



Magazine

No. 187 December 2023

Dear Friends

It has been a number of years since Christmas Eve has fallen on a Sunday, 2017 by my reckoning when I was off being Moderator, and 2014 the time before that. It will be a busy day with services at 10.30am, 6.30pm and then the Watchnight at 11.30pm (with carols from just after 11pm). I thought maybe not to have the 9.30am that Sunday! And of course, there will be the 10am Christmas Day service, which has certainly grown considerably in attendance in recent years.

But what to do on the day of Christmas Eve? So much of the focus is on the birth in the stable, the night time hours, the shepherds in the cold dark fields, the angels in the star-pocked skies.

What was going on during Christmas Eve morning?

Was the (unmentioned in the nativity story) donkey weary of the long road it had undertaken from Nazareth in the north to Bethlehem in the south, a journey of several days?

Was footsore Joseph going from place to place looking for a room?

Were the shepherds laying up stocks for a cold evening, moving their sheep into safer places?

How far away were the Wise Men in their travelling?

What was King Herod up to in one of his several fortresses?

Was the innkeeper turning away more and more desperate people looking for a room in census-packed Bethlehem?

Were the angels having one last choir practice before their big moment?

Were the swaddling cloths to hand?

Was the manger filled with straw?

Had Mary's waters broken and was she already in labour?

Well, that's the sermon written or at least the notes beginning to take shape. Perhaps more than you had thought! There was a lot going on during Christmas Eve in the morning for us to think about



I hope you will come along to hear what happened next (though we know what happened!) I look forward to seeing you at our services over this season of light and hope and the fulfilment of God's promise of love.

And I hope that all of you, on your own, or with your family, or with your friends, will have a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Very Revd Dr Derek Browning

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

KIRK SESSION NEWS

The Kirk Session met in November:

Presbytery Plan – draft proposal: the Moderator introduced the draft proposal for the Parish Grouping in which our Church is located, along with Fairmilehead, Greenbank and St John's Colinton Mains. The approved Presbytery Plan indicates this partnership will be served by three full-time Ministers of Word and Sacrament (which we currently have with the vacancy at Greenbank), along with locally appointed staff. Under the plan all four church buildings will be retained. There will be a steady move towards looking at emerging proposals for the four churches to work together, which will include ways to recycle for good causes; coffee mornings/open days in the four churches as we get to know each other and our different approaches to ministry and parish work; a Men's Baking challenge; educational/study events, perhaps based on "What do we believe?" It was recognised that all four churches are currently fully engaged with their parishes and already busy, as well as being well-used by their communities. There was some discussion about whether or not the proposal went far enough, given the significant readjustments going on around the city, and indeed the rest of the country. It was pointed out that our church is already the result of a 5-way union, and St John's Colinton Mains is a more recent union. Session agreed broadly with the draft proposal as a way to begin moving the process forward.

Pastoral Care: Doreen Reekie, convener, reported on the work of the visiting group, particularly in relation to visiting members who were now resident in nursing homes, and also invited suggestions about other home-bound members who might like more regular visiting.

Stewardship and Finance: Robert Armour, convener, reported that the review of giving would be launched in the early part of next year, probably in February. It has been some years since we held such a review and this

would provide an opportunity for members and friends of the congregation to review their financial support of the church's work, as well as other ways to commit time and talent to our much-appreciated work.

Worship: the Moderator reported that the Worship Committee had met to review worship in the life of our congregation, and in particular the resumption of offering the Common Cup at Communion (mentioned elsewhere in this edition).

Outreach: Kimberly Milne, convener, updated the Session on discussions about reviewing the overseas charity we support. Over the last few years this charity has been the Pad Project and the monies we have raised have made a significant difference to the lives of girls and women through the provision of sanitary goods. The Outreach Committee proposed, and Session agreed, that the next overseas charity we will be supporting will be the David Nott Foundation, a charity that provides surgical training for overseas doctors, often in countries where training is limited and where help is needed most, particularly in countries where there is conflict. Training has been provided in Ukraine, Iraq, Somaliland and other parts of the world. The fund also helps to train the trainers, who help make safer surgery a reality for more people worldwide.

Presbytery Elder: Robert Armour reported on the meeting of 7th November where the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian met. The 2024 Giving to Grow allocation for Morningside to the wider work of the church will be £103,573. This funding helps supports congregations who need support in our inner cities, and also in the remoter rural areas, as well as other national and international church work. In relation to the Presbytery Mission Plan, Presbytery has approved nine unions (involving sixteen congregations), nine Reviewable Charge appointments and one Parish Grouping. More are in preparation.

