

Pastor Roy Writes...

Dear Friends,

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

I don't know about your home, but we have had our house decorated, complete with Christmas Tree, since the 21st. of November. Christine loves to stretch the season as much as she can. It is a lovely time for those who are able to enjoy it. For those surrounded with family, for those who have made plans for the Christmas season, and are looking forward to all the festivities.

Ministers in any community, are all too aware that the festive season heightens pain for many. If there has been bereavement in the last year, the first Christmas without that special person can be awful. Tragedy in any form that has come to a home or family can also be more acutely experienced in the Christmas season which is so full of Love and Joy and Peace. Where there is brokenness, sadness, poverty, or turmoil, Christmas is heavy burden. Then there are the lonely, those who spend so much time alone, and are only too glad when the season is behind them.

Christmas! Jesus came into a world of pain and turmoil. He knows what that feels like. His family was poor, He lost his earthly father, Joseph, at some point in His life. He, experienced at the hands of men mockery, bruising, injury, and eventual crucifixion. Jesus can identify with the worst that people experience because he has walked in these self same shoes - Jesus is the Man for This Season!

As Christ's Church we are aware, and remember to reach out to all people in this season. Can I extend to you all an invitation to come to Church this season. Come and sing again the carols, hear the same old, old story told again, but as fresh and new as ever about the coming of the child that was born in a stable.

As I said in last year's magazine, and this never changes, 'God loved us enough that He came down in the person of Jesus, putting on human skin, and through his life, death and resurrection gives all of us an eternal hope.

Have a Blessed Christmas

Roy and Christine

Worship Diary

Normal Sunday Services are held at 11.00 am. Once a month, there is an evening service, including prayers for healing. A short mid-week service is held on Thursdays at 10.30 am.

Special services between now and the next issue of St John's News (all at St John's except where indicated):

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| <p>December 8 <i>Carol Service for the Bereaved, at St Andrew's Church</i></p> <p>11 Third Sunday in Advent</p> <p>18 Fourth Sunday in Advent
<i>Youth Church Service</i></p> <p>24 Christmas Eve
<i>Watchnight Service at 11:15 pm.</i></p> <p>25 Christmas Day
<i>Joint Family service with St Andrew's at 10:30 am</i></p> <p>January 1 <i>Parish Grouping service for New Year at St Andrew's Church</i></p> <p>8 <i>Joint Service with St Andrew's</i></p> |
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* **Sacrament of Holy Communion** *
* will be held on Sunday, 5 February 2012. *
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Jar of Grace

Jesus said:

“I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink”

“Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me - you did it to me.”

In our country when we hear someone say “I’m starving”, we know they don’t mean it literally. What it means to be really starving has been brought home to us all over the past few months in the reports we have seen from East Africa, where more than 13 million people were left in urgent need of food, water and emergency childcare because of one of the worst droughts in 60 years, a situation made even worse in many cases by the effects of war in the region.

Over the past few years the Church of Scotland congregations in Carlisle have responded with great generosity to UNICEF’s Jar of Grace appeals. This year UNICEF is asking for our support as it works to help prevent and to treat malnutrition in children.

Every hour more than 300 children around the world die because of malnutrition. In many areas of our world poverty and increased food prices mean that many families simply cannot afford food. Often war and natural disasters, such as floods, drought, earthquakes, put children at even greater risk.

Lack of nourishment weakens a child’s immune system and makes illness more dangerous. A malnourished child is more likely to die from diarrhoea, pneumonia and many common diseases. And children who don’t have enough to eat are affected in other ways: malnutrition can blunt children’s intellect, making it more difficult for them to learn and ultimately to earn a living as they grow up.

Many of these deaths could be prevented easily. Simple low-cost solutions exist which could save the lives of our world’s most vulnerable children.



