

# St. Machan's News

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**Hope for a broken world**

## From the Editor

It has been such a wonderful Autumn this year , warm and dry, with the glorious colours of the leaves on the trees reminding us of the beauty of God's creation. It seems that Christmas has come on us suddenly.

We are all delighted to welcome back Alastair and hope that his health will continue to improve.

I remind you that audio versions of the magazine are available if you let an elder or myself know. We also think that we have solved the problems with putting the magazine on the website in a readable form so give it a try. If you know people who have moved away but are still interested in St Machan's, you may wish to draw their attention to this.

I hope and pray that you will find a time of peace and hope through the coming days.

Fay Allan

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# View from the Manse



**“But when the right time finally came, God sent his own Son. He came as the son of a human mother and lived under the Jewish Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God's children.”**

*(Galatians 4:4-5)*

Dear Friends

Many, many, many thanks for all the support and assistance, for all the kindness and expressions of care, for all the wonderful cards, and for all the much appreciated prayers during my recent time of illness. I am slowly but surely getting back to full fitness and hope to be fully back to work very soon!

Life has a habit of presenting us with unexpected experiences which can also be unexplained: Despite a number of medical tests, I have no clue yet as to exactly what brought about my ill health! I told the doctor that I couldn't stop singing the song “The green, green grass of home!” and they told me that I might be suffering from Tom Jones Syndrome. I asked if it was common and they said, “It's not unusual!”



One of the side effects of my ‘enforced’ rest was finding myself with a lot more time on my hands than I am used to. As you can see from above, I spent some of the time adding to my repertoire of excellent jokes which I can't wait to share with the congregation! Some of the time I spent becoming an expert at multitasking and I can now waste time, be unproductive, and procrastinate all at once.



Some of the time was spent improving my domestic abilities and my DIY skills: I can now stack the dishes in the dishwasher like an Olympic champion and, after three months effort, I managed to replace a broken toilet seat! My wife has said there are one or two other small jobs needing to be done about the house but I've said they'll have to wait until I retire!!!!

Do we make the best use of the time that we are given? In His wisdom and His grace, God has always shown perfect timing and achieved the full potential in all the times that He has shared with His children: From the creation of such an incredible universe to the gift of Jesus Christ His Son as the Saviour of the world!

The first Christmas was a time that was unexpected by the world but it was certainly not unexplained: Hundreds of years before Christ was born, the Bible said, **“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel, which means God Is With Us!” (Isaiah 7:14):** At the time of Christ's birth, the Bible said, **“Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and redeemed His people. He has sent us a mighty Saviour....” (Luke 1:68-69):** Years after Christ's arrival on earth, the Bible said, **“Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, He has spoken to us through His Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)**



Do we make the best use of the Christmas time that we are given? In the midst of the festive season we find it so easy to multitask all the giving, all the receiving, all the consumption and all the celebration. This year may we also remember to spend some time reflecting on God's gift to us at Christmas. And if we do, then we will receive the unexpected and unsurpassed blessing; of finding that God truly is with us; of knowing Jesus as our Saviour; of hearing Him speak God's words of love and forgiveness into our lives and into our hearts!





May the peace and presence of the Lord be with you and yours this Christmas time!

Yours in Christ

Alastair McKillop

## A prayer of John Wesley

I am no longer my own but yours,  
Put me to what you will.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you.  
Let me be full or empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to  
Your pleasure and disposal.  
And now glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
You are mine and I am yours. So be it.  
And this covenant now made on earth,  
Let it be satisfied in heaven.

Amen



From A Box of Delights J. John & Mark  
Stibble, Monarch Books

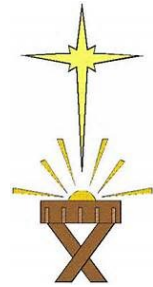
The deeds you do today may be the only sermon  
some people will hear today.

St Francis of Assisi

## A Christmas Prayer

Father,

Thank you for creating us and for loving us  
so much that you sent Jesus to become one  
of us and to be our way to you. This  
Christmas may we know the love, peace,  
comfort and joy that only you can give, no  
matter what our circumstances. And may  
we reflect your light and love in this dark  
world to bring glory to you. In Jesus' name.  
Amen.



By Daphne Kitching

## Prayer Diary

- For Alastair and Lorraine's wellbeing
- For those members of our church family who are experiencing physical or emotional pain
- For the progressing of the vision for St Machan's
- For the large number of people facing the debilitating effects of unemployment
- For those who are homeless especially at Christmas
- For Christians throughout the world who are being victimised and persecuted for their faith
- For our governments that they may be guided by God's justice and mercy.



### Wednesday Morning Prayer and Worship Services

Prayer Service 10.15 am

Worship Service 11am

Tea and fellowship after Prayer Service

# Pancake Morning

## MENU

Pancake (butter / jam)	50p
Pancake (plain)	40p
Coffee      cup/mug	60p
Tea	50p
Juice	10p

Fridays 10.00am—12 noon

## VISION & MISSION COMMITTEE

The Vision and Mission Committee are having an evening of Christmas Fun, Fellowship and Film on Thursday 1st of December.

The doors will be open from 6.30pm when Graham Duncan will be entertaining us with carols and Christmas songs followed by the classic film White Christmas at 7pm.



During the break there will be tea, coffee and warm mince pies. So come along, bring your friends and start getting into the Christmas spirit.



Entry by tea ticket @ £2.00 from members of the committee.

Christmas Stall



# Christmas Answer

(Lk 2:6)

So many refugees,  
So many homeless people,  
So much conflict and  
despair and pain,  
In a world without answers.



