



Link Magazine

Christmas 2022

I really like the season of Advent.
I like the sense of waiting...
of wondering...
of anticipation...

I like that Advent is a time of 'not yet... but soon!'

It's not that I don't love Christmas. I do. But when we rush past Advent I think we miss something important. There is much to be found in the waiting.

Waiting for some things can be hard. Especially waiting for change.

Part of the reason this edition of LINK is late in the year was our hope that we could update you all on the Presbytery's Mission Plan. Sadly, we have little to share. The Planning Team circulated some proposals which showed that St Ninian's would remain unaltered. Some of the other proposals were met with a lack of enthusiasm and, sadly, some very strong opposition expressed in unhelpful ways. So much so that the Planning Team felt they were left with no option but to resign.

A new committee has been appointed by the Presbytery and will begin their work soon with more support, but it remains a difficult task which some are enthusiastic about and others dread the outcome. In our waiting, perhaps we could keep the team in our prayers that they will be able to listen well and make good decisions, but knowing that these decisions will be hard for many.

Jesus birth was the end of a very, very long wait. People had been waiting for hundreds of years. We struggle to wait for four weeks.

Waiting isn't always the same. Waiting for a flight when you are going on holiday is very different from waiting on a flight home. Waiting on good news isn't the same as waiting on bad news. And the news we wait for doesn't mean the same to everyone.

Advent happens every year but it's never the same. At the very least we are a year older with all the things that have happened to us in that time. This year we are able to join together for all kinds of activities and service for the first time in three years.

For those who wait, of whose waiting has come to an end, our Light in the Darkness Service offers time and space to sit together with our losses and our loves.

The Kirk Session have decided that there will be no service on Christmas Day, which falls on a Sunday, recognising that many will be taking the chance to spend time with family and friends. There will be two services at St Ninian's on Christmas Eve and a Christmas Day video and podcast.

In Advent we join in with people who waited for all kinds of things.

We wait with Mary on the birth of a child... something she hadn't planned for.
We wait with Joseph... wondering at the faith it took him to take his place as the step-father of God.

We wait with Shepherds... outside, not expecting an invitation to anything, never mind the birth of the Messiah.

We wait with kings, governors, and rulers... anxious about a challenger to their power.

We wait with wise travelers patiently following nothing more than a hunch that something important was happening.

So we wait...

We wait together for the birth of Jesus, good news for all the world.

Stewart



LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

a service of remembering

11 December 2022

3:30pm

St Ninian's Church, Stonehouse

st-ninians-stonehouse.org.uk



a thank you from all of us

My family and I would like to thank you all for the support we received when Jim died towards the end of March this year. His death was a terrible blow for everyone in our family but your heartfelt messages, cards, flowers and visits did comfort us. I often call or send a card or flowers at such times and wonder what possible help can it be in sad times, but of course they all do help.

We thought you would like to know that due to everyone's generosity we were able to send a cheque for £500 to the Scottish Charities Air Ambulance team and received a lovely thank you on behalf of the Paramedics, Pilots and all who work in the charity.

Anne Cowan

Hello everyone, it's Lesley here!

While I feel like I'm beginning to get to know you all a little better already, I thought it would be nice for me to give you a bit of background on my journey into ministry.

This is my fourth and final year of training with the URC Scottish College, in partnership with Glasgow University, and for this I have the pleasure in spending my last placement with yourselves in St Ninian's. I have to admit I did mention that I hoped to have a placement with yourselves right back at the beginning of my training, but I also asked if it could be in my final year. I've been lucky enough to have previous placements with both URC congregations and the Scottish Episcopal Church in Hamilton and Uddingston, and I thought that getting to work alongside Stewart and yourselves would provide a really strong grounding for my final year.

As St Ninians is part of a Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Church of Scotland and the URC, it will be interesting to learn more about this type of ministry and to understand the benefits, and perhaps pitfalls, that can be found within these types of partnerships. Along with an active in-person church programme, Stewart has also developed a strong connection with people from within and outside the congregation through his online worship and podcasts. It will be interesting to learn more about the diversity of your worship as my placement develops.

I hold very close to my heart the work of local mission. Only in becoming more focused on the concerns and needs of people around us locally, will our churches once again become an integral part of its community. For me, mission starts from within and reaches out to our neighbours. It should never be thought of as an act which benefits people in far off countries alone. This is something that is evidently very important to your congregation as well, which fills me with lots of hope and promise for my own future congregations.

I'm looking forward to all the worship and activities which you run throughout the year and hope that I can participate in as many as possible.

Lesley

A wooden manger filled with straw, set against a soft, warm background.

