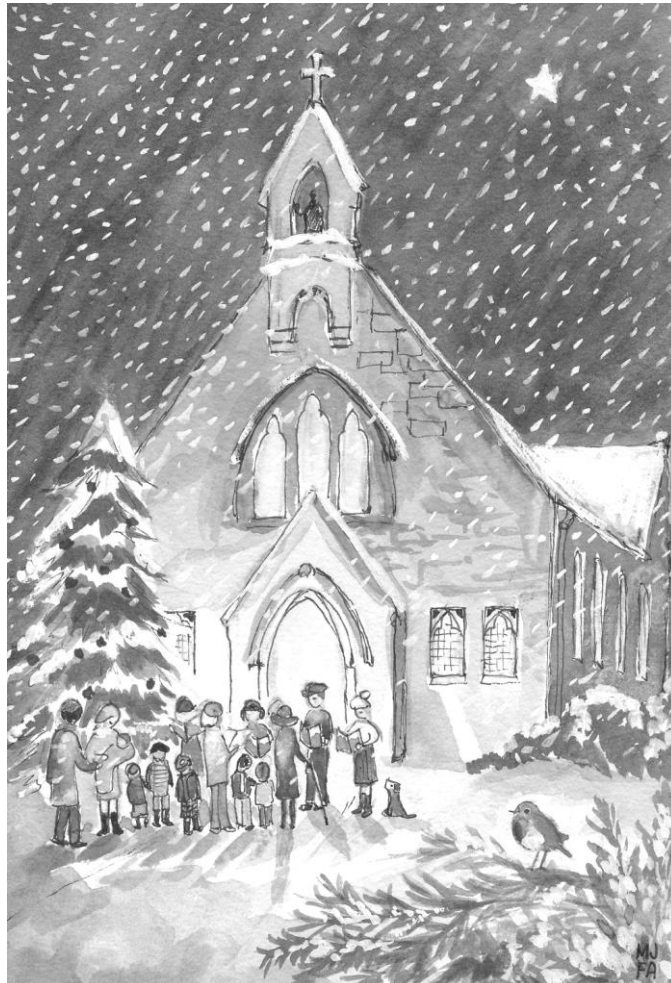


# Ferintosh

## Parish Church



# Ferintosh Focus

Church Newsletter

December 2013

Serving the communities of Conon Bridge & Maryburgh

[www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk)



# Church Contact Information

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Church Website:

[www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk)



# Contents

Many of us will have been encouraged since we were young lassies and lads to reflect on the real meaning of Christmas. Maybe some of us were even compelled to tell others about the birth of our Saviour.

Jesus came to Earth to live among us as a man, being fully human in emotion, companionship, trial and celebration. But his true legacy is more than we can imagine: He died on the cross to save us and give us the gift of an eternal loving relationship with God. The real meaning of Christmas transcends a stable and some shepherds – it's the bringing of grace and love into the world for each of us. A gift of this magnitude is offered to every single person on this Earth and what a testament of thanks it would be if we could tell, not only of that stable, but of the wonderful gift it's led to.

## Congregation Contribution

Look out for the "Congregation Contributions" in this edition, and have a think about submitting some for the next issue.

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As always, we welcome any comments, questions or suggestions about the newsletter. Submissions are now invited for the next edition of the Focus - these can be made to members of the editorial team, or sent by email to [strathdrynie@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:strathdrynie@tiscali.co.uk).

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*



# Minister's Message

On my recent holiday to Edinburgh I was able to witness the switching on of the Christmas lights. The city was buzzing and George Street became a pedestrian precinct, with everyone standing shoulder to shoulder. The joy on everyone's face was self-evident as the Christmas songs started. Everyone was singing and dancing; people of every nationality, or so it seemed as I listened to their accents. It was as if, for that hour or so, everyone had forgotten their worries and the peace and joy of Christmas reigned. The night sky was not only lit up by the fire-works but with smiles of true happiness.



None of this would have been possible if it was not for the birth of our Lord and Saviour, no lights, no fireworks, no joyful smiles, no peaceful hearts, no true happiness and no united people standing shoulder to shoulder. The sad thing for me was how many of the people there knew this?

