

**St Margaret's
Scottish Episcopal Church
Magazine**
30p

**Christmas issue
December 2010 - January 2011**



.....and a little child shall lead them (Isaiah 11.6)



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A warm welcome to St Margaret's

Should you wish to speak to the Rector, he is regularly available at the Church on Wednesdays between 6 and 7pm (if the church does not appear to be open, please ring the bell at the left side of the small door to the left of the main West door). Otherwise he can be contacted on 0141 632 3292.

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Pastoral letter



Christmas is a time that can bring out the best and the worst in us. I know that I'm meant to provide appropriately uplifting material for the Yuletide season but the truth is that Christmas can be and very often is a stressful time for people. Leaving aside the obvious stress of materialistic pressure bearing down on parents to get this or that for the kids, there is the pressure that family life brings in and of itself. Being at close quarters with one's relatives for an extended period of time can, of course, be joyous, but it can also be quietly, insidiously poisonous. Where and how does that come about? Peace and goodwill to all? One would like to think so, but peace can seem at quite a distance as the Yuletide season gets in full swing.

I do not (despite what my family might tell you!) want to appear like good old Ebenezer Scrooge and put a dampener on your Christmas experience. By all means have a happy Christmas!! All I am saying is that Christmas brings its own pressures and I wonder what that says about us.

For me, I think it says that Christmas has a tendency to expose our lack of peace. I think it says to me that I can't manufacture peace of mind. I can't turn on Mary Poppins (again!!!) and believe that this televisual feast will make everything all right. (On second thoughts, turning *off* Mary Poppins may do the trick!) Seriously, there can be no artificial solution to the perennial request that most sane people have at this time of year, and that is, indeed, for peace. Peace in our world and, more importantly, peace in our hearts.

Everyone wants peace. But the evidence seems to show that, for many of us, even at this time of peace and goodwill, we have yet to get hold of that particular present. It can't be manufactured, it can't be bought, it can't be turned on like the latest flat screen 3D TV (No, you're not getting one, Stephen!) Peace has to be found. And if it is to be found we must seek. And where must we seek? We must seek outside the box.

Think of the child who receives her present on Christmas morning. Her parents have taken great care to choose just the right gift, and there it is under the tree in all its glory. The little one sees the brightly coloured paper and eagerly rips it off the huge box. She struggles but eventually opens the box. She peers inside and then slowly takes out the present. And then she puts it to one side and starts joyously playing with the box.

That, for me, is an image of where peace can be found. It may not be where you would immediately expect it. It may be found in something extremely simple and unassuming. It may be outside the box.



For peace is found in the unconventional. It's a bit like God's arrival that first Christmas. Nothing expected about that. And yet we claim, and rightly, that it was on that night the angels proclaimed: 'Peace on earth and goodwill to all!'

So may you find peace in unexpected places this Christmas.

Scott

Reading Group



The first meeting of the Reading Group will be on Wednesday 9th February at 7.30pm. The novel that we will be looking at is *Easter* by Michael Arditti (available from Amazon at around £5). Nearer the time, we will determine where we will be meeting. In the meantime, let me know if you want to be part of the group.

Scott

Church Register

Baptism

7 November

Ben James Robertson,
son of Chris and Christine,
grandson of Fiona McCracken



In Memoriam

Liuda George, died 12 December 2009

Far round the world.....

.....reflections on S(e)oul Music, faith and sharing



Earlier this year, I travelled to South Korea to direct a new musical (performed in Korean), entitled “A Bungee Jump Of Their Own”, about a couple who love each other, but then things go awry. Three years previously, I had gone there to direct Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd*. Both of these journeys were intense and emotional experiences, involving long hours and few opportunities to see the sights. Almost every discussion I had required a translator. In addition, contact with my family was limited to conversation via the computer screen. But these trips were also amazing opportunities that offered me a new perspective on my daily life and my own beliefs.

There were numerous surface differences between life in Seoul and Glasgow – made apparent every morning as I took off my shoes at the door of the rehearsal room and began to work in bare feet. For instance, while we were rehearsing a scene in which a husband returned home from work, I suggested that he kiss his wife as they greeted each other. But it was explained to me that this would look very odd to Koreans; indeed, it would be clear to the audience that the production had been directed by a foreigner.

