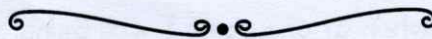


NEWSLETTER
DEC 2024 - FEB 2025



FOR TO US A CHILD IS BORN,
TO US A SON IS GIVEN,
AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE
ON HIS SHOULDERS.
AND HE WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE.



ISAIAH 9:6

And in the words of American spiritual (involving a slight change of metaphor):

I HEAR THE TRAIN A COMIN'
I HEAR IT CLOSE AT HAND
I HEAR THOSE CAR WHEELS RUMBLIN'
AND ROLLIN' THROUGH THE LAND

GET ON BOARD, LITTLE CHILDREN
GET ON BOARD, LITTLE CHILDREN
GET ON BOARD, LITTLE CHILDREN
THERE'S ROOM FOR MANY-A-MORE

THE FARE IS CHEAP
AND ALL CAN GO
THE RICH AND POOR ARE THERE
NO SECOND CLASS ABOARD THE TRAIN

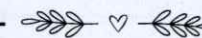
NO DIFFERENCE IN THE FARE
GET ON BOARD, LITTLE CHILDREN
GET ON BOARD, LITTLE CHILDREN
GET ON BOARD, LITTLE CHILDREN
THERE'S ROOM FOR MANY-A-MORE

May God bless to all the good news of His coming!


MOTHER & TODDLER GROUP


The Mother & Toddler Group runs each Thursday morning during school term time from 10am in the church hall.

9:30



GATHERINGS

 **SUNDAY WORSHIP** - Sundays at 11am in the main space

 **SPECIAL SERVICES** - Communion Service, 1st Dec at 11am

- Sunday Service, 15th Dec at 11am
will include the Baptism of Moses Joshua Wright
(of Aaron & Emily Wright, Dunbar)


Advent Meditations: 4th, 11th & 18th Dec at 6.30pm


Christmas Services:

✦ Christmas Eve Service, 24th Dec at 4.30pm


✦ Christmas Morning Service, 25th Dec at 10.30am

✦ Christingle Service with St Mary's at St Mary's,
26th January at 11am, third Sunday after Epiphany

 **PRAYER MEETING** - Tuesdays at 8.15am - 9am in the lower hall

 **MORNING BIBLE STUDY** - First and third Wednesday of the month,
10am - 11am in the lower hall

We are studying the book of 'Revelation,' which we find as rewarding as
we find it challenging - joining possible at any point.

 **EVENING BIBLE STUDY** - Second and fourth Wednesday of the month
7.30pm at the Manse.

Our theme: In conversation with God's Word - the Letter to the Romans,
from chapter 8 - life in the Spirit, the wonder of God's faithfulness,
a Christian ethic.

→ We would love to share in fellowship with you.

Please contact John (01620 822213) if you would like to join a group.



ESTHER NESS, who passed away on 26th October 2024 aged 93

IN MEMORY OF ESTHER NESS

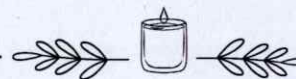
JOHN VISCHER

Esther was born in 1931 at home in Stranraer, the youngest of six girls. Her mother hailed from Lochboisdale, South Uist, which instilled in Esther a lifelong love for that part of Scotland's western edge, its people and its way of life. Indeed, she was brought up to speak Gaelic. Up until her marriage to Alex Dewar in 1952 she lived and worked in Stranraer, and then moved east to Edinburgh. She became mother to their daughter Alexa in 1965 and their son David in 1967, a vocation at which, in their words, "she excelled". In various places of work her winsome personality would endear her to fellow employees and customers alike, gaining trust and friendship. After the death of Alex in 1992, Esther was married again in 1993 to Ian Ness, and together they moved to Haddington the following year. She loved living in Haddington, experiencing it as a welcoming and friendly town. Her faith in God led her to join the West Church and its fellowship, to seek support through worship and the regular coming together to hear the Word of God. In terms of what it means to belong to God's household we trust that she now sees as she believed.

From the eulogy: "Esther loved life, she embraced it all. Like everyone she faced challenges but she always fought back and carried on. She was small in stature, large in character and had a backbone of steel

plus a gritty determination to make the very best of the life she was given."

