

*Scottish Episcopal Church
Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway
St Ninian's, Castle Douglas
(Scottish Charity No: SC011079)*



Lighting of the First Advent Candle

St Ninian's Review

Issue No 59

Advent 2017



SERVICES FOR CHRISTMAS-TIDE 2017

Sun 10 Dec - Advent 3

No 8.30am *Holy Communion*

11.00am Family Eucharist

No 6.00pm *Evensong*

Wed 13 Dec

10.15 am Holy Communion

Sun 17 Dec - Advent 3

8.30am Holy Communion

11.00am Family Eucharist

7.00pm Christmas Carol Service

Wed 20 Dec - St Thomas, Apostle

10.15 am Holy Communion

Sun 24 Dec - Christmas Eve

8.30am Holy Communion

11.00am Matins, followed by

11.45am Holy Communion (Said Service)

4.00pm Christingle and Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Eucharist

Mon 25 Dec - Christmas Day

11.00am Family Eucharist and Nativity

Wed 28 Dec - St John the Evangelist

10.15 am Holy Communion

Sun 31 Dec - The Naming of Jesus

8.30am Holy Communion

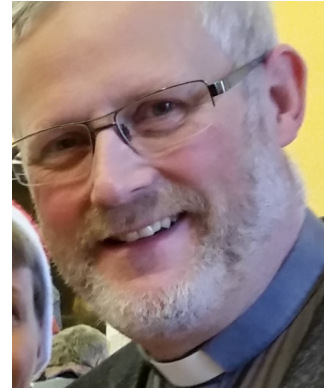
11.00am Family Eucharist

No 7.00pm *Sunday Evening Alternative Service*

A MESSAGE FROM REVD MARK SMITH

Happy Advent to all our readers!

Advent is the time leading up to Christmas. In the Church's Year it is from Advent Sunday to Christmas Eve **not** from the day after Bonfire Night to Christmas Eve as per the supermarket calendar. By the way, Easter does **not** start on Boxing Day!



Of course, Christmas itself only starts on December 25th and runs until either Epiphany (6th January) or Candlemas (2nd February) depending on who you ask! I suspect that most of us have had enough of 'Christmas' movies and adverts by mid-December and Boxing Day brings a sigh of relief in many households. Why not delay your start so that you can enjoy the whole season – although 39 days of festivities seems a lot to us middle-aged folk! Perhaps I'll stick to twelve.

Advent means 'coming' and for centuries Christians round the world have used it as a time of preparation for the big celebration. It's a bit like Lent is to Easter, but with less publicity and a lower profile ... and you don't have to give up chocolate! Especially not the ones in the Advent Calendar ...

The real purpose of Advent is to highlight the three-dimensional nature of our faith:

1. Jesus **came** down at Christmas for YOU – whatever your past may hold.
2. Jesus **comes** into YOUR life today – whatever you face.
3. Jesus **will come again** on the Last Day and wants YOU to be ready.

In our Service of Lessons and Carols, midnight Communion on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day worship and regular Sunday Services, we will learn together the truth about the baby born to die – the most precious Christmas gift anyone can receive ... anytime !

Jesus is the reason for the season ... but Jesus is not just for Christmas, He's for **your** life! Will the Christ-child be integral to your celebrations this year?

Oh, by the way ... Happy Christmas (when it comes).

May God bless you,

Mark Smith

SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2017 - MAJOR GORDON COMMEMORATION DAY

Together with the National Trust for Scotland and the Irish Guards, St Ninian's remembered the generosity of Alan Gordon of Threave with a special day of events, 60 years after his death in 1957.

There was an exhibition about Major Gordon's life, and a talk about the creation of Threave Gardens, at NTS Threave Visitor Centre in the afternoon followed at St Ninian's by three short talks on aspects of his life: Amanda Herries on his family and involvement with Threave, Colonel Sir William Mahon LVO on his distinguished service in the Irish Guards during WW1 and Patrick Little on his involvement and commitment to St Ninian's Church (see the following article). There was a one-minute silence and then a wreath was laid at his memorial in the Chancel.

Then followed a Service of Choral Evensong, sung by members of the choir of St John's, Dumfries, attended by Rt Revd Gregor Duncan and at which the Officiant was Revd Christopher Wren. The celebrations ended with a wine reception and canapés in the Gordon Memorial Hall.

