

*O Come Let Us Adore Him*



**HOLYTOWN PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND  
CHRISTMAS 2016**

Well since the change of the clocks in October the nights have been becoming longer as we now move into the winter months and as a result of those longer nights the darkness seems to be increasing too.

I don't know about you, but with the increased darkness I sometimes find my mood changing and often my appetite too - for it always seems to me that with the coming of those darker nights comes an increased desire for wonderful comfort foods such as good heartening stews and delicious stodgy puddings!

So if you are like me, the darkness can indeed affect you!

It is always quite noticeable to me at this time of year how we can become fixated on the darkness and find ourselves talking more often of the longer nights than what we have been doing during our shorter days.

Thinking on this fixation with the darkness brought to mind a story that I read recently in a book by Margaret Silf who told the story of travelling to be with friends for a pre-Christmas visit.

She spoke of her long tedious journey along endless monotonous roads with the intense darkness of those

roads only ever being broken up occasionally by the lights of the built-up areas she was passing through. Apart from those times there was nothing to relieve the intense darkness of her night time journey.

Then suddenly as she was driving along in the darkness she caught sight of a solitary Christmas tree on the roadside right in the middle of nowhere with its lights twinkling against the backdrop of a very cold dark night.

She said it was a wonderful, delightful surprise!

Yet she also said, her reaction to it was mixed.

On the one hand the tree seemed to be speaking of courage and resilience by defying the darkness with the determined glow of its lights.

But, on the other hand, it being there in the middle of nowhere seemed so futile - because what difference could a few Christmas tree lights make to such a very dark night.

Thinking on it, her conclusion though, was really that it was all about where she focused her attention - on the lights or on the darkness.

Perhaps we too are focusing too much on the darkness of this time of year - maybe even too much on the darkness of our world - when we should be focusing on the light - on our 'Light' and on how we can bring light to our world!

Our Advent journey is just about to begin once more (unless you have been attending Bible Study where it has been going on for the last six weeks!) This is a journey which should help us to re-focus our thoughts - a journey which helps us to focus on the light not the darkness around us.

We bring into focus once more Jesus - Jesus the 'Light of the World' who came to banish the darkness in our world. His light is one which can never be extinguished. His light catches us unawares too in the midst of our darkness times - just like that little Christmas tree in the middle of nowhere caught the eye of Margaret Silf and surprised her unexpectedly in the darkness - Jesus does that too.

So as we approach Advent this year let's try even harder than ever to focus on the light around us not the dark and not the 'darkness' of the commercialism of Christmas but let's truly focus once more on Jesus the 'Light of the World' and let him bring his light to our lives!

Wishing you all this Advent and Christmas season the peace and hope the 'Light of the World' brings!

Caryl

A wee postscript:

You know I often think that people may wonder why we put up a Christmas tree outside the church in the manse garden on the roadside - maybe the sight of that tree may bring unexpected light to someone as they journey past on a long tedious journey or indeed it may bring them a moment of delight in their time of darkness - so let's keep on spreading the light!!

## OUR SINCERE THANKS

You will recall that the most senior member of our congregation, John Gillan, died some time ago at the age of 97. John was always a very active man - indeed he was still driving in his nineties. He attended the Centenary Celebrations of the 1<sup>st</sup> Holytown Boys' Brigade - the oldest "old boy" present.

For a short time the Gillan family were members of the West Church in Bellshill. This was to be convenient for where they lived. But John, Net and Lottie were still at heart Holytown folk and once again became members of Holytown Kirk.

We have now learned that John has left money for Holytown Church which is to be used the maintenance and upkeep of the church buildings. We are appreciative of this gift and will endeavour to use it wisely.

## FLOWER LIST

|        |                 |
|--------|-----------------|
| Nov 20 | D Paterson      |
| 27     | Christine Dunns |
| Dec 4  | Freda Marshall  |
| 11     | N McPherson     |
| 18     | D Paterson      |
| 25     | C Boyd          |

We should like to thank all those who, during 2016, have placed flowers in the Church. They have beautified the church and later they have given pleasure to those who received them. The new Flower List is available now.

