

CONTACT



Church Magazine of the Parish of Traprain

Christmas 2024



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PARISH OF
TRAPRAIN

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Contact Series 2 No.12



**‘Joy to the world, the Lord has come,
let earth receive her King’**

We were recently scrolling through some old family photos and videos on our phones, and I was reminded of what is probably my most favourite Christmas video ever. The video is of Christmas morning when our daughter was four years old, and we see her arriving downstairs to find gifts left by Santa. Immediately her voice raises several octaves, and she starts to jump up and down as she reaches to the bag of the pile for the ‘big present, big present’. The paper is ripped off in a hurry and she screams out in the highest pitch ever ‘Yeah – that’s the one I wanted’, and then continues to jump up and down in pure delight as she opens the box of the toy buggy that she had really been hoping for. You cannot help but smile every time you watch that video. Pure joy is infectious, particularly when it is expressed so openly as that of a small child receiving a gift that clearly means the world to them.

I hope that as you read this, you will be prompted to reflect back on moments of joy from previous Christmas days in your life. Maybe it was a gift that you received that still holds a special place in your hearts, or maybe it is the memory of seeing someone else’s face light up as they unwrap their present. Perhaps your joyful memory is more about other people than it is about an object. Christmas is a time when we often reconnect or meet up with people we have not seen for a while. The best Christmas gift may have been getting time with someone special as you celebrate together.

When the angel announced ‘good news of great joy’ to the shepherds, the gift that was being spoken of was of a baby, born to be their Saviour. When the Magi from the east saw the star stop over Bethlehem, we are told they were ‘overwhelmed with joy’. The gift of Jesus is a cause for joy, and at Christmas we are reminded that joy continues to be possible even when times are hard.

Some of our more joyful memories are tinged with sadness, as we remember people who are no longer with us, or people that we no longer see. We might not experience joy in the same way as we used to, but at Christmas we can be grateful for past joys and seek to find new joys in our current context. Not every Christmas needs to be the best one ever, but there is opportunity for joy to be found every year because that is the promise of the Christmas story.

This Christmas, my prayer is that we will all find joy – a deeper kind of joy that lasts.

I also hope that some of you may also experience the jumping up and down, screaming joy of receiving the present you wanted!

Rev Douglas Hamilton

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 15 December

Crafts & Carols at Athelstaneford Village Hall, 5pm

Thursday 19 December

Christmas Remembrance Service at Prestonkirk, 7pm

Sunday 22 December

Carols & Readings at Stenton, 9.30am

Carols & Readings at Prestonkirk, 11am

Christingle Service at Prestonkirk, 6.30pm

Tuesday 24 December

Family Service at Stenton, 4pm

Family Service at Athelstaneford, 6pm

Wednesday 25 December

Family Service at Prestonkirk, 10.30am

Sunday 29 December

Joint Communion Service at Prestonkirk, 11am



We will have special collections for **CrossReach** at our Christmas Services.

PASTORAL CARE

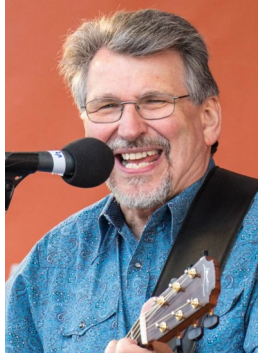
Our new pastoral care team is now up and running. It is being led by Sue Rhodes and the other members are Irene Heron, Libby Jeffrey, Margaret Jeffrey and Helen Napier. If you, or someone you know, is unwell, lonely/ isolated, in hospital or a care home, and would like to ensure that visits are arranged, please contact one of the team or send an email to: care@parishoftraprain.org.uk and someone will get back to you.

THE GUILD OF TRAPRAIN

The new strategy of the Guild for the next three years is **'Let us build a house'**.

Our Dedication Service for the new session 2024/25 was held in Prestonkirk Stables on 8 October. Rev Douglas Hamilton gave a very interesting address on our new theme of **'Sure Foundations'** with Guild members trying to identify from a selection of photographs which buildings would be best suited for a church building. An interesting discussion ensued about the buildings chosen!

