



Parish News



Dear Friends,

Such a busy time ahead for many of us, organising the build-up to Christmas in whatever that means for you. As usual the church also has a busy time ahead with all the services planned for the Season. **Carols by Candlelight** on the 19th at 7pm; **Christmas Eve Service** on the 24th at 11:30pm; **Christmas Day Service** at 10:30am; with our **Sunday Service** at 11am on **Boxing Day**. It is wonderful to be able to come together to celebrate the Arrival of the *Christ-Child* and it is a time of Joy and Gladness in our hearts to be able to worship fully, to sing together and to meet in Fellowship.

This all comes with a warning though, if the Government bring in Restrictions before then, all of this will change. My outlook for the immediate future is to plan for the big celebrations and cope with changes if they do happen. It all lies in God's Hands and He is constant and ever-lasting, He will provide for us and if we have to change then so shall it be.

This time of Advent where we wait in Hope - a time where we must take time to prepare - we must take time to look for the wonder, the light and the life that is to come. We must be ready to see, to know, to experience how amazing this Christmas, this Incarnation stuff really is ... the Advent Gift ... the God-given Gift of Life in all its redemptive fullness. Or else? We miss it! Consumed by our iPods and our newspapers; trapped in our own space and our crowded journeys; carried along without looking around us; consumed by our troubles, our self-centredness, our weariness ...

So let's take time to think in this Advent Season ... let's take time to be amazed at the wonder of it all. When we do all of that, we will know how wonderful Christmas actually is; how marvellous that Mary with all humility said 'Yes' to God. Joseph listened to the Angel's message and acted upon it instead of going his own way. How wonderful that so many from all different ends of the spectrum of humanity visited the Christ-Child. The Magi with their wealthy gifts; the Shepherds with their humble worship all provided by messages of a sort from the Heavens - namely the Star suspended in the sky leading the Magi and the Heavenly Host appearing in the night sky with the Good News.

The sadness of the Advent Season is when we make Christmas too small and too normal; when we confine it, trap it, wrap it up in what we can know and understand. The truth about this Advent Season is that it points us to a Christmas which is mind-boggling, remarkable, world-changing, cataclysmic, explosive and beyond our comprehension that God should so love us that He intervened directly in the World. Don't let us make Christmas too familiar, too ordinary, too small. Be amazed. Be blown away. Be changed. Be transformed. Share the Good News. For then we *WILL* know how wonderful this season actually is.

Whenever you listen to Carols on the radio or on your Player, whenever you hear the Nativity narrated once more, don't switch off, give thanks to God for the reason for all the Celebration. Listen to the words once more and imagine yourself in that place and how it would have been for the Holy Family to have been rejected and forced to live in a Stable, emphasising their low status, dismissed by many, but also worshipped by complete strangers.

They were a section of the marginalised, the people on the edge yet the world was changed because of the obedience and faith of the young couple and the wonder of the Christ child. It just shows you, we never know with whom we are dealing, the person who society dismisses may be the one who saves. We apply our prejudices and our norms to everyone else and forget that those we do not understand are just as valid and have just as big a contribution to make as anyone else. In this time of Advent let us remember those in need and may we all reach out to them and do so in God's Name and give to Him the Glory.

I Hope and Pray that you have a very Blessed time this Christmas Season and that you can take time to be close to God and find His Comfort and Peace in His Presence.

With every Blessing,

Rev. Grace Saunders

'Carols by Candlelight' Service is Sunday 19th December at 7.00pm.

Limited seating so 'Book' your place in advance. — Tel: 07533763697 (mornings Mon-Thurs)

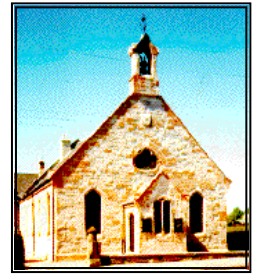
Cumbernauld :Condorrat Parish Church



Minister
Rev. Grace Saunders
B.Th; B.Sc.
(Tel. 01236 452090)

Session Clerk

Family Development Worker
Mrs Susan Boland
(SBoland@churchofscotland.org.uk)



SUNDAY SERVICES:



Morning Worship in the Sanctuary at 11am.

Communion Services (1st Sun. – March; June; September; December.).....**11 am**

Check the *Condorrat Parish Church* blog on our website or at www.ccosfive.wordpress.com

Cumbernauld Churches Together

PRAYER FOR CONDORRAT

Circle Condorrat Lord
Keep protection near and danger far,
Keep hope within and despair without.

