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Holy Trinity Church

Albert Place, Stirling, FK8 2RG

Issue 4

December 2024

January 2025

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THE HOLLY

& THE IVY

Rector's Letter

Dear all,

Every year at Christmas we focus anew on the story of Christ's birth as expressed in the Gospels, but also as reflected upon in carols, stories and in many of our Christmas traditions.

Christmas may be so familiar to us that we could easily forget that there isn't just one Christmas story, but that there are actually very different stories telling us of a wondrous birth and love incarnate.

Of our four Gospel writers, only two (Matthew and Luke) tell actual stories of Jesus' birth, but do so in quite different ways. The Evangelist Mark isn't concerned with stories before Jesus-age-30 at all, while John reflects on Christ's Incarnation by way of a theological prelude to his Gospel, rather than by telling us stories of a child in a manger.

Traditionally, attempts were made to homogenise these different stories into one narrative, but that inevitably reduces what each of these stories uniquely has to say about God's love, plan and care for us. Rather, it might be wise to let the different stories speak in their very different voices as each grapples with the mystery of God-with-us.

After all, our own life stories can be vastly different as well: yet in their essence they all speak of God's love and involvement with us as we learn to become truly human in the eyes of God.

Hearing the Christmas stories afresh with their unique message is what we aim to do in our Advent Study Groups this year, but I hope that we all may find ways of listening very carefully to the differences and common threads in the Christmas stories: how they relate to our own story and how they realign our stories with the great narrative of God's love incarnate.

Yours in Christ, Christoph

From the Registers

Baptism

Kieran Young 3rd November

Advent Study Groups 2024

We'll meet for three sessions this Advent to read and discuss the different accounts of Jesus' Birth as found in the Gospels of Luke & Matthew and to reflect on the Prologue of John's Gospel as a way of telling the Christmas story.

Two groups will run in parallel on **Thursdays this year (5th, 12th & 19th December): in the morning after the 11a.m. Service (so ca 11.30a.m.) and in the evening at 8 p.m.** (followed by Compline). Each session will last for about an hour.

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Holy Trinity Building Conservation Repair Work (Latest)

The magazine article in September outlined the conservation work to be implemented on the church and why it is needed. The drone photographs taken in August and displayed at the ACM showed close up problems like the buddleia which had rooted on the building.

In September, our contractor, Cornerstone Traditional Masonry Ltd, used a "cherry picker" to clear the buddleia, other small plants (weeds) and moss rooted in the joints and also from the gutters.

The east end has now been fenced off and scaffolding put up there. Stone cleaning trials have shown decayed and doubtful pointing and areas of chronic water ingress. The organ has been covered to prevent dust getting in.

The scaffolded area has been found to be generally sound, but with areas of water ingress from open joints or growth in the masonry above. Work is being concentrated on these areas. The South buttress pinnacle was found to move near the top. The top three stones will be lifted as a unit and re-bedded with stainless steel dowels set in a special mortar to stabilise the pinnacle and prevent further movement.

Our architect has approved the sample pointing mix and application into thin and wider joints. The mortar is Otterbein Lime (a special lime for the restoration and preservation of historic buildings and also in ecological, biological building construction) and Cambusmore Sand, a special sand from the Callander area

One of the grant conditions is opening of the church outside service times for public access, which has gone on over the summer, and to enable students to see this traditional craft of stonemasonry in practice and learn about career opportunities in traditional building skills. Working with the Developing Young Workforce team from Forth Valley College arrangements are being put in hand for visits by small groups from High Schools in this area.

We will be happy to answer questions about the works and other aspects of our building.

Rev'd Ian Boa, Property Convenor; Robert Nellist Treasurer

Scaffolding at the East End

Cherry Picker in Action

HT Prayer Tree

The Prayer Tree situated at the back of church is an aid to prayer. Feel free to take a label and write your prayer/ message on it and hang it on the tree. **Please add the current date.** The label will be removed one month after this date but if you would like to leave the label on the tree please just alter the date or write another label.

Memories of Christmas as a Child

Christmas was a magical time for me during the 1960s. Although I'm an only child, I had a lot of aunts, uncles and cousins.

