

# GRAPEVINE

Mayfield Salisbury Parish (Edinburgh) Church of Scotland  
Working towards a Parish Union on 1 January 2025 with  
Craigmillar Park and Priestfield Churches to be known as:

**Newington Trinity Church of Scotland**



*Created at Messy Church - See page 8*

LETTER FROM THE MANSE

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

HEATING RENEWAL PROJECT



# FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends,

In my favourite TV quiz show, *Richard Osman's House of Games*, one of the regular rounds for the celebrity contestants is called High Brow, Low Brow. The answer is the same to a 'high brow' and a 'low brow' question, with two points if you get the answer from the first 'high brow' question and one point can't answer it then, but can do so with the 'low brow' alternative. Whether you get the answer 'Piggy' from a character in *Lord of the Flies* or in *The Muppets*, you will still get some reward! As we approach Christmas, there are plenty of 'high brow' and 'low brow' options on how to celebrate.

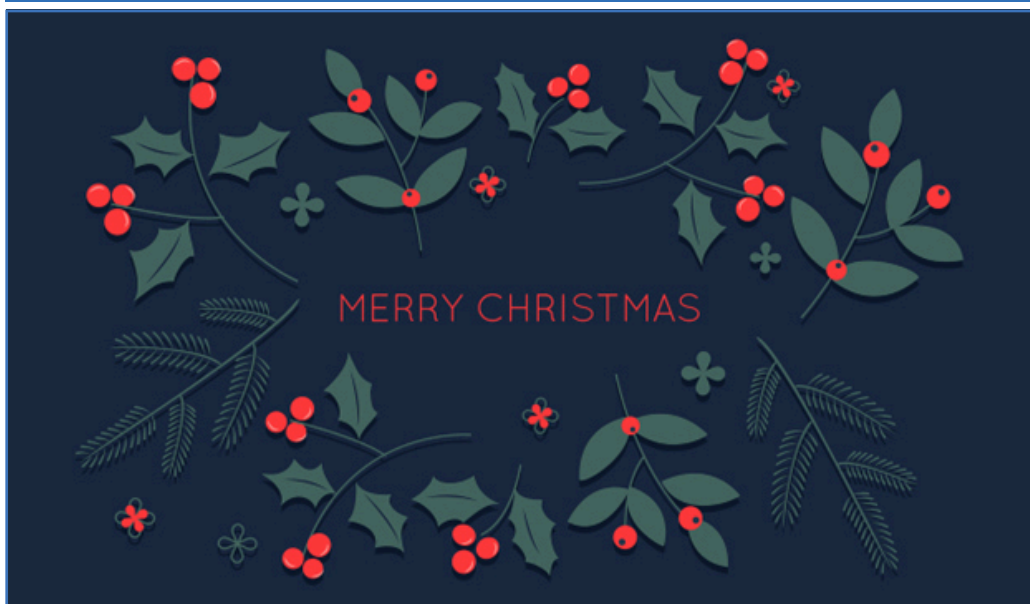
For some, 'Christmas would not be Christmas' without a 'high brow' diet of Carols from King's College Chapel and the message from the monarch on the telly, a trip to the *The Nutcracker* ballet, watching Andre Rieu from Vienna and *It's a Wonderful Life*, and enjoying a selection of fine pâté and cheese with some vintage port. For others, it might be the more 'low brow' options of *Now That's What I Call Christmas* blasting out Slade, Wham and the Pogues, some dodgy disco dancing at the office party night, watching *The Great Escape* and *Elf*, and enjoying a few boxes of Twiglets and After Eights, with some cans of Tennents and a bottle of Advocaat. Who's to say that one is any better or worse than the other: 'one person's meat is another's poison', after all? As long as we can all sing together on cue, in the words of Mr Noddy Holder himself, 'here it is, merry Christmas, everybody's having fun.'

Christ-mas, at least by tradition, is a celebration of the birth of Jesus in the most humble of circumstances, but for Christian believers with earth-shattering and almost overwhelming consequences. The coming of Jesus Christ into this world, God

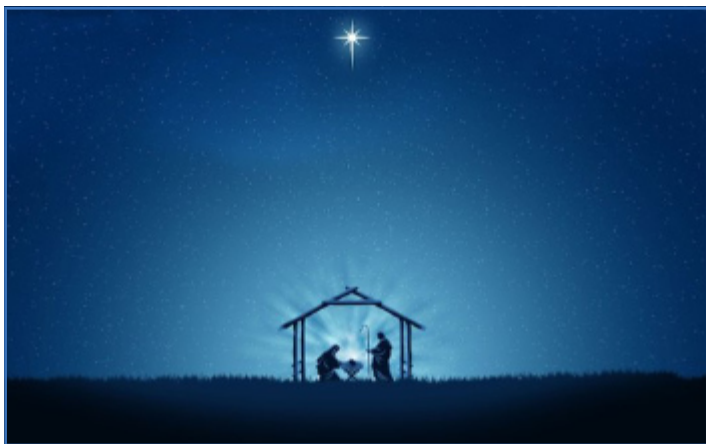


incarnated and came to earth, both fully human and fully divine, is the ultimate 'low brow' and 'high brow' moment combined.

