

Auchterarder Parish Church Newsletter

18th December 2021

Registered Charities SC001688

Musings from the Manse

Well, this just isn't the Christmas we ordered - It's not what we expect

We want our winter wonderland – our party plans are wrecked!

So begins a joyful children's worship song, written last year by Fischy Music to help children (and grown ups!) to worship during the pandemic - you can find it at https://youtu.be/LEORRN_3avU. For me, it hit the spot exactly – capturing our sheer frustration and disappointment with normal Christmas being "cancelled". Yet that's immediately balanced with an alertness to God's presence:

But even in the strangest times, there's good news to be found

What are the things that we're thankful for as we stop and look around?

Through the joy, through the pain, Christmas coming near again....

I remember thinking, "it's a shame we won't be able to sing this next year", never for a moment imagining that the song would turn out to be perhaps even more relevant for Christmas 2021. Yet here we are again, not quite in the same place but with many of the same feelings. It's better in some ways – we know a lot more than we did about coping with the pandemic, and we're vaccinated. In other ways, it's worse. Any optimism that the situation would be quickly solved is long gone as we realise the scale of the problem and its long-term consequences, for the economy and education as well as health. It's no exaggeration to say that the world will never be the same again.

Yet doesn't that make the Christmas story even more relevant for us:

But don't we know we're not the first to have our world turned upside down

Joseph and Mary must have felt this way, out of place in an unknown town...

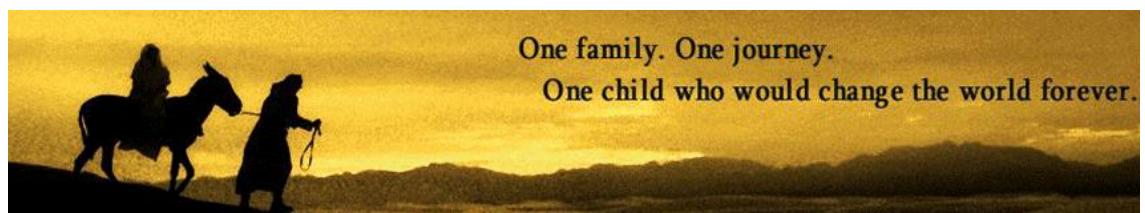
When God intervenes to introduce something radically new, that can't happen without shaking up the way things have always been and disrupting our comfort. Of course that's a bad thing in many ways, and sometimes it's hard not to be negative. Yet perhaps we can hear God's strange promise that in this disruption, there is good news. Something new is coming, the life of God for us in Jesus in a form we've never seen it before.

Rejoice, rejoice, Immanuel will come to you!

I pray that through the cracks of Christmas 2021, through the loneliness or frustration or sadness or disappointment, the God who comes close will find His way in for you. May you be very aware of His nearness this Christmas.

Wishing you God's blessing.

Lynn





Christmas Services

Watchnight Service

Friday 24 December 11:30 pm
Carols from 11:15 pm

Boxing Day Sunday

10:30 am

Pre-booking is required and track-and-trace will be in place.

Book by email on:

admin@auchterarderparish.org

You are requested to take a lateral flow test before attending worship.

Please note: sadly there are no additional services over Christmas due to current Guidelines

Christmas Service Arrangements @ APC

Due to the current Guidelines as a result of the new Covid variant, with great sadness the Kirk Session has decided that the Christmas Eve Crib Service and Christmas Day service are both cancelled.

However, we can still worship at the Watchnight Service (11.30pm) and on Boxing Day at 10:30am, with additional safety measures in place:

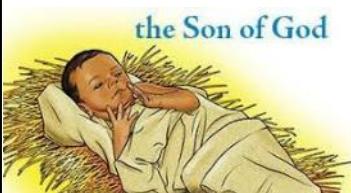
- Everyone is asked to take a Lateral Flow test before coming to church.
- Seating for social distancing of 1.5m
- Due to reduced capacity, you need to pre-book for any service from Christmas Eve onwards.
- Tea and coffee cannot be served.
- Masks remain necessary throughout, as do Track and Trace and hand sanitising.

Bookings can be made from Monday 20 December for Christmas Eve and all other Sunday services, via email on: admin@auchterarderparish.org. Additional means of booking will be added soon.

Thank you in advance for your understand and support - while these changes are disappointing, we're so thankful that they let us continue to worship together safely!

Guild News - December 2021

We have enjoyed meeting together over the last couple of months and are saddened that we had to cancel our Christmas Party. We were particularly glad to be welcoming those members who have been unable to come out in the evening. I'm sure you were all looking forward to an afternoon of fun, fellowship and festive food which we were preparing. Unfortunately we feel we should cancel the afternoon meeting on January 6th and don't have much confidence that we will be able to meet on January 20th, our Burns Afternoon. As the Bard himself said "The best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft agley....". Hopefully we can all share Christmas Joy with family and friends. As we welcome the new born Jesus, the Son of God sent to be our Saviour, we wish you every blessing at



the Son of God Christmas and in the coming year. Our prayer is that you will all stay safe and well and that we'll be able to gather together again soon.

