

KNEC NEWS



Almondell and Calderwood Country Park

*No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single truth compare -
That God was man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.
(Christmas, John Betjamen)*

DECEMBER 2022



Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church of Scotland

Scottish Charity No: SC006973



FROM THE EDITOR



I am listening to a podcast tracing the life of Putin, from boyhood to ‘bloodstained aggressor’, as Boris Johnson called him. Previous prime ministers and US Presidents spoke very differently: Tony Blair said he was the best hope of continuing peace in Europe; George Bush said he trusted him and could ‘see his soul’. Were they fooled or has Putin changed in twenty years?.

The most startling thing I learned from the podcasts is that Putin sees himself as a devout Christian, champion of the one true church in Russia. Trying to see him as such, ranged alongside our late Queen whose stalwart faith shone out of her, is difficult. How on earth does he square the violence and bloodshed he is wreaking on innocent civilians with the gospel of peace and love? Is he simply pretending to be a Christian for propaganda purposes; is he deluded into thinking God approves of what he is doing? Does he see himself on a mission that allows/endorse violent aggression, like some Old Testament avenger?

We all have our contradictions, but they are not usually as startling as this. We are all complex people. Only God can truly see into our hearts and, in the end, only He can judge us. But we do know He loves us, despite our contradictions, delusions, sins, and crimes. He even loves Putin! This love is surely one of the great mysteries of the universe.

God bless and have a lovely Christmas.

Fran: email:





THE GUILD

We meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 2pm-3pm in East Calder Church Hall.

About twenty-five members attend each meeting and it is a great joy to witness the friendship and fellowship shared. No one can put a value on spending time with others to give company: it is precious.

Recently, we have had lots of interesting meetings, learning about:

- Dignity Boxes
- Working in the CID of the police
- The Rudolph Foundation
- Bible Study
- Christmas Flower Arranging

I find it a great pleasure and privilege to lead the Guild, to learn from and socialise with all the ladies there (men are welcome too, we just don't have any at the moment!)

I have been encouraged and well supported as I learn this role I thank each one of you for welcoming me with open arms. Please come and join us if you can. ***All are very welcome to join us.***

Elizabeth

email:





FROM OUR MINISTER

By the time you read this you will likely know that the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian have agreed their future plan, which aims to address the national shortage of ministers and to encourage the church to focus more on missional matters. We will be in a parish grouping with Ratho, West Kirk of Calder and Polbeth Harwood, with two full time ministers and one ordained local minister between us. Kirknewton church building must be disposed of by the end of 2024 with any proceeds to be used for mission or fabric needs.

It will be difficult to let go of Kirknewton building, and many will see this as a sign that the church is closing. ***Nothing would be further from the truth!*** God is not finished with Kirknewton nor with any part of our mission field. There is so much to look forward to, as the Spirit guides us together and gives us opportunities to 'do church differently'.

However, this loss will upset many of us and we must take time to lament what we are losing. And, of course, to give thanks and celebrate what our God has done in the past in Kirknewton, in both the church building and the church community.

The story of Christmas is full of uncertainty and faith is called for. Zechariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, and the Magi were each called to receive the news in faith. They were all told things before they saw them for themselves. They needed to believe just enough to go in search for themselves or (in Zechariah's case) to see it happen as it was foretold.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.

How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?'

The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.'

'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.' Then the angel left her.

(Luke 1:26-38)

Like Mary, we can be fearful and uncertain about how a good thing might come about, but the Holy One is able to do impossible things for us, with us, and sometimes *despite* us. Don't rule anything out! Christmas is about the Word of God coming to dwell with us: 'Immanuel'. Nothing else matters because we have the precious gift of love to receive, to open, and to share.

May the grace of Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit nourish you and sustain you and yours this Christmas.

Alistair email: acowper@churchofscotland.org.uk tel:



WHAT'S ON?


In-Person' Services

11 December	Kirknewton 10.30am Calderwood Primary School 3pm – <i>carol service</i>
18 December	East Calder 10.30am & 3pm
Christmas Eve	East Calder 6pm – <i>family service</i>
24 December	Kirknewton 11.30pm- <i>watchnight service</i>
25 December	East Calder 10.30am


Podcasts & YouTube

- catch up on the services via Youtube: (@kneccchurch
- listen again to sermons as podcasts :<https://anchor.fm/knec-sermons>, or wherever you listen to podcasts (just search for 'KNEC Sermons' on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, etc.)

