



*Winter morning at Stepps Parish Church*

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***Welcome to the February 2023  
edition of  
Prospect***

*In this edition there is all our usual features with updates from the Boys Brigade, LHM as well as our congregational news.*

*There is also an invitation to join us for Afternoon Tea on Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> of February as we mark Gordon's Retirement and prepare for his last Sunday Service with us on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February. Come along and share with us your good wishes and memories.*

*If you have any ideas for additional features, please get in touch.*

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**February 2023**

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Scottish Charity No.  
SC014212

## **PROSPECT**

**Magazine of Stepps Parish  
Church**

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**Watch us on YouTube each  
Sunday at 11.00 am.**

**Follow us on Facebook.**

[www.steppsparishchurch.org](http://www.steppsparishchurch.org)

At the heart of our  
community celebrating  
faith and life to the full.

**To submit an item for Prospect please  
email Lorraine on**

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## Stepps Parish Church

### Minister



Rev Gordon MacRae (BD  
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Tel: 0141 779 5742

### Session Clerk

Lorraine Robertson

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## Sunday Services Morning Worship at 11am

The Scottish Government have removed all COVID rules and restrictions, but the virus has not gone away. Instead of legal constraints the government are asking people to use 'COVID sense' to help protect themselves and others. The same principal of using 'COVID sense' should apply to our church buildings, congregational activities and the support you offer communities.

[Getting your vaccine](#) when offered to ensure you are fully protected.

Staying at home and resting if you have symptoms.

Opening windows when meeting indoors

[Wearing a face covering](#) in indoor public places and encouraging the use of face coverings in church buildings wherever possible.

Washing your hands to protect each other.

Taking an LFD test if you have symptoms or before visiting someone in a hospital or care home.

Please continue to follow the website for information about our Services. We look forward to welcoming you all back with us again. For those who are unable to return with us at this time we will continue to stream our weekly Sunday services on our Stepps Parish Church YouTube channel

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI7mTSz5O1-vW\\_aMkKjCxAw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI7mTSz5O1-vW_aMkKjCxAw)



Charity No: SC014212

## Pastoral Letter Rev. Gordon MacRae



**D**ear Friends,  
I wonder, are you a letter writer? Now I mean do you write 'real' letters, not emails, nor Facebook or WhatsApp?

Most will agree that the art of letter writing has almost disappeared in our lifetime. I never really excelled at the 'art' of writing a letter. My handwriting was appalling before the scourge of email and tablets and now.... I can hardly read it myself.

I have always admired those who write with a fine hand. Yet despite my lack of pen skills, I still use paper and pen (has to be a fountain pen) to write my musings both for my person journal and my sermon planning. There is definitely a creative process in this. I take my time, I write, I score out, I draw something to help the creative juices flow, and *then* I turn to the keyboard.

So, what do I write as my final letter to you my dear, dear friends, my beloved family at Stepps Parish Church?

I don't know how many "pastoral letters" I have written over these 38 years of Ministry. Doing the quickest math's comes out at around 500 and each one began with the question.

"What do I write?"

"What do the folk need to hear?"

"What has God to say to us?"

So, now what do I write on this final farewell, a farewell not just for you guys but to my professional ministry to which I was called in August 1979?

I have struggled. I wrote, I scored it out, I wrote again. Then it occurred to me 'why not check out other people's letters?' So, my thoughts turned to some words from Paul's letter to his beloved Philippians. He begins thus,

***"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."***

Paul wrote some great letters, not with a good fountain pen on quality paper, certainly not on his iPad! Without doubt these are my favourite words from Paul. We all know the famous passages from this letter. Behind every sentence, every thought three truths are clear: Paul Loves the Philippians, Paul Joys in the Philippians and Paul Prays for The Philippians.

Now I find myself writing my final Prospect Letter to you, all of you, each of you and my first thoughts are these, please know I thank my God every time I think of you. In days to come, as I seek to adjust to not being a parish minister and not being with you all, I will always pray with joy as I think of you.

We have shared so much of joy and of sadness but in all things and at all moments I have been certain of one thing that God who has blessed us in all days past will continue to bless us in whatever our futures hold.

Dear, dear family know that I love you, be assured that you are blessed by God and be sure that I will remember you all with joy because of our partnership in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Love and Blessings

Gordon x



*Image Courtesy of [pastorkaren.org](http://pastorkaren.org)*

## Session Clerk Letter



**D**ear Friends,  
Here we are again a new month upon us and one of great significance as we prepare to say 'ae fond' farewell to Gordon. After almost 9 years as our minister, we are set to mark Gordon's retirement of almost 40 years at the end of the month and one you are all invited to share with us as we mark his retirement with an Afternoon Tea in the Church Hall (details on page 11). I do hope you can all come and share this special occasion with us and offer your own personal reminiscences and thanks for his long ministry.

