

INSPIRE

Oh come, all ye faithful



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jings!
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michty me!



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The collage includes images of shelves filled with various gift boxes, a large white gift bag, a small Christmas tree, a collection of gift cards, a book titled 'MAN CAVE', a pair of gloves, two plush donkey toys, a display of small gift boxes, and a coffee machine next to a leopard-print bag.

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and *time well spent.*

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Dear Friends

“Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow”! Will the weather be ‘frightful’ this winter and over the Christmas Season? We can’t really tell. Even though forecasting weather is very advanced these days, there is nothing that can really tell us for sure if it will be a ‘white Christmas’ or not. I for one wouldn’t mind a little snow at some point!

It was once said the Inuit People have 50 different names for snow though some discredit that today. It was also once thought that every snowflake is unique. Again, some scientists now tell us that the evidence suggests this too is wrong and that there are only 35 possible shapes and configurations of snowflake. However I am happy to report that all enthusiastic excitement over ‘amazing facts’ is not totally discredited, and we can still say with that each snowflake is unique. Thank goodness – that saves the conclusion of my Christmas letter to you!

Steve Martin, comedian (and sometime philosopher and actor) once joked, “God couldn’t get ANYTHING right; he couldn’t even get TWO SNOWFLAKES alike”. Thank goodness for that uniqueness in creation and in humanity.

We are all different and that truth reveals how special each one of us is. Although at a theological and intellectual level we can have a stab at describing what Faith is – at a personal level, given we are all unique, the way we relate to God or creation, the way we see and feel that relationship with God, the way we allow God or creation itself to merge into our mind and soul is different for each one of us. God’s quality and breadth of being is such that the connection with each one of us is ‘one of a kind’.

So often when it comes to the gift of Christmas we often use grand and superlative phrases such as ‘God brought light into the world’s darkness’, ‘God’s gift of a child changed the world forever’.

Yes, the world was changed, and that’s worth acknowledging in the Christmas messages but what is very important for us to remember is that this gift is for each one of us. What God has made, and does make possible, is the unique gift of Himself to each of us. God’s love for each one of us is as unique like a snowflake.

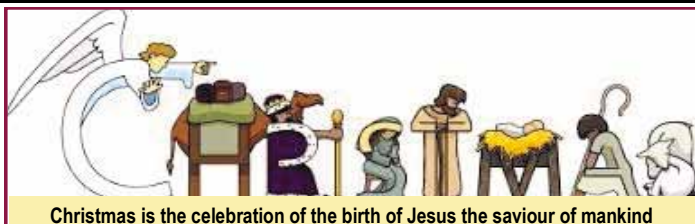
May the Season of Christmas treat you well, and as you attend Christmas services, or come across the spirit of Christmas in other ways, may you delight in the fact that God’s Christmas gift of Himself is personal - designed just for you!

God Bless

Keith

CHURCH CALENDAR DECEMBER

Sun 1 Dec	10am	Family Service <i>Advent Communion</i>
Wed 4 Dec	10.30am	Midweek Service
Sun 8 Dec	10am 7pm	Morning Worship - <i>Guild Angels</i> Lessons and carols 
Wed 11 Dec	10.30am	Midweek Service
Sun 15 Dec	10am 3.15pm	Morning Worship Craigielea Service led by <i>Lesley Reid</i>
Wed 18 Dec	10.30am	Midweek Service Last midweek service until 15 January
Sun 22 Dec	10am	Morning Worship - <i>Nativity Service</i>
Tues 24 Dec	7pm 11.30pm	Christmas Eve Family Carol Service Watchnight Service
Wed 25 Dec	10.30am	Christmas Day Family Worship Service
Sun 29 Dec	10am	Morning Worship



Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the saviour of mankind

CHURCH CONTACTS

www.mannofieldchurch.org.uk

Minister	Rev Keith Blackwood	kblackwood@churchofscotland.org.uk	01224315748
Children & Family worker	Dorte Griesse	DGriesse@churchofscotland.org.uk	07494863137
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Church Officer	Nick Youngson	nick.youngson@gmail.com	01224322239
Session Clerk	Bob Anderson	Nnikibob@aol.com	01224743484

My journey to becoming a Street Pastor

It all started at a Mannofield Church Outreach and Mission Group meeting when it was decided to outreach further than just within the church and our local community. As Street Pastors were looking for volunteers (based in John Street above the Credo Cafe) four of us decided to investigate.



We all had a night out with a Pastor group to see if we were suited to the work and the hours involved (9.30pm to 4am approx.) My observation night out was the 20 October 2018 which was an eye opener to anyone who does not go down town in an evening especially at a weekend. The city centre can become very busy with revellers who are out to have a good time, but some have too much to drink, have taken drugs, or a combination of both. The Street Pastors would assess the best action to help and make sure those in need get transport home safely.

I applied, was accepted and started training over the next 3 months - afternoons, evenings, and some whole days. My first official night out on the streets was 26 April.

I really like the work of helping anyone who is in distress, needs help, direction, or just a chat about what we are doing out on the streets. We have a Safe Truck which is parked in Belmont Street to take anyone away to a safe place, either to sober up, have a more in depth chat over a cup of tea or coffee, or summon the emergency services if a more serious incident had occurred. Street Pastors go out in groups of 3, one with a radio to contact cctv/Police about an incident. The other 2 attend to person(s) who need help.

Street Pastors were launched on 20 January 2003 at Brixton Baptist Church by Rev. Les Isaac. Then in April that year groups were started at Lambeth and Hackney. London has 33 groups and in the UK more and more groups have been established.

A Street Pastor volunteer is a Christian and a member of a local church with a concern in particular for young people who feel themselves to be excluded and marginalised and who are willing to talk about where they are in terms of their perspective of life and where they hang out be it on the streets, in the pubs and clubs or at parties etc..

As the Street Pastor comes to know people in the community he/she will find out what the needs are and what can be done to help. A presence of Street Pastors will earn credibility in the community, so that people know that the Church is there for them in a practical way. The role is not about preaching but one of listening, caring and helping in a non-judgmental way.

