

# COME TOGETHER

Winter 2020

Magazine of  
St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bathgate  
&  
St. Peter's Episcopal Church Linlithgow



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of  
St Columba's &  
St Peter's*



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Dear Friends,

Preparing to sit down and write this I read through what I wrote to you last year – it began with ‘Well, the Christmas markets are in full swing’ ....sadly not this year but the festive lights all lighten the dark nights around the town and outside people’s home. This year people are pulling out all the stops and there are some spectacular displays up our way which Millie and I take in on late afternoons. And yes, the Sainsbury driver delivered the ingredients for the annual Drambuie truffle making so, even in these very different times, we are heading towards the festive season of Christmas.

Of course, Christmas is going to be so different this year, not only in church when we will be denied the singing of our lovely carols, but in our homes too. Sadly no big family gatherings, there will be empty seats at dinner tables this year, but hopefully we will all find ways of making the day special. Christmas bubbles rather than Christmas baubles this year. I love the image on the right, it reminds me that ‘because of Bethlehem love is born, hope is here’, the title of a lovely book I am reading this Advent.

Advent got off to a good start, with our Advent Sunday services and lots of Advent Calendars. Rachel and Lucy from St Columba’s created a wonderful online version with images from church and creations from our church family. Our Curate and Jim from St Columba’s created a paper variety that in place of windows to be opened has room for a little reflection. And then there are the traditional calendars that we distributed to children and families in both churches, these were given to us last January by Sally in our local bookshop. What a year to have them! And Rev Peter is running an advent study group via Zoom this year. As I write this letter plans are afoot to decorate our churches again rather differently as ‘bubbles’ will be the order of the day here too. St Columba’s have plans for a lit Christmas greeting in the church garden and after the huge sadness of St Peter’s little Advent Prayer Tree being taken from outside the front door by the time you are reading this something different but equally special will be in its place, even I have to wait to see what it is!

Advent is the season of waiting of anticipating and this advent our focus quite naturally is on the eagerly awaited vaccines for covid that will enable us to resume some sort of normality during 2021.

But it must surely also be on the one we travel to meet at the manger, the one we kneel down in front of each Christmas, the one who turned the world upside down, the one whose return we await. I hope that in the midst of all the challenges of this time we can take some time to be still and to ponder the mystery of Christmas. May we this year with festivities much scaled back and as the new year approaches be drawn into Christmas story in a new way, a way that draws us ever closer to the Christ child and to make the most of those simple pleasures of precious time with family if that is possible.

I know that for some meeting up with family for Christmas this year won't be possible and this will be very disappointing but please do remember we are church families united in a bond, part of the body of Christ, that is precious, so please do share if you can in our services either in person or via Zoom and know that you are very welcome.

In closing may I wish you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas and may the New Year bring a return to a more normal life for us all.

With love and prayers  
Christine

### **A Christmas Prayer**

May this Christmas day be full of peace within your heart.  
May you be reminded of new birth, and of redeeming love.  
May you dwell within each moment and savour all you have.  
May you find hope and power to pray for things that make you sad.  
May your heart be ever thankful and your faith rise up high in praise.  
May you know you're loved and treasured on this very special day.

### **From our Service Registers**

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November Funeral of Ian Lawrie, a Bathgate Resident,  
in West Lothian Crematorium

## **Christmas Services**

Sunday 20th December St Peter's Eucharist will include a very special nativity for this year via Zoom.

In the evening @ 6.30pm there will be Service of Nine Lessons and Carols via Zoom

Christmas Eve Morning Prayer as usual @ 9am via Zoom

4 pm Christingle Zoomed from St Peter's with a small number in church.

7pm Christmas Eve Eucharist from St Peter's with congregation in church and from home via Zoom.

11.30pm Christmas Eucharist in St Columba's

Christmas Day 10am Eucharist from St Peter's with congregation in church and from home via Zoom.

## **A Christmas Poem**

By U A Fanthorpe

BC:AD

*This was the moment when Before turned into After, and the future's  
uninvented timekeepers presented arms.*

*This was the moment when nothing happened. Only dull peace  
sprawled boringly over the earth.*

*This was the moment when even energetic Romans could find nothing  
better to do than counting heads in remote provinces.*

*And this was the moment when a few farm workers and three members  
of an obscure Persian sect walked haphazard by starlight straight into  
the kingdom of heaven.*

## **New Vestries**

In spite of lockdown restrictions, we were able to hold both churches AGM's recently, St Columba's entirely by Zoom and St Peter's a mixture of Zoom and people in church. At St Columba's Sandra Dobson stood down from vestry after many years of sterling service. Sandra is always the "go to person" for knowledge of past events in the life of our church and for good practical advice too. And the same can be said for Sue Rippon from St Peter's who also stepped down from vestry this time. Thank you ladies, enjoy your free time.

