

Dear friends,

Christmas is coming once again and the shops have their Christmas wares on display. Some are already saying they have sold out of certain lines. In the Church we start our Christmas thinking on Advent Sunday and for the rest of December our eyes are on the great event.

There are times when I fear we may miss some of the poignancy of the birth of Jesus. We tend to focus on the narratives we find in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. They make a nice story for children to act out.

When John wrote his gospel he made no reference to Bethlehem in it. He, instead, reflected on something far more significant. John saw Jesus from an eternal perspective. Yes he was born in Bethlehem and as such that was where the human story of Jesus did start, but it was not where Jesus started. John realised that Jesus came from heaven, and had been with God the Father from eternity. His incarnation at Bethlehem was simply a chapter of his life where he would demonstrate the love of God to a world that needed to see it. Jesus himself made reference to this on several occasions.

It was not that people had no interest in God prior to his birth. There was a thriving Jewish faith with all its ritual. Sadly though, what people found in their religion did not satisfy them.

Their religion may have been a comfort zone for some, but it failed to satisfy all, and there were those who were prepared to admit it. Dare I say it, the same is true today. There are many people who find their worship satisfying and devoutly trust in God. There are others who do not find the church satisfying to them and thus do not join in the public worship of God that the church currently provides.

Every so often I get the impression that church members can feel a little like Elijah did in his day. We believe we have been faithful to our God. We have come to worship and supported the Church where we feel we can, and yet we see the church apparently in decline. Way back in Old Testament times Elijah had the same feeling. He had worked miracles for the Lord – yet instead of everyone rushing to join him, he is left all alone and he complains to God that there is no one left. At that point the Lord informs him that He has thousands of people who will support him, and gave him his marching orders.

He went to look for them. You can read his story in 1 Kings 19

That is what Jesus did during his ministry. He went to look for those who would follow Him. That is what the Church is called to do now. As Jesus said, He had come to seek and to save the lost.

There are people in our community who have a faith in God, but who obviously do not find the church a place to meet together for worship. Some may have left because they have fallen out with one or more individuals. Others may have left because they did not find the worship meaningful to them. Others may have found a faith 'outside' the church and they simply have for a variety of reasons not got round to attending worship.

If we are aware of this situation, then it is quite possible for us to put our heads in the sand, carry on as we are, all the while lamenting that no one comes to join us. That was Elijah's attitude before he complained to the Lord.

At Christmas we remember that God sent his Son to us in the world, because of his love for us and concern that many were not finding a faith in God through the 'normal' worship of the time.

To achieve his aims he came to this world, which meant for Jesus leaving his 'comfort zone' of heaven and coming to help us here. We are called to follow his example. If we are honest, we will probably be able to name more than one person whom we believe has faith in God, but who does not find worship satisfying. If you look round the congregation at Bainsford on a normal Sunday you would be excused thinking that the message of hope and salvation was only for older people, yet we know this is not true.

As we ponder the Christmas story once again, can I ask you to ponder how the church should be making contact with others in the parish? Andrew is planning to start a '15-50' group where people in that age range will be encouraged to say what they would like to see in the church, and how it can meet their needs. Those who venture round to the hall prior to worship can probably smell the bacon and sausage from the Breakfast club. It could be that in the coming year we will have to change things within the church to accommodate the needs of others. That, after all was what Jesus did in coming to this earth,

The call of Jesus was very simply, 'Follow me'. That is what we have to seek to do within the church

I trust at this Christmas season you will know the blessing of the Lord in your lives, and as we look forward into the New Year we will be able to trust His guidance as we seek to offer meaningful worship to Him as part of our local community as we follow Him in our daily lives.

I trust that we will know the Lord's blessing and peace over the coming Christmas season and into the New Year

Yours sincerely

Michael R. Philip

Bainsford finances

You will no doubt have heard rumours about our Church finances. It was deemed wise that I put the record straight.

Jim Slater has asked to be allowed to take a break from duties, and the Kirk Session has granted him his wish. Consequently, Andrew Sarle is temporarily looking after the accounts – and Andrew would be happy to hand over this responsibility as soon as possible to anyone who would be willing to help the Church in this matter.

Over many of the past 15 years we have experienced a deficit – our income has not matched our costs – and now virtually all our reserves have been used up. The Deacons' Court will be contacting you in the near future with a range of suggested ways you can help, but I wish to reassure you that the Church in Bainsford is not in danger of going bankrupt, but is going through a cash flow problem at present.

Please pray for our office bearers as they seek to find ways to balance the books.

Michael Philip

PARISH REGISTER

Baptism

10th October Darcy Grace Kemp

Infant daughter of Scott and Laura Kemp, 21 Campsie Terrace, Skinflats Falkirk

Funerals

06 November 2010 Arthur Mulgrew 6 River Street Bainsford

17 November 2010 Alexander Wallace Nimmo 61 Main Street Bainsford

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

With the coming of Advent there will be the following services:

Advent Sunday is the 28th November and on Sunday 5th December we will celebrate communion.