## **CHRISTMAS DINNER**

Christmas Dinner will be on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7 pm in the Church Hall. It will cost £16 per person. A list will be in the Vestibule for your name and choice of menu. We shall be having a Singing Surprise Act and community singing. Santa is also expected to pay a visit.

## **MAGAZINE**

This edition of the magazine marks the end of an era. Our Editor who also is our organist, Miss Margaret Milne is retiring from this valued role after 60 years of faithfully compiling the magazine. In this time she has taken the contributions and articles that have filled our magazine from four ministers, one interim minister, eight interim moderators and various members from the congregation over the years including herself, compiled them, typed them and printed them. Margaret took great pride in the magazine and in the special covers she sourced for landmark occasions in the Church calendar.

Her involvement began in January 1957 when she became Joint Editor with the Rev Dr James Richmond. Since we began producing our own magazine in 1962, no magazine has been issued that Margaret did not type. During the ministry of the Rev Tom Swanston, Bible reading notes were also issued for around eight years.

The magazine has been particularly valued by those who may not be able to attend regular worship due to health reasons, work commitments or maybe even because they

have moved away. We have regular online readers of the magazine living in America and Australia and I know of several local folks who have enjoyed this link with home while serving in the forces.

I am well aware that over the years Margaret has been, an invaluable source of help to ministers and office bearers with her unequalled knowledge of the history of our Church here in Holytown. As she takes a well-earned rest from her magazine duties, we wish her well and will continue to come to her for information and advice.

## **FRIENDS OF HOLYTOWN**

We held a fundraising evening in Club 100 on Friday October 5<sup>th</sup>. An enjoyable evening was experienced by all who attended. It was encouraging to see the wide age range of those who came along and, believe it or not the organisers have not received any negative comments about the format and many who were there were asking when the next one would be happening. On the evening, we realised the sum of £800 which for a first attempt is indeed commendable. We would hope that due to the positivity surrounding the event, even more folks will support the next one.

One of the objectives of the church of Scotland is to increase the visibility of the church within local communities and Friends of Holytown although not being a body directly under the banner of the Church is publically fundraising within the community and these funds will be available for the Church to use as required.



## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>**

We have a special service planned for this Sunday morning with a lot of Christmas songs you won't know being sung to tunes you will know. It should be fun with all the words of the songs we'll all be singing absolutely covering the Christian Christmas story. After all, Christmas is a celebration of the birth of our Saviour and whether we celebrate it with traditional or modern songs, it is still a celebration. After this service, we will be having our hot rolls and tea and coffee in the hall providing us once again with the opportunity for additional fellowship. These songs will be aired for the first time at the evening service on 27<sup>th</sup> November so I would appeal to all the folks in the congregation who love the Christmas story and are not averse to belting out a good tune to come along on this night to be even better prepared for when we do them again at the morning service on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

There will be adequate opportunities to sing the more traditional carols at other services during advent. I would particularly recommend our evening celebration which is also on the 18<sup>th</sup> and takes place at 6.30 pm in the hall and our watch night service on Christmas Eve with carol singing from 11.00 pm and the service proper commencing at 11.30 pm in the Church.

If you can fit it in, we would also love you to come along to a short service at 10.00 am on Christmas morning which is always a joint service and this year will be held at Wrangholm Kirk.

## FIRST CHRISTMAS

It was a simple scene that first Christmas - a rough room, a young couple and nothing but a feeding trough to put the child in. It was probably quite cold and with family far away there was little help. Not exactly the Hallmark moment we like to show in Christmas pageants. And yet this rustic scene marked the greatest event in the history of mankind.

God's Son became human and came to earth to save us. God had promised to send a Messiah, one who would save His people. He could have easily burst on the scene as a full grown man, a seven foot warrior with fiery eyes and arms of steel. This was what many people were looking for, but it wasn't how God did it. He arrived in the arms of a young girl. He was, as another of our authors put it, "a very small package, wrapped in rags, given from the heart of God. The perfect gift."

