

Cumbernauld Old Parish Church Advent 2020 Update

From the Minister

Dear all,

Although we have been in lockdown since March, we have been very busy planning the weekly online services, writing cards, making telephone calls and starting to prepare the services and activities for Advent and Christmas.

Sadly, we won't be able to do the 'Follow the Star' event that took place last year which attracted hundreds of people to follow the star literally around the village, stopping off at points along the way to hear parts of the Christmas story. Hopefully, next year we will be able to do something similar. We do though, have 'Journey to Bethlehem' and the 'Online Advent Calendar' — more about these later in this update.

It's been a very odd year for all of us, and the Church has not been exempt from this.

We have been following advice given to us by the Church of Scotland regarding health and safety in the Church and have made it as secure as it can be. Sadly, though, we have to limit the numbers who are able to be in the Church to 24. We are continuing to produce on-line services which can also be accessed by telephone. We also have been holding a once a month 'Time for Reflection' service in the Church which is a short, half-hour service of readings and reflections interspersed with recorded music, which is on the third Sunday of the month. The next 'Time for Reflection' will be on 20th December and will have a distinctly Christmas flavour!

If you would like to come to the 'Time for Reflection', please contact Anne Murphy on **01236 726875** or **07719 290042** to book your place as numbers are very limited.

I would like to thank everyone for all their help since March. It has been marvellous the way in which people have worked together to ensure that services can still go ahead, particularly since we have been given permission to reopen.

I know it is a bit early, but I hope you all have a Christmas which is full of joy, hope, peace and love.

Elsbeth

Online Advent Calendar

We are planning to have an on-line Advent Calendar this year. There will be a short video posted every day from 1st December until 24th December. Each day will have a short Bible reading and very short reflection together with either a work of art or video to accompany it (sorry, no chocolate!). If you would like to access the Advent Calendar, it will be posted on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/cumbernauldold, and also on the Church website www.cumbernauldold.org.uk. If you would like to, please share it far and wide and spread the Good News of Christ's birth!

Christmas Services

We are preparing the following services for Christmas, which follow our normal pattern. All the following services will only be on-line at www.facebook.com/cumbernauldold and on the website www.cumbernauldold.org.uk They can also be accessed by telephone on the day by calling 01236 809237.

13th December	Morning	Nativity and Gift service	Online/Telephone
	Afternoon	Rainbow Service	Online/Telephone
20th December	Morning	Morning Worship	Online/Telephone
	11am	Time for Reflection	In Church
24th December	Evening	Watchnight service	Online/Telephone
25th December	Morning	Christmas Morning Worship	Online/Telephone
27th December	Morning	Nine Lessons and Carols	Online/Telephone
3rd January	Morning	Morning Worship	Online/Telephone

Rainbow Service 2020

For many years now at Cumbernauld Old, just before Christmas we have held our annual 'Rainbow Service' which is especially for people who have been bereaved. We have found that people who are perhaps struggling with their loss at this time of year appreciate the chance to remember their loved ones and be supported in a thoughtful service in the church.

However, after much prayer and reflection we have come to the difficult decision that we cannot safely hold such a service this year. Instead, our pre-recorded 'Rainbow Service' will be available online from the afternoon of Sunday 13th December. You are respectfully invited to join us online or by phone.

The link for the service will be available on the afternoon of Sunday 13th December on our Facebook page and also on our website which can be found at www.cumbernauldold.org.uk. The service can also be accessed by telephone on Sunday 13th December in the afternoon by calling 01236 809237.

All are most welcome, so please share the link with anyone you feel might find it helpful. We appreciate that many will be disappointed that there will be no service in the church this year but, hopefully, you will understand, given the exceptional circumstances we find ourselves in.

Whilst we cannot be with you in person, please know that you are very much in our thoughts and prayers.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you... for I am the Lord your God. (Isaiah 43: 2-3)

Gift Service

Like many things this year, our annual Gift Service will be different because of the current restrictions. Following the success of our Harvest Appeal, Christmas gifts can be left at the Manse front door up to and including the morning of our 'Gift Service' on 13th December. They will then be taken to Cornerstone for distribution at their Christmas event. The organisers at Bethlehem House of Bread have advised that while they are happy to accept gifts, they are trying to limit handling of items due to current health concerns so have requested **monetary donations where possible**. This can be via direct transfer to Bethlehem House of Bread at account number 10810170, sort code 83 17 31 or by donation in a sealed envelope to the Manse which will then be passed on.

Bethlehem House of Bread plans to buy vouchers from B & M to distribute to those in need to allow them to buy their own gifts.

