

**St. Margaret's Community Church of
Scotland Dunfermline**

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19th December 2020 Newsletter

This is my 14th Christmas as your minister and one unlike any other. We are living through strange times, yet with some optimism that there is light at the end of the tunnel – let us hope and pray that the different vaccines will be effective; and not just for us but for the whole world.

The world into which Jesus was born was one with a huge degree of uncertainty and trauma. The Jewish people were living under the iron rod of Rome – a tyrannical and oppressive regime. There seemed little hope that the might of Rome could soon be overthrown.

The Jews were also subject to King Herod, a man appointed by Rome and known for his cruelty. Not long after the birth of Jesus he was to exhibit his cruelty as he condemned all of the boys under two years old in the Bethlehem area to be slaughtered.

The world was a selfish place. How could it be that a young woman expecting her first child could be offered a cave where the animals were kept as the only place available? Could no-one have given her their place?

It is into this kind of world, little different from our own today that God came in the Person of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Here the greatest of all miracles took place – the God, who is Creator and Lord of all, entered history with the express intent to begin something that can never end – His Kingdom and rule beginning in the lives of men and women like you and me.

There is no greater story than the one we tell that begins on that first Christmas. The story of angels visiting Mary and Joseph and preparing them for something unique and magnificent – they were to bear and take care of the Son of God until He was ready to make His mark on history.

The story of the shepherds out in their fields and how the angels came to them and convinced them that something glorious had happened that night in Bethlehem – how they left their sheep and went and saw for themselves that unique child – ordinary and yet so extraordinary.

And later on the story of the Wise Men, led by the Spirit of God to go and find this new king – bringing with them gifts that the young couple would need when they had to flee down to Egypt – how they worshipped and bowed before the King of Kings.

The story that we have heard retold since we were children – even those of us who were never taken to church, heard it in our schools year in year out.

An old story, yet forever new. A story that we never tire hearing because it is both old and contemporary. A story that stirs our hearts and minds with the magnificence of what it reveals – God has come down to be with us, to save us and all out of love for us.

A Kingdom has begun that will never end! All the Kingdoms of the world will eventually come to their end – that is as it has always been. But this Kingdom has a King that ever lives. He is a King who is good and honourable and eternal and perfect in every way – especially His love. This is why Christmas is so special and why we celebrate and worship.

Iain

Intimations

Services will be at the normal times on Sunday – Facebook will go on at 9am, Zoom at 9.45 and the Main Service at 11am in the Church.

No Zoom Service on Wednesday.

On Christmas Eve there will be a Christmas Eve Service at 7.00pm on Zoom.

There will be no Service on Sunday 27th December although there will be a thought for the day on our Facebook Page that day.

Christmas Thankyous

First of all thank you to everyone who brought gifts to the Church – over 300 – to be shared in the community among those people who will be really struggling this Christmas.

Thank you to everyone who provided a wee gift and minding to some members in our community and many of our homebound folks this year.

Thank you to everyone who knotted angels. Each member of our congregation received an angel and 500 homes in the community were sent an angel along with a specially designed card from the Church.

Thank you to everyone in the Church and the Community and Rotary who have provided food for the trolley over the last nine months – what a difference this has made to so many people. We reckon that in terms of food donated and money too, over £9000 worth of food has been made available. Tesco will be donating special Christmas food later on next week to go on the table.

Thankyou to everyone who has donated clothes, duvets, sheets, warm jackets,

and other necessities – this has been so gratefully received by so many.

And finally, thank you for everyone who has given financially to the Church to keep us afloat this year in order that we can meet all of our obligations. A special thanks too to everyone who gave so generously to the Christmas appeal – including the Gift Aid we will recoup, nearly £7000 has been donated in the last two weeks and along with the wonderful effort by JAM well over £800 raised; we will be able to conclude our year with no deficit, able to meet fully our Ministry and Mission responsibilities and carrying no debt forward.

This has been a tough year, but St Margaret's people – you – has pulled together and as your minister I cannot be more proud of this church than through these difficult days. Well done one and all.

"Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white'." – Bing Crosby

"No man is a failure who has friends." – *It's a Wonderful Life*

"God bless us, every one!" – *A Christmas Carol*

"Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmastime." – *Laura Ingalls Wilder*