God gave His only Son to die in our place so that we, in all our brokenness, could know forgiveness. He came so that we could know what love feels like, real love - love that never leaves, love that never disappoints, love that is never betrayed. He sent His Son into a corrupted world to bring us hope.

## BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA

A little child,  
A shining star,  
A stable rude,  
The door ajar

Yet in that place,  
So crude, forlorn,  
The Hope of all  
The world was born.

## **CHRISTMAS CALENDAR**

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December:** Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade and Sunday School Party at 3 pm in the Church Hall.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December:** Christmas Dinner at 7 pm in the Church Hall. (More details under "Christmas Dinner")

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December:** 10.00 am Gift Service

You are invited to bring a gift for either a boy or a girl. It would be helpful if you label the gift "boy" or "girl" and give an idea of the age group.

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December:** 10.00 am - Nativity Play performed by the children of the Sunday School.

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December:**

7.00 pm Crib Service in Wrangholm Kirk, New Stevenston

11.00 pm Carol Singing in Holytown Church

11.30 pm Watchnight Service

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December:** 10.00 am Joint Christmas Day Service in Wrangholm Kirk, New Stevenston.

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> December:** Hogmanay Party in the Church Hall from 9.00 pm until after "The Bells".

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January:** Joint New Year's Day Service in Holytown Parish Church.

## **CHRISTMAS MAIL**

We are offering you the opportunity of posting your Christmas cards for Holytown at the Church. The box will be there from Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> November. The cards will be distributed after the last collection on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December. A donation for Boys' Brigade funds would be much appreciated.

## **SPRING FAYRE**

The Spring Fayre will take place on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2017. Please keep any unwanted gifts and gift bags. There will be the usual stalls. The Committee are: L Baillie, K Bell, I Hinshelwood, I Houston, B Jenkins, M McNeil, J Murray, S Reid, T Stewart and S McCartney (Treasurer). Further information will be given later.

## **FRIENDS OF HOLYTOWN**

We should like to thank everyone for their support of this new venture. This is much appreciated. You will be interested to know that to date the sum of £1,896 has been raised - a truly remarkable achievement.

## **LIFE AND WORK MAGAZINE**

The cost of this magazine in 2017 will be £2.50 per issue. With the discount the price will be £2.28 which works out at £27.36 annually. Please confirm whether or not you wish to continue to receive this magazine either with Mrs I Hinshelwood or with Mrs Susan Reid.

## EMMANUEL

*Behold, a virgin shall be with child,  
and shall bring forth a son,  
and they shall call his name Emmanuel,  
which being interpreted is, God with us.*

*Matthew 1:23*

Most likely, your address list has gone through many changes over the years. People move, they marry. Children are born, new friends are added, and elders are released to God's care in death. If you keep an address book the old-fashioned way - pen to paper - the pages tell a story of change!

God's "address," however, remains the same season after season, year after year. You find Him in His book, the Bible, where God tells you about Himself and the kind of God He is - loving, compassionate, caring, and most of all, present. He is as present to you this Christmas as He was present to Christians celebrating Christmas decades ago, right on down to His presence with Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus on that first Christmas night. The Bible is the unchangeable book you can open at any time and know you are hearing the voice of God present for you at all times and in all places.

This year, take time to remember your friends who have recently moved and who may be feeling lonely in their new home or sad to miss their familiar Christmas traditions and celebrations. Encourage them with a note or card telling them about life's unchanging blessing; God's presence in their lives and in His Word at Christmastime and always.

Helen Steiner Rice

## THE LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS TREASURE

Treasure hunting on Christmas morning? Yes, that was our tradition when our children were young. I have no Christmas memories from when I was a child, so I wanted to make Jesus' birthday special for my own family. After sledging, building snowmen, and getting the perfect tree, the treasure hunt for gifts was the highlight of our Christmas celebration. Mysterious envelopes would appear throughout the house, containing directions to each person's special gift.