Men's Fellowship (see page 13)

Saturday mornings, fortnightly: breakfast 8.30; meeting 9.00
All men warmly invited. Contact *John Young* - 

Forget Me Not Café

Last Thursday of the month 10am-12noon in the East Calder Church Hall: for people living with dementia and their carers.
Contact WestLothianServices@Alzscot.org or 

Warm Hubs (see page 8)

Every Monday and Thursday 11am to 3pm East Calder Church Hall
Every Wednesday 12.00 -2.00 pm. Kirknewton Village Hall

Housegroups (see page 9)

Wednesdays 7.30pm at Robert Alexander's home
Thursdays 2.30 – 3.30 pm on Zoom with Dora

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AND GIVE

Leading Worship

Would you like to help? Reading, leading us in prayer, singing, playing music, welcoming, or helping with the audio visual? If so, please speak to Alistair - even if you've never done it before!

Reuse and Thrive

Would you like to join the team of volunteers in your local community charity shop? There are opportunities to work in the shop, or behind the scenes, or with social media and the like. Contact: [REDACTED]

Christmas Hampers

Once again we will be filling large festive bags with some Christmas treats for needy families (identified by the three school heads). ***Donations*** (money only) are needed ***for these, and for the Warm Hub***. You can either give cash to the treasurer (Robert Alexander) or make a bank transfer: church bank account number: [REDACTED] sort code [REDACTED]; reference 'Warm Hub' or 'Christmas Hampers'.

IN FOCUS

Our Sunday evenings started again on 30th October - the first time since March 2020 – providing an informal time of worship and fellowship in the downstairs hall at East Calder. We had an initial four meetings, to gauge if the fellowship was still supportive of a Sunday evening service. Over these four Sundays, attendance was good, and future meetings will be planned to start again in January. During the four Sundays of Advent, In Focus is being replaced by a Sunday afternoon *Advent Service*, at 3 pm.

For more information on *In Focus*, please contact

Robert Alexander tel: [REDACTED]



THE WARM HUB

It has been a very busy time at the Project. We are encouraged to see it grow and develop. There is always a lovely buzz in the hall, lots of chat, games, and laughter.

- Thanks to our twenty-two lovely volunteers for their hard work and commitment. They come from different backgrounds in our community, and it has been wonderful to watch them 'gel' as a supportive team
- Our Hub has run twelve times since the beginning of October
- West Lothian News and West Lothian Courier have both visited and produced articles on the Project - valuable publicity!
- We held an information stall and sold gift cards at East Calder School Fayre, Calderwood School Fayre, and the Community 'Light Switch On' event at the Sports Centre, thus raising awareness of what we do, which will help to increase our funding
- the Project Gift Cards are available in the church to buy for £5 (or any other amount you wish). You can gift them to people for Christmas (instead of spending money on chocolates, etc.) They will know the money goes to provide a warm space and food for someone who needs it, and that they are helping to support the running of the Hub

Prayer Support

I know many of you are praying for the Project. Thank you for that. Some prayer points:

- that we reach those most in need, both financially and socially
- that funding comes through at the right time
- good health for our volunteers
- vision and guiding to advance the Project
- growing awareness in the community of the importance of really listening to each other
- continued good teamwork

- good support for the coordinator from the management team
- that those who need the Project most, but have not yet had the courage to contact us, will do so
- for God's name to be glorified through all we do, as we put our faith into action

You are all very welcome to come to The Warm Hub any time, and/or to book a 1-1 Listening Session by phoning the Project's number below. The more people who know and understand the concept of the Project, the more we can spread the word and invite others along.

Elizabeth Pennykid, KNEC Community Listening Project Coordinator
 Project tel. no: [REDACTED]

Church of Scotland Scottish Charity No. SC006973

HOUSE GROUPS

Our programme (providing a mid-week opportunity for bible study, sharing, fellowship and prayer) has re-started after a prolonged 'COVID break'.