### St Columba's

Vestry Chair – Rev Christine  
Secretary – Jim Adamson  
Lay Representative – Duncan Sinnet  
Rector's Warden – David Graham Service  
Carola Small  
Gill Drysdale Wilson  
June Bremner  
Rachel Bell  
Sandra Buchanan  
Sandy McAlpin  
Danielle Woson  
Jackie Jackson

Ron Buchanan our treasure is not a member of vestry and Alastair Small continues in his role as alternate Lay Representative, not a vestry post.

**Life Together  
Spring 2021**

**Article  
Deadline Date**

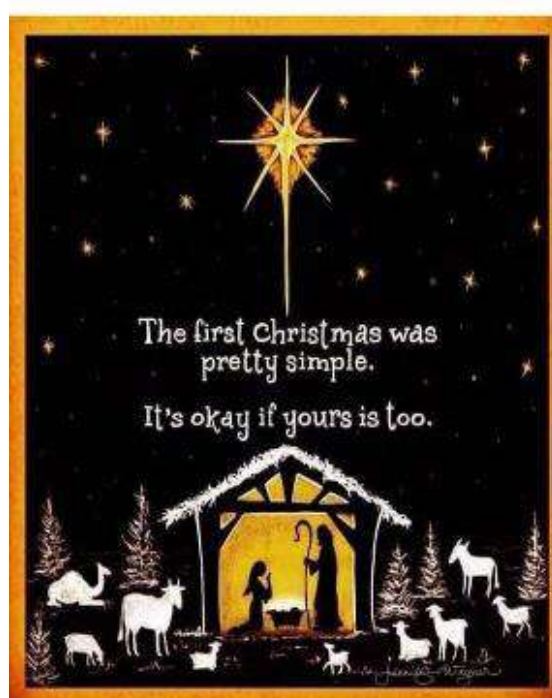
**February  
24th 2021**

St Peter's

Vestry Chair – Rev Christine  
Secretary – Catherine Fowler  
Lay Representative – Stewart Veitch  
Rector's Warden – Jane Ramsay  
Anne Moir  
Claire Wakefield  
Clare McLay  
Judy Barker  
Paul Hammond  
Peter Lewis  
David Szkudlarek

John Aitken our treasurer is not a member of vestry

Janet Moss continues in her role as Alternate Lay Representative as does Richard Rippon as Fabric Convenor. Both are non-vestry positions.



**Sermon for Christ the King  
delivered by the Very Rev Jim Mein  
to St Peter's on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020**

Today we come to the end of the Church year – it's not been the easiest. Christine and Peter in the Church circular this week have brilliantly expressed the heart of our faith through the appointed readings. I'll not try and repeat that. It struck me that these readings were not suggesting that we'd come to the final curtain, but rather were expressing hope for the future. Paul put it like this: "I pray - - that with the eyes of your heart enlightened you may know what is the hope to which he has called you". And the parables in Ezekiel and Matthew about caring for the weak, or the lean sheep, held out hope. We can celebrate and feel good on this feast day of Christ the King because we see a better future.

Yet in this world, the here and now, that may not seem so easy. It has been a tough year for many people – though I might say that for myself, an introvert who likes reading, watching sky sports and walking with Helen; secure in a house with the pension rolling in each month and no urgent need for health care, the restrictions have not been so bad – but they certainly have been for many many people. And even to me the future looks tricky: Covid continuing, the economy seriously threatened with Brexit soon to be a reality. I'm deeply relieved Joe Biden won but 48% of Americans voting for Donald Trump is worrying, and many other parts of the world seem to be in such chaos that people are forced to flee as refugees – and above all, Global warming, which threatens every one of us in a variety of ways.

The editorial in the recent Diocesan Communicant had in bold type "It's OK not to feel OK". Of course that pastoral view is right. But sympathy, understanding, even feeling the same, does not mean we are happy to just leave it there. None of us wish ourselves, or others, to feel "not OK" – we want to glimpse hope; to believe things can and will get better. We could of course just push all that into a future life – God will sort it all out in heaven or, as the first Christians thought, when Jesus returns to earth. But I don't believe Jesus, or the Bible generally, wished us to be satisfied with that. There is no opting out. Our concern today is this world, the here and now, the lost, suffering poor around us as Christian and Peter said. We need energy to change things - to have hope.