MAJOR GORDON AND ST NINIAN'S



Major Alan Gordon (Photo courtesy of the NTS)

Major Alan Gordon's extraordinary generosity has transformed St Ninian's Church: any visitor to our beautifully-kept Church building and the excellent, well-appointed Hall can see that. It is also down to Alan Gordon that we are able to use our relatively comfortable financial position to help other churches in the region (as Alan Gordon intended) and to support charities

locally, nationally and around the world. I hope he would approve of the efforts made by past Rectors and past and present members of the Vestry to steward the Endowment Fund he created, and to ensure the future of the Episcopal Church in Galloway.

But today I do not wish to focus on what Major Gordon gave us after his death – rather on his faithful service to this church and its congregation during his life, by looking at his role as Vestry Secretary in the decade before his death in 1957. To this end I went truffling through the relevant volume of Vestry minutes. Alan Gordon was a reserved, private man, but these records reveal another side of him, as a wise counsellor to the congregation, and a man of considerable foresight. It is also odd how many of the issues of sixty plus years ago have resonances for our congregation today.

Major Gordon became Vestry Secretary in March 1947, and soon made his presence felt. In the same year, when the search was on for a new Rector, he proposed selling the Rectory building – which was at the other end of Abercromby Road, and thus very inconvenient – and buying instead a fine house known as Belleview, at 68 St Andrew Street. The change did not happen at this time – the owner refused to sell – but that very building later became our Rectory, and still is.

In August 1948 Major Gordon began to press for a larger salary to be raised for the Rector, describing the current amount as ‘quite inadequate’, and there was even talk of amalgamating St Ninian’s with St Margaret’s in New Galloway. In 1955 Alan Gordon addressed the continuing financial problems of the church in two very practical ways: by offering to open his gardens at Threave to the public, the proceeds going to the church, and by urging his fellow Vestry members to think up ways to raise more funds for the Rector’s salary, which, he said, still ‘compared extremely unfavourably with many other people in Castle Douglas with no responsibility’ – in other words, those of independent means. As a result, a programme of fund-raising events – bring and buy, sales of produce and flowers, sales of game, teas, ‘cakes and candy’ and a White Elephant stall. Alan Gordon was less enthusiastic about the new-fangled ‘freewill offering’ promoted by the diocese as a modern alternative to pew rents, and according to a note on the envelope, he point-blank refused to read a long, hectoring letter from one of the diocesan officials.

In the meantime, society was changing fast, and Major Gordon was not against embracing this change if it guaranteed the future of the church. In February 1951, for example, he was present at the special meeting that

agreed to allow ladies to be members of the Vestry – interestingly that meeting was chaired by Captain Keith Murray of Parton, as the Rector of the time found himself indisposed! One of the first lady members was the major's gardening friend, Mrs Phinn.

Repairs and rebuilding were a constant source of concern. In 1952 and 1953 there were lengthy discussions about the removal of the spire. Major Gordon recorded everything faithfully, and intervened when necessary, to ensure that 'an alternative simplified structure' was put in its place. The resulting tower is the one that can be seen today.

Other issues caused difficulties in 1956, including the need to cover services at Christ Church Dalbeattie 'in the absence of a permanent Rector being appointed'. Alan Gordon was also concerned to allow memorials to past worshippers in the church – new plaques and monuments had been banned by the diocese in 1951 – and in December 1956 he suggested the panelling should be extended to go across the front of the arch in the chancel where the organ now stands, and that area used for additional discrete plaques. This did not happen, but it was perhaps appropriate that the major's own memorial is adjacent to the planned extension. Incidentally, when his memorial was erected it was a joint-effort with the NTS and the Irish Guards, who sent representatives to the dedication service, attended by the bishop – so we have been here before.