Our next meeting, on Tuesday 22 October, was the **Bruce Davies concert** which had been postponed since February. This was a very happy afternoon spent listening and singing with Bruce some well known songs. It takes you back! Thank you all who attended from all our congregations and beyond. Monies raised will go to our Guild charities this session which include CrossReach Projects 'Playful Beginnings' and 'Daisy Chain' as well as 'Bibles for Bairns' from the Scottish Bible Society.



*Elizabeth Cowan
Convener*

STENTON SINGERS CONCERT

The superb Stenton Singers will be performing a Christmas concert on Sunday 22 December at 6pm at Stenton Church. The concert is free with a collection at the end in aid of *Keep The Heid*, a local mental health charity.

NEWS AROUND THE PARISH

Stenton

Stenton Church hosted a sell-out Lammermuir Festival concert in mid-September.

Our Harvest Thanksgiving was followed by Stenton School Harvest Service which was well supported by families who enjoyed brass, woodwind and string numbers and enthusiastic singing.

Remembrance Sunday was marked at the War Memorial, followed by a short church service.

This year we will see a change on Christmas Eve with an all age family service at 4pm rather than the Watchnight service that we have taken place in recent years.

Angie Simpson

Athelstaneford

There will be a St Andrews Day service at Athelstaneford Church on Saturday 30 November at 2pm. This will be followed by refreshments in our village hall. All are welcome.

We will be singing Christmas carols around the Christmas tree outside the village hall at 5pm on Sunday 15 December. Please bring torches. Words of carols will be supplied as will refreshments, served in the village hall after the singing. Donations to will go to our parish Christmas charity which this year is CrossReach.

The plans for redevelopment of the park in Athelstaneford are now well developed. The next stage is application for planning permission.



The roundels for the path to the Flag Trust Heritage Centre have arrived after some difficulty in procuring them. It is hoped they will be in place before St Andrews Day. Here is a picture of the one representing the battle of Athelstaneford. The Flag Trust would be very grateful to receive donations towards this.

Helen Napier

Prestonkirk

September saw four excellent and well attended Lammermuir Festival classical music concerts at Prestonkirk. A special Steinway piano was delivered for the performers (quite a job to manoeuvre!).



Work continues across the Parish on property maintenance of our buildings: in October we put in new outdoor lighting for both Prestonkirk and the Stables, and worked on updating the streetlights on the lane and car park. Thanks to Cliff and Freddie for their work, and thanks also to Tom Middlemas for supplying his cherry-picker to help us reach the high bits!



Our **Advent Messy Church** will be on Sunday 1 December between 3-5pm at Prestonkirk in East Linton. Messy Church is aimed at young families and all are welcome. We will be baking, painting, sticking, singing and listening to the story of Christmas. There will be refreshments afterwards in the Stables.

VILLAGE VESTRY



The Village Vestry is a new meeting / office space that we are trialling for the next few months. It is located in a unit at the back of the Mart in East Linton, close to the Station car park. Douglas will be working from the Village Vestry at various points during the week and will be happy to meet you there.

BAPTISMS AND BLESSINGS

Eoin Thomas, Prestonkirk, 17 Nov
Hector Rettie, Stenton, 17 Nov

FUNERALS AND MEMORIAL SERVICES

Jack Campbell, Prestonkirk, 30 Sep
Lesley McEwan, Prestonkirk, 4 Oct
Bridget Taylor, Stenton, 11 Oct
Jane Stevenson, Prestonkirk, 15 Oct
Walter Crosby, Prestonkirk, 29 Oct
Helen Watt, Prestonkirk & Whitekirk, 12 Nov
Mary Storrie, Binning Wood, 21 Nov

MESSY CHURCH

Our Harvest Messy Church was an absolute blast! Most of our activities were outside and the children had fun hopping between them all including a scavenger hunt, painting, making bird cakes and much more.



Don't worry if you missed it, our next Messy Church will be our advent one on Sunday 1 December at the Stables, Prestonkirk from 3-5pm. We are aware that there is lots going on in the village on that day, but please feel free to drop in for fun activities, some yummy festive refreshments and hearing all about the story of Christmas. Just what you need to get you in the festive mood before you head off to see the Christmas lights switch on in the square.