Thank you all for your unstinting support over the years, and in these uncertain and difficult times we take heart from the many small acts of kindness which give hope to us all but especially those in greatest need. Wishing you and your loved ones a Christmas of peace and hope.

Village Food Bank Update: Winter 2020

First and foremost, all at the food bank send every good wish to you and your loved ones in these strange and challenging times.

Sadly, we had to close the doors at the Village Food bank in March when lockdown began. We remain closed as the Session House is not designed for social distancing at all. Bethlehem House of Bread at Cornerstone has continued throughout the pandemic, although in a much-changed format. We have supported them with donations of food and money (£355 since February) over this time. In fact, the donations to Bethlehem House of Bread at our Harvest this year surpassed all expectations, as can be seen from the photographs on our website. As always, a huge thank you to all who support this ongoing effort. It is much appreciated.

Journey to Bethlehem

One of the successes of last year's Christmas celebrations at Cumbernauld Old was our walking Nativity trail called Follow the Star. Well, we can't do that this year, but are putting together something else that people can do in their own time and within their own personal 'bubble'.

It's called Journey to Bethlehem and here's how it will work:

Around the parish there will be twelve posters, each with a picture representing part of the story of Christmas and a line from the Bible relating to that picture. There's a candle, angel, Mary, shepherds, wise men and so on.

Each poster also will also have a QR code (see below) which you can scan on your mobile phone.

That will bring up a page on our church website where you can read the Bible passage that goes with that picture. If you click or tap on the picture on the website page you will find puzzles, quizzes, colouring-in, crafts, etc. all linked to the Christmas story and which younger people can do at home.

The posters will be numbered 1 – 12 and that will take you through the Christmas story in sequence if you want to follow that, but you are more than welcome to scan the code on any of the posters you come across. (We hope to have them in place in early December and will let you know where to find them through our website and Facebook page.)

If you want to give QR codes a try, why not scan this one on your mobile phone – it may not work with some older phones! – that should take you to our *Journey to Bethlehem* 'home' page, which we'll keep updated with all the latest news.

Keep safe, and enjoy our new take on the Christmas story.



Fundraising

As you are all aware, we haven't been able to hold our planned fundraising events this year, but despite the restrictions we have managed to continue raising funds for the church.

Following on from our online 'Summer Songs of Praise' in June, which many people watched before making a donation on the church website, we were delighted that Elspeth and David agreed to help with online 'Christmas Carols and Readings' which will be shared with you by email or on Cumbernauld Old's Facebook page from 15th December. There are 10 well-known Carols for you to join in and sing along with, and a mixture of poems and readings for you to enjoy and help get you into the festive mood. Should you wish, you can make a donation afterwards on the church website using the 'Donate Online' button.

We ordered packs of 10 Christmas cards for sale, with two different designs featuring the church in winter. They were available for ordering and have now been delivered by some of the fundraising team. The cards are really beautiful, and excellent value for money at £3.50 a pack. They have raised a profit of £89 so far and we still have a few packs left if anyone would like to purchase them.

Once again, we have been taking orders for knitted Christmas Chocolate oranges. They cost £3, the same price as last year, and the number of orders exceeded all our expectations. At the time of writing, they have raised the magnificent sum of £556 and there are still orders coming in. The fundraising team is indebted to the wonderful team of knitters: Anne Murphy, who in addition to knitting has co-ordinated the team, dropped off wool from the craft group supplies and collected the beautiful Santa Hats, Christmas Puddings and Ski Hats knitted and crocheted by Ann, Lorna, Joan, Margaret, Nancy, Rita and Caroline; and also to Elizabeth, who has taken the orders and delivered the chocolate oranges beautifully finished in a cellophane bag tied with ribbon. Many thanks also to all those who so generously donated all the chocolate oranges.

Prior to the tighter restrictions being reintroduced there were a number of small fundraising events with family and friends while socially distancing. Ann McLeish raised over £120 by hosting afternoon teas.

Remember to keep saving your 10p and 20p coins, because once we are all able to be safely back at church together we will be giving you a welcome-back tube of Smarties for our Cumbernauld Old Smart Savers Initiative.

The Fundraising Team

Church Finance

The continued financial support for the Church has been very welcome and thank you to all who have contributed to the Church during the pandemic. Some members have converted to paying by Bank Standing Order thus providing the Church with a regular income. Others have handed in cheques in lieu of their Free Will Offering Envelopes and others have handed in their envelopes. All this income has allowed the Church to meet its obligations. The Finance Committee meets online each month and the position is closely monitored and expenditure is kept to a minimum. I can say with confidence that the Church will be financially stable at the end of the year. This is due to the continued support from all. **THANK YOU.**

Robin Cantlie

Treasurer

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