If you wish to know more about Street Pastors please ask me at church on Sundays, or at any time. I would only be too pleased and willing to have a chat. The only criteria are that you are over the age of 18 years (no upper limit) and you are a member of a church.

You can also find out more about Aberdeen Street Pastors by contacting them direct at <https://streetpastors.org/locations/aberdeen/contact-us/>.

I hope this will give you more understanding of what Street Pastors do on the streets every Friday and Saturday whatever the weather throws at them!





At the 44th Boys Brigade all sections are enjoying the new session and growing with some new and enthusiastic boys having started since the summer. Company Section numbers have dropped however as a number of older boys have left for university. However this does allow us to do some different activities we can't do with a large group.

This year Anchor Boys teams are Star Wars themed. Teams are named after Star Wars characters and each has a 'Pop' mascot to look after each week. The marble points are back and these are won (or lost) each week for games and behaviour with the winning team receiving stickers at the end of the night. Boys are enjoying the variety of games and crafts including colouring in, the Scarecrow race (boys had to race to dress their team mate as a scarecrow), unihoc, dodgeball and parachute games. They painted a giant mural of their favourite Star Wars characters. We had a massive assault course in the hall and they had great fun leading a team mate round the course blindfolded. We have just had a Halloween party where the boys all dressed up. We played spooky games, had party food and played with loads of glow sticks.



Junior Section are full of beans as usual and are enjoying the traditional activities like figure marching, which is not as easy as it sounds. Recently they all took part in the #BBin3 event sharing in 3 words what BB means to them. One of our young leaders, who is on a university placement in Canada, sent his #BBin3 picture to us from across the world. They have also enjoyed a wide version of Rock, Paper, Scissors game where, in teams, you have to travel across the hall as you win each round. As an introduction to Company Section activities it's planned for Juniors to have a taster session with the gymnastic equipment and try some jumps on our vaulting horse.

Company Section has been enjoying a selection of new games, variations of old favourites and some new activities to freshen things up this session. Our first night back included Giant Jenga and more recently we played a group quiz together using a smartphone app called Kahoot where everyone plays together but on their own mobile. For badge class we have been running a series of STEM challenges (Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths) exercises. Examples include a paper marble run and paper gliders. Our existing Queen's Badge candidates have started helping at Anchors and Juniors as part of their final year, with both of them settling in well and getting to know the younger boys. Back in September we had 6 boys stewarding and selling programmes with Aberdeen Battalion at the Braemar Games.



Does all this sound like fun? If it does come and join in!

Anchor Boys is for boys in P1 - P3 meets on Thursday 6.00 - 7.00pm.

Junior Section for boys in P4 - P6 meets on Thursdays 7.00 - 8.15pm.

Company Section for boys in P7 - S6 meets on Fridays 7.45 - 10pm.

To find out more or to join email us at info@40four.co.uk, visit www.40four.co.uk or find us on Facebook.

Dave Tait, Captain, 44th Aberdeen Boys Brigade

Great Western Medical Practice

My article this winter is about 2 areas of cutting edge medicine which I have come across in my clinical practice in recent months and I am sure, in the future, will become part of mainstream medical practice.



Immunotherapy

This technique uses our own immune system to fight disease, especially cancer. The therapy works by helping our immune system recognise and attack cancer cells.

We all have naturally occurring antibodies in our blood which fight infection. Monoclonal antibodies mimic natural antibodies but are manufactured in the lab. They attach themselves to proteins specific to cancer cells making it easier for the immune system to identify and attack the cancer cells but leave normal cells alone. This differs significantly from many forms of chemotherapy which tend to affect both cancer and non cancerous cells, which is how they cause many of their side effects. Developments in Immunotherapy are leading to a generation of cancer treatments that are both highly effective and well tolerated.

As part of this branch of medicine, vaccines are also being developed to help the immune system identify and attack cancer cells.

Genomics

Genetics is the study of genes and their role in inheritance/disease (usually looking at single genes). **Genomics** is the study of all the body's genes, their functions and their influences on growth, development and the working of the body.

The Genome is one whole set of all our genes and all the DNA between the genes.

There are approximately 20,000 genes in the Genome. Humans share about 99% of the same Genome but it is the 1% that makes us different (hair colour, temperament, height etc). Some of these differences also relate to disease. DNA is extracted from blood and fed into a sequencing machine. Various techniques filter down the difference from millions down to a handful that could potentially be harmful. About 80% of rare diseases are caused by a change in a DNA sequence and by understanding the whole Genome sequence scientists can begin to identify the cause of these rare conditions and help develop specific treatments. It is likely this technique will lead to faster diagnosis, personalising medication to the individual and thereby improved cancer survival rates.

Both these techniques are very exciting and are a glimpse of what is likely to lie ahead in the medical world.

Dr Ewan Wallace

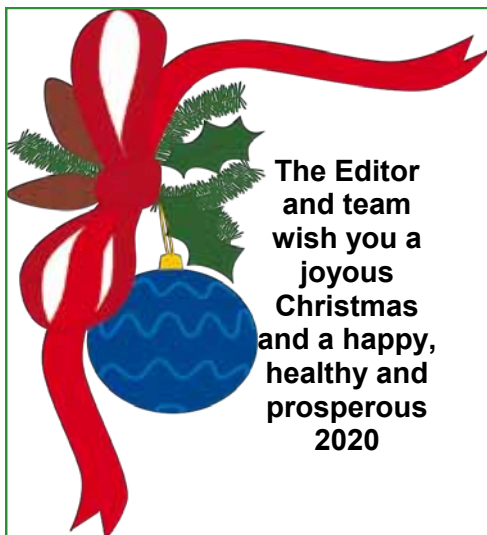
CRAFT FAIR

Buttons in the Jar

There were 1073 buttons.

The winning number was 1079, 6 over. The runner up guessed 1066, 7 under.





The Editor
and team
wish you a
joyous
Christmas
and a happy,
healthy and
prosperous
2020

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ an the luve o
God an fallowship i the Halie Spirit be wi ye aal!"



