



St Peter's Church
19 Townsend Place
Kirkcaldy
KY1 1HB

Rector: The Revd. Canon Christine Fraser

St. Peter's Rectory

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Kirkcaldy. KY2 5YJ

Registered Charity Number:

St. Peter's with Ss Mary and Leonard: SC010443

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St Peter's Website..... www.stpeterskirkcaldy.co.uk

The Contact Magazine of St. Peter's with Ss. Mary & Leonard



The Front Cover picture is from Jenner's in Edinburgh

It was founded as "Kennington & Jenner" in 1838 by Charles Jenner, a linen draper, and Charles Kennington. The store has never left its site on Princes Street, but its original building was destroyed by fire in 1892.

Jenners has been a fixture in Edinburgh city centre and was once the oldest independently owned department store in the world.

Affectionately known as the 'Harrods of the North', the high-end store long attracted big spenders, window shoppers and tourists until it closed in December 2020.



The building was destroyed by fire in January of this year.

Some Events in Fife

(Use google Search for more details)

Santa Paws at Dobbie's Dunfermline

Santa's Breakfast

Festive Pop Up Gift Shop

The Little Mermaid Panto

The Wizard of OZ Panto

Santa's Grotto at Dobbie's Dunfermline

Small Business Market

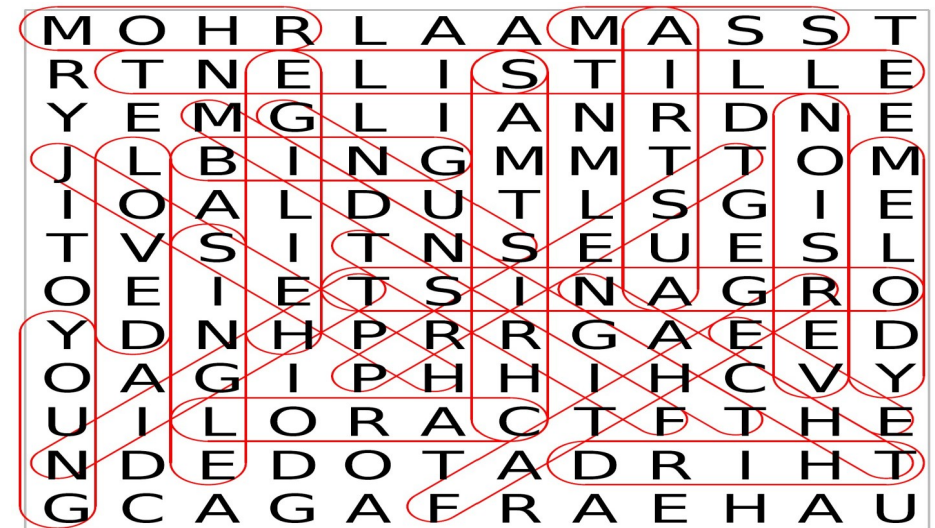
Cont. From Page 34

Those homes that contain several children are visited just after bedtime, so that parents will give generously simply to get the choir to go somewhere else. Veiled threats to stay and sing more carols (unless they give generously) are usually very effective. Getting whoever looks the most innocent and photogenic to ring the bell and ask for money is a far more subtle way of ensuring a donation than planting any number of mafia lookalikes (such as our church treasurer) on the doorstep.

The choir always finishes its evening at the local pub – but again, the timing must be carefully managed. Too early and there will only be the landlord, his wife, and their Labrador to listen; too late and people will be so full of Christmas cheer that any carols will be hijacked and become the equivalent of back-of-the bus rugby songs.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



On how to make the most of carol singing

The Rectory

St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren



Carol singing is not what it used to be. My fond memories of a group of choristers, muffled in scarves and overcoats, carrying lanterns, and walking from door to door in the snow, as they sang 'While shepherds watched ...' had to be suddenly revised when I saw your own music group, in T-shirts inscribed with 'Jesus loves You', singing 'Little donkey', in your shopping centre. I suspect any money you raised would just about have paid for the electricity used to power your banks of electronic equipment. Singing in the main square of the Centre next to the fountain may have looked good, but it seemed to mean that the choir men were obliged to make constant trips to the lavatory.

Here at St James the Least of All, carol singing is regarded as a staff perk for the choir; the year when the Boys' Brigade tried to break their monopoly was suppressed with a ruthlessness that would have impressed Genghis Kahn.

