

Forth St Paul's Parish Church

Newsletter

January to March 2025 / Issue 09



Welcome

This has been a very busy time... with folk working hard to keep our church services going every week, making a great success of the cafe, fundraising and making our church a place that welcomes children.

We are truly blessed.



There's Always a Springtime

After the winter comes the spring
To show us again that in everything
There is always a renewal divinely planned,
Flawlessly perfect, the work of God's hand.

And just like the seasons that come and go
When the flowers of spring lay buried in
snow,

God sends, to the heart in its winter of
sadness

A springtime awakening of new hope and
gladness.



Inside this issue:

- What's been happening in our Church?
- Youth Rainforest Cafe
- In other news
- A Chat with Mary Gemmel
- News from the Scott family
- Intimations

Forth St Paul's – What's been happening?

Sunday 26th January and Sunday 2nd February – Holy Communion

Holy communion was taking place on Sunday 26th January and we were lucky to be able to arrange for Rev Dawn Westwood to conduct this service. This seemed a great arrangement, however the weather disagreed and there was snow, ice and bitter coldness. Many of the regular congregation folk were unable to attend because of the weather. Things were looking difficult. Luckily Dawn came to our rescue, not only did she preach a very good, encouraging and supportive communion service on that snowy Sunday, she came back the next Sunday and gave a second excellent communion service so that the folk who were unable to attend on 26th did not miss out. We send a great big thank you and many blessings to Dawn.

Week commencing 24th February – Pancake making with Forth Primary School

Karen visited Forth Primary and made pancakes with all the classes. At the Easter Code three of the Primary 6's voluntarily made a comment about this which was too good not to share in the newsletter...

- I liked it when Karen came into school to make the pancakes with us. She makes the best pancakes in the world (*Lewis*)
- I enjoyed Karen coming to school to make the pancakes with us (*Sophia*)
- I enjoy the pancakes. They are the fluffiest and the best (*Emily*)

Saturday 1st March – Youth Rainforest Café Afternoon Tea

Please see page 5 for more details and photos.

Sunday 2nd March – Baptism of Maddison

We were delighted to welcome the family and friends of Maddison Wigg who was baptised today by Rev Mike Fucella.

Tuesday 4th March – Pancake night

It was great to see an amazing turn out at our annual pancake night. Thank you to all who supported and helped out.

A special mention and thanks to Anne, Jean, Karen and Margaret for making a whopping 1,310 pancakes! A total of £340.26 was raised.



Friday 14th March – Pizza making

On this day, Karen and Julie hosted a pizza making afternoon for some of the teenagers who came to the Rainforest Youth Café. The recipe they used is shown below...

Pizza recipe	
Ingredients for base 200g natural yoghurt 250g self-raising flour 1 teaspoon baking powder Pinch salt Tiny bit of water (optional)	Method <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mix ingredients together and knead the dough. Divide into 4 and roll each one out.• Cook the base for 5 minutes in the oven• Flip the base over and cook the other side for a couple of minutes Making the sauce <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mix ingredients together and cook in a pot for 10-15 minutes Topping <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spread sauce over pizza and add your favourite toppings.• Put back into oven for a few minutes until ready.• ENJOY!



Monday 10th March to Friday 21st March – Easter Code with Forth Primary School

There was great excitement when all the children from Forth Primary visited the church to take part in the Easter Code. The children were very enthusiastic and joyfully joined in with all the activities and very much enjoyed their time at the Easter Code. The children went round the different stations finding out about the events of Holy Week. They had a scavenger hunt in church, enjoyed a PowerPoint presentation, made Easter cards, danced and sang, and of course, ate pancakes. A huge thank you to Karen and her helpers who worked so hard preparing and delivering the Easter Code. Also, we greatly appreciate the help and support the church receives from the school staff and the well-behaved enthusiastic pupils.



Two of the Primary 5 children's prayers...

I pray for the rainforest to be safe and nice.

I pray for the love we have for each other. I hope the war will go. I pray that my family will stay safe.



The garden of Gethsemane. It is so peaceful. Last year we seen the shooting star. I will be looking for it this year. (*Millie, P7*)

I like the chocolate and marshmallows and the last supper. I was a disciple (*Jayden, P3*)

The lights in the garden of Gethsemane (*Lauren, P7*)

I like the singing and dancing. I like how it's all about Jesus (*Aria, P3*)

We asked the children what their favourite thing was about the Easter Code. Here is some of the feedback...