Circle Condorrat Lord,
Keep light near and darkness far,
Keep peace within and anxiety without.

Eternal Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Shield Condorrat on every side.

Amen.

Sunday Welcome Teams



December 2021

5th. — Mr. J. Moir and Team 4.
12th. — Mr. J Newlands & Team 1.
19th. — Mrs. L McKeown & Team 2.
26th. — Mrs J. Bolling and Team 3.

Church open but still with masks
and social distancing.

CLERK to THE BOARD

Mrs Christine Macphail Tel: 728990

TREASURER

Mrs Ann Kenny Tel: 732377

ROLLKEEPER

Mr John Newlands Tel: 732632

FABRIC CONVENOR

Mr Gordon Bennie Tel: 734637

FWO & GIFT AID ADMINISTRATOR

Mrs Doreen Ross Mob. No. 07769 203648



HALLS LETTING

Mrs Elizabeth Hutton Tel: 07502 457198

Mrs Elizabeth McLean Tel: 07840 958133

SAFEGUARDING CO-ORDINATORS

Mr Alistair Robertson Tel: 734905

Mrs Elizabeth Masterton Tel: 723492

CHURCH OFFICER

Mr David Logie Tel: 724532

Intimations & Parish News

P Taylor Logan Tel: 07436 117346

e-mail: tayval@tiscali.co.uk

Intimation

The position of **Session Clerk** has been vacant for some time, yet this position is an important one in church life. It is mainly organisational and the person would need to work with a computer, be able to take minutes of the **Kirk Session** and carry out secretarial duties. The **Session Clerk** also has forms to fill in different times of the year to send to Presbytery or Church of Scotland Office. He or she would also set out and organise Communion.

The **Session Clerk** does *not* have to be a member of the **Kirk Session**; therefore, I am appealing to anyone who has organising skills to get in touch with me or a member of the Kirk Session. It would be great if **two** people would come forward to share this role and so support each other.

I pray that someone would be moved to help the church in this way.

Rev. Grace Saunders

The Treasurer

December 2021

Dear Everyone,

By the time you are reading this, we shall be at the start of Advent.....and I wonder what type of Advent we will experience this year? Hopefully, we shall be able to have the kind we were used before the restrictions of last year. Whatever happens, it is still a time to look forward to celebrate the Birth of Jesus.

Recently, a Review Invoice was received from PPLPRS (the people we pay for our music licence). Now, as the Halls are classed as 'community buildings', we have to pay for a separate licence than that for the Sanctuary. In the period under consideration, our income was £540 and £300 of that was for the day of the election. No music was played that day and the Playgroup, who donated the remaining £240, *sometimes* play a CD. Following telephone conversations and emails, we were advised that we are being charged the minimum - £64.20. This means that, roughly, one quarter of the amount we took in - in the hall rental where music was played *sometimes* - will be taken for a music licence. Negotiations are continuing.

As you are aware, we are moving with the times and going 'Digital'. The deposit on the new Equipment for the Sanctuary has been paid so it will be installed soon.

A donation of £1000 has been deposited in our bank account. The donor wishes to remain anonymous but has stipulated that the money has to be used for the '*new technology*' being installed. We thank this person most sincerely for this very generous amount.

As this is the last "Parish News" of the year, I pray that you will have a lovely **Christmas**, celebrating the Birth of Jesus in your own individual way, so that, within yourself, you will know, and benefit from, the true meaning of Christmas.

May the **New Year** bring you **Peace** and **Hope**. Remember that the days will be getting longer soon and, within a few weeks, noticeably so.

Keep well, remain positive.....and

May God bless you,

Ann Kenny

Coronavirus in Scotland

* Stay at home as much as possible

* Keep away from crowds of other people

* *Wash your hands often and always as soon as you return home*

Stay safe, Protect others, Save lives.

* *Always wear a face covering on public transport, shops and enclosed public spaces*

* **Self-isolate if you have any symptoms and book a test**

Hello Everyone,

December 2021

As there hasn't been a Congregational Board or Kirk Session meeting since last month there is nothing new to report from there. However, our youth organisations have designed Christmas cards which we hope to distribute in the community. These will carry 'Greetings' from the church and will let people know what services are planned over Advent and Christmas. If you don't get a card this time – we can't cover the whole parish unfortunately – the information will be on our Facebook page and on posters displayed locally.

If you have been in the Sanctuary recently you may have noticed holes with wires coming out of them above the entrance door. This is the start of our project to go digital, so keep watching!

