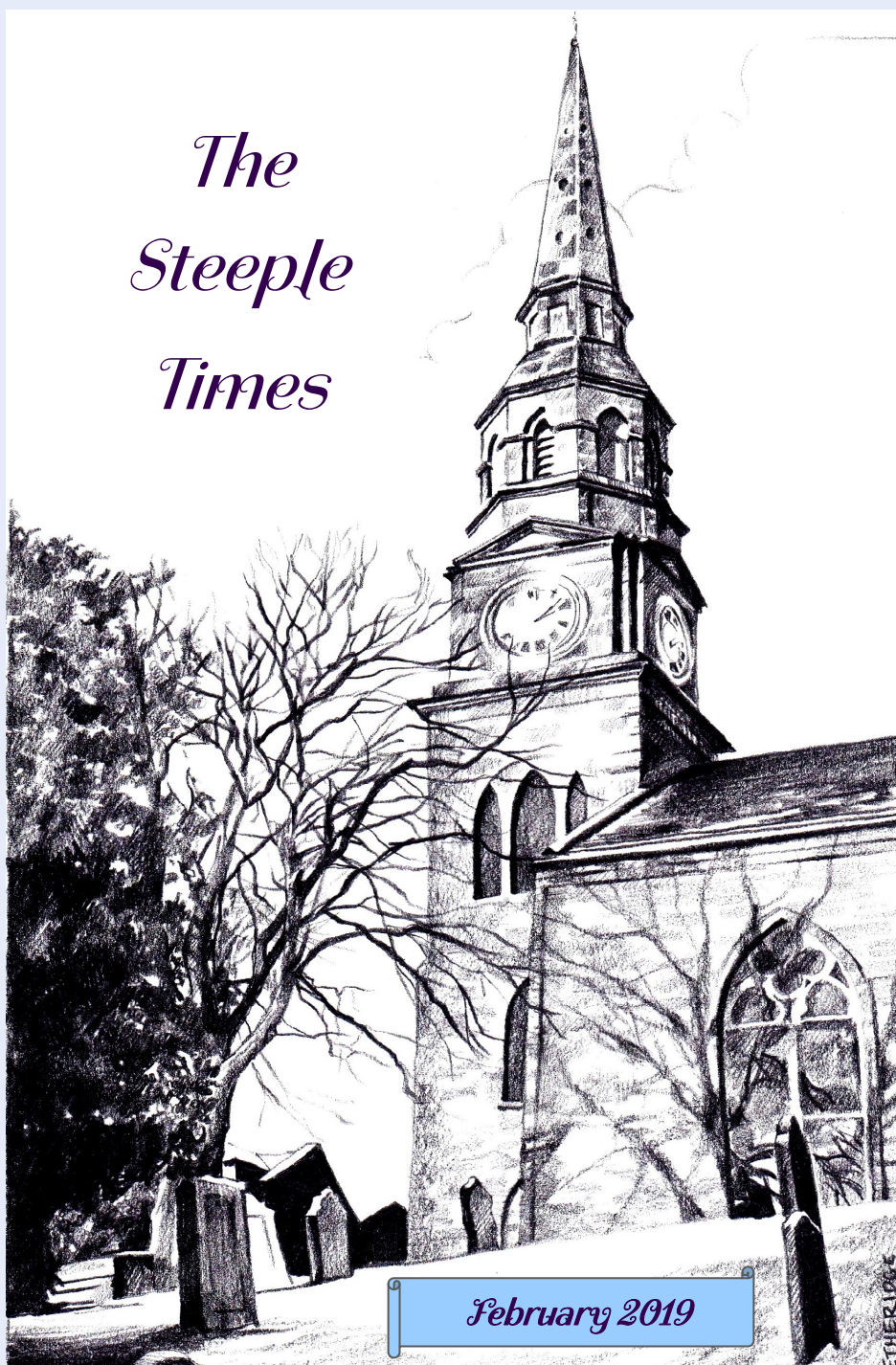


*The
Steeple
Times*



February 2019

ETHERIDGE



Services of Public Worship:

✝ **Every Sunday at 11:00am**

✝ ***Additional services:***

⇒ First Sunday of the month: Informal Communion
at 9:30am

✝ **Midweek Service every Wednesday at 12:10pm**

Minister:

The Rev. Barbara Ann Sweetin B.D.