On the one hand, it couldn't get more 'low brow' than being born in a stable to an unmarried mother with a cattle trough for a crib, with a few rough and ready shepherds being the first to greet your arrival. Jesus was very ordinary and lowly in His human background, and throughout His earthly life humbled Himself before the outcasts and the diseased as the 'Servant King', whilst confronting the exploitation and hubris of His earthly rulers. There's a Christmas t-shirt which is selling well in America amongst those who were deflated rather than delighted by the outcome of the recent Presidential election. It says on the front *Rejoice in the Birth of a Brown Skinned, Middle Eastern, Undocumented Immigrant!* If only those who claim the name of Christian and yet spew out overt discrimination and chant for mass deportations had the time to read a Gospel this Christmas; and realise who Jesus was and the way of life that he modelled. Jesus would not be standing alongside those shouting the taunts and signing the decrees, but with those who will be herded into the trucks.



On the other hand, it couldn't get more 'high brow' than the deeper meaning of the Christmas story. As Isaiah prophesied in the Old Testament, from the familiar words of the King James translation, 'for unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'



There could be nothing more momentous than such a dramatic rupture in the seemingly inevitable course of human history, one of toil and bloodshed and heartache, than the coming promise of new life, new light and a world of peace, reconciliation and harmony in the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God on earth. In Him, all hope was born and all love was shown, as the journey towards Calvary and the empty tomb began.

May God bless you and your loved ones in the coming Advent time. May you have a very happy Christmas, whether it might be 'high brow', 'middle brow' or 'low brow' (or like me, probably a combination of them all!). And as you celebrate the birth of the Saviour, may the love, peace and hope of God be your companions in these days, and throughout the coming year.

God bless,

Sandy

# CHRISTMAS

@ 'Newington Trinity' Parish Church



A very happy Christmas from 'Newington Trinity' Church. We'll be celebrating the wonder of Christmas and the birth of Jesus with a variety of services at which you are very much welcome, including our popular Christingle Service and Messy Church. Come along to share in the real meaning of Christmas in carols, readings and prayers. We would love to see you there. May God bless you and your loved ones at this special time, and in the New Year.

*Rev'd Dr Sandy Forsyth*

## Sunday 8 December

9.30am All-Age Service with communion  
10.45am Traditional Service with communion

## Sunday 15 December

10.30am All-Age Worship - Nativity story  
1.00pm Carol Singing - Nicolson Square Gardens  
7.30pm A Choral Celebration of Carols

## Sunday 22 December

10.30am Joint Sunday Service  
6.30pm Christingle Service

## Tuesday 24 December

4.00pm Messy Church with Christingle  
11.30pm Watchnight Service

## Wednesday 25 December

10.30am Christmas Day Celebration

## Sunday 29 December

10.30am Service of Nine Readings and Carols



# NEWS

## A CHORAL CELEBRATION OF CAROLS



The Church Choir are presenting a concert of Christmas music in Mayfield Salisbury sanctuary on Sunday 15 December at 7.30pm. There will be lots of favourites as well as some less familiar carols some poetry, and lots of carols for all to join in.

Please come along to help us to launch the Christmas period in an hour of special seasonal music.

## AFTERNOON SERVICES

2025 Dates for your Diary

- 11 March • 13 May
- 1 July • 9 September
- 11 November

Tuesday dates for our 2025 Afternoon Services at 2.30pm (until around 3.45pm) in the Bill McDonald Hall are noted to the left

These quieter and relaxed services are open to all who would like to come, and especially relevant for those who now find it difficult to attend Sunday services for reasons of infirmity, transport, time of day, etc. There are usually around 25 – 30 people and we sit around the tables then enjoy tea afterwards. We look forward to welcoming you next year! Pauline Robertson, Parish Deacon, will be pleased to hear from you if you would like to know more.

## STEWARDSING GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Saturday 17 to Thursday 22 May 2025



Stewards play a significantly important role to ensure that many of the backup services, in support of the General Assembly, operate in a highly efficient, welcoming and friendly manner. Throughout the week of the General Assembly some 150 stewards help to cover over 400 different duties. Each 'shift' generally lasts for about three hours and it is up to each steward as to how often they wish to help.

With so many tasks to undertake we are always seeking new volunteers and we are still short of our required target for 2025. If you think you might like to help us then please get in touch for more information. Your help would be very greatly appreciated.

For more details please contact the Chief Steward, Sandy Gemmill, at [assemblystewards@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:assemblystewards@churchofscotland.org.uk) or speak with William Mearns, the Church Manager at church.

## GIFT SERVICES THANK YOU!



1 December was our Annual Gift Services Sunday. Letters of thanks come in every year and with his permission, here's a section of the thank you letter sent out by the organiser of the Christmas Gift Collection at HMP Edinburgh in January 2024.

*Dearest Friends.*

*Thank you for your kindness and generosity. Every child that visited the visitors centre during the time leading up to Christmas received a gift, whether their parents or guardians requested them or not. This year three hundred and twenty-eight children from one hundred and twenty-six families had Christmas presents to open on Christmas morning due to your kindness and generosity.*