Here are just some of the ways in which UNICEF can use the money it raises:

- **£13** can provide for a child a week's supply of "miracle milk", an incredible skimmed milk powder containing carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals which can improve a child's health in a matter of days;
- **£38** can provide 100 life-saving doses of vaccine to protect children from diseases such as measles and polio;
- **£100** can provide 300 sachets of therapeutic peanut paste, enough for a month's supply of life-saving high-energy food to nurse a severely malnourished child back to health.

For anyone who doesn't know about the Jar of Grace, please let us explain:

- after Christmas you can collect a leaflet giving information about the appeal;
- this leaflet has a label which you can detach and stick onto an empty jar;
- before you eat each meal, in thanks for the food you are about to eat, you are asked to put a coin into your Jar of Grace;
- after Easter the money you have put into your jar will be collected and sent to UNICEF.

If you would like to work with UNICEF to help prevent and treat malnutrition among our world's children please look out for the leaflets which will be available after Christmas.

Many thanks once again - in anticipation!

Chris Shanks

Thursday Mornings

Back in Spring 2008, the Thursday morning *Kettle's On* moved from the Small Hall to the Large Hall due to the increasing numbers enjoying tea and coffee after the Thursday morning mid-week service. Since that time, we have gone from strength to strength, averaging between 50-60 visitors each week. Most people enjoying tea, coffee and fellowship come straight from the church service although some drop in at 10am prior to going through to the service.

Kettle's On makes no charge for tea/coffee and biscuits, but due to the generosity of our regular visitors we have been able to make sizeable donations to suggested charities and good causes over the past few years, some of which are listed below:

St. Andrew's Hospice; Malawi Orphanage;
Cancer Care; CHAS;
Huntington's Association; Community Christmas Dinner 2011.

Kettle's On runs concurrently with the Thursday morning mid-week service, which starts at 10.30am and lasts for approximately 20 minutes. The number of people attending the service has also seen a significant increase, also averaging 50/60 per week, with many more attending at Communion times, Christmas and Easter.

The service is often led by Pastor Roy and other ministers in the town, but we also have a team of very able and interesting "lay" people who take it in turn to lead the service. This variety of speakers is one of the great strengths of Thursday mornings, providing different views and perspectives on matters affecting Christian life, supported with a range of personal stories and experiences.

The service is particularly suitable for those with problems sitting through a longer Sunday morning service or anyone who works on a Sunday. In recent months, the average age of those attending has dropped quite dramatically as we have been blessed by having 2-3 very young babies regularly in the congregation and at *Kettle's On* afterwards, and they have brought their mums with them too!!

So, if you are a young mum (or dad) reading this article and you are thinking you would like to get back to church, please do not hesitate to join us on a Thursday morning. You and your baby will be

made very welcome.

Within the “Kettle’s On” Team, there are several individuals, led by Dr Ann Jackson, who have a particular interest in a “healing ministry”, and they would welcome the opportunity to pray with you in confidence. If you have health concerns or other issues for which you would like prayer just ask a member of the Team.

The “Kettle’s On” Team is a warm-hearted group of people who do their best to create a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. So, whether you meet up with friends or come on your own, you will always be assured of a warm welcome and someone to chat with.

On **Thursday 22 December**, we will be serving, hot mince pies, Christmas cake and other seasonal goodies. Come along and give us a try!!

Liz Jackson

Gift Aid

Would members who Gift Aid their offering, or other donations, please remember to put their name on any such donations.

We cannot claim back tax if we do not know who gave made the donation!



Youth Church

We are now fast approaching Christmas and the children have all started rehearsing for school activities and also for our all age Christmas Service on Sunday, 18th December. I know that they will do us proud, as always, and I'm sure everyone will be feeling very much in the Christmas spirit by the end of the service and hopefully get our message that JESUS really is the reason for the season.

Our Christmas party for the younger children will be from 3pm - 5pm on Sunday, 11th December when we will be having lots of party games, snacks and fun.

On behalf of all Youth Church I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone God's Blessing this Christmas and good health and happiness in 2012 (where has 2011 gone?!).