She leaves behind her husband, Ian. We commend him and all the family to God's care and comfort and to your prayers.



BAPTISMS

On Sunday 6th October in St Mary's when we held a joint Harvest Thanksgiving service we conducted, in accordance with the will of our Lord, the baptism of Emily and Islay Hogarth (-Campbell), sweet twins and the daughters of Daniel and Emma.

May the Lord God in whose name these children were baptised bless them all richly and make known to them the treasure they have received and which they're promised!

There is the forthcoming baptism, on Sunday 15th December (3rd Sunday in Advent) of Moses Joshua Wright, born 14th September to Emily and Aaron.

Their request for baptism as an act of faith and trust is a cause of great joy: as the name is into which we are baptised, so is the gift that is received!



MATTERS OF JOINING / MEMBERSHIP

We are delighted to receive into membership of the West Church Kenneth and Rosemary Lynch and welcome them warmly into our fellowship! I have asked Kenneth, by way of introducing themselves to the wider church family to send in a piece for the newsletter - here it is:



This is to introduce ourselves and to explain our coming and going in the congregation. I originally come from Northern Ireland and Rosemary from Glasgow. We met when I was studying at New College and she was at Edinburg University.

I was ordained in the Presbyterian church in Ireland and we spent two years in Belfast where I was an assistant minister and then moved for seven years to a country congregation some eight miles out of Belfast. All three of our daughters were born in Ireland.

In 1984 I moved to the United Reformed Church. First of all to Redhill in Surrey where Rosemary studied to become a librarian. From there I served in pastorates in Brighton, Norfolk and West Sussex.

I retired ten years ago and we moved to Bognor Regis but I have continued to do some church work.

We have six grandchildren. Two of our daughters and their families live near Brighton and one in Haddington, so, at the moment, we divide out time between them.

We thank you for making us so welcome at West Church.



SILIGURI / HARVEST THANKSGIVING

JOHN WEIERTER (ST MARY'S)

We came together for a joint Harvest Thanksgiving service with the West Church on Sunday 6th October. The service was well attended and hearty fellowship was enjoyed at the soup and pudding lunch afterwards.

As part of the service we learned about a twinning arrangement the West Church has with a group of churches in West Bengal, India, called the Siliguri Pastorate. Jacqueline Waugh spoke warmly of her experience with the twinning and of a visit to Scotland made by a couple of their Pastors, just before the pandemic. She described the culture shock the pastors felt when they first arrived and how amazed they were by the technology in the schools that they visited.

Jacqueline also related greetings and reports that have come recently from their contact, Marolina, about their church year in their churches. Some of her stories about the difficulties faced by the pastors when visiting outlying churches were quite harrowing. They might need to cross rivers by laying down bamboo poles as a bridge and they are sometimes attacked by members of hostile factions. However, the impression is that their churches are doing well and are in good heart. We were asked to keep them in our prayers.

[Collection for Siliguri raised £500]



**"GOD IS FAITHFUL, BY WHOM YOU WERE CALLED
INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SON,
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."**

1 CORINTHIANS 1:9

SOME BACKGROUND ON SILIGURI PASTORATE



GEOGRAPHICAL

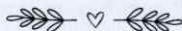
Siliguri is a city of over 1 million people in north east India, commanding the route through a narrow neck of land between the border of Bangladesh and Bhutan, which links India with its eastern states of West Bengal, Assam etc. The city is not industrial, rather more business and commercial.

CHURCH ORGANISATION

The Church of North India (CNI) Pastorate of Siliguri consists of one medium sized church on a limited site in the centre of the city and six daughter churches in outlying areas of the city. They a total of about 700 or so communicants.

UNION OF THE WEST CHURCH WITH ST MARY'S

For up-to-date information regarding the forthcoming union, I print below the statement as it appears in St Mary's newsletter:



At their separate meetings on 5th November, the Kirk Sessions of St Mary's and the West Church voted in favour of the Basis of Union which had been prepared by the Working Group which is made up of elders from both Kirk Sessions. The Basis of Union now goes through a process of being checked by Presbytery Planning committee, the Church of Scotland legal team, and the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group. Once they are happy that everything is as it should be, the Basis of Union will be voted on by both congregations.