Anne Graham

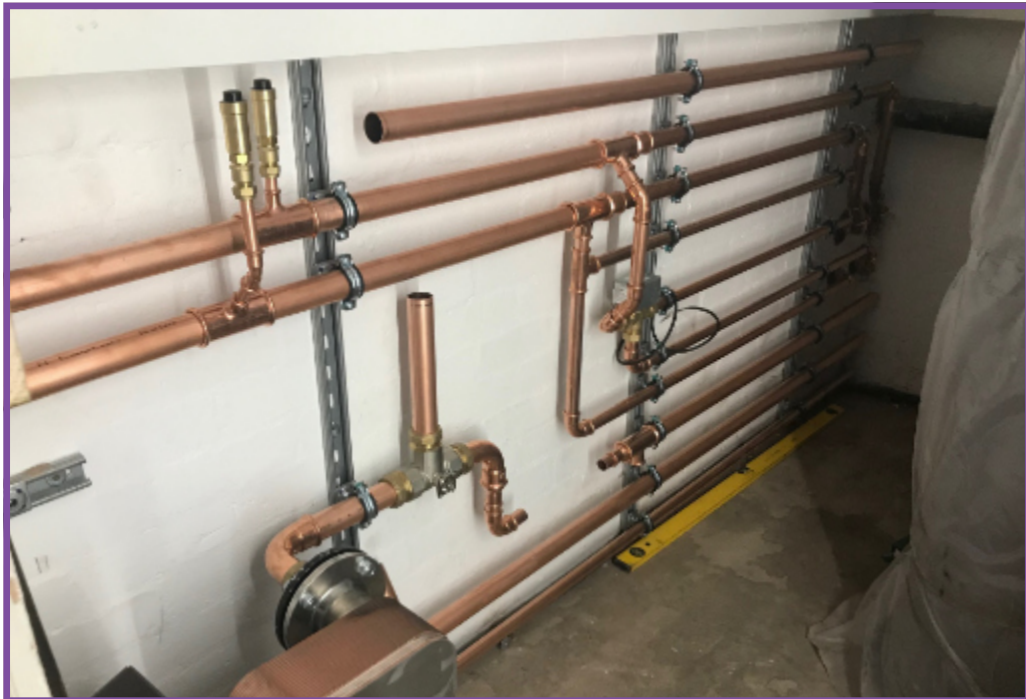
We obviously didn't provide all those items but we contributed a generous portion. With my warmest thanks on behalf of our own team.

# SCOT BABY BOX APPEAL



Many thanks to those who kindly donated and 12 colleagues spent the day sorting, packing, weighing and labelling aid which will be driven over to Ukraine early next month. These were delivered to the charity's warehouse on Tuesday, where Louise Your generosity is much appreciated.

# HEATING RENEWAL PROJECT



Photos: New pipework and hot water storage in the new plant room below the Bill McDonald Upper Hall

## Halls

Work is well advanced on the halls project and so far there have been no unexpected problems. The installation of the heat pumps is close to completion and work is well under way on putting solar panels on the hall roof. It looks at the moment as if the work will essentially be complete before Christmas!

## Sanctuary

The Heating Working Group has had several discussions about what to do in the sanctuary. The problem in the sanctuary is the distribution of heat, because the Victorian pipework in the trenches is life-expired. The heating working group reported it agreed some time ago that the only effective answer to

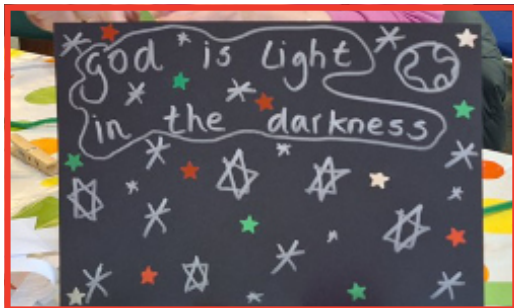
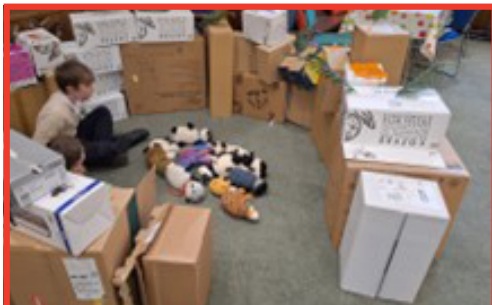


that was to install underfloor heating. Radiant heaters would be obtrusive and expensive in regular use and convector heaters would be noisy and expensive in regular use. Underfloor heating would be unobtrusive and more effective although it would have to be supplemented by a few convector heaters or radiators because the size of the space.

Underfloor heating is also better suited to run on environmentally friendly heat sources such as Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs). ASHPs could not generate heat and volume to run the Victorian pipework.

Work continues.

# MESSY CHURCH



During the Autumn there have been two sessions of Messy Church.

At the end of September we looked at "Who is God? What is God like?"

To answer these questions we thought about God as creator, our guide, our light and his power, and loving nature. To help us explore this we created shapes out of clay and on paper, there was an opportunity to be guided round an obstacle course, make a light picture and a powerful crocodile. With songs, chat and then hotdogs followed by cake, it was a really good time. Fun, whilst finding out about God.

October Messy was an opportunity to find out about Jesus - that he is the Son of God, our friend, he cares for us like a shepherd and is our light. Hunting for the lost sheep around the building and then putting them safely in the sheepfold was a favourite, as was making a lantern, making a friendship bracelet and icing an angel.

Pasta bolognese followed by apple crumble and custard finished everything off.



On 30 November, we learned about Advent. We also decorated a Christmas tree and created an Advent wreath, as well as the seasonal snowballing (a traditional favourite!).

On Christmas Eve, 24 December, there will be a Messy Christingle at 4.00pm, with refreshments beforehand. A good way to start Christmas.

All families are always welcome, for fun, a lot of activity and chat, songs, food and sharing the message of Jesus.



# Can you help us care?

Our church supports The Care Van, a ministry providing soup and hot drinks to those experiencing homelessness in Edinburgh.

If you would like to consider joining our church team as a volunteer, we would love to hear from you. Joining a team is a meaningful way to serve in our community, connect with others in our church and strengthen our relationship with both each other and with Jesus.

We would be delighted to have you on board!

**If you are interested, please contact the church office for more information. 0131 667 1522 or [churchmanager@googlemail.com](mailto:churchmanager@googlemail.com)**



**In our city, for our city.**

[www.edinburghcitymission.org.uk](http://www.edinburghcitymission.org.uk)  
Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation Reg No. SC050844



# SOUTHSIDE FAITH CARE

Hello from Dan and Su!