The prophet Isaiah tells us, ***'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and they will call Him Immanuel...(Isa. 7:14),*** which means ***God with us*** and in Luke's Gospel we read, ***...on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests...(Luke 2:14).*** My challenge to you this Christmas is to tell people this Good News of our Lord and Saviour, and of the wonderful life we can have if we believe in Him. And I pray that the hope, peace, love and joy that came down that first Christmas becomes a reality for not only the people we love, but for our entire world and everyone in it.

**Ferintosh Parish Church**

## Christmas Services

<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Family Nativity Service</b> at 11.00am, followed by tea and coffee in the Church hall
<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Family Carol Service</b> at 6.30pm, followed by tea, coffee and mince pies in the Church hall
<b>Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Watchnight Service</b> at 11.30pm
<b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Christmas Day Family Service</b> at 11.00am

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*



## A gift to each other...



The theme this **Guild** session, 2013-2014, is "a fellowship to build" and the Guild Team has tried to build the syllabus around this.

It has been an interesting one so far ranging from an informal meeting in a member's home to begin, a talk by our very own minister, Rev A Graham, an afternoon with Iona Nicol of the Munlochy Animal Rescue Centre and a delightful afternoon with the Dingwall Primary School Choir. As you can see, there is a great variety trying to accommodate many interests.

We are delaying our visit to Cameron House into the New Year but look forward to that visit very much.

The project we are supporting this year is Mary's Meals in Liberia and Guild members were invited to take a Smartie tube and fill it for this project so that we would not take away too much from the much needed fund-raising in the congregation. Amazingly the Guild has raised in one year £248,371.91 for the six projects running until 2015!!

Annually we have a discussion topic and this year it is "finding the right way". We look forward to everyone's contributions on that.

Guild Week is at the end of November each year and the Presbyterial Council of Ross marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its inauguration by taking a walk around Dingwall beginning at St Clements Church Hall and ending up at the coffee morning in Castle Street Church Hall. That day was our first taste of snow and winter. However all those who turned up enjoyed a really beautiful time together as we walked along the Canal path along by the Firth. Castle Street Church folk made us very welcome and had set up a table where all the Guild people could sit together and have even more time for fellowship. This was so kind and very much appreciated. In our own Guild, members took part in the morning service and were able to highlight the work of the Guild to the congregation.







The important event in our year at Ferintosh has been the Guild Link with Hamilton Bardrainey in Port Glasgow. We have had a couple of letters and have sent news from Ferintosh there. These are follow-ups to the visit by some of the ladies of their Guild to Canon Bridge in early summer. We look forward to strengthening this Link over the coming months and years.

Ferintosh Parish Church Guild is always welcoming and, of course, is for everyone. The next meeting will be held in the Church Hall on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm. when Janette and Hugh Steele will take you on a visit to South Africa with them. Even if you don't usually attend the Guild you can come along and be most welcome.

### Dates for the 2014 Diary



RIVER CAFÉ:	Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> February	2-3.30pm
	Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> March	2-3.30pm
SOUP LUNCH:	Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> February	12 noon
	Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> March	12 noon

The **Pastoral Care Team** is a small group of people who are able to give some time to those who need help in the parish.

They are happy to do odd jobs for you, take you to appointments both locally and Inverness, take you to visit a friend or relative in a Care Home or hospital. If you have something you'd like doing, just ask and we will try our best to assist. We also are happy to visit with you either at home or in your Care Home to keep you updated on Church news and for a wee chat.

The Team has been less busy of late due to the passing of some of our users. However, our team is quite small and would welcome new members, even if you could help on odd occasions.

This team could not operate without the prayers of the congregation and friends and we thank those who remember our work regularly.

The coordinator, Janette Steele (01349 861591), thanks everyone who helps in this work. Their dedication and willingness are much appreciated.

Contact either your elder or the coordinator and we will try to arrange what you need. Please allow time for arrangements to be made, especially for appointments.

*Janette Steele, Coordinator*



There is to be a **Variety Concert** in the church on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 7pm. Details nearer the time!