One year, the directions led our son from room to room and finally to the barn. There he discovered a floppy-eared hound dog, waiting in the hay. I can still remember the look on his face when he turned toward his father and me.

"I can't believe he's mine," he whispered with wonder in his voice.

Another year, our daughter even found clues in the woodpile. The last one directed her to the freezer - but the door was shut tight, and she couldn't lift the lid. Luckily, the phone next to the freezer rang just then. It was her grandmother, calling to wish everyone a Merry Christmas . . . and she happened to know where the freezer key was hidden. Our daughter's gift was frozen solid - but she loved the hot pink snowsuit.

Our family will never forget those Christmas treasure hunts. These days, all year long, we still hunt for an even greater treasure . . . The Christ Child, the shining gift that lies hidden in the midst of our lives, always waiting for us to discover Him if we will only look.

Barbara Wymbs

## **WE ARE SURVIVORS**

**(For those born before 1940 . . .)**

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball-point pens, before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes . . . and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea. We existed before house-husbands, computer dating and 'sheltered accommodation' was where you waited for a bus.

We were before day care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors, or young men wearing earrings. For us 'time sharing' meant togetherness, a 'chip' was a piece of wood or fried potato, 'hardware' meant nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word.

Before 1940 'Made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double-decker bus to the terminus. In our day, cigarette smoking was 'fashionable', 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in the coalhouse, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. 'Rock music' was a fond mother's lullaby, 'Eldorado' was an ice cream, a 'gay person' was the life and

soul of the party, while 'aids' just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today . . . BUT

By the grace of God . . . we have survived!

## **A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS**

God, give us eyes this Christmas  
to see the Christmas star,  
And give us ears to hear the song  
of angels from afar . . .  
And with our eyes and ears attuned  
for a message from above,  
Let Christmas angels speak to us  
of hope and faith and love -  
Hope to light our pathway  
when the way ahead is dark,  
Hope to sing through stormy days  
with the sweetness of a lark.  
Faith to trust in things unseen  
and know beyond all seeing  
That it is in our Father's love  
we live and have our being,  
And love to break down barriers  
of colour, race, and creed.  
Love to see and understand  
and help all those in need.

Helen Steiner Rice



## **A LETTER TO SANTA**

DEAR SANTA; Put into my stocking a dash of human kindness. And add some of the breadth of vision that will make me realize that, in truth, I am my brother's keeper.

Pour in some of the oil of graciousness - the mark of a true gentleman. Give me strength to play my part in this big, busy world, and to so regulate my life that when I pass on no man can say of me "he lived for self alone."

Leave for me a generous package of good cheer, so that when my neighbour is weighed down with despair I may go to help him look up and hope anew. Bring me a jack-in-the-box like the one that thrilled my childish heart, only let it be labelled faith; and allow me to unlock the magic of faith for every heart that comes my way.

Make all the children glad, but don't forget the grown-ups who have relinquished the carefreeness of youth for the stern verities of the daily struggle. Write upon their minds and hearts the message that real happiness consists in service to one's fellows, not in things for oneself.

Author unknown

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **FABRIC FUND**

| <u>2016</u> | <u>2015</u> |
|-------------|-------------|
| £2,163.52*  | £653.74     |

\* Includes a Donation from the estate of John Gillan

## **Financial Statement as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016**

|                 | <u>2016</u>       | <u>2015</u>       |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| FWO             | 15,852.72         | 16,678.00         |
| Plate           | 4,385.21          | 4,970.02          |
| Standing Orders | <u>7,215.00</u>   | <u>6,230.00</u>   |
|                 | <u>£27,452.93</u> | <u>£27,878.02</u> |
| Average         | £623.93           | £653.74           |
| No of Sundays   | 44                | 43                |

### **FROM THE EDITOR**

Over the years much has been reported on the pages of the magazine. It contains a record of the award winners of the Girls' and Boys' Brigades, as well as notices of baptisms, weddings and funerals. It recalled visitors to the church from various organisations such as the Reformation Society, Mission Aviation Fellowship and so on. It could be described as a mini-history of our church and the people in it.

