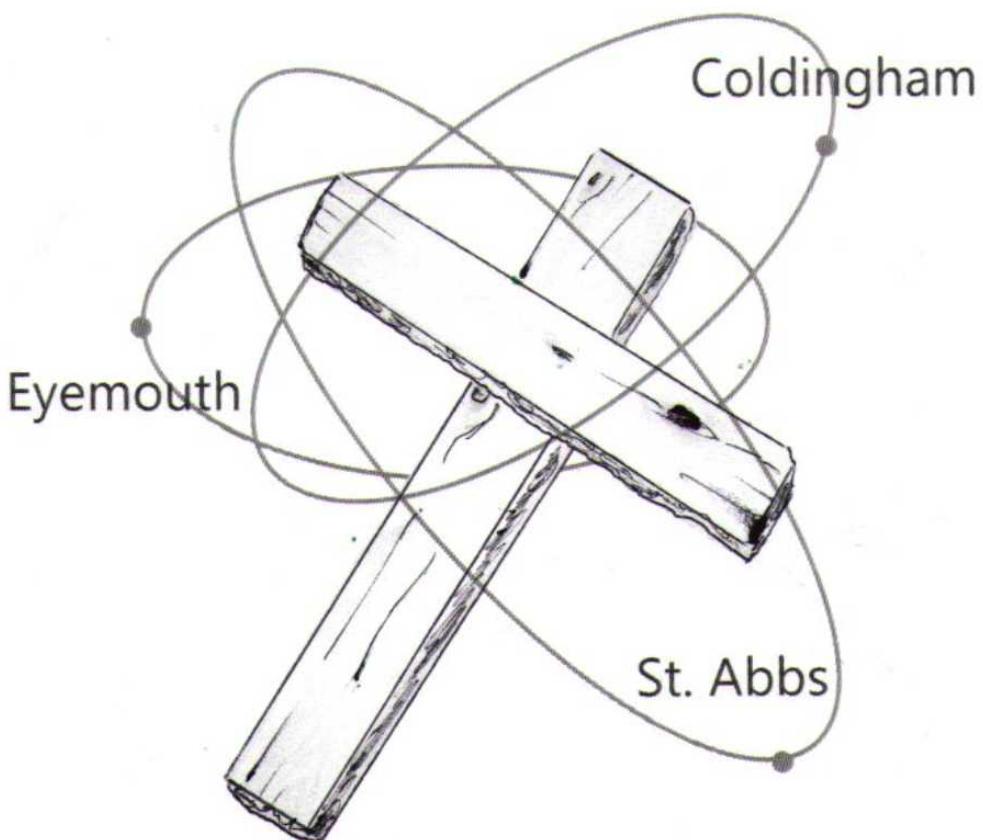


UNITED UPDATE

Advent/Christmas 2024 Edition



**Newsletter of the Parish Church of Coldingham &
St. Abbs linked with Eyemouth Parish Church**

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Luke 2:20 (NIV-UK)

Worship Fully – The Advent Conspiracy

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. ” Romans 12:1 (NIV-UK)

Dear friends,

This year we have embarked on the Advent Conspiracy throughout the Advent season. It is built on four tenents: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More and Love All. The aim of this conspiracy is to help us during Advent to reorient our hearts back to Christ, to put the Christ back into Christmas in some senses! But also as Advent is a time of preparation, then we can then take this time to prepare ourselves not just to celebrate the birth of our Saviour, but also to prepare ourselves for the return of Jesus too. Central to this idea of preparation is the idea of worship. Yet what IS worship?

Too often we think of worship as that time we spend on a Sunday morning, we even call it Sunday worship... YET worship is so much more than that. We treat worship as a noun, something we attend, yet Paul in his letter to the church in Rome is clear that worship is a verb, a doing word and it's something that involves our whole body, and involves sacrifice giving up our priorities and our expectations. Worship is not defined by the songs we sing, the instruments we use, the words we say, or whether we can concentrate on what is going on, but is defined our own connection with God.

It can happen in the simplest of things, even amongst noise and chaos, and it brings a real sense of the holiness of that moment, something important is happening. For when we worship something important is happening. God responds to our worship, God is reaching out in response to us. I know in my own life that it has not always been during a Sunday service that I have sensed that deep connection with God, yet each time I have made that choice to worship, to reach out to God no matter what I have been doing, God responds and through the Holy Spirit works.

