

Focus

Your Church Magazine
December 2010

This month.....



Christmas Eve	7.00 pm	Candlelit Service
Christmas Eve	11.15 pm	Watchnight Service
Christmas Day	10.30 am	Short Christmas Day Family Service
Boxing Day	10.30 am	Service of Lessons and Carols

From the Manse

Dear Friends

What if? If only. These are questions which people have asked for centuries, sometimes with a sense of bitterness and frustration. Life is so unpredictable and events have taken place which could so easily have gone one way or the other. The most basic and simple actions, decisions and mistakes can have devastating consequences on people's lives and on human history. After an accident, all sorts of questions might be asked. If only a loved one had caught a different plane. If only a smoke alarm had been installed.... If only....

Here's a good 'What if?' for you. How would the human race have developed if Jesus Christ had never been born? Or what if instead of returning by a different route, the Wise Men had gone back to Herod and told him where to find the Christ child? Herod would then have sent his soldiers to the stable and Christ would have been killed as a tiny baby.

If Christ had not been born, there would be no crazy Christmas shopping, Christmas cards and presents, trees and tinsel, Santa Claus and Rudolph. Bing Crosby would never have sung 'White Christmas' and Cliff would never have sung 'Mistletoe and Wine'. (A good thing too, some might feel) There would be no Nativity Scenes and a story about a baby born in a stable and laid in a manger. In saying that, I'm sure human beings would have come up with something else to brighten up the darkness of winter as they did for many years before the Church began celebrating Christmas.

If Christ had never been born, then there would have been no message about God's Kingdom, about life style, relationships and values. There would have been no reaching out by Christ to those who were sick and on the fringes of society. There would never have been the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and so Easter would be out the window too. The significance of this for Christians is that there would be no hope of a life to come after we die and no faith in a God who understands our suffering and who cares deeply about all that we go through in life.

I know that there are some people who believe strongly that the world would actually have been a better place if Jesus Christ had not been born, indeed, if religion had never existed at all. I can understand why they feel like this, especially in view of the fact that religion has sadly caused much suffering down the centuries, primarily because people have abused or misunderstood religious principles and values.

Flowers for October/November were kindly donated by:

Marlene Dawson

Norma Rothwell

Cath MacKenzie

Isobel Kennedy



Many thanks to these people.

The holly collection is going well thanks to many people who have directed us to a good source. But so far for the Christmas Fayre we have only half the usual number of wreaths so please keep them coming in.

Flower Convenor: Violet Smith, 733317

Treasurer: Hazel Mitchell, 733187

(Continued from page 2)

Yet despite the terrible things which have been done in the name of religion and despite the fact that at times I wonder why this life can be so cruel and unfair, I still believe that the world is a better place because of the birth of Christ and the foundation of the Christian Church.

For those of you who will find Christmas a difficult time, for those who have been recently bereaved, for people reading this who are ill or have experienced a terrible year, the birth of that tiny child in Bethlehem can bring light into your darkness, hope amidst your despair and new life where everything seems bleak.

I am glad that Christ was born, I am glad to be able to celebrate that fact on Christmas Day and I am glad to be able to wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

Yours sincerely
John Ferguson



Presbytery Matters

The November meeting of Presbytery included the following:

1. Building Bridges and Sitting at the Table

Presbytery welcomed the opportunity to consult with and be consulted by Aberdeen City Council with regard to its 5 year Corporate Business Plan and affirmed the importance of bringing the needs of the most vulnerable to the ongoing discussions as cuts and adjustments are being made.

2. Winter Care Programme

The financial support from the Council to the Winter Care Programme 2010/2011 was welcomed. Thanks were given for the willingness of churches, agencies and individuals to provide accommodation and catering facilities during this period. The Bethany Christian Trust was commended.

3. Ministries Council Consultation

Representatives from congregations in Aberdeen and surrounding Presbyteries attended a meeting at St Mark's Church on the 16th of November to hear about the key aims of 2020 Vision agreed at this years General Assembly. From 2014 the Ministries Council will only fund 1,000 ministry posts, a reduction of 10% on current numbers. Presbyteries are working towards having new Presbytery Plans incorporating the reductions. The Council are looking at new ways of training to involve more church members in ministries of varying forms.

Richard Little

Save the Date

It is common practice nowadays for people to be advised of an important occasion in the future where they might be asked to "save the date". Such is the case for a Special Event to happen in our church to which all members will be invited.

A Planning Group is currently working on proposals for an Event that could be the biggest since the formation of Peterculter Parish Church. It will happen probably on two evenings and one afternoon in week commencing 16th May 2011 so try to keep time free during that week.

Watch this space in future magazines for more information.

