

UNITED UPDATE
DECEMBER 2021

AWESOMELY
DIVINE
VENTURE,
EXCITING
NOEL
TIDINGS!



Waiting, Why are we Waiting?

Dear friends,

I heard recently the phrase as one door closes another door opens, however it was placed in the context of someone eating their way through an advent calendar! It's amazing that in our house advent calendars, especially chocolate ones, manage to last the full 24 days of December leading up the Christmas, the discipline of only eating one chocolate at a time seems to fly in the face of our society's insistence that we can have what we want, when we want it. Yet Advent time is all about waiting, a chance to practice the discipline of patience, to develop the excitement of expectation, to enjoy the anticipation of a wondrous moment to come.

As we approach Christmas there is always a sense of waiting, no matter how early the decorations are up, or how early the shops are selling Christmas chocolates, or even how soon we hear Last Christmas on the radio. Yet waiting for something good is good for us. Indeed sometimes the good thing we are waiting for is only good because we have waited till the right time. Waiting can feel painful, and indeed that's how the Apostle Paul talks about it in the Bible when he is writing to the new church in Rome, he says "we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." (Romans 5:3-4) Then goes onto say "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6) Here we discover not only that waiting produces, character and hope, but also that at the right time God came in Jesus and gave himself for each and everyone of us.

What are we waiting for at Advent? We're waiting to celebrate the arrival of Jesus, this most momentous action of God in the entire history of the world. The moment when God came to us, as John so eloquently puts it, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) The beginning of the end of our waiting for God to fulfil the promises made throughout the Bible. So not only is it worth waiting for, isn't it also worth celebrating? May God Bless you this Christmas time as you wait for Jesus and the reconciliation of all things.

Andy



To Andy and Carrie
Stewart, Cameron & Rebekah
we look forward to receiving the
worships D.V.D each week, & enjoy
the contemporary early service with all
its fun, and serious message of God's love
And then it is uplifting &
comforting to join the congregation
in the traditional late service -
which is indeed inspirational in our
daily lives. May God be with you all
Love from Jessie & Margaret
help 32 charities (Lamb & Kent, !!)

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THE BIBLE	SCIENCE THEN	SCIENCE NOW
-The Earth is a Sphere. Isaiah 40:22	-The Earth was a flat disk	-The Earth is a Sphere.
-Innumerable Stars. Jeremiah 33:22	-only 1100 stars	-Innumerable Stars.
-Air Has Weight. Job 28:25	-Air is weightless	-Air Has Weight.
-Each star is different. 1 Corinthians 15:41	-All stars were the same	-Each star is different.
-Light moves. Job 38:19-20	-Light was fixed in place	-Light moves.
-Free float of Earth in space. Job 26:7	-Earth sat on a large animal.	-Free float of Earth in space.
-Winds blow in cyclones. Ecclesiastes 1:6	-Winds blew straight.	-Winds blow in cyclones.
-Ocean floor contains deep valleys and mountains. 2 Samuel 22:16; Jonah 2:6	-The ocean floor was flat.	-Ocean floor contains deep valleys and mountains.
-Blood is the source of life and health. Leviticus 17:11	-Sick people must be bled.	-Blood is the source of life and health.
-Creation made of invisible elements. Hebrews 11:3	-Science is mostly ignorant on the subject.	-Creation made of invisible elements(Atoms)
-Ocean contains springs. Job 38:16	-Ocean fed only by rivers and rain.	-Ocean contains springs.



**STOP.
BREATHE.
MANY EVENTS.
ONE ADVENT.
EASY MISSED.**

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Creation Kind – East Berwickshire Eco Group

After the completion of the Stiches for Survival Project, the Eco Group members decided to support the COP26 Day of Action on Saturday 6 November last month. This was organised as a Global Event, taking place midway during the COP26 fortnight in the hope of applying further pressure on governments to make bold climate decisions. As travelling to Glasgow to join a big March was considered too risky because of Covid, the group was keen to take part in a local event.

Luckily, Sea The Change (a local Social Enterprise) was in the same frame of mind and their workers organised an event on Coldingham Beach in support of Climate Justice. Many of our members and additional members from other local churches turned up to 'Draw A Line In The Sand For Climate Justice'. A short video recording was shown on ITV news later that night.

In 2022 we are looking forward to further working together on Climate Issues and Climate Action. Anyone wanting to join us is very welcome to do so. Due to Covid restrictions we are still meeting online.

The Eco Group would like to wish you all a blessed Christmas and New Year. May the Lord continue to bless our work and keep our hearts soft to His concerns and issues.