As Eugene Peterson puts it in his Message translation of that passage in Romans: “Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out.”

Let us this Advent allow God to change us from the inside out, but let's do that through our worship, by fixing our attention on Jesus, on the God who came as one of us and whose return we await.

God Bless

Andy



*shepherds on a hill
occasional bleat of sheep
peace is all around*

*suddenly a voice
sky fills with glorious light
good news of great joy*

*run to the stable
kneel down before the baby
love has come to earth*

*they spread the good news
light has entered our darkness
hope comes to our world.*

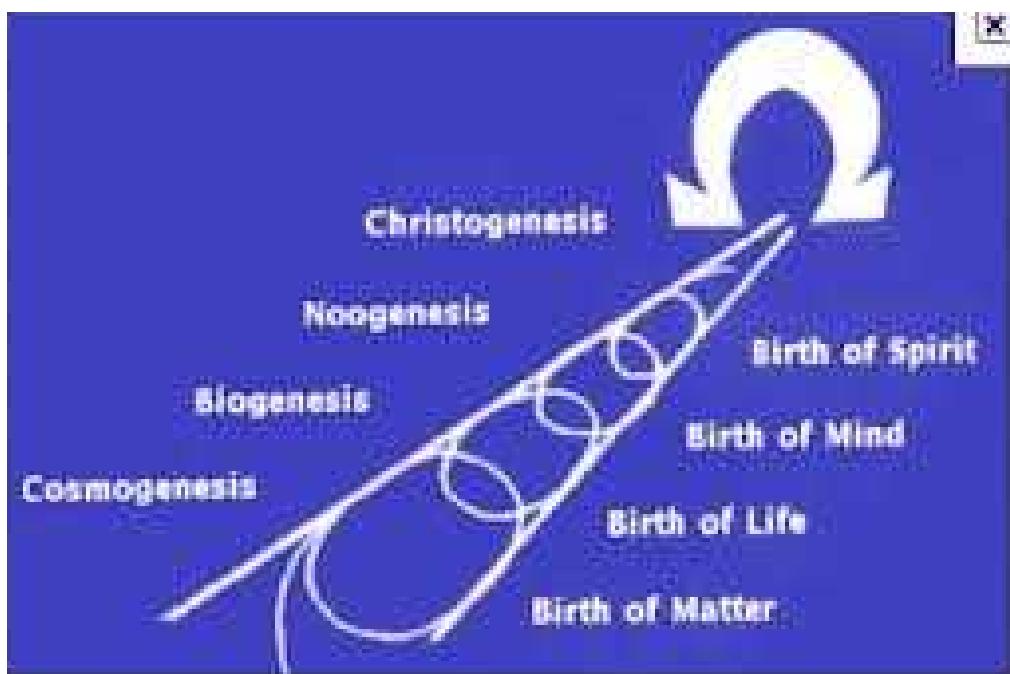


To all my friends in Coldingham Priory and Eyemouth May Peace, Joy, Love and Hope be yours this Christmas

Heather

God's Game? Submitted by Richard Bond

A few years ago, I submitted a poem for United Update to David Philp, the then editor. He responded “I can’t understand it, you have to explain”. I was reluctant as I believe the meaning of a poem belongs to the reader and the fun is trying to unpick it. Nevertheless, I obeyed. I hear David’s challenge once more ringing in my ears with this one. However it is worth noting that the poem is based on the Omega Point conceived by the Jesuit evolutionary scientist and mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin early in the 20th century. Briefly described as ‘the Divine centre of convergence of evolution and consciousness’, illustrated in the picture below.



Bouncing to Omega

With hand ball's envisioned trajectory,
I throw with force and hope, let there be flight.
By God's will alone and out of nothing,
Quantum particles are randomly flung.

Ball and wall rendezvous,
Elastic flexes into new orbit.
Star dust condenses, burns bright, collapses,
Supernovae blasts out new elements.

Ball's triad relay rebounds on the ground
Then rises homeward towards omega.
Earth's primordial soup of compounds, birth
Organic life seeking complexity.

My hand outstretched, I strain to catch the ball.
Mankind at life's zenith, apprehends God,
By prophets and Immanuel reconciled,
Omega point draws near; Thy will be done.

Postscript

GAME OVER!

The Trinity clap their hands, laugh and dance for joy, saying,
“That was fun,
Shall We play it again”?