Christmas Eve
Family Service 7pm
Watchnight Service 11.30pm
Christmas Day
Family Service
10.30am



The deadline for the February mini InSpire 17 January

Material should be deposited
in the Church Office
or emailed to:

roddy@mccollassociates.com
office@mannofieldchurch.org.uk

Flower Calendar



December

- 1 Mrs M. Hunter
- 8 Miss Youngson's Legacy
- 15 Miss Youngson's Legacy
- 22 Flower Fund
- 29 Flower Fund



Mannofield Church Defibrillator

Thanks to a generous donation from The Knights of St John, a defibrillator has been erected on the church wall facing Great Western Road and close to a busy bus stop. We are happy to make a provision of this life saving equipment for the community of Mannofield.

This machine may one day save a life!



Garden Chat by John R Little

As I compose this note on the first day of October the weather forecast warns of frost by the end of the week. If it comes it is the time to think about lifting and storing tender plants before they are too badly damaged and we lose them. There are two in particular which are well worth saving and are liable to frost damage namely begonias and dahlias. Both are very fleshy and when the frost has reduced the stems to a soft mush that's when to get them out of the ground. Begonias grow from a corm and this is usually just under the surface of the soil. You will find the stems easy to snap off from the corm and remove loose soil from the roots. It is important to remember which is the top of the corm from which next year's growth is going to come. A clue to look for is usually the top of the corm is concave. It is important when planting next year you have the corm the right way up. You now should let the corms dry off – a tray on a sunny window sill is ideal, as dampness will cause mould and rot will set in. Once the corms are dry wrap them in newspaper and store them in a frost free place e.g. a garage or shed. During the winter check a couple of times for any signs of mould. The corms do not need any heat or water just keep them frost free.



Dahlias need similar protection but require different preparation. Once the frost has killed off the flowers and leaves dig up the tubers, remove soil from the roots and cut off the stems about 2" above the tubers. Using warm water wash off any remaining soil and place the tubers upside down to dry off. This is important as the stems are hollow and you don't want any water to remain as this would cause mould to form. Once completely dry follow the same storage details as that for begonias. You want to avoid any heat as this will result in the tubers shrivelling up and dying off. Come the spring hopefully you will have survivors ready to throw new fresh shoots. Very often the tubers will have multiple shoots and some of these you can use for cuttings. You can also propagate by dividing the tuber making sure you have a cutting with a piece of tuber with roots. More about that in the spring.



If you have shrubs in your garden you might want to try some propagation by means of hardwood cuttings. These are different from softwood cuttings which are taken in the spring. You should choose non flowering stems and cut off about 6". Strip off most of the leaves leaving 2-4 at the top. Find a place in the garden where the soil is moist and place the cuttings to bury about 2/3 of the stem. You can leave these undisturbed throughout the winter and hopefully in the spring you will have some new growth appear. By the time you read this it will be a bit late in the season to do this but it's worth a try. You may want to place a label with each to remind you what you have. I have managed to root cuttings from a number of shrubs but it's a bit hit or a miss so why not give it a try.

Herbaceous borders should be given a tidy up removing dead stems and where a plant has become too big you may want to dig it up and divide it for replanting. Hostas are very easy to divide using a couple of garden forks back to back but don't be afraid to use a spade for this job. Most herbaceous plants can be propagated this way.

I hope we do not have too bad a winter but come what may we know that bulbs will soon start to push their way and provide that welcome splash of colour as spring arrives.



Have a good Christmas and a new year in which to enjoy your garden.

DARK NIGHTS



The clocks have changed and the nights are getting darker, this is where we usually urge you to lock your doors, ensure that valuables are kept out of sight and that a light is left on to make your home look occupied!

This we would still like you to do as you don't want to be the only home on your street that looks unoccupied and vulnerable, as someone put it recently to be the injured wildebeest on the Serengeti when the lions come to call.

We would also like you to think of a home resilience /emergency plan.

<https://www.readyscotland.org/at-home/> is the place to look for good advice regarding emergency plans, but we would like you to perhaps think of extending your plan to cover a little further afield.

- Consider your security, how would you break into your own home?
- Consider where you keep your keys and valuables?

Making little changes and only minor inconveniences to a daily routine can make you significantly less likely to be a victim of crime.

- Consider your vulnerable neighbours - how will they manage in the cold weather or a power cut?

Although there is nothing as effective as a neighbour going round to check, even your awareness that there are vulnerable people nearby means that should something happen, you can advise the appropriate agency to check on them.

- Consider where you keep valuable documents and information. Do you have copies stored elsewhere other than your home should the worst happen?
- When you're clearing the leaves up and looking at the spaces in the borders remind yourself that the plant catalogues have sections for plants which look good and enhance your security.

There is a wealth of information out there to help you plan and prevent crime. However having a visit from local officers will assist you in improving your security (if needed) but also to put the risks into context.

We have a number of Home Security Survey trained officers with the local team. If you would like a survey please make contact via the email address below.

AiryhallBroomhillGarthdeeCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk



MANNOFIELD LUNCH CLUB

Balmanno Hall

Thursday 19 December

Lunch served 1pm

Entertainment 2-3pm

Cuppa at 2.30pm Cost: £6

Need transport?

Contact: Lynn Allan ☎ 07708110216

Prayer:

Refugee Jesus,
grant strength to those weary with travelling;
grant hope to those who are stuck in-between;
grant comfort to those separated from family;
grant healing to those living with trauma;
grant provision for those made destitute again;
grant wisdom and compassion to decision makers;
grant tenacity and companions to those who journey on.
Grant us the encounters to welcome and offer hospitality to those who are far from home.
Amen.

Acknowledgement : This extract is taken from "Stories of Encounter : Pray Now " and is used with permission.

"Word of Life" publications are available from www.standrewpress.com

Mannofield Church Balmanno Hall



Saturday - 18 January
Saturday - 15 February
Saturday - 14 March
10am - noon
Admission free

Contact Sandy 01224 311261

CHRISTMAS EVE and CHRISTMAS DAY

"Open plate" offerings will be donated to:

CROSSREACH, the social-arm of Church of Scotland, in this their 150th Anniversary year.

Christian humour at Christmas



Thanks to Nadine Fafard (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-24-200

THAT'S THE BEST ONE-STAR HOTEL THAT I'VE EVER SEEN

Poppyscotland Appeal

The total collected for Poppyscotland at the Remembrance Day service was £803 plus Gift Aid where appropriate.