Our annual carol-singing route involves months of meticulous planning. We find that a transparent collection box is vital, so that donors can see what earlier patrons have given. This means that those who are bound to put in notes must be visited first – '*pour encourager les autres*'. It also needs a detachable base, so that if coppers are given, they can be removed from sight before the next call.

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Dear Friends

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. Have you noticed? The town squares, stores, and houses are decorated for Christmas and Christmas music is playing on nearly every radio station. It seems that people are beginning to decorate their houses nearly as early as stores are now; admittedly, we decorated inside of our house before Thanksgiving this year. People can go a bit overboard with the decorations these days; people usually opt for giant inflatable characters as a staple in outdoor Christmas decorating. There's nothing wrong with Frosty the Snowman and Santa and Rudolph and all the characters that are associated with the holiday, but as Christians, we should ask ourselves: which Christmas do we want to reflect?

The Encyclopedia Britannica gives two different classifications for Christmas, citing it as both "a Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus" and "a secular family holiday." Over the years, the secular family holiday version has sought to push the Christian festival out, replacing the phrase "Merry Christmas" with "Happy Holidays." It's even gotten to the point now where most, if not all, retailers and restaurants will avoid the word "Christmas" altogether. Instead of Christmas lights or a Christmas tree, it's holiday lights and a holiday tree. Since there is such a stark distinction between the Christian festival celebrating Christ's birth and the secular family holiday, as Christ's representatives, we should make a clear stand on which one we are celebrating.

"So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'" (2 Corinthians 5:20)

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In these ways, we believe we will be standing in support of those continuing to suffer—just as Christ did with us in His Incarnation, in order that all of God's children might receive the hope of a New Jerusalem in the presence of the Almighty, where "death shall be no more, neither mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4) "

As we in St. Peter's approach Christmas, thinking of presents to buy and decorations to hang, and carols to sing about the "little town of Bethlehem", can we learn from our fellow-Christians in Bethlehem about ways to celebrate Christmas in 2023?

Here are Four Ways to celebrate the coming of the Prince of Peace by standing with those who suffer:

We can add our voices to the **Christian Aid** call for "a humanitarian ceasefire and a de-escalation of violence" by signing the Christian Aid petition online at www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/emergencies/middle-east-crisis-action or in the foyer of the church. In so doing we remind politicians and leaders that ours is a God who knows even when a sparrow falls to the ground, and whose heart must therefore be breaking at the needless deaths of 4,000 innocent children.

We can **pray** in our church service and in our private prayers, for Palestinians and Israelis who are both victims in this officially recognised apartheid society; pray for peace; pray for justice.

BETHLEHEM CHURCHES CANCEL CHRISTMAS

This Christmas the celebration of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is cancelled. The Advent decorations in Manger Square have been taken down. Church leaders are urging their congregations to forego festive activities.

What has happened to Christmas in 2023?

"These are not normal times" reads the Statement issued by the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem. There is now no joy at the approach of the Feast of the Nativity. "Since the start of the War on Gaza, there has been an atmosphere of sadness and pain. Thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children, have died, or suffered serious injuries. Many more grieve over the loss of their homes, their loved ones, or the uncertain fate of those dear to them. Throughout the region, even more have lost their work and are suffering from serious economic challenges. Yet despite our repeated calls for a humanitarian ceasefire and a de-escalation of violence, the war continues."

"Therefore," the statement continues, rejoicing is inappropriate, verging on obscenity. Instead, "stand strong with those facing such afflictions, ...focus on the spiritual meaning of Christmas in pastoral activities and the liturgies..., holding in our thoughts our brothers and sisters affected by this war and its consequences, and with fervent prayers for a just and lasting peace for our beloved Holy Land.

Moreover, during this season of giving, we also invite the faithful to advocate, pray and contribute generously as they are able for the relief of the victims as well as to encourage others to join them in this mission of this war, and for those in dire need, of mercy.

Church leaders agree that people are more receptive to the message of Christ around Christmas and Easter, so we should take advantage of how God has prepared people's hearts this time of year. An easy way we can point our neighbours to the true meaning of Christmas is through our decorations; after all, it's how the outside world will see us—don't you want to point to the true meaning of Christmas? In some cases, Nativity scenes have shrunk to near imperceptible sizes—or worse, they have been replaced altogether by secular decorative displays.