But God so loved this world  
That he created Christmas  
And came, in Jesus.  
Jesus, born into poverty,  
Jesus, who was homeless,  
Who was a refugee,  
Who shares our conflict and despair and  
pain,  
Who takes it all and transforms it  
By his life-giving death and resurrection  
Into possibilities of peace and hope and joy,  
Into life in all its fullness.  
Jesus who came out of the stable  
And lives.  
God's answer.  
Hallelujah.



By Daphne Kitching

Christmas is the season when your  
neighbour keeps you awake playing 'Silent  
Night'.

# Everychild

For people who have forgotten or who never really knew, our contributions to this charity evolved from supporting individual children in Africa under the auspices of The CHRISTIAN Children's Fund of Great Britain. They then amalgamated with The European Children's Trust to become EveryChild which we have been contributing to since.



In the last couple of years greater changes have been taking place which has meant yet another change of name. Family for EveryChild which is an alliance of 25 local organisations in 24 different countries around the world. The changes have not stopped there with EveryChild and Family becoming one organisation with change of address, the stepping down of Chair of the Board and Chief Executive of EveryChild on 1st Oct 2016.

Personally, I am not sure about all of these changes.



By the end of 2016 St Machan's Coin Jar collections from The Sunday Club, individuals and organisations will have contributed £15,000 to EveryChild. The original target was to have been £10,000 so it has far exceeded that.

Perhaps it is time for US to change. A new recipient could be decided upon or a spreading of recipients - perhaps nominating a different charity annually to receive the average givings of £500. These could be local, national or international organisations.

I hope to step down at the end of the year so if there is anyone out there who would like to take over and co-ordinate this worthwhile fundraiser ie coin jar and donations from individuals and organisations, please get in touch with me on 01698 889927

I wish you a very happy CHRISTmas day when it comes  
Love and God bless

*Moir Bruce*



## Dates for your diary

Sun 4 Dec	11:00 am	Communion & Advent Gift Sunday
Sun 18 Dec	11:00 am	Sunday Fun Club Nativity Family Service
Sat 24 Dec	7:00 pm	Christmas Eve Family Service St Machan's
Sat 24 Dec	11:30 pm	Watchnight Service St Machan's
Sun 25Dec	11.00am	Christmas Thanksgiving Celebration
Sun 1 Jan	11.00am	New Year Communion Service



The true story is told of a minister who, the week before Christmas, invited a local homeless man to his home for Christmas lunch. The man sighed, put his hand into his very worn jacket, and took out a grubby diary.

"It won't be easy," he said. "I am already booked for Christmas lunches on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. But how about after Christmas? I might be able to fit that in."



# Men's Club



The Men's Club opened the 2016/17 session on Monday 10th October when the speaker was the Rev. Andrea Boyce. She talked about her almost four years at Chalmers Church, of the work done and the work still to do.

As previously mentioned, the annual St Andrew's Night Concert with the "Dukes of Uke" ukulele band took place on Tuesday 22nd November.



However, the Men's Club has been asked to arrange a Christmas Concert featuring "The Stonehouse Male Voice Choir" and the "Coalburn Silver Intermediate Band" including young members.

It is intended that this concert takes place in the Church on Friday 9th December 2016 at 7.30pm. It is also understood that Santa will be paying a visit for the children who will be admitted free.

The Men's Club's final meeting of the year is their Christmas dinner on Monday 5th December.

The Indoor Bowls Section, every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, will close on Monday 17th December for the holidays.

The club members would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for supporting the various concerts





and also to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year.

John McLean  
President

**Christmas carols as mis-heard by children**

Deck the Halls with Buddy Holly  
We three kings of porridge and tar  
On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me  
Later on we'll perspire, as we dream by the fire.  
He's makin a list, chicken and rice.  
Noel, Noel, Barney's the king of Israel.  
With the jelly toast proclaim  
Olive, the other reindeer  
Frosty the Snowman is a ferret elf, I say  
Sleep in heavenly peas  
In the meadow we can build a snowman, Then pretend that he is  
sparse and brown  
You'll go down in listerine ...  
Oh, what fun it is to ride with one horse, soap  
and hay  
O come, froggy faithful.



**St Machan's Offering Rota January to March 2017**

	Door	Assisting	Welcome
January	R Allan <u>F Sandeman</u>	<u>M Bruce</u> J Smith	M Laird J Kellighan
			1st M Bruce 8th M Laird 15th J Smith 22nd J Kellighan 29th M Bruce
February	<u>J Hynd</u> <u>A Hynd</u>	S Cork A Morrice	J Blackwood J Williamson
			5th S Cork 12th J Blackwood 19th A Morrice 26th J Williamson
March	<u>W Kean</u> <u>A Kean</u>	J Kaprot M Stevenson	E Davidson D Revie
			5th J Kaprot 12th M Stevenson 19th E Davidson 26th D Revie

It was the Bank Holiday and there was a long queue to get petrol.

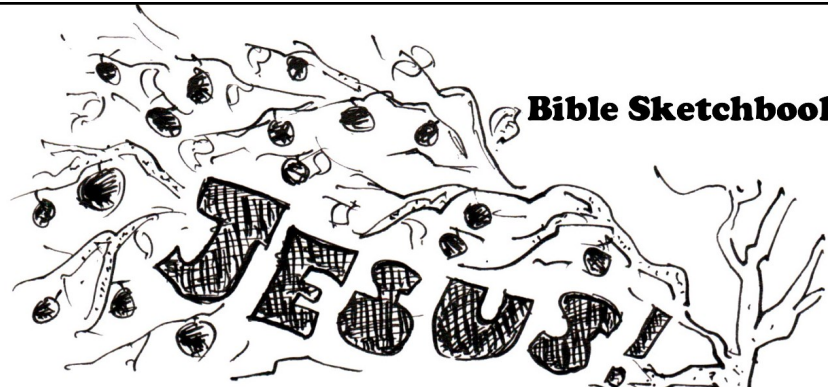
The garage attendant said, "If people know that they are going on a trip, why do they always leave it until the last minute to get ready?"

