

Christmas Newsletter

St Fillan's
Parish Church
Aberdour

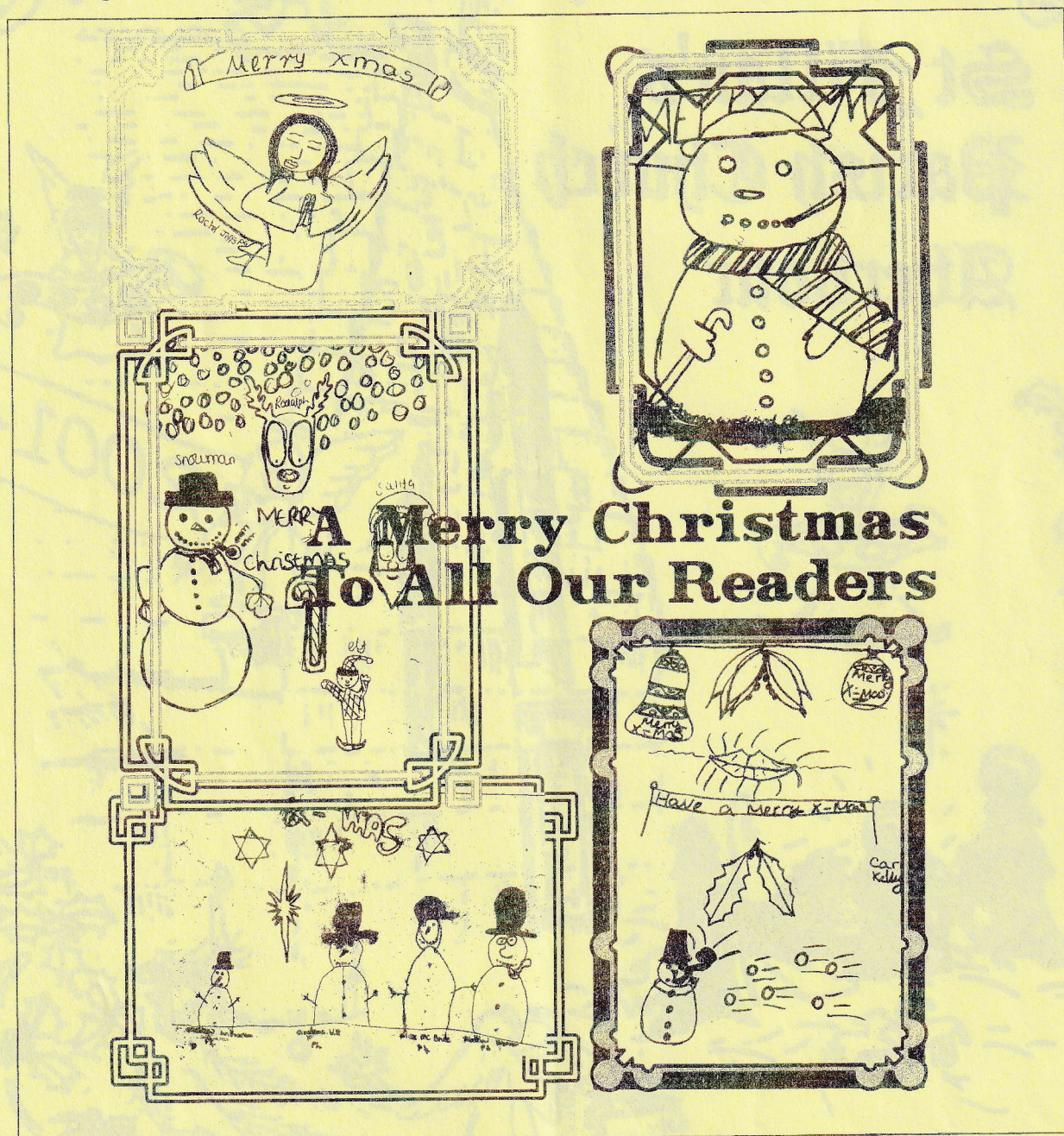
2001



Church Newsletter Committee:
Collette Adam
Linda Brown Distribution
Catherine Duncan
David Hannah
Eileen Harper
Kenneth Hodge Editor

Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter can be handed to any member of the committee.

