

St Mary's Parish Church
NEWSLETTER
December 2024



"For the glory of God
and the solace of a whole community"

INVITATION

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
will be celebrated
on Sunday 8th December 2024



You are warmly invited to share in this important part of the life of
St Mary's Parish Church

Children are welcomed at the Lord's Table

Single Joint Services

We hold a single service on a nearly-monthly basis, tied in with certain occasions in the church.

Watch for notices or check the online church calendar,
as the Sunday of the month will vary to suit the occasion.

Check also for the times as they may vary.

Advent & Christmas Services

Sunday 1st December Advent 1 9.30am and 11am

Sunday 8th December Advent 2

Sacrament of Holy Communion 9.30am and 11am

Wednesday 11th December

Time for quiet reflection 7-7.30pm

Sunday 15th December Advent 3 9.30am and 11am

Wednesday 18th December

Ecumenical Carol service 6.30pm **Holy Trinity**

Sunday 22nd December Advent 4

Nativity service ONE service 11am

Lunch following - Homemade Soup, Bread, Trifle, Tea and Coffee

Tuesday 24th December Christmas Eve

Church open for quiet reflection 2pm-4pm

Family Christmas Eve service 6.30pm

Watchnight service 11.30pm

Wednesday 25th December

Christmas Day Service 10am

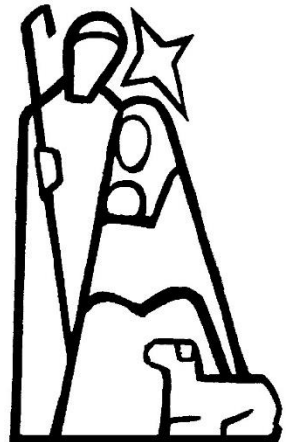
Sunday 29th December

ONE service 10am

2025

Sunday 5th January

ONE service 10am



From the Manse



December is a month filled with familiar sounds. Whether you love or loathe the Christmas songs they will accompany you wherever you shop. Children listen out for the jingle of sleigh bells. There are plenty of concerts featuring seasonal favourites. There are other sounds too: the folding of gift wrap, the squeak of Sellotape and the ripping up of paper (unless you are someone who opens carefully and folds very neatly). In worship Advent begins with 'O come O come Emmanuel' and we look forward to singing seasonal hymns as the month progresses, until we greet Christmas Day with a rousing 'O come all ye faithful' and 'Hark the Herald'.

The Advent and Christmas readings are full of people who sang. We hear the song of Zechariah on the birth of John. Mary sings her Magnificat on the news that she will bear God's son. The birth of Jesus is announced to the world by a sky full of singing angels. It's certainly a noisy month.

There's one sound that we stop to listen out for through all the rest. It's the sound which is at the heart of all the music and all the other noise of the season: a baby's cry. (I don't believe he didn't!). If we want to hear that sound then we need to pause for a moment and open our hearts, as well as our ears. That sound reaches us in different ways: in the cries of babies whose lives begin in the noise and devastation of war; through those who do not have enough to eat and are cold; through all who cry out for us to take notice of their pain. We will make two specific collections this year. In December we will join the West Church in collecting clothes for Women's Aid. Our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day offerings will go as they did last year through Christian Aid to the humanitarian appeal for the middle east.

This Christmas may we raise a joyful song to God as we celebrate our Christ's birth and make the angels' song of peace and hope our own, as announce the good news of God to the world.

May God bless you and yours this Christmas.

Alison

Attesting the roll



In the New Year the congregation will be asked to vote on the Basis of Union with Haddington West church. The vote will take place after a Sunday morning service (date to be announced) and you can only vote in person on the day.

St Mary's Kirk Session needs to prepare for that by 'attesting the roll.' This means that we need to make sure that our membership roll is complete, as that will become the voting roll of the congregation. Only people who are on our membership roll and our adherents roll can vote. Adherents are people who do not wish to be full members of the congregation but do wish to be associated formally with the congregation. The Kirk Session will be attesting the roll at its next meeting on Tuesday 14th January. If you belong to the St Mary's family and are not yet a member or adherent of the congregation, then this is a good time to consider joining or applying to be an adherent. You can join the congregation by profession of faith, by transferring your lines

(membership) from another congregation or by resolution of the Kirk Session. Please note that you cannot be an adherent if you are a member of another congregation. The minister will be happy to speak to you about membership. If you are not sure whether you are a member or an adherent, then please contact our roll-keeper, Russell Darling, who will be able to advise you. You need to do this before the Kirk Session attests the roll to have a vote.

Newsletter

Editor

John Weierter



Welcome to our Christmas edition. Thanks to all who have contributed articles.

Send articles for the next edition to:

newsletter@stmaryskirk.co.uk

by 10th of February 2025.

