



THE SPIRE

Winter 2023 / 2024

**St. Stephens and West
PARISH CHURCH**
Broughty Ferry



Lifeboats

BROUGHTY FERRY FUNDRAISING BRANCH

RNLI CAROL CONCERT

St. James Church, Broughty Ferry

Monday

11th December

2023 Starting at 7pm

Musical items provided by 'The Noteables Choir'



Blaver

Christmas gifts for children

On Sunday 10th. December there will be a collection of gifts for children. The gifts should be placed in front of the communion table and please do not wrap the items. After the service they will be delivered to a charity for distribution.

The gifts are for all ages of children and not restricted.

DONATE



Welcome

to the Winter issue of

THE SPIRE

St. Stephen's & West Kirk
Magazine
Winter 2023 / 2024

2024 is nearly with us and welcome to the last edition of 2023.

I take this opportunity of wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

A number of our congregation are unwell at present and we miss you all at the regular Sunday service.

All of us at St. Stephens and West wish you a speedy recovery and hope you feel a little bit better every day, you are taking it slow and easy right now and hang in there as better days are coming.

Best Wishes and hope you enjoy the magazine.

George Anderson

George Anderson



A prayer for Christmas from the minister Rev. Keith Hall

Though the years be many and long that divide us from the Bethlehem of stable and straw, yet still that sacred birth speaks to us, warms our hearts, answers our questions.

Though we come by many hard and testing ways with all the scars of life seared upon us: some with heavy hearts, some with doubtful caution, some with painful grief, yet still we come longing to enter into the spirit of the season, desperate for the quiet, glad excitement of being encountered and shriven and directed by the unavoidable compassion of a kind and tender Father God.

Though the years are many that divide us from the cradle so rude and bare, yet still we sense Thy living, loving presence in the web of stories, songs and messages that weave around us a timeless robe of grace and goodwill.



Parish Register: St. Stephen's & West.

IN MEMORIAM

Awhile our mortal blindness may miss God's loving kindness,
And grope in faithless strife.
But when life's day is over,
Shall death's fair night discover
Fields of everlasting life.

September 12, 2023

Stuart Dron, 29 Heriotgait, Cross Street, Broughty Ferry.

October 3, 2023

Margaret Dron, 29 Heriotgait, Cross Street, Broughty Ferry.

October 3, 2023

Murray Dalgety, 29 Strathern Road, West Ferry.

November 1, 2023

Ron McMillan, 4 Dundas Street, Broughty Ferry.

November 8, 2023

Ronald Gellatly, 51, Forthill Road, Broughty Ferry

The Panmurefield Ukranian Cafe will be stopping after Christmas as most are more settled and integrated into the community. There are still donations travelling overland by truck to support Ukraine.

The Connections Cafe has been a lot busier in the last few weeks due to the arrival of a large number of asylum seekers in Dundee who want to improve their English conversation. The more urgent need is for warm clothing as they arrived with nothing except the light clothes they arrived in.

With Refugees Broughty Ferry

We were approached to see if we could help with raising awareness of the need for donations of warm clothing, shoes, hats gloves etc. Within 2 weeks we had taken 2 large loads of donations up to help keep the men warmer. With the help of all the churches giving information on Sundays and via social media we reached a large number of people, church goes and others who contacted with donations. We were delighted with the response as I am sure the recipients were as well. For anyone wishing to donate items of clothing please contact Jill direct at 736278.

We continue our work with mentoring through Project Scotland/ Inspire. We now have 4 volunteers helping to prepare refugees for work.

Jill Oakley WRBF

UPDATE

It is not funny but is worth reading when considering what the Christmas message means to each of us as individuals. Christmas is for love. It is for joy, for giving and sharing, for laughter, for reuniting with family and friends, for tinsel and brightly covered packages.

Christmas is for Love Classic Tale

But, mostly Christmas is for love. I had not believed this until a small elfin like pupil with wide innocent eyes and soft rosy cheeks gave me a wondrous gift one Christmas. Matthew was a 10 year old orphan who lived with his aunt, a bitter, middle aged woman greatly annoyed with the burden of caring for her dead sister's son. She never failed to remind young Matthew, if it hadn't been for her generosity, he would be a vagrant, homeless waif. Still, with all the scolding and chilliness at home, he was a sweet and gentle child.