On behalf of Creation Kind, Els Nicol (Coldingham & St Abbs Parish Church)



WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS *FEEL* LIKE?

It was December 1990. In August Iraq had invaded and occupied Kuwait. As part of a multinational response Britain had deployed warships to the Gulf. It was known that the northern Gulf had been 'seeded' with mines and so this naval contingent included 5 mine hunters based at Rosyth. I had flown out from UK to join them as their chaplain. Also present was a small team from STV making a programme to be screened back home. Would I be interviewed? Reluctantly, I agreed. In the chat which followed I was asked, 'How are you going to celebrate Christmas in this situation? It just doesn't feel much like Christmas'.

A question like that is a gift. It gave me the chance to make the distinction between all the trappings of our celebration of Christmas, the decorations, the exchange of gifts, families getting together, all the things we do, and enjoy doing, every year – to make a distinction between the artificial world we create at Christmas and the reality of the situation surrounding the birth of Jesus.

We have turned the Nativity story into a pretty tale, as someone said, we have mucked out the stable and sanitized the manger. The reality is set in an occupied country, like Kuwait had been occupied, it features a young couple compelled to make a long and difficult journey because the Romans had said so, and she was pregnant and her baby was due, and she ends up giving birth in a shed where the animals were put at night because no other place could be found. That is the reality and whatever else it might be, it is not a pretty story.

The TV interviewer had commented, 'It doesn't feel like Christmas'. So what *does* Christmas feel like? What *should* Christmas feel like? I hope that in spite of all the restrictions by which our lives are still surrounded we can celebrate Christmas in the way we want to do; but, please don't let us lose sight of the fact that in Jesus God came into the real world, our world, to share with us the life of his kingdom.

May you know His blessing at this time.

Bruce Neill



RMS Titanic

175 feet
882 feet
92 feet
Steel
3,547 people
Provisions for 3 weeks

Height
Length
Width
Construction
Capacity

Noah's Ark

45 feet

450 feet

75 feet

Wood

50,000+ animals
2,000,000+ insects
8 people
Provisions for 1 year

Sanctification

I am who I am, not another
My soul is mine alone
This world is where I inhabit
Close by that other beyond.

God's breath infuses the random
And guides all things to His will.
The soul is His gift and our freedom
To choose to do good or do ill.

Though animal, we have the image
Merging our will to Thine
Exploring beyond the edge
Approaching the divine.

Richard Bond, November 2021

Advent Musings

A couple of months ago, I noticed that the streetlights in our cul-de-sac and adjoining roads were not coming on. I and others reported this and after several weeks and further phone calls the adjoining roads and our cul-de-sac lights came back on, - all except the one at the end of my drive leaving this end in darkness. I reported it again and still nothing happened. I did no more until my neighbour, recently bereaved, asked me if I could try again. I phoned again this time pointing out that we were both living on our own and felt unsafe going out in the now dark evenings and early mornings. A few days later a van appeared with a crane from which the light was inspected, and I hoped mended, but that night to my disappointment it was still out. However, the next day a small van appeared, and a man got out and opened a door at the base of the light and when I questioned him said it was a burnt-out fuse which he replaced. That night, to my delight, a light was shining in the darkness, the waiting was over, and the perseverance had paid off.

I am writing this just before the first Sunday in advent and the Church of Scotland's advent calendar theme is 'Light in the darkness, details of which you can find on the C of S website. One of the other many advent themes is 'Waiting'. The Israelites waited many years for the coming of the Messiah, the wise men waited for the prophesied star to appear then followed its guiding light. They all waited in 'Hope'. Sometimes we wait a long time for God to answer our prayers, but he does answer in his own time and in his own way, although not always in the way we had expected. For children advent is a time of waiting probably impatiently, with hope, for Christmas to come. This Advent let us wait in hope that the pandemic may be kept under control, that we may sing out our carols and ring the church bells and celebrate with family and friends as we follow the star that leads us to Christ, the Light of the World.

Christmas Blessings to you all, Heather Johnston

p.s. Again, this year instead of exchanging cards, those who wish to do so may send their Christmas Greetings to Church family friends to Andy and these will be put up on the screens in Coldingham and Eyemouth for the two weeks prior to Christmas.



Christmas 2018 in Eyemouth
Margaret Carey

The Last Shall be First

Christmas was always a challenge in rural Sri Lanka for Catherine, myself and children, Roisin, Rachel, Lucy, and last of all our much-loved Pomeranian cross (*cross Pomeranian?!* Ed), Fudge. Boosted by the triumph of finding a bottle of perfume for Catherine among the hardware and saris in the local store (Catherine later thanked me for the bottle of after-shave), I cut a branch from a neighbour's fir tree. It approximated to a Christmas tree and once the girls had made decorations, we thought it was lovely.

