



St John's News

The Newsletter of St John's Church of Scotland: Carlisle

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December 2016

Pastoral Letter

Dear members

As I write this pastoral letter, I am looking out of my study room's window, at a seemingly murky view. The weather is becoming crisper and colder and the days are a wee bit shorter. That rather gloomy scene is reflected in the latest news headlines of a deepening global economic crisis and rising unemployment, the struggle of many families to find sufficient money to pay for food and other necessities and a growing anxiety and uncertainty following the Brexit. Yet in the midst of this darkness, the light of Christ shines through. Indeed, we all have a lot to be thankful for: life, loving families, great friends who are always there, good health, God's joy and peace in the midst of pains. Just recently, Andy Murray, a Scottish professional tennis player has currently been ranked world No. 1 in men's singles. What a great honour for a small country like ours!

My family and I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation for your kind words, cards, letters and prayers, especially following the passing on of my dad. Similarly, I wish to express my thanks for your continuing generous and regular giving (time, talents and money) towards the life and mission of our church here at St. John's. God has placed each one of us here in this place and time because he has good things he wants to accomplish in our world through our lives. As followers of Jesus Christ, we express our love for Jesus by participating actively in the life of his church family, and our wider community. We are beginning a new liturgical year with the season of Advent which offers us a real sense of hope and encouragement as we continue our journey of faith. In this season, we prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, and look forward, to his return. Advent shouldn't be swamped by premature Christmases; rather it should be a time for us to examine the depth of our faith and commitment to God. May we be thankful and allow God to bear good fruit through us!

With an assurance of my continuing prayers and love for you all,

Rev. Dr. Elijah Obinna
Minister

St John's Diary

Regular Worship Times

Normal Sunday Services are held at 11:00 am.

A short evening service, with prayers for healing, is normally held on the second Sunday of each month at 7:00 pm

A Praise Service is held on the last Sunday of the month, also at 7:00 pm.

A short, mid-week service is held on Thursdays at 10:30 am.

Minister's Vestry Times - Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Sunday Morning Prayers - 10:30 - 10:50 am, before morning service.

Special events and services between now and the next issue of St John's News:

Mon 5 Dec	7:00 pm	Christmas Jingles at Kirkton Church
Wed 7 Dec	7:00 pm	Carol Service for the Bereaved at <i>St Andrew's Church</i>
Thu 8 Dec	10:30 am	Holy Communion at Thursday Service
Sun 11 Dec	12:15 pm	Soup Lunch
	2:30 pm	Pantomime at Kirkton Church
	7:00 pm	Christian Aid Carol Service at <i>St Athanasius' Church</i>
Sun 18 Dec	9:30 am	Christmas Breakfast
	11:00 am	All-Age Service
Thu 22 Dec	11:00 am	Crawforddyke PS Christmas Service
	4:00 pm	Messy Church and Christingle at <i>Kirkton Church</i>
Sat 24 Dec	11:15 pm	Watchnight Service
Sun 25 Dec	10:30 am	Christmas Day Service
	12:30 pm	Christmas Lunch
Sun 1 Jan	11:00 am	United New Year Service
Sun 5 Mar	11:00 am	Celebration of Holy Communion

Please refer to Sunday bulletins, local press or the church website for more information or changes to the programme above.

**Carlisle Churches
Christian Aid Carol Service
on
Sunday 11 December at 7:00 pm
in
St Athanasius' Church
led by
Father Thomas Magill
with
St Athanasius' Primary School Choir**



A warm welcome is extended to come along and join in the festive praise, with refreshments after the service. An offering will be taken for Christian Aid's Christmas appeal

Material for the next edition of St John's News should be in the hands of the editor NO LATER THAN Sunday 19 February 2017.

Jar of Grace Appeal 2016-17

I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit.



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

(From Eugene Petersen's translation of Matthew 25 in The Message)

This year we are once again being asked to raise funds through the Jar of Grace appeal to support UNICEF's Children's Emergency Fund. When disaster strikes, whether it's a flood, an earthquake or a typhoon or the result of war and conflict, it seems that it is always the children who suffer most. We know how vital it is that help reaches children who are in danger as soon as possible.