I had not noticed Matthew particularly until he began staying after class each day [at the risk of arousing his aunt's anger so I learned later] to help me straighten up the room. We did this quietly and comfortably, not speaking much, but enjoying the solitude of that hour of the day. When we did talk, Matthew spoke mostly of his mother. Though he was quite young when she died, he remembered a kind, gentle, loving woman who always spent time with him. As Christmas drew near however, Matthew failed to stay after school each day. I looked forward to his coming, and when the days passed and he continued to scamper hurriedly from the room after class, I stopped him one afternoon and asked him why he no longer helped me in the room.

I told him how I had missed him, and his large brown eyes lit up eagerly as he replied, 'Did you really miss me?' I explained how he had been my best helper, 'I was making you a surprise,' he whispered confidentially. 'It's for Christmas.' With that, he became embarrassed and dashed from the room. He didn't stay after school any more after that. Finally came the last school day before Christmas. Matthew crept slowly into the room late that afternoon with his hands concealing something behind his back. 'I have your present,' he said timidly when I looked up. 'I hope you like it.'

He held out his hands, and there lying in his small palms was a tiny wooden box. 'It's beautiful, Matthew. Is there something in it?' I asked opening the top to look inside. 'Oh you can't see what's in it,' he replied, 'and you can't touch it, or taste it or feel it, but mother always said it makes you feel good all the time, warm on cold nights and safe when you're all alone.' I gazed into the empty box. 'What is it, Matthew' I asked gently, 'that will make me feel so good?' 'It's love,' he whispered softly, 'and mother always said it's best when you give it away.' He turned

and quietly left the room. So now I keep a small box crudely made of scraps of wood on the piano in my living room and only smile when inquiring friends raise quizzical eyebrows when I explain to them there is love in it. Yes, Christmas is for gaiety, mirth, song, and for good and wondrous gifts. But mostly, Christmas is for love.

Anonymous



Meru Update

I very much appreciated the opportunity to have a stall for Meru at the recent coffee morning. Along with Kenyan artefacts I had a variety of other traditional and unusual gifts for Christmas and babies. A big thank you to my talented and generous friends.

Recently after fundraising, £666 was used to support Rev Elijah's orphans; to purchase 4 computers for Limbene school and to fund building materials for a school dining hall in Meru.

The summer was spent selling paintings and preparing Coronation stones for sale with my grandchildren to raise funds for Meru. Recently the children of my new neighbours have also produced stones and Reuben (8) has apparently been inspired to do a sponsored swim for Dundee bairns!

Recently I raffled a giant teddy for £88 and it was won by a very surprised Jean McRae. Halloween stones have also been successful in raising funds.

Now I would very much appreciate donations for a Christmas raffle so that I can send funds to Meru for the start of the new term in January.

I first visited Meru at the aegis of Marjorie Kerr in 2008 and we are in the early stages of plans to volunteer at a project for young people next year.

Elijah and Mercy report that like UK Meru is suffering from the economic after effects of covid; rocketing fuel prices affecting food prices and consumer goods ,coupled with droughts followed by severe flooding in a country where support services lag well behind ours.



Elijah uses the funds sent from the Meru plate to support children in education in families where there is a disabled guardian or parent and they are very grateful for our generosity.

Photographs for the article are of some of the sponsored children with their guardians. The photographs were provided by Rev.Elijah and identify some of the orphans we support through our donations at St.Stephens and West.

Wishing everyone peace and joy at Christmas and good health in 2024.

Where to now?

What is happening with regards to the Broughty Ferry Churches?

In the last magazine reference was made to the future of the churches in Broughty Ferry. Since then a meeting was convened in the church on Sunday 5th. November to listen to a presentation from the Presbytery and followed by a vote with reference to a Team Ministry in Broughty Ferry and also a vote for approval of the deferred union.