"The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you." (John 15:19)

"But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior." (Philippians 3:20)

"Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

People all over the world will be opening presents around a Christmas tree on December 25. We as Christians are challenged to not shy away from displaying and talking about the true meaning of Christmas, the reason for the season, which is the birth of our Lord and Savior. This time of year, is a great opportunity to point others to Jesus Christ. It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, so which Christmas are we displaying?

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Blessings, Christine

Prof. Emeritus Richard Fawcett

B.A. PhD FSA FRSE FSA Scot. OBE

St Peter's recently lost a very devoted member of our congregation. Richard's funeral was held in church on Friday, 24th November. The number of people in attendance was testimony to the high regard in which he was held.

During his life, he had written many articles and books on the subject so close to his heart – Medieval Architecture.

You don't gain the titles of Doctor and Professor easily. His work for Historic Scotland was recognised when he was honoured to be presented to Queen Elizabeth to be decorated with an O.B.E. Richard was also a television personality when he shared his knowledge with his viewers.

Richard could hold an audience with his resounding voice which demanded, in the nicest possible way, your attention. On many occasions, he led the 9.15 am service and the congregation always commented on the way he held their attention. As a Lay Worship Leader he carried out his duties to a very high standard. Richard was a reader and intercessor. He was always well prepared. Personally, I would listen to his Intercessions to learn which Saint was celebrated during that week. He religiously followed the Liturgical Calendar. As a Vestry member he served St. Peter's well, over many years.

At church, Richard was never seen without Sue, his wife of 50+ years. He lovingly cared for Sue during their years together, especially after she suffered a debilitating illness which left her with epilepsy.

Richard, you will be missed on many levels. May you rest in peace and rise to glory.

The story of 'Silent Night'

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.

Silent

Night

Loved

Carol

Austria

First

Sung

Stille

Nacht

Heilige

Christmas

Eve

Father

Joseph

Mohr

M	O	H	R	L	A	A	M	A	S	S	T
R	T	N	E	L	I	S	T	I	L	L	E
Y	E	M	G	L	I	A	N	R	D	N	E
J	L	B	I	N	G	M	M	T	T	O	M
I	O	A	L	D	U	T	L	S	G	I	E
T	V	S	I	T	N	S	E	U	E	S	L
O	E	I	E	T	S	I	N	A	G	R	O
Y	D	N	H	P	R	R	G	A	E	E	D
O	A	G	I	P	H	H	I	H	C	V	Y
U	I	L	O	R	A	C	T	F	T	H	E
N	D	E	D	O	T	A	D	R	I	H	T
G	C	A	G	A	F	R	A	E	H	A	U

Priest

Organist

Midnight

Mass

Young

Melody

Single

Bing

Version

Third

(Answers on Page 35)

On the Christmas sales table this year are many different items including fabric stars. Dawn, our daughter who has joined us on several Mondays, showed the ladies how to make them as well as supplying all the different fabrics and also supplying a pattern for the tote bags. One week we had 4 sewing machines working away, with most of the ladies trying them out. Two of the members had never sewn bags before and the joy on their faces once they had completed a bag was fabulous, so much had they enjoyed the process they went on to complete a second.

We are having a Christmas lunch in December at Wellsgreen organised by Jeeta and Norman.

Many thanks to all who have supported the group including June Paul who gave us £25 from the candle stand which has been included in our donation to Women's Aid.

Thank you Norman, the tea boy, for the endless cups of tea and coffee he serves through the sessions and thanks to everyone who has made and bought from the sales table.

Thought for the day:

"With God all things are possible. (Matthew 19.26)" and God made hugs, one size fits all.



Worship at St Peter's

Sundays 9.15 am Said Eucharist (SPB)
10.30am Sung Eucharist (1982 Liturgy)

Wednesdays 10.00 am Said Eucharist (1982 Liturgy)

Christmas Services 2023

Sunday 17th December Advent 4 9.15am Said Eucharist

10.30am Carols and Communion

Sunday 24th December 9.15am Said Eucharist

10.30am Sung Eucharist 11.30pm Sung Eucharist

Monday 25th December 10.00am Sung Eucharist

Wednesday 27th December NO SERVICE

Sunday 31st December 9.15am Said Eucharist

10.30am Sung Eucharist

Wednesday 27th December NO SERVICE

Sunday 31st December Christmas 1 9.15am Said Eucharist

10.30am Sung Eucharist

Wednesday 3rd January NO SERVICE

Sunday 7th January

Epiphany 9.15am Said Eucharist 10.30am Sung Eucharist

21st December Winter Solstice

A Midwinter festival has been a part of life since pre-Christian times. When the hours of daylight are fewest, the warmth of the sun weakest, and life itself seemingly at a standstill, our ancestors, the pagan peoples of Europe and Western Asia, kept festival by lighting bonfires and decorating their buildings with evergreens.