With a permanent presence in over 190 countries, UNICEF is well positioned to respond as soon as an emergency strikes, providing life-saving food, clean water and sanitation, medicines, protection and psychosocial support to children whose lives have been devastated.

£16 could buy a vaccine cold box to keep life-saving vaccines effective;
£44 could provide two malnourished children with food for a week;
£100 could buy water kits for 10 families, giving them access to clean water.

How to use your Jar of Grace to help UNICEF's work:

In January you can collect a label to attach to an empty jar;
Before you eat a meal, in thanks for the food you are about to eat, you are asked to put coins into your Jar of Grace;
After Easter the money you have put into your jar will be collected, counted for you and sent to UNICEF.

Please look out for the labels which will be available early in the New Year. Thank you again for all your past support. We hope that you will once again feel able to help UNICEF's work for children caught up in emergencies around our world.

CS

Christian Aid

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), cosy and joyful Christmases at home are a distant memory for thousands who have had their lives violently uprooted as a result of civil war. Those who dedicate their lives to serving Christ will often witness darkness in the world, but few have seen as much of it as Celestin.

First his bishop was murdered, then he witnessed nine priests killed by rebels. Celestin, himself a priest in the DRC, fled for his life. *Surviving was not an easy task. Priests at times are targeted, including myself* he says.

Now his ministry brings the light of Christ to others who have had to escape. He lives in a safer area, which has become a sanctuary to other traumatised survivors of violence.

Families who seek safety in Celestin's community need support to rebuild their lives and create a safe place to call home. Local host families show extraordinary generosity and kindness to newcomers, but their few resources are often stretched.

Conflict, poverty and displacement will leave millions of families struggling to find safety.

This Christmas we can light their way of darkness. Along with hundreds of other churches throughout the UK, the Carluke Churches will hold a carol service, during which a collection will be taken. What you give will be a light in the darkness for a struggling family this Christmas. So your generosity could make a real difference.



Thank you for your continued support.

IN

Spare a Thought...

Decorations in house and street,
inducing thoughts of festive treat
Christmas cards with usual rhymes
bring usual greetings for auld lang syne.

But spare a thought for Jesus

Food collected, drinks in store,
there's never room for any more.
Fun and games to make you jolly,
crackers, parties, balloons and holly.

But spare a thought for Jesus

Wrapping paper, a secret thought,
hiding away the gifts you've bought
Singing carols, they're pleasant on ear
and they sound right for this time of year.

But spare a thought for Jesus

Exciting times on Christmas morn,
opening presents from early dawn.
Stockings and dear old Santa Clause,
Christmas pudding and brandy sauce.

But spare a thought for Jesus

Scattered toys throughout the day,
a waiting time for new owner's play.
Fairy lights on Christmas trees
and families sharing memories.

But spare a thought for Jesus. Spare a thought

© Roger Stapenhill, St John's Church, Keele

Property Team Leader

In the last issue, I wrote about the tendency of most of us to "leave it to Someone Else" whenever there is a job to do in the church (or, indeed, in life). This quarter, I should like to draw your attention to a specific, immediate need for Someone Else to step forward.

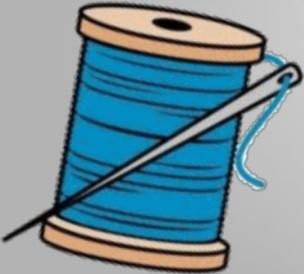
John Stratton has been the leader of the Property Team for over 8 years, with a short break in 2013. In the summer, he decided that it was time to step down from the leadership role, although he continues to be an active member of the Property Team. He and the other members of the Property Team have, between them, a wealth of experience and skills to enable them to keep our buildings and surroundings in the best of conditions.

What is missing is Someone Else to co-ordinate their work as Team Leader (or Convenor - the terms are interchangeable). This Someone Else need not have much in the way of the practical skills required to identify and deal with property issues - the Property Team members can cover those, as mentioned above. Neither would he or she be expected to carry out more than their own share of the Property Team tasks. Her or his focus would be to **lead and organise** the team's activities.

