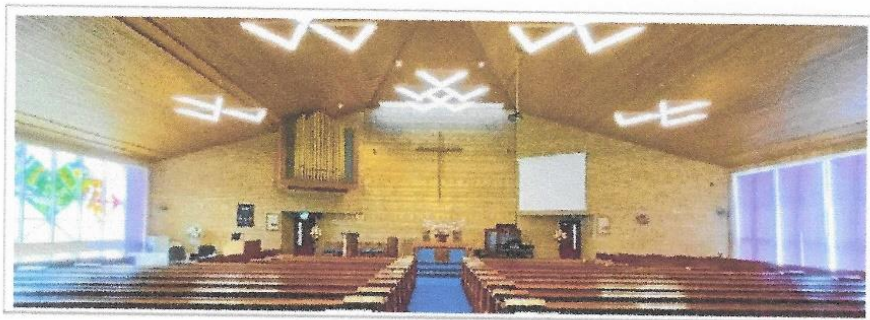


Bennoch Parish Church of Scotland

# Newsletter

December 2023



We wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The continuing uncertainty over the future of the four congregations has been something of a challenge. Joint services and contributions from the Worship Group and others are helping to fill any gaps.

The update from our Interim Minister, which accompanies this, gives some hope that things will soon move forward.

In the meantime our services continue and on-line viewing is still being used by those who are unable to attend. Our website is the place to go for this and also for the latest church news.

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Session Clerk: 200179

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Website: [www.bennochparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.bennochparishchurch.org.uk)

Registered Scottish Charity SC005628

DECEMBER 2023

*A Christmas message from the Interim Moderator*

If you look back on this year, how will you remember 2023...? Through all the hardship, sadness, and loss, but also through the times of joy, celebration, and abundance, God has been there. The Lord has been faithful. He is our Provider!

On behalf of the Kirk Session, I want to say thank you for your time and sacrifice, your contributions and giving, of yourself and your time and money. May we all look back on this year and sing: *Gloria in excelsis Deo!* Glory to God in the highest!

On Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, it will be the start of Advent. The word Advent is a Latin word that literally refers to "coming" or in this case "the coming of Christ". It is therefore supposed to be a time in which we prepare for the celebration of the coming of Jesus. So, take out the lights and decorate the Christmas trees. Wrap all the presents and write all the Christmas cards (if you haven't already done so), because Jesus comes as the true Light of the world. He is our greatest gift because, with the celebration of each Christmas, we remind ourselves and each other that He is the source of our hope.

Advent also reminds me of another word: 'Advent-ure'. God's adventure with us. Each Christmas we celebrate a new adventure with Jesus who becomes human and comes to live among us (John 1:14). It's not just another Christmas, this year can be different if we take God's adventure with us seriously. What an adventure it must have been for all those who say baby Jesus first - Matthew tells of astronomers from the east who followed a "miracle star" and were "overjoyed" when they came to Jesus (Matthew 2:10-11); Luke tells that shepherds suddenly saw a light shining around them and then saw and heard a multitude of angels with



"good news of great joy" (Luke 2:10) and so the story continues throughout the New Testament..... what an adventure!

This adventure is meant for us too. Christmas also wants to be "good news of great joy" for us this year. What an amazing Christmas adventure it can be if we take time during Advent this year to reflect on the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The fact that He came to live with us. As we prepare our hearts and minds to celebrate the true meaning of 'Christ-mas', let us make room for Him in our hearts and minds. In our living rooms, kitchens, and at our Christmas tables. At work or at home, with our families, or if we are alone.

This is my Christmas prayer for you...

May this festive season be exceptional for you and your people!

Grace and Peace

**Adriaan**



## **Interim Ministry Update**

Along with this Newsletter you will also receive the November Ministry Update from our Interim Minister, Rev Stewart McPherson. This not only gives the latest news on our current situation but lists all the suggestions received for a 'new name' for you to ponder!

## **FWO Envelopes**

Where appropriate you should also receive your Free Will Offering envelopes for 2024. If you have changed your method of giving or simply no longer wish to receive envelopes please let your elder know, so they will not be re-ordered.

Death

13.11.23

Mrs Rena Williamson



## Shoe Box Appeal 2023

Bennochty Church friends and family, how kind you are!! Your gifts in boxes for people we will never know have been astounding, All ages have been involved searching for suitable items for the boxes.

