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# *DORNOCH PARISH MAGAZINE*

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**Dornoch Cathedral in the snow**

## **Welcome to the new look Parish Magazine!**

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Following a lengthy break due to COVID 19 restrictions, we are delighted once again to bring you the monthly newsletter from Dornoch Cathedral.

We hope you enjoy this update about our church - if you have any comments about anything you'd like to see or suggested articles for inclusion, please send them to [newsletter@dornoch-cathedral.com](mailto:newsletter@dornoch-cathedral.com) and we'll try to incorporate them.

### **In this issue**

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## **Our Minister's thoughts**

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### **Page 2**

*"Perhaps, this year, we can let Christmas be as meant."*

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## **Dates for your Diary**

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### **Page 3**

Weddings, funerals – and events you shouldn't miss.

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## **News from the Pews**

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### **Pages 4 - 10**

The latest news from the many Cathedral groups.

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## **Poem**

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### **Page 11**

Something to inspire you.

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## **The Gift Project**

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### **Page 12**

Annie MacDonald's award from CASWA and how you can help them.

**And much more!**

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# Minister's Thoughts

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## Dear friends

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I can't quite believe it's nearly Christmas, can you?

Sometimes in life days drift by barely discernible one from the other. But I've been with you as Locum Minister almost a year now. The months seem to have flown. And here we are on the cusp of Christmas.

Christmas is a funny one. There's what we've made it - 'the festival of conspicuous consumption' is how someone described it to me once - there's what we've made it... and what it really is. But the thing it really is, well, it has surprise written all over it.

Consider Mary. That's who she is when we meet her first. Mary. A young woman engaged to be married. After that, she's considered, in that time and place, a scandal. She's pregnant. And the father is... who? But it's not people's whispering that gets to her, it's angel's, and it fills her soul. *Mary... Mary... Do not be afraid, you have found favour with God.*

Which is what it's all about really. Christmas. God who brings to birth kingdoms trusted one of us to birth God's own self. There's something to try to get your mind around when you're peeling the sprouts... Imagine. And, yet, that's what the story says. And it's far from fiction. Mary couldn't believe it. *Me? Wait. How?* But I think she must have decided it didn't matter too much what she believed. It was God's belief in her, in the end, that mattered.

And so it is with us. *John... Isla... Linda... Gavin...* (add your own name here)... *do not be afraid, you have found favour with God.* It's what God came to tell us. God took flesh and bone and being to remind us we are loved, always loved, and cherished in heaven's heart. End of story. Which is, of course, just the beginning. Because God spoke by putting Godself in our hands. A wrinkly wriggling bundle of hope to hold.

Perhaps, this year, we can let Christmas be as meant. Perhaps, this year, we can make room in our minds for the surprising truth that God believes in us... and let it fill *our* soul. *Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. You have found favour with God.*

Peace to you this Christmas time and far beyond.

**Carol Anne**



## Dates for your diary

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### Friday 2nd - Monday 12th December

“NO TREE CHRISTMAS DISPLAY” IN THE CATHEDRAL

### Saturday 3rd December - at 4pm

ST. ANDREW'S FAIR CAROL SERVICE

### Tuesday 6th December - at 2:30pm

GUILD CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON TEA

### Tuesday 6th December - at 7pm

CAROLS FOR CHRISTIAN AID

### Saturday 10th December - at 2.30pm & 7.00pm

CATHEDRAL YOUTH THEATRE GROUP - PERFORMANCE OF

‘THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE’ .....

### Sunday 11th December - at 6pm

CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCE SERVICE .....

### Monday 12th December - at 12:00

NATTER & NOSH CHRISTMAS LUNCH .....

### Friday 23rd December

DORNOCH PRIMARY & ACADEMY END OF TERM CAROL SERVICES

### Saturday 24th December - at 11pm

WATCHNIGHT SERVICE.....

### Sunday 25th December - at 10am

A SHORT FAMILY SERVICE

### Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> December - from 4 to 6pm

LABYRINTH.....

