

# Contact



**EK South Parish Church**

**Advent 2023**

# Christmas Worship Services 2023

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December

Christmas Eve service 10:30 am

Carol service 7pm

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December

Christmas day family service 11 am

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December

New Year's Eve service 10:30 am

## **Mission Statement**

By the grace of God,  
In the spirit of Christ,  
We are a people called by God  
To live and act by His Word,  
And spread the Good News  
In our community and beyond.

Greetings from our Interim Moderator, Rev. Calum Stark:



**The unchanging truth**  
**in an ever changing world**

As you look back over the last year, I'm sure that you can think of a number of changes that you have experienced in your personal and church life. Change is not always easy, and the harsh fact of life is that change is here to stay, whether we like it or not. Commentators tell us that we are living in a time of "seismic change" where things are moving at a particularly fast rate due to the advances in modern technology.

Christmas time gives us the opportunity to return to the familiar: the tree, the classic carols and the old seasonal films. More importantly comfort can be found in the unchanging truth of the God "who so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but will have eternal life." At this time of year, we can pause to take in the wonder of the familiar story of how Jesus gave up his place in heaven and came to earth as a helpless baby. One day the wooden manger would be replaced by a wooden cross where he would willingly pay the price for the sins of all who trust in Him.

So, this Christmas I hope that you might get to enjoy the things that you appreciate about this time of year and more than anything else I pray that, within this fast-changing and uncertain world, you will experience and know the unchanging love of God.

Merry Christmas,

*Calum*



Over the last few months, we've had a busy time with around 75 young people attending our weekly sessions.

In addition to these we've had a number of other activities for the young people to get involved in. Some of our Anchors enjoyed taking part in a Lego Morning with other groups from across the Glasgow Area. For the Juniors one of the highlights was a sleepover in the church hall to mark the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BB – this included a lively zoom call with almost 2,000 young people from across the UK who were taking part in similar sleepovers on the same night.

Company & Seniors have been taking part in a variety of different national competitions and have managed to progress well in some of them. At the time of writing, we still have a team in Badminton, a team in Chess and two teams in the FIFA competition.

We are starting to focus on Christmas now with our Christmas parties just a week away and a trip to the pantomime planned before we stop for Christmas too!

Thanks to everyone who supported our recent Christmas Coffee Morning. Despite the snow it was great to see so many people come along on the day and we were delighted to be able to raise £547. We are planning to have a Quiz Night on Saturday 27 January, so please save the date and more information will be available about this at the start of January.

On behalf of all the leaders and young people of the BB can I take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and wish you all a very merry Christmas and good wishes for 2024.

*David Crawford*

**the girls' brigade**  
girls' lives transformed  
god's world enriched



As we head into the festive season and look forward to the Christmas party, the girls have been working really hard towards their badge work.

The Explorers have been hearing Bible stories about Creation, and Jonah and the Whale. They have used these stories in their craft making, have created cakes and enjoyed game time.

The Junior group have been travelling the world finding out which countries have an International Girls' Brigade. So far, we have travelled to Australia, Singapore, and are now back in the UK. We have also been learning about the meanings of the GB motto and crest.

The Brigaders have been extremely busy each week, making sweet treats, creating our memorial for Remembrance Sunday, learning about the motto of the Girls Brigade, preparing the poster in the small hall and preparing some of the crafts on sale at the Coffee evening.

We have seen Lynsey return from maternity leave to our leaders this session. Fiona is on maternity leave after the arrival of Blair, and Gemma has recently started maternity leave: we await the news of the safe arrival of her baby.

The New Year sees the return of competitions at divisional level and we know the girls will be excited when these come around.

The leaders and girls would like to wish their church family a very peaceful and blessed merry Christmas.

