

December/January

Issue 156

The Link



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

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Dear Friends

As I'm writing this letter, I'm looking at the first winter snow falling outside my window. How is it possible that Christmas



is less than a month away? It's been such a busy year... A year filled with many happy moments, but quite a few sad times too.

And as the colour of the grass outside gradually changes from green to white, I think of all the change that took place this year – in the Church of Scotland, in our own congregations – the start of a new era of being church in the world. I'm so excited about all the plans our new committees have for 2024, and I feel very grateful to be the minister of two such amazing congregations!

But then I also think about all the people we had to say goodbye to this year, and how empty our churches feel without them. And as the initial dusting of snow changes into a proper white covering, I realise something – that's

exactly what God did for us that first Christmas, what he still does for us every single day – he covers us in his love, like the snow covers the earth in winter.

A friend of mine, who's neighbour has an immaculate garden, always says that he loves the snow, because then his garden looks exactly the same as his neighbour's! And because God covers *all of us* with his love – no matter what our lives look like – God sees us all the same.

So this Christmas, when you miss those who's seats around your table are empty, but also when you laugh and enjoy the company of those who *are* there, remember that God loves you, just the way you are. And that when he looks at you, he sees something beautiful.

May God bless you all this Christmas, and in 2024!

Much love,

Nanda

Reflection for Advent - The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God."

Advent is a season of angels - Gabriel appears to Mary, Joseph, and Zechariah; a heavenly host appears to the shepherds on Christmas night - but there are no angels in Narnia. Have you ever read the Narnia books by CS Lewis? I love them - great children's stories but with faith and biblical stories interwoven. If you have read the books (the first one being the lion the witch and the wardrobe), you will know this. Perhaps it is strange CS Lewis did not include angels in his

Narnia books when there are in the land of Narnia unicorns, naiads and wraiths.

In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for *angel* is the same as the word for *messenger*. Angels have many ways of serving God, according to scripture, and carrying messages to human beings is an important one.

The Robin is very much like an angel, a winged messenger in the service of Aslan, (the lion in the Narnia stories - the great king), guiding the children to safety and help but also calling them to follow Aslan, even though they don't even know his name yet. Like Mary, they say yes, even though they cannot know what lies ahead. They have seen Tumnus's cave, destroyed by the Witch's police, so they know that danger is close. They put themselves in the Robin's hands, forgetting about dinner and home, because they want to see where he will lead them.

Mary, too, told Gabriel yes without knowing much about where she was being led, beyond the goodness and love of the God who was leading her. May we remain open to God's messengers

in our lives, too, whether they arrive in the form of birds, friends, or a glorious heavenly host.

Questions to reflect upon:

Have you ever had a feeling you'd been visited by an angel?

What made you feel that way? Did you ever tell anyone else?

Have you ever felt God leading you in a direction you didn't expect?

What were the messengers or clues that signalled this to you?

Did you end up following in that unexpected path or not? Why or why not?

Prayer:

Thank you, heavenly Father, for Bethlehem and for its message of Love incarnate, Love divine. Shed that love in our hearts and homes this Christmas time, and help us to reflect it in our worship, in our family life, and in all that we try to do to help those in need. Give us peace in our hearts, that we may create peace in our homes to help to spread peace in the world, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Rev Alison Quilter

Session Clerks

A heartfelt thank-you to
Alison McNaught (West Kirk of Calder)
and Tom Griffin (Polbeth Harwood Church),
for recently filling the posts of Session Clerk
in our respective congregations.

May God bless you and keep you as you serve him and
lead our congregations in this role



Unitary Constitution

In our new Unitary Constitution, we have 5 committees in our churches. The convenors for these committees are:

Mission:

Lorna Graham (WK) Eleanor Davidson (PH)

Administration:

Liz Dyer (WK) Marian Kinsman (PH)

Stewardship and Fellowship:

Megan Hodges (WK) Sandra Dixon (PH)

Property:

Alistair Farquhar (WK) Theresa MacDonald (PH)

Pastoral Care:

Beryl Henderson (WK) Reeta Griffin (PH)

Thank you so much to every single person who volunteered to be on/support any of the committees. If you are not on a committee and would like to be or have any good ideas for us as a church to take forward, please get in touch with the appropriate convenor.

