



ELGIN
ST GILES' &
ST COLUMBA'S SOUTH
CHURCH MAGAZINE

Christmas 2022



PEOPLE IN OUR CHURCH – WHO'S WHO

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Bowling	George Robb	07708028555	
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Theatre Group	Lindsay Knight	01343 543393	07802438460
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Minister's Letter

Church of St Giles' and St Columba's South

Dear all,

I hope this letter finds you well as we are about to start the season of Advent. Advent is a special time for me. Despite the shorter days and longer (and colder) nights, there is something about this season that makes us look ahead to the beautiful music and lights we associate with the season of Christmas. Despite all the things we have collectively experienced this year, and there were a lot, Christmas does remind us of the best we have in God's presence. Even our personal experiences become united with God's presence and His peace. It was indeed a roller coaster of a year! To take one example, in February and June we celebrated The Queen's jubilee just to be drawn into the farewell of her life in September. On a more personal level, the bread we bought in February for 40p is suddenly 90p!

I have wondered over the last few days, if we can celebrate Christmas this year? Can we really have elaborate meals with all the hardship in our community? Should we indulge in expensive gifts when so many children are having none? These are all valid questions, but it does miss the point of Christmas. In Isaiah 2: 4 -5 the prophet reminds us about who God really is:

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

There is an old African hymn that rings out "We are walking in the light of God". Having sung this hymn in a tin church close to an informal settlement, you become aware that people can look past the trouble, poverty and injustice of this world. Opiate of the people, according to Karl Marx? No, a reality that God can change our circumstance, one step and one solution at a time. Think of our new breakfast project in Elgin, I am excited that we are changing the life of one child at a time. We might have more resources than other countries, but a hungry child in Elgin is the same as one in Johannesburg. Someone has to walk in the light of the Lord, to change the life of that child. Do we cancel Christmas? No, we celebrate it as we have done in the past, because we are walking in the light of God. We continue to look at our broken world and continue to pray for swords to be changed into ploughshares and spears to become pruning hooks. We continue to serve and to do good, not because we are looking for "limelight", but because we are indeed in the Light! May you and your family have a blessed Christmas and prayerful 2023.

Can I offer by this means my heartfelt thanks to our two editors, Kathy Dale and Mary Dawson. From our arrival in Elgin these two stalwarts have been absolutely brilliant. A lot of time and effort was put in over the years, and we have always enjoyed a well edited and professional looking magazine. Kathy and Mary have indicated their "retirement" at the end of this edition. To them, a big thank you! At this point, we have not been able to get a volunteer/s to edit the magazine from February 2023. If you have the time and think you can serve the congregation by taking on the magazine, please contact Mary or Kathy for more information. You would also be welcome to contact me.

With the best of wishes from everyone at the Manse,

Deon



DECEMBER		
1	1.00pm	Midweek Worship - St Giles'
4	9.00am	Breakfast Church - Williamson Hall
	10.30am	Sunday Worship - St Columba's South
	4.00pm	Café and Carols @ St Giles'
5	1.00-3.30pm	Monday Club - Williamson Hall
	7.30pm	Monday Guild - Williamson Hall
6	10.00-11.30am	Coffee & Chat - Williamson Hall
	2.00-4.00pm	Bowls - Williamson Hall
7	10.00am-12.30pm	TASS - Williamson Hall
	2.00-4.00pm	Wednesday Guild - Williamson Hall - Party
	6.30pm	Bible Study - Williamson Hall
	6.30-8.00pm	Badminton - Williamson Hall
	7.30pm	Women's Group - Williamson Hall
8	1.00pm	Midweek Worship - St Giles'
9	12noon for 12.30pm	Monday Guild - Christmas Lunch - Laichmoray Hotel
11	10.30am	Sunday Worship - St Columba's South - Nativity and Communion
	6.00pm	Healing Service - Williamson Hall
12	1.00-3.30pm	Monday Club - Williamson Hall
13	10.00-11.30am	Coffee & Chat - Williamson Hall
	7.00pm	Bereavement Service - St Columba's South
14	12noon for 12.30pm	Men's Association Christmas Lunch - Laichmoray Hotel
	2.00-4.00pm	Craft Group - Williamson Hall
	6.30pm	Bible Study - Williamson Hall
	6.30-8.00pm	Badminton - Williamson Hall
15	1.00pm	Midweek Worship - St Giles'
18	10.30am	Sunday Worship - St Columba's South - Service of Lessons and Carols
19	7.00pm	Rotaract Carols - St Columba's South
21	6.30pm	Bible Study - Williamson Hall
22	1.00pm	Midweek Worship - St Giles'
24	6.00pm	Christingle Service - St Columba's South
	11.30pm	Watchnight Service - St Columba's South
25	10.00am	Sunday Christmas Day Worship - St Columba's South
	2.00-4.00pm	Craft Group - Williamson Hall
31	-	NO HOGMANAY SERVICE