God is with us

in the quiet ponderings of the heart
in the bold choruses of joy

in those who choose to feast
in those who have no choice but to fast

in huddled masses
in enforced solitude

in the excited child
in the desperate parent

in prisons
in palaces

in the powerful
in the oppressed

in all creation
in all time

God is with us
the embodiment of hope
Peace beyond all understanding

© Rev Rachel Poolman, St Cuthbert's Centre, Holy
Island

World Day of Prayer

Hello everyone

On Friday 3rd March, we once again had our World Day of Prayer Service, or 'ELEVENSES' as we've come to know it. We adapted the service with the help of Ann Thompson and Yvonne Hamilton which was received very well. We also invited URC student minister, Michael Topple, to give an address on the text based on Jeremiah 29:11 'I know the plans I have for you'. As some of you will know, we also have a banner in the church with this text on it which made the service so appropriate. After the service, everyone enjoyed ELEVENSES. It was great to see people come together again to chat and enjoy the company.

I would like to thank everyone who helped take part in the service and who helped with eatables. We had a very successful morning and raised £168 for World Day of Prayer.

This service is held annually and will take place on Friday 3rd March 2023 when we will be holding our ELEVENSES once again. For next year, the theme is taken forward by the women of Taiwan, 'I heard about your faith' based on Ephesians 1:15-19.

If you would like to find out more about World Day of Prayer visit <https://worlddayofprayer.net/taiwan-2023.html>.

Have a lovely Christmas, everyone.

Norma





Make Time for Advent

'Prepare The Way For The Lord' (#PrepareTheWay) is the theme of this year's Church of Scotland Advent calendar, which runs from 1 December until Christmas Eve (Saturday 24 December).

This year's theme is inspired by Mark 1:3

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way - a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him.'"

Each day during Advent, a new window will be available to open with a themed prayer, video, or story. Sign up below to receive notifications via email when our Advent calendar goes live.

Find out more by visiting

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/advent>

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas.



The Church of Scotland

The Guild

We started back to our meeting in February with John Young giving us an very interesting talk about Sandford. In March it was time for our AGM which included a talk on gin making and we enjoyed the opportunity to taste the gin too! Brian Taylor Fashions came to our meeting in May and was as enjoyable and successful as every. As usual the home baking went down well! On 20th June, we held an Afternoon Tea with entertainment for the senior citizens of the church and those who attend the coffee mornings. For our annual day out we went to Stirling on 10th September which included high tea at the Birds and Bees Restaurant. A great day out!

In addition to all of our usual meetings which take place on the 2nd Monday of every month we have a craft evening which continues on every 4th Monday in the month (there will be no craft night in December). You don't need to be a member of the church to attend any of these meetings so, if you would like a wee night out for a few hours, please come along and join us as you will be made very welcome.

We look forward to our Christmas Guild Dinner on Monday 5th December which is always an evening of good food, company and laughter.

2023 is shaping up nicely with speakers:

Christine Simmons on 9th January with a fitness demonstration

Avril Cutler on 13th February talking about hospital chaplaincy

The AGM and beetle drive will be held on 13th March - join us!

The focus of the Guild's work is to journey together with our communities, nation, and world, both in sharing our faith and resources, and in doing everything in our power to bring about positive change. You can find out more information about the Church of Scotland Guild and our Projects by visiting <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/the-guild/projects>.

Have a lovely Christmas everyone.

Wilma



SANTA'S GROTTO

and FREE family fun day!

3 December 2022

10am - 2pm

St Ninian's Church, Stonehouse



st-ninians-stonehouse.org.uk

CHOIR

We are delighted to be back rehearsing once again and even more delighted to have welcomed new members. We are busy practising two pieces for the Christian Aid Services and are grateful to Alan who has kindly volunteered to lead and conduct us. If anyone would like to come and join us, we meet each Sunday at 9.45am in the church before the service at 11am. Don't worry if you can't read music, many of us don't. We just love to sing!

Blessings ~ Yvonne

Coffee Mornings

Coffee mornings will finish up on Tuesday 29th November but we would like to take this opportunity to invite you along to our Christmas Carols Coffee Morning on 6th December at 10.30am. Joining us will be folks from McLean Gardens and Lintaugh Gardens. Stewart will lead us in a short service and there will be tea/coffee and of course home baking ~ there is no charge.

We look forward to seeing you then.