Presbytery also noted that there were currently thirty four churches in vacancy across the Presbytery. The Presbytery also approved the overture sent down from the General Assembly via the Theological Forum in relation to Confessions of Faith. The Church is being asked to approve that the Westminster Confession of Faith will have a

status similar to that of the Scots Confession and the 1992 Statement of Faith. The two ancient creeds, the Apostles' Creed (which we use at Communion) and the Nicene Creed remain the core of our faith, with the Bible as the supreme guide to what we believe.



CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Despite adverse weather, last year's Tree Festival was much appreciated by our congregation and also by the large number of people who use our building, so we're having it again.

It will run from Saturday 9th until Sunday 17th December, generally from 10 – 2 pm though on Sundays trees can be viewed after the 10.30 service, that is from 11.30 - 1pm.

Most of the participants had a tree last year but this time we are joined by the three churches we are seeking to form closer links with: Fairmilehead, Greenbank and St John's Colinton Mains.

We have the same generous sponsor as last year – William Purves – and they will also decorate a tree.

Refreshments will be served on the Saturdays from 10 – 12 noon, The Social Committee has kindly agreed to provide coffee/tea and a mince pie with brandy cream for £5. Children will be offered juice and biscuits free. Table decorations at the refreshments will be made by the Rainbows.

It is not primarily a fundraising event, so entry will be by donation though there will be a raffle and a quiz for the kids. Many of you will already know about the Craft Stall run again by Rona McLaren who has been providing knitting patterns for those who might like to knit a tree decoration or a Santa bag. All crafted items are welcome and cash raised will go again to the church's charities: the Pad Project and the Edinburgh Clothing Store. The stall will mainly be on the two Saturdays though – depending on stock and staffing – hopefully also on the two Sundays and at Wednesday coffee.

We hope this will bring festive cheer to our own congregation and also to our neighbours.

FRIENDS OF MORNINGSIDE PARISH CHURCH

Friends of Morningside are once again decorating a tree as part of the Christmas Tree Festival. We aim to publicise the work we do in providing resources to enhance the beauty of the church building and also promoting the music by sponsoring choir scholarships.

Our tree features photographs of some of these projects while the choristers are depicted in cross-stitch. Do look out for them – you might be surprised by the number and variety of projects we have achieved. If you are interested in becoming a Friend of Morningside, you would be very welcome. Please speak to any of the stewards during the festival for further information.



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

WORSHIP NOTES

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The next communion service will be on Sunday 3rd December, which is also the first Sunday of Advent. The Common Cup, discontinued during Lockdown, will be reinstated but served in a slightly different format. When the elders take the elements out to serve the congregation, the Minister will take the Common Cup from the Communion Table and carry it to the back of the Church and place it beside a plate of bread which will already be on one of the console tables. If you wish to receive the Common Cup, please leave your seat from wherever you are sitting in Church and make your way to this small table, where the Minister will serve you the bread and wine as you stand around the table. It is a practice we used at the evening services some years ago. Otherwise, please remain in your seats and be served with bread and individual glasses by the elders as usual.

This is an experiment until we see how many request communion in this form. After the December communion, the Minister with the Worship Committee and Kirk Session will review the situation.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR AT MORNINGSIDE

Christmas Tree Festival – 9th – 17th December – more detail on opposite page

Sunday 10th December, 10.30am: All age Christmas service (*no 9.30am service*) with Christmas treats and mulled wine served in the St Matthew Hall after the service.

Wednesday 13th December, 7.30pm Telephone Choir Carol Concert

For Church and community and the Wednesday Club, a lovely evening of the choir singing and congregational carols. There will be a retiring offering for the work of the Wednesday Club.

Sunday 17th December,

9.30am Early Service in Cluny Hall

10.30am Lessons and Carols Service in the Church

3pm Blue Christmas in the Church. A half hour service for those who find this time of year difficult or sad. Refreshments served in the St Matthew Hall afterwards.

Christmas Eve, Sunday 24th December (*No 9.30am service*)

10.30am Christmas Eve morning service

6.30pm Christmas Eve family service

11.00pm Carol Singing

11.30pm Watchnight service

Christmas Day, Monday 25th December

10am A half hour service to celebrate Christmas Day

Sunday 31st December, Hogmanay (*No 9.30am service*)

10.30am Morning Worship

Sunday 7th January 2024

9.30am Early Morning service

10.30am Morning Worship



FLOWER COMMITTEE

The flowers in December have been donated and will be arranged as follows:-

	Donated by	Arranged by
Dec 3	Catriona & Bill Reid	Anne Armour & Issie Paterson
10	Christmas	Flower committee
17	Christmas	Flower committee
24	Christmas	Flower committee
Dec 31	Christmas	Flower committee



