



The Church of Scotland

Guild NEWS

Newsletter | Winter 2024



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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of Guild News, we hope that you enjoy catching up with the news from Guild groups across the country and from the National Guild. We also hope you enjoy finding out about four exciting new project partners who join us from 1st January.

It has been another busy year in the Guild and we have been encouraged by the number of Guilds reporting that they have had new people join them. We welcome all of them to the Guild family and hope that they enjoy the fellowship and fun that being part of the Guild brings.

Every Blessing

Karen Gillon,

Editor and General Secretary

REFLECTIONS FROM THE NATIONAL CONVENER



As I reflect on the work of the Guild I am struck again by the feeling of absolute privilege and responsibility to belong to such a forward-looking, highly effective and respected movement - working together in moving hearts and minds to bring light, hope and love to others.

In the past few years there have been many changes and challenges over a short period of time making such an impact on our lives and subsequently on our Guilds, resulting in many of us wishing to stay within our own comfort zones.

Although some Guilds have closed - leaving behind a great legacy of service and dedication - some new Guilds have started up in areas that haven't had a Guild for years or indeed have never had a Guild. And, as their affiliated churches are doing, some Guilds are uniting, forging new friendships, rekindling enthusiasm and gaining a

new energy. Guilds Together groups are also in a similar position.

We are resilient, imaginative and innovative people who, together in our local Guild groups, are very much a valued part of a bigger national and global picture, one effective Movement that is the Church of Scotland Guild.

I hope we can once again look out beyond our own local Guilds, wonderful as they all are, and in this world of inequality and injustice be united in faith, worship, prayer and action to make a difference.

We are God's representatives here on earth! So let us unite to play our part in 'Building a House' strong and secure on the foundations of its cornerstone, Christ Jesus, whose we are and whom we serve.

Christina Paterson
National Convener

ANNUAL GATHERING 2024

The Annual Gathering 2024 was one with a number of firsts – our first delegation from Malawi, our first Malawian style communion, our first pop up Guild Choir and our first set of ceilidh dancing.

Over 700 people joined in the day and it was a day filled with fellowship, fun and laughter. We were led by Rae Lind, as she brought her year of office to a close and were joined by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, by our project partners, by members of LIFT and by Finlay Morse and friends who led us in the dancing.

The Holy Communion, led by the Moderator, was particularly moving as the elements were brought in to the singing of a traditional Malawian hymn. It was wonderful to share in this special celebration reminding us how we are part of a worldwide fellowship of believers. It was also great to be joined online by friends from all over Scotland.

The day ended with Christina Paterson taking the oath of office and becoming our National Convener for 2024-25.

Plans are underway for next year so try and come along if you can!





SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

It is great to celebrate with Guilds and with members who this year have celebrated a special anniversary.

Thank you to you all for your service to the Guild over many years.



Crosshouse Guild is 125!



135 years of Kinross Guild



Dumbarton Riverside is 50 years old



Calderbank celebrates 110 years



260 years of service at Stonehaven

WHO IS GOD TO YOU?

Former National Convener Marian McIntyre shares with us who God is to her.

Faced by this question, a song from the 1960's, written by Ralph Carmichael leapt into my mind. Its recurring question is 'What is that to me?'



In the stars His handiwork I see
On the wind He speaks with majesty
Though He ruleth over land and sea
What is that to me?

... God as Creator

I will celebrate Nativity
For it has a place in history
Sure, He came to set His people free
What is that to me?

... the humanity of God seen in Jesus

... a God of justice and peace

Till by faith I met Him face to face
And I felt the wonder of His grace,
Then I knew that He was more than just
A God who didn't care
That lived away out there
And now He walks beside me day by day
Ever watching o'er me lest I stray
Helping me to find that narrow way
He's Everything to me.

... a God who desires a personal commitment

... a God who is present in others

... God's guiding Spirit keeping me on target

I respond to a loving Creator who speaks to me in the wonders of the world where I live – the stars, the wind, the sea, the hills, the wildlife and the flowers.

This is God to me

I see God in the life and ministry of Jesus, sent in human form to show us what love is like.

