

NORTH LEITH PARISH CHURCH MAGAZINE

December 2021

Dear Friends

Our Faith-Life Journey

Our Christmas Story certainly has Mary and Joseph set out at a very inconvenient time but we see God's prompting and God's hand at work! How many other journeys can you think of in our Bible? I would imagine that you can easily think of at least a dozen important journeys where people were prompted to move from their security to a destination and which would present real challenges.



In church life we value stability and security while life around us can seem chaotic and we might resist the idea that we have to move from our place of comfort. While I understand these deep-set feelings, I believe that the church has reached a point where it must certainly set out on a new journey of discovery or else it will dwindle to the point that it won't be able to continue. The Radical Plan is asking presbyteries, congregations and church members to step forward in faith in a way which will prove our faith. This is both challenging and terrifying but I do believe that it is very much in our biblical faith tradition of the Faith-Life Journey.

As I move into retirement I will be setting out on a journey of my own. I call it a 'Journey of Thanks' to visit each of the congregations where I have worked over nearly 40 years in training then in ministry. It will take me about 3 months where I hope to just sit on a Sunday morning as part of each of the congregations. Hopefully I can travel in an eco-friendly way to each by train, bus or bike and have the opportunity to meet old friends who have given me so much and shaped my life and work. Having served for 21 years in my first parish in the East End of Glasgow, I moved into a more peripatetic work in Interim Ministry also having 3 years as Coordinator of the Chance to Thrive Project supporting 8 different Priority Area Congregations. I look forward to this 'Journey of Thanks'.

One of my visits will certainly be to my friends in North Leith where it has been just great to have helped in some way over the past couple of years. You have given to me as much as I have given to you and for that I give thanks!

I wish you well for your journey ahead and pray that you will go forward in faith and with courage

Russell

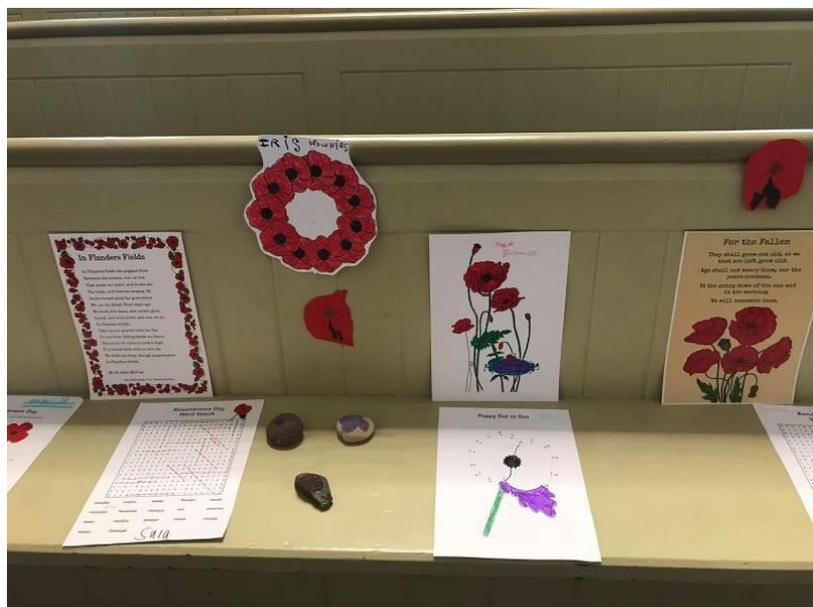
Sunday Worship



Since the beginning of October we have enjoyed a variety of worship leaders under the One Church rota arrangements, including Jennifer Booth, John Tait, both retired ministers, Brian Drummond, Reader in Training, and Kailyard music group, all from South Leith; Rob Mackenzie and Ron Smith, retired minister, both from Leith St Andrew's; Mark Foster minister at Pilrig St Paul's.

Our service on Remembrance Sunday was led by John Tait and a number of people contributed including Stewart Lowe and Jenny Martin who both spoke movingly on 'What remembrance means to

me', David Black who again played the pipes at the end of the two minutes' silence, the scripture reader, the wreath layer, the flower organisers, those who provided the tea & coffee after the service, and the members of our Guiding units who, although not present on the Sunday morning, provided beautiful decorations illustrated below. Thanks to all involved.





Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Seafarers' Christmas bags. The picture shows Walter, Anne Marie and Eric with filled bags. Pauline also sends thanks to the the ladies who provided knitted hats.

Christmas Appeal - Providing the means for a home-cooked meal



This year our own Christmas charity appeal is for Fresh Start's Cookers for Christmas.

Imagine moving into your new tenancy, then realising that you don't have a cooker to make your dinner, no washing machine to have clean clothes to visit friends and family and no fridge to store a pint of milk to make a hot drink on a cold night. This concept is all too real for Fresh Start service users throughout the whole year.