"I know just what you mean," said the vicar. "It's like that in my job too."





## Bible Sketchbook



### 4,000 years and still going strong!

Do you realise the Christmas idea goes back at least 4,000 years? OK - we all know it was 2,000 years ago Jesus was born. But it was 4,000 years ago God promised his ancestor Abraham he would have as many children as stars in the sky!

Then 3,000 years ago one of his descendants, Jesse, was promised that from the **stump** of his life a new **shoot** would emerge, who would become a great king. First of all one of Jesse's sons, David, was anointed king. But the greatest king of all came 1,000 years later. This was Jesus - a direct descendant on his mother's side and fathered by the Holy Spirit! He was a **branch** of that original shoot, who would be beautiful, glorious, bearing masses of fruit, King of Kings for all people, everywhere, for ever! And he's still going strong!

**Food for thought and celebration! Read more in Isaiah 11:1; Romans 15:12; Revelation 5:5**



# Christian Aid



Last Tuesday I went along to the Guild meeting to hear Rev. Stuart Smith from Christian Aid who was speaking on Bolivia, South America. One of the Guild's projects for 2015-2018 is 'Caring for Mother Earth' in Bolivia. Their strategy, Be Bold, Be Strong, will raise awareness of, pray for and fundraise for various

projects one of which is helping the people of this part of South America.

Bolivia is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in South America. Millions of people live in difficult conditions struggling to survive. The Bolivian Amazon is one of the most bio-diverse regions of the world, yet it is increasingly under threat from deforestation. This coupled with climate change has left communities who rely on the forest for survival vulnerable, as crops flood and livelihoods are lost.

Women very often have to spend hours every day collecting firewood for cooking. Not only does this prevent them from engaging in other activities, but when the forest is under water it becomes difficult to get wood for cooking and families are unable to even boil water.



Through Christian Aid partners, this project will work with 700 families to educate them about climate change and support them to build and use solar powered ovens enabling families to eat year round. Partnering with the Church of Scotland on Bolivia, Christian Aid Scotland will use this story to link Guilds to their current work on climate change and give



practical ways to get involved.



It was very encouraging to see the slides of happy smiling women who have been given the opportunity to help their families and their communities and to free them up from standing over an open fire all day cooking.

I wish the Guild every success with their projects which are changing the lives of the poorest people of the world.

Christian Aid has worked in Bolivia for more than 30 years. They have been in the Amazon since 1997 and have gradually shifted their focus to concentrate on this region.

The Amazon is notable for high levels of inequality and vulnerability, particularly relating to the rights of the indigenous and farming forest communities and the effects on them from climate change.

During the past decade, Bolivia has experienced the worst floods since records began, which have directly hit the communities where Christian Aid work. For this reason, strengthening resilient livelihoods is at the heart of their programme.



With our support, Christian Aid will have the means to help achieve their goal, so, again this Christmas, we will be issuing donation envelopes and I know we at St Machan's will give generously.

Many thanks for your support throughout the year and may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy and happy 2017.

*Grace McGhee*

## GENESIS YOUTH CLUB

Membership at Genesis Youth Club although initially slow, has been gathering momentum over recent meetings.

Our night on 22<sup>nd</sup>. November will be a trip to the bowling in Motherwell.

After that, on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December will be our Christmas party night



The club meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday from August through until May.

We start at 7.30pm. Finishing at 9pm prompt.

All boys and girls aged from 10 up are welcome to come along and enjoy the fun and fellowship (age is flexible) so please come along and give us a try. Don't be shy, bring a friend.

We have leaflets available on our notice board in the main hall.

We start each night with games but we have many interesting topics planned, including guest speakers, visits, quiz nights, ten pin bowling etc.

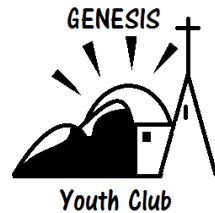
This is a further sign of God's vision to bring the youth of Larkhall in to our Church surroundings.

If you know of anyone in the above age bracket, please encourage them to come along.

Any help or ideas would also be much appreciated



For more information, please contact Graham Preston,  
Alastair Gilroy, Holly Taylor, Jeannette McDonald, John  
Gilroy or our vision development worker Ann



**WHY NOT COME JOIN US!!**

**Don't be shy - bring a friend**

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: Peace on  
Earth; Goodwill to Men; and Batteries not included.



### ***Shoe Box Appeal - 2016***

The total number of shoe boxes collected this year was 129 as well as  
£467.50 in cash donations.

This included 30 boxes from Machanhill  
Primary School.

Well done everyone, this was another great  
achievement.

Many thanks to all who contributed in any way.

John Gilroy



# The Guild



Thank you for supporting the Guild "Soup and  
Crusty Bread" lunch. We raised £293.50 for  
Guild projects of which there are six.

At our meeting on 1st November, Rev.  
Stewart Smith gave an informative and  
inspirational talk on the Guild project in  
Bolivia. This project educates families  
about climate change and supports them  
in building solar powered ovens to give  
year round cooking facilities.



