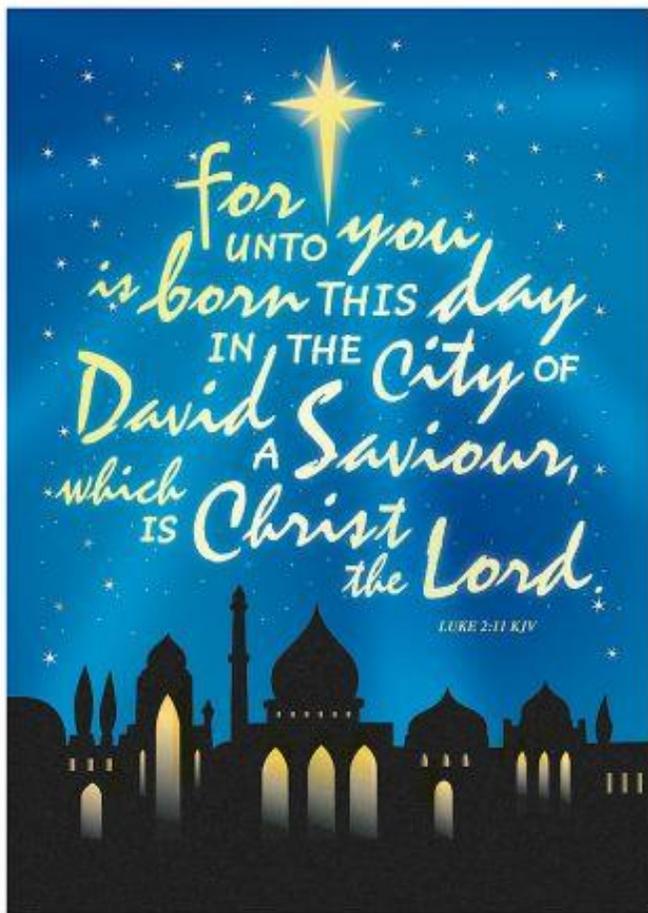


# Saltcoats St Cuthbert's Church Magazine



*December 2021*

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## **Stop Press**

### **Christmas Gift Card**

Ardrossan Presbytery is twinned with Milala Presbytery in Malawi. As part of our duty of care, a Christmas Gift Card has been prepared in the hope that congregations would be willing to sell these over the Festive Season.

These gift cards priced £5.00 will pay for a Mosquito Net for a family in Malawi. A friend, teacher or lollipop lady might appreciate this as an alternative Christmas gift.

I can source these for anyone wishing to purchase.

*William Parker*



## From the Minister.

We might think that a year with continuing restrictions due to the pandemic might feel slow to pass, and yet here we are in December, beginning another celebration of Advent. We should feel we are in a better place compared to this time last year. Thankfully, we were able to celebrate Christmas 2020 – just – before church buildings had to close for some three months. Now, while we may not be back into ‘full swing’, we are moving forward with a slight spring in our steps, able to sing God’s praise (with masks on) during Sunday services, and with our choir recently back to lead our singing and inspire us through anthems.

The world is, of course, not back ‘to normal’. Hopefully, we have learned by now that ‘normal’ is just a definition we put on to what we usually do. Our ‘normal’ is not ‘normal’ for people living in Yemen or Haiti. Our ‘normal’ is not the same ‘normal’ of our ancestors. ‘Normality’ evolves as we adapt to changes in the natural world or in scientific knowledge and technological development.

There are other changes ahead for the Church in Scotland, not the direct consequence of the pandemic, but resulting from the gradual movement away from the ‘normal’ pattern of people prior to the 1960s who attended Sunday services – even in the evening - because they always had in the past or were expected to be there in the present.

Maybe we would prefer the ‘old normality’ of church life and worship, but it is no longer there. We are in an ever-evolving ‘new normality’. If we are anxious that we will lose some of our ‘normal’ church practices as we move into a new chapter of church life, let us remember that our 2019 pre-pandemic ‘normal’ was not the same ‘normal’ of the Early Church just after the year AD 33!