I have had much pleasure in compiling the magazine but do feel that it is time for someone new with fresh ideas to take over. Please accept my personal thanks for the support I have received throughout these 60 years.

I wish my successor much pleasure and satisfaction as the magazine continues to tell the story of what is happening within the congregation of Holytown Parish Church.

## THE PENDULUM

There was once a pendulum waiting to be fixed on a new clock. It began to calculate how long it would be before the big wheels were worn out and its work was done. It would be expected to tick night and day, so many times a minute, sixty times that every hour, and twenty-four times that every day, and three hundred and sixty-five times that every year. It was awful! Quite a row of figures, enough to stagger you! Millions of ticks! "I can never do it," said the poor pendulum. But the clock-maker encouraged it, "You can do one tick at a time?" he asked. "Oh yes," the pendulum could do that. "Well," he said, "that is all which will be required of you." So the pendulum went to work, steadily ticking, one tick at a time, and it is ticking yet, quite cheerfully.

Dwight Lyman Moody

## GLORY TO GOD

"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace, good will toward men."  
May the angels' song of long ago,  
ring in our hearts again  
And bring a new awareness  
that the fate of every nation  
Is sealed securely in the hand  
of the Maker of creation . . .  
For man, with all his knowledge,  
his wisdom, and his skill,  
Is powerless to go beyond  
the holy Father's will . . .

And when we fully recognize  
the helplessness of man  
And seek our Father's guidance  
in our every thought and plan,  
Then only can we build a world  
of faith and hope and love,  
And only then can man achieve  
the life he's dreaming of.

Helen Steiner Rice

## **THE LEGEND OF THE ROBIN**

It is said that at one time the robin was a dull-coloured bird and did not have the red breast which makes it so easy to recognise.

On the night when Jesus was born in the stable at Bethlehem, it was very cold. Mary was worried that her baby son would not be warm enough, so Joseph made a fire and they lay down beside it to sleep.

A little bird was watching them through a crack in the roof and saw that the fire had begun to die. Flying down, he tried to replenish it, but the wood was too heavy for him to lift. So, all night long he stood by the fire, fluttering his wings to keep the flames bright.

When morning came, Mary saw that the robin's breast was reddened by being too close to the blaze.

"You brave little bird!" she exclaimed. "In recognition of your courage and devotion, you shall keep your red breast forever,

and then everyone will know how you risked your life for your Lord."

## THE KIRK OF EARLIER TIMES

A young precentor, in the first month of his office, was still extremely nervous as he began the line of the opening psalm. One Sunday it happened to be a portion of Psalm 119, beginning with the words: "Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way, of Thy precepts divine."

An old elder, observing his timorousness and the several attempts he made to begin, said to him at the close of the service, "Yon verse, laddie, wis awful' appropriate. But haud ye on, and He'll teach y the perfec' wye yet."

Two brothers were talking about their duties in the Kirk. One said, "I ring the bell, and ye raise the tune; we're baith doin' guid wark." The other would reply "Ay, ye mak' the music outside an I mak' the music inside; we're baith at the same wark. The kirks cudna do wantin' us." "No," said the other, "If there wis nae beadle they wadna ken the oor; and if there wes nae precentor they wadna ken the tune. They wad be sair misguided without us twa."

Holytown had a precentor for many years. It seemed to be a rather precarious position to have if the number of meetings held to elect a new one are to be taken seriously. Incidentally the election of precentors, in common with so many other things, was the prerogative of the male members of the church. The women had no say at all. In Holytown the precentor sat under the pulpit which at that time was against the back wall - that is prior to the erection of the chancel.

# COMMUNION SERVICES - Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December

10.00 am and 6.30 pm



Minister: Rev Caryl A E Kyle, BD (Min), DipEd  
260 Edinburgh Road  
Newhouse  
Motherwell ML1 5RU  
Tel: 01698 832622

Website: [www.holytownparishchurch.org.ok](http://www.holytownparishchurch.org.ok)

Services: 10.00 am each Sunday