**Further details**

*Donations. See page 4*

*All welcome, especially those who may have lost loved ones.*

*tickets can be bought at November lunches - cost £5*

*with community carol singing from 11pm*

*A short prayerful walk through the candle-lit crossing in the Cathedral. Volunteers required to help set up, supervise and tidying away. Further details in the Order of Service.*

## Life Events

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Since the beginning of September

### Weddings

September 18th - Jessica Crisp and Reuben Merrick

October 8th - Blessing - Mr & Mrs Patrick Murray

October 22nd - Kayleigh A Smith and David M. Munro

November 12th - Mona Mackay and James Cameron

### Funerals

Mary (Molly) Gunn – 22<sup>nd</sup> September

Catherine (Cathy) Matheson – 7<sup>th</sup> October

### New Members

Jean Redpath – 2<sup>nd</sup> October – by resolution of the Kirk Session

Nan Gibb – 2<sup>nd</sup> October – by resolution of the Kirk Session

Patricia Murray – 16<sup>th</sup> October

James MacDonald – 17<sup>th</sup> October



## Cathedral Youth Theatre Group

### The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

On Saturday 10th December 2022 our Cathedral Youth Theatre Group will stage two performances of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. There will be an afternoon performance at **2:30 pm** and an evening show at **7:30 pm**. These will take place in the West Church Hall and **entry is by donation**.

This is the Group's first post-lockdown production and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible supporting our talented youngsters.

### The Plot.....

Our four children are evacuated from London during World War II. They find themselves in the care of an old eccentric professor and a fiery housekeeper. In trouble with the latter, they hide in a wardrobe where all is not as it appears to be..... They find themselves in a magical land, Narnia, and discover they are part of an ancient prophecy. ....

In the control of the evil queen, Narnia is in permanent winter.

Edmond (one of the children) is fooled by the Queen and held prisoner. He must be rescued; Narnia must be saved. Who will be its saviour?

**Find out on Saturday, the 10th of December**



## Cathedral Prayer Tree

We don't light candles in the Cathedral but we do have a prayer tree where visitors can place a prayer, a memorial, or a reflection.



The Prayer Tree is situated on a table near the West door of the Cathedral.

The prayer tree is well used with prayer labels written in a range of different languages by visitors of all ages. Children often leave a message, a thought, or a drawing and those too young to write 'scribble-write' or draw their message.

It has been great to see things getting back to normal since the Cathedral re-opened to visitors post pandemic, and the summer months were particularly busy, with 100 labels put out each week.

The last full year before the Covid pandemic saw over 1600 visitors to the tree.

I urge anyone who is spending some time in the Cathedral, to take a look and read the prayer labels there.

## Bible Study Group

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Hello again,

Here's an invitation. It's an invitation to walk together, you and I and all of us, in prayer and bible reading.

From Monday 27th November, the first week of Advent, I will be making, 'Seeking Aliveness' by Brian D McLaren, part of my week and my day - and I'd love for you to join me.

'Seeking Aliveness' is essentially a retelling of the biblical story and a reintroduction to the Christian faith. It is organised around four major themes chronicled in Scripture whose common thread is the 'quest for aliveness'.

'Seeking Aliveness' is about exploring what a difference an honest, curious, growing faith can make in our lives and in our world today. There are weekly bible readings, a thought and a question to ponder (between four and seven each week). And, after Christmas, I aim to gather those who'd like to into groups to go a little deeper in study and share with each other in prayer. These groups could include an online gathering, a coffee shop meeting, a get together in a house or whatever feels good and right to each of us.

Please, will you think about joining in? What else matters in these days but living our faith, together, as fully as we can. Perhaps this devotional resource can be a help in that?

The book is available at the usual outlets, not least from the lovely Maggie at the Dornoch Bookshop.

Yours hopefully,

**Carol Anne**



*"What we all want is pretty simple, really. We want to be alive. To feel alive. Not just to exist but to thrive, to live out loud, walk tall, breathe free. We want to be less lonely, less exhausted, less conflicted or afraid... more awake, more grateful, more energised and purposeful. If you're a seeker exploring Christianity, if you're a long-term believer feeling disheartened, if your faith seems to be a lot of talk without much practice, here you'll find a fresh and healthy reorientation."*

**Brian D McLaren**

## The Guild

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The first meeting of the Guild had to be cancelled owing to the death of Queen Elizabeth.