Christmas morning arrived and the girls were excited to see the somewhat mangled parcels (clumsy customs inspections) from family back home stacked beneath the tree. They even included a pack of doggy chews, something new to Fudge, and therein lay the problem. As the children approached the tree, our beloved pooch turned into a ferocious guard dog, barking and baring his teeth. There would clearly be no present opening and so to avoid tears, we inflated a balloon and started a knock-about. The dog didn't join in, he was on guard duty.

Eventually, the balloon drifted over to the tree and fortuitously popped on a pine needle. Startled, Fudge bolted out of the house, giving us a few moments to retrieve the buried chews and place them at the front. On his return, Fudge bettered the customs officer's demolition work and triumphantly discovered the delights of doggy chews. He then graciously allowed us to open our presents.

Truly, the last shall be first.

Richard Bond



The St. Andrew's Declaration

On St. Andrew's day this year a special declaration was signed between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Declaration outlines a series of acknowledgments and commitments between the churches intended to deepen their relationship, and look at new ways of working together to serve the people of Scotland.

This year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland voted to welcome the agreement, which was also then passed at the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church in June.

Rev Prof Canon Charlotte Methuen from the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Rev Sandy Horsburgh from the Church of Scotland lead a special service that can be seen on the Church of Scotland's YouTube channel. Rev Sandy Horsburgh, who is the Church of Scotland's Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee, said: "This is a genuinely exciting and important step forward for our two churches. We're celebrating the huge amount we hold in common, especially our common calling to minister to all the people of Scotland. And we're valuing and being enriched by the different strengths we are each bringing into this relationship. Working together, we will be more effective in mission and service and more faithful to the call of Christ."

Alongside the Columba Declaration with the Church of England, signed back in 2016, they both represent steps towards closer cooperation between denominations and will open up new future possibilities of closer working together to develop God's Church. The Ecumenical Policy of the Church of Scotland, commits the denomination to encouraging churches at local, regional, national and international levels to act together where possible.

We are blessed locally to have an active group of churches who gather together and work together throughout the year, to explore about how you can be more involved in this, the simple suggestion would be to come along to the churches together gatherings at either Advent or Lent or any of the other joint churches events.

Christmas in Zimbabwe

by the Mutimbairi family

Christmas in Zimbabwe is mainly seen as a time for family and giving, it is the most joyous of all the holidays.

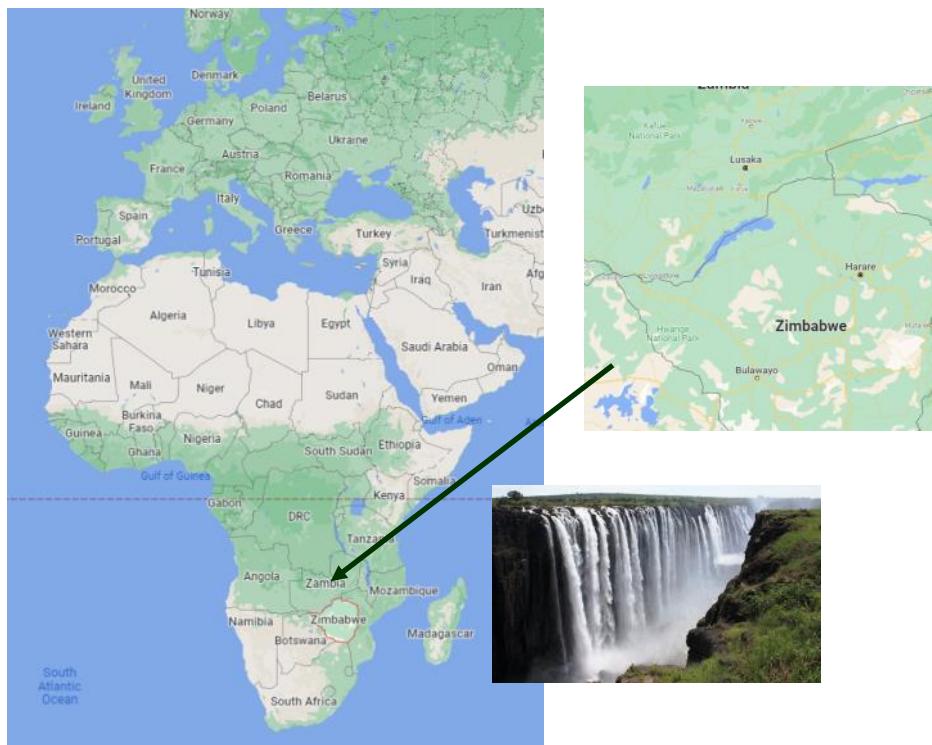
Christmas preparations usually began at the end of November when most workers received their “bonus” (thirteenth cheque), most families will then go on a spending spree buying ‘new’ clothes for their children, these clothes will then be hidden awaiting to be premiered on Christmas day, after buying the clothes all preparations will go silent.

