

December/January

Issue 146

The Link



The magazine for the linked congregations and communities
of the West Kirk of Calder and Polbeth Harwood.

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Letter from the minister



Dear friends

Christmas Unrestricted...

After years of different restrictions placed upon us as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, this year – at last – we are allowed to celebrate Christmas restriction-free.

This year we can choose how we want to spend Christmas, and that thought fills me with a deep thankfulness. Covid taught us that we shouldn't take *anything* for granted, *ever*. And that is why I would like to encourage you to choose to come to church during this time of advent. We have many lovely services and events planned, and what better place to say thank-you to God for sending us Jesus and giving us the opportunity to celebrate his unrestricted love for us, than in our lovely churches?

During the pandemic we might have been restricted as to how we could celebrate Christmas, but nothing, absolutely nothing, can restrict God's love for us, the love he so clearly demonstrated that very first Christmas. In Jesus, he gave us the biggest gift of all...

May God bless you all this Christmas, and may 2023 be a year filled with unrestricted love, joy and laughter.

Much love,
Nanda

Reflection based on Matthew 2:11b,12 (Rev Alison Quilter)

‘Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road’.

Have you ever embarked on a journey you have made countless times before, only to be encountered by a ‘road closure’ diversion? And instead of following the diversion signs you decide, you think, you know how to get around the ‘road closure’ without making use of the diversion route, following the guided route? That would be my husband! After a bit of a drive and seeing places never before encountered we made our destination – not far off as it turned out to where we’d started. A solitary lesson, you might think, but on the plus side we explored parts of the countryside we’d never otherwise would have visited. And subsequently, after consulting the map at great length realised that there was indeed a short cut through that we could have taken – a discovery that we would exploit many times following repeat journeys.

The magi, in a sense, were to come across a ‘road closed’ sign, a dream causing them to return to their own country by another route. Why? Because God had warned them not to return to King Herod. But they returned via another route in a sense also. They knelt before the child, presenting priceless and precious gifts, each of them clearly aware that they were privileged to share in a truly historic and special moment. Could they have just gone back homewards afterwards as though nothing had changed? No, what they had seen and experienced must in some way have changed their lives for ever, for they had been touched by the divine. So, it is for us all. Truly to meet with Christ is a life-changing experience. We cannot simply nod in acknowledgement and continue blithely on our way. His love, grace and goodness call for a response, inviting us to journey in faith. Have we, like the magi, the courage to change direction and travel with him?

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, show me where you would have me go, what you would have me do, how you would have me live, and help me to follow, trusting you to guide me. Amen.

The Presbytery Plan

Prior to the deadline meeting of 15th November when the full plan for Edinburgh & West Lothian Presbytery was being presented for approval, on 10th November there was a joint meeting of the Boards and Sessions of our congregations when discussion of the plan, as it affects our own Mission District, took place. There had been surprise at the late inclusion of Ratho in our grouping, but we unanimously agreed to accept the plan as laid out by presbytery's Deployment Group in the knowledge that there will be annual reviews of local situations, though this could be a double-edged sword! It was thought that whilst the plan was not ideal, there was broad agreement that we could make it work.

An official response was then made by our Mission District to presbytery as follows:

'We agree in principle to the plan for West Lothian Mission District 3 and will strive to work together to face the challenges and opportunities the future presents to achieve positive outcomes for Mission.'

At the meeting of 15th November, the complete plan as laid out by the Deployment Group was accepted and approved by Presbytery. It will now be forwarded to meet the Church of Scotland's deadline of December 2022.

What does it mean for us at congregational level?

Our linked charge is initially in a grouping with East Calder & Kirknewton and Ratho parishes within the Mission District (The other

grouping is formed by Livingston Old, Livingston United and Kirk of Calder). This grouping will be served by two full time ministers and an OLM (Alison Quilter) when the minister at Ratho retires in the near future.

Once Nanda is no longer Interim Moderator at Kirk of Calder, we can expect a maximum of three quarters of her time (the situation for East Calder & Kirknewton will be similar) but as yet Presbytery has not been able to give any time commitment on that.

As a result, we will urgently need to find various ways to assist Nanda and Alison to continue the expected level of care and nurture not only within our congregations but across the grouping, as in this new way forward from January 2023 there are no parish boundaries. In the future, teamwork involving as many members as possible will be essential and every bit of service by members, no matter how small, will be of value. And attendance at worship on a Sunday morning is as good a starting place as any to show support.