Margaret



COFFEE MORNING CHRISTMAS CAROLS

6 December 2022

10:30am

St Ninian's Church, Stonehouse



CAROL SERVICE

Wednesday 7th December

7pm

St Ninian's Church



3rd Sunday Youth Club
3rd sunday of each month
St Ninian's Church Hall
7:00 – 8:30pm
S1 – S6

CANDLELIT CONCERT

11 December 2022

7:30pm

St Ninian's Church, Stonehouse

Tickets £10 (includes refreshments)



st-ninians-stonehouse.org.uk

News from Missing & Discipleship

The Mission, Education & Discipleship Team have held two successful family fun and craft days this year. These free events were aimed at bringing families together to enjoy playing games, making crafts, and socialising with one another. We are excited to announce that we will be bringing Messy Church to St Ninian's in the new year. Messy Church is a form of church for children and adults that involves creativity, celebration, and hospitality.

More details will follow but, if you would like to find out more or would like to volunteer to help with this or any of our events, then please contact me.

Blessings ~ Yvonne

find out more about Messy Church by visiting
<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/>



Church Diaries and Offering Options

Where does the time go? We seem to have arrived at nearly Christmas 2022 bypassing the past 2 years... or is that just me? Our youngest grandson has gone from being a toddler to now in school and the oldest was starting university and now he has a Masters degree and working. Maybe time passes so quickly because I'm getting old! Like so many other families we missed out on lots of special celebrations but, thankfully, that's all we have lost and are grateful for our continuing good health. My heartfelt sympathy goes out to all who have lost loved ones these past years, not only because of Covid-19, but through other illnesses and circumstances. It was difficult for many to grieve properly while so many restrictions were in place.

On a lighter note its been lovely to be back in church these last months and feel 'normal' again. A huge personal thankyou to Stewart for all his expertise in coordinating all the different aspects of our church life online. We were, and are, so blessed.

Our Church Diaries will hopefully be available this year. The company we normally dealt with were taken over but new owners have assured me they will be resuming diary printing this year so fingers crossed.

I am still in charge of our church offering envelopes. Since the pandemic lots of people who elected to set up standing orders have continued to contribute to our church life in this way and I'm sure it really makes life easier for Bill our church treasurer. However, envelopes are still available so please do not hesitate to speak to me at church, get in touch on 01698 793591, or by e-mail at annerlaw@gmail.com. If you pay tax and haven't filled in a gift aid form please let me know as the church can claim 25% back for our funds and believe me it all adds up to sizeable amount.

Thank you to everyone for continuing to give during these difficult times. I hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas.

God Bless
Anne Law

HOPE CAFE

meets every second Thursday ~ 10am to 1pm
food, conversation, support, community
it's good for your mental health!

St Ninian's Church Hall
10 Vicars Road, Stonehouse ML9 3EB



come and join us

Hope Cafe Too Peer Support Group

facilitated by Jenna Harwood

Tuesday 20th December 2022

Tuesday 5th January 2023 ~ includes mindfulness
7pm to 9pm

St Ninian's Church Hall
10 Vicars Road,
Stonehouse ML9 3EB



For more information, contact:
leneonmelanarkshire@gmail.com

Hope Cafe Too





I'm glad to have the opportunity to let everyone know that I am still in contact with The Leprosy Mission Scotland (TLM) and that I did manage to organise a recent donation to them of £148. Thanks to everyone who continue to collect in their tubs and also make a donation.

A bit from my latest Volunteer Newsletter told the story of Rabiul who is six years old. At such a young age, his life seemed like it was over before it started. When his father found out Rabiul had leprosy, he left Rabiul and his mother. Any hopes of a future had left too; with clawed hands from the leprosy, he couldn't do simple tasks like eat on his own or hold a pen. He was forced to drop out of school. But thanks to generous support, Rabiul received physiotherapy, helping him get the strength and movement back in his hands, along with counselling to help him see a brighter future.

While it may be easier to focus on things like the fundraising, to show picture of the bricks and mortar of buildings and talk about the people who work for TLM in such challenging situations, I am asked to remind you that we mustn't lose sight of the fact that prayer is underpinning all the work that is done and I was asked to remind you of this.

So I would like to thank everyone for your help and, hopefully, we will be in a position to send a further donation at the end of December.