On the 12th December there will be family service led by the Boys and Girls Brigades, while on the 19th December the service will feature the Ladies Group.

We will have our usual Watchnight service on Christmas Eve at 11.30 with some carol singing before then.

Please note that there will be a service in Harley Court on the 1st December which will be Communion while on 22nd December we will have a Christmas Carol service. These two services being at 10.30 a.m.

ORGANISATIONS

THE LADIES GROUP

the group finishes this session with Christmas dinner on 13TH December and re-starts Monday 10TH January 2010 AT 7.30PM in the session house – weather permitting. our guest on this occasion will be Carrie James from the Salvation Army.

All ladies welcome to come along and join the group.

KEEP-FIT CLASS

HELD ON MONDAYS IN THE CHURCH HALL FROM 6pm – 7PM. ALL WELCOME

THE GIRLS BRIGADE

ALL SECTIONS OF THE G.B. MEET IN THE CHURCH HALL ON TUESDAYS.

Explorers - (P1-3) 6pm – 7.15pm

Juniors - (P4-7) 7.30pm – 9pm

Brigaders – (S1-6) 7.30pm – 9pm

PLEASE ENCOURAGE GIRLS TO COME ALONG AND BRING A FRIEND.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PHONE MRS.LINDA McAUSLAN ON

07813-247658

THE BOYS BRIGADE

ALL SECTIONS OF THE B.B. MEET IN THE CHURCH HALL ON FRIDAYS.

Anchor Boys - (P1/2/3/) 6pm – 7pm
Junior Section - (P4-7) 6.30pm – 8pm
Company Section - (S1-6) 7.45pm – 10pm

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT BILL MOCHRIE ON 01324-626200

COUNTRY DANCING GROUP

The Country Dancing group meets in the Church Hall on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm. We enjoy dancing, good company and a very nice supper which is provided by the members. We would welcome new members to the Group so if you enjoy music, exercise and good fun do come along and join us. You will be made very welcome.

EMMS PAGE

Well we are into the winter months now with shorter days and and the dark nights are ahead of us for some time yet. However no matter how you look at it, winter can be beautiful and I remember a time years ago when I lived in Camelon we went up lime road to see the trees. It was a very frosty day but when we reached lime road the trees looked so lovely. They were shimmering and silvery - truly beautiful and just like a christmas card sparkling with glitter. We were mesmerised and could only look in wonder at god's hand at work with nature. Mind you in the days before central heating it was gey cold getting up in the morning and sometimes the windows were frosted up inside but the most beautiful patterns were there on the glass to see while we shivered and made for the cosy coal fire. Lovely.

THIS WAS TAKEN FROM A LETTER TO SANTA FROM A 7 YR.OLD CHILD

Dear Santa

I would like lots of things in the world but mainly I would like everyone to be happy and in a warm place. I would really like all animals to be in one too. I hope that you and your little elves could gather some food for the starving. Please, please don't worry about any of my presents but I hope you could help or my Christmas won't be happy.

Can you imagine Christmas without Christmas trees? To us it would be very odd. In Uganda there are no spruce trees, so banana trees are used to decorate the roads. The day before Christmas, the trees are cut and re-planted at the roadsides. Each person plants trees from his home to the next and then everyone combines to plant trees to the main road and then to the church. The trees are then garlanded with wild flowers, the roads swept and the grass verges cut. The village drums which have been silent all year are put in the sun to dry. This has the effect of tuning them in readiness for Christmas night. These customs occurred in the past when a king was expected in the village or the town and now at Christmas they welcome the king of kings. Everyone looks forward to Christmas day. In the local language the day is called Sebukulo which means, "the greatest day of all".

I've written on this page before a lovely story about donkeys and of their significance in relation to Jesus ie carrying Mary when she was about to give birth in Jerusalem and also carrying Jesus on palm Sunday. Well today i was out and happened to be 'up the braes' at California when I turned down a quiet country road beside a farm. There in the field stood a horse with a little donkey cuddled in to his side. It looked so cute standing there with his big pal.

For the last few years one of the things which takes place at the end of November is the BBC Children in Need appeal. It has been characterised by generosity, enthusiasm, a sense of fun and the most amazing variety of fund Raising ideas as young and old try and make each year 'the best yet' in their efforts to provide a better quality of life for disadvantaged children all over the UK. It is amazing how many people offer themselves in a good cause with a variety of talents given to help others. Perhaps on an occasion like this our own role can only be a supportive one. It's a bit like our own shoebox appeal which the local churches hold before Christmas when so much is given to those who have so little to help make their Christmas just a wee bit brighter. Each year it just gets better and better and reflects what Christmas is all about.

OBERAMMERGAU 2010 – FROM JEAN McPHERSON

Oberammergau is a picturesque village set at the foot of the Bavarian Alps with Mount Laber rising in the background. The houses are typically bavarian with carved wood balconies and floral decorations. The term 'luftmalerei' is given to the colourful mural paintings on many house facades which are mainly religious themes and also many scenes from fairy tales. The village also practises the art of wood carving and has many craft shops.