On the 15th of November we heard from our own Ann Tennent  
on "Nursing in the NHS".

Then on the 22nd of November we helped the Men's Club with  
their St Andrew's Night Concert featuring the Dukes of Uke.  
A great night was had by all.

On the 20th of December our President, Phyllis, has arranged an  
evening of "Call my bluff" along with a Christmas purvey.

Our Guild is very healthy but we always welcome new faces at  
our meetings so do come along and bring a friend.

Elspeth May

Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the  
rest we take between two deep breaths, or the turning in-  
wards in prayer... for five short minutes.

*Etty Hillesum*



# Friendship Circle



The Friendship held their first meeting of the new session on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October when John Kaprot gave a talk on the life and times of a reluctant immigrant.

The guest speaker at our next meeting was Mrs Margaret Tooth from Blythswood Care who told us the story of how Blythswood care came to be set up 60 years ago and of the work they do and the support they give in many of the poorest countries in the world.



We had our re-dedication service on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November. This was a very intimate and special communion service conducted by Rev Andrea Boyes of Chalmers Parish Church.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November Phyllis Brophy introduced the stories behind six favourite hymns which then were sung by members.

On December 13th the Jolly Beggars will be leading us in our pre-Christmas meeting so if you wish to join us you will be made most welcome.

Should you wish to attend, it would be helpful if you would speak with Fiona Sandeman as this would help with the numbers for catering.



## The Everlasting Turkey

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me  
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard

As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.

On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,  
The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.

On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old  
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,

But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.

On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.

The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince  
When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.

On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,

For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alkaseltzer.

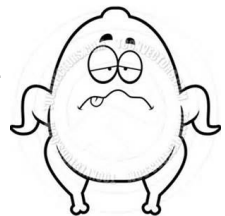
On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,

He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.

On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,

Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,





And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.  
On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,  
The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.



### All faiths are NOT the same!

For many religions, God is considered unknowable – just a supreme power or presence ‘out there’ somewhere. Not so Christianity. The heart of the Christmas message is His coming to us in peace and love – as the Bible says: ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.’ (John 1:4 RSV)

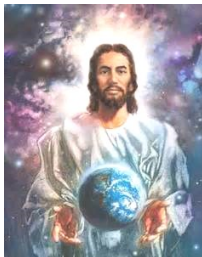


Jesus was born a baby, grew up amongst us, healed us, did many miracles, taught us, and then went on to die for us.

He entered our time and our space, and we could approach Him and talk to Him. Jesus made clear that to see Him was to see the Father.

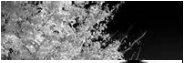


What a wonderful God! He is the Creator of the Universe, but He is also Jesus, who calls us into a daily relationship of love and dependency upon Him.



# Fabric Convenor's Report

Hello everyone, I don't know about you, but I love all of the four seasons. Although the summer sunshine is nice, the colours of the trees through Autumn have been spectacular, and we now enjoy nice cold crispy mornings.



We have enjoyed a fair bit of dry warm weather recently which has allowed us to get on with some maintenance and repair work.



Up at the Manse, we have been trying to deal with the problem with the front door. This was due to be replaced under guarantee, however, only a few days before our agreed installation date, Dalmation windows entered administration.

We are now in discussion with the administrators with a view to resolving the issue.

Otherwise, work at the Manse has been kept to a minimum due to Alastair's recent illness.

And so to the work completed since the last edition of the magazine:



Further to my last report on the water ingress at the vestibule area, we have now completed our remedial work to the outside walls.

This included re-pointing the stonework and applying water repellent.

You will have noticed the de-humidifier in the vestibule area which has been arranged by Graham Duncan. This will help to dry out the internal walls.

This will then allow the vestibule decoration to be completed,.

Graham has since carried out a survey of the upper vestibule and steeple



area in order to identify any outstanding problem areas requiring attention. We have identified where we think the water ingress was coming from and this has now been rectified. This should prevent any further water penetration in the vestibule area. (fingers crossed ) Happy to report that Graham's survey did not highlight any major problems and any repairs in the near future should be minimal.

Many thanks to Graham for his work on our behalf.

The heating system has now settled down and we have managed to set the temperatures to suit everyone, although it will now be monitored for the winter period. Our annual boiler service has been carried out.



The Church security / fire alarm system has again been upgraded by the installation of a fire call point at the rear hall exit, however, due to problems with the mobile receiver network, we may require some additional modifications.



The fault in the gallery camera, which sends a live video link to the halls, has been identified and repaired by RAK engineering and is now up and running again although we now have a problem with the sound and we are looking into this.

Over the summer, we had three wasps nests removed from roof voids.

A leak in the disabled toilet has been repaired and we have fitted new toilet seats in the ladies toilet.

We have given the vestry a facelift by redecorating, fitting a new carpet and also purchased good quality second hand office furniture. This will serve the minister as well as the business committee.



We have laid new kerb stones at the top of the garden.



Our annual PAT testing will be carried out on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>. Nov. and during this maintenance visit, we will arrange to replace all the lamps and starters in the main hall and one in the sanctuary. Jim Hynd has very generously donated all the lamps.

Up at 2 Marshall street the roofer has now removed the asbestos roof to the rear and replaced with a tiled roof. We will now clean and paint the back gutters and windows.

We can now complete the dampness repairs to the internal wall in the back office and finish off the painting.

We have recently had new vertical blinds fitted to the front windows of the cottage.

And so to our ongoing work.

We still have one new notice board to replace and this should be completed shortly. We intend to use this to highlight all activities throughout the week.

