



## KIRK NEWS LIGHT CHRISTMAS

Issue No 5, DECEMBER 2019

HOPE

PEACE



JOY

LOVE

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas

### **From our Minister**

*I would just like to say a heart-felt “thank you” to you all for your love and support over these last weeks. If prayer could ever ‘feel’ like a hug, it would be during this time.*

*Each of us goes on a journey of faith with Jesus. There are high points and low points, mountain top moments and times in dark valleys. God is always with us and His Spirit never fails, but we still have times of immense difficulty as well as times of peace and joy.*

*In this time of experiencing brokenness, it is a blessing to have such a caring church family. Thank you for your patience, kindness, and love.  
I am missing you all very much.*

*Lots of love,*

*Seòras - and Debbz and Sullivan too. God bless.*

### **GOD IN THE THICK OF THINGS**

God, in Jesus, arrived right in the middle of human history, right into the thick of things. From the very beginning, it was God’s intention to *be present* with those he loves...One of our great fears is that we will be abandoned, that God will get so annoyed with us or disinterested in our plight that he’ll leave us alone. But God has demonstrated to us that this is a lie. **Jesus is IMMANUEL**. God *is with us*. He’ll never leave us, never forsake us. And in Jesus, God became human. He insisted on *being present* in the very centre of our reality, in the thick of our sorrows and joys and confusion. Jesus doesn’t give us wisdom from a distance, platitudes that are true, but hollow and disengaged. Rather, in Jesus, **GOD IS WITH US**... in the very places we’re most desperate to be loved and healed.

Winn Collier, *Our Daily Bread* author



# TAKE NOTE

It's been a very busy Autumn term for Take Note as we had a big intake of new children following our summer break. It was good to get into the garden for our games before the evenings became too dark. Everyone enjoyed our evening of Light at the end of October. We even tried bowling in the dark (see photo) and made a cross using our glo-sticks.

Now we're busy preparing for our Christmas events and we hope that you'll be able to come along and join us. The children are very enthusiastic and look forward to this time of the year.

## TAKE NOTE – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December - Spey Bay Hall Advent Carol Service at 6 p.m.**

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December**

**Bellie Church at 6.45 p.m. for**

**"A Christmas Journey with Take Note".**

Donations for MFR Mission Christmas Appeal. (See poster for more details)



*Best Wishes for Christmas and 2020 from all at Take Note!*

*Denise & Neil Brown*



## 'A Christmas Journey'

with

**TakeNote**

Refreshments to follow



**Bellie Church**

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December**

**At 6.45 pm**

**All Welcome**

This year Take Note are supporting  
MFR Mission Christmas 2019 - Cash for Kids.  
Donations for this cause would be very welcome.



Please note: Gifts donated too late for distribution pre-Christmas are still  
be very much appreciated and will be used for emergency grants in the  
New Year or kept in storage until next year's Mission Christmas.

After our successful coffee morning in October, **we sent a donation of £300 to the Traidcraft Exchange**, (check out the certificate on the Eco noticeboard). Thank you to all who are continuing to support Traidcraft.

**Stamps** - Please remember to collect stamps over the Christmas season and place in the appropriate box or bag depending which Church you are in. They will go at the end of Jan 20

**Recycling for Good Causes** - We have decided not to continue with this particular scheme. The goods already collected were sent off and we are waiting to hear if we have been successful in selling them on. However, we are **reverting to the recycling we did previously**, i.e. stamps, ink cartridges, mobile phones, glasses and hearing aids.

*Lisa Campbell*

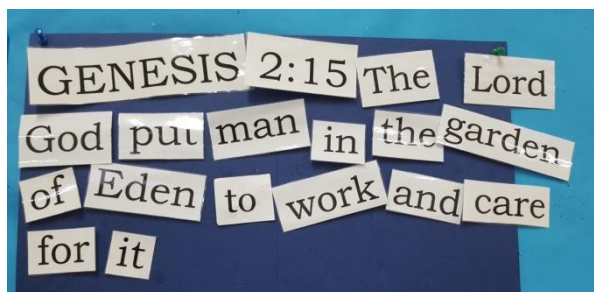
**YOUNG CHURCH**

*Alison Paterson*

**OCTOBER** - Our youngsters learned about recycling and protecting our beautiful planet, although they already knew a lot about the damage caused through wastefulness and discarded plastic.

