

Pastor Roy writes...

Dear Friends

Recently, Christine and I have been visiting throughout the area of Lanarkshire and beyond, telling our story. To a variety of groups we have been sharing our story especially about life as Houseparents at Quarrier's Homes as well as life in Canada. We have noticed that as we have moved closer into the Christmas season, we have spent more time, sharing our Christmas memories. We have been telling what it was like to make sure there were enough gifts on Christmas day for 16 children. We tell how Christine prepared the home with its 17 rooms for the season, and how the Christmas meals were made ready with all the needs of the children in mind.

We then move on to talk about Canada, but at this time of the year we have focused more on talking about our winters there. What life was like in Ontario's snow belt. How we stayed warm. How we were never shy of getting out and fully enjoying the winter weather. We tell of our initial Christmas seasons there when our kids were still young.

In our last church in Ontario we had a collection of people of other nationalities who had come to Canada at different times to settle, some as far back as after the Second World War. About a week or two prior to Christmas we would have a Christmas lunch event preceded by carol singing. After the singing and before we ate, I would ask people of other nationalities to share what Christmas was like in their home. What could they remember?

I used to love watching their faces light up as they recalled Christmas in another world from Canada. Sometime in very poor and humble circumstances they still remembered fondly and with great joy the simple traditions that lingered on in their memories. I could never get used to the Dutch however, with their greater emphasis on December 5th. -which is Black Peter Day, who is the evil twin of Santa Claus.

This season again we will all make memories. This Christmas you might be making memories that will forever remain with your

Christmas Events

All events take place at St John's, unless otherwise stated

- Thursday 11 Dec** Carol service for the bereaved, 7:00 pm at St Andrew's Church
- Sunday 14 Dec** Christian Aid Festival of Christmas Praise, 7:00 pm at St Athanasius' Hall, Mount Stewart Street. See page 20
- Friday 19 Dec** **SHINE** Christmas Concert, 7.30 pm (Tickets 01698 357232)
- Sunday 21 Dec** Christmas Breakfast - see page 20
- Wednesday 24 Dec** Watchnight Service, 11.15 pm
- Thursday 25 Dec** Christmas Morning Service, 10.30 am. Led by Alan Grant

grandchildren or children that will become so important to them in the years ahead. Take time to create them, because as Christine and I discovered in each of these years, that the people who shared them had not forgotten them. Great Christmas memories are unique.

This Christmas again, we will be making special memories at each of our Advent and Christmas services where our theme for the season will be - ***People with a song to sing***. Come and join us for our Christmas Carols, our time with the children and our Christmas teaching that may assist you in creating the best of memories this Christmas, 2008.

Peace, Joy and Love for Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Wonderful 2009,

Roy and Christine

Obituary

Jim Barclay

9th September 1925 - 30th October 2008

Jim Barclay's name was synonymous with St John's Church, and those of us, who knew him over a long period of time, will recall the enormous contribution he made to the life of St John's.

With his younger brothers George and Bill, Jim was brought up in Melville Place and attended St John's from an early age. As a boy and youth in 1st Carluke (St John's) Scout Troup - wolf cub, boy scout, rover scout and band player - Jim continued his affiliation to the Scout movement as member and treasurer of the Group Scout Association. His work on behalf of the movement was recognised in later years by the award of the Silver Acorn.

Following service in the Royal Navy during the latter years of the war, Jim joined the Civil Service in a career that spanned 40 years. It's easy to understand how well suited he was to such a profession. He was exact and meticulous and indeed expected others to be the same!

As a young man, Jim was a Sunday school teacher, chorister and member of the drama group in St John's until 1955 when he was transferred to the Ministry of Labour in London. There, he joined St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ealing, where he became fully involved in church life, singing in the choir, acting as beadle, attending to property matters and being ordained as an elder.