The Manse

Lour Road

Forfar DD8 2BB

Tel: 01307 248228

E-mail: **bsweetin@churchofscotland.org.uk**

Church website: www.thebigkirk.co.uk

Church E-mail: eando_office@yahoo.co.uk

Scottish Charity No: SC004921

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LETTER FROM THE MANSE

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I pray that 2019 will be a year that brings health and happiness to you and your loved ones and that it brings peace and stability not only in Great Britain but around our world. We also hope in 2019 that the Church of Scotland can find some peace and stability as each presbytery and congregation looks towards the future of our National Church. We will see many changes in the church over the next few years: less ministers, fewer charges and the possibility of a number of churches across the country closing so I ask you to keep our National Church in your prayers this year. Remember the parable about the vine tree – let's remember that sometimes trees and bushes need to be pruned to stimulate re-growth to let it flourish. Please also keep East and Old Church in your prayers because all Angus churches will be under review this coming year and even though we have spent a great deal of time and money on our buildings, we cannot take it for granted that nothing will change for us.

However it is not all gloom and doom! The Kirk Session of East and Old Church met in November last year to look at our vision for the church over the next 5 to 10 years. We looked at the activities of the church over the last few years and then discussed and considered where we would go and where we felt God was leading us. Who would have thought we could operate a shop 5 days a week and make a good profit from it! We still have phase two of the building to complete which will cost us in the region of £200,000 to £250,000 — however does the phrase 'out of sight out of mind' mean anything to you? Most of our congregation and members do not see phase two because it is 95% upstairs but it must be completed because of the certificates we need from the Council. To that end we hope to get the lift installed in the next little while and then take our members on a tour of the upstairs of the building and the

session room and then ask you to think carefully and then pray about where the money will come from.

The next avenue we looked at was the possibility of hiring a full time family and youth worker who is theologically trained and there are a lot of reasons why this would be very, very beneficial for our church and community. A team is going to be set up to look at the cost and the pros and cons of doing this. Is this more beneficial than finishing phase two of the works? This is something we are grappling with.

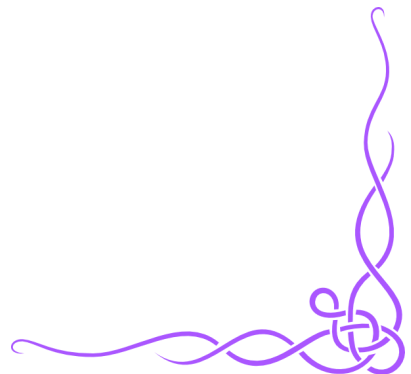
As a Kirk Session we also looked at other ways we could interact with the community and work jointly with other organisations and so much more. Once the Kirk Session have come to some decisions on what our vision and plan entails, you will hear more about it at a congregation meeting we intend to hold. However, if you have any ideas in the meantime about anything to take our church forward over the next five years or so we would love to hear from you. Please just write it down and give it to myself, Lexi Smart or Margaret Scrimgeour.

During 2018 it was great to see some of our members returning to church who have not attended for a while and we had a good number of baptisms. We admitted new members and ordained new elders on the first Sunday in January so we thank God for this and for giving us a wonderful building to worship in, fantastic membership and friends who give of their time, talents and money and the energy and vision to carry on throughout 2019 and further ahead.

God Bless

Your minister and friend

Barbara Ann



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Gift Service - Each year the members and friends of East and Old bring new gifts into the Church on the first Sunday of December, which we then hand over to the Angus Toy Appeal. During the week a few other gifts were handed in and they also joined our very large pile of toys and gifts. The representative for the Angus Toy Appeal wanted to say a huge thank you to you our members for the amount of gifts received – they were overwhelmed by your generosity. All the toys and gifts were handed out over the Christmas period to children who's Christmas would have been much poorer without the gifts. Thank you once again everyone.



National Prayer Event - The Church of Scotland asked congregations and areas to hold a national prayer event on 3rd November last year, however East and Old had quite a lot going on at that time therefore we moved our date to 3rd December and invited along the other Churches in Forfar to join us. The Ministers and members of Lawson Memorial and St Margaret's joined us that evening to talk about prayer and also to pray for all the Churches in Forfar, the work they do in the community and thanking God for everything we have.

Christmas Tree Competition - Our annual Christmas Tree competition was held in the Sanctuary on Friday 7th December and was busy as ever with 14 organisations taking part and what a lovely evening it turned out to be. There were 4 junior teams and 10 adult teams and congratulations go to the "Groovy Gryphons" for coming first in the juniors and "The Green Team" for the adults. The theme was recycling and what amazing, creative ideas came to the forefront. Thank you to Jennifer Gair from Prima for judging the competition and to the outreach team for organising it.



Ladies and Men joint Christmas Meal - The men and women decided to join forces this year for a meal at Christmas and what a lovely meal it was at Armstrong's Restaurant. The food, service and company were all good which led to a lovely evening.

Christmas Chocolate Morning - What can we say about this other than a big, big thank you to all those involved. The Guild ran the tearoom and on offer were chocolate hamburgers and hotdogs, chocolate onions, with ketchup and mustard made out of double cream. There were numerous stalls in the church and many of the Church committees ran a stall. The total for the day came in at over £2500.