Recently I was reading a magazine from one of the rural areas of Scotland. The Church of Scotland minister was commenting about the changing times we live in and how we as a church are not immune to change. If you followed the General Assembly, or read about its discussions; you will know that the number of full-time ministers and presbyteries is being cut

considerably. This faces us with challenges, but also opportunities. We are all having to change to continue the work of spreading the Christian message. How would you feel if it was decided to close Condorrat Parish Church building and ask us to go elsewhere? This is the reality lots of congregations have had to face. Would it make a difference in our community if the Church of Scotland no longer had a presence in our village? Whether you come to church regularly or not, can you think of ways that we as a Congregation can contribute to the wellbeing of our community? I hope you give this some thought, and it would be interesting to hear what you think.

As this is the last 'News' of this year, I hope you all have a happy and peaceful Christmas, and that the New Year holds lots of good things in store for you.

*Please remember our Church and
all those who are members of our
Congregation in your prayers.*

*Christine MacPhail
(Clerk to the Board)*

Carol Singing

'*Carols for Christmas*' will take place on **Sunday 12th December at 6.30pm.**

We shall meet at the Condorrat Library beside the Christmas Tree.

All are welcome to come along, bring friends and Family and join in singing all the well-known and familiar Christmas Carols.

Just wear your thermals ! If weather inclement, we'll move to the church.

The Guild

December 2021

Hi Everyone,

At our last meeting we enjoyed an interesting talk on how a newspaper is put together. Mr Charles Freeland talked us through the process of making up a page of The Glasgow Herald and related some amusing stories of how things can go wrong when reporters are sent to interview people at home. The ladies were surprised at how long it takes to design even a simple page of the paper.

Next meeting — 8th December
at 1.30pm in the church halls

At our final meeting of the year we'll be making some Christmas Crafts.... and no doubt, sampling chocolates! The ladies are reminded to bring an old saucer and a pillar candle this week.

Lesley Freeland

Tel: 01236 734930.

Mob: 0775771190

e-mail: lesleyfreeland@hotmail.co.uk

The Sunday School

We hope to have our three girls in Church on 19th December when they shall receive the prizes they missed getting back in June 2020.

We are really looking forward to this service

Lesley Freeland

An English Teacher took her young son to see Santa for the first time.

'If that's Santa Claus,' he asked slightly bewildered, 'then who are all the other men with white beards on the street?'

Quickly drawing on her classroom experience, she explained,

'Oh, these are just subordinate clauses.'



Thank You

I'd like to THANK the Ladies of the Guild for the beautiful flowers I received after their 100th Dedication Service. It gave me great joy to be remembered by you all. I thank you also for my 95th Birthday Card which was also lovely. I have so many happy memories of my many years at the Guild. Again... 'Thank You' one and all.
Molly Fleming

Thank You

I was delighted to once again take part in the Remembrance Day Service in the Sanctuary, and enjoyed renewing old friendships. I would like to thank Rev Grace Saunders and the Congregation for the beautiful flowers I recently received. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.
Alastair Petrie

White Donation Boxes

Many thanks to all who continue to give a little extra through the white boxes this is very much appreciated.

Please remember to put your name on the label on the box.

Thank you,
Mrs Doreen Ross

(PARISH NEWS)

1st Condorrat Company The Boys' Brigade	1st Condorrat Company The Girls' Brigade
We give 'Thanks' to EVERYONE for your continued support and hope you are keeping safe at this difficult and trying time.	
Check us out on 'facebook' !	
Andrew Eadie (Company Captain) Tel: 07748 537621	Nicola Gilmore (Captain) Tel: 07557470195

Sunday Morning Tea/Coffee Rotas

December

5th. Mrs. M. McKinnon, Mrs. B. Watt + 1.
12th. Mrs. M. Innes, Mrs. A. McLellan & Mrs. M. Proctor.
19th. Mrs. S. Graham, Mrs M. Semple & Mrs. L. Freeland.
26th. Mrs. I. Diamond, Mrs. J. Larruzzi + 1.

January 2022

2nd. Mrs. N Hynd plus 2
9th. Mrs. M. McKinnon, Mrs. B. Watt + 1.
16th. Mrs. M. Innes, Mrs. A. McLellan & Mrs. M. Proctor.
23rd. Mrs. S. Graham, Mrs. M. Semple & Mrs. L. Freeland.
30th. Mrs. I. Diamond, Mrs. J. Larruzzi + 1.

We are still looking for volunteers to add to our team. It's all Thanks to our very willing Tea Ladies that we are back in business! 'Thank You' for your continued support.