*Fiona Bulman*

## THE PENNY FINALLY DROPPED!

There was a Scottish farmer who did not believe in the Christmas story. The idea that God could become a man was absurd. His wife, however, was a devout believer and raised the children in her faith. The farmer sometimes gave her a hard time, mocking her faith and belief in the incarnation of God in the baby at Bethlehem. "It's all nonsense," he said. "Why would God lower himself to become a human like us? It's such a ridiculous story!"

One snowy Sunday evening his wife took the children to church while the farmer relaxed at home. After they had left, the weather deteriorated into a blinding snowstorm. Then he heard a loud thump against the window. Then another thump! He ventured outside to see what was happening. There in the field was the strangest sight - a flock of geese. They had been migrating south but had become disorientated by the storm. They were standing on his farm unable to fly or to see their way.

The farmer had compassion on them. He wanted to help them and realised the barn would give them shelter for the night. He opened the barn doors and stood back, hoping they would make their way in. But they didn't realise it would be a shelter for them. So he tried to shoo the geese in but they ran in all directions. Perplexed, he got some bread and made a trail to the barn door. They still didn't catch on. Nothing he could do would get them into the warmth and shelter of the barn.

Feeling totally frustrated, he exclaimed, "Why don't they follow me? Can't they see this is the only place where they can survive the storm? How can I possibly get them to follow me?" He thought for a moment and then realised that they would not follow a human. He said to himself, "How can I possibly save them? The only way would for me to become a goose. If only I could become like one of them, they would follow me and I would lead them to safety."

At that moment, he stopped and realised what he had said. The words reverberated in his head, "If only I could become like one of them, then I could save them!" Then he understood God's love for mankind. The penny had dropped! He fell on his knees and worshipped him!!

(anon.)

I don't know where this came from or whether it is a true story or not, but felt it was worth sharing!

*Elizabeth Crawford*

## News from Malawi— Our mission partner, Gary Brough writes:

Dear Friends,

The weather is hotting up here in Mzuzu. Temperatures are topping 30°C for most of the week. We're in the cooler, hilly north of the country but it's still a month or two until we expect the hottest weather. These temperatures are not uncommon in the UK now, though we visited for a Scottish summer in July and seemed to miss it altogether. We are grateful for the chance to reconnect with family and friends and enjoy a week at the Keswick Convention.

The change of weather is another reminder that the year is marching ahead. When I last wrote I had recently visited southern Malawi, where communities were devastated by Cyclone Freddy. We were there again last month to distribute roofing materials thanks to donations from Overton Parish Church and other international partners.

The CCAP General Assembly has supported the rehabilitation of 20 homes in Migowi and Chituta Presbyteries, in an area of Southern Malawi that



was hit hard by Cyclone Freddy. Local congregations identified vulnerable households and mobilised the other materials needed. A local congregant provided transport of materials from Blantyre. The presbyteries arranged for young people with bicycles to get the materials to each home. Great to see the impact of the church working together locally and globally. Praise God!

The road to recovery is long and slow, particularly in the current economic climate. We noticed the difference in supermarket prices during our short visit to the UK, however the hike on our return to Malawi after only a few weeks was perhaps larger. A shortage of forex (*foreign exchange capacity*) to support imports of fuel, medicines and supplies for vital infrastructure projects is hitting Malawi hard. It is also making it hard to source fertilisers and so food prices are being pushed higher and higher. This is the context in which the church is serving.

There's a lot to be thankful for, when we take the time to stop and think. That includes our gratitude to those of you who read these updates and join our work in prayer. We're grateful to God for our partnership with you - thanks!

We're glad that the girls have settled in well to a new school year. There is always a fair amount of change in the classes each year as jobs and other commitments lead families to move. We're mindful of the impact that all this transition has on the girls and appreciate your prayers for them. Caitlin is now very much walking. It seemed like, though the skills were all there, last month was when she decided to put them to use. Now there is no stopping her!