A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURERS

“You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God...”

2 Corinthians 9:11-13

Traditionally, the Festive Season is the time of giving and at this time we would ask you to remember your Church. Your donations and contributions are greatly appreciated and help to keep our Churches and facilities open and help fund the work of the Church of Scotland.

Please speak to one of your Elders or pick up a **Standing Order** mandate from the Church, if you wish to make a one-off or regular contribution via direct bank transfer or if you wish to register for Freewill Offering Envelopes. Donations can also be received via the Open Plate.

We also ask you to consider completing a **Gift Aid** Mandate, if you are eligible, so that we can reclaim Gift Aid on donations received. The Gift Aid scheme allows us to increase your donation by 25% when we reclaim via HMRC.

Perhaps you could also consider a gift to the Church in your **Will**? The work of the Church has been greatly assisted by the generous gifts left to the Church in Wills. These gifts are a lasting legacy and allow the work of the Church to be taken forward.

Thank-you for your continued support of our Churches.

Karen & Sandra

TeenTime Primary 7 upwards

The next meeting of TeenTime is on **Sunday 14th January at 6:15pm** 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.

We hope to encourage some of the young folk to take a lead with some of the evening's activities.....

We would like to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

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 quarterly. A get together and have a blether, sharing a meal or light snack 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 6th December at 7pm. The Bridge let's stay connected!

We would like to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Nanda and Alison



The Quiet Service

A monthly mid-week quiet service in Polbeth Harwood will next be held on **Wednesday 17 January at 3:30pm** in the 'quiet room'. All are welcome to this short service followed by tea, coffee, biscuits and a 'blether'.

Anyone who would like to come and needs assistance with transport should call Sandra Dixon on 07855861223.

We look forward to seeing you there



Special Events in your Church this December



To all of which, a very warm welcome awaits



The Gift Service

Sunday December 10th

9:45am in the West Kirk

11:15am in Polbeth Harwood

Gifts must be new and unwrapped as they are being donated to families of people in HMP Saughton.

All are welcome with or without a gift.



United Lessons & Carols Service

Sunday December 17th

10:30 in Polbeth Harwood Church

Please note this is a united service and there will be no morning worship in the West Kirk this Sunday





Traditional Carol Singing



Sunday December 17th

19:00 in the West Kirk

Enjoy singing your favourite carols in the warmth of the Kirk.

Followed by seasonal refreshments served in the hall.



United Nativity Service

Sunday December 24th

10:30 in the West Kirk

“Children of the world”

This service is led entirely by children from
Sunday Club and JAM CLUB



Christmas Eve Family Service

Sunday December 24th

18:30 in Polbeth Harwood Church

A lovely early service, for all the family.



Watchnight Service

Sunday December 24th

23:30 in the West Kirk

Celebrate the Saviour's birth by Candlelight



United Morning Worship

Sunday December 31st

10:30 in Polbeth Harwood



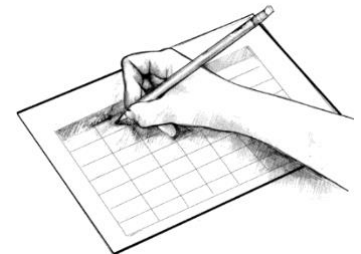
Say goodbye to the old and prepare to celebrate the new!

Dates for your 2024 Diary.....

Sunday January 28th

9:45am in the West Kirk

11.15am in Polbeth Harwood



Come join us for a service of "All things Scottish"

From welcome music, to prayer, bible readings, skits and hymns. We will even have a wee taster of Haggis Neeps & Tatties in the hall after the service, and perhaps even some canny wee tunes & songs.