To show our willingness to work together in the grouping, Nanda and Alison will shortly be giving open invitation to young people from East Calder & Kirknewton and Ratho congregations to join with our own young people at Teen Time and at The Bridge. A welcome has also been extended to our upcoming Evening of Christmas Music.

The Church has faced many challenges in the past, and this is the big challenge of our times. With God's guidance and strength, **together** we can rise to accept the challenge and make opportunities to show and encourage others to find His love and forgiveness.

Liz Dyer



TeenTime Primary 7 upwards

Our next TeenTime is **Sunday 11th December at 6:30pm** in West Kirk Hall and we hope to see you all there for an evening of sharing our faith, fun and friendship. Bring a friend along. It's a fun evening of games, mystery challenges and much more.

Dates for 2023: Sunday 15th January and Sunday 19th February.
March to June dates will be provided at a later date.

We wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Alison, Reeta and Nanda



The Bridge '16 to 25-year olds'

'The Bridge' for young folk aged 16 to 25 years old will be held every 7 or 8 weeks or so. A get together and have a blether, over a cuppa, or meal perhaps, and share and explore our faith and discuss things that matter to you as young folk in 21stC.

If you are interested please get in touch with me or Nanda and bring a friend along too!

We next meet in Polbeth Harwood Café Area on Wednesday 14th December at 7pm.

The Bridge - let's stay connected!

Alison

An alleged New Year's letter written from a church member to an American pastor.

Dear Pastor: You often stress attendance at worship as being very important for a Christian, but I think a person has a right to miss now and then. I think every person ought to be excused for the following reasons and the number of times indicated.

Christmas Holidays (the Sunday before & after)	2
New Year (the party lasted too long)	1
Easter (get away for the holidays)	2
July 4th (national holidays)	1
Labour Day (need to get away)	2
Memorial Day (visit hometown folk)	1
School closing (kids need a break)	1
School reopens (one last fling)	1
Family reunions (mine & wife's)	3
Sleep late (stayed up too long Saturday night)	9
Deaths in family	2
Anniversary (second honeymoon)	1
Sickness (one per family member)	5
Business trip (a must)	1
Vacation (three to four weeks)	6
Bad weather (ice, snow, rain, clouds)	2
Ball games	2
Races	2
Unexpected company (can't walk out)	2
Time changes (spring & fall)	2
Special on TV (Superbowl, etc)	3

Pastor, that leaves two Sundays per year. So, you can count on us to be in church on the 4th Sunday in February and the 3rd Sunday in August unless we are providentially hindered.

Sincerely, A Faithful Member

We can all find excuses NOT TO DO something. Let's make it a habit to find reasons to DO something and start by coming together for worship and companionship.



"Oh come let us adore him"

