

ST. NINIANS OLD PARISH CHURCH

PARISHIONER

WINTER 2022



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From the Manse

Dear Friends,

I am grateful for the opportunity given through this edition of *The Parishioner* to convey to you my good wishes and to assure you of my prayers.

This year, like any other, has had its ups and downs but foremost in the thoughts of many of us, is the increase in the cost of living and the pressure this is placing on individuals and families. The winter will be a challenge for a lot of people with an increasing number turning to food banks and other agencies for help and support. Start Up Stirling is involved in helping many people within the Stirling area and welcomes donations of food. These can be left at 'stations' located in some supermarkets and the Thistle Centre. Financial donations can also be given



directly to Start Up or you can place your donation in the Start Up tin in the Church vestibule on a Sunday morning.



The Church of Scotland is not without its challenges either. Presbyteries throughout the land have been tasked with preparing Mission Plans which take account of the decline in the number of full time Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament and the reduction in the number of members which has a

natural impact on the Church's finances. The Mission Plans also seek to discern how congregations may work together with their neighbours in order to strengthen our mission in local communities and beyond. Our own Kirk Session has spent time considering the challenges before us and we have indicated our support for a closer working relationship with the congregations of the Holy Rude, Park Church and Viewfield Erskine. What this closer working relationship will actually entail has yet to be fully discussed and agreed, but it will see us build on the good work already being done. This consists of, among other things, Friendship

Lunches, Messy Church, Holiday Clubs, Bible Studies and School Programmes at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. Please remember the Church of Scotland in your prayers and do not hesitate to share your thoughts with me or your elder. You are the Church, and your voice must be heard!

As we approach Christmas, we do so in the knowledge that there are significant challenges in the world. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has had a devastating impact on the Ukrainian people and there is uncertainty as to what could happen next in that particular situation. There is real concern about the consequences of our actions on the climate with some of the world's poorest people suffering even more as a result of the decisions we, in the more affluent countries of the world, make. And there are those who go without what so many of us take for granted by way of food to eat, water to drink, essential medicine and a place to call home.

The prophet Isaiah declared *'the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.'* (Isaiah 9:2) His prophesy was fulfilled at the first Christmas when God came to us in the form of a baby. The world then was an uncertain one also, but the birth of the Christ Child heralded a new dawn. God was not some remote being watching from a distance. He had, instead, come to dwell among His people, and through the Holy Spirit, He is with us still!

I find great comfort in knowing that God is fully aware of all that is happening within our country, the Church and the world. As we prepare to celebrate His coming once again, let us revisit the Christmas story and let us marvel that God is indeed with us leading us from the darkness to the light, giving us reason to have hope instead of despair, sharing in our joys and sorrows, and showing us His love in the most wonderful way imaginable!

I wish you a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Your friend and Minister,

Gary J McIntyre



Services

Services are held at 10:30am every Sunday.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated on Sunday 4th December and Sunday 12th March.

The Christmas Gift Service will be on Sunday 11th December at 10:30am. Gifts for children and adults will be welcome and will be taken to the Salvation Army who will distribute them to children and adults in the community. Gifts should be new and unwrapped.

There will be a service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday 18th December at 10:30am. This will be a Family Service and it is hoped children and families will join us. The service will be followed by tea, coffee and mince pies in the Parish Halls.

There will be a service on Christmas Eve at 11:30pm. A retiral collection will be held for Strathcarron Hospice.

A short family service will be held on Christmas Day at 10:30am.

There will be a Christmas Carol service in Roselea Court Care Home at 2:30pm on Monday 19th December.

A Christmas service will be held in Eccles Court on Wednesday 21st December at 2:30pm.

St Ninians Primary School Christmas service will be held in the Church on Thursday 22nd December at 10am.

There is a monthly service in Eccles Court on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 2:30pm.

Iconic Places of Worship Around the World

KEN CHRISTIE

Following on from my previous two articles and as we approach the Christmas season, I thought it would be apt to feature places of worship which we associate through Christmas Carols.