Funeral	
02/11/2010	Mrs Gladys Henderson, Eastleigh Care Home

Church Office

The church office will close on Wednesday 22nd December at 1.00pm and re-open on Friday January 7th at 9.00a.m.

Teas, coffees & a chat!

Thursday & Saturday Coffee Time

Join us for coffee in the small hall on Thursdays & Saturdays between 10.00 am and 12 noon.

All welcome.

Come along and enjoy fellowship, fine fare and fresh coffee.

You are also invited to join the short service of worship on Thursday mornings at 11.30 am.

The last Thursday coffee morning is on 23rd December, restarting on Thursday 13th January.

The last Saturday coffee morning is on 18th December, restarting on Saturday 8th January.



Ceilidh

It was disappointing to have to cancel the Ceilidh due to lack of ticket sales. A church with a good social life needs the support of members and I would urge you to support social events and buy tickets early. If there are any social events you would like to see happening in our church please see Edna Ledingham or any member of the social team.

Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS Project

Souper Sunday 9th January 2011

On Sunday 9th January 2011, churches all over Scotland – and all over the world – will be marking "Souper Sunday", when church services promise to be a little different.

This special day has been endorsed by The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as a time when congregations might choose to hold elder-led acts of worship, followed by a simple lunch of soup and bread. As a result of the day it is hoped that all church members will become more aware of the many issues surrounding HIV. Also, Souper Sunday will offer an opportunity to raise much needed funds for a wide range of HIV initiatives at home and overseas.



The Nativity Story

What is the Christmas story all about? Each year we celebrate this event, but what really happened and why?

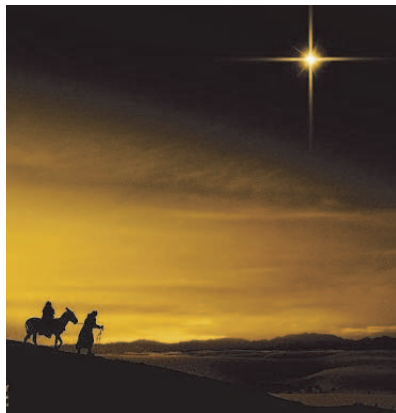
I have decided to hold a couple of meetings to explore the Christmas story as found in the gospels of Matthew and Luke and to look at the background to it all.

These will take place on Thursday December 9th and 16th at 7.30pm in the small hall.

There is a signup sheet for those interested at the extension door.

All are welcome.

John Ferguson



Church Property

Maintaining the church building is a major undertaking and keeping it in the excellent condition that it is in requires dedication from the group of volunteers who form the Property Team. Since I came to Peterculter Church, this same group of people who were there at the start have worked incredibly hard and, as far as I can recall, only two new volunteers have joined them in the past 11 years.



As I write this just before the Christmas Fayre, I know that it will be broadly the same people who will be manning the stalls and serving the teas, who have done so for the past 10 Fayres in the life of Peterculter Church. Their dedication and commitment ensures that our church continues to undertake all its activities in the name of Christ – but it is only right that the work is more spread so that others contribute too.

It is not fair to expect people to continue to undertake these jobs around the church forever!

We desperately need new people to come on board and I would make this plea to all members who may be in a position to help with these jobs and others around the church to consider doing so. Of course I appreciate that many people have very busy lives – but can you still spare a few hours a month to help your church? If so, please get in touch.

John Ferguson.

A Time to Remember

On Sunday 19th December at 2.00pm, we will be holding a Bereavement Service called 'A Time to Remember'. This is open to everyone who has lost a loved one in recent times, or some time ago. The Care Team will be providing a cup of tea after the service.



Posada

What is Posada? Posada is a Spanish word meaning 'inn'. Posada celebrations originated in Mexico where two young people were chosen to dress up as Mary and Joseph. They used to travel from house to house in their village telling people about the imminent arrival of Jesus and asking them if they would give Him a room. On Christmas Eve they would re-enact a community play and bring figures of Mary and Joseph to be placed in a crib. The



modern day equivalent is based on this concept but encourages people to give a home to the nativity figures of Mary and Joseph for a night. This symbolises making room for Jesus in our lives, homes and communities. The journey encourages us to think about the meaning of Christmas and to share the message with others.



A calendar for December is now available at the front door or contact myself or church office if you would like your name added. You can choose to take Mary and Joseph into your home on a date that suits. Mary and Joseph will be welcomed back to the church at the early evening service on Christmas Eve.

Our aim is to refocus the Advent preparations and is a reminder to us of the many who are without shelter or care in Advent and all the year round. We are inviting hosts to make a donation of around £5 and this money will go to the charity Instant Neighbour.

