



The Cairn

News from St. Anne's Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Church in Dunbar



What is Advent all about?

When you are young, Advent is that time of year that seems to last for ever. When would Christmas actually arrive? Or, more accurately, when can we open our presents?!

When my brother was nearly four, he really understood what Christmas was all about: presents! When Christmas Eve actually came, he was wildly excited. Being nearly 10 years older, I was given the job of tiring him out in the hope it would bring sleep to him. He had been told that Father Christmas wouldn't come if he wasn't asleep - telling him that didn't bring about any desire in him for going to bed. So, it was decided we would take him for a walk in the dark.



Inside your bumper Dec-Jan issue

Christmas poetry



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The Creed: Summarized



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Reflections on time



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We didn't get very far, in fact not even to the end of our garden path. As he stepped out of the front door, he looked across at the top of the hill a mile or so away. There was a red light shining out from near its summit. In a blind panic he ran into the house and up to bed shouting, "Father Christmas is coming, I can see Rudolph's red nose!"

Surprisingly, he went to sleep. We only told him, many years later, that what he had seen was the red neon light of the pub sign up on the hill!

As I said, at nearly four, Christmas was all about getting presents from Father Christmas. Yes, even at his age, he knew about the star, stable, wise men and baby Jesus plus his mum Mary and dad Joseph. Knew about them, but still presents were the important part.

He's older now, a lot. I'm no longer a 13-year-old trying to get his little brother to bed on Christmas eve. So what is Advent about now I'm older?

Well, it's not just a time that holds back getting presents. It is an important time of preparation for what Christmas offers to us. We do need to step back from the headlong rush of life, especially what can seem the endless pressure to have the perfect Christmas. Food, decorations, entertainment, presents, all just right. That first Christmas in Palestine wasn't perfect. An arduous journey, no accommodation booked, then the baby ends up arriving. A mess.

A mess, but something occurred that changed the world. A child was born who brought hope to the hopeless.

Many years ago I purchased the Wild Goose Worship Group book, *Cloth for the Cradle*. I adapted the Advent litany on page 31 to become the liturgy for lighting the Advent candles. Having

five verses, it fitted well: adding a verse every Sunday of Advent with the final verse added on Christmas morning.

The verses tell us who Christ will reach out to (everyone), in what places (everywhere), how (many ways), what will be the effect (surprising?) and finally state that ... (you will have to come on Christmas morning to hear the full version!).

I did add one line at the start of each verse, "Hush and Listen, Hush and Listen, Christ is coming". Each verse of the Wildgoose litany ended with everyone joining in saying, "He is coming to make all things new."

Hush and listen,
Christ is coming
and is calling us to
listen. Let us hear
his voice in our
journey through
Advent and
beyond.

Rev Geoff Shutt



A gift of new worship books

At our Thursday communion service, we have of late, been using the pink *Methodist Communion* liturgy booklet. Unfortunately we didn't have enough copies to enable us to use them on a Sunday morning. As they are not in print at the moment, I put an appeal out across Methodism in Scotland to see if any copies were available in the Scotland Circuit.

Rev Helen Garton, minister of Clydebank Methodist Church, responded with an offer of 30 of the large maroon *Methodist Worship* books. On a very wet and miserable day in November I drove across to Pollokshaws to meet with Helen and collect the books from her.

The Clydebank Church are pleased to know that their surplus books will now be used; I am pleased that we can use this valuable resource at St Anne's.



The maroon books contain the various communion services that are within our pink books plus a lot more. Included are prayers and readings suitable for private contemplation in church. Please take a look when you have time.

Our thanks go to Rev Helen Garton and the folk from Clydebank who have gifted us these books at no cost to us other than a wet and congested journey to Glasgow.