Major Gordon died on 27 November 1957. At the next meeting of the Vestry, in January, the Rector read a letter from Mrs Williams of Kirkcudbright, 'thanking the members of the Vestry for the wreath which they had sent to her cousin, Major Gordon's, funeral', and a letter from the local solicitors was also read out, indicating that under his will, written on 10 August 1955, a fifth of the residue of the estate had been left to the Church. Once death duties had been paid, the bequest amounted to £25,000 – in today's money somewhere in excess of £2 million. At a stroke, Major Gordon had solved the financial problems that had been his principal worry in his decade as Vestry Secretary. On 1 February 1958, at the Annual General Meeting, the following minute was made:

'The Rector reminded the members of the congregation of the loss to St Ninian's caused by the death of Major Alan Francis Gordon, one of the trustees and for many years Secretary to the Church, and asked that they should stand for a moment's silence, in remembrance of his work.'

Patrick Little

G'day!

I'm writing to you from Melbourne, Australia! I've been travelling now since 11th September and I've quite literally had the time of my life. I arrived in Sydney, visited friends in Canberra (the capital), and then began my travels up the East Coast to Cairns before flying down to Melbourne.

I'm actually flying back to Cairns again to see some people I met on my trip and then back to Sydney ready to fly home. The highlights of my trip have been Byron Bay, Fraser Island, Whitsundays, Magnetic Island and Cairns. In fact ... everything! I could not name my most favourite place.



Smiling through tears, Beth at Heathrow, about to set off on her travels



I've met lots of incredible people on my trip most specifically, my two new, special friends, Sophie and Georgia. Thankfully I haven't been homesick but I am very excited to be coming home for Christmas.



I look forward to seeing you all then and sharing all my stories with you.

Beth MacQuarrie

CHANGED TIMES

Last month the Lonely Planet travel guide named Belfast and the Causeway Coast in Northern Ireland as its Best Region to visit in 2018. Not the Best Region in the UK but the Best Region in the *World*, no less. Yes, I know, hard to believe. Even native Ulsterfolk parodied this unexpected accolade on social media, declaring that hospitals were bracing themselves for a massive outbreak of “Underwhelmed Tourist Syndrome.”



I grew up in Northern Ireland during the 1980s and 90s when things were a wee bit different. Certainly recommendations like the one above were non-existent or at best few and far between. It left me reflecting on how much had changed since then.

The Northern Ireland Troubles, as they were known, spanned 30 years from 1968 to 1998 and cost over 3600 lives, left over 50,000 people physically injured, and many more affected psychologically. Until I left for Glasgow University at the age of eighteen they were part and parcel of my childhood and adolescence.

I always thought I had a normal childhood growing up in Northern Ireland. But what is ‘normal’? If you don’t know any different then I guess everything is normal, or is it? Loving family, primary and secondary education, football with jumpers as goalposts, climbing trees, damming streams, fights, scrapes, bumps and falls, all normal. Cinema, TV, mini-rugby, Youth Club, Church on a Sunday, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, all normal. Bomb scares, security check points, Army patrols outside Gran’s, Chinooks, Police Land Rovers, riots, petrol bombs and sectarian murders all part of normal life. Hang on a minute, are you telling me your local Police Station didn’t look like the proverbial Fort Knox?

Of course, now I realise those last things were not part of everyday life in the rest of the UK and to be fair the majority of those things weren’t part of my daily life either. They were just there. Sometimes in the background, sometimes in your face.

I was probably very fortunate in both time and place. I grew up in Ballymena in County Antrim, 26 miles north of Belfast on the road to the Causeway Coast. I was going to describe it as a town relatively lightly affected by the Troubles but, when I was a one year-old the, IRA blew up the town centre and then when I was at Primary School they bombed the police station. Obviously the first incident I don’t remember and the second only registers with a Primary School child for a nano-second before thoughts inevitably turn

to who is going to be “it” in the game of tig. So Ballymena wasn’t untouched but it wasn’t affected like Belfast, which is my parents’ hometown. They were both working in the City Centre on Bloody Friday in July 1972 when the IRA exploded 19 bombs in just over an hour. It was a pretty terrifying experience for them so, when Dad got a job in Ballymena, I think they thought it might be a bit safer. And it was .