And yes, I believe this is possible. I want to talk about a book I read during lockdown which was not explicitly religious but talked about our human nature. But first, in introduction, let me refer to a saying from Paul that we all know: “The good that I would, that I do not; the evil that I would not, that I do.” In the past I’ve thought that a depressing view – how helpless I am, how incapable of being the person I want to be. And that’s true; I don’t behave as well I wish I did. But then I take heart. At least I know the direction I want to move in. I know what my nature should fundamentally be: I seek goodness rather than evil. And not only me: you don’t find many people wishing they were worse than they are – more selfish, greedy, cruel. I believe Paul was saying our basic human nature is that we are good, generous, wishing to care for one another. We need that nature to come out.

That is the message of this book I read “Humankind” by Rutger Bregman. 400 pages followed by 782 notes at the back. He starts with a question a professor in social psychology asked his students each year: So let me ask you: An aeroplane makes an emergency landing and breaks up, the cabin filling with smoke. On planet A) the passengers turn to their neighbours and ask if they are OK. Those needing assistance are helped our first. People are willing to give their lives, even for strangers. On planet B) everyone fend for themselves, panic breaks out, pushing and shoving, children and elderly are trampled. Which planet do we live on – A or B? Every year the vast majority of new students responded that we live on planet B. The truth, almost always from all the evidence we can gather, including the Blitz, the Titanic, the Twin towers on 9/11, and a multitude of smaller local disasters, is that we live on planet A. To say most people, deep down, are pretty decent is an understatement.

I’m not going to spend time on all the evidence outlined in the book – I wrote a review of it for a Zoom meeting of group of Christians I belong to in Edinburgh and can send that to anyone interested, but he talks about mass bombing on London, on Germany, on Vietnam: he compares a real life event with “The Lord of the flies”: he challenges Richard Dawkin’s “Selfish Gene”, claiming it has been the survival of the friendliest, most cooperative, most able to share information, that has evolved in humanity.

He points out that “News” is generally the reporting of the unusual: it is assault on the mundane and so, as a situation improves, the safety of aeroplanes for instance, the coverage given to each individual accident increases greatly – and so our perception becomes that flying is dangerous, now even more dangerous than in the past, when in fact it is much safer.

I loved a quote from Film director Richard Curtis. If you make a film about a man kidnapping a woman and chaining her to a radiator for 5 years – something that has happened probably once in history – its called a searingly realistic analysis of society. If I make a film like Love actually which is about people falling love – and there are about a million people falling in love in Britain today – its called a sentimental fairy story in an unrealistic world.

Bregman also discusses war and interestingly researched how few soldiers actually fire their weapons; and even fewer shoot to kill. What makes the majority of soldiers brave and willing to fight is not some idealistic belief, or their hatred of the enemy, but rather solidarity with their fellow soldiers. This explains much of the training they go through. The fellowship of “us” overrides our individual self-interest. Nations have flags and national anthems; Firms spend time and money encouraging ‘bonding’ amongst their staff. And in the Church, my experience is that belonging counts for at least as much as believing. Growing evangelical Churches are very good at helping members feel part of a family – friends – as you are here at St: Peter’s. Friendship trumps any problem of differing beliefs.

We like stories in the Church and I finish with one Bregman tells in Humankind. An old man says to his grandson: “I feel there is a fight going on inside me. It seems like a terrible fight between two wolves. One wolf is evil, angry, greedy, jealous, arrogant and cowardly. The other is good, peaceful, loving, modest, generous, trustworthy and honest. These two wolves are fighting inside me, and I think in you – indeed in everyone. After a moment the boy asks “Which wolf wins?” and the old man smiles “The one you feed”.

I've talked about this book because I think we face a tough time in the coming year and I believe our best weapon is to keep telling ourselves, and others that we, and they, are fundamentally good people. Whether we are created by a good God or whether by the enlightened self-interest of our friendly genes, we need to keep that faith. Being good is not always easy, often it's hard, but it is what reflects our true nature, it is what we are meant to be, who we really are. So let's not retreat in fear and selfishness but go into the new Church year with hope - with the expectation that we will meet goodness. Our faith should feed the good wolf.



At 12.30 on 22<sup>nd</sup> November our red doors reopened after the morning service to celebrate Christ the King and in came four of our families, long missing from our Sunday worship, and so happy to be back in the warm embrace of our little St Peter's once more. How different things must have seemed to them, green plastic chairs, social distancing in practice so no running about to greet each other, no matter how delighted they were to be together again. There was to be no singing either but this proved to be a step too far for our Rector to adhere to strictly and it was entertaining to watch her dance to the music she had downloaded and then with total abandonment begin to sing! She was of course well distanced from the rest of us and it was disappointing to see her suddenly realise what she was doing and put her hand over her mouth to stop anymore unrestrained joyful warbling.

