

# Muckairn Parish Church

Linked with Kilchrenan & Dalavich

# Christmas 2020



## A Message from the Editor

This Christmas is going to be a rather different festive season at the end of an extraordinary year. After the challenges of 2020, it feels like we really need to try to make it special for those we care about and for ourselves. I think everyone deserves some light and some moments of pleasure and I hope you may find some of these as you read through everyone's contributions in this Newsletter.

I would like to say thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition. It has been a rather big learning curve for me with, I'm not going to lie, some exasperating moments, especially trying to master the new software Affinity Publisher! However, I can hopefully put these new skills to good use. Including in January, helping the Mothership complete the new Taynult Telephone book. So if you have any new names and phone numbers to be included in the book, please pass them either to Lorna or Isabel Blyth as soon as possible.

On behalf of everyone, I would also like to say a big THANK YOU to Lorna in the Post Office for her help and co-operation in accepting and storing the gifts and donations and all the many other ways she has helped us throughout this difficult year.

While creating this issue I have kept you in the front of my mind and heart and whatever your plans are for this Christmas I would like to send you our warmest Christmas wishes.



## Christmas Is Coming

by John L. Bell (b. 1949)

Christmas is coming!  
the Church is glad to  
sing,  
and let the advent  
candles bright burn in  
a ring.

The first is for God's  
promise to put the  
wrong things right,  
and bring to earth's  
darkness the hope of  
love and light.

The second for the  
prophets, who said  
that Christ would  
come  
with good news for  
many and angry  
words for some.

The third is for the  
Baptist who cried,  
'Prepare the way  
Be ready for Jesus,  
today and every  
day'.

The fourth is for the  
Virgin, who mothered  
God's own Son  
and sang how God's  
justice was meant for  
everyone.

At last we light the  
candle kept new for  
Christmas Day.  
This shines bright for  
Jesus, new-born, and  
here to stay.

Christmas is among  
us  
The candles in the  
ring  
remind us that our  
Saviour will light up  
everything.



# Advent Hope by Rev. Tom Telfer

Advent is considered a season of hope. It is the hope of light in the darkness. It is remembering the hoped-for messiah. It is the hope of the prophets of old.  
In the United Methodist Hymnal, the hymn 'My Hope Is Built' is found in the section entitled assurance. I believe it could be included in the Advent section. You hear the themes of hope, of darkness, and of the Second Coming. These are all Advent themes.

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name

When darkness hides His lovely face  
I rest on His unchanging grace  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil  
Trust in You and only You  
His oath, His covenant, His blood  
Support me in the whelming flood  
When all around my soul gives way  
He then is all my hope and stay  
When He shall come with trumpet sound  
Oh, may I then in Him be found  
Dressed in His righteousness alone  
Faultless to stand before the throne  
On Christ the solid Rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand  
All other ground is sinking sand

This year's Advent season is perhaps more poignant than other years with the long darkness of COVID-19 hanging over us and the hoped-for anticipation of a soon to be distributed vaccine. The hope I look to in Advent is much deeper than the hope of the end of the pandemic and all the restrictions upon those things that make life sweet and for the opportunity for workers and businesses to be put back into the market. And I do deeply hope for these things.

The deeper hope is found on Christ the solid rock upon which I stand. I hope in the justice of God that does not change with every political, cultural, or technological wind. I hope in the steadfast love of God, in Christ, that nothing, not even death can take from you and me. I hope in the eternal word of God that is a sure guide. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for.



Sunday Worship at  
Muckairn: 11.30am -  
12.00. Social distancing  
and safety procedures  
are in place.

Our Harvest Thanksgiving  
collection for Hope  
Kitchen raised over £285  
with five boxes of tinned  
foods also donated.

We were overwhelmed  
with the generosity  
shown for the Christmas  
Gifts collection 18 black  
bin bags of children's  
gifts were taken to The  
Salvation Army and 5  
black bin bags of adult  
gifts and 1 bag of  
children's gifts were  
taken to Hope kitchen.

Our Christmas Order to  
Cross Reach amounted  
to £170.00 this year.

The profits from this  
Christmas Celebration  
Edition will be shared  
between Muckairn  
Church and Christian Aid.