The winners of the chocolate competition (which was to serve hot chocolate to someone/somewhere unusual) was hot chocolate being served to a worker up scaffolding, another sitting at Balmashanner monument on Remembrance Sunday evening with the red glow and another in a hot tub. I wonder what type of competition this year will bring?

Salvation Army Band at Lowson Memorial Church - Each year our Church holds a retiring offering, which is added to money raised by the Salvation Army band when in Forfar. This year we brought in just under £100 which will be added to the total and is then given to FACT for their chosen charity - 'The Inspiration Orchestra'. We don't have a total yet as FACT has not met.

First Aid Training - Ten of our Church members undertook a First Aid training course, which was run in the Church. Congratulations to Johnny Forbes, Karen Kelly, Paula Stewart, Esther Kidd, Bob Kidd, Lexi Smart, Ian Stewart, Irene Duthie, Anne Watt and Muriel Fairley. This idea of First Aid training came on the back of receiving the Defibrillator from Stewart Davidson.



The 2-day course covered the working of the Defibrillator and emergency first aid. We hope to run another course in the near future.

Forfar Instrumental Band very kindly came and played at our worship service on Sunday 16th December which involved playing the music for all the carols we sang and then an individual piece and also playing as the offering was being collected. A big thank you to the band for coming along and participating in the worship service and many of the congregation commented on the full and wonderful sound in the Church.

Discovering Advent - This was a new idea for our Church last year in that instead of holding 3 or 4 evening advent bible studies our Minister ran a full-day event.

Although the take up was poor those who attended felt they benefited from the day.

Christmas Tree and Flowers -

A big thank you must go to Bill Duthie and his team of helpers for getting the tree decorated and installed in the Church. The tree this year was particularly beautiful in its shape and with its decorations. You have no idea how many times we are asked in the Church how they manage to get the tree decorated at the top and how they get the tree up as well! You will need to understand that as a tree goes up it needs to come down again and between the tree going up and down it took many, many hours of hard work.

We also need to say a big thank you to the flower team for all the beautiful floral decorations around the Church and reception area over the Christmas period – they were stunning and complimented our worshipping and social spaces.

Once again these are time consuming tasks and a big thanks goes to our flower ladies.

Nine Lessons and Carols - This annual event of a reflective time for Christmas in a quiet atmosphere is getting bigger and bigger each year. Many people turned up at this evening service to

hear the story from the beginning of time right through to the Messiah's birth whilst singing the hymns that related to each part of the story. Thank you to all the readers and to Margaret Anderson for playing the organ.

Nativity Service - This is one of the most looked forward to services every year by the members – not by the Groovy Gryphon leaders though! The scene was set with the manger, the lights were on and the nativity play began. Each year we marvel at the different ways the Groovy Gryphons bring us the nativity story and they did not let us down. The children were very good and could be heard quite clearly and needless to say they sang like angels. Our Minister was delighted to be asked to take part and play the role of the angel! (and she milked it for all it was worth.)



Christingle Service - This service is always the busiest service of the year and this year was no different with over 300 people in the Church. However the service and the Christingles don't just happen by magic. Thank you very much to everyone who stayed behind after the Nativity service to make the Christingles. The bribery of soup, bread and mince pies did the trick and over 35 people stayed behind to make all 350 of them! The teamwork was amazing and the Christingles were finished in just over an hour rather than two hours. Over 2000 cocktail sticks were used! However with the children helping to make the Christingles when putting the marshmallows and sweets on the sticks, it might have been one for the stick and one for them.



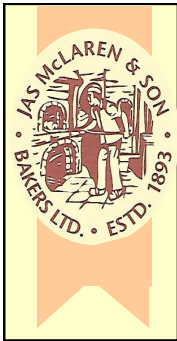
Thank you to our Minister for once again coming up with so many new and novel ideas to bring to the Christingle service – we would love to know where you get your ideas and energy from. If you didn't see the chocolate nativity slide show you must ask Barbara Ann to show it to you. And who would have thought that the song 'Baby Shark' could be turned into 'Nativity Shark'. Santa Claus made a

guest appearance at the service and kindly gave out chocolate bars to everyone!

However, there was one fly in the ointment! Our Minister forgot to announce that there was a retiring offering in aid of 'Lucy's Blue Day' – a children's book being written by



Chris Duke who lives in Forfar to help with children's mental health awareness with the other half going to 'Strathmore Primary School J Rock Challenge'. A few people at the door did hand in donations amounting to £116 but on Hogmanay two of our members wrote a cheque for £400 to supplement this money and at the Hogmanay Party another £100 came in. Each charity will now receive £350 each. The Minister has now handed over both cheques and both recipients are delighted. The Church is going to buy a few of the 'Lucy's Blue Day' book and sell them in the Church at £10. Another idea is why not order one or two in advance from the Church and then we can collect them and donate some to each of the primary schools in Forfar. The cost is £10 and there is a sign-up sheet in the Church.



