

Winter morning at Stepps Parish Church



Image courtesy of pixy.org

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PROSPECT

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Watch us on YouTube each Sunday at 11.00 am.

Follow us on Facebook.

www.steppsparishchurch.org

At the heart of our community celebrating faith and life to the full.

To submit an item for Prospect please email Lorraine on

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Stepps Parish Church

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Sunday Services

Morning Worship at 11am (Services will be reduced and limited in numbers until further notice)

Scotland moved beyond Level 0 on the 9th of August 2021. The legal limits on capacity within churches has been removed. As our services have got busier we have decided to remove the 1 metre physical distancing from the 25th of October and can now accommodate between 100-120 people within the sanctuary. It is still a legal requirement that people wear a face covering when attending a church for worship. Unless you are medically exempt or under the age of 12, everyone needs to wear a face covering when entering and leaving our church, when you are seated in our pews and when you stand to sing. The regulation to keep a register of those attending worship has also been removed by the Government, however it is recommended that congregations continue to ask people to check-in to a church building. There is the opportunity to visit the Sanctuary each Thursday from 10.00 am- 12.00 noon.

You can now check into our buildings using the Test & Protect Check In Scotland App using your smartphone (see page 12 for details)

Please continue to follow the website for information about our Services. We look forward to welcoming you all back with us again. For those who are unable to return with us at this time we will continue to stream our weekly Sunday services on our Stepps Parish Church YouTube channel

https://www.youtube.com/cha nnel/UCI7mTSz5OIvW_qMKKjcXAw



Charity No: SC014212

Pastoral Letter Rev. Gordon MacRae

very year at Advent we, in our church, mark the weeks of Advent using our Advent Candles. We start each Advent
lighting just one candle, and we are reminded that the smallest of lights can illumine a whole room and that no



amount of darkness can, alone, dim the light. Then two candles are lit and three then four each signifying the growing Advent of Jesus Birth.

Hope, Peace, Love & *Joy* each one light a small unit of its own, each light added to brighten the church. This year our overarching theme is *Jesus Light of the World*.



In December, as the days become duller, the nights darker and longer we acknowledge our need for light.

Now, this is a common human experience across all space and time. Since an ancient first looked to the stars and contemplated his place in the cosmos, we humans have been fascinated by Light. So many people of faith acknowledge God as the source of that light.

"Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that you have kindled" (Judaism)

"The wise see the Lord in the sun, rising in all its golden radiance to give it warmth and light and life to all" (Hindu)

"The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world" (Christianity)

Hanukkah, Diwali, Christmas all share the notion of God's eternal and everlasting light

We believe that Jesus is the *Light of the world,* and that Jesus carries the light into our own, personal and corporate dark worlds.

Sometimes on our journey, the light will be dim and we might feel like we need more light. Other times the light will burn brightly, and the presence of God will burn like a fire within us. But whatever the case, there will always be a little bit of light, if even just a spark.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness

but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

As we journey through this Advent, let us pray that, not only will we find a little light on our path, but that we might be that light for others.

Philippa, Elaine and I join in wishing each and all of you a most Blessed Christmas Season.

Love Gordon.

Session Clerk Letter

ear Friends,

As we head towards the festive season time really does seem to race by with so much to do and prepare for in the run up to the big day. There is growing excitement as it seems this year we'll be able to gather with our nearest and



dearest having experienced a very different more scaled back Christmas last year.

We know however that we continue still to live with the uncertainty that Covid and all the challenges it brings creates for us all and whilst we are in a more positive situation this year we are still not quite back to where we were pre-pandemic. Many will still be separated perhaps for fear of travelling or simply because of illness, self isolation or work.

I know our own Christmas this year will be quite different as our Daughter will be working as a staff nurse in a busy neonatal unit where she and many of her colleaugues and fellow professionals will be working tireslessly to save the most fragile of neonatal lives and working with their families.

This reminds me greatly of the vulnerability and most precious of gifts that we are soon to celebrate. The coming of our '*Lord Jesus Christ'* in the form of an infant child born in a stable. The true meaning of Christmas.