Midweek Christmas Lunch

Wed 1st December, 12.30pm - 1.30pm

£3.50 for 2 courses

All Welcome!



The Wednesday Club

Peterculter Parish Church Hall every second Wednesday from 2 pm.

Open to all.

Admission £1 (members) £2 (non-members).

Includes refreshments.

The next meeting before our Christmas break will be on the 8th December at 2 pm where the speaker will be Liz Davidson, practitioner nurse at the Peterculter Health Clinic. Her subject is on her nursing experiences and we look forward to her talk with interest.

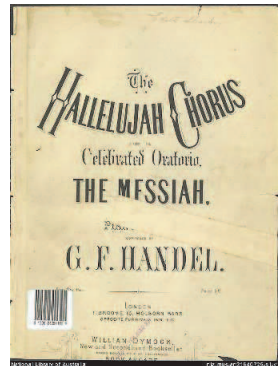
On the 19th January 2011 we resume our meetings when the talented North East "Bothy Ballad King" Hector Riddell is to entertain us with a talk and songs.

Please come along and take a friend, if your are free, to these interesting afternoons which always wind up with a friendly cuppa.



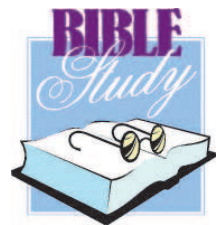
The Messiah

Aberdeen Chorus Society is performing Handel's Messiah in the Music Hall on Tuesday 14th December at 7.15 pm. Tickets priced £14 and £12 can be obtained from Tessa Cowie, tel: 01330 811781



Delta Bible Study Group

The Delta Bible Study Group will meet in the extension area of the church on Thursday 2nd December at 10.00 am. New members will be most welcome.





CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH
SUNDAY DECEMBER 12TH 2010
TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!

New Hope Trust

The church and Culter School again sent a large number of boxes to the New Hope Trust this year. Thank you to all members and to families at the school for this, with special thanks to Fiona Bruce for organising the church side and Susan Chalmers from the school.



The Lighter Side.....

To encourage everyone to be in church next Sunday, we are planning a special “no-excuses” service, that will include:



- Cots in the vestibule for those who say Sunday is their only day to sleep in
- Eye drops for everyone who stayed up too late Saturday night
- Steel helmets for anyone afraid the roof will fall if they show up in church
- Blankets for those who find the church too cold; fans for those who find it too hot
- Hearing aids for those finding the minister too hard to hear; cotton for the ears of those who find the minister too loud
- Scorecards for anyone wishing to count how many hypocrites show up
- Relatives for those who want to go visiting on Sunday
- Microwave meals for those who don't feel they can attend church and make dinner, too
- A section of trees, grass and putting green for those who see God in nature, especially golf courses.
- Both Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for those who have never seen the church without them

Aberdeen Show Chorus
Proudly presents:

Snow White
2

The return of the Queen

Come along and join Snow White and her friends in
their adventures in fairy tale land

Our shows will commence at 7:45 pm at the following venues:

Mastrick Church – Monday 6th December

Midstocket Church – Friday 10th December

Peterculter Parish Church – Monday 13th December

Holburn West Church – Friday 17th December

An evening of fun, music, Christmas carols – and a few
surprises! – Suitable for all ages.

Entrance: £10.00 – adults. £7.00 – children and concessions
(Refreshments available)

Tickets available from Aberdeen Chorus on 07941 415516 or
tickets@aberdeenchorus.co.uk

For more information please visit www.aberdeenchorus.co.uk



SWEET ADELINES
INTERNATIONAL

Tickets for the above show also available from Val Muir on 735001

Friendship Club Dates

The Friendship Club resumes in the New Year

Tuesday 25th January	"Burns Night" Theme
Tuesday 8th February	"Climbing Kilimanjaro - Catherine Lacy
Tuesday 22nd February	"Club Evening" with Bring/Buy Stall
Tuesday 8th March	"Mountain Rescue" - Alison Todd
Tuesday 22nd March	"Island of St Helena" - Rev J Montgomerie & Moira Marshall

Each evening starts at 7.30 pm. Only £1.50 to cover tea and a biscuit. Bring along a friend. **OPEN TO EVERYONE**

Entrance to church

The Church of Scotland has called on all congregations to reduce their carbon footprint by 5% each year. To this end, and also to keep the church warmer, members are encouraged to use the extension door when entering the church between now and the end of February, possibly longer depending on the weather. However, the front door will continue to be open for those who wish to use it and duty elders will be on hand as usual. If you are using this door, could you please open it and close it behind you.



