ST PAUL'S MILNGAVIE

LIFE



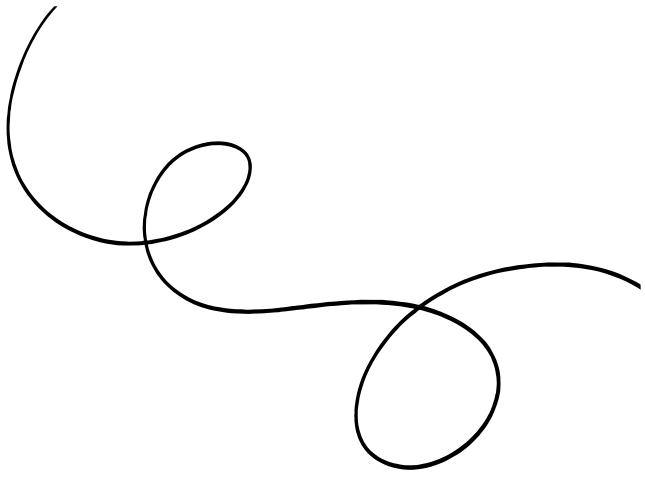
29TH NOVEMBER

14TH ISSUE

DECEMBER EDITION

"FOR TO US A CHILD IS BORN, TO US A SON IS GIVEN, AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ON HIS SHOULDERS. AND HE WILL BE CALLED WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE."

ISAIAH 9:6



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Editor's Note

CARLA MACALLISTER

Welcome to the December edition of Life! December is always a special and busy time at St Paul's. This year, even more so with the opening of our Christmas Tree Festival. It's wonderful to see the joy and community spirit it brings.

As we journey through Advent, our services offer opportunities to pause, reflect and prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christmas Day.

I hope you enjoy all that this special season has to offer, and may you know the joy, hope and peace of Christ this Christmas.

With love,

Carla

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Lynsey's Letter

REV LYNSEY BRENNAN

Dear Friends,



As we enter this special season of Advent, we are invited to pause, prepare our hearts and rediscover the wonder of Christmas. It is a season filled with anticipation, familiar traditions, joyful celebrations and opportunities to share love with those around us. Yet, at the heart of all the preparations and festivities is the greatest gift of all: Jesus Christ, born that first Christmas morning to bring hope, peace, love and joy to the world.

When we put Christ at the heart of Christmas, we are reminded of the extraordinary gift God freely offers to each of us – life in all its fullness, a living hope that shines into the darkest places and promises of eternal love that can never be taken away.

Advent is a season of hope and expectation. Think of it as preparing your home to welcome someone very special. We are making room in our hearts for the One we have been waiting for. It is not simply about shopping, planning, rushing around or getting everything just right. It is about waiting, watching, praying and making space for God. It is about recognising the

joy of Christ's coming and allowing that joy to shape how we live and how we treat others.

So, as Christmas approaches, let's not become so caught up in the busyness of the season that we miss its true meaning. Let's share hope, show kindness, offer encouragement and let our words and actions reflect the love of Jesus. Let's celebrate together, come to church, raise our voices in praise and give thanks to the God who freely gives us the light and life of Christ. May we carry the joy of Christmas in our hearts, not just on Christmas Day, but throughout the year ahead.

Later in this magazine, you will find two reflections that I thought you might enjoy reading. Back in November 2021, during a time when Christmas celebrations were still being shaped by the restrictions of the pandemic, I was invited by Life and Work, the Church of Scotland magazine, to respond to the question: “Will you appreciate Christmas more this year?” My response was published in the December issue.



Hearts created by our Sunday Club for Pastoral Care visits

I hadn't realised at the time that your previous minister and my old mentor, the Rev Fergus Buchanan, had also been invited to answer the same question. Our answers are quite different, shaped by our own experiences and perspectives, but each offers something valuable to reflect on as we consider what Christmas really means.

Although those words were written in 2021, their message remains just as meaningful today. Perhaps they will encourage

us to look afresh at the familiar Christmas story and appreciate anew the hope, love and joy at its heart.

Love came down that first Christmas, and it is a love that never stops giving. Whatever this season holds for you, may you make room for Christ, embrace the joy of His coming and know the peace and hope that only He can bring.

