

**May God's peace and joy be yours
this Christmas
from
Prestongrange Parish Church**



Today in the town of David a Saviour
has been born; he is Christ the Lord...

Prestonpans: Prestongrange Parish Church ((Church of Scotland)-
Scottish Charity SC 031191

www.prestongrange-church.org.uk

Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

The perfect gift. What would that be for you? It's always one of those "wow!" moments when we receive such. The thoughtful, "I know what you need- or would appreciate" kind of gift that says something about the giver and elicits our grateful response.

Christmas is the finest example of the perfect gift. "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2.10 & 11: the angel's message to the shepherds).

What can you give someone who has no hope? : living hope. What can you give the person who has no peace? : peace with God. And that gift is found in the gift of God to us in the form of His Son. God breaks into the darkness and brokenness of our human situation to give us the most precious gift that he could afford. And that gift that cost Him everything- costs us nothing- it only needs to be received with the recognition that Jesus is the gift we need the most. We cannot save ourselves and we cannot know peace with God and peace within apart from Jesus. His coming to die for us gives unique significance to his birth, life and death and gives a new perspective and meaning to our human existence and experience. You simply cannot divorce His birth from his death for the crib without the cross would be a meaningless and valueless thing – simply something of sentimental value and self- focussed celebration- as Christmas is for many.

For the Christian believer, Christmas is a time of great celebration as we praise God for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ- the promised one of God who

meets our deepest needs. Like the shepherds, who made the journey of discovery: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." (V.15), we know that life can never be the same again when we bow the knee to the Lord of glory: "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." (V.20).

What the Lord looks for in response to his self- giving is the adoration and praise of our hearts as we stand in awe and wonder at His coming and look forward to His coming again as judge and Saviour. In the words of Christina Rossetti's poem (immortalised in the carol, "In the bleak midwinter"):

What can I give Him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can, I give Him - Give my heart.

Our hearts given over to God in glad worship and adoration is the only gift He looks for and desires from us. It's the only appropriate and pleasing gift that we can offer.

As we celebrate Christmas, may our heart's desire be found in Christ as we worship and praise Him for His birth- and death- as our Saviour.

Moira joins me in asking for the blessing and peace of God upon you this coming

Prayer Spot

Heavenly Father in a world that is full of uncertainty we praise and thank You that we can be certain of Your unending love, because while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Father forgive us for our taking the price Jesus paid on the cross for our sin for granted. Would You by the power of Your Holy Spirit create in us a clean heart, a heart that seeks to honour You and give You glory. May we reflect Your love and empower us to tell others of the hope we have because of Jesus this Christmas and beyond.

Saturday 30th January 2016, 10.00 – 13.00

Lighthouses of Prayer are groups of two or three or more people who agree together to pray, care and share the Good News **wherever they are.**

Lighthouses can be small groups in the church, people from different churches working together, as an expression of unity in Christ, can impact that area by being and sharing the Good News.



Being certain in an uncertain world

So much has happened in our nation and around the world since the last edition of Pans Post in August. The extract below was written in September by Alistair Barton, Chairman of Pray for Scotland, even then no one could not have predicted the horrific events that would take place in Paris on the 13th November. As we pray for peace in a world where there is so much violence and hatred let us remind ourselves of the words of a worship song we often sing at Prestongrange, “Jesus is King”. It reminds us that Jesus is King, He reigns on high and is enthroned in the heavens. Jesus is the word of God and He is exalted for us. Because of Jesus we have hope which is certain in uncertain times. Jesus intercedes for us in the throne-room of our heavenly

Harvest Supper

Around fifty folk gathered at the church hall to take part in a celebration meal. The hall was decorated with leaves of all colours, gold table cloths, autumn themed table centre decorations. As we came in we were met with a bench festooned with harvest produce so there was every evidence of God's generous provision. It was great to see families, old and young enjoying food together. There was fresh juice punches, soup, stovies, aubergine pie, apple crumble and fruit pavlova. A cup of tea or coffee with homemade tablet completed a hearty meal! A family quiz gave a welcome pause and allowed the "dishwashers" to catch up. Hard work for all it was agreed but worth the effort for the food , fun and fellowship. Donations were given for the Church Roof Fund.



Thanks to all who came to help and those who came to enjoy.

Rhona MacKenzie



Christianity Explored

This course is designed for those enquiring about the Christian Faith and study centres around the Gospel of Mark.

