



Christmas and Advent Worship at St. Paul's



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| Saturday 30th Nov | 9.30am | Advent Service - Luke 21:5-19 Theme: ' <i>A Time for Encouragement</i> ' Alex McEwan |
| Sunday 1st Dec | 10.00am | Morning Worship Rev Ramsay Shields |
| | 7.00pm | Evening Worship Rev Ramsay Shields |
| Saturday 7th | 9.30am | Advent Service - Luke 19: 1-10 Theme: ' <i>A Time for Renewal</i> ' Robin Easton |
| Sunday 8th | 10.00am | Morning Worship Rev Dr David White |
| | 7.00pm | Evening Worship with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper Rev Ramsay Shields |
| Saturday 14th | 9.30am | Advent Service - Luke 20: 41- 21:4 Theme: ' <i>A Time for Justice</i> ' Douglas Muirhead |
| Sunday 15th | 10.00am | Christmas Family Gift Service Rev John Wilson |
| | 7.00pm | Milngavie Churches Carol Service |
| Saturday 21st | 9.30am | Advent Service - Luke 15:25-32 Theme: ' <i>A Time for Celebration</i> ' Stephen Thoms |
| Sunday 22nd | 10.00am | Christmas Family Worship <i>followed by Coffee & Mince Pies</i> |
| | 7.00pm | Christmas Readings and Music |
| Tuesday 24th | 7.00pm | Christmas Eve Family Carol Service |
| | 11.30pm | Watchnight Service |
| Wednesday 25th | 11.00am | Christmas Day Service at Baldernock Church |
| Sunday 29th | 10.00am | Morning Worship Very Rev John Christie |

No Evening Worship

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

December 2019



Dear Friends,

For over two millennia, people have told of the child in the Bethlehem manger; of angels who announced His birth to shepherds, and of wise men who travelled a great distance to witness His birth as foretold by the prophets. That a story persists for many years does not prove its truthfulness. Many legends also survive in the popular imagination. However, a twenty-century tenure at least merits the consideration of any open-minded person. What deep human longings does the Christmas story portray?

Who can remain unmoved hearing children singing “Away in a manger”? The simple story of eternal love in the form of the infant Christ reaches the places that no manufactured reality television rendition ever could. The Christmas story continues to entice many despite the secularisation of our society. That is why people still gather in church on Christmas Eve, searching, yearning, sometimes with drink on their breaths, but hope in their hearts, ready to hear the same old story of Jesus and His birth.

The Christmas story is important because it has endured and because it speaks of hope and survival. In our Christmas carols, we sing about “peace on earth”. Greetings cards extol peace, nations crave peace, families desire it, and the news reminds us of its fleeting nature. Yet it still offers us hope of survival and a hope of life that is still linked to something that is greater than ourselves.

In his best-selling book “Emotional Intelligence”, psychologist Daniel Goleman tells of boarding a New York City bus to find a driver whose friendly greeting and positive disposition spread a contagious warmth among the initially cold and indifferent passengers. Daniel Goleman envisioned a “virus of good feeling” spreading through the city from this “urban peacemaker” as he described him, whose good will had softened hearts. In the truest sense, the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is the birth of our Global Peacemaker.

Romantic estrangement, family strife and bereavement can all conspire to make many a person's Christmas dismal. One of Elvis Presley's most popular songs was “Blue Christmas” in which a lonely crooner mourns heart-breaking lost love. Our family may be apart this season by necessity or choice, and an “empty chair” will often remind people of their pain. Christmas “Ho, Ho, Ho” can often do little to subside the deep melancholy and torment of many!

One possible influence of the blues might be Seasonable Affective Disorder (SAD), a form of depression that I am sure that many, even within the medical profession, do not fully understand. The Mayo Clinic claims that genetics, age and body chemistry could be the culprits. Mayo recommends that we see our doctor if we are feeling down for days and have motivation problems. Symptoms can include changing sleep patterns and appetite, feeling hopeless, contemplating suicide, or seeking comfort in drugs or alcohol.

Many people will sit around a large table this Christmas with their families, no-one missing, laughing and joking, with peace and joy shared out in bucket loads. However, others will experience loneliness, disharmony and dysfunction. Thankfully though, regardless of our personal circumstances, we can be comforted with the realisation and acceptance that it was God Himself who chose to come amongst us at Christmas because He chose to do so from before the beginning of time. Our Lord God and Heavenly Father listens to us and helps us to realise that we are not alone in this world. This is the amazing mystery of Christmas that continues to give us comfort and consolation as well as peace and joy. Naturally, the carnal part of us clings to our loneliness and does not allow God to touch us where we feel most wounded. I have seen this again and again in my many years of experience of parish ministry. Often, we hide from Him or reject Him because we feel angry, confused and lost.