Wishing you all a blessed Advent and a Christmas filled with the love, light and joy of Jesus. Again, please reach out if you need support, a listening ear or a time of prayer this season.

Love,

Lynsey x

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."

Micah 5:2

Pastoral Letter

REV JOHN MACGREGOR
- PASTORAL ASSISTANT

Dear Friends,

As Advent begins and we approach the celebration of Christmas, there is an invitation before us that can so easily be lost amid the busyness of the season. Advent calls us to pause, to be still, and to prepare our hearts once again for the coming of Christ.

The much-loved Christmas carol reminds us that "Love came down at Christmas". In Jesus, God's love took on flesh and entered our world. He came to walk alongside people in every season of life, especially those times when our hearts are burdened by grief. The shortest verse in the Bible is of Jesus at the funeral of his friend. He wept.

For many people, Christmas is a season of happy memories and family gatherings, and rightly so. Yet for others, an empty chair around the table or the memory of a loved one who is no longer with us can make this time of year painfully challenging. The good news of Christmas is that God's love meets us exactly where we are. We do not journey through our grief alone. He understands our pain and walks with us. The two men on the Emmaus Road knew this to be true (Luke 24 v13-35).

As part of our Advent journey, you are invited to gather on 6th December at 2pm in the sanctuary, for our annual grief share Remembrance Service. This gentle and meaningful service provides an opportunity to give thanks to God for loved ones who have been called home. Naturally there will be sadness, but it will also be a time of comfort, encouragement, and hope. Together we remember cherished memories, give thanks for lives well lived, and hold on to the promise that one day we shall meet again in Christ's presence.

During the service, there will be an opportunity to place the names of your loved ones on paper hearts and hang them on our Memory Tree. This simple yet meaningful act allows us to honour those we miss while entrusting them to God's loving care. Their names will remain in church over the Advent and Christmas period, reminding us that they are not forgotten.

The service will be led with the support of our Pastoral Care Team, and everyone is warmly welcome, whether your loss is recent or many years past. If you need further information, or would like to speak to me about your grief, please contact me.

This Advent, as we reflect on the truth that Love came down at Christmas, may we find comfort in the God who came near, with hope in His promises, and peace in His presence.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5)

Every blessing,

Rev John

Hello from Sakata

LORNA FERGUSON

It was lovely to see on social media the advert for the Milngavie Christmas Tree Festival coming up. When I lived in the Greater Tokyo Area I would see quite a few decorated Christmas trees. But here in rural Sakata, there are hardly any. Apart from a few decorations being sold or adverts for the cakes Japanese people eat on Christmas Eve, you wouldn't even know that Christmas is coming.



At my church we are having a few events which we are inviting people to. We have a kids' Christmas outreach on the 6th, with the Christmas story, games and a craft. Then on the 12th, we have a ladies' Christmas. I have been asked to prepare Christmas tree shaped biscuits which the ladies will decorate and also to give the message. On the 20th, we have our Christmas service and then a candle service on the evening of the 24th.

The 25th is a normal working day here. I hope to invite a few church ladies for a British Christmas dinner in the evening, although we will have to make do with chicken since you can't get turkey in this part of the country.

In all of these events, we hope to have the chance to share the good news of Jesus' birth, and why he came, to people who

have not yet heard. As it says in Romans 10:14,

“And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?”

The work in Japan is slow and a lot of patience is needed. However, just last week, God gave us two encouragements. I do a small English conversation class with two mums who want to improve their English. Each time we look at a Bible story of a person who met Jesus, and how they were changed as a result.

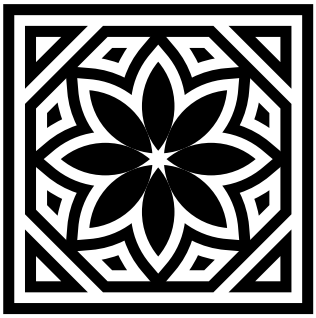
On the morning of the class, we woke up to a thick blanket of snow. One of the ladies comes from the other side of the town and had not yet changed to winter tyres, so she couldn’t drive. She tried to book a taxi but they were all busy. So she walked nearly 3km in the snow and the cold because she said she so much wanted to be there. At the end of the class, the other lady said that she is interested in knowing more about the Bible and wants to ask the minister if he can recommend a Japanese book for her.