The children all had parts to play in this first family service of our Covid – led days, and each of them did themselves and their mums and dads proud – from the littlest to those of them who had grown suddenly so tall and were on their way to leaving their younger selves far behind as they stretch themselves into their future.

Each child received a Christmas “goodie bag” with not only the printed service sheets but games, advent calendars and knitted angels with instructions and wool for knitting their own to pass onto some lucky neighbour or relative.

I have to say it was not without a lump in the throat that we let them carefully out of church again and bid them “keep safe” until we meet again – hopefully before the summer. Before then there is the Christingle and the Nativity play for us all to look forward to either being one of the few who can fit into church in person or via the magic of Zoom. We will then all be touched by the true wonder of Christmas, a gift given to us by our children. Thank you to them and to their supporting parents who have not abandoned St Peter's but are just waiting in the wings to return when it is safe to do so and bring with them the certainty that our future will be in very capable hands.

Jane. x



This was made by Gillian for the family service and the bottle of gold was made by Euan.

Children's hand painted stones for Remembrance



Advent wreath made by Vera

## THE ST PETER'S TRIPTYCH – PART TWO



It was the wish of the benefactor of the newly built Episcopal Church in Linlithgow, Bishop Somerset Walpole, that the building should commemorate the name of his deceased wife, Mildred, and be a tribute to the work of women in the church. Consequently, the choice of Joan Howson as the stained glass artist was a natural one. She was herself a woman, the daughter of an Archdeacon, and had already, by 1928, produced artistic depictions in stained glass of Mary Magdalene and of the three Marys at the Sepulchre.

She was to go on to produce images of Charlotte Bronte, St Bridget, Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Edith Cavell, Christina Rossetti and Millicent Fawcett – a particular heroine of Miss Howson who herself was a prominent Suffragette. In Linlithgow, she was commissioned to create an image of St Mildred in the attire of an Augustinian nun – reflecting her position as the Abbess of the Abbey of Minster-in-Thamet in Kent – an institution founded by her mother Saint Eormenburga. In the window, the building over Mildred's left shoulder is an attempt to depict the 7<sup>th</sup> century structure of the Abbey which unfortunately is no more. Mildred's remains were taken from the site and reburied at St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury.



Joan Howson at work

Mildred is shown standing at prayer beside a lectern – indicating that the Augustinian nuns were noted for their love of books and learning. Mildred herself had received an excellent education in a convent school near Paris. But there are oddities in the portrait. Nuns of the Augustinian Order wore modest, austere, black tunics as symbols of their spiritual commitment. Obviously, Ms Howson has taken poetic licence, perhaps in her desire to impart colour into her creation. Mildred is pictured wearing a tunic in various shades of blue, although she does sport a white coif and wimple - as marks of her modesty.



Mildred's black cloak, lined with gold, is reminiscent of the attire worn by the Order established by Hildegard von Bingen who advocated gold so that her nuns would be pleasing to Christ. Mildred's shoes are also rather strange. The order of the day decreed that nuns should wear "simple, functional shoes or sandals". Certainly, no nun would have worn purple footwear – chosen in this case perhaps to match the book upon the lectern?

On either side of the saint, there appears to be a fringed curtain or is it an altarpiece. On it, in vibrant red, are abstract circular shapes, reminiscent of Celtic art - particularly the depiction of a snake with its tail in its mouth which was used as a symbol of eternity. To my mind, the artwork resembles the Rod of Asclepius – a symbol of medicine - and indeed St Mildred was credited with several medical cures, using the dust from the rock on which she first stood on her return to England from France.

The saint wears a cincture of blue rope – again an artistic flight of fancy, I fear. At least, I've never seen this symbol of purity and chastity in any other colour than white. And what exactly is the brown and orange collection in the bottom right corner – is it Mildred's hat lying on a table?

Mildred's halo is also blue - a colour sometimes used to depict a female saint – although a halo is usually shown as a ray of golden or white light representing glory – from the Greek word 'halos' meaning the ring of light around the sun or moon. And above Mildred we do indeed have the sun, used as a Christian symbol to represent life, strength and energy; the completing of the Great Work and echoing the words of Genesis, "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night".

That "lesser light", the moon, is depicted above the figure of Saint Margaret.