West Kirk & Polbeth Harwood

**Sun 4 Dec – Communion – 9:45am West Kirk
and 11:15am Polbeth Harwood**

Sun 4 Dec – Bereavement Service – 3pm West Kirk

**Sun 11 Dec – Gift Service – 9:45am West Kirk
and 11:15am Polbeth Harwood**

Sun 18 Dec – Nativity Service – 10am West Kirk

**Sun 18 Dec – Evening of Christmas Music –
6pm West Kirk**

**Sat 24 Dec – Family Christmas Eve Service –
6:30pm Polbeth Harwood**

**Sat 24 Dec – Watchnight Service –
11:30pm West Kirk**

**Sun 25 Dec – Christmas Day informal service –
10:30am Polbeth Harwood**

**Sun 1 Jan – New Year's Day service –
10:30am West Kirk**

All are welcome





Christmas

Kirks Cafe

Saturday 3rd December

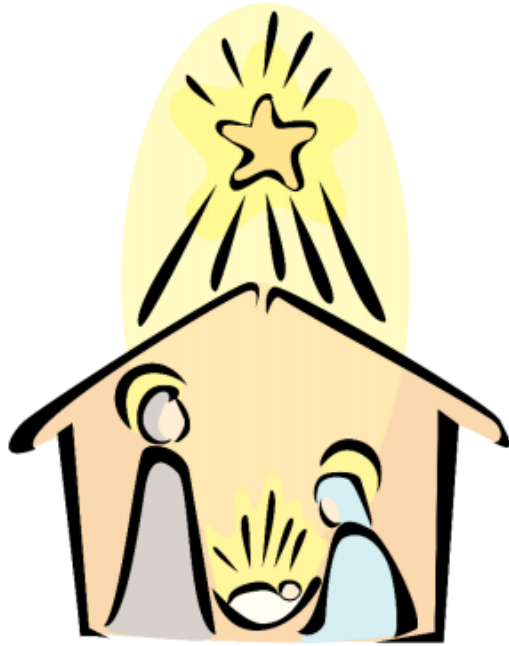
10.30 – 12.30

in West Kirk Hall

**With your tea or coffee, come to
enjoy some festive fayre and chat.**

**Also raffle, tombola, home baking
and Christmas gifts and crafts stalls**





Invitation

The young people of Polbeth Harwood and the West Kirk would like to invite you all to come join us in the West Kirk on Sunday December 18th at 10am as they share with you the Nativity story from a slightly different angle.

This is an open invitation to everyone and it would be just great if you could share this invitation with your friends, family and neighbours.

As this service is led entirely by children we would also like to set you a wee challenge, to see how many children we can welcome to our Nativity service this Christmas.

There will also be some lovely home baking in the hall to accompany our tea, coffee and juice after the service.

A very warm welcome awaits everyone to come join us at Polbeth Harwood church on Christmas Eve at 6:30pm for our relaxed family service.

Suitable for all ages.

The perfect start to Christmas.





and



We look forward to welcoming Sunday Club, Jam Club & Bible class on Sunday January 8th 2023.



What do you get
if you cross a bell
with a skunk?

Jingle Smells!

What do
snowmen wear
on their heads?

Ice caps!

How did Mary and
Joseph know that
Jesus was 7lb 6oz
when he was born?

*They had a weigh in a
manger*

A child's prayer

Loving Father, sometimes we care about ourselves more than we care for others. Sometimes we have worries and problems which fill up our minds. This Christmas and the New Year ahead help us Lord, to remember those who may need our love and help – our friends, families and people we meet every day. Teach us to be more giving and to care for everyone as you do. As we celebrate your humble birth may we remember all those less fortunate than ourselves? May they see and feel your love and comfort this Christmas.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

"SIX LITTLE STORIES WITH LOTS OF MEANING...

1. Once all the villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer, all of them gathered but only one little boy brought an umbrella. **That is Faith.**
2. When you throw little kids in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them. **That is Trust.**
3. Every night we go to sleep with no assurance of being alive the next morning, but still we set our alarms to wake up. **That is Hope.**
4. We plan big things for the future without being certain of tomorrow. **That is Confidence.**
5. We see the world suffering, but still we get married and have children. **That is Love.**
6. On an old man's t-shirt was a sentence printed, "I'm not 80 years old. I'm sweet 16 with 64 years' experience. **That is Attitude.**

Have a happy day and live your life like these six stories!

Remember good friends are the jewels of life; difficult to find and impossible to replace!"

~ Author unknown ~

As the Auld Year sidles oot the door,
An meets the new ane on the way,
We turn oor thochts tae friends an' kin,
Both hame an' far away
Here's tae us a'
Let's raise a glass,
A guid New Year, we say enjoy
Yersels' ring oot the bells,
An' Happy Hogmanay

The Story behind a Christmas Favourite

A man named Bob May, depressed and broken-hearted, stared out his draughty apartment window into the chilling December night. His 4-year-old daughter Barbara sat on his lap quietly sobbing.

Bob's wife, Evelyn, was dying of cancer. Little Barbara couldn't understand why her mommy could never come home. Barbara looked up into her dad's eyes and asked, "Why isn't Mommy just like everybody else's Mommy?"

Bob's jaw tightened and his eyes welled with tears. Her question brought waves of grief, but also of anger. It had been the story of Bob's life. Life always had to be different for Bob.

Small when he was a kid, Bob was often bullied by other boys. He was too little at the time to compete in sports. He was often called names he'd rather not remember. From childhood, Bob was different and never seemed to fit in.