We did not know how many people would come along and were delighted to have 12 people in total including the Leaders.

We start the evening with a meal together and this contributed to us getting to know a little about each other. The content of the course themed around the character of Jesus, why did he come , why did He have to die and the Resurrection. As well as group discussion we viewed a video relating to the topic being discussed.

Over the weeks people got more involved with the activities and generally relaxed a bit! I think we all agreed that we learnt a lot more about Jesus and what it means to follow Him.

Dates for Your Christmas Diary

Sunday 6th Dec - Remembering Loved Ones Service in the Church at 3pm.

- Community Nativity in the garden of the Church during the Christmas parade leaving Community Centre at 5.15pm

Monday 7th Dec - Joint Board and Session meeting. 7pm. Side room

Sunday 13th Dec - Nativity practice until 1pm in the Church

- Sunday Club Christmas Party. **3-4.30pm** in the Church Hall

Sunday 20th Dec - Nativity Service led by the Sunday Club

Christmas Eve - Thursday 24th Dec

7:00pm Family Service led by Focus and youth team

11:30pm Watchnight service led by Kenneth Donald

Christmas Day - Friday 25th Dec

11:00am Christmas Morning Worship led by Kenneth Donald

Children – bring one of your Christmas presents along with you to show us.

New Year

Sunday 3rd Jan 2016 - Morning service 11am with a celebration of the Lord's supper.

The balcony on the East side will be closed on this day to encourage folks to sit together.

Guild Diary

Wed 9th Dec - Christmas Gifts with Nancy Paterson
Business Meeting

Wed 16th Dec - Christmas Music and Readings with
Bill Baillie and Family Brass Band

2016

Wed 6th Jan - New Year Entertainment

Wed 20th Jan - Silent Auction

Afternoon Teas

There is no Thursday Afternoon Tea in December.

The next one will be on Thursday 28th Jan 2016 in the Church Hall

The Small World would like to thank everyone for their support this year. The shop will close on 19th Dec and reopen on Tuesday 19th Jan 2016.

New volunteers would be welcome in the New Year.

We wish everyone God's Blessing at Christmas and for the

CHURCH FLOWERS

I am making a new list of people who wish to give flowers to the church in 2016, which are then given out to members of the community. Some people have requested specific dates so if you wish to put your name for a date next year please speak to Jane after church, call 01875 610758 or hpbrnfmly@aol.com



A Message From our Treasurer

Thank you for this. The current total raised is now **£10,290**.

The smarties tubes total is now **£785**, growing well.

Thank you so much to everyone who gives in this way. Every little helps.

Christmas for many people can be an expensive time of year. Some people give a donation to charity instead of sending Christmas cards. Will you bear in mind Prestongrange could be your charity of choice this year. Members of the congregation have been very generous in donating and fundraising for the roof this year.

In addition we have a pledge of **£8,000** (from The Baird Trust) to be added when other funding is in place.

We are an active church and this year has seen us spending more than last. Please consider a gift to the church this December. Or maybe you would like to increase your regular giving next year. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Margaret Milne (Tel. 899041)

Shoe Box Appeal

Thank you so much to everyone who filled a shoebox for this year's appeal. Over 20 boxes were donated and have now been sent on to those in need through the Blythswood charity.

Janice McLeish

Foodbank Feedback

A huge "Thank you" to everyone who donated to the East Lothian Foodbank through our Harvest Service. Our total donation was a massive 221.3kgs of food which meant 369 meals could be provided to those in need.

Thank you

Fiona Carbray-Johnson

**May God's blessing be upon those who have lost loved ones -
the family and friends of the late:**

Margaret Steele, James Watters, Douglas Ritchie,
David McGregor, Margaret Burns, Adam Stewart, Margaret
Black and Jerry Dobson.

Congratulation to those who have been joined in
Marriage recently;



James Scott & Claire Watters on 26th September
Colin Fisher & Sharlie Thomson on 23rd October

Contacts

Minister: Rev Kenneth Donald 01875 813643

Session Clerk: Mrs Jane Hepburn 01875 610758

Youth Elder: Heather Antonelli 01620 842646

Order of Service: Calum Wilson 07773 085378

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**NEXT PANS POST FEBRUARY EDITION
COPY DEADLINE**

Sunday 17th January 2016

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