

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

BATHGATE

BATHGATE SOUTH, WESTER INCH, INCHCROSS, STANDHILL, BRIDGEND PARK, BIRNIEHILL, FALSIDE
AND WINDYKNOWE



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023



Church Contacts

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|---------------------------|--|---------------------|
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Services Funeral services for Cecilia Bonnar were held on Friday, the seventeenth of November, one service in St John's, the other in Livingston Crematorium. Afterwards, friends gathered in the church hall for tea.

Appreciation

I would just like to thank you and all the helpers involved for providing such a warm tribute to Cecilia. Quite simply, she would have loved it and I can't think of a better way to end yesterday than in the Church with the company of people who were so special to her.

Thank you all so much. There was a loving friendship shown which epitomises the best of St John's

Please pass on our thanks to all who made yesterday special.

Meg and Allan Pennycuick



Dear Friends,

We are a month away from All Saints Day, and I wonder – “What is a Saint?” Answer – you are! Saint Paul wrote letters to the Churches – and he greeted them in the same way – “To the Saints at Phillipi” or wherever. If he was writing a letter to us, he would have addressed it to “The Saints who are in St John’s Bathgate”. If you follow Jesus, as I know you do, you are a Saint. The trouble is, nowadays the term “Saint” is confined to outstandingly devout people, like Mother Teresa, or people like the Apostles, of whom our Saint John was one. We tend to think they are more or less perfect, and put them on a pedestal, but that is to deny their common humanity, warts and all. I read somewhere that some of the Nuns who worked for Mother Teresa said she could be really tough on them sometimes, and even the great Saint Paul was prone to argue and boast (he said so himself!). He could be hard on young followers, as he was to poor homesick Mark, and he fell out with the gentle Barnabas over his refusal to give the lad a second chance. And his views on women speaking in Church were a throwback to the Pharisee he once was.

But does that make him any less a Saint? Of course not – he was probably the greatest and most intelligent and bravest Christian who ever lived. It just means he was a sinful human being, not perfect like Christ, in fact with faults just like you and me. So there is hope for us – despite our faults and failings, we too can be Saints – in fact we are!

I’m reading a book given me by Sarah Young at Torphichen, all about the early Saints of Ireland and Scotland. It’s called “Islands of the Evening”, by Alistair Moffat, and it tells us of the extreme lengths some of them went to mortify the flesh and thus become holier and, as they thought, nearer God. They built their tiny cells on remote windswept Islands, they ate just enough to keep them alive, and they prayed for hours standing up to their necks in a cold Loch.

Now you don’t have to do any of that to prove that you are a Saint – God is quite happy to call you a “Saint” just as you are, but of course always striving to be a better Christian.

You have all had the patience of Saints as you waited for some clarity about the future of our beloved Church of Saint John. Now we have it. Union is coming, and we shall lose that wonderful name – “Saint John’s”, and exchange it for the prosaic “Bathgate Parish Church”. The Saints at the High will also lose their special name. And we will become the Saints United! Let us pray that this coming Union will be a blessing to all the Saints in the two Churches, and to the people of Bathgate.

God Bless ,

Ken Mackay

Closure of St John's

The Union of St John's Church and the High Church having been agreed by both congregations and the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian, there remained the question of which set of buildings would be used to accommodate the new Bathgate Parish Church. The decision on which buildings would serve would be made by Presbytery and there would be no appealing of its decision.

At its meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2023, Presbytery will consider the proposal of its Deployment Committee that 'the complex at Bathgate High be retained for mission and the complex at Bathgate St John's be released'. In other words, St John's buildings will be closed. There is no reason to suppose Presbytery will reject this proposal.

Data on the people and property of the two congregations had been gathered by the Deployment Committee and from this information it judged that the High Church had a younger congregation and so would have a better base for mission with the younger elements in the community and it had a 'a larger leadership core on which to build'; also, its finances had been stronger over the years. The Committee acknowledged that St John's buildings were in a better condition than the High's and it suggested that St John's would be more easily sold and money from its sale 'could address fabric issues', presumably at the High Church complex.

Optimistically, the Committee thought 'the retention of the Bathgate High complex may be best when looking at the longer term presence of a Church of Scotland congregation in Bathgate'; pessimistically, it thought that if circumstances reached 'a point when even the Bathgate High sanctuary cannot be sustained', 'the separate hall at Bathgate High could be used as the locus for the Church of Scotland in Bathgate'.

The Committee said 'Mission' had been the factor that had led it to its decision which was offered 'with recognition that both congregations have engaged in excellent mission and there will be great sadness and a sense of loss in Bathgate St John's'.

A copy of the full report of the Deployment Committee's Building Proposal for Bathgate Parish Church can be obtained from Anne Noble, Session Clerk.