The new flower list for 2024 is now available on the vestibule noticeboard. If you would like to supply flowers one Sunday, please put your name and phone number against your chosen date. The cost remains at £45. Cheques should be made payable to 'Morningside Parish Church Flower Fund' or payment can be made by bank transfer if preferred. If you are a UK taxpayer and can give by Gift Aid, please fill in one of the Gift Aid envelopes or advise me if you have registered with the Gift Aid Convener. Monies can be given to a member of the Committee, put in the Flower Committee pigeon hole or sent to the church office clearly marked for the Flower Fund. Please contact me direct on 0131 449 2866; e-mail: irene_a_wilson@btinternet.com if you require details to make a bank transfer.

Remember, if you are unable to come to church on your chosen date for any reason, you can always see your flowers online.

Do you have a talent for, or would like to try your hand at, flower arranging? You will have noticed that the majority of our displays are now in vases as opposed to the pedestals we used previously. We are always delighted to welcome new members to join our team - men are also welcome if they have an artistic flair. If you would like to join us, or want to come along and see what it entails, please come and speak to myself or any other members of the Flower Committee on a Sunday morning. Training and guidance can be given if required.

Irene Wilson, Convener - Flower Committee

BECAUSE OF US

Today I learned the English word *gauze* (finely woven medical cloth) may come from the Arabic word غَزَّة (*ghazza*), though some dispute the etymology. Gaza was an ancient centre for weaving and a fine type of silk known as *gazzatum* was imported from Gaza as early as the C13th. Amongst other uses, gauze is widely used for medical dressings.

I wondered, then,
How many of our wounds
Have been dressed
Because of them...

And how many of theirs
Have been left open
Because of us.

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



ROLL CHANGES

Please remember in your prayers:

Sheila Cottingham who died on 29 October 2023.



THE LOCAL ECUMENICAL SERVICE for the
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
on **FRIDAY 1st MARCH 2024**

Will be held in Greenbank Parish Church at 10.30 am

This service has been written by Christian women of Palestine, on the theme:

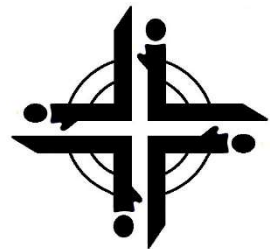
“I Beg You...Bear With One Another in Love.”

(from St Paul's letter to Ephesians 4: 1-7).

There will a Bible Study on Thursday 25th Jan 2024

at St Michael's Church, Slateford, at 10.30 am.

Further details will be announced in January.





Morningside Hope



This is the umbrella name for the projects made possible by the generous grant received from TOR Christian Foundation and additional funding from the church itself.

If you're like me, it's helpful to have dates in the diary well in advance so below are some of the activities that will be coming up.

For more details, just contact our Pastoral Assistant, Jacqui Lindsay, on: 07834 364 628 or e-mail: pastoralassistant@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

2024 DATES:

HEART FOR ART: workshops for those with dementia and their partners/carers
Held every Tuesday in the St Matthew's Hall 11am - 1pm



MUSIC AND MEMORIES IN MORNINGSIDE workshops for those with dementia and their partners/carers

Held in the Cluny Hall, 2- 4pm.

January:	Monday 8 th	Friday 26 th	July:	Monday 8 th	Friday 26 th
February:	Monday 5 th	Friday 23 rd	August:	Monday 12 th	Friday 23 rd
March:	Monday 4 th	Friday 22 nd	September:	Monday 2 nd	Friday 13 th
April:	Monday 8 th	Friday 19 th		Monday 23 rd	Monday 30 th
	Monday 29 th		October:	Friday 11 th	Monday 14 th ***
May:	Monday 13 th	Friday 31 st		Monday 21 st	
June:	Monday 10 th	Friday 28 th	November:	Friday 1 st	Monday 11 th
				Friday 29 th	
			December:	Monday 9 th	
				Friday 20 th	(Christmas Party)

*** Visit from Nigel's All Stars, Traditional Scottish Music Group Mon 14 Oct., date TBC

GENTLE EXERCISE CLASSES Dementia friendly but open to all 60+.

The class will last 40-45 minutes, followed by tea, coffee and the chance to chat.

Held on Mondays in the Cluny Hall 2-4pm

15 th & 29 th January	12 th & 26 th February	11 th & 25 th March
15 th & 29 th April	6 th & 20 th May	3 rd & 17 th June
No classes in July	5 th & 19 th August	9 th & 23 rd September.
7 th & 21 st October	4 th & 18 th November	2 nd & 16 th December (Christmas Party)

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

GAMES AFTERNOON: open to everyone, these afternoons are a chance to meet up with friends old and new, play our favourite board games, jigsaws etc. and have a coffee and a catch up.

