tell these two parables?

- i.) Was it because Jesus was associating with 'sinners' and He saw this as an opportunity to reach out to them?
- ii.) Or was it purely in response to the mutterings of the Pharisees?

Having considered this, what was Jesus main message within these two parables? Could we identify with the shepherd or the woman?

Read Luke 15:11-31

Why did Jesus continue with this third parable after the first two?

- i.) Was it for the benefit of the Pharisees?
- ii.) Or was it for someone 'closer to home'?

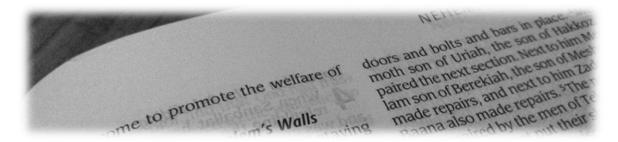
How exactly was the younger son lost?

We tend to focus on the younger, lost son in this parable, but what can be said about the attitude of the older son?

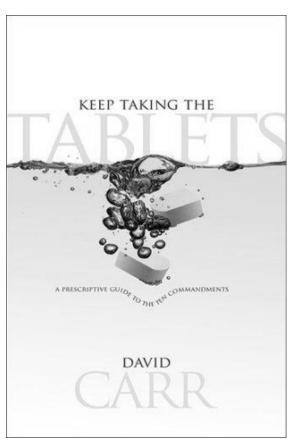
- i.) Was it understandable and fair?
- ii.) Or was it harsh and unkind?
- iii.) Did he respond in love or was he envious or jealous of his brother

Which of the two sons was really lost?
Which of these two sons would we most identify ourselves with?
And how does this third parable relate to those mentioned in the opening two verses?

These 'Lost and Found' parables in chapter fifteen say everything about the love of God. They highlight that when people are separated from God they are spiritually dead – yet still God's loves and cares for them, and still He wants nothing more than to 'find' them and bring them to Him once again. The story of the Lost Son in particular tells of all the things that can separate us from God, greed, the desire for the worldly things in life, pride, stubbornness and envy, to name but a few. Yet even still, God's love for us is such that He will willingly welcome us back with open arms, if we would but come before Him in repentance.



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Our topic for this winter's studies at **Ladies Bible Study** has been "The Ten Commandments - Living God's Way" from the Cover to Cover material produced by CWR. The seven studies are entitled:

- a) Who do you think I am?
- b) Exclusive rights
- c) Misrepresentation
- d) Respect!

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- e) Sex and Violence
- f) Who are You Kidding
- g) The Now Generation

We have found this material quite challenging and most conducive to study and debate.

We have found the book "Keep Taking the Tablets" by David Carr very interesting for background and up-to-date application; some have also returned to their youth to look at the Shorter Catechism.

The group is very friendly and welcoming and, although we will be taking a break after 2nd April until the autumn, we would love to have you join us. Please prayerfully think about it!

The Social Calendar

SUMMER FETE:

There is to be a Summer Fete in the church grounds on Saturday 28th June 2014, in aid of church funds. There will be a variety of stalls and activities on the day, with teas being served in the hall. Further details will be announced nearer the event.

FLOWER FESTIVAL:

There is to be a Flower Festival in the church on Friday 15th, Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th August 2014 with teas being served in the hall during this event. The theme is to be "Flowers and Praise".

RIVER CAFÉ:

This takes place in the church hall on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, during school term time, from 2pm-3.30pm. The dates of the next cafes are 14th May and 11th June 2014.

Janet Murray Social Convenor



CROSSREACH providing a caring future

This Social Care Arm of the Church of Scotland works in three main areas

- 1. Adult Care Services
- 2. Children and Family services
- 3. Services to Older People

It has been doing this on our behalf since 1869, the name may have changed over this period but the caring work continues. It employs 2,000 staff, in more than 70 services stretching from Shetland to Ayrshire. They help people in need every day of the year.

Adult Care Services

CrossReach supports people between the ages of 16 and 65 with the range of difficulties that they face to rebuild their lives. It aims to help service users to make their own decisions, improve their quality of life and unlock their potential.

Central to the philosophy is an emphasis on Recovery where appropriate; this approach promotes service user involvement and social inclusion.

The staff and service users would be grateful if you could add them to your prayer concerns.



SOUP LUNCHES:

At our February soup lunch, Janette and Hugh Steele gave a most enjoyable presentation on their recent visit to South Africa. The Guild organized the March lunch and presented a "Church" quiz to test our knowledge. The lunches have been well attended throughout the winter months and thanks go to all who made and served soup, helped in leading the Devotions or came along to enjoy this time of fellowship together. We look forward to welcoming you back in the autumn.

SMARTIES TUBES:

The total raised for church funds has grown to £499.17, so far. Many thanks go to everyone who has contributed to this amazing amount. There are still a few Smarties Tubes available at the back of the church, for anyone wishing to participate in this venture. All we ask is that you enjoy the contents and return the tubes, filled with the coins of your choice.



Are you having fun?

Perhaps that's the wrong way to put the question, but do you ever feel that you could get more out of your membership or association with Ferintosh Parish Church? Christ said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." Does our participation in the life of the kirk give us a more abundant life? Do we all feel truly part of our congregation?