After many months of planning, advertising, recruitment and preparations the Emerging Leaders Programme got off to a very positive start. I could see God's many provisions in the logistics for the event, the positive relationships formed in the group and the meaningful conversations we had together. Please pray for our group as they begin to put things into practice in their workplaces and join online workshops until we meet again in November. Until I can introduce them more fully, here is a run-down of our first cohort so that you can pray for each of them:

- Leah - a project manager and child protection officer from Livingstonia Synod Church and Society Programme
- Thoko -project manager at Blantyre Synod's Health & Development Commission
- Isaac - project officer in Nkhoma Synod's Youth Department and youth theatre coordinator
- Hope - project officer in Nkhoma Synod's Youth Department
- Lloyd - Head of HR and reverend within Zambia Synod
- Tanazio - Coordinator of Blantyre Synod's Student ministry
- Gilbert - Programmes Manager for Livingstonia Synod Aids Programme
- Robert - Presbytery Youth coordinator, reverend within Harare Synod, Zimbabwe
- Glory - Librarian at Zomba Theological University.

During our first in-person gathering the group visited Dzaleka refugee camp. The camp was meant to be home to 10,000 refugees but until recently the population was over 50,000. That has now swollen to an estimated 60,000 following a forced relocation exercise by the government of any refugee living outside of the camp.

Malawi is a signatory of various international instruments and commitments. However, it falls short of many standards around integration and freedoms of refugees. Like in the UK, the political rhetoric towards those fleeing conflict, violence and persecution is widely inaccurate and dehumanising.

Our aim for the visit was to allow our group to draw their own conclusions from real conversations, in a dignified, two-way exchange of information. They sat with people who have been awaiting their application processing for decades, who are three or more generations from those who fled their home country, who are trying to make a dignified living to provide for their families.

Looking ahead to the coming months, with funding for the trees project now in place for two Synods, please pray for the work of launch and coordination of this project. I plan to visit Blantyre during November to help develop the marketing plan for the nursery there – getting to put my academic studies into practice. In October, I'll go to Zomba Theological University as the post graduate building project should have completed the planning stage and we will be looking at funding and logistics to start the renovation and building works.

Jacqueline maintains her link with Mzuzu Crisis Nursery and Family Centre, mostly through friendship and support of the nursery manager, Anna. Please pray for Anna as she grieves the loss of her father this month. Jacqueline was able to travel to attend the village funeral and we pray she can continue to be a friend and support to Anna and the wider ministry.

When we stop and reflect, perhaps the challenges seem greater than before. Perhaps resources look smaller than before. How great a comfort it is to know that He is always greater:

“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” – *Ephesians 3:20-21*

As ever, thanks for your continued prayer and friendship.

*Gary, Jacqueline, Eilidh, Morven and Caitlin x*



With one of our busiest periods just around the corner, I would like to take the time to reflect on the past year and the realisation that we have been operational in the church since March 2019!

Scarily, we have seen a vast increase in numbers coming to use the Food Bank and a high number of clients returning as they are again struggling to make ends meet. The gratefulness though of being offered the groceries to tide things over or bulk out the little they can afford is truly humbling.

Week on week, the team have been collecting the grocery bags, distributing these on a Thursday, volunteering at the Café, and working in the central unit making up the bags ready to distribute.

We have the honour again this year of being able to provide our clients with a Christmas Food Hamper which contains all the items for them to enjoy a Christmas Day Dinner. When you see the joy and relief from the client on delivery, when they know that they too will also be able to enjoy Christmas without the worry of being able to afford this meal, it is worth all the hard work in the lead up.

If you are at a loose end on a Thursday morning and like a chat, cuppa and a roll I would encourage you to pop in and see what we do, or even chat to the clients.

I would like to thank our volunteers for being so supportive and making my job easier and would like to wish you all a very peaceful Christmas break.