The stained glass image of Saint Margaret is displayed in the left hand panel on the St Peter's stained glass triptych. Above her head shines a crescent moon – balancing the sun above St Mildred, and perhaps included as a tribute to the fact that Margaret rose at midnight every night to attend the Roman Catholic liturgy. There are certainly several symbols of her life in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Above her head (again shown surrounded with a blue halo) is a representation of Edinburgh Castle with, what I take to be, her chapel in the foreground - although in reality the building (the oldest in Edinburgh) has a pitched roof and was never worshipped in by Queen Margaret! She never ever saw it! It was built in her honour by her son, King David, in 1130. Queen Margaret died in the year 1093!



### *Saint Margaret's Chapel.*

Ms Howson has chosen to depict Margaret carrying, I assume, a holy book - reflecting her piety and the fact that she often read from the Bible to her husband - the initially uncivilized Malcolm. It is well documented that she attended to many charitable works; serving orphans and the poor every day before she ate, and washing the feet of the poor in imitation of



Christ washing the disciples' feet. The young boy by her side (under another elaborate cloak) is holding bread with which to feed the poor. Christine and I have debated on who this child might be. Is it one of the orphan children she aided or is it one of her six sons, three of whom became kings of the Scots? Is it perhaps David who was just 9 years old when his mother died in 1093?

David was certainly influenced by his mother's devotion to the church and in fact, as monarch, he became such a generous benefactor, spending so much of the nation's wealth on church building and supporting religious orders, that he became known as 'Ane Sair Sanct for the Croon' (a sore saint for the crown).

By Margaret's side is a spinning wheel and I'm afraid that its inclusion is an anachronism. A simple wheel for spinning was perhaps known in the Islamic world in the 11<sup>th</sup> century but there is no evidence of any being used anywhere in Britain (especially in the sophisticated form shown in the glass) until the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Margaret did spin but she would have used a distaff and spindle as shown in this 13<sup>th</sup> century painting of her.



Also depicted is the Scottish lion rampant and again this is not correct for the time of the 11<sup>th</sup> century St Margaret. The earliest recorded use of this royal emblem in Scotland was by Alexander II in 1222! There are also the same “Celtic” designs on a backcloth and, amazingly, St Mildred and St Margaret had the same black and white tessellated flooring! Am I being too critical – well let me stretch things further and suggest that the image crawling up Margaret’s robe, in the bottom left corner, is a snail – a symbol of childbirth. Women in the Medieval period would pray to Saint Margaret during their pregnancy and confinement. The therapeutic properties of snails were thought to come from their holy strength. Associated with femininity and fertility, they were used to treat stomach pain during childbirth.



Isn't it amazing what can be read into one image? But don't get me started on Margaret 's and the young boy's shoes!!



What we can say is that both the women represented in the stained glass bear the same determined facial expressions: forthright, direct, honest – an inspiration for us all and an acknowledgement of what women have brought to Christianity.

Bruce Jamieson

During lockdown St Columba's had a weekly zoom Coffee and Chat. There were always around 10 people joined in. We had great fun catching up with one another's gossip and putting the world to right. We later changed it to once a fortnight but it's still well attended and I hope everyone enjoys their chat and for others just company.

As you read this we will have had our Christmas social (11th December) a little different this year as we will be sat in our own house rather than the church but still something we enjoy. It included a quiz by David ( we always enjoy a challenge Mr Google at the ready ) the fiddle played by Gwyneth, Guitar played by Richard and much more. Done in Christmas jumpers sparkly earrings and favourite tippie in hand and of course nibbles.

Jackie Jackson



We had our Christmas delivered to Church last week. One family bubble was able to go in and decorate it.

Ayla Jacob and Mum had a great time.

## A READING FOR CHRISTMASTIDE

I came across this a few years ago. I don't know the author but I feel that the sentiment is very appropriate for this Christmas in our time of difficulty and uncertainty.

### WHEN THE WORLD WAS DARK

When the world was dark and the city was quiet,  
you came.  
You crept in beside us  
And no-one knew,  
Only the few  
Who dared to believe  
That God might do something different.

Will you come into the darkness of tonight's world?  
Not the friendly darkness  
as when sleep rescues us from tiredness,  
But the fearful darkness  
in which people have stopped believing  
    that war will end  
    or that food will come  
    or that government will change  
    or that the church cares?

Will you come into the quietness of this town;  
Not the friendly quietness  
as when lovers hold hands,  
But the fearful silence  
    When the phone has not rung,  
    The letter has not come,  
    The friendly voice no longer speaks,  
    The doctor's face says it all?

Will you come into the dark corners  
And the quiet places of our lives?  
When the world was dark and the city was quiet  
you came.  
You crept in beside us.  
Do the same this Christmas  
Do the same.