Let us not forget in the midst of all the rush and preparations this Advent that we wait for '*his light'* coming into the world. Something that you will hear a lot about these next few weeks from Gordon as we wait and ponder the true meaning of the season of Advent.

Within this issue I make no apology for focusing somewhat on the vulnerabilities of children. This very week we have hearof the tragic loss of life of some men, women and children crossing our Channel in search of a better life.

As a Church family this year we think of the work of two chraities that do so much good to offer treatment and care for children facing difficulties whether it be physical or emotional. I hope you all agree that they are worthy of our support this year and how they tug at your heart strings. I know they do mine. So please consider supporting them in your givings this Christmas as generously as you can, for a little can go a long way in making a difference to a childs life.

Whatever your plans are for Christmas this year whether they be large or small may I wish you all the happiest of Christmases and every blessing for the season ahead.

Love Lorraine.



190th GLASGOW COMPANY, THE BOYS' BRIGADE Contact: <u>captain190thglasgow@hotmail.com</u>

We hope this finds you all looking forward to Christmas and all that the season brings with it. It seems like a very short time ago I last sat down to write an article for the magazine. They do say if time is rushing past you must be having fun. I think that is definitely true of the Company Section. We have had a busy session so far and it shows no sign of slowing down now!

Cool Creatures, a very successful Zoom session last year was repeated in 'real life' which gave some the opportunity to challenge themselves to be close to creatures they might be less than keen on, whilst we also learned that meerkats have wonderfully soft fur.

Attendance at Remembrance events was well supported by all Boys and the Company was represented at both the George Square Remembrance Parade and at the COP26 Thanksgiving Service at Glasgow Cathedral. Very well done to all on the smart well drilled turnout.

Two visits to BT Murrayfield have been undertaken, Scotland won both games, so they were a great success. Feed back from Boys and parents would certainly seem to agree on that point. A big thank you to 45th Glasgow BB for the use of their minibus for transport and to the parents who provided additional support. This will be repeated in the autumn next year.

Badge work has continued at a fast pace with the 'Target' Boys having all earned their Membership Badge, these will be presented as soon as the new badges become available. Badge classes have also included crafts, signalling, and The Object of the Boys Brigade. Christian Faith has covered some Old Testament heroes, Noah, David, Jonah, and Samuel amongst others.

Our young leaders have made great progress in leading activities, this can be rather daunting to move into as a role, but little steps will get them there. We have been able to put leadership into a more prominent part of our programme as we are now big enough as a company to run in squads. Watch out for updates on the squad competition in later articles.

The Company Section are planning an 'Escape Room' and buffet night for Christmas.

The Anchor Boys and Junior Section are working through their award scheme too, with sessions on basic drill, games, arts and crafts, writing prayers, Remembrance and flags of the world. They are looking forward to their Christmas party night and trip to Flipout.

A couple of things to look out for on our Facebook page: a 'Reverse Advent Calendar' starting First Week in Advent; and 2021 Christmas Decorations and Company Shopping Bags will be on sale soon so again watch Facebook for details. (These will help to raise much needed funds).

We are always looking for new members, so please keep telling friends, family and classmates about us. Contact Colin for details.

Christine Copeland	Colin Goodall	
Lieutenant	Captain (tel. 07828 932807)	

Friendship Club

Programme for November / December



We have two meetings in December: -

Monday 13th when Alastair will be playing Christmas Carols and we will join in.

Monday 20th Festive Lunch at the Garfield

We resume our meetings on Monday 10th January when we will be asking everyone ' Dae ye ken yur Scots Wurds'. This is with the help of Age Scotland and Edinburgh University's adult Literacy course. Please bring along a Scots word or two!

Thanks a lot. Our next meeting will be 10th January, 2022

Kate Houston

Church Flowers

We are now back in our routine of having flowers in church each Sunday. These are funded by donations and purchased and arranged by our floral team, who volunteer their time to beautify our church. They are then distributed to members after each service.

Our volunteer numbers have reduced, as have our donors. If

you feel able and would like to donate, or take a turn at "doing the flowers," then please let me know. Please don't be intimidated or feel daunted by this. A simple vase of flowers is all that is required.