*Fiona Bulman*

## **Pastoral Care Group**

As we approach Christmas, we must remember those in our church family who are no longer able to come along to church on a Sunday morning. This year, as in the past, we have sent Christmas cards to let them know we are thinking of them and will visit where we can. We also appreciate the pastoral care that goes on in our church when visits and phone calls are made by all of you when the need arises.



There are others in our congregation we should remember as well: those who have gone through ill health; those who have gone through anxious times due to the illness of a loved one and those who have lost a loved one over the past year. Christmas can be a difficult time for them so we ask that you remember in prayer those known to you and, as always, speak to one of us if you feel we can help in any way.

New Year can also be an anxious time for some and we would like to share again the quote we put in last year's new year edition of the magazine, from the King George VI Christmas Broadcast 1939:

*“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.” (King George VI – 1939 Christmas Broadcast)*

We wish you a Happy Christmas and many blessings in the New Year.

*Elizabeth, Barrie, Jeanette, Jean, June  
and Alison*



*“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you”  
(1 Peter, 5:7, New Living Translation)*

## From the “Orcadian”

Many of you will remember Tony and Anne Wilkinson and their children, Eilidh and Matthew, who all played a big part in the life of the South Parish before they moved to Orkney in 2005 as Tony had a new job as a doctor there. Tony is now an elder in the Grace Church there. He also helps organise the annual Orkney Bible Festival and writes occasional items for the local newspaper. One of his articles was sent to a member of the church and makes interesting reading.

*Barrie Crawford*



Before I came to faith in Jesus Christ, I was a hard-hearted atheist. I took pleasure in mocking Christians at every opportunity. I enjoyed parodies of the Bible and not least Monty Python’s Life of Brian.

There is a well-known scene where the zealots are trying to fight back against the Roman occupiers. Then one of them says, “What have the Romans ever done for us?” There follows a discussion of the various ways in which the Romans had brought progress. It leads to Reg finally saying: “All right, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, fresh water system and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?”

There’s so much to admire in what was achieved technologically. But it was far from fair to all. Infanticide with no recriminations. Blood sports with human victims in front of large crowds. No true freedom of expression. No tolerance of opposing viewpoints. Death by the torture of crucifixion for non-Roman citizens.

Into that world came Jesus Christ. He turned everything upside down.

His way, the Christian way, was radically different. Calling everyone to his standard of conduct, his sharpest criticism was reserved for those who thought they were above the Law, and therefore above reproach. His call was to repentance and faith in him. To leave behind their rebellion, not against Rome, but against God. Nobody was excluded from the requirement to repent, and nobody was excluded from the promise of eternal life through faith in him when they did.

So viewing everyone as made in God's image, respecting the sanctity of human life, a call to love your enemies, true compassion, even the current debate over equality - these all came from the virtues Jesus brought into a world that was far from free. They were not present in the Greco-Roman world, and are still not present in many countries in the world.

And the Bible calls its readers to these virtues against which surely nobody can argue, which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control.



Our societal values have their roots in Christ's way. They have not always been applied fairly and well, even including in some churches. But the truth is that Jesus Christ transformed our world, and our society has been the beneficiary, even if it rather seems to take it all for granted.

What a pity that is. We have brought self-centred individualism into the mix. We have used our freedoms to rebel against the one who gave us freedom in the first place. Some people think that a call to live in Christ's way is some form of power-grab by churches desperate to ruin the lives of ordinary people.

What if, in fact, the intent was to call people to love Jesus and to follow His way out of love for them?

When you see that as true, it changes everything.

*Tony Wilkinson*

## **Bible Study**

The BIBLE STUDY continues to meet every Wednesday at 7.30pm.

These last few weeks we have been learning from the book of the prophet Micah.



Where we don't know a great deal about Micah we are reminded in this book about the Grace and mercy of our God and how patient he is with us. Within this book we have these well known words to God's people, that they are required 'TO ACT JUSTLY AND TO LOVE MERCY AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD' (Micah 6:8). Three simple commands, as relevant for us today as to His people all these years ago.

