



Magazine

No. 160 December 2020

Dear Friends

The first recorded Christmas card was sent by Michael Mair to King James VI and I, and his son Prince Henry of Wales, in 1611. It was found in 1979 in the Scottish Record Office. It was laid out to form a rose, and had the words of greeting: "*A greeting on the birthday of the Sacred King, to the most worshipful and energetic lord and most eminent James, King of Great Britain and Ireland, and Defender of the true faith, with a*

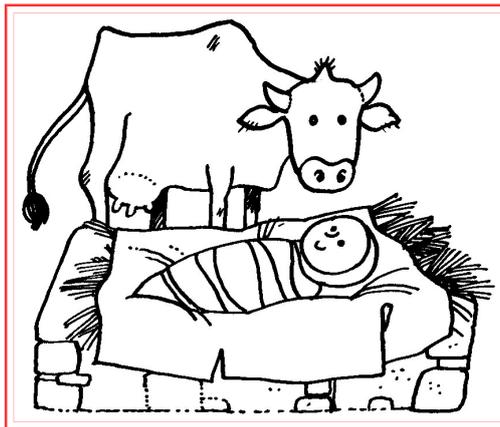
gesture of joyful celebration of the Birthday of the Lord, in most 'joyand' fortune, we enter into the new auspicious year 1612". Christmas cards became more popular, largely due to the introduction of the Penny Post (stamps much more expensive nowadays!), and Queen Victoria started sending cards in the 1840s.

In the Christmas cards that we are sending out from the Church this year, given there were over three hundred, I'm afraid you just have the words 'Christmas greetings' and my signature! There is also the printed text from Paul's letter to the Philippians, '*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice*', and the cards support the Church of Scotland social care organisation, CrossReach. CrossReach supports a wide range of care across Scotland, supporting young people, people with poor mental health, women with perinatal depression, and care for the elderly. Nearest us are the care homes at The Elms and Morlich.

This year the Kirk Session has decided that we would try to reach out to as many as possible in

our congregation with a Christmas card – to say thank you, and to say bless you.

Many will be wondering how Christmas will be celebrated this year. At the time of writing, there are still so many restrictions. Will we be able to meet with friends and family? Who will be at our table? Will we hear any of our Christmas carol favourites?



Whatever happens, we can be assured of this: the Christmas message remains the same.

Jesus is born; light will shine; hope will come.

I wonder, might it just be, if we focus our minds not on what we cannot do, but on what we can, that through the simplicity that message of the birth of Jesus might

bolster us all in this time of vulnerability and fearfulness. Not that we do nothing, but that we focus on a few things that **really** matter. What are we thankful about; who are we thankful for; how will we show this? In what simple way, public or private, might we find ourselves humbly at the manger, remembering and praising the birth of the Saviour Who keeps our world turning still?

Christmas cards might help, but however you celebrate Christmas this year, and the New Year beyond, alone or in company, may the blessing of the Christ-child be with you and with those you love.

Very Revd Dr Derek Browning

NOVEMBER KIRK SESSION

The November meeting was a Zoom meeting.