We would like to invite you all to wear a wee bit tartan to this service as we celebrate this Scottish themed service.

Friday March 1st

19:00 in the West Kirk Hall

A great old favourite returns!

“An evening of family fun and entertainment”

We will have some invited guests and we will also be making our own entertainment!

A light basket supper will be served halfway through and we will finish in good time to get the bairns in bed timely! So get the date in your diary now, more information will follow in the next edition of the Link!



Friday 2nd February 7pm in Polbeth Harwood Church.

Tickets will be available in January. £4 each including a cuppa and a cake.

For more information contact Sandra.dixon71@gmail.com or call/text 07855 861223.

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal 2023 - Message from Rhoda

Thank you to everyone who supported the Annual Appeal through the West Kirk, Polbeth Harwood & Limefield United Free Churches & friends from outwith the local area.

On 31st Oct a total of 100 boxes were uplifted by the Charity to head to the Sorting Centre to have the final check & Diary or Calendar inserted before heading off to Eastern Europe this year most likely destination was Moldova.

The statistics for the categories of boxes filled were as follows:

Girls - 29

Boys - 11

Teenage Girls - 6

Teenage Boys - 9

Women - 28

Men - 15

Elderly Woman - 2

A great effort by everyone and the only items I had to remove and replace were loose sweeties, mini packs of Haribos taken from a large party bag as no expiry dates visible & one bottle of conditioner. Thank you for making the sorting easier by working with the list supplied.

The project runs year long. Eleanor Davidson at Polbeth and I work away throughout the whole year to ensure the project runs as well as it can. Recent years have been challenging for everyone financially and also the Pandemic did close down the freedom we used to have to meet to work on the Project. Work demands have curtailed my own availability in the past few years.

Our hope for the future of the project is that we have to look forward to a new era in supporting the project. Like many organisations there are falling numbers able to support the cause & less willing helpers to carry the project through.

We are relocating our storage space at Polbeth Harwood to give a little easier access. Come the New Year I hope to request helpers to get boxes wrapped as early as Feb/ March so that people can purchase them earlier to start filling them gradually over the months so by Sept / Oct the boxes are ready for early checking. It helps the Charity to be able to pick up the boxes at end of Oct to ensure arrival at their destination after all the necessary check ins at Customs at each Border Country.

