

THE LINK MAGAZINE
BATHGATE HIGH CHURCH
DECEMBER 2021



Scottish Charity No. SC007418

Our Mission statement -*We seek to share the love of Jesus by worship, faith and fellowship with all ages.*

Church office – info@bathgatehigh.com

From the Editor –

Season's greetings to all!

This issue of the Link contains information about our services over the Christmas period. Given that the Bathgate churches are now working together more closely, some of these services are at our sister church at Boghall and some are joint services with St John's.

At this time last year, Scotland was heading for lockdown, with our Christmas schedules being curtailed at very short notice, though we continued with our worship online. We pray that this year we can celebrate the birth of our Lord in ways much closer to our normal pattern. The elves have already been spotted in the church spreading greenery and sparkly things. We hope to see you during Advent and Christmas.

Please enjoy the church Christmas card attached to your Link.

We are still seeking an editor for the Link magazine. This is an area of important service for our congregation and community, and in these times of change and uncertainty, maintaining effective communication is very important.

Anyone wishing further information or to discuss the post, please contact anyone on the Session Clerk Team.

John Wood

Locum's Message

From our hymn books we read these familiar words from this 18th century carol that still speaks volumes to us in our world today.

*'O come, all you faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come to now, O come now to Bethlehem,
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels...'*

The invitation to come is more pressing now than it ever was, come and share the love that God sent into this world through the birth of His son Jesus.

Born not in some grand palace, but in a cold, smelly, damp stable as there was no room for them in the inn. Jesus was laid in a manger filled with straw, a feeding trough for animals.

Surely, we ask, the most unlikely start to life on this Earth of one who came to bring peace, love and joy to all.

Even his birth was proclaimed to lovely shepherds as they watch their flocks on a cold wintry night on the hills around Bethlehem.

And the message was seen by travellers, astrologers who were looking to the skies when they saw the sign of something magnificence. These astrologers were not Jews but Gentiles.

Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was welcomed into this world by social outcasts, the shepherds and Wise men who were not of God's chosen people.

No royal fanfare, no visits from local dignitaries or leaders of the Jewish Church.

The invite to come to Jesus and to share the love His Father gave Him, is still on offer today, but it is the responsibility of you and I who profess to be Christian to share the invite our family, friends and folks we meet in our daily lives.

'Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year' and it is a time that 'the reason for the season' should be shouted from the roof tops.

I hope and pray that you will all have a Happy Christmas but share a thought for those who have lost a loved one this year, those who stay on their own and are lonely this Christmas.

Share the love of Jesus with joy as Jesus' love for all is unchanging, unending and is found in every circumstance.

David Wilkie (Locum)

Worship matters –

On Sunday 14th November, there was a united evening service for all the churches in Bathgate. This was called– ‘Rise up!’ The service was on the theme of Climate Change and the COP26 Summit and has been jointly planned by representatives of the High, St John’s and Boghall. It was a very contemplative service, stressing the interdependence of all parts of God’s creation, the biblical trail from creation to the new Heaven and new Earth promised in Revelation, and gave an opportunity for all present to make personal commitments to caring for the world we have been entrusted with.

We are now looking forward to our celebrations of the birth of our Lord over the coming weeks.

12th December – The Sunday School Nativity

19th December –The Choir at Christmas

24th December – Christingle Service at 7PM

24th December – Watchnight Service (Boghall Church) at 11.30PM

25th December – Christmas morning service (Boghall Church) at 10.30AM

26th December – United service with St John’s, at the High

2nd January – United service with St Johns, at St John’s

We would like to thank all those who have been involved in the planning of the Christmas programme and those who will be leading worship.

Vacancy matters

Following a Presbytery meeting and the Session meetings in November, it appears that Presbytery is supportive of the suggestion of the High and St John's uniting, though the Presbytery Mission Plan, outlining the distribution of ministry posts and charges in West Lothian has still to be passed formally. The timescale for this is complicated by West Lothian and Edinburgh Presbyteries merging in January, and all ministry vacancies are currently 'on hold'. If congregational votes support union, we could be in a position to call a minister as a united congregation by late summer or early autumn.

JW



The Guild

The Guild has now reached the end of the first session since lockdown. We have enjoyed a varied programme of speakers, but have had smaller numbers, probably due to the change to afternoon meetings, to avoid walking or driving in the dark wintry nights. We finished our meetings in the usual way, with our Christmas meal at the Fairway on 1st December. We will be back at the beginning of February, weather permitting and we would be pleased to welcome new members.

May I wish you all the Season's Greetings for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours, in His service,

Agnes Ferris



The Choir

I am sure that you are like me and miss hearing the choir sing on a Sunday. I went to visit the choir on Monday, at their practice, and the atmosphere was so friendly and electric. Everyone there was happy at getting back together and doing what they all enjoy – singing!

Mind you, when the practice starts, Alison keeps them going with no wasted time. On Monday, they were rehearsing Christmas songs. They sang seven songs, but each one was sung at least five times. Ronnie had agreed to sing a solo, and he did great! A new song was brought out, and Edith and Louise were asked by Alison to sing solos on different verses. After going over it five or six times, I was amazed at the change when everyone settled into the tune. As the tune went very high, I did not sing along with them. Our choir numbers are depleted – we only have six sopranos, three altos and two tenors.