We opened the Session with a talk from the Vine Trust on one of the projects that the Guild is supporting. Mr Alistair Munro told us about Kazunzu Village of Hope. The vision for Kazunzu is to create a sustainable village on the shores of Lake Victoria, enabling young guardian parents to care for orphaned children from the lake zone. We shared this meeting with the Woman's Group.

In October, we heard from one of our Guild members, Rev Lizzie Campbell. Lizzie spoke on how the Lord called her from Scotland to be a maths teacher in Malawi, to the Philippines and back to Britain and a call to the ministry.

Our second meeting was Patrick Argyle, a retired vet, who kept us entertained with his memories of veterinary practice in Sutherland.

In November, Sue Prince encouraged us to improve our fitness with exercises that we could do sitting on a chair.

On 15th November, Trish and Liz got us into the Christmas spirit with a cookery demonstration of Christmas treats.

Our last meeting for the year is on 6th December when we will hold a Christmas Celebration with afternoon tea, carols and entertainment.

All are welcome to come along and enjoy the fellowship of the Guild.

## Cathedral Welcome & Sales Team

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We are looking for more volunteers to join our established group. We operate as a team between May and September each year, based in the centre of the Cathedral. Duties include selling items from our Sales Table as well as offering a welcoming smile to the hundreds of visitors who come in to marvel at the beauty of our Cathedral and its stained glass windows.

**Could YOU spare 2 - 3 hours once a fortnight to help?**

Volunteers work in teams of 2 - so it is an ideal opportunity for friends, couples or partners to spend time together as well as helping to raise funds towards the maintenance of the Cathedral.

If you would like to learn more - please contact Sue on 01862 810415 or Anne on 01862 811520

**We'd love to meet you!**



## Women's Group

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**When is a Christmas tree not a Christmas tree...?**

When it is constructed of anything that isn't actually any part of a tree...

Obvious, isn't it!

The Dornoch Cathedral Women's Group, along with many local businesses, have been challenged with the task of creating just such a thing. This "forest" of trees will be displayed in the Cathedral in early December. In previous years these No-tree-Christmas-trees have been made of some weird, wonderful and very abstract materials.

The creative imagination of the people of Dornoch knows no bounds and will amaze you.

The photos show two examples that were made by the Women's Group in past years.



## Natter & Nosh Christmas Lunch

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Hopefully you already have your ticket for the Christmas Lunch on Monday 12th December. Tickets available at Monday Natter & Nosh lunches. Your last chance to book a place will be Monday 28th November. Precise numbers for that day are needed in advance.



## New Dornoch Cathedral Website

Check our new website where you can see details about worship, including listening to Sunday Services; Latest News; Life Events which have Baptisms, Weddings & Deaths; History of the Cathedral; Gallery of photos; a very quick method to make a donation; link to Church of Scotland website; our Annual Financial Accounts; details of 12 different activities and how to book the West Church Hall and loads more of interest. [www.dornoch-cathedral.com](http://www.dornoch-cathedral.com)



## Sutherland Presbytery Plan

The 2021 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland tasked Presbyteries with effectively delivering Christ's mission in practice by developing a Mission Plan. Presbyteries, working with the Faith Nurture Forum and the General Trustees, must have an Approved Mission Plan in place no later than 31 December 2022. Once approved, the Mission Plan must be implemented, then evaluated on an annual basis and further developed as needed so it remains an accurate, comprehensive plan for the shape of church life.

The General Assembly allocated 4 full time equivalent ministers to cover the whole county of Sutherland. Currently we have five full-time ministers, one OLM (ordained local minister) two Readers and two Locums. There are also 4 vacancies – Dornoch, Creich & Kincardine, Lairg & Rogart and Eddrachilles. The Planning Team had the unenviable task of exploring how future ministry could be conducted across the county with the imposed reduction.

