



The Proclaimer

The Magazine of Burnhead Parish Church

Christmas 2023

Message From The Manse

Dear Friends, one of the highlights of the Christmas season for me is Nativity Sunday, the day the children become characters from that special moment in time 2,000 years ago. The congregation often waits in anticipation to see; who will be Mary, who will be Joseph, who will be shepherds or kings, who will be angels or one of the animals?

Sometimes it can be very competitive – if not for the children, then certainly among the grown-ups.

So, here's a question. Who would you want to be in the Nativity?

Mary, perhaps – the favourite of most girls, for she has the leading role, the centre of attention, the one who rocks the baby, the one who shows her love for the child Jesus, and so represents every one of us.

It could be Joseph, the boy's favourite – a quiet hero in action – the man who cares for his wife with tenderness and love, whilst gazing spell bound upon the new-born baby – all the while being their protector.

Maybe a shepherd – rough and ready, they represent the ordinary working folk who come to worship in wonder.

Or if you see yourself as a bit posher and smarter, you might fancy yourself as one of the kings or wise men. This role requires more than just an old tea towel round your head, you are responsible for carrying important objects, and you have to remember to call one of them “frankincense” and not “Frankenstein”. The nobility of the kings reminds us, that this baby is the true Lord of heaven and earth.

If your halo is feeling polished enough, you might want to be an angel, especially if you can sing, for they are the ones who bring the worship of all creation before its Lord.

And there are some other roles, especially for those who never seek, nor ever seem to get, the limelight; the ones who struggle to keep still or remember their lines. They get to be sheep or donkeys – and in their humility they remind us of the humility of God himself.

So, who would you be? Which role suits your character and witness to our Lord?

For me there is one part I have not mentioned yet – the innkeeper. I’d quite like to play that part, not because he gets to serve beer or taste all the pub grub – No, I would want to be like the innkeeper because he is the one who gives the Son of God his first earthly home. Simple, basic and makeshift, he puts a roof over his head, a home, nevertheless.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And the innkeeper did not turn him away. Or ignore him. Or leave him for others to deal with. He welcomed him. He made space for him.

Whichever character you choose to be, I hope and pray that you still view the nativity through the eyes of a child – with wonder and excitement.

Have a wonderful Christmas, Les Brunger (Minister)

Spare a Thought

Decorations in house and street,
inducing thoughts of festive treat.
Christmas cards with usual rhymes
bring usual greetings for Auld Lange Syne.

But spare a thought for Jesus.

Food collected, drinks in store,
there's never room for any more.
Fun and games to make you jolly,
crackers, parties, balloons and holly.

But spare a thought for Jesus.

Wrapping paper, a secret thought,
hiding away the gifts you've bought.
Singing carols, they're pleasant on ear
and they sound right for this time of year.

But spare a thought for Jesus.

Exciting times on Christmas morn,
opening presents from early dawn.
Stockings and dear old Santa Clause,
Christmas pudding and brandy sauce.

But spare a thought for Jesus.

Scattered toys throughout the day,
awaiting time for new owner's play.
Fairy lights on Christmas trees
and families sharing memories.

But spare a thought for Jesus, spare a thought.

A Christmas Parable

"Mike, what on earth inspires you to turn out to church in all weathers, especially when you could just as easy stay in bed on a Sunday morning, or at least do something exciting."

Mike looked at Pete his workmate, then at his watch. "We'll take five and I'll tell you a story," he said.

"It was Christmas eve, and this young mother, was taking her daughter to church for the evening service. It was a really cold night and she had just put a scarf round her daughters neck when she decided to have another try at persuading her husband to go with them.

"You sure you're not coming?" she asked him, "who knows, you might even enjoy it."

"No, not tonight. You know my feelings and I'm no hypocrite. Anyway, I prefer my spirit from a bottle, not that Holy stuff" Her husband answered, "but you go, enjoy yourself."

"I don't believe you, you'd do anything for anyone yet you won't come to church with your family, still if as you say you're no hypocrite."

"Tell you what then, I'll come down later and meet you from church." He gave a slight smile.

"Mind you do!" giving him a quick kiss on the cheek she took their daughter's hand opened the front door and went out, leaving him on his own.

As she left a sharp gust of cold air blew in complete with a swirling dust of snow, it reminded him that apart from his desire for a quiet evening in front of the telly with a glass of whisky in his hand, tonight was not the night for going anywhere, especially to that cold church even if it was

Christmas eve, but he supposed that he'd be able to brave it a bit later on. It might have even left off snowing by then. 'Hm.. Pigs might fly.'

Half an hour later though, something happened that changed his life for ever, or was it that he'd never noticed before?