This is God to me

When I see people in need or marginalised, I feel the need to respond, inspired by Jesus who came 'to set us free'.

This is God to me

I have found meaning and purpose in my life in Jesus since I first made a commitment to Him as a teenager at SU camp.

This is God to me

I see God in others and am guided by the people in my life who have helped and inspired me to understand the way of Christ.

This is God to me

I am prompted by the Holy Spirit to live my life in faith and service wherever I am. I like the word 'Prompter'. That's how I experience the Holy Spirit.

This is God to me

I am comforted to know that God is my 'companion on the road', that the Holy Spirit will guide my journey, keeping me on track, and at the end of the day I know that I will be safe in His presence.

This is God to me



Wormit and Balmerino

Wormit and Balmerino have been thinking about food, for those of us who have plenty and those with little. Members brought baking, snacks and recipes to enjoy and they prayed for all those who suffer from failed harvests, or live in war-torn countries, as well as those in our own country who worry about feeding their families thanking God for agencies who help. Another good idea for a Guild meeting.



Galloway Guilds Together

Galloway Guilds Together gave every Guild from all Guilds in the Rhins and Machars these beautiful stones to remind them of the sure foundations on which their Guilds Together is built.

GUILD NEWS



Armadale Guild

Armadale Guild made the most of their good weather and a community fun day to promote the Guild and encourage new members to join. Is there an event locally where you could promote the Guild?



Duns and District Guild

Duns and District Guild hosted their soup lunch in aid of the Guild Projects. It was well attended by the generous 'punters' and raised £255. Well done!



Lothian Guilds Together

Lothian Guilds Together have held their inaugural meeting and set up their own Facebook page. It is great to see so many Guild members coming together. We look forward to seeing all our new Guilds Together Groups set up over the next few months.



BIBLES FOR BAIRNS



Fewer than half of 0-2-year-olds are read to every day. We want to help change that.

Reading to young children helps them feel safe and loved. It builds self-esteem, grows their vocabulary, and fires their imagination. Reading the Bible can help bring a family together and closer to God.

Our vision is to offer every baby born in Scotland a free Share a Story toddler Bible on their first birthday. Every birthday after that, until age five, we will send a Bible related gift. On their fifth birthday each child will receive an early reader Bible to take them through their primary school years. The Bible gifts are wrapped by volunteers each month and an individual birthday card is written to every child. Before each package is posted we pray over them, knowing that God cares for these children and their families.

This program costs just £50 per family for the five years and means that from a child's earliest memories and through their school years, the greatest stories from the Bible will play a part in shaping their lives. Our aim is to register up to 1000 babies per year, with the cumulative cost per year reaching £50k.

BUILD MY CHURCH



“Build My Church” is a project inspired by the work of the tiny Scottish Charity, Bear Necessities for Bulgaria.

Thirteen years ago Bear Necessities began supporting the children of a small, primarily gypsy village in rural Bulgaria to attend school. Currently, Bear Necessities operate a soup kitchen and medical clinic, and provide winter boots to all school aged children in the village, as well as a few other key projects, and have been doing this with the support of Rumen Ganushev, a local minister.

This project “Build My Church” will work with Rumen to plant a church at the centre

LET US BUILD A HOUSE

PROJECTS
2025 - 2027

of the large residential district of the city of Sliven. We want that church to have a truly holistic approach, meaning it will offer services for teaching and worship and prayer, but in time the vision is for the church to also provide free access to health care, food for the hungry, and training and support for the leadership of other churches in the district.

OPERATION HOPE



Egypt is home to the largest Christian minority in the Middle East with around 10-12% of the population professing faith in Jesus. However, as a minority they face varying levels of discrimination and suffer poverty and lack of education, especially in the more rural areas of Upper Egypt. In local disputes with their neighbours, Christians are often blamed regardless of fault and in some cases have been forced to leave their homes.