The village museum with 350 years of history has the smallest crib with figures that are thumb sized and also the historical crib which decorated the parish church during the advent seasons until 1982. There are 120 statuettes, each some 40cm. In size and clad in gorgeous robes, with more than 80 animal figurines from the representation of the birth of christ. All this makes a visit a must.

The passion play theatre is a massive hanger-like building holding around 5,000 people with a vast open-air stage 40m in width that can accommodate the 2,000 players featured in the play. This year was the 41st production of the play with 102 performances during the season. The play is divided into two parts starting at 2.30pm until 5pm with a break until 8pm allowing time for an evening meal, with the final part from 8pm to 10.30pm. The prologue (speaker) opens the play with the words "welcome to all here, the tender love of the Saviour unites, mourning, to following him on his journey of suffering to his final resting place" and the spectacular opening scene of Palm Sunday's entrance into Jerusalem unfolds.

In addition to the main characters, there are numerous crowd scenes. I find it hard to put into words just how moving the play was. The stage settings with visual pictures in the play with music from an unseen orchestra, the beautiful singing of the 48 voice choir, the narrations and colourful costumes, all added to the emotion of the well known story of the last week of Jesus life with the final part, the betrayal and the crucifixion, acted out under the night sky. After the resurrection and the fleeting transfiguration, the stage was left empty and silence filled the theatre before everyone quietly left.

This was a truly unforgettable experience and i left the theatre speechless and emotionally drained.

Look at your Christmas cards and you will notice how they capture the spirit of the season so well. Some will recall that bygone world of horse-drawn carriages on snow covered country roads, while others show the many outdoor beauty of this season – holly bushes with red berries, snowflakes clinging to pine needles, frost like tinsel on the hedgerows. Bells too, are a common feature for they are such an integral part of the festive season. Sadly Bainsford church's bell is now in the church hall having been taken down for safety's sake but we can hear the bells from Falkirk old and St. Modan's which ring out during the Christmas season while we do our Christmas shopping or when at church on Sundays. At few other times of the year do bells ring out in such unison from the steeples of the great cathedrals to the smallest village church. When they peal out the old and ring in the new at New Year, we sincerely hope that peace and goodwill will remain in our hearts throughout the coming year. God bless you one and all. A very happy Christmas and a healthy and happy new year to you and yours.

While talking to Arthur's family about his funeral, it came out that one of his hobbies was writing poetry, some of which he has had published. One of the family read the following out – and I suggested it be part of his funeral service.

I have the families' permission to put this in the Newsletter. Can you make his prayer, your prayer?

M Philip

MY PRAYER

Dear Lord my saviour
Possessor of my soul!
Please hear my prayers as I speak them
Your understanding I extol

Give me the strength to meet each day
Not knowing what's in store,
Dear Lord teach me humility
Like I never knew before.

Teach me Lord! Forgiveness,
To those who'd cause me pain
Help me turn the other cheek
If they wish to strike again!

Teach me loving tenderness
I could pass on to others
To those I thought unfriendly
Let me look on them as brothers.

There is so much that I could ask
So much that you could give
But giving rather than taking
Is the way I want to live.

I can't forget the sacrifice
On the cross at Calvary!
When the Lord gave his only son
For sinners just like me.

By Arthur Mulgrew- 3/1/08

SUNDAY

THE MORNING SERVICE TAKES PLACE AT 11am(Creche Available)

FRIDAY

BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER MEETING IN LADIES ROOM AT 2.30pm

LIFELINE DAILY BIBLE READING NOTES

These are available in the Church Vestibule – payment by donation.

FLOWERS

Anyone wishing to donate flowers for the Church on Sundays please contact Mrs. Milly Morrison on 01324-624207.

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

If you have an article for the next newsletter please pass this on to Morag Mochrie. Thanks for the contributions for this edition.

SHOEBOXES

We have exceeded last years total once again despite the recession. We handed over 60 boxes to Blythswood Trust this year. Saying that over 50 boxes came from Bainsford Church and we had some boxes handed in to us from Barnardo's shop in Graham's Road. Thanks to Rhona the manager and her staff who contributed. We've had a letter of thanks from Blythswood and our boxes are on their way to Albania where they will be much appreciated and no doubt much needed. Thanks to all in the church for their kindness.

BOOK CLUB

We have an excellent BOOK CLUB where you can pick up a good book for a small donation which goes to help church funds.

TEA AND COFFEE

Teas and Coffees are served in the Church Hall after the service each Sunday along with home baking. Thanks to all who come along for a cuppa and a blether every week and who help us raise money for the church, also thanks to all the ladies of the tea committee for a most enjoyable cuppa 'n cake.

KEEP FIT CLASS

There is a keep-fit class started in the Church Hall on MONDAYS From 6pm-7pm. All welcome.