There was a thump at the window. Kids playing snowballs? He poured another whisky. Thump, then another thump. He tried to ignore it but how could he? if it carried on like this the little perishers would end up smashing his window. Eventually he pulled himself out of his chair and slipped back one of the curtains. It was too dark to see a thing, especially now the snow was getting even harder and he drew the curtain back again

Thump.. that was enough. He went to the door but there was nothing there just a swirling mass of snow, driven by what was now almost a gale force wind and thankfully, once again returned to his chair.

Thump, thump, thump. This was getting beyond a joke, he'd got to find out what it was. Grabbing his heavy boots from the kitchen, he pulled them on then getting his coat he quickly wrapped himself into it and finally grabbing his wife's furry hat he thrust it on his head and went outside.

Even wrapped up as he was, the cold biting wind swept right through him, he could barely see the street light over the road and already the snow came over his boots. He went round to the lounge window. No signs of any snowball hits, but a flap and a thump and a small bird fluttered past his furry covered ears smacking into the glass. He looked around, there at his feet a number of the little creatures were flapping and floundering in the snow and bent down to pick up the nearest one but it scraped its way out of his grasp.

'Poor little devils, they'll freeze to death.' He thought quickly, the car was in the garage, they can't go in there. It would have to be his shed, it would at least be sheltered in there, they should be alright.' So he went down the path to his shed, grabbed a broom then leaving the door open, went back and started to swing the broom in front of the birds to drive them down his pathway, but the more he swung it, the more they scattered. This was going to take a long time. It did take a fair while but eventually all were shepherded in out of the wind, and congratulating himself he made his way back to the front door almost tasting the whisky waiting for him inside.

Back indoors, he pulled the curtains apart. That's when he saw it, one last bird still out in the cold until he realised that he was looking at his own reflection. He was that last bird, he was still in the cold. Then another thought, if he'd been a bird for just a few moments, how much easier his task, would have been then a rush of excitement. God sent Jesus, his son, as a man. He heard the front door open, his wife was home.

"I thought you coming to meet us?"

"Sorry, something happened," he called back and without a glance at his glass of whisky went to his wife and daughter and wrapped his arms around them, "how about us all going to church in the morning," it was all he said.

Peter was quiet for a moment, then looking back at Mike said. "that's all very well but it is only a story isn't it."

"Well put it this way," Mike answered. "My wife had a real shock when she went out to the shed Christmas morning! and if you just think about what God did for us you'll get all the excitement you'll ever need. And I can assure you, the Holy stuff is much stronger than any spirit you find in a bottle."

Now read (John 10: 14 – 16, The good shepherd.)

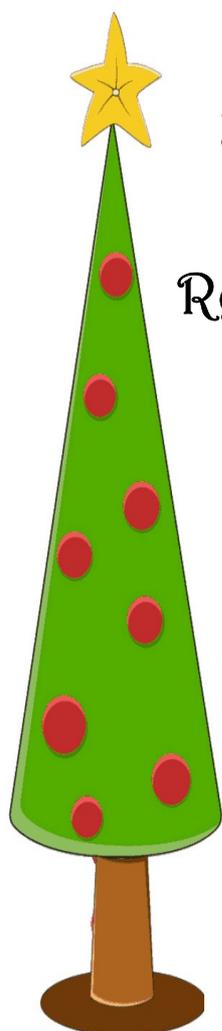
Christmas Child

by Mary E Carpio



Turn your eyes this Christmas
To the Child who was born
He came into the world
Only to find sorrow and scorn

He knew we needed a Saviour
To set us free from sin
No other way to redemption
But to open your heart to Him



Remember this Christmas Season
Material things cannot satisfy
They are but temporary
They disappear and die

But the love of our Saviour
A gift that lives eternally
He is the brightest Star
Which shines upon the tree!

On Saturday the 25th November we had our Annual Christmas Fayre when we opened our doors to the local community and yet again they certainly didn't disappoint us!

Looking out to the carpark at 12:45 we couldn't see too many people about and wondered if the weather was too wet for them to come to the Fayre, but when the doors opened at 1pm.....wow, were we so mistaken!

As The Lord says "If you build it, they will come" and they certainly did. The Viewpark community once again turned out in droves and before too long the 'big' hall was packed, waiting for the arrival of Santa and his helpers. To the sound of jingle bells he arrived and soon our Grotto was alive with children waiting to see him and tell him what they would like for their Christmas.

People were soon browsing the stalls and buying up the homebaking, toys, crocheted items, fancy goods and of course the wheel of fortune and the lucky envelopes, not forgetting the Hot Dogs! The Church Sanctuary had been transformed into a tea-room with a bouncy castle and a giant slide for the young at heart and they danced and laughed their way through the afternoon.