And yet, still we gather for worship, still we baptise believers and their children in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Still we break and share bread, still we drink from the fruit of the vine, repeating the words of Jesus, “This is My Body broken for you. This is My Blood poured out for you.” The Good News of Christ’s life and death and resurrection is still the same some 2,000 years later and some 4,000 miles away from where it all happened, even if we now present His Gospel through different media, even if we sing new songs accompanied by different instruments, even if we modernise the translations of the original Greek of the New Testament and the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, even if the length and timing and siting of our worship experiences vary vastly across the years and across the miles, even if the Church in Scotland as we go forward will be different from what it was in 2019, 1961 or 1561.

The ‘new normality’ of church life and worship will carry forward the essential ‘ancient normal words and deeds’ of Jesus and His first disciples, but some of the ‘normalities’ accumulated by succeeding generations of worshippers according to their societal ‘norms’ may be ‘lost’.

As we look forward through Advent 2021 into a new liturgical year of Christ’s Church, let us rejoice that however different things may be, we are together in the living Presence of Jesus Christ, who is “the same yesterday, today and forever.” *Hebrews 13 v 8*

*With every blessing,*

*Sarah Nicol.*

## **Church Register**

**Death**      *“In My Father’s house are many mansions...”*

October      Mrs. C. Stewart, Saltcoats.

November    Mrs. D. Dickie, Stevenston.

## From the Treasurer

This has been another difficult year but hopefully there is a brighter future ahead. Although our offerings in 2021 will be in the region of £51,000 this is actually £5,000 less than in 2019. However as a result of much of our expenditure being less than in 2019 or 2020 it is expected that we will break even for 2021.

This reduction in expenditure will not continue. Our payments for Ministry and Mission which had been reduced by £7,000 for 2021, will be increased in 2022 by £5,000, and along with other expected increased costs our annual expenditure could increase by at least £12,000 in 2022. This would make our predicted deficit, with a small increase in income at least £10,000

We are however all grateful for everybody who has continued to keep their offerings up to date using all the methods previously mentioned, and hope and pray that this will continue.

Looking ahead however, it is hoped that the life of the church will be starting to get back to some sort of normality with more of the organisations meeting again.

I have received a letter from the North Ayrshire Foodbank thanking the church for the generosity of our members who contributed £340 in lieu of the usual Harvest Thanksgiving donations.

There will be a collection for the "Schiehallion ward of the Queen Elizabeth Children's Hospital" at the Christmas Eve Service. Anyone wishing to contribute to this can do so throughout December by placing their donation in a separate envelope marked Schiehallion Ward.

**FREEWILL ENVELOPES** These have already been distributed, either in person or with this magazine. If you have not received them or wish to contribute this way please let me know

I would like to take this opportunity of wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and trust and hope that 2022 will be much improved.

*Ann Turner 01294 462834*

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house

I searched for the tools to hand to my spouse

Instructions were studied and we were inspired

in hopes we could manage "Some Assembly Required."

The children were quiet (not asleep) in their beds

while Dad and I faced the evening with dread:

a kitchen, two bikes, Barbie's townhouse to boot!

And.., thanks to Grandpa, a train with a toot!

We opened the boxes, my heart skipped a beat

– let no parts be missing or parts incomplete!

Too late for last minute returns or replacement;

If we can't get it right, it goes in the basement!

When what to my worrying eyes should appear

but 50 sheets of directions, concise, but not clear,

With each part numbered and every slot named,

so if we failed, only we could be blamed.

More rapid than eagles the parts then fell out,

all over the carpet they were scattered about.

"Now bolt it! Now twist it! Attach it right there!

Slide on the seats, and staple the stair!



Hammer the shelves, and nail to the stand.”

Honey said hubby, “You just glued my hand.”

And then in a twinkling, I knew for a fact that  
all the toy dealers had indeed made a pact  
to keep parents busy all Christmas Eve night  
with “assembly required” till morning’s first light  
We spoke not a word but kept bent at our work,  
our eyes went bleary, our fingers all hurt.