Where do I even begin to acknowledge with gratitude all that he has done for our church over the years - the journey we have taken. I thought that I would simply share with you my address to Presbytery in December delivered via Zoom instead of in person due to adverse weather but one that felt no less poignant.

*"Gordon came to Stepps in 2014 and so began a period of great joy for our congregation having been in Vacancy for over 2 years. A lot of preparation and effort had gone into selling and re- buying a new house for our new manse family. We had just come through yet a previous Presbytery planning process and had been faced with the possibility of linkage or being allocated only a 0.5 FTE ministry post but in the end were delighted to have been granted a fulltime equivalent ministry under a 5-year reviewable tenure. Gordon and others were able to set us on a path of outreach and mission aptly known as 'Taking Stepps' and helped to steady the ship for us all at least for a time.*

*Gordon's long ministry career has taken him from Garden Festival to prison chaplaincy serving both rural and urban charges. During Gordon's tenure we established lasting friendship with our local chapel, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic church as well as Millerston UF free church where we are currently working in partnership offering our **Warm Welcome Space** to the local community through our Chestnut Cafe.*

*A series of conversations led to the formation of the **Stepps Community Development Trust (SCDT)**. We were able to raise enough funds to repair our roof after it was stripped of its lead and have hosted many a special community event over the years.*

*When we gained Gordon as our minister, we also gained a lasting friendship with St Enoch's Hogganfield Parish church through his wife Elaine.*

*You have introduced us to your love for all things Space and '**Snoopy**' and I'm sure our '**Charlie Brown tree**' will be a lasting Advent tradition for us as a congregation.*

*I hesitantly became Gordon's session clerk in 2020 not because I worried about working with him but more because I doubted that I had the necessary skills to take on such a responsibility. In many ways Gordon and I have lots of things in common. We are both, believe it or not of a similar nature - naturally both quite shy - worried about what others think of us and both share a love of Northumberland.*

*Little did I know then that in the space of only a few short weeks I would have a husband who would become unwell (once again you came to the rescue - turning up at the most apt of moments) to then head into a global pandemic and the way in which we all did Church change overnight. Despite all these enormous challenges I can honestly say it has been an absolute honour and privilege to have served as your session clerk.*

*You have not only been a wonderful friend but have also offered me and my whole family your love and support through times of personal family illness. More recently your wise and trusted counsel has reassured me in times of doubt and concern for the future of our beautiful church. Reassuring me of God's plans for us all and at other times when you have simply just listened to me.*

*On behalf of everyone at Stepps Parish church we say a huge thank you for guiding us through probably one of the most challenging times that the Church of Scotland has ever known. You have been an enormous support to us in recent months as we negotiate a new path for our congregation, your experience and discernment has helped us go forward with our Cluster Mission Plan. Your wisdom both spiritually and practically has helped to steer the ship in another direction.*

*We will all miss you very much, but please be assured that Elaine, Philippa & yourself will continue to be with us in our thoughts and prayers and know you will be welcomed among us with open arms and always remain part of our Church family. Thank you on behalf of the Kirk Session and Congregation for everything that you have done for us all and we wish you every blessing in your retirement”.*



***May the Lord bless you and keep you, fill your life with His joy and sustain you by His grace.***

***Lorraine x***



## **190<sup>th</sup> GLASGOW COMPANY, THE BOYS' BRIGADE**

### **Company Section and Seniors**

It seems like so long since I last sat down to write an article for the magazine and I apologise to all who support the Boys' Brigade for the lack of regular updates. Please be assured it is not because we do not appreciate your support but because we have been busy doing BB things!

Our Parents' Night was a great success, the Badges and trophies having been largely redundant for the last couple of years due to Covid. There was a real 'buzz' about the evening which I think all who attended enjoyed; a thriving Boys' Brigade company showing itself to the whole community. This was followed a week later by our Platinum Jubilee Garden Party. If throwing your guests out by asking them to go home is an indicator that a party is a success, this was a success. Photographs of both events are posted on our Facebook page if you have not already done so, please take time to have a look.

We started in October without Enrolment Service and Rolls and Sausage morning, this was well received by all and we look forward to next time it was good after so long to see the hall buzzing with conversation and above all laughter as we gathered for a light lunch after the service.

Our classes for this first part of the year were take-home baking, things they could cook as a help for Mum or Dad for tea, and model making, (I will be concerned if there are any aspiring aeronautical engineers in the company!).

In October we also had a company bowling competition with the Juniors joining the Company section at ProBowl Kirkintilloch for an evening of bowling, hotdogs and hamburgers.