Anybody fancy a shot of editing the Newsletter? - just basic skills in Word needed!

Moving towards union



between St Mary's and the West Church

At their separate meetings on 5th November, the Kirk Sessions of St Mary's and the West Church voted in favour of the Basis of Union which had been prepared by the Working Group which is made up of elders from both Kirk Sessions. The Basis of Union now goes through a process of being checked by Presbytery Planning Committee, the Church of Scotland legal team, and the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group. Once they are happy that everything is as it should be, the Basis of Union will be voted on by both congregations.

Further information will follow in the New Year.

Alison

Motion in Parliament.

Perhaps a little prematurely, Craig Hoy, South Scotland MSP, referred to our Minister's upcoming retirement with a motion, highlighting her service and supported by more than 15 Holyrood colleagues:

“That the Parliament congratulates the Rev Alison McDonald of Haddington's St Mary's Parish Church on her retirement; notes that Haddington was the town where Scottish Reformer John Knox was born; understands that St Mary's is one of Scotland's finest medieval parish churches, with a rich history stretching back over many centuries; commends Rev McDonald for her work in maintaining a vibrant congregation, which draws people from diverse church backgrounds from across Haddington and neighbouring villages; acknowledges what it sees as her outstanding 25 years of service as a minister; commends her commitment to working with families across the community; and wishes Rev McDonald all the best for the future.”

Harvest Service

with the West Church



We came together for a joint Harvest Thanksgiving service with the West Church on 6th October. The service was well attended and hearty fellowship was enjoyed at the soup and pudding lunch afterwards.

As part of the service we learned about a twinning arrangement the West Church has with a group of churches in West Bengal, India, called the Siliguri Pastorate. Jacqueline Waugh spoke warmly of her experience with the twinning and of a visit to Scotland made by a couple of their Pastors, just before the pandemic. She described the culture shock the pastors felt when they first arrived and how amazed they were by the technology in the schools that they visited.

Jacqueline also related greetings and reports that have come recently from their contact, Marolina, about their church year in their churches. Some of her stories about the difficulties faced by the pastors

when visiting outlying churches were quite harrowing. They might need to cross rivers by laying down bamboo poles as a bridge and they are sometimes attacked by members of hostile factions. However, the impression is that their churches are doing well and are in good heart. We were asked to keep them in our prayers.

Some background on Siliguri Pastorate

Geographical

Siliguri is a city of over 1 million people in north east India, commanding the route through a narrow neck of land between the border of Bangladesh and Bhutan, which links India with its eastern states of West Bengal, Assam etc. The city is not industrial, rather more of a business and commercial city.

Church organization

The Church of North India (CNI) Pastorate of Siliguri consists of one medium sized church on a limited site in the centre of the city and six daughter churches in outlying areas of the city. They have a total of about 700 or so communicants.

Crafty Folk



When you read this the Martinmas Fair will be over. Hopefully, it will be another success. The 'Crafty Folk' will have their usual stall. During the church's Visitor Season, this year, the Craft Stall was reduced in size but we did raise £655.

Our membership is quite low and we hope to see some 'new blood' in 2025. Following the Martinmas, we will have a break until later in February (date to be advised).

I would like to thank all our crafters for their hard work and all the volunteers who help at the stall in the Visitor Season.

Jane Davies

Flower team

The flower committee would like to thank all those who have contributed to Flowers in St Mary's and to remind you that we are always happy to arrange flowers for you for special occasions or times of Remembrance.

It's great to hear all of your lovely comments -- keep them coming Please!

Our theme for Christmas, this year, will be Xmas Music. Will there be enough clues in our flowers for you to name the Carol or song?

Thank you,
Joint Convener,



Shirley Patterson

Gifts for Christmas for Women's Aid

Haddington West Church along with St Mary's Church would like to support Women's Aid this Christmas by providing gifts and/or donations.

Here are ideas of what they need:

*New fluffy socks for women and children

*Pyjamas for women and children (see Home Bargains)

All items should be handed in at either church **before 8thDecember**

Women's Aid is grateful for our continued support and thanks us all.



Third



Wednesday

takes place every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 7-7.30 pm, - a quiet time to sit in peace in candlelight in our beautiful sanctuary. Some words to help you meditate, some music to put you in the mood but mainly silence.

The December date has had to be changed because of a very busy church calendar so it is now to be on **Wednesday 11th December**. Why not try it?

Felicity Haire & Isobel Colley

Social Committee

LUNCH

There will be a lunch following the Nativity Service on Sunday 22nd December.

Home made Soup, Bread, Trifle, Tea and Coffee.

Please stay, if you can, to enjoy the food and the fellowship.

Circle of Friends

(Pastoral Care)

We continue to visit and deliver posies to those who are bereaved, have special birthdays and anniversaries and those in care homes.