Yet one cold, dark night, among the furrowed hills of Bethlehem, God, who transcends both time and space and knows no boundaries, took on the lowly confines of a baby's skin and the vulnerable labours of mortality, to come and live among us. The apostle would later write to the Church at Colossae:- "He is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation." (Colossians 1:15). However, the handful of eye-witnesses on that extraordinary night saw none of that. All they saw was a tiny child trying to exercise His lungs for the first time.

The innocence of the Christmas story challenges this fallen world; the purity and beauty of the Virgin and Child. It is the shining innocence of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the Gospel narrative which convicts us and uplifts us. There will be no shortage of effort devoted to debunking and modifying Christmas, even from so-called "leaders" within the church. However, Christmas continues to be celebrated to the ends of the earth.

I wish you all every blessing as we join this celebration together this Christmas.

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Ramsay B. Shields

Church of Scotland Used Stamp Appeal

As Christmas draws near please remember to collect all stamps from cards and parcels. There is a collection box in the Strathblane Road porch along with details of the charity that is being supported by World Mission this year. The collection box is there all year round so please remember this is not only at Christmas.

Irene Strang

Gardening Thank You

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the hard working gardeners who keep the Church garden in such good order. The weather this year has been unpredictable and it has been a challenge. It is always nice to hear from the congregation and also members of the public on how they appreciate our hard work. I would also like to thank Hugh for cutting the grass and of course keeping the hedge on the straight and narrow. If anyone would like to help in the garden please let me know.



Wishing everyone the compliments of the season.

Sheila Dickson
Garden Convener

Scottish Bible Society

Thanks to everyone who supported the annual Walk for the Word in October. The sum raised for Bible Society projects was £110.

Frances Ireland

Coffee and Mince Pies

Our annual Coffee and Mince Pies event will be held on Sunday 22nd December in the Large Hall after the morning service. This year's charity is the Scottish Cot Death Trust. Do come and join us for festive fare and fellowship. As usual, donations of mince pies or shortbread will be most welcome.



Frances Ireland and Liz Trill

Scottish Cot Death Trust

The Scottish Cot Death Trust was founded in 1985 and is the only charity in Scotland dedicated to the sudden unexpected death of babies and young children. It makes a difference because it aims to find answers through funding research, provides support for bereaved families and educates the public and professionals about sudden unexpected death in infants (SUDI) and how to reduce the risks. It is a small charity run from an office base in Glasgow with a small team of dedicated staff and volunteers and its services are accessible from anywhere in Scotland.

Thank You

Dear All,

Just a wee note to say many, many, thanks for all the kindness shown to me by telephone calls, cards, and food parcels! But most important your prayers which have been a great source of strength and support to me. I am now well on the road to recovery, although at a slower pace than I am used to!
Once again. Many thanks.

Elizabeth Trill

Guild News



At our last meeting in October, we were particularly pleased to welcome a speaker from the Sailors' Society which is one of the wider Guild projects. Becky Haldane who is a chaplain with the Sailors' Society gave a very interesting and informative talk about the work that this charity does. The Sailors' Society was founded in 1818 and is now in 30 countries around the world helping seafarers and their families. It was a surprise to hear that 90% of everything that we use comes by sea and that there is a workforce of 1.6 million seafarers. Their valuable contribution to keeping the global economy afloat cannot be underestimated and this was particularly evident to us when Becky explained that if our ports were to close, there would only be enough food for 10 days in the UK. Becky provided us with detail of the hardships that our seafarers face in their daily lives including loneliness, isolation, accidents, violent storms, piracy, imprisonment and slavery as well as explaining how the Sailors' Society provides spiritual, practical, social and mental support to seafarers.

The topic for our first meeting in November was a *small window of opportunity opens* and we were privileged to hear the story of a truly remarkable lady, Sue Swinson who received a heart transplant in 2011. Sue told us of her deteriorating health prior to 2011 and how she underwent assessment to ascertain that she was ill enough to need a transplant and well enough to survive. Throughout Sue's presentation, it was clear that she is a lady of immense inner strength and determination, so much so that she was able to resume her former pursuits, for example - hill walking. We were all awe-struck to hear that she climbed Ben Lomond in snow and in poor visibility, less than 2 years after she had received her heart transplant! We were further amazed to hear of her medal winning achievements at the Annual Transplant Winter Games in 2014 where she won silver for downhill skiing and a gold in the curling team. Sue's inspiring story gripped us all, particularly as she was an excellent speaker with wonderful slides to illustrate her talk. We were delighted to hear that she had been chosen to carry the Commonwealth baton and were moved to hear that she had used this opportunity to tour the hospital where she had received her heart transplant, speaking words of support and encouragement to others undergoing the same procedure. It is no surprise that Sue has featured in the British Heart Foundation films with regard to the opt-out donor organ legislation and we all thought that she is a tremendous ambassador for this charity.