Poppyscotland £98 was raised through the collection for the Earl Haig Fund Scotland. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

Leprosy Mission The sum of £226.32 was sent to the Leprosy Mission during November. On behalf of the Mission, my grateful thanks to all who helped to achieve this. *Marion McLaughlin*

Thank you Alison Russell and Kay thank all in St Johns who have given support and kindness to them at this difficult time. 'Thank you for your thoughts and prayers since Graham's passing.' *Alison*

Dear Friends of St. John's congregation

Now that Cecilia has passed on to her place in 'Gloryland' - (remember? the Chorus - 'Way beyond the Blue, Do Lord, Do Lord, O Do remember me'), and is now at heavenly Peace, safe in the arms of Jesus - I must THANK YOU all , for the heart-warming support you have given me and Melanie and Mark these past few weeks.

The Funeral Services, under the guidance of Rev. Ken Mackay, John McFadzean, and Betty Cockburn, with the High Tea provided by Gayle Naismith and helped by the ladies of the Guild, have been largely appreciated. A lot of hard work has been done by many of you, and my family are grateful for the love and care given. The expressive words and thoughts given in your cards and calls, have been so reflective of the qualities that Cecilia displayed herself.

You certainly have 'practised what is preached', which pleases our Heavenly Father. What a wonderful congregation of people St. John's has been for so many years.

May God continue to bless us as we step into the future with our neighbouring congregations. Praise the Lord for his guiding hand on our personal and communal lives.

Yours Aye,

George Bonnar

Annual Gift Service Sunday 10th December

" River Kids" is a charity based in Livingston and founded in 2005 by Wendy Simpson and Donny Hughes. They realised that West Lothian needed a charity which focussed solely on benefitting local children and their families. They believed that no child should go without at Christmas or miss the opportunity to reach their full potential through educational, financial or emotional support.

"River Kids" now organises and runs the West Lothian Toy Appeal from their warehouse in Broxburn. We in St John's have been providing gifts for disadvantaged children for many years now.

On this, our last year in our Church, please bring your UNWRAPPED gift on the 10th and place it under the tree before the service.



This year our Company has around 32 girls attending regularly on a Wednesday evening. Each section follows its own theme incorporating spiritual, educational & physical activities.

It's a pleasure to see so many girls attending each week and they certainly enjoy all the activities, games & crafts. Girls and leaders are all looking forward to our Christmas Party on the 13th December. We are extremely lucky to have another 3 talented leaders joining our team since September. I would like to welcome:

*Linda Scott
Heather MacNeill
Megan Anderson.*

We have 14 girls and 1 leader signed up for a weekend visit to "Teen Ranch" in April. Each company with girls attending camp have been asked to hold a fundraising event with proceeds going towards cost of the bus. Our company is running a Christmas Chocolate Bouquet raffle. The bouquet was made up by one of our own talented Brigaders.

Raffle tickets will be available to purchase at the **Coffee morning** on the 9th December.

GB TEEN RANCH

2nd Bathgate Girls' Brigade are fundraising to help pay for the bus to Teen Ranch in April

Win the Sweetie Bouquet



£2.00 a ticket

Raffle Tickets available on Wednesday evenings
or from any GB Leader

Merry Christmas from all the Girls & Leaders.

Christmas Coffee Morning and Fayre

St. John's Church Fundraising Committee is holding a **Christmas Coffee Morning and Christmas Fayre on Saturday 9 December from 10.00am – 12.00 noon** in the Hall.

There will be various Stalls – Bric-a-Brac with Christmas items, Baking, Bottle Stall along with other Festive delights.

We would certainly greatly appreciate donations of baking for both the Tables and the Stall.

Also if you could donate any items for our Bottle Stall that too would be greatly appreciated.

It would really assist us if **these donations could please be handed in on Friday 8 December between 11am – 3pm** when we will be there setting up the Hall.

Most of all we would like you and your friends to come along and join us in the last St. John's Christmas Coffee Morning and Fayre. On this occasion all proceeds from this event will go to local Charities for Christmas.



Admission is still the same – £3 for Adults and 50p for Children.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH



Mid Street Bathgate

*Christmas Coffee Morning
and Fayre*



Saturday 9th December 2023

10 a.m. – 12 noon

Admission £3.00 children 50p

Clothing Appeal

There are a large number of young men, refugees and immigrants, staying in local hotels and they are in desperate need of warm winter clothing. If you could donate any warm jerseys, jackets or jogging bottoms for them, they would be most grateful. A collection of these articles will be made in the church on Sunday, 3rd December.

Many thanks.

Margaret Hardy

Sunday Services

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|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 3 December | Rev Ken Mackay | |
| 10 December | Mr John McFadzean | Gift Service |
| 17 December | Mr John McFadzean | |
| 24 December | Congregation | Celebration |
| 31 December | tbc | |

Tea/Coffee Rota

| | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| 3 December | Mrs Priester | Mrs Armstrong |
| 10 December | Mrs Gallacher | Mrs Forehand |
| 17 December | Mrs Reid | Mrs McLaughlin |
| 24 December | Ms Hay | Mrs Rankin |
| 31 December | Mrs Mathieson | Mrs Cameron |
| 7 January | Mrs Swan | Mrs Simpson |
| 14 January | Mrs Reid | Mrs Armstrong |

Bathgate Churches Together Shared services

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 3 December | St. Columba's | Advent carol service | 6.30 pm |
| 10 December | Boghall church | Christmas celebration | 6.30 pm |
| 17 December | St. Columba's | Service of nine lessons and carols | 6.30 pm |
| 24 December | High Church | Christingle service | 7.00 pm (tbc) |

Happy Christmas

The News Team wishes all our readers, their families and friends a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and may all the world 'hush the noise and still the strife to hear the angels sing'.