On the death of his father in 1964, Jim returned to Carluke to care for his mother in

Melville Place and later in Deeside Drive, continuing his Civil Service career in Lanarkshire and Glasgow. He was soon immersed in church activities once more, giving himself unselfishly to the work and life of St John's. Over the years, he filled many a position - secretary of the Men's Club, organising new members' socials, property convenor, clerk to the congregational board, beadle, secretary of vacancy committees, president of the flower show and gardening club, choir member, one of the first lay - members to take the

Thursday morning service, co-editor of the second issue of the history of St John's, president and secretary of Carluke Probus club. He was convener of the advisory committee for the church's 150th anniversary celebrations in 1993 and co-ordinated the significant refurbishment of the church. If there was a need for a convener or secretary to a committee, Jim was your man! He got things done. Board and Session meetings saw many a lively discussion when Jim was in attendance!

In 1993 he was presented with a certificate honouring 38 years service as an elder.

The love of his life was music and choral singing. He had a great knowledge of classical music and was only too willing to share his knowledge with anyone who would listen! Who could have imagined that this deep love and knowledge of music would have its origin from his days as a side drummer in the 1st Carluke (St John's) Scout Pipe Band?

He was for many years a member of St John's Choir and a founder member of Carluke and Lanark Choral Union but his greatest musical commitment was to the Glasgow Philharmonic Male Voice Choir of which he was a member for 27 years.

Throughout his life, Jim brought a great sense of the dignity of public worship and a deep knowledge of the best traditions of the Presbyterian Kirk to his work within St John's. He was fearlessly truthful in his views and whatever post he held, one could be confident that the duties would be discharged with great thoroughness, precision and a perfectionist drive for excellence. He always wanted things done properly. Woe betide if they weren't! Those of us who knew him more closely appreciated that beneath a sometimes brusque manner lay kindness, respect and a loving concern for his church.

Youth For Christ - update

In the Autumn, Jamie Newton embarked on a year's mission service, supported in prayer and financially by many of the congregation. This is his first report from his initial placement which, as you will read, was not quite where he expected it to be!

After two and a half weeks training, with two weeks spent at Nottingham University and a long weekend at Carrot Wood outdoor centre in Kent, the leader of the Youth for Christ (YFC) sports team dropped a small bombshell on my team. On our second last night of training he explained that, rather than living in Coventry for the next year, we would in fact be placed in...Edinburgh!

So, rather than staying in the home of a YFC partner in the West Midlands, our team of three live in the dormitories of Faith Mission Bible College in Gilmerton in the south side of Edinburgh. We have joined the staff of Gilmerton New Church, a small fellowship whose vision is to reach out to young people and their families and show them the love of God. With a fellowship of around 10 the church is small, but its impact in the area is huge. Our work involves running and coaching sports clubs in local high schools and primary schools - including two high school basketball teams - and helping out on Sundays with the church's youth group. We also run R.E. lessons and help out with school events and conferences.

My time in Edinburgh has been highly enjoyable for many reasons. The kids we work with are fun to be around, my team is a good laugh and our accommodation is...alright. Above all, I have enjoyed the opportunity to see God move in powerful ways.

Up until a few weekends ago, many of the young people (14-16 year olds) in our youth group would not have called themselves Christians. The club they attend was hastily set up after a successful sports and arts camp held in Edinburgh over the summer. The club was only to run for 90 days and was designed to let the young people, who mostly come from non-Christian backgrounds, learn more about God and what He's about. The culmination of the 90 day period was a long weekend at an activity centre called Carronvale, near Falkirk.

During the weekend we did sports, games, hide and seek, the lot. We also had ministry time on Saturday evening and Sunday morning, where we did some modern worship songs and gave the young people the chance to respond to a gospel message. During and after the weekend many chose to put their faith in Christ. One of the catalysts for this was an event that took place on Sunday morning. During our ministry time, the leaders invited the young people to come forward for prayer, in particular a pair who had been injured during the sports sessions on Friday and Saturday. One boy who came forward was on crutches, having earlier damaged the ligaments in his right ankle to the extent that the ligament had detached from the bone; the doctors had told him to never do sport again. We prayed in Jesus' name for the foot to be restored; that morning the pain and swelling left his foot and he was able to walk around completely unaided. That afternoon he joined in a kick about in the sports hall. His crutches were last seen poking out of a nearby bush. Many exciting conversations were to follow and several of the young people have been led one step closer to God.

