

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Christian Aid Week 2018 runs from 13-19 May

Cumbernauld Old Parish Church has been organising door-to-door collections for Christian Aid for over 30 years and many of our collectors have been there from the start. Liz Dalling and I are relative new comers – about five years.

During Christian Aid Week, the collectors post the red envelopes through their neighbours' doors and return later to collect them. We have consistently raised over £2000, making it very worthwhile. Christian Aid supports some of the poorest communities in the world, and is there for people in crisis, such as refugees.

I'd like to share my experiences of Christian Aid Week, to encourage you to become part of our team.

In my envelopes, on the first day of Christian Aid Week, I include a note that has: my name and address; the total collected the previous year; when I'll return to collect the envelope and my thanks. The note encourages trust and makes it more likely to inspire a donation. Going back for the envelopes is more time consuming as neighbours may be out, or not particularly welcoming.

It must be awful for someone, if the only way to survive is to ask others for help. Compared to their humiliation and despair, unfriendly neighbours is nothing.

Many of my neighbours stop to chat, and envelopes filled, Christian Aid Week is discussed and this is encouraging. I keep these positive thoughts in mind when collecting – 'rejections' make it too easy to give up. Giving to charity is a very personal thing and I thank people even if they do not donate.

Here are some of the memorable things from my 10 years as a collector.

- An elderly gentleman answered his door and looked at me rather sceptically. He put some coppers in the envelope and gave it back to me a little ungraciously. I thanked him and carried on: I was a few houses away when I heard footsteps behind me. It was the same man with a ten pound note, apologising and asking for another envelope.
- Someone once gave me back the envelope with a piece of kitchen towel in it. Were they too embarrassed to say 'No'? Did someone in the household take the money and substituted the towel to make it feel like the envelope still contained the original bank note? What's your theory?
- Some people send children to the door rather than talk to me and I have had some very odd conversations with tiny tots.
- Some men appear to be under their wife's thumb and then say 'no' to the donation, by saying, 'My wife's not in'.
- People even swear they did not receive an envelope and this surprises me. This is mostly a way of saying 'No' but it's worthwhile offering a replacement.
- Last, seems the number of expensive cars in the driveway is inversely proportional to the likelihood of the occupants answering their door.

My intention is to encourage and so I hope I have not put you off by sharing these anecdotes and please give some serious consideration to becoming a collector this Christian Aid Week (13-19 May). Even if you only visit a few of your immediate neighbours it would make a difference.

We're stronger together.

Lesley Littlejohn.

More information on Christian Aid can be found on www.christianaid.org.uk.

If you would like to find out more about what we do at Cumbernauld Old or offer suggestions please contact Liz Dalling (01236) 727000 or Lesley Littlejohn (01236) 729083.