

DORNOCH PARISH MAGAZINE

Issue 7 for December 2023 / January 2024

£1 towards costs



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NOTE:

Winter Sunday Services in the West Church Hall 7th January to 3rd March

Love is come again ...

Dear Friends,

As this wee wonder of a newsletter makes it's way into your hands or onto your screens, we will be nearing the season the church calls *Advent*.

If I asked my son about *Advent* he'd probably put it together with the word *Calendar*. He came home with one at the weekend. It has a picture of the big guy in the red suit on the front and a snowman looking over his shoulder. And it has insultingly (I imagine!) tiny pieces of chocolate inside.

But *Advent*, meaning something like *arrival* or *coming*, is not so much to do with the arrival of the guy in the red suit, parcel in hand, lovely though all of that can be, but of God coming to earth, crying, thirsty, cold, needing to be held.

A long ago prophet and poet wrote of this coming,

A child has been born for us ···
And he shall be called
Wonderful Counsellor
Mighty God···
Prince of Peace.



Except… he hadn't yet arrived, not then. The prophet, whose name was Isaiah, was looking for God to come. Because everything felt dark to Isaiah. Dangerous even. The city was rich. The poor increasingly oppressed. Nations making back room deals: *You watch my back and I'll watch yours*.

We sit on the other side of what Isaiah most longed for. And still the city is rich. The poor getting poorer. Nations making back room, cash-in-their-eyes deals that get folk killed.

And here we are, looking for God still today. Not realising perhaps God is come in the fear-filled eyes of the crying, the thirsty, the cold, those who need holding today.

And… that when we open our arms to each other, we open our arms to God… And we discover light… even in darkness… and Love is come again.

Whatever else comes your way this Advent, teeny tiny pieces of chocolate and ho-ho-ho's and all the rest, I pray for you, eyes-open-moments, heart- and hand-open-moments. To see God. To welcome God. To know God… born for us.

Deep peace of the Prince of Peace to you, this Christmas and far beyond…

Carol Anne

Advent Credo

It is not true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss — This is true: For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction — This is true: I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever — This is true: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called wonderful counsellor, mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of peace.

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world — This is true: To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers — This is true: I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall have dreams.

It is not true that our hopes for liberation of humankind, of justice, of human dignity of peace are not meant for this earth and for this history — This is true: The hour comes, and it is now, that the true worshipers shall worship God in spirit and in truth.

So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ — the life of the world.



The Rev. Allan Boesak

Franciscan Blessing from Carol Anne

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, So that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in the world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

Amen

NEW MEMBERS

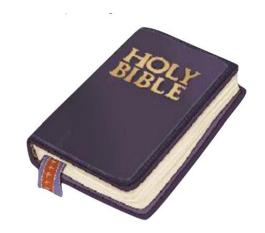
The Kirk Session and the congregation welcomed new members to the Cathedral.

New Member

Annie MacDonald, Achinchanter House, Dornoch

By Resolution of the Kirk Session

Nan Matheson, 17 Elizabeth Crescent, Dornoch Diana & David Thompson, The Old Manse, Edderton Mairi Forbes, 4 Craighill Terrace, Tain Ian Crisp, Pier House, Dunrobin Castle, Golspie



By Transfer of Lines

Colin and Hazel Chessor,13 Murray Road, Dornoch, from Halkirk Church of Scotland.

LIFE EVENTS

<u>Funerals</u>

11th November - Julie Anderson, Dornoch.

Baptisms

29th October - James Mackay, son of Craig & Yvonne Mackay.

19th November - Minnie Helen Morag Day, daughter of Matt and Rhona Day.

'May the Lord, mighty God, bless and keep you for ever' Adapted from Aaronic Blessing, Numbers 6.24

GIFT DAY 2023

Gift Day was held on Saturday 30th September this year and for the first time it was held inside the Cathedral. Those who came along could enjoy teas, coffees, home baking and fellowship as well as contributing to the Cathedral funds.