**Mother Teresa, Love: A Fruit Always in Season
God - Whose we are and Whom we serve**



Hi Everyone,

Christmas came early this year, and our samba drums have arrived!! I have been busy this past couple of weeks planning for Christmas parties that now won't go ahead. But the good news is that in the New Year things are set to pick up. As things currently stand youthwork in schools can still go ahead as it has done, and outside of schools it's much the same. This means that although things are closing at the moment over Christmas there is still new things coming on the horizon.

Andrew Kennedy



BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA

At this time of year, our thoughts turn towards Bethlehem where, as scripture tells us, Jesus was born in the days of Herod the King. The whole area around Bethlehem was, and is, littered with caves. Many survive to this day. Wooden structures were built, extending many of the caves, to convert them in to houses. Today, the precise cave where the infant Jesus was born, probably with a structure in front to house animals, is covered by The Church of the Nativity, one of the earliest Christian Churches ever built.



As we know, the Romans were in power at that time and were keen to obliterate the site of Jesus' birth, as they tried to obliterate any rise in this new religion forming in His Name.. They did so by planting a corpse of trees over the site, not realising that all that did was draw attention to where the cave was. And so with the demise of the rule of Rome, St. Helena, the devout mother of Constantine the Great, designed a Church to be built on the site, which was dedicated in 333AD, making it one of the oldest churches of Christendom.

Today, that church is visited by tens of thousands of Christians every year. The door into the building is only about four feet high. Everyone has to stoop low, through the 'door of humility' to enter this sacred holy place. Immediately inside, one gets an appreciation of the breadth and variety of Christianity. The Church has regular services, spanning much of the day, in the area that we would refer to as the chancel. These are in the tradition of the Greek Orthodox, who supervise the place, alongside the Armenian Orthodox. 'Bells and smells' to most Western Christians like us, quickly realise that not all followers of Jesus worship in the way that we do. As can be seen in one of the pictures, part of the present floor has been removed to reveal ancient mosaics on what has been the original floor of the building. The grotto, or cave of the nativity is under the main building and can be visited at certain times of the day. Each time I lead groups there, we read St. Luke 2. 1-20 in the cave and sing 'Away in a manger'.



Just beside the Church of the Nativity stands The Church of St. Catherine, supervised by the Roman Catholics. It is the modern Church from which the service at midnight on Christmas Eve is broadcast world-wide as the Christmas bells (pictured above) ring out. Catherine Wheels, known to us particularly on 5th November, are the design of the light fittings in this Church denoting the way in which St. Catherine was martyred. And below the church floor area are a further series of caves said to have been used by St.

Jerome who translated much of the very early scriptures into Latin.



The area around Bethlehem has always been known for its fertility. The word Bethlehem translates 'House of Bread'. (*Beit-* house of; *lehem-* bread.) Today, the 'little town' (which is not so little) is conjoined on one side by Beit Jala (house of the green carpet) and on the other by Beit Sahour (house of the annunciation of the shepherds). As to Bethlehem itself, it's religious history goes away back. Have a look at the Book of Ruth ch4 vv 11-12 & 17-22 and then read 1 Samuel ch16 vv 1-13 where the Prophet Samuel anointed David the King to whom the Jewish faith even today looks back with admiration and reverence. And if you still have a Bible out, look at Micah ch5 vv 2, and there is the prophecy of the birth of Jesus. Note there that Ephrathah is an ancient name for Bethlehem.

Homework complete? Now look forward to our worship over the Christmas season and remember that Jesus, born in Bethlehem of Judea all these years ago, can be born afresh in our hearts this Christmas season. Have a Happy Christmas and remember that we Presbyterians are but one small sect in the largest faith in the world which approaches and worships God through Jesus Christ; and it all started through this unique event which took place in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King.

Iain Paton

Craft Group

A huge thank you to all the knitters who produced a nativity set for each church. Some of the figures were used for a Nativity Trail for children. The shops, cafes etc. that had the figures in the window were delighted to do so and one or two were asking about next year!



The digital Life and Work magazine have included this Nativity Trail in their current edition.

An ecumenical knitted nativity trail in Auchterarder, and new members in Glasgow in our final parish news of the year.

<https://www.lifeandwork.org/news/news/post/1578-parish-news>

The Craft Group have decided to become official and we have decided to meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 11am in the board room. There is no set agenda. People are welcome to bring their own craft work, sit and chat and it might be possible to bring in a demonstrator occasionally. This is a truly ecumenical group. So come and join us on Tuesday 1st February. One of the jobs we will have to do is to repair the poppy hanging which has been hung now for 4 years and some poppies are now looking a bit bedraggled.

