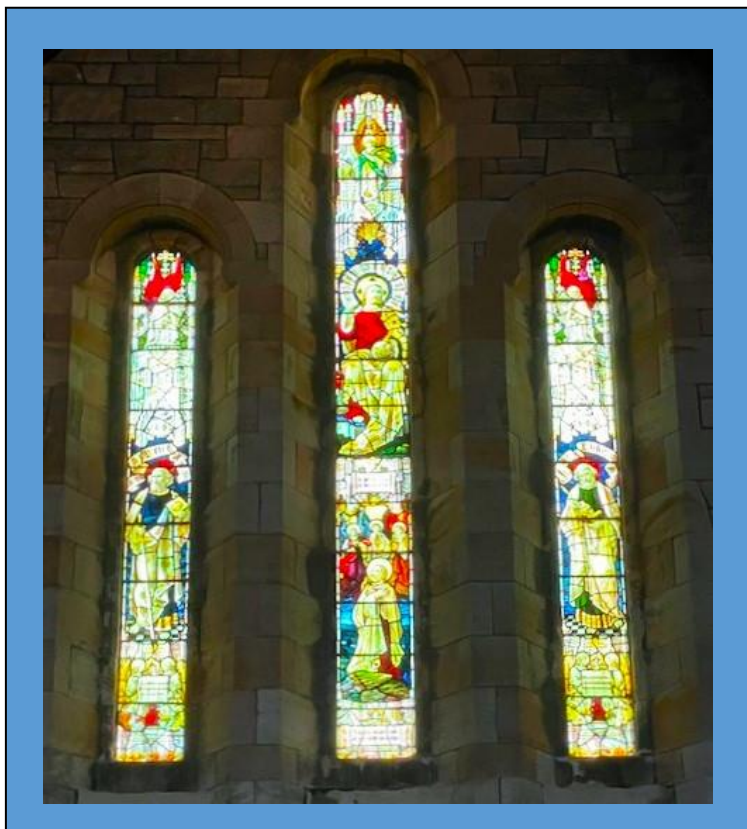


St. Cuthbert's Church Magazine



*Triple light window in the Chancel.
Original to the building and dedicated at
the opening service 3rd December, 1908*

December 2023

Guest Contributor

Rev. Alan Sorensen

The Christmas story is full of unexpected people popping up with profound things to give Mary & Joseph something to figure out: shepherds, wise men, and of course, the baby! Many in the congregation won't know who I am, but I've had the privilege of leading worship a few times this year and, having been invited to write a few words for the magazine, perhaps I'm just like one of those random individuals who popped up and offered their bit to the meaning of Christmas.

So, here's a thought: I love Christmas lights! The street decorations, buildings lit up and our trees shining so bright they attract moths from 20 miles away. I love it all. But they really only work when it's dark. In the daylight they're far less effective - it's actually because of the darkness that we appreciate the light so much.

Something dawned on me once during a Sunday School Nativity Play. Everything was exactly as you would expect – lines forgotten, costumes coming apart, the wee yins just wandering around waving at their mum. Even I missed my cue. It was just perfect! That's what makes a nativity play; if it all went perfectly it would be pretty dull! Now, I really don't wish anyone any ill, or that there should be any more darkness in the world, but I believe that since there IS a lot of darkness, our task is to pray for light, to be the light, but especially – like the play – to truly believe that the light shines IN the darkness.

For everyone in St. Cuthbert's, with the darkness of uncertainty hanging over the congregation; for all of us struggling with whatever cares are burdening us; for our country and our war-torn world – this is the time we celebrate that "the light has come into the world, and the darkness has NEVER overcome it!" And so I wish you, with faith, a very happy Christmas and a guid New Year.

All the best for this season of carols and calories!

Alan Sorensen.

Basis of Union Voting Results on Sunday 19th November

	Approve	not approving	Abstain
Saltcoats: North.	26	2	1
Ardrossan: Park.	55	13	0
Ardrossan and Saltcoats: Kirkgate.	59	0	0
Saltcoats: St Cuthbert's.	14	65	0

Decision on clause 7. Rev. N. Chikanya to be minister

Saltcoats: North.	27	2
Ardrossan: Park.	39	29
Saltcoats: St Cuthbert's.	17	61

From the Roll Keeper

Had the Basis of Union been approved on 19th November by all four congregations St. Cuthbert's Church would have closed on 31st December and from 1st January 2024 all administration would have been taken over by the new united charge. As reported elsewhere the congregation did not give that approval.

The meeting scheduled for 6th December may help to give some indication as to whether this may still happen or what alternatives can be considered.