Richard Bond, December 2019 / 2024

Richard's Interpretation (If I must he says!)

This poem is speculating on what God's game is. Using the Omega Point as its start point the poem cheekily interweaves the awesome creation and ongoing evolution of the cosmos with the simple amusement of playing catch-ball against a wall. Ultimately implying that creation is solely for the delight of our Trinitarian God.

Eyemouth Needs and Appeals donation to the Ekwendeni Disability Centre, Malawi

During our time at Ekwendeni Hospital, Malawi, Kistone Mhango ran the community program overseeing clinics in the surrounding area where children were vaccinated and antenatal care was given. Tragically a few years after we left, he was paralysed in a road accident. Despite ongoing health issues, he managed with the help of his wife to resume working at the hospital but retired in 2022. The following summer his work in the Ekwendeni community was recognised by Airtel, Malawi (a mobile phone provider) who gave him an award.

Using the Award from Airtel Malawi, as seed money, Kistone was successful in applying for funding from the Australian embassy in Zimbabwe to start building a Disability Centre. However, a 44% devaluation of the local currency (Malawi Kwacha) towards the end of last year coupled with a 3% devaluation in March 2024 meant that they had insufficient funds to buy iron sheets for the roof. The congregational board agreed at their September meeting to send £500 from the money given at the after-service tea and coffee. The photo below is of the disability centre now with its roof of iron sheets.



Kistone reports that people in and around Ekwendeni are flocking to the Centre registering their relatives and children needing mobility devices or other assistance. They see this Centre as a valuable asset in their community that will address their mobility challenges and equip them

with relevant information. They are desperately waiting for a day when the Recreation Hall will be officially opened to the public hopefully before the end of the year.

The aims for the disability centre are:

1. To maintain mobility and independence among people with disabilities through the provision and servicing of wheelchairs and tricycles.
2. To provide physiotherapy and occupation therapy.
3. To equip parents/guardians with relevant knowledge and skills to help their children with disabilities including learning difficulties.

GodSpace – Making Space for God as a family



enjoy an opportunity to worship God in a different way from what we might be used to on a Sunday morning.

The service starts with a prayer, a few songs, then a video or a story sharing some aspect of the Christian faith. Over the months we've looked at the Old Testament in overview, given thanks for all the food we have access to and considered the life story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. After this we spend some time doing games and crafts all together with some of our older members not just helping out but creating their own crafts too! The final stage of the service involves everyone helping to prepare the table for a meal and then we'll have a short thought, another song and a prayer before eating together.

Since starting we have four regular families who join us and a number of other families and children who attend and with it being multi-generational anyone can come along and join in making space for God!

Since September we have been running a special GodSpace service on Sunday afternoons in Eyemouth usually on the first Sunday of the month. These services are designed to be multi-generational in that folk at every age and stage can

Heart for God.

The next Heart for God, ladies conference, will be in Paxton House on Saturday 15th March 2025. Booking forms will be available in January.

Away Day and Book Groups.

In October we returned to St. Baldred's Church in North Berwick where Andy Leach gave us an introduction to the book "A Love That Cannot be Contained" which we will be studying in groups in the new year. The groups will meet in Eyemouth on a Tuesday afternoon, in Coldingham on a Wednesday morning and in Eyemouth on a Thursday evening. The plan is that each fortnight all groups would study the same chapter so that people could go to the group which fitted in with their other activities that week.

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The Waterwheel

The relationship of the Trinity generates and pours out love into all creation.

It can be seen as the flowing of a stream.

We can be seen as an overshot waterwheel along the stream.

Our buckets are filled with water, the weight of which turns us into action and as the wheel turns our buckets empty water back into the stream continuing the flow.

The waterwheel only and forever flows in one direction.

Richard Bond - After Rohr R. 2016 'The Divine Dance'.

Presbytery News

Presbytery continues to implement the United Presbytery Mission Plan agreed by the previous presbyteries. This has required a huge number of linkages and unions to be enacted across the whole of Presbytery which has kept the Clerk, the moderator and the Planning Committee very busy.