It was a huge success, realising £16,183.65, more than double last year's total. In addition to that we have been able to make a gift aid claim on the donations for £2525.

Thanks are due to every single one of you who donated. To have raised over £18,700 is wonderful and every single penny is appreciated.

Thanks also to those who set up, baked, served teas and coffees and were there to welcome people.

The Finance Team

PRESBYTERY NEWS

On 1st January 2024 Sutherland Presbytery will cease to exist and we become part of the new presbytery Cleir Eilean I or 'Highlands and Hebrides.'

The translation of the Gaelic means 'Presbytery of Iona' which might seem a bit strange - but Iona is included in the new presbytery and it is an acknowledgment of our heritage in which Columba spread the Word of God out from Iona.

The old presbyteries of Argyll, Abernethy, Lochaber, Inverness, Ross, Caithness, Sutherland, Lochcarron & Skye, and Uist will join to make one very large presbytery. A full-time Clerk has already been appointed and other appointments will be made soon including specialists in finance and property. These posts will be funded for the next 5 years by the Church of Scotland.

At present we are on track towards a 1 January 2024 launch of the new Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland after all three churches involved - Kincardine, Croick & Edderton; Creich; and Dornoch Cathedral voted in favour of the proposed Basis of Union. The application to OSCR to register as a charity has been successful.

Once the process is complete it will enable the next steps to be taken towards the appointment of a full time Minister. The Kirk Session of the new united congregation will be made up of the elders from the three congregations and it is expected that subcommittees will be formed to handle aspects such as worship, finance, property, pastoral care, etc.

PARISH NEWS YEAR 2 How do you get a copy?

Thank you for supporting the Parish News during the first year of the new style. Thanks are also due to the many contributors and I must give praise for the improvement in photography.

If you wish to continue to receive a digital copy I am pleased to say we are able to keep the cost at £5 for the next set of 6 issues up until November 2024. Paper copies will remain at £1 each.

To make your donation you can either use:

- Bank transfer details are Sort Code 80-06-36 Account 06002380 and include as a reference -Parish News.
- **By cheque** made payable to **Dornoch Cathedral** and take to the Cathedral with your name on the envelope and marked Parish News.
- Cash in an envelope taken to the Cathedral with your name and marked Parish News.

If you have content that you would like to be included email it to newsletter@dornoch-cathedral.com

THANK YOU

The Kirk Session and Deacons Court take this opportunity to thank John Calder, Property Convenor for more than 13 years. John's ability to cope with the many and varied issues over this lengthy period for the Cathedral and West Church Hall has been exceptional.

Thank you, John.

NATTER AND NOSH

This Lunch Club meets on Monday 27th November and Monday 11th December. We will restart in 2024 on Monday 15th January and again on Monday 29th January. The rest of the dates till June 2024 will be in the next Issue of the Parish News. Christmas Gift Food Parcels will be sale on Monday 11th December.

Trish Geddes

DORNOCH GUILD

September 26th – Gwen Muir and Trish Geddes welcomed members and friends to an afternoon of Favourite Hymns. We are indebted to Roddy who came along and played for us. We had a lovely afternoon singing hymns Old and New and were ready for a welcome cup of tea.



On 10th October, Elma Mackay from Blythswood spoke to the Guild on 'Bringing Joy to Others' by giving the gift of a shoe box full of practical items. Since the first shoe box appeal in 1993, 2.5 million have been given out. Elma showed a video showing how the boxes, each one different, each one personal were delivered to schools, hospitals, orphanages, care homes and to households in very low income communities. Guild members brought boxes for the appeal.

On October 24th – We welcomed Anne McDonald from Highland Senior Citizens. Anne is the co-ordinator for the North Highlands and gave a very interesting talk on the work of the Network, giving us advice on how to contact them if worried about anything in life from falls to Dementia. It is good to know that the support is there for all. We agreed that we are lucky in our community to have such organisations to call on.