Anne Cowan



**EVERY TUESDAY
ST NINIAN'S CHURCH
HALL STONEHOUSE**

Explorers (P1-P3): 3pm to 4.30pm

Juniors (P4-P7): 5.30pm to 7pm

Brigaders (S1-S6): 7.30pm to 9pm

THE BOYS'
BRIGADE
> the adventure begins here



WEDNESDAYS, CHURCH HALL, ST NINIAN'S, STONEHOUSE

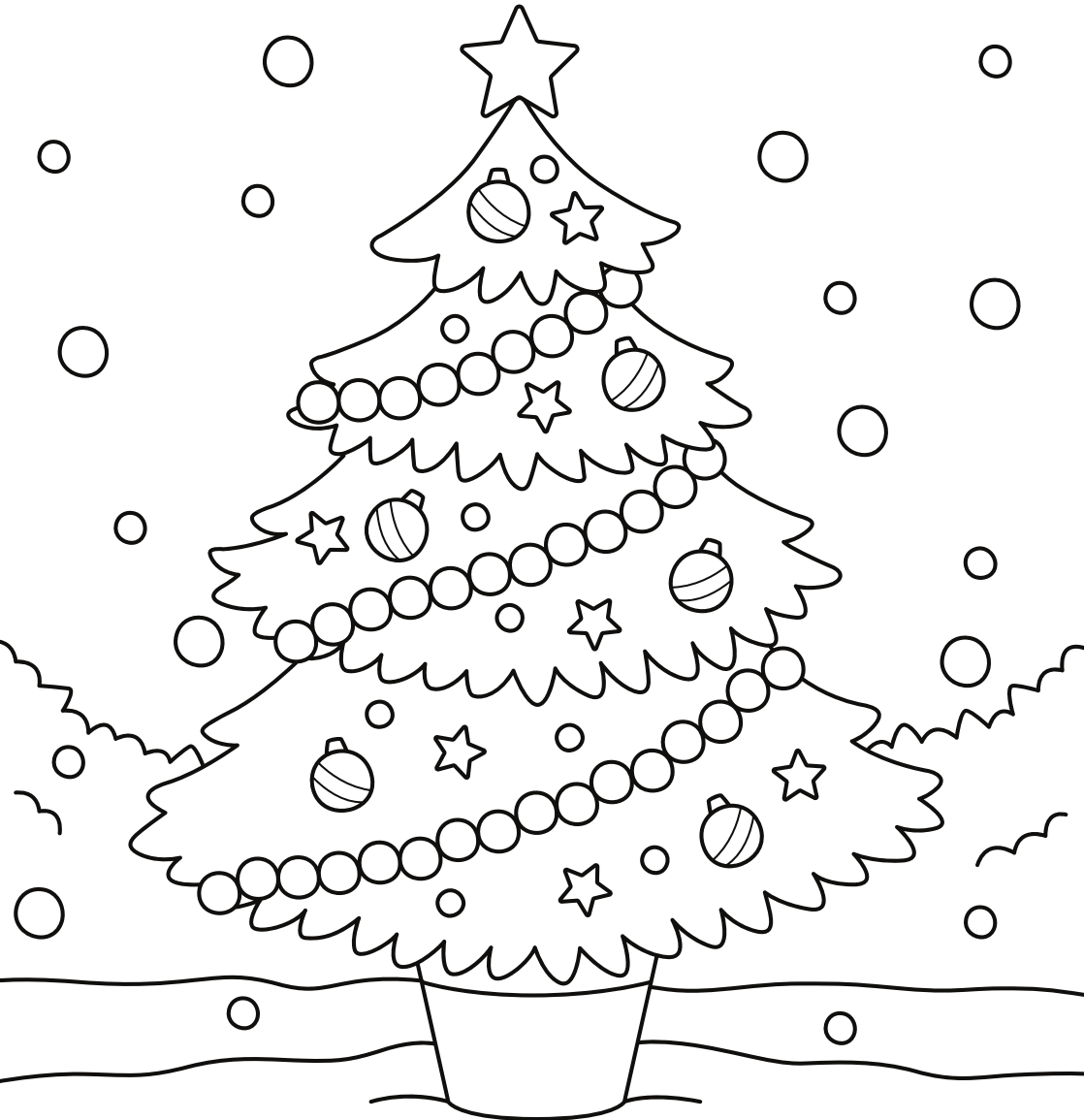
Anchor Boys (5-8 yrs): 6pm to 7pm

Junior Section (8-11yrs): 6.45pm to 8.15pm


Company Section (11-18yrs): 7.45pm to 9.15pm

CHRISTMAS

COLORING PAGE



Where visitors see this poster on display they will know the church welcomes infant feeding.



FEED SLEEP PLAY CHANGE



The
United
Reformed
Church **Children**

**This is a safe
space for you
and your children**

CHRISTMAS AT ST NINIAN'S

3 December - 10am-2pm

**Santa's Family Fun Day
with Santa's Grotto**

4 December - 7:30-9pm

Night Church

7 December - 7pm

BB Carol Service

11 December - 3:30pm

Light in the Darkness
a service of remembering

11 December - 7:30pm

**Candlelit Concert
ft Ancuta & Quintin Doyle**

18 December - 6:30pm

Christian Aid Concert

23 December - 6:30pm

Santa's Bedtime Story

Christmas Eve

Family Carol Service: 7pm

Watchnight Service: 11:15pm



st-ninians-stonehouse.org.uk