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Christmas Day Service - Our Minister was delighted that so many people turned up on Christmas Day to worship our new-born King. The service lasted 30 minutes with quite a few people bringing along their gifts for the show and tell session. It was a happy and relaxed service with people staying behind for a chat.

New Year Message - After morning worship on 30th December our Minister recorded a New Year message with members of the congregation wishing everyone a Happy New Year and welcoming them into East and Old during 2019. This recording was uploaded onto Facebook and at the time of writing this article it has been viewed 1,200 times - the power of social media. Barbara Ann then recorded a second message and sent it to Zuglo Church in Hungary and Dubendorf Church linked with Schwerzenbach Church in Zurich and both Churches were delighted to receive it.

Hogmanay Party - This was one of our Minister's new ideas. She had heard many stories about people going to The Cross for the 'Bells' in the past and thought we could do it at the end of 2018 and into 2019 and why not have a party at the same time. Over 50 came along and after returning from The Cross everyone sat down to steak pie, potatoes, peas and carrots followed by trifle. Talking of The Cross, when we arrived there, all the youngsters were at the Christmas tree in varying degrees of dress. Most of our group watched for a short time and then went to the actual Cross to watch the Big Kirk Clock strike 12 midnight to welcome in 2019. As for the party – there was dancing, community singing and lots of games and quizzes – everyone appeared to have a great time. Who would have thought the Church doors would still be open at 3:00am in the morning!



Strathmore Primary School - What a busy time the school had leading up to Christmas. Barbara Ann joined the children on their trip to the Pantomime at Webster Theatre in Arbroath but decided to drive herself there rather than go on one of the seven buses. It turned out to be a good idea because one of the children was feeling very sick and when the show finished Barbara Ann brought the child back in her car. Our Minister has been in the school nearly every week for the school assemblies and

has attended a few of the training courses that the teachers have been on about mental health of children, dealing with certain issues in child behaviour and just last week learning ways to speak to children who appear to be having emotional problems. When the school arrived at the Church on the Friday before Christmas the downstairs was full. The school chanter group played their chanters and Barbara Ann had the children as high as kites throughout the service. The Minister explained to the children how the big tree got into the Kirk, how it was decorated and the tree was a huge success with the children – it made such a visual impact for them.

Chimes Playgroup - The children came up to the Church for their Christmas Concert in the middle of December and it was good to see all these very small people in the Church with their family and friends coming along to watch them. The following week our Minister went down to the hall and re-told the children the Christmas Story. It is always special to hear the little ones sing 'Away in a manger'.



Our Organist and Choir - What can I say about our organist Bruce Simpson! Bruce plays the organ every week and sometimes three times on a Sunday. He practices with the choir every Sunday morning and also every second Wednesday. Whenever our Minister comes up with a new idea for worship it tends to involve music and Bruce willingly adjusts what he is doing to fit it in. The number of services and events at Christmas that Bruce played at is really very high. Our choir turn up faithfully to rehearsals and to worship services and tackle just about everything that our Minister throws at them. 'Can we try ...' she will say. 'Do you think you could ...' and the choir respond enthusiastically. Thank you very much Bruce and the choir for all that you contribute to our worship services.

Kirkriggs Court and Care Homes - Most months our Minister conducts three services a month – once a month at Kirkriggs and normally two care homes a month. Barbara Ann would like to say thank you very much to Bruce, Margaret and Elizabeth who play at these services and to the members of the congregation who also come along to help them with the singing and speaking to everyone.

Accord - our entertainment group had a busy time leading up to Christmas, performing at the Christingle Service and they have already sung this year at the beginning of January. Thanks to Accord for bringing so much fun, laughter and enjoyment through their performances, whilst simultaneously raising some funds for the Kirk's Renovation Fund.



Book Club - The Book Club are nearing the end of their chosen book selection and have made their next selection which starts in February. Below you will find the books they are reading and when and where they are meeting. Anyone is welcome to come along and join them, but if you cannot, then you could read each book at home and let them know what you think of it. Just after the New Year the Book Club members went to 'Sinclair's Kitchen' for an evening meal and discussed their latest book – they enjoyed the meal so much, they think they'll do it again soon.

