

The *Lych Gate*

The Newsletter of St Machar's Ranfurly Church



Dec 2023

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FROM THE MINISTER

I'm not a great fan of starting Christmas preparations early (i.e. having Christmas food and gifts in the shops as early as September!). I tend to get mildly panicked when I see social media posts of other ministers (usually American) planning their Advent and Christmas sermons and study groups in the summer. Yikes. Can we just do one thing at a time please and ease ourselves into the mellowness of autumn before facing up to the intensity of December? This December issue of the Lych Gate has had to be written and prepared unseasonally early due to the well-deserved holiday of our editorial team in November. So, I now find myself having to write something suitably Christmassy on returning from the October break...

In light of the above it won't surprise you that I haven't planned my Advent services yet in terms of content, but I think this year I will stick to the traditional themes of **hope, peace, joy and love**. It seems that all are in short supply in the world at the moment, with the wars in Ukraine and Israel/Gaza ongoing as I write. **Hope, peace, joy and love** can at times

feel in short supply in our lives as well, as we get worn down by worry and despair over what is going on in the world, in the Church and perhaps in our personal circumstances too.

Where do we find these precious commodities?

Actually, I use the word 'commodities' but that is exactly what they are not – they are not products we can buy or experiences we can sell. **Hope, peace, joy and love** are precious gifts that we receive in our lives, and when received we can graciously share with others. They are gifts from God, gifts we need to seek and ask for, but which are received not because of anything we have accomplished or earned.

They are received in utter dependence on God.

The good news of Christmas is that the hope, peace, joy and love that God gives becomes tangible in Jesus – God with us. He is our hope, our peace, he brings joy and he is love incarnate. Jesus is our **hope** because his life, death and resurrection shows that sin, evil and death that has the world in its grip, is already conquered (1 Peter 1:3). Jesus is our **peace**, because

he reconciles us with God and with one another (Ephesians 2:14). Jesus brings **joy** because he came to bring us life in all its fulness (John 10:10). And Jesus is **love** incarnate because he was sent to show God's love to us; he laid down his life for us (1 John 4:9). When we receive these heavenly gifts for ourselves, we get to share them with others – because they are not limited commodities they can be freely shared without running out or being diluted. Amidst the busyness and commercialism of Christmas may we all look for and receive these gifts from God - **hope, peace, joy and love** – and find practical ways of sharing these gifts with others. I hope you will be able to join us during the Advent and Christmas services – in person or online – and that we will together receive and share what our world so desperately needs.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Yours
Hanneke

BEARSDEN FIDDLERS

On Sunday 8th October the Bearsden Fiddlers played for a delighted audience in St Machar's Ranfurly Church. Great music and wonderful entertainment were followed by very welcome tea and biscuits. Everyone left with a spring in their step and we're all looking forward to the Bearsden Fiddlers' next visit to the village



THE GUILD



We started the session on 2nd October and so far we have had two meetings, with an average of 15 ladies present.

Our first speaker was a dietician telling us how to keep well over the winter. We did a quiz with 3 trays of goods, and had to work out a tray of foods containing calcium, a tray of herbs and one of surgical equipment. It was quite challenging.

Our next meeting was 3 members of the Haven, situated on the Kilmacolm to Greenock Road. One was a member of staff and the two other men lived at the Haven. Both told their story and both had had alcohol and drug problems, living rough and had been told of the Haven. Men are interviewed and if accepted go there for a set period to be helped, but they must have the will to go through with it. There are 16 people there at any

one time. Both men were very articulate in their telling and we all enjoyed their company.

We hope to have many more good speakers and also hope some more ladies will join us in the Church Hall at 2.00 pm to hear our speakers and enjoy fellowship. All welcome

Ann Hart

2ND BRIDGE OF WEIR GUIDES (TUESDAY GUIDES)

Our group has been kept busy working on Unit Meeting Activities. We had hoped that the Guides who are working towards their Gold Guide Award would have 'won' a place on the County's Under the Stars night at Finlaystone. Unfortunately the event proved very popular and we were unsuccessful. So as an alternative task the girls had to organise a menu and supervise their Patrols to cook a meal outside on an open fire. We did this one evening at South Newton. The food was very good and our older Guides made chocolate, marshmallow and fruit pudding in waffle cones.



