



St Leonard's Welcomes You in Jesus' Name

'Come to me, all of you who are heavy laden, and I will
give you rest' **Matthew 11 : 28**



From the Minister

Well, here we are in Advent already. This year is tinged with a sense of sadness due to the losses we have not been able to fully recognise in Church, and for ongoing isolation for many of our members. However, as a Christian community, I am highly impressed by the generous responses to the needs of people in food poverty. Also, for the mutual support given to our more lonely and isolated members. It may have been "just a phone call" or a jar of jam handed over the door, but good fellowship has prevailed. You may ask yourselves some day, when was it... that you LORD were hungry and I gave you food? I am positive that our congregation has been busy during the Lockdown in the activity we call MISSION.

Prayer: One of the most powerful activities that a Christian can do, is to regularly pray for the needs of others, and indeed for our Church. The wonderful thing about prayer is that prayer is always heard by God and always answered, even if not the way we hoped or expected. An old Minister once said, be careful what you Pray for. A man once prayed that his vegetables would grow better and the following week a large load of manure was delivered to his house. Prayer answered, but not in the way expected. With prayer, we believe in God-incidences, not co-incidences. In St Leonard's Church, we have currently some active prayer groups and good things are happening.

Christmas this year seems to have the same market pressures on us all, But somehow people are celebrating the great Christian festival more modestly and perhaps... we hope... more generously. As Jesus said, what charity is it if you only give to those who will give back to you? Hard as it may sound, we are called to love even our enemies, for by so doing we may win them for the Lord. This Christmas, we have much less capacity in our church for visitors, but so far we have been able to accommodate a steady stream of visitors to our twice monthly services. I look forward to seeing as many of you all as possible this Christmas. If you cannot make it to church, then do please ask your elder for a doorstep visit or a Minister's telephone visit. You may be able to view our weekly online services with a friend.

Wishing you God's rich blessings during this Festive time of Christmas as we celebrate the birth of the Saviour.

Yours in Christ. **Donald Prentice (Parish Minister)**

Celebrating Christmas

Due to the continuing prevalence of the pandemic Christmas 2020 will seem very different from any we have experienced in our lifetime.

However, in spite of everything, the fundamental message of Christmas remains exactly the same as it has always been. So at St Leonard's we will still be celebrating Christmas through a number of special services in the church during Advent.



These are as follows:

Sunday 13 December at 10.30am
Third Sunday in Advent
(Rev Donald Prentice)

Sunday 20 December at 10.30am
Christmas Service
(Rev Donald Prentice)

Thursday 24 December at 7.00pm
Christmas Eve Service
(Rev Donald Prentice)

The church will be decorated in a limited way with our usual Christmas tree etc, so please come and join us as we celebrate 'the reason for the season'.

Please note there will be NO service in church on **Sunday 27 December**, but there will be a service online as usual.

Visit www.stleonardschurchforres.org.uk

Comings and Goings

Over the last couple of months there have been a few changes in personnel within the church, due to a variety of factors.

Trish Fenton, our Church Officer had been on furlough, but continuation of the post became more problematic in the light of changes to the scheme and her employment had sadly to be terminated.

Wendy Robertson, our church cleaner for the past few years, tendered her resignation in October. The post has been advertised, but as yet no suitable candidates have come forward. However, it is vitally important we fill the post quickly as cleaning of the hall, in particular, is paramount to the safety of the groups and organisations using it on a weekly basis. So if you know of anyone who might fit the bill, please let Roy as Session Clerk know as soon as possible.

We also have a new Roll Keeper following the resignation of Catherine Laing. Joan Paterson has kindly taken on the role for a year, for which we are very grateful. The Kirk Session thanked Catherine for many years of faithful service as an Elder and Presbytery Elder, as well as Roll Keeper.

Talking of the church roll there have been a few changes there also in recent weeks. Disjunction certificates have been issued on request to Peter and Wendy Robertson and to Judith Watts. Mary Grant sadly passed away, but on the positive side we have been delighted to welcome Mrs Molly Emslie back to St Leonard's from Kinloss. At the morning service on 20th December we are looking forward to welcoming two new members - Emma Logan, who is doing such a sterling job looking after our website, and Gemma Spurgeon.

Presbytery Changes

A major change in the structure of Presbyteries throughout Scotland is currently underway. The number of Presbyteries is likely to be reduced from around 40 to approximately 12.

The western part of Moray Presbytery, including our own charge, is likely to be part of the new Highlands and Islands Presbytery with the eastern part joining the new Grampian Presbytery. These changes are likely to take effect in 2022. One of the benefits of the new structure is that it will hopefully provide greater support to congregations in carrying out necessary functions, including keeping accounts, safeguarding and data protection.

Moray Presbytery is currently consulting on a new Presbytery Plan, which is likely to entail a considerable reduction in the number of full-time Ministers serving congregations across the area. The number of congregations is also likely to be fewer as a result. Again more detailed information on this should be forthcoming on the next year.

Online Worship

Our online services continue to be broadcast each week on the You Tube channel.

The preachers until the end of the year are as follows:

Sunday 6th December
Rev Edward Andrews

Sunday 13th December
Rev Donald Prentice

Sunday 20th December
Rev Donald Prentice

Thursday 24th December
Rev Edward Andrews

Sunday 27th December
Rev Donald Prentice

These services can also be accessed via the church's Facebook page.

