

Christmas Greetings from Hope Park and Martyrs Church



From the Manse

The worship of Hope Park and Martyrs Church for much of this year has been offered either online or by dialling in. Almost every week since church services resumed in March I have begun our worship by saying these words

“We pause before we begin our worship and as we do so, I invite you to remember the lit candle that sits on the Communion Table, a sign that Christ is the Light of the World.”

That image is found in the Prologue of John’s Gospel. It is the fourth gospel’s way of telling the Christmas story. John 1:5 says, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never mastered it.” In *The Message* by Eugene Peterson he renders that verse, “The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn’t put it out”. These words come into their own at this time of year. In the darkest place, if you light a bright light, how far and wide it will spread and what a dramatic effect it will have!

It is hard to choose words to sum up this year – profound, difficult, depressing for some and extraordinary for everyone. Let’s hope and pray that other words and emotions will be prominent in 2021.

As we approach Christmas may we continue to pray for and see a drop in the number of those infected and requiring hospital treatment for Covid-19.

By the time we reach Christmas the shortest winter days are behind us and daylight is stretching once more – darkness is on the wane.

By the time we reach Christmas, the number of people receiving Covid-19 vaccinations will have increased– who would have thought it possible back in March!

This Christmas may you and those whom you love – even if you cannot be with them or choose not to be with them this year- know God’s Peace. May the reality of a child born in a stable and placed in a manger, Emmanuel, God with us, allow you to sense the strength and power of the Life-Light.

God bless you this Christmas and on into 2021.

Allan McCafferty

From our Mission Partners in Zambia

Advent is the time of preparation for Christmas and the coming New Year. It is also a time to slow down, in spite of the holiday rush, to hear once again the message from the Angels and Shepherds of that special gift from God, born in a lowly stable. In Zambia people are at the moment preoccupied with voter registration for next year’s elections, Covid-19 management, high poverty levels and the poor economy—much as you in Scotland today and those in Palestine 2000 years ago were with their own forms of poverty, disease and interaction with the political and religious authorities, the powers-that-be.

In the midst of our present concerns, let us take time to appreciate the many gifts and blessings God sends to this broken world and his promise to be with us, guiding, guarding, leading and protecting us now and always. May you all have a joyful Christmas and wishing you every blessing in the coming year.

With love and thanks *Keith, Ida & Mubita*

Church Services over the Christmas Period

Wed Dec 16 at 3pm	Advent Remembrance Service in HPM	See the article below for more details
Sun Dec 20 at 9.45am	Morning Worship in HPM and online	Usual booking procedure
Fri Dec 25 at 10am	Christmas Day Morning Worship in HPM	Book by Sat 19 Dec
Sun Dec 27	No worship in Hope Park and Martyrs but the Moderator of the General Assembly, The Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair will be broadcasting a Service which you can link to via HPM website	
Sun Jan 3 at 9.45am	No Cluster Service Morning Worship in HPM and online.	Book by phone on Wed 30 between 5-6pm or email by 9am on Thurs 31 Dec
Sun Jan 3 at 11.45am	Morning Worship In Strathkinness Church	
Wed Jan 6 at 10.00am	Epiphany Communion Service via Zoom If you wish to join in this service email the church office (email address below) and the zoom link will be emailed to you on Tues 5 Jan	

If you wish to attend remember to book a place by phoning the office (01334 478144) or by email to admin@hpm.org.uk The service will be usually be available online by lunchtime on the church website

<http://www.hpmchurch.org.uk>

The Annual Advent Remembrance Service 3pm on Wednesday 16th December will be a short reflective service lasting around half an hour to allow people to pause and remember a loss of any kind that they have experienced. That might be the loss of a friend, relative or person who was loved but it may also be the loss of a relationship, the loss of a job or indeed numerous other things which give rise to feelings of loss. This year everyone has suffered some degree of loss relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Everyone is most welcome but current worship restrictions mean that no more than forty people will be able to attend. If you wish to attend please email admin@hpmchurch.org.uk or phone the church office on 01334 478144 and leave a message with contact details and the number of people from each household who will be attending. This will allow a seating plan to be produced where people from the same household may sit together.