Rory on the beach on the Causeway coast

I was very fortunate to have a happy childhood growing up In Ballymena. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Gracehill Primary School which is located in Gracehill Moravian Village and whose old Georgian era school building featured in BBC’s Restoration TV programme in 2006. After that I continued my education at Ballymena Academy. In fact one of my most traumatic childhood memories doesn’t relate to any terror related atrocity but to the 11-Plus Exam which needed to be taken to be admitted to the school! I played Rugby Union all through school and dreamt of playing for Ireland like Old Pupils Willie John McBride, Syd Millar and David Humphreys. I still dream of playing for Ireland but more sensibly from the comfort of my armchair. I also competed for Ballymena and Antrim Athletic Club for many years. Both these sports provided me with the opportunity to travel throughout Ireland and further afield and make friendships which continue to this day. Fortunately the security situation

hindered none of these experiences The terrorist threat was always there and you had to be careful, but it didn't stop us enjoying ourselves. I guess you just adapt to your environment and get on with things. Much like the people of London and Manchester after the terror attacks earlier this year.

One thing visitors to Belfast won't have to contend with nowadays are the security gates at the entrance to Royal Avenue, one of the main shopping areas. They were like a cross between airport security and football turnstiles and were an attempt to protect the City Centre from bombings. Not ideal for retail trade but better than no shops at all.



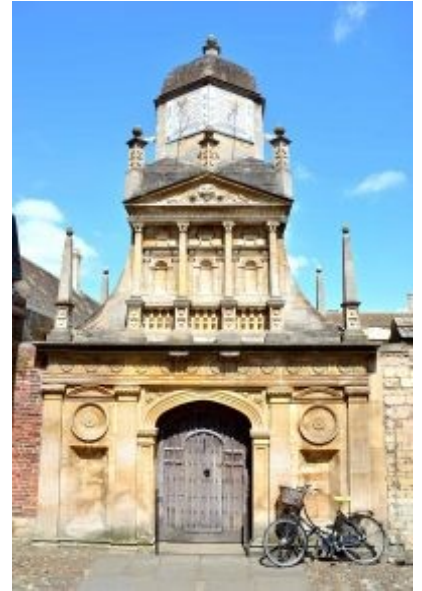
Northern Ireland , and Belfast in particular, has changed so much since the end of the Troubles. There are so many things to see and do but don't take my word for it. Go see for yourself. You can even get the bus from Castle Douglas!

Peter McCormick

FIRST IMPRESSIONS FROM PETER LITTLE AT CAMBRIDGE



I went up to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, this autumn, and at the end of my first term I definitely feel I am a proper 'Caian'! Caius was originally founded in 1348 by Edmund Gonville, and it was re-founded in the mid-sixteenth century by Dr John Caius, an alumnus of the college, who spent lots of money rebuilding it. The old courts, in the middle of town, date from this time. They include the chapel and dining hall, and also the three gates of Humility, Virtue and Honour. The Gate of Honour is the college's most famous landmark. My room this year is in the modern Harvey Court, a short walk across the Backs, but I hope to have rooms in the old courts in my second or third year.



The Gate of Honour

Caius is one of 31 colleges that make up the University. It has about 560 undergraduates studying all kinds of subjects: my friends include medics and engineers and music students. I am one of only two veterinary undergraduates in my year at Caius, but I am getting to know plenty of others through the department.

Cambridge terms are famously short – 'Full Term', when all the teaching takes place, is only eight weeks – but a huge amount is packed into that time. I have about three lectures a day, along with 3-4 practical sessions and four supervisions a week, and with those and all the extra reading and preparation, I'm kept pretty busy Monday to Friday. I do have time to do other activities, and thankfully many of those happen at the weekends. I play the violin in the college orchestra, and go to chapel on Sunday, where I have already been roped in to do readings and potentially become chapel clerk. I have taken up small-bore rifle shooting and go out beagling on Saturday afternoons.

I am having tremendous fun, but it is very tiring and I am looking forward to coming home to have a rest. Unfortunately I have exams in January, so there will be lots of revision to do too. Thank you again to all at St Ninian's for giving me some money towards my studies. I look forward to seeing you in December.

Peter Little



Katie and Lucy

THE HARVEST SUPPER NO.2

Once again, this year, the Harvest Supper was a very good evening. To begin with we ate lots of posh little nibbles, which made me feel very, very hungry. While we were eating and drinking nice drink, Euan and Jack were selling raffle tickets. They actually had to go to buy another book! Then we all sat down and NOW here comes the really interesting bit.