Rev Geoff Shutt

Rectory news

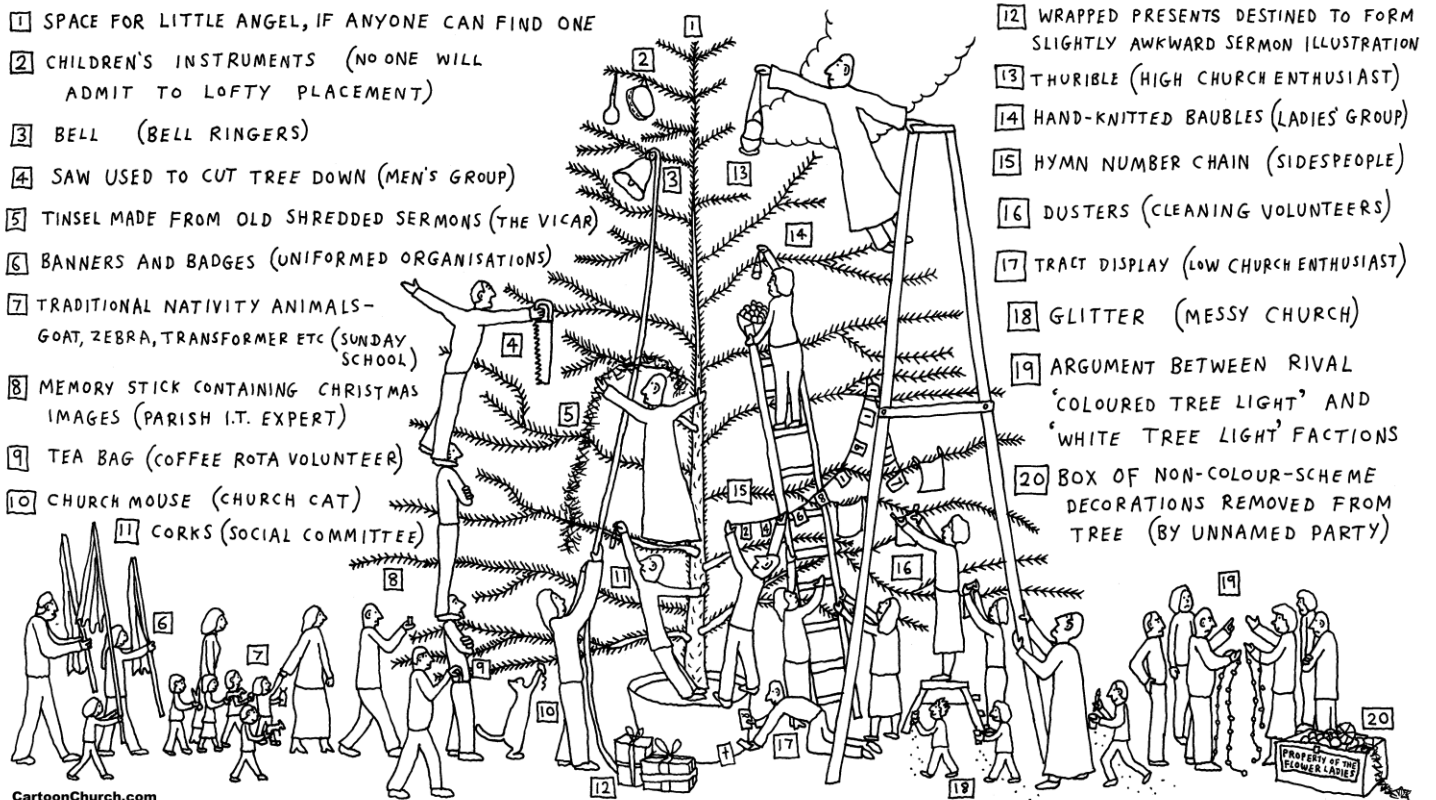
We get the keys to the new Rectory on 10th December. It is in great condition, but we are hoping to clean it and have it ready for Harriet and her family in January. We will be looking for a few helpers so if you are available, please let me know.

David Robins and the Buildings Group



THE PARISH CHRISTMAS TREE

THE THINGS THAT ARE HANGING ON IT (AND THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONE THE HANGING)



Grateful thanks

I am very aware that I have not managed to express our family's heartfelt thanks to our friends at St Anne's for all your love, kindness and prayer since Richard's fall outside our house in mid-August. I did not attempt to reply to many messages as life was overwhelming, but I have felt carried through that time.

When Richard was gradually becoming more lucid, we both really appreciated your cards, thoughts and messages, and the candle being lit on Thursday mornings. Those Thursday mornings at St Anne's were such an important part of Richard's life in Dunbar.

Special thanks to everyone for helping to arrange everything in the church for the Thanksgiving Service on November 7th, and for arranging and serving the refreshments afterwards.

We are especially grateful for the enormous support Anne Harvey gave throughout the last two months of Richard's life, even when she was on the Isle of Wight. In the days after she returned home, Anne gave so much time to helping me, Jo and Geoff make rather last minute decisions and changes to the funeral and thanksgiving services.

We knew we were in safe hands.

And on 7th November it was warm and sunny, which was wonderful.