Perhaps the world's most famous carol, "Silent Night" comes to us from Austria and is known as "Stille Nacht" in its original German. The first performance of the carol was in **St Nicholas Church Oberndorf Austria in 1818.**

The history of the carol is that on a cold Christmas Eve in 1818 Pastor Joseph Franz Mohr walked the three kilometres from his home in Oberndorf to visit his friend Franz Xaver Gruber in the neighbouring town of Anrsdorf bei Laufen. Mohr brought with him a poem he had written some two years earlier.

He desperately needed a carol for the Christmas Eve midnight mass that was only hours away. His friend was the church's choirmaster and organist and he hoped that he could set the poem to music.

Franz Gruber composed the tune in just a few hours and the carol was sung at the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.



In Austria "Stille Nacht" is considered a national treasure. Traditionally the carol may not be played publicly before Christmas Eve and any commercial use of the 204-year-old carol is verboten.

The second carol I have chosen is Once in Royal David's City which we associate with Bethlehem and **The Church of the Nativity or Basilica of the Nativity**. The grotto contained within the Basilica holds a prominent religious significance to Christians of various denominations as the birthplace of Jesus. The grotto is the oldest site continuously used as a place of worship in Christianity.



Over the centuries, the surrounding compound has been expanded and today it covers some 12,000 square metres comprising three different monasteries: one Roman Catholic one Armenian Apostolic and one Greek Orthodox.

Since 2012, the Church of the Nativity is a World Heritage Site and was the first to be listed by UNESCO under Palestine.

The history behind the carol

The lyrics to "Once in Royal David's City" were written by Mrs Cecil Alexander, who was born Miss Cecil Humphreys in Dublin in 1818, and married the Anglican clergyman William Alexander in 1850, two years after the publication of "Once in Royal David's City".

"Once in Royal David's City" was set to music in 1849, by the composer Henry John Gauntlett, who read the poem and liked it. The carol has traditionally been the first carol sung in the annual *Carols from King's* service at King's College Chapel in Cambridge.

Staying in Bethlehem for our third carol, **We Three Kings** which was originally written in 1857 by John Henry Hopkins Junior. At the time of composing the carol, Hopkins was rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Williamsport Pennsylvania, and it was written for a Christmas pageant in New York City. It was also the first widely popular Christmas carol written in America.



According to St. Matthew's Gospel, a bright star led the Magi from the east until it "stopped over the place where the child was", and "upon entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother".

What is interesting when you read later tellings of the Magi's story is their lands of origin. Melchior came from Persia now Iran, Casper from India and Balthazar from

Arabia. Their gifts had special symbolic meanings as well: gold signified Jesus's status as King of the Jews, frankincense represented his identity as the Son of God and myrrh touched upon his mortality.

Some scholars argue that the Three Kings visited Bethlehem 12 days after Christmas on January 6th. As we know the 6th of January is known as Epiphany which is one of Christianity's oldest holidays. Orthodox Christian faiths celebrate on January 19th.

As we look forward to singing our Christmas Carols over the festive season, I hope my little historical notes have brought new meanings to the words and melodies which we all enjoy.

From Our Former Session Clerk

MARGARET SIBBALD

As many of you already know I have retired as Session Clerk of St. Ninians Old Parish Church. I would like to record my thanks to Mr McIntyre for asking me to take up that position and to the many people who have supported me throughout. During the past unsettled time for us dealing with Covid and the Presbytery Mission Plan, it has been encouraging to see everyone working together to maintain the strength of our Congregation.

A Christmas Prayer

Eternal God, your Word brings everything into being, and in your grace we are adopted as your children.

Teach us to honour and respect the imprint of your essence in all people...
Your light shines in the darkness and nothing can overcome it.

Word of life, you inspire prophets to tell of your wonders and call your people to walk in your ways.

Guide the steps of all in authority...

Bring justice and peace for the good of all creation.

Spirit of truth, you bring hope to birth and lighten the hearts of all who call on you.
May the celebration of our Saviour's birth renew within us the good news of your wonderful gift...

Bless all with whom we exchange tokens of love and expand our concern that we might reach out to strangers and unknown friends.

Blessed Lord, may your light shine on all who walk in darkness;

Comfort those for whom this season can be difficult...those who are sick, those who are lonely and those remembering loved ones who are no longer with us.

Loving God, you make ruined places break into song and restore all that has been lost.

Come again to the world this Christmas and let us rejoice in the knowledge that you are 'Immanuel', God with us.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.