On Christmas Day most of the relations from dad's side of the family got together at my aunt Joan's in Riverside, with the exception of my uncle Jim and Aunt Elizabeth and my aunt Winnie and her family, all of whom stayed in England. Jim would send up a York ham and a 5lb box of Rowntree's chocolates. Elizabeth's family were among the founders of Rowntree of York. The other aunts cooked the meal and my aunt Elma made the most delicious sherry trifle.

New Year's Day was an altogether quieter affair. My dad, mum and myself went to my mum's brother, George and his Belgian wife, Jeanne, in Bridge of Allan. Jeanne was a very enthusiastic hostess. We would start with consommé, followed usually by pork and apple sauce. I can't remember what desserts we had but she did have quite strong French white wine and lots of Belgian chocolates which were constantly being passed around.

She had lovely little pictures of views of Belgium and we often listened to her record collection including the Carpenters! *Sheila Brown*

I remember one Christmas when I was about 9 or 10. I had been dropping some heavy-handed hints for ages about desperately wanting a bike for Christmas. Neither Mum nor Dad responded how I would like. Poker faces! Dad didn't actually say that Scottish thing - portrayed so well by Billy Connolly - " Bike? I'll bike you!" but the vibes were the same. I therefore had no expectations when we all rushed downstairs on Christmas morning. While my brothers were ecstatic I did my best to appear pleased with my books, selection boxes, scarf and gloves etc. although I was more than a tad disappointed. Then I heard the tring-tring of a bike bell from the hallway and Dad appeared with my coveted

new bike. Abundant joy! I was so excited that my parents had to dissuade/ forbid me from going out in my pyjamas to try it out! *Sandy Goss*

What does Santa like to eat?

My earliest (pre-school, I think) memory is of asking why my mother was putting out tea things and slices of cherry cake when we were going to bed on Christmas Eve. For Santa and his reindeers, of course! Or actually for my father and two choirboy brothers, when they got back from Midnight Mass. *Ann Lees*

The most well known Christmas story about me was that at the age of 5/6 I told my mother that I didn't want that dirty old man coming down the chimney in to my bedroom! *Rachel Campbell*

From the age of 5 to 10 my mother my two sisters and I spent most Christmases at our grandparents flat in Wolverhampton, a 90 minute drive from our home in the Cotswolds. The journey was the start of the magic, piling everything into the car and setting off on a long journey through Evesham, Droitwich and skirting round Kidderminster. At last we'd arrive. First and foremost, we'd inspect the tree, a very tall tree beautifully decorated by Grandma with the fairy in her net skirt at the top. It also contained in its branches "prizes" such as soap or a pen to be won on Boxing Day when we would play parlour games .

Food was very important. Apart from the turkey with trimmings there would be a tongue, usually placed under the table leg to press it into shape.

Christmas Eve was a happy occasion, going to bed in the large Victorian bedroom where all four of us slept. And then waking at an unearthly hour to feel the weight of a stocking on my feet. Magical. *Libby Coats*

Sheran Harper – Mothers Union Worldwide President

MU members from across Scotland welcomed the opportunity to meet Sheran at St John's Episcopal Church Perth on 6th November. A service was held at 11.00am attended by most of our Bishops, followed by an afternoon of fellowship which was much enjoyed. Sheran spoke about the work of the MU worldwide and she brought Guyanese meals for everyone to taste which was very popular. The following day Sheran attended MU Prayers at the cathedral – a much-appreciated quiet time in a busy life, before jetting off to London. As she leaves office, she is setting up a legacy fund to support leadership training for MU members.

Sheran was born in the United Kingdom and grew up in Guyana. She is a physiotherapist by profession who in the past opened and managed new physiotherapy departments in hospitals across Guyana, and lectured on the Rehabilitation Therapists Training Programme for the government. Sheran has been a member of Mothers' Union since 1987, and since 2001 has devoted herself to serving Mothers' Union, at parish, diocesan, provincial and worldwide levels.

She has been regularly called to speak, and advise government regionally on matters relating to the family and the reduction of violence in the home. Since her election as Worldwide President, Sheran has visited eleven zones around the world to meet members and see programmes first hand. She has also been invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to speak at international conferences and advise on matters relating to peace and reconciliation, an area she is passionate about.