JANUARY 2023		
1	10.30am	Sunday Worship - Joint service with Elgin High in St Giles'
4	10.15am	Men's Association - Williamson Hall
8	10.30am	Sunday Worship - Joint service with Elgin High in Elgin High
	6.00pm	Healing Service - Williamson Hall
9	1.00-3.30pm	Monday Club - Williamson Hall
	7.30pm	Monday Guild - Williamson Hall
10	10.00-11.30am	Coffee & Chat - Williamson Hall
	2.00-4.00pm	Bowls - Williamson Hall
11	10.00-12.30pm	TASS - Williamson Hall
	2.00-4.00pm	Wednesday Guild - Williamson Hall
	6.30pm	Bible Study - Williamson Hall
	6.30-8.00pm	Badminton - Williamson Hall
	7.30pm	Women's Group - Williamson Hall
12	1.00pm	Midweek Worship - St Giles'
15	10.30am	Sunday Worship - St Giles'
16	1.00-3.30pm	Monday Club - Williamson Hall
17	10.00-11.30am	Coffee & Chat - Williamson Hall
	2.00-4.00pm	Bowls - Williamson Hall
18	10.15am	Men's Association - Outing to Moray Sports Centre
	6.30pm	Bible Study - Williamson Hall
	6.30-8.00pm	Badminton - Williamson Hall
19	1.00pm	Midweek Worship - St Giles'
22	10.30am	Sunday Worship - St Giles'
23	1.00-3.30pm	Monday Club - Williamson Hall
24	10.00-11.30am	Coffee & Chat - Williamson Hall
	2.00-4.00pm	Bowls - Williamson Hall
25	6.30pm	Bible Study - Williamson Hall
	6.30-8.00pm	Badminton - Williamson Hall
26	1.00pm	Midweek Worship - St Giles'
29	10.30am	Sunday Worship - St Giles'
30	1.00-3.30pm	Monday Club - Williamson Hall
31	10.00-11.30am	Coffee & Chat - Williamson Hall
	2.00-4.00pm	Bowls - Williamson Hall





Peace and Joy from Nutty Nanny's Hoose!

Dear Friends in faith

Wow that's us approaching Advent and then 2023, Advent is important in the Christian calendar, but when explaining Christianity to a 12-year-old last week I had to say that Easter was in my opinion even more important in our Christian lives. As from Sunday we will be starting our services with approaching the Advent wreath and lighting the Advent candles each week. What does the Advent wreath represent? Advent wreaths were eventually fashioned out of evergreens, twisted together in a circle to symbolize continuous life across the seasons, from the death of winter to the new life of spring. Naturally, this earthly symbolism also points to the spiritual symbolism of newness and the promise of eternal life and salvation offered through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ John 3:16. The circular nature of the Advent wreath, similar to a wedding ring or band, is further meant to reflect the unending love of Christ and eternal life offered through salvation. Holly leaves, berries, and seeds are also added to the Advent wreath. Holly leaves can be prickly and therefore used to represent the crown of thorns placed on Jesus's head during his crucifixion. Berries, which are typically red, also point to Christ's sacrifice and the bloodshed for sins. Pinecones, seeds, and nuts are also placed within the wreath as a symbol and promise of new life. Together, the elements of the Advent wreath reflect the new life and eternal salvation offered through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who we now celebrate. So as we reflect on our year, we may all have moments of sadness, joy and find this time as a time for reflection. This has been this year let's move on as Jesus did from place to place, move forward. Yes, as a church we are moving forward, new Presbytery, new parish, different ways of worship a great deal to take in and as we get older it is not always easy to accept change, but as Grandad said change is as good as a rest!

So, we have to look forward and yes, it is so difficult when you are maturing in years, living alone, losing siblings and friends, BUT God put us here to love the life we have, try to connect with people you have, enjoy the friends and neighbours you have, and experiment! Try the different worship options now coming your way, breakfast church, afternoon worship, how about trying 'new' in the New Year, prayer, and healing time one afternoon a week 2-3 on a Wednesday at the Williamson Hall. (Deon doesn't know yet! Naughty nanny!)