Used stamps are still  
needed by World Mission.  
Please put yours in the  
box at the back of the  
Church.

The weekly Sunday  
Service is on our KDM  
Parishes Website  
[www.kdmparishes.co.uk](http://www.kdmparishes.co.uk)  
along with any  
Intimations. Printed  
copies can also be  
obtained from Lorna at  
The Village Post Office,  
or by ringing Isabel Blyth  
(822319) to have a  
copy delivered to your  
door on Saturdays.

Christmas Eve Services  
Via Zoom online only:  
5.00pm and 11.30pm

Christmas Day Service at  
Muckairn Church:  
11:00am - 11:30am



## WATCHNIGHT SERVICE MEMORIES

After the year 2020 has been, it was perhaps inevitable that our Christmas Eve Watchnight Service would fall victim to the restrictions that have affected virtually every aspect of our lives. For sad but understandable reasons, this much-loved tradition at Muckairn will not take place this year.

Here is a photo capturing the magic and anticipation from last year's Watchnight Service. Strange to think that when we were gathered here, Covid-19 was an obscure illness in China and we had no idea on the impact it would have on all of us.

But with the advent of new and hopeful vaccines we can look forward in faith to a return to many of the traditions we know and love.

Ronnie Neil



## Zoom Christmas Eve/Watchnight Service Lessons and Carols December 24 @ 5 pm and 11:30 pm

Everything is different this year and Christmas Eve services are no exception.

This year we will attempt to have some normalcy by having a traditional lessons and carol singing service. What will not be traditional is that it will be done online on Zoom. The Muckairn service will be at 11:30 pm on Christmas Eve and Kilchrenan/Dalavich at 5pm. Actually, the services are for all the KDM folks and beyond. 5 pm will feature families and 11:30 pm will feature instrumentalists (so far: a harp piece by Helen McNeill, a flute piece by Jan Telfer and a piano piece by our Walla Walla friend, Terri Koch.)

I recognize that not everybody is comfortable with the internet and that a few people will therefore not be able to join in. Then again, if you have a phone line, you are able to join in and so nobody is really excluded.

Why do it on the internet rather than in church?

1. Participation – you can sing carols in your own home, but not in church. We can have multiple readers rather than just one. Also, distant families can join if they so choose.
2. Numbers – we can have up to 100 computers or phones signed into Zoom rather than the limit of 1-2 dozen people in church. There will be no need for reserving a place.
3. Children friendly – easier for children to check in and out of the service while at home. Families can join the 5 pm Kilchrenan/Dalavich Service
4. Safer – No driving after dark...and no COVID-19 concern

What is lost or problematic?

1. Seeing each other “in the flesh.”
2. There is something about being in our “sacred space.”
3. Inevitable technical difficulties

I hope you can see that this virtual Christmas Eve service has more positives about it than negatives and that you will want to join us in this worship experience.

We will be sending invitations and instructions through email and snail mail to the constituents of the church and to the wider community through the Taynuilt Facebook page “What’s Happening.”

Included in the invitation will be opportunities to practice (via internet or phone) getting into a Zoom meeting for those who need help or practice before Christmas Eve. Do take advantage of the practice times.

I do hope to see you on Christmas Eve

Rev Tom



The following verses are from The Sunday Post, sent in by Ann McCallum - as she says "they seem to fit in with our current situation"...

Can't wait to be beside the sea,  
To walk along the shore,  
Visit friends and family,  
when the time is ours once more.  
Never again to take for granted,  
Freedom of our countryside,  
Or all those dedicated people  
Who care to us provide.



Our lives may be in turmoil,  
But we can play our part,  
By being kind and caring,  
And never losing heart.  
Keep smiling but be wary,  
And with hope and guidance too,  
We'll row the boat together,  
And in the end pull through.



A friend who listens,  
and is always there,  
a person who somehow,  
always seems to care,  
a friend is special,  
they really give their all,  
so return the favour, if a  
friend in need should call.



Time again to look forward,  
As we greet another year,  
A chance to pursue life's pathways,  
Get ourselves into gear.  
Aims and dreams to keep in sight,  
And if you falter along the way,  
Don't lose heart, keep on trying,  
In time it could well pay.