I am thankful that Karen can do this and she teaches us about the bible. I am thankful for her inviting us. (*Iona, P6*)

The marshmallows and chocolate (*Owen, P1*)

Me being Jesus at the Last Supper (*Ally, P5*)

Pancakes and marshmallows (*P2*)

What we learned by Primary 2-

- We learned about forgiveness (*Reuben*)
- Jesus wants us to love others the way Jesus loves us (*Drew & Anna*)
- Jesus came back to life (*William*)

I like the quizzes on the clipboard (*Harold, P6*)

Doing the scavenger hunt for names because we get to run around freely and find out more about Church (*Sarah, P5*)

Making Easter cards for our family and friends (*Lucy and Bobbie, P5*)

Writing prayers as I don't do it much and it feels good (*Zoe, P7*)

Monday 24th March – Easter Code with the adults

Karen welcomed people in the afternoon and evening.

Saturday 29th March – Guild Easter Fayre

The fayre was a great day, with a lovely welcoming, friendly atmosphere. It was good to see so many church folk there and also many visitors from the surrounding area. There were scrumptious cakes to eat and even some to buy and take home and unlimited tea and coffee. There was the fun and excitement of the tombola and raffles, and some great Easter bargains to be had at the craft stall. A big thank you to the Guild members, JIGSAW leaders, and members of church, who all worked hard to make the day possible. The Guild members greatly appreciate the support they receive from the local and surrounding communities; we could not hold a fayre if no one turned up and spent their money. An incredible amount of £1705.40 was raised (£22 more than last year). Because of the success of the fayre the Guild will be able to donate £2000 to church funds. Well done!



Sunday 30th March – Mother's Day

The JIGSAW children, leaders and Chirstine helped with the service on Mother's Day making it a fun and appropriate service. They told the congregation about the presents they had given their mums for Mother's Day then performed a very good drama about the "Feeding of the 5,000", even producing salmon sandwiches so that the congregation could join in with the drama. The children gave their mums a gift of flowers and a card and then gave everyone in the congregation some marshmallow cakes. We are so lucky with the children we have in JIGSAW.



Saturday 1st March – Youth Rainforest Café Afternoon Tea

The young folk from the Rainforest group were invited to host an afternoon tea in the hall for their friends and family. This was part of the grant that we got from the Co-op. It was a great turn out and raised £335 for the Friday youth café activities. Here are some of the photos from a very successful and enjoyable time together. Thank you to Alison, Julie and Karen for making this possible and also to Susan from the Co-Op.

How the day started off...



Corey making a tray bake



Josh making a cheesecake



A lesson from Alison on how to make our own sausage rolls



Ruth making fairy cakes



Leah, Millie and Marley making sandwiches



Lily making sandwiches



The young people got to design their own tickets and menus as well as decorate the centre of their table.

Brooke made her own flowers out of Lego to decorate her table.

Brooke also made a mars bar tray bake which was one of Nellie Fraser's recipes.

Josh said that he enjoyed making the mandarin cheesecake. He added that he really enjoyed the day and also spending time with his family, friends, Karen and Julie. He enjoyed learning how to bake.

Time for our friends and family to enjoy the afternoon tea...



Lily's table



Marley's table



Leah's table



Millie's table



Ruth's table



Brooke's table



Corey's table



Josh's table

How the day ended...with smiles and certificates for all the hard work and learning.



In other news...

Congratulations to Eckhardt and Rozelle Bosch



A very special welcome to Lucien Bosch who was born on 17th January at 2:15am at St John's Hospital.

Lucien and Rozelle are doing well and are fit and healthy. Lorelei was so happy to meet her wee brother and couldn't stop giving him hugs and kisses.

Eckhardt shared that overall, the experience was a blessing with key people supporting them and they can only be truly grateful to God for providing support when needed.

We caught up with Eckhardt mid March who informed us that life is very busy but everyone is doing well. Lorelei and Lucian will be baptised on 13th April.





Tea and a Tale with The Braw Clan

We have enjoyed a couple more visits this year from The Braw Clan. They are an award-winning theatre company making new Scots language plays. Those who attended also enjoyed a cup of tea and one of Karen's delicious scones.