As soon as Sunday worship ceases in St. Cuthbert's, from that date it is likely that, as Roll Keeper, I will cease to have access to make any changes in the Roll. In the event of the 4-way union going ahead the members still on the Roll will automatically be transferred to the Roll of the new congregation, Ardrossan and Saltcoats Church of Scotland.

Anyone wishing to opt out of that process would require to notify me that they would like their Transference Certificate (lines) to be given or sent to them.

It is less clear what will happen if St. Cuthbert's Church and members do not become involved in the Union although the same documentation (Certificate of Transference) will always be available wherever it is held.

William Parker Roll Keeper

From the Session Meeting

At the Session meeting on 23rd November and following the vote on Sunday 19th November, moderating the meeting Rev. Alan Ward stated that the path for St Cuthbert's will now not be straightforward.

The convenor and vice convenor of the Planning Committee will have to visit to ascertain from the congregation why it had rejected the Basis of Union when the Kirk Session had previously accepted it. This document had proposed a 4-way Union comprising Ardrossan Park, Saltcoats North, Kirkgate and St Cuthberts. The other three congregations had agreed to this 4-way Union but they may now need to be asked to vote on a 3-way Union which does not include St Cuthberts.

The time frame is very tight if there is to be any chance of resolving all of the issues by the end of the year.

Revs McWilliams and Vint, Convenor and vice convenor of the Presbytery Planning Committee, have agreed to come to meet with the congregation at 7p.m. on Wednesday 6th December.

The Session received the resignation of the Session Clerk on 10th November. The post will become vacant on 31st December. No one has yet offered to take on the position and so the church faces the possibility of entering 2024 with no Session Clerk, minister or Interim Moderator. The Moderator of the meeting asked the Session to prayerfully consider this vacancy over the coming weeks.

It was agreed that if Sunday worship continued in St Cuthbert's into January the Guild and Afternoon Clubs could continue to meet until that situation changes.

William Parker. Session Clerk

Sunday School

The Sunday School will accept donations of small change until the 17th of December to allow time to get it counted and let everyone know the total before Christmas. Thanks to all who have contributed It is much appreciated.

God's blessings from Sunday School Team

From the Treasurer

I have delayed writing this to the very last minute as I was hoping that some decision would be made and I could give clear instructions as treasurer on the way ahead. As this has not happened and there may be a decision made before the next magazine, I have no option but to detail what I THINK will happen in each case.

If we stay open into January 2024 I will continue to be the treasurer for St. Cuthbert's and everything will go on as usual. People who normally contribute using free will offering envelopes will be issued with a new set before the end of the year. The only difference is that they will look slightly different, purely because they have been sourced from a different printer. Sequi who normally supplied them has ceased to trade.

Despite our vote to reject the merger into the new parish, if by some twist of fate we are told that we have to close on 31 December things will be a little more complicated. I would assume people will no longer wish to contribute; members who give by Standing Order will have to advise their bank to stop payments and of course there will be no service to bring offering envelopes to.

Should we eventually decide to join the new parish the Treasurer of the present Kirkgate, John Stewart, will be the treasurer and you should contact him if you wish to either set up a new Standing Order or obtain Free Will Offering envelopes or arrange Gift Aid.

On a personal level I wish to thank the congregation of St. Cuthbert's for "taking us in". We arrived from a very difficult situation feeling extremely broken. You welcomed Roy and I, encouraged us to become one of the family and allowed us the privilege of serving you. We have enjoyed your fellowship and wish everyone well wherever you go.

Finally, I would like to thank Ann Turner, without her help and support I would have found the position of treasurer nearly impossible.

Margaret Kelso

Treasurer

A few artefacts collected over the lifetime of the church

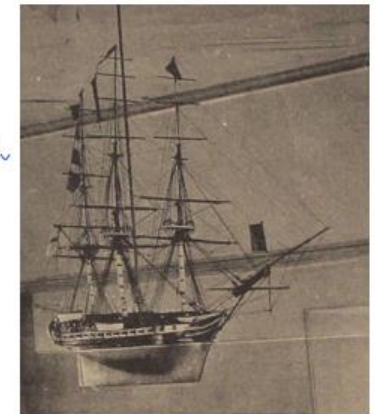


Lectern 1928



Dedicated in 1929 to celebrate the semi-jubilee of serving minister Rev D D Rees

Frigate gifted in 1804 and displayed in both churches until the present day



Organ 1912



St. Cuthbert's Embroidery 1992



Smaller stained glass windows added in 1948

Larger windows below back gallery added in 1976.

