

CASTLE DOUGLAS PARISH CHURCH

SCO11037

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2018



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Intimations to be with Aileen Stoddart by Thursday each week at the latest please.

We are grateful to **Small Print** for the production of this newsletter. Their help is invaluable.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

29TH November 2018

Open Church from 1pm – 4pm. The Church will be open for anyone who would like to come in and spend some quiet time or talk to others. Tea and coffee is available and all are welcome. This happens on the last Thursday of every month.

3rd – 24th December

Christmas Festival. The Church will be open Monday to Saturday 12-4pm every day. Please come along and enjoy some calm contemplation on the reason for the season in this beautiful setting created by the community. Coffee and mince pies. If you are free to help please put your name on the rota on the Church Notice Board. We are always needing volunteers.

3rd December

Service of Lights 7pm. A very special service for people who may find Christmas difficult for many reasons but especially because of the loss of loved ones. A quiet, reflective service.

4th December

7.30pm in the Church Hall. Young Women's Group. All welcome to an evening of carols, mince pies, shortbread and fellowship.

8th December

Isobel Prowse will again be taking part in "Sleep in the Park" in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. Funds raised go to Social Bite which campaigns to end homelessness in Scotland. If you would like to sponsor Isobel you can use the following online site uk.virginmoneygiving.com or contact Isobel who has sponsor sheets.

9th December

Gift Sunday Service. You are invited to bring a gift for a child who might otherwise receive nothing for Christmas. Please wrap your gift and label with boy or girl (if appropriate) and an approximate age.

23rd December

Community Carol Concert. 3pm in Walleys Marts Ring 1. This promises to be a lovely event for all the Community to join together to celebrate the start of Christmas.

24th December

Watchnight Service 11.15pm join together to bring in Christmas Day when Jesus Christ was born.

25th December

Christmas Morning Service 10.30am

Please keep an eye in the local press and Church notice boards as there will probably be more events not confirmed at time of printing.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends,

We are about to be celebrating our first Christmas together, which is exciting!! It is a lovely time of year when everyone seems to want to be happy, when you can bump the person in front of you with their trolley and they don't turn round and give you a nasty look - instead they laugh.

Soon we will all be working like mad to make sure we are ready for Christmas: Christmas cards bought, written, sent - tick; presents bought wrapped and delivered - tick; tree and decorations up - tick; food bought - tick; turkey ordered, collected and cooked - tick; set the table.... oh, no we forgot Christmas crackers!!

Soon our churches will be brought to life with trees and lights and the singing of Christmas Carols.

But what about people elsewhere in the world?

Do you believe that there was once a time when I was really afraid to go to a church service? It was the Christmas I was in Sialkot. The government had decided that at some point, but the date was kept secret for fear of rioting, they would lift Martial Law. We had a few frightening months when gun sales were going through the roof and people shared stories of how frightening life had been before Martial Law. Newspapers reported date after date when it would be lifted. The dates passed and nothing had happened. One of the dates reported was 25th December, the birthday of Mohammad Ali Jinnah (founder of Pakistan).

Christmas Eve came and throughout the evening the noise from gunfire got more and more frequent. No-one knew what was happening. Had Martial Law been lifted and this was a demonstration? Was it more like a battle? Was someone celebrating the birth of a son? Why was there more and more gunfire? It didn't stop till well into the wee small hours. Helen MacMillan who was Mission Partner to this Presbytery, decided to go to the watchnight service regardless of gunfire, about a 10 minute walk up a dark road. I waited up till she got back. The church had been full of Pakistani Christians and I felt ashamed that I had been too afraid.

This story shouldn't make us feel guilt, what I hope it will do is remind us that we need to put Christ right into the heart of the Christmas celebrations. That was what was important to the Christians in Sialkot. They knew that Christmas would not be Christmas unless they truly celebrated Jesus' birth and coming among us to be with us always.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas.

Love Alison

Alison Burnside

Harvest Thanksgiving and Potatoes

All over Castle Douglas the chip pans were in action last month as 2,500 bags of potatoes were distributed around the town and its surroundings, as a recognition and celebration of harvest fruitfulness. In spite of fears of a poor crop of potatoes due to inclement summer weather, our contacts sourced supplies and 2 tons of potatoes were delivered to the Church Session Room ready for action. An enthusiastic army of baggers then got to work, sustained by good humour and coffee and cake, to turn sacks of potatoes into meal-sized recyclable bags, ready for distribution to the waiting doorsteps. Soon the Church was transformed into an "Amazon-like" distribution centre, with bags laid out in town zones ready for uplift and delivery. This year with a favourable weather forecast and help from the Scouts, Castle Douglas Primary School House Captains and Rotary members we were able to get the bags delivered to the doorstep dry and intact in record time. The message that the Church is alive and well and active in the town was well received as was the simple pleasure of interacting with householders on their doorstep. In order to achieve this outcome we depend on the willingness of Church members to offer financial donations, their time, and their talents as a positive form of outreach into our Community. However, the success of delivering a message in the Community is matched by the fellowship enjoyed by Church members in working together to achieve this goal. Thank you once again to all who have contributed to this adventure.