*Gordon Beetham*

Our advent tree's been taken  
I know not where it's gone  
The place wherein it briefly sat  
Is empty and forlorn  
So here's the words you sent to me  
Especially for you to see  
While in a room this Advent time  
The light of love we hope will shine!



JOY  
LOVE  
HOPE  
FAITH  
BELIEF  
HEALTH  
DREAM  
PRAYER  
CARING  
WISDOM  
EMBRACE  
VACCINE  
RAINBOW  
SUPPORT  
EMPATHY  
SHARING  
STRENGTH  
PATIENCE  
ENDURANCE  
THE WORLD  
HAPPINESS  
GENTLENESS  
FRIENDSHIP  
INGENUITY  
ACCEPTANCE  
FORGIVENESS  
UNDERSTANDING  
COURAGE, LE PRINTEMPS ARRIVE  
DO NOT LOSE HEART, SPRING IS COMING.

Jane Ramsay

### **Eco-congregation and covid-19 restrictions.**

So, our churches may be unable to function as normal congregations just now.

And meanwhile the rainforests are still being burnt down to make way for palm tree plantations.

Here is one little thing we as families at home could do to help: **switch to Paterson oatcakes.**

They are the only brand of oatcakes I have come across which do not contain palm oil as one of the ingredients. They are locally made in Livingston so also food mile friendly.

Try them for taste - you won't be disappointed!  
Corinne Anderson



### **St Peter's Red Door planters**

The two large planters outside St Peter's are part of Burgh Beautiful's High Street display, and we maintain them with a twice yearly change of bedding plants.

Sadly, this year the summer display of red and yellow begonias and white bacopa was plundered by unscrupulous thieves. Worse was to come, they returned to take one of the large centre plants, a box topiary donated some years back by the Ramsay family. I was very disheartened.

However, this was an opportunity for change!. So when the winter plants (wallflowers and primroses) arrived, I decided to get two matching lime green conifers as the centre plants.

The surviving box shrub has been transplanted to the back garden and now proudly guards the entrance to the prayer labyrinth.

This is a photo of one of the newly planted planters, decorated with poppies for Remembrance Day by the Sunday School children.

Corinne Anderson



## NEW HOME WANTED FOR UNDERUSED KNITTING MACHINE

I'm a BROTHER PUNCHCARD MACHINE model KH 836 and am looking for a new home where I will be used, appreciated and happy to work hard!

I will come with my ribbing attachment model KR850  
Transfer carriage model 8300;  
Intarsia carriage model 8210  
& many other bits & pieces including all instruction books & many pattern books to get you started.

A knowledge of knitting is helpful. My present owner is not making use of me and would love you to give her a ring to find out more about me. Liz



I have a good quality 8 foot x 6 foot glass greenhouse, complete with a 2 foot x 8 foot metal stage that I no longer need. It is quite old but its in good condition.

Perhaps somebody in St Peter's Church would like to give it a new home? New they cost around £400 plus the cost of the staging and I would be happy to give it to someone for a small donation to St Peter's.

It is currently erected at my home and if required it can be dismantled and delivered to the new owner. If help is needed to erect it then this could be discussed.

Katie Peterson



## St Luke's Church in Uganda



Some of you who are fairly new to St Columba's or St Peter's may be wondering why we have links with a church in northern Uganda. Here is the story.

It all started back in ... Well, here is David Olwa to tell you in his own words. But first, David's own story.

David has been a member of St Peter's for many years. He is native from Bala, a village on the outskirts of Lira, a major town in northern Uganda. David came to study in the UK and had to remain here permanently, this was in the Idi Amin era, and David would have been in serious danger of his life if he had gone back home...

David and his late wife Dorothy both had jobs in the NHS. Through their contacts they recovered redundant medical equipment and shipped it to the hospital in Lira. To their credit, they managed over time to send two lorry loads over!

Now over to David.

*"You see Corinne, When late Dorothy and I were visiting Lira hospital to review the equipment which we previously donated, my friend Florence Odongo approached us and said that "we have started building a Church on Lira hospital compound as we have to pray under the mango trees! and have nowhere to bury our dead with dignity". Florence then took us to the building site and we found that the walls were 4 metres high! She then requested if we could find donors to assist with the funding in order to complete the building project. We told Florence that we could not promise but we would try.*

*On our return from Uganda, I approached Rev Philip the Former Rector of St Peter's and St Columba's Churches and I explained everything to him and asked him if St Peter's Episcopal Church in Linlithgow could assist in building a Church for Lira hospital in Northern Uganda, which local people have already started but lack funding to continue".*



David went on to explain how Rev Pip sought advice from both the then Bishop of Edinburgh and from the Vestries of our two churches, who all agreed it would be a good thing to do. *"Every Sunday the Rector used to appeal to the congregations and said prayers for Lira Church"*.