We marked Remembrance as always, and specifically relating to 'Sportsmen' who had gone to serve. This was linked to visiting Murrayfield for the matches against Fiji and New Zealand. The New Zealand game falling on Remembrance Day itself, Boys left for the match directly from the War Memorial Service in Stepps and we marked the occasion by leaving Poppy Crosses at the Murrayfield War Memorial.

Senior Boys continue to work on their President's and Queen's Badges and took part in a District adventure day in Dunkeld in November. along with members of other Companies.

We did a craft class block in December trying our hand at various Christmas crafts in the lead up to the break. I would again point you at our Facebook page as the standard attained

although 'variable' was generally high. What are known to the Boys as 'running about games' (football if they are allowed to pick!) was the other part of the programme. Quizzes form an interesting part of the programme and often lead to informative, interesting, informal discussion on a wide range of subjects. Sweeties as prizes provide a useful competitive edge. Drill remains a Stedfast element in the programme and is often enthusiastically competitive (Colin even says it is getting better).

The session started with a bang, off and running from the start, we thought about the visit of the Magi to the Baby Jesus and had activities which taught more about wisdom and learning. Week 2 was a visit from the ever popular 'Owl Lady' and we move on to another block of classes next week (31/01) with a return to a normal programme of classes; this block including handy household skills.

We are already planning our summer programme and Parents' night but more of that later.

If you have not already done so, please follow our Facebook page where we post photographs of our activities.

**Christine Copeland, Lieutenant**

### **Anchor Boys and Junior Section**

We have enjoyed a huge boost in numbers this Session; it seems like there is a new Recruit just about every week. This is fantastic, as it means that the Company will have generations of Boys moving up through the age groups for some years to come.

We have instituted a regular programme of arts and crafts, award scheme work based on learning about the world and the community, Bible knowledge, and plenty of games.

Both Sections took part in Remembrance Sunday, and also enjoyed a visit from Hoot Owls, which is becoming an annual event and always goes down very well indeed.

Anchor Boys and Junior Section meet on Mondays from 6.00pm to 7.00pm for Boys in P1 to P6, and Company Section on Mondays from 7.00pm to 9.00pm for Boys P7 and over. New recruits are always welcome, please spread the word!

**Colin Goodall, Captain**

[colingoodall91@hotmail.com](mailto:colingoodall91@hotmail.com)

[captain190thglasgow@hotmail.com](mailto:captain190thglasgow@hotmail.com)



## Congregational News

**Deaths:** Mr. Hugh Baird 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
Mr. Duncan Shields 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022  
Mr. Jim Fraser 28<sup>th</sup> December 2022

*"My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?" ...*

**(John 14:2)**

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*John and his wife Christine*

We also mourn our friend, John Eldridge, Christine's husband, who passed away last month on Christmas Eve. John was a highly regarded Emeritus Professor in Sociology at Glasgow University with a distinguished academic career but we knew him best as Christine's "other half", a gentleman as well as a gentle man and as a good friend in his own right to Stepps Parish Church.

***Rest in peace, good and faithful servant.***

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Belated Birthday wishes & congratulations to Mrs. Mgt Moore who celebrated her 94<sup>th</sup> Birthday on the 2nd of Jan & to Mrs. Amy Somerville who recently celebrated her 85<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Best wishes to them both for good health and happiness in 2023 from all your friends in Stepps Parish Church.

## Letters from the Congregation



*Mr. Duncan Shields*

Dear Friends,

Janee, Debra and I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has offered us their support and prayers during this terrible time. Knowing how many people really care has been a great comfort to us. We were especially touched at how many of you came to pay your respects at Duncan's funeral. He would have been amazed. More than £1,000 was raised for the Beatson Cancer Charity from the retiral offerings at the church and the crematorium. For obvious reasons, this charity means a lot to us and was very close to Duncan's heart so a MASSIVE thank you to everyone who donated so generously.

THANK YOU SO MUCH,

*Flora Shields*

A Big 'Thank You' to one and all who either collated or delivered the Christmas cards within the community.

Well done- mission accomplished successfully.

A total amount of £162.00 was raised and it has been agreed that a cheque for £162 will be sent to the Salvation Army who will put the money to good use in these troubled times.

Save the date for '2023 Christmas Post'.

When assistance / volunteers will be welcome. Any feedback or comments on how to improve the service are welcome.

Do remember this is not a professional service and requires volunteers with everyone working together.

*Angela Orme*



Our thoughts and prayers go out to the following: William Mitchell; Ellen Baird; Flora Shields & Christine Reid.

May God comfort them on their recent loss over the festive season.