A 'Christmas Cracker' for SSAFA

Featuring:

The West of Scotland Military Wives Choir

The RHET Factor Choir **SSAFA Brass**

at Holy Trinity Church Stirling

Saturday 14th December 3pm

Admission £5, children under 10 free

Refreshments provided

Tickets at the door or to reserve, please call

01786870360

Thank you to all who supported the **Christian Aid Coffee Morning** on 26th October. A grand total of **£1162** was made.

Holy Trinity Stirling is not responsible for the content of external sites whose links are included in the magazine. The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the editorial team.

Christmas Quiz 2024

1. This year was a Leap Year. Were 1900 and 2000 Leap Years?
2. What is Whamaggedon?
3. Alan Bates hit the headlines in January. He shares his name with a famous actor, but why is he well known?
4. HRH Duke of Edinburgh met a special resident at St Helena in January who had also met his grandparents. Who is he?
5. A young actor, fresh out of drama school, was told by Arthur Lowe, "don't worry if there's not a lot of lines. They'll come. In the meantime get yourself a funny costume and stand near me". Who was the actor who passed away this year and starred in this classic sitcom?
6. Why did a family photo taken for Mothering Sunday lead to a lot of media speculation?
7. Why did North Korean television object to Alan Titchmarsh and his trousers?
8. How did a black cat called Matins get into trouble on 2nd June 1953 at Westminster Abbey?
9. Where was the Carnation Revolution fifty years ago?
10. What product manufacturer (a byword in usefulness) announced in 2024 they would introduce the first bladeless version?
11. Which Oxford Don applied unsuccessfully to be a code breaker in the 1940s? There was a note by his name "keen".
12. Where is the Elephant and Bear Line?
13. What is Election purdah?
14. What was Gamblegate?

15. 17th July was National Emoji Day. One of the most popular is known as ROTFL. What does that mean?

16. In this year's Olympics the Philippines gold medallist Carlos Yulo got an unusual reward as well as the medal. What was it?

17. In August a north Italian city advertised for people to learn an ancient skill. The job requirements include being 18 or over, having a high school-level education, knowing how to swim, and possessing a medical certificate that proves "a healthy and robust constitution". What job was this for?

18. What music celebrated its 200th anniversary? Liked by many, and Karl Marx thought it "a solemn mass of earthly joy"?

19. Why might you be looking forward to not looking back in anger?

20. What types of special judges were cancelled after 147 years' service and replaced electronically?

Answers on page 20 **www.parishpump.co.uk**

Our Services

Sundays
10.30am Sung Eucharist

Thursdays
11.00am Holy Communion

At present Sunday School (HTKidZ) meets according to demand. Contact Gen Pont for further information: gandapont@yahoo.co.uk

Please note that the 8.30am Holy Communion service is discontinued in autumn and winter

Prayer Diary December 2024

Sun 01 Advent 1

Mon 02 Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, 1637, that we seek godliness in all things

Tue 03 Francis Xavier, Priest and Missionary, 1552, that we bring others to the light of Christ

Wed 04 Clement of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith, 387, that we use our wealth wisely

Thu 05 for all working in education

Fri 06 Nicholas of Myra, Bishop, 4th century, for our Bishop Ian

Sat 07 Ambrose of Milan, Bishop and Teacher of the Faith, 397, for our Primus Mark

Sun 08 Advent 2

Mon 09 The Conception of Mary, Mother of the Lord, that we have courage in God's will

Tue 10 for all artists who change our perception of the world

Wed 11 for all who are forced to become refugees

Thu 12 for truth and justice in all governments

Fri 13 for all who struggle with mental health

Sat 14 John of the Cross, Priest, Teacher of the Faith, 1591, that we are content with having what we need