The Food! The food was amazing! For mains you could get pigeon casserole, or was it... lamb? Anyway it was delicious either way. There was also a vegetarian option. The desserts were also amazing. I have got to be honest, there were too many to count. If you can remember them all give yourself a pat on the back. The raffle was great and there were loads of prizes. It was such a fun evening and there was lots of chat and laughter.

A very big thank you to the McQuarrie and the Little families for organising such a wonderful night.

Katie {Katherine} Eddyshaw

Thanks to Jenny Armstrong for all photos taken at the supper



Euan and Jack



Patrick and Ian



Janet and Margot



Chief cooks: Rosie and Susanne



Chief waiter: Michael



Alan and Judi, with Joy



Thelma and Gill



Marjorie, Jenny and Liz



Niamh - the youngest!

**WORLD WAR ONE - 1914-1918:
HAVE YOU A FAMILY STORY THAT YOU
COULD SHARE?**



In 2014 I began to compile a book of stories to commemorate and remember those who served in the Great War. I started with collecting stories from members of Christ Church, Dalbeattie; then decided it would be good to request stories from our sister church at St Ninian's, Castle Douglas as well. I had planned to have the book ready before Canon Bayne retired. However, I soon realised that it would be more appropriate to have the book ready for the beginning of November 2018. To date I have nearly 30 stories.

I now wish to extend this request to other churches in the area. If you have a story or two or more to share I would be delighted to hear from you. No story will be published until the story-teller is absolutely satisfied with the finished article. It can take at least four or five drafts as once an article is started other memories are remembered. The **cut-off date** for new stories is **the end of April 2018**. Then the final editing begins ...

I can be contacted by email: murielpalmerww1@gmail.com;
post: 5 Hestan Burn, Rockcliffe, Dalbeattie, DG5 4XL
or telephone: 01556 630314.

All profits from the sale of the book are to be donated to **Erskine** (SC006609). **Erskine** has cared for Veterans since 1916. They are Scotland's foremost provider of care and offer unrivalled nursing and residential, respite and dementia care for UK Veterans and their spouses. Visit their website www.erskine.org.uk for more information about the charity.

Muriel Palmer

DURING THE VACANCY OUR INTERIM PRIEST, THE REVD STEPHEN HAZLETT
is responsible for arranging any weddings, baptisms and funerals,
as well as for hospital visits and any emergencies
Tel: 01557 620132, Mob: 07900 231360
Email: stephen.hazlett@greyfriarsstmarys.org.uk

SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

David Bradwell, refugee co-ordinator for Scottish Churches Action for Refugees, was the speaker at the September Theological Reflection Meeting held in Dalbeattie.

FROM LAMPEDUSA DAVID BRADWELL REFLECTS ON BORDERS AND REFUGEES

David Bradwell visited Lampedusa, Italy to take part in a Protestant churches conference on borders and to attend a service commemorating the thousands of people drowned in the Mediterranean while trying to reach safety. Working together ecumenically with him at Lampedusa were Fiona Kendall, for the World Mission Council, Christine Elliott, director of World Church Programmes for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and Joshua Ralston, lecturer in Muslim-Christian Relations at New College, University of Edinburgh. This is his report, sent on 5 October 2017.



The first thing I noticed about Lampedusa was the presence of uniforms. At the airport there was a military honour guard waiting to receive the Italian Interior minister. In the café where we had lunch yesterday four French helicopter crew in their jumpsuits sat at the table next to ours. As we left a team from the fire brigade came in.

I've seen more police around the island than I would have expected for a tiny community of just a few thousand inhabitants. They are a reminder that Lampedusa, a tiny speck of land 3km wide and 11km long, is now caught up in the vortex of global forces which are driving displacement.

The island is situated some 70km from Africa; as an Italian possession it is the goal for many of the people seeking freedom from war and persecution from countries across Africa and the Middle East.

I am here for a conference that has been organised by Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI), the Church of Scotland's partner church in the country.

Where cultures meet

The theme of the conference is 'Living and Witnessing the Border' and has

taken place in Palermo for the past few days. Sicily is at the centre of the Mediterranean, itself a sea that links three continents. For many centuries Sicily has been a place of the border, where cultures and people meet - from North, South, East and West. Etruscans, Greeks, Normans, Spanish - and many others. The border was not a barrier but a place of exchange. A meeting place where diversity is an everyday reality of life.