It's been wonderful to see so many of you at our groups and the word spreading to others locally.

We've been growing our online presence, so do check out our website: [www.southsidefaithcare.org](http://www.southsidefaithcare.org) and our Facebook page: 'Southside Faith Care' to keep updated.

We wanted to particularly highlight two groups and a talk we're currently running and two groups coming up in the New Year and our exciting Christmas Party at the beginning of December.

## Current

**Sporting Memories** - enjoy chatting about sport? We talk about all sports, from 50 years ago to 5 days ago; no sporting moment or player is off the cards! Come and meet like-minded people who enjoy a blether about sport. Thursdays, 11am-12.30pm. Priestfield Church, EH16 5HW

**Community Art** - We run a weekly art/crafts group with a creative facilitator leading us through different art/craft activities each week. No expertise required- come along if you want to get creative, learn something new and relax doing some art with others. Wednesdays, 2-5pm, The Salisbury Centre, 2 Salisbury Road, EH16 5AB (last session 11 December)

**Let's Talk Care** - Come along to free talks about Care, run in partnership with Home Instead. All welcome. All free. Light refreshments provided. Friday 6th December, 12.30-1.30pm. Carer Support Friday 10 January, 12.30-1.30pm. Power of Attorney.

## Upcoming

**Craft, Games, Soup!** Enjoy boardgames? Chess? Relaxing doing crafts? Or perhaps you would just appreciate being in a warm space with a mug of soup chatting away? This group will be a relaxed space to play a boardgame, take part in crafts, bring your own crafts or simply chat with others. Soup and hot drinks will be provided.

Start date in January 2025- stay in touch for news of specific start dates!

## Digital Groups

- After much enthusiasm and interest, we're running further digital groups- alongside Tap into IT- for support with your devices. Bring your laptop, phone and/or tablet and get the help you need with a hot drink included!



Tuesdays, 2-4pm, 21 January for 5 weeks, Priestfield Church, EH16 5HW

Thursdays, 1.30-3.30pm, 23rd January for five weeks, Morningside United Church, 15 Chamberlain Road, EH10 4DH

**Christmas Party!** This is for everyone- whether you've come to a group before, volunteered or simply want a free mince pie! Join us on Tuesday, 10 December 2-4pm at Priestfield Church for a festive time with others. Expect mince pies, Christmas crafts and music!

Finally, we want Southside Faith Care to be a charity where we do things that you want in the community for older people. So, if you have an idea for a new group or a talk e.g. local history or know someone who may enjoy coming along, we would love to hear from you- please get in touch. Our contact details are below.

Stay warm and hope to see lots of you soon!

Dan - Activities Coordinator:  
[dan@southsidefaithcare.org](mailto:dan@southsidefaithcare.org)  
07587014948

Su - Development Lead:  
[su@southsidefaithcare.org](mailto:su@southsidefaithcare.org)  
07478 543510

**Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church is uniting with its friends  
Craigmillar Park and Priestfield Churches on 1 January 2025.  
The united church will be known as Newington Trinity.**

# **INVITATION**

**The Rev Dr Alexander (Sandy) Forsyth, LLB BD (Min)  
together with  
the Kirk Session of Mayfield Salisbury cordially**

**invite you to  
Mayfield Salisbury -  
A Celebration Service of Nine Lessons,  
Poems, and Carols**

**On Sunday 29 December 2024  
at 10.30am  
at Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church  
18 West Mayfield, Edinburgh, EH9 1TQ**



**ALL WELCOME**

## Coffee and Crafts

A huge thank-you to everyone who supported the Christian Aid Coffee and Crafts afternoon. We are grateful to all our makers, bakers and stall holders – and of course to all those who purchased our goods and enjoyed the opportunity to meet and chat in the café. Together we raised around £2,400 in support of the DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal, of which Christian Aid is a participant. It was a particular pleasure to work as a team with the newly combined Newington Trinity Christian Aid group, and we look forward to a busy future together.

## Christian Aid Carol Service

Come and immerse yourself in the Christmas spirit at the Christian Aid Carol Service 2024, taking place at New Town Church, Edinburgh, Wednesday 11 December at 6.30pm. With a theme of peace, this special service will include numerous carols led by Siskin Green and Fischy Music. The keynote address will be delivered by John L Bell of the Iona Community. Plus, we'll be hearing from partners in the Middle East and in South Sudan, which is the focus of this year's Christmas Appeal.

The service will run for a little more than an hour, followed by mince pies and tea/coffee. If you would like to reserve a free ticket, or to receive the livestream link nearer the time, please sign up using the form at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/christian-aid-carol-service-2024>

Val Brown, head of Christian Aid Scotland, writes:

*Every day we see horrific images of death, destruction and displacement coming from Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. Across Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon lives have been shattered, families grieve, and poverty is further entrenched. Shamefully, war is more profitable to*

*many than peace, and weapons companies spend billions of dollars on lobbyists to protect their interests.*

*Peace seems elusive, and yet we dare to hope. We hope because we see people who espouse empathy – those who give generously, those who write to their elected representatives to call for a ceasefire, those who pray unceasingly, and those incredibly brave people who put their lives on the line to deliver aid and medical assistance surrounded by danger. People who refuse to be enemies and do the incredibly hard job of resisting the easy narrative and work to build trust and communication across divisions. People who can see the image of God, in the other.*

*Advent is a time when we wait again for the coming of Christ, the Prince of Peace. But that is not a passive waiting. Our partners work to bring hope in incredibly difficult circumstances.*