There are still some **Smarties Tubes** available in the church. As you are aware these were donated to help raise much needed funds for the church. All we ask is that you enjoy the contents of the tubes and return them, filled with the coins of your choice. To date the sum of £295.66 has been raised. Many thanks to everyone who has participated in this.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November saw the church hall filled with a variety of stalls and goods for sale at the **Pre-Christmas Bazaar**. Customers were not disappointed with the choice of baking and produce, gifts, books, floral arrangements, crafts, jewelry, sweets and much, much more. Teas were available with a delicious choice of baking to enjoy. The winner of the Christmas cake (6lbs 1oz) was Morag Foster from Canon Bridge and the jar of sweets was won by Rev'd Graham who had the nearest guess of 224 sweets (actual number was 219). Congratulations to both. The excellent sum of £964.10 was raised for church funds. Thanks go to everyone who helped in any way to make this event the success it was.

*Janet Murray*

## Congregation Contribution

And God held in his hand  
A small globe. Look, he said.  
The son looked. Far off,  
As through water, he saw  
A scorched land of fierce  
Colour. The light burned  
There; crusted buildings  
Cast their shadows: a bright  
Serpent, a river  
Uncoiled itself, radiant  
With slime.  
On a bare  
Hill a bare tree saddened  
The sky. Many people  
Held out their thin arms  
To it, as though waiting  
For a vanished April  
To return to its crossed  
Boughs. The son watched  
Them. Let me go there, he said.



"The Coming" - R.S. Thomas



# The gift of God's message...

*The opening verses of John's Gospel are invariably read at some point during Christmas and have become well known to us over the years. But when did we last take time to reflect on them and consider precisely what these verses are saying to us and in what way they are challenging us?*

## **Read John 1:1-18**

What are the main three things that this opening prologue to John's Gospel touches on?

- It tells us exactly who Jesus is.
  - **But who is Jesus to us – what does He mean to us?**
- It tells us of the relationship between Jesus and God.
  - **Are we clear on this relationship and where do we fit into this?**
- It hints that His mission will not meet with universal success.
  - **Have we experienced this in our faith life and, if so, how have we dealt with this – what impact has it had on us?**

What key themes are we introduced to in the verses, themes that will crop up again and again as we read through the Gospel?

- Eternal life- Instead of talking of the Kingdom of God
  - **Why is John so focussed on this theme of Eternal life and is it different from the theme of The Kingdom of God we find in the Synoptic Gospels?**
- The 'World'- used not only when speaking about the created order, but also used in a way to depict those who do not accept the revelation of Christ.
  - **We often speak of 'worldly things'. Is there something of that in what John is saying here?**
- Truth – Jesus Himself not only reveals this truth, He is the personification of truth.
  - **What do we understand by this – Jesus being the personification of Truth?**
- Dualism – John's Gospel is full of dualistic pairs of opposites – belief/unbelief, light/darkness, from below/from above
  - **But what are these all ultimately about?**

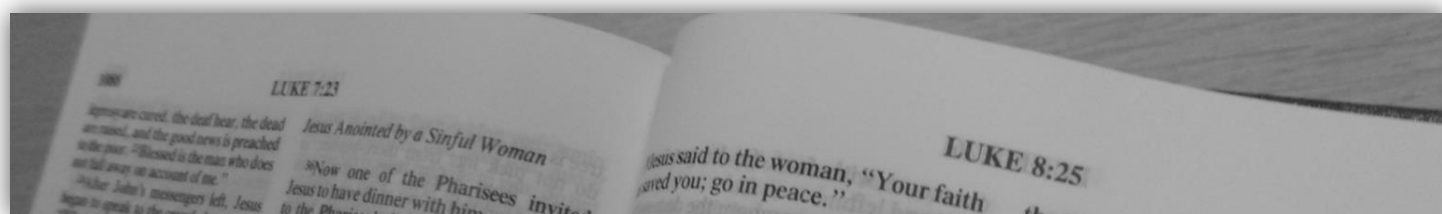




Read through these verses again. What else can we learn from these opening verses?

- In a sense they are like a 'mini-gospel'.
  - Verses 1-5 speak to us of the unity of Christ and God, a theme which we see throughout the fourth Gospel.
  - Verses 6-8 introduce us to John the Baptist, sent to prepare the way for Christ.
  - Verses 9-13 speak to us of the coming of Christ into the world, the light of the world that not all would recognise.
  - Verses 14-18 speak to us of the incarnation and salvation, God becoming flesh and the salvation that this would bring those who accepted Him.