QUIZ - WHAT IS THE SCOTTISH LOCH

| | | Answer |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Let mum out | |
| 2 | Leg bone | |
| 3 | Shock and..... | |
| 4 | Twisted vines | |
| 5 | Sounds like you're going | |
| 6 | Regatta yachts have it as a mooring | |
| 7 | Torn Dior remodelled | |
| 8 | A short way | |
| 9 | Quiet seven | |
| 10 | Does it have a halo? | |
| | | |

September Quiz Answers:

1. Asthma 2. Flu 3. Eczema 4. Measles 5. Mumps
6. Hives 7. Thrush 8. Cataract 9. Acne 10. Scarlet Fever

Helen Bullen

FROM THE ORGAN LOFT



I am one of these old bores who likes their music done right! By the time this edition hits the shelves Advent will be fast approaching. It doesn't need me to tell you that Advent and Christmas are not the same! The season of Advent begins (this year) on Sunday 3 December, with the season of Christmas beginning on the 24th December. Advent means 'coming' and is the season of preparation for Christmas. Being an aforementioned "old bore" means that the choir too won't be singing any Christmas music until later in the advent period. That doesn't mean our music won't be any less exciting! There are a few pieces looming which I'm quite looking forward to. On Advent Sunday we sing Piers Maxim's relatively recent setting of *Adam lay ybounden*. This is a fifteenth century poem which has been set by many composers, most famously Boris Ord who was a former Director of Music at King's College, Cambridge. This ancient text harks back to the book of Genesis and the

Fall of Man – Adam committing the first sin and eating the apple. For those familiar with the service of 9 Lessons and Carols, this is the first reading of the service. Ever since that moment in Genesis humans have erred and strayed and lead lives full of sin. From then on God knew he had to send a saviour to save mankind. Pushing on into Advent, we'll be singing Sir James MacMillan's *O Radiant Dawn*. MacMillan is one of Scotland's foremost composers, a devout Catholic who has written much for both liturgy and parish church choirs. *O Radiant Dawn* is one of the seven O Antiphons, each antiphon to be sung on the days leading up to Christmas. The Antiphons are:

O Sapientia: O Wisdom
O Adonai: O Lord
O Radix Jesse: O Root of Jesse
O Clavis David: O Key of David
O Oriens: O Dawn of the East
O Rex Gentium: O King of the Nations
O Emmanuel: O Emmanuel

Thinking about it, these antiphons probably aren't as unfamiliar as we might think! As each one forms one of the verses in the Advent hymn: *O come, O come Emmanuel*. A couple of verses have been dropped in our

hymnbook.

To please the choir, I've included Bach's *How shall I fitly meet thee* as well. The tune is his famous passion chorale. Bach was a busy man: he was teaching at the Thomas School in Leipzig, Director of Music at St. Thomas Church (which came with four other Leipzig churches to oversee), he had a hectic domestic life (father to 20 children) and composed a new cantata each week for church services not to mention working on other compositions. It meant that musical ideas were often repeated. In fact, the melody of this Passion Chorale came from a pretty risqué 16th century love song, which like many folk melodies, was commandeered for liturgical use and is how it is familiar to many today. Bach, often stretched for time, would frequently recycle material or steal pre-existing tunes (to aid congregational singing) hence the Passion Chorale made it into his Christmas Oratorio and the chorale entitled *How shall I fitly meet thee*. I hope some of our advent music can help shine a new light on the liturgy in the run up to Christmas.

Ian Munro

1ST BRIDGE OF WEIR GUIDES (WEDNESDAY GUIDES)

We started the new term in September with 26 Guides and have continued to work steadily on our Skill Builders and Unit Meeting activities. We had three Guides who took part in a new County sleepover event called 'Under the Stars' on the 8/9th September. It was held in Finlaystone Estate on what, thankfully, was a perfect, warm late summer evening. The girls enjoyed a bat walk at dusk and a star gazing session before supper and campfire. It was then time to bed down in bivvy bags, out in the open, to sleep under the stars. Glad to report everyone managed to have at least a little sleep. In October, we have been making beeswax wraps and everyone enjoyed a yoga class with a local instructor, Sara. Sara came along and put us through a series of stretches and poses with breathing techniques.