It was decided to continue the monthly Afternoon Teas, aimed at those who cannot attend morning worship for whatever reason, who are lonely or just enjoy the camaraderie.

The next Tea takes place on **Thursday 12 December** with a Christmas Afternoon Tea. Any offers of help will be greatly appreciated.

**Isobel Colley, Felicity Haire,
Rona Bowick, Di Kettles,
& Lorna Macdougall**



The Church Walking Group



The group meets on the second Saturday of each month, usually about 9.30am at the North Door of St Mary's. We take on walks of about 6 or 7 miles and often travel to our starting point by sharing cars or by bus.

Mid-morning, we stop for about 10 minutes for refreshments and then for maybe 30 minutes for a packed lunch.

We might go for coffee or tea afterwards if there is a handy cafe.

Our November walk was to East Linton, along the riverside path starting from the Church. We returned by bus.

John Weierter

Walking Group near Gifford in May



Ring for a Memory



The Bellringers are kindly offering a new service. Fill in a form, that is available in the church, to request that the bells are rung on a particular Sunday to celebrate a person or event dear to you.

Busy DODs

Our Doors Open Days made for a busy and exciting finale to our Open Season for Visitors.

**DOORS
OPEN
DAYS 2024**

As well as our usual Self-guided Trail telling our story of Ruin and Restoration, we had special displays, celebrating the 475th anniversary of the end of the Siege of Haddington. There were flower displays, visiting experts giving "Talks and Walks, refreshments, with home baking, the craft stall, and children's activities. Visitors could also view the Haddington Concert Society's new Bösendorfer piano and visit the Belfry. We are grateful to all who contributed towards these successful days.

Our Church Family



Baptism

“Then He took the children in His arms, placed His hands on them, and blessed them”.

Gwendolyn Anne Morgan Townley



Funerals

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”.

Alexander Bradford

Mary Denholm

Stewart Campbell

David Gavins

Alexander (Sandy) Todd



Admissions

Welcome to

Roderick and Libby Urquhart



Christmas Offerings

The Kirk Session has decided to devote the offerings at the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services to the Middle East Humanitarian Appeal organised by DEC (Disaster Emergency Council) through Christian Aid.



Contributions can be by cash at the services or by going online to

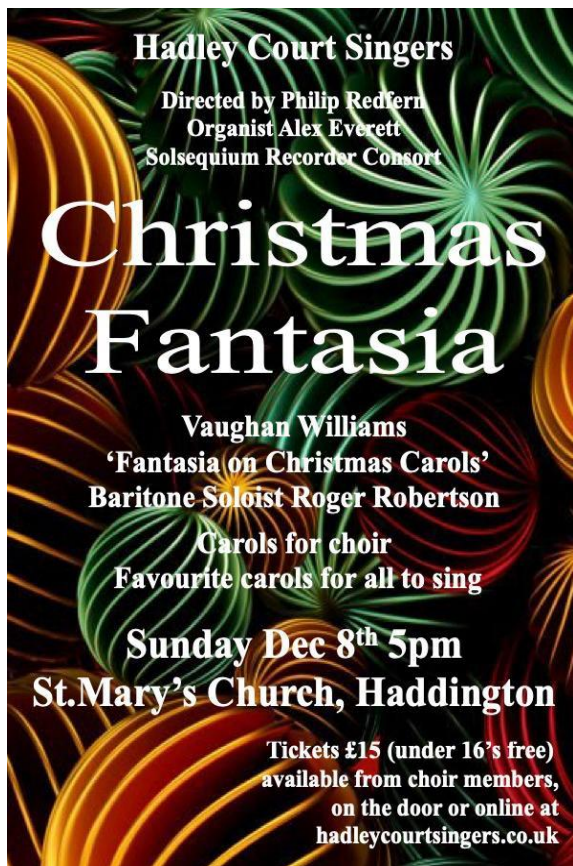
<https://giving.give-star.com/online/christian-aid/st-mary-s-through-haddington-churches-christmas-appeal>

or point your smartphone at:



Christmas Concerts & Events at St Mary's

This advent season St Mary's will be filled with beautiful music as we welcome four local choirs and ensembles to the church for their Christmas concerts: on **Saturday 7 December** the Haddington Community Choir, on **Sunday 8 December** at 5pm the Hadley Court Singers, on **Saturday 14 December** at 4.30pm DM Brass and on **Sunday 15 December** at 6.30pm the Garleton Singers.