They came up with a plan for four parish areas – north, east, south and west. In discussions at a meeting in the West Church Hall on 8th October the congregation of Dornoch Cathedral voted to accept the plan for the Southern Parish which would see the union of Dornoch Cathedral with the Kyle of Sutherland churches - Creich, Kincardine & Croick. Edderton would potentially be included in Tain Parish Church's parish.

At a consultation meeting on 18th October each Sutherland congregation gave feedback and asked questions about the plan. The plan has now been revised in the light of that feedback. There is no change to arrangements for the Southern Parish. It is hoped that at a meeting of Presbytery on 29 November the plan will be approved and will then go through various stages of approval at the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Only after the Sutherland plan is approved can the process of appointing a minister begin.

## An update from the Property Convenor

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### Tower

What started out with a report from the clock service engineer that some of the brackets holding the clock faces in place had rusted through, leading to a full inspection of the tower; this identified work that needs to be done externally and internally. The internal work is mainly to create a safe working area when carrying out the repairs to the clock faces. The external work covers things like painting the clock faces, the weather vane and repointing stonework. The cost of doing all this is around £82,000, which

could be higher with spiralling material costs and inflation! The internal work is due to commence within the next few weeks.

### Cathedral External doors

The outside doors of the cathedral require painting. Our original choice of colour was turned down on heritage grounds which has led to a delay meaning that it won't be done until the spring 2023 when the weather should be much better for painting. More money, I'm afraid, around £970.

## Dornoch Cathedral Boys' Brigade

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Junior Section and Anchor Boys are well into their winter programme. The Juniors have been leaf lifting around the West Church Hall, working on their figure marching and practising for the Carols for Christian Aid Service.

The Anchors have been learning all about Boys' Brigade and enjoying new games. The Juniors love playing 'Quarters' and rock, paper, scissors in hoops! Anchor boys are very competitive at dodge ball and ladders.

We have a great number of boys with us this year but if you know of any boy in Primaries 1-6 who would like to join us on a Tuesday evening there is always room for more.

Anchor boys, Primaries 1 – 3, meet 6pm-7pm and Junior BBs, Primaries 4 – 6, meet 7pm – 8.30pm.





## Dornoch Firth Group – Tuesday Tots

Tuesday Tots have been enjoying lots of fun activities this term including sensory play, Halloween games, autumn crown making, daffodil planting and song time. We've had a few new babies join the group which is lovely.

Our Knit and Natter group have been creating fabulous garments including jumpers and blankets – all so creative!



We've been able to distribute some goodies from the Food Share Larder at our table in the West Church Hall - there's plenty of tea and pasta if anyone is passing, you're saving it from landfill!

While Jen Smith is on maternity leave the Tuesday Tots contacts are Eilidh Smith or Charles Minall [charles@dfgcommunity.com](mailto:charles@dfgcommunity.com)



## Cooking Club at the Hub (free)

The Dornoch Hub has a Cooking Club every Thursday from 11am – 1pm. All welcome! We have different menus each week and people who don't want to cook can come along to eat and chat. You can book through Eventbrite online and enjoy two hours with Yvonne. If you have access to a computer you can book using Eventbrite or call us on 07341284405 or pop in if passing Argyle Street and we can book a place for you. This event is free for the community.

[www.dornochhub.co.uk](http://www.dornochhub.co.uk)




## Look out for these posters!

**The No Tree  
Christmas  
Tree Display**



in  
Dornoch Cathedral  
3<sup>rd</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
Cathedral open each day till 6.00pm

Come and see the amazing display of  
Christmas trees imaginatively created by  
different local businesses and groups.




**Carols for Christian Aid**

Service of Carols and Readings  
in  
Dornoch Cathedral  
Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 7.00pm.

Come and join us for an informal service of Carols  
and Readings.

Donations at the door to be split between Christian Aid  
and MFR Cash for Kids



## Smartie Tube collection

**MEMO** – if you were at a morning Service at the beginning of October you most likely took a tube of Smarties home with you. For many years we have donated to numerous appeals by replacing the sweets with 20 pence or even pound coins. Some even manage to get paper money into their tube.

This year the collection will be sent to support the Pakistan Emergency Disaster Fund. Please bring your Smartie tubes to morning Service on Sundays 11th and 18th December.