The evening ended with a relaxation session. It was great session enjoyed by everyone.



To finish October, we will hold our annual 'Spooktacular' party. In November, we will attend the annual Remembrance Sunday service in St Machar's Church with the Rainbows and Brownies. We also have a large group of girls joining Guides from around Renfrewshire at a sleepover in the Glasgow Science Centre. This December, as well as planning a craft session and a visit to the cinema, we will be out around the village as usual with the Bridge of Weir Festival committee Santa's Sleigh. Let's hope the weather will be kind.

Christine Haddock Guide Leader

BOYS BRIGADE



last year we recently enjoyed a presentation on his latest cycle epic to South Korea and Japan.



Photo: no, we are not doing ballet at the BB, just enthusiastic participation in a game of land polo!

Anchors. We have started the session off with 16 enthusiastic children at Anchors who attend very regularly. We have been learning about bubble prayers, road

safety, apples and playing a variety of team games. The boys have begun learning their marching routine to perform at the display next year. We will be having our Christmas party in December and also looking forward to attending 'Out of the Box' when they are at Freeland on Monday 11th December.

We are keen to involve our boys and girls in the life of the church as much as possible, so will be encouraging participation in the enrollment service and also in the Nativity, especially as there are not many children in the Sunday School. The BB and GA remains our biggest outreach to young people in terms of numbers, so your prayers and support would be much appreciated.

Brian Logie



The **Company Section** is making a start with this year's National Competitions. 5-a-side football, table tennis, badminton and the quiz are all scheduled for kick-off in November. How far we get this year remains to be seen, but the boys and girls enjoy the challenge. Two other special events coming up shortly are the Curry and Quiz night, where the youth usually do very well especially if in a team with one or two adults, and a visit to Malcolm Heritage in Linwood.

We have recently registered six for Silver and six for Bronze DofE, so we should have another lively expedition season next year. Also, 4 boys are embarking on the 2 year programme which hopefully will lead to Queen's [or possibly King's] badge in 2025.

Following Paul Holbrook's talk to the boys

WORSHIP

| Date | | Service | Beadle/Reader |
|------|----|---|-----------------|
| Dec | 10 | 10.30 am Morning Service | Bill Christie |
| | 17 | 10.30 am Morning Service | David Macdonald |
| | 24 | 10.30 am Christingle Morning service | Helen Bullen |
| | 24 | 11.30pm Watch Night Service | N/A |
| | 31 | 10.30 am Morning Service— Joint with Freeland Church at St. Machar's Ranfurly | Dick Hughes |
| Jan | 7 | 10.30 am Morning Service— Joint with Freeland Church at Freeland Church | N/A |
| | 14 | 10.30 am Morning Service | Ann Hart |
| | 21 | 10.30 am Morning Service | Greg Miller |
| | 28 | 10.30 am Morning Service - All Age Service in Hall | Dick Hughes |
| Feb | 4 | 10.30 am Sacrament of Holy Communion | Dennis Taylor |
| | 11 | 10.30 am Morning Service | Norma Hancock |
| | 18 | 10.30 am Morning Service | Bill Robb |
| | 25 | 10.30 am Morning Service - All Age Service — in Church | N/A |
| Mar | 3 | 3.00 pm Morning Service | Bill Christie |
| | 10 | 10.30 am Morning Service | Helen Bullen |

BRIDGE OF WEIR CHURCHES ACTIVITIES

Regular Activities

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------|---|
| Mondays | 6.30 pm | Girls Association (All Age Groups) at Freeland |
| Thursdays | 10.00 am - 12 noon | Coffee Drop in - Home Baking at Freeland |
| | 4.15 pm | Junior Choir at St Machar's Ranfurly |
| | 6.15 pm | Anchor Boys at Freeland |
| Fridays | 6.30 pm | Boys Brigade Junior Section at St Machar's Ranfurly |
| | 7.30 pm | Boys Brigade Company Section at Freeland |