### Buy Your Own Gifts

Last Christmas, Grandpa was feeling his age and found that shopping for Christmas gifts had become too difficult. So he decided to send cheques to everyone instead.

In each card he wrote, "Buy your own Present!" and mailed them early. He enjoyed the usual flurry of family festivities, and it was only after the holiday that he noticed that he had received few cards in return.

Puzzled over this, he went into his study, intending to write to a couple of his relatives and ask if everything was ok. It was then, as he cleared off his cluttered desk that he got his answer. Under a stack of papers, he was horrified to find the gift cheques which he had forgotten to enclose with the cards.

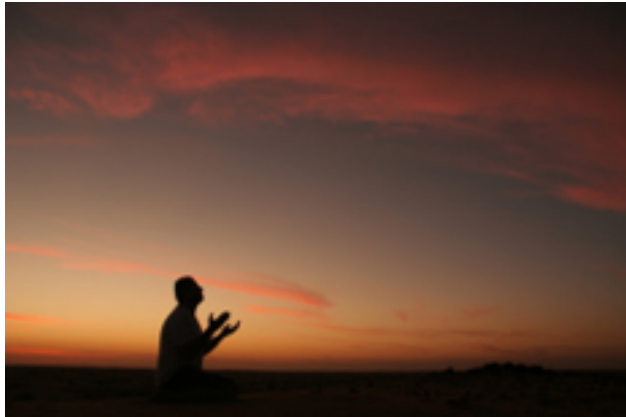


### Reindeer's Story at Christmas

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, while both male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to mid-December.

Female reindeer retain their antlers till after they give birth in the spring. Therefore, according to Every historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, Every single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen, had to be a girl.

Whispers  
by anon



The man whispered, "God speak to me." And a Robin sang.  
But the man did not hear.

So the man yelled, "God speak to me". And the thunder  
rolled across the sky. But the man did not listen.

Then the man looked around and said, "God let me see  
you". And a star shone brightly. But the man did not see.

And the man shouted, "God show me a miracle." And a life  
was born. But the man did not notice.

So the man cried out in despair, "Touch me God and let me  
know you are here."

Whereupon God reached down and touched the man.  
But the man brushed the winter moth away and walked on.



Shakespeare's Christmas Lament  
by I A Blyth

(how many Shakespeare quotations or allusions to Shakespeare can you spot within these lines?)

In sooth I know not why I am so sad  
It wearies me,  
You say it wearies you,  
But Christmas fast approaches and  
I don't know what to do.

There is a tree they bring indoors  
and decorate with flair,  
but I, alas, have none such bough  
and so my house is bare.

And Anne she will so Hath- her- way  
and nags me day and night.  
So unto Stratford I must go  
to maketh our house bright.

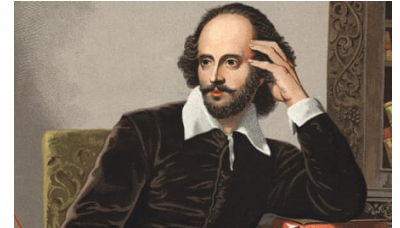
My dearest Yorick you wouldst know  
how joy I could impart,  
for your light dazzled every room  
and lightened every heart.

And though I write a thousand lines  
and dream and thousand dreams,  
The daily chores of Christmas are  
beyond my flair it seems.

To be or not to be a spirit  
bright with Christmas Cheer?  
As winter is my discontent,  
my safety lies in fear.

For at this time  
the world's a stage  
adorned with decorations,  
and I in faith, hide in the wings  
or 'come with hesitations.

For all that glisters is not gold  
and its reflection blindeth eyes  
obscuring the true meaning that  
beneath the false adornment lies.



## Christmas Spirit



It was just before Christmas and the magistrate was in a happy mood. He asked the prisoner who was in the dock, 'What are you charged with?'

The prisoner replied, 'Doing my Christmas shopping too early.'

'That's no crime', said the magistrate. 'Just how early were you doing this shopping?'

'Before the shop opened', answered the prisoner.