Dear Friends of St. John's

Christmas is rapidly approaching, and my choir is diligently practising for a Christmas party for older people in our community. Our repertoire includes 'Silent Night' and 'Joy to the World' alongside some festive non-religious tunes such as 'Santa Claus Is Coming to Town' and 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'.

What Christmas song holds a special place in your heart? As I shared in last December's newsletter, my favourite is 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. While not widely known in Japan, the melody of this song starts playing on a loop in my mind as Christmas draws near, filling me with the festive spirit.

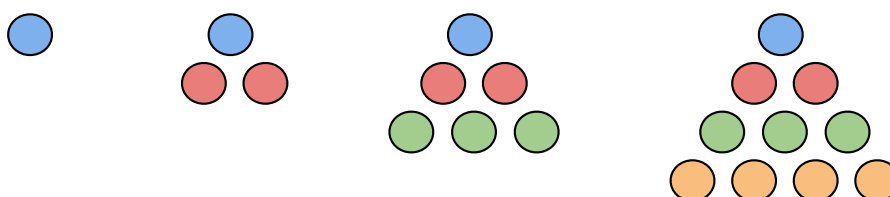
Recently, I realised that if your true love gave you all the gifts mentioned in the lyrics, the number of gifts given each day would follow an interesting mathematical pattern.

Day 1: 1 partridge = 1 gift

Day 2: 1 partridge + 2 doves = 3 gifts

Day 3: 1 partridge + 2 doves + 3 hens = 6 gifts

Day 4: 1 partridge + 2 doves + 3 hens + 4 calling birds = 10 gifts



Thus, the number of gifts for each day is 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 21, and so on. This sequence is known as the triangular numbers, which I learnt in my senior school maths class. The n^{th} triangular number is given by the formula $\frac{n(n+1)}{2}$. For example, to find out how many gifts you would receive on the fourth day, substitute $n = 4$ into this formula, and you will find that $\frac{4(4+1)}{2} = 10$ gifts, and similarly 78 gifts on the twelfth day.

Furthermore, the sum of the first n triangular numbers is given by $\frac{n(n+1)(n+2)}{6}$. Using this formula, we see that in 12 days, you will receive a total of 364 gifts! Your true love is certainly generous, but what would you do with so many birds and people? I would rather just get the gold rings.

I wish you a merry Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year.

Yoko



The Guild 91st Birthday Party

To Steal a line from a song in the Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice musical, Evita, 'Oh what an exit, that's how to go when they're ringing your curtain down.'

The Guild 91st Birthday party was held on the 14th of November in the church hall. We had thought we would not be able to match the success of the 90th party held last year. However, in a beautifully presented, packed hall we did just that!

In attendance were members of the Guild past and present and invited guests from the other churches in Bathgate. We also welcomed Dr Philip Bell and his concert party who would entertain us. Almost 70 people in the church hall!

It was noted that this would be the last birthday party of St John's Church Guild, but it was not the day for regret, rather a day of celebration of all the Guild has been over the years. It has been a beacon of light in the history of St John's and is still forward looking, fresh and relevant. Tribute was paid to the present membership, a group of remarkable ladies, unfailingly supportive and dependable. They rise to every challenge with good humour and kindness. Post pandemic when many Guilds folded, we have remained strong and stable.

As previously mentioned, Dr Philip Bell and his group came to entertain us. They were wonderful!! Performing a programme of popular music from the fifties and sixties that had us joining in with gusto! They played for over an hour; it was a toe-tapping trip down memory lane. They were warmly thanked by John Hardy in the vote of thanks.

The birthday cake was cut by Netta Armstrong, the Guild secretary, to the strains of Happy Birthday. After which everyone present enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea provided by the ladies of the Guild.

And so, with this joyful celebration, the curtain was brought down on the final St John's Church birthday party.

Elaine

Guild Party - Netta and Elaine



Christmas Lights Saturday 2 December 2023 Pedestrian Precinct

- 3.00pm to 6.00pm Local market trading stalls (in collaboration with Bathgate Market); with musical entertainment by Regal Radio.
- 4.00pm Carol service with traditional and contemporary singing, choir and accompanying local brass bands.
- 4.40pm Christmas address / reflection by the Rev. Rosie Addis.
- 4.45pm Christmas Tree Switch On, performed by Bathgate Procession Principal Characters.
- 5.00pm Parade and performance by the world pipe band champions, the People's Ford Boghall & Bathgate Caledonia Pipe Band.





Christmas Concert

**WITH
WEST LOTHIAN SCHOOLS
FLUTE ENSEMBLE**

FRIDAY
15TH
DECEMBER

7:30PM

ST. JOHN'S
CHURCH,
BATHGATE



TICKETS £8 (UNDER 12S FREE)
AVAILABLE FROM CHOIR MEMBERS
OR ON THE DOOR