Outdoor carol service

Wednesday 15th December

7.00pm in the church car park

Followed by tea, coffee, mince pies in the large hall

Date	Service	Preacher
5th December	10.30 am - Morning Worship	John Ferguson
12th December	10.30 am - Christingle Service	John Ferguson
19th December	10.30 am - Family Service	John Ferguson
24th December	7.00 pm - Candlelit Service 11.15 pm - Watchnight Service	John Ferguson
Sat 25th December	10.30 am - Short Christmas Day Family Service	John Ferguson
Sunday 26th December	10.30 am - Service of Lessons and Carols	John Ferguson
2nd January	10.30 am - Morning Worship	Rev Andrew Christie
9th January	10.30 am - Souper Sunday	John Ferguson
16th January	10.30 am - Pulpit Exchange for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	
23rd January	10.30 am - Family Service	John Ferguson
30th January	10.30 am - Morning Worship Followed by Communion	John Ferguson

Evening Services

Due to a later than normal meeting of the Malawi Partnership Committee, the Evening Service on December 5th has had to be cancelled.

The Emmaus Course

Emmaus is a course which has been developed to introduce people to the Christian faith or provide a refresher course for Christians.



For more than 10 years, Emmaus has been used as a way to bring people to faith, to nurture new Christians and inspire life-long discipleship.

Thousands of people have grown in their Christian faith as a result.

Each evening will begin with a two course meal at 6.30 pm (no charge, just a donation if desired).

The programme will begin at 7.30 pm and end by 9.00 pm.

PART 1: WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

January 26th – God is there and he matters

February 2nd – We need God in our lives

February 9th – Jesus – his ministry and death

February 16th – The Resurrection of Jesus

February 23rd – Becoming a Christian

PART 2: HOW CHRISTIANS GROW

March 2nd – Learning to pray

March 9th – Reading the Bible

March 16th – Belonging to the Church and sharing Communion

PART 3: LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

March 23rd – Living God's way

March 30th – Learning to love and sharing the faith

If you are interested in attending the course, please contact the church office at secretary@culterkirk.co.uk or phone (01224) 735845, sign the sheet at the church door, or just come along to find out more with no obligation to return.

Peterculter Parish Church

Contact Us!

Minister

Rev John Ferguson

Tel: 735041

Email: minister@culterkirk.co.uk

Session Clerk

Donald Muir

Tel: 735001

Email:

sessionclerk@culterkirk.co.uk

Church Office

Jill Grant

Tel: 735845

Email: secretary@culterkirk.co.uk

Magazine Editor

Val Muir

Tel: 735001

Email: editor@culterkirk.co.uk

Bethany Christian Trust Homeless Shelter



Bethany
Christian
Trust

Last year, some members assisted the Bethany Christian Trust with their homeless shelter, by volunteering to prepare and serve the food. We intend to do so next year and the dates are as follows:

Friday 4th February, Sunday 13th March and Saturday 2nd April.

If you can help, please contact Edna Ledingham on 733723 or the church office.

Perhaps helping out on these nights is not for you, but we are also looking for donations towards the purchase of the food we will be providing, so please, if you can support this worthwhile initiative, give donations to William Anderson, Treasurer marking the donation for Bethany Trust.

Christmas Offerings

The offering at the Candlelit Service this year will go to the Bethany Christian Trust and the Presbytery Malawi Project.

Next Issue: February 2011 (no January issue)

Material to editor: Sunday 23rd January 2011
Ready for distribution: Sunday 30th January 2011

Social Events for 2010/2011

- Monday 13th December—Aberdeen Show Chorus Annual Christmas Show
 - Provisional: Return visit from The Twa Fat Laddies
 - Provisional: Culter's Got More Talent
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Table Top Sales—first Saturday of each month

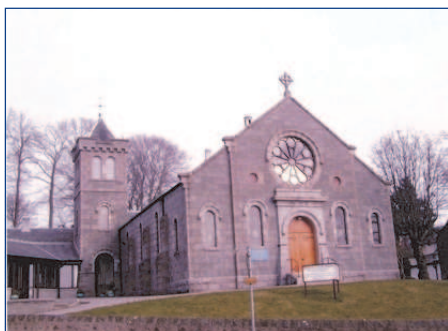
The next Table Top Sale begins again in February.

Set up is from 9 am—10 am with items on sale between 10.00 am and 12 noon.

A table costs £5. To book contact the church office on 735845 or secretary@culterkirk.co.uk.

The sale is held in the large hall and teas/coffees and home bakes are available in the small hall.

The first table top sale of the new year is on Saturday 5th February 2011.



Mission Statement

The purpose of Peterculter Parish Church is to celebrate our faith in God and in the Good News of Jesus Christ through worship, fellowship, teaching, outreach and pastoral care and to participate in the work of the world wide Church.

See the church website:

www.culterkirk.co.uk