What happened next is that in little more than a year we managed to raise enough money to allow the completion of St Luke's! Well, almost, it still lacked glazed windows, and electricity, and a coat of paint, and seating, and... but that didn't stop a grateful congregation sending us an invitation, for up to 10 people to attend the consecration by the bishop on St Luke's Day, 18th October 2010.

It was touch and go whether we would be able to send anybody, not least because at that time the Foreign Office was advising against travel to Uganda. But Paul Goldfinch and myself ended up being the representatives of our two churches. We flew out with some trepidation. It was our first time in Africa, and to a war ravaged country at that.

We needn't have worried. We received a tremendous welcome! We were hosted by the locals and looked after like royalty. Together with David and Dorothy we had places of honour at the consecration (we deserved them - the ceremony lasted 6 hours!). The photos below give a flavour of our experience of a lifetime.

We spent a week there being shown around various community projects (oh the speeches we had to make...most of them with no warning!). We were shocked and saddened by the hardship and poverty we saw. But we were also smitten by the wonderful magic of Africa and the happy nature of its people. We made some great memories, and have kept in touch with at least a couple of hopefully lifelong friends.

So now you know!. Of course this year 2020 is the 10th anniversary of St Luke's Consecration, so it seems very appropriate to remind ourselves of our link with this church in northern Uganda.

And you'll be pleased to know that we also raised further funds at a later date, which enabled windows and electricity to be installed.

Corinne Anderson



Paul reading out  
the letter from  
Bishop of Edinburgh

David showing  
photos of our  
congregations





St Luke's as we saw it in 2020



Inside of St Luke's (note the lack of seating)



Bishop John Charles Odurokmi ceremoniously addressing the closed door of the church



This baby sat on its mother's knee for the whole duration of the consecration, he/she was as good as gold! Amazing.

We were made to sample ant paste mixed with peanut butter... (Paul didn't like the peanut taste)



.but as a special treat they took us to the Equator!

Dorothy standing next to the church sign





The goat that was given as a present to the bishop from the congregation of St Luke's



Corinne explaining the banner beautifully made by Liz Beetham  
It says: "Love and blessings to St Lukes - Lira  
from St Peter's - Linlithgow and St Columba's - Bathgate"

## Margot's Moments

Lockdown, Covid and me.

Ask me how I am and I will almost certainly say "Fine. " I am not always fine however and certainly have not been for most of the last eight months. I suspect I am not alone. I seldom let my guard down but if I do then you will be surprised how it all comes pouring out. I like to be strong for my family and those around me. Being down myself does not prevent me from helping and advising others or indeed from composing ridiculous rhymes for the Church Chat group. I can have a change of mood ten times a day. I may wake up full of the joys or in the depths of despair depending what the day ahead has in store. Before Covid I lead a very active life with my involvement in various Groups and Charities plus many coffees and lunches with friends and family which kept the loneliness at bay since Johnny died. Then suddenly it all came crashing to a halt.

The world itself almost came to a standstill and a huge cloud of doom and fear enveloped us all. My generally upbeat personality embraced this at first. I painted in the house and garden, I planted pots and flower beds and I made lots of meals to freeze and even baked. I looked forward immensely to my weekly delivery of shopping and chat from the window with my daughter or sons. Then progress, Garden meeting with one, then two and more and eventually in the house. O Glory be. Imagine the joy when once again we could go out for a meal or coffee and I even managed a caravan holiday. Suddenly the world was once more threatened with a resurgence of the dreaded Virus. This time my resilience has not served me well. Ask me how I am and I will still smile and say fine, I still write my nonsense but behind the mask I am not really faring all that well.

Ask me how I am after reading this I will say fine, ask me how I really am I will still say fine. Don't ask me again.

Margot.

The First Christmas.

Long ago on a night so cold  
came the greatest story ever told  
Mary and Joseph wrapped up tight  
journeyd through the starry night

No room at the Inn but stable bare  
Mary had her baby there  
in a manger lined with hay  
round about the animals lay

A miracle this night occurred  
according to God's Holy word  
Christ our Saviour sent to save  
and on the Cross his life he gave

Rejoice this Christmas Praise his name  
that into our lives as a babe he came.