Happy Birthday to Margaret Hunter

Our Session Clerk Margaret turned 60 in March. We surprised Margaret in the café after Church with a birthday cake which was shared out with everyone.

Thank you for the enormous amount of work you do for us and our Church Margaret. We hope you enjoyed continuing the celebrations with your family.



World Record breaker! Congratulations to Blair Hannah and crew

Royal Navy Vanguard-class submarine comes home after breaking the record for the longest patrol

A submarine returned home to the Clyde on 17th March following the longest ever patrol by a British nuclear deterrent-carrying boat. The submarine left Faslane in late August of 2024 and had been away for 205 days. This breaks the record achieved in 2024, an extraordinarily long time for the crew to spend underwater.

We caught up with Blair to find out a bit more about his time under the ocean.

Blair told us that he only had a few days to prepare before joining a crew of 160. The crew worked in shifts, 6 hours on and 12 hours off. They only got 20-second showers each day. The food started off great but got simpler over time – they were still guaranteed 3 meals a day. Blair spent his free time going to the gym, watching movies, playing video games, and sleeping. He had his own bunk, which was a nice perk. The crew didn't know where they were or weren't allowed to contact their family while they were away. Blair said the submarine didn't feel as cramped as people think, though he did bang his head a few times. There are 4 subs on rotation, so it'll be next year before Blair has another chance to go.



Part of this article and the photo was taken from navylookout.com

A chat with Mary Gemmel....

Milk delivery

1. **The snowy weather in January has made driving conditions very poor. How did you find driving to deliver the milk in winter?**

My husband John had his milk round in the village with the help of the milk boys. The customers relied on daily deliveries as there were no supermarkets then. I delivered milk and eggs for 30 years - from the boot of my car – 4 days a week round Haywood, Auchengray and Woolfords. Sometimes if the snow was bad the tractor was required so John and his helpers did Forth and Braehead and then did mine. The school would be closed due to the weather.

2. **Was there a particularly good, scenic drive you had to make?**

When I went from Woolfords to Cobbinshaw Loch, I then had to cross the causeway to get to the farm at the top of the hill. I always had family with me – preschool age. They would get down on the floor of the car, look out the windows and pretend they were in a boat. If the loch was rough with high waves, we didn't cross the causeway but left the milk for the customers to collect later.



Happy days - Mary and John in August 2004

Family

3. **You had 4 daughters, what were the high and low times of bringing up 4 girls?**

From an early age each one was different. All went to Brownies and Guides but only 2 kept going to Sunday School and 2 went to Highland dancing. The high times were when Elizabeth was a Gala Day flower girl and then a maid. Barbara was the Gala Day Queen in 1987. The low times were fortunately fewer with some illnesses etc and when Marion at the age of 21 broke her knee. This was a first for me visiting A&E with any of them and put John's main worker off the road for 6 weeks.



Mary with Marion, Elizabeth, Alison & Barbara. August 2024

4. **All your grandchildren are boys, so are boys easier or harder to handle?**

I have 6 boys who are all taller than me! Jack is 23 and a barber, Alistair is 20 and an agricultural engineer, Ewan is 21 and at Edinburgh University, Sam is 19 at Glasgow University, Oliver is 17 and in his 6th year at Lanark Grammar and Nathan is 17 and in his 6th year at Ulverston High School. John's wish for a boy came true at last. They loved to go with him in the tractor checking the cattle or helping to feed them down in the big shed. They all liked to help with baking, making biscuits and rolling out. The smallest always got the stool out to stand on while working the Kenwood. A good machine operator was very important.



Left to right - Alistair, Nathan, Ewan, Sam & Oliver. Jack at front

Guild

5. **You have been a Guild member for many years, what do you enjoy most about the Guild?**

I joined when I was 45 and at that time we sat in rows with an attendance of about 60. A couple of times during the session we were joined by 2 church elders to make sure things were being properly done and the current minister always chaired the AGM. It was then the "Women's Guild". This changed 25 years ago in 2000. We are now "The Guild" with men welcomed to join and I'm glad to say the past few years we have 3 who attend regularly.

I always enjoyed the annual outings, one in April to a shopping centre as Livingston was not on the go then and one in June to a seaside resort. The weather almost always seemed in our favour and we always enjoyed a stop for high tea on the way home.