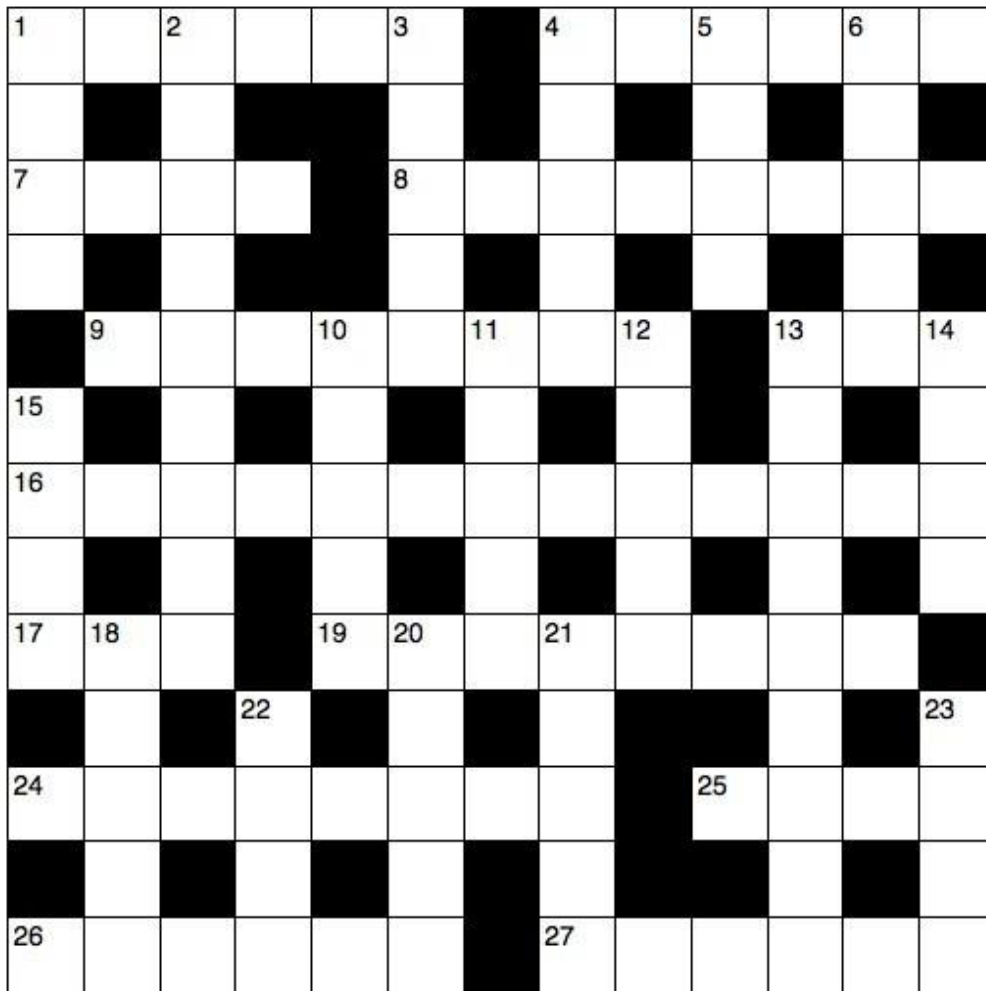
Such a simple little cardboard box truly reflects the message of the Christmas Season of Love, Hope & Joy that someone somewhere has taken enough time to care for someone they don't know to let them know that having the basics of life is like treasure to one with nothing or very little.

Please remember us in your prayers & anyone interested in wrapping boxes please get in touch with me in the New Year.

All offers of Christmas Wrapping paper very welcome as supplies are starting to diminish.

Every Blessing for the Festive Season that the Love , Peace & Hope spreads not just in a shoebox but in your own life too.

Thanks Rhoda



Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
- 4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
- 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)

8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)

9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)

13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)

16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)

17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)

19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)

24 Able dock (anag.) (8)

25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)

26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)

27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

Down

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
- 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2)(9)
- 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
- 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
- 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
- 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
- 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
- 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
- 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
- 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
- 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
- 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
- 18 Narnia's Lion (5)
- 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
- 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
- 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
- 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)

Answers from issue 155

ACROSS: 1, Thanks. 4, Banner. 8, Esher. 9, Azariah. 10, Compare. 11, Ishma. 12, Doorposts. 17, Oaths. 19, Galatia. 21, Papyrus. 22, Frail. 23, Listen. 24, Hyssop.

DOWN: 1, Trench. 2, Ashamed. 3, Karma. 5, Ananias. 6, Neigh. 7, Reheat. 9, Areopagus. 13, Observe. 14, Satraps. 15, Compel. 16, Gallop. 18, Tapes. 20, Lofty.

The Big Bash!



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY

HE SENT OUT LOTS OF INVITATIONS

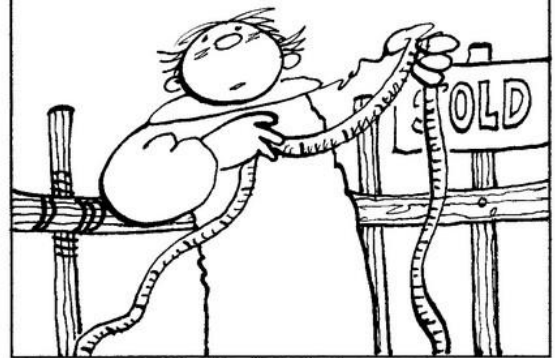


OH! NO!!