## A Prayer for Advent from Christian Aid

*We light a candle,  
to push the darkness back.  
Back you go, we pray.  
But we must push with more than a prayer  
if we are to embody the love that does not  
know how to stop hoping.  
if we are to find peace when the world has  
fractured into pieces.  
Christ-child, come.  
Bring your vulnerability,  
your fragility, your need  
and the unexpected power  
of your presence deep in our souls.  
Love, besotted with creation,  
you refuse to retreat,  
but shine relentlessly into our lives.  
Your love doesn't cross its fingers,  
it rolls up its sleeves.  
As we wait for you to be born again,  
may we seek the love  
that welcomes you  
even when we don't recognise  
your face. Amen*

## 'Jesus 'Saves' – From What and For What?'

**Passages: Luke 15:11-32 &  
1 Corinthians 15: 49-55**

'O, here we go again, I thought...this is just unbelievable!' It seemed like a huge dollop of déjà vu on Friday night, as I sat in the stands at Hampden Park in Glasgow, Scotland v Croatia at football. The Groundhog Day script, with the phrases 'disaster for Scotland' and 'snatching defeat from the jaws of victory' not being far away. Turning up in expectation that everything might change from a dismal run of recent results, showing promise in a game full of near misses, and then near the end somehow shooting ourselves in the foot with some calamitous error, or being on the receiving end of a piece of world class brilliance from the opposition, and yet again defeat and disappointment are the outcome. As they said before the recent European Football championships in the summer, and the rugby Six Nations, if you are supporting Scotland at sport, 'it's the hope that kills you'. Except this time, and it was indeed almost unbelievable, we snatched victory into our grasp late on and actually won a game for the first time in a year! Honestly, though, is the tension and the angst actually worth it?!

That's why I always raise a wry smile when I see the banners that are set out by the supporters of Manchester United, who have themselves gone through a couple of very bad seasons, that say 'This is our religion'. Well, what comes to mind for me is that if your idea of a religion is one of tantalising failures, anguish and sometime anger, with just an occasional dash of sunshine thrown in, and generally being



down in the dumps about the whole experience of life, then you're welcome to it. Mine's more joyful and uplifting, mate! But maybe, just maybe, there's something in the experience of being a supporter of a club, or a committed advocate of a political or social cause, that has some resonance with being a Christian or a Jew or a Muslim. About being included within a larger community who are united in a love for something that is beyond ourselves, where we can find meaning and are accepted no matter who we are. About dedication to the cause, you might even call it worship and praise, often vocal and sung, that is expressed together. And about the hope, albeit sometimes forlorn, that there will be a transformation of our fortunes and an ultimate triumph; a time where there will be no more pain and no more tears, but great happiness and celebration. In short, always belonging and always believing.

Talking of football banners, the same Man Utd fans had a classic in the 1970s about

their star striker, Stewart Pearson, which has had many imitators since, saying: 'Jesus saves, but Pearson nets the rebound.'

Whether we can ever hope of finding salvation through the love of a game and its

club or country is maybe dubious, but when we say 'Jesus saves', how is that any different? How is Jesus 'our saviour'? From what, and for what? Where does it all lead to – is seeking the salvation of Jesus Christ like the story of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – just trying to find the golden ticket for entry into the afterlife, where there will be more pie on offer in the sky that you could ever consume, as you strum idly on your harp in the Elysian fields? Or is salvation just as much for the here and now, no matter how much anguish and disappointment our lives might throw at us, no matter how many times those jaws of victory remain alien to us?

The three parables at the start of Luke 15 are the embodiment of that line in 'Amazing Grace', 'I once was lost but now I'm found'. For me, the parable Jesus told of the return of the prodigal son, and its immediate predecessors in Luke's gospel of the retrieving of the lost sheep and of the lost coin, speak principally of salvation, of being saved, spoken as they are by Jesus to a group of Pharisees that are murmuring and muttering about why Jesus might be associating with tax collectors and other low life and riff raff. Jesus was telling them, this is what salvation is, and this is how it comes about, and this is who it is for.

For the key to the salvation of Jesus Christ in their lives, and all of our lives now, are the common themes in those parables of being lost and distant from God, of homecoming and celebration, and of a reunion and incorporation back into a



loving and caring community. A prior time then of estrangement – being way off the map in the far country – not able to hear or know God calling, or feel his love and peace and hope – we have

wandered away and squandered the gifts given to us, focused only on ourselves, not fulfilling our true purpose so wrapped up as we are in our own image, our own consumption and our own needs. And then realising that this is just not enough – it's not making us happy and fulfilled, or anyone around us. We have become morally or spiritually or literally lost, or even bankrupt, like the younger son in the parable, and we need to find a way back home.

Sometimes you might be relieved to know that the thoughts of your local, neighbourhood pastor are not always lofty and 'high falutin', (or ever, I hear you say). For the very familiar words that John just read for us of the parable of the return of the prodigal son not only bring to mind for me salvation through a world of muddy boots, bovriils and banners, they also make me think of the Dougie MacLean song, 'Caledonia' – if you know the one it is a yearning for a homecoming – an expat Scot living somewhere round the world longing to come back to bonnie Scotland – 'Caledonia you're calling me, and now I'm going home' 'Caledonia you're everything I have ever had.'