## The Inkeeper's Wife by Marian Cleworth



We were full to the rafters when they knocked, so late,  
Joseph was anxious - babies don't wait.  
She smiled through her pain, trusting God had this planned;  
I offered our stable and he took her hand.

With so many visitors, how could I know  
Who would be with us before the dawn's glow?  
That across the night skies I would hear angles sing,  
And shepherds would come from the hills, chattering?

If I'd had one notion, one notion at all,  
I would have slept in our messy old stall,  
Insisting that Mary should take my own bed,  
Comfy and warm, for her labour. Instead...

They called for me shortly before she gave birth,  
While above us, a star blazed like nothing on earth.  
I welcomed him into this world, my life blessed;  
He lay in our manger, and all was at rest.

## I See the Countless Christmas Trees by Wanda Bencke

I see the countless Christmas trees  
Around the world below,  
with tiny lights like heaven's stars  
Reflecting in the snow.



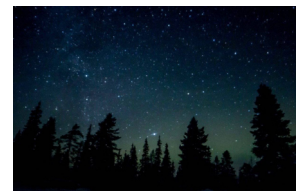
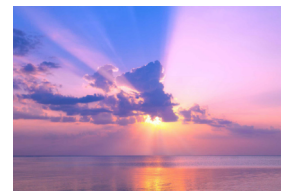
The sight is so spectacular  
Please wipe away that tear  
For I am spending Christmas  
In Heaven's glory this year.



I hear the many Christmas songs  
That people hold so dear,  
But earthly music can't compare  
With the Christmas choir up here.  
For I have no words to tell you  
The joy their voices bring,  
For it's beyond description  
To hear the angels sing.

I can't tell you of the splendour  
Or the peace here in this place;  
Can you imagine Christmas  
With Jesus, face-to-face?  
I'll ask him to light your spirit  
As I tell Him of your Love,  
So then pray for one another  
As you lift your eyes above.

Please let your hearts be joyful  
And let your spirit sing,  
For I'm spending Christmas in Heaven  
And I'm walking with the King!



## "A Christmas Poem"

Most of us have favourite Christmas carols or poems which we are delighted to rediscover each year when Christmas comes round. Here is one of mine, by Rudyard Kipling, which I should like to share with you all.

### Eddi's Service

(A.D. 687)

Eddi, priest of St. Wilfrid  
In his chapel at Manhood End,  
Ordered a midnight service  
For such as cared to attend.

But the Saxons were keeping Christmas,  
And the night was stormy as well.  
Nobody came to service,  
Though Eddi rang the bell.

"'Wicked weather for walking,"  
Said Eddi of Manhood End.  
"But I must go on with the service  
For such as care to attend."

The altar-lamps were lighted, --  
An old marsh-donkey came,  
Bold as a guest invited,  
And stared at the guttering flame.

The storm beat on at the windows,  
The water splashed on the floor,  
And a wet, yoke-weary bullock  
Pushed in through the open door.

"How do I know what is greatest,  
How do I know what is least?  
That is My Father's business,"  
Said Eddi, Wilfrid's priest.

"But -- three are gathered together --  
Listen to me and attend.  
I bring good news, my brethren!"  
Said Eddi of Manhood End.

And he told the Ox of a Manger  
And a Stall in Bethlehem,  
And he spoke to the Ass of a Rider,  
That rode to Jerusalem.



They steamed and dripped in the chancel,  
They listened and never stirred,  
While, just as though they were Bishops,  
Eddi preached them The World,

Till the gale blew off on the marshes  
And the windows showed the day,  
And the Ox and the Ass together  
Wheeled and clattered away.

And when the Saxons mocked him,  
Said Eddi of Manhood End,  
"I dare not shut His chapel  
On such as care to attend."

Here we have Eddi, the priest, being ignored by the pagan Saxons who are celebrating their Yuletide and the winter solstice. The fact that only an ox and an ass attend Eddi's Christmas service reflects the ancient tradition, though nowhere actually stated in the Bible that an ox and an ass were present in the stable at the Nativity.

Eddi was a real person in the 7th century, as was St. Wilfrid. Eddius Stephanus was a Kentish man who was a priest and biographer of Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, who had spent time in Sussex where he had converted the South Saxons to Christianity.