Of course, determining profound differences between cultures from such details can be dangerous, as you run the risk of drawing simplistic conclusions. And there was nothing cold or distant about the Koreans I worked with. Theatre thrives on a desire to work towards a common goal, and the generous spirit that permeated through the company made this goal possible. Mealtimes were central, communal parts of the day, with people often grouped on long tables, picking food out of the same bowls. In one restaurant they literally slid an entire tabletop, teeming with dishes, off a huge trolley and placed it in front of us.

The sense of sharing in a united purpose was most apparent during the World Cup. The sea of red shirts that flooded Seoul with national pride was unlike anything I have experienced elsewhere. There was also disappointment when North Korea lost; despite the continuing tension and suspicion on both sides of the border, people in Seoul wanted to see all Koreans triumph (such underlying brotherhood surely would be unthinkable here!).

In Korea there appears to be a profound sense that there is something greater and nobler than individual aspiration. No doubt this infuses most family homes, but it also seems to extend to people's attitude towards their religion. I was often asked, "Are you a Christian?" by people who were proud to declare their faith. And such certainty provided one of the most intimate moments I encountered, when one cast member, preparing for his wedding, found a quiet corner of the rehearsal room and buried himself in a miniature Bible. I sensed that that he wasn't simply reading the words; he was reaching into them and forging a connection that he could carry with him to the next stage of his life.

Here then, surely, is a challenge to us in the West to rediscover that sense of certainty in our faith, and that deep-rooted sense of togetherness and fellowship in the bonds of family, community, country and beyond.

Adrian Osmond

Angels from the realms of Glory...

Raphael: Well, Uriel, what do you make of your latest posting?

Uriel: It's certainly different, Raphael; what about yours?

Raphael: Cold, and light years from anywhere. Each of the angels in my legion has to cover vastly more than when I was on duty at your place, which is not surprising as the diameter of this planet is 10 times greater.



Uriel: Well, actually, I think I've got the short straw now; there are so many problems here.

Raphael: What do you mean? I can't see life being much worse than here on Jupiter; it's a vast planet far out into the solar system which means that we take 12 years to go round the Sun. So that means spring lasts 3 earth years, as do summer, autumn and winter. I don't know how I'll cope. And yet it spins round on its own axis so fast that a day lasts for only 10 Earth hours. I think I'll have to get into the habit of working one day and sleeping the next. I don't know what you're worrying about; it should be a doddle looking after life on earth.

Uriel: It's not so much the physical side of life on Earth. It's a great place with 24 hour days, 4 seasons each of 3 months a year and an amazing varieties of creatures, landscapes, sea scapes, climate and geography. The Boss has done a really good job. The only problem is the people.

Raphael: Yes; I've heard that they're a pretty awkward lot.

Uriel: Too true! They really are impossible, capable of so much that is good and noble, but also selfish, grasping, rude, belligerent, uncaring, foul mouthed, violent, brutal, always trying to find ways round the guidelines the Boss has set, out for a quick buck and completely oblivious to how they treat

the planet. Once upon a time the Boss nearly gave up on them and sent a flood to get rid of them; he salvaged a few, hoping that things would be better second time around.

Raphael:but they messed up, didn't they? I seem to recall that there was a catalogue of disasters – overweening arrogance at the tower of Babel, dysfunctional families and general chaos right down through history...

Uriel: Yes, and here we are with the world in a complete m e s s , ruled by Rome with a rod of iron, armies marching to and fro, leaders with egos the size of the planet. Goodness knows what state the place will be in after another 2000 years; I'll be surprised if there's much of it left. What in the Universe can be done?

Raphael: I've heard at HQ that the Boss has really been racking his brains and that there's something big afoot, a Plan B, utterly radical, something which will turn the world upside down.... codenamed Bethlehem, they say. D Day is very soon... any day now....

Uriel: But can it really work? We who told creation's story...