Amazingly, this was not the first healing our team had experienced. Weeks before a team member at YFC training injured her hand playing basketball. At the time, we prayed for her and the pain left. When she went to hospital the x-rays showed she had broken her hand and it was put in a cast. But by the time of the next hospital appointment a couple of weeks later the bone had fused; her hand had recovered weeks before the doctors said it would.

I want to thank everyone who is supporting me with their finances and prayers, without your help I would have missed out on these amazing opportunities to see God move. In these weeks leading up to Christmas I look forward to seeing many more instances of God at work in the lives of the young people here.

JN

Reflections on the Holy Land

It was with great excitement and anticipation that Sandra, Iris, Charlie and myself set off for a 10 day pilgrimage to the Holy Land in October. The trip had been organised by our previous minister, Rev Mike Frew, with Rev Clarence Musgrave as our guide. And what a trip it turned out to be! We were so privileged to have both Mike and Clarence leading the group with their biblical as well as local knowledge, as Clarence was minister of St Andrew's Church in Jerusalem for six years and is also a qualified guide.

We were privileged to stay three nights in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and then Nazareth which allowed us to appreciate each town in its own right. Each day was packed full, from early morning till late into the evening, with sightseeing and meeting local people, but I wouldn't have missed any of it.

In Jerusalem we started at Mount Scopus with a breathtaking view over the city, then moved on to see the Judean Desert. We visited the church at Bethphage before walking down the Mount of Olives, stopping at the Dominus Flevit Church which commemorates where Jesus wept over Jerusalem. We spent time in Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations then visited the Church of St Peter in Galllicantu which commemorates Jesus' arrest and Peter's denial. Some of us walked through the old city via the Western Wall while other headed back to the hotel. This was all in the first afternoon!

On Sunday we worshiped in St Andrew's Church, which we all found very moving, and then spent most of the afternoon in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre over the sight of the crucifixion and resurrection- another very emotional experience for us all despite the fact that we had try to look past the symbols of various church denominations. Some of the group visited the museum which has excavations of early Jerusalem while Charlie and I followed the Via Dolorosa. We also visited the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem before Ya d Vashem holocaust museum.

From there we moved to Bethlehem, having our first sight of the 24ft security wall and Israeli checkpoints. We visited the Shepherds Fields then the Church of the Nativity which was another experi-

ence full of emotion. I will always remember signing "O Come All Ye Faithful" standing before the place which commemorates Christ's birth.

While in Bethlehem we visited the Daheisha refugee camp where we were confronted with the stark reality of Palestinians who have been displaced since 1948. But we also met Naji, the director of the community centre, who expressed such hope for the future. We visited the Al Sharook School for the Blind and the Wi'am Reconciliation Centre who help the Palestinian people come to terms with life in the West Bank. From here we had lunch with local Christian families before visiting the Diyar arts and drama centre.

The most harrowing trip was to Hebron, which is controlled by Israeli security forces. We were met by Maureen from the Christian Peacekeepers Team who showed us the harsh reality of life in the West Bank today. On leaving Hebron we travelled to the village of Idna where we had lunch at the home of one of the women in a craft co-operative before visiting their shop.

On Thursday we travelled south through the desert to Qumran then on to Masada for the most amazing visit to a town and palace from 1st century BC built high on top of the mountain where it was 40 degrees! After lunch we had the chance to "float" in the Dead Sea having covered ourselves in mud! The photos are not very flattering!