## **Lo! He comes**

‘Lo! He comes with clouds descending’, by the Reverend Charles Wesley, has been a popular Advent hymn in Britain for more than two hundred years, writes Rev Dr Michael Hull, *Director of Studies with the Scottish Episcopal Institute*. It abounds in imagery from the Book of Revelation and evokes the timbre of Advent. Advent is a time of God’s movement toward us and of our expectation of him. The word itself comes into English from the Latin *adventus*, that is, ‘arrival’, a word used for a Roman emperor’s visit to a city. Christians co-opted ‘advent’ for the coming of the Messiah, the King of Kings, to Bethlehem: ‘For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord’ (Luke 2.11). Over two thousand years later, from a liturgical standpoint, we mark the Season of Advent with four weeks of joyful anticipation of the Baby Jesus.

From just about every other standpoint, at least as far back as I can remember, Advent is a season of movement on our part. So busy is Advent in terms of rushing around to prepare for Christmas that the ‘Sunday next before Advent’ (as the Scottish Prayer Book has it) is oft referred to as ‘Stir-up Sunday’, an appellation from the collect: ‘Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people [...]’. Thus, it’s become the custom to begin stirring the Christmas pudding even before the start of the Season of Advent and likewise to begin our shopping season. This, unfortunately, furthers the misapprehension that Advent is about our movement rather than God’s. We focus not just on the pudding, of course, but on browsing, buying and wrapping. We shop ‘til we drop in the days running up to the Nativity of our Lord.

Yet Advent 2020 is going to be different to any Advent we’ve known, as will be Christmas 2020, because there’s likely to be little moving about or visiting on our part. Although the Covid-19 pandemic may constrain our physical movement and our material preparation, it need not dampen our souls and spirits, nor our hopeful expectancy of the Christ child. Advent is not about the things we do; it’s not about our rushing around, shopping or visiting. Advent, like Christmas itself, is about the things that God does, especially the ways in which God comes to us.

St Bernard of Clairvaux elucidates three ‘advents’ in his Sermons for Advent and Christmas. The first advent is the liturgical one as we await the Incarnation.



‘And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’ (John 1.14). The second, and perhaps the most subtle of the three advents, is the ‘intermediate coming’ where Jesus, who is our ‘rest and consolation’, comes into our hearts each and every day. Jesus says that if we keep his words, then he and the Father will come to us and make their abode in us (John 14.23). This is the sentiment of our forebears who encountered the Risen Jesus on the Emmaus Road and said: ‘Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent’ (Luke 24.29). The third advent is the return of the Triumphant Christ to Earth, so aptly summed up in Wesley’s hymn as the moment ‘when God appears on Earth to reign [...] every eye shall now behold him robed in dreadful majesty [...], all shall their Messiah see’. Jesus is the agent in each of these advents: God is doing the visiting. It is God who moves, and it is we who are still.

That said, it will not be easy for you and me to accept constraints this Advent. Millions are in the same boat as my family and me. We’d planned to move about, to do as we’d always done in Advents past. That’s not going to happen this Advent, but we should not let our hearts be troubled (John 14.1). In our apprehension about the present and the future, we Christians ought to hear well God’s voice through the Psalmist: ‘Be still, and know that I am God’ (46.10). For all the darkness that has descended on the world of late serves to throw into sharper contrast the star over Bethlehem. Jesus is the light of the world. Our material preparation, gift giving and visiting, as generous as they were and are, pale in comparison to the generosity of God’s gift in the Christ child. Whilst there may be little movement on our part this Advent, there is no constraint on God’s movement. Nothing could have stopped God’s arrival in the fullness of time, nothing stops God from abiding in our hearts and nothing will stop God from returning in glory. Lo! He comes!

Author: Rev Dr Michael Hull, Director of Studies with the Scottish Episcopal Institute  
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Paul Goldfinch





## *Regular Weekly Services & Events*

### *St Columba's, Bathgate*

Sunday 11.15 a.m Sung Eucharist  
(Second Sunday of Month is a Family Service)  
Last Sunday of Month 6.30 p.m Choral Evensong  
Monday 9.00 a.m Morning Prayer  
Second Monday of Month 7.15 p.m Film Night  
Wednesday 10.30 a.m Said Eucharist  
(followed by coffee and natter)  
First Wed. of Month 12 noon Community Lunch  
Thursday 11 a.m 4C's - Cuppa, Chat, Company & Crafts

### *St Peter's, Linlithgow*

Sunday 9.30 a.m Sung Eucharist  
First Sunday of Month 6 p.m Choral Evensong  
Tuesday 10.30 a.m Said Eucharist  
Thursday 9 a.m Morning Prayer  
9.30am Sunday Youth Group Meets Monthly at Fenwicks

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