At our meeting on 11th November, we were hosts to visitors from the other local Guilds and we were also pleased to welcome three of our Elders – Mairi McCreddie, John Macpherson and Colin Robertson. Our speaker, Peter Buchan held us all enthralled as he shared his story of being a missionary doctor in Botswana. Through photographs and an excellent powerpoint presentation, Peter provided us with a fascinating insight into the history, geography and economy of Botswana before telling us about the medical work that he and his wife, Hazel carried out there. We could only listen in wonder as he explained that they ran a 150 bed hospital where, in some cases, they had to carry out practical surgery and medical procedures whilst consulting textbooks! Their medical duties included outpatients, village clinics and nurse/midwifery training, all the while contending with the adverse ‘medical’ treatments of the witch doctors and building relationships with the reclusive bush people. As well as their medical duties, they also set up a Christian group which over 100 young people attended and they also ran the Guides/Sunbeams groups. Peter explained that their medical outreach and team-work had all been blessed by God and throughout their time in Botswana, both he and Hazel had felt God’s Hand in everything that they had accomplished.

On 18th November our Guild Charity Concert, in aid of Malawi Fruits, took place and members of the City of Glasgow Chorus entertained us with a wonderful programme featuring hit songs from the big screen and stage as well as popular songs from many well-known singers and song-writers. It was lovely that so many people were able to come along and support us and the evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Many thanks to all of the helpers, especially the husbands!

Our final meeting in November was our Scottish Night when Ann Robertson entertained us with an illustrated talk entitled *Dancing round Scotland*.

Our programme for December is as follows:

2nd December: Finance Meeting, Chris Scott & Film Favourites

6th December (Friday): Christmas Lunch, Milngavie Bowling Club

11th December (Wednesday): Guild Carol Service, Killermont Parish Church, Bearsden at 2.00pm.

Our first meeting of the New Year takes place on Monday, 6th January when Derek Norval will be telling us about his musical journey.

We look forward to welcoming you to any or all of our meetings!

Flower Donations - December



Happy Christmas, and thank you for your donations towards St. Paul's Flowers.

Donations given in Memory for December from H Kelly and A D Easton.

Please send any donations to Mrs Marjorie Thoms, 66 Braeside Ave, G62 6NN, or place it in the Flower Guild pigeon hole at the back of the Church. Cheques should be made payable to St Paul's Flowers.

Christmas Eve Offering

The Kirk Session has agreed that this year's Christmas Eve offering should be given to Wateraid.

Wateraid has teams in 28 countries across the world, working with partners to transform millions of lives every year by improving access to clean water, toilets and hygiene. Since 1981, 27 million people have been reached with clean water.

This charity has gone from strength to strength and become one of the most respected organisations dealing with clean water.

There will be information leaflets available about this charity and gift aid envelopes will be left at the back of the Church if anyone wishes them.

Marilyn Ure, Overseas Convenor.

LIFE AND WORK DECEMBER 2019

Christmas in the Holy Land

Church ministers offer contrasting pictures of Christmas in Tiberias and Bethlehem

Discipleship and Me

Perspectives on following Jesus from Christians from Nigeria, Uruguay and the Czech Republic

'A Real Honour and Privilege'

Interview with the newly elected President of the Diaconate Council, Mark Evans
DCS

'My Story is Also My Work'

The background to a new series of portraits of refugees, painted by church artist Iain Campbell and on display at the Royal Society of Edinburgh

Transforming Lives in Christ's Name

Viv Dickenson reflects on a year of social care celebration for CrossReach and the Church of Scotland

'Our Church is Awesome!'

Two young Fife sisters describe their experience as part of the Church family

Speaking and Acting

The Rev Dr Martin Fair continues his study of 1 Thessalonians

Plus all the regular columnists, news, reviews, letters, registers and cross-words

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BreakAway

Introduction

This article was written by the husband and carer of one of our members in BreakAway @ St Paul's Dementia support group. Frank has valued the support and respite provided for his family and care given to his wife over the past three years by all our volunteer befrienders. He has always had a keen interest in the variety of voluntary groups supporting many different vulnerable people in our local communities. This case study -'The Key Role of Voluntary Community Care and Support Groups' is Frank's appreciation of the value he places on the work of voluntary groups and BreakAway in particular.