I give thanks for each of these ladies and their interest in the Bible. May God help them not just to be interested in the Bible but to be able to believe it too.

May God also give each of you opportunities this Christmas to share the good news of Jesus with those round about you.

🎄 Merry Christmas 🎄

Lorna



Youth & Children Update

MATTHEW TODD
YOUTH & CHILDREN ASSISTANT

As we head into Christmas it has been so encouraging to see the numbers of children and young people in St Paul's climbing.

We are gearing up for our Nativity Play on 13th December when we will explore the fragility of Jesus' birth and what that reveals to us about the God we worship. The children will sing those words from Graham Kendrick's "Like a Candle Flame".

"Stars and Angels sing
Yet the earth sleeps in shadow
Can this tiny spark
Set our world on fire?"

The fact that God became a helpless baby changes everything. The smallest spark can start a fire and the smallest child can change the world forever.

Life & Work 2021

REV LYNSEY BRENNAN

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION: "WILL YOU APPRECIATE CHRISTMAS MORE THIS YEAR?"

"Straight away my answer is "No". Last year with the restrictions in place it created for us opportunities to share the Christmas story and the wonderful Good News of the birth and gift of Jesus Christ in new and inspiring ways.

We used the railings outside the church and lit up the word "JESUS" surrounded by a lit-up star. We also invited the children in the village to decorate stars for our "wall of star filled joy" that contained messages of hope for the people to read. The primary school also used the railings to display artwork depicting the full nativity story, with each class designing a different part of the story. This was a wonderful display and brought joy and light to the village. We encouraged our local radio station to join in with "carols on the doorstep" and as a community we enjoyed singing carols safely from our doorsteps taking photos and videos to share on social media.

Personally, as I experienced a slightly slower pace of ministry last year, it helped me to reflect more on the amazing miracle of the first Christmas and, by stopping to listen and be still before God and Jesus my Saviour, this gave me a great sense of peace and joy."

Life & Work 2021

REV FERGUS BUCHANAN

“Christmas 2020 saw me shielding as a consequence of a stem-cell transplant undergone earlier in the year. Everyone was having to endure restrictions but folk like me were to be extra careful. So no big family gathering on Christmas Day.

At this point in time we can look forward to a different Christmas with “live” worship and the family once again together. There is always a joy in regaining something you had lost. The thing to remember, though, is that no matter how dismal last Christmas might have been, we never lost God. Think of the circumstances nationally and personally in which Jesus was born. His parents were under compulsion to leave their home to register in a census. His birth was in conditions undesirable by any standards. The birth stories of Jesus have their dark side. And yet, through all of this, God was working for the good of us all.

Isaiah's vision of “Immanuel, God with us” was realised in Jesus. In the “downs” as well as the “ups”, he is with us. That Jesus is the ultimate assurance of this is the message that makes all Christmasses meaningful. And maybe it's in the most challenging times we appreciate it most.”

Gift Service

SUE ROLLINGS

The gift service is one of the highlights of the St Paul's calendar.

This year the moderator's committee has agreed to share gifts received at the gift service between two very worthwhile charities:

- Glasgow City Mission child and family centre
- 3D Families in Drumchapel.

Both these charities support families with children up to the age of 12.

We would love to give each charity at least 50 presents and are very grateful for your generous support in this.

The retiring offering at the gift service will go to Dalmuir Barclay Community Pantry which we have been supporting for a number of years. They are busy all year round but especially so at Christmas so this money will be put to good use.

Gifts should be wrapped or in gift bags and labelled with girl/boy and the age range. It would be helpful if you can write in pencil what it is so the charities can match the present with the right child.

As well as toys, hats, scarves and gloves would be welcome.