Raphael: ...might one day be able to bring some good news... only time will tell...

(Fragment of conversation downloaded from AngelTube by Jim Gibson)

Thank you for the music

Thank you Michael for organising a variety of superb musical events in November—the Sunday concert with Tamas Fejes, the choral evensong, the Glasgow Chamber Choir concert and the musical evening with violinist David Smith.



All were superbly performed. Tamas played with verve and passion, the evensong radiated peace and quiet reflection, the church was well filled for the Chamber choir's concert when the whole building rang to the power of the music, and David's virtuosic violin pulsed prodigious effervescent energy. St Margaret's is the place for music! *(Ed)*

A Time to Remember

Our Service this year, organised by the Pastoral Care Group, took place on Saturday 30 October on a beautiful crisp, sunny Autumn afternoon. Just under 50 people attended this year – the numbers have gradually crept up since our first Service 3 years ago. Some St Margaret members attended, but many also came from various other Churches around Glasgow – some even came from Ayr, Hamilton, Strathaven and Milton of Campsie. Word seems to be getting around!



Our theme was ‘Winter and Spring’ and after bringing out cards with our loved ones’ names on them and hanging them on our ‘Remembrance Tree’, we took away a little plant-pot with spring bulbs in it. We were invited to watch these grow and so to remember not only our loved ones but also those who shared in the Service with us.

The Service lasted only 30 minutes but we experienced a very tangible sense of calm and peace with the Holy Spirit in our midst. Tears were quietly shed but these too were truly a Gift of God’s Grace and healing. One letter which we received said, ‘All of you who presented and organised it are to be warmly congratulated! The flowers, candles and music complemented the tranquil atmosphere and sensitive content of the service. Please thank all involved, not least for the welcoming tea afterwards.’ Scott and Paul attended and mingled and chatted with many people who stayed for coffee and delightful ‘home baking’ in the Hall. Some who had been reluctant to join us for ‘refreshments’ after our first Service now eagerly look forward to this time when they can meet, and converse with others they now regard as friends and fellow travellers through their journey of grief.

For those who attend it, this Service seems to meet a need and is helpful and therapeutic. It seems that it is now a well and truly established item in our Annual Church calendar.

Eileen Smith

Christmas Services at the Victoria Infirmary

Eileen also reminds us that volunteers are required for:

Sunday 12 December—Carol Service at Café Fleure (Level E) 5.30 for 6

Thursday 23 December—Carol Singing round wards 5.30 for 6

Please speak to Eileen if you can help at either of these services.

Calendar of events..... December

- Wed 1st Rector's Hour at the church 6pm
- Sun 5th Advent 2
Evensong 6.30pm
- Tues 7th Holy Communion 10am
- Wed 8th Rector's Hour at the church 6pm
- Sun 12th Advent 3
Second Sunday Concert in the Church 3.30pm
Words and Music for Advent 6.30pm
- Tues 14th Holy Communion 10am
Housegroup in the Church (Upper Room) 7.30pm
- Wed 15th Rector's Hour at the church 6pm
- Sun 19th Advent 4—All Age Worship
- Tues 21st Holy Communion 10am
- Wed 22nd Rector's Hour at the church 6pm
- Fri 24th Christmas Eve Family Service 8pm
Christmas Eve Midnight Eucharist 11pm
- Sat 25th Said Eucharist 9am
Christmas Day Family Service (Highly informal!) 10.30am
- Sun 26th Christmas 1
- Tues 28th Holy Communion 10am
- Wed 29th Rector's Hour at the church 6pm

For January events, see church bulletin, but please note that there will be NO Rector's Hour on Wednesday 5th January.

AGM Report, 28 November 2010

Enough members braved the snow to make the meeting quorate. The proposed new constitution was approved after debate, and now goes forward for approval by a further congregational meeting and by the Bishop. Reports were submitted in respect of the Lay Representative, Southside Regional Council and Child Protection/Vulnerable Adults, and also by the Rector's Warden and Treasurer (see below).

Nick Rynn and Malcolm Maddox were elected as Vestry members and Eileen Smith as People's Warden, and Scott appointed Jenny Whelan as his Warden.

