



The Church of Scotland

# Stepps Parish Church PROSPECT

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

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



Scottish Charity No. SC014212

December 2015- January 2016, Issue 348

## *Pastoral Letter*

### **Preparing for Christmas Visitors**

December has to be, by far, the craziest month of the year – wouldn't you agree? There is so much we feel we have to do to “be ready for Christmas”. Are you preparing for visitors, washing the bed linen, cleaning the skirting boards, polishing the silver?? How many sets of crockery do you have? The everyday family plates, the matching set for ‘ordinary’ visitors and the ‘best china’ for the best occasion. How often does the linen table cloth come out these days? Who do you make a special effort for? What if a really special person was coming?

### ***What if Jesus were coming??***

As we begin to tidy the house, make up the spare room for those Christmas visitors, the church begins to consider ***The Christmas Visitor*** it is all supposed to be about.

December is a month of preparation. In the church year, we are in the season of preparation called “Advent.” Advent is a Latin word which means “approach” or “arrival.” Advent is that time of the year when we prepare for the visit of Christ. We prepare to celebrate ***The Visitation*** of Immanuel; God with us, Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

During this Advent and Christmas Season we at Steps Parish Church will follow the theme of ***Christmas Visitors***.

We prepare for visitors coming to our home. We tidy up, we do everything we can to make them welcome. So, in our worship and in our Tuesday evening studies we would hope to get our hearts and minds prepared and welcoming to receive the Christ Child.

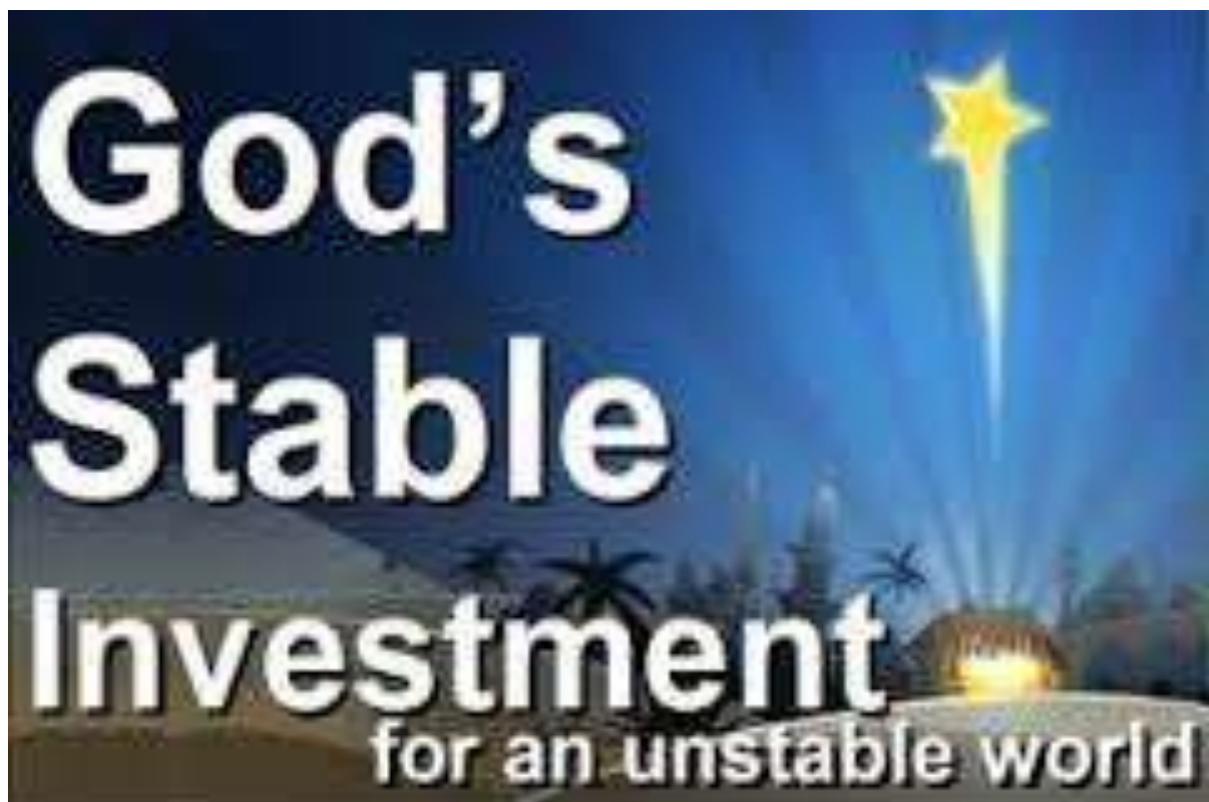
In Luke's Gospel at chapter 3 we find someone who tells us how to ‘tidy up our lives’ in order to *really* prepare for the Christmas Visitor. John the Baptist tells us to “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him..... “