John's Gospel is unlike any of the other Gospels, of that there is no doubt and many believe it to be the most 'accurate' of all. His 'perspective' on Jesus Christ is unlike any of the other Gospels and in these opening verses we get a glimpse of why Jesus came and of what is to come, which is why it is such an important lesson for this time of year.



The **Ladies' Bible Study** meets fortnightly in the Church Hall at 2pm on Wednesdays. This year we are studying the Cover to Cover material on "The Ten Commandments - LIVING GOD'S WAY". So far we have looked at "who do you think I am" which examined the different titles we use when we speak and listen to God and how these names might affect our relationship with God - as a country, our church and ourselves.

We are now having a break until 7<sup>th</sup> January when we will follow ALTERNativity "Extending the Table - new meals for Advent and Epiphany". On the 7<sup>th</sup> it will be "Just Desserts"; a way of carrying the story of the birth into the New Year highlighting the arrival of the Wise Men thereby signalling that Jesus' birth was for all nations. It would be lovely if you could come along that day.

On 21<sup>st</sup> January, we will begin studying The Ten Commandments "Exclusive Rights". The ladies are friendly and welcoming and enjoy listening to others suggestions as well as joining in the discussion. Please give prayerful thought to joining us each fortnight.

Janette Steele



## Gifts to give freely...

The main local development in the last few months has been the **community choir**. Around 20 people have met every Wednesday evening in the hall to enjoy each other's company and sing a range of popular and seasonal music. So far the music has been for our own enjoyment, but in future, who knows... Anyone interested will be made very welcome when the choir meets again in the New Year. No need to read music or have any experience of singing in a choir. Enjoyment and enthusiasm are more important by far. Unfortunately a junior choir for 8-14 year olds did not prove popular, and has now ceased meeting.

In terms of **world mission**, there have been two recent events of note. Firstly, on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013 the twinning agreement between the Presbytery of Ross and **Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi** was signed by Rev. Fraser Stuart, the current Moderator of the Presbytery of Ross, and Mr Ron Gunstone, the Presbytery Clerk. The agreement had previously been signed in Malawi on behalf of the hospital. Ekwendeni Hospital was represented at the event in Castle Street Church hall by Maria Silo, who is Deputy Co-ordinator of the hospital's outreach programme to those living with HIV/AIDS (those infected, and those affected by the condition). Like many of the workers and volunteers on the outreach programme, Maria is herself living with the virus, and told us how she would probably have died but for the assistance of a group from a congregation in Cumbria who were on a visit to Malawi. This was in the days when regular anti-retroviral treatment was beyond the means of most Malawians, and certainly of a widow with a young family like Maria. Maria's candid insight into her life at that time was courageous and thought-provoking. The presentation she gave together with Marjorie Clark, Co-ordinator of the Church of Scotland's HIV/AIDS Programme, was totally inspiring. The difference which free treatment and targeted outreach work makes to individuals and families, but also to the country as a whole, is amazing. Educational work; campaigns to encourage testing; treatment, care and support of those infected, in their own homes where possible; support and self-help groups; practical help such as nutritious food, clothing and day care for young children of affected families, or school fees, clothing and materials for older children, or assistance to build or rebuild houses for families headed by children and older people. The list is endless, and this work is carried out in several hundred places around in the hospital's catchment area, by many hundred paid staff and volunteers. Best of all, statistics show that infection rates are reducing. Praise be to God!

The second event was a talk by Clapperton Mayuni, Director of the **National Bible Society of Malawi**, who came with a member of staff of the Scottish Bible Society. The two gentlemen gave a fascinating insight into the work of Bible Societies around the world, from translation to printing to distribution to engagement with the people of the country concerned. Clapperton has been involved in translation work, which is always undertaken by a group of people, some native speakers, others experts in the original texts. Sometimes it is necessary to develop a written form of a language before translation can begin. In Malawi, in spite of many years' work, the complete Bible exists in few of its several languages. In others, parts have been translated, and in others none at all. Historically Bibles for Malawi were printed in Scotland, more recently in South Africa, which reduced transport costs. Today the most cost effective option is to have them printed by the Amity Press in China. Clapperton told us that for an ordinary Malawian family the cost of a Bible is very high relative to their income, so it is a prized possession. The Society tries to keep the cost as low as possible, but must keep within its budget. He also showed an example of a low cost, wind-up player which can be used to bring the Bible to people whose level of literacy does not allow them to read it for themselves.