Today the border has become a barrier, a wall which has a purpose to keep people out. This is despite our belief in human rights and protection for those in need - instead of offering protection and welcome to the stranger we live in a Fortress Europe; where the benefits of free movement and free markets are granted only to those already inside the borders. For the suffering of people outside, they risk everything to make the journey.

Last night we attended an ecumenical service in the church in Lampedusa's main town. This service was a commemoration of the massacre of more than 360 people on 3 October 2013. A boat carrying around 500 people got into difficulty less than a quarter of a mile from the coast of Lampedusa, and hundreds died.

We remembered the dead and the reasons why they and so many other thousands have died trying to cross borders all around the world. These deaths are the consequence of selfishness, richness, so-called 'security', militarisation, exploitation, slavery, human trafficking. What price do we pay for a human life? What price do we pay for human dignity?

We have heard moving stories of people who have crossed the sea. We have heard from a Church pastor from Arizona, USA, who works a few miles from the Mexican border to provide water and aid to people fleeing from misery and suffering in the hope for life. And we have heard of the work of the FCEI, which through its programme Mediterranean Hope and with a partnership with the Sant' Edigio Community, has successfully established a Humanitarian Corridor, which sees vulnerable people being brought safely to Italy where they are supported and helped by local church groups.

This is an antidote to all the fear and distrust in the world. We hear that similar schemes are now being developed in France and it remains my prayer that the response of the Church remains steadfast and committed to human life, and that by our witness we can transform the lives of many and be a beacon to the world for goodness and justice.

Sent in by Jill Russell, Bothwell House

BISHOP GREGOR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

November 21, 2017



We're all familiar with slogans, mottoes, catchphrases, strap lines, by which institutions or political parties or campaigning groups like to promote themselves, their claims, their values among the rest of us. Some of them may strike us as important and even challenging – I certainly, for example, find that to be true of Christian Aid's strap line, *we believe in life before death*. And I've always loved the motto of the University of Oxford, where I studied for my degree in theology: *Dominus illuminatio mea, the Lord is my light*.

Well, I think that the word *flesh* was a kind of strapline for the Christian communities among which the Gospel of St John came to be written, say, in the second half of the first century CE. The most celebrated use of it we hear proclaimed in the gospel every year at Midnight Mass: *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*. But we also find it in the letters of St John, closely related to the Gospel, where it is said that true believers always confess that Jesus Christ came *in the flesh*. Indeed so important was this little word *flesh* to these Johannine Christians that they went so far as to claim that those who would not say that Jesus came in the flesh were Antichrist, just about the worst thing you *could* say about anyone, from a Christian point of view, right up to the present day.

The thing is, though, that this coming in the flesh isn't just important to St John's Christian communities. It's not just a matter of what they thought all those centuries ago. Not at all. It has remained of absolutely fundamental importance to all Christian people ever since and is at the very heart of our Christmas celebrations, every year, which is why traditionally the reader of the gospel makes a deep bow at these words and why people used to kneel for the words *and was made man* in the Creed. Really, Christmas simply isn't conceivable, isn't possible without St John's joyous affirmation that *God the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*.

Why is that so? Why should such a small word matter so very much? Well, for St John and his communities of Christians *flesh* was important because it meant to them our human life, so that when he says that God becomes flesh he wants us to understand that in Jesus Christ God lives out our human life from the inside. We call this the Incarnation, God with a skin if you like, and it's

what Christmas is all about. God so loves us, so wants us to make the most of the lives given us, by drawing us to God's own life, that it is a case of becoming God with us, God one of us, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. God wants to be as close to us as possible and that means beginning life as we do, utterly dependent on other people. Not God commanding us from afar with overwhelming power, but in our midst loving us in the weakness and vulnerability of a human child. This is how much God loves us fleshly human beings and, as the divine life among us unfolds, we know the cost of that love, the height, the depth, the self-giving of that love.

As we celebrate once more that immense love God has for us and for the whole world, we must know ourselves called to love God in return. And a big part of *that* is to love ourselves and all around us because we are all loved so much by God and so precious to God.