Scott encouraged us for the work of the year ahead by reminding us that we are all so unique and different, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Mutually dependent on each other, and building on the foundation of love at the centre, we can indeed be the jewel in crown of the South Side.

Financial Report 2009/10

	£	£
Income		
Offerings including tax recovery	75,804	
Hall donations and property income	20,600	
Investment income	18,529	
Legacies	<u>20,000</u>	
		134,933
Expenditure		
Stipend and salaries	48,791	
Quota	17,379	
Property costs	71,176	
Miscellaneous costs	<u>12,828</u>	
		<u>163,579</u>
Deficit		<u>15,241</u>

The financial year to 31 August 2010 was not an easy one for the congrega-

tion. Tom Montgomery moved to Troon, and for 6 months the congregation continued its work with the help of Nicholas Taylor and Paul Romano, and also undertook considerable refurbishment in the Rectory. It is to our credit that the deficit is only in the region of £15,000.

Some of the issues worth noting are:

1. **Income:** This was down from 2009, largely due to some 'one off' large donations not being repeated. Income is still critical and, while thanking warmly those who review their giving on a regular basis, I would invite everyone to consider the fine church community we have and support it as best they can.
2. **Tax reclaim:** This remains a welcome source of income and I would encourage those who do not give under Gift Aid to do so.
3. **Investment income:** This is not as plump a cushion as it once was, and investment income was down by around £4,000. Some modest improvement in the stock market has resulted in an unrealised gain on our portfolio of £28,643 this year. This helps to mitigate the unrealised loss last year of £112,504 but there is some way to go before the portfolio is up to the pre 2009 level.
4. **Hall users:** Income from hall users increased by £600 partly due to a new class run by Ann Rawson which has been successful.
5. **Property costs:** The Rectory required significant work before the Robertson family moved in. This, together with the regular maintenance on the church fabric, amounted to nearly £51,000 but as much of this work was long overdue it will ensure that the property is in good repair for some time into the future. The fabric costs were partially met by a very generous legacy from Marie Howell.
6. **Salary costs:** These are £14,000 lower than in 2009 but this is entirely due to the vacancy and the cost will rise again in 2010.
7. **Second Sunday concerts:** These have continued to be of a very high standard and are popular both with audience and performers. A publicity drive has increased the audience numbers. The financial return has been significant but so has the outreach to the wider public which is also exceedingly important.

8. **Deficit for year:** The deficit for the year is £15,241, which is extremely encouraging considering the difficulties in the year and the amount of fabric maintenance undertaken. The congregation can take heart that our resources are being used well but also bear in mind that costs rarely decrease and therefore we need to ensure that all our funds are used well.
9. **Charitable income disbursements:** In addition to our congregational income, donations of £3,116 were made to various charities.

Maida Gibson

Vestry Report 2009/2010

(edited from fuller version presented at AGM)

Tom Montgomery's departure for Troon brought a mixture of happiness for him and regret for ourselves. After his loving and devoted service to St Margaret's we understand that he is now enjoying his new charge, and we wish him and his new congregation every blessing.

The Vestry, under the convenership of the Rector's Warden, had as its prime task the responsibility of appointing a new Rector. In this it was ably advised and assisted by Dr Nicholas Taylor of St Aidan's, our Assistant Priest Paul Romano and by Dr Gregor Duncan, first as Dean and latterly as Bishop. To all these we express our greatest possible appreciation of the love and care extended to us.

In order to focus our plans and aspirations, Vestry produced an up to date parish profile, which clarified our history and goals. After a careful and prayerful process of interview, discussion and consideration the Vestry unanimously selected Dr Scott Robertson as our new Rector, and we were delighted that he was able to take up his appointment in July, coming with his wife Alison and sons Stephen and Craig to join us at St Margaret's. The Institution was a wonderful celebration of our faith and confidence in him.

During the vacancy the Vestry oversaw the refurbishment and redecoration of the Rectory and necessary Church roof repairs. Of great concern was the realisation of the condition of the Church organ. A group has been formed to report to the Vestry on the precise nature of the problems and to consider solutions, costs and funding. The matters under consideration include repair, refurbishment, renewal and replacement, and in view of the likely expense, the Vestry intends to consult with the congregation on the matter.