And when we begin to think of what salvation, of being saved, might mean for us through Christ the saviour, that kind of distance and that yearning to return is at the heart of it. Think of the younger brother as yourself and the father as God, as the parable has traditionally been read. You,

the younger son, have done pretty much everything possible to be at a far distance from home and from God, and not just in a geographical sense. To the ears of the tax collectors and Pharisees who heard Jesus speak here, your conduct



has been nothing short of outrageous. In your initial request of your share of the inheritance well before time, you were failing to honour your parents under the fifth commandment. And then showing nothing but contempt for your covenantal people you sell the land given to you by God, squander the money in loose living and then in desperation hire yourself out to a Gentile for demeaning work with, of all things, ritually unclean pigs. Jesus could not have painted a more desperate and despicable picture of a human being for those who heard it. No wonder, like in the song 'Caledonia', you are yearning desperately to return home, where despite how far you have fallen, you will be embraced and welcomed.

The younger son was far distant in the wildernesses of life. Literally far distant in what sounds like the Las Vegas of its day, the Sin City, and far distant in what he had done. Christians have for centuries seen our distance from God, for which we seek forgiveness and salvation, as being caused by one very small, but actually very large, word '-sin'. It is said our personal depravities, great or small, have, like the younger son, caused us and the world to be far distant from God and that as a result a divine rescue mission was needed – Jesus was born, crucified and rose again for our sins, so that we might be forgiven – and therein lies our 'justification', being made right with God, and our 'salvation', being forgiven and saved.

But rather than us quarrelling as the church

has done over many centuries over whether this act or that, personal, social, sexual, is a sin or not in God's eyes; or indeed grapple with the bigger question of whether that narrative of Jesus as a human sacrifice to appease God can

ever be a justifiable theology to explain a loving God, that is perhaps for another day, let's focus instead on the root of all such 'sin', even seen in a traditional sense – which is that estrangement from God and our unfaithfulness – that's what it is driving at. Being lost and distant, we are in exile and have closed our hearts to God. It's not necessarily that we have been extra bad and need to be punished by a divine headmaster with his Lochgelly belt poised ready to swing in the air towards us, it's just that we are so far off the mark for whatever reason, we are not even a blip on the radar screen, and are acting and failing to act in all sorts of ways that are miles away from where we should be. And so the first road to reconciliation with God and salvation in Christ is the road home.

And so the answer to being saved from what, is almost about being saved from a life of nothingness – instead, to find acceptance and meaning and value and purpose. From an unfulfilling life of taking all you can get in instant pleasures and stuff the rest of them. Saved by coming home, God running towards us with arms outstretched as we approach – in this parable in verse 20 – but while the younger son was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion – he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Finding meaning and purpose and love once more. The 'seeking love of God', always acting, searching, never wavering; the joy of His encounter with all of us who have come alive to our own flawed and often broken and wrong-headed humanity,

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and our need for God. Yearning for the homecoming with God that being 'found' might hold. Carried back home by God like the lost sheep to the warmth of the fold, like the younger son to the joyous feast.

We might get past thinking of sin, forgiveness and salvation as some kind of swinging pendulum of divine punishment and reward, for as Clarence Jordan said 'God is not a celestial prison warden jangling the keys on a bunch of lifers: he's a shepherd seeking for sheep, a woman searching for coins, a father waiting for his son.'

Jesus was saying to the Pharisees in these parables, God actively seeks out those who are lost and distant in His grace, those who are struggling for meaning, for purpose and for hope in their lives, call that sin or whatever you like. In doing so, God looks to bring restoration and transformation, new life, and not just wrath and punishment on those who have wandered astray. In all three parables, when the sheep or the coin or the wandering wastrel son is found again, the form of repentance does not mirror punishment for what has been done.

Instead, the focus in the parables is on God's joy, and the recovery and new life of the person who God has found. It's so positive and purposeful. There is no-one outside the gate who is condemned to be lost forever. Nothing is too low for the cross. The Greek word *metanoia* that is used here for repentance is not about judgment for what has been, it's all about transformation to what will be, a change of mind and purpose with God, a resurrection which demands joy and celebration both here and in heaven.

And what of that big why question? Why do we need a saviour? Where does it all lead? Is it just to mark up our celestial score card to try to squeeze past St Peter through the pearly gates and into a blissful realm called heaven?

Salvation is about being made right and Amen.

reconciled with God, becoming 'ingrafted into Christ', knowing God, finding light in the darkness and wholeness and healing IN THIS LIFE. Eternal life is a godly life - it is to know God, whether that be in this bodily existence or in one to come. Who knows what an afterlife might look like, what heaven is to you or me, this side of the dim mirror before all might be made clear.

Who knows whether Paul's vision in 1 Corinthians 15 will be fully realised in us, no matter how you interpret it. Yes, Jesus does talk of eternal judgment in Matthew 25 and the separation of the sheep and the goats, and elsewhere to us being wheat or chaff depending on our choices now, but his references to the afterlife were few and far between.

His focus was on 'repent, as the Kingdom of God is near'. As the scholar Marcus Borg puts it, 'his message was not really about how to get to heaven. It was about a way of transformation in this world and the Kingdom of God on earth'. As Borg puts it, 'Salvation is about life with God, life in the presence of God, now and forever', and in that, all that speaks of death and destruction, has indeed lost its sting and been immortally conquered.

In salvation, we may indeed bear the image of the man of heaven as the trumpet sounds: a transformation here of people and places in a radical new way of peace, love and reconciliation, and perhaps beyond mortal life too – but we're surely not cynically signing up to one to try to get to the other – we're returning from the far country to the community of God's beloved NOW from Christ's command, no matter what else lies ahead. It's the **here and now** that most interests Jesus our saviour, and not the **maybe then**.

This is our salvation. This IS our religion. This is the 'snatching of victory from the jaws of defeat'. It's the hope that make you live...a life in all its fulness!