With best wishes to Everyone for a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year.
Mary Innes

Christmas Cards 2021

How would you like to deliver a Christmas Card designed by a child to your immediate neighbour sending them Christmas greetings from the church ?

We need willing volunteers to deliver 'Christmas Greetings' from the church this year. The cards will show all the Christmas Services being held in December as well as Facebook and Website information."

Susan Boland

Remember to **SAVE** your 'used' Postage Stamps and bring them to Church at the first opportunity.





Funerals: "Blessed are they who die in the Lord." (*member)

November

- 11th - Mr. Roy Montagu * of Westerwood.
12th - Mrs. Elizabeth Rankin * of Badenheath Farm
17th - Mrs. Isobel Lamont of Balloch.



As the present conditions have prevented Funerals to be conducted with those who would have attended to pay their respects. There will be *Memorial Services in the Sanctuary* once we are fully allowed to come together again.

Baptism: Jesus said, "Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

October

24th - Jyia daughter of Steven and Holly Reynolds of Greenfaulds.



Visitations: Due to the present crisis there will be no visits in person by the Minister.

The Prayer Corner

December 2021

This month of Advent where we are waiting for Christmas and all the celebrations which this brings, we remember to keep alert to the needs of our Spiritual Life and to stay in a constant time of prayer from the heart, not so much with words.

Let us look once more at the words of *John Chrysostom* which was read out on in church.

He was a 4th Century writer whose words are so apt, beautiful and timeless.

Prayer and conversing with God is a supreme good; it is a partnership and union with God. as the eyes of the body are enlightened when they see light; so is our spirit, when it is intent on God, is illuminated by His infinite Light. I do not mean the prayer of the outward observance, but prayer form the heart; not confined to fixed times or periods but continuous throughout the day and the night. Our spirit should be quick to reach out toward God, not only when it is engaged in meditation; at other times also, when it is carrying out its duties; caring for the needy, performing works of charity, giving generously in the service of others, our spirit should long for God and call Him to mind, so that these works may be seasoned with he salt of God's Love, and so make a palatable offering to the Lord of the Universe.

Prayer stands before God as an honoured ambassador. It gives Joy to the spirit, Peace to the heart. I

speak of prayer not words. it is the longing for God, love too deep for words, a gift not given by man, but by God's Grace.

Let us Pray...

LOVING LORD,

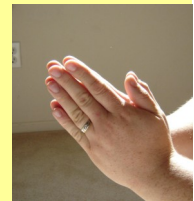
Words cannot fully describe our Love for You, our devotion, our worship; accept the depths of hearts.

You know us fully, through and through and You Love us as we are, despite our faults.

The Glory of Your Love is that it encompasses all people no matter what state of life they are in.

We thank You for Your Goodness and Your Constant Love for us.

We ask in Jesus Name. AMEN



*All scripture is inspired by **God**, and is useful for teaching the truth; rebuking error; faults; and for giving instruction for right living.*

2 Tim. 3:16,17.





**1st Condorrat Company
The Boys' Brigade**

December 2021

Hi Everyone!

It's been a very unusual session this year. With the lockdown continuing from the previous year, it has been a challenge to the Staff to come up with ideas to hold the Boy's attention. Thankfully BB Headquarters were quick to produce activities and new games to assist us in our hour of need. Together we managed to get through with *Zoom* meetings and when appropriate, outdoor sessions at the Condorrat Rugby Club, who thankfully have given us permission to use one of their fields. This was the only way we could keep in contact with the Boys - and although not all of the boys take part, those that do, seem to enjoy what was being offered.

Last September we agreed to try to start up our 2021-2022 Session. Safety checks were made and appropriate signage put in place to make sure everyone, Boys and Staff would be safe.

As mentioned before I was quietly surprised at the numbers that attended the opening night. Online information was a big help with many parents logging on. The numbers have remained steady with a few new members attending; but we have lost fewer than expected.

We finish this half of the session on Thursday 16th Dec, when each Boy will receive a gift.

— On a personal note, I have been receiving some very nice comments from members of the public regarding the Church Notice Board. Over the past few months I have been putting up various paintings relating to the time of the year, Christmas/Easter etc. with the latest being *Remembrance*. The first one was "Poppy Fields"; the second is "Lest we Forget". —

For further information regarding BB activities, uniforms or an update on what's happening please contact any of the Staff or myself.....

Anchor Boys: Kris Tomas- 07554018417.
Junior Section: Derek Russell- 07845768966.
Company Section: Jamie Porritt,- 07860742720.