Manhood End is also a real place, a hamlet in the vicinity of Selsey in West Sussex. According to ancient records it was granted to Wilfrid by Ethelwald, a king of the South Saxons.

Michael G. Kidd





# Merry



Thank you to everyone who made a donation to send their Christmas Wishes this year. To date £120 has been raised for Christian Aid.

Best wishes for the Christmas Season,  
Rosemary Carswell



To all my dear friends, this has been a year like no other. One of upset and tears for so many. I pray that the Christmas Spirit shall bring you joy and peace. Merry Christmas and happy new year. Keep safe and well...  
Love Robert Brookes xx

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a brighter and happier 2021,  
Katherine, Isabel & Duncan Blyth

Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and a peaceful year to come,  
Mary Scott & family



Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,  
Michael Kidd

Christmas Blessings to everyone  
Tom & Jan Telfer

Best wishes for the Christmas Season,  
Christine Allen



Happy Christmast to everybody, hope 2021 will be a lot better,  
Freddie & Mary Nicolson

Best wishes for Christmas and the coming year from Jan & Brian Wilkinson



# Christmas!



I hope that Christmas is a happy time for you all. This year has been a difficult one and my hopes and prayers for you are that 2021 will bring you all peace and happiness. I miss you all very much, but I am kept busy with decorating and gardening. God bless you all and thank you for being such kind friends to me and Stafford.  
Judith Day

Seasons greetings to you and remember to keep on humming. Alison Pringle

Best Wishes for a Happy Christmas and a good New Year  
Deirdre MacFarlane

Happy Christmas to everyone and a Good New Year. Onwards and upwards in 2021!  
Donald and Janice Harrison



Best wishes for the Christmas season  
Lorna & John MacLennan

Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. from Margaret & Peter Harper

Happy Christmas to everyone, hope to see you in the New Year.  
Jen Moffatt

Wishing all my friends and neighbours a very Happy Christmas and a good New Year. From Dolly Harrison

We wish you all the Joy of Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.  
Sara, Alexandra and Roy Rutherford





# Merry Christmas

*With best wishes for  
Christmas and the New  
Year*

*Donald, Helen and  
Family McNeill*

*Merry Christmas wishes  
to everyone  
Ronnië, Shona and  
Angus Neil*



*Best wishes for a Merry  
Christmas and a Happy  
New Year  
Marian and Monty  
Montgomery*



*Wishing you Peace and  
Joy at Christmas  
Kathy Murgatroyd*

*Best wishes for the  
Christmas Season  
Lawrence and Ann Scott*

*Christmas joy amid the  
darkness of winter be with  
my friends in Taynuilt.  
Rosemary (former locum).*

*Wishing you a Merry  
Christmas and here's to a  
better and brighter 2021  
June and Colin Boden*

*With best wishes for  
Christmas and the New  
Year  
Marlene Stanners*

*Best wishes for a Merry  
Christmas and a Happy  
New Year  
Maclain and Jo Service*

*Best wishes for the  
Christmas Season  
Campbell and Florence  
Andeson*

*With all my love to  
everyone,  
Ivy Smart*



"Santa Claus" is a variant of "Saint Nicholas" the patron & protector of children, who lived in the fourth Century (Born in 4th Century in Myra, Asia Minor (now Turkey)). He was rich and devoted his wealth to the relief of the poor, yet so modest that he disliked being thanked: his benefactions were mostly anonymous. Thus all

welcome gifts received from unknown sources came to be ascribed to St. Nicholas.

Santa Claus was introduced into Britain as the secret dispenser of Christmas gifts as recently as the eighteenth century. The Christmas stocking is accounted for by the story that St. Nicholas, on one of his midnight expeditions, climbed onto a roof and dropped a purse down a chimney; which instead of falling on the hearth was caught in a stocking hanging up to dry.

## Christmas Carols

The word "carol" originally meant a dance, especially a ring dance, accompanied by singing. Gradually the meaning changed so as to denote a merry song with a tune suggestive of dancing. The earliest English carol dates from about 1410, "I saw a sweet a seemly sight". The source of many of our carols was the middle ages.