Book Club List February to October 2019

26th Feb – The Paul Street Boys by Ferenc Molnár at Marion's

25th Mar – The Story of the British Isles in 100 places by Neil Oliver at Sheena's

24th Apr – The Tea Planter's Wife by Dinah Jefferies at Linda's

30th May – The Little Red Chairs by Edna O'Brien at Mary's

24th Jun – The Muse by Jessie Burton at Esther's

31st Jul – Cast Iron by Peter May at Margaret's

27th Aug – Jamaica Inn by Daphne Du Maurier at Lexi's

30th Sept – The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom at Jean's

31st Oct – The Lady and the Unicorn by Tracy Chevalier at Sheila's



Sunday Worship for All - On the first Sunday in January there were three worship services: 9:30am, 11:00am and 6:30pm. All three services were designed to meet the needs and tastes of our congregation. The early morning service was our traditional service with communion at the end and the 11:00am service was a mixture of tradition and contemporary. The evening service was taken by the worship team in a Songs of Praise style which was very good and those present liked the format and style of that. Thank you to everyone for starting off our year in the Church with a full and varied programme.

Faith Discussion Group - This group continues to meet once a month for some frank and open discussions. They are held in the Manse at 7:30pm and everyone is welcome. You can contribute to the discussions or remain silent – why not come along and see what it is all about. Join us on **18th Feb, 11th Mar, 8th Apr, 6th May, 3rd Jun, 2nd Sept, 7th Oct, 4th Nov, 2nd Dec** – a warm welcome awaits you.



Bible Study and Prayer Group - meeting once a month in the manse but also during Lent the Bible Study is held with the other Churches of FACT. It is amazing what you can discover about the bible and what others think of it when you get a chance to talk about it - why not come along and give it a try. **Meetings to be held on 21st Feb, 9th May, 27th Jun, 19th Sept, 17th Oct, 21st Nov with the Lent studies being every week during Lent – 7th Mar, 14th Mar, 21st Mar, 28th Mar, 4th Apr, 11th Apr.**

Bill Duthie has decided that it is time to step down as property convener of the Church (that does not mean he is giving up everything he does!) We feel it is only right and proper that as a Church we offer a thank you to Bill for his amazing work over the last 10 years. As a charity we are not allowed to hand out money from the accounts as a thank you, so it must come from donations. To that end if anyone would like to contribute a monetary gift for Bill then please place it in an envelope with your name and place it in the offering plate, hand it into the shop or pass it on to the Minister or an elder. We hope to present Bill with his gift in March.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR!

Julie Stewart in Concert - We are delighted to announce that Julie Stewart is returning to give another performance and concert in our Church on Saturday 16th February. Everyone was so impressed and enjoyed the concert she performed in the Church the last time and if you missed it you missed something special. Accompanying Julie is her friend, pianist Don Finlay and Maggie Finlay (soprano) will be accompanied by Alison Hart - what an exciting evening it will be. Tickets are available from the Church and the Big Kirk Shop.



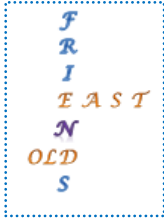
Groovy Gryphons Pancake Sunday
The Groovy Gryphons really enjoyed making pancakes last year on the Sunday near Shrove Tuesday and they would love to do it again! Pancakes will be on sale after the service as you leave the Church and for those who stay behind for tea and coffee. The pancakes will be in bags of 4 and they are asking for a generous donation for each bag. The big day will be **Sunday 10th March**. Bring some extra money with you. This money will go to a charity of the children's choice.



Sponsored Shave and Wax - Some of the men in the Church have risen to the challenge of getting their heads shaved, beards shaved, back, chest, arms and legs waxed – wow! This will take place on **Saturday 30th March** and a coffee morning will be held while it is all happening! Sponsor sheets will be available in the Church and in the Big Kirk Shop and because the men had no hesitation in saying yes to our Minister she has started the sponsor sheet off by sponsoring them £100. Look out Johnny Forbes, Dave Duncan, Dave Bowman, Mike Johnston, Graham Scattergood, Jim Stewart and Billy Sweetin.



Friends of East and Old - At the time of writing this article Friends of East and Old were just about to hold their winter BBQ – more details in the next edition.



In October last year at our Friends renewal night, the **Carnoustie Singers** entertained us and it was a great evening – they were marvellous! They so enjoyed performing in the church they asked if they could come back again!

We think it was the supper because they thought it was fantastic! The date has been set for **Friday 22nd March** in the Church and tickets will be on sale soon from the church and at the Big Kirk Shop. The variety of songs last time was excellent and Maggie Finlay who we all know performed a solo also. Put the date in your diary please.

Each year the Friends hand over a cheque to the Church for their funds and once again this will happen at the Easter service where they hope to hand over somewhere between £3000 and £4000.

Over the last year and a bit the Friends have held an Italian night and then a Spanish night and each night was a huge hit. Put the date in your diary for the **American Night – Friday 31st May**.

Thank you to everyone who comes along and supports our events in so many ways.

FRIENDS R' US – this friendly group set up for widows, widowers and single people in April 2018 is growing from month to month.