We often enjoy lovely food during our sessions, so the children were delighted when they saw the table covered with tablecloths. However, this wasn't a normal session, and instead of food there were lots of empty plastic bottles, sweet wrappers and other disposable rubbish. Imagine their surprise when I asked them to choose something yummy to eat from their table. They quickly pointed out it wouldn't taste very nice which led on to our discussions about many animals being faced with this problem on a daily basis.

The children were then asked to scatter the plastic on the floor and had to 'swim' across the room without touching any of the plastic - quite a challenge, but achieved when they realised they had to go slowly and carefully. The activity started good conversations about how everyone can look after our planet more. Our 'sad world and plastic bottle' picture showed the problem - 'too much rubbish being thrown away instead of being put into the bin', 'wasting food', 'buying cheap, one-use items' to name a few.



A treasure hunt for this bible verse was also great fun - especially when one of the words went missing!

We finished our sessions with a happier world ☺ ☺ ☺

as we thought and remembered the 3R's - **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**  
a simple motto we can all use to ensure that future generations have a lovely planet to enjoy.

November - Red poppy images featured largely in our weekly Young Church sessions.



The significance of wearing a red poppy enabled our youngsters to gain an understanding and respect for all those brave servicemen and women involved in and affected by both World Wars and subsequent conflicts. **“We will remember them”**

# Playing the very popular “Kim’s Game” featuring lots of poppy-designed items provided

an ideal opportunity to challenge our observation and memory skills!

# Whilst making paper poppies, we learned that the Scottish poppy is made with four petals. By adding stems and magnetic tape to our poppies, our youngsters felt proud to return home with a Remembrance memento.

# The Scouts joined us after the Remembrance Sunday Service and added a special dimension to our Young Church session. Joan shared a very poignant poem “One thousand men are walking” written by Joshua Dyer, a fourteen year old teenager.

# The children recently shared in a mini-style Communion breakfast which explained the significance of the scripture verse

**“Do this in remembrance of me.”**

December Remembering isn’t only about past events but also remembering families whose circumstances may be less fortunate than our own today.

We support the

**Reverse Advent Calendar Appeal.** (See Sophie’s Adventure p.5) Donations welcome - by **Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Dec**  
**Grampian and Moray Toy and Food Appeal.** Donations of toys or games (in good condition) can be handed in to Christies the chemist. We pray that our youngsters will think of others throughout their lives. We also remember **Faith (and family) in Kenya**, praying that our Christmas card and greetings arrive betimes!!

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December 9.30 – 11.30 in Bellie Church Hall**

We’re excited to be repeating the popular **Pottery Painting Workshop**. Tanya and Jim (owners of the Buckie Pottery Company) will bring a selection of Christmas items for us to paint. Christmas music and party eats will accompany this Festive Workshop. **‘Glazed masterpieces’ can be collected Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec!**

### **United Family Service - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December – 10.00 a.m. Bellie Church**

Young Church Team look forward to “sharing” a short Nativity called – “With love from God to you.” This Nativity encourages participation from the Congregation in the form of hand signs and sounds – nothing too onerous! **There will be a dressing-up box available in the Session room for any children, teenagers or young-at-heart adults who would like to “get into character” – in this instance a Nativity character!**

Grateful thanks for continued support, prayers and encouragement for all our Young Church families.  
**“Knowing Jesus is the greatest gift we can receive. Sharing Him is the greatest gift we can give.”**

*Christmas Blessings to one and all,  
Young Church Team*



Why do bees stay in their hive in winter?



Swarm! Ho-ho-ho ☺

## Sophie's Adventure (by Mum, Lisa)

After hearing about Moray Food Plus and the Reverse Advent Calendar Appeal, Sophie was keen to get involved. Armed with her shopping list and her pennies which she had saved up (£8 worth), we headed to the supermarket. She carefully thought about all the items going into her trolley remembering those people who don't have any hard to appreciate.



About half way down the list, Sophie realised she would not have enough money left to buy the rest of the items. I made up the rest of the bill, but it did give Sophie an appreciation that people only having a certain amount of money to spend would have to make the difficult choice of what to put back. She also realised quickly that there was no meat - only a can of vegetables and fruit to enjoy -

and very few treats. We added a few extra items to the trolley for Christmas and concluded our day by dropping the items off at the food bank. They took us to the back shop so that Sophie could see first-hand the racks of simple foods and meet the generous volunteers who were making up the food parcels.