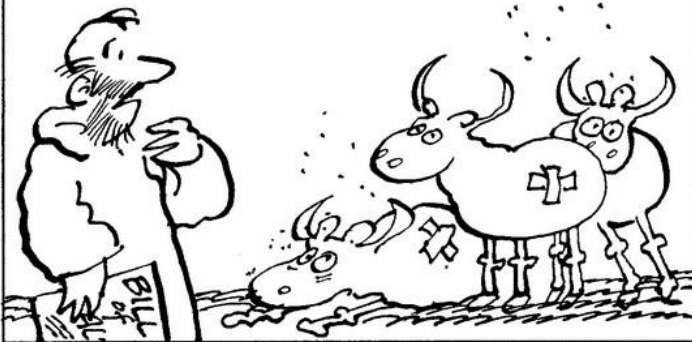


BUT PEOPLE STARTED MAKING EXCUSES

ONE MAN SAID HE HAD BOUGHT A FIELD, BUT NEEDED TO MEASURE IT



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE NEEDED TO TEST DRIVE THE OXEN HE HAS JUST PAID FOR



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE HAD JUST GOT MARRIED - AND HIS WIFE WOULDN'T LET HIM OUT!

SO THE RICH MAN INVITED ALL THE POOR AND NEEDY INSTEAD.



YES - I CAN COME TO YOUR PARTY

THE PARABLE MEANS WE SHOULDN'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR NOT FOLLOWING JESUS.



Merry Christmas!



Homemade
GIFTS MADE EASY

THANK YOU FROM POLBETH HARWOOD CHURCH

Our first gift table sale was a huge success. We raised just over £1200 which was a great effort from everyone involved. The stallholders had a fantastic variety of goods for sale and everyone who attended enjoyed the day.

We look forward to our next sale and hope to see you all then.

Jingle & Mingle

The pupils from West Calder High School invite all retired people from our community for an afternoon of inter-generational Christmas fun and food!

The young people go out of their way to make this a special afternoon, so let's support them by being there!

Please RSVP to Beryl Henderson (West Kirk) 01506 379 230
or Marian Kinsman (Polbeth Harwood) 01506 871125



WEST CALDER HIGH SCHOOL

Jingle and Mingle

THURSDAY DECEMBER 21ST 2023 FROM 1.30PM TO 3PM

The Cafe
West Calder High School
Limefield Lane
EH55 8BF

RSVP BY 14TH DECEMBER

Reflection – New Year - Inner Peace

John 14:27 (New Living Translation)

²⁷ “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

Have you noticed how many TV adverts there are selling us different kinds of insurance to promise to give us peace of mind? The marketing teams really working hard to entice us to buy peace of mind: health insurance, life insurance, car insurance, appliance insurance and many more. And then appears after these a timely advert inviting us to book holidays in the sun to get away from it all. Marketing collusion – I leave that with you..... Buy insurance to take the stress and strain out of life. Anything and everything, it seems, promises us a more relaxed and happy existence.

Well that is not quite true, and the statistics don’t quite match the picture painted. Yes, it true that we have more leisure time, more money today than previous generations, and we may enjoy the latest gadgets, but even with all this, we live in a world where stress is rife and where countless people yearn for a sense of inner peace. Peace, like happiness, cannot be bought; indeed, the quest for money and possessions and status is often what destroys the little peace we have.

We can find a degree of peace in this world in the sense of briefly getting away from it all, but for Christian’s real peace comes from another source – from an awareness of God’s love made real through inner presence of

his Holy Spirit. This was the verse that the convenor of the Faith Nurture Committee, (a Presbytery committee I am a member of) opened our meeting last week with and asked us to try and sit with God daily and receive His peace in this time of busyness. Take the time to experience this gift of peace and let the busyness and stresses of life cease for a time.

We cannot create such peace ourselves, but we can cultivate it through making time for God, creating a space in our lives for prayer and reflection and being open to what He would do within us. Such peace involves letting go and seeing life from another perspective – it also means taking hold of the wonderful gift He gives. A gift that no-one or anything can give us – a peace that passes understanding.