Sun 15 Advent 3

Mon 16 for HTTOTS

Tue 17 for peace in the Middle East

Wed 18 for all overwhelmed by Christmas preparations

Thu 19 for peace in Ukraine

Prayer Diary December 2024

Fri 20 for all who feel loneliness

Sat 21 Thomas, Apostle, that we live by faith

Sun 22 Advent 4

Mon 23 for all travelling at this time

Tue 24 Christmas Eve, for families everywhere

Wed 25 Christmas Day, for the joy of the gift given

Thu 26 Stephen, Deacon and Martyr, for all Priests and Deacons

Fri 27 John, Apostle and Evangelist, for all who make music at Holy Trinity

Sat 28 The Holy Innocents, for the safety of all children

Sun 29 Christmas 1

Mon 30 Josephine Butler, 1905, for an end to modern slavery

Tue 31 John Wycliffe, priest, 1384, that our understanding of scripture may grow

Prayer Diary January 2025

Wed 01 Naming of Jesus, that we trust in our salvation

Thu 02 Seraphim of Sarov, 1833, for all who minister at Holy Trinity

Fri 03 for the people of the USA

Sat 04 for all working in the night time economy

Sun 05 Epiphany

Mon 06 for HTTOTS

Tue 07 for our Armed Forces and the work of SSAFA

Wed 08 for all who are sleeping rough

Thu 09 for peace in the Middle East

Fri 10 William Laud, Bishop, 1645, for Ian our Bishop

Sat 11 David, King of Scots, 1153, for our Primus Mark

Sun 12 Epiphany 1

Mon 13 Kentigern (or Mungo), Bishop c.603, for the church here in Scotland

Tue 14 Hilary of Poitiers, Bishop and Teacher of the Faith, c.367, for the courage to challenge falsehoods

Wed 15 for all who are neurodivergent

Thu 16 for all who feel lost in darkness

Fri 17 Antony of Egypt, Abbot, 356, for the work of Startup Stirling

Sat 18 The Confession of Peter, that we seek growth in our church

Sun 19 Epiphany 2

Mon 20 Commemoration of Scottish Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation Period, for the Scottish Episcopal Institute

Tue 21 for all in fear of homelessness

Wed 22 Agnes, Martyr, c.304, for all victims of sexual violence

Thu 23 for an end to the war in Ukraine

Fri 24 Francis de Sales, Bishop, 1622, that we learn patience

Sat 25 The Conversion of Paul, Apostle, that we all have a vision of our mission

Sun 26 Epiphany 3

Mon 27 John Chrysostom, Bishop and Teacher of the Faith, 407, for all in education

Tue 28 for our emergency services

Wed 29 Thomas Aquinas, Teacher of the Faith, 1274, for all ordinands

Thu 30 Charles I, King, Martyr, 1649, for our governments in Westminster and Holyrood

Fri 31 Charles Mackenzie of Central Africa, Bishop, Missionary, Martyr, 1862, for peace in the Central African nations

Rotas December 2024

	Readings	Intercessions
1st Dec	R Piper	T Mitchell
8th Dec	W Wheeler	A Pont
15th Dec	N Jorgensen	C Johnston
22nd Dec	T Mitchell	A Shaw
29th Dec	A Shaw	D Brown

	Sidesduty
1st Dec	R Campbell and C Kendall
8th Dec	J Foster and R Nellist
15th Dec	L Coats and S Goss
22nd Dec	J Morris and N Morris
29th Dec	H Kemp and A Lees

Rotas January 2025

	Readings	Intercessions
5th Jan	N Okeke	M Kenyon
12th Jan	A Pont	R Piper
19th Jan	C Johnston	R Nellist
26th Jan	T Mitchell	A Tyler

	Sidesduty
5th Jan	R Campbell and R Nellist
12th Jan	L Coats and J Foster
19th Jan	S Goss and A Lees
26th Jan	R Campbell and H Kemp

Readings December 2024

Sunday 1st	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
ADVENT 1	**Readings**	Jeremiah 33.14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3.9-13; Luke 21.25-36
	6.30pm	Advent Carol Service
Thursday 5th	**11am**	Holy Communion
	Readings	Isaiah 26.1-6; Matthew 7.21-27
Sunday 8th	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
ADVENT 2	**Readings**	Malachi 3.1-4; Philippians 1.3-11; Luke 3.1-6
Thursday 12th	**11am**	Holy Communion
	Readings	Isaiah 41.13-20; Matthew 11.7-15
Sunday 15th	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
ADVENT 3	**Readings**	Zephaniah 3.14-20; Philippians 4.4-7; Luke 3.7-18
Thursday 19th	**11am**	Holy Communion
	Readings	Judges 13.2-7, 24-25; Luke 1.5-25

Readings December 2024

Sunday 22nd	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
ADVENT 4	**Readings**	Micah 5.2-5a; Hebrews 10.5-10; Luke 1.39-45
Tuesday 24th	**11.00 pm**	Midnight Mass
CHRISTMAS EVE	**Readings**	Isaiah 52.7-10; Hebrews 1.1-4; John 1.1-14
Wednesday 25th	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
CHRISTMAS DAY	**Readings**	Isaiah 9.2-7; Titus 2.11-14; Luke 2.1-20