If you think you may be that Someone Else and would like more information, please speak to George Reid, or download the Property Team Leader Job Description from the church website using this link;

www.carluke-stjohns.org.uk/downloads/index.shtm

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Kwai River Christian Hospital

Scott dropped a bombshell in his November newsletter when he reported that the Murrays may have to leave KRCH. It appears that, since he and Nok returned to Thailand from their break in Scotland in the Summer, Scott has been at odds with the hospital Board and the Leaders of the Church of Christ in Thailand (under which the hospital is associated). The Board and Leaders want to build a large modern hospital while Scott feels that their plans are too "grandiose". The Board decided to remove Scott as Hospital Director, effective from 1 May 2017.

Scott asked to speak to the Board to find out why this decision was made, and was able to speak to a member of the Board whom he respects and trusts on 11 November. The Board member agreed that the Board's decision was based on one letter from the Chairman of the local Presbytery/Diocese (who is a member of the Board), backed by input from the Hospital Business Manager who is keen to have the new hospital on his CV. It was agreed that, at the next meeting of the Board, scheduled for 2 December, the decision to remove Scott would be reviewed and that he would be able to put his side of the case.

He and Nok feel that, perhaps, the Lord is saying it is time to move on from here and so are praying for guidance about the issue. They are determined to abide by God's will whatever the outcome of the Board meeting.

Three Pagodas Clinic

Scott has been travelling the 40 km to this clinic 3 mornings per week, but numbers of patients attending are increasing to the point where he cannot get away much before 2-3 pm on busy days with no time for lunch. He then has to get back to KRCH to see patients there. The reason why the Three Pagodas Clinic is so busy is because it is on the Thai-Burmese border and so more accessible to the Burmese patients who otherwise would have to pass a check-point to get to KRCH where the Thai soldiers manning it turn back 2 out of every 3 because they don't have the correct documentation.

Family Matters

We reported, in the June issue, that Scott had sustained a fracture to his right elbow which he had neglected somewhat resulting in a continued inability to straighten it. At the beginning of November, he fell and hurt his wrist. An X-ray showed that there may be a fine crack in one of the small bones, so his wrist and hand were put in plaster. He planned to repeat the X-ray on 19 November and, should there be no further sign of the crack, remove the plaster. In the meantime he was able to consult but not practice surgery.

Scott and Nok had a wonderful time visiting Cara in Aberdeen. She seems to be thriving and has joined the University Girls' Soccer Team and CU. Scott thinks she may also spend some time studying! Meanwhile, Shane is in his final year at school and still unsure about what to do next. He is possibly interested in Business or engineering - but not even sure about that either! He is still interested in studying in Japan or Taiwan. At the same time he is applying through UCAS for options in Scotland. Scott asks for your prayers for things to become clear and a good decision to be made!



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Messages from the Front

These messages, from two members of the congregation were printed in the September edition of *St John's United Free Church Monthly Leaflet*. Our thanks to Iris Nelson for lending the original (shown opposite).

“As long as I know that the home folks are all right, I don't worry. You are right in saying that God is watching over me. He has brought me through many dangers. I hope and pray that He will bring me safely through it all, and that He will help me so that I may be able to thank Him in a proper way.”

“Our dug-out is an ammunition store also, and our so-called couches are merely trench foot-boards tastefully decorated with the ubiquitous sandbag. We have just had a thunderstorm and a miniature cloudburst, and are just finished baling out the water; I only hope that we are afloat in the morning. To lighten the hours when off duty, many and various are the expedients resorted to. I know of one, who may be found with a small, dirty, well-thumbed Virgil- oblivious to all discomforts, serenely content. Reading newspapers and writing 'duty-bound' letters might include most of the men, but a few are out of that circle. In our own Section you may find one man intent on finding the formula for a Geometric Progression, another reading 'our' copy of the Golden Treasury, and another studying French Grammar, while your humble servant is in mortal combat with the simple verb. But then we are 'some' Section. After one day's rain, our trenches are mere water-logged mud holes. The boys are taking off sox and hoes tops, and paddling along in boots only; a wise course when there is no hope of a change for a fortnight yet. Summer makes us think more of home and the beauties of Scotland, and I know that a vision of our own little town is more beautiful and desirable than anything else within the bounds of human wishes. If we can't win this war we aren't going to allow John Hun to win it, and I expect 'dourness' will triumph in the end.”