We have a regular attendance of about 24 members each meeting and anyone is welcome to join us at 2.30 in the West Church Hall. The dates till Christmas are as follows: November 28th and December 5th. Be sure of a warm welcome.

Trish Geddes

WOMEN'S GROUP

The Women's Group continues to meet regularly and our programme continues to be varied, and sometimes surprising to us all. September saw us enjoying "A night at the Movies" – better known as an hour or so watching a DVD projected onto a wall in the West Church Hall, accompanied by cake and tea! (Essential IT know-how was very kindly provided by Willie Mackay – without whom it would have been a blank wall accompanied by cake and tea).

Currently we are planning the annual Carols for Christian Aid service which will be held on Tuesday 12th December at 7pm in the Cathedral. Readers, singers and musicians have been invited and rehearsals planned. We look forward to welcoming many old friends, and new, on the night. As usual, home baked shortbread will be served with tea and coffee at the close of the service and we are confident that, this year, the weather will be kind allowing a large number of people to join us raising the Cathedral roof with some of our favourite carols.

In the new year it is our intention to share with you, via this publication some of the history of the Dornoch Cathedral Women's Group (or the Young Women's Group as it was formerly known) using photographs, written records and memories. We hope to include some personal stories of how members came to join or were enlisted, and what being part of this small group means to us! So please watch this space.............

Caroline Gilchrist

DORNOCH FIRTH CAMPUS – ACT of REMBERANCE

On Friday 10th November a very moving and well-prepared Service with pupils from Bonar Bridge & Dornoch Primary Schools and Dornoch Academy, which form the Dornoch Firth Campus, was held in our Cathedral.

Pupils were piped from school by teacher, Danny Parkin. Senior pupils had researched from archives details of some of those from Dornoch who had fallen in the First World War.





This is a small selection of Remembrance art work produced by Dornoch Primary 6 pupils.





REMEMBERANE PARADE SUNDAY 12^{TH} NOVEMBER Boys Brigade

The Anchor Boys and Junior Section boys have been busy working on their marching skills since the October break. They needed these skills for taking part in Dornoch's Remembrance Sunday Parade.

The Boys' Brigade flag was carried by Struan McPhillips and his escorts were Magnus McIntosh and Elliot Richardson. During the Service at the Memorial the Boys' Brigade wreath was laid by Calvin Mackenzie.

The rest of Junior Section and a good number of Anchor Boys joined in the Parade. Each and everyone of them behaved beautifully and were a credit to their parents.

The next few weekly meetings will be full of activities that will keep us busy till we finish on the 5th of December for our Christmas break.



Remembrance Parade

Morag Mcaskill

BROWNIES

So very proud of our girls for their part in the parade and the church service. Somebody in our group (who shall remain nameless!) volunteered Archie for "Team Camel."



1st Dornoch Brownies ready for the Parade to the War memorial



Who volunteered Archie to be a Camel?



BROWNIES BLYTHWOOD SHOE BOX APPEAL

At the start of November Vivienne Mackay from Blythswood very kindly helped us with the Shoe Box Appeal. The girls watched a video presentation and all set to work wrapping and filling their boxes. Many thanks to Vivienne and to our parents for the generous donations. Charity Badge completed!





Carols for Chistian Aid

The Brownies are participating this year, Tuesday 12th December at 7pm. Girls are delighted that they can earn their Performing Badge. Gulie Herbertson



CATHEDRAL YOUTH BAND

Do you play a musical instrument? Would you like to be a founder-member of the Dornoch Cathedral Youth Band?



If so then bring your instrument to the very first meeting.



This will take place in the West Church Hall at 7:15 pm on Friday 12th January 2024.

All standards welcome. You just have to be learning/playing an instrument. All instruments welcome!

The band will be led by Roddy Maclean and Graham McCarthy.

Parents/Carers are also very welcome to attend the first meeting. Look forward to seeing you all there.