By 4pm it was all over and boy were we exhausted, but what a wonderful day it had been. To see the people of Viewpark having such a good time was amazing and we would like to thank each and every one of them for once again supporting Burnhead Church, especially as this year has been especially tough on everyone financially.

We would also like to thank all the volunteers who helped with the stalls, baking, crochet, tea-room, kids entertainment etc., you all know who you are!! A special thank you to Liz McLaughlin and the Young Peoples Group for assembling the grotto, it was a lot of hard work but the finished article was a joy to see.

The Fayre is over for another year, but it won't be that long until we will be organising it again for 2024, keep an eye on the Church's website and Facebook page for details of what we will be doing then.

God Bless you all and thank you for your support during 2023.

The Social & Wellbeing Team

THE
Legend
of the
Christmas Tree

BY: LUCY WHEELLOCK

Two little children were sitting by the fire one cold winter's night.

* All at once they heard a timid knock at the door, and one ran to open it. There, outside in the cold and the

darkness, stood a child with no shoes upon his feet and clad in thin, ragged garments. He was shivering with cold, and he asked to come in and warm himself. "Yes, come," cried both the children; "you shall have our place by the fire. Come in!"

They drew the little stranger to their warm seat and shared their supper with him, and gave him their bed, while they slept on a hard bench. In the night they were awakened by strains of sweet music and, looking out, they saw a band of children in shining garments approaching the house. They were playing on golden harps, and the air was full of melody.

Suddenly the Stranger Child stood before them; no longer cold and ragged, but clad in silvery light. His soft voice said: "I was cold and you took Me in. I was hungry, and you fed Me. I was tired, and you gave Me your bed. I am the Christ Child, wandering through the world to bring peace and happiness to all good children. As you have given to Me, so may this tree every year give rich fruit to you."

So saying, He broke a branch from the fir tree that grew near the door, and He planted it in the ground and disappeared. But the branch grew into a great tree, and every year it bore wonderful golden fruit for the kind children.

A Christmas Prayer

Dear Jesus, the perfect love and light of Christmas,
we pray you will guide us to love one another,
not only at Christmas, but throughout the year.

Amen



**SonHouse Party Night
16 December 2023**





**SonHouse Nativity
17 December 2023**



**Christmas Carol Party
17 December 2023**

A Community is for Life, not just for Christmas. = = = Lisa Loughran = = =

The festive season is upon us and all around Viewpark the community has begun to hum to life. There will be Christmas Fayres, Nativity plays, carol services, tree lighting and some special appearances by the big man himself...Santa.

Having recently helped out with our own Christmas Fayre, I am well on my way to getting that warm Christmas glow, I even roped my husband into it. I love being involved with our community, I grew up with family who were always involved in one project or another. My parents helped out with the youth clubs, my Nana would go to social clubs and volunteer her amazing talent for singing and my gran had a big part in projects such as the Focus Youth Centre, Viewpark Community Centre and the Blue Triangle. So I had some tough acts to follow!

I am a naturally shy person and find it hard to be around a lot of people but for some strange reason I feel very comfortable and somewhat confident volunteering to help out with community projects. Setting up for the grotto and helping as much as I was able at the Christmas Fayre definitely sparked off my Christmas spirit and it seems it is contagious. Some rather formidable ladies managed to get my John to dress as an elf and even managed to get David Green to dawn an elf hat. It was great having all those different personalities, talents and skills in the one place, working together, getting busy, laughing and joking and in the process building something for the people of Viewpark to be part of. It is really humbling to be a part of something like that, it is a big part of why I wanted to join Burnhead Church, it is definitely true that people make a place. The buzz and joy you could feel from our fayre was amazing and

if anyone took anything from it, lets hope it is a desire to continue to help and provide for others.

Christmas is a time of year where people seem a bit more willing to help their fellow citizens out. Think of every Christmas movie where the main character undergoes a major personal transformation to become a better person, all inspired by the spirit of Christmas. I would also like to point out that in most of these movies the real meaning of Christmas is very rarely featured, except from the occasional character wandering into a church on Christmas Eve to search their soul for that elusive spirit and goodwill towards all men. I am shocked every year by the number of children in nurseries that have no idea what Christmas is all about, I knew the nativity story before I knew who Santa was, we definitely need to strive to keep Christ in Christmas and we really need to keep in mind that we don't need a special time of year to keep helping our community.

God calls us to fellowship; we are urged to gather and care for one another on this earth as this reflects what awaits us in heaven. The bible teaches us about the importance of community:

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25.