CDs of weekly services can also be obtained from John Carson.

Hall Lets

Our hall continues to be let to groups and organisations on three evenings per week, although this may change if we cannot find a new cleaner.

There are three different ballet classes for over 55s throughout the day on Mondays.

Then on Tuesday evenings the Boys' Brigade occupy the hall, while on Thursday evenings it's the turn of the Brownies. The Guides are hoping to resume in early January.

Fabric Update

As you will have noticed, the scaffolding around the church has now gone, meaning that the work on the church roof has been completed with the exception of a few masonry repairs.

As you can appreciate this work has made a sizeable hole in our Fabric Fund in spite of your generous donations last year and the grant from the Church of Scotland.

And, of course, there is always more to be done in seeking to preserve the fabric of our large building. Shortly work will be starting on repairs to the steeple - this is specialist work for a steeplejack, which could not be done by the roofer. Maintenance work on the windows is also imminent.

Moreover because of a continuing shortfall in the General Account around £2k is having to be taken from the Fabric Fund each month to cover utility expenses (gas and electricity), church cleaning, insurance and Council Tax.

In recent years we have often held a Day of Giving around this time, which has provided a valuable boost to the Fabric Fund. Of course, this year we have been unable to organise such an event due to Covid 19.

So perhaps instead you might consider giving a little bit extra, putting it in an envelope and popping it in the plate with the Sunday offering or through the church letterbox - or even passing it on to your Elder.

We are hugely grateful for the sacrificial giving of our members and understand how difficult this year, in particular, has been for all. But the necessary expenditure incurred in fulfilling the work and witness of our church continues unabated, so any additional contributions towards that will be gratefully and prayerfully received.

Jars of Grace

There has not been much opportunity this year to contribute to UNICEF's Jars of Grace Appeal, but if anyone would like to give something to this worthy cause, please pass it on to Derek Charteris.

Prayer for Christmas Morning

(courtesy of Church of Scotland website)

As we think on the gift of love given to this world through the birth of the Christ child,
as we hope and pray,
as we remember - the good and the bad and all those bits in between -
we are blessed with the presence of God's Spirit.

Blessed by God With Us.

Blessed, because no matter the circumstance,
God goes with us,
behind and before,
around and within.

God With Us, in the midst of pandemic and post COVID-19,
God's ear to hear our prayers,
God's eye to look before us to a hopeful future,
God's hand to guard and to guide,
God's presence in each and every circumstance.

God of all our yesterdays, todays and tomorrows,
made real in our gathering and our distancing,
bring hope, bring peace,
bring joy,
bring love,
bring light,
bring healing.



Christmas Acrostic

C is for the Child born that night to be our light.

H is for holy is His name.

R is for rejoice with gladness and joy.

I is for Immanuel, God with us.

S is for the star that led the Wise Men to Him.

T is for the truth and grace that was sent our way

M is for Mother Mary laying Him in the manger.

A is for angels singing songs of joy.

S is for salvation.



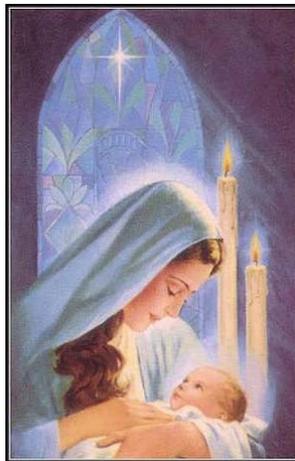
Wonder

By Nancy Buckley

There is faint music in the night,
And pale wings fanned by silver flight;
A frosty hill with tender glow
Of countless stars that shine on snow.

A shelter from the winter storm,
A straw-lined manger, safe and warm,
And Mary crooning lullabies,
To hush her Baby's sleepy sighs.

Her eyes are rapt under His face,
Unheeded here is time and space;
Her heart filled with blinding joy,
For God's own Son, her little Boy!



On Christmas Morn

by Deborah Ann Belka

A promise to the world,
a child to be given
so many years foretold
so all could be forgiven.

Moonless night shining,
with the Morning Star
calling watchful shepherds
to come from afar.

Wise Men carry gifts,
meant for only a King
angels up in heaven
Glory ~Glory ~ sing.



God became a man,
the Good News is born
begotten Son arrives
on this Christmas morn.

Our mighty God concedes,
to the wickedness of man
the Prince of Peace comes
to bridge the empty span.

Wonderful is His name,
Counsellor to the meek
the Son was born of flesh
to give power to the weak.

Our everlasting Father,
knows our fallen state
so He sent His only Son
to save us from our fate.

A promise to the world,
our Lord and Saviour is born
sing ~ Praises to His Glory ~

Christmas Quiz

Can you identify the phrases associated with Christmas from the following clues?

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. 12 D of C | 2. 3K of O A |
| 3. 7 J of M | 4. 24 W in an A C |
| 5. 70 M from N to B | 6. 3 S C S I |
| 7. 1 C on a C | 8. 364 G in the T D of C |
| 9. 9 L and C | 10. 1 P in a P T |

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