December Activities

| | | |
|--------------|----------|--|
| Saturday 9th | 10.30 am | Community Carols - Outside Co-op |
| Tuesday 12th | | Men's Club - Christmas Lunch at Bernie's Deli |
| Sunday 17th | 4.00 pm | Carol Concert - St. Machar's Ranfurly Church |
| Sunday 17th | 7.00 pm | Candlelight Service - Freeland Church |
| Monday 18th | 2.00 pm | The Guild—Christmas Cake Decoration—St Machar's Ranfurly Church Hall |
| Tuesday 19th | 6.00 pm | Carols by Candlelight - St. Mary's Church |
| Sunday 24th | 10.30 am | All Age Christingle Service - St. Machar's Ranfurly Church |
| Sunday 24th | 11.30 pm | Watchnight Service |

January Activities

| | | |
|-------------|---------|--|
| Monday 8th | 2.00 pm | The Guild—Air Ambulance—St Machar's Ranfurly Church Hall |
| Monday 22nd | 2.00 pm | The Guild—Aberlour Trust —St Machar's Ranfurly Church Hall |

February Activities

| | | |
|-------------|---------|--|
| Monday 5th | 2.00 pm | The Guild—Waste Management—St Machar's Ranfurly Church Hall |
| Monday 19th | 2.00 pm | The Guild—Bridge of Weir Leather —St Machar's Ranfurly Church Hall |

CHURCHES OF THE WORLD

Arctic Cathedral - Tromso, Norway

I visited this church in June on a very warm and sunny day but the guide said that it is also an exceptionally wonderful sight in the

snow during the winter. It is called Tromsdalen Church or the Arctic Cathedral and is a parish church of Norway in Tromso.



It is a daring piece of architecture and was built in 1945, inspired by Arctic nature. It stands at the end of Tromsø bridge and shines out like a lighthouse across the Tromsøysundet strait. The architect Jan Inge Hovig cited his

masterpiece over this strait and it overlooks the world's largest city north of the Arctic Circle. Tromsø is the seat of the Norwegian Polar Institute and the Arctic University Museum of Norway.

In architectural terms the Arctic Cathedral is nothing more than a parish church. Tromsø already has a cathedral, an austere wooden building consecrated in 1861 when this was a small municipality slowly developing around Arctic trade and hunting. It is not known what inspired the architect. The Midnight sun in summer, Northern Lights and the near constant snow white backdrop for so much of the year, all come into play in the walls of eleven aluminium-coated concrete panels and bright chandeliers of Czech crystals exude warmth surrounded by an unforgiving landscape.

The organ has 2960 pipes and 42 stops fashioned in the same sail shape as the church itself. It accommodates 720 worshippers and holds many musical events throughout the year. Midnight concerts are held in the summer when a chamber orchestra of professional musicians accompany the 5 choirs who are attached to the congregation. As you enter the church there is a poignant modern structure of a tree with doves symbolizing peace.



Helen Bullen

JUNIOR CHOIR

The Junior Choir is now in full-flow, and we've increased our membership to around 14 children. To celebrate Music Sunday in 2024 our gala concert will feature a performance of Horowitz's *Captain Noah and His Floating Zoo* which I'm hoping will see our own choir augmented and the junior choir joining us for this. To help prepare for this, I've decided to go down an animal/nature theme. With Harvest recently being celebrated and the arrival of autumn we've sung songs reflecting on those themes, as well as *Two by Two* and Andrew Carter's anthem *Badgers and Hedgehogs* which introduces the youngsters to a wide variety of animals and birds. This has caused the children no end of amusement, however we've all come away a bit more familiar with some of the animals in the wild! Christmas is fast approaching and I am

hoping, like last year, our Junior Choir will join our Christmas Music Service on Sunday 17th December at 4.00 p.m. It's always good to try and involve the Junior Choir in our church life and I'm sure they'll enjoy singing some Christmas hymns as well as their own contributions. We'll be doing John Rutter's *Donkey Carol* which is quite jazzy and introduces the children to 5 beats in the bar but done slightly differently to Dave Brubeck's *Take Five*. This session the children have enjoyed having our choir mascot, Machar, present at rehearsals. Machar sits on the piano observing things: warm-ups, breathing exercises, our singing, and our musical games at the end. He decides (with help from the adult helpers) which child gets to take him home for the week. So far Machar has been to swimming and gymnastics lessons, several birthday parties,

many walks, trips to the cinema and much more. For the October break he came to stay with Carla and me and had a lovely spa and some relaxing time on the couch. He's a great way to encourage the children to come to rehearsals and an incentive to pay attention, behave and work hard.