Bob and Jan Baxter will be attending the Guild meeting on the afternoon of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, when they will be able to give us first-hand information about the work of the **Raven Trust, the Viyele project** and other initiatives they have seen on their recent visit to Malawi. Anyone interested is welcome to attend, at 2pm in the Church hall.

Janet Winchester  
Convener, Mission and Outreach Committee

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*



# Gifts from birth to eternal life...

**Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12**

Since August **Sunday Club** has been going through Genesis looking at Creation and making mobiles. We have also learnt about Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca and Joseph. We made lots of 'reindeer food' to sell at the Pre-Christmas Bazaar. Now we are practising for the Nativity at the end of the month. Anyone with visiting young ones coming to the service on 22<sup>nd</sup> December is very welcome to join in on stage as angels, shepherds or wise men.

Recently at **Ferintosh Youth Fellowship (FYF)** we've been using our SCRIPTURE Union magazines to look at some of the many challenges the Israelites faced on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land.

With a lot of help from Mrs Graham we also made some Christmas decorations to sell at the Pre-Christmas Bazaar that was recently held in the Church hall. We had great fun making decorations and some of us even helped to sell them on the day.

Now with Advent upon us we've focused once again on the birth of Christ and the hope and joy it brings to all of us. Over the next few weeks we are also going to be busy preparing for the Christmas Service.

We will be joining with the Sunday Club for the annual Christmas Party on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December. Hopefully Santa (if he's not too busy getting ready for Christmas day!!) will pop in to see us.

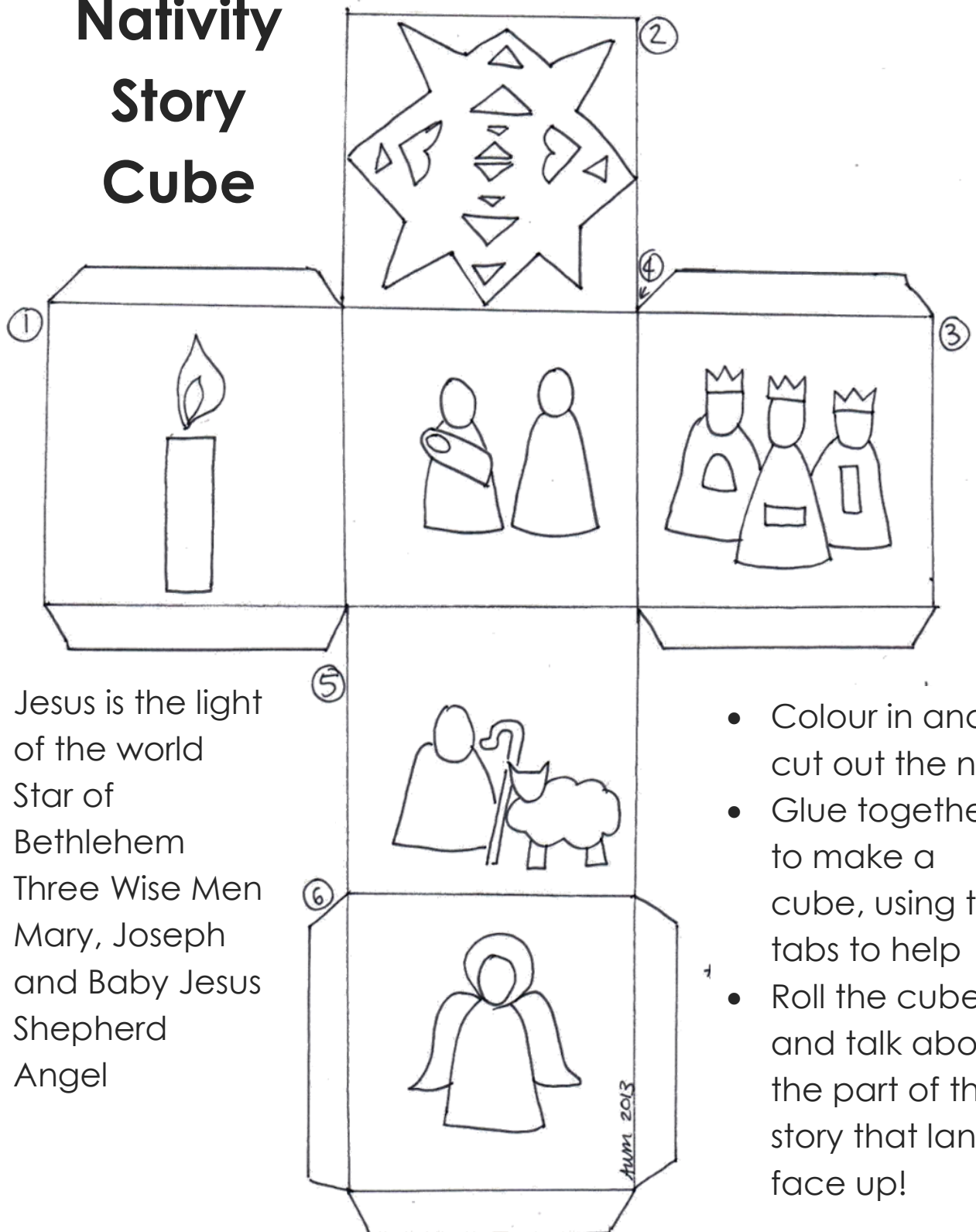
FYF is open to all Academy aged young people and we'd love to see more young people coming along to it. If you'd like to come along then why not give it a try? We normally meet at 10:50am, we go into the Church for 15-20 minutes before coming out to do our own Bible led activities. Although some of the topics can be difficult at times, the sessions are light hearted and fun and a warm welcome awaits.