Then laying the tools away in the chest,  
we fell into to bed for a well deserved rest.

But I said to my husband just before I passed out,  
“This will be the best Christmas, without any  
doubt.

Tomorrow we’ll cheer, let the holiday ring,  
and not have to run to the store for a thing!

We did it! We did it! The toys are all set  
for the perfect, most perfect, Christmas, I bet!”

Then off to dreamland and sweet repose

I grateful went, though I suppose  
there’s something to those self deluded

- cont.



cont. **I’d forgotten that BATTERIES are never included!**

### Christmas Greetings from the Manse



Sarah and Deborah send warm Christian greetings to friends in our St. Cuthbert’s Church family. We appreciate all your kindness and support through our time here, and particularly during the last year. We pray God’s blessings of hope, peace, love and joy upon you and your families this Christmas and into the New Year.

*With prayerful good wishes,  
Sarah and Deborah.*

**CROSS REACH**  
Care you can put your faith in

The final Christmas Card order has been placed and delivered, the sales for this year total £547.35 plus £75.00 donations.

I am so very grateful to the members of St. Cuthberts; without your continued support Crossreach would not have benefited so much.

I am so happy to report an increase in sales from last year of £146.20, thank you everyone.

*Margaret Kelso*

### **Blythwood shoebox appeal**



All 60 shoe boxes plus 3 large bags of miscellaneous items were uplifted on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. This is a tremendous total considering the current restrictions.

On behalf of Blythwood

Care, I would like to pass on my thanks to all who contributed.  
*Ann Turner*

## Advent and Christmas Services

Sunday services are at 10.45am as usual in the sanctuary.

**28 November Family Service** with the **Sacrament of Baptism** and the lighting of the first candle of **HOPE**

**5 December Gift Service** (gifts to be distributed through Social Services) with the lighting of the second candle of **PEACE**

**12 December Morning worship** with the lighting of the third candle of **LOVE**

**19 December Family Service** with the lighting of the fourth candle of **JOY**

**26 December Service of Carols and Lessons**

**There will be one informal Christmas Eve Service on 24 December held in the hall at 6pm. when there will be an opportunity to donate to the "Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity Schiehallion Appeal".**

You are warmly invited to share in all these services.



## Sunday Readers

Dec 5	Simon Hales	Jan 2	<b>LESLEY BOYLE</b>
12	Ann Turner	<b>9</b>	<b>ENA GROVE</b>
19	Sunday School	<b>16</b>	<b>CHRIS KNIGHT</b>
26	Choir Members	<b>23</b>	<b>ELIZABETH BARCLAY</b>
		<b>30</b>	<b>RAYMOND MONTGOMERIE</b>

Many thanks to all who volunteer. If any given date proves unsuitable, please arrange a swap from this list and please let me know. If anyone would like to join the rota of readers, that would be wonderful!

*Sarah.*

## The Guild invites you

The Women's Guild came about shortly after the formation of the Young Men's Guild in the early 1880s and, unlike the young men's organisation which eventually closed, over the years it went from strength to strength. In 1997 the name changed, dropping 'Women' and became 'The Guild' so men were invited to join too. It invites and encourages both women and men to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and enables them to express their faith in worship, prayer, action and fellowship.