Bob did complete college, married his loving wife, and was grateful to get his job as a copywriter at Montgomery Ward during the Great Depression. Then he was blessed with his little girl. But it was all short-lived. Evelyn's bout with cancer stripped them of all their savings and now Bob and his daughter were forced to live in a two-room apartment in the Chicago slums. Evelyn died just days before Christmas in 1938.

Bob struggled to give hope to his child, for whom he couldn't even afford to buy a Christmas gift. But if he couldn't buy a gift, he was determined to make one – a storybook!

Bob had created an animal character in his own mind and told the animal's story to little Barbara to give her comfort and hope. Again, and again, Bob told the story, embellishing it more with each telling. Who was the character? What was the story all about?



The story Bob May created was his own autobiography in fable form. The character he created was a misfit outcast like he was. The name of the character? A little reindeer named Rudolph, with a big shiny nose. Bob finished the book just in time to give it to his little girl on Christmas Day. But the story doesn't end there.

The general manager of Montgomery Ward caught wind of the little storybook and offered Bob May a nominal fee to purchase the rights to print the book. Wards went on to print, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and distribute it to children visiting Santa Claus in their stores. By 1946 Wards had printed and distributed more than six million copies of Rudolph. That same year, a major publisher wanted to purchase the rights from Wards to print an updated version of the book.

In an unprecedented gesture of kindness, the CEO of Wards returned all rights back to Bob May. The book became a best seller. Many toy and marketing deals followed and Bob May, now remarried with a growing family, became wealthy from the story he created to comfort his grieving daughter. But the story doesn't end there either.

Bob's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, made a song adaptation of Rudolph. Though the song was turned down by such popular vocalists as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore, it was recorded by the singing cowboy, Gene Autry. "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was released in 1949 and became a phenomenal success, selling more records than any other Christmas song, with the exception of "White Christmas."

The gift of love that Bob May created for his daughter so long ago kept on returning back to bless him again and again. And Bob May learned the lesson, just like his dear friend Rudolph, that being different isn't so bad.