The Key Role of Voluntary Community Care and Support Groups

Frank O'Hagan

The current paucity of publicly-provided social care, coupled with a national aim of addressing the requirements of an ageing population at home rather than in residential placements, has reached critical levels in many parts of modern Britain. In response, dedicated and highly effective volunteers from different walks of life deliver much-needed support on behalf of the sick and elderly living within their local communities. In doing so, they contribute to building a more vibrant and compassionate society and greatly lessen the burden placed on over-stressed caregivers. The amount of financial savings which this work contributes to the public purse, including the budgets of local authorities and the National Health Service, is substantial.

The role of caregivers is often an onerous one. It carries responsibilities which can occur unexpectedly and when a family is ill-equipped and confused by the ailments of a loved one. The carer may be in need of urgent advice and support. In such circumstances, it is of great comfort to find that assistance is available within their locality as voluntary groups are often well-placed to help fill gaps in provision. Their overall administration can be demanding as it encompasses such matters as the recruitment of skilled and suitable volunteers, timetabling and organisation of activities, and concerns relating to aspects of general health and safety. Nonetheless, their outcomes and achievements can be life-affirming.

BreakAway, composed of members from the congregation of St Paul's Church of Scotland in Milngavie, provides a flourishing example of voluntary work in action. Their commitment and impact have highlighted key features of management and delivery which are essential in ensuring high quality care and support. These include: ascertaining the needs, strengths, interests and favourite pastimes of those attending sessions; identifying and utilising the specific talents and relevant experiences among the volunteers; effectively matching colleagues' skills in relation to meeting the requirements of all participants; and providing a varied and worthwhile programme of pursuits. Consideration is given to balancing one-to-one tasks, collaborative work in small groups, and those occasions when it is most appropriate for the whole gathering to be involved. Importantly, there is a focus on sustaining a happy and engaging ethos from the beginning to the end of sessions.

The helpers give thoughtful attention to social bonding at coffee breaks and through heart-to-heart conversations, playing games such as dominoes or indoor bowling, group singing of songs from yesteryear, and social trips beyond the church hall. Planning takes due account of birthdays, anniversaries, the seasons of the year and national celebrations such as Burns' Night. Practical activities include painting, designing, making greeting cards, flower arranging and other forms of hand-eye coordination. Examples of tasks which are focused on verbal skills and cognition comprise engagement in quizzes, crosswords and the completion of proverbs and well-known sayings. At all stages of the meeting, the focus is placed firmly on inclusion, participation and enjoyment.

Caregivers who make use of BreakAway welcome and appreciate the support that is well-suited to the prerequisites of those for whom they are responsible. They take comfort in knowing that there is an emphasis on 'living well while ageing' through the enhancement of features relating to personal and social health and wellbeing. They appreciate being kept well-informed about what takes place during sessions and being shown examples of drawings and artefacts which have been produced. Feedback on how individuals respond to planned activities and suggestions on leisure interests which they can undertake at home are also very helpful.

'It's nice to be nice' goes the old adage. For volunteers, the giving and sharing of their time and the application of their talents bring their own insightful and beneficial rewards. They too learn from their involvement and can experience both pleasure and contentment through their valuable contributions. There is little doubt that voluntary community care and support groups can and do provide indispensable services amid the hustle and stresses of modern life. It is unfortunate that their social capital is so frequently undervalued.

If you are interested in learning more about BreakAway and getting involved please speak to Peggy Barlow or Gabrielle Buchanan.

World Mission

Prayer requests from CLAAS

The Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement (CLASS) have sent out recent prayer requests for three men who are currently being tried for blasphemy. Stephen Masih's family has had two house fires this month, losing many of their possessions.

Zafar Bhatti is appealing his life sentence after escaping the death penalty when a judge decided there was a lack of evidence. Sawan Masih has been on death row since 2014, his family has been forced into hiding due to mob violence after Sawan's initial arrest. Please keep these men, their families and the lawyers representing them in your prayers; for safety and justice.

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Copy Dates

The copy date for the January issue is Wednesday **1st** January for e-mails and Wednesday **29th** December if using the church pigeon hole.

Please send any articles to st.paulslifemagazine@gmail.com

| Date | Flower Deliveries | Crèche Rota | Vestibule Rota |
|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1st Dec | K. Hagart J. Mill | Tracey Berry | Team 6 R. Easton |
| 8th Dec | A. McLeod S. Stenhouse | Richell MacAllister | Team 7 M. Boyd |
| 15th Dec | J. Ford C. Tanner | Wallis Wilson | Team 8 G. Rogerson |
| 22nd Dec | P. Barlow S. Robertson | Sillars MacKinnon | Team 9 H. Arnold |
| 29th Dec | S. Anderson L. Cowie | No Crèche | Team 10 D. Muirhead |
| 5th Jan | M. Conway K. Edwards | No Crèche | Team 3 E. McEwan |