As God's people it is good for us to come together and share fellowship and learn of Him. A good way to start the New Year would be to come and join our group, where you will be warmly welcome.

Come taste and see.

*Ishbel Campbell*



## **Stalwarts in the Past**

Just a reminder at Christmas of some of the Elders, no longer with us, who put in an amazing amount of work- names like Tom Orr, Alastair Sutherland and Frank McIntosh. There are too many to mention but these people were the very foundation of the church and worked tirelessly on its behalf. So much as we are all looking forward to Christmas, don't forget the people in our past.

And as I conclude, wishing you a very merry Christmas from all the Johnston family.

*Douglas Johnston*

## Presbytery matters

### **Presbytery Plan**

At the Presbytery meeting of 26 September 2023, the Mission Plan Action Group (MPAG) presented a Draft Mission Plan. The Draft Plan was received and consideration of it deferred to a future meeting.

Presbytery instructed that MPAG should “communicate to Kirk Sessions the precise rationale behind its decisions for each local situation where it has departed from the proposals made within clusters” and that Kirk Sessions might then “submit to the Mission Plan Action Group such clarifications and detail in order to help a refining of the Draft Mission Plan before its next submission to Presbytery.”

In September, copies of the Draft Plan were sent to the General Assembly’s Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group (PMPIG) and to the General Trustees. In early November, MPAG secured a meeting with them and received from them substantial feedback on the September Draft, including areas of both agreement and concern. MPAG are currently revising aspects of the Draft Plan following this feedback. While this might slightly extend the timescales for communicating rationales to Kirk Sessions, it is MPAG’s hope that, when Presbytery finally agrees a plan, there is an increased likelihood of achieving concurrence with the necessary bodies within the Church of Scotland without significant problems or further delay. MPAG have a target of sending revisions and rationales to the relevant Kirk Sessions by early January. Presbytery set a deadline of 5th February 2024 for these Kirk Sessions to respond. Other Kirk Sessions and members of Presbytery may make submissions to MPAG and such submissions will be carefully considered in revising the Draft Plan.

Presbytery agreed to meet, for the specific purpose of approving the Draft Presbytery Mission Plan, in the Spring of 2024.

All Kirk Sessions were encouraged to continue working together within their clusters to strengthen relationships and vision, noting that no formal steps towards readjustment can be made until a Presbytery Plan is agreed and receives concurrence from PMPIG and the General Trustees.

## **The final report of the Legal Questions Governance Review Group**

Presbytery approved the tenor of the report and the general direction of travel outlined by the Task Group. It was agreed to appoint a Governance Working Group of seven members of Presbytery to bring forward specific proposals to the March 2024 meeting of Presbytery. The remit of this working group is to find ways of building up trust and improving relationships as part of the new strategies that may be recommended, including opportunities for mediation and facilitated conversations for ministers and elders across the presbytery.

## **Debate the Confessions of Faith Overture.**

Presbytery considered and voted on the Confessions of Faith Overture sent down to Presbytery under the Barrier Act by the General Assembly of 2023, whereby 110 voted For and 13 voted Against the Overture.

*(editor: further information on the proposed changes is available on the Theological Forum's page of the Church of Scotland website)*

Alterations in matters of doctrine, worship, government or discipline require the agreement of General Assemblies and two thirds of presbyteries in each of two successive years.