# PASTORAL CARE

*Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God. Acts 20:28*

Please contact Pauline Robertson DCS in relation to any pastoral issues or concerns and/or if you wish anyone to be remembered in the confidential prayer chain or wish to be added to the email circulation list. The contact details for Pauline are: [pastoralassistantms@gmail.com](mailto:pastoralassistantms@gmail.com) or phone 0758 704 3191.



# SCOUT UPDATE

## Scout, Cub and Beaver Coffee Morning

Thank you to everyone that came along to support our annual Coffee Morning on Saturday, 9th November. It was good to see so many of our old friends and supporters.

The tremendous support and generosity helped us to make over £2,600 which is a new record.

## Scouts

Our annual Parents Night in October was well attended and the Parents were able to enjoy the video of our Summer Camp and see all the activities, skills learned and culinary triumphs. The evening included the presentation of the Session and Camp awards to those Scouts that had excelled.

The evening ended with the presentation of the Chief Scout's Gold Award to two of our Patrol Leaders, Alfie and Lewis, recognising all that they had achieved in their time in the Troop.

Activities during the month included a Night Hike in the Pentlands, a traditional Halloween night and the just as traditional skills required for Knotting, Scouts also had the chance to earn Activity Badges and



including Snowsports, Watersports, Photographer, Digital Maker and Angler.

In November we returned to Bonaly Scout Centre to continue with the work that has seen us plant over 500 trees since our Troop Centenary in 2020. This time, we were checking on the growth of the trees planted and putting larger tree guards on those that had made good progress. Other activities included a night wide game, camp fire, archery and backwoods cooking. Troop nights started training in handling Emergencies and First Aid.

*Alan Dickson* Scout Leader

## Headquarters

Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church  
18 West Mayfield, Edinburgh, EH9 1TQ  
Scottish Charity No SC006141



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**Youth Group - For a list of youth group dates, please check the weekly news**

**Events at Mayfield Salisbury Church = (MSPC). At Priestfield Church = (PPC)  
Services will take place at Mayfield Salisbury unless otherwise noted.**

## December

### Sun 1 **First Sunday of Advent and Gift Services**

9.30am All-Age Worship (Simon Hessett)  
10.45am Service of Worship (Simon Hessett)  
4.00pm Service to Remember Loved Ones (PPC)  
(Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth & Pauline Robertson DCS)

Tue 3 10.00am Morning Prayers (at MSPC)

Thu 5 2.00pm Thursday Club: Chris Martin *Our time in Kiev '21 - '22'* (MSPC)

### Sun 8 **Second Sunday of Advent**

9.30am All-Age Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)  
10.45am Service of Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)

Tue 10 10.00am Morning Prayers (at MSPC)

Thu 12 2.00pm Thursday Club: Maureen Kelly *The Victorians At Christmas* (MSPC)  
7.30pm Praise and Prayer (PPC)

### Sun 15 **Third Sunday of Advent**

10.30am All-Age Worship - Including the telling of the Nativity story  
1.00pm Newington Churches Together Carol singing Nicolson Square Gardens  
7.30pm A Choral Celebration of Carols for Christmas (MSPC)

Tue 17 10.00am Morning Prayers (at Mayfield Salisbury)

Thu 19 2.00pm Thursday Club: George Ross & Susan Wooding  
Singsong And Christmas Party (MSPC)

### Sun 22 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

10.30am All-Age Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)  
6.30pm Traditional Christingle Service (MSPC)

### Tue 24 **Christmas Eve**

4.00pm Messy Church Family Christingle (PPC)  
11.30pm Watchnight Service (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth) (MSPC)

### Wed 25 **Christmas Day**

10.30am Christmas Day Celebration (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)

### Sun 29 **First Sunday after Christmas**

10.30am A Service of Nine Readings, Poems & Carols. With time to reflect  
of 31 Years of the Mayfield Salisbury Congregation - see page 11

## January 2025

### Sun 5 **First Sunday of Epiphany**

10.30am All-Age Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)  
7.00pm Evening Service (TBC)

Tue 7 10.00am Morning Prayers (at MSPC)



Thu 9 2.00pm Thursday Club: Tom Kelly *Songs Of Folk And Protest* (MSPC)  
7.30pm Praise and Prayer (PPC)

**Sun 12 Second Sunday of Epiphany**

9.30am All-Age Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)  
10.45am Service of Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)

Tue 14 10.00am Morning Prayers (at MSPC)

Thu 16 2.00pm Thursday Club: *Roy Johnston Heroines Of The Special Operations Force* (MSPC)

**Sun 19 Third Sunday of Epiphany**

9.30am All-Age Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)  
10.45am Service of Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)

**Mon 20 7.00pm Service of Union between Craigmillar Park, Mayfield Salisbury and Priestfield Churches. (MSPC)**

Tue 21 10.00am Morning Prayers (at Mayfield Salisbury)

Thu 23 2.00pm Graeme Cruikshank *Burnsian* (MSPC)  
7.30pm Praise and Prayer (PPC)

**Sun 26 Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**

9.30am All-Age Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)  
10.45am Service of Worship (Rev Dr Sandy Forsyth)