**It's easy to tell when it's Nativity Play time – I can never find a tea-towel!**



# Nativity Story Cube



- (1) Jesus is the light of the world
- (2) Star of Bethlehem
- (3) Three Wise Men
- (4) Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus
- (5) Shepherd
- (6) Angel

- Colour in and cut out the net
- Glue together to make a cube, using the tabs to help
- Roll the cube and talk about the part of the story that lands face up!

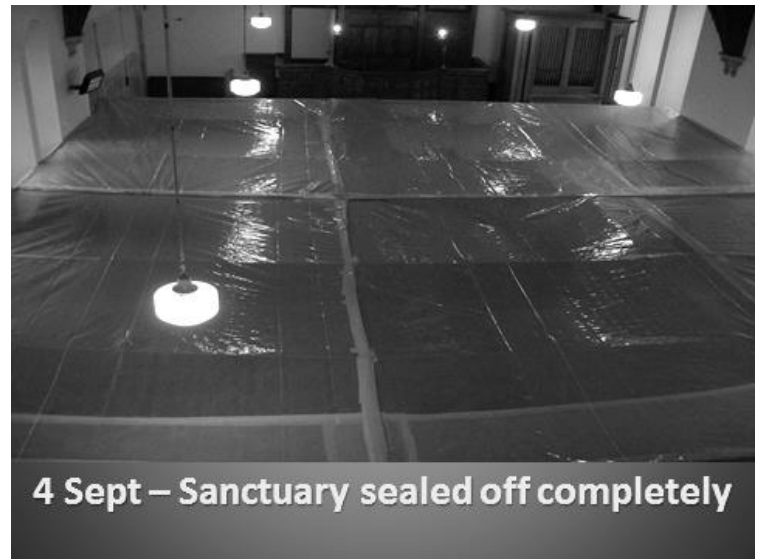




## A BIG THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone in the congregation for their patience and understanding during the last few months while we were having work done in our sanctuary and especially all who helped in any way during that time. I would also like to thank the local tradesmen who did such a wonderful job and who were so willing to co-operate when sudden changes were forced upon us – Kenneth Ross (Joiner), Fraser MacKenzie and his boys (Electrician) and Martin MacLean (Decorator). Also, a big thank you to Tool-Up Asbestos for the very professional way in which they carried out their work. As for the chair company, well...!!!