The St Margaret's web site and monthly Magazine have been revamped under new editors, and the Sunday School and Youth Group will need to be an area of future focus. Work is being done to address the problem of expenditure exceeding income, and the Vestry has proposed a new Constitution for approval and adoption, in order to comply with new charity legislation.

Since taking charge as Rector Scott has begun to get to know the church and its congregation. He brings with him a wealth of experience in life and of worship within the Episcopal Church, together with a depth and breadth of knowledge and learning, all of which will be part of his gift to us.

Change often brings anxiety and apprehension, and the arrival and establishment of a new Rector is no different. New ideas, new vocabulary, new voices and new faces can sometimes be disconcerting and difficult. Change can be difficult to deal with, but we realise that change is inevitable, and a new perspective may be just what we need to jolt us from what can be a position of staleness, sterility and stagnation. The Vestry is delighted to have Scott as our spiritual and pastoral leader for the exciting journey ahead.

There are changes too in Vestry members and office bearers. Joan Girling demits office as Secretary after many years of loyal, devoted, cheerful and scrupulously efficient service; Linda Fisher, the People's Warden and John Fisher, the Property Convenor, who both have worked tirelessly in many projects but perhaps in particular the refurbishment of the Rectory, have both decided the time is now right to step back. Ron Connor, with his penchant for apposite and helpful comments, and Eileen Smith, whose work in providing loving pastoral care is particularly appreciated, both retire from the Vestry. To these individuals, and to those who are unnamed but who have rendered much devoted service, the Vestry extends its sincere thanks and appreciation.

Finally, the interim (and inherited) Rector's Warden thinks it right that he should stand down, as the Rector must now make up his own team. He does so with a sense of honour and privilege in having had a hand, with so many others, in steering our church through some challenging and even some difficult times. In passing on his baton he does so with complete confidence in St Margaret's happy and healthy future.

Gary Allan

Alzheimers Craft Fair

Our Craft Fair for Alzheimer Scotland raised approximately £1,500, thanks to the generosity of people like yourselves. To say thank you is really inadequate but I will try—to the ladies who donated the delicious home baking (the best in the public’s opinion), and to those who were kept busy serving and selling produce and cards (Gavin is quite a salesman!). In the kitchen, the ladies and Colin ensured that tea coffee and clean crockery was available and that tables were served and cleared promptly. Most craft sales lack such a polished image—what a team!

I am grateful to Scott for his willing participation and to Jan MacDonald for arranging so many things so efficiently. As our hosts it seemed fitting that the quilt was won by Ann Rawson, with Moyna Kennedy also winning a prize—congratulations to both. It was a lively friendly morning which everyone appeared to enjoy. Thanks again for your support and our best wishes for a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Irene Dunbar (Quilters)

Fair-trade news

I was privileged to attend the meeting at St Mary’s cathedral on 5 November, at which Susan Scott from Traidcraft was selling some excellent cut-price jewellery, scarves and other craft items.

However the most interesting part was listening to a presentation marking the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Scotland Malawi cooperation agreement. We heard from Joshua Varela of the smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi, who organised the Malawi rice challenge in which St Margaret’s participated last year, and from Chris Stevens of Dedza Pottery as well as directors from Britain of various development and Trading associations. They were all very open about issues concerning trade and answered many questions from the audience. The main message from Malawi was

“We want Trade not Aid.”

It was also interesting to meet members of other churches all aiding members of their congregations to buy Fair-trade products from a Traidcraft stall, ensuring that all profit goes straight back into the communities of the producers.

Thanks to all who put in special Christmas orders this year. We still have quite a selection of Christmas cards on the stall and if you would like to order anything specific, please contact me direct at liz@bryceassociates.co.uk.

Intercessions

Dear Lord, we place ourselves fully before You, not to brag or manipulate, but simply to be creature with our Creator. May we be like an instrument in Your hands; always available and willing to be picked up and used in whatever way You see fit. May we respond to Your lead with trusting obedience, confident that Your work through us will accomplish what You desire.