This we are called to do in and for a world that can often seem very far away from love, life and hope. We see so much hatred, so much holding of human life not as precious but as cheap and insignificant, so much torn and wounded and abused flesh, so many shattered lives, so much cruelty, so much indifference to suffering, so much pitiless killing of the innocent. Christmas is not about escaping from all of that. Apart from anything else it is all anyhow embedded in our Christmas celebration as it unfolds – after all, on the second day of Christmas we find ourselves commemorating the terrible stoning to death of St Stephen and then two days later the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem at Herod's command.

The thing is, of course, that the Word made flesh, Jesus himself, from the very start of his life among us, as his family fled for their lives as refugees into Egypt, faced in the world he loved the same lovelessness and cruelty that we face. He knows what that's like and He is with us in our Christmas celebration and throughout our lives to encourage us always to keep faith, to hold to love, and goodness and truth and beauty, to hold to *God's* vision of the preciousness of all God's children, whose flesh God shares, whose lives God cherishes and whose love God desires, always and for ever.

I wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas.

+Gregor



ANOTHER CHRISTMAS

by Sheila MacKenzie

There is no snow on the ground,
No comfortless comfortable stable,
No ox and ass snuffling the hay;
Only a barren landscape
And a plastic sheet pegged out against the wind.

All that is left of a family here
Is a wide-eyed girl clasping her new-born
And an old man, helpless to help.
“Water,” they cry, “Something, anything to eat.”

Where are the shepherds?
Where are the wise men?
They’re lost in the legend of a Christmas past.
But a truck comes rattling through the campsite,
With cargo more precious than gold and incense;
Food, vitamin-rich, to ease the hunger,
A blanket to warm the sleepless child.

The princes of the Western World
Toss out their bounty and drive on;
But the child will flourish,
Grow to manhood,
Struggle again to bring the message
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

“ESCAPED AS A BIRD”
Verses from a Japanese Leprosy Hospital

On the theme from Psalm 124 vs.7;

“Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers;
the snare is broken, and we are escaped.”

Bearing reproach and shame,
Suffering pain and loss,
My soul undaunted still shall march
Holding aloft the Cross *(Hayashi)*

When I would pray,
“Lord, take the thorn away,”
Clearly there comes to me
A vision of His cross! *(Mumei)*

I wander to a little pine clad hill
Above the sea
For prayer;
And every dawn I find a nightingale
Is singing there. *(Mumei)*

Why should my pathway seem
A desert stark and dry,
When all around the hills of God
Are glorious in the sky? *(Takamoto)*

I saw the miracle the snow had wrought,
The white world shining silent here below,
And in my heart I prayed again to God,
“Lord, make me whiter, even, than the snow.” *(Nagata)*

I do not fear to tread the road
I cannot see
Because the hand of One-Who-Loves
Is leading me *(Nagata)*



***From a little book brought to the Saturday Bible Study Group
by Joy Margerison***

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

For many years we have been fascinated by this carol. Having 'googled' the carol we were interested to learn that modern folklore claims that the lyrics were written as a "catechism song". There is no substantive proof for this claim. However, regardless of the origin of this idea, many Christians give the following meanings to the gifts.

GIFT		INTERPRETATION
A partridge in a pear tree	.....	Jesus
Two turtle doves	.....	The Old and New Testaments
Three French hens	.....	The three theological virtues faith, hope and love
Four calling birds	.....	The Four Gospels
Five gold rings	.....	The Torah or Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament
Six geese a-laying	.....	The six days of creation
Seven swans a-swimming	.....	Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
Eight maids a-milking	.....	The eight Beatitudes
Nine ladies dancing	.....	Nine fruits of the Holy Spirit
Ten lords a-leaping	.....	The Ten Commandments
Eleven pipers piping	.....	The eleven faithful Apostles
Twelve drummers drumming	.....	The twelve points of the Apostles' Creed

Muriel & Nicholas Palmer

THE IMPORTANCE OF A HUG

My wee rescue cat comes, every night, for a little cuddle. She isn't a lap cat or even a cat which sits near you, but, every night, before I go to sleep, she comes for a snuggle on my shoulder. It got me thinking about the importance of giving and receiving a hug or a loving touch. I come from a family who didn't hug and married into one who do.