We meet on the **second Tuesday of each month in the Church Social Area at 2:00pm**.

We have had a varied list of visits to places of interest, walks cinema etc. during each month. In December we had a very interesting talk on

“scams”, a very enjoyable Christmas lunch at the Plough Inn, Forfar on 14th and we are now looking forward to meeting and getting out and about in 2019.



Anyone interested in joining the group will be made most welcome.

TUESDAY LUNCHES !

Have you heard about our Church Lunches?

We've been running our Lunches **every Tuesday, 12noon to 1pm**, for several years now, offering a choice of two home-made soups (one Vegetarian option) which is served with crusty bread, this is followed by tasty sandwiches (including vegetarian), tea/coffee and biscuits. The soups and sandwiches are prepared and served by our friendly volunteers.

No fixed charge – all we ask is a donation, for example £3 per person, or more if you wish to give more.

This happens every week apart from Christmas and New Year. Why not come along, on your own or with a friend – you don't have to be a member of East & Old to enjoy the lunch, all are welcome.

If you interested in helping as a volunteer on the lunches please contact either Barbara Ann or Jean Alexander (463860), it's a great way to meet new people and make friends.



A decorative border consisting of small, stylized stick figures arranged in a rectangular frame around the central text.

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Modern Planetary Concerns

(An Article from the Green Team)

Have we created products which cause more problems than they are worth?

There are several products on today's market which are contributing to the phenomenon called Global Warming. They are the products which are polluting our air, water and filling up our land masses at an alarming rate.

Examples of this are:

Air Pollution

- The use of palm oil in deodorants and other products, as well as the amount of carbons being released into the air, coupled with deforestation contributes greatly to the quality of our air.
- The use of aerosols and exhaust fumes from cars



Land and Sea Pollution

- **Plastics** - our use of natural materials such as wood, bone, leather, stone, iron and glass has been replaced by plastics in many industries.



In pursuit of the easy life and low cost of living we have created a wide range of plastics including bottles, plates, tubing, CD's, floor tiles, car parts, glitter, pipes and other plumbing products which are proving to be a large problem in the modern world. How do we recycle the various types of plastics—a labour intensive job—costing companies money they may not want to spend. Plastics are mounting up in our landfill sites and choking our oceans.

- Almost everything we use has battery back-ups or runs on batteries. Whether they are AA or AAA which can be put in the landfill sites or recyclable batteries which must be returned to their manufacturer for safe disposal, batteries are mounting up at an incredible speed.



Perhaps it now time to look at what we can do to help our planet. Although we cannot influence the policies of the countries around the world, we can contribute to a cleaner planet by doing the following:

Air Pollution can be combated by:

- Planting more trees in your gardens to help decrease carbon in the air.
- Planting oxygen giving plants such as Areca Palm, Aloe Vera, Christmas Cactus, Gerbera (orange)
- Perhaps the move to electric cars can help to alleviate the amount of car fumes which are now affecting the health of people in large cities and help prevent the end of crude oil on our planet.
- Avoid using aerosols—opt for roll-on deodorants or gel based air fresheners



Sea and Land Pollution can be combated by cutting down on our use of plastics—e.g.

- Buy milk and juice in glass bottles
- Create a glitter substitute by creating paper confetti with coloured card/paper and a hole punch. Use coloured sugar if you want to put a shine to a card.
- Buy your food in cardboard packaging and use paper or cloth bags to carry shopping.
- Buy products made from wood, metal and glass as they are more easily up-cycled and recycled.
- Changing from nuclear produced electricity to that made by the force of the sea and wind.
- Solar Power panels on buildings.





GUILD REPORT

BAN CHOCOLATE ! (just joking)

After a very busy Church Chocolate Morning in December, the Guild members serving chocolate hotdogs and chocolate burgers were thoroughly 'chocolated' out. However it has to be said the customers very much enjoyed the delicacies prepared. Enough said.

Our Christmas party and meal (as always beautifully prepared by Alison Beattie) was organised by Guild member Barbara Ann and everyone was welcomed by member Mandy Cornwell - a super evening was enjoyed by all.

Our January meeting was a thought-provoking insight into our own Barbara Ann's journey towards becoming an ordained minister, inducted into East and Old 8 years ago.

We'll report on our Scots Night in the next edition - the evening will include music, quizzing and a 5-minute talk on Burns by Margaret Scrimgeour.

The rest of our meetings include a talk by Amanda Kopel - we are sure this will be an inspiration to us all; care at home (including how to be aware of scams etc.)

Dates for your diary in March

Saturday 10th — Coffee Morning

Wednesday 13th — joint meeting at St Margaret's with Lawson

Wednesday 27th — AGM when new Committee will be elected.

A Guid New Year from *Esther & Bob*



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Boys Brigade — The Boys have all returned after their Christmas break with lots of stories to tell us about what they had been doing.