On behalf of the Staff, I would like to wish Everyone a very "*Happy Christmas*" and a *peaceful* "*New Year.*"

Take care Everyone..... and Stay Safe,



Andrew Eadie
(Company Captain)

Tel: 611 317 or 07748 537621
e-mail: weandy222@gmail.com

The Girls' Brigade

December 2021

Since last issue the Girls have had their Fancy Girl Party and despite not being able to participate in activities as a Company the Girls had a blast!

They are continuing to work hard on their Badge Work and, I hope, enjoying what they are learning. We are now into the Christmas Season and the Girls are looking forward to the activities we have planned, and hopefully have a visit from Santa.

We would like to congratulate Angelina and Daniel (BB) for winning the church's Christmas Card Competition. All the entries were wonderful!!

We still have spaces for any Young Ladies age between Primary 1 to Year 6 in secondary school would like to come a join.

Just email : first.condorrat.gb@hotmail.com.

Explorers: P1-3 - 6.15pm till 7.15.

Juniors: P4-7 - 7.30pm till 9.00.

Brigaders: S1-6 - 7.30pm till 9.00.

All the Covid restrictions still apply as explained to both the parents and Girls.

Thank you for your continuing support,

Nicola Gilmore
(Captain)

Message of Christmas

Welcome Christmas once again !
Come blizzard, snow or rime —
It cannot dim the joy that fills
Our hearts at this glad time.

The days are brief, the nights are long,
the skies may be bleak and drear —
But a glory shines there round about
the ending of the year.

The glory of a wondrous thing:
The Christmas mystery.
The strange and lovely story
Of our Lord's nativity.

The only hope that's left to man
Upon this troubled earth —
The hope God gave at Bethlehem
At the Messiah's birth...

Welcome sweet and holy day,
The day of Christ the King.
Once again the world awaits,
The message that you bring.

PS.

Great people are just ordinary people
with an extraordinary amount of determination

**FAMILY DEVELOPMENT WORK/
OUTREACH**

December 2021

While the New Horizons group were unsuccessful in obtaining funding earlier this year, we have reached an agreement with the company providing the equipment as well as donations for us to go ahead with the buying and installing new digital equipment which will be used to enhance our worship services by putting the words to the hymns and scripture readings up on a monitor. As we gain confidence in using the equipment, it can be used to further the church's Outreach work to our Parish and local community.

Shelving and electrical work has already begun under the care of the Property Committee with Mr Cochrane, as Project Manager liaising with Mr Bennie and Mr Drummond from AV Drummond, the company installing the equipment.

A "user group" or computer group has been compiled of myself, Miss Service, Mr Reynolds, Mr Clark and Mr MacKenzie. This group will work together to fully utilise the equipment, enhancing our worship experience as well as better sound for all.

"Carols for All" is an outdoor Christmas carol service taking place on Sunday, 12th December at 6.30pm. Please invite friends, family and your neighbours. Come along, wrap up warmly and join together singing well known and familiar Christmas Carols for half an hour. Candles, 'phone torches' and *Jingle Bells* are encouraged!

The New Horizons group initiated a Christmas Card Competition with two children being awarded a prize each – Angelina from our Girls' Brigade and Daniel from our Boys' Brigade Companies. The cards have been printed and handed out to the Congregation with information on the back regarding all the Christmas Worship Services at Condorrat Parish Church during the season of Advent and into Christmas itself. Please avail yourself of some cards to deliver to your neighbours or friends..... for who can resist a card decorated by a child?

Both New Horizons and the Computer Group are open to all as we are always looking for new ideas and new ways for Outreach.

*Please continue to pray
for the Outreach to our Parish,*

Susan Boland

The Social Committee **December 2021**

We are very aware that for almost two years we have been unable to have any fundraising events and I'm sure we've all missed the socialising these bring.

There is **no** Christmas Fayre again this year

The Christmas Card Post Box is now in the vestibule of the church and will be there until Sunday 19th December. All cards are very welcome and will be on show for everyone to see in the Church Hall. Mrs Ross is the only person who opens them and deals with any donations so they can be Gift-aided where appropriate.

Mrs Cochrane and myself are now collecting again for the charity '*Smalls For All*' which supplies underwear to both abroad and in the U.K. where it is needed. Pants must be *brand new* and all sizes are very welcome from children's upwards and in any colour, although black in ladies sizes is much appreciated. They also take '*gently worn*' bras .

Sadly, no other Fund-raising Events can be organised until we know when it is considered safe to gather..... but watch this space .