You are invited to bring along a sprig of rosemary (around 15-20 cm long), the traditional symbol of remembrance. During the service it will help us reflect on what we have gone through this year. At the end of worship the rosemary will be sent away to be used in a 'Scented Lament' art installation supported by the Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair. Dr Fair will feature it in the BBC Scotland 'Resolutions' programme on New Year's Day. The installation's artists are the Rev Peter Gardner and his wife Heidi. They say, "We will attach all the rosemary to a 180cm diameter plywood ring, creating a rosemary wreath. We see the cutting, the posting and the bringing together of the rosemary as acts of remembering pandemic griefs and losses and naming them in God's presence."

Roundabout Café

The Kirk Session has given much consideration to the future of the Roundabout Café at this difficult time. If it were to reopen under the current restrictions, there would only be a small number of tables allowed in the café and this would mean that it would not be viable. Under the circumstances the Kirk Session regrettably felt it necessary to make both paid employees, Maureen Johnston and Mary Nilsen, redundant. I'm sure everyone would want to thank both Maureen and Mary for the service they have given to the Church through their work with the café. Of course the café could not have operated without the work of the loyal volunteers and they too should be thanked for all that they did to make the café such a friendly and welcoming place.

Elaine Dowie Session Clerk

Missing the chance to sing all your favourite Christmas carols? Here are 2 online options where you can join in

The Guild Big Sing at <https://www.facebook.com/cofsguild>

St Andrews University Alumni Carol Concert For the live service visit the Chaplaincy 's Worship Webpage at 7pm on Sun 13 <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/community/worship/> Click on to Livestreamed Services, then choose the University & Alumni Carol Service option. The service will be available online for some time.

News from the Mission Group



We have been busy gathering in all your wonderful donations.

There will be 40 Goody bags, basic foods with some treats too, distributed before Christmas to needy families in your name. Also, lots of beautiful knitted and sewn goods were delivered to the Toy Drive organisers in time to go to families before Christmas. So, there will be many children and their families who will have some Christmas cheer thanks to your generous donations. There will be more details and photos in the next newsletter.

Please don't forget Storehouse when you shop, or you can donate online on their website. Also, Morrisons now have "Food Bank Pick Up Packs" paper bags with suitable foods, they are just inside the door and are priced on bag around £2-£3.

Muriel Gray

MESSY CHURCH



Christmas is coming... and with 27 Messy Church bags delivered to our Messy Church families as well as 40 Advent candle craft kits taken to Cosmos Afterschool Club, the excitement has begun!

Whilst our traditional Messy Church Nativity play is off the cards this year, perhaps it is just as meaningful to enable families to enjoy crafts, activities (and chocolate!) together throughout the Advent season. My thanks again to Pam Wilson for the pop-up nativity scene and cute pom-pom sheep crafts.

Also, lots of fun will be our Messy Church Nativity Sheep trail featuring delightful little sheep knitted by the Pins and Needles group. They'll be displayed in shop windows throughout the town, as well as one at the church. All you need to do is follow the trail and discover their names! We still need a name for our HPM sheep so let me know any suggestions! Also, get in touch if you'd like a trail sheet emailed or sent to you -perhaps you might be the lucky winner of the first prize, a fluffy sheep cushion handmade by Margaret Thomson!

And when Christmas comes, I trust it will bring renewed hope, joy and peace. With thanks for all your support throughout the year,

Lorna



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CHURCH FLOWERS

On behalf of the **Flower Team**, I would like to forward our good wishes to everyone for the Festive Season. I would also like to thank all those who volunteer to provide, arrange and deliver the Church flowers. Unfortunately, due to the present situation, the provision of flowers has been suspended for the time being and it is not certain when we will again be able to decorate our Church.

Normally at this time of year I would be phoning all those who help with the provision of flowers, asking for their continued support for 2021. I would then, with help from Elaine, publish the Flower List for the complete year. It has been decided to delay this exercise until we have guidelines about Church Services returning to something approaching normality. Hopefully I will contact everyone around the beginning of the new year, and then provide a Flower List for the remainder of the year. *Norrie Wilson*

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

2020 has certainly been a most peculiar year for everyone. I'm sure I'd be correct in thinking that we have all been affected by Covid-19 in some way, not just in our community but everywhere across the world. None of our usual events have been possible but I know many people have been keeping in contact by phone and of course, it's good to talk.

One of the difficulties is sharing information when all the usual church groups are suspended. So here's a plea! Please pass on information about people who are in hospital, unwell or simply could do with a chat on the phone. I believe Open Doors group are planning a fish supper zoom. Hopefully it will be a good way to meet - or at least the best we can - and share food in the current circumstances. *Moirra Kerr*