We pray for our family and friends, for their health and well being. We pray for our colleagues at work and our classmates at school. Though blessed with a network of people to support us, we still sometimes feel alone, unsupported, unloved. Give us faith not to forget that in our direst need You Lord Jesus stand by us, we have only to reach out for You.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for our church, for Scott, for Paul, for their families. We thank You for their leadership, wisdom and compassion. May they lead us to apply the example of God's love and justice to create the fairest and most uplifting society we can – a truly spiritual community, not one bogged down in worldly struggle.

We pray for those injured or bereaved by inexplicable violence, may Your compassion surround and uphold them. We pray for all those whose lives have been changed by such tragedy, may Your sustaining love be present in all expressions of support offered and help received. Lord, forgive our violence toward each other.

Grant to our leaders mutual respect, restraint in the exercise of power, and the will for peace with justice. Daily remind us that actions which spring from humility and respect for others make for a longer lasting good than those born of power and arrogance. Forgive our violation of Your creation. We run roughshod over the earth, plundering resources, failing to share our wealth with our weaker neighbours. Give us wisdom Lord to see the error of our ways, to change our behaviour and work for a more just and fair world for *all* nations. Help us to remember that others' life and wellbeing depends on the products we place into our shopping basket and eat from our plates. Make us thankful and give us the strength to cast off the shackles that bind us to wealth and possessions.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer

Jesus the healer, be with all who work in hospitals, clinics and local surgeries. We pray in particular for those with long term illness whose lives are blighted and confined. Give them courage and fortitude to endure painful and invasive treatments. Give them hope to fight another day. Hold them in the knowledge of Your love; may they there find inner peace. We commend into Your care Lord all who have passed from this world, we give thanks for their life. We ask that You bring light to the darkness of those who remain, mourning such loss. "The darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day."

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer

May we become at all times, both now and forever

A protector for those without protection

A guide for those who have lost their way

A ship for those with oceans to cross

A bridge for those with rivers to cross

A sanctuary for those in danger

A lamp for those without light

A place of refuge for those who lack shelter

And a servant to all in need.

Jan MacDonald (24 October)

Miscellaneous editor's notes

Graham and Collette Foord would like to thank all who supported the Dance on 28 October in aid of the Glasgow Family Diabetes Group. The magnificent sum of £3,193 was raised. A fuller report will follow in a future issue.

David Smith's violin concert, also for the Diabetes Unit at Yorkhill Hospital, raised £325.

Thank you to this month's contributors (I have had difficulty in editing the material so that it all fits in!). There are lots of ideas buzzing around for future issues, so please keep the material coming. Taking on board comments made, a larger 11 point typeface has been used instead of 10 point, and I hope this meets with approval.

Grateful thanks to Mattie Davidson for the line drawing on the front cover.

Letter to the editor

Light my fire!

Many years ago, whilst on a break from a training course, my fellow students and I joined our instructor for some lunch in the company cafeteria. Our instructor invited a gentleman to join us, mentioning that he had a very interesting passion, which turned out to be steam engine locomotives.



Good.....you're still reading! I, like some of you no doubt, thought that this was going to be akin to slow torture, but I was more than prepared to show polite interest. As has often happened to me, life brought one of its more wonderful surprises round the corner, for the gentleman's enthusiasm, knowledge and passion for this subject was without doubt a magical pleasure to share. In fact he ignited a passion for the subject which I still have today, over 15 years later.

What are you passionate about? I still remember reading the question and answer session which Nimmo did in the magazine many months ago when he said he would be loved to be locked in St Margaret's with JS Bach. Why is Nimmo so passionate about Bach? What are you passionate about? Please share it with us, for your passion can highlight hidden gems which most of us would pass by or never see.

What could you tell us? Maybe a list of "Did you know.." questions and answers, or whatever gets you saying, "Yes, that's it...". What moves you, what has been a memory which still makes you smile, or laugh, or cry? What do you burst to let people know, given the chance? We don't want a novel, just what you're passionate about.