St. John's United Free Church, CARLUKE. Monthly Leaflet.

No. 21.

SEPTEMBER, 1916.

SECOND YEAR.

MESSAGES FROM THE FRONT.

"As long as I know that the home folks are all right, I don't worry. You are right in saying that God is watching over me. He has brought me through many dangers. I hope and pray that He will bring me safely through it all, and that He will help me so that I may be able to thank Him in a proper way." (One of our men.)

"Our dug-out is an ammunition store also, and our so-called couches are merely trench foot-boards tastefully decorated with the ubiquitous sandbag. We have just had a thunderstorm and a miniature cloudburst, and are just finished baling out the water; I only hope we are not wet by morning. To lighten the hours when off duty, many and various are the expedients resorted to. I know of one, who may be found with a small, dirty, well-thumbed Virgil—oblivious to all discomforts, serenely content. Reading newspapers and writing 'duty-bound' letters might include most of the men, but a few are out of that circle. In our own Section you may find one man intent on finding the formula for a Geometric Progression, another reading 'our' copy of the Golden Treasury, and another studying French Grammar, while your humble servant is in mortal combat with the simple verb. But then we are 'some' Section. After one day's rain, our trenches are mere water-logged mud holes. The boys are taking off sox and hosetops, and paddling along in boots only; a wise course when there is no hope of a change for a fortnight yet. Summer makes us think more of home and the beauties of Scotland, and I know that a vision of our own little town is more beautiful and desirable than anything else within the bounds of human wishes. If we can't win this war we aren't going to allow John Hun to win it, and I expect 'dourness' will triumph in the end." (Another of our men.)

INTIMATIONS.

The Prayer Meeting has resumed for the winter months. The subject of study for September and October will be the Prophecy of Zechariah, dealing with the reconstruction of the nation of Israel after the return from the

captivity. In these days the minds of many are anxious concerning the future of the nation and the well-being of those who have so nobly suffered that it is well for us to see God's work in such a time. The real object of our gathering is made plain in its name. A band of regular worshippers has always been faithful, but we look for more, and surely at such a time as this the members of Christ's Church should take all opportunities for united prayer.

The Junior and Senior Bible Classes will be united for this winter, and meet at 4.30 p.m. The subjects of study will appear in the Leaflet month by month. Our first meeting will be on Sabbath, 17th September. All young men and women from fourteen years and upwards are earnestly invited to attend.

The Band of Hope will meet on the first Friday of October. The Minister is anxious that all the boys and girls of the congregation may meet with him at this gathering week by week. The hour will be as usual, 6.30 p.m.

In view of the October Communion, a Communicants' Class will begin on Tuesday, 10th September. The meeting place is the Vestry at the Church, and there Mr. Turnbull will welcome all who desire to be instructed concerning Church membership. It is very desirable that all should come at the beginning of the Class.

PRAYER MEETING.

SUBJECTS:

- Wednesday 6th—Zechariah, the Prophet; ch. I, v. 1-6.
" 13th—The First Vision; ch. I, v. 7-17.
" 20th—Four Horns—The City of Peace; ch. I, v. 18; II, 5.
" 27th—The High Priest and the Adversary, ch. III.

MEMBERS ASSISTING:

- Wednesday, 6th—Messrs George S. Harvie and Wm. Train.
" 13th—Messrs Thomas Harvie and James Weir.
" 20th—Messrs Thomas Jackson and Archibald Prentice.
" 27th—Messrs William Inglis and Robert Thomson.

The actual front page from the September 1916 issue of the then church newsletter

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