The Kirk Session

Mr Arthur Walls 30 years of dedicated service as an elder was marked on Sunday 27th November when he was presented with a certificate signed by the Moderator of the General Assembly, The Right Reverend Iain Greenshields. Arthur was ordained to the eldership in the West High Kirk, Kilmarnock on 29th November 1992 and following his and Rena's move to Stirling, he was admitted as an elder in our congregation on 9th September 2012. We congratulate Arthur on reaching this significant milestone and thank him warmly for all that he has done in the service of our Lord.

The Kirk Session will meet on Tuesday 31st January at 7:30pm and on Tuesday 21st March at 7:30pm. Both meetings will be held in the Parish Halls.

The Stated Annual Meeting of the congregation will be held at the close of the service on Sunday 26th March 2023.

The Pastoral Care Group

GRACE MCINTOSH - Pastoral Care Group Convener

The Pastoral Care Group of St Ninians Old Parish Church now consists of four Elders and one member of our congregation. We will be very pleased to visit anyone in our congregation who would appreciate a visit over and above those received from the Minister and the district Elders.

During the Covid 19 Pandemic our pastoral care visits were not allowed. Contact was maintained through letters, greetings cards, postcards and telephone calls. We are now in a position to restart visits to existing and any new parishioners.

If you know of anyone who would enjoy a visit or telephone contact for a chat please let me or the Minister know.

Book Review

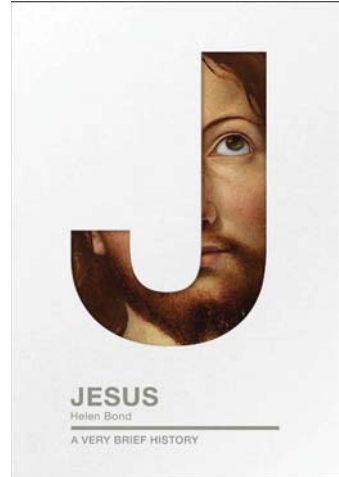
Jesus, A Very Brief History by Helen Bond

ARTHUR S. WALLS

With over two billion followers today, Jesus of Nazareth is the most influential person to have walked The Earth. But why has he had such an enormous impact?

The author Helen Bond is Professor of Christian Origins at the University of Edinburgh. She has written extensively on the Gospels, the historical Jesus and the emergence of Christianity, and has contributed to several documentaries for the BBC, Discovery and National Geographic channels.

This brief history begins by assessing Jesus the man - his Jewish heritage, his message, his friends and enemies, and his eventual execution. Helen Bond then considers Jesus legacy, starting with the accounts of his life in the New Testament. She also looks at the other early portrayals of Jesus, at the spread of Jesus-devotion during the Middle Ages, and what Jesus means to people today- both in the Church and in secular culture.



A symbolic last meal, The Last Supper.

Jesus spent his last evening with his friends in a borrowed room in Jerusalem. Jesus's words at this gathering are some of the most famous he ever uttered and have been repeated ever since at The Sacrament of Holy Communion, also known as the Christian Eucharist in other denominations. There are actually a number of different versions, one in Matthew, one in Mark and one in Luke.

The oldest report, however, is preserved in one of Paul's letters, and dates to within 20 years of Jesus' death. They are the oldest words of Jesus ever recorded.

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This Cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

(First Corinthians 11.23-25)

I have a copy of Professor Helen Bond's book and anyone who wishes can borrow it from me. It is most interesting. As well as refreshing our minds of what we know already there are insights into other aspects of Jesus's life, crucifixion, and resurrection and of course his legacy. For some people who have some doubts about Jesus this book could well convince them, and "help the penny to drop." Others who have doubted the existence of Jesus at all, sceptics or unbelievers, in spite of The Holy Bible, may change their minds.

Soup and Sandwich Lunches

**ST.NINIANS OLD PARISH CHURCH
SOUP & SANDWICH
LUNCHEs**

- Saturday 3rd December
- Saturday 14th January
- Saturday 4th February
- Saturday 4th March 2023



There will be a Soup and Sandwich lunch on Saturday 3rd December 2022.

In the New Year the first of the lunches will be on Saturday 14th January 2023 and thereafter on Saturday 4th February and Saturday 4th March 2023.