In my opinion the manner and tone of the presentation by Presbytery was very poor and if they were hoping to take this opportunity to sell the advantages of a deferred union then in my opinion, they failed miserably.

The votes approved the team ministry but not the deferred union which leaves St. Stephens and West as the only church not wishing to be part of the union of the 5 churches in Broughty Ferry the other 4 being St. James, St. Lukes, St. Margarets and the New Kirk.

At the time of writing this article a meeting of Presbytery is planned for 22nd. November to discuss the way forward and we will be

informed of the outcome as soon after that meeting.

We are in the fortunate position of having Keith as our minister in post and given the terms and conditions of his Ordination as a Parish Minister serving The Church of Scotland, he is permitted to practice until his 75th. birthday, which if providence is kind, will mark the 50th anniversary of his Ordination.

As pointed out at the meeting in the church, 6 years is a long time in the life of a church and circumstances can change in that period which may have an impact on decisions taken at an earlier date. That includes decisions taken by Presbytery which may have to be revisited as and when the new team ministry is in place.

In the meantime we look forward to continuing as we are which is a welcoming church family and a place where all feel comfortable and benefit from the way we worship.

GA



A Sign of the Times

As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"



Service on Sunday 31st. December

Please note that there will not be a service at St. Stephens and West on this date.

The Wine of Astonishment

In his book, "An Unfinished Autobiography" the English historian and Liberal politician, H.A.L. Fisher who served as Minister of Education in Lloyd George's Coalition Government 1916-1922, tells how, when he was a student he spent some time in France.

There he met many fascinating individuals, among them was Rodin, the famous sculptor. During a conversation about the strange barrenness which at that time had affected both Literary and Artistic productions, Rodin observed: "my compatriots have lost the art of admiration."

How sad, to lose one's sense of wonder!
Think about it.

When we were young we were so keen to explore an exciting and thrilling wonder land, learning was good fun. But as we grow older, we seem to grow less curious and are content to dwell in a world grown grey. The change I fear is not always in the world around us but within us.

One classic expression of this loss of wonder is afforded us in a familiar Ode by Wordsworth.

He claims we come into this world, "trailing clouds of glory from God who is our home." But then, "shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy and the vision splendid fades into the light of common day."

We were encouraged at Primary School to learn all sorts of pieces of poetry by heart. We were told to be our natural selves, that it was acceptable to slip up, no one expected a perfectly polished performance from a pupil aged 8.

"When first my way to Fair I took
Few pence in purse had I
And long I used to stand and look
At things I could not buy.

Now times are altered, if I care
To buy a thing, I can.
The pence are here, and there's the Fair
But where is that lost young man?"

Has the rocky road of human living, strewn
with so many vexing vicissitudes, robbed
us of the wonder of youth?

Why has the red hot hammer, once so full
of passion and promise, turned to cold
iron?

Psalm 60

In the sixtieth Psalm one Hebrew poet speaks of the "wine of astonishment!" That is, recapture a slick sense of curiosity, look out and around at the Creative Order and lose yourself in the sheer wonder of it all.

Following that Star of Wonder, three Wise Men presented tender tokens, symbolic signs at the Manger, each of which predicted the person of Jesus.

Gold for a King but a King of Peace, one who rode not in a majestic carriage but on the back of a donkey: humility is pure gold.

Frankincense for a Priest, a Pontifex, a bridge builder, one who would spend himself in the service of others, seeking to link here to there, this to that, man to God, time to eternity.

Myrrh, the oil of preservation, an embalming fluid in order to keep the Son of Man close heralding a new chapter to which there would be no ending. Of such, is the outcome of three strange astrologers following their star of wonder.

As yet another Festive season dawns, why not follow your personal star of wonder and drink amply of the wine of astonishment?

KFH



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Out of the shadows

Oh say, can you see them, these thousands of men
Eager to make their way skywards again?
Out of the shadows of time they appear
Ready for action, disclaiming all fear,
Knowing the dangers of fighters and flak,
These were the heroes who never came back.