Seventy two boxes were delivered to the collection van and a cheque was sent to cover haulage.



A huge thank you to all.

### ***Mary***

- Thanks also to Mary and her team of helpers for covering the boxes and arranging for extra ones to be filled.



Some of the boxes at the Dedication service

## Coffee Morning

Another successful coffee morning was held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November, when many turned out to enjoy tea/coffee and mince pies despite the weather. An impressive array of gifts and toiletries was collected and these gifts have now been delivered to the Salvation Army for distribution to the parents of local children. A donation was also made to the Salvation Army and £70 raised for church funds. Thanks to all who donated and thanks also to Isobel and her team of helpers.



- A letter of thanks has been received from the Salvation Army.

## **The Non- Fattening, Eco- Friendly Advent Calendar 2023!**

**1** Christmas is for people who hope for better days to come: Isaiah 9 v 1:  
“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.”

**2** Christmas is for people who long for justice: Isaiah 11v 4:  
“With righteousness God will judge the needy.  
With justice God will give decisions for the poor of the earth”

**3** Christmas is for people who long for peace: Micah 4v3:  
“God will judge and settle disputes...Nation will not take up sword against nation...nor will they train for war anymore”

**4** Christmas is for people like Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke 1 v 7 : to be  
“childless” any time of the year, for whatever reason, is a grief which  
Christmas can sometimes make worse.

**5** Christmas is for people like...Zechariah in Luke 1 v 12,  
“gripped with fear” by unexpected happenings in their lives.

**6** Christmas is for people like Elizabeth in Luke 1 v 25 who saw herself as a  
“disgrace among the people” through no fault of her own.

**7** Christmas is for people like Mary in Luke 1 v 29 who are  
“greatly troubled” when faced with important choices.

**8** Christmas is for people like Gabriel in Luke 1 v 13 and v 30,  
who try to reassure others who are afraid: “Fear not...don’t be afraid.”

**9** Christmas is for people like Mary in Luke 1 vv 53 who speak up for justice  
when “the hungry will be filled with good things and the rich sent away  
empty.”

**10** Christmas is for people like John in Luke 1 v 79 who share the mercy of  
God which “shines on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death”

**11** Christmas is for people like Joseph in Matthew 1 v 19 &24  
who respect and cherish women and children.

**12** Christmas is for people like those in Luke 2 v1-3 who are faced with long,  
dangerous and difficult journeys because a distant, uncaring government  
has “issued a decree” which must be obeyed.

**13** Christmas is for people like the innkeeper in Bethlehem in Luke 2 v 6 & 7 who found someplace safe and warm for a woman to “give birth to her firstborn.”

**14** Christmas is for people like Jesus in Luke 2 v 10, born in desperate circumstances but still a source of “good news that will cause great joy.”

**15** Christmas is for people like the shepherds in Luke 2 v 17 -20 who share their “good news” with everyone.

**16** Christmas is for Simeon and Anna in Luke 2 vv 25-38 who, despite their advanced age, recognise Jesus as important for the whole world: “a light for revelation to the Gentiles.”

**17** Christmas is for people like Mary in Luke 2 v 35: every parent knows too well the pain - “a sword to pierce your soul”- that parenthood can bring.

**18** Christmas is for people like the Magi in Matthew 2: 1-2-people seeking the truth even if it means taking risks.

**19** Christmas is for people who suffer from the actions of those, like Herod in Matthew 2 v 16-who rule by fear and terror. “Herod was furious...and he gave orders to kill...”

**20** Christmas is for people who depend on the gifts of others to feed and clothe their families. And those, like the Magi, in Matthew 2 v 11, who “opened their treasures”

**21** Christmas is for people who have to flee their country or face persecution or death.” Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him” Matthew 2 v 13

**22** Christmas is for people who have suffered and live with loss: “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning. Rachel is weeping for her children ...because they are no more.” Matthew 2 v 16-18

**23** Christmas is for people who trust that  
“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”  
John 1 v 5

**24** Christmas is for people like us: Christmas is for everyone.



## Gift Day

Our Gift Day on 5<sup>th</sup> November has so far raised a total so far of £1,320. Thank you to all who donated.