## Kris Kringle

Sometimes people call Santa Claus "Kris Kringle," a name popularized by a 1947 movie called Miracle on 34th Street, but the origin of the name goes back much further.

In the 1500s, during the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther wanted to discourage the figure of St. Nicholas (he believed praying to any saint was against Scripture). Luther and his followers introduced the idea that the "Christkind" (German for "Christ-child") would secretly come on Christmas Eve to bring presents to all good children. Christkind was modified to Kriss Kringle in the 1840s and became a popular nickname in some countries for Santa Claus.

## Prayer

Lord to those who are hungry give bread  
And to those who have bread a hunger for justice  
Mary Scott



The following beautiful poem was requested by Jo Service as it is one of her favourites

## The House of Christmas by G. K. Chesterton



There fared a mother driven forth  
Out of an inn to roam;  
In the place where she was homeless  
All men are at home.  
The crazy stable close at hand,  
With shaking timber and shifting sand,  
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand  
Than the square stones of Rome.

For men are homesick in their homes,  
And strangers under the sun,  
And they lay on their heads in a foreign land  
Whenever the day is done.  
Here we have battle and blazing eyes,  
And chance and honour and high surprise,  
But our homes are under miraculous skies  
Where the yule tale was begun.

A Child in a foul stable,  
Where the beasts feed and foam;  
Only where He was homeless  
Are you and I at home;  
We have hands that fashion and heads that know,  
But our hearts we lost - how long ago!  
In a place no chart nor ship can show  
Under the sky's dome.

This world is wild as an old wives' tale,  
And strange the plain things are,  
The earth is enough and the air is enough  
For our wonder and our war;  
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings  
And our peace is put in impossible things  
Where clashed and thundered unthinkable wings  
Round an incredible star.

To an open house in the evening  
Home shall men come,  
To an older place than Eden  
And a taller town than Rome.  
To the end of the way of the wandering star,  
To the things that cannot be and that are,  
To the place where God was homeless  
And all men are at home



## PEOPLE LOOK EAST

(Hymn No 281)  
Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)

People, Look East. The time is near  
of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look East, and sing today:  
Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,  
one more seed is planted there:  
give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
that in course the flower may flourish.  
People, look East, and sing today:  
Love, the Rose, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim  
one more light the bowl shall brim,  
shining beyond the frosty weather,  
bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look East, and sing today:  
Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth  
Christ who brings new life to earth.  
Set every peak and valley humming  
with the word the Lord is coming.  
People, look East, and sing today:  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.





## Christmas Jokes

Did you hear about the St Michael's Primary School nativity play? Two children are dressed as Mary and Joseph, and they are on their way to the inn at Bethlehem. Meanwhile on the other side of the stage, a lad in a shepherd's outfit is on a mobile phone. He is calling the inn to make a reservation.

Father George was opening his Christmas cards one December morning. Out from one card came a single sheet of paper, on it was written only one word: 'Fool'. The following Sunday, in church, Father George announced to the assembled congregation, 'I have known many people who have written notes to me and forgotten to sign their names. But this week I received a note from someone who signed his name and had forgotten to write a letter.'

It was the Sunday after Christmas at St Peter and Saint Paul's Church in Borden, Kent, England. Father John was looking at the nativity scene prior to



packing away the figures when he noticed the baby Jesus was missing from the scene. Immediately, Father John turned towards the vicarage in order to call the police. But as he was about to do so, he saw little Harry with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant, Jesus. Father John walked up to Harry and said, 'Well, Harry, where did you get the little infant?' Harry replied honestly, 'I took him from the church, Father John.' 'And why did you take him?' With a sheepish smile, Harry said, 'Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to little Lord Jesus. I told him if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give him a ride around the block in it.'

## Thank You

The following message from Christine almost certainly sums up how each of us feels...

*Just a BIG 'Thank you' to everyone who has kept in touch during these last months.*

*I hope you have managed to occupy yourselves, not being able to meet up with our friends has been difficult but probably - like me - the telephone has been a 'lifeline'.*

*I have been so grateful to all of our local shops and businesses - the Post Office, Butchers, Grocers, Hairdressers, Gift Shop, Garden Centre, Garage and Lorne Auto Services; their help has been amazing - also having 'Robin's Nest' open so we can see our friends face to face and having the Church open on Sundays is wonderful.*

*I hope Christmas celebrations will be possible for us all, probably different, but we can look*

*forward to extra special times in the future.*

*Keep well and keep in touch*

*- best wishes for Christmas and hopefully lots to look forward to in the New Year.*  
*Christine Allen*



Thank you from Mary Nicholson on behalf of us all...