Graham McCarthy & Roddy MacLean

CATHEDRAL YOUTH THEATRE GROUP

Rehearsals are going well – "Oh NO they are NOT – Oh YES they ARE!" Unless you get an early digital copy of the Lion King the curtain will have dropped on this year's performance.

The Lion King performance at the West Church Hall on Saturday 25th November has/had two performances - one at 2:30 pm, the other at 7:00 pm. Entry by donation.







Rehearsals – scary!!

Watch this space for a full report and photos in our next issue.

Graham McCarthy

CATHEDRAL CHOIR

The popular Watchnight Service on Christmas Eve will once again be a feature of the Christmas celebrations in the Cathedral.

Come along and enjoy singing your favourite Carols at 11pm before we start a short Service at 11.30pm which take us up to midnight and Christmas Day.



Roddy MacLean

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

There is a Coffee Morning on Friday 8th December from 10:30 to 12:00. Come along and enjoy home baking in the West Church. The dates from January to June 2024 will be announced soon.

The Quiz Night on Saturday 18th November, saw John MacKenzie providing another evening of FUN.

REMEMBER - Christmas Gift Food Parcels will be on sale after Sunday Services on 10th and 17th December as well as at Natter & Nosh on Monday 1ith December.

Una Reid

CREICH FLOWER FESTIVAL

This content wasn't included in Issue 6 but you will enjoy the photos and the text.





Creich Church held their annual flower festival as part of the Kyle of Sutherland's Gala week just before the children went back to school This year the theme chosen was SERVICE and the floral displays ranged from the fire service, the air ambulance, missionary work, defence and medical services, voluntary support groups and that of individuals.

The first day was 'Pancake Day' and a good number gathered for Morag, Sheila and Rosemary's pancakes, tea or coffee and a natter. The sales table was popular with folk stocking up on home baking!

The last day included a Songs of Praise continuing the theme of Service and it was well supported by other local congregations.

Jeani Hunter

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 squeeze notes into their tube.



This year the collection will once again support a needy charity which will be agreed at the next Deacons Court meeting and announced in the Order of Service.

Please bring your Smartie tubes to morning Service on Sundays 10th and 17th December.

Thank you for your generosity.

Mhairi Mackay

CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS SALES TABLE - Sunday, 26th November after Morning Service

The Cathedral Sales & Welcome Team will be opening up again soon, especially for Christmas. Please stay on after the service, not only for a hot drink, baking or a biscuit from our lovely Sunday catering team, but to browse for gifts and Christmas goods.

We will be offering very well priced **Christmas Cards** (in packs and singly), **Christmas Wrapping Paper and Children's Nativity Sticker Books**, mostly sourced from Crossreach or other charities.

Also on sale will be small, well-loved items from our regular sales table all of which are suitable as Christmas stocking fillers. Please remember to bring your purses along on **Sunday 26th November** and be assured that all profits from any sales will go towards the maintenance of the Cathedral.

If we still have any stock left over we will open again on the **Sunday, 3rd December.**

We look forward to seeing you all on the 26th November.

Sue, Lisa and Anne 🛕 🕏 🛕 🚭 🛕

Prayer Group

During November we've been praying each Thursday morning with a wider group of God's followers from across the new parish, that God's spirit will guide the decisions that have to be taken to move forward with the Union. So many decisions are needed - from the strategic and visionary, to the mundane and day to day, and we are seeking to give the decision-makers in the joint kirk session our prayerful support.

Our weekly prayers have focused on the decisions that are needed to help us become a real union, a single family of believers, to enable us to have unity of vision and to create a single aim for the future. We want to support those among us who are making decisions, asking for patience and understanding between those involved, recognising the sensitivities that individuals bring into the situation. We've also been praying about the decisions needed over our regular worship, in terms of formats of services, alternative fellowship opportunities, locations and leaders, and about Outreach, how we fulfil our stated aim to be 'Christ's hands, feet, voice and heart to all ages in our community and beyond'.