Then on to our last stop, Nazareth, travelling up the Jordan valley. Friday was spent in Galilee. We took a boat trip from Tiberius to Ginosar where we saw a 1st century Galilean boat, then visited the church on the Mount of Beatitudes where we sat on the hillside reading the Sermon on the Mount. We visited the church which houses the famous mosaic commemorating the feeding of the five thousand, then had our picnic lunch by the sea - some of us even had a paddle!

From there we went to Capernaum to see the excavations of the town as it was in Jesus time before heading to Peter's Primacy at

Reflections (continued)

Tabgha which commemorates Jesus breakfast with the disciples after his resurrection and his commissioning of Peter. In the evening we were welcomed into the home of Najah and Bassim from the Nazareth Hospital for a meal and yet more Palestinian hospitality.

Our last day was spent in Nazareth, visiting the Church of the Annunciation and for some of us, the church over the sight of Mary's Well, being the only fresh water spring in Nazareth at the time of Jesus. We then visited Nazareth Village which has been recreated to show life in Nazareth in the time of Jesus before visiting the hospital.

Finally, we had a communion service in the beautiful chapel within the hospital grounds which was a very emotional and meaningful end to our pilgrimage for all of us.

As well as these trips and visits, we had speakers some evenings, both Jewish and Palestinian, who shared their stories with us and answered our many questions. And although the trip was tiring, both physically and emotionally, it was worth it all to experience the land of Jesus and to walk in his footsteps.

This short reflection can in no way do justice to this stunning country, its wonderful people or its fascinating history and it can never encapsulate life in modern day Palestine.

But it was the most amazing journey and has left me with a much greater understanding of the scriptures by bringing them to life, and of the current political situation, especially the plight of the Palestinians.

It was a great privilege to have visited the Holy Land on this pilgrimage and should you have any questions, I am sure all of us would welcome the chance to share more of our trip with you. So please feel free to speak to any of us - there is so much of the Holy Land and its people that we would love to share.

JW

Our headlines are dominated by stories of political infighting, rising fuel costs and an increase in violent crime; it seems that each day brings a fresh onslaught of bad news. The Scottish Bible Society wants to buck the trend and be positive as it celebrates its bicentenary year in 2009.

One positive story is Bibleworld, at Bible House in Hampton Terrace, Edinburgh where schoolchildren and other groups, are taken, in the footsteps of Paul, to learn about Christianity and how it spread. Their interactive visit takes them back in time and into the costumes of the people they meet.

Bibleworld SBS studios is a mobile interactive Christian classroom which has visited Newton Mearns, Cumbernauld, Dalgety Bay, Saltcoats, Oban, St Andrews, Portlethen, Arran, Johnstone, Strathaven, and Inverness during the autumn term.

From Scotland with love.

Over recent months £30,582 was raised by the Scottish Bible Society for the Democratic Republic of Congo, £60,609 for Nepal, and £54,057 for Burmese cyclone relief.

Scottish youngsters joined with the Maltese Bible Society in sharing the Gospel of Mark - in Maltese of course - with the local teenagers, presenting it as a contrasting life style to the prevalent alcohol, drug abuse and violence etc. which confront all teenagers. Malta's Millennium Chapel is situated in the centre of night life offering alternative activities and help and counselling.

For the Olympics a special edition of the four gospels in modern Chinese and English, complete with the official games emblem, was printed (in Scotland!) at Amity Press for free distribution at the Olympic village chapel and via churches at other sporting venues. With some 23,000 athletes and officials attending the Olympics and Paralympics, not forgetting more than 2 million visitors, pray that many will have been touched by the message of Jesus.

Congregational Board

In the summer issue of the newsletter we outlined some of the areas of work within the church covered by the congregational board and management team. In order to update members and friends of ongoing and prospective projects, the following gives a brief outline of progress and plans.

Church Buildings - As part of a continuing planned maintenance schedule, the corridors and landing between the kitchen and large hall were painted during the summer. This work adds to recent re-decoration and painting including the large hall, corridors, external doors, windows and downpipes. It is anticipated that the toilet for disabled people will be upgraded during the coming year. All hall users and visitors will be aware of the new access security system operating at the side door. Following a number of nuisance intrusions and minor thefts, the electronic key operated system was installed to control and monitor entrance at the door. A meeting with key holders and frequent users will be called shortly to review operating procedures and to receive feedback on possible improvements.