At first glance it looked like a lot. Then Sophie realised **the biscuit and pudding section was empty**. (☹!) She was delighted that she had packed some biscuits in her bags and was told they would be going out to someone that very day to enjoy. A very worthwhile, humbling experience and one I know Sophie won't forget.



So please, if you can, remember to add an item or two especially for that section of the food bank over the Christmas period.

*Grateful thanks  
and best wishes !*

*Please include our grateful thanks to all the folks who have sent their best wishes, visited and remembered us in their prayers. As I said in a recent Kirk News to Aberlour one of my favourite parables is that of the Good Samaritan but I had not realised just how many Good Samaritans there are. From the Police and emergency services who bravely and carefully rescued us, the hospital staff who tended our wounds and then cared for us and gently restored us, to the many folks who have been thinking about and praying for us, many of them we know but also many folks we have never met. We are grateful for it all and that there are so many 'Good Samaritans' still around. Again many thanks and God bless.*

*I should have said that we are both making progress and are physically much stronger and are back to walking the dog every day.*

**Rev Morris & Jan Smith**



What is Santa's favourite pizza?  
One that's deep-pan, crisp and even!  
What happens when winter arrives?  
Autumn leaves!

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?  
A Mince Spy!  
What's a parent's favourite carol?  
Silent Night!

## Refugees

By Brian Bilston

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way

(Now read from bottom to top)

## 'BITS FROM BEYOND'

This very challenging and clever 'two-way poem' by Brian Bilston was sent in by Janet Whyte.

### MORAY SUPPORTS REFUGEES

North Chanonry Road, Elgin - Collection Point

#### Opening Times

Mondays 10am – 12.30pm

Thursdays 2 pm – 4.30 pm

Fridays 11.30 am – 2 pm

For other times or more information

[babsanddoug@btinternet.com](mailto:babsanddoug@btinternet.com)

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We rejoice with our friends at

#### **GORDON CHAPEL**

who now have a lift!

People who can't manage the stairs

can now visit the sanctuary

for personal or public worship.

It is accessed via the ramp

at the side of the building, which is open from  
10 am – 4 pm daily. But check Noticeboard.

\*\*\*

#### From **PRESBYTERY**

Rev Stuart Duff retired from Birnie & Pluscarden l/w  
Elgin High on 31 Oct; Rev Alastair Gray demitted his

charge at Keith: North, Newmill, Boharm & Rothiemay on 30 Nov; and after a long illness Rev Barry Boyd  
will retire from Forres: St Laurence on 31 Jan 2020. That will take Moray to 9 vacancies (nearly 50%).

Remember all the ministers still in post, doubling up on responsibilities  
and retired 'servants', worship groups and Kirk Sessions standing in the gap,  
especially 'our own' Rev David Whyte, Margaret King and Colin Hanover.

But Good News! – Rev Dr Jacobus (Jaco) Boonzaaier (ex South Africa)  
was inducted to Findochty l/w Portknockie on 28 Nov.

May he and the congregations see much fruit from serving their communities together.

### NEWS - from December's Life & Work

\*\*\* The Moderator Designate to the 2020 General Assembly is the **Rev Dr Martin Fair of St Andrew's Parish Church, Arbroath**. In an interview for Life & Work, he said,

*We need to be much more creative in sharing our message, and we do that by understanding our role nowadays is about serving. If we want the right to speak about what Christianity means, we have to show what it looks like in practice.*

Dr Fair intends to use his year in office to highlight issues around addiction and mental health.

\*\*\* Remember our **current Moderator, Rt Rev Colin Sinclair**, as he continues his duties. From his Advent article: His year thus far has been a 'unique, intense, exhausting privilege'. *However you need markers to keep your focus clear and remind you of what really matters. Advent is one such season ...it stops us in our tracks and asks us to tune in to another agenda which matters more than ours. ... Jesus came to reveal God to us, to keep us company, and help us find forgiveness, strength and direction. That doesn't seem to me to be a bad set of Christmas presents. Happy Christmas!*

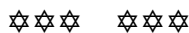
## THE LEGEND OF THE POINSETTIA

It was the custom in Mexico for villagers to leave a gift for the baby Jesus in their church on Christmas Eve. In one small village, a little boy who had no gift to bring prayed to God for a way to show his love for the infant King. God looked down on the lad and answered his prayer by causing a flower to bloom where he knelt.