The Editor wishes to thank the artists from Aberdour Primary School for providing the Christmas Gallery.



A personal gift at Christmas

Christmas is a time for gifts and many of us will have experienced the organised 'communal' exchange when people collectively exchange gifts with someone at school, friendship groups or work. You may know the drill; everyone draws a name, purchases an appropriate gift, and then 'anonymously' brings the gift to the party or whatever. I recall an anecdotal story of someone at primary school who was disappointed at the outcome of this 'exchange'. To preserve anonymity I will call him Jim. Jim had drawn a name. His Mother (nothing changes does it!) had purchased and wrapped a gift, which Jim brought to school and placed under the tree in the classroom. The time eventually came for the exchange of gifts and Jim was quite excited.

What gift would he get?

The presents were taken from under the tree and the names were called. Jim kept thinking that he would be next. Finally everybody's name except Jim's been called and Jim realised that whoever had drawn his name had forgotten to bring a gift. On her desk the teacher had 5 or 6 gifts that were used for emergencies such as this. "Here Jim" she said, "take one of these." But for Jim it wasn't the same. These were 'generic' gifts, and nobody wants a generic gift when you were expecting personalised gift with your own name on it.

I often think of Jim when I read what I believe to be one of the most important and meaningful verses in the bible. It is John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life". Some reading this might say, "Well, if the gift of God is for everyone, it's generic". But when **YOU** look at that verse carefully, and in light of the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, you see how beautifully personal it is. So who may receive the personal gift of God's grace? Each person who responds to the generous offer of God's love.

I invite you to revisit that lovely verse, this time putting your own name in the spaces:

"For God so loved that he gave his only Son, so that
..... would not perish but have eternal life." The personal gift which God gives

YOU is the offer of salvation. I hope and pray that you accept it
with open arms.

Peter Park
Parish Minister

A Christmas story

One of the big selling children's toys this year is Thunderbirds' 'Tracy Island'. There is a tale about a Glasgow (could it have been anywhere else?) couple desperate to track one down who decided to send Gran'dad round the shops. After numerous fruitless searches he visited yet another toy department and to save time shouted to a young shop assistant "I'm looking for Tracy Island. "Her reply in Glasgow patois - "Nae bother son! - what department does she work in?"

CHRISTMAS SERVICES IN ST FILLAN'S

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ALL OR ANY OF THESE



Sun 3rd 10.30 Morning Worship
Handbell ringers
6.30 Evening Worship

Sun 10th 10.30 Morning Worship
Scottish Bible Society

Sun 17th 10.30 Morning Worship

Sunday School Nativity 

Sun 17th 12-1  Carols at the castle
Charity collection on the day
café open for refreshments

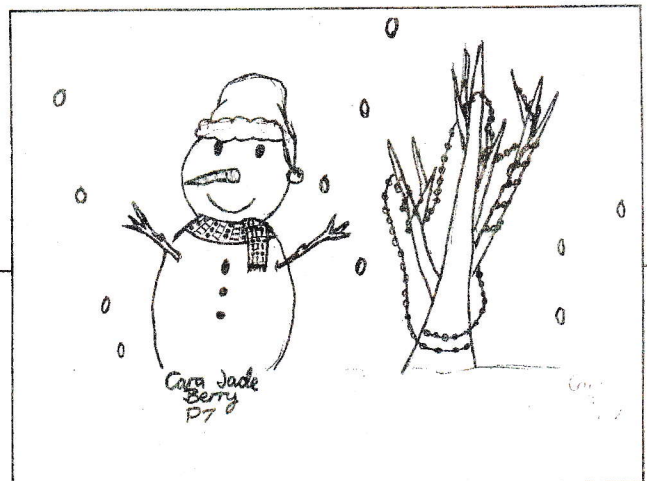
Fri 22nd 10.00  Primary School
end of term service

Sun 24th 10.30 Service of readings and carols

Sun 24th 11.15PM  Watch night Service
Please bring a torch with you

Mon 25th 10.30  Christmas Day Service
Followed by Sacrament of Communion

Sun 31st 10.30 Morning Worship



A visit to the Church of Scotland in Tarbert, Harris.