The 'In-person' group meets at the home of Robert Alexander on Wednesday evening at 7:30pm; the online group meets on Zoom on a Thursday afternoon at 2:30pm under the leadership of Dora Bennett.

Until the Christmas break, the groups are studying a Psalm at each meeting. The programme for after the New Year is currently being considered.

If you would like more information or if you would like to become involved, please contact:

Robert at [REDACTED]
 or **Dora** at: *email* [REDACTED] *tel.* [REDACTED]

REPORT FROM OUR (NEW) SESSION CLERK

The role of Session Clerk is one that I am learning as time goes on I have still much to learn. Thank you all for your patience and support. Such a lot going on within the Church just now! It is so encouraging to have an active fellowship. It makes me smile when I know groups are meeting, sharing company, and supporting each other. Our week looks like this (I appreciate not every group runs every week):

Monday: Warm hub, Prayer Meeting

Tuesday: The Guild, Board and Session Meeting

Wednesday: House Group

Thursday: Warm Hub, House Group on Zoom

Friday: Boys Brigade

Saturday: Men's Fellowship

Sunday: Church, EnerJ, In Focus

We should be proud of all that and encouraged by the range of activities we are blessed to run.

One thing that you all hear me beat the drum about is: the Church is the people! However, we are in a hard time, learning that Kirknewton Church building will close by the end of 2024. I know there is a lot of sadness and my heart hurts seeing the pain in our Kirknewton members. We are one Church family, and my prayer is for healing and unity, for working together, for compassion and respect for each other's emotions, as we find out how our Church will work in the months and years to come. I don't yet have answers to this, but I am happy for anyone to speak with me about it, if that helps.

There is a lot to be covered at Session Meetings just now, including:

- Pastoral Care/Elders Districts
- New policies from Church of Scotland
- Safeguarding
- How Church will look in future
- Mission Districts

Our Elders and Board Members try their best to represent the church family. Please hold us all in prayer, seeking God's guiding and blessing upon them for vision and wisdom as they seek to do God's will. Thank you for your continued support and please speak to us about what you like or don't like. The Church is all its people, and we want to take you all with us in all our ventures. Let's all pray for God's guiding, equipping and spirit to be strong in us and evident to all we meet.

Elizabeth Pennykid, Session Clerk

#advent

CAROL OF THE BELLS FOR THE HEROES

Saturday, **Dec 17th** 12.30 – 5.00

Parish Church of St Cuthbert, Edinburgh

Art, Craft, Music, Singing, Refreshments, Entertainment.

A fund-raising event for Ukraine, suitable for all ages.

Organised by the Ukrainian community in Scotland

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

It's not too late to take part

Support families struggling with the cost-of-living crisis this winter

Contact: westlothian.foodbank.org.uk

It has been a busy time for us since our last update.



- **Enrolment Evening**, Friday 7th October, was very well attended by boys and their families; our collection raised £200 for McMillan Cancer Support
- We continue to have excellent attendances across the 3 sections with most weeks having **between 30 and 40 boys** in attendance
- Three of our young men in the company section are working towards their **Queen's Badges**: Aedan and Arran are nearly at the end of the process; Josh is just beginning
- All three young men are attending a BB training course over the 10th and 11th December at Carronvale House.
- Our Christmas Service is on **Friday 16th December** at 7pm in East Calder Church and everyone is welcome - it would be great to have you join us.

Unfortunately, this session, **Gillian Gilchrist** took the decision to retire from the BB. She will be greatly missed, but we wish her all the best in the future. Gillian has been around BB all her life and has been a leader for many years. The boys in the company section said farewell to Gillian with a chocolate-themed evening and presented her with a BB vase. She was also presented with flowers from the church as a '*thank-you*' for her service.

We now have **three new leaders** joining our team. Thanks to Sandra Martin, Chris Hoskins, and Ben Castaneda for coming to join us in the BB adventure!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the BB Team,
Calum, Craig, Colin, Iain, Heather, Elizabeth, Robert, Sandra, Chris, and Ben

Calum Pennykid. (for the BB Leaders Team)

You can contact Calum at 1steastcalderboysbrigade@gmail.com

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Around ten or eleven men attend regularly.