Margaret McCallum

(Social Convener) (07799 281876)

Food-bank Christmas Appeal

We again **Thank** the Congregation for their continued support of donations to the Food-bank.

With Christmas fast approaching, we would be very grateful for donations of "**Festive Fayre**" food - eg. Mince-pies, Christmas Pudding , tins of fruits, chocolates , sweets for children, etc. to enable us to bring some *Festive Cheer* to those folks who sadly have to use the Food-bank.

We would be thankful if the donations could be made by Sunday 12th December to allow for distribution.

The Food-bank will be closed on Fri. 24th Dec . and open from 11am – 12 noon on Fri. 31st Dec. for food collection only.

We once again **Thank Vanilla Café** for their latest donations of Soup Parcels, which were very welcome in this cold weather, their generosity is very much appreciated.

***The Food-bank Team wish you all
a Blessed Christmas.***

Sheila Graham

Tel: 01236 611222

What is Presbytery.

A Presbytery is a group of churches who work with each other and learn from each other. It is the court of the church. The 46 Presbyteries have representation from every Congregation in the Church of Scotland. Ministers, Deacons and Elders gather together for Fellowship, Worship, Discussion, *TEA*, and decision making that affects their local Parishes.

For many Elders the word 'Presbytery' is synonymous with problems, and we tend to forget that it is charged with supporting our churches. At times we feel it is only there to set our 'contributions' to the overall work of the church and to judge us in terms of our development and our focus on Mission and Outreach, Pastoral Care, Worship.... and looking after our church buildings.

I was given the opportunity to serve as Condorrat's Presbytery Elder a few years ago and if I'm honest I really didn't know what was involved, but I knew I had to attend about 8 meetings a year. My opinion of Presbytery was not unlike what you have read in the previous paragraph. I attended my first meeting in Falkirk Trinity church with Grace, our minister, to 'show me the ropes'. Condorrat was then part of Falkirk Presbytery. Why? Well, I don't know

as Cumbernauld has never really had any historical links with Falkirk. Over the years I have got to know many people at Falkirk Presbytery sharing with and learning from other members, and it has been truly enriching. After every meeting I would report back to our Kirk Session the important items affecting our Congregation.

Nothing stays the same however and everything is changing. Under Church of Scotland's reorganisation, we are going from 46 Presbyteries to 12 in the whole of Scotland. The Cumbernauld Churches felt that our needs were best served by joining Glasgow Presbytery. As you can imagine with 12 Presbyteries they are much larger, Glasgow encompasses **120** congregations - (*at a recent zoom meeting there were 220 participants!*).

We have become a small fish in a big sea but be assured Grace and I will 'trumpet' the good work going on in Condorrat in our Worship, Family Development Work, Uniformed Organisations, Guild, the Choir, Food Bank, and our Office Bearers... and when **Covid** allows, our Social Events and Sunday School.

(Apologies to anyone I may have omitted)

John Denney.
your Presbytery Elder

Christmas Past

Every Christmas, I remember,
The ones of long ago;
I see our mantelpiece adorned
With stockings in a row.

Every Christmas finds me dreaming
Of days that used to be,
When we hid presents here and there
For all the Family.

Every Christmas I remember
The fragrance in the air,
Of roasting turkey and mince pies
And chocolates everywhere.

Every Christmas finds me longing
For Christmases long past,
And I'm back in my childhood,
So long as memories last.

Carice Williams.

Cleaning your house while the kids are still growing
Is like shovelling the path before it stops snowing.

Phyllis Diller

I hate housework! You make the beds and do the dishes - and six months later you have to start all over again.

Joan Rivers

(PARISH NEWS)

When he died...

Lights are flashing, people are dashing,
It's so cold out, it could kill a snowman,
Cash register's ringing, caroller's singing,
And a man rakes through a trash can.

Everyone's shopping, nobody's stopping,
As he hold out a paper cup he's found.
With holiday cheer, filling the air,
He begs from his seat on the ground.

Music is playing, everyone's saying
Merry Christmas and yes a Happy New Year.
Yet all step around the man on the ground,
Pretending there's no one to see there.

Hungry and cold, broken and old,
With a beard and all dirty they think strange,
They're filled with detest by his simple request
'Can you please help me out with spare change'.

No one would dare to venture too near
The old man with change to be given;
All stepped aside, as he walked with no pride
To the alley and the box that he lived in.

On the way there he happened to hear
These words from the mouth of a small child
'Look! Santa Claus!' which did make him pause;
Then he turned and he winked.. and he smiled.