But this is the season for spending time with family and friends, but let's share a while for those who have no one to share Christmas with, can you plate an extra plate of food and send it to the neighbour on their own? Or even pop in a Christmas card with your phone number on!

But I have a family Christmas to look forward to this year, my two children under the same roof at Christmas first in ten years plus, six adults, three children, four dogs and a cat under one roof! Christmas! But what's the reason for the season? Our Saviour, Jesus, God sent him to us as an innocent baby, then a man who sacrificed his life for our sins. As we move into the next year, let's embrace the life given to us by our Lord, reflect on the past but look and make the best of the future, let's experience the ethos of the ACORN experience, ask the lord each day to name someone or connect us with, someone to share faith with, invite to share the love of having faith. Let's put the sadness and challenges of 2022 behind us and look forward in faith to 2023 with changes in our personal, church lives, but together as a church community.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life” John 3: 16.

So let’s look forward in faith and use all our life experiences to fulfil our Faith purpose here on earth. So, I have to leave you with pictures of the joys!



you do could sign up for a Holly makeover! or always smile like these three adorable girls.

May you all have peace, love, and most of all faith in your lives. Love Nutty nanny and family XX



Dates for prayer and healing meetings: -

Tuesday 6th December 2-3, Williamson Hall, west room

Tuesday 20th December 2-3 Williamson Hall, west room.

Tuesday 10th January 2-3 Williamson Hall, west room.

Breakfast Church recommences for busy families: -

Sunday 15th January 0900 to 0945 hrs. Williamson Hall.

Sunday 12th February 0900 to 0945 hrs. Williamson Hall.

Bible Study to explore faith.

**Every Wednesday over Advent 630 to 7.30. Christ in our lives Williamson Hall West room.
break 28th Dec recommence 18th January 2023.**

God bless you all and may you have a peaceful, joyful and happy Christmas

Love and Nanny Hugs Sonia x



**If You Look for Me at
Christmas...**

Author Unknown

If you look for me at Christmas,
you won't need a special star;
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,
I'm right there where you are.

You may not be aware of Me
amid the celebrations.
You'll have to look beyond the
stores
and all the decorations.

But if you take a moment
from your list of things to do,
and listen to your heart, you'll find
I'm waiting there for you.

You're the one I want to be with,
you're the reason that I came,
and you'll find Me in the stillness,
as I'm whispering your name.



Answers to Christmas Quiz

1. 23 birds
2. 40 people
3. 12 days
4. 24 drum sticks
5. 15 eggs
6. 46 wings
7. 126 legs
8. 4 ladies
9. Swans flew away
10. 354 presents altogether



Mary and Kathy would just like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a most enjoyable Christmas and contended New Year.

We would also like to thank all of the people who have contributed in any way to the magazine over the years that we have been doing it.

The folk who gave us articles; the folk who printed off the hard copies; the magazine team who stapled it together and the distributors who delivered them to your doors.



St Giles' and St Columba's South Church - Christmas Decorations

Many thanks to all who decorated both of the Churches with their lovely Christmas trees and decorations, helping to create a very happy festive occasion.

Muriel Gerrard and Kathy



A Christmas Poem

I have a list of folk I know, all written in a book
And every year at Christmastime I go and take a look
And that is when I realise their names are all a part
Not of the book they're written in but of my very heart
For each name stands for someone whose path
touched mine and then
Left such a print of friendship that I want to touch again
And while it sounds fantastic for me to make this claim
I really feel that I'm composed of each and every name
So never think my Christmas cards are just a mere
routine
Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in-between
For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to
you
It is because you're on the list of folk I'm Indebted to
And every year when Christmas comes, I realise anew
The biggest gift that life can give is meeting folk like
you
So may the Christmas spirit that each season still
outpours
Leave its richest blessing in the
hearts of you and yours.

Anon



St Giles & St Columba's South Church - Flowers

We wish to thank all the ladies who have donated and delivered flowers during 2022.

The flowers are very much appreciated by the congregation and by the members who receive them.

Kathy Dale and Muriel Gerrard

Men's Association.