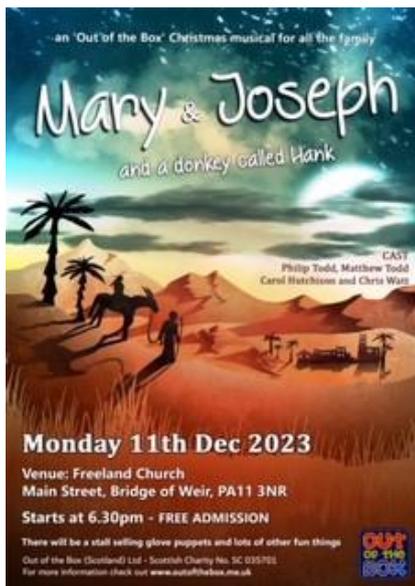
[Machar relaxing before the next Junior Choir term]



[Machar enjoying his spa!]

Ian Munro

NOTICES



Christmas Concert

Sunday 17th December
4pm

St Machar's Ranfurly
Church

Funerals



Jesus said

"I am the Resurrection
and the Life"

Anne Jenkins

19th September 2023

Douglas McClure

28th September 2023

Samuel McGonigle

25th October 2023



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ROTAS

| Date | Welcome | | Sound and Vision | |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Dec 10 | Jennie Durward | Alan Durward | Jonny Watson | Naomi Butterworth |
| 17 | Ann Hart | Anne Yeaman | Greg Miller | Drew Richardson |
| 24 | Dennis Taylor | Mary Taylor | Tabitha Marshall | Lois Marshall |
| (11.30pm) 24 | | | Harrison Butterworth | Naomi Butterworth |
| 31 | Norma Hancock | Dennis Taylor | Greg Miller | Jonny Watson |
| Jan 7 | Freeland Church | Mary Taylor | Freeland Church | |
| 14 | Bill Christie | Agnes McKechan | Tabitha Marshall | Drew Richardson |
| 21 | Bill Robb | Philip McCulloch | Dave Macdonald | Naomi Butterworth |
| 28 | Morven McLeod | Margaret Richardson | Greg Miller | |
| Feb 4 | Scott McLaughlin | Sarah McNaught | Tabitha Marshall | Lois Marshall |
| 11 | Elizabeth Lyle | Anne Allen | Jonny Miller | Drew Richardson |
| 18 | Ann Hart | Norma Hancock | Greg Miller | Naomi Butterworth |
| 25 | Jennie Durward | Alan Durward | Tabitha Marshall | Lois Marshall |
| Mar 3 | Anne Yeaman | Bill Christie | Jonny Watson | Naomi Butterworth |
| 10 | Agnes McKechan | Philip McCulloch | Greg Miller | Drew Richardson |

| Date | Flowers | Flower Delivery | Date | Flowers | Flower Delivery |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Dec 10 | Jane Shepherd | Jane Shepherd | Jan 28 | Jennie Durward | Jennie Durward |
| 17 | Mary Taylor | Mary Taylor | Feb 4 | Jane Stirling | Jane Stirling |
| 24 | Flower Fund | Mary Taylor | 11 | Anne Allen | Anne Allen |
| 31 | Norma Hancock | Norma Hancock | 18 | Anne Yeaman | Anne Yeaman |
| Jan 7 | n/a | n/a | 25 | Coral Mclaughlin | Coral Mclaughlin |
| 14 | Moira Johnstone | Moira Johnstone | Mar 3 | Sarah McNaught | Sarah McNaught |
| 21 | Helen Bullen | Helen Bullen | 10 | Margaret Richardson | Margaret Richardson |

December Riddles

What is always in front of you but can't be seen?
 What can you break even if you never pick it up or touch it?
 I have branches but no fruit trunk or leaves. What am I?
 What can travel all around the world without ever leaving its corner?
 I'm tall when I'm young and I'm short when I'm old. What am I?

Editorial Team:
Dennis Taylor, Mary Taylor
Marion Reid

Contributions for the next issue of *The Lych Gate* should be with the Editor by **Tuesday 13th February 2024**.
Please E-mail to: dennis1taylor@msn.com or pass memory sticks or paper copies to Dennis Taylor.