To those who already contribute their time and effort, many thanks. We hope to see you return when you feel able to do so.

Thank you

Margaret Crawford



Flowers at the Chancel

December - January Door Welcome Duty



	Welcome at Door	Track & Trace	Beadle
December 5 th	Al. Macdonald	H. Baker	S. Baker
	Ailsa Macdonald		
12 th	J. Burns. M. Crawford	R. McGovern	J. Hope
19 th	R. McGovern.	E. Watson	H. Baker
	S. MacLean.		
26 th	L. Robertson	C. Skinner	J. Burns
	F. Shields.		
January 2 nd	P. Watson	A. Macdonald	Ј. Норе
	Al. McDonald.		
9 th	F. McGovern	S. Baker	J. Burns
	H. Baker		
16 th	Mgt. Crawford	S. MacLean	S. Baker
	R. McGovern		
23 rd	E. Watson	F. Shields	H. Baker
	P. Watson		
30 th	J. Christie	S. Gowans	J.Burns
	C. Skinner		
February 6 th	H. Baker	A. Macdonald	Ј. Норе
	Al. Macdonald		

If you are unable to do your weekly rota. Please ensure you arrange someone to cover.





LODGING HOUSE MISSION'S CHRISTMAS APPEAL

As we approach Christmas, LHM seeks our help to enable them to feed their clients throughout the Christmas season. Elsewhere in this magazine, see LHM's Christmas Cracker Appeal which invites us to do away with Christmas crackers on our Christmas tables, thereby helping the planet by preventing the accumulation of litter in our bins, and instead donate what we may have spent on crackers to LHM to help fund the cost of feeding the homeless in Glasgow throughout the Christmas period. Please support this appeal and give generously.

WORLD AIDS DAY



WEDNESDAY 1 DECEMBER 2021

Ribbons will be available to purchase in the Church with a suggested minimum donation of £1. Please help us to support this important day and "*Rock the Ribbon*"





World AIDS Day is on **1 December** each year. It's a time for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show support for people living with HIV, and remember all those we've lost to AIDS-related illnesses.

This year marks 40 years since the first reported cases of HIV-related illnesses and deaths. With a renewed drive to end new HIV cases nationally by 2030, it's an important time to take part in World AIDS Day.

An estimated 105,200 people live with HIV in the UK. Yet our recent research found 63% of the public do not remember seeing or hearing about HIV in the past six months. Only a third said they have sympathy for people living with HIV regardless of how they acquired it.

National AIDS Trust is committed to stopping new cases of HIV, securing the rights of people living with HIV, and fighting HIV stigma and discrimination. There's still a crucial need to raise money, increase awareness, and fight prejudice to do this especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

For World AIDS Day 2021 we're asking you to Rock the Ribbon and be an HIV ally.

We know COVID-19 has meant fundraising has looked a bit different, and there's uncertainty about what may be possible this year. Are you ready to say "Rock the Ribbon with us" this World AIDS Day?

LHM 2021

CHRISTMAS CRACKER APPEAL



FEED THE HOMELESS THIS CHRISTMAS <u>and</u> SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

For the price of a box of crackers, you could sponsor the cost of a warm meal this festive season for a homeless person at the Lodging House Mission, Glasgow

WILL YOU FOREGO YOUR CHRISTMAS CRACKERS TO FEED THE HUNGRY?

Please donate your payment in lieu of Crackers to us here at LHM to enable us, on your behalf, to keep the hungry fed this Christmas

THANKYOU



Christmas Post



We have decided to continue with our usual church Christmas mail again this year as we know many of us remain estranged or



isolated and will not be able to share your usual festive greetings with each other. Angela Orme has very kindly offered to oversee the arrangements this year and has been busy recruiting some volunteers to help manage the deliveries along with some help from the Boy's Brigade who have volunteered to be of assistance in helping with deliveries. Post boxes will be in the church and in the entrance to the large hall from Thursday the 25th of November between 10-12.00 am and run for the following two Thursday's until the 6th of December before sorting and ready for distribution commencing 12th of December. Additional volunteers interested in helping can contact Angela Orme on 0141- 779- 2206. A donation of 30p per card or £1 for 4 cards is suggested to avoid handling small change. Please make sure all addresses are local to Stepps for ease of delivery with the correct name and address shown in full.