It took me a long time to get used to being given a hug of welcome and another of farewell but now I would really miss it. How many people do we know who live alone and rarely feel that loving touch? We read that Jesus often healed with a touch. Might we be able to help heal someone's loneliness with a touch too ?

Judi Rumble

The following is copied from a 1982 church magazine of Bexleyheath, Kent and was part of an article promoting the Bible Reading Fellowship

THE WAY IN

- ♦ Pick up anything that may happen to be available – a spoon, a tennis racket, a bottle of beer. You can weigh, measure and analyse; you can describe the thing, but you won't have said anything important about it unless you say what the thing is for;
- ♦ It's the same with the Bible. We may know what's in it and how the pieces came together; we may be able to set it in history, to analyse it, but the essential question is still: **What is it for?**
- ♦ The Bible introduces us to the idea of talking with God and listening to Him, and gets us involved in this conversation.
- ♦ It describes how the God-mankind conversation works, and shows us how to improve it.
- ♦ It challenges us to be people of action in God's world.
- ♦ The Bible helps us to cope with whatever may happen to us as we live our lives for God and other people.

From Jenny Armstrong



FROM THE REGISTERS

Wedding:

9 September Leanne Hamilton and Robert Ross

Baptism:

15 October Robbie Mark Wilson

Funerals:

9 October Maurice Till

31 October Arthur Aitchison

EARLY SERVICES AT ST NINIAN'S IN THE NEW YEAR

(December's services are listed on the inside front cover of this magazine)

There will be 8.30am services on Sunday mornings on **only** the following dates:

14 / 28 January

11 / 25 February

11 / 25 March

Details of all services at St Ninian's will be given in the weekly pew sheets and on the website: <http://stninianscastledouglas.org.uk/service-times/>

ST NINIAN'S REVIEW - Spring 2018

If you have anything you would like to contribute to the next edition of "The Review" it would be most welcome.

Please give or send it to Stephanie by mid-March.

The deadline will be published in the weekly notices nearer the time.

Email: s.dewhurst23@gmail.com or phone: 01556 502736.

Current and recent editions of the Review can also be read on the St Ninian's website: stninianscastledouglas.org.uk/st-ninians-review/

If for any reason you are unable to get to a Service at St Ninian's, the current notices are also published on the News page of the website.

ST NINIAN'S WEBSITE can be found at: stninianscastledouglas.org.uk/

WHO'S WHO

Interim Priest	: The Revd Stephen Hazlett	01557 620132
Lay Readers	: Mr Douglas Allison	504279
	: Mr Alan Rumble	01644 420250
Lay Worship Leader / Pastoral Assistant	: Mrs Jenny Wright	01557-339081
Methodist Associate	: Revd Joy Margerison	505476
Hon Secretary	: Mr Patrick Little	690507
Hon Treasurer / Freewill Offerings Convenor	: Mr Fred Coulthard	502965
Property Convenor	: Mr Ian MacQuarrie	01557-820530
Lay Representative	: Mrs Jenny Wright	01557-339081
Alternate Lay Representative	: Mrs Ann Gault	502253
Vestry Members	: Hon Treasurer (Chair)	
	: Hon Secretary	
	: Property Convenor	
	: Lay Representative	
	: Alt Lay Representative	
Elected Vestry Members	: Mrs Sue Beddows	670286
	: Mrs Stephanie Dewhurst	502736
	: Miss Sheila MacKenzie	01644-420623
	: Revd Joy Margerison	505476
	: Mr David Stevens	503589
Organ Scholar	: Michael Little	
Sanctuary Guild Convenor	: Mrs Val Davies	502750
Co-ordinator for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups	: Miss Sheila MacKenzie	01644-420623
MU Branch Leader	: Mrs Sue Beddows	670286
Administrator / Hall Bookings / Magazine & Website Editor	: Mrs Stephanie Dewhurst	502736
Magazine Distribution / Traidcraft	: Mr John Dewhurst	502736
Sunday School Leaders	: {Mrs Rosie MacQuarrie	01557-820530
	: {Mrs Ann Gault	502253
Little Fishes	: Mrs Roz Stevens	503589