How do we do that? ..... Come along to as many of the worship and study activities as you are able and also take time for self-preparation. Stop! Think! Pray! Read the stories again, read them in a mature, thoughtful and prayer-filled manner. Enter into them. Be there; be with Mary as she listens to the angel. Consider how you might have felt if you were her. Be with the shepherds in the fields; listen to the angels' song. Gaze with them, on the face of the Christ Child.

**I promise you that all of this will make a straight path for Christ to enter in and be your most special Visitor this Christmas.**

Elaine Philippa and I join in wishing you a Holy Advent season and a blessed Christmas.

Love Gordon

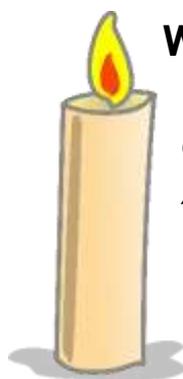


## Christmas and Advent Activities

A variety of worship services and Christmas activities are planned through Advent. These are detailed below. We hope that you will be able to join us for some or all of the activities as we prepare to welcome Christ in to our world.

### **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm in the East Trancept**

**Chapel a Comfort Service** is being held. For those that find the Christmas Season a difficult time through loss of a job, illness, separation, divorce or grief and loss of a loved one. A hand is extended to reflect and seek solace at this evening event.



### **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm in the Church**

**Hall the Carols by Candlelight Event** has been organized again this year by our young adults in 4U@SPC. Tea and mince pies will be served.

### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 11am in the Church**

**the Gift Service** is being held. Please bring a gift, wrapped and labelled that will be donated to Glasgow, the Caring City. These will be distributed to the most needy children across our own city, helping to bring a taste of the joy of Christmas.



**Joy to the World!**

### **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>**

**December between 8pm**

**and 9pm a group will be Carol singing in Crowwood Grange.**

Those wanting to join us should meet at Hall Place, off Reynolds Drive at 8pm. This will be an opportunity to promote the

family service on Christmas Eve. Those that brace the cold will welcome hot drinks served after in a local home.

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 11am** in Church the Sunday Club and Girls' Brigade will delight us with their **nativity play**. This will be a family service and all ages are welcome that day.



Later the same day, on **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm to 4pm a Children's Christmas Craft and Activity afternoon** will be held in the church halls.

After the success of our previous Christmas and Easter activity days we hope this will be another fun filled time, creating opportunities to form friendships with children and their carers. The event is free. Consent forms will be available from youth group leaders and on the day.



**Christmas Eve** is a busy time. At **6pm a Torchlight Parade** will leave the Scout Hall and make its way to the common ground next to the manse in **Crowwood Grange**. This is at the roundabout where Kirkpatrick Drive and Dewar Road meet, opposite The Marches show home. Here we will hold a **family service at 6.30pm**. We anticipate there will be warm beverages to add some Christmas Cheer at this event. Transport can be arranged if needed to this service.



**The Watchnight Service will be held on Christmas Eve at 11.30pm in the Church.**

We herald the arrival of the Christ Child on **Christmas morning at 11am in the church.** This will be a short, informal service. You are asked to bring along a present that you have received and share together a time of joy.



## Christmas Postal Service



June Bennie has kindly arranged for the Christmas Card postal delivery service to run once again this year. The post box will be in place in the Church hall on both Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> December with deliveries being made the following week. There is a suggested donation of 20p per card towards Church funds. Cards will can be delivered to all areas in Steps.

## Prayer Group

*“And I tell you more: whenever two of you on Earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in Heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.”*

Matthew Chapter 18 verses 19-20

Following the response to holding short prayer meeting *after* the church service on the first Sunday in November, we will continue to meet at this time in December and January. Each meeting will last for 10 to 15 minutes.