Sunday club

Sunday club is having a gift service on Sunday 5th December. We would be very grateful if everyone involved in Stepps Parish Church donated a toy, game or cuddly toy suitable for children from 2 to 16. All gifts are given to Glasgow, the caring city for Rev. Neil Galbraith and his helpers to distribute to needy children in the Glasgow area. There is a great need for gifts so please give on Gift Sunday. If you are unable to come on 5th December, you can hand them into the Chestnut cafe or to someone coming to Church on that Sunday.

Sunday club Christmas treat is on Saturday 11th December. Children will be given a letter with all the details.



Image courtesy of istockphoto.com

From Anne, fsther, finda and Arainn.



Marking Advent in Stepps Parish Church wouldn't be the same without the magic of our Advent Wreath mysteriously appearing marking a coutdown to Christmas. The Advent candles represent the fragile light of hope amidst the deep dark of the season. As Christ's Advent, or "coming" draws nearer, a new candle is lit each week, combining with the candle of the passing week. Christ, referred to as the *"Light of the World"* is seen in direct contrast to the bleak darkness of sin. Think of the lighting of the weekly

candle as a spiritual contemplation of your role in the story that is about to unfold and so marks our Advent theme for this year. Our new Banner will proudly adorn our railings and mark the beginning of Advent serving as a constant reminder to us over the coming weeks. To learn more of the History of the Advent Wreath Story you can read a short blog by Daniel Kantor available on the following link.

https://www.nightofsilence.com/blog/2018/11/28/advent-wreath



" You are the light of the world. Then Jesus again spoke to them saying

" I am the Light of the World; he who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life"

John 8: 12

Worship over the Christmas Period

With Christmas this year falling over a weekend we always anticipated it being a busy time in our Church life as if the build up to the day itself wasn't already busy enough. Many of us had hoped that unlike last year there would be a return to a more **'normal'** Christmas in church. With Christmas Eve on a Friday, Christmas Day on a Saturday and Boxing Day on a Sunday there are sadly some logistical issues for congregations to consider. With services traditionally busier there was some updated guidance for congregations to consider stressing the importance of ensuring buildings were thoroughly cleaned, sanitised and ready for use again between services. This means all touch points require to be cleaned regularly (light switches, pews and seats, toilets, door handles etc) and the full church cleaned and sanitised as much as possible during this period. With all the additional cleaning pressures and limited personnel available to ensure that all surface points would be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised the Kirk Session had to make the difficult decision to re-think what was possible. With this is mind our services will not follow our usual pattern of Family Service – Watchnight, Christmas Morning Celebration etc. Instead our services will be as stated below. We thank you all for your understanding.



Sunday 28th November 1st Sunday in Advent 11.00 am

Jesus Light of the World

Sunday 5th December 2nd Sunday in Advent Gift Service 11.00 am

Covid Reflection Service

15.00 pm

Sunday 12th December 3rd Sunday in Advent 11.00 am

Sunday 19th December 4th Sunday in

Advent 11.00 am

Christmas Eve Friday 24th December Service 19.00 pm

No Watchnight Service

Christmas Morning 25th December

No service

Sunday 26th December - Boxing Day

Morning service 11.00 am



Christmas Charities

As Christians we think of others and as is our custom in Stepps Parish Church we nominate two charities one overseas and one closer to home to support. This year I'm sure you'll agree that both charities are worthy of our support. Our two choosen charities are SmileTrain and Crossreach. Retiral collections will be collected over our Christamas services and divided between the two. We thank you in advance and urge you to give generously.



Smile Train is an international children's charity with a sustainable approach to a single, solvable problem: cleft lip and palate.

Many children with untreated clefts around the

world live in isolation, but more importantly, 1 in 700 babies are born with a cleft lip and/or palate globally. Clefts cause difficulties **eating**, **breathing**, **hearing**, and **speaking**. Cleft treatment is safe, and the impact on the child is immediate.