Eric Williamson

All hats and starched collars

Having enjoyed holidays to the beautiful isle of Harris in the Western Isles for a number of years, Barbara and I decided during our visit this past summer that it was high time we worshipped at a local Church. We had always been a little concerned that without the Gaelic our participation in a service would be distinctly limited. It was also a cause for apprehension that we were completely unaccustomed to the traditions of the Free Church, The Reformed Free Church or indeed any of the



now numerous forms of Free Presbyterianism represented on the Island.

“Never fear” said Catherine, the owner of our delightful holiday cottage, “come along to the Church of Scotland in Tarbert”. She was able to assure me that the service would be conducted in English and that we would of course be most welcome. This year we were joined on holiday by Barbara’s Brother, his wife and family and so another potential problem - what to do with the boys - was solved. It was explained that the usual Minister was on holiday and that worship would be led by a visiting preacher from Northern Ireland.

The full significance of Catherine’s comment that “he’s a wee bit like that Ian Paisley” escaped me during our conversation. it was to become all too apparent the following morning.

Leaving our pair, their Uncle and Cousins to an idyllic morning of glorious sunshine and innumerable sand castles, Barbara and I together with Sister-in-law Julie set off for the 11 am service at Tarbert, the “capital” of Harris. On arrival it was immediately obvious that we were all somewhat underdressed for the occasion by comparison with the large throng of worshippers heading for the church. We’d neither a stiff collar nor hat amongst us! What were we to do?

Well the perfect and blindingly clear excuse was of course that we were tourists and so we were presumably forgiven this minor indiscretion. They let us in. By the time we took our seats the church was pleasingly full. The congregation spanned the generations with a fair sprinkling of children. Regulation dress for men was of course a dark suit while for the majority of ladies hats were the norm.

The atmosphere was hushed. Greetings were by a nod of the head, a whisper for the bold. I was certain that the organist would at any moment provide me with the cover I needed to ask the keeper of the pan drops for supplies. But try as I might I couldn’t see Jim’s counterpart. “He’s got it easy here” I thought, surmising that pre service music was not the tradition. I had been aware of course that tuning forks were preferred in some quarters to pipe organs but surely this was the 21st century and this was after all the Church of Scotland!

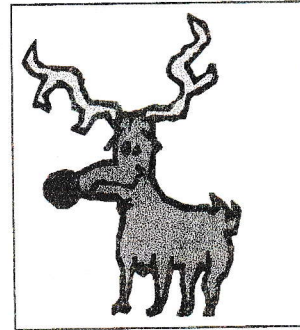
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WARNING: Exposure to the Son may prevent burning
Plan ahead, it wasn’t raining when Noah built the ark.
Having truth decay? Brush up on your Bible.
Give Satan an inch and he will be a ruler.

American bumper stickers

What's in a name?

In 1939 Robert May Chicago, wrote a poem about one of Santa's reindeer with an illuminated nose. He suggested the name Rollo but it was rejected. He then thought of Reginald and that too was turned down. Finally he came up with Rudolph!



Comment from the Editor

Life is odd. Having been born and instructed into the ways of human kind one is abandoned to make the best of a very difficult lot. Options abound. There are multiple turns at every crossing. There are stumbling blocks every where and mostly unseen. Conflicting advice fires at you like cinema surround sound. In amongst all this one is supposed to make decisions that will see one through to life's natural conclusion.

Over and above the external influences, one's mind dreams up the most preposterous reasons for not doing this or indeed, for doing that. Self doubt, inability, indecision, lack of confidence, fear and a host of other feelings rage within us all. Is it a wonder that one falters?

Counter to all this is the human being's ability to pull out the stops when "The going gets tough." This strange mix of electric currents and chemicals can produce such a range of abilities from a fighting spirit to deep passionate, tender loving concern.