Although our month of organised prayer meetings is drawing to a close, the prayer effort needs to continue. We would ask everyone in the congregation - and those who are not church-goers - to continue to pray with us for the future of the new Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland parish.

Father, we ask for your blessing on our new parish Union.

Give those involved in the decision-making your vision for what the new parish should look like and how it should operate.

Give them patience, understanding, sensitivity and wisdom.

And help all of us to be faithful in prayer supporting them through the current process so that we create a vibrant and united family of your believers in this area.

We ask it all in your name, that your spirit will flow within the new Union and out into the communities we live in. Amen



The last session is on Thursday 30th November in the West Church Hall at 10:30am. All welcome.

The Prayer Group

PLANTING KING CHARLES III CORONATION TREE

On Wednesday 8th November a ceremony was held to plant one of the trees that King Charles III and Queen Camilla gifted to communities across the UK to mark the Coronation.

Lord Lieutenant Major General Patrick Marriott, officiated along with two Primary pupils, completing the planting.

Catherine MacAngus, Chair of Dornoch & District Community Council, thanked the Primary and Secondary pupils for attending along with former Provost Duncan Allan and Vice Lord-Lieutenant Kim Tulloch.









DORNOCH FIRTH GROUP Activities

Tuesday Tots, Outdoor Tots, Buggy Walks, Baby Massage

Our parent and toddler Project, Tuesday Tots is expanding, Jen has returned from maternity leave to continue on Tuesdays which will allow Eilidh to deliver our NEW, EXCITING OUTDOOR TOTS PROJECT from January. Our baby Massage sessions are a real hit with new mums and our Buggy Walks are proving popular and fun. It's a great way to get parents out and about with their children, exploring and learning in the woods.

Dornoch Community Workshops:

Dornoch Men's Shed members have just finished building a new extension to our workshop to provide a cosy rest area for a brew and a blether. We have two good sized workshops now for various activities allowing us to start up-cycling, restoring, repairing and building new. Open every day Monday to Saturday for members, no fixed times, but someone will be there every Thursday between 10:30 and 12:00 for new members or if anyone wants to drop in for a chat and look around. We are in the grounds of Oversteps Care Home, Earls Cross Road, Dornoch.



Pottery

Behind our Men's Shed workshops is our Ceramics Workshop, open to everyone, we have classes with a tutor every Monday and Wednesday. Small classes up to 3 people at a time can use our pottery wheels and have their items fired. Throwing, hand building or slab building for any skill level or just for beginners. Get on our waiting list by accessing our website www.dornochfirthgroup.com Our main customers seem to be ladies, we welcome gents too!

Knit and Natter

Our Knit and Natter crafting group on a Tuesday morning at the West Church Hall has grown in numbers and they are making lots of beautiful knitted and crocheted items as well as making friends. Anyone welcome, just come along on Tuesday Mornings and learn or share some new skills.

Sutherland Cares Counselling Project

Our Counselling project is going well with around 50 sessions delivered each month. We have Community Regeneration Funding from Highland Council to offer Free Counselling Sessions to anyone living in Sutherland, a confidential service delivered by qualified counsellors. You can self refer or get a friend to access for you. See https://dfgcommunity.com/free-counselling-sessions. or call our number 07354 854 266

The Hut. Food Share Larder

Our Food Hut in the car park of Dornoch Hub is open every Tuesday and Thursday morning, we collect food from local supermarkets, and have regular deliveries of food from our local food network. Donations are welcome and we have a cupboard outside open 24/7 for donations or to help yourself to provisions inside. We shall have fresh veg available leading up to the new year for anyone to access.