His eyes twinkled bright on that cold winter's night
As he climbed into his box from the storm.
He laid down his head on his newspaper bed,
As the words of that child kept him warm.

And the very next day, when they brushed away
The snow from the box where he lied
They all thought it strange, he'd a cup full of change,
And a smile on his face.... when he'd died.

God bless us everyone.....right?

(9)

What if the shepherds never told?

As Christmas draws near, it is tradition to read the Bible stories of the birth of Christ. Most of us know how the story goes and who the main characters are. We know of Joseph and Mary who travel to Bethlehem and, finding no room at the inn, stay in a stable. We know that Jesus was born and placed in a manger. We know that angels heralded the birth of this baby Saviour King. But what about the people who weren't necessarily the main characters of this story?

One of my favourite parts of the Christmas story is the story of the shepherds. In the book of Luke, just after the description of the birth of Jesus, another story is told. Out in the field, shepherds are keeping watch over their sheep. During this time, shepherds were social outcasts. They were hated by many people, considered untrustworthy and unclean. Shepherds lived with their sheep in the fields day and night, ensuring that no harm would come to them. They were the lowest of the low. No one cared about the shepherds.

However, on this night, an angel appears to the shepherds. And while at first they are afraid and trembling with fear, the angel assures them, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." And then the sky is filled with angels, glorifying God and singing.

The shepherds decide to travel to Bethlehem to see the Saviour. The Bible says that they go with haste. I like to imagine them running, excited beyond belief. All they know is that this baby is lying in a manger in Bethlehem. They probably search excitedly through the streets, waking up the whole town of Bethlehem to the presence of the baby that they seek. After they find him, they

go about telling everyone they meet about what they had seen, praising God all the while.

No one cared about the shepherds. And yet, God chooses the shepherds to be the first to hear of the birth of Jesus. They are the first to share the good news with the rest of the people. God chose these men of humble means, these men that society deemed unclean and unworthy, and said, "Come meet my Son."

The shepherds teach us that no story is unimportant. No life is not worthy enough. The Saviour came for everyone, not just the wealthy or the educated or the strong. The Saviour's birth was to bring joy to all the people. And the shepherds were the first to tell about it.

This Christmas, consider your own story. Look over the past year and ask yourself, "Where did I see God?" And then, think about who you might share your story with. Who might be blessed to hear about how God has worked in your life, whether it was extravagant or simple, whether you are still struggling or you've made it out of the valley. God has given each of us a story to share, and it's as much God's story as it is our own.

What if the shepherds hadn't told everyone else about what they'd seen? What if they thought, "I do not matter. No one cares about me.?" The people of Bethlehem would have missed out on an amazing opportunity to learn of Emmanuel, God's Son, sent to earth to be with His people. By keeping your story to yourself, you just might be depriving the people around you of the chance to rejoice in God's amazing work in the lives of God's people.

Give more than presents this Christmas. Give witness to Christ whose birth we celebrate this season.

by *STACIE HOPPMAN*
(from Gordon Ross)

Advent Puns/and Others.....

- * I'm not buying an advent calendar this year, their days are numbered.
- * Did you hear what happened to the man who stole an advent calendar? He got 25 days.
- * According to my chocolate advent calendar, there is only 3 days to Christmas.
- * Why aren't Scotrail employees getting advent calendars this Christmas? Because they can't decide who is responsible for opening the doors.
- * Someone stole my antidepressants.
Whoever they are, I hope they're happy. *Richard Stott*
- * A thesaurus is great. There's no other word for it. *Ross Smith*
- * To be or not to be a horse rider, that is Equestrian. *Mark Simmons*

*Have a Happy Christmas,
Gordon Ross*

1. Ripple
 2. The Out
 3. Refreshers
 4. Matchmakers
 5. Galaxy
 6. Edinburgh Rock
 7. Kinder Surprise
 8. Bounty
 9. Walnut Whip
 10. Dolly Mixtures
- Sweet Answers***

Articles for Parish News are welcome from ALL the Congregation.

From CrossReach Scotland.....

As friends and supporters of **CrossReach**, I wanted to get in touch to tell you about a little girl we have had the pleasure of helping.

We know it's not an easy story to read but the stark reality is not every Christmas is a happy one for countless children all over Scotland who face domestic abuse and it is important to shine a light on Julie's story.

At just 10 years old, Julie came to CrossReach counselling after witnessing her stepfather assault her younger sister who had additional support needs.