Oh say, can you hear it, that full -throated roar
Of Lancaster engines as you heard before?
The bombers all ready to take to the sky
Their crews in position and waiting to fly.
I hear them so clearly...though 80 years on
The runways have vanished – the Lancasters gone.

Oh say, can you feel it, that tingling inside,
A sense of humility, tempered with pride?
Let's stand here to honour them and, as they go,
Remember again the great debt that we owe.
They came from the shadows, these planes and these men,
Now they return to the shadows again.

Nora Veysey

Remembrance day Soup and Sandwich day Proceeds to Poppy Scotland

On Sunday 12th.November over 40 members of the congregation retired to the hall after the service and enjoyed the soup and sandwiches provided by the social committee. A total of £275 was raised and donated

to Poppy Scotland. An impressive choice of 4 different soups was on offer along with a number of different sandwich fillings. Second helpings were the order of the day. Well done ladies.

Alex Perry

90th. Birthday

On Sunday 29th.October the actual day of his birthday, Alex our organist for the past 51 years had a party after the service to celebrate his 90th.birthday. There was a rendition of Happy Birthday and Alex confirmed at the end of the chorus that the singers did not pass the audition for joining the choir. A cake was provided for the occasion and best wishes from the congregation to himself and Helen from Keith our minister. His son Graham who lives in Ottawa, Canada attended and was warmly welcomed by members of the congregation.



Christmas Greetings

Christmas blessings to everyone at St Stephens and West. Good health and happiness in 2024.
Sybil Rough

Merry Christmas to everyone in St Stephens and West and very best wishes for a Healthy, Happy 2024.
Regards, May Masson

To all of the members of St. Stephens and West and their families a very Merry Christmas and happy safe New Year
from George and Rhona Anderson.

A Very Merry Christmas and lots of Health and Happiness in 2024.
from Jill and Ron Oakley

Toni and Euan McNicoll would like to wish all their friends in the congregation and the wider community a peaceful Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2024.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
From Malcolm and Moira Davidon

Margaret Knight and family would like to send choir and congregational friends Warmest Greetings of the Season and Every Good Wish for the Coming Year

Wishing all members and friends of St Stephen's and West a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.
Anne Potts

We send our warmest Christmas Greetings and every good wish for the coming year to all our friends at St. Stephens and West.
Syd and Christine Smith

Sending Christmas Greetings from Helen and Peter Wakefield; Juliet and Bobby; Christopher, Vår, Joseph and Lydia. Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

A very happy Christmas to all at St. Stephens and West.
Love Frances, Alan and Kelvin Justice.

ST. STEPHENS & WEST PARISH CHURCH

BROUGHTY FERRY

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Door Duty

(One duty elder with transport should offer to distribute flowers.
Please arrange a substitute if any date is unsuitable for you.)

2024 St Stephen's & West Parish Church

Elders Duty List

Date	Time	Door Duty	Door Duty	Beadle
Sun 7 Jan	10:00	Margaret Knight	Toni McNicoll	Fiona Watt
Sun 14 Jan	10:00	Sybil Rough	Shirley Grinyer	Peter Wakefield
Sun 21 Jan	10:00	Syd Smith	Sandra McMillan	Alan Justice
Sun 28 Jan	10:00	George Anderson	Heather Stiven	Ron McPherson
Sun 4 Feb	10.00	Simon Davidson	Toni McNicoll	Kenny Matheson
Sun 11 Feb	10.00	Margaret Knight	Shirley Grinyer	Shirley Thomson
Sun 18 Feb	10.00	May Masson	Sybil Rough	Syd Smith
Sun 25 Feb	10.00	Fiona Watt	Rhona Anderson	Linda Parry-Richards
Sun 3 Mar	10.00	Margaret Knight	Toni McNicoll	Alan Justice
Sun 10 Mar	10.00	May Masson	Heather Stiven	Kenny Matheson
Sun 17 Mar	10.00	Rhona Anderson	Simon Davidson	Shirley Thomson
Sun 24 Mar	10.00	Alan Justice	George Anderson	Ron McPherson
Sun 31 Mar	Easter/ BST Begins 10.00	Linda Parry-Richards	Sandra McMillan	Peter Wakefield