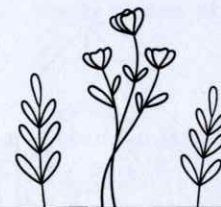
“JESUS SAID: ‘ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME. GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. AND BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE END OF THE AGE.’”

MATTHEW 28:18-20

A MATTER OF THANKS

On Saturday 9th November, a few folk gathered to do some needed clearing out work in the church, especially from the tower room and the space above. Many items, pulled away from underneath the dust that had gathered on top of them over the years, were shifted to the downstairs hall, to be taken away by skip for disposal (or put aside for reuse). Thanks to all for persevering through the dust storm and for climbing the equivalent of a munro, and thanks to Rob for masterminding the whole thing. It was suggested about this exercise that it might do nicely for a sermon illustration - food for thought... .

Also, but on a personal note: Elizabeth and I want to express our thanks to the session and the congregation for the support we received in regard to the work needing to be carried out on our property.



PRAYER

CHARLOTTE CRAWFORD

What a beautiful moment when love filled a stable
and God's greatest promise came true -

Heavenly Father, as we prepare for Christmas help us in all the busyness
of these days to find time to think of what Christmas really means -
your love for the world and your coming as the promised Redeemer.

Let us thank you for the comfort we have when we know you are near
as we seek your guidance to help us in the decisions we have to make
each day. You plant your message of hope in unexpected places.

We ask you to draw near to friends in our congregation who are ill at
this time, undergoing treatment or awaiting tests, results or operations.

We think before you of the sad, the lonely and the homeless, for whom
this time may be a particularly difficult one: may through all the
appearances of Christmas its true light, which shines in darkness, be
known.

We are saddened to know this will be the last year we will celebrate
Christmas in our own church. Help us to see that changes are about the
new beginnings that lie ahead.

Amen



"From the squalor of a borrowed stable / by the Spirit and a
virgin's faith / to the anguish and the shame of scandal / came the
Saviour our the human race.

But the skies were filled with the praise of heaven / shepherds
listen as the angels tell / of the gift of God come down to man / at
the dawning of Immanuel." (S Townend)

THOUGHTS ADVENT / CHRISTMAS

'THE SON OF GOD'

JEFFREY ARCHER

'He was born in a barn, his father a carpenter, and his mother a decent
woman, but they were of no significance, and certainly couldn't have
afforded to give the boy a private education. And yet, as a teenager, he
was arguing the toss with his elders and betters in the council chambers.

He never got a proper job, just roamed around the countryside,
unshaven, and living off bread and water and the occasional fish, while
offering his opinions to those who cared to listen.

He became the manager of a football team known as The Disciples, not
one of them a star, in fact the twelfth man rather let the side down by
accepting a transfer fee of thirty pieces of silver to play for the
opposition.

The authorities eventually arrested him as a rabble-rouser, but couldn't

decide what to charge him with, other than the fact he claimed he was the Son of God.

They strung him up with a couple of criminals, and when he finally gave up the ghost, rather assumed that would be the last they'd hear of him. The Disciples were relegated at the end of the season, in fact the captain denied on more than one occasion that he'd ever been a member of His team.

When He died at the age of thirty-three, there were no obituaries in the local press reporting his achievements, no glossy supplements highlighting his colourful career, no radio programmes to discuss his legacy, and no box sets recording any of his miracles.

But then, He'd never relied on focus groups to advise him on current trends, or advertising gurus to spend millions promoting his brand, or spin doctors to sharpen his image, and he didn't require social media to keep his followers up to date, so you could be forgiven for assuming he'd be forgotten in a few days.

SO HOW CAN ONE EXPLAIN THAT OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS LATER,
JESUS CHRIST IS STILL THE BEST-KNOWN CELEBRITY ON EARTH?
COULD IT JUST BE THAT HE WAS THE SON OF GOD?'

'In the creation, the Lord made man like himself;
but in the redemption he made himself like man.' (John Boys)

'God became man to turn creatures into sons, not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man.' (CS Lewis)



**THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU;
THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE TO SHINE
UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU;
THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE
UPON YOU AND GIVE YOU PEACE.**