*Wendy Kerr*



## **Season's Greetings from The Bulman Family.**

The power of prayer has truly been answered this year for our Family, when we were finally offered our keys to our forever home. After over three years of uncertainty, we are now almost three months settled (albeit with some boxes still to unpack) in our new home. We can now look forward to creating new happy memories and enjoy our first Christmas with hope for the future. I would like to thank everyone who prayed for us over the unsettling times and wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

# Merry Christmas from Anne and Elizabeth Clelland.

Elizabeth writes: One of my much loved Christmas songs is “Crackers and turkey and pudding and cream”, reminding us of the true reason for the season:

## IT'S SOMEBODY'S BIRTHDAY



by Ian White



*Crackers and turkeys and pudding and cream,  
Toys in the window that I've never seen.  
This is the Christmas that everyone sees,  
But Christmas means more to me.*



### Chorus



*It's somebody's birthday I won't forget,  
As I open the things that I get.  
I'll remember the inn and the stable so bare,  
And Jesus who once lay there.*

~

*Everyone's out shopping late every night,  
For candles and presents and Christmas tree lights  
This is the Christmas that everyone sees,  
But Christmas means more to me.*

~

*Christmas morning, the start of the day,  
There's presents to open and new games to play.  
This is the Christmas that everyone sees,  
But Christmas means more to me*



## Getting to know you:

### Irene Masenge talking to Sandra MacKenzie

A real blessing on our church this year has been the arrival of Irene Masenge from Tanzania and her two adorable little girls, Noreen (5) and Nadine (2). Irene is here to study for a PhD at Strathclyde University, the culmination of many years of study.

When Irene started primary school in Arusha, in the north of Tanzania, which is in East Africa, she spoke and was taught in Swahili. She was also taught in Swahili when she moved on to secondary school in Kilimanjaro, in a boarding school, where she was introduced to science.



She finished her secondary education, again in a boarding school, in the Coastal Region of Tanzania. She was there for two years and studied three subjects: Physics, Chemistry and Maths. This time her studies were all in English.

Irene moved on to University in Dar es Salaam where she studied for four years for a degree in Electrical Engineering. She worked for a time as a tutor and a teaching assistant. She began working for her Masters Degree in Power Systems and High Voltages in 2016.

Irene is a very dedicated student but sometimes God steps into the lives of even the most ardent of scholars and Irene met her future husband Halfan while studying. They married in 2017 and Noreen was born in July 2018.

Irene froze her studies for six months to be a full time mum and graduated in 2020. It was also a significant year for Irene,

Halfan and Nadine because Nadine was born on December 17th that same year.

Growing up and away from home at school a lot of the time Irene was still very close to her mum Monica.

“My mum made sure that I was brought up in the church,” said Irene, “and she took me to the Pentecostal Church.”

Irene has a brother who has a degree in IT and computer science. He went to a state run day school for his secondary education and only went to boarding school for his high school education. He now works for the Ministry of Energy in Tanzania.

All the schools Irene attended were Roman Catholic run and Irene was a regular attender at Mass. Bible Study was an obligatory subject.

After her graduation in 2020 Irene then decided to study for a PhD and she applied for a Commonwealth Scholarship. The competition was fierce and Irene had to write a research proposal. Needless to say she won! That resulted in her coming to Strathclyde University in October 2022 and studying for her PhD. Her research is into renewable energy with a particular emphasis on wind and solar energy.



You might find yourself wondering why Irene decided to uproot herself and come here to study. Is she just driven by the need to learn? You don't need to spend very long in Irene's company to know that there's a lot more to this young woman than that.

She told me that there's a real issue in Tanzania with the supply of energy. From September through to January there can be prolonged periods of drought which result in power cuts. Irene

said, “Noreen kept waiting for the lights to go out when she moved here and couldn’t really believe that it didn’t happen, especially as she is afraid of the dark.”

So there is the reason for Irene being here. She wants to be able to go back to Tanzania and give something back to her country. She even spent her first six months here without her girls. They stayed with their dad, Halfen, while Irene settled into her studies and found a place for them to live.

“I need 60 credits for my PhD and because I could stay longer at university without having to look after the girls, I managed to get 57 before they arrived,” said Irene.

Juggling her studies with taking care of her daughters is difficult for Irene but her mum Monica came over to help. She too is now a well known face at our Sunday services. She has been staying with Irene for a few months here in East Kilbride and has provided very welcome childcare support and has been taking Nadine along to Smarteenies as well as being there for Noreen who started in Primary 1 in The Murray Primary in August this year. Nadine will be 3 on December 17th and will be able to attend Nursery.