Janice Ord
Youth Church Superintendent

Drum Lessons

All levels and ages catered for

Contact Stevie Smith

07785 354965

steviesmith@hotmail.co.uk

Time for fellowship

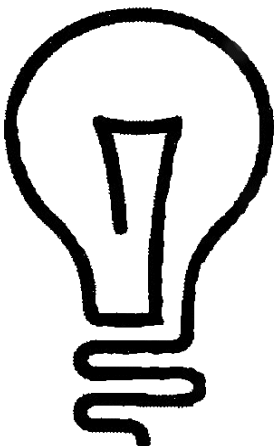
On behalf of the Time for Fellowship team, I should like to thank everyone who enjoys their fellowship after church each Sunday morning. Thanks to your kind generosity, we are fortunate, this year, to be able to support several ventures:

- Christmas Day Community Lunch (Georgene McLaren) - £100
- New Beginnings - £100
- St Andrew's Hospice - £150
- McMillan Nurses - £150

I would also like to thank Kay and my teams who support me every week. However, we are still looking for anyone (male or female) who would be willing to help serve at Time for Fellowship on a few Sundays per year. If you are able to help, please speak to me at church, or phone 750915.

Yours in Christ

Moira Braynion



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Scottish Bible Society

How to Celebrate 400 years of the King James Bible!

The People's Bible toured the country, including a visit to Carluke, St John's, (because the weather was too windy for the tent at it's original site at Aldi's car park), and all in the community were invited to write out two verses in their own hand writing, to form a unique on line bible, which would also be presented in paper form to Westminster Abbey.

Two tour managers Adrian and Russell, who were responsible for setting up and supervising each days activities welcomed their volunteer helpers and found the interaction with the public made the long days of travelling and missing home worthwhile. Their highlights were when Neil, in Aberdeen, wrote his verses, and told them it was the most significant thing he had done in his life for years. He found it really meaningful and was ready to read more of the bible and took more literature away with him.

The other was when after writing his verses a man asked for prayer and it was amazing having the opportunity to pray with someone for the first time.

Adrian and Russell would like on going prayer for the non Christians to be drawn, as they see their verses on line, to continue to read the bible for themselves and that all will be drawn to see just how alive and powerful the bible is as it speaks to us today.

In Edinburgh City Art Centre, an exhibition, Precious Light, showcased the work of David Mach, an artist born in Fife. A friend told him of the King James Bible being discussed in Burntisland in 1601 and of the anniversary, and as David had already been thinking of work on biblical themes... The final exhibition included over 70 massive collages, 6 major sculptures, and spanned 5 gallery floors of the Art centre. His work is contemporary, huge pictures of the plague of frogs, sweeping across Belfast City Hall, and Noah's Ark being constructed against a backdrop of Arthurs Seat. Between the exhibits were the matching scripture passages. The visitors book bears testimony to the overwhelming positive public response.

The curator, David Patterson, himself a Christian, prayed that the exhibition might have re-acquainted some people with the bible and caused them to take a second look. And that God's word, so publicly displayed, would not return to him empty, but accomplish what he desired, and achieve the purpose for which He sent it.

In East Calder 167 children entered the bible story painting competition in the "art room" beside the Peoples Bible venue. With tips and help to mix colours from a real live artist the children produced pictures which showed a real understanding of the bible stories and all the families involved were invited to a special prize giving at Sunday service.

As we continue the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, activities promoting or commemorating the bible in English are seen all over the UK. Among them is **SELBL**, the Society for English Learning through Biblical Literature set up in 2008, which shows that the bible in English can touch the hearts of Christians and non Christians. It helps spiritually and practically, preparing Christian teachers and missionaries as well as benefiting students. How many sayings are biblical? "go the extra mile" etc.

The founder of **SELBL** is **Jenny Wong**, a PhD candidate in literature and theology at Glasgow University. She graduated from the Divinity School of Chung Chi College at Chinese University of Hong Kong with an MA in Christian studies in 2009. She teaches translation at several universities in Hong Kong and China.