Monday Evenings at Mannofield Church in 2020

Starting on 13 January we are offering 3 courses:

- ◆ The **Alpha Course**
- ◆ The Apprentice Series
- ◆ The Prayer Course



Each evening starts at 7pm in Café Connect with a meal together, then each course continues individually with a short DVD and a brief discussion. The evening finishes around 9pm. Everyone is welcome and there is no charge.

Alpha at Café Connect

Explore

Life
Faith
Meaning

Everyone has questions

Exploring is good. We're built for it. Explore more about life, faith and meaning with **Alpha**.

Alpha is a series of interactive sessions which freely explore the basics of the Christian faith. It runs for 10 weeks with an 'away-day' planned for Saturday 15 February 2020.

The sessions look at different questions around faith and are designed to engage and inspire conversation. Questions such as "*Who is Jesus?*" and "*How can we have faith?*"

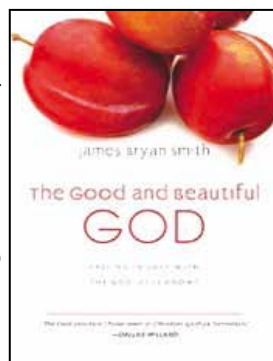
There's no obligation to say anything and there's nothing you can't say (seriously!). It's an opportunity to hear from others and contribute your own perspective in an honest, friendly and open environment.

We have offered the **Alpha Course** for over ten years, and we are keen to welcome new participants and those who may have been once or twice before. If you've been more than twice, don't stop there! The **Apprentice Series** and **Prayer Course** will help you to continue your faith journey.

The Apprentice Series

THE GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL GOD is the first book in the **Apprentice Series** which, along with two other titles, forms "a curriculum for Christlikeness". The Good and Beautiful God focuses on the 'character' of God.

Each chapter uncovers the narratives by which Jesus lived and includes a 'soul-training' exercise to help us embed these narratives into our own lives. *"This deep and transformative book will help you discover the narratives that Jesus lived by and help you grow in the knowledge of our great and beautiful God"*



Monday Evenings at Mannofield Church in 2020

Continued from page 15

The Prayer Course



Spend 8 weeks journeying through the Lord's Prayer with a mixture of video content, discussion and practical prayer activities. The Prayer Course is designed to equip and inspire you. The 2020 course is updated from one we have



run previously.

We would be pleased to see you at any of these courses. It would help if you could contact the Church office or email Mail@thompsonaberdeen.com, or call 01224 681384 no later than **8 January**, because that will help us to make catering arrangements.

You can also find out more about **Alpha** at <https://alpha.org.uk/try> and more about **The Prayer Course** at <https://prayercourse.org/about/>

This Christmas

I wish for you, light, to crumple up the darkness.

This Christmas I wish for you, love, to pull us closer to one another.

This Christmas I wish for you, peace, of which the angels sang.

This Christmas I wish for you, starlight, to follow on your way home.

This Christmas I wish for you, promise, to keep hope alive for you.

This Christmas I wish for you, God, newly-born and in the flesh.

This Christmas I wish for you, Jesus Christ, born this night, light of the world.



CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

New Member

by Transference of Certificate

22 October Mrs Hazel Angus,

Deaths:

14 October Mrs Margaret Schwarz

21 October Mr John Robbie

22 October Mrs Marlene Milton

22 October Mr Graham Stalker

30 October Mrs Margaret Davidson

Disjunctions:

Karen Cooper

Susan Palmer

Alan and Lorna Freeland

MANNOFIELD GUILD

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 5 Dec | Coffee Morning |
| | 10am Balmanno Hall |
| 7 Jan | The Life and times of a criminal lawyer |
| | <i>Lynne Freeland</i> |
| 9 Jan | Coffee Morning |
| | 10am Balmanno Hall |
| 21 Jan | History of candle making |
| | <i>Rena Walker</i> |
| 6 Feb | Coffee Morning |
| | 10am Balmanno Hall |
| 11 Feb | The history of Shore Porters |
| | <i>John Nichol</i> |
| 25 Feb | Woodend Barn |
| | <i>Lorraine Grant</i> |



Christmas Cranberry Chocolate Roulade

INGREDIENTS (Cuts into 12-14 slices)

CHOCOLATE GANACHE FROSTING

300 ml / half pint double cream

350 g / 12 oz plain dark chocolate, chopped

2 tbsp brandy (optional)



FOR THE ROULADE

5 large eggs, separated

3 tbsp cocoa powder, sifted, plus extra for dusting

125 g / 4 oz icing sugar, sifted, plus extra for dusting

1/4 tsp cream of tartar

FOR THE FILLING

175 g / 6 oz cranberry sauce

1-2 tbsp brandy (optional)

450 ml / 3/4 pint double cream, whipped to soft peaks

TO DECORATE

caramelised orange strips

dried cranberries

1. Preheat the oven to 200 degrees Celsius / 400 degrees F / Gas Mark 6. Bring the cream to the boil over a medium heat. Remove from the heat and add all of the chocolate, stirring until melted. Stir in the brandy, if using and strain into a medium bowl. Cool, then refrigerate for 6-8 hours.
2. Lightly oil and line a 39 x 26 cm / 15.5 x 10.5 inch Swiss roll tin with non-stick baking paper. Using an electric whisk, beat the egg yolks until thick and creamy. Slowly beat in the cocoa powder and half the icing sugar and reserve. Whisk the egg whites and cream of tartar into soft peaks. Gradually whisk in the remaining sugar until the mixture is stiff and glossy. Gently fold the yolk mixture into the egg whites with a metal spoon or rubber spatula. Spread evenly into the tin.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes. Remove and invert on to a large sheet of greaseproof paper, dusted with cocoa powder. Cut off the crisp edges of the cake then roll up. Leave on a wire rack until cold.
4. For the filling heat the cranberry sauce with the brandy, if using, until warm and spreadable. Unroll the cooled cake and spread with the cranberry sauce. Allow to cool and set. Carefully spoon the whipped cream over the surface and spread to within 2.5 cm / 1 inch of the edges. Re-roll the cake. Transfer to a cake plate or tray.
5. Allow the chocolate ganache to soften at room temperature, then beat until soft and of a spreadable consistency. Spread over the roulade and, using a fork, mark the roulade with ridges to resemble tree bark. Dust with icing sugar. Decorate with the caramelised orange strips and dried cranberries and serve.