Perhaps they believed that the dying sun could be enheartened by fire, and the life of the buried seed assured by the presence of evergreen branches.

With the advent of Christianity, the Spring gods became identified with Christ, and the birthday of the sun with the birthday of the Light of the World.

The early church father Tertullian did not approve of Christmas decorations. "Let those who have no light in themselves light candles!... You are the light of the world, you are the tree ever green...." But by the time of St Gregory and St Augustine, four centuries later, this had changed. Pope Gregory instructed Augustine not to worry about harmless outward customs, as long as the right God be worshipped through them. And so many Anglo-Saxon customs were never discarded, but simply endowed with a new significance.

By 1598 one John Stow of London wrote how: "Against the feast of Christmas, every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the year afforded to be green."

The craft have made an amount of monies and have decided to donate £100 to Maggie's Centre, and £100 to the hospice in Kirkcaldy and the balance of £500 to Women's Aid.

This year you will have noticed a hanging behind the altar with 4 different coloured poppies for remembrance Sunday. Red – to remember all who died in conflict, white to remember all who perished and a hope for peace, purple – to remember all the animals which were killed or suffered in conflict and black – to remember all the Afro-Caribbean, African, Asian people who died. The ladies at craft made all the poppies from felt and black buttons. Moira also made the poppies with leaves which were for sale on the vestibule table, a sum of £42 was collected and donated to Poppy Scotland. Thanks to all who gave so generously.



Craft Group Update

Well another busy session of the crafty ladies Monday afternoon.

We've explored a number of different crafts which include decoupage, stone painting, rainbow hangings etc. as well as some favourites, felt pictures, kimekomi and hexagons.

So far this session 5 quilts have been donated to Maggie's for their sales table along with bits and pieces which were left over from last year's sale table. Glad to report that all were sold. Maggie's have a sales table once a month in Kingsgate Shopping Centre, Dunfermline and at the Buffalo Farm just outside Kirkcaldy.

The craft group were approached by Maggie's and asked if anyone in the group would consider making a throw out of T-shirts for a lady whose ex-Black Watch husband had recently passed. This was to give to their daughter for Christmas. Suzanna had thought that she would enjoy the challenge, but unfortunately she had a fall, sustaining a back injury, and was unable to sit at her sewing machine. I then took the T-shirts to a member of Cupar Quilters called Sue, who is now making the throw.

We also had a talk by Bee, whom some of you might know from church. Bee is an ambassador for Fife Women's Aid and it was decided that the craft group would like to support this cause with funds from the sales tables. The ladies have been busy making tote bags, large and small, and filling them with items donated by the Craft Ladies.

Women's Aid supports and gives families a safe place. Many of the ladies and their children leave homes where there has been physical and mental abuse, leaving with just what they have on their backs. So no possessions of any kind.



We are open for bookings!

NOW with recently installed WiFi Internet access



THE PREMISES ARE LET OUT IN SESSIONS OF 4 HOURS:

SESSION 1:	0900 – 1300
SESSION 2:	1300 – 1700
SESSION 3:	1800 – 2200



COST: (Including one free car parking place)

CHURCH:	£30 - £40 PER SESSION	CAPACITY: 80
LARGE HALL:	£30 PER SESSION	CAPACITY: 50
SMALL MEETING ROOM:	£20 PER SESSION	CAPACITY: 12

A booking form with full details is available for download from the website: www.stpeterskirkcaldy.co.uk

For further information please contact Andrea Ladyka:

Email: bookings@stpeterskirkcaldy.co.uk Mobile: 07740910221

A Christmas Carol

(A most famous Christmas story)

by [Charles Dickens](#)

Charles Dickens' novella *A Christmas Carol in Prose, Being a Ghost-Story of Christmas* (1843) remains one of the most popular and enduring Christmas stories of all time. *A Christmas Carol* is a morality tale of a bitter old miser named Ebenezer Scrooge. Scrooge holds much of the world in contempt and has sacrificed love and friendship to the worship of money. Running his business with tyrannical authority, the oppressive boss is so cheerless that he refuses to show Bob Cratchit, his over worked and underpaid employee any quarter, even on the day before Christmas.