- Tribute was paid to Craig Dawson, one of our elders, who died recently. Craig's enthusiasm to help and his warm and generous personality will be greatly missed.
- It was noted with thanks that Euan Murray will be joining David Calder and Douglas Paterson in helping with running the IT at Sunday services.
- Work on the limited reopening of our Halls continues. It is likely that the first groups to return will be the regulated young people's groups, primarily the uniformed organisations. This has been a time-consuming and complicated piece of work as a variety of regulations and health and safety issues have had to be factored in. Thanks were given to the Session Clerk for overseeing most of this work.
- There will be a recorded Communion service made available on the website in early December.
- Due to restrictions there will be only two Christmas trees this year: one in the sanctuary, and one outside. The Flower Committee will make arrangements to decorate the communion table and pulpit, and the Chrismon boards will be put on the pillars.
- Given uncertainty about any changes to numbers attending worship, it is unlikely services can be held on Christmas Eve, so there will be two services recorded – one for the all-age service, one for the Watchnight service.
- The **Outreach Committee** reported that £7,162 was raised for our Church charities in 2019 and paid in 2020. In 2019 we supported the Edinburgh Clothing Store, Scottish Love in Action and Water Aid. In 2020 we are supporting the Edinburgh Clothing Store, the PAD project, and our Church. Due to the Covid pandemic fundraising has been put on hold and we have contacted the charities concerned.
- The **Pastoral Care Committee** reported that whilst face-to-face visits were still not possible, contact was being maintained by telephone and email. Our Pastoral Assistant, in consultation with the Minister, continues to deliver flowers to people around our congregation and to those who have had bereavements. We have a link with George Watson's College and now have four volunteers from the school working in pairs to support two households with shopping.
- The **Staff Committee** reported that we are most fortunate to have a team of staff who have worked positively and flexibly during these difficult months. The Session noted its sincere appreciation of our staff members.
- The **Communication Committee** noted that it has now arranged for those who do not have Internet access to receive printed copies of the monthly church magazine. Also this year will be the first year that members of the congregation will receive a Christmas card.
- **Presbytery Elder's Report.** The Presbytery continues to meet via Zoom. Our Minister was nominated as the next Moderator of Edinburgh Presbytery. The Presbytery begins more focussed work on its reform and strategy plan. The Fresh Start Appeal for Cookers for Christmas was announced. Mission and Ministry congregational finance targets were announced; in the case of Morningside there has been a recognition that, along with all other congregations, the pandemic has had a serious effect on our finance. Our annual allocation has been reduced by 8% from £123,085 to £104,195.

Edinburgh:Morningside Parish Church of Scotland: Scottish Charity No: SCO34396

- The congregation was reminded that, during the current restrictions at Sunday services, people should remember to keep an appropriate distance from each other whilst inside the church building.

WORSHIP MATTERS

Sunday services

At time of writing restrictions about numbers and social distancing are still in place. There are 40 places available in Church each Sunday. You **MUST** book your space through the Church Office. Please do not turn up on Sunday and assume you will be able to attend the service. Booking continues to be fairly brisk!

Services are now live-streamed each Sunday at 10.30am, (follow the link on the Church website), and we continue to experiment with this new format. We also continue to record the half-hour 10.30am service each Sunday, and the order of service and sermon can also be read. The shorter service at 10.30am will continue into the New Year.

The 9.30am service remains suspended at the moment, as do the normal Sunday rotas, the choir, Sunday after-service teas and coffees.

There are a number of safety and hygiene issues, all of which are extensively noted in the weekly intimations, and on the Church website.



Communion in December

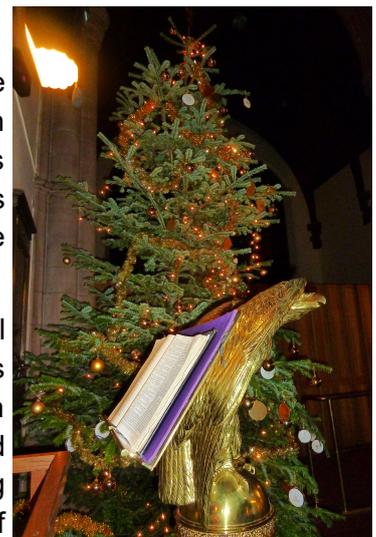
As it looks like there is going to be no significant change in the restrictions around numbers and style of church services in the near future, there will be no communion service in Church on 6th December, though there will be an ordinary service that day.

The Minister will be recording a communion service online and this will be put on the Church website during the first week in December.

Christmas Services

Looking ahead to services around Christmas, at the moment, the services on Sunday will go ahead in their current format at 10.30am with appropriate themes. We will not be able to have an all-age Christmas service this year, nor the traditional Lessons and Carols service. It is also looking unlikely that the traditional Christmas Eve services will be possible.

The Minister is planning to record two Christmas Eve services, one all age, and one to cover the Watchnight Service, and put these online as we approach Christmas. At the moment, we hope to have a service on Christmas Day at 10am with the current restrictions on numbers and recording contact details. The situation may change so we are keeping an eye on what may be possible, but it may be helpful to have notice of what is likely to be happening. Many thanks to everyone who is making what we are able to do possible. It is not how we would want things to be, but we should be grateful we are able to do something, when other faith communities are less fortunate.





FINANCIAL GIVING TO THE CHURCH DURING COVID-19

Please keep up to date with your financial giving via standing order or direct debit, or save your envelopes and other financial gifts and bring them to church when we re-open. **Increase regular donations: please** consider instructing your bank to increase your existing standing order if you are able. Cheques can now be posted to the Church Office for processing.