We have a New Year lunch arranged on Tuesday 11th January in the Golf Club. Let's hope that can go ahead.

Marjorie Paton

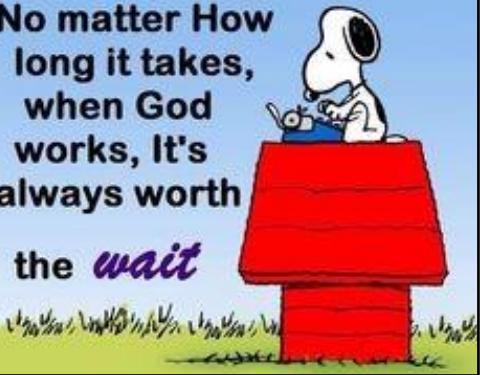
Men's Shed News

A very busy day was had at the beginning of December with the Men's Shed making log reindeers. If you would like some fun, join us at the Auchterarder and District Men's Shed on Tuesdays at 2pm at the Parish Church.



No matter How long it takes,
when God works, It's always worth

the *wait*

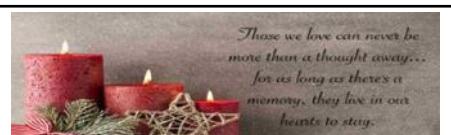


Congregation Party

We are having a party on **Saturday 8th January 2022**, in the Church Centre, to celebrate the New Year and put the last 2 years firmly behind us! A reason to get together, have a sing and a dance, enjoy each others company in a convivial atmosphere. Music, dancing, games and fun for all. Bring your own bottle and snacks. Free to enter. We look forward to seeing you all. Stewardship Team.

Keith Allan

This event is subject to Covid guidelines at the time.



This photo was taken at the Memorial Service which was well attended and took place on Sunday 12 December.



Church Flower Calendar

The new flower calendar for 2022 is displayed in the church porch.

Donations for flowers are always welcome, please add your name to your special date/s.

The flowers which enhance our church for worship each Sunday, are much appreciated by those who receive them afterwards, as a reminder of God's love and care.

Our team of flower ladies are willing to help with arranging if required.

Elsie, Lesley, Alison, Marjory, Rosemary



Kirsty Duncan Christmas Concert:

Deepest apologies for anyone who may have turned up to the church for this event, unfortunately due to Government announcements the concert was cancelled at the last minute. We have had confirmation from Kirsty that she will look at rescheduling as soon as is possible and safe for everyone involved.



**Blue Door
(Foodbank)**

Do you know someone who needs to use our services?

Referrers can be found on our Webpage (www.bluedoorfoodbank.org) or we can be contacted on 01764 660965 alternatively people are welcome to pop in on a Tues or Friday morning for a chat 11.00 – 13.00 whether about a referral or just wanting to know more about what we do and how

During the **Christmas Holidays** we will be providing **packed lunch parcels** where children are referred and for anyone of any age vulnerable / isolating over the holidays. These Lunches are **funded** by Perth and Kinross Council, so please let people know. We will be delivering 5 days' worth of lunches on the 23rd of December and again on the 30th of December.

Christmas – Given the rapid change of events do let us know if a household would benefit from a wee hand over Christmas, including providing a dinner. Otherwise please have a **Merry Christmas** and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Banana's!!!

OH Yes, we got more bananas.
Did you know you can freeze a banana? If it is a yellow skin just peel and freeze whole, going / gone brown mash it up put in a freezer bag freeze ready mashed for your banana bread, defrost good to go.....the things you learn! So, who reckons they have the best Banana cake / loaf / pancake recipe? Care to share? Drop it to us in the foodbank.

We continue to spread the sharing of any fresh produce locally or with Giraffe Café in Perth or other foodbanks.

Two Special visits to the Foodbank!

A group of Beavers (16) and Catriona Ferguson's P3 class from Auchterarder school popped in to see us. Not at the same time I hasten to add.

We hosted both groups explaining how the foodbank worked. The different jobs volunteers do, (including the age range) as well as the type of issues our clients have as to why they need the emergency help. COVID isolation wasn't particularly understood as a reason for needing temporary help. They all experienced the routine like checking dates on products, weighing them in and stacking them away. They all asked questions which were impressive and difficult to answer. They gave us good ideas for what we should try putting in the packed lunches!

Their attitude and emotional intelligence were both touching and inspiring hope going forward.

If you would like to donate, the following would be appreciated:-

Baked Beans, Sugar, Diluting Juice, Biscuits, Hot and Cold puddings, Tinned Fish (Tuna), toothpaste, shampoo, Toilet roll, Pet Food.