A poster for a Christmas concert. The background is dark with vibrant, glowing, abstract patterns in shades of green, orange, and red, resembling stylized flames or musical notes. The text is white and centered. At the top, it says 'Hadley Court Singers', followed by 'Directed by Philip Redfern', 'Organist Alex Everett', and 'Solsequium Recorder Consort'. The main title 'Christmas Fantasia' is in a large, elegant serif font. Below that, it lists 'Vaughan Williams', 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols', and 'Baritone Soloist Roger Robertson'. It also mentions 'Carols for choir' and 'Favourite carols for all to sing'. The date and time are 'Sunday Dec 8th 5pm' and the location is 'St. Mary's Church, Haddington'. At the bottom, it says 'Tickets £15 (under 16's free) available from choir members, on the door or online at hadleycourtsingers.co.uk'.

Hadley Court Singers
Directed by Philip Redfern
Organist Alex Everett
Solsequium Recorder Consort

Christmas Fantasia

Vaughan Williams
'Fantasia on Christmas Carols'
Baritone Soloist Roger Robertson
Carols for choir
Favourite carols for all to sing

Sunday Dec 8th 5pm
St. Mary's Church, Haddington

Tickets £15 (under 16's free)
available from choir members,
on the door or online at
hadleycourtsingers.co.uk

We also welcome St Columba's Hospice as part of their annual 'Light Up a Life Event' on **Thursday 5 December**. The Tree of Remembrance will be lit in the gardens of Haddington Garden Trust next to Haddington House and refreshments will be served beforehand and afterwards in St Mary's with an opportunity to donate to the charity or buy items from a stall inside the kirk.



Help Needed – Stewarding – Join our Events Team

We are always looking for people to be on welcome duty and to steward at concerts not just at Christmas but throughout the year. It's great to be able to welcome visiting performers and audiences to our beautiful church and is also a chance to hear some gorgeous music free of charge! If you would like to join our Events Team please get in touch by speaking to Alison Meikle or e-mailing events@stmaryskirk.co.uk

The Haddington Concert Society

We are very pleased that the Concert Society's magnificent Bösendorfer Concert Grand Piano has found a new home here at St Mary's. The piano will be available for community use and will, of course, be used for the society's concert series – Music Close Up - which takes place over the winter months on a Sunday afternoon here in the church. For more information go to www.haddingtonconcertsociety.com



**EAST LOTHIAN'S
CHRISTMAS
STARTS HERE!!**

East Lothian's D&M Brass Band.
Famous ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT
ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH
HADDINGTON - Saturday 14th December
Doors open 4pm. Families welcome
COME AND MEET SANTA!!

Tickets available from
band website, FALCO or
pay at the door

£10. First under 16yo FREE, must be
accompanied. Additional under 16's
£2. D&M Band is a charity registered
in Scotland SC032501

Christian Aid

The Sponsored Walk took place on Saturday 14th September. St Mary's Church Walking Group kindly invited CA supporters from Haddington Churches and beyond to join them on their monthly walk in September **in support of the *Harvest of Hope* campaign**. The 6 mile walk started at St Mary's Church North Door and finished at The Trinity Centre where refreshments were provided and packed lunches were eaten. 21 walkers participated this year and, although the weather was a bit dull and cool, it was perfect for walking. **An amazing sum of £1015 was raised.** Thanks to all who took part, donated or supported in any way.



Some of the walkers taking a break at Amisfield Gardens

Our total raised so far this year from all events is £6,019.

Future Plans

- **The Quiz** will be held on Friday 21st February 2025 in the West Church.
- **Christian Aid Week** will take place from 12th to 18th May 2025
- **Christmas offerings at St Mary's** will go to the Middle East Humanitarian Appeal organised by DEC & Christian Aid.

Gail Craven of Holy Trinity continues as our Chair and enthusiastic leader. Thanks for all your ongoing support.

John Weierter

Life and Work is the award winning magazine of the Church of Scotland

November 2024

Remembrance

Islands Under Occupation: the wartime experience of a Channel Islands church

Remembrance Prayer from the Moderator of the General Assembly

‘Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things’

The Guild’s Annual Gathering

Presbytery Focus

Clèir Eilean Ì, the Presbytery of the Highlands and Hebrides

Care for Buildings

The Rev Scott Rennie of the General Trustees offers some tips on care for buildings in winter.

Walking the Camino

Anne Edwards describes the experience and lessons of a Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage.

‘No Room for Comfort and Joy’

The Christian Aid Christmas Appeal

Regulars

The Moderator of the General Assembly on Remembrance

Worship column by the Rev Roddy Hamilton

Reflection by the Rev Dr Richard Frazer

The Rev Ruth Kennedy on digital church

Bible study by the Rev Richard Baxter

My Church: Gillian McLean of Corby, Northamptonshire

Youth: Joe Liddall looks back on his experience as a summer intern at an Edinburgh church

Plus: official update from the Assembly Trustees, readers’ pictures, news, letters, reviews and puzzles – all for £3.50.

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St Mary's is on **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Threads** as **stmaryskirk**



Haddington: St Mary's Parish Church (Church of Scotland)
Scottish Charity Number SCO10614