The property committee have agreed a sub-committee of Jim Reid, Walter Kean and John McLean to deal with Health, Safety, Security, Fire Precaution etc. They are now preparing a document which will be posted on the notice board before being presented to all organisations and users of the buildings. This is further to correspondence from Church of Scotland in Edinburgh and Hamilton Presbytery with relation to "Safe Buildings" and Risk Assessment. Our final document will be printed in the next edition of the magazine



Due to ongoing problems with the roof windows in the main hall, we are still investigating how we can solve the problem of continual drips on a permanent basis.



John Walker very kindly prepared drawings and specification to allow us to seek quotes for this. I have met with Hamilton planning department to discuss our options as we are a listed "B" building. We are now looking at how best to finance this project.



Thinking of the prospect of any major costs for repairs over the foreseeable future, we have asked John Walker to carry out a survey / report of all our buildings. This will allow us to prepare in advance for any major issues.

You may have noticed that the hall fire doors are not closing properly. We await our local joiner to repair / rectify this problem.



We have arranged to erect a handrail from the bottom of the pedestrian gate up to the Church entrance. Due to the centre path being required for wedding / funeral limousines turning, the rail will be erected at the right hand side of the garden.

One of our members has very kindly donated £100 towards the cost.

Up at the manse, we still have some decoration work to be arranged. This will be done as and when Alastair is feeling better.

With our new constitution under way, we will now be known as the property committee, with our responsibilities changing slightly. I am happy to report that we now have a few additional members. The current Property Committee members are:  
John Gilroy, Jim Reid, Kirsty Laird, Walter Kean, John McLean  
Alastair Gilroy, Sandra Graham and Donald McDonald.

Please remember, if you notice anything around the Church which needs attention, please contact one of the property committee a.s.a.p. and we will attend to it.

Please keep dropping a white fabric envelope in to the plate as this helps

to maintain our fabric fund balance. You will find these envelopes scattered around the Church. If you can't see one. Please ask me for one

My thanks again to my property team for all their help as well as volunteers from the congregation who never seem to let us down

God's vision for St. Machan's is driving us on, and to him be all the Glory.

May I finish by taking this opportunity to wish you all God's blessings for a happy and peaceful Christmas and good health in 2017

*John Gilroy* Tel: 886935 Mobile: 07956 107883

You never really learn to swear until you learn to drive.  
You never learn to pray until your kids learn to drive.



I asked a friend of mine what he would be doing over Christmas. He told me he reckoned he would be doing a lot of work on "aqua-thermal treatment of ceramics, aluminum, and steel under a constrained environment."

I was astonished – and baffled.

In further conversation, I learned that he would be "washing dishes with hot water under his wife's supervision."







## Sunday Fun Club Nativity 2016

The children will be performing **The ABC Nativity** on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 11am.



Our dress rehearsals will be on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December after the church service. Children should bring a packed lunch to church on these dates and are expected to be finished by 1.30pm.

All family and friends are encouraged to come along to support our children as they play their part in retelling the true story of Christmas.



The Sunday Fun Club would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

### No room

The Sunday School teacher was telling the story of the Nativity, and had just finished the part about there being 'no room at the inn'.

A small voice piped up: 'I blame Joseph. He should have booked.'



# Flora & Fauna

It has been a funny old year!

The Flower Fund continues to have a healthy bank balance so I would like to thank all who have contributed in cash or kind for their generosity. Thanks to the wedding parties who leave flowers for distribution. I would also like to thank Moira's little helpers who deliver as and when required.



As a result of the Stewardship Campaign a few others have offered to come on board to help deliver. Thank you for that. Pop in to the Session Room after the service on the Sundays you can deliver as we don't always know in advance who the recipients will be. A special thank you to Margaret Moore, Isobel Ogston and Mavis Law for standing in when I am on holiday etc.

I would also like to thank all who have invited me and others into their homes in times of sadness and happiness. It has been a privilege.

Having said all of the above, I hope to step down from handling the flower fund etc at the end of the year or as soon as possible thereafter. It is over 30 years since I got involved and eventually took over the reins when Jan Smart and Margaret Craw had to retire due to ill health. I am not giving up due to ill health exactly but I do think new blood is needed - maybe even younger blood than mine!

I earnestly pray that there is someone out there who has just been waiting to be asked to do a job and this job fits their bill.

If that is the case or you are just prepared to give it a go, please phone me on 01698 889927 or speak to me at church.



Love and God bless

Moira Bruce



PS. Just thought I would add the following although it has nothing to do with the Flower Fund.

Over the last number of years the church has been decorated for Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Not quite sure when this started as it would not have been the norm to do so in Presbyterian churches.



Harvest probably was the first if you can call bringing the fruits of the harvest to the table "decoration"

Christmas probably followed on as it became more commercialised and celebrated more in Scotland than it had been times gone by. Possibly started with a Christmas tree in the church hall for Sunday School parties then on the Chancel - sparsely decorated - no lights - definitely no flashing lights ! - moving on to Nativity scenes, garlands, wreaths, window displays with candles etc.



Easter would not be marked by any obvious decoration other than, possibly, white flowers.

We have become used to this and expect it to happen. Again big changes here over the last few years.

The faithful bunch of volunteers has dwindled again due to ill health, immobility and dare I say "old age".

May Mackie's talents and enthusiasm have been sorely missed this year as she comes to terms with her bereavement.

In the last few years Etta Davidson, Margaret Gibb and I have helped her with the special occasions. I have no real artistic talent so my contribution has been 'labouring'. I am the first to admit labourers are essential.