Generally the prayer group prays for the church, our minister, our attached organizations and those amongst our congregation that are facing ill health or trying times. We also pray for the church throughout the world, often dependent on recent news events, and for our mission partners, Steve and Katuska Davies.



These prayers are similar to those in our monthly prayer diary which we would encourage all our congregation to use each day.

Prayer requests can be given to Mhairi Moore or put in the prayer envelope on the table at the back of the church.

### **Stepping Stones to Stewardship**

Thank you to all who have returned from the Stewardship Pack. To clarify the data protection form is to help the church meet the requirements of the data protection legislation and gives us permission to store information, such as your name and address in a confidential manner for use in church business. This will include for Prospect delivery, pastoral visits etc. We ask that you return this to ensure our records are correct. If you have not managed to return your form or mislaid your form then your Elder will be able to provide you with another.



Alternatively you can e-mail

[sessionclerk@steppsparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:sessionclerk@steppsparishchurch.org.uk) to indicate whether you are happy for us to retain your details on file. If you no longer wish us to keep your details, then please also inform your Elder or again e-mail the Session Clerk. If we do not receive a form or receive notification from you by the end of December 2015, we will assume, unless you have stated otherwise that you no longer wish us to hold your details.

*Ailsa Macdonald*

*Session Clerk*

## **Data Protection Training Evening**

Elders and Congregational Board members, as trustees, should be up to date with data protection legislation. Previously a training session was held in June 2015, which representatives of our church linked organisations and a number of trustees attended. For those that were not able to make this training evening another similar event is planned to be held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm in the Session Room. The Kirk Session and Congregational Board are grateful to Marvyn Mackay for delivering this training session.

## **WFO ENVELOPES FOR 2016**

For those who give their church offerings by using WFO envelopes, your envelopes for 2016 should accompany delivery of this edition of Prospect. If for any reason, you have not received WFO envelopes when you expected to, or conversely if you have received them but no longer wish to give in this way, please contact Liz Ashmole on 779 1086 who will rectify the WFO Roll accordingly.

## **Fundraising Event**

We will be holding a Christmas Coffee Afternoon on Saturday 5th December 1-3pm tickets are now on sale



from Susan Gowans & Ann Green priced £3 or come along and pay on the day. A chance to have a coffee and a blether while enjoying some good home baking. We will also have some nice Stalls for you to "browse". Please come along and support this event!!

## Take Stepps

Having been in discussions with our advisor at Glasgow Presbytery, our 'Take Stepps' plan for the next 4 to 5 year is nearing its final draft. This covers what activities we are going to undertake and how we plan to better engage with our community in Stepps. It takes into consideration the comments from our Stepping Stone to Stewardship responses. When the plan is completed, it will go to Presbytery for approval. In the meantime our series of Advent activities would be similar to some components of the final plan.

## CHURCH FINANCES

### General Income

At the end of October, income from direct giving was £33,064, made up as follows:

	£
WFO Scheme	15,848
Gift Aid Donations	11,436
Ordinary Offerings (Open Plate)	4,692
Other Offerings, Donations, etc.	1,088
	<hr/>
	33,064
	<hr/>

### Roof Fund

At the end of October, the amount raised towards the repair of the roof was £15,062, made up as follows:

	£
Donations – Gift Aid	5,307
Donations – Non-Gift Aid	1,350
Other Donations, etc.	2,680
Fundraising	4,875
Other Receipts	850
	<hr/>
	15,062
	<hr/>

Les Moore

## **Girls' Brigade**

This will be a very busy month for the girls lots of things planned, on the 1st of December we will be having a Karaoke evening with the girls, on the 8th December we will all be enjoying a film night with "frozen" being shown, on the 15th December our party night we are off to the Bowling with the girls.

We are also very busy preparing for our Nativity Play with the Sunday Club at the family service on the 20th December.

The girls are hosting two stalls at the Christmas Coffee afternoon to help raise funds for the Company, we are having a Chocolate Tombola and donations will be greatly received. If you would like to donate then please speak to Ann Green.

Merry Christmas from all at the 80th Glasgow GB.