Since Covid we have become much less formal and with 27 members we rely on local talent to speak or demonstrate at meetings with members able to participate, making things or joining in with their experiences about the topic. The Guild committee used to do a play for entertainment at our Christmas party. My first time doing anything on a stage. I was the “wood cutter” and went home and looked out John’s biggest axe only to be told no, far too dangerous. He then made me one with a cardboard blade covered in tinfoil. This was ok as I was at the back of the stage anyway.



6. How did you come to start going to the Guild?

Agnes Harkness persuaded me to join and as I became more involved she kept me going with good advice. I enjoyed working with her and Anne Anderson. We all had different bits that we looked after and a series of very good secretaries along the years that kept our syllabus right.

7. How can we encourage more folk to come to the Guild?

The most important thing is to make them welcome. If someone wishes to come – even for one visit to see what it is like, it is helpful if one of our members offers to come with them. Then we have to do our best to keep the meetings varied and interesting while keeping to our motto “whose we are and whom we serve” still starting our meetings with a hymn and a prayer and a short reading or story.

Jam and baking

8. You are a great jam maker, what is your favourite jam?

Making jam used to be more stressful as it had to be made when the fruit was in season with enough jam to last till the following year. Now fruit is stored in the freezer to be made when required. I find this less stressful than baking. And if the weather is bad I just defrost some fruit, put the jars in the dishwasher and make it. I am fortunate as my friends all donate jars and though I buy strawberries and raspberries, if someone has too many berries, and ask if I can use them, I say absolutely yes. My cousin also has a huge Bramley Apple tree and I am free to pick as many as I like. I have also recently received a donation of sugar which I appreciated.



Agnes Harkness and Mary

9. You are also famous for your chocolate cake and empire biscuits, what do you think makes you such a good baker?

I always baked a lot when the family were all here, tray bakes, buns, scones and cakes. Not pancakes as my mum brought them. I can now make them with Anne Anderson’s recipe. Biscuits are easy and can be iced at night while watching TV. Chocolate cakes also come easy either in round tins or square tins being cut into small pieces for parties.

Church

10. As a faithful member of our Church, what is your favourite church time or memory?

A memory that stays in my mind was in August 1996. I was about to start as Guild President. I felt out of my depth, sure I wasn’t able to do this and scared. At the Sunday service that day in the large hall, the minister Rev Seth preached the parable of the mustard seed. I thought that’s me I only have that amount of faith but he gave me hope to work at it and improve. I enjoy coming to church, always meeting friendly folk around me. If I have been to another church on a family occasion or with another Guild I always come back and feel proud of our Church and feel that I belong here.

11. And finally, what is your motto in life?

“I to the hills will lift my eyes”. This can help even if not religious. You will see either someone worse off than you or sunshine or even snow or a scenic view.

A catch up with Mr David Scott...

David Scott was our minister in the 70s and 80s. When he arrived in Forth, he had hair, but more importantly a lovely young American wife. They stayed firstly in the old manse, then in a council house in Ravenswood until the new manse in Learig was built. They had all their 4 children while living in Forth before leaving for Stirling. Forth has always been close to his heart and he has always been interested in what we were up to. He was very involved in all the church and community activities.

We contacted David and asked him if he would do an article for our newsletter with an update on his family, retirement and some memories. He replied immediately to say he was delighted to hear from us and would be very happy to write something. He enjoys reading the newsletters that Isa sends to him and said that they are a wonderful enrichment of the life of the congregation, full of local interest and colourful photographs.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE SCOTT'S

When I was inducted to Forth St. Paul's, I became the minister of what had been five separate parishes – Forth, Wilsontown, Haywood, Braehead and Climpay. Braehead Church had just closed. One of the first things I did was to meet the Braehead elders – Grace Graham, Willie Bryce and Bob MacGregor, the baker from Bridgeton, who lent me his car for a whole month when our bone-shaker, as the locals called it, was being repaired.

Although the members at Braehead were grieving the closure of their church, the kirk hired the local minibus as they transferred their worshipping allegiance to Forth. Their gracious and joyful witness contributed much to the enrichment of the congregation. I remember their positive spirit in my work now as a volunteer 'facilitator' striving to bring three congregations into a union for the Presbytery of Fife. They showed me what was possible in faith and love.