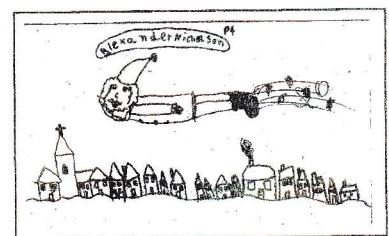
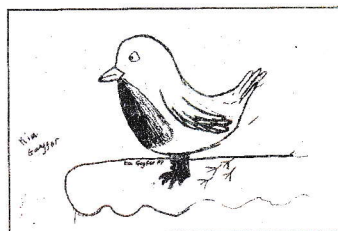
Oddly enough, we are taught the fighting bit, but the other side of the coin is left for us to find out for ourselves how to engage self control.

Two thousand years ago Christ said that love was the strongest force we have and laid down the guidelines that would get us through this odd ball existence. Such guide lines that would take the chaos out of our fire cracker decisions. Because parallel universes only exist in the minds of Sci. fi writers we have no idea how much Christ has influenced the path of life but I would suggest that this life would have been a far sorrier thing had his influence not been so complete. At Christmas say "Thank you".

The Swallows were back this year.

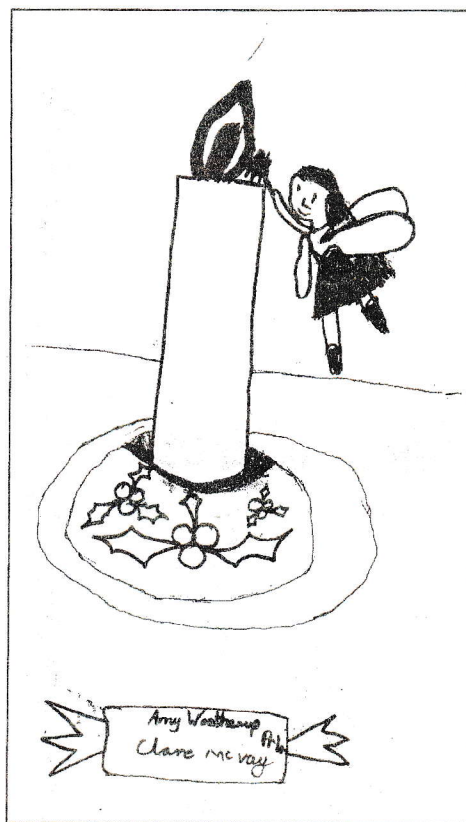


Following attempts to discourage swallows from nesting in the church porch, the birds were back. This year two nests were set up and the photograph taken by Helen Hannay, shows the first brood of youngsters getting ready for the big trip to Africa and beyond. Round about late July, early August a second pair of birds set up home in the south corner of the porch and produced three youngsters. The worry was would they be ready to fly with the flock? The answer was no and the parent birds were still feeding the chicks when the rest left. They finally took flight at the end of September.



GREAT TRUTHS ABOUT LIFE THAT CHILDREN HAVE LEARNED

- 1) No matter how hard you try, you can't baptise cats.
- 2) When your Mum is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- 3) If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- 4) Never ask your 3-year-old brother to hold a tomato.
- 5) You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- 6) Reading what people write on desks can teach you a lot.
- 7) Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- 8) Puppies still have bad breath, even after eating a tic-tac.
- 9) Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time.
- 10) School lunches stick to the wall.
- 11) You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- 12) Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts.
- 13) The best place to be when you're sad is Grandpa's lap.



Thank You

The Treasurer has handed to the Newsletter two thank you letters.

Leonard Cheshire (Scotland) thanks St Fillan's for the £178.01 for the Acquired Brain Injury Appeal raised from a special church collection.

The Scottish Motor Neurone Disease Association thanks us for the £400 raised at the film show in the church hall. (This sum including "gift aid" ultimately reached £540. My personal thanks to all who supported the event. K Hodge)

Heartfelt thanks are extended to all who contributed so generously in so many different ways to making the **Sale of Work** such a success this year, the final total for which amounted to £3102-31.

Are you interested in Church membership?
If so please speak with the Minister who is planning to hold an enquirer's class early in 2001.