Working with a local partner, Release International's Operation Hope project serves Christian communities in Upper Egypt helping those who are facing extreme poverty and marginalisation. Families are provided with basic living needs such as beds, toilet facilities, kitchen appliances, food, and funds to help with construction of their homes. The project also helps families to establish micro-businesses so they can begin to support themselves, and it provides psychological and spiritual care through regular visits and discipleship programmes.

The Operation Hope project aims to support 2,000 people in around 100 villages in Upper Egypt each year.

Through the Guild's generous support multiple practical needs will be met; poverty will be alleviated; the impact of persecution and marginalisation will be reduced; Christian families will be assured of their value and given opportunities to build a future; and ultimately the wider Christian community in Upper Egypt will be established, strengthened, and enabled to flourish.

PLAYFUL BEGINNINGS

CROSSREACH
Care you can put your faith in

Working together for these three years, let's build a house that lays a strong foundation for vulnerable families.

Together we will support families at Sunflower Garden in Edinburgh and Daisy Chain in Glasgow.

A child's early years can have an impact that lasts a lifetime. The Guild's support will ensure infants have the best possible start in life by developing strong, positive relationship between parents and children. With the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis, parents are presenting to us with more trauma and distress than at any other time. Demand, and the need for your help, is greater than ever.

Research shows that parents who attend to their own emotional and psychological needs are in a better position to respond to their infants' cues and engage with them in positive ways. The Guild will support specialist perinatal therapy with creche support at Sunflower Garden. The team there delivers Parent and Infant Relationship therapy. Parents can access their counselling sessions while leaving their baby in trusted hands.

Daisy Chain is a community based, inclusive, early intervention project for children under 12, and their families. With your support, the team will work to improve children's health and wellbeing through play and nurture. Your help will strengthen family relationships and support families to become more resilient. Children with disabilities, from deprived backgrounds and facing home challenges can thrive here.

MALAWI - SCOTLAND PARTNERSHIP 2024

We were delighted to welcome five sisters and brothers from the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia to Scotland. The visit was part of our ongoing partnership between our two Guilds. Our visitors spent the first week visiting projects and places of interest then brought vibrancy and joy to our Annual Gathering before heading to various parts of Scotland to spend a week with Guilds.

Iness Phiri from Mzuzu spent her time in Dunbartonshire, Jane Chirwa from Bandawe was hosted by Ayr and District, Monicah Mtambo from Mzimba was the guest of North Ayrshire and Daniel Mvula from Dwangwa was furthest travelled as he spent time with Guilds in Shetland including a visit to our most northerly Guild in Unst. Daniel also made it to the Machars in Galloway so he saw Scotland from top to bottom.

Finally, Gloria Mlowoka, the Director of the Women's Guild, who spent her time with Rae Lind understanding more about how the Guild works in Scotland. We look forward to seeing how these partnerships grow and develop.





Ekwendeni Update

We are delighted that the first boxes of gifts arrived safely at Ekwendeni in July. The gifts are already being put to good use. Another container with more boxes will arrive in December. Thanks to everyone who contributed it is really appreciated.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS



Marjorie Dallas celebrates 50 years



Long service at Perth North



Nan cuts cake as Queensferry celebrates 130 years



Strichen & Tyrie long service



Celebrating 30 years of Guild link between Pathhead, Kirkcaldy and Lenzie Union



Springfield Cambridge celebrates 95 years with nonagenarians

PROSPECTS ACROSS SCOTLAND (PAS)

Cast your mind back almost 10 years to the Guild Projects. One of the six was Prospects: All Friends Together! The Project aimed to help adults with learning disabilities and autism and include them in all aspects of church life to build friendships with Jesus and other church members.

Prospects is now known as Prospects Across Scotland (PAS). Around Scotland there are 20 church-based groups, many of them started because of the All Friends Together Project. These groups raise awareness among Christians in Scotland about the needs of people with learning disabilities and autism and provide opportunities for them to take part in church activities. Michael a member of one of our groups, plays an active part in his church. This is how Michael feels, *"I love the church. It feels like home to me – and God is always there for me. I am on the welcome team and a church cleaner – doing the hoovering and dusting every Thursday. Sometimes I pray in the service. I have Down's Syndrome and that is good – my disability makes me feel special."*

PAS highlights the gifts of people like Michael, to build up the church, by equipping churches to be more effective in how they welcome people into all aspects of church life.