*Our sincere thanks must go to Gavin Carswell who put up the Christmas tree in the church. His late father, Dougie, put it up for many years, and one of his favourite quotes was "One volunteer is worth two pressed men". How true that is. This attitude has obviously passed on to his son who so willingly gave of his time. Thank you Gavin. You're a star!*





# 12 Days of Christmas

One of the most complicated and curious Christmas song has to be 'The 12 Days of Christmas'. It has attracted lots of speculation about its origins and is the source of some dispute.

Is it a remnant of a memory and forfeit parlour game for the twelfth night celebrations? An early children's book, 'Mirth Without Mischief' includes the game and was published in 1780. However, it is thought it dates back to the early 16th Century possibly originating in France (as the red-legged, or French partridge perches in trees more frequently than the British grey partridge). The music is generally believed to have been added later around the mid 19th Century with the pivotal bars of 'Five Gold Rings' being from an arrangement by Frederick Austin, copyrighted in 1909.

Or, is it a rhyme of Christian instruction, dating back to the 16th Century, to help teach faith to youngsters? This was a time of great uncertainty and religious strife, with the Protestant Reformation and revolt throughout Europe and the separation of the Church of England from Rome. The Twelve Days of Christmas' as a catechism song would give each verse a religious significance....

1. The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
2. Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
3. Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love (charity).
4. The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
5. The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.



6. The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

7. Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

8. The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

9. Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.

10. The ten lords a-leaping were the ten commandments.

11. The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.

12. The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

Many have questioned the historical accuracy of this religious origin of the song. Although there is little 'hard' evidence either way. We may never know for certain, but for those who like a fun catchy tune and have good memories it remains an entertaining, favourite Christmas song.



## A Christmas Present by Maggie Ingall

Christmas is a present, not underneath a tree,  
But here, and all around us: A gift that's plain to see.  
A present of a baby - A king, though stable-born,  
His birth proclaimed by angles, that first bright Christmas morn.  
So let our hearts be grateful, for hope and life and love,  
Delivered as a baby - A gift from God above.



Does anyone else like the SHEPHERD'S PIPE CAROL ? Quite a jaunty wee melody, it's another carol written by John Rutter, apparently when he was an undergraduate at university. You don't hear it that often but it reminds me of when I was a reasonably angelic choirboy at a wee boarding school in Fife and the choirmaster organised for us to sing with quite a professional choir in Dunfermline Abbey for a big concert. Then we went on to sing with them again; supposedly we were to be recorded.... there could be a reel of recording tape dust somewhere...

Andrew Gray



## Winter Book Discussion



Nine weeks January 11 - March 8, 2021  
Monday 10 - 11am Zoom Meeting "The Good and Beautiful Life"  
7 - 8 PM (19:00-20:00) Zoom Meeting "The Good and Beautiful Life"  
Phone conversations or discussion partners can be arranged as needed.

If there is interest in reading the first book as well, "The Good and Beautiful God", we can also make arrangements to meet for that as well. Please contact Jan to sign up for attending one of these groups or if you have any questions.

At the beginning of this year, Barbi Craig and I offered to host a book group to read through the series of books written by James Bryan Smith.

To our joy we held three groups each week and shared thoughts, experiences and questions prompted by the readings in the book. We had planned to meet weekly for 10 weeks for one hour each session and so enjoyed getting to know each other. Unfortunately, because of the lockdown, we did not get to complete our discussions together and ended with Chapter 8 which focused on 'Solitude'. We did not know that before the next and last gathering we would all be practicing solitude with the lockdown. Irony or humour?

This winter, as we look to more cold and possible isolation, we would like to offer more opportunities to read through the books and discuss them. The options offered are: Zoom meetings (practice sessions to connect can be offered) Monday January 11 - Monday March 8 10am - 11pm or 19:00 - 20:00

Partner with another reader and share insights/question via the telephone Read on your own (the book is complete with questions to ponder - the same questions that we will be discussing together).