In our local area the implementation of the plan is exceedingly complex due to the nature of what was agreed by the former Duns Presbytery. At this time they are working towards creating a new set of linkages formed around Berwick-upon-Tweed (Berwick St. Andrews linked with Ayton & District, linked with Fogo Parish Church), Coldstream (Coldstream & District linked with Eccles & Leithholm) and Earlston (Earlston linked with Greenlaw, linked with Gordon St. Michael's, linked with Legerwood), Earlston having chosen to join our area of the Presbytery plan. Duns & District Parish will continue as they are and so will ourselves. The newly united charge of Whiteadder (formerly Chirnside linked with Hutton, Fishwick and Paxton) have declined to join the parish grouping.

Once these new linkages are in place then a Basis of Parish Grouping needs to be agreed by all the charges involved (including us at this time.) This Parish Grouping would then be formed of these 5 charges and have 5 ministers allocated to them each with a specialism. The five specialisms are: Worship, Pastoral Care, Mission, Christian Education and Youth. Under the parish grouping the team ministry would not be solely responsible for carrying out these specialisms, but actually each member would be there to encourage, support and enable the individual congregations throughout the entire area to do these aspects of ministry themselves.

Eyemouth Foodbank

DONATIONS NEEDED

EYEMOUTH FOOD BANK



Unfortunately there seems to be no let up in need for the foodbank and it continues to be well used. The foodbank covers the East Coast of Berwickshire and inland towards Ayton, Foulden and Grantshouse. The numbers for each month have remained fairly steady over the Summer, however just in the last month the foodbank has seen a marked increase in family parcels. Over the last three months the foodbank has delivered 61 food parcels feeding around 171 people.

The two biggest needs for the foodbank is volunteers to help with organising the foodstore and for money to pay for the fresh produce and food vouchers that goes into each parcel. If you can help please speak to Andy. Do remember to continue to collect food and your donations can be dropped off on a Sunday for the foodbank. Once again, if you would be interested in helping out with food parcel deliveries, or taking collected food to the Foodbank store then please contact Andy.

The Food List

Tins or packets of Soup

Tins of mince, stew, meat balls, curry pies in tins

Corned beef, spam, ham, tuna, sardines, pilchards, baked beans

Tinned veg and potatoes

Pasta

Pasta sauce

Tea & Coffee

Breakfast cereal

Dried or UHT milk

Custard

Tinned fruit

The following items are added when the parcel is made up and delivered, so donations of money are always accepted: food voucher, bread, margarine, fresh milk, fresh potatoes (nappies and baby food, if required)

Help While You Shop

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be collecting free donations for the Church?

There are over 3,000 shops and sites on board ready to make a donation, including Amazon, John Lewis, Aviva, thetrainline and Sainsbury's – it doesn't cost you a penny extra!

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3...

1. Head to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/coldinghamstabbs/> or <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/eyemouthparishchurch/> and join for free.

2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping, or download the easyfundraising donation reminder for your web browser.

3. After you've checked out, that retailer will make a donation to your good cause for no extra cost whatsoever!

There are no catches or hidden charges and the Church will be really grateful for your donations.

You can now even download a handy reminder that reminds you to activate your donation when shopping on participating webpages.

Christmas Services

Sunday 15th December, 7pm – Carols By Candlelight in the Priory

Thursday 19th December, 6.30pm – Carols @ St. Abbs, Ebba Centre

Saturday 21st December, 6pm – Christmas Film Night, Eyemouth

Sunday 22nd December, 10.30am – Family Nativity Service

Christmas Eve

Tuesday 24th December, 6pm – Family Christingle, Eyemouth

**Tuesday 24th December, 11.30pm – Watchnight Services in both
Eyemouth and Coldingham**

Christmas Day

**Wednesday 25th December, 10.30am – Informal Family Service in
Eyemouth, bring your new toys to show off!**

Contacts

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Regular Events

Weekly

Sundays	Morning Worship, Eyemouth, 10.30am
	Morning Worship, Coldingham, 10.30am
Mondays	Busy Bees, Coldingham, 9–10.30am
Tuesdays	Prayer time on ZOOM, 9am
	Busy Bees, Eyemouth, 10.30am–12noon
Thursdays	Prayer Time, Eyemouth, 9.00–9.30am
Fridays	Tea & Toast, Eyemouth, 9.30–10.30am
	Busy Bees, Eyemouth, 10.30am–12noon

Monthly

1 st Saturday	Prayer Breakfast, Eyemouth, 8.30am
1 st Sunday	GodSpace, Eyemouth, 4–5.30pm
3 rd Saturday	Prayer Time, Coldingham, 9am
Last Sunday	Evening Worship, Eyemouth, 6.30pm