I am privileged to have become a friend to my local group, JAM (Jesus and Me), a joint mission between Erskine and Inchinnan Parish Churches, who plan the programme together. They meet monthly and share worship which the members conduct. The enthusiasm which they bring is

fantastic. Worship is followed by a craft activity connected to the worship theme, and of course, like all Guild meetings, we finish with a cup of tea and a blether. This is the Guild Project still in action 10 years on: All Friends Together!

Iain McDonald from the JAM group, who is also a Guild member says, *"I enjoy JAM. I like meeting people and getting to know folk from other churches. I like the drama best. I enjoy going to church and the Guild too, but JAM has a nice family atmosphere."*

The link with the Guild started 10 years ago and is still there today. Have you been blessed with welcoming people with learning disabilities into your Guild? If you have perhaps you could let us know and if not, is there someone in your church or community you could reach out to?

PAS values the on-going links with the Guild. You can continue to support us with your prayers, by inviting a speaker to your Guild, or by donating or fundraising for us.

Helen Eckford, PAS Trustee



LET'S GET BUILDING

Guilds across Scotland have been finding creative ways of exploring our new strategy Let Us Build a House. From origami houses to sturdy bird boxes you members have really been getting building! If you would like to order some of the little cardboard houses please email guild@churchofscotland.org.uk



In Fairlie in Ayrshire, members had great fun building their little houses and enjoyed fellowship as they helped each other with the craft.



In Ferintosh in Ross-shire they made these beautiful little churches! What a great idea.



Grahamston United in Falkirk members made our own cardboard houses which they will now use to collect loose change for Guild projects.



In Elgin at St Andrew's they were even more adventurous making these fabulous bird boxes with the help of their local Men's Shed.



And finally, in St Andrew's in Arbroath their Guild week service saw them all doing their best builder impressions to share the theme with the congregation.

MORE GUILD NEWS



Quiz winners

Congratulations to the members of Breich Valley Guilds who were winners of the recent quiz night held with West Lothian Guilds.



New members

National Convener Christina Paterson was delighted to meet these six new members of Faifley Duntocher Afternoon Guild when she visited recently. Welcome folks.



Livestreaming

Bourock Guild enjoyed live streaming the Annual Gathering from the comfort of their church hall. Over 300 people used the live stream option this year.



Banner for 100th birthday

Members of Elderslie Guild made this great banner to celebrate their 100th birthday. A lot of hard work has clearly gone to make it possible.

PROJECT TOTALS 2024



It has been a joy to work with our six project partners over the past three years. Each has inspired and challenged us in equal measure. They have all told us about the warm welcome they have received at Guilds as well as the searching questions asked, the excellent home baking and the phenomenal fundraising that has been part of our partnership together. We look forward to hearing about how things progress in the years ahead. You can still give to the projects up to 31st December so there is still time for us to reach that special £500,000 figure.

Beat - £83,166.80

Vine Trust - £91,458.58

Pioneers - £65,020.31

Home for Good - £108,731.97

Starchild - £88,459.56

Unida - £63,115.51

TOTAL - £499,952.73

GUILD SHOP

The Guild merchandise is a great way of promoting the Guild and raising money for the Guild at the same time. You can order a sale or return for an event you are having or take an order at your Guild and we will post things out to you.

Guild friend badge

Just £3 to show your appreciation to someone for all they do to help and support the Guild.



Guild Diary

£4



GOODIE BAG

If you would like to win a Guild goodie bag then your challenge is to make as many words as you can using only the letters in Let us build a house! Answers to the Guild office by 28th February for your chance to win.

SAVE THE DATE



BIG SING

AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2025



When: Tuesday 20 May at 7pm

MINI GATHERINGS

This spring we will be holding mini gatherings featuring all of our project partners in the Borders, Fife, North Highlands, Aberdeenshire and Dumfries and Galloway. Further details of dates and venues in the January mailing.