Christmas in Zimbabwe often involve traveling to rural homes where most of our elderly live, this is usually done on the 22nd of December, public transport becomes very expensive due to the very high demand. It is during this time that most families have an annual family gathering in the rural areas where the extended family meet and get to know each other, this is usually a good time also for those in the diaspora to meet most of their relatives in a short space of time.

Most churches will not have Christmas eve services but on Christmas day the churches will have a very early service to announce the birth of Christ, after the church service the Christmas day festivities would begin, large families will slaughter a cow or bull, and some smaller ones will be having goat or chicken. The children will be given their ‘new’ clothes and they will move from homestead to homestead ‘sampling the food’, bread spread with mixed fruit jam (sun jam) is usually served in a winnowing basket, the most common dish is rice and chicken served with a coleslaw salad, fizzy drinks are a must have without which Christmas is incomplete. After lunch, the young and young at heart will congregate at their nearest shopping centre which at times could be more than 7 miles, donning their ‘new’ outfits they will parade them at the same time showing off their dance moves!

Having come to Scotland we have noticed that both individuals and organisations (the Church included) start very early their Christmas preparations and also the decorations that come with it. In Zimbabwe only large supermarkets will put up Christmas decorations, some parts of the big cities will also have some Christmas lights, it is very rare to see any decorations in people's homes or on their houses. charity organisations usually take advantage of the generosity that prevails during this time to raise funds to support the less fortunate.

Having seen all the preparations that take place in preparation of Christmas day we are eager to see what Christmas day is like here in Scotland.





O HOLY NIGHT

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

ANGEL

GIFTS

MYRRH

ANIMALS

GOLD

PEACE

BABY

JESUS

SAVIOR

BETHLEHEM

JOSEPH

SHEPHERD

DONKEY

MANGER

STAR

FRANKINCENSE

MARY

WISE MEN



"Flesh
Became
Word"
image
copyright
David Philp



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.

AMAZON SMILE

If you use Amazon for your shopping you can also persuade them to donate on your behalf by signing up for Amazon Smile. Simply go to smile.amazon.co.uk from your web browser on your computer or mobile device. This will allow you to connect your Amazon account and select a charity to receive donations, both congregations are registered (The Church of Scotland, Eyemouth Parish Church or The Parish Church of Coldingham & St. Abbs) with Amazon and once linked when you shop on Amazon Smile, donations will be made automatically with no cost to yourself!

East Berwickshire Churches Together Advent Gatherings

Every Wednesday in Advent we meet on ZOOM for a short gathering led by volunteers from the different churches. The gathering starts at 11am and is finished by 12noon. This is a great opportunity to take a moment away from the busy-ness of the lead up to Christmas and refocus on why we celebrate Christmas.

Wednesday 15th December
Wednesday 22nd December

Christmas Services

Saturday 18th December - Carols by Carlight at 4pm at Eyemouth Freezers

Sunday 19th December - Carols by Candlelight, 6.30pm, in Coldingham Priory

Christmas Eve, 5pm – Family Christingle in Eyemouth Parish Church

Christmas Eve, 11.30pm – Watchnight Service in both Eyemouth and Coldingham.

Christmas Day Service, 10.30am – Christmas Day Service at Eyemouth, relaxed, short and informal; come along and join in the family celebrations.



Eyemouth RENEW Project

The RENEW team have continued to be busy over the past few months filling in applications to grant funders. This has resulted in us having received a further £20,000. The recent gift day added a further £4,925. Currently this means that we have a total of £227,000 towards the previous estimated cost of £300,000.

Unfortunately, over the past few months, the cost of building materials and labour have increased. At a recent meeting with the architect and quantity surveyor the plans were reviewed and this is to be followed by a discussion with the Church of Scotland heating advisor who will finalise heating plans allowing the quantity surveyor to update costs. These are required for a number of funding applications that are outstanding.

The architect is in the process of applying for the building warrant and she is hopeful that initial work on the project will be able to start in the spring.

Ishbel

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