

ST. MARGARET'S
Parish Church



Christmas 2020
Newsletter





Hi Everyone,

Christmas is fast approaching. I'm sure Christmas 2020 will stand out for us in the future and never be forgotten. Each day we listen out to hear if the Scottish Government will change any rules, or if more restrictions will be added in at the last minute.

Covid-19 has shaken all our traditions and made the things that we have known and loved about Christmas from childhood seem unstable and confused in uncertainty. Can we really have a Christmas without singing carols? Can we welcome in the midnight hour of Christ's birth without hugging and kissing our family and friends? So much of our tradition is based in us being together as a worshipping community.

Advent is a time of both celebration and reflection. It is a time of waiting and of expectancy. The Creator's light and hope resonates at the heart of the universe and reaches out to the core of our being. We are invited to the deepest meaning of watching and waiting. The Persians have a saying; "When it is dark enough you can see the stars". It is interesting that the colour the church chooses for advent is not the cheerful red of the Santa suit or the white and green tinsel of trees and snow. It is the more sombre colour, purple, for reflection and waiting.

And we believe that going through the days and hours of waiting and painful reflection make that moment of birth so amazing and life changing.

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In the midst of our advent, restless searching hearts and minds can be opened to see things more clearly. A baby brings joy, but also changes to all whose lives he/she touches. Advent is the preparation for new beginnings. There's an old Indian saying, "God has lit up lamps in my heart that nothing can put out."

Christmas goes far deeper than our traditions, although sometimes it is hard to let go and trust that God is in this beside us. We prepare to welcome Christ this Christmas, to believe that God wants to be alongside us, and that we have a purpose, a job to do. We stand beside those who are struggling, and with pilgrims everywhere we affirm that God's goodness in humanity is wonderful and imbedded more deeply than all that is wrong.

Prayer:

Dear God,

Thank you for breaking into our world with all its complexities, especially this year when our hopes seem dimmed with the pandemic crisis. So many people have lost loved ones and there are many doubts and fears to deal with. Kindle a flame within our hearts to embrace the story of Christmas. To be alongside our servant king in the hard places where people cry out for help. In stillness help us to listen to Your voice, God. And to realise that transforming journeys lie ahead, pathways rich in surprise, goodness and truth.

Amen.

Audrey Jamieson
Interim Moderator





'DON'T LOOK DOWN - LOOK UP!'

Last year, I happened to look up at the ceiling of our lounge - and to my surprise and horror, discovered that a light brown stain had appeared!! It was a water stain! Further investigations revealed that the stain had been caused by a faulty valve serving our hot water cylinder located above.

But how long had it been dripping?

I am glad to report that the valve has now been replaced, and the ceiling is now redecorated.

But it left me asking serious questions of myself - why had I (or anyone else) never seen it before? Why had I never looked up? Could I have looked up before and never spotted it?

The stain on my lounge ceiling reminded me of much of today's attitude towards Christmas.

Although we may be restricted in what we can do and where we can go this year, we can still become distracted with so many events, present buying, writing and sending of cards, shopping for food, and meeting the many demands of family and friends - that we simply don't have time for Jesus.

In other words, we are so busy '**looking down**' - and consumed with all that the world demands of us, that we become convinced if we don't satisfy all these demands - then we will simply **not** enjoy Christmas!

And in our 'busyness' we **fail** to '**look up**' - we **fail** to see Jesus who is the real 'reason for the season.' Like my water stain - Jesus is there, He is always there with us - but we don't take time to spot Him or taken any notice of Him.

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His resurrection, angels approached those who were searching for Jesus' body in the garden, and asked them - 'Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is **not** here; He has risen!'

We are often guilty of looking for Jesus in the **wrong** place - and **not** just at Christmas time. Sadly, many still seek Jesus in the trappings and tinsel of Christmas - and do **not** find Him.

Many of us are so busy '**looking down**' when we should be '**looking up**'

If I had ignored my water stain for a long period time it could have led to disastrous consequences - and the same is true if we continue to ignore the reality and presence of Jesus in our lives. Jesus longs for us to seek Him, know Him and to enjoy Him.

This Advent season, my prayer for you all is - please take the time and the many wonderful opportunities that are given to us as a church family and community **not** to '**look down**' but instead - to '**look up**' - to '**look up**' - and rejoice in **Jesus** who came down from heaven to be our Saviour, and our Lord!!

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Finally, may I say that the COVID restrictions have prevented me from getting to know so many of you and providing the pastoral support that you deserve. And for that, I am sorry.

But it has been a real joy to return to the church building and enjoy our times of worship, albeit in a different way.

However, I do want to thank David our Session Clerk, Janet our Clerk to the Board, Christine our organist who together with others, have made Alison and I so welcome. It has been our privilege to serve and minister to you since the beginning of May this year.

May God grant each one of you, and your families, a most blessed Christmas - and with the vaccine now discovered and approved, a most peaceful, safe, and prosperous New Year.

John and Alison.





A Vent for Advent - Christmas Quiz.

1. In which of the Gospels is the story of Jesus birth?
2. Isaiah prophesies the birth of the Messiah. Which four titles does he say Jesus will be known as?
3. Which of the minor prophets prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem?
4. In which town (or city) do the angels tell the shepherds Jesus was born?
5. What animals are mentioned in the stable at Jesus birth?
6. How many shepherds went to see Jesus at his birth?
7. How old was Jesus when he was presented at the Temple
8. When Jesus was taken to the temple for circumcision Joseph and Mary offered 2 pigeons as sacrificial offerings for what purpose?
9. Where was Jesus when the Magi found him?
10. Who was Jesus grandfather?
11. Who was the old man who was at the temple for Jesus presentation?
12. John the Baptist was how much older than Jesus?



Answers on page 8.



Watchnight Service

This year's service will be held via Zoom.

ID 854 6994 3484

Tel: 0131 460 1196

Thursday 24th December at 7:00pm

All Welcome!



Quiz answers.

1. Only in Luke's Gospel is the actual story of Jesus birth told (Luke 2:1-7), 2.Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6), 3.Micah 5:2, 4. The town of David (Luke 2:11), 5. None!, 6. We don't know, 7. Eight days old. (Luke 2: 21), 8. One was a burnt offering while the other was a sin offering. (Leviticus 12:8), 9. In a house (Matthew 2:11), 10. Simeon (Luke 2: 25), 11. Jacob (Matthew 1:16), 12. 6 months older (Luke 1:36)