Focus

The Church Newsletter of Peterculter Parish Church
Winter 2026



FROM THE MINISTER

There is a trend for nostalgic Christmas decorations this year. The ones that hang from the ceiling similar to the ones from the 1980s. There is always something nostalgic in our remembering of Christmas preparations, decoration and gifts from our childhood.

One of the many things that has stood the test of time is the nativity play. Children dressed as shepherds or angels or wise men retelling that ancient story and making memories for themselves and their parents. A child falling asleep on stage, another swinging a toy lamb by the leg, another forgetting their words, another waving to their parents, another narrating the story from the front. A teacher or young church leader praying that the play goes smoothly, and that no-one falls of the stage or starts to cry before the end.

There may be different experiences of watching and participating and different memories being made but all are connected through the story of the Jesus, the child in the manger. Nativity plays acted out by the innocent, witnesses, to the eternal truth of the incarnation.

I wonder how are we each witnessing to the truth of the incarnation in our lives?

Just as the children in the nativity play tell the story simply, we too are called to share the good news in simple ways, through kindness, generosity, forgiveness, compassion and welcome.

As we move further away from childhood, the decorations and presents and preparations all may change, but the story at the heart of Christmas remains the same. The baby in the manger, Emmanuel, God with us, brought life and love and hope and joy into the world.

It's an ancient story which reverberates with purpose and relevance each Christmas. It's not intended to be nostalgic. It was a moment in time that changed all of time. May we each find a way this Christmas to retell that ancient story of a love for all that has no limits.

Wishing you every blessing this Christmas

Emma

Monday 7th December 7pm	***Sunday 13th December 2pm***	***Thursday 24th December 6pm***
Carol Service with Aberdeen Concert Band	***Carol Service at Drumoak***	***Christmas Eve Family Service***

WORSHIP

See page 2 for details of all our upcoming services.

LIVE STREAMING

Our services are live-streamed on our YouTube channel.

These can be watched live (or later) at our YouTube page: **https://youtube.com/user/CulterKirk** .

After the service they can also be found on our website: **www.culterkirk.co.uk**.

SATURDAY COFFEES

10am-12noon 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month.

THURSDAY WORSHIP AND COFFEES

A short Thursday midweek service is held at 11.30am, on the 1st Thursday of each month.

Tea and coffee is served prior to these services from 10am.

SPRING FOCUS

Focus is now moving from a monthly publication to quarterly. Check the church website in the new year for the deadline for the spring edition.

The Presbytery of the North East and the Northern Isles

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

The Presbytery of the North East and Northern Isles (NENI) last met on Saturday the 12th September at Fountainhall at the Cross Church.

My name is Doreen Fowlie and I attended this first meeting in the role of Commissioned Elder for Peterculter Church. The work of Presbytery is primarily delegated to its Standing Committees. The Church Society and International committee has 4 sub independent committees.

I have joined the Political and Social Engagement (PSE) group. This group took the lead on different evenings delivering a 6 weeks programme focusing on human trafficking in Scotland. The material was based on Bible Study through Galatians, also facts and figures from the World Council of Churches and Clewer institute.

'Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland' (SOHTIS) Hidden in Plain Sight, gave moving accounts of how SOHTIS support survivors while working alongside local churches. We were also fortunate to have the real-life experience shared by a survivor from Scotland. Her identity was kept anonymous. The importance of noticing someone where something doesn't feel quite right and reporting it was emphasised.

To report concerns of Human Trafficking Modern Slavery:

Helpline 08000 121 700 or UNSEEN APP

Martyn's Law

Terrorism and protection Law was explored. Although our churches are considered to be in low-risk areas, we were asked to consider the possible implications in all our churches. Initially this is about raising awareness and starting conversations about the Law.

New Presbytery elders are now offered induction training. This was held at Devana Church on 30th September and certainly was welcomed by those of us who needed a little more insight into the structures and different roles within Presbytery.