Anthea Huband



Gabriel's Revelation

Shepherds, they say, were the fools of their day,
the ones who were butts of the jokes—
Fred Flintstone with sheep, Homer Simpson asleep,
imperfectly ordin'ry blokes.

They're nobody famous, just some ignoramuses
anyone might string along—
neither pious nor holy, they take things in slowly
and often get much of it wrong.

So they're out on the down, looking over the town,
feeling vaguely that life's passed them by,
just minding their own, prob'ly having a moan,
when an angel gatecrashes their sky.

Well, the herdsmen took fright at this startling sight
(some rustic expletives were spoken)
while the seraph looked round at the desolate ground
and decided his satnav was broken.

He'd expected to come to a media scrum
for a major announcement like this,
to communicate to the good and the great
the arrival of endless bliss.

Celebs should be present, not a handful of peasants
at night on a freezing moor:
such a strange target market for heralds to hark at—
yet he'd seen something like it before.

He'd been sent to appear somewhere north of Judaea
to an unmarried teenage maid
with a tale so alarming he oozed his most charming
"My dear, you must not be afraid!"

He explained her behaviour had put her in favour
with the heavenly powers that be,
and to tell her bridegroom that she'd have to make womb
for a special delivery.

To the angel's surprise she looked straight in his eyes
and said, "Fine, but I don't figure how,
because Joseph and I haven't yet..." he said "My,
we don't need go into that now!".

He covered his fluster with angelic bluster:
"Don't question the method—believe!
He has strategies still to accomplish his will
of which you could never conceive!".

He was struck by her youth and the staggering truth
he had just so abruptly confided
when the girl bowed her head and quietly said:
"Let it be as the Lord has decided".

It was going quite well (though he then had to tell
the fiancé, and scared him to heck—
a small jobbing builder who hardly fulfilled an
ideal foster-God-parent spec).

Now the nine months are through and the baby is due
and it's time to inform them of why,
so here he is talking to these faces gawking
wide-open-mouthed up to the sky.

As Gabriel hovered, he felt deeply bovered:
this was really a bit of shambles—
teenagers, brickies, now this group of ... thickies—
they seemed such extraordinary gambles.

Here's God planning to save everyone from the grave
and you'd think he'd be quite risk averse,

keep his cards to his chest and use only the best—
not entrust everything to the worst.

It was almost as though he was trying to show
that he didn't need forceful or clever—
give him any lame horses or dodgy resources,
he was going to fix it, whatever.

Gabriel thought back a bit, and it started to fit
when considering what it all meant:
God's resolute choices of renegade voices
were more than an accident.

He thought down the ages of prophets and sages
whose hopes of success seemed like zero—
Abraham, Nehemiah, David, Ruth, Jeremiah,
each one an improbable hero—

he thought of the stories of unlikely glories,
of Joseph, sold off without pity,
of Gideon the nerd and Elisha—absurd!—
and a brass band that blew down a city,
for that's how it is, this behaviour of his,
it's his *modus operandi*
to choose the obscure or the dull or the poor—
frankly, anyone who's handy,

and at last it was plain to his angelic brain
that the God he was messaging for
would be nobody now so that all—anyhow—
would be somebody for evermore.

Gabriel took out his scroll and let it unroll
and said "OK, you lot, listen up.
Those who've told you the prize is reserved for the wise
would appear to have sold you a pup,

for a Saviour is born this remarkable morn
and his name it is Christ, the Lord
then he added a bit that seemed awfully fit
but that Luke somehow didn't record:

"One day this child will see men reconciled
in a world that's been turned upside down,
where the best will be worst, the last will be first
and a beggar can carry a crown.

You'll find him down there, in a room cold and bare,
and it looks like a pauper's birth,
but what's born here is peace that will spread without cease
till it reaches all people on earth

And the angels joined in with a heavenly din
Deo Gloria in Excelsis
for the child that's now grown, and the grace that's been shown
is ours—and everyone else's.

Godfrey Rust, www.wordsout.co.uk, submitted by Anne Harvey



<< Gabriel, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

O I will haste to Bethlehem

O I will haste to Bethlehem
This holy Christmas day,
And with bowed head, on bended knee
My humble homage pay,
Where Jesus' head - O holy Guest!
Lay on a lowly human breast.

And I will yield to Him my heart
More mean than stable place,
And lowlier than the stable rude
Which hid his kingly face,
That He may have, if He but deign,
A throne where He in love may reign.