And so in different ways, the word of God is moving through the world. May we take advantage of our freedom to have bibles and worship.



www.scottishbiblesociety.org

Christian Aid

The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have had a lot to fear. Despite huge deposits of minerals (such as diamonds) and an abundance of natural resources (such as timber), 80 per cent of the population live on less than 13 pence/14 euro cents per day. Fragile leadership and escalating conflict over recent years have resulted in large-scale civilian massacres, widespread rape and sexual violence, and many thousands of people forced to abandon their villages.

And yet, while the DRC has sometimes been publicised in our media as a place of nothing but despair, Christian Aid partners are telling stories that speak of deep joy and profound hope, even within this challenging context of poverty and violence.

Seeking shelter

Shukuru Binguru was only 12 years old when she heard rebel soldiers approaching her school: 'I heard explosions and shouting. I said to the others "can't you hear that? We must leave and go and find our families".' She ran home to find her three younger siblings distressed and alone. Their father was out working in the fields and their mother was away at market. Shukuru and her siblings joined the crowds of people leaving for Goma. In an unknown city, with no idea whether their parents were alive or dead, they had a lot to fear. Then Shukuru heard of Pastor Patrick who works with Christian Aid partner CBCA. She went to his home with her siblings to seek shelter. And they were not alone. Over the next few days more and more children started to arrive.

Some were alone, some were in small groups. But all of them told the same story of being forced to flee from violence. Within just a few days the number of children had totalled 129.

'The joy was enormous'

CBCA built a centre to house the children and contacted local schools so the older children could continue their education. And as soon as it was safe to do so, CBCA sent out messages to its network of churches to try and get news of the children's families. Broadcasting on the radio and reading out lists of names in churches, it fastidiously combed the region for the families.

And amazingly, word started coming back to the CBCA centre that parents had been found. Within six months, the sight of large groups of excited children, dressed in their best clothes, piling into minibuses out-

side the CBCA centre became a regular occurrence. They were taken back to their villages and to emotional reunions with their parents. 'We were full of an indescribable joy,' says Nyampuga Siperant, Shukuru's mother. 'We wept together for 20 or 30 minutes and we shared embraces all round.'

Désiré Safari, the head of CBCA, tells us: 'We had expected that some of the families would not be found.' But every single child was reunited. 'The joy was enormous.'

Good news of great joy

In this situation of dislocation, pain and fear, we witness good news of great joy. So this Christmas, please consider a gift to Christian Aid to bring joy to families like Shukuru's. You will be helping to bring hope in some of the most desperate circumstances, and restoration and reconnection where there is brokenness and pain. But it is in stories like Shukuru's that you may also be able to witness some of the ancient truth of the promise of joy that comes to the world at Christmas.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, it cost 85p to feed a child for a day at the CBCA centre; £9 to provide medical care for one child for six months of their stay; £36.50 to provide the total lodging cost for one child for six months.

Elsewhere around the world, your money will help to bring hope to other poor communities.

£8 could help families caring for children who have been orphaned by HIV in Kenya to save with a cash box; £47 could pay for a health promotion workshop in Haiti, allowing communities to learn about how to protect themselves and their families from infection and illness.



Carrots, Eggs & Coffee

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed set them to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil; without saying a word.

After twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, ' Tell me what you see.'

'Carrots, eggs, and coffee,' she replied.

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hardboiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, 'What does it mean, mother?'

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

'Which are you?' she asked her daughter. 'When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?'

Think of this: Which am I?

Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavour. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you.

When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?

May we all be COFFEE!!!!!!



Thank you...

During my stay in hospital, I have been overwhelmed by the care and concern shown by the people of St John's and other churches in the town. Thank you for your prayers, cards and messages, all of which have been a great source of comfort. I promise to get well as quickly as possible!

Sandra Peat

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 19 February 2012.**

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

The magazines of the three churches of the Parish Grouping reach almost 1500 homes in Carluke and surrounding area

To place a small ad, contact the editor, George Reid on 661742, or by email.