You may or may not have noticed that the special occasions were not as they have been.



If there are willing workers out there with artistic talents that could be used on these occasions could you and any labourers come forward and hopefully a team could be formed to put your talents to good use. With the new committee system it may be that church decoration would come under worship.



"Of all the cheek! Rides up on his sleigh in his flashy red suit, pushes to the front of the queue to the stable shouting 'Ho! Ho! Ho!'... who DOES he think he is?!"



## PARKER PLACE

The redecoration work at Parker Place is now complete with all internal walls painted, new carpets fitted and the modern fabric in the main hall looking rather chic.

On our first entertainment evening of the new session we had Graham Duncan starting us off in September with a night of music and sing-a-long songs accompanied by the flute and a great night was enjoyed by all.



Holly provided a night of singing in October as she chose some of her favourite hymns, which again was enjoyed by all.

The women's guild will entertain on November 29<sup>th</sup> and we will finish the year with a Christmas sing-along with a date still to be arranged in December.



We are now trying to arrange a night in January to celebrate the works of Robert Burns.

Tea and home baking will be served on each evening.

Anyone willing to assist in any way or to come along and assist with the teas would be most welcome.

If you would like more information, please contact John Gilroy.

## Why does God let it all happen?

*Billy Graham's daughter was being interviewed on the Early Show. Jane Clayson asked her **How could God let something like this happen?** (Regarding the attacks on Sept. 11). Anne Graham gave a profound and insightful response. She said:*

I believe that God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman that He is, I believe that He *has* calmly backed out.

How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand that He leave us alone? In light of recent events - terrorists attack, school shootings, etc. let's see.

I think it started when Madeline Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body was found recently) complained she didn't want any prayer in our schools, and **we said OK.**

Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school... the Bible that says thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal and love your neighbour as yourself. And **we said OK.**

Then Dr. Spock said we shouldn't smack, our children when they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide). And we said, an expert should know what he's talking about so **we said OK.**

Then someone said teachers and principals better not discipline their children when they misbehave. And the school administrators said no faculty member in this school better touch a student when they misbehave because we don't want any bad publicity and we surely



don't want to be sued (There's a big difference between disciplinng and touching, beating smacking humiliating kicking, etc.) **We said, OK.**

Then someone said, let's let our daughters have abortions if they want, and they won't even have to tell their parents. And **we said, OK.**

Then some wise school board member said since boys will be boys and they're going to do it anyway let's give our sons all the condoms they want, so they can have all the fun they desire, and we won't have to tell their parents they got them at school And **we said, OK.**

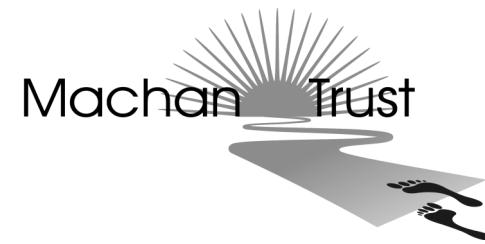
Then some of our top elected *officials* said it doesn't matter what we do in private as long as we do our jobs. And agreeing with them, we said it doesn't matter to me what anyone including the President does in private as long as I have a job and the economy is good.

Then newspapers and magazines print pictures of nude women and call it wholesome, down-to-earth appreciation for the beauty of the female body. And **we said, O.K.**

And then someone else took that appreciation a step further and published pictures of nude children and then stepped further still by making them available on the internet. And **we said O.K.** They're entitled to their free speech.

And then the entertainment industry said: let's make TV shows and movies that promote profanity, violence and illicit sex. And let's record music that encourages rape, drugs, murder, suicide, and satanic themes and we said it's just entertainment, it has no adverse effect, and nobody takes it seriously anyway so go right ahead.

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves. Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with **"WE REAP WHAT WE SOW"**.



The Machan Trust young people have benefitted from five residential breaks this year which have all been funded by different organisations.

In the spring our first residential was a weekend at Derwent Water funded by ORB (Outdoor Resource Base) for P5 upwards, we also ran a weekend at Wiston Lodge for our younger children aged 8 and 9, this was funded by Awards for All.

The summer saw us in Crianlarich for a week for youngsters aged 12 and above funded by Cash for Kids. For September weekend ORB funded a weekend in Comrie for our



11 – 14 year olds and we ended our residential year in November with a weekend in Oban for young people aged 12 – 18 funded by Give us a break. Our accommodation is usually hostel style with our activities being a mixture of climbing, canoeing, mountain biking, orienteering and different outdoor crafts. Our aims for these weekends are to build confidence, broaden horizons, learn new skills, teambuilding and increasing



leadership skills. As with all our groups our volunteers are key and at each of these residential weekends our young volunteers who came along found it helpful in developing their own leadership skills.



## October School Week Holiday



During the October school week a group of our P5 to P7 children visited Hamilton Fire Station for the day where they learned about being a fire officer. Every day they enjoyed either mountain biking, leaning how to Ski or climbing, this was organised and funded by ORB.

## Christmas at the Machan Trust

We are holding a Christmas Party this year for our P1 to P4 children on Saturday 3rd December from 3pm until 5pm, in St Machan's Church hall. So party frocks at the ready! We've even put in a request for Santa to come along. Anyone wishing to come along should contact the Machan Trust Office on 01698 305674.



This year we are again visiting the Irn Bru festival on Friday 13th January and this is open to children aged 10 and above. Anyone wishing to come along, please call the Machan Trust Office.