**Agnes Gilmour Guthrie,
submitted by Diana Buchan -
Agnes Gilmour Guthrie's granddaughter**



Bethlehem image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

The Nicene Creed: In Summary

Stuart finishes his insightful series on the Creed - Thank you, Stuart for imparting your learning with us month by month (Ed.)

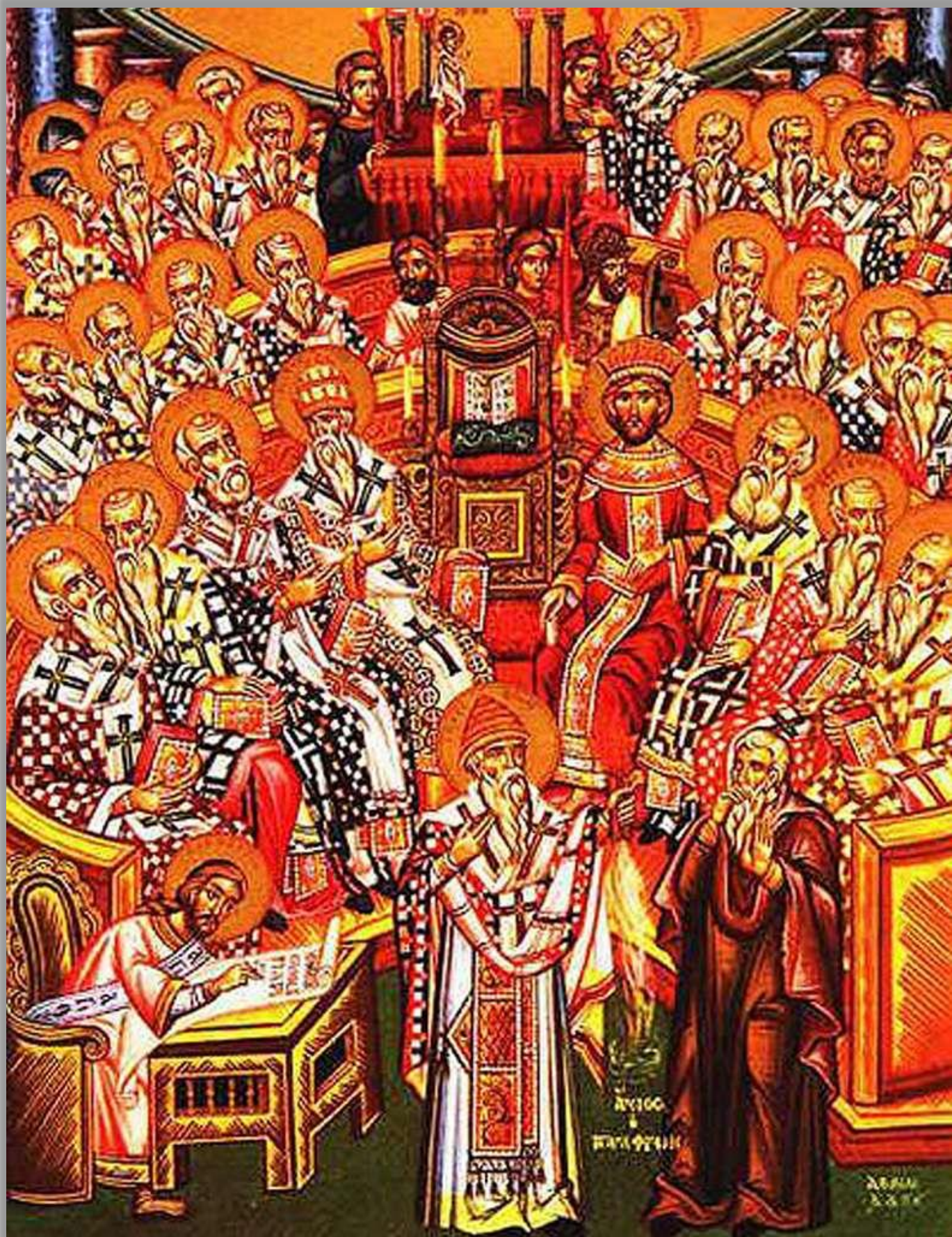
The Nicene Creed was first articulated in 325AD. It is no accident that it contains the things it does - it reflects the time in which it was drawn up and the controversies and insights of that period. We might have written it differently. We may well find elements in it difficult to understand or hard to swallow. However, we should not reject any part of it before we've considered more than one way of interpreting these.