Dornoch Emergency Resilience Group DORNOCH FIRTH GROUP cont'd

We are looking for a small number of volunteers to be part of a new steering group for this important activity. See our website for info and contact charles@dfgcommunity.com if you can be on the steering group. https://dfgcommunity.com/community-resilience

Charles Minall

Oversteps 65th Anniversary Celebration

The party was well attended by residents, relatives and the Friends of Oversteps. Rev. Alister MacInnes welcomed everyone with a prayer, and this was followed by a short talk about the history of Oversteps by Jimmy Melville. Gwen Melville, previous Home Manager was presented with a bouquet of flowers before everyone enjoyed a delicious buffet made by the new cook, David Macdonald. It was a lovely event, and we are looking forward to welcoming everyone into the home more often for events. *Photos next Issue.*

Jen MacDonald

A NEW CHRISTMAS CAROL

Away in a Manger (alternative words)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, Just a box in the corner where the animals fed. When morning had broken, the ass and the ox Found a surprise there, asleep in the box. For a bundle of love smiled back from the hay,
To the shock of the donkey who had brought Him this way.
And the shepherds who first heard the choirs above,
Outcasts no longer, stood wrapped in His love.

Like them we are welcomed, like them we are called – Hear the Good Shepherd, come into the fold. See the child in the manger asleep in His bed, And with all of God's creatures come now to be fed.

Alasdair MacKay

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

From Pat Murray

Many thanks for the warm welcome extended to me as a new member of Dornoch Cathedral congregation.

Very Best Wishes to all for Christmas 2023 and for New Year 2024.

From Willie, Maureen, and Isabelle

We send warmest greetings. May the gifts of love, happiness and peace be yours this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

From Liz and James Manson

Wishing all our Cathedral family a blessed Christmas and best wishes for a very happy and healthy 2024.

From Jane and Alasdair

We wish everyone a Christmas filled with blessings. May the love, joy and peace of Christmas go with us all into the New Year.

Dates for Your Diary

INNIS MHOR CARE HOME, Tain – AFTERNOON TEA – Friday 1st December 2pm – 3.30pm

Innis Mhor invite you to join the residents for an afternoon tea and a chance to browse their stall of handmade decorations and stocking fillers.

JOIN CAROL ANNE in December

Follow the Star Trail

Dornoch Cathedral, from Friday 1st December to Nativity Sunday 24th December 11am

Find five minutes to come and meet Shalom the Star and join the *Follow the Star Trail*. This is perfect for little ones and parents and grandparents together, wanting to find out a little bit about what Christmas is all about. As you follow the trail, you'll listen for noises, find things, draw, give yourself a hug - or hug each other - and more besides. And, at the end, there'll be a special invitation, just for you.

The Makers @ Advent

West Church Hall, **Sunday 10**th **December, 2-4pm**Come and find a wee bit of what you need as Christmas nears

This is a **one-off event** (unless you like it and want to do more) for anyone of any age, families and folk on their own, for those who go to church and those who wouldn't dream of it. It's for folk wanting to make space to explore Christmas in their own way or maybe just enjoy some space before December gets too crazy. There will (probably! it's all in the planning!) be: snacks and drinks, games to play around the table, Lego, crafts to try, a prayer space, stories to explore.

Come along and give it a go? You might just feel better for it.

DATES at a GLANCE

Sunday 26 th November - Cathedral Sales Table	Sunday 24 th December - Sunday Service @ 11am
Thursday 30th Nov . 10.30am-WCHall Prayer Group Prayers for Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland	Sunday 24 th December – Watchnight Service Carols from 11pm and Service at 11.30pm
Friday 1 st December – Follow the Star	Mon. 25 th Dec. – CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE – 10am
Friday 8 th December – Coffee Morning W.C.Hall 10.30	27/11 & 11/12 – Natter & Nosh - Restarts 15 th Jan.
Sunday 3 rd December - The Makers @ Advent	28 November & 5 th December – The Guild
Tuesday 12th December – Carols for Christian Aid 7.00pm in the Cathedral	Friday 12 th January – The first session for the new Cathedral Youth Band – in the West Church Hall.

NOTE:

Winter Sunday Services will be held in the West Church Hall from 7th January up to and including 3rd March.