No Thursday service on Dec 26th

Sunday 29th	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
CHRISTMAS 1	**Readings**	1 Samuel 2.18-20,26; Colossians 3.12-17; Luke 2.41-52

Readings January 2025

No Thursday service on Jan 2nd

Sunday 5th	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
EPIPHANY	**Readings**	Isaiah 60.1-6; Ephesians 3.1-12; Matthew 2.1-12
	6.30pm	Epiphany Carol Service
Thursday 9th	**11am**	Holy Communion
	Readings	1 John 4.11-19; Mark 6.45-52
Sunday 12th	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
BAPTISM OF CHRIST	**Readings**	Isaiah 43.1-7; Acts 8.14-17; Luke 3.15-17,21-22
Thursday 16th	**11am**	Holy Communion
	Readings	Hebrews 3.1-14; Mark 1.40-45
Sunday 19th	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
2nd Sunday after Epiphany		
	Readings	Isaiah 62.1-5; 1 Corinthians 12.1-11; John 2.1-11

Readings January 2025

Thursday 23rd	**11am**	Holy Communion
	Readings	Hebrews 7.23-8.7; Mark 3.7-12
Sunday 26th	**10.30am**	Sung Eucharist
3rd Sunday after Epiphany	**Readings**	Nehemiah 8.1-3,5-6, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 12.12-31a; Luke 4.14-21
Thursday 30th	**11am**	Holy Communion

Wishing all our readers a very **Happy Christmas**

and a **Peaceful New Year**

Articles for the **February** magazine are requested on or before

January 12th

The magazine will be available on

January 26th

Christmas Quiz Answers

1 The year 2000 was a leap year. But 1900 was not. Every 4 years is a leap year.

2 Whamageddon is a game played during the 24 days before Christmas in which players try to go from 1 December to the end of Christmas Eve (24 December) without hearing "Last Christmas" by Wham!.

3 Sir Alan Bates has been very active in trying to address the Post Office scandal.

4 A giant tortoise.

5 Ian Lavender, who played Pike.

6.The photo taken by HRH Princess of Wales had been not very successfully altered.

7 He was wearing American style jeans.

8 The cat fell asleep on the Coronation throne.

9 Portugal.

10 Swiss Army knife.

11 JRR Tolkein. The word “keen” may have been a misspelling of his surname.

12 Coventry from Nuneaton down to Royal Leamington Spa.

13 The rule that civil servants and others will normally observe discretion about making new announcements or decisions that could influence voters.

14The allegations that some politicians took bets on when the general election would be when they had insider information.

15 Roll on the floor laughing.

16 In this year’s Olympics the Philippines gold medallist Carlos Yulo got an unusual reward: a lifetime of free colonoscopies.

17 Gondolier.

18 Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

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Organisations Meeting in the Church Hall

Mondays

10-12noon HTTots Gen Pont: gandapont@yahoo.co.uk

4.00-6.15pm Destination Judo: info@destinationjudo.com

6.15-7.45pm Mindbodysoul Yoga: grant@mindbodysoulyoga.co.uk

Tuesdays

10-12noon Pilates: judithgraham090@gmail.com

6.30-8pm Lishi Self Defence: damien@lishi.org

Wednesdays

9.15-10.15 Pilates Mini Ball Class: Jackie.govan@live.com

12-1pm Latin and Ballroom Dance Class: stirling4community@gmail.com

5-7pm Dance: francescahamill@icloud.com

7-9pm SABOS: sabosmusicaltheatre@gmail.com

Thursdays

11-2pm Stirling Community Lunch: stirling4community@gmail.com

7pm Stirling4 Community Choir

Fridays

9.10-9.55 Pilates: judithgraham090@gmail.com

10-12 noon Art Group: stirling4community@gmail.com

2-5pm University of the Third Age (monthly): membership@fvu3a.org.uk

5-6pm Capoeira class: dendemaruouk@outlook.com

Saturdays

9-10am Babyballet: livingstonandfalkirk@babyballet.co.uk

The church hall is available for further lettings. If you would like to rent the hall please contact Sarah Shaw on 07970466551