Wednesday November 2nd

The men's association members gathered as usual for our morning refreshment and a chat and welcomed our speaker for this morning, Rev Sonia Palmer. After the usual business matters included a change to the next meeting, which now will be a visit and tour to the Windswept Brewery at Lossiemouth, we then settled down to be entertained. Sonia went on and described her early years in nursing spending lots of time on different training courses and many locations. She also covered her time at various locations while in the services. During her time as a nurse in Moray area when in contact with various ministers and churches, her focus gradually turned to the ministry. Following her studies and training Sonia became an OLM (ordained local minister)

Wednesday November 16th

Members gathered at the Williamson Hall at 10am for our trip to the Windswept Brewery, this was a last minute change of venue due to unforeseen circumstances at the previous venue. We were met at the brewery by Zara, who just happened to be our secretary's daughter, well done Bert. The Windswept name was devised by Al Read and Nigel Tiddy, their love of the outdoors was always balanced by the beer they enjoyed at the end of each day. That's exactly what led the two former RAF pilots into the world of hops and grains some ten years ago. A lot has happened in the intervening years, from their first brew to the wide selection of over two dozen beers that they offer today. After a cup of tea/coffee we were given a guided tour of the brewery and explanation of the brewing process with explanations of various grains and their locations. Included in the range are two specialty beers which are matured in whisky and port casks which were used by Glen Moray distillery. We were also lucky enough to see the bottling plant in operation which completed our tour of the plant. We then retired to the Tap Room for further explanations of the beers on offer as well as a tasting session accompanied with delicious sandwiches from Harry Gow in Elgin, (courtesy of Bert Duffus) I must say that they went down a treat complimenting the samples. We were then given the opportunity to take home some beer, at a preferential price may I add. After a vote of thanks to our tour guide we went on our **merry way** back to Elgin. All in all it was a splendid outing enjoyed by all the members who managed to attend.

Forthcoming Events

November 30th	Speaker -	Andy Wardley at The Williamson Hall
December 14th	Christmas Lunch -	Laichmoray Hotel, Maisondue Road
Cost	-	As per menu circulated

Ken Wood
Chairman

This is a non-denominational men's group and a warm welcome is extended to all.



Men's Association Guest 2022/23

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker / Visit</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Location</u>
5 Oct 2022	Open Meeting		Williamson Hall
19 Oct 2022	Liz Tait	Red Cross Co-ordinator	Williamson Hall
2 Nov 2022	Rev Sonia Palmer		Williamson Hall
16/11/2022	Windswept Brewery	Visit & Tour	Lossiemouth
30/11/2022	Andy Wardley	RAF Lossiemouth	Williamson Hall
14/12/2022	Christmas Lunch	12.30 for 1.00pm At Hotel	Laichmoray Hotel
4 Jan 2023	RNLI		Williamson Hall
18 Jan 2023	Moray Sports Centre	Tour - Coffee or Soup & Sandwich	Sports Centre
1 Feb 2023	Tracy	Tesco - The Pandemic	Williamson Hall
15/02/2023	Glen Moray Distillery	History of Distillery	Williamson Hall
1 Mar 2023	Elgin Museum	Provisional	Elgin Museum
15/03/2023	Spirit of Speyside	Lynn	Williamson Hall
5 Apr 2023	Boeing - RAF Lossiemouth	Mike	Williamson Hall
19/04/2023	Pluscarden Abbey	Visit to Abbey (Requires Donation)	Pluscarden

World Mission news

“Sri Lankans need justice”

The Church of Scotland has received messages from our partner churches in Sri Lanka, **asking for our prayers** as the country navigates a distressing economic and political crisis.

"At the heart of this crisis is the unjust way a country has been saddled with unpayable debt. Sri Lanka is only one of a number of countries that are already, or are on the brink of, defaulting on debt payments and so suffering further penalties while the citizens of those countries struggle to make ends meet", the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, said.

"Sri Lankans need justice."

Rev Saman Perera, Moderator of Presbytery of Lanka asks that we “pray for political and economic stability, and for God's miraculous provision so that people such as the poor in Sri Lanka will not have to starve. That there will be a unity seen among churches, in this distress that we will not mirror the political system, but that we will be an alternative ideal for what leadership looks like, what community looks like, what love looks like, what care and love look like.

"In all these ways we have a unique opportunity to embody the God we serve."

In a reflection on the World Council of Churches Assembly, Carol Finlay looks back on the fellowship and worship, but also the important work in keeping HIV at the heart of WCC's ministry

‘Do you remember me?’ I said cautiously as I interrupted an animated conversation between a minister and his sign language interpreter.

The minister was Rev Jonnas Owino Siang’a from Kenya. I was so delighted when he looked and his whole face lit up as he jumped up to embrace me. Jonnas had been a Faithshare visitor to the deaf churches here in the Church of Scotland some years ago when he was still working as a volunteer pastor. Now he heads the Presbyterian Church of East Africa’s deaf ministry and has 15 deaf congregations.