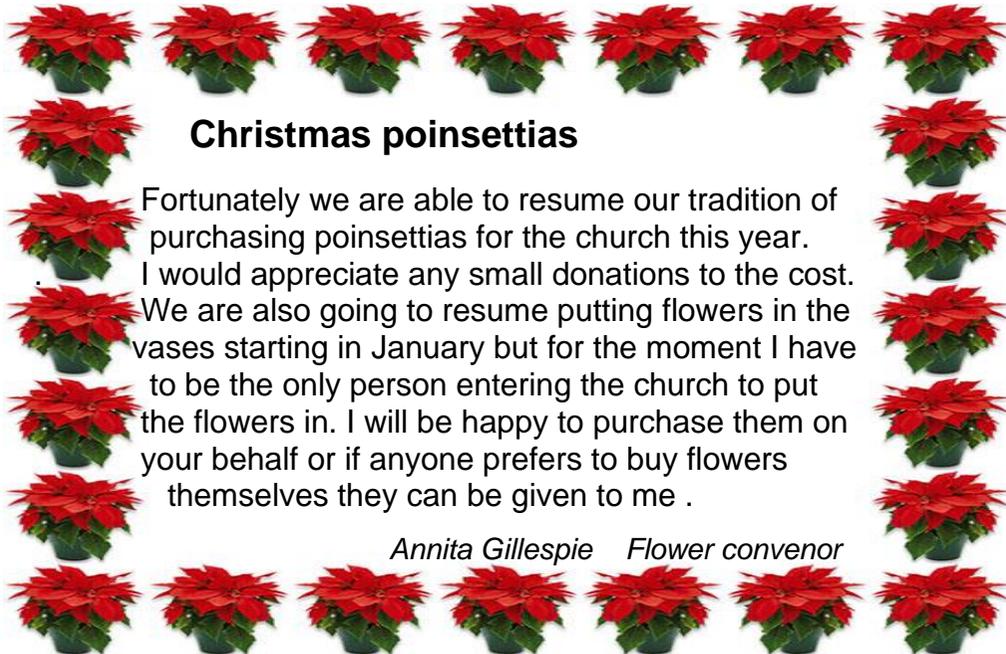
We cannot escape the knowledge that most Guilds are getting smaller as some members now find it impossible to attend meetings and new members are few and far between. Sadly, some groups have closed right across Scotland, but we believe that our existence is still very relevant to the church however, until we find ways to reenergise, the decline is going to be hard to prevent both locally and nationally. We are currently looking at when we can restart our regular meetings and would invite you all to consider becoming involved.

From 2pm on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Guilds Together in North Ayrshire, a group which represents all Guilds in the area, are holding an Advent meeting in the sanctuary of St Cuthbert's Church.

Please show your support by coming along and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of a Guild rally.

The usual COVID safe protocols will apply.

*Bea Nicholson*



## **Christmas poinsettias**

Fortunately we are able to resume our tradition of purchasing poinsettias for the church this year. I would appreciate any small donations to the cost. We are also going to resume putting flowers in the vases starting in January but for the moment I have to be the only person entering the church to put the flowers in. I will be happy to purchase them on your behalf or if anyone prefers to buy flowers themselves they can be given to me .

*Annita Gillespie Flower convenor*

## Afternoon Club

Dear friends, the Afternoon Club is up and running and we are coping well with having to do things differently. We are however due to stop for a break over the festive season.

We will close after our meeting on Monday 13th December— and resume again on Monday 10th of January 2022.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous new year.

*Nan Smith*

## Life and Work

Subscriptions for 2022 Life and Work magazine are due by the end of December. £36. Please pay Ann Turner.

To all my friends in the church family.

I wish you a Very Happy Christmas. It is many months since we were all together in St Cuthbert's. There have been many changes for everyone but hopefully our memories of good times will help us to carry on.

I wish you well in 2022 with Good Health and Happiness.

Best Wishes to all.

*Evelyn Slater.*

## Sunday School

Moving into advent we will be concentrating on the events leading up to the birth of Jesus; teaching the story of his birth.

A big thank you once again for all the donations of small change.

Please keep them coming.

God's blessings on you all.

*The Sunday school team*



A whole new year awaits us, Lord,  
the path we all must tread,  
And only you can see the way  
and just what lies ahead.  
Will there be days of happiness,  
with laughter, joy and fun?  
Or times when sadness comes along,  
and darkness hides the sun?  
The new year is a challenge, Lord,  
a chance to start anew,  
But we need courage, strength and hope,  
and love which comes from you.  
Please walk beside us through the year  
and all our fears dispel,  
Then, in our hearts,  
we'll hear your voice:  
"Go forward all is well."

*Iris Hesselden*

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*Mrs Bea Nicholson for Saltcoats St Cuthbert's Church of Scotland*

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