Iain Proudfoot



Helen, Maureen and Sheila show some of the wonderful produce donated to our Harvest Festival. Flowers, fruit, vegetables and a host of different grocery items were distributed to folk in our Parish and also to Carlingwark House. Thank you to those who make it all happen.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the 11th month perhaps took on much deserved focus this year as we remembered 100 years since the ceasefire of WW1.

Modern media sources give us access to pictures, facts and figures not freely available before and the sheer horror of war is there for all to see. Folk spoke of relatives they had never known but felt the grief of their loss and thought of the terrors they had endured.

The day started at 6am with Ian Wemyss piping in a congregation who were led in contemplation by Oonagh. This was followed by tea and toast in the hall. This was followed by the service at the memorial with the parade to the Church service where a wreath was laid. In the evening Alison led a short service of reflection with Lesley Sanderson playing the Last Post and the Church bell being rung.



KID'S CLUB!

*Sunday School
and Bible Quest
are on Sunday
mornings at
11am. Come
along and try it!*

**WHAT IS
CLAUSTOPHOBIA?
FEAR OF SANTA =)**

**WHAT DID MR & MRS
SNOWMAN HANG OVER
BABY SNOWMAN'S COT?**

A SNOWMOBILE =)



*Colour in the picture on the opposite
page and hand it in to the Church
during the Christmas Festival and we
will put it on the wall for everyone to
see*

The Christmas Story

By Leanne Guenther

Once upon a time,
A long, long time ago.
Begins the story of a baby,
That most of you should know.
His daddy's name was Joseph,
And Mary was His mom,
This babe was very special
He was God's only Son.
Some angels came from heaven,
And they began to sing.
To the shepherds in the fields below,
"Glad tidings do we bring!"
A bright star lit the heavens,
To light the magi's way,
To the baby in the manger
Who was born on Christmas day.
And all who gathered round Him,
Rejoiced and praised His birth.
For the babe, the King, named Jesus,
Is our Saviour here on earth!

Christmas isn't a national holiday in Japan but that doesn't stop a large number of people celebrating the festival. Santa Claus, or Santa Kurohsu, is said to have eyes in the back of his head to keep an eye on naughty children, while Japanese Christmas cake is usually made up of sponge, whipped cream, and strawberries.

**Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year**





Coloured in by

NameAge.....



Lest We Forget.....

On Sunday 18th September St Georges Church Drama Group, Dumfries performed a reflection in words and music for Remembrance Time.

Our Church along with Corsock and Kirkpatrick Durham Church hosted the evening and around 230 people attended.

We were treated to a poignant evening of words and music from both World Wars performed brilliantly by the group above. With empathy and sympathy we were transported to the trenches with poetry and actual letters and then we were in the dance halls with Glenn Millar. There was even a visit from Winston Churchill.

From start to finish this was a beautiful evening of reflection with some tears and a good helping of humour as we reflected years gone by.

Thank you St Georges Church Drama Group. What will you bring next time you come?



Be a peacemaker for Christmas Aid

At Christmas time, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, given to bring hope, love, peace and justice to a broken world. We get the chance to spend time with our loved ones celebrating the Prince of Peace, but for millions of people this Christmas, peace seems like an impossible dream.

Violence and conflict remains the norm for many across the globe, from South Sudan to Colombia. In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. If current trends persist, by 2030 more than half of the world's poorest people will be living in countries affected by high levels of violence.

But while peace is broken every day, it is also built every day through the tireless work of peacemakers. This Christmas, Christian Aid is calling for you to stand together with peacemakers around the world who are working tirelessly to bring hope to seemingly hopeless situations. In South Sudan, Bishop Paride Taban

is relentless in working for peace in his country where millions of citizens are suffering from hunger caused by years of civil war. Now in his eighties, he believes that peace is something you practice and every day he repeats 28 words for peace: 'If all put these 28 words into their hearts, and every day they repeat them, there will be no war in South Sudan, there will be permanent peace in South Sudan.'

