

This is the monthly newsletter from Strathmore Parish Church; you are receiving it because you have passed on your email address to the church. If you do not want us to have your email address, or if you don't want to receive these emails, please let us know right away at admin@strathmoreparish.org Feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested, or to send us the email address of anyone who would like to be added to the mailing list.

Hello, everyone - wasn't it great, on Wednesday of this past week, to get a wee glimpse of the sun? I hope you managed to get out and enjoy it! I had a walk at Dronley Wood (between Newtyle and Birkhill, if you are not familiar with it) and it was so good to drive over there on dry roads and to walk the dog without needing head-to-toe waterproofs! I see quite a number of dogs out just now with doggie waterproofs, some of which are very fancy indeed, but it's not something we've ever had for any of our dogs, though perhaps it would help to cut down on the number of dog towels being used in the current weather! Dronley Community Woodland, to give it its full title, is an excellent place for a walk - it is mostly sheltered from the prevailing wind coming from the south-west, it has a proper car park (often a problem if you want to access woodland), and there is an initial loop of path that is suitable for wheelchairs, prams and kiddies' bikes. That path leads along to a picnic shelter with a good view across to Auchterhouse Hill, and from various points along there you can strike off onto more adventurous paths leading around the wood or over the top to meet the old Dundee to Newtyle railway line.



I think we will all be glad to see the back of January this year, won't we, and we will just have to hope that February will bring us a few more sunny days. There are a lot of flooded fields in our area at present, and that can't be good news for the farmers.

In the garden, a few brave snowdrops and aconites are showing through the ground, but I haven't managed to get outside for a pic, so here's a photo of a bunch of daffs which are fairly cheering things up! Daffodils are not dear to buy (indeed, it makes you wonder how the growers can make a living) and they make a lovely present for anyone who is unable to get out or just to bring home to your own house. The wee Tête-à-Tête ones in pots are great, too; they last for two or three weeks and when they are past you can plant them out in your garden and get the benefit for years.

It would be daft to recommend a car run at the moment, but, if you happen to be heading towards Perth during the next few weeks, it could be well worth while making a detour round by Campmuir (just about the furthest west part of Strathmore Parish) to see the snowdrops along the verges there.



Our parish boundaries are quite far-flung, aren't they? Going well beyond Coupar Angus to the west, and almost into Forfar in the east, we encompass the old parishes of (from west to east) Kettins, Ardler, Meikle, Newtyle, Nevay, Eassie and Glamis. To the south, we are bounded by the Sidlaws, and it's interesting to see on this map how we relate to the communities around us.

Help needed for Glamis Scout Troop! The Scouts are looking for volunteers to help in various ways, in particular with the Beaver Scouts (boys and girls aged 6 to 8) who 'have fun, make friends, help others and go on adventures'! The Glamis Beavers meet in the Scout Hut on Tuesdays from 6.30 to 7.30pm - if you feel you might be able to help, please contact Jon Wilkin jowilkin8@gmail.com and have a chat. Jon stresses that no previous experience is needed; just a willingness to give up some of your time to help youngsters.



Many thanks to everyone who handed in their Christmas stamps (and loads of other exotic stamps from round the world) for the Church of Scotland's final **Stamp Appeal!** Most folk will know that, this year, the money raised by used stamps from kirks all over Scotland will be going to Al Ahli Arab Hospital, in Gaza. Gaza has slipped from our TV screens recently, as President Trump's interest in it has moved on elsewhere for the moment, but this awe-inspiring hospital, despite having suffered many bomb attacks, is still serving the Palestinian people in their continuing need. If you would like to read more about the work going on there, go to <https://afedj.org/institution/ahli-arab-hospital-gaza-city/>

Our church **Treasurer, Diane Strachan**, like all church treasurers, is very busy at this time of year getting the congregational accounts for 2025 licked into shape, before presenting them to the Trustees (the Kirk Session) for their approval, and then submitting them to Presbytery for scrutiny. It's a huge amount of work, and we are all grateful to you, Diane, for taking it on.

As she looked back over the past year, Diane was impressed to see that, as well as our giving to the church itself, Strathmore Parish Church members had also donated very generously to a number of charities, including:-

- Shelter Box - £1,550 (including £1,400 for 'A Tent for Lent')
- Christian Aid - £1,433 (remember 'Cake at the Gate'?)
- Shelter - £858.60 (Christmas Eve offerings)
- Food Banks - £170 (in addition to substantial donations of food!)

Isn't that amazing? It's great that we have been able to help these good causes!