Christmas Sudoku!

Fill in the matrix so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box, contains the letters:

C H R I S T M A S & E.

This also means that no repetition of letters is allowed in each

C			T					H
	H			R				E
S		R			E			A
T			I			E		R
A				S				T
R			H		T			
		A				M		
	R						A	
E								S

The Legend of the 12 Days of Christmas

Huffpost May 2011

How did dancing ladies, piping pipers and a bevy of birds become part of one of the season's best-known carols? What, if anything, do they symbolise? It depends on whom you ask.

The song has French origins, and was published in an English children's book called *Mirth without Mischief* around 1780. Most people believe it began as a memory game sung at Twelfth Night parties. The 12 days of Christmas in Western Christianity refer to the time between Christ's birth on Dec. 25 and the arrival of the Magi to honour the newborn, known as Epiphany, on 6 January.

In recent times, the song has been searched for coded references to Catholic doctrine, ancient Egyptian holidays, Roman myths and the menu at medieval feasts. It has even become an annual index of economic inflation. Purchasing all the gifts from "Twelve Days" would cost about \$23,400, an increase of more than 9 percent from 2010 (PNC Financial Services Group).



Continued page 24



Joy to the World



ADVENT
ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSINGS
CAMELS
FRANKINCENSE

INFANT
JESUS
JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MIRACLE

MYRRH
NATIVITY
REJOICE
STABLE
STAR
THREE KINGS
WISE MEN

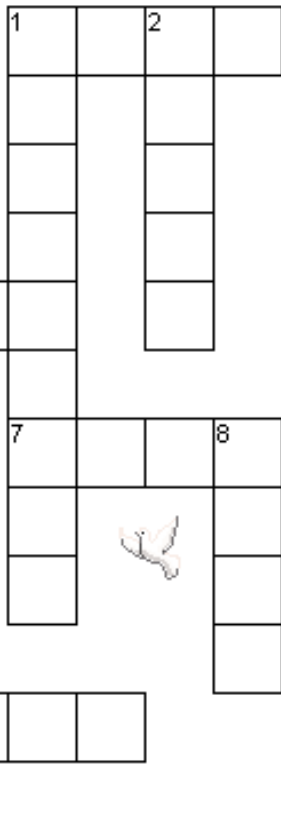


October 2019 answer: The letters 'CR' can be added in front of each word: crease, crimps, crone, credit, craft crown.

Birth of Christ

DOWN

- 1 Who were tending their flocks by night
- 2 Who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds
- 3 The wise men bowed down to Jesus to _____ him
- 4 Jesus was born in this town
- 6 "The _____ of peace" - one of the titles of Jesus
- 8 mother of Jesus
- 9 Jesus was born in a _____
- 10 The shepherds were in the _____ when they saw an angel



ACROSS

- 1 The wise men followed a _____ that led them to Jesus
- 5 human father of Jesus
- 7 There was no _____ at the inn for Jesus
- 9 one of the gifts of the three wise men
- 11 Jesus could not stay at the _____ because it was full
- 12 and on earth _____, goodwill toward men (Luke 2:14)



Ron Ferguson reflects on the approach of Advent

NOVEMBER: Orkney. It's breezy up here in the Northern Isles. You need to have your hat firmly fixed to your head before you venture out in the gales with the dog. Furthermore, you need to have your spectacles nailed to your nut, lest they are soon gone with the wind as well. People up here still talk in hushed tones about the gales of 1953, when roofs took flight, accompanied by garden sheds and flying chickens. In fact, the 1953 gales marked the end of a once-thriving poultry business in Orkney. People in the deep "sooth"- ie the central belt – who complain about "gales" (which are actually harmless breezes) are regarded in the North as being rather effete. So there.



Summer visitors to Orkney are sometimes so enchanted by the vistas that they decide there and then to come north to live. The real testing time comes in the winter, when the hatches are being battened down, and the bottles of Orkney's famous Highland Park whisky are taken down from the shelf.

You see, November in the Northern Isles is not just a cauld blast, it's dark. After the long light of the summer, the nights have fair drawn in. Sometimes there has to be a queuing system for burials because of the lack of light during the day.

I'm not surprised at all by the popularity of winter fire festivals such as Up Helly a' in Shetland. These events are acts of defiance against the enveloping darkness, and appointing in hope towards the future.

These earthly realities are, of course, acknowledged in the rhythms of the Christian year. We don't have a scooby about the true date of Christ's birth. Much as I love the Christmas hymn *In the Bleak Midwinter*, it shouldn't be relied on as a meteorological statement about the birth of the Saviour. Snow had fallen, snow on snow? A yellow weather warning for camels? In Palestine? Aye, right. Let's face it, the Church has never been shy about taking over pagan festivals and Christianising them – whether the pagans liked it or not. (Sometimes it must be irritating to be a pagan.)

To sing about the birth of a Child of Hope and Light in the wintertime makes emotional and theological sense, in the same way as the winter fire festivals banish gloom and face towards the future and the coming again of the light. In its Advent season of preparation and waiting, the Church rightly sings songs of hope while pointing forward towards the coming and coming again of a revolutionary Son who comes with healing in his wings.

In today's troubled and darkened political and cultural times, there will be special yearnings for a new light, one that can never, ultimately, be quenched by the darkness. Anyway, back here in Orkney, the wind is howling and the dog is telling me that he needs out. I check that his bunnet is firmly in place. I put on my coats – yes, plural – and reach for the torch. "I'll be back soon," I shout to the lady in the electronic croft. "Isn't that what Captain Lawrence Oates is supposed to have said to Captain Scott?" she replies.

It's as well we keep cheery in these straitened times. "In the bleak midwinter" I start singing tunelessly. Mansie howls. Onwards and upwards, my friends. Help is on its way – for us all.