Jonnas and I were two of over 4000 people gathered for the World Council of Churches Assembly in Karlsruhe in Germany in September 2022. Our encounter was just one of the many instances of meeting and greeting old friends and colleagues and the opportunity of meeting with new people too. We were all part of the wonderful rainbow of ecumenical witness that is the World Council of Churches family.

The Assembly was, of course, not just an opportunity to meet in fellowship but was a time of deep spiritual reflection; discussion and decision on wide ranging topics including climate change, peace and reconciliation, HIV, Gender issues, the Middle East and even killer robots.

Not all of us were involved in the waving of red or green cards in the consensus decision making sessions, but in the many workshops and exhibitions and in the amazing worship as we sung and prayed together in the main languages of the participants. One of my favourite moments was hearing 4000 voices singing Hawaiian words to a beautiful south sea island tune...or was it a little bit Celtic?

It was also good to be with my colleagues in the WCC EAA HIV Strategy Group and to be part of the important issue keeping HIV at the heart of the WCC ministry, particularly following Covid-19 when focus has dropped from HIV research. The voices of those living with HIV was heard and particularly good was the presence of Gracia Ross, from Bolivia who is the first staff member of WCC to be openly HIV positive. Her role will help to diminish stigma which still is a major issue around the world.

Making decisions in such a broad ecumenical forum is not always easy but it is in sharing together that consensus can be reached and we can see change happening.

News from Groups and Associations

WOMEN'S GROUP

For our November meeting we had a wonderfully enjoyable craft night led by Linda Robertson who brought the material along and showed us how to make little 'Hug Pillows', an idea thought up during Covid.

We all achieved our task and took home a brightly coloured little pillow. Many thanks to Linda.

Our December meeting, on December 7th, will be a games night preparing us for Christmas.

We shall also be meeting in St Giles' Church at 10 am, on Thursday 1st December, to put up the decorations.

Kathy Dale

MONDAY GUILD

At the meeting on 7th November, Vivien Welsh entertained members with a wonderful spinning demonstration - from fleece to thread. Members thoroughly enjoyed 'having a go' with surprising results.

Rev. Deon will join the meeting on 5th December and members are invited to join a carol service at Buckie North Church on Wednesday 7th December at 2pm. The final meeting of 2022 will be Christmas Lunch on Friday 9th December.

On behalf of The Guild, I'd like to sincerely thank Mary and Kathy for editing the magazine. Well done ladies.

Monday Guild meetings will resume on 9th January 2023 when Ruth will lead members in some gentle exercise.

On behalf of Monday Guild I'd like to wish everyone peace, health and happiness for Christmas and The New Year - 2023.

Doreen Johnston

WEDNESDAY GUILD

It is party time at the Wednesday Guild on 7 December at 2.00pm in the Williamson Hall. A Happy Festive Season and we look forward to seeing you all at the first meeting of 2023 on 11 January at 2.00 pm in the Williamson Hall.

Maureen Stephen

I am sure that you have all heard, or sang the Christmas carol 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. I have always felt that it had strange words, none of which seemed to refer to Christmas at all for me.

However, I read a story about the supposed origins of this carol which seemed very believable to me and many other people. However there are also those who say that the story is rubbish – you can decide for yourself

The story is this

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in Britain were not permitted to practise their faith openly. Someone during this time wrote this carol for young Catholics. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day.

The partridge in the pear tree also represents Jesus because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life to protect its young.

The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments

The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.

The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The five golden rings recalled the Torah, or Law the first five books of the Old Testament.

The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit-----wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, courage, faith, and fear of the Lord (wonder and awe)

The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes. (Matthew 5: 3 – 10)

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-----Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control.

The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

So there is your history for today. I found the story interesting and now I think that I know how that strange song became a Christmas Carol.



....and a partridge in a pear tree

A Christmas Quiz to go with the Story

1. How many birds are there in the song?
2. How many people are there?
3. How many days are presents given on?
4. Each drummer has two sticks, how many sticks are there altogether?
5. If three of the geese lay three eggs and the rest lay two eggs, how many eggs are there?
6. How many wings are there?
7. How many legs are in the song altogether? (birds and people)
-
8. If the five gold rings were shared among the dancing ladies, how many would not get one?
9. If one group of birds flies away, leaving a total of 16 birds behind, which group is it that flies away?
10. This song starts:
On the first day of Christmas my true love sent to me a partridge in a pear tree, on the second day two turtle doves and a partridge in a pear tree, and so on. Work out how many presents were given altogether over the 12 days.



....and a partridge in a pear tree