Smile Train is the world's largest cleft-focused organisation, with a sustainable and local model of supporting surgery and other forms of essential care. Over the last 20+ years, we have supported safe and quality cleft care for 1.5+ million children and will continue to do so until every child in need with a cleft has access to the care they deserve.

And through our sustainable "teach a man to fish" model, Smile Train is not only raising the standard of cleft care and safety – we're setting it. The support we provide has elevated the standards of care for cleft patients at our partner hospitals around the world, ultimately elevating the standards of care for all patients.

As a result of our efficiency, and with the help of our donors and partners, Smile Train has supported safe and quality cleft care for 1.5+ million children and will continue to do so until every child in need with a cleft has access to the care they deserve.

You can find out more on the work of *SmileTrain* and the remarkable work they do on the following link: https://www.smiletrain.org



Changing the World One Smile at a Time



For many people, life is difficult. Faced with various physical, emotional and social challenges, we aren't always equipped to cope on our own.

But at *CrossReach* we believe that with the right support, at the right time, every person can flourish and every life can be fulfilling.

Crossreach is there for everyone supporting vulnerable families, adults with learning disabilities or substance abuse, vulnerable elderly or the very young as well as supporting Homlessness and prison offenders. Services include providing emotional support for Children, young people and families, counselling, daycare services, respite and much more.

Every monetary gift received is used to enhance and enrich the lives of people in Scotland who are going through tough or troubling times. You can have faith that your money will be spent where it is needed most.

- £5 could help fund a week's supply of tea and coffee at one of our counselling centres.
- £10 could buy a cooking pot and utensils to use over an outdoor campfire for outdoor learning fun.
- £25 could allow a child affected by their parent's substance misuse to take part in activities to build self-esteem and confidence.
- £50 could cover the cost of a 1-hour counselling session for someone at rock bottom who doesn't have the means to pay for the support they need.
- £100 enables a new mum to leave her baby safe in the hands of our trained creche workers while she has her counselling sessions
- £500 enables someone in recovery from addiction to access the counselling support they need to succeed.



Will you be a hero to a child like Julie this Christmas?

Christian Aid Christmas Appeal

Mums on the frontline of the climate crisis face impossible choices every day, but our decision to stand with them is an easy one.

The climate crisis in South Sudan is polluting fragile water sources, killing crops and destroying homes. Combined with years of conflict and the Covid-19 pandemic, it's forcing mums to make impossible choices for their children. Dirty water, or none at all? A morsel of food each, or a bigger portion for one? School fees, or materials to rebuild the family home?



Yokwe with her youngest Child

Your gifts this Christmas could help build more boreholes, provide seeds and farming tools, and give mums the chance to set up small businesses. With clean water, nutritious food and ways to earn money, mums like Adut won't have to make such impossible choices. We all do what we can for the children in our lives, especially at Christmas. You can stand with mums this Christmas and help the next generation grow.

Christian Aid envelopes are available in the church to make donations or you can donate online at <u>https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christmas-appeal</u>



A Hedgehog in the grass.

How long is it since you last saw a hedgehog?

October - November is tradionally the month(s) when we see our little friends hibernate for the Winter. Icy temperatures can make winter survival tough for some wildlife, but in a milder winter you may still see hedgehogs out and about in December.

The UK has lost a third of its population since 2000, and their numbers are declining as fast as tigers in the wild.

They are now officially classed as vulnerable to extinction in the IUCN's Red List for British Mammals. There are many reasons and it's sad to think that, for future generations, such a fate would make this lovely, prickly God's creature only a character in storybooks.

Here are 10 simple tips to help them.

1. Link your garden with a Hedgehog Highway. Hedgehogs travel between 1-2 km a night searching for food and a mate. Leaving a small gap in your fence the size of a CD case will let hedgehogs through but be too small for pets.

BHPT/PTES sell snazzy little recyclable Hedgehog Highway signs, for a few pounds. Ask your neighbours to do the same!

2 Create a wild corner in your garden so they can snuffle around for insects.

3. Tidy up netting and litter which can trap hedgehogs due to their spines. Even rubber bands dropped by the postie can become embedded in their skin, causing a slow, painful death.