**Thank you for your generosity.**



# A Jigsaw in Need of Repair

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*In a box at the back of an unopened cupboard,  
Bashed and discarded, corners all torn,  
Lies a picture of memories, good times together,  
The image now fading, in pieces well worn.*

*Loose sockets, lugs broken, not fitting in places,  
A piece missing here and another one there,  
Some bits from another thrown into the cocktail,  
It's a jigsaw that's badly in need of repair.*

*A box in the window where once he had stood  
Comes to his mind for it glimmered like gold.  
Often he'd pondered what made it shine brightly,  
What secrets therein did that little box hold?*

*Then somebody picked up the battered old box  
And saw what this faded old jigsaw could be,  
They sorted the pieces, mended the lugs and  
Gave it some much needed TLC.*

*Once it was built it looked so much better,  
The image appearing though not quite complete,  
A gap in the middle in the shape of a cross  
The last space to fill to make it all neat.*

*And the builder knew just where to find such a piece  
So he opened the jigsaw he remembered of old –  
The very same jigsaw that stood in that window,  
The very same box which glimmered like gold.*

*He took out a cross shape and offered it into  
The hole in the jigsaw which fitted just right,  
And now as that cross had completed the picture  
The image took on a new glimmering light.*

*It now was a picture of dreams for the future,  
An image of hope for others to share,  
But this only happened thanks to one who saw promise  
And one of who gave of himself out of care.*

*And that little jigsaw which had glimmered so brightly  
Still glimmers brightly long into the night;  
For the cross at the heart holds a powerful secret,  
When you share it with others you hold onto the light.*



## The Gift Project - Volunteers work recognised

Voluntary Groups Sutherland hosted a special awards evening to pay tribute to local volunteers in Sutherland – the VOSCARS. Annie MacDonald was recognised for her work in creating and delivering The Gift Project and was awarded a VOSCAR.



Annie, centre, is pictured with two friends, Patsy Mackay (on left) and Kathleen Mackenzie (on right) who, with others supporting THE GIFT PROJECT, received beautiful floral bouquets from CASWA.

Caithness and Sutherland Womens Aid (CASWA), supports women, children and young people who experience domestic abuse and have little in the way of basic material possessions. When fleeing a relationship there may be no time to take basic possessions. For women left in financial ruin or recovery following domestic abuse, material possessions simply cannot be afforded.

CASWA are able to provide the emotional and practical support needs of the women, children and young people throughout their journey to a safe and abuse free life, but sadly are not funded to provide the physical items such as clothing, toys, toiletries, etc. Without the hard work and selfless commitment of Annie we would not be able to offer our families these basic items.

In 2018 Annie became a volunteer with CASWA, helping to raise awareness of the service, which is available in Caithness and Sutherland.

In 2019 Annie received a number of bags of children's clothing from a friend, including toys and a children's seat. Following a meeting Annie offered the items to the team who were able to take everything and give them to service users.

In Annie's words, "It was a rude awakening when I experienced this moment and realised that there

was a vital un-met need in our community. As a result of this I decided to launch The Gift Project. The plan developed and I aim to stock new and nearly new clothing, toiletries, toys and games for women, children and young people, therefore providing good quality essential items as a gift. Initially the items were stored in my home, then in 2021 I was allocated storage and working space at the Dornoch Community Hub gratefully funded by CASWA.

"CASWA domestic abuse specialists contact me with the size, sex, age of the children and the woman's details. I have friends who support and give time to help select the items needed and pack them into new boxes, when they are ready to go out as gifts to the family.

"Through family, friends near and far, I have had loyal practical support, amazing donations and generosity of spirit. The community are unbelievably supportive and compassionate to the project and ultimately to the women, children and the young people it serves."

Mitchell's Chemist has accepted toiletry donations for the project and Dornoch Book Shop and St Finbarr's Charity Shop have also been a constant support.

If you wish to support The Gift Project and the work of Annie and her friends please find more information on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/thegiftprojectsutherland> or [www.caswa.org.uk](http://www.caswa.org.uk) or email Annie on [help@caswa.org.uk](mailto:help@caswa.org.uk)