How we serve God is how we should serve each other, with love, compassion and kindness.

If we open our eyes to each other and accept each other faults and all, think of the positive changes we can bring into our community.

Over 2000 years ago Jesus was born to save us and to teach us how to serve God as his children and that is what we

need to remember at this time of year and all year round. No man is an island; how you treat others has a ripple effect, what you do gives out energy into the world and isn't it marvellous knowing that you can make that as positive as possible. We are all connected to each other and to God, “

*“For as in one body we have many members,
and the members do not all have the same
function, so we, though many, are one body in
Christ, and individually members of one
another.” Romans 12:4-5.*

So, what would I like you to take away from this? I am not saying right go out join lots of community things, be on committees, organise fund raisers, single handily fix all the problems of Viewpark. I mean if you have a desire to do so then great, more power to you. It doesn't have to be an overwhelming task, start small and send out little nuggets of goodness into the world. Open a door for someone, donate your time or possessions to

causes, join a new group or easiest of all smile and say hello to people you pass by. Do you know what can come from a simple smile? You smile at someone, they might have been having a bit of a bad day and that smile you give makes them smile. Then they just might smile at someone else and so on and so forth and before you know it there is people all over smiling because you started with sharing yours. Like I said the little things.

I will leave you with this thought, you can do good and make a difference of any size by just showing a little kindness and joy to those around you. If we build each other up, take care of each other then we have the chance to experience on earth what awaits us in heaven.

*a Unto Us
Savior's Born*



Carol Brunger

It was with mixed emotions that the Kirk Session of Burnhead Church were notified that Carol Brunger would be stepping down from her role as Convener of the Prayer Team at the end of November.

Having taken on the role when we as a church first adopted the Unitary Constitution a few years back now, Carol has been both an inspiration and an example of dedication, hard work and faithfulness in her role to the Prayer Team, serving the team members, the church congregation and the wider community as a whole.

In our community and in the wider world, the need for prayer is great and Carol and her team have met this need through various means such as the monthly prayer list, the WhatsApp group, the Prayer Circle and more. In addition to this, we have had the opportunity of hosting and participating in various Prayer Vigils, the Palm Sunday Easter Labyrinths and the more recent Prodigals Evening.

As Carol steps down from this role, I would like to take the opportunity on behalf of the myself, the Kirk Session and the congregation of Burnhead to say a big THANK YOU for all that has been achieved during Carol's time as convener of the Prayer Team. Her service has been very much appreciated by all at Burnhead and she leaves the role having built a strong foundation for those who will come forward to continue the Lord's work.

David Green, Session Clerk



Ode to all the Mums at Christmas Past, Present and Future.

Christmas happens but one day a year,
Filled with joy, laughter, merriment and cheer.

But for your poor mammy this ain't the case,
For months now she has been running all over the place.

Preparations began in October, maybe September?
Was it possibly August? I really don't remember.

What presents have been bought? it is all such a blur,
All the wise men had to remember was gold,
frankincense and myrrh.

It is not just the gifts for everyone we take care of you know,
That's just the half of it, there is still far to go.

There's wrapping paper, cards and of course the tree,
For a few weeks a year, from the loft it will be free.

Then there is the carol singing and nativity plays,
Enough Christmas jobs to take up all twelve days.

Then when you think you are done running round like a looney,
Wee granny decides that she needs slippers and a new goonie.

The night before Christmas there is more than a stirring,
The best elf mummy with her wine and her singing.

She is wrapping and packing and checking her own list,
The days have all blended and she has gone round the twist.

But it is all worth it on Christmas morning seeing you happy,
Watching you all open your gifts makes her feel all sappy.

Especially when the gift tag is from mum and dad to you,
But dad is as surprised by the gift, he didn't have a clue.

Mum puts away all the wrapping,
she handled Christmas like a winner,
But she can't relax as there is still all the prep for Christmas dinner.

At the end of the night you get that woman a treat,
Give her a wee tippie, jammies and some quality street.

Merry Christmas mums, the best of Santa's elves.

Meet the Elders – Nancy Hill



The 1st Lady Elder of Burnhead Parish Church.
This is my story.

I was married and lived in Easterhouse, Glasgow where I became a member of St George's and St Peter's Church. I quickly made friends there and it was a very happy time. In 1972- after the Church of Scotland took a vote to allow lady elders I was asked by the minister if I would like to take up the office. After thinking it over, I happily agreed and was then ordained with another three of my friends. From this I went on to spent four happy years as Session Clerk to the board, then moving to become treasurer.