As we come to the end of one year and look forward to a new one, let us make time daily to remind ourselves of the gift God gives us – true inner peace. Let us take time each day to sit with God and soak up this peace and let the other distractions fall away. ²⁷ ***“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.***

May God bless you in the year ahead and be assured He walks with you.

Prayer

Loving God, wherever I am, wherever I go, whatever I do, however I feel,

***I know that you will be with me,
to hold, to heal, to guide and to bless.***

So, I will go in peace assured of your unfailing love. Amen.

Rev Alison Quilter



December 23

Saturday	2 nd	Christmas Kirks' Cafe	West Kirk	10.00
Sunday	3 rd	Holy Communion	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		Bible Class	West Kirk	09.45
		Bereavement Service	Polbeth Harwood	15.00
Wednesday	6 th	The Bridge	Polbeth Cafe	19.00
Sunday	10 th	Gift Service	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		Teen Time	West Kirk	18.15
Wednesday	13 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	14 th	Beyond Kirk Wall	Dickson Court	14.00
		Services	Burngrange Home	15.30
Sunday	17 th	United Service of Lessons & Carols	Polbeth Harwood	10.30
		Evening of Traditional Carol Singing	West Kirk	19.00
Wednesday	20 th	Parkhead School Xmas Service	West Kirk	09.30
Sunday	24 th	United Nativity Service	West Kirk	10.30
		Family Service	Polbeth Harwood	18.30
		Watchnight Service	West Kirk	23.30
Sunday	31 st	United Morning Worship	Polbeth Harwood	10.30

January 24

Sunday	7 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		Bible Class	West Kirk	09.45
Wednesday	10 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	11 th	Beyond Kirk Wall Services	Dickson Court	14.00
			Burngrange Home	15.30
Sunday	14 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		Teen Time	West Kirk	18.15
Wednesday	17 th	Quiet Service	Polbeth Harwood	15.30
Thursday	18 th	Session Meeting	West Kirk	19.00
Sunday	21 st	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
Thursday	25 th	Bible Study	Via Zoom	19.00
Friday	26 th	Youth Group	Outside Venue	19.00
Sunday	28 th	'All Things Scottish' Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15



February 24

Sunday	4 th	Morning Worship	West Kirk	09.45
			Polbeth Harwood	11.15
		Bible Class	West Kirk	09.45
Wednesday	7 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk	11.30
Thursday	8 th	Beyond Kirk Wall Services	Dickson Court	14.00
			Burngrange Home	15.30

Parish Record



Baptisms

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as them.”

26th November – Rya Leigh Hunter, infant daughter of Christopher Hunter and Carla Laird



Deaths

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

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

15th September – Nancy Ashwood, Crofthead Care Home, Fauldhouse

16th October – Mary McGill, Harburn Drive, West Calder

22nd October – Alexander (Alistair) McPherson, Antiquary Care Home, Arbroath

2nd November – William Donaldson, Eagle Brae, Livingston

4th November – John Smirrell, Polbeth Crescent, Polbeth

14th November – Pearl Reid, Woodlands Care Home, Livingston

**Lord God,
You are light in our darkness.
You are purpose in our wandering.
You are revealed in the angel's greeting.
You are known in the acceptance of Mary.
You are felt in the care of Joseph.
You are received in the following of the shepherds.
You are given in the gifts of the magi.
What a blessing you are, Lord God.
Amen**



**Christmas Services in
Polbeth Harwood Church
with West Kirk of Calder**

**Sunday 17th December at 10.30 am
Carols and Readings in Polbeth Harwood**

No service in West Kirk

**Sunday 17th December at 7pm
Community Carol Singing in West Kirk**

**Sunday 24th December at 10.30 am
Nativity Service in West Kirk**

No service in Polbeth Harwood

**Christmas Eve service 6.30pm
in Polbeth Harwood
Watchnight Service 11.30 pm in West Kirk**

**Sunday 31st December United Worship at 10.30 am
in Polbeth Harwood
No service in West Kirk**