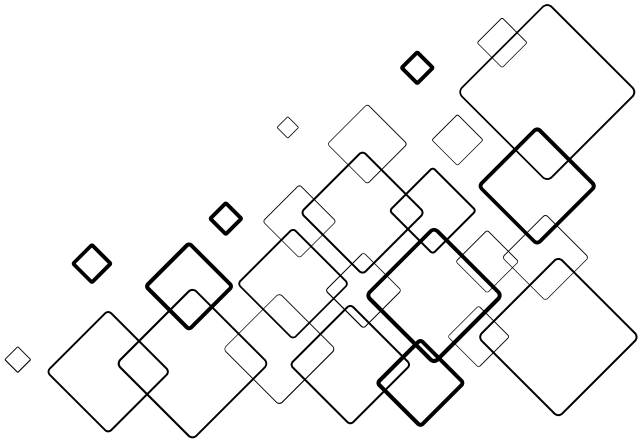
Thank You

REV JOHN MACGREGOR

I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who has reached out with cards, messages, prayers and acts of kindness during the illness and following the death of my mother, Elma. Thanks to our Assistant Session Clerk, Lachie McNeill and Pastoral Care Convenor and Elder, Robin Easton, for making the long journey down to Tarbert for my Mum’s service.

Elma passed peacefully into God's loving presence on 7th November. Your support, compassion, and prayers have been a great source of comfort and strength to both myself and Susan during this time of loss.

We are deeply grateful for the love and care shown by this amazing congregation and wider community.



The Guild

ELEANOR EASTON

November's meetings proved to be very varied and really interesting. We were once again delighted by Linda Ormiston whose powers of entertaining her audience are undiminished! At the next meeting we had two physiotherapists, who gave us many practical tips on how to stay as fit as possible. The lawyer who spoke the following week outlined details of one case which had really impacted her and gave us much food for thought.

At the time of writing we look forward to the first of this year's Guild Projects being opened up for us, 'Bear Necessities'. This supports a church plant and community hub in the city of Sliven in Bulgaria. On November 30th our speaker will talk about some of the New Testament Churches. Our final meeting of this year is our finance meeting, followed by our Christmas Lunch on Friday 11th.

Our first meeting of the New Year, on January 11th, promises to be challenging for us all as our speaker talks about the work among persecuted Christians in many parts of the world. We remain overseas with a picture of life in Tabeetha School in Israel, the only school owned and run by the Church of Scotland. Our final meeting in January has our own Malcolm Boyd whose topic is 'Elvis has left the building' – make of that what you will!

Guild members wish all the congregation a very happy Christmas and a good New Year!

The Men's Association

BRIAN ADAIR

Since the last report, the Association had Alison and Mark Hazell our friends from Baldernock Church sharing their experiences of being Street Pastors in Glasgow. From the number of questions asked by members, clearly a most informed and entertaining talk had been received. Glasgow Street Pastors, based at the Tron Church then wrote thanking us for making a donation to the work which they do.

On 31st October, our famous Coffee Morning happened. Firstly, let me please thank all members of the Association and their friends and families for the huge donations of home baking which was hungrily devoured by those attending. Secondly, thanks to all those who helped do all the hard work on the day itself. We had set up the Hall with tables to seat 86 but in the course of the morning, we added 4 more tables which meant another 24 being seated!! Add to that all the helpers, serving, working in the kitchen and helping at the Cake and Candy stall, and I am confident that there were over 130 enjoying the event. Fiona from Bags Full of Love and her family were there and were overwhelmed at the turnout. She was even more impressed when we were able to deliver bags which had been donated by the congregation and, of course, when she received the final total of £1370.06. Thank you everyone- you know who you are!!

In November, we had Shaw Anderson from Glasgow City Mission (who is an elder in St Luke's Church) who gave a very informed talk about how the Mission operates and, again there was a good turnout of members, proving yet again, that we've made the right decision to change to Monday afternoon.

In last month's Life, I highlighted our Christmas Lunch. Now, I am reporting that we have decided to postpone lunch until the New Year so for anyone who has not received my email please don't worry there will be an opportunity for a social occasion early in 2027.

There are no meetings of the Association in December so there will be no report in January Life.

The Association wishes all readers a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.