Elsewhere in the shadow of violence and conflict, Diana Abbas sows the seeds of peace through counselling and therapy. She is the only psychologist at a children's centre run by Association Najdeh, Christian Aid's partner in Lebanon. Through psychotherapy, literacy classes and art therapy, the centre gives young Palestinian refugees the chance to overcome the violence they have witnessed. Thanks to Diana and others at the centre, more children can find peace. Now more than ever, we need peace. With your support, peace is possible this Christmas. Matthew 5:9 shows the blessings lie within peacemaking – in this world it is up to us to do what we can in our daily lives to help frontline peacemakers like Diana and Bishop Paride.

Will you stand with the peacemakers this Christmas?

SNIPPETS

Come and join us for **Community Carols**, Sunday **23rd of December at 3pm** in **Wallet's Mart Ring 1**. This is the start of a 'new' ecumenical, community event to celebrate the fun and excitement of Christmas.

Alison and Louise would like to thank everyone who supported them in Sober of October. We raised £525 with the money being divided between McMillan Cancer Care and the Church of Scotland's support services for people with mental health issues and/or addictions (Crossreach). Suddenly being sober for a whole month seems worth it. THANK YOU!!

THURSDAYS 9.15 AM PRAYER GROUP.....IN LOWER CHURCH HALL

"Hear my prayer, O God." Psalm 54.2.

This group is open to all members and also to non-members. Meetings last half-an-hour.

YOUNG WOMENS GROUP

The Young Woman's Group meet the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm from September to May. Everyone is welcome to come along and join us.

This year we started with a Town treasure hunt downloaded from the internet. The walk started at the Market Hill car park and took us through Castle Douglas looking for the answers to the clues. Fortunately it was a dry night and we had a great time.

We all learned something new about our local town. We finished our tour and met at the church hall for supper which the Scottish Pantry brought in for us.

On 2nd October Mrs Isobel Prowse gave us a very interesting talk on her time at the "sleep in the park" in Edinburgh last year. Mrs Prowse will be going to Princes Street Gardens on December 8th 2018 to take part again. Some of our group have agreed to take part in Sleep in the Park 2019.

For our charity fundraiser night for Parkinson's we organised an event and had ten local crafters/beauty stalls who brought along their items for show.

We had a talk from the local representative of Parkinson's about the support available and the work being done to find a cure by overcoming the symptoms of Parkinson's one by one.

Supper was provided and the sum of £400.96 was raised and given to Parkinson's.

We will be having an evening of carol singing followed by mince pies and shortbread on Tuesday December 4th at 7:30pm in the church hall. Please come along and join us.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR O.L.M.

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.

Dear Friends,

As we move towards Advent, that time of waiting with Hope; isn't it a blessing that our waiting time for a new Minister is past, and we look to the future in her company? I feel personally blessed by both the safe arrival of grand-daughter Rosie, and the beginning of Alison's ministry.

Working as an OLM with her is a real privilege and her enthusiasm is infectious. The future opening up before us, to share the Good News of our faith in God in new ways; to worship together with new nuances; it's an exciting opportunity.

It feels as if we are travelling together on the right road; working in new teams, so that what we are about, as the Parish Church here in castle Douglas, can blossom and grow. So, as we look forward together, may the love of the Lord continue to fill our hearts and minds with the joy of deep trust for today and bright Hope for all our tomorrows.

Yours, as ever, Oonagh.

Castle Douglas Primary School Learning in R.M.E. August – Christmas

Our Nursery classes have been learning about the Nativity Story. We will be performing this during our Christmas concert in December.

P1a and P1b have been learning about being kind and the importance of being good friends to one and other. We will learn about the nativity at Christmas time.

P2 has been learning about the importance of giving. We have learned about the symbolism of gifts. We have been sharing gift ideas.

P2/3 has been learning about giving to charities like Children in Need. We have also learned about the symbolism of advent candles and their importance at Christmas time.

P3 and P3/4 are learning about the story of Christmas and the importance of the Nativity.

P4 has been learning about Diwali. We have been learning to investigate what happens during the festival of Diwali and whether the celebrations bring a sense of belonging to Hindus.

P4/5 has been learning about Hinduism. We have learned where and when Hinduism was founded. We have also learned about the main beliefs of the religion.

P5 has been learning about world religions but have focused on Judaism. We have learned about Torah scrolls, Abraham, The Ten Commandments, Moses and Shabat. We will look at Hannuka closer to December.