We meet on a fortnightly basis in the Church Hall on Saturday morning at 8.30.

We always start with breakfast, cooked by our resident chef! We are so grateful for Craig's cooking skills.

We have enjoyed a variety of speakers lately, including:

- Bill Thomson from Holy Trinity Church in Wester Hailes
- Robert Alexander keeping up to date on the work of the Vine Trust
- Donna Flynn, a community pastor from the Broxburn Baptist Church

We have also started having a 'Time of Sharing' in some meetings, instead of a guest speaker. This gives the men gathered a chance to share views, beliefs, and 'faith moments' in their lives. We are finding it a time of uplift and encouragement.

An interesting comment was made by one of our recent speakers, who said that we were one of the very few churches they had visited who still have a Men's Group. That comment alone made us more aware of why we meet.

By God's grace, we can keep going! We would love to welcome some new faces. You can visit any morning, no strings attached, to see us for yourself. A warm welcome (and a hot breakfast!) awaits.

John Young

email:



tel:





PRAYER MATTERS

Father as the days have darkened and the night-time has stretched, we long for the light as water in the desert.

Not sun or moon or starlight but heaven's light, Jesus Christ, our saviour and redeemer. That first Christmas, Mary and Joseph looked at the heavenly light and encircled it in their arms. Not yet knowing how dreams, visions and prophecies would work out for them and this tiny baby.

As for us, we 'know' about this light. We have seen the prophecies come true. Read of visions and their fulfilments. Considered the dreams that protected the heavenly light. With Awe and trembling we stand at the foot of the cross, bathed in this pure light of royal love. Help us, we pray deeply, to know it anew this Advent season. The fulfilment of expectations, the joy of salvation. The saviour's touch.

In Jesus name. **Amen.**

It seems strange to be moving forward to the ending of this year and yet looking to a new year in Christ. Our lives are full of contradictions, and we so need Jesus to guide us by his Holy Spirit.

This year has seen such difficult and sorrowful things in our own lives as well as in the nations:

- The war in Ukraine
- The death of Queen Elizabeth II
- Political upheaval in our government
- The aftermath of Covid in the ongoing presence of Covid
- Strikes
- A struggling NHS

BUT ... Our God is a 'great big God and he holds us in his hands'. Nothing comes to us that he does not know about. He gives grace and strength to us despite our circumstances.

We give thanks for our Monday night prayer times: for new people coming; for such a sense of grace and the presence of the Lord leading us; for difficult prayers and situations; for answers before we have even prayed; for all these things, we give thanks.

Dora Bennett, Prayer Secretary:



ANYONE FOR TENNIS?



Very informal group – all ages – meets fortnightly on Saturday afternoon at 4 pm in East Calder Upper Hall. Everybody welcome. Bats and balls supplied

Any and all skill levels! No worries if you haven't played for years.


Come and have fun - and a wee bit exercise too

DAILY READING NOTES: 2023

Sorry to be the bearer of bad news for readers of 'Everyday with Jesus': these notes will no longer be available through the Faith Mission Bookshop. Take heart, there are alternatives:

- **Daily Bread** aims to help you hear from God as you read the Bible £5.49 every 3 months.
- **Encounter with God**, designed for thoughtful, in-depth approach to systematic Bible reading. £5.49 every 3 months.
- **Explore** helps you understand and apply extraordinary truths of God's word every single day. £4.99 every 3 months.
- **Upper Room**, readings and reflections, written by readers aiming to inspire and encourage other readers. £4.85 every 4 months.

And there are other Bible Notes, if you wish a change or to try a new one.

Marion Goodall tel: 

NEED A LIFT TO CHURCH?

Getting to church is easy if you live close by but, even if you don't, there is still a way to get there! With our Church services being held in Kirknewton one week, and East Calder the next, please know that you can get a lift to church.

If you live in Kirknewton and want to get to East Calder, or vice versa, please let me know and I can arrange for someone to give you a lift.

Keep connected with your church family. Why? Because you are missed when you are not there.

Marion Goodall tel: 