If anyone missed the Gift Day and would still like to contribute please put your donation in an envelope marked 'Gift Day' and place it in the collection plate any Sunday, or hand to your elder. Gift Aid envelopes are available if required.



## Christmas Cards

This year we will once again be having a page on the website where members can post their Christmas greetings to all at Bennoch. This will also be printed and on display so those who don't use the web can view them.

The website page will be available from the end of November and greetings and messages can either be handed to Liz or Ragnar, emailed direct to Allan at [allan@mortondesign.co.uk](mailto:allan@mortondesign.co.uk) or go to [xmas@bennochparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:xmas@bennochparishchurch.co.uk).

**Congratulations** to Jim Marshall, who celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday on Remembrance Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> November!



**Congratulations** also to Jim and Isobel Neilson who celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 8<sup>th</sup> December.



**Thank you** - Mrs. Margaret Miller (95), one of our Church members, is always busy knitting squares which are crocheted together into a blanket and gifted to the Cottage Family Centre in Templehall. She reckons she has knitted a few hundred squares over the past few years. Our thanks to her for this sterling work.



## Toy Service

We begin the season of Advent with our Toy Service, on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December when you are invited to donate new toys (unwrapped please) which will be gifted to the Salvation Army as part of their Christmas appeal. Gifts suitable for older boys are traditionally in short supply, if you are undecided who to give to.

The service will be led by Rev Dr Janet Foggie and will be attended by a representative from the Salvation Army who will uplift the gifts after the service for distribution.



**Christmas Jumpers will be worn!**



## Bell Ringers

We are to contribute to the Toy service on Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, hopefully with a joyful sound of Christmas carols.

We will visit Marchmont Residential Home on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December and provide some Christmas music for all to enjoy - and sing-a-long.

We will resume late January. Open invitation to come and ring . . . . .



***Margaret Simpson***

## Social Team

There is a plan to have a Social Team which will organise events over the next year to bring members of the town centre churches together. If you would like to be part of this team, please let the Session Clerk know. Ideally we would like two or three people from each congregation.

## Carols and a Pint

The first event is a Carols and a Pint sing-a-long in the Duchess pub in Kirkcaldy on 13<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 pm with Richard Michael. All are welcome: just come along on the night!





## Christmas Calendar

December 3	Toy Service & Christmas Jumper Day (Rev Dr Janet Foggie)
December 10	Service in Bennochty (Rev Stewart McPherson)
December 13	'Carols & a Pint' in the Duchess Pub, 7.30pm
December 14	Olive Branch Café Christmas Lunch
December 17	Service in Bennochty (Worship Group & Sunday School)
December 24	Service in Bennochty, with St Bryce, 11am (Rev McPherson)
December 24	Joint service at St Bryce Kirk, 7pm – Carols by Candlelight
December 24	Watchnight Service in Linktown Church, 11.15pm
December 31	Joint Service at St Bryce



### 2024

January 7	Joint service at Bennochty, with St Bryce and Abbotshall. Sunday School resumes
January 11	Olive Branch Café re-opens

- \* The Sunday School will be participating in the service on 17<sup>th</sup> December, and this will be followed by a short Christmas party with a special guest. They will be on holiday on 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> December, starting back on 7<sup>th</sup> January.



- \* The Olive Branch Café are holding their Christmas Lunch on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December. Please note this is a ticket only event. The café will then be closed over Christmas, re-opening on 11<sup>th</sup> January.

Sandra & Jim Marshall wish all members and friends of the congregation a very Happy Christmas and best of wishes for 2024.



## **Current Activities in Bennochy Church**

<b>Girl Guides:</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
Rainbows	for girls aged 5 - 7 years
Brownies	for girls aged 7 - 10 years
Guides	for girls aged 10 - 14 years
Senior Section.	for girls aged 14 - 25 years

<b>Women's Group</b>	<b>Tuesdays, fortnightly</b>
<b>Community Choir</b>	<b>Monday</b>
<b>Al Anon</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>Dru Yoga</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>Hand Bell Ringers</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>Country Dancers</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>Indoor Bowling</b>	<b>Monday</b>
<b>T'ai Chi</b>	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday</b>
<b>Zumba</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>

<b>The Olive Branch</b>	<b>Your community café.</b>
	<b>Internet connection is available.</b>
	<b>Every Thursday 11.00 - 2.00</b>

More information on these activities can be found on our website.