*Gillian Green*

## **4U@SPC – Expedition Evening**

Last month we told you we were about to hold our Parents' Evening which was part of the assessment for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The 4U@SPC girls had to give a presentation to parents and friends: as Katie reported in a previous 'Prospect' they decided to document 'The adventures of Sparkle, the Bear', who accompanied them on their final expedition in Fife. Joanne Denney led the evening with all the girls participating in the explanation of the ups and downs of camping during a very wet Scottish summer!

We are pleased to say that the North Lanarkshire staff were delighted with what they did and commented on what a credit they were to their families and to 4U@SPC.

Below is a picture of 4U@SPC with some of their guests.



*Les and Mhairi Moore*

### **4U@SPC – ‘Carols by Candlelight’**

4U@SPC is holding the annual ‘Carols by Candlelight’ on Wednesday 9 December at 7.30pm in the Large Hall. We hope you will be able to join us to sing some of your favourite carols. Anyone who would like to donate a box of mince pies is asked to see Les or Mhairi. Please bring your friends and family!

*Les and Mhairi Moore*

### **Sunday Club**

We are enjoying working with the Girls Brigade this term and rehearsing our Nativity play which you are all invited to come along and see on December the 20th. We are asking that all children involved in the Nativity come along at 10am on the 6th, 13th and 20th of December for rehearsals in the Church before Sunday Club.

Our Christmas party will be held in the Church hall on Saturday the 12th of December between 2 and 4 pm. As in previous years parents are invited to come along for the last 15/20 minutes when we shall have a special guest visiting.

Sunday the 20th is our last day for this term and we shall resume on Sunday the 10th of January 2016.

The Sunday Club leaders would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Joyous and Peaceful Christmas.

Jacqueline Hoy



## **LHM FESTIVE COLLECTION TO FEED THE HOMELESS AT CHRISTMAS**

Members and friends are reminded that, in place of the former shoebox appeal, this year we are again invited to fill a Lodging House Mission envelope with a banknote of any denomination, the proceeds of which will greatly assist the Lodging House Mission to defray the considerable cost of providing free meals to the homeless and needy over the festive period. Special envelopes for this purpose will be located at the entrance to the Church.

There is now a shelf in the entrance way to the church hall, where foodstuffs can be left for donation to the Lodging House Mission throughout the year. Items that the Lodging House Mission regularly need include tea, coffee, porridge, cornflakes, Weetabix, Frosties, tinned vegetables and tinned fruit.

## **NEWS FROM THE DAVIES FAMILY IN MOZAMBIQUE**

Dear Friends,

This brings you our warmest greetings and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year! We have much to report and share with you this time, and we're aware that our once-regular email updates have rather thinned out again.

The most important news is that we are expecting to be back in the UK in the early months of 2016. We have been sustained here by your faithful prayers and financial support, and you must know that we're grateful for both. We came to Mozambique in 2013, trusting that the support would supply our needs for two years and perhaps more, and we've been watching the situation closely in recent months. It is a very typical pattern that ministry costs increase while we're in the field, as our activities grow and the prices of everything steadily rise. As a result, we are facing the reality that monthly expenditure now exceeds income by some distance, and as we write (late October) there are probably just 3 or 4 months to go before we would have no choice but to return for furlough. The logical response seems to be to make our plans now, draw our activities here to a close and travel early in the year.

For Steve the biggest immediate question is of course the direction of the seminary. For two years he has been trying both to build the academic team and to encourage future leaders among its members. The team has grown, and there's a good range of lecturers to call on, but the truth is we don't see much measurable success in the leadership area—some colleagues are able, but they are heavily committed already. If we could pay them more, we could bring some of them on board full time: so it may be partly a financial question, and the seminary finances are still somewhere on a long, careful road out of a desert. One of the key points is that still, after several years, there is no other OMS missionary on this field working at the seminary. Finding someone to step in right now is looking quite a challenge.

For Katuska it's not too difficult to take a change of venue in her stride, with the flexibility that's built into all that she's doing with home education. She and the boys are enjoying it and doing well, and in theory they could keep on doing the same in any country. But there should be, once again, the option of fitting in with mainstream

schooling while in the UK: this would give her a much-needed break as well as some variety for the boys, and we need to consider it.