Photos courtesy of S. McMahon & W. Mitchell

Pray without Walls

Go to the church that has no doors and where the walls are made of carved granite. Sit under its moving roof on a pew that smells like fresh laundry, fold your hands quietly until God joins you in this most ancient of churches, and wonder out loud: “when will I too, be made anew?”



I find it hard to believe that it was as long as 22 years ago (2001) that the ‘Church Without Walls’ concept was brought to the Church of Scotland’s wider congregation. It talked of ‘reshaping’ and ‘releasing’, of investing, modelling and permitting. Ten years later, the steering group reported to the General Assembly about a number of sub-initiatives led by the Mission and Discipleship Committee from ‘Future Focus’ and ‘Why Believe’ to ‘Pray it Forward’ and other bits in between. We were all urged to continue in our efforts to rise to the challenges of mission and ministry.

The responses varied across the nation, but here we are, very much still a ‘Church Within Walls’; a religious institution that has lost sight of its purpose because it is enclosed in a model of church that belongs to a former age. Nothing really changed. Unfortunately, the Presbytery Plans which have been submitted across Scotland are perpetuating this model, just in fewer buildings. The vanishing point is likely to be three rather than two dimensional and sooner rather than later unless we act now.

Church appears when people meet in Jesus’ name. When they start to rediscover that church is community not building - that when we meet in Jesus’ name we become a spiritual house. It is a very scary thing to even think about moving away from our familiar patterns but maybe we could start by Praying Without Walls.

Two verses from Matthew 18 give us a clue.

19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

So, the challenge while we deal with the grief that St Cuthbert's may no longer be a regular place of worship within the Church of Scotland, is to go with one or two friends to pray. In a perfect world, it would be somewhere outside, but recognising this is the West of Scotland and the weather isn't always inclement, see if you can find somewhere peaceful and quiet but under cover!

"Father, thank You for making us important to your plans (especially when we find out what they are ...). Help us to believe it of ourselves and every other person that we meet today."

Keeping the congregation of St Cuthbert's and other congregations across Scotland and beyond close to my heart and in my prayers.

Bea Nicholson

Afternoon Club

Thank you!

Many thanks to the ladies of the Afternoon Club and the congregation for continuing to support many worthwhile charities, such as baby hats and cannula sleeves for premature babies, twiddle muffs for people who have dementia, knee rugs for a local nursing home, baby blankets for Malawi, World Mission and Crossreach stamp appeals and of course the beautiful poppy fall. These charities are so grateful for the ongoing generosity from St Cuthbert's for so many years, even during lockdowns !!

Thank you all.

Nan Smith

Christian Aid

Grateful thanks to everyone who gave so generously to the Middle East Crisis Appeal. A total of £200 has been sent to Christian Aid.

Graeme Sutherland

Church Flowers and Book Stall

A great big thanks to everyone who has supported the flower fund over the year and enabled me to put flowers in the church. I shall be putting some poinsettias in later in December as well as the usual flowers.

We have a very wide variety of books on the table outside the hall. Please help yourselves and put money in donation box. Three books for £1.

Annita Gillespie (flower convener) 01294 468101

Data Protection

Saltcoats St Cuthbert's recognises the importance of your privacy and personal information. Your email address, name and any other information you provide such as address and phone number are held in strict confidence. We only keep your information so that we can stay connected with you. We do not sell or share your information with anyone outside of the Church of Scotland. Please refer to our General Privacy Notice which can be accessed from our website and is also available on the church noticeboard at the end of the link corridor. If your personally identifiable information changes, or if you no longer wish to keep in contact, you may correct, update or deactivate it by letting your elder know or emailing us at webmaster@saltcoats-stcuthberts.org.uk. We will respond to your request as quickly as possible and certainly within 30 days. We will retain your information only if you remain interested in our church and at your request will delete your details from our records.

Please note that unless you have requested removal, this information will be passed across to the new combined parish of Ardrossan and Saltcoats Church of Scotland (Charity Number SC023003) on 1st January 2024.

Bea Nicholson for Saltcoats St Cuthbert's Church of Scotland

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) took effect in the UK on 25 May 2018

Hymn Corner CH4 273 O come, O come, Emmanuel (*Veni, Emmanuel*)

As the rush of Christmas comes upon us, we forget about that important season of Advent. This is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity and the return of Christ at the second coming. A hymn that is sung frequently throughout Advent is 'O come, O come, Emmanuel' and is based on the Latin antiphons which were sung during the early Church. The origins of these short verses are uncertain although they probably date from the 6-7th century. There were originally seven antiphons and in monastic institutions they were chanted at the evening service of Vespers by obedientiaries (*officers*).