Lunch will be served from 12.00 noon until 1:30pm.

Come and join us, a warm welcome awaits!

Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal 2022



Thank you to everyone who supported the appeal this year. One hundred and four filled shoeboxes were taken to the local collection point after which they were checked by Blythswood Care who add a Bible storybook for children, a book for teenagers or a calendar with Bible verses for adults.

Shoeboxes will be distributed to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. In time for Christmas.

There were also financial donations for which a sincere word of thanks is also expressed.

WaterAid Harvest Appeal 2022

The sum of £969.30 was raised by the congregation for WaterAid. This is a tremendous result and will be a real help to those who presently do not have clean water to drink. Thank you for your generosity and kindness!

Christian Aid

ELAINE WALKER - St.Ninians Old Christian Aid Representative

Thank you so much to everyone who supported the recent Christian Aid coffee morning, be it with your attendance, donations or help. We are so grateful.

It was a lovely morning of fellowship and a whopping £830 was raised for this wonderful charity.

The work the charity does in transforming people's lives around the world is immeasurable.

Again, our sincere thanks for your gifts, support and prayers.



Christmas Fayre



A Christmas Fayre and lunch was held in the Parish Halls on Saturday 5th November. Despite inclement weather there was a good turnout of people and over £1,000 was raised. A sincere word of thanks is extended to those who baked, made soup or items for the craft stall, and to those who worked so hard in the kitchen and who served at tables.

Tuesday Group

MIRANDA MILLER - President

50th Anniversary Tea



On the 27th of September, nearly 90 friends met together in the Parish Halls to celebrate over 50 years of the Tuesday group.

Members new and 'old' enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea which the committee had provided. The Rev. Gary McIntyre opened the event and indicated that the Tuesday Group was now open to both men and women. Gary gave a warm welcome to past members who had travelled from afar for the occasion. The afternoon was a great success, and it was wonderful to socialise once again after a two-year suspension due to the pandemic.

Quiz afternoon

Once again, a large number gathered together in the Parish Halls to challenge their minds, hoping the questions were not going to be too difficult. Many thanks to Chris and Elaine Mackay for posing the questions and delivering the quiz. There were lots of weird and wonderful answers and a fun afternoon was had by all. Once again, tea, coffee and home baking was provided by the committee.

Forthcoming events

Tuesday 29th November 7.30pm

Scots' Night

This event will be held in the Parish Halls and entertainment will be provided by The Campsie Players.

Tuesday 13th December 12 noon for 12.30pm

Christmas Lunch

A Christmas lunch will be held at King's Park Golf Club. Cost £22 for 3 courses which includes tea, coffee and mincemeat pies. Names can be given to Mrs Dorothy Walker and a deposit of £5 should be paid by the end of November. Telephone 01786 814813.

Tuesday 24th January 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Burns Supper

A Burns Supper will be celebrated in the Parish Halls. Tickets £12. More details to follow.

Tuesday 28th February 2.00pm

An afternoon with the Rev Gary McIntyre. Gary will address the group which will then be followed by tea, coffee and home baking.

Many thanks to everyone who has attended the meetings over the last few months. We are all so happy to be able to meet again.

On behalf of myself and the committee we wish you a joyful Christmas and a happy new year.

The Boys' Brigade



The 8th Stirling (St Ninians) Company of the Boys' Brigade was well represented at the morning service in St Ninians Old on Sunday 2nd October and at the annual Service of Remembrance on Sunday 13th November.

- The Anchor Boys meet on a Wednesday evening from 6:15pm – 7:30pm.
- The Juniors meet on a Friday from 6:45pm – 8.00pm.
- The Company section meets on a Friday from 8:15pm – 10.00pm.

Email 8stirling@boys-brigade.org.uk for more information or check out the Facebook page: 8th Stirling – St Ninians Boys' Brigade.

The Sunday Club

The Sunday Club has had a varied programme since returning after the summer holidays.



After the long summer break our planters needed some attention. We spent the first meetings of the new session tidying, weeding and giving the planters a fresh coat of paint. They are looking fabulous again.