Improving access at the side door and removal of the existing hedge is still under discussion with South Lanarkshire Council with respect to construction of a pavement and retaining wall. We are also expecting action from the council regarding the remaining birch tree adjacent to the large hall. The original 2 trees were considered to be responsible for the appearance of cracks in the hall wall and consequently sanctioned for removal. The church acted to fell the tree within our boundary but SLC are responsible for the remaining specimen.

As several public halls are unavailable at the moment, a number of community groups including dancing schools and music/performance groups are making use of the halls. It is encouraging to see the premises abuzz with lively youth groups.

Manse - The annual manse survey indicated a couple of areas in need of significant attention and consequently the Board recently approved expenditure to replace/upgrade bathroom fittings and the en suite adjoining the master bedroom.

Communications - Most bulk printing including this newsletter and the Sunday order of service is performing using a printer shared with our partner churches in the Parish Grouping. With time, we expect to see additional advantages of pooling resources and working together across a number of projects. Posting links to the Sunday services on the St John's website and distribution of weekly CDs are proving popular with those unable to attend on Sundays.

Future projects - The Kirk Session has charged the Board with reviewing how we publicise St John's and communicate with the community. A proposal will be presented to the Session in due course with suggestions of how we may raise our Christian profile within Carluke. A wide ranging assessment of the layout and facilities within the sanctuary will also be performed with particular emphasis on audio-visual equipment and comfort levels.

GW

Contributions for the next issue of St John's News, **or for the website**, can be submitted to the editor **at any time** but no later than **Sunday 15 February 2009**.

Contributions may be hand-written, typed or emailed to **editor@carluke-stjohns.org.uk**

Jar of Grace

Wars, cyclones, earthquakes, floods, droughts - every day we seem to read in the newspaper or hear on the TV or radio about yet another disaster somewhere in the world. And in all these disasters the people who are usually most severely affected are the children.



UNICEF's Children's Emergency Fund is its vital first step in providing life-saving help and protection for children left vulnerable by war and natural disasters. The fund allows UNICEF to send emergency supplies and equipment rapidly, even before any appeal for help is launched. It ensures children have swift access to clean water, medical care, adequate nutrition. The fund also allows UNICEF to help children in "forgotten emergencies", for example where countries face long-term conflict or which regularly experience natural disasters.

Here are some examples of situations where such help has been provided by UNICEF:

- ✧ In Darfur last year UNICEF provided clean water to 2 million people living in camps and treated 35,000 malnourished children in 143 feeding centres.
- ✧ In Myanmar (Burma) when Cyclone Nargis struck in May this year, thousands were killed and 2.5 million affected, 40% of them children. UNICEF was able to send in supplies immediately.
- ✧ In the occupied Palestinian territories, although Gaza has been almost sealed off since June 2007, UNICEF is working to restore a sense of normality for the young people, creating sports and recreation programmes, working with communities to establish play areas and even developing worksheets to help them keep up with their studies.
- ✧ In Iraq tens of thousands of children have lost parents and other family members to the conflict. Many have been displaced and their families are unable to return home. Most children have experienced stress at various levels, with fear and anxiety increas-

ingly common. Despite the challenges UNICEF provided humanitarian assistance to 150,000 last year

- ✧ In Somalia the growing conflict has led to thousands of children becoming severely malnourished and there are increasing reports of violence against children and women and of children being separated from their families or even recruited to fight. And, of course, children cannot go to school. UNICEF is treating around 15,000 malnourished children each month and provides medicines, vaccines and equipment to health centres. Around 1.6 million children were vaccinated against polio last year.
- ✧ In Sri Lanka the conflict continues to take its toll. Last year UNICEF and its partners provided shelter, distributed hygiene supplies for 300,000 displaced people and the Back-to-School

If you would like to help UNICEF provide emergency supplies for vulnerable children, please look out for the labels which will be available after Christmas. Stick a label on an empty jar and, before each meal, as you give thanks for the food you are about to eat, put a coin into your Jar of Grace. After Easter the money you have put into your Jar of Grace will be collected and sent to UNICEF.