There is a sort of religious zeal which has an important thing in common with a sort of hostility to religion: they both seem to say that the answers to questions about religion are clear; and that there is no mystery or vagueness about the matter. Both are far removed from an approach which holds:

- that our efforts at defining religious truth are never precise;
- that the heart of the matter is swathed in great mystery; and
- that our statements of doctrine never tell the whole story.

We should therefore not be intimidated by statements from the past. Neither should we regard them as liable to suffocate free thought or freeze our own contemporary attempts to say what our Faith is. We should treat them with the honour and respect due to expressions which have stood the test of centuries and carried the acceptance of the Christian community. Our challenge is not to jettison them when they fail to fit our patterns of thought, but to produce our own responses to Christ, permitting ancient and new to work together on the imaginations of any who wish to consider an old religion claiming to be capable of renewal.

Stuart Ritchie



^^ The First Council of Nicaea (Eastern Orthodox icon). Wikimedia Commons

Time, that sleekit old friend

There's a turn-of-the-year feeling to this beautiful piece from our in-house creative writer, Rab

As I get older, I've realised time isn't the thief I once thought it was. It's more of a canny companion, just a bit quicker on its feet these days.

I used to think of time as something that crept in to steal my youth and opportunity, but not so much now. Time's not out to rob me; all my memories are safely filed away, ready to be dusted off when nostalgia strikes or when a bit of cheer is needed.

And, even at my age, there's still time to make dreams come true, after all, growing old is mandatory, but growing up is optional, so my mantra is "have fun, and stop worrying about the clock".

As a lad, time felt generous. It stretched out like long summer holidays, each day overflowing with adventure: climbing trees, swimming in the river or off the harbour wall, skinned knees patched with plasters, plundering apples in the Autumn, and games of fitba under the streetlights, only ending at bedtime, that daft invention of parents who'd forgotten what being a kid was like.

Then, somewhere along the way, the years began slipping by, quicker with each passing one. You blink, and it's Monday again. The Christmas tree's barely back in the loft before the decorations are appearing in the shops. Weeks slip by like pages in a well-loved book, each chapter shorter than the last.

I sometimes think there's a wee hamster on a treadmill inside the clock in my head, running ever faster and making the hands whirl round and round. Back when I was young, an hour felt like an eternity. Now, an hour's about the time it takes to find my glasses,

realise they've been on my head all along, and then forget what I actually needed them for.

And yet, there's a quiet kind of grace to time. Its quickening is a gentle reminder that the days are precious. Each one, however fleeting, carries its own pleasures: a perfectly brewed cup of tea just when you need it, a grandchild's laugh that becomes infectious, or the Northern Lights appearing just when you thought you'd missed them. Even the small, ordinary days can glow if you let them.

So aye, time's a canny trickster. It sneaks past when you're busy, but if you stop, really stop, you can still hear it ticking along like a friendly old clock, keeping you company and nudging you gently forward.

And finally, I'm reminded of a Billy Connolly quote: "Whenever I think time is going too fast, I just go to the Post Office."

Rab Shields



Noticeboard

Community Carols

6th December 6pm
Comrie Avenue Play Park

12th December 6pm
Moray Avenue Small Park
(Between No's 42 & 43)

19th December 6pm
Beveridge Links Green





Nine Lessons and Carols

Belhaven Hill School Choir
and Dunbar Choral
Society.

St Anne's Episcopal and Methodist Church
Dunbar

7pm 8th December 2025

Followed by alcohol free mulled wine and mince pies.

DONATIONS WELCOME TO SUPPORT DUNBAR FISHING COMMUNITY RECOVERY



CHRISTMAS *Community Carol Sing*

14 DECEMBER, 3PM
St Anne's Church, Dunbar

All are welcome to this special service
hosted by Edinburgh District Sea Cadets
and supported by local groups to benefit
local fisherman

CAROL SINGING AND
FESTIVE READINGS FOLLOWED
BY MINCE PIES AND
MULLED PUNCH



For details contact Chaplain Suzie Fletcher 07973960544

ROTARY CLUB OF DUNBAR

ANGEL TREE

2025



For many children and families Christmas may be a struggle and not the celebration so many of us enjoy.

Many continue to be adversely affected by the circumstances of the economy, rising costs and fuel poverty.

By donating a gift to a specific child in our community, you would be making Christmas a little easier and a great deal happier for them.

Choosing an Angel couldn't be easier!

Christmas Trees decorated with Angel Tags are located at **Dunbar Library**, the vestibule of **St Anne's Church**, the **Church Hall of Belhaven Church** and within **BeGreen shop** on the High Street.