Jacob Marley, Ebenezer Scrooge's deceased partner visits old man Scrooge as he is making his way home on Christmas Eve.

In serial order the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come visit old Scrooge, and are able to spark a dramatic change in the bitter old man. Enjoy Charles Dickens' masterful tale of redemption. A story that has given us timeless characters like Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Jacob Marley, and Tiny Tim.

The American poet Longfellow once wrote: 'If we could read the secret history of enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility '.



A picture of expresses a thousand words.

Alphabet for seniors will make you laugh By Norman Ward

A is for apple and B is for boat, that used to be right but now it won't float! Age before beauty is what we say but let's be a bit more realistic instead.

The alphabet for seniors: A's for arthritis, B's for bad back, C's for chest pains, perhaps cardiac? D is for dental decay and decline, E is for eyesight, can't read that top line! F is for fissures and fluid retention, G is for gas which we'd rather not mention. H is for high blood pressure; I for incisions with scars you can show. J is for joints, out of socket, won't mend, K is for knees that crack when they bend. L's for lots of love M is for memory, I forget what comes next. N is neuralgia, in nerves way down low; O is for osteo, bones that don't grow! P's for prescriptions, I have quite a few, just give me a pill and I'll be good as new! Q is for queasy, is it fatal or flu? R is for reflux, one meal turns to two. S is for sleepless nights, counting my fears. T is for Tinnitus, bells in my ears! U is for urinary, troubles with flow, V for vertigo, that's 'dizzy,' you know. W for worry, now what's going 'round? X is for X ray and what might be found. Y for another year I'm left here behind, Z is for zest I still have - in my mind!

Please remember to use EASYFUNDING when shopping Online

Details on the Notice Board in the Church Hall

Hottie Bottie

The moon is shining way up high, Its stopper had dislodged,
The night is drawing in, The water, disappeared.

My curtains drawn,

My supper made,

Evening prayers begin.

Puddled sheets, and wet duvet,

A soggy mattress, now I feared.

Tonight, when I retire,

I venture into the kitchen,

The kettle is now boiling,

I fill my hottie bottle,

To keep me warm,

Until the morning.

To my temporary, sofa bed,

I will throw away hottie bottle,

And take old teddy instead.

G.J.Urquhart

I clamber into my bed,

And snuggle down to sleep,

I ask the dear Lord, up above,

My erring soul to keep.

So cozy, and contented,

I kiss the day, good night,

I entered into dreamland,

Then woke with such a fright.

It wasn't such a cozy Friend,

That I had lain beside,

It was a rubber bottle,

With gaping mouth so wide.

Who's Who at St. Peter's

Rector: Rev'd. Canon Christine Fraser
Assistant Priest Bob Barrett

.....

Car Park Rentals: Maria Page

Child/vulnerable adult Protection:

Kerry Briers

Christian Aid: Judy Webster

Rosemary Potter

Church Treasurer, Gift

Aid & 100 Club: Judy Webster

Contact Magazine Editor: Richard Ouston

Email richard.16@hotmail.co.uk

CTN Administrator: Shirley Mann

Duty and Tea Rotas: Judy Webster

Shirley Mann

Fabric Convenor: George Legge

Flower Convenor: Jane Legge

Hall & Room Hire: Andrea Ladyka

Lay Representative: Shirley Mann

Maria Page

Shirley Mann

Rudi Limebury

Rev. Christine Fraser

Prayer Group:

Social & Fund Raising

Committee Chair: Shirley Mann

Vestry Chairman: Bill Page

Vestry Secretary: Maria Page

Website: Norman Ward

Halls For Hire And Rooms For Rent

We welcome people/groups to hire our church, halls and rooms. Ask Andrea for a leaflet, details of charges and equipment available.