### A reminder of the work carried out:







15 Oct – Work complete, awaiting chairs



1 Nov – New seats in place – work complete.

**Fabric Fund - Asbestos Removal etc. Fund as at 20.11.13****INCOME**

		£.p.
Donations		14,071.60
Sale of Pews		1,500.00
Grant - Garfield Weston		2,500.00
Grant - Church of Scotland		20,000.00
Fabric Fund - General	(Transfer)	5,000.00
Reserve Fund	(Transfer)	5,243.41
Donations for -		
"Sponsor a Chair" donations	2,230.00	
Sale of Pew Cushions	30.00	
Sale of Memorabilia, etc.	85.00	2,345.00
Tax recoveries on all Donations		2,368.75
		<b>53,028.76</b>

**EXPENDITURE**

Rosehill Furniture Group - Chairs	9,982.80	
KJR Joinery	7,309.45	
Tool-Up Asbestos Solutions	16,290.00	
Sharon Leon Carpets	8,045.00	
Freser MacKenzie (Elect. Contractor)	9,820.94	
Martin MacLean Ltd. (Painter)	1,542.00	
Miscellaneous costs (Appeal Envelopes)	38.75	<b>53,028.76</b>
		<u>0.00</u>



Please remember to save the **British and foreign stamps** from your Christmas mail for the World Mission Council used stamp appeal. Information about the 2014 project will follow as soon as available. Please help by cutting stamps off envelopes, rather than tearing, leaving a margin of half an inch all round if possible, but if not ensuring the perforations are undamaged. Also separate British and foreign stamps if possible. Stamps can be left in the box now situated in the annexe at Church, or given to the person who delivers your newsletter. Alternatively, phone 01349 865308.

## Can you work out December's Mystery Member?

Born and raised in Cheshire by Yorkshire parents.

Taken to Sunday School at an Anglican Church, aged 3, by my elder sister.

Remained loyal to this church until I left home in my early twenties, joined the youth club, which at its peak had 90 members, enjoyed Sundays in my teens as a Sunday School teacher, and through the youth fellowship attended weekends away on Christian Youth events. Had fun as a cub leader for a few years, and following the youth club, a group from the church formed a Revue Society staging musicals and comedy sketch shows. The latter standing me in good stead for my appearance on stage at the Church Holiday Club as a parrot!

On leaving home I headed north to a ski resort not too many miles from here and there waiting to greet me on the station platform was my future husband, sent by the hotel I was due to work in, to help me with my luggage.

From the snow, we then headed south to the coast and Brighton.

Following a career managing hotels, in Glasgow, Oban and Mull, we returned to the Highlands and set up 'shop' a stone's throw from Ferintosh Church.

But not before buying a remote West Coast cottage and selling it to a famous pop star in the early seventies, who subsequently sold it back to us 5 years later.

My father in law was an elder of this church, and I accompanied my mother in law to church regularly. She also introduced me to the Ross-shire Flower Club, which I enjoyed until photography took over.

I am married to an artist, and live in an old Drovers Inn, with Paco our whippet cross and Sox the cat.

Have I given you enough clues?! The correct answer will be revealed in the next edition of the Focus!



## Church Flowers



### January

5<sup>th</sup>

12<sup>th</sup>

19<sup>th</sup>

26<sup>th</sup>

### February

2<sup>nd</sup>

9<sup>th</sup>

16<sup>th</sup>

23<sup>rd</sup>

### March

2<sup>nd</sup>

9<sup>th</sup>

16<sup>th</sup>

23<sup>rd</sup>

30<sup>th</sup>

### Organiser – Mrs M Wilson

Mrs M Wilson

Mrs J McCulloch

Mrs S Chalmers

### Organiser – Mrs M MacLeod

Mrs M MacLeod

Mrs J Steele

Mrs K Campbell

Mrs MacKinnon

### Organiser – Mrs P Chata

Mrs E Munro

Mrs S MacKenzie

Mrs P Chata

Mrs C Parry

Mrs I Thomson

## Church Welcome



### Door

### Count

### January

M. MacKenzie

E. Blackburn

J. Winchester

### February

J. Steele

R. Urquhart

I. MacKenzie

### March

E. Munro

E. Neilson

J. Smith

## Church Register

### Funerals

8 November Mrs. Doreen Ritchie

9 November Mrs. Una Beattie

### A Christmas Prayer

by Robert Louis Stevenson

O God, our loving Father, help us  
Rightly to remember the birth of Jesus,  
That we may share in the song of the  
Angels, the gladness of the shepherds  
And the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the  
Door of love all over the world.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing  
That Christ brings, and teach us  
To be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy  
To be thy children and the Christmas  
Evening bring us to our beds with  
Grateful thoughts, forgiving, and  
Forgiven, for Jesus's sake.

Amen.