We will now settle down to badge work /crafts and games. We are planning to make bird-feeders in preparation for the colder weather - could be messy!

Our Christmas Card Delivery Service was a great success once again. On behalf of 2nd Forfar Boys Brigade and 6th Forfar Scouts, our sincere thanks goes to everyone who posted their cards in the red boxes and to the volunteers who helped sort and deliver them. Well done to all.

Art Group — We started back last September with only six members, but still managed to put on an exhibition, although smaller than usual.

Since then we have had a steady increase in numbers and now have a dozen artists. We had a stall on Chocolate Saturday and sold most of our chocolate related pictures.

Anyone interested in joining our group would be very welcome.



We meet on Thursday afternoons from 1:30 to 4:00pm. Cost is £2 per session (including tea/coffee and biscuits.)



MUSIC CAFÉ

The Music Cafe meets **every Monday** , from **2:00pm to 3:15pm**, helpers are there from **1:30pm**.

We meet in the Church Social Space.

The Music Cafe is for people suffering from Alzheimer's/Dementia and their carers. We sing a mixture of songs, including old favourites, Scottish, hymns and modern well known songs.

We break for tea/coffee when people can enjoy a chat.

Run by Pat Brodlie, one of our members, who is the Alzheimer Scotland contact for Angus. A very happy afternoon where the helpers prepare the teas/coffees & eats before the session starts and serve during the break, also help with finding songs in the folders for people who attend. **CAN YOU HELP?**

Please contact **Jean Alexander** (01307 463860) or **Barbara Ann** (01307 248228) for more information.



Our Sleep in the Park 8th December 2018 – we raised £2250 Wow!



To give you an idea what our experience was like, we've included reflections from each of us – all looking at the at it from a slightly different angle! 2 out of 4 of us slept! **Norma** our Soroptimist friend was the 'clown' in the pack making some very funny but profound comments which kept us going when we couldn't sleep – **Karen** you will see is very much the strategist with all the nuts and bolts in place covering almost every aspect of the project adventure! **Prue** also a Soroptimist friend was unsure what we wanted for this article and made reference the Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the United Nations which includes the caring of others across the world including homelessness. As stakeholders in the UN we Soroptimists do work towards this goal – this project was an ideal fit! We four were all different in our findings and thoughts and had great fun sharing them at the end and for many days after.

KAREN - "I took part in the world's biggest sleep out event, "Sleep in the Park" organised by the Edinburgh based charity Social Bite a Homeless Charity. Two of Lexi's friends from the Dundee Soroptimist Group also joined us. As the event drew closer, fundraising began in earnest. We were inspired by the work of the charity and so it was on a cold winter's night in December that we set off on our adventure, to get just a flavour of what the homeless experience regardless of the weather must be like. We arrived about 6pm and had our bags searched and shown to our "pitch". We were given an orange survival bag to protect us from the elements. The event was set up like a festival. There was a stage with local artists performing, as well as headline acts KT Tunstall and Amy McDonald and local boy Kyle Falconer of The View fame. Compering the show was DJ Ewan Cameron who introduced local people who talked of their **personal experiences of homelessness** or the work they do with Social Bite or other organisations. It was a very moving and humbling experience and more than once I had tears in my eyes. Lexi and I **stood for 5hrs** listening to the stage presentations – we then wondered why we had sore legs and feet- no chairs there - we had to be tough and maybe a wee bit mad! At 10:45pm, with the concert over we were bid goodnight and sent to bed. It was a cold foggy night and the condensation and the heat from our sleeping bags meant everything got damp. Inside our survival bags, the outside of our sleeping bag was wet and yet there was no rain! It was a dry evening, how much worse would it have been if it had been raining or snowing? We tried to get some sleep, I managed to get a little but Lexi and Norma were awake the whole night. We braved it until 6:00am when we were told to leave, thankful to be heading home for food, warmth, a shower and our comfy beds - luxuries the homeless do not have and yet we take for granted."

NORMA – “Spending a night outdoors in the middle of a Scottish December was never really appealing. However, I knew it was impossible to understand how it felt to be a rough sleeper until I tried it myself. The night was damp, cold and very noisy and the ground extremely hard. I found it very difficult to sleep getting up now and again where I had to fight my way out of so many layers and put my boots on! I had 3 friends around me Lexi, Karen, and Prue and 500 more like-minded people, security staff and a team of first aiders. There were ‘heilan’ loos with no lights – so that’s why we needed to bring a torch - and all-night hot drinks tent. I found myself asking some questions and to whoever would listen - the ‘real-world’ rough sleepers would not be safe during the night, they would not have hot drinks and toilets. Come the morning their aim would simply be to get through the day and do exactly the same the next night. My experience of this at Christmas time also made me think about 2 people, Mary and Joseph alone in a foreign place having difficulty finding a place that was safe and secure overnight - I knew that I’d done the right thing by showing my support for the homeless.” In the middle of the night Norma also wanted to know why God had sent us to do this challenging project – we assured her it was not God this time – it was just us being a ‘bit extra mental’!