"IN TODAY'S TROUBLED AND DARKENED POLITICAL AND CULTURAL TIMES, THERE WILL BE SPECIAL YEARNINGS FOR A NEW LIGHT, ONE THAT CAN NEVER, ULTIMATELY, BE QUENCHED BY THE DARKNESS."

A letter from America

Hello Mannofield Church,

Not a day passes without thinking of you all and being thankful to our God for your committed ministry in Aberdeen. I proudly display some mementos from my time in Aberdeen in my new church office!

A lot has happened since my time with you all. With my family surrounding me, I graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with my Masters of Divinity on May 18, 2019. Shortly afterwards, I accepted a call to Swarthmore Presbyterian Church as Minister of Christian Formation. Swarthmore Presbyterian Church is found in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is part of the oldest Presbytery found in the U.S.A.

My role is both challenging and edifying, as I oversee the Christian Formation program that empowers children, youth and adults to be faithful disciples in our diverse world. It is quite the range! I have found this position to be unique, as the Church created this role so that the minister hired could have an intergenerational lens in their approach to ministry. Christian Formation doesn't end once completing certain stages of school, but instead is a life-long journey we all are on.

You may be asking how our Church is wrestling with the difficult times we face in the U.S.A. I remember clearly the day when President Trump was elected while I was with you all. Then, as today, I am reminded how deeply divided our nation is, our communities are and the hard work that is laid out for us. Nonetheless, I am reminded that the gospel compels us to love our God and to love one another. It is no easy task, since the "other" can be seen at a foreign distance. Yet, I hold close to truth that we are to find our unity in Jesus Christ and in the call to be a people who act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

How does this look in the everyday? It calls our Church to listen to where God is leading us today, to be a beacon of hope, a light in the darkness and the salt of the earth.

I pray that God's presence may continue to be with you all and your loved ones. I miss you all dearly and I hope one day to return to visit you all. May God continue to bless you and the work of your hands.

Yours truly,

Alex Evangelista

Minister of Christian Formation, Swarthmore Presbyterian Church
Philadelphia

Rev Alex Evangelista



Maureen Watt MSP

By the time you read this article, we will be well into yet another general election campaign for Westminster. Regardless of your political persuasion, please spare a thought for party activists who, despite the dark nights and inclement weather, are willing to take their party's message to you directly on the doorstep.

While Westminster has reached an impasse, parliamentarians at Holyrood are continuing to work as normal on committees, in the chamber and most importantly in their constituencies.

Throughout October, whilst helping people with different issues, I was also able to meet with key organisations that truly make a difference in our communities.

I was delighted to meet representatives of Marie Curie and find out more about the invaluable support their nurses give to terminally-ill patients and their families during such a difficult time. I was surprised to hear that a number of people are not aware that this is a free service and I would certainly recommend that people find out more about Marie Curie on their website:

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/>

I also took the opportunity to join my colleague, Kevin Stewart MSP, who as Minister for Local Government and Housing opened a new community food pantry, *Best Start and Smile Pantry* at the CFINE community foodbank, ensuring more help is available for people and families in need.

In other news I am aware of the Church of Scotland's review into its churches in Aberdeen, with some, including Craigiebuckler in my constituency, potentially being put up for sale. Nowadays, the pastoral as well as the spiritual role of churches in our communities, especially for the less well-off, cannot be understated - it is important this is recognised by those making these vital decisions.

I am always happy to help with any issue you may have. To get in touch you can email me at maureen.watt.msp@parliament.scot or call my office, 9am-6pm on Mondays to Fridays, on 01224 876743.



Maureen Watt MSP with Marie Curie representatives

CRAFT FAIR @ MANNOFIELD 2019

Mannofield church welcomed over 40 crafters and hundreds of visitors to the fair.

The display of talent using a variety of media from paper to paint, wood to glass transformed into quality goods to buy, was awe inspiring.

A great day to celebrate local talent and fellowship - don't miss next years!



Liam Kerr MSP for North East Scotland

Success means different things to different people in politics.

It is no secret that I, like many other MSPs of all parties, got into this with a somewhat evangelical desire to try to make life in Scotland better for people, whether at national or local level.

For me therefore “success” might mean a national initiative such as the recent announcement that, following my campaign, the Scottish Government will implement “Finn’s Law” in Scotland (see previous InSpire).



Or there is the ability to raise the business rates regime which many businesses in Aberdeen argue unfairly penalises them and is negative for the North East. (Note: the Scottish Government would take a different view of the business rates regime and it would be wrong to seek to influence your position in this magazine; you must decide for yourself!). We succeeded in getting a cap introduced on certain industries which, whatever one’s position, will have helped them, at least temporarily.

Equally, I celebrate the “micro” successes which help our local community. A couple of months ago I ran into an old friend in Cults Costa, who complained that the Deeside Way was getting dangerously overgrown; she was right – I’d cycled it that morning! I took that concern to the council and was pleased to see them respond promptly and efficiently to cut it back.

Similarly the community’s concerns about parking in and around Deeside Drive were brought to me and I have managed, along with others, to secure double yellows which ought to assist (noting however that this matter is not at an end and we continue to campaign for more!).

Or even down to discovering that a child’s bike could not be taken on the number 19 bus, leading to a 3 mile walk for a 7 year old. I was able to write to First Bus and secure both a clarification and change in policy.

In summary, “success” for me means representing everyone, from the very local, to the regional, to the national level. Sometimes I will succeed and be able to help; sometimes I won’t. But we must always try.

To do that, I need to hear from you. So if you have a concern at any of these levels, which I might be able to help with, my details are below. Or grab me on a Sunday after the service! Have a peaceful, joyful and safe Christmas.

Liam Kerr

Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Justice

Office: 0131 348 6973 www.liamkerr.org.uk

The Legend of the 12 Days of Christmas

Huffpost May 2011 continued.