These two things—the hand-over at the seminary, and decisions over the boys' schooling—are the key questions on our minds at the moment. Both, in different ways, are to do with continuity, and we are so used to living with discontinuities in the strange world of foreign mission that we probably undervalue this precious commodity. At the seminary there are 44 students embarked on a course of study and, mostly, struggling hard against all kinds of pressures and distractions in their efforts to persevere. Meanwhile Sam, Ben and Joe face an equally uncertain world, and we are striving to see clearly even a few steps ahead.

Please join us in prayer, above all for vision. Jesus said, “If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.” We need our eyes to be in good shape, and we also have to keep on looking in the right direction. Thanks for allowing us to share these needs with you. See overleaf for a few different items of news!

Much love from us all,

**Steve, Katuska, Sam, Ben & Joe**

*(The full version of the Davies' Prayer Letter can be read on the World Mission Noticeboard in the Small Hall)*

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Belated congratulations to Mr Billy Hamilton on the occasion of a 'very' special birthday on 7<sup>th</sup> November. Wishing him peace and joy in this coming year.

## Friendship Club

We are well under way with our early winter syllabus. All our meetings have been very well attended and last Monday's bus run to Bridge of Allan for lunch then back to Stirling to shop was very popular.

We have only one meeting left for 30<sup>th</sup> November - A St. Andrew's Day Concert with the Gem Singers.

On December 7<sup>th</sup> we are looking forward to welcoming Janet Wilson to show us how to make Christmas Flower arrangements.

14<sup>th</sup> December is the date for our Christmas Lunch at the Garfield Hotel.

We have no meetings on 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> December or 4<sup>th</sup> January and our first meeting of the New Year is on 11<sup>th</sup> January when we have Father O'Brien telling us about his work as a Parish Priest.

He is followed on 25<sup>th</sup> January by Jim Hope when we are having an afternoon with Jim and Robert Burns. We'll need to serve shortbread that day, I think!

Advance notice for February: 1<sup>st</sup> is our A.G.M. AND gift envelope day with a buffet lunch to help things along.

15<sup>th</sup> February - Mr. Scott Ferguson will talk to us about the work of linking N.L.'s seven lochs starting at Hogganfield and finishing at Drumpellier which should be an interesting afternoon.

Another interesting talk is on 29<sup>th</sup> February when David Wilson will brighten up the winter with a show of coloured slides of France and Holland in the Springtime.

If anyone in the congregation would like to join us for the rest of our syllabus, or even a particular meeting, please do so. You will receive a very warm welcome from all of us. Just watch Prospect to find out what's on next.

Kate Houston.

## **Church Clean Up**

Can I thank all the willing volunteers who helped clean the church on a Saturday at the beginning of November. With a band of 20 or so volunteers, including willing helpers from Shettleston Old Parish Church we set about removing cobwebs, dusting down stonework, washing and polishing pews, polishing brass, scrubbing umbrella stands, brushing and mopping floors, hoovering, polishing the tile floors and cleaning the Trancept window. It was a mammoth effort and truly amazing what was achieved in a couple of hours. I'm sure you all agree that the church is looking spick and span again.

Alasdair Macdonald

*Property Convenor*

## **Tea Duty Rota**

### **December 2015**

6th Eleanor Patrick, Kate Houston, Jean Christie  
13th Emily Watson, Margaret Moore, Jean Christie  
20th Margaret Crawford, Flora Shields, Jean Christie,  
27th Margaret McWilliams, Ellen Baird, Sandra McLean

### **January 2016**

3rd Janet Wilson, Ella Corbett, Jean Christie  
10th Angela Orme, Kate Houston, Sandra McLean  
17th June Bennie, C Skinner, Jean Christie  
24th Helen Baker, Ann Green, Jean Christie  
31st Ellen Baird, Emily Watson, Sandra McLean

## **Welcome Team on Door Duty**

### **December 2015**

- 6 B McNeill. M. McWilliams. M. Mitchell. A. Neilson. J. Thomson
- 13. A. Orme. C. Skinner. J. Thomson. L. Ashmole. D. Wilson
- 20. H. Baker. S. Baker. J. Bennie. J. Burns. L. Ashmole
- 27. H. Corbett. M. Crawford. K. Davidson. A. Green. H. Baker

### **January 2016**

- 3. G. Green. J. Hamilton. J. Hope. L. Maxwell. J. Burns
- 10. M. Moore. R. McGovern. C. McLaren. C. McLaren. H. Corbett
- 17. F. McGovern. S. MacLean. B. McNeill. M. McWilliams. A. Green
- 24. M Mitchell. A. Neilson. A. Orme. C. Skinner. J. Hope.
- 31. J. Thomson. D. Wilson. L. Ashmole. H. Baker. L. Maxwell.