LEXI - in summary – so how did all this begin - had some mischief maker got fed-up of her nice comfy bed – in the WINTER time? **Prue** and I had visited Edinburgh in December 2017 where the first **Sleep in the Park** was and we thought it would be a great thing to do! However, we ducked out and simply gave a donation which salvaged our conscience for 2017! But in 2018 this event to help the homeless came to **Dundee!** – there was no escape this time! At our Kirk Session meeting on 18th November I asked the Elders if they would like to join me – there were mixed responses ranging from great laughter and comments including “you are mad!” and some “no way!” I got one offer from Karen and we instantly became the E&O adventurers! That night the Elders quickly pledged to sponsor us signing a sponsor sheet that *I just happened to have ready!* We quickly raised sponsorship from the Elders, the church congregation and our family and friends – for that we sincerely thank you all – we also had numerous offers of mats – sleeping bags etc. 3 of us as Soroptimists were given £50 each from the Club which was also very generous – the executive and club members were in such awe of what we did! Sleeping under the stars and the street lights from ground level we could see the underbelly of low-flying seagulls. They looked gigantic – the size of an albatross in the light – we just prayed they did not need the loo!

Many, many thanks for everyone’s support and encouragement – we felt honoured to be able to have taken part. Our overall total raised was **£2250** a big help to Social Bite.

Over to you folks for 2019 – WE will sponsor YOU!

Lexi-Karen-Prue-Norma

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

DEATHS

Dec 18	Elizabeth (Betty) Smith	Finavon Court, Forfar	< 5 >
Jan 4	George McLellan	46 Dunnichen Road, Kingsmuir	< 38 >
7	Norman Millar	22 North Street, Forfar	< 3 >
9	Elizabeth Robbie	34 Yeaman Street, Forfar	< 13 >

BAPTISMS

Jan 20 Flora Catherine Robertson
Angus James Robertson



MINISTRY OF FLOWERS



3 FEB	Marjory Maclean	10 MAR	Bruce Simpson
10	“ Joan Petrie	17	“ Margaret Myles
17	“ Isobel Farquharson	24	“ Pat Milne
24	“ Karen Murray	31	“ Aileen Millar
3 MAR	George Richardson	7 APR	

*Please pass your donations to Catriona Milne,
Irene Duthie or pop your money in an envelope and
hand it in to Jennifer at PRIMA –Thank you*

CHURCH FLOWERS

The 2019 Flower Calendar is in the church foyer for you to choose your Sunday slots.

We ask for a minimum donation of £20 which pays for the weekly church flowers with a percentage of this money allocated to the flower delivery fund — giving flowers to those who need to know that our church community are thinking of them during difficult times .

We need additional volunteers to join the Flower Team who place the blooms in church each Sunday. If this is something you would be able to help with, please speak to either Catriona Milne or Irene Duthie.



Do you need Transport to Church ?

The Forfarian bus is available on the first Sunday of each month.

Anyone requiring the bus please call Jean Alexander on 01307 463860. Please leave a message with your name and phone number if there is no answer and your call will be returned.

Session Clerk	Lexi Smart	01307 464330
Depute Session Clerk	Margaret Scrimgeour	01307 469145
Church Secretary	Karen Kelly	01307 465043
Treasurer	Paula Stewart	01307 641700
FWO Treasurer	Jean Alexander	01307 463860
Gift Aid Convener	Mabel & Bruce Martin	01307 462713
Editor of Steeple Times	Catriona Milne	07962065936
Organist & Choirmaster	Bruce Simpson	01307 468179
Property Convener & Lets	Bill Duthie	01307 465895
Groovy Gryphons Leader	Joyce Archibald	01307 469519
Flower Group Administrator	Catriona Milne	07962065936
Guild Contact and Life and Work	Esther Kidd	01307 462701
Big Kirk Shop Organisers	Muriel Fairley	01307 463936
Prayer Group	Mary Pickstone	01307 466569
2nd Forfar Company of The Boy's Brigade	Irene Duthie	01307 465895
Friends of Forfar East & Old	Mary Daun	01307 464935
Protection of Vulnerable Groups	Isabel Farquharson	01307 462053
Minibus Hire	William Sweetin	01307 248228

NEXT ISSUE OF STEEPLE TIMES
 The deadline for submission of articles for
 the **APRIL 2019** issue is
15TH MARCH 2019
 Material can be given /sent to the Editor
 or e-mail **ed@thebigkirk.co.uk**