If you would like to make a one-off donation, please use the new 'Donate' button on the Church website.

There will be a significant impact on Church finances over these weeks. Your continuing, or increased, generosity will be particularly important. It enables so much to happen in and around our Church.

Thank you to everyone who continues to be generous with their financial giving at this time.

CHURCH FLOWERS

The decision was taken at the start of lockdown to suspend the provision of fresh flowers in the church pending the resumption of normal services. As those of you watching the services on-line will have noticed, silk flowers were purchased from the Flower Fund and are currently being changed on a seasonal basis. A limited number of hands-free flower deliveries are now taking place when deemed appropriate by the Minister. These are being financed by monies received for the provision of flowers in the church over this period.



Donations in December and January are as follows:

6 December	Donation from Gourab Choudhury
10 January 2021	Donation from Doreen Reekie
17 January	Donation from Lady Lucinda Mackay
24 January	Donation from Roger and Jane Prince
31 January	Donation from Euan Murray

The new flower list for 2021 is now available. Until such time as restrictions permit, monies donated will be used to provide flower deliveries. As the flower list cannot be displayed as usual in the vestibule, if you would like to supply flowers one Sunday, please contact Irene Wilson (Tel: 449 2866 e-mail: irene_a_wilson@btinternet.com). Cheques for £45 should be made payable to 'Morningside Parish Church Flower Fund'. If you are a UK taxpayer and can give by Gift Aid, please fill in a Gift Aid envelope or advise me if you have registered with the Gift Aid Convener. Monies can be sent to me at 66 Thomson Crescent, Edinburgh, EH14 5JS, put in the Flower Committee pigeon hole or sent to the church office (marked for the Flower Fund). If you prefer to pay by bank transfer, please contact me direct for details.

Irene Wilson
Secretary & Treasurer - Flower Committee

HELPFUL CONTACT DETAILS - UPDATE

In addition to last month's Useful Numbers article, some may find the additional numbers below helpful.

Some supermarkets are clearly aware that not everyone has internet access to do their shopping on line. In response to this, some are offering to take telephone orders which they can then deliver to your home.

The ones that I am aware of thus far are:

Waitrose: Tel: 0800 188 884, option 4. Orders must be £40 or over to qualify for free delivery. You need to be on their priority list but when you phone the first time, the person you speak to can put you through to their head office to get you onto that list.

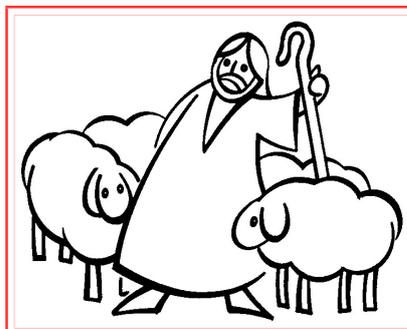
Morrison's: Tel: 0345 611 6111 and choose option 5.

Sainsbury's : Tel: 0800 328 1700 and choose option 2 for on line shopping. *(I know that's confusing and I have fed that back to them, but that's the way they have it set up)* I found them quite difficult to get through to but I may have just been unlucky.

Jacqui Lindsay, Pastoral Assistant

PASTORAL CARE AT MORNINGSIDE PARISH CHURCH DURING COVID-19

The Minister, Pastoral Assistant and Probationer Minister, with district elders and others, continue to phone, email and write to congregation members, particularly those who are vulnerable or on their own. Please let us know if there are any people who you think might appreciate a phone call or email at this time. And if you would like a call – do not hesitate to contact us! At time of writing, home visits, along with hospital and nursing home visits are still not possible.



Funerals can be held in Church, but at time of writing the numbers attending can be no more than 20. Live-streaming a Church funeral service (with the family's permission) is usually possible. At the Crematoria the number of mourners is also restricted to no more than 20, but may be 15 in the smaller chapels.



ROLL CHANGES

Please remember in your prayer the family and friends of the following members:

Vivien Shearer, who died on 22nd October

Craig Dawson, who died on 28th October

Mary Tweeddale, who died on 28th October

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

This is my favourite time of year. Some people love the sun, but I am happiest in the cold. From 12.01am on November 1st I am in the mood for Advent and Christmas.