Originally the antiphons were never sung together but only one on each of the seven days leading up to Christmas. However, in the 12th century five of them were put together to form the verses of a Latin hymn beginning 'Veni, veni, Emmanuel' (O come, O come Emmanuel) with the refrain 'Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel, nascetur pro te, Israel' (Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel) sung at the end of each verse.

In 1851, John Mason Neale (1818-66) translated the first five verses into English and turned them into a hymn. It began with 'Draw nigh, draw nigh, Emmanuel' and appeared in his book Medieval Hymns. The following year he revised his translation to produce the version in our hymn book today.

This hymn undoubtedly derives much of its powerful sense of longing from the tune 'Veni Immanuel' which has accompanied Neale's revised translation since 1854. It seems to derive from a tune in a French Mass setting in the National Library of Portugal in Lisbon, which itself was an adaption of a plainsong prayer. Some authorities say that Neale himself copied the tune from the setting, others that it was copied by an English Bishop on a visit to Lisbon in 1853. Eventually, the tune was arranged by the Rev Thomas Helmore (1811-90), an Anglican clergyman who was one of the pioneers in the revival of the use of the Gregorian chant in the services of the episcopal church.

As we sing this hymn during this season of advent, remember the refrain is written as '*Fortissimo*' (very loud), rejoicing, that Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Peter Livingstone



Love came down
at Christmas.

Be sure to "come down"

to

St. Cuthbert's Church

Saltcoats

Sunday 17th December

3.30pm

All age Service of Lessons & Carols

Refreshments to follow

All welcome

A rehearsal will held on Thursday 14th at 7pm in St. Cuthbert's Church
for anyone who would like to join our augmented choir for the occasion.
Names for choir should be registered by 1st December at

07931553952

Hope to see you there.

Scottish Charity number: SC002950





We've
 often heard
 the story of
 Jesus and His birth.
 We use the phrase quite
 freely: "The Saviour of the earth!"
 But do you know the meaning? And do you
 know it's true?
 And do you know the birth
 of Jesus happened just for you?
 And do you know He loves you,
 and that is why he came? If there were
 only you on earth, He still would do the same!
 For yes, He
 thinks you're worth it!
 And yes, His love is real. And yes,
 today, He knows exactly what it is you feel.
 So don't just hear a story: He wants you to be part
 Of this year's special chapter when you let Him in your heart.
 Just
 open
 up
 and
 listen
 to what God has to say.
 Then be a part of the
 unending story,
 from today.

The final Christmas Card order has been placed and delivered. Sales from 20 members this year totalled £394.95.

I am so very grateful to the members of St.Cuthbert's. Without your continued support Crossreach would not benefit.

Margaret Kelso

Guild News

Visit of the Guild General Secretary

At our first meeting in November, Karen Gillon, Guild General Secretary, came to update us on Guild activities and initiatives.

She thanked St. Cuthbert's Guild for their generous donation of £10,000 towards the development of the Young Adults' Guild throughout Scotland and another £10,000 towards a project in Malawi.

The Malawi project would take the form of three regional workshops to deliver leadership training to existing and up-coming women leaders, a National Conference to celebrate the role of women in Central Church of Africa Presbyterian over the last 100 years, and to map the way forward. Finally, the publication of a book which would be used to inspire women in leadership

Donation to South Beach House

Guild members visited South Beach House to present a cheque for £10,000. This donation is to be used for a 'Namaste Therapy' which offers specialist care.

The manner of Namaste Care is described as 'holistic' because it is incorporated into all aspects of daily life and involves a range of physical, sensory and emotional approaches.

These approaches support residents with advanced dementia in many activities, for example managing pain, making sure they are getting enough to eat and drink and use of music to manage anxiety and stress.

Three Towns Guilds Quiz



Champion Quizzers

Wooden spooners



Team Allsorts



Team Dolly mixtures

Members of the Three Towns Guilds and friends gathered on Wednesday afternoon to enjoy a quiz competition and fellowship over 'Afternoon Tea' – with Kandy Bar cakes and sandwiches. The winning team each received a Guild china mug and the last team – well, you guessed – wooden spoons!

Christmas Lunch

On Sunday 3rd December, the Guild hosted and sponsored a Christmas lunch for the congregation. We hope that all who attended enjoyed this special celebration meal.

National Big Sing

Some members took part in the National Guild Advent 'Big Sing' on Friday 1st December in St. George's Tron, Glasgow

The last meeting before Christmas on Wednesday December 13th will be to consider the future. Members are asked to bring a childhood photo of themselves.

The Guild wish the members of the congregation a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.