Each Angel tag will describe the gender, age and interest/wishes of a child. If you wish to donate, simply select a tag from the tree and purchase the gift fulfilling the wishes on the tag.

Instructions on where and by when to return the **unwrapped gifts, with the** Angel tag, along with some helpful suggestions are attached to the back of each Angel tag.

Should you wish to make a cash donation for a specific Angel, we would be happy to purchase the gift for the child on your behalf.

By selecting an Angel Tag from the tree, you will be helping a family celebrate Christmas a little more easily.

Silent reflective mornings at St Anne's

First Saturday of the month at
1030 for an hour

3rd January

7th February

7th March

2nd May

6th June

All welcome



PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE
THE INSTITUTION OF
HARRIET JOHNSTON
AS RECTOR OF
ST ANNE'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL &
METHODIST CHURCH, DUNBAR

2PM 24TH JANUARY 2026

ST ANNE'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL & METHODIST
CHURCH, 1 WESTGARE, DUNBAR, EH42 1ZN

**FOLLOWED BY AFTERNOON TEA AT DUNBAR DAY
CENTRE**

Thursdays at St Anne's Church

10.30 am

Quiet Communion Service
followed by discussion about faith and life

12.00 midday

Prayers for peace - gather at the Peace Pole

www.stannesdunbar.org.uk

CUPPA



TUESDAYS
10AM - 12NOON



CAKE



ST ANNE'S
CHURCH



CHAT

Come on in, the kettle's hot!

Take what you need
Give what you can
Everyone is welcome

www.stannesdunbar.org.uk



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

ST. ANNE'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL &
METHODIST CHURCH
1 WESTGATE, DUNBAR EH42 1JL

Silent Reflective Morning Saturday 6th
December 10.30am

Nine Lessons & Carols with Belhaven Hill
School Choir & Dunbar Choral,
Monday 8th December at 7pm

Christmas Eve Crib Service at 6.00pm

Christmas Eve Carols and Communion, at
11.30pm

Christmas Day Family Celebration with
Communion at 10.30am

Readings and Rotas

Sunday 7th December - Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:1-12

Readings: Mike

Intercessions: Noreen

Chalice: Stuart

Organ: Brian

Sunday 14th December - Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10; Matthew 11:2-11

Readings: Brian

Intercessions: Robert

Chalice: Robert

Organ: George

Sunday 21st December - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16; Matthew 1:18-end

Readings: Rosemary

Intercessions: Sharon

Chalice: Sharon

Organ: Brian

Christmas Eve Crib Service

Organ: David

Christmas Eve Carols and Communion

Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-14

Readings: David

Intercessions: Mark

Chalice: Robert

Organ: Caitriona

All readings use
the New Revised
Standard Version
of the Bible

Christmas Day Family Celebration

Isaiah 52:7-10; John 1:1-14

Readings: Chris

Intercessions: Geoff

Chalice: Geoff

Organ: Diana

Sunday 28th December - First Sunday after Christmas

Readings TBC

Readings: Sharon

Intercessions: Robert

Chalice: Robert

Organ: Brian

Sunday 4th January - Second Sunday after Christmas

Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-18

Readings: Caitriona

Intercessions: Noreen

Chalice: Noreen

Organ: Diana

Sunday 11th January - Baptism of the Lord

Acts 19:34-43; Matthew 3:13-end

Readings: Alasdair

Intercessions: Anne

Chalice: Anne

Organ: Brian

Sunday 18th January - Methodist Covenant Service

Deuteronomy 29:10-15;

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Mark 14:22-25

Readings: Alison

Intercessions: Mark

Chalice: Stuart

Organ: George

Sunday 25th January - Third Sunday after Epiphany

Readings TBC

Readings: Robert

Intercessions: Sharon

Chalice: Sharon

Organ: Brian



Services at St. Anne's

Sunday

10.30am - Holy Communion

With Young Service activities every Sunday during Advent

Thursday

10.30am - Holy Communion followed by coffee and discussion

12.00pm - Prayers at the Peace Pole



Useful Contacts

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Organ Enquiries Brian Dale: organist@stannesdunbar.org.uk

Magazine (subscriptions and contributions) and Social Media comms@stannesdunbar.org.uk

Please send Cairn contributions by the last Sunday of the month

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Find us on 

www.stannesdunbar.org.uk

St. Anne's Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Church, Dunbar is a Scottish Charity, SC010950,
regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)