Church involvement is a bit like exercise. At first exercise may seem a bit of a chore; something we do because we feel we should, rather than because we want to, but as we persist we see rewards and

YOU ALSO, LIKE LIVING STONES, ARE BEING BUILT INTO A SPIRITUAL HOUSE TO BE A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, 1 PETER 2:5

derive a sense of well-being from it. So too with our participation in the life of the church. The more we put into it, the more we can get out of it.

"Ah, well" you may say, "I'm not one for putting myself forward. I couldn't lead a group or a service. I don't know anything about finance or buildings." And that may well be true, but there are many ways in which we participate in the life of the church. A less-thanexhaustive list appears on the next page. There are so many ways in which we can contribute to the life of the Church and add value to our own lives in the process.

Involvement in the life of the Church is not just about attending for an hour-long service once a week. Practical acts of service are also a form of worship. We can all be living stones of different shapes and sizes, performing different tasks, but each in our own way playing an essential part in creating the structure of our local branch of the Church. This way we can ensure that Ferintosh Parish Church becomes a visible beacon of faith to the Maryburgh and Conon Bridge community.

Soon we will be distributing cards inviting you to indicate how you could contribute, or contribute in news ways, to the work of the Kingdom here in the Maryburgh and Conon Bridge area. Later, on Whit Sunday (or at Pentecost), we plan to hold a service of dedication, when you will be invited to return the completed cards. We hope that this exercise will allow us all to experience the joy of "offering sacrifices acceptable to God through our Lord", and to enjoy a greater sense of fellowship within the congregation

Ways to participate

Reading rota; Choir; Welcome at door; Worship Team; playing organ/piano/music; Writing prayer for order of service; Digital hymnal; Prayer group; Beadle

Individual prayers for requests;

Pastoral

Visits at home; Practical tasks Visits at hospital and care homes; Distribution of Easter flowers, harvest aifts and sanctuary flowers; Transport and support for appointments;

Practical

Making tea and coffee; Washing up; Making soup for lunchtime fellowship, Souper Sunday and Christian Aid; Baking for River Café, Fete, sales; Needlework – repairs to furnishings, costumes for drama, knitting/crochet Tidying/cleaning/laundry when needed in addition to cleaner; Hall security; Indoor maintenance – joinery, plumbing, electrical etc; Outdoor maintenance – gardening, grass-cutting, gutters etc. Recyclina bin

Communication

Information sheet, Life & Work, Recording & distribution of DVD of services; Library maintenance; Birthday cards for baptised children;

Noticeboards: Newsletter articles, editing, distribution;

Creative

Church decoration on special occasions:

Flowers; Pictures; Banners; Posters Assistance with art and craft work and drama at Sunday Club, FYF and Youth Club

Youth activities

Crèche; Sunday Club; FYF; Fun days; Holiday club; Cosy Café

Accounts; Auditing; counting offerings; Arranging Gift Aid; Fund-raising for Blythswood, Malawi etc;

Community

Foodbank: Blythswood bin

World mission

Newsletters; Traidcraft; Christain Aid; Raven Trust; Stamps; Malawi

Crossreach

Distribution of material & information

Guild

Social

Planning & organising events Helpina at events;

Congregational Board

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Simply passing on the message...

During January and February in Sunday Club we were reading Exodus and learning about Moses. The children made Moses in his basket out of royal icing sugar and sweets! We turned the water into 'blood' and remembered all the plagues brought on Egypt. We are adding pictures onto a time line of Moses that is pinned up in the Hall. Pancake day was celebrated with a toss the pancake race and fresh pancakes to eat at the end. We are now reading about the Easter story and will be having fun and games on 30th March. There will be no Sunday Club on 6th and 13th April but we will be back for a Family service on

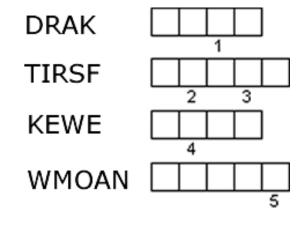


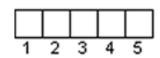






"He has risen! He is not here." Mark 16:6







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Since the Christmas holidays at Ferintosh Youth Fellowship (FYF) we've been looking at a couple of themes; the first of which was 'Spread the Word'. We spent the first few weeks exploring God's plan to spread the Good News of Christ. It focussed on individuals such as Barnabas and Saul. We also looked at how the many followers of Jesus worked together to Spread the Word the word of Jesus. It also looked at Christianity in relation to other faiths.

The theme that we're currently on is looking at the many challenges that Christians face in the world today as well as the challenges Jesus sets us in following him.

On Sunday 9th March we spent the session looking at the service prepared for the World Day of Prayer. This year the service was prepared by Christian ladies in Egypt. We learnt a lot about the country including some of the challenges faced by people living there. The service focussed on the theme of water. We discovered that there are still a lot of people today who do not have access to clean fresh water like we do. In the Bible Jesus is described as 'living water' therefore as we can't live without clean drinking water we can't really live without Jesus who is the living water that replenishes our faith and gives us strength.