This is the season when we tend to put more effort into enjoying ourselves, largely because the weather is not going to cheer us up. Especially when you are expecting beautiful autumnal days with crisp leaves... But what you actually get is drizzle, sludge and splashes from passing cars.

Normally, I enjoy and look forward to all the extra activities that we have around church and the traditions that each family, household and friend group has for the festive season. I love Christmas Stalls, Nativity plays, the food, the lights, and even the T.V.

This year, however, is different. Some of the traditions will remain, but many will change, we have fewer church events, we will likely see less of our loved ones. We may even watch more T.V. if that is possible. Even so, this does not change my feelings for Advent and Christmas.

Advent is a time for reflection, a time to consider and prepare. It gives us space in the liturgical year to contemplate what has come before and prepare ourselves for what is to come in the year ahead, as well as the coming of Christmas. This is why I love this time of year.

So often in our busy lives, time for reflection and preparation is a luxury few of us have, or perhaps, realise that we have. Advent, however, gives us space, even if it is only on a Sunday morning (but with any luck it lasts throughout the week), to consider our lives, our faith, what we have done, and what we hope to do.

This year then, Advent and Christmas are even more important to me. After a year that will go down in history as one of our most difficult, this time to think and prepare will give us space to consider, not only the terrible things that have happened to our world, but also the good; the shining lights of hope that are our friends, neighbours, health care workers, supermarket staff, and all those who worked tirelessly to ensure that we remain safe.

During Advent as we wait and prepare, and at Christmas as we rejoice in remembering the coming of Jesus into our lives, this year, hopefully, we will have the time and space to consider what that really means for each of us.

Conor

CHURCH WEEKLY EMAIL

For those of you already receiving the Church magazine electronically, you may also be interested in receiving a weekly email from the Church that highlights some of the current and upcoming events in the Church's week. If you would like to receive this weekly update, or to receive the magazine by email, please email the Church Office



office@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk



SLA Christmas Card Volunteer Post



Save money and support a good cause!

CARING FOR CHILDREN IN INDIA

We will deliver your cards, by bike or on foot, to **EH9, EH10 and EH13** post codes for 40 pence a card. **Main door addresses only**

please

This will save you 36 pence on a first class stamp, and 25 pence on a second class stamp.

All the money raised will go to support Scottish Love in Action. Please look at their website to find out more about the work of this very special charity. www.sla-india.org

Please deliver your Christmas Cards to one of the addresses below

by **5pm on Friday 4th December, together with the correct postage (40p per card)**

Many thanks

Margaret and Venetia

Margaret Clark

37/1 Mid Steil

Edinburgh

EH10 5XB

07763 779344

Venetia Thomson

13 Comiston Drive

Edinburgh

EH10 5QR

07505 284657

THANK YOU!

Poppy Scotland

Even with our smaller than usual congregation on Remembrance Sunday, though all the seats were taken, £88.50 was raised for Poppy Scotland, the trading name for the Earl Haig Fund. Thank you for your support.

FRESH START – CORRECTION

In the November magazine, the wrong address was given for Fresh Start. It should be 22-24 Ferry Road Drive, EH4 4BR.

FEBRUARY MAGAZINE

There is no magazine at the beginning of January. Material for the February issue of the magazine should be with the editor, Alison Riddell, by **Friday 15th January 2021** and it will be available by Sunday 31st January. While there are restrictions on church opening, please email contributions to editor@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk. As the magazine is not being printed for general distribution during the pandemic, if you would like to receive it by email, or know of any member of the congregation who would like this, please contact the church office. It will be put on the church website, where you can also find previous issues.

In Due time by Frances Ballantyne

God's due time,
Not our immediate now,
God's perfect timing,
Not ours of impatience.
God's timetable,
Not our schedule.
God's will,
Not our imperfect incompleteness.
God's day of salvation,
Not our day of self-effort.
God's finale celebrations,
Not our man-made festivities.
God's delivery date,
Not our probable date.
God's due time,
Not ours to disagree about.
God's time is now due!



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derek.browning@churchofscotland.org.uk

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Join us for worship in Church in person at 10.30am each Sunday, having first booked a seat through the Church Office, or click on the link on our website to join us online either live or at a later date. www.morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS TO ALL OUR READERS

Edinburgh:Morningside Parish Church of Scotland: Scottish Charity No: SCO34396