Thankfully she was able to receive the *Support* she needed by having counselling sessions over 6 months at our service in Inverness.

It was a safe place where she could share what she had been through, what she had witnessed and how she was feeling. By giving her that safe space and listening to Julie, the counsellor was able to find ways to help her manage the trauma, flashbacks and fear.

In addition to supporting Julie one to one, the CrossReach counsellor met key people at Julie's school to help them understand how Julie was feeling and help them support her within the school setting, where she spent most of her days.

— *The counsellor also had frequent review meetings with Julie's mother who was herself receiving counselling; not only did this help her personally, but it also meant she was able to support Julie at home.* —

In time, Julie's flashbacks began to fade and she learned that it was understandable to feel this way, as well as learning that what happened was not her fault. She felt more able to ask for help, gradually becoming more settled in school and finally able to sleep through the night without fear or worry.

Police Scotland recorded nearly **63,000** incidents of domestic abuse in Scotland in 2019/2020, a 4% increase year on year and..... we are yet to see what impact 'lockdown' has had on that number.

Many suffer in silence, but what we at CrossReach want to ensure is that we are there to support everyone who comes to us for help in such a horrific situation. No one should have to go through the abuse like Julie experienced.

We need your help so that we can fund our services to be there for more children like Julie.

We rely on donations from friends like you to keep our children and family services open.

God Bless and Thank you

Paul.

A Sweetie Quiz

1. Gentle wave
2. Dine al fresco
3. Thirst quenchers
4. Marriage arrangers
5. Ford people-carrier
6. Stone from Scottish capital
7. Gentler than a shock
8. Mutinous ship
9. Nutty way to urge a horse
10. Barbie's assortment

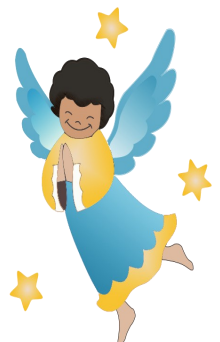
giftaid it

Who can give through Gift Aid ?

Anyone who pays Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax, which is annually at least equal to the Tax which the Congregation, and other Charities to which you make Gift Aid Donations, will reclaim on the financial value of your '*gifts*' for that year.

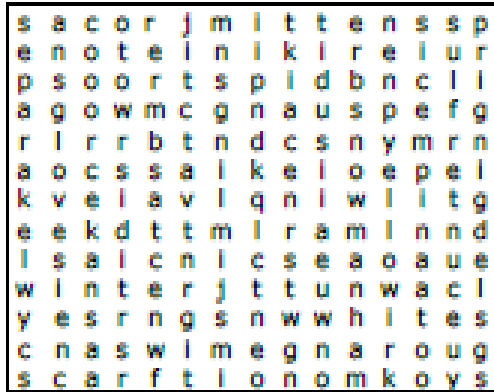
Gift Aid Declaration Forms or further information is available from our **Gift Aid Convener:....**

Mrs Doreen Ross
Mob. No. 07769203648



Children's Corner

Snowball Word Search

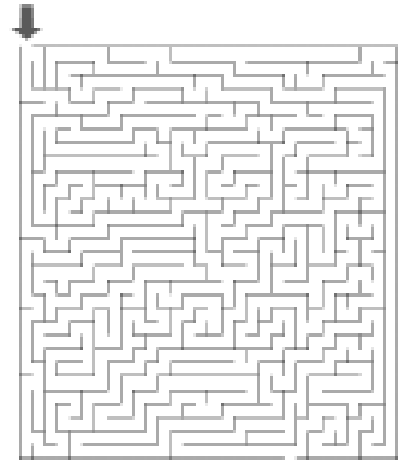


- | | |
|----------|---------|
| snowball | white |
| snowman | scarf |
| ice | gloves |
| winter | mittens |
| sledging | skis |



Mittens Maze

The girl has lost her mittens in the snow. Can you help her through the maze and find them?



Colour me...



Colour me too.....





FABRIC DONATION ENVELOPES

On the Communion months the *Fabric Envelopes* will be delivered to every member of the congregation along with the 'Parish News'. Please take time and prayerfully consider donating money to the church in this way.

Envelopes can also be collected at the church on Sundays by those members who get Parish News 'on-line'.

As you can imagine the running costs of the Church and Halls are expensive and we need your support.

If you do fill in an envelope they can be returned at any time, not just the following Sunday.

Please consider *Gift Aiding* your donation by filling in the information on the envelope as this gives us another 25% of your donation and costs you nothing.

With many thanks,

Grace Saunders
(Minister)