Here are just some of the ways in which UNICEF will be able to use your gift:

- ✧ £12 buys 2 large reinforced plastic protective sheets to be used as shelter
- ✧ £20 provides blankets to protect 10 babies from the cold
- ✧ £65 supplies water kits for 10 families
- ✧ £115 gives a school a box kit to provide emergency education for at least 80 children
- ✧ £265 buys 1 tonne of protein-rich nutritious porridge for vulnerable children

Thank you once again to all who supported last year's appeal .

Find out more about the appeal at www.unicef.org.uk/Jarofgrace .

Many thanks once again - in anticipation!

CS

Interview with God

I dreamed I had an interview with God.
"So you would like to interview me?" God asked.
"If you have the time," I said.
God smiled. "My time is eternity.
What questions do you have in mind for me?"
"What surprises you most about humankind?"
God answered...
"That they get bored with childhood,
they rush to grow up, and then
long to be children again.
That they lose their health to make money..
and then lose their money to restore their health.
That by thinking anxiously about the future,
they forget the present,
such that they live in neither
the present nor the future.
That they live as if they will never die,
and die as though they had never lived."
God's hand took mine
and we were silent for a while.
And then I asked ...
"As a parent, what are some of life's lessons
you want your children to learn?"
"To learn they cannot make anyone
love them. All they can do
is let themselves be loved.
To learn that it is not good
to compare themselves to others.
To learn to forgive
by practicing forgiveness.
To learn that it only takes a few seconds
to open profound wounds in those they love,
and it can take many years to heal them.
To learn that a rich person
is not one who has the most,
but is one who needs the least.
To learn that there are people

Bible-Reading Notes

A huge thank you to those members of the congregation who have ordered Bible Reading Notes or made donations over the past year. The sum of £53 has been sent to **Shelter Scotland**, and on behalf of those who will benefit this Christmas, I thank everyone who has made this possible.

Anyone wishing to order Bible Reading Notes for the coming year please see me as soon as possible to arrange.

JW

who love them dearly,
but simply have not yet learned
how to express or show their feelings.
To learn that two people can
look at the same thing
and see it differently.
To learn that it is not enough that they
forgive one another, but they must also forgive them-
selves."
"Thank you for your time," I said humbly,
"Is there anything else
you would like your children to know?"
God smiled and said,
"Just know that I am here... always."

Author unknown

*(a presentation of this poem, with inspirational pho-
tography, can be viewed at
www.theinterviewwithgod.com/)*

Christian Aid News

Christmas Appeal 2008 - Help us reunite families this Christmas

Three mothers: Nuryiani, Husana and Yusinta. lived in Nuryiani's village of Kuala Bubon in Indonesia which was devastated by 2004's Boxing Day tsunami.

Nuryiani remembers it like yesterday. 'I fainted with the shock of seeing the devastation,' she says. Almost every family lost loved ones - parents, children, siblings and grandparents were swept away forever. But the situation grew still worse and the families that were left were to face further loss.

No return

With the land still partially submerged, the local government refused to let the families return to their village to rebuild. Living indefinitely in 'tent cities' far from the land and sea that had provided their homes and livelihoods, the families of Kuala Bubon faced an uncertain future.

Many of the men had to leave to find work, For many, family breakdown seemed imminent. But Nuryiani, Husana and Yusinta, known to other villagers as 'the three mothers', refused to accept the status quo and sought the help of Yakkum Emergency Unit (YEU), a local Christian Aid partner.