**THE BIBLE IN A YEAR**

**December**

1 Hosea 3-6 / Revelation 1  
2 Hosea 7,8 / Psalms 137,138  
3 Hosea 9,10 / Revelation 2  
4 Hosea 11,12 / Revelation 3  
5 Hosea 13,14 / Revelation 4  
6 Joel 1,2 / Psalm 139  
7 Joel 3 / Revelation 5  
8 Amos 1,2 / Revelation 6  
9 Amos 3,4 / Psalms 140,141  
10 Amos 5,6 / Revelation 7  
11 Amos 7,8 / Revelation 8  
12 Amos 9 / Revelation 9  
13 Obadiah / Psalms 142,143  
14 Jonah 1,2 / Revelation 10  
15 Jonah 3,4 / Revelation 11  
16 Micah 1-3 / Psalm 144  
17 Micah 4,5 / Revelation 12  
18 Micah 6,7 / Revelation 13  
19 Nahum 1-3 / Revelation 14  
20 Habakkuk 1-3 / Psalm 145  
21 Zephaniah 1-3 / Revelation 15  
22 Haggai 1,2 / Revelation 16  
23 Zechariah 1,2 / Psalms 146,147  
24 Zechariah 3,4 / Revelation 17  
25 Zechariah 5,6 / Revelation 18  
26 Zechariah 7,8 / Revelation 19  
27 Zechariah 9,10 / Psalm 148  
28 Zechariah 11,12 / Revelation 20  
29 Zechariah 13,14 / Revelation 21  
30 Malachi 1,2 / Psalms 149,150  
31 Malachi 3,4 / Revelation 22

**January 2023**

1 Genesis 1,2 / Matthew 1  
2 Genesis 3,4 / Matthew 2

3 Genesis 5,6 / Matthew 3  
4 Genesis 7,8 / Psalms 1,2  
5 Genesis 9-11 / Matthew 4  
6 Genesis 12,13 / Matthew 5  
7 Genesis 14,15 / Psalms 3,4  
8 Genesis 16,17 / Matthew 6  
9 Genesis 18,19 / Matthew 7  
10 Genesis 20,21 / Matthew 8  
11 Genesis 22,23 / Psalms 5,6  
12 Genesis 24,25 / Matthew 9  
13 Genesis 26,27 / Matthew 10  
14 Genesis 28,29 / Psalms 7,8  
15 Genesis 30,31 / Matthew 11  
16 Genesis 32,33 / Matthew 12  
17 Genesis 34,36 / Matthew 13  
18 Genesis 37,38 / Psalm 9  
19 Genesis 39,40 / Matthew 14  
20 Genesis 41,42 / Matthew 15  
21 Genesis 43,44 / Psalm 10  
22 Genesis 45,46 / Matthew 16  
23 Genesis 47,48 / Matthew 17  
24 Genesis 49,50 / Matthew 18  
25 Exodus 1,2 / Psalms 11,12  
26 Exodus 3,4 / Matthew 19  
27 Exodus 5,6 / Matthew 20  
28 Exodus 7,8 / Psalms 13,14  
29 Exodus 9,10 / Matthew 21  
30 Exodus 11,12 / Matthew 22  
31 Exodus 13,14 / Matthew 23

**February**

1 Exodus 15,16 / Psalms 15,16  
2 Exodus 17,18 / Matthew 24  
3 Exodus 19,20 / Matthew 25  
4 Exodus 21,22 / Psalm 17  
5 Exodus 23,24 / Matthew 26

# WHO'S WHO IN THE CHURCH

Mayfield Salisbury Parish (Edinburgh) Church of Scotland. Scottish Charity Number SC000785

## Minister

Rev'd Dr Alexander Forsyth    AForsyth@churchofscotland.org.uk    0131 667 1286

## Parish Deacon

Pauline Robertson DCS    pastoralassistantms@gmail.com    0758 704 3191

## Children and Young Adult Worker

Bettina Hather    youthworkersmspc@gmail.com    0778 319 0114

## Church Manager

William Mearns    churchmanager@googlemail.com    0780 801 1234

## Organist

Kate Pearson    kate.q.kate@gmail.com    0744 238 2296

## Session Clerk

Boyd McAdam    clerkmspc@gmail.com    0777 358 7579

## Treasurer

John Graham    culkein@btinternet.com    0131 667 6331

## Safeguarding Co-ordinators (until end of 2024 the c/o Church Office)

Aileen Nimmo    mayfieldsafeguarding@gmail.com    0131 667 1522  
and Dougie Robertson

## Gift Aid Donations & Roll Keeper

Hugh Somerville    hs.somerville2@gmail.com    0131 466 2446

## Mayfield Radio Unit

The Studio    mayfieldradiounit@gmail.com    0131 667 7742

## Church Address and Office

18 West Mayfield, Edinburgh, EH9 1TQ  
0131 667 1522 or churchmanager@googlemail.com

## Pastoral Care

For home or hospital visits, please contact the Minister or Pastoral Assistant

## Staff Days Off - (Generally)

Minister: Fridays  
Children and Young Families Worker: Mondays  
Manager: Monday afternoons & Fridays  
Pastoral Assistant: Friday

## Social Media Accounts

-  [www.facebook.com/MayfieldSalisbury](http://www.facebook.com/MayfieldSalisbury)  
[www.facebook.com/priestfieldchurch](http://www.facebook.com/priestfieldchurch)
-  [www.youtube.com/@ChurchEdinburgh](http://www.youtube.com/@ChurchEdinburgh)
-  [www.flickr.com/photos/98063709@N06](http://www.flickr.com/photos/98063709@N06)
-  [www.x.com/churchscotland](http://www.x.com/churchscotland) (formally Twitter)
-  [www.mayfieldsalisbury.org](http://www.mayfieldsalisbury.org)



The Church of Scotland

## SCAN TO GIVE



[www.give.net/20311853](http://www.give.net/20311853)

## Copy Date for Next Issue:

6.00pm on  
Friday 24 January 2025

WEB