Irene told me she tried several churches before coming to The South Parish but knew she had found the right one with us.

“I just felt at home,” she said.

Monica will be going home in January and will be greatly missed by her daughter and her granddaughters. However the family will be reunited with husband and dad, Halfen, when he arrives this month and stays till mid February. Halfen is a banker and is in charge of IT in his bank.

Irene tries to supplement her income from her scholarship by teaching tutorials once a week at Strathclyde. She helps stu-

dents with questions about particular aspects of their studies and can have up to 15 students attending her tutorial sessions. She tries to keep her weekends completely free to concentrate on her girls.

“I like to spend time doing their hair,” she smiled.

I remembered saying to her some time ago that I loved Nadiné’s hair but was really taken aback when she told me it can take her two hours! At least it doesn’t have to be done every day.

I asked Irene did she have any time for her own interests apart from her girls and her studying.

“I love listening to the sermons of a pastor in Tanzania,” she replied. “I also love listening to encouraging music. Although we don’t have television I do have Netflix on my computer and I really enjoy watching episodes of “The Crown.”

You have to agree that Irene is a very interesting and most welcome addition to our church family.

***Sandra adds a personal note:***

Irene came to my house to be interviewed and she met my daughter Jane who some of you know. She was very taken with Jane as was Jane with her. When we finished our interview she asked me if she could pray with me and she specially asked for God’s blessing on Jane. I don’t know about you but I’ve never had a member of our congregation – apart from the minister - pray with just me before. It was a wonderful experience and just added to my picture of this lovely woman. Maybe something we could all try?

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

It has been very exciting for us to have resumed a Sunday School during the morning service. Although our numbers are small compared to what they once were, June, Alison, Jean and I enjoy sharing the stories of the Bible with the young ones and we really are thankful we are able to do so.

It's lovely to spend the weeks of Advent, leading up to Christmas, starting with the Angel appearing to Mary and building on the story each week through colourfully illustrated children's books, songs and crafts and, of course, our Advent Calendar.

After many years of taking them to a pantomime at Christmas, this year we have reverted to the good old Sunday School Party for the children with games, party snacks and of course, a visit from Santa! This is taking place on 23<sup>rd</sup> December and we are all looking forward to it.

As I have said before, we don't know exactly what the future holds for our Sunday School or indeed our church family, but we do know who holds the future and that should be sufficient for us.

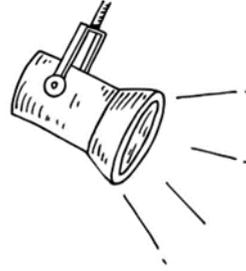
Christmas wishes and many blessings to all are sent to you all, with love and thanks for all your support over the years.

*Elizabeth Crawford  
(along with June, Alison and Jean)*



## Barrie writes:

I read about a Christmas play where the children dressed up to play the parts of the school Nativity play - Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men, angels and so on.



The highlight of the Christmas play was to show the radiance of Jesus. An electric bulb was hidden in the manger. All the stage lights were to be turned off, leaving only one light in the manger.

At the appropriate time, all the lights went out - even the manger light!

The silence was broken when one of the little shepherds loudly whispered, "Hey, you turned off Jesus!"



That story is a timely reminder that Jesus should be the centre of our Christmas celebrations. We shouldn't keep him out at this time. He is the Light who came into the dark world to show us the way. His is a light that can never go out.

*Barrie Crawford*

# Christmas Greetings from the Crawford Family.



A very happy and blessed Christmas to all our friends at the South Parish. Thank you for your support and encouragement throughout the year. May 2024, with all its uncertainty, see us drawing closer to each other and closer to our Heavenly Father, trusting him to be with us whatever the year may bring.