In the run up to Harvest Thanksgiving we talked about and tasted different foods from around the world. We learned where they grow, the food miles involved to get them to our supermarkets and the impact of that on the environment. We also learned about Food Banks and talked about the different reasons why people will need to use foodbanks and the types of food that foodbanks need donated.

In our first session after the October break, we celebrated the season of autumn, and we made leaf art pictures of woodland animals.



In the coming weeks we will be talking about Remembrance Sunday, looking at the different animals and creatures in the Bible and we are looking forward to talking about Advent and making some Christmas crafts.

Sunday Club is for children from Nursery School through to Primary 7, younger children can attend our crèche. We would love new families to join our Sunday Club family.

Stirling Kirks Together - All Age Friendship Lunches

All age friendship lunches will be held in Park Church Hall on the second Wednesday of the month from 12 noon – 1:30pm. Optional donation - £2.50. All welcome!

- Wednesday 14th December
- Wednesday 11th January
- Wednesday 8th February
- Wednesday 8th March

Joint Bible Studies for Lent

A series of joint Bible Studies with our friends in Holy Rude, Park Church and Viewfield Erskine will be held in Park Church at 7.00pm.



Joint Study Group for Lent

- Tuesday 21st February
- Tuesday 28th February
- Tuesday 7th March
- Tuesday 14th March
- Tuesday 21st March
- Tuesday 28th March

Meeting in Park Church at 7.00pm

Parish Halls Library

The library is now open for business after our closure during the pandemic.

Opening Times

During fellowship teas

During soup and sandwich lunches

Tuesday group

After church service with prior request

We hold a large selection of books including;

- Children's
- Religious
- Hobbies and Crafts
- Educational
- Autobiographies
- Crime and Romance
- Travel
- Gardening

If you are looking for a particular book, author or subject we do not stock, please let us know and we will try to source it for you.

When borrowing a book leave the title and your name in the book provided and sign it when you return it.

For more information contact:

Freda Smart 01786 447352 fredasmart@hotmail.com

Bill Anderson 01786 472756 bill.anderson1011@gmail.com

The Parish Register

Baptism *'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'*

17th April 2022

Aster Belle Smith, daughter of Craig and Carolyn

24th April 2022

Jude Allen, son of Chris and Emma

12th September 2022

Archer Ross Kucsera, son of Ross and Melissa

Marriage *'God is Love'*

20th February 2022

Sean Owen and Carol Young

Langhill Cottage, by Denny

21st May 2022

Robbie Forsyth and Molly Hair

4 Easter Livilands, Stirling

26th August 2022

Alasdair MacLean and Sarah-Jane Urquhart

Shepherds Cottage, Heylipol Farm, Tiree

10th September 2022

John Cross and Elizabeth Nisbett

40 St John Street, Stirling

Deaths *'I go to prepare a place for you'*

11th August 2022

Mrs Isabel McCotter

48 Pinkieknowe

St Ninians

26th August 2022
Mr John McLellan
Roselea Court Care Home
Stirling

23rd September 2022
Mrs Rosemary Robertson
Tigh Na Coille
Torlundy
Fort William

25th September 2022
Mr Douglas Brimer
28 Strachan Crescent
Dollar

28th September 2022
Mrs Anne Verel
Hall Quarter Farm
Stirling

30th September 2022
Mr Douglas Macgowan
75 Ashley Terrace
Alloa

5th October 2022
Mr Harold Dormer
27 Coxithill Road
St Ninians

16th October 2022
Mrs Muriel Kale
54 Cruckburn Wynd
Stirling

Quiz Corner

Nativity Word Scramble

All these words come from the Christmas story. Can you unscramble them?

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------|------------|-------|
| 1. STRA | ---- | 6. AEGLN | ----- |
| 2. MAGREN | ----- | 7. JPHOES | ----- |
| 3. MYAR | ---- | 8. JSSEU | ----- |
| 4. SEPHE | ----- | 9. LODG | ---- |
| 5. DOEYKN | ----- | 10. STBALE | ----- |

Word Search

Find the unscrambled words from above.

E M J O S E P H E M
V A N G E L D M G A
L N A U O S O A F N
L G D T S T A R N S
R E O S R Y G Y S I
R R N T E L B A T S
Y D K B G Y D O I G
A J E S U S H E E P
Y R Y E S E O T N E
G N I H G O L D N J

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