If you are unable to be present on any of the above dates, please arrange a substitute.

December 2015						
◀ November						January ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry  6pm Girl's Brigade 7.30pm Advent study	<b>2</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry 10am-12noon Humpty Dumpty toddler group  7.30pm badminton club	<b>3</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry 10.30am Breathing Space  7.30pm Kirk Session	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 1pm Christmas Coffee Afternoon
<b>6</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent 10am Bible Class 10.50am Sunday Club 11am Service of Worship 12.15pm Prayer Group 6.30pm Comfort Service	<b>7</b> 1.15pm Friendship Club 6pm Anchor Boys 7pm Junior/Company Section BB	<b>8</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry  6pm Girl's Brigade Film night 7.30pm Advent study	<b>9</b> 10am-12noon Humpty Dumpty toddler group 7.30pm Carols by Candlelight-church hall	<b>10</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry 10.30am Breathing Space  7.30pm Data Protection update	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 2pm Sunday Club Party
<b>13</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent 10am Prayer Group 10am Bible Class 10.50am Sunday Club 11am Gift Service	<b>14</b> 1pm Friendship Club lunch- The Garfield 6pm Anchor Boys 7pm Junior/Company Section BB	<b>15</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry  6pm Girl's Brigade Bowling 7.30pm Advent study	<b>16</b> 10am-12noon Humpty Dumpty toddler group  8pm Carol singing- Crowwood Grange	<b>17</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry 10.30am Breathing Space	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent 10am Prayer Group 10am Bible Class 11am Nativity Play  2pm Children's Craft Afternoon	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 6pm Torchlight Parade 6.30pm Family Service Crowwood Grange 11.30pm Watchnight Service	<b>25</b> 11am Christmas Day Family Service	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 11am Service of Worship 12.15pm Short Communion Service	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Notes:</b>	

January 2016						
◀ December						February ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

January 2016						
◀ December						February ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
<b>3</b> 11am Service of Worship 12.15pm Prayer Group 12.30pm Christmas decorations taken down	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 7pm Saturday Club
<b>10</b> 10am Bible Class 10.50am Sunday Club 11am Service of Worship	<b>11</b> 1.15pm Friendship Club 6pm Anchor Boys 7pm Junior/Company Section BB	<b>12</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry  6pm Girl's Brigade 7.30pm Bible study	<b>13</b> 10am-12noon Humpty Dumpty toddler group  7.30pm badminton club	<b>14</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry 10.30am Breathing Space	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 10am Bible Class 10.50am Sunday Club 11am Service of Worship	<b>18</b> 6pm Anchor Boys 7pm Junior/Company Section BB	<b>19</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry  6pm Girl's Brigade 7.30pm Bible study	<b>20</b> 10am-12noon Humpty Dumpty toddler group  7.30pm badminton club	<b>21</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry 10.30am Breathing Space	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 7pm Saturday Club
<b>24</b> 10am Bible Class 10.50am Sunday Club 11am Service of Worship	<b>25</b> 1.15pm Friendship Club 6pm Anchor Boys 7pm Junior/Company Section BB	<b>26</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry  6pm Girl's Brigade 7.30pm Bible study	<b>27</b> 10am-12noon Humpty Dumpty toddler group  7.30pm badminton club	<b>28</b> 10am-12noon Gordon in vestry 10.30am Breathing Space  7.30pm Congregational Board	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 10am Bible Class 10.50am Sunday Club 11am Service of Worship 12.15pm Short Communion Service	<b>Notes:</b>					



Minister: Gordon Macrae 0141 779 5742 [minister@steppsparishchurch.org](mailto:minister@steppsparishchurch.org)

Session Clerk: Ailsa Macdonald 0141 779 1427  
[sessionclerk@steppsparishchurch.org](mailto:sessionclerk@steppsparishchurch.org)

Church Organist/ musician: Alastair Sim 0141 779 1101