Andy Furnace

Ed: I quite agree. Readers please pick up your pens or crunch your keyboard!

Riddle

My great uncle Jacob didn't celebrate his first birthday until he was 8, How come? (for answer see page 22)

Readings for December and January

5 December Advent 2	Isaiah 11: 1-10, Romans 15: 4-13 Matthew 3: 1-12
12 December Advent 3	Isaiah 35: 1-10, James 5: 7-10 Matthew 11: 2-11
19 December	All age Worship
24 December Christmas Midnight	Isaiah 9: 2-7, Titus 2: 11-14 Luke 2: 1-14
26 December Christmas 1	Isaiah 63: 7-9, Hebrews 2: 10-18 Matthew 2: 13-23
2 January The Naming of Jesus	Numbers 6: 22-27, Galatians 4: 4-7 Luke 2: 15-21
9 January Epiphany 1	Isaiah 42: 1-9, Acts 10: 34-43 Matthew 3: 13-17
16 January Epiphany 2	Isaiah 49: 1-7, 1 Corinthians 1: 1-9 John 1: 29-42
23 January Conversion of St Paul	Acts 26: 9-23, Galatians 1: 11-24 Matthew 10: 16-22
30 January Epiphany 4	Micah 6: 1-8, 1 Corinthians 1: 18-31 Matthew 5: 1-12

Meditation (*George Herbert 1593 - 1633*)

Of all the creatures both in sea and land,
Only to man thou hast made known thy ways,
And put the pen alone into his hand,
And made him secretary of thy praise.

In the Garden

Mistletoe: “Kiss and Tell”



Not surprisingly, 120,000 visited the fabulous Glasgow Boys exhibition at the “Kelvingrove” this summer and AE Hornel’s “The Druids Bringing Home the Mistletoe” was a notable inclusion. Painted in 1890, it exemplifies most colourfully and exotically how this simple understated plant has entered the psyche, art and religious beliefs of people down through the ages; its presence and associated customs and superstitions are still part of our Christmas tradition today.

Its names *Viscum album* and “The European Mistletoe” tell a story even before we delve into its lore. The second part of the botanical name *album* refers to the colour of the familiar berries, while the first part *Viscum* (*viscous*) refers to their extremely sticky contents which, although much loved by birds, especially the eponymous Mistle Thrush, result in the poor creatures spending hours cleaning and preening after each meal. These antics do help to deposit seeds back into bark crevices, but it’s the plant’s common name that really describes its main method of seed dispersal.

“Mistiltan” in old English is a combination of two Anglo-Saxon words; *mistil* meaning dung or in this case bird droppings and *tan* or *tang* meaning twig, thus the “dung-on-a-twig” plant describes both the plant’s primary mode of distribution and helps explain why the seed is so sticky for, once deposited on a branch, it holds fast with one of nature’s strongest “glues”; and thus planted, so begins its strange and fascinating life.

The seeds germinate in Feb-March, and root-like structures burrow down through the bark and into the branch; the plant produces petal-less and inconspicuous flowers in May, and then white berries which ripen in Nov-Dec.

Mistletoe is an evergreen and unusually, a parasite. It can photosynthesise, (*make its own food from sunlight*) but must derive from its host all the water and nutrients which normal plants would obtain from the soil through their roots. It does this by connecting itself uninvited to the trees’ internal plumbing and taking what it needs, but its pilfering always weakens the host and on occasion may kill it; something any self-respecting parasite ought to avoid!

Its growth rate is slow; each stem producing only two shoots a year and on each shoot only two leaves, but in time, several plants may envelop whole trees making them appear to be in full leaf even in winter. It will grow on a wide range of trees and shrubs but it prefers soft barked species such as apple, hawthorn, lime, poplar and oak.

So here is a plant that suddenly and mysteriously appears, is alive all year round, possesses no roots and needs no soil, is verdant and bountiful in the depths of winter and spends its entire life perched aloft; little wonder that Mistletoe was regarded as one of the most magical, mystical and sacred plants in European folklore. Some Mistletoe facts.....