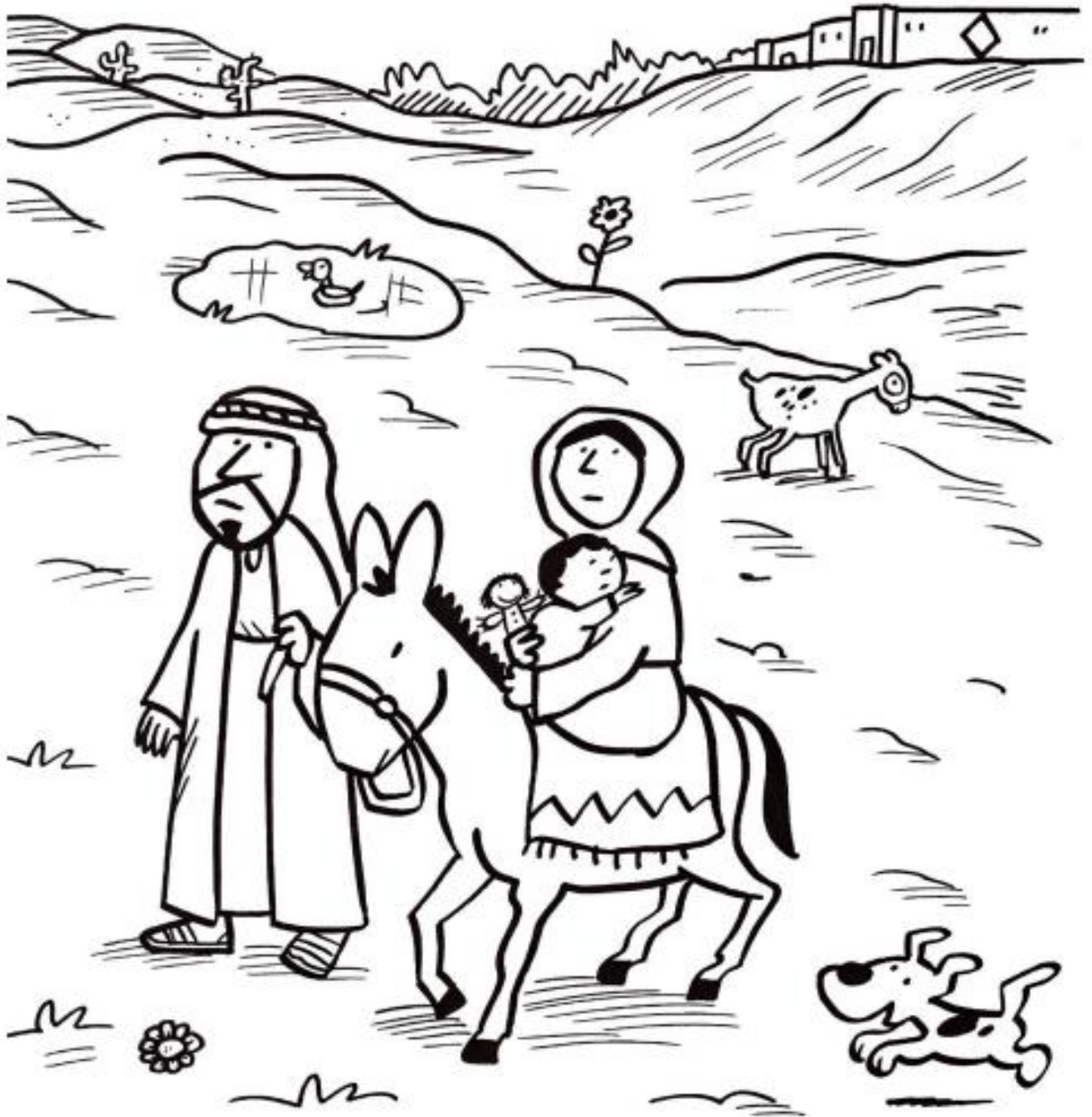


In fact, being different can be a blessing.

***If you would prefer a large print copy of the Link, please
contact Sandra on 07855 861223 or
Sandra.dixon71@gmail.com***

Travelling into Egypt

Draw a circle around anything in this picture that begins with the letter 'd'.



We often forget that Mary & Joseph had to flee the wrath of Herod becoming refugees. Did you find the seven items? Answers in the next edition of The Link.

An invitation from Our Lady and St Bridget's Catholic Church:

We are continuing our tradition of a special rotate advent Mass on every Wednesday of Advent at 7pm.

As every year we invite different guests to be our preachers. We have great memories of Polbeth Harwood and the West Kirk of Calder joining us last year. On behalf of myself and our parish pastoral council I would like to extend an invitation to you to join us again this year. You will be made most welcome.

Below is the list of our Wednesday Advent Masses and the invited guests to be this year's preachers.