Held once a month on a Wednesday afternoon, 2-4pm

17 th January	14 th February	13 th March	17 th April
15 th May	19 th June	<i>No games July & August</i>	
18 th September	16 th October	13 th November	11 th December (Christmas Party)

ANIMAL AFTERNOONS:

March/ April	Therapy ponies date tbc
Wednesday May 8 th	Alpacas 2pm
Wednesday Oct 23 rd	Alpacas 2pm

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY CONCERTS

We offer 4 or 5 dementia friendly concerts each year. Open to all, this will be a varied programme.

February/ March	Peter Foggitt, Piano Recital date tbc
25 th May	Traditional Scots
September	Santiago Project date tbc
30 th November	Forget me Notes



PASTORAL SKILLS COURSE, an Introduction: running over two evenings,

Tuesdays 19th and 26th March

Braid Hall

Caring for one another is the responsibility of each and every one of us and so we are offering a brief introduction to Pastoral Skills running from 6 –9.30pm each evening, hopefully starting with a light supper.

There is a maximum of 16 places on the course **and it is open to anyone** interested in finding out a bit more about pastoral care, without the necessity of making any commitment, beyond the course itself.

The course will look at topics such as:

- Communication & listening skills.
- Self-awareness & self-care
- Boundaries and why they matter.
- Dementia

The training will be hands on/experiential in nature and the aim, to make it an enjoyable experience for those attending. There is no charge for the training and CPD certificates will be provided.

PASTORAL SKILLS COURSE, PART 2: running over two evenings, Tuesday 22nd & 29th October.

Open to those who have completed the introductory course above and want to further develop their skills and knowledge. Specialist subject for the level two will be bereavement.

Interested in attending? Please come along to any of the above, you will be made most welcome.

Interested in volunteering? If you would like to help with any of these activities please get in touch, we're going to need a lot of willing hands to enable this exciting project to happen.

Or simply **interested in finding out a little bit more**, just contact our Pastoral Assistant Jacqui Lindsay on 07834 364 628 or e mail: pastoralassistant@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

ALPACA VISIT



On Tuesday 31st October we were graced with a visit from Calvin and Praline. These two lovely creatures stayed with us for a full hour, allowing themselves to be petted, fed, cuddled and posed with for photos. It was a truly wonderful afternoon and they left a smile on everyone's faces.

60+ people came along, many faces we'd not seen before in the church, which was great. Some friends came over from the OPEN DOOR. We had babies in prams, toddlers, school kids, teenagers, mums, dads, grans and granddads, great grans and great granddads, it was truly an intergenerational extravaganza!

We are very grateful to Bob from BOBCAT alpaca farm in Bonaly for bringing the "boys" along for us to enjoy.

For those of you who missed it, don't worry, we plan to invite them back next year.





THE WEDNESDAY (EVENING) CLUB (AID FOR THE DISABLED) AND THE EDINBURGH TELEPHONE CHOIR

For many years the Edinburgh Telephone Choir was on the list of entertainers for the Wednesday (Evening) Club and at the suggestion of the late Rev. George Munro, this became the now well established Carol Concert. The disabled men thoroughly enjoy the singing in the company of relatives, friends and members of the congregation. Their evening continues with refreshments in the company of members of the choir, along with the traditional visit from Santa.

This year's concert/sing-a-long, led by the choir's Musical Director, Jennifer Gosling, is on Wednesday 13th December at 7.30pm in the church. At the grand piano will be the choir's accompanist John Chan and the choir's previous accompanist Marion McPherson, will lead the congregational singing from the organ.

The Wednesday Club was in danger of closing following the withdrawal of transport funded by the Council. As the Club receives no funding and is purely reliant on donations it was deemed that there were insufficient monies in the Club's funds to provide transport. However, two generous anonymous benefactors have come forward to provide funding for transport which will enable the Club to meet once a month, not weekly, until the end of the session in April.

We hope you will come along and join us to help make this a memorable evening for the men and yourselves. A retiring collection is taken to assist with Club's funding.