In the 1990s, a story began floating around the Internet that “The Twelve Days” was used as a secret catechism by Catholics persecuted after the Reformation in England. The “true love” who offers the gifts refers to God, according to this theory. The partridge is Jesus, the two turtle doves are the Old and New Testaments, the three French hens represent the virtues of faith, hope and charity. But California folklorists who run Snopes.com, an urban legend website, dispute the catechism tale. None of the tenets supposedly encoded in the song were points of conflict between Anglicans and Catholics, the website notes, so there would have been no reason to keep them secret. Also, it’s impractical to rely on a seasonal song to teach the faith, the folklorists said. What did persecuted Catholics do for the rest of the year?





Airyhall School - Go Eco

Airyhall School children are very pleased to announce that they have been awarded their sixth Eco Schools Green Flag. The Eco Schools Accreditation is a programme where pupils work towards ten topics in connection with environmental responsibility, with a specific focus on three of these topics. Over the last two years the Airyhall Eco Group have worked on Litter, Saving Energy and Water and Global Sustainability. Pupils learn about the ways in which they can be more environmentally responsible and they also encourage members of the community to do the best they can too.

Energy Over the past two years pupils took part in energy audits and with the support of the Robertson's Facilities Management team they tried to reduce electricity, gas and water consumption in the school. From careful analysis of data, they know we did this successfully, whilst also encouraging families to do the same at home. They took part in low tech days in school where they switched off technology in classrooms for the whole day. Pupils acted as energy monitors reminding their teachers to turn down the heating, turn off lights and computers when not in use and they worked with Mr Thomson our facilities manager to report leaks and faulty lights. Mr Thomson let the Eco Group see how energy efficient the building can be with recycling rainwater and managing heating and lighting efficiently.



Litter is always a big priority in our Eco Agenda. Pupils complete weekly litter picks in our playground and they also complete other litter picks in the community as part of our 'Clean Up Aberdeen' campaign. We have our own litter policy and pupils take part in lots of initiatives to encourage each other to put litter in the litter bins or recycling bins.



Global Sustainability

At Airyhall we also have other Pupil Groups in order to encourage Global Sustainability and the groups regularly relate their work to the Global Sustainable Development Goals which are displayed alongside our school Vision and Values in our school dining room. The Pupil Council, Rights Respecting Group, Fairtrade Group and Junior Road Safety Officers also work hard to improve our school and educate our pupils on 'Learning for



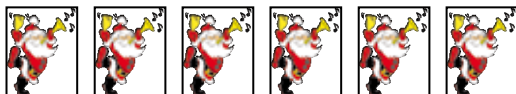
Sustainability.'

School Grounds The Eco Group also worked on developing the school grounds where they annually grow their own vegetables, develop areas like a sensory garden and take part in many competitions. We were very fortunate this year to get first prize in the Aberdeen in Bloom Competition for School Gardens and we were also given the award of 'Outstanding' by the Scotland in Bloom 'It's Your Neighbourhood' judges. Airyhall Nursery was also given the award of 'Best Container' in the Aberdeen Tattie competition. Pupils showed the judges round the school garden with confidence and pride. We were also fortunate to be able to show the Scotland in Bloom judges around when they came to assess Aberdeen City, in the City Category.



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(change of date due to general election)

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Fly Cup meets again on Thursday 9 January



EXTINCTION REBELLION



Organisations seldom choose two really scary words for their title, but that's exactly what Extinction Rebellion has done. Not that it's difficult to see why – their aim appears to be to deliberately scare people in general, and governments in particular, into action.

Action, of course, is no bad thing, because almost everyone knows that action is necessary if we are to steer away from highly damaging climate change. And it's great to see such a high proportion of young people prepared to stand up and rank this issue above such (real enough) concerns as Brexit, the NHS, the economy and social care. Good for them.

Hold on a minute though before we rush out to join them. Shouting is no way to persuade anyone to change their mind. Some folk might do what they are told when yelled at, but it's no way to change beliefs. A government will only change course if a clear majority firmly wants to go in that direction.

The sheer scale of some of recent demonstrations and the massive disruption which they caused, particularly but not only in London, is just another form of shouting. It is just as likely to turn people off as it is to get them on side.

Quiet and reasoned persuasion is much more effective. If there really is a sound argument, eventually it will win. Greta Thunberg has tried this approach, and while some of her reasoning is a bit naïve, her core message is spot on. Much more effective to have a speech to the United Nations reported in every news bulletin in the world than to encourage rebellion and mob rule in central London.

The instruction to “do to others as you would have them do to you” is not just for Christians – it's also good common sense.

Alistair Stark,

Convenor, Eco Congregation Committee

Obituary - Graham Stalker

Graham Stalker, one of our Elders, passed away after a brave fight against cancer. Graham attended Mile End school and Robert Gordon's college and then went on to spend a big part of his working life at sea, before working onshore within the same industry in his later years before retirement. His interests included golf and rugby. Whilst living in the Midstocket area he was invited to become an elder of the Church of Scotland at the congregation now part of Midstocket Church. On moving to Kenfield Crescent some 40 years ago and joining Mannofield Church along with his wife Pat, he did not become a member of our Kirk Session as an active Elder until 5 or 6 years ago. In his 70s by this point, Graham was delighted to have been asked and was committed to the work and life of our church. During these years he was very much appreciated as a supportive and positive influence and provided great encouragement to his fellow elders and minister. Graham, first and foremost, was a 'family man' – a wonderful husband to Pat, father to Ross and Nicola, father-in-law to Sarah and Andrew and grandfather to Benjamin and Chloe, Douglas and Lachlan. As a congregation we are indebted to Graham for his commitment to our church, and at this time we extend our prayers and love towards his family in their loss.



CAROL SERVICE

St John Scotland, Aberdeen and North East Committee has arranged a carol service at:-

Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting on 5 December at 6.30pm.

The choir will be conducted by the world famous,

Professor Paul Mealor and the service is open for the public to come along to what will be a memorable service. Please also invite your friends. Light refreshments will be available after the service.

There will be a collection to support the sight saving work of the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.

Joe Mackie, Chairman, St John Scotland, Aberdeen and North East Committee



Braeside and Mannofield Community Council



The Braeside and Mannofield Community Council continues to meet monthly at Mannofield Church. Our meetings take place in the Countesswells Room at 7pm on the 4th Tuesday of every month except July and December when there are no meetings. All residents in the area are welcome to attend and we are always on the lookout to recruit additional Community Councillors.