If you would like to join the choir, you would be made very welcome. You do not need to be able to read music. Practices are held on a Monday evening from 6.30 until 7.30, in the Lesser Hall.

I hope and pray that the Christmas Choir service can take place on Sunday 19th December. I would like to thank Alison and everyone in the choir for taking time out to practise and I look forward to seeing you all back in the church on a Sunday morning. I would also like to thank the members of the choir who have led the singing from the front of the church over the last few months.

Phyllis Sproul



Sunday School News

Although we are low on numbers, the past few weeks have been filled with lots of fun, laughter and joyful chaos as we have rehearsed, chosen our costumes (some of us have more than one!) and enjoyed singing our old favourites as we prepare to share the Nativity story with you.

Nativity Sunday is a highlight for many, and we hope those who are unable to be with us in church will join us online.

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to the Christingle Service on Christmas Eve at 7.00pm, this is a short all age service open to all.

Finally, from all at the Sunday School we would like to wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas time.



Flower Committee

Sadly, after 55 years, the Bathgate and District Flower Club (not to be confused with our own Bathgate High Church Flower Committee) has disbanded, due to being unable to appoint committee members. This meant the club could not continue. Beth Anderson, Minnie Macdonald and Christine Macfarlane were founder members and were active down the years. Following its inception, many church flower groups were formed and are still active to date. Coincidentally, here in the High, our own Flower Committee would have been celebrating 50 years

in its present form. Normally, the church would have been decorated and possibly a celebratory lunch organised, but Covid restrictions have put paid to that. The Flower Committee regrets that we are bound by rules are presently we are still prevented from arranging flowers and delivering fresh flowers from church. How we all miss being involved and especially our pastoral care visits. Hopefully, this will change soon when we may be able to return to visiting within our congregation as restrictions are eased. In the meantime, stay safe, keep clam and carry on!

The Flower Committee would like to send Christmas greetings to all our church family at this festive time. As we look forward to welcoming the Babe of Bethlehem, we wish everyone peace, good health and contentment, praying that the Spirit of Christmas remains with us all in the challenging New Year that lies ahead.

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The Tree of Christmas

Where Autumn's red and golden ways
Merge into a wintry haze;
There stands, star bright, for all to see,
The wonder of the Christmas tree.

The tree that year by year is lit
That man may have the joy of it,
And rest from turmoil, sin and strife,
Under the boughs of the Tree of Life;
The tree of peace, for all spread wide,
Rooted in love at Christmastide

Patience Strong

Finance Report October 2021

Total donations are down £2,400 from this time last year. However total income is up by over £600 compared to this time last year.

Total payments are down by just under £2,000 over the same period last year. Without the furlough scheme we would be on an overall deficit of £1,848, however with this payment we have a surplus of £3,667. The Furlough Scheme has now finished.

Bathgate High's Mission & Ministry contribution was set at £59,896, higher than our current contribution which is £51,925. This figure is likely to be discounted by around £12,000 since we are in vacancy, bringing it down to around £40,000

Presbytery dues are up substantially, from £770 to £1,722.

Coffee Morning Update

Following the successful 'Tea, Coffee, Biscuit and Chat' in November, the next event will be held on Saturday 18th December from 10 AM until 12 noon. All will be most welcome. Santa hats optional !

Jean Logie



A box of thanks – Blytheswood Shoebox Appeal

Carried over from last month, below are the solutions for the Shoebox Quiz –

Places –

1. Village near the world 's tallest beech hedge – *Meiklour*
2. Reputed to be the Scottish birth place of Pontius Pilate – *Fortingall*
3. Island with is home to the Callanish Stones – *Harris*
4. Boring in Oregon is paired with this place in Perthshire – *Dull*
5. Birthplace of the 10th Dr Who actor – *Bathgate*
6. Known as the Athens of the North – *Edinburgh*
7. Scotland's deepest loch – *Morar*
8. Nicknamed Shaleopolis – *Broxburn*

People –

9. Big Tam from Fountainbridge – *Sean Connery*
10. Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective – *Sherlock Holmes*
11. Poet born in Alloway – *Robert Burns*
12. Famous for Roamin' in the Gloamin' - *Harry Lauder*
13. Found in Africa by Henry Morton Stanley – *David Livingston*
14. Stoll-thrower of St Giles – *Jenny Geddes*

Miscellaneous

15. Scotland's national animal – *unicorn*
16. Reputedly the first person to spot Nessie – *St Columba*
17. Roman legion, said to have disappeared in Scotland – *Ninth*
18. Palindromic glen – *Glenelg*
19. Scotland's whirlpool – *Corry Vrechan*
20. Not an island near Inverness – *The Black Isle*

Link Donations – November

Christine Robertson	£2
Christine Macfarlane	£7
Beth Anderson	£5
Margaret Black	£10
Marion	£2
Marion and Mary	£14
Anon	£10

Total £40



On-line presence

We continue to build an on-line presence, with the church Facebook page and website.

We are currently hosting a series of short Advent reflections, which have been prepared by members of all the different Bathgate churches. These are posted daily on the church Facebook page and also the Boghall Church Facebook page. They are included on the Worship Resources page of the church website for those who are not Facebook users, and this also includes a musical reflection for each day.

Many thanks to all who took part!