*With love from  
Elizabeth, Barrie and David (not forgetting Lesley who is thankful for the support given to her in her work with SU Scotland.)*

## Smarteenies Toddlers

We are continuing to enjoy a lovely time of friendship every Wednesday morning. The babies are growing into toddlers and learning how to interact. The toddlers are fast becoming more independent week by week. We are looking forward to our Christmas party and a visit from Santa.

We pray for hope, peace, joy and love for all our friends this Christmas and look forward to a New Year filled with God's richest blessings for us all.

*The Smarteenies team.*

## EMMANUEL – GOD IS WITH US.

As the year ends and another approaches, we are aware that many face uncertainty for a variety of reasons.

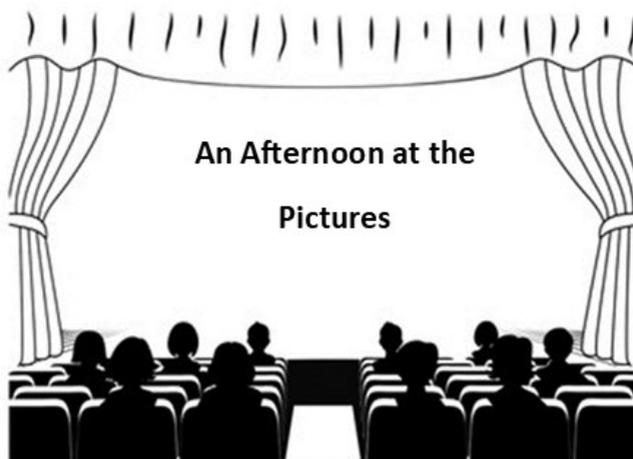
God's words to Abraham come down through the generations and speak to every one of us.

Genesis 26:24 "Do not be afraid, for I am with you."

We wish for you all joy and peace for Christmas and 2024.

*Iain & Ishbel.*





On a recently wet and damp day there was quite a buzz in the warmth of the small hall where 'Sunshine on Leith' was being screened.

The seats were not just as comfortable as the couches in the Odeon but when the popcorn, ice lollies, soft drinks and sweeties were on offer that made it reminiscent of the old days at the pictures.

It was nice to see one or two residents from Strathcona House at the event and with transport provided for anyone requiring a lift.

Before there was a town centre the Murray School hall became the place to go to the pictures. As children of those early years, we were allowed to go there for film showing and, along with church youth organisations and country dancing, this was a big part of our school days entertainment in the Murray area.

I'm sure it would be rewarding for the organisers of the 'healthy and active / 2' O'clock club (*Now the Tuesday Get Together!*) to see the next event well attended at the Christmas singalong afternoon on Tuesday 12 December at 1 pm

Una Gracie



*Tuesday Get Together*

*12 December 1pm*

*Carol Concert by the children of  
Murray Primary School  
Plus Christmas sing along  
(Christmas refreshments provided)*



*South Parish Church, Baird Hill, East Kilbride  
For free bus pick up in The Murray area please  
phone Andrew on 07720451506*



## Church Information

Interim Moderator: Rev. Calum Stark 01357 671557

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Church Officer	Andy Wilson	01355 234903
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Magazine Editor	Claire Johnston	e.claire.johnston@btinternet.com 01355 245277

## Congregational Activities

Sunday Worship service 10.30am (In church building and on Zoom)

Tuesday 10:00am Badminton Club

Wednesday 9:15am Smartenies toddler group

Wednesday 6:30pm Girls' Brigade

Wednesday 7:30pm Bible Study

Thursday 11:00am to 12 noon Food bank & Café

Thursday 6:00pm Boys' Brigade Anchors

Thursday 7:00pm Boys' Brigade Juniors

Friday 7:00pm Boys' Brigade Company Section

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

Baird Hill, The Murray, East Kilbride, G75 0ED



Church of Scotland

Scottish Charity No 008332