FYF is open to all Academy aged young people. We normally meet at 10:50am, and go into the Church for 15-20 minutes before coming out to do our own Bible led activities.

The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" Matthew 21:9







village colt tied Lord needs

people standing answered threw cloaks

road spread branches shouted hosanna

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Congregation Contribution

Yes God has a sense of humour! You can't read the story of creation and hear the words "and it was good" that God spoke at the end of each day without thinking of a smile coming to his lips. And he has to have laughed with enormous pleasure at some of the creatures he created!

There are in fact Christian churches across the globe that hold annual services to celebrate laughter - holy humour Sunday they call it.

Some do it in the middle of Lent - but the more traditional time (and yes it is traditional) is on the First Sunday after Easter - a Sunday that way back was called "Bright" Sunday.

The tradition goes back to the musings of greats such as Augustine and St John Chrysostom who talked of Easter being like God playing a practical joke on the devil by raising Christ from the dead... "Risus pascha lis... The Easter laugh," the early theologians called it.



I'm not sure whether we'll start celebrating such a Sunday, but why not see if the following makes you smile. Let's test your Biblical knowledge...

A: Do you know what kind of car the apostles drove?

B: No, what kind did they drive?

A: They shared a Honda.

B: How do you know?

A: The Bible says that they were "all in one

Accord."

A: Do you know why they couldn't play cards on the Ark?

B: Nope, why?

A: Because Noah was standing on the deck.

For all the coffee lovers out there, did you know it's a sin for a woman to brew coffee? Yup, it's right there in the Bible; it says, He-brews

A: What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?

B: I give up; what kind of man was he?

A: Ruthless.

And one for the recession-hit times:

A: Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?

B: Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet.

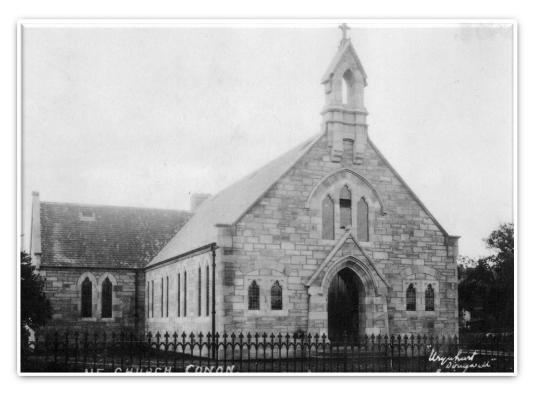
It has been scientifically proven that laughter is good for you. It's a gift so make sure you use it to the full.

But enjoy most of all the world's best joke - the Easter laugh when God broke the power of death and won life for us all.

(With thanks to Rev S Brown published in Dornoch Cathedral Parish News 2010)

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Congregation Contribution



At the time the history of Ferintosh Church was being prepared there was certainty that a photograph of the Church in 1909 by Urquhart of Dingwall was somewhere "out there" – but where? Since then the long-desired photograph has come into the possession of Tony, Innes, who has kindly allowed it to be scanned.

There is something missing. A bell tower but no bell. The answer lies in the feu charter granted by Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch which reads "... the said Trustees shall be bound not to place a bell in or in connection with the said Church." And "... it shall be in the power of (Sir Kenneth) to prohibit the ringing of such bell if any feuar or leaseholder in the said village shall object to the noise which such bell ringing may occasion." Sir Kenneth must have relented at some time!



This second photograph – also made available by Tony Innes – shows Ferintosh Church in 1966 when the River Conon burst its banks.

I would like to thank the Rev and Mrs A Graham, the Kirk Session. Congregational Board and the Congregation of Ferintosh Church for the overwhelming support to me, both before and since my stay in hospital; for prayers, visits, cards, gifts and flowers – all of which I appreciate greatly. I am home now and doing well and hope to join in morning worship in the not too distant future.

> Love and every blessing, Georgie

Church Flowers

April Organiser - Miss J Winchester

Miss J Winchester 13th Mrs M Wilson 20th Mrs J Cameron Sheena Telfer 27th

Organiser - Mrs J MacKenzie May

4th Mrs J Steele 11th Mrs J McCulloch 18th Mrs J MacKenzie 25th Miss M MacKenzie

June Organiser – Mrs J Murray

Shona Menzies 1 st 8th Mrs J Murray 1.5th Doreen Suckling **22**nd Sheena Telfer 29th Miss J Winchester

Church Welcome

	DOOL	Couni
April	H. Fraser	C. Parry
	I. MacDonald	
May	S. Telfer	I. Millar
	G. Jack	
June	I. MacKenzie	E. Blackburn
	J. Smith	

Church Register

Funerals

20 December 2013	Mr. Billy Sinclair
10 January 2014	Mr. Ron Christie
16 January 2014	Mrs. Betty Tolmie
23 January 2014	Mr. Brian MacKenzie
28 January 2014	Mrs. Marie MacRitchie
21 February 2014	Mr. Philip Green
25 February 2014	Mr. Malcolm MacLeod
1 March 2014	Mr. Donnie Munro
15 March 2014	Mr. Sandy Smith

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