As well as this work, I am still preaching most Sundays and although I miss the magic of the children who seem to have vanished from the smaller rural churches, I still value this ministry, the thrill of proclaiming the Gospel and getting to know people within these varied congregations. Times are hard with finance, vocations and a more alien culture but we do not forget that the Easter Gospel, 'Christ is risen, He is risen indeed!' has been proclaimed in Scotland for some 1600 years!



In our St. Andrews retirement, we are blessed with family nearby. All our children were born in the William Smellie and registered by Ian Smith on Hawkwood Terrace. David was born in 1981 on the coldest day in a hundred years. The snow lay thick for a month. His American granny came to stay in the old Victorian manse. When she returned two years later for Anna's birth, she commented, 'Oh, there are sidewalks in Forth!' David and his wife, Pamela are artists. He brings hope and consolation to people with physical and mental disabilities.

By contrast, Anna was born on the hottest day for some three hundred years! Did her birth mark the start of global warming? On this day, we not only remember Anna but Brian Dornan who was tragically killed in a drowning accident aged sixteen. The two are forever entwined in our memory. Grief never ends. Anna is now a nurse working in the eye department at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee.

Colin was born on Pentecost Sunday 1985. In the morning, his mum was on the stage in the big hall wearing her Laura Ashley dress handing out books to the children in the Sunday School who were also wearing their best clothes. No other children in my whole ministry were so well-dressed for Prize-giving and Christmas Party. They were valued events. Colin is now a pianist with Northern Ballet and has just composed the music for 'Hansel and Gretel', a ballet for children, touring in the Spring.

Sarah was born in 1987. Some thought we were having too many children but Nellie Fraser said, 'There's always love for another child.' Nellie, Willie and Christine always looked after the children on Christmas Eve whilst we prepared for Watchnight and Santa. The children still remember Nellie's magical trifles. And we remember her Christmas Cake which Mary-Catherine baked for the congregation on Colin's baptismal day. Sarah is in the Civil Service and about to start training as a 'Health and Safety Officer'.

With grandparents in the West Highlands and in the USA, our children were glad to have a substitute in Isa Gardner who was always on hand to look after them and for over four decades has never forgotten them on birthdays and at Christmas. Her letters kept us informed about family and community.

And our mutual exchange of humorous poems has lightened many a moment in a long and busy ministry. It was Margaret Stewart who provided her gas stove when a power cut prevented Mary-Catherine from cooking lunch for the judges at the Kirk's Flower Show and Ian Rowan who came down to fetch me when I was conducting a service at the Bank Hall. David, like Alfie in the Shirley Hughes book, 'Alfie Gets in First' had locked his mother out at the coal bunker on a bitterly, cold Sunday afternoon!

By this time, we were in the new manse and developing the garden. It has remained an interest for both of us into our eighth decade. Mary-Catherine has very skilful hands for sewing, knitting, cooking, baking and gardening. I am the heavy-weight with the spade attacking weeds and building a pond. This summer, we are hosting Colin's wedding. He will be forty and asked to marry Ellie in our garden. Mary-Catherine is baking the cake and we're going to cater for twenty-five! It will be a moving event (not literally). We will warn the neighbours!

We call our house 'Learig' not only because this former council house was built on the lea rig of the farmer's field where courting couples used to meet for privacy and romance but also because our new manse in Forth was built on Learig. It looked south-west to Tinto Hill and onto Tennant's field where sheep grazed throughout the winter and whom our growing children visited on snowy days! The memories have never faded of place, parish and people and live within us for auld lang syne.



Anna, Sarah, Colin and David



David D Scott

Happy memories....



The Cross and the Tomb

The cross stands empty to the sky
The tomb laid bare as well
It is these signs that show the truth
The Lord's no longer there.

He went about and told us
Of all his father can do
And showed us all His miracles
Through food and drink and health

He taught us all the wondrous things
His father's love can give
Redemption and forgiveness for us
If we believe in Him

Eternal life is promised
Through the shedding of His blood
And in God's house forevermore
Our resting place shall be.

The cross stands empty to the sky
The tomb laid bare as well
It is these signs that show the truth
The Lord's no longer there.

Poem written by Laura-Jane Sinclair

Easter

Our Easter service will take place in Church on
Sunday 20th April.