30 Nov – Rev Chris Galbraith. Church of Scotland, Chaplain to Addiewell Prison

7 Dec – Fr William McQuillan. Fauldhouse Parish priest

14 Dec – Msgr Chambers. Vicar General, Bathgate Parish priest

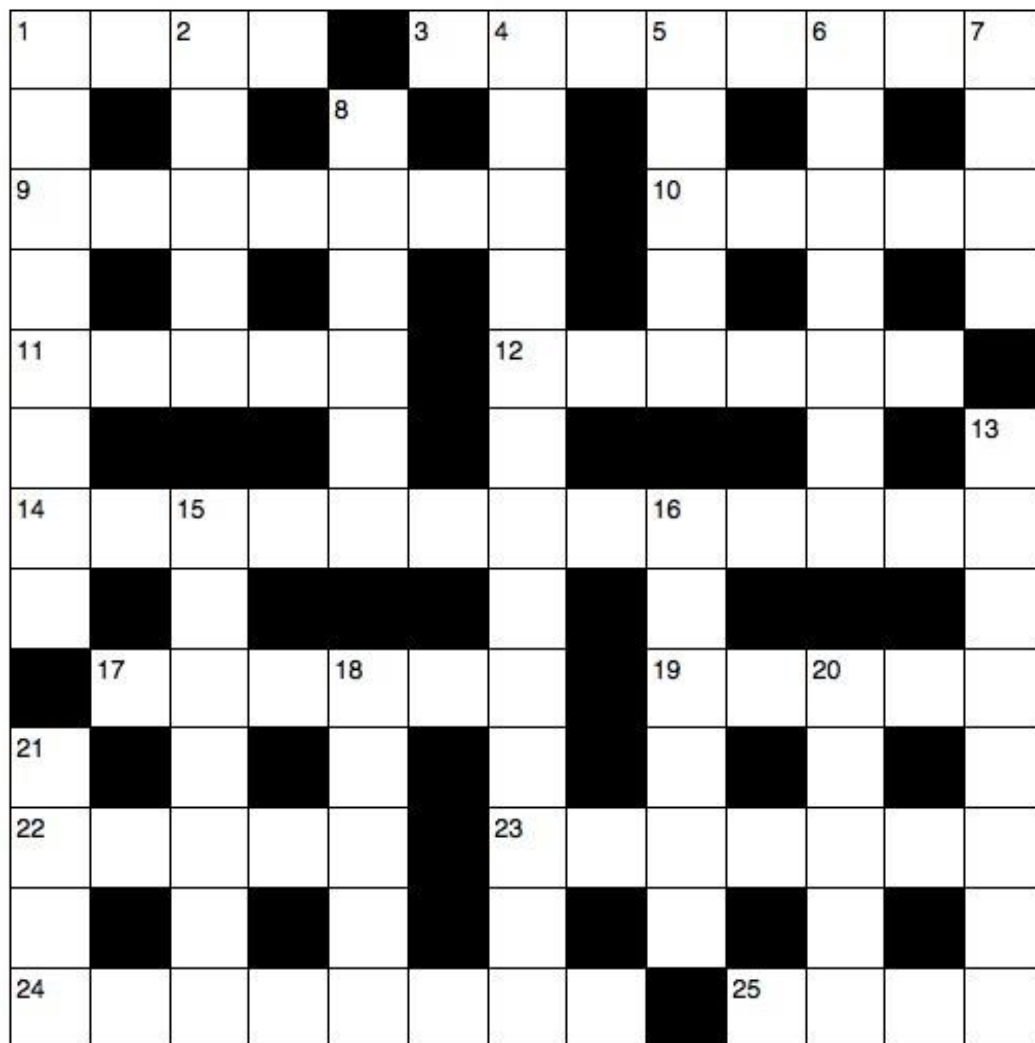
21 Dec - Rev Kay Gilchrist. Church of Scotland, Jackson Church Airdrie.

God bless

Fr Marcin Motyka SAC STD

Parish Priest





Across

- 1 'How long will you — your face from me?' (Psalm 13:1) (4)
 3 'Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the — he bore' (Hebrews 13:13) (8)
 9 Posh sin (anag.) (Romans 8:15) (7)

10 Solemn pledges (Matthew 5:33) (5)

11 Italian term for full orchestra (5)

12 'For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not — the cry of the afflicted' (Psalm 9:12) (6)

14 Prescience (1 Peter 1:2) (13)

17 Where a Hindu holy man lives (6)

19 'If he found any... who belonged to the Way, whether — — women, he might take them as prisoners' (Acts 9:3) (3,2)

22 Fragrance (2 Corinthians 2:15) (5)

23 Vine hen (anag.) (Jonah 1:2) (7)

24 Precious stone decorating the twelfth foundation of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:20) (8)

25 'Will you keep to the old path that evil men have — ?' (Job 22:15) (4)

Down

- 1 'Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with — — ' (Numbers 20:11) (3,5)
- 2 'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, " — — murder"' (Matthew 5:21) (2,3)
- 4 One of Paul's many hardships endured as a servant of God (2 Corinthians 6:5) (13)
- 5 'We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, — inwardly' (Romans 8:23) (5)
- 6 Changed (Daniel 6:8) (7)
- 7 'My yoke is — and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30) (4)
- 8 Recoil (Revelation 12:11) (6)
- 13 'O Lord, you have — me and you know me' (Psalm 139:1) (8)
- 15 ' — to me the joy of your salvation' (Psalm 51:12) (7)
- 16 Express sorrow (Isaiah 16:7) (6)
- 18 'Then he said to Thomas, " — out your hand and put it into my side"' (John 20:27) (5)
- 20 'God has said, " — will I leave you; — will I forsake you"' (Hebrews 13:5) (5)
- 21 Son of Onam and brother of Shammai (1 Chronicles 2:28) (4)

Answers to Issue 145

ACROSS: 1, Hopefulness. 9, Hitting. 10, du Pre. 11, Ere. 13, Ozni. 16, Wait. 17, Climbs. 18, Obey. 20, Joni. 21, Cuckoo. 22, In it. 23, Yaws. 25, Elm. 28, Alarm. 29, Epistle. 30, Whitsuntide.