Choir

DEREK NORVAL

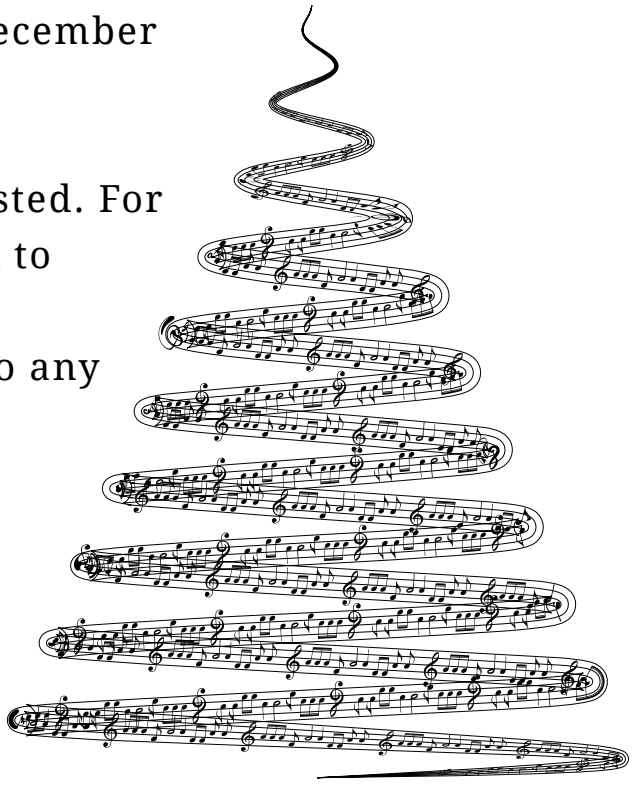
Extra singers with some choral experience would still be welcome to join us as we prepare our Christmas programme. The music we learn will be used at the Advent and Christmas services throughout December. This is the final call to join us in the wide range of music that we will provide during the morning services and at our service of lessons and carols at

7.00pm on Sunday, 20th December.

Rehearsals for the Christmas programme are as follows:-

Thursdays 3rd, 10th and 17th December from 7.45pm until 9.15pm

Do come along if you are interested. For further information please speak to Derek Norval (07814389262) Derek.Norval@ntlworld.com or to any member of the Choir.



Praise Band

DEREK NORVAL

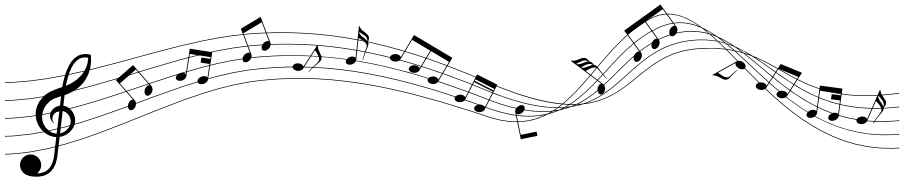
A further invitation to any instrumentalists who would like to join us for two occasions.

- On Sunday, 20th December we will rehearse at 9.30am in the hall and provide music after the service during the “mince pie” time for teas and coffees.

- On Thursday 24th December we will provide the music for the Christmas Eve Family service at 7pm. We will rehearse from 6.15pm.

Several additional players have already expressed an interest in playing. Please make sure that Derek Norval knows that you intend to play in order that suitable music can be provided for you before the first rehearsal. Instrumentalists would be most welcome to join us for either or both of these two Christmas events.

If you (or anyone you know) would like to play in the band, please contact Derek Norval (07814389262) for more information.



Christmas Tree Festival

ELEANOR EASTON



SATURDAY NOVEMBER 28TH

–

FRIDAY 4TH DECEMBER

First of all the members of the committee want to say a huge 'thank you' to the many people in the congregation who have offered to help in a variety of ways during the Christmas Tree Festival! We could not run this event without your help and are immensely grateful to you.

This year we have the biggest number of trees for several years, thirty-five! This includes several trees decorated by groups who have not participated before, which shows the popularity of the festival. It should be a wonderful spectacle.

We hope for generous donations from our visitors which will be divided among the four charities nominated this year. Two are very local – Gavin's Mill Roof Fund and the Milngavie and Bearsden Men's Shed. The Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme and Médecins Sans Frontières complete our list and all are very deserving of our support.

Please visit as often as you can - we would be delighted to welcome you every day! The tearoom will provide a chance to relax and the music programme will entertain you as you look at the trees or when you sit down to listen to an item which is particularly appealing to you.

We look forward to seeing you!

SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER

10.15	St. Paul's Church Choir
11.00	Opening Ceremony
11.30	Rachel Rutherford – Clarsach
2.00	Brennan Brass
3.00	David Crooks & Sunil Sagoo – Classical Guitar

SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER

1.45	Quavers Music – Recorder Group
2.15 & 3.15	Flute Phonics

MONDAY 30 NOVEMBER

11.00	David Inglis – Organ
12.00	David Inglis – Piano
2.00 & 2.50	Group from Milngavie Choir
3.15	Milngavie Primary School Choir

TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER

11.00 & 12.00	Douglas Academy Instrumental Ensemble
2.30 & 3.15	Christine Furnish – Organ

WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER

11.00 & 12.00	Group from Bearsden Fiddle Orchestra
2.15	Derek Norval – Piano
3.15	Derek Norval – Organ

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER

10.45	Noah's Ark Toddler Group – Singing
11.00 & 11.45	Glynn Bragg – Organ
2.15 & 3.15	Euan Russell – Voice

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER

11.00 & 12.00	Matthew Todd – Piano and Voice
2.30 & 3.15	Jordanhill Handbell Ringers

Looking Forward...



UPCOMING COURSES

The Prayer Course: this is an eight week journey through The Lord's Prayer which will begin in the New Year. This is a wonderful course and is based on Pete Greig's book – How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People. The course is suitable for everybody – even those who have attended church for many years!

Calling New Members: Rev. Lynsey Brennan and a small team from the congregation will be running a Thursday evening course in the New Year for people wishing to join the church and learn more about our community of faith. The course is called ABC in Discipleship.

For either of these courses, please get in touch with Hilary in the office (st.pauls@btconnect.com) if you are interested in coming along.

Presbytery News

Since 2023, Church of Scotland Learning has been a platform which equips people to live out the mission of God by providing free learning resources for individuals, groups and congregations. The resources are designed to help people discover and develop their purpose, gifts and calling for the journey of faith.

Recently, four brand-new resources exploring Eldership, Being Intergenerational, Welcome and Youth Ministry have been added.

If you've never explored these free resources, please take a look via the Church of Scotland website: https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/church-of-scotland-learning. Once you've registered an account, you can watch helpful videos - some for individuals, others to watch as a group.

If you would like any more information on these, please contact learning@churchofscotland.org.uk or scan the QR code with your phone camera:

The Noticeboard

1 ADVENT SERVICES

Join us each Saturday morning for our Advent Services from 9.30am - 10am Following on from Rev Lynsey preaching on Hope;

5th Dec - Peace
- Matthew Todd

12th Dec - Joy
- Stephen Thoms

19th Dec - Love
- Rev John MacGregor

Join us for our Ecumenical Advent Services: A peaceful half-hour of reflection, prayer, and worship as we prepare our hearts for Christmas.

2 YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Christmas Party

Open to all 8-18 year-olds from 7-8.30pm, Saturday 5th December. Come along for Christmas games, pizza and cake with of course the usual Bible based message!

3 CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Particular Dates to note over the Christmas period:

6th Dec
- 2pm Remembrance Service for loved ones

13th Dec
- 11am - Gift Service

20th Dec
- 11am - Mince Pie Sunday
- 7pm - Lessons and Carols

24th Dec
- 7pm - All-family service
- 11.30pm - Watchnight Service

25th Dec
- Family Christmas Day Service 10.30am at Baldernock Church

"The Way" will resume in January 2027

4 BALDERNOCK FAYRE

Baldernock Christmas Fayre: this will be held at Balmore Golf Club on Saturday, 5th December (10am -12 noon).

5 CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

11th Dec - 7.30pm
Milngavie Churches Shepherds Quartet
- Allander Church

12th Dec - 7pm
Candlelit Christmas with Aria Harmony Group
- Baldernock Church

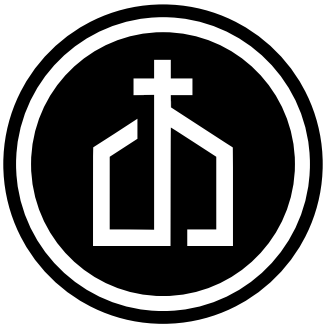
14th Dec - 7.30pm
Douglas Academy Concert
- St Paul's Church

18th Dec - 6pm
Baldernock Family Carols
- Baldernock Church

For information on any of these events, please contact the Church office.

6 LIFE DEADLINES

The next issue of St Paul's Life will be published on Sunday 7th February. The deadline for submissions is Sunday 31st January. All submissions and suggestions are welcome. Thank you for all your continued support.



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