At the turn of every corner, you see advertisements for tasty treats, ideas of what to cook for dinner and messages of healthy living. The

lack of amenity to carry out these activities is felt by too many of our service users.

Fresh Start wants to make all these messages of healthy living and living well a reality for those who have been homeless and provide them with a brand new cooker, washing machine or fridge freezer. Any small donation is welcome and will help to make a real difference to a person's life.

Our appeal is open till the end of December – Please put donations in an envelope marked 'Christmas' and put it in the collection plate or the box on the way out of the church. If you can give by Gift Aid please use one of the Gift Aid envelopes. You can give by bank transfer to the church's bank account putting 'Christmas' in the reference field (in this case gift aid will be applied if you already give to the church by gift aid).

From the Treasurer

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the National Giving Day. The total raised for church funds was £1,965.

Many thanks also to all of you who have kept up regular giving to the church over the year, whether at worship services or by sending in your offerings to the church office. It would be good to get any remaining 2021 envelopes before the end of the year.

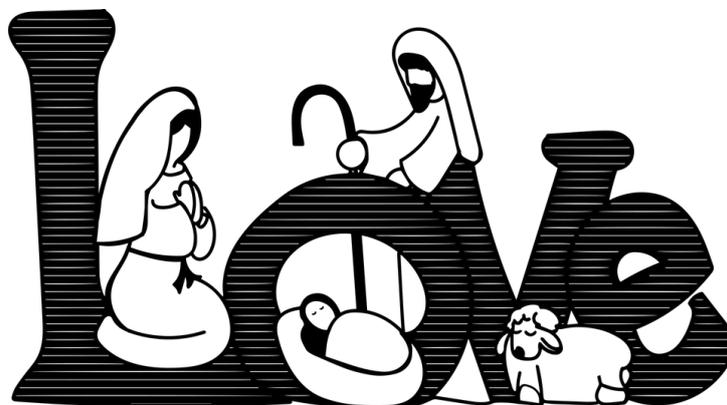
In the run-up to Christmas we are making the regular annual donations from the Husband Bequest (HBF) and Robertson Funds (RF): £1,000 from the HBF and the RF (£500 each) to the Welcome Centre (previously the Care Shelter) run by Bethany Christian Trust for those unfortunate people who have no home of their own over the winter; £500 from the RF to the Citadel's Families at Christmas (in addition to the gifts contributed from the congregation). We are very fortunate to have these funds set up in the past from the generosity of benefactors.

ODE TO CHRISTMAS

The blessed babe of long ago
born into a winter's woe
yet set to bring us hope and cheer
to give us Christmas every year

We celebrate the Saviour's birth
with unfailing joy and mirth
carol singing ... yuletide bringing
festive food and gifts so good
remembering the shining star
that guided wise men from afar
Angels with glad tidings yield
to shepherds watching in a field
rejoicing in the Christmas story
giving God the highest glory ...

A sonnet written for Christmas 2021 by Norma A Macarthur





Thanks to Juana Molina for this great photo

Upcoming Worship Services

We will have a service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday 19 December at 11am and this will be led by members of the congregation.

Sunday 26 December will be a chance to say thanks and farewell to Russell, who has been our Interim Moderator since the beginning of the vacancy, when he conducts our Christmas Sunday service at 11am. There will not be services in our church on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day but if you would like to attend a service in a church building here are services in the other Leith churches on these days:

Christmas Eve

6.30pm – family worship and 11.30pm – watchnight service, at *Leith St Andrew's*

6pm - Christingle and 11pm - watchnight service, at *South Leith*

Christmas Day

11am short services at Leith St Andrew's and South Leith

These services will also be available online, as will short reflections from Pilgrig St Paul's (see their websites for details).

Our joint Epiphany service will be on Sunday 9 January 2022 at Pilgrig St Paul's. The rota for the rest of January is now being set up.

A Prayer for Advent and Christmas Time

God of all people,
as we wait again for the coming of Christmas Day,
let us take time to be still
and pause from the business of the season.

We remember a poor family travelling to Bethlehem, because they had to;
Of the search to find somewhere, anywhere, for Mary to give birth;
Of the joy at the safe arrival of Jesus, despite the insanitary conditions;
Of the visitors who came to pay their respects at the birth of God incarnate.

But we also remember the fear and anxiety that stalked Herod,
that made the Wise Men know that all was not well,
that put in place the decree to slaughter the young boys
that forced the Holy Family to flee.

God of all the years, as we wait for Christmas,
we remember those who are still waiting,
for justice, for peace, for release.

Waiting to be seen, recognised and included.
And we remember the work of your Son,
to bring good news and proclaim a different way to live.
As we go into our Christmas celebrations,
let us do likewise.

AMEN (from *ALTERnativity*)