Cont. From Page 24

Dr Madeleine Pennington, head of research at Theos, said: "It appears that the UK population no longer has a shared conviction on the importance of ritual frameworks to say goodbye. Market forces have a bigger impact on how we grieve, when we no longer approach grief itself through a 'transcendent' frame. In an age of declining formal religious affiliation, this is driving a significant realignment of British bereavement practices."

Archbishop Justin Welby, commenting on the report, said: "It is shocking to discover that death may be seen as expensive, time-consuming and irrelevant, and that it is better just to move on."

He calls for the Church to re-offer its "honed compassionate skills." "We must re-open conversations, name Death, and think about how this compassionate caring can be re-shaped for this new world."

Love, Grief, and Hope: Emotional responses to death and dying in the UK was written by Dr Madeleine Pennington with Dr Nathan Mladin, senior researcher at Theos. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.



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Why funerals are going out of fashion

Less than half of the UK population now want their death to be marked with a funeral.

So says a major new research report called *Love, Grief, and Hope: Emotional responses to death and dying in the UK*, by the religion and society think tank Theos.

The findings are based on polling commissioned from YouGov, and reveal significant changes in the ways that people in the UK are approaching death and dying.

Less than half of respondents (47%) said they wanted a funeral. Just over one in 10 (13%) of respondents who did not want a funeral said this was because they did not have enough money saved, but far more said they felt the money could be better spent another way (67%).

Others said: "I don't see the point" (55%) or "I don't want a traditional service" (43%).

Existing polling from Sunlife indicates that direct cremation (or 'take-away funerals' where the body is taken directly to a crematorium without any service or other event) is now chosen for 18% of all deaths.

This new polling by Theos suggests that this trend could grow further, translating into a potential crisis for the funeral industry as a whole.

The researchers found that financial factors are significant in these decisions, but religious and spiritual adherence is even more influential: 76% of frequent worshippers said they wanted a funeral, compared to 38% who never attend.



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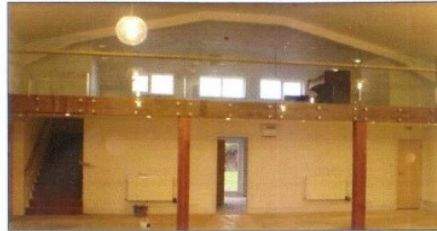
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No parking on Sundays due to Church Services

e-mail Maria Page - billmariap@virginmedia.com

The New Vase

from June Paul

Just recently I emptied the money box at the Candle Stand and was pleasantly surprised at the amount which had again been collected.

David had been a Vestry member for more than twenty years and most of that time he was the fabric convenor. During that time, I was the flower convenor and when I was arranging the flowers David was always there to help me. I thought a nice vase, just for a single arrangement, instead of a pedestal might be a fitting gift for St. Peters to remember David by.

David and I with our son Andrew and daughter— in—law Maureen visited Canterbury Cathedral a while ago. At the side of the Cathedral is a shop called Canterbury pottery and they have some lovely ceramics in stock (we have one or two pieces at home).

This year, with Christine's agreement, I used some of the money from the Candle Stand to purchased a lovely Vase for St Peters in David's memory..

The reminder of the Candle Stand money has been given Marjorie Ward to be included with the money from the Craft Group, this year to be donated to "Women's Aid".

I usually arrange the flowers on January 22nd for our Son Cameron who died in 1984 and I hope to use the Vase for David at that time.

I hope all the members of the church will agree how lovely the Vase is and approve of the family doing this in David's name.



New Year Resolutions

Last year (2023) 30 million people in the UK made New Year resolutions, with health (28%), money (27%), family (24%) and self-improvement (21%) topping the charts for the most common resolutions. However, surveys suggest that most people lasted seven weeks before giving them up and 21% only lasted for a month before giving up.

What resolutions can we make that will last beyond January? At the start of a new year, let's remember Paul's words: *'I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings'* (Philippians 3:10). Like Paul, our resolution should be to know Christ deeper in this coming year.

'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.' (Phil 3:13,14). Paul sees following Christ like an athlete running a race in the stadium. As any good runner, we mustn't look back. We cannot live on past successes, get bogged down by past sins and failures, or be bitter over past wrongs we've done, or had done to us!

An athlete strains every muscle to win the race. Like Paul, let's be single-minded in making Jesus our focus during the coming year in everything we do. What practical steps are needed if we are to go deeper in our prayer life and Bible reading? How can we more effectively see Christ working in our workplace and career, or family and children?