YOUTH CLUB

Our Youth Club, for S1-S6, is going as strong as ever with around 30 attending each week. Come along and join in the fun, have some pizza and snacks, play some games and just enjoy being with your friends. We are also running a follow-on session after youth club where we are exploring "big questions" and prayer. This is very much led by our young people, who are all enjoying this special, reflective space together.

Gill Watson

A WORD FROM THE SESSION CLERK

At our last meeting of the Kirk Session, at the request of the General Assembly, we spent some time considering the Westminster Confession of Faith. If you would like more information about this, please let me know.

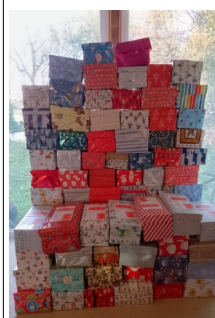
On Sunday 27 October Chris Clark was introduced as the new Treasurer of our Parish and we also took the opportunity to thank Winifred Govan who has retired as our Assistant Treasurer. Winifred has been a real servant to the Kirk and we really appreciate all her hard work over the last 36 years.

We have also been keeping in touch with some of our overseas partners. Free Presbyterian Church of Holt in Michigan hold a Heritage Sunday each year when they celebrate their presbyterian roots. We were able to send some information about John Knox and his work in East Lothian. I have often wondered if he ever preached in any of our churches? If you know the folks at Holt they are keen to host some visitors from Traprain and we are looking into the possibility of a trip there in Autumn 2025. If that is something you would be interested in can you please let me know at sessionclerk@parishoftraprain.org.uk.

I am writing this update from Bagdogra in India. I am over here visiting churches in the Diocese of the Eastern Himalayas. I have just had my first glimpse of the mountains and if all goes to plan, I should be worshipping with our partner church in Naxalbari on Sunday 17 November.



Bill Stevenson

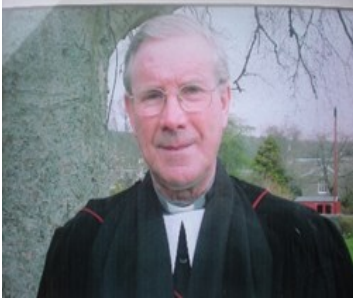


Thank you to everyone who donated towards this year's **Blythswood Care Shoebox appeal**. Earlier this month, 69 boxes (see picture) and a big bag full of extras were taken to their warehouse, and will shortly be on their way to Ukraine in time for Christmas.

You can find more information about services, activities and our new Church Calendar on our website: www.parishoftraprain.org.uk

Sign up for our monthly email update by emailing Wendy: admin@parishoftraprain.org.uk

A big thank you goes out to all those who contributed content and to all the parish volunteers who help to deliver *Contact*.



In Memorium: The Rev James Lawson MA BD

Reverend James Lawson passed away on the 26 September, aged 87, only six months after the death of his dear wife Anne.

Jimmy was inducted into the linked charge of Prestonkirk, Stenton and Whittingehame in 1986. His early ministry was in St Columba’s Church, Pont Street in London. This was followed by two years in Canada as assistant at Parkdale Presbyterian Church, Toronto. Prior to this he was appointed as an Army Padre to the Gordon Highlanders and

the Royal Highland Fusiliers. This took him to postings in Germany, Northern Ireland and the Far East.

After his service in the Army, he worked for 4 years with the Church of Scotland’s ‘Board of Social Responsibility’ at 121 George Street Edinburgh, before coming to East Linton.

Whilst in the three parishes, Jimmy was a popular, caring and dedicated pastor, ably supported by his wife Anne, both taking an active part in parish and community life.

In 1998, he was inducted to the Parish of South Uist, a charge he held for 4 years prior to retiring to Comrie in Perthshire.

He is survived by his daughter Rosalind and sons Fraser, Douglas and five grandchildren.



ARMISTICE DAY

We took time to reflect and remember our fallen heroes on Remembrance Sunday. There was heart-warming support from across the community including local Scout, Cub, Guide and Brownie groups. At our services we collected £258 for Poppy Scotland.

Thank you to all who contributed.



The Stables
COMMUNITY CAFE

Come join us for a blether or just relax with a cuppa

Refreshments, an emergency pantry and access to advice

There is no charge

For more info contact

☎ 07849 743 066 ✉ support@the-ridge.org.uk

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