## Help required - Breakfast and Lunch Groups



The Machan Trust now delivers a Breakfast club at St Mary's Primary School thanks to Greggs funding. We now serve over 400 breakfasts per week. Our volunteers are really key to making this a success. As well as Breakfast groups we also run Lunch Groups working with selected children who benefit from extra support. If you would like to help at any of these groups, please call the office on 01698 305674 or by e-mail [volunteermachantrust@gmail.com](mailto:volunteermachantrust@gmail.com)

## St Machan's Book Club



The Book Club meets on the first Monday of each month. The books we have read so far this session include:

'A Man called Ove' by Fredrik Backman

A grumpy yet loveable man finds his solitary world turned on its head when a boisterous young family moves in next door.

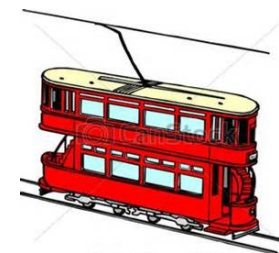


Meet Ove. He's a curmudgeon, the kind of man who points at people he dislikes as if they were burglars caught outside his bedroom window. He has staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. People call him *the bitter neighbor from hell*, but must Ove be bitter just because he doesn't walk around with a smile plastered to his face all the time?

Behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness.

The next read was written by a Scottish Writer, Robert Douglas. The title of the book was Night Song of the Last Tram – a Glasgow Childhood.

This is a wonderfully colourful and deeply poignant memoir of growing up in a 'single end' - one room in a Glasgow tenement - during and immediately after the Second World War. Although young Robert Douglas's life was blighted by the cruel if sporadic presence of his father, it was equally blessed by the love of his mother, Janet. While the story of their life together is in some ways very sad, it is also filled with humorous and happy memories. "Night Song of The Last Tram" is a superb evocation of childhood and of a Glasgow of trams and tenements that has long since disappeared.



Both books were very enjoyable and whilst both invoked sadness there



were many parts of them both when you had to laugh out loud.  
Both well worth a read.

The book we are now reading and will be discussed in December is by Alex Gray and entitled Shadows of Sounds

If you wish to come along anytime please do. We meet at 10.30 am at 14 Saltire Crescent where we discuss the books while we have a cup of tea or coffee. You will be very welcome.

**Fiona Sandeman**

## The Meaning of the Christingle

Christingle means 'Christ's Light' and it is a symbol of the Christian faith. Lots of churches hold Christingle services around Christmas time. The custom of giving out lighted candles in these services began in Germany in 1747.

Each piece of the Christingle holds special symbolism to help children understand the importance of Jesus and the Gospel, and its relevance at Christmas time.



The orange represents the world  
The red ribbon symbolises the love and blood of Christ  
The sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creations  
The lit candle represents Jesus's light in the world,  
bringing hope to people living in darkness.

## Puzzle Corner

1. Each puzzle begins with a blank 9 x 9 grid. A coordinate system—with the letters A through I across the top and the numbers 1 through 9 down the left side—will help you place the "givens," or starter numbers, generated by the Bible trivia questions.
2. For each puzzle, trivia questions will be answered by the numbers 1 through 9. The coordinates with each question (for example, *A1*, *C9*, *H3*) indicate where you should insert that particular answer into the sudoku grid. If you don't know the answer and want to find out from the Bible, references are provided.
3. Once you've inserted the givens into the grid, you can solve the sudoku puzzle. The goal of sudoku is to place the numbers 1 through 9 in each row, each column, and each of nine 3 x 3 minigrids (the shaded areas) within the larger puzzle. Numbers can never be duplicated in a row, column, or 3 x 3 grid—so use your skills of deduction to determine what numbers can or can't go into a particular box.

### **For C1, F8, H5, D4**

How many princes of the Midianites did Gideon's army slay?  
(Judges 7:25)

### **For G5, B4, D3**

Of the oxen holding up the molten sea at Solomon's temple, how many faced in each direction? (2 Chronicles 4:4)

### **For B6, E3, H8, D9**

How many times was the blood sprinkled before the Lord?  
(Leviticus 4:6)

### **For F7 C5**

"... every \_\_\_\_\_ after his tongue..." (Genesis 10:5)



**For F4, A8, D1, G9**

"... \_\_\_\_\_ hundred and fifty and six." (1 Chronicles 9:9)

**For I4, B3, H2, F6**

How many paces did the ark go before the sacrifice was made?  
(2 Samuel 6:13)

**For E9, A3, I6, C4**

How many hundred pomegranates were on the two wreaths on the temple's pillars? (2 Chronicles 4:13)

**For B2, I5, C7, G1**

How many hundred years old was Noah when he had his children?  
(Genesis 5:32)

**For G3, E5, F2, B7**

In the first nine psalms, which psalm begins, "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"?