In the film *Chariots of Fire*, Eric Liddell says: *'I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure.'* In this New Year, let's find our pleasure in the pursuit of knowing Christ better!

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The Perfect Sacrifice

Yes Your sacrifice complete,
Now until eternity;
All is done, all prepared,
Scarcely did you count the cost;
Only on Gethsemane,
Sweating blood in agony.
Lord how ever couldst Thou bear
The greatest sins of humanity?
Yet You did,
And so I must too,
Not despair, but carry too
All this suffering within You;
And in all the misery of sin,
Still I see the Risen King:
Light your candle, I'll light mine,
Let it burn and let it shine.
Ours now eternally
The greatest gift of Eternity.

By Hedi Jaquemar, Nov' 23

SIMPLE FORMULA FOR LIVING

Live beneath your means.
Return everything you borrow.
Stop blaming other people.
Admit it when you make mistake.
Give clothes not worn to charity.
Do something nice and try not to
get caught.
Listen more; talk less.
Every day take a 30 min. walk.
Strive for excellence, not
perfection.
Be on time. Don't make excuses.
Don't argue. Get organized.
Be kind to unkind people.
Let someone cut ahead of you in
line. Take time to be alone.
Cultivate good manners.
Be humble. Realize and accept
that life isn't fair. Know when to
keep your mouth shut. Go an
entire day without criticising
anyone. Learn from the past.
Plan for the future. Live in the
present. Don't sweat the small
stuff. It's all small stuff.

By Norman Ward

Praying for Peace in Palestine and Israel

Among the Rubble

Compassionate God,

In our minds, we pray among the rubble, the unholy mess of
demolitions

In the land that we call holy.

In our hearts we hold families who have lost their homes, children,
who have seen their schools destroyed,
communities which no longer have a clinic,

We pray for them as they weep for all that's lost,

We pray that they will not lose hope.

And we pray, too, for the men who drive the bulldozers, soldiers who
beat back protesters, politicians who sign the orders— aware that
such actions destroy their humanity.

Bless those who campaign against injustice;

bless the patient rebuilders;

Bless those who hope against hope that peace with justice will
prevail in the land that we call Holy.

Amen

A Magical Christmas Moment

It was a late Friday afternoon in the busy office, when my next customer was an elderly gentleman and his grandson. Once grandad had been served the young boy told me he had just sung “Away in a Manger” at his school Nativity Play. I asked him if he would sing it for me and he agreed. Off he went in a beautiful little voice which silenced the noise in the office and gave everyone a feeling of peace. Even the Manager came out of her office, I think she wondered how we had managed to still the noise. For me I still think of this little boy and his Grandad when I’m waiting in the queue to post my Christmas parcels and remember my own Magical Christmas Moment!

Jill Harris

Sums up Christmas

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: ‘Peace on Earth’;
‘Goodwill to Men’; and ‘Batteries not included.’

Runs over

A father gave his daughter a young puppy for Christmas. An hour later, he found her in the kitchen, looking sadly at a puddle in the centre of the floor. “Look Dad,” she said, “My pup runneth over!”



...the good news is - I've found a way of heating the church on unwanted chip-fat!...

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Tips For Christmas

If you will be out in your car a lot this Christmas, here's an easy way to stop your windscreen from misting up:

Simply clean it with shaving foam. It provides a protective barrier which stops mist forming. Ice hockey players use it to stop their face masks from steaming up while they're on the ice. It's easy to do. Put a good dollop of shaving foam onto a clean towel, and then wipe it all over the windscreen. Then take a second clean towel, and gently wipe off the shaving foam. This leaves a protective barrier, but it will need to be regularly reapplied, to continue to work. This tip can be found on the RAC website: www.rac.co.uk

This may look silly, but it works: cover your windscreen wipers with old socks, to stop them sticking to the windscreen on a freezing morning. The RAC warns that if windscreen wipers cannot move, there is a risk the circuit will overheat and blow a fuse.

If you are cycling to work, try wearing a swimming cap under your cycling helmet – Cycling UK recommends it as a good extra layer, to keep warm.

If you need to be outside for long, wear several thin layers instead of one big chunky one. The UK Health Security Agency says that the air which gets trapped between the layers also helps keep you warm.

If you have any tips you would like to share please contact the Editor