4. Put out food and water. You can supplement their diet with wet dog or cat food (preferably not fish based). No bread, milk or mealworms, which are all extremely bad for them. For those who are into simple DIY you can make a feeding station to stop other animals having a free supper - details on the BHPS website/YouTube

5. Stop using chemicals especially slug pellets. Hedgehogs are a gardener's best friend as they eat slugs as well as many other beasties which would otherwise be devouring your prize flowers and vegetables.

6. Check before mowing or strimming. Hedgehogs often sleep in long grass or hedges during daytime and won't run away if they hear a mower, resulting in horrific injuries or death. Use gloves to move a single hog to safety. If theres a family, call the BHPS for advice on 01584 890801, the SSPCA on 0300 999 999 or Google to find your local Hedgehog Rescue.

7. Be careful with bonfires or simply burning leaves. Piles of debris are irresistible to a hedgehog looking for somewhere to hibernate or nest – build it on the day of burning to avoid a tragic end, or if you have to build it before then check carefully with a pole or broom, not a spade or fork. They are usually in the centre.

8. Make a home for hedgehogs. A log pile is one of the best features for encouraging all kinds of wildlife, and easy to make. It will encourage insects and provide nesting opportunities all year around. Alternatively, you can make your own hedgehog house – download instructions from the BHPS website.

9. Keep an eye out for hedgehogs when driving at night, &; let it get over the road safely if you see one. If you see it too late try to steer so it will pass under the middle of the car where it is least likely to be harmed.

10. Record hedgehog sightings, including dead ones, on The Big Hedgehog Map website.

This is important in building up a picture of where they are most active & how we can encourage local populations. A hedgehog seen during the day is usually in need of help & you should contact one of the organisations above. If you'd like to do more, you can become a Hedgehog Champion by registering on the Hedgehog Street website, where you can find lots of resources to make your gardens, neighbourhood and Parish, hedgehogfriendly zones.

Moira Grant

Volunteer Hedgehog Champion with the British

Hedgehog Preservation Society/Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species.

Letters from the Congregation



Childhood Memories

When reading last months **Prospect** magazine I was interested in the article about Rev. Muriel Pearson. When I was a child Jane Jennings (who died recently) asked me to fund raise for St. Andrews Church, Jerusalem. I would imagine several children in Stepps did this as well. Jane gave us books of one penny prints. The idea was we signed up Mum and Dad and relatives to pledge one penny (per week possibly). These funds were sent to the minister of the church in Jerusalem Rev. John Smith (I'm sure that was his name). A plaque was put up in the church there with all the childrens names and we were given or shown a photo of it. This would be possibly 60 years ago (or longer).

June Bennie (McNish)

Ann Neilson wishes to convey her appreciation for the cards & messages that she has recently received from friends acquaintances and quoted from Ann her 'Church Family'. In a few words a big 'Thank You' for all the support during this difficult time.

Let us continue to have Ann in our thoughts and prayers. May God bless her and give her strength to stay strong as she continues with treatment for her good health.

Our thoughts & prayers also for Mary Bruce's Husband, Neil, who is unwell.

Have your Say!

Our recent Givings Day Service held on the 31st of October raised £865 which is a fantastic amount given our reduced numbers. The Finance Team are able to claim some Gift Aid back on this figure increasing the final total. The Kirk Session agreed that the funds would be held locally and be used for the benefit of our own congregation- church in the future. We thank you all for your generous givings and supporting the work of your church.

Lorraine Robertson Session Clerk

If you would like to share any news / letters or comment on any articles please feel free to share with your church family by sending your letters to Gordon or Lorraine or pop them in the post box.

One Life Can Make a Difference

One song can spark a moment One flower can wake the dream One bird can herald spring One smile begins a friendship One handclasp lifts a soul One star can guide a ship at sea One word can frame the goal One vote can change a nation One sunbeam lights a room One candle wipes out darkness One laugh will conquer gloom One step must start a journey One word must start a prayer One hope will raise our spirits One touch can show you care One voice can speak with wisdom One heart can know what's true One life can make a difference You see, it's up to you Anon