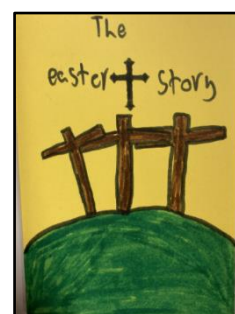
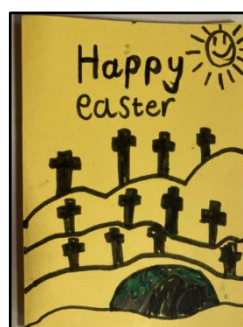
All are welcome to come and join in the celebration.

More about Easter will feature in our April-June newsletter.

Please let us know if you have anything to share with us.
We'd love to hear from you.



*Some of the
beautiful Easter
cards made by
the children
at Forth Primary
during the
Easter Code*



Jigsaw at the
Easter Code.

Celebrating 150 years of Forth St Pauls Church

This year marks the 150th anniversary of our Church and we need your help.... We would like to gather some information such as any old photographs or stories from any of the groups or worship or trips away - anything at all connected with our Church and our Church family. We are hoping to pull them all together into a memory night and have some activities over the course of the rest of the year to celebrate our Church history as we imagine this may be the last year of Forth St Paul's on its own so it would be good to celebrate where we have come from, where we are now and our future moving forward.



Events

Church services - We would love you to join us in person on a Sunday morning at 11am but if this isn't possible our services are streamed live via our website www.forthstpauls.com or via YouTube (a link for this can be found on the website).

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for more information on upcoming events.

Café News..

The Rainforest Café is open on a Sunday from 12noon and every Wednesday from 10am till 3pm (last orders are taken at 2.15pm). We will however be on holiday from 13th to 20th April and will return on Wednesday 23rd April.



The café is open to everyone to sit in or takeaway lunches/snacks.

We would like to thank our customers/friends for their continued support.

Church Groups (open to everyone) – All groups will be off over Easter

- ❖ **KNACC (Knit, Natter, Craft & Chatter)** meet on a Monday from 10am-12noon.
- ❖ **Guild** meet every second Monday from 7-9pm. They will return in September.
- ❖ **Mainly Music (pre-school parent & toddlers)** meet on a Tuesday from 10-11.30am.
- ❖ **Planet Earth Afternoon Club** for P3-P7 meet on a Tuesday from 3-4.30pm.
- ❖ **Youth Rainforest Café** for high school pupils meet on a Friday from 1pm onwards.
- ❖ **Jigsaw** meet on a Sunday at 10.50am.



Fun for all at Mainly Music

Intimations

Gift Aid – If you give regularly to the Church and are a Tax payer, please consider signing up for Gift Aid. This will not cost you anything and will allow the Church to claim back 25% of any amount you give. Also, if you have previously signed up for Gift Aid and are no longer a Tax payer then please let us know so that we do not make a false claim. If you are unsure or would like any further information then please speak to either Catherine McGurk or Jane Savage and they will be able to help you.

Old Spectacles - If anyone has any old spectacles they no longer use and are happy to donate them to a charity in Ukraine, please bring them along to Church or the Cafe and Audrey will coordinate.

Used stamps – Please leave in the box at the back of the Church to support the work of the Al Ahli Hospital in Northern Gaza.

Co-op Community Grant – Please support the Planet Earth Club

The Planet Earth Club has been selected as one of the charities so, if you are able, please select them. Information on how vote annually is below...

**Do this by pressing the community button on your Co-op app or
call 0800 068 6727**

Doing this costs you nothing and means your favourite local cause gets more money in the autumn payout.

Volunteers:

All the following wee jobs need covered if you'd be interested please get in touch. Remember you'd be on a rota not covering all the time.

- Church Door Duty
- Readers in church
- Sound desk/ Powerpoint preparation
- Flowers in church and flower delivery
- Anyone willing to write and read the 'Prayer for Others' during weekly worship
- People willing to help with our Property Group to maintain our buildings
- Cleaner

Prayer Box

A prayer box is at the back of the Church for anyone who would appreciate prayer for themselves, a friend, a family member or a situation.

Please pop a note in the box and the prayer group will offer a prayer.

We would like to encourage more people to use this box

When your heart starts to worry,
and your mind just can't rest,
put your prayers down on paper
and let God do the rest

All requests are confidential.