Reunited

YEU realised that if the families of Kuala Bubon were to return, the village would need to be rebuilt in a new storm-proof form - on stilts. This convinced the authorities to let the families return. In total, YEU rebuilt 118 houses in Kuala Bubon.

Thanks to the help of Christian Aid and YEU, families like Nuryiani's were eventually able to be reunited with the lives they once loved.

Christmas is a time to remember the hope we have been given. Christ came among us to build a new kingdom. What will you build this Christmas?

Nuryiani's story is one example of how your support for Christian Aid can bring hope to those torn from their loved ones by disaster, poverty or injustice. And so this Christmas Christian Aid is focusing on families, by asking us to help reunite families through donating what we can to their Christmas appeal.

Present Aid

Buying virtual gifts from Christian Aid's gift catalogue is one way you can help.

What is Present Aid?

Present Aid is Christian Aid's virtual gifts scheme. During the last four years £7 million pounds has been raised through Present Aid and given thousands of people the opportunity to give and receive meaningful gifts at Christmas. Gift shopping in this way gives hope of a brighter future that will change lives.

How does Present Aid work?

All the gifts available through Present Aid are examples of how Christian Aid works to help people in the world's poorest communities tackle poverty and injustice.

- ✧ **Choose** presents from the catalogue for your family or friends
- ✧ **Pay** in cash, or by cheque made payable to Christian Aid
- ✧ In return, you will **receive** an attractive gift card describing the item you have selected and how someone in the developing world will benefit.
- ✧ **Add** a personal message before giving the card to your friend or family member at Christmas

(continued on next page)

Christian Aid (continued)

Christmas Events

The Christian Aid Group, with assistance from family and friends completed a **grocery packing fundraiser** in Somerfield during November, raising £632. This money, together with the collection which will be taken at the Christmas Festival of Praise, will be sent directly to Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal.

A **Present Aid stall** has been set up in St John's Church Hall. You can visit the stall every Sunday or Thursday morning after worship between now and 21st December. There you can pick up a catalogue, view the gifts and gift cards and make purchases on the spot. Come and have a look at what's on offer!

And finally you are warmly invited to **Christian Aid's Festival of Christmas Praise** on Sunday 14th December at 7.00 pm. This year it will be held in St Athanasius new Community Hall in Mount Stewart Street. As always it will be a family occasion with musical contributions from St Athanasius Primary school children. Refreshments will be served at the end.

Thank you for your continued support in all we do to improve the lives of those who are suffering and in great need of our prayers and practical support.



Invitation

As a congregation, St John's is inviting the people of Carluke to breakfast on

**Sunday 21 December in the Church Halls, Park Street, Carluke
between 9.15 am and 10.30 am.**

Come along, bring friends and neighbours and enjoy a hot bacon roll and coffee

All are Welcome!

How indeed?

Chrissy was lonely. "How much longer have I to stay in this place?" she asked. "You'll be up here until December" replied Ollie.

Chrissy couldn't understand why she was here. How her life had changed! A year ago she left a factory in China and boarded a ship to Scotland. During the sea voyage some of her fellow travellers told her that she would be helping celebrate the birthday of someone called Jesus.

Shortly after arriving in Scotland she was taken to live with a family in Carlisle. She was dressed very prettily, and the family seemed delighted to have her in their home. Her new home was full of dancing, parties, fun and laughter, and she was always in the midst of things. How honoured she felt to be there.

After a few weeks, however, things suddenly changed. Mary Darling said "We'd better get things ready for going back to work and school."

John Dear said, "Right, I'll see to the tree." He then stripped Chrissy of all her pretty lights and baubles, leaving her feeling so naked.

She was then taken through a door in the ceiling to the "loft". Chrissy didn't like it. It was cold and dark. Her new neighbour Ollie, a stuffed owl, told her she would only be needed once every year, around the time of Jesus' birthday.

"That's not fair," said Chrissy. "How would this Jesus feel if he was only brought out at his birthday, and then forgotten for the rest of the year?"

"How indeed," said Ollie, "How indeed!"