It was at that time my husband was offered a new job in Lairds which resulted in us moving to Viewpark. Once living in Viewpark I soon discovered Burnhead Parish Church. I decided to become a member of this church and had my papers transferred. Time passed and I again made many friends in my new church family.

One day I was asked by a friend if I would like to become a member of the board, I was delighted to be asked but informed them that I was already a session member. They were shocked to hear this as they did not have any lady elders at this time in Burnhead Church. Rev. Jim Grady soon heard of this and took it to the session for discussion. Some members of the board were not exactly pleased with one member saying "women, who needs women". Well, thankfully he was out voted and so I came to pass in 1976, the first lady elder of Burnhead Parish church.

I couldn't be ordained as I was already an ordained elder, so I was just accepted at the early morning service. Thereafter I spent many years serving my church and enjoyed the company of the ladies who soon came after me. Incidentally, the man who made the remark about woman soon became a good friend of mine.

This was a happy time for me however, after nearly 40 years of service as an elder I became quite poorly. At this point I made the very difficult decision to resign as an active elder. It truly was a sad time for me but I will never forget my time as the 1st Lady Elder of Burnhead Parish Church. I believe once and elder, always an elder.

What's On – A Week in the Life of Burnhead

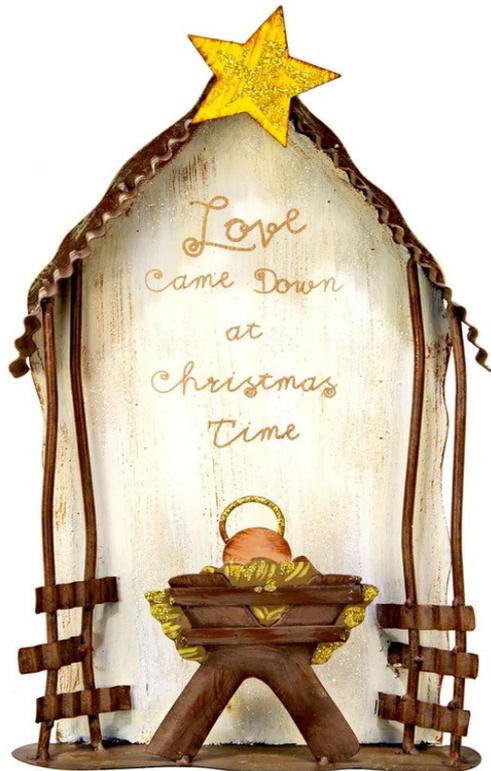
- Sunday:** 11:00 – 12:00 Service of Worship
- 11:00 – 12:00 Crèche
- 11:00 – 12:00 SonHouse
Contact: Anne Morton – 07443 416017
- 11:00 – 12:00 Bible Class
Contact: Liz McLaughlin – 07471 933497
- 19:15 – 20:45 Youth Fellowship
Contact: Liz McLaughlin – 07471 933497
- 18:30 – 19:00 Evening Communion Service
**First Sunday of the month only*
- 19:00 – 21:00 A.A.

Monday: 19:15 – 20:45 Bible Study

- Tuesday:** 10:00 – 11:30 Pre-5 Praise
Contact: Carol Brunger – 07426 170261
- 13:30 – 15:00 Recycled Teenagers
Contact: Rev Les Brunger – 07806 781489
**First Tuesday of the month only*
- 13:30 – 15:00 The Guild
Contact: Sandra Roy – 01698 810113

- Wed'day:** 10:00 – 11:30 Crochet Club
Contact: Sandra Roy – 01698 810113
- 10:00 – 12:00 Private Prayer
In the McFarlane Room
- 10:00 – 11:00 Vestry Hour
- 10:00 – 12:00 Tea, Toast and a Blether
- 10:00 – 13:00 Citizens Advice
Contact: Margaret Sagar – 07902 565585
- 13:00 – 15:00 A.A.
- 18:00 – 19:00 Girls' Brigade – P1 - P7
Contact: Michelle Miller – 07956 991406
- 19:15 – 20:15 Girls' Brigade – S1 and above
Contact: Michelle Miller – 07956 991406
- Thursday:** 10:00 – 11:00 Midweek Reflections
Contact: Sandra Roy – 01698 810113
- 12:00 – 14:00 Welcome Inn Community Café
Contact: David Combe – 07452 875770
- 19:00 – 21:00 Al Anon
- Saturday:** 10:30 – 12:00 Gamblers Anonymous
- 19:00 – 21:00 A.A.

*Burnhead Church would like to
wish all members of the
congregation and the local
community a Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year.*



The Proclaimer is the magazine of Uddingston Burnhead Parish Church,
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Church Website: www.burnheadchurch.com