And here's Diane herself, looking very cheerful despite her responsibilities as Treasurer!

So, what's coming up in and around Strathmore Parish in the month of **February**?

As far as **Sunday services** go, these will be as usual throughout the month, ie at Newtyle every Sunday at 10.00am, at Glamis every Sunday at 11.30am, at Kettins (10.00am) on Sundays 1st and 15th and at Meigle (also 10.00am) on Sundays 8th and 22nd.



We have three **Church of Scotland Guilds** in our parish:- Glamis Guild, Kettins-Ardler-Meigle Guild and Newtyle Guild. This coming Wednesday, February 4th, at 7.30pm, all three are meeting together in Kettins to hear a speaker from one of the four projects currently being supported by Guilds all over Scotland.

The project that members and guests will be hearing about is being run by **Release International**, a charity that supports Christians (in many countries) who are being persecuted for their beliefs. As well as campaigning for the release of Christians who have been imprisoned because of their faith, the charity also supports communities who are being discriminated against - for example, being harassed or attacked by neighbours, not being allowed to apply for jobs, being refused entry to schools, etc..

Despite being one of the oldest Christian communities in the world, the church in Egypt is suffering very badly in this way, and Release International is already working with churches in Egypt to enable these marginalised and impoverished Christians to live in safety and to be able to feed their families. Part of the project involves the repair, or rebuilding, of homes, which fits in very well with the current Guild theme, 'Let us build a house!'



The three Strathmore Parish Guilds, as well as supporting our own congregational events, also raise money every year for the Guild projects. If you would like to know more about the current projects, and how much money is being raised for each, please read the paper attached to this newsletter. And, of course, all members of the congregation are invited to hear about 'Operation Hope: Egypt' on Wednesday at 7.30 in Kettins Church Hall.



Since the eighth century, the 14th of February has been celebrated in many churches as the feast day of **St Valentine**, a Roman Christian who was put to death for his faith in the third century. Valentine was regarded for many years as the patron saint of beekeepers, but the linking of St Valentine's Day with the sending of messages between people who are in love is much more recent. No-one really knows why St Valentine is associated with all the lovey-dovey stuff, though there is a suggestion that Valentine favoured the idea that Roman soldiers and Christian priests should be married, rather than single men!

The season of **Lent begins on Ash Wednesday** - this year that falls on the 18th of February. There's never any doubt about what we should be doing on the preceding day, Shrove Tuesday - in Britain, that's the traditional day for making pancakes, supposedly to use up all your eggs, sugar, etc., before fasting during Lent. Fasting isn't so widely practised in the Christian church as it was at one time, though lots of us try to give up chocolate or alcohol during the weeks leading up to Easter. (This year, Easter Sunday is on the 5th of April.) Some people try nowadays to do something positive on each of the 40 days of Lent - one way is to follow the prompting of '**40 Acts: Do Lent generously**', which suggests various things that you might want to try. See <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/40acts> for more details.

As most of you will already know, the lovely community hall at Balkeerie is run by **ENKCA** (the Eassie, Nevay and Kirkinch Community Association) and the events and activities that take place there are open to everyone living in our parish and the surrounding area.

If you are feeling the need for a bit more exercise in these dreich days, there are classes and clubs at the hall:-

Yoga (Monday 12 - 1pm, or 6 - 7.30pm; Thursday 10 - 11am)

Pilates (Tuesday 5.45 - 6.30pm)

Table Tennis (Thursday 7 - 10pm)

If **reading** is your thing, the Angus Library Van service hosts a Book Chat Group at the hall (Tuesdays, once a month 2.15 - 3pm, details on the Angus Alive website) and the hall has an ongoing second-hand book sale, always available when the hall is open.

Art lovers are welcome, too - every second Saturday, 10am - 12 noon, there's a painting class open to all, from complete beginners onwards! You can **play bridge** at the hall with the Glamis Bridge Club (Tuesday 6.30 - 10pm, contact glamisbridge@gmail.com or **dance** at Scott Band's monthly Sunday afternoon Ceilidh.

Something there for everybody, I think you'll agree! More details on the ENKCA website

<https://www.eassieandnevay.org/>



No nice flower or landscape pictures this month, I'm afraid, but I hope you will enjoy this photo of a local resident!

Take care in these dismal days, and remember that the kirk is always there for you, not only at Sunday services - if you need to speak to a minister at any time, please contact our Interim Moderator, Rev John Duncan jduncan@churchofscotland.org.uk

With best wishes,
Mary Reid