LIFE + WORK - DECEMBER 2023

Reaching Out at Christmas: Churches and charities supporting their local communities

Letter from the Holy Land: The Rev Muriel Pearson reflects on the message of the birth of the Prince of Peace

'Nothing is Impossible With God': the Moderator urges readers to listen for the spirit during Advent

Time to Pause: The Rev Roddy Hamilton urges us to find space to consider every aspect of the Advent story anew

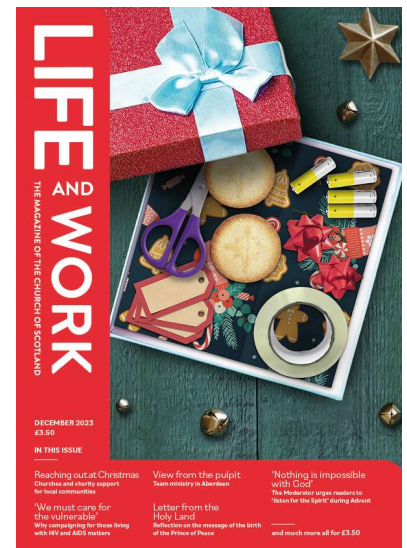
'We Must Care for the Vulnerable': Marking World AIDS Day on December 1, a Bolivian campaigner living with HIV talks about her work

A Labyrinth Ministry: In his final column as Sanctuary First minister, the Very Rev Albert Bogle reflects on the power of journey

'Christian faith is rooted in the physical': The Rev Dr Richard Frazer links physical wellbeing to spiritual health

Sharing 'the fragrance of His love': A young Church member who moved to Scotland from Nigeria last year shares his story

The Art of Peacebuilding: Concluding her series of Bible studies, Ruth Harvey reflects on the place of 'voicewalkers'





Support the
Community

Join Our Christmas Raffle!



(Photo by Brian Aris)

Fantastic prizes:

2 Tickets for Barbara Dickson's Farewell Tour

- Hand woven Latvian blanket
- 50" Smart TV
- £250 cash
- and a variety of smaller prizes

Buy a ticket and get a chance to win exciting prizes while supporting The Open Door

Tickets £2 each

Draw 2pm, Wednesday 20 December, The Open Door

Available from Peggy's Cafe, The Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, EH10 5HY

Promoter: Simon Warr, 420 Morningside Road, EH10 5HY
T: 0131-447-9757 e: hello@theopendoor.org.uk
Registered charity: SC007315



Our heartfelt thanks to our
Patron, Barbara Dickson and
our members and all the local
businesses for all the amazing
donations!!!



Join us on Wednesday 6
December for our late
night opening of Peggy's
Cafe! Open until 9.30pm

Artisan crafts, amazing cake, great coffee.
See you there!

We're staying open late for you night owls.

FEBRUARY MAGAZINE

Material for the February issue of the magazine should be with the editor, Alison Riddell, by **Friday 19 January 2024** and it will be available by Sunday 4 February. Contributions should be emailed to editor@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk . Please note there is no magazine in January.

Mice in the Hay

*Out of the lamplight
Whispering, worshipping
The mice in the hay*

*Timid eyes pearl-bright
Whispering, worshipping
Whisking quick away.*

*They were there that night
Whispering, worshipping*

*Smaller than snowflakes
are*

*Quietly made their way
Whispering,
worshipping
Close to the manger*

Lesley Norris

*Yes, they were afraid
Whispering, worshipping
As the journey was made*

*From a dark corner
Whispering, worshipping
Scuttling together*

*But He smiled to see them
Whispering, worshipping*

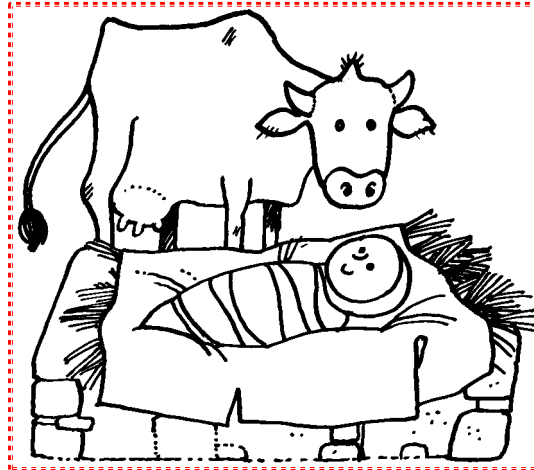
There in the lamplight

*Stretched out His hand
to them*

*They saw the baby
King*

*Hurried back out of
sight*

*Whispering,
worshipping*



Minister: Very Revd Dr Derek Browning 447 1617

derek.browning@churchofscotland.org.uk

Pastoral Assistant: Jacqui Lindsay 07834 364 628

pastoralassistant@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

Magazine Editor: Alison Riddell 445 2330

editor@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

Church Administrator: Leigh Malaihollo 447 6745

office@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

Christmas Blessings to all our readers!

www.morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

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