The miraculous flower, so brilliant and fair, was formed like a star with leaves that were so bright and red that the boy's precious gift came to be known as "The Flower of the Holy Night"

*The plant's association with Christmas began in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Mexico.... From the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Franciscan friars in Mexico included the plants in their Christmas celebrations. The star-shaped leaf pattern is said to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem and the red colour represents the blood sacrifice through the crucifixion of Jesus. (From Wikipedia)*



## WEDNESDAY PRAYER MEETING



After many months meeting in the prayer corner in Bellie Church, we are back in the Session Room with its comfy seats and ambient lighting which allows us to appreciate the candlelight and concentrate on God, who is Light. We miss Seòras (and young Sullie) and constantly pray for his full healing and recovery. Please continue to pray with us and let us know if you want yourself or a loved one held in prayer before God. (Margaret King 820937 or write the name/ situation in the notebook in the Prayer Corner)



When we think that our prayers may have been lost in transit or forgotten, remember and give thanks that they are gathered and heard in the throne-room of heaven.[Revelation 8] They (and we) are precious to God and he cares more than we know. So keep praying! – But leave it to God!

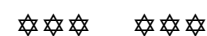
There is something called an *omakase* restaurant. *Omakase* is Japanese for 'I will leave it up to you', which means customers leave it up to the chef to choose and cook their meal!

This goes for our prayer life too. We can pour out our hearts to God because he wants to hear – and delights to give. But being human and finite, we don't always know what's best. So it makes sense to *leave the answers up to him*, confident that our God is totally trustworthy and will choose what's good for us.

*Thank you, Lord, for carrying us and our needs close to your heart.*

*I surrender my life, and those I love, to your care.*

*The LORD bless you with his peace and healing light this Christmas and throughout 2020.*



## BELLIE & SPEYMOUTH GUILD

We have trekked in the Sahara with Diane McLeish; 'danced in the aisles' with Ruth Rollo (yes, really! 😊) and been reminded by Trish Pakenham of the continuing need for research into and education about leprosy. There is no preventive vaccine yet, but there is an effective and relatively cheap cure. But the continued stigma of the disease means people don't come forward for treatment, or when they do, can be ostracized by their family or community.

We look forward to our Christmas meal on 10 Dec, cooked by Moira from Thursday Lunch Club, then on into 2020, with Rev Attie van Wyk leading our Bible Study on 14 Jan and a Chocolate Workshop on 28 Jan to which you are most welcome. We remember especially in prayer those of our number who are unwell (Liz Runcie) and those for whom Christmas will be a bitter-sweet time this year.

*We wish you much blessing at Christmas and through 2020.*

*The Guild Team*

## THE HARVEST THANKSGIVING APPEAL

The Harvest Gift envelopes for Church Funds raised **£2,716** as at end of October. A Gift Aid claim is going in soon, and with at least £1,000 of donations gift-aided, the total will exceed the £3,000 mark.

Many thanks to all who gave so generously!

Nevertheless, we have to report that our general fund is still in deficit to the tune of £1700.

*Chris Campbell & the Finance Team*

## DEPARTED FRIENDS

*Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life".*

2 Nov - Elizabeth Nimmo

24 Nov – Robert (Bobby) Still

26 Nov – Heather Legge

27 Nov - Margaret (Dolly) Fraser

*May God's loving presence comfort all family and friends in their loss*

## SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Fri 6 Dec – **Brew & Blether** 2 - 3.30pm, Speymouth Church Hall

Sat 7 Dec – Big **Sleep Out** in aid of the Homeless – Sponsor, Pray, Participate. See John McConnachie for details

Fri 13 Dec – Take Note's **A Christmas Journey**, Bellie Church at 6.45pm

## Christmas Services

**Sunday 22 Dec** – United Service, Bellie Church, 10am with **Young Church/ Congregational Nativity**

**Christmas Eve** – Carol Service in **Garmouth Village Hall at 4.30pm**

Family Service in **Bellie Church at 6.30pm**

**Christmas Day** - Short Family Service in **Bellie Church at 11am**

Sun 29 Dec – United Service of **Lessons & Carols in Speymouth Church at 11.30am**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Locum: Colin Hanover. See Church Admin

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bellieandspeymouth](https://www.facebook.com/bellieandspeymouth)

[Scottish Charity Number SC005310](#)

## NEXT ISSUE

Please send in 'copy' and photos **AS & WHEN** you have them, but by **10 Feb 2020** at latest.

*Have a peaceful Christmas  
and a deeply blessed New Year!*

P.S. Remember we are having a restful January!