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

**Across**

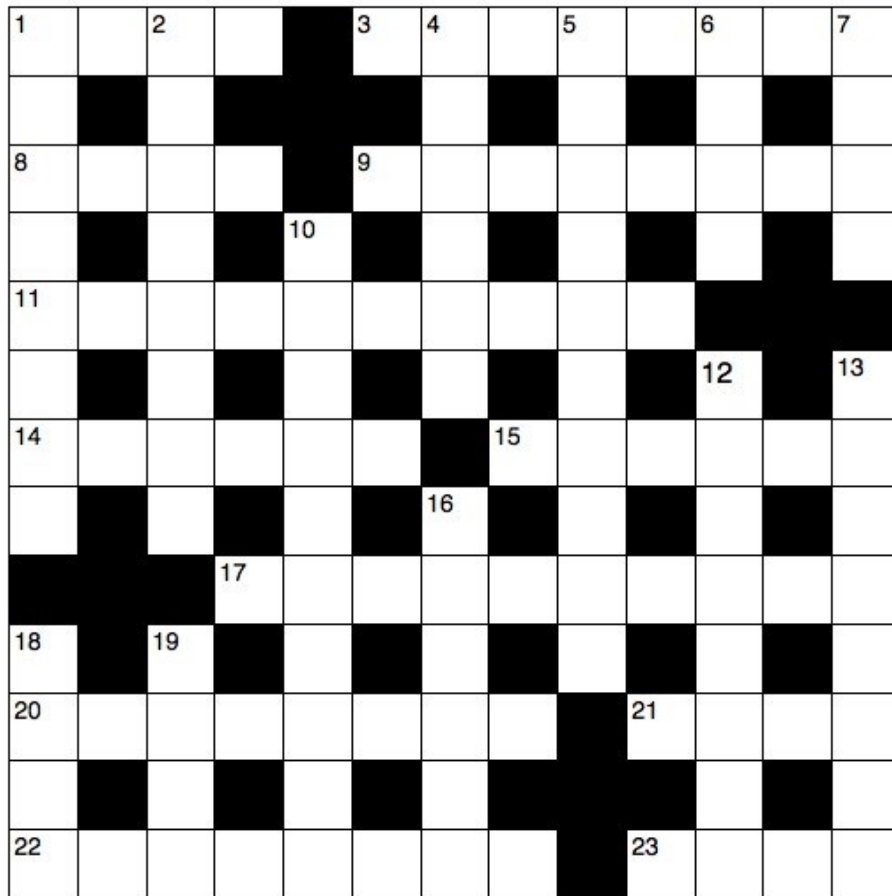
- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
- 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
- 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
- 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
- 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
- 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
- 15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)
- 17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)
- 20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)
- 21 Rite (anag.) (4)
- 22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)
- 23 'The eye cannot say to the — , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

**Down**

- 1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
- 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)
- 4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)
- 5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
- 6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)
- 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
- 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
- 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
- 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
- 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)
- 18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully



committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)  
 19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)



One Christmas, the Sunday School heard the story of the shepherds visiting Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in the stable and then they all drew pictures.

One little boy included a dog in his nativity picture.

When asked why, he explained that it was a German Shepherd.



## SAINT NICHOLAS WORDSEARCH

Father Christmas is based on St Nicholas, who was born in the third century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy, and when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop, he was in prison with other bishops under the emperor Diocletian's fierce persecution of Christians.

One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight, and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery. The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings – in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas - on Christmas Eve. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.

father	Century	Needy	Poor	money
Christmas	Greek	Sick	Family	Stockings
Nicholas	Village	Suffering	Three	
Born	Devout	Prison	Daughters	
Third	Wealthy	Emperor	Stockings	

**I'd rather stand trial before people for serving God than to stand trial before God for serving people.**





Every time I pass a church I pay a little visit,

*So when at last I'm carried in  
the Lord won't say*

***"Who is it?"***



# Children's Pages-colour in



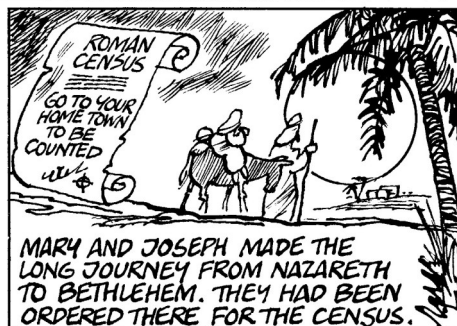


# A Very Special Baby

JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE A VERY SPECIAL BABY.



BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL...



...WHICH IS WHERE JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAD BEEN BORN.

WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST. THEY TOO WANTED TO SEE JESUS. THEY HAD BEEN GUIDED BY A STAR.



THEY BROUGHT GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.

BUT MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS SOON HAD TO ESCAPE TO EGYPT...



...AS KING HEROD WANTED JESUS DEAD!!

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## Puzzle Answers

2,3,7,1,9,6,4,5,8  
Starter numbers in order

L	A	M	E	O	B	T	A	I	N	E	D
O	A			R	C	E	A				
O	M	I	T	M	E	R	C	H	A	N	T
K	N	P	A	O	R	E					
B	U	R	D	E	N	S	O	M	E		
A	O	S	T	P	B	T					
C	R	A	F	T	P	L	E	A	S	E	
K	D	I	A	I	S	T					
		B	L	A	C	K	S	M	I	T	H
A	C	E	T	H	L	E					
S	P	L	E	N	D	I	D	T	I	E	R
A	A	C	O			C	E				
S	I	N	G	E	I	N	G	H	A	N	D

Y	S	D	T	E	G	I	R	B	I	A	R	H
I	E	T	C	D	E	V	O	U	T	N	A	C
Y	E	N	O	E	A	R	O	U	I	G	E	H
W	L	C	O	C	N	U	P	I	N	R	M	I
N	E	I	S	M	K	T	G	I	E	P	T	
E	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	E	E	R
E	E	I	L	A	O	E	N	U	T	K	R	P
D	R	I	H	T	F	C	F	G	R	E	O	R
Y	H	K	H	F	H	E	K	A	S	Y	R	I
I	R	R	U	L	G	Y	S	I	T	N	F	S
L	E	S	A	L	O	H	C	I	N	H	U	O
E	C	U	F	I	V	I	L	L	A	G	E	N
O	E	N	A	L	L	G	I	K	C	I	S	R