Doreen Fowlie



Thu 3rd December, 11.30am	Short Midweek Service
Sun 6th December, 10.30am	Morning Worship
Mon 7th December, 7pm	Carol Service with Aberdeen Concert Band
Sun 13th December, 10.30am	Morning Worship
Sun 13th December, 2pm	Carol Service at Drumoak
Sun 20th December, 10.30am	Morning Worship
Thu 24th December, 6pm	Christmas Eve Family Service
Sun 27th December, 10.30am	Morning Worship

VOLUNTEERS



Our Church functions as efficiently as it does thanks in no small part to the many volunteers who willingly give of their time and talents. Some of the more visible examples are:

- Welcome Duty - welcomes the congregation to Church on a Sunday and acts as fire wardens in the event of an emergency
- Reading Rota - reads the Bible lessons during the Sunday service
- Flower Team - decorates the Church with flowers every Sunday, with larger displays for special occasions, e.g. harvest
- Coffee Team - provides teas and coffees after the service

However, there are many, many more volunteers in addition to those listed here which rarely get the attention and praise they so richly deserve, but for which we are all grateful. If you are interested in volunteering to help the Church in any of these areas, or want to see what other opportunities there may be, then please do not hesitate to speak to either the Minister or the Session Clerk.

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

During October you may have noticed that the seating layout in the church had been altered, with some seats removed as a trial.

The reasons behind the seating trial were that people naturally tended to spread out and occupy seats away from other people. That made the church feel emptier than it is. Also, having ten seats across the middle generally resulted in people sitting to either side, leaving the middle seats empty. Consequently a new middle aisle was created and some seats were removed from the back at either side. Following the trial, the original layout was reinstated for Remembrance Sunday due to the anticipated larger congregation. Feedback on the trial seating arrangements has been mixed. Generally, the new middle aisle has proved to be popular but removing the seats at either side at the rear has been less well-received. Consequently, going forwards the new default arrangement will be to have a centre aisle, reverting back to the original layout if larger attendances are anticipated, e.g. Christmas Eve service.

The new seating arrangements were proposed by a member of the congregation. If you have any suggestions or proposals that you think would improve any aspect of Church life, then please feel free to suggest these to either the Minister or the Session Clerk.

OLD LECTERN BIBLES

Over the years the church has gathered a number of large lectern bibles which are no longer used as they are not the version currently used in services (New International Version). If any member of the congregation would like to take one of these then please speak to the Session Clerk. Otherwise they will be disposed.

USED STAMPS FOR KIDNEY CARE UK

In the run up to Christmas hopefully we will all be receiving more letters and cards. Recycling our used stamps is a good way to support Kidney Care UK.

Every kilogram of stamps that is collected generates £20 income to support kidney patients.

Please bring your stamps along to church and put them in the pocket on the noticeboard in the extension area.

Please trim your stamps to have a finger's width (or 1cm) of paper all the way around.

For further information speak to Dayer Coburn.

SAVE THE DATE

Afternoon Tea and Entertainment from Jim Smith (60s Music)

Sunday 14th March

2-4pm



REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY DONATIONS



On Remembrance Sunday, donations from the open plate, i.e. everything but the envelopes, are given to PoppyScotland.
This year a total of £291 was raised. Thank you to everyone for helping to support this cause.

SOUP SUNDAY



A soup lunch was held after the Harvest Thanksgiving Service on Sunday 11th October, which raised money for: *"2 The Nations"*, a charity that supports the work of the Rev. Susan Sutherland's daughter and son-in-law in the Philippines, Vivien and August Manio. The lunch raised a total of £482 for this worthwhile cause. Susan came long to our service on the 15th November where she gave a talk on the work of Vivien and August and how our money would be used.

GIFT DAY



Many thanks to those who contributed to church funds for Gift Day. Donations amounted to £4,475 with a further £980 to be added from the Gift Aid scheme giving a boost to our church of £5,455 as the year end approaches.

Richard Little

INSTANT NEIGHBOUR DONATIONS

Instant Neighbour

Our foodbank drop-off for Instant Neighbour takes place each Monday from 11am – 12 noon.
Alternatively you can bring goods on a Sunday morning and leave them in the basket at the Culter Church extension door.

EMAIL CONTACT

It would help administration greatly if you are able to provide an email address that the church can use for communication.

If you have an email address and have not already supplied us with it, can you please email **secretary@culterkirk.co.uk**

CONTACT US

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CHURCH OFFICE

The Church Office is open to the public on Friday mornings from 10am - 12 noon.



Scottish Charity Number: SC001452