- Its religious and medicinal use by the Druids in Britain was first recorded by the Romans. The earliest circumstantial evidence for its medicinal use comes from the stomach contents of “Lindow Man”, a 1st Century AD bog body dug up in 1984 by commercial peat cutters.
- Mistletoe was assumed to arise where lightning struck a tree. In Brittany (*a mistletoe hot-spot*) its old common name was *Herbe de la Croix* or *Lignum crucis*. The legend goes that the cross was made of the wood of the mistletoe tree and in punishment God demoted its status to that of a lowly “parasite”.
- Mistletoe has 1400 distinct species worldwide inhabiting both the tropic and temperate regions. It is one of nine known parasitic plants. In South Africa the fruits were worked into sticky masses and spread on trees to trap small birds and animals.
- Written evidence for the use of Mistletoe as a Christmas decoration first appears in the 18th century and the custom of kissing under the mistletoe (*probably Scandanavian*) first appears in print in the 1820s.
- European Mistletoe is a poisonous plant causing acute gastrointestinal and cardiac problems. Despite this it has been and still is used in herbal and homeopathic preparations for epilepsy, circulatory, respiratory and urinary problems and even cancer.
- It can be cultivated, but alas not in Scotland.

Have a great Christmas.

Kenneth Watson

Puzzle Corner

Christmas Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains the letters

G O D W I T H U S

W		H	U			I		T
	U				O		W	
O				H				G
U			D		I	W		O
	D			W	H		T	
H			G		T			D
I				O				W
	G	U				O	S	
D		W	H			T		I

Answer to riddle (page 18)

Great uncle Jacob was born on 29 February 1896 (there being no Leap Year in 1900!)

Last month's Quiz answers:

1. Wine (John 2.11)
2. Psalm 119
3. Purple cloth (Acts 16.14)
4. Nowhere!
5. The fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1.7)
6. One thousand (Psalm 90.4)
7. Elisha (2 Kings 2.12-13)
8. Levi (Luke 5.27)
9. She asked for his head (Matthew 14.6-11)
10. Zipporah (Exodus 2.21)

Church officials and key contacts

Organist & Director of Music	Michael Bawtree (as office)
Creche Organiser	F Graham
Sunday School contact person	<i>vacant</i>
Youth Group Co-ordinator	<i>vacant</i>
Bible Study/House/Prayer Groups	The Rector
Lay Reader Emeritus	A Linnegan
Church Wardens	
People's Warden	E Smith
Rector's Warden	J Whelan
Secretary to the Vestry	A Panickar
Treasurer	M Gibson
Other contacts	
Altar Linen	F McCracken
Archivist	C Fowler
Catering Co-ordinator	J MacDonald
Child Protection Co-ordinator	C Ball
Domestic Bursar	F Campbell
Fair Trade Co-ordinator	L Bryce
Flowers	O Parkes
Freewill Offering Secretary	G McKendrick
Garden Co-ordinator	<i>vacant</i>
Gift Aid Secretary	M Kennedy
Hall Convener	M Livingstone
Lay Diocesan Representative	J Whiteside
Magazine Distribution	C Fowler
Magazine Editor	J Gibson
Pastoral Care Team	En Smith
Property Convener	<i>vacant</i>
Readers' Rota	J Girling
Roll-keeper	J Gray
Stewards' Rota	E McIndoe
Sunday Coffee Rota	F Campbell

The Last Word

A Sunday schoolteacher began her lesson with a question, “Boys and girls, what do we know about God?” A hand shot up in the air. “He is an artist!”, said the kindergarten boy. “Really? How do you know?”, the teacher asked. “You know”, said the boy, “Our Father, who does art in heaven...”

St Margaret of Scotland, Newlands



Service details

Sundays

9.00am Said Eucharist

10.30am Sung Eucharist,

Crèche, Sunday School & Youth Group

Tuesdays

10am Holy Communion

For other services not listed please see Diary inside

Church Website address: www.episcopalnewlands.org.uk
Scottish Charity No SC 008953

Next issue 30 January

**Copy deadline
Wednesday 19 January 6pm**