DOWN: 2, Often. 3, Exit. 4, Urge. 5, Node. 6, Soprano. 7, Theological. 8, Westminster. 12, Rebuke. 14, Icy. 15, Ritual. 19, Epitaph. 20, Joy. 24, Acted. 25, Emit. 26, Menu. 27, Gift.

Jingle & Mingle

The pupils at West Calder High School would like to invite any retired people from our church and community to an afternoon of Christmas fun at the school!

Thursday 22 December 2022

1:30pm

All welcome!

Please RSVP to Nanda
by Sunday 18 December

Gift Service

Sunday 11 December

West Kirk of Calder 09:45

Polbeth Harwood 11:15



Please remember to bring along a gift on
December. These will be distributed to

Bethany Trust (West Kirk of Calder) and a local homeless shelter
(Polbeth Harwood).

Attach a removable label indicating whether your gift is for a man or a woman.



11

POLBETH HARWOOD CHURCH CHRISTMAS FAYRE

The total raised at our Christmas Fayre was a fabulous £1535. Grateful thanks are extended to all those who supported us by giving donations and attending on the day to make it a great success.

A massive thank you is, as always, given to our team of dedicated volunteers.





Parish Record

Deaths

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

29th October – James Morland, Langside Gardens, Polbeth

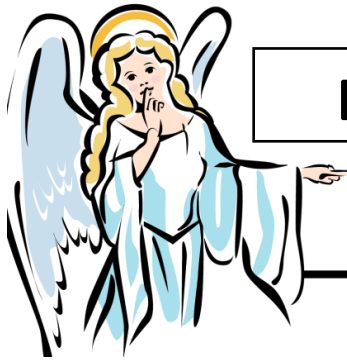
To all who have lost a loved one we extend our sincere sympathies and prayers.

Jesus, light of the world,
you embraced our human life;
you shared in our vulnerability;
we thank you for your desire to know us
and reach out to us.

We pray for all dealing with the pain of bereavement
whilst having to make difficult decisions about the future.

May they know your love is surrounding them
and be aware of your peace and guiding light
in these Advent days.

Amen.



December 22



Saturday	3 rd	Christmas Coffee Morning	West Kirk	10.30
Sunday	4 th	Holy Communion	West Kirk	09.45
		Bible Class	Polbeth Harwood	11.15
			West Kirk	09.45
	4 th	Bereavement Service	West Kirk	15.00
Thursday	8 th	Beyond Kirk Walls	Dickson Court	14.00
Sunday	11 th	Gift Service	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		Teen Time	West Kirk	18.30
Wednesday	14 th	The Bridge	Polbeth Harwood Café area	19.00
Sunday	18 th	United Nativity Service	West Kirk	10.00
	18 th	Evening of Christmas Music	West Kirk	18.00
Wednesday	21 st	Parkhead School Service	West Kirk	09.30
Thursday	22 nd	Bellsquarry School Service	Polbeth Harwood	14.00
Saturday	24 th	Family Service	Polbeth Harwood	18.30
	24 th	Watchnight Service	West Kirk	23.30
Sunday	25 th	United Christmas Morning worship	Polbeth Harwood	10.30

January 23

Sunday	1 st	United Morning Worship	West Kirk	10.30
Sunday	8 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
		Polbeth Harwood	11.15	
		Bible Class	West Kirk	09.45
Wednesday	11 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	12 th	Beyond Kirk Walls	Dickson Court	14.00
	12 th	Board & Session Meetings	West Kirk	19.00
Sunday	15 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
		Polbeth Harwood	11.15	
	15 th	Board & Session Meetings	Polbeth Harwood	12.15
	15 th	Teen Time	West Kirk	18.30
Sunday	22 nd	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
		Polbeth Harwood	11.15	
Thursday	26 th	Bible Study	Via Zoom	19.00
Friday	27 th	Youth Group	West Kirk	19.00
Sunday	29 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
		Polbeth Harwood	11.15	

February 23

Sunday	5 th	Stewardship	West Kirk	09.45
		Morning Worship	Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		Bible Class	West Kirk	09.45
Wednesday	8 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	9 th	Beyond Kirk Walls	Dickson Court	14.00