One of the issues causing concern at the moment is the parking situation in the Deeside Drive area. With the lack of adequate parking facilities at the Robert Gordon University and the expansion of parking restrictions in the University environs, many students are parking their cars in the Deeside Drive area.

At the beginning of the year we, and councillor Yuill, were successful in having double yellow lines painted at junctions and corners to minimise the risk of accidents. However, residents are concerned that some of the car owners give little thought to, or have any respect for, the access to their homes. Cars are being parked across driveways, in positions that narrow the road making access difficult and on pavements.

Parking across driveways is inconsiderate at the least, and can, in some cases, be illegal. Narrowing the street by inconsiderate parking has the potential of restricting access to larger vehicles such as refuse collection lorries, delivery vans or, in the worst case, Emergency Service vehicles. Parking on the pavement presents a hazard to pedestrians with sight impairment, parents with buggies and those who require walking frames. In addition damage can be caused to underground utilities. Legislation has just been passed making it illegal, as from January 2020, to park on the pavement. Councillor Yuill and the Community Council have contacted the City Wardens department asking them to give attention to pavement parking in Deeside area as a priority. Liam Kerr, MSP is also aware of the situation and is in contact with RGU regarding the situation.

We continue to explore solutions and compromises to alleviate the problem but are not convinced that the residents, at the moment, would want double yellow lines throughout the area or the introduction of a Parking Control Zone where they would have to pay an annual fee for them or their visitors to park in the street. We would be keen to hear your views.

If you have any issues that you think the Community Council may be able to help with feel free to come along to a meeting or email us on bandmcommcouncil@gmail.com

The dates of our meetings and information of local interest can be found on our website at www.bandmcommcouncil.blogspot.com

The Braeside and Mannofield Community Council covers an area roughly bounded by South Anderson Drive, Broomhill Road, Bairds Brae and Countesswells/Seafield Road.

Naomi Mandel, Chair, Braeside and Mannofield Community Council

Councillor Martin Greig—an update of some issues raised by constituents HAVE YOU COMMENTS ON TRAFFIC LEVELS IN OUR AREA?



The Western Peripheral Route was fully opened early this year. Many people have commented that this new road appears to have made a welcome difference to traffic volumes in our area. Anderson Drive seems less congested. The major east / west routes, such as Great Western Road and Seafield Road, are a little quieter. However, we still experience times of traffic pressure at peak hours. Generally speaking the feedback is positive. I hope you approve of this major roads project. I am keen to hear comments and suggestions to improve the local transport network. Please let me know. I look forward to all questions and views.

MORE HOUSES IN WEST OF CITY

In the past few years I have opposed new housing developments out here in the western part of the city. Unfortunately, I have been unable to stop high density building through committee decisions. At Pinewood/ Hazledene in Countesswells Road, there was a sequence of fresh applications each time seeking to increase the number of houses and flats in the limited spaces. The latest decision approved a further 216 homes on this site. I did not support these efforts which add significant amounts of new housing. Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful. I also had real concerns about the plans for 7000 new homes at Countesswells New Town. People have questioned all this housebuilding activity. The city does not seem to have the demand for all these new properties. I will keep on tackling these issues on behalf of the community.

DEVELOPMENT AT RUBISLAW QUARRY

Last year, I was glad the council supported my motion to stop a 10 storey block of flats from being built on the north edge of Rubislaw Quarry. This would have been visible from far and wide. There were more than 350 representations from the public. This indicates the strong feeling about the future of the quarry site. Our local decision to refuse permission was appealed. So it was a great relief that the appeal was refused and the Council's decision was upheld. Now, there is a brand new planning application at this site. More information will be published in the coming weeks. This application will be considered carefully through the Council's decision making process.

HAZLEHEAD PARK

In the news you might have seen the project to build a hotel and conference centre in the Green Belt of Hazlehead Park. I opposed this outline plan but was unable to block the scheme. The general idea has been approved and the next stage is to consider the detail. Please let me know any feedback.

ANDERSON DRIVE

Anderson Drive has always been considered an important transport and tourist route through the city. The trees and verges deserve to be looked after well. For many years I have worked with the Scottish Government urging them to maintain and upgrade the verges and pavements. I have been arguing that the trees should present a fine image of the area. I have been able to have some improvement work carried out such as pavement repairs and shrub planting in places. Anderson Drive is now the responsibility of the Council –no longer of the Scottish Government. I continue to try and ensure this busy road is looked after to a good standard. There are also issues of road safety. Pedestrians should feel secure at crossing points. There is much to be done and I will press on with this issue.

Please contact me if I can help in any way:

Councillor Martin Greig, Town House, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1FY

mgreig@aberdeencity.gov.uk



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Help a family in crisis this Christmas

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Donate food or supermarket gift cards

11 th Pasta Sauces	18 th Biscuits	4 th Instant Coffee	21 st Shaving Foam	15 th Tinned Soup	9 th Pot Noodles
20 th Tinned Macaroni	5 th Tinned Tuna	13 th Tinned Ravioli	23 rd Cereal	12 th Shower Gel	3 rd Shampoo
8 th Rice	7 th Cereal Bars	17 th Deodorant	1 st Pasta	24 th Toothbrush & Paste	16 th Tinned Salmon
2 nd Tinned Fruit	14 th Tea Bags	22 nd Tinned Vegetables	10 th Tinned Chicken	19 th Tinned Mince	6 th Tinned Beans

Donate Food OR Donate Gift Cards

It's easy, rather than treating yourself everyday, treat someone who really needs it. Simply get a bag and each day of Advent add a new item. See the items in the calendar above for suggestions.

Alternatively, this year we are looking for donations of supermarket gift cards, this gives the Foodbanks the opportunity to buy exactly what is needed to help families in the North East.

 **MANNOFIELD CHURCH**
Heart of the Community



Then what?

After you have filled your bag with items, please leave all the donations in the (Gordon Room) at Mannofield Church or Café Connect between December 24th and January 5th. We'll distribute the goods to help families in the New Year.

ASDA



co
op

Sainsbury's