P5/6 has been learning about Buddhism-Siddhartha Gautama and how he became a teacher. We have discussed the key beliefs of Buddhism and have shared our learning about the religion with each other.

P6 and P6/7 have been exploring what it means to 'Worship' and how we show that things are of worth to us. We have been learning about the place music has within worship. P7's learning has focused on Creation Stories. In particular, we have studied the Judeo-Christian creation story and how the Old Testament is shared between both religions.

Mr Whan p6/7 teacher

Once again, there will be artwork from the Primary School and local Nurseries and Playgroups on show at the Christmas Festival.

ON A LIGHTER NOTE.....

The teacher asked her Sunday School Class to draw pictures of their favourite Bible story. She was puzzled by Katie's picture which showed four people on an plane.

When asked what story it was meant to represent she replied "The Flight to Egypt".

Pointing at each figure the teacher ventured:

"That must be Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus. But who is the fourth person?"

"Oh" explained Katie happily, "that's Pontius – the pilot!"

"Thanks very much for the beautiful jumper" said John dutifully kissing his Granny on the cheek.

"Och there's nothing to thank me for" she said

"That's what I thought but Mum said I had to!"

May
Peace
be your gift
at
Christmas
and your
Blessing
all year
through.

IT'S CHRISTMAS DAY - ALL IS SECURE

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS HE LIVED ALL ALONE
IN A ONE BEDROOM HOUSE, MADE OF PLASTER AND STONE
I HAD COME DOWN THE CHIMNEY WITH PRESENTS TO GIVE
AND TO SEE JUST WHO IN THIS HOME DID LIVE
I LOOKED ALL ABOUT A STRANGE SIGHT I DID SEE
NO TINSEL NO PRESENTS NOT EVEN A TREE
NO STOCKING BY THE MANTLE, JUST BOOTS FILLED WITH SAND
ON THE WALL HUNG PICTURES OF FAR DISTANT LANDS
WITH MEDALS AND BADGES AWARDS OF ALL KINDS
A SOBER THOUGHT CAME THROUGH MY MIND
FOR THIS HOUSE WAS DIFFERENT IT WAS DARK AND DREARY
I FOUND THE HOME OF A SOLDIER, ONCE I COULD SEE CLEARLY
THE SOLDIER LAY SLEEPING SILENT ALONE
CURLED UP ON THE FLOOR IN THIS ONE BEDROOM HOME
THE FACE WAS SO GENTLE THE ROOM IN SUCH DISORDER
NOT HOW I PICTURED A LONE BRITISH SOLDIER
WAS THIS THE HERO OF WHOM I'D JUST READ
CURLED UP ON A PONCHO THE FLOOR FOR A BED
I REALISED THE FAMILIES THAT I SAW THIS NIGHT
OWED THEIR LIVES TO THESE SOLDIERS WHO WERE WILLING TO FIGHT
SOON ROUND THE WORLD THE CHILDREN WOULD PLAY
AND GROWNUPS WOULD CELEBRATE A BRIGHT CHRISTMAS DAY
THEY ALL ENJOY FREEDOM EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR
BECAUSE OF THE SOLDIERS LIKE THE ONE LYING HERE
I COULDN'T HELP WONDER HOW MANY ALONE
ON A COLD CHRISTMAS EVE IN A LAND FAR FROM HOME
THE VERY THOUGHT BROUGHT A TEAR TO MY EYE
I DROPPED TO MY KNEES AND STARTED TO CRY
THE SOLDIER AWAKENED AND I HEARD A ROUGH VOICE
'SANTA DON'T CRY THIS LIFE IS MY CHOICE
I FIGHT FOR FREEDOM I DON'T ASK FOR MORE
MY LIFE IS MY GOD, MY COUNTRY. MY CORPS'
THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER AND DRIFTED TO SLEEP
I COULDN'T CONTROL IT I CONTINUED TO WEEP
I KEPT WATCH FOR HOURS SO SILENT AND STILL
AND WE BOTH SAT AND SHIVERED FROM THE COLD NIGHTS CHILL
I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE ON THAT COLD DARK NIGHT
THIS GUARDIAN OF HONOUR SO WILLING TO FIGHT
THEN THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER WITH A VOICE SOFT AND PURE
WHISPERED 'CARRY ON SANTA ITS CHRISTMAS DAY ALL IS SECURE'
ONE LOOK AT MY WATCH AND I KNEW HE WAS RIGHT
'MERRY CHRISTMAS MY FRIEND AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT'

Written by a Peace Keeping Soldier stationed overseas
He asks that we pass it on