Anyone interested is invited. You do not need to attend church, just have a desire or curiosity to explore the topics. Books are available at Eden.co.uk (hard copies), Amazon.co.uk (kindle version)

1 - The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knew

2 - The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ

3 - The Good and Beautiful Community: Following the Spirit, Extending Grace, Demonstrating Love

The tools needed: A copy of the book; a bible, and a blank Journal and Pen

Contact information for Jan: Home 01866 822204 (Muckairn Manse), Mobile 07785 233398 or email [janlynn2316@gmail.com](mailto:janlynn2316@gmail.com)

With hope of new life in 2021 - Jan Telfer

## Christmas Greetings

I was curious how covid-19 was impacting Christmas card greetings this year and began an internet search. An article from USA Today Life called 2020 holiday cards sure are honest – Illustrator Sara Showalter, who sells her holiday designs on her Etsy shop, was surprised at how popular her 2020-inspired cards are. “We made it,” one card celebrates. “Dear Santa, how about a do-over?” another proposes. Her most popular? A design with a Christmas tree assembled out of toilet paper that cleverly says, “What a year but we rolled with it.”

An article from paperless post listed the 101 best holiday messages in 2020

It began with a set of Covid-19 themed ideas

- ☐ New Year? Yes, Please!
- ☐ All I want for Christmas is a vaccine.
- ☐ Merry Christ-mask
- ☐ From our bubble to yours.
- ☐ You're essential to us.
- ☐ I'm dreaming of a better Christmas.



Most of these were trying to use humour to lighten the mood. The article went on to list the faith-based sentiments.

- ☐ Warmest wishes for faith, hope, and peace this Christmas season.
- ☐ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.
- ☐ Jesus is the reason for the season.
- ☐ May God bless your Christmas season with joy and love.
- ☐ May the Lord grant you and all your loved ones peace, joy, and goodwill.
- ☐ Wishing you a season that's merry and bright with the light of God's love.

- ☐ Joy to the world, the Lord has come!  
As you can see, these wishes are timeless and reflect little of what we have gone through directly. Though some might consider this to be a testimony to the moribund or stagnant nature of Christian faith, I choose to see it as a testimony to the sure and certain rock of our salvation.

The first set of sentiments creatively do the job of lightening our mood for today and then become obsolete within months. The second set of sentiments are timeless and apply to today and to all of our tomorrows.

The birth of Jesus is a testimony to God's light in the midst of darkness, of God's love in the midst of an oppressive regime, God's humility to enter into our world in a small rural town, with a young unwed mother, and with a manger as a cradle.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5

May the hearts of you and your loved ones be brightened in the light of God's love!

Rev. Tom





# A Christmas Prayer

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father,  
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,  
that we may share in the song of the angels,  
the gladness of the shepherds,  
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate  
and open the door of love all over the world.  
Let kindness come with every gift  
and good desires with every greeting.  
Deliver us from evil by the blessing  
which Christ brings,  
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning  
make us happy to be thy children,  
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds  
with grateful thoughts,  
forgiving and forgiven,  
for Jesus' sake.

Amen



## Christmas Prayer

(from the New York Life Insurance Company in  
the early 1960s)

Let us pray that strength and courage abundant be  
given to all who work for a world of reason and  
understanding

\* that the good that lies in every man's heart may day  
by day be magnified

\* that men will come to see more clearly not that which  
divides them, but that which unites them

\* that each hour may bring us closer to a final victory,  
not of nation over nation, but of man over his own evils  
and weaknesses

\* that the true spirit of this Christmas Season - its joy,  
its beauty, its hope and above all its abiding faith - may  
live among us

\* that the blessings of peace be ours - the peace to  
build and grow, to live in harmony and sympathy with  
others, and to plan for the future with confidence.





Minister: Rev. Tom Telfer

Muckairn Manse, Taynuilt,  
PA35 1HW

01866 822 240

Editor: Katherine Blyth

Carnoch, Taynuilt, Argyll,  
PA35 1HP

01866 822 319