*Love and Peace to them All.*



## The Gathering 2023



**Christian Aid Scotland Supporter Gathering 2023:** The annual supporter event will be here before you know it. Have you signed up yet? To make it accessible to everyone it will take place online again on 28 February at 10am. It's a great opportunity to hear from the Christian Aid team in Malawi, who will give

an update on their current projects, and it will be a time to hear and celebrate what supporters in Scotland are doing, how you can get involved and learn more about climate justice work.

[Register for your place](#)

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Please join us  
as we honour

*Rev Gordon MacRae*



On the occasion of his Retirement

February 25th 2023  
At Stepps Parish Church Hall  
@ 3pm for Afternoon Tea.  
RSVP to Lorraine at  
[sessionclerkspc@gmail.com](mailto:sessionclerkspc@gmail.com)



## February Door Welcome Duty



February	Welcome at Door	Welcome	Beadle
5 <sup>th</sup>	S. Baker	J. Burns	H. Baker
12 <sup>th</sup>	S. Gowans	A. Macdonald	S. Baker
19 <sup>th</sup>	R. McGovern	S. MacLean	J. Burns
26 <sup>th</sup>	C. Skinner	E. Watson	J. Thomson
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	J. Thomson	H. Baker	L. Ashmole

If you are unable to do your weekly rota. Please ensure you arrange someone to cover.

*June Thomson*

## Tea Rota



February 5 <sup>th</sup>	S. MacLean	R. McGovern
12 <sup>th</sup>	S. Gowans	E. Watson
19 <sup>th</sup>	H. Baker	E. Corbett
26 <sup>th</sup>	S. MacLean	R. McGovern
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	S. MacLean	L. Robertson



It was a very busy month in December with the Panto, Carol Service and Christmas Lunch which was much appreciated by all who attended. Looking forward the Room to Breathe space is available every Thursday for those wishing a place to go for some quiet time or to be supported through prayer or meditation. It is hoped that this can be expanded into a more structured service once we assess what those who use the service would like us to provide.

Weekly activities continue with the singing group, sports competitions and weekly bingo all on offer and I'm sure Mark will have some trips planned once the weather improves again.

Feeding our guests is a very large part of what the Lodging House Mission does and we provide hundreds of hot breakfasts and lunches every week. To this end Archie the chief has requested that if you do wish to donate items then he needs tins of Baked Beans the most. Tins of Tomato soup and cartons of UHT milk would also be much appreciated as they always run out of them.

As you may be aware Claire the LHM Chaplain will be our Interim Moderator upon Gordon's retirement, I know she has been very busy working with Gordon in preparation for this role. I'm sure that you will all join me in praying for Claire as she takes on this role and make her welcome within our Church family.

If anyone would like to know more about the Lodging House Mission or would like me to organise a visit to see the good work we do then please get in touch.

*"When Gods people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be ready to practice hospitality".*

**(Romans 12:13)**

Jacqueline



Chestnut  
Café

Chestnut  
Café

The Chestnut Café is open again every Thursday from **10.00am - 1.00pm**. Now well established with many regular customers, although there is always room for new customers who would like to come along. The Café has a menu of eight barista style coffees incl. decaff, a variety of teas and hot chocolate with scones, pancakes and a choice of cakes. In addition, from **12.00noon** soup and bread rolls are served for lunch. Payment is by donations only.

The Café usually has activity sessions running alongside it on a Thursday morning, but due to holidays and other reasons we have been unable to source an activity for February, so it likely to be March before these begin again. Watch this space!

In the meantime, do come to the Café for a cosy chat and hot drinks in the warmth and comfort of the church hall, one of three North Lanarkshire Council funded Warm Space Venues for Stepps, Cardowan and Millerston. The other two are Monday afternoons and Wednesday Lunch Time in St Joseph's Church Centre and Tuesday and Friday mornings in Millerston UF Church Halls.

More volunteers would be welcome and anyone who would be like to assist should speak to a member of the Team.

Jim Burns, Ian and Esther Hyndman, Marvyn Mackay  
The Chestnut Café Team.

## A trip down Memory Lane



*Images by kind permission of A. Crawford*

## Drinking From the Saucer

by John Paul Moore

I've never made a fortune,  
And I'll never make one now  
But it really doesn't matter  
'Cause I'm happy anyhow

As I go along my journey  
I'm reaping better than I've sowed  
I'm drinking from the saucer  
'Cause my cup has overflowed

I don't have a lot of riches,  
And sometimes the going's tough  
But with kin and friends to love me  
I think I'm rich enough

I thank God for the blessings  
That His mercy has bestowed  
I'm drinking from the saucer  
'Cause my cup has overflowed

He gives me strength and courage  
When the way grows steep and rough  
I'll not ask for other blessings for  
I'm already blessed enough

May we never be too busy  
To help bear another's load  
Then we'll all be drinking from the saucer  
When our cups have overflowed



*Image courtesy of  
thecaringcatalyst.com*