Christingle Messy Church

We held our second Messy Church since lockdown on Sunday 5th December and it was based on the Christingle. We had a great turn-out of families and helpers and were very busy learning about the elements that make up a Christingle and what they stand for. It fitted in perfectly with the Church of Scotland theme for Christmas – ‘Light in the Darkness’. Every child made their own Christingle - as well as lots of other Christmas crafts – and at the closing worship they were all lit as we sang ‘This little light of mine’. It was a very special moment seeing their faces all lit up and sharing the light of Jesus with one another. We had our usual brilliant tea prepared by the wonderful ladies in the kitchen and then many of us went on up to the carols across from the Co-op. All in all it was a great afternoon of fun and fellowship. Let’s hope it’s not too long before we can have another! Have a very Happy Messy Christmas everyone!



The Christmas Tree at Garries Corner opposite the Co-op, where carols were sung.

AUCHTERARDER IS MAGIC

Once upon a time in a land far far away...

Well, after three months of preparation it was all over in a flash. A big thank you to everyone who helped in any way to produce the pantomime. The audience had great fun and were completely "up for it" from the moment Keith stepped out to do the warm up act in his own inimitable way. They shouted out, sang and danced their way through the hour and in the end left £444 donations for Tearfund's work in Afghanistan. It was amazing to see my ideas come



to life and people coming up with talents I didn't know they possessed. If you enjoyed the panto and would like to be involved next year please get in touch. The first few lines are already written. What's it about? Well, you'll just have to wait and see. Lesley Buchan



Following Lesley's successful pantomime where we collected £444 for Tearfund Afghan children appeal the Parish Church has added an additional £256 from the money we collect throughout the year for Tearfund. Therefore we shall send £700 to Tearfund this year



Merry Christmas

Christmas is a time for snow,
For people trudging, to and fro.
For giving gifts to those we love.
And thinking of the one above.
He does not wait for Xmas time,
For mistletoe and festive wine.
He's with us always, on and all
He always comes, when you do call.
So think of him, the whole year through.
Include him in all that you do,
By showing love, to one and all
You will hear him when he doth call.
He was born of Mary, in a stable dim.
He died for us, to clear our sin
By loving each and everyone,
We do the work our Lord begun,
So enjoy your Christmas, have loads of fun.
But please remember, our Lord's son.

Margaret Merlin, by e-mail

Taken from Choices magazine Dec 2021



Community Action Plan - Your help is needed!

The [Community Views Survey](#) offers people the opportunity to share their thoughts about Auchterarder and Aberuthven.

Results of the survey will contribute to a 5 Year **Community Action Plan** - A guide for groups taking forward the priority projects, supporting them to access funding and to help enable the positive change people want to see in our Community.

Closing date for response is Burns Night.

Results of the Survey will be available at our Community Event on the 26th of February 2022

Your views really matter.

Have your say!

Thank you.





I was overwhelmed by all the lovely cards of sympathy, prayers and flowers received by so many friends within the Church on the passing of my wife Marion. I found great comfort in all through this very sad time, and give you all my grateful thanks. I thank Rev. Iain Paton for conducting a very meaningful Service in Celebration of Marion's life.
A special thank you too, to all the ladies who provided and served up such a wonderful Purvey afterwards. Thanks be to God our Father.

JOHN ROBERTSON



From the editor ...

It has been a hard year in many ways and just as we thought we were over the worst, Omicron appeared.
I do hope you have enjoyed the newsletters which currently is being produced on the last Saturday of the month and the next issue will be Saturday 29th January 2022.

If you have any interesting stories, celebrations, photos etc you would like me to publish then please send to me, whenever you have them, and I will keep for the next edition.
If you are reading this newsletter as a paper copy and would like me to send it to you by email please email me at sylvia.elsmere@hotmail.co.uk



Social Media Reminders

Remember, you can always keep in touch online with APC and all its goings-on in a variety of ways!



The website address is: auchterarderparish.org
APC twitter link is: @apcchat
Messy Church twitter link is: @ApcMessy
Our Facebook pages is: @auchterarderparish



Blue Door Foodbank

Opening Hours

Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
Friday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
Auchterarder Parish Church
24 High Street, Auchterarder

For any further information, please contact us on: info@bluedoorfoodbank.org or 01764 660965

Blue Door Foodbank is always very grateful for food donations which can be dropped off at the local Co-op.



**I'm proud of myself
for not giving up,
because this year
hasn't been easy at all.**

Auchterarder Parish Church Covid-19 Community Support

A chat on the phone
Tel: 07467 793061 or 01764 660152
E: admin@auchterarderparish.org
To speak to a Minister telephone:
Rev Dr Lynn McChlery: 01764 662399
Rev Iain Paton: 01764 682234

