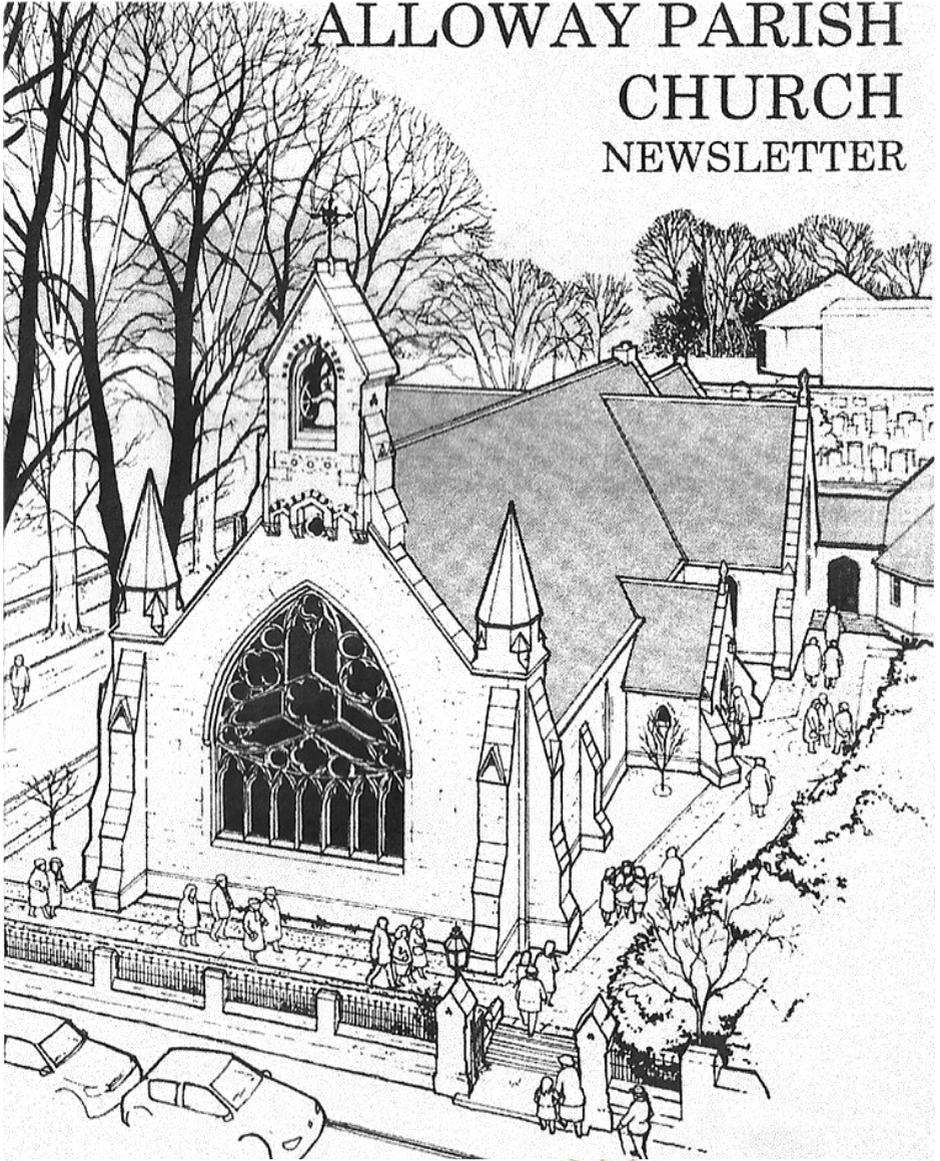


ALLOWAY PARISH CHURCH NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER

2020



Dear Friends

One of the Christmas traditions I enjoy is placing candles in the window. Indeed, this year I have ordered candle bridges for the church and halls!

Some say the candle in the window tradition goes back to Ireland.

The candles were a sign that a priest was welcome to call. In Penal days this was not allowed. When the British questioned the Irish about the candles, they said that it was a way to welcome Joseph, Mary, and the Baby Jesus during Christmas time.

In Alloway physically our streets have got darker.

Through winter this darkness seems deeper.

In one of his great I am sayings Jesus used the image of light:

"I am the Light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have light and life". John 8:12,

Thanks to Covid economically things have got darker this year!

Amidst this dark material truth, the bright spiritual truth of the Christmas story is indeed to be much welcomed and cherished.

The message of the angels to the shepherd was "Fear not".

The shepherds left the darkness of their hillside to head to the brightness of the town.

Thus, these least likely of worshippers were the first visitors to gather around the manger.

I guess all of us are a little afraid this year. Yet fear should not define us! It is time again to celebrate the light of the world.

Not only should we celebrate this Christ child love but share it also

"Jesus bids us shine, then, for all around
Many kinds of darkness in this world are found -
Sin, and want, and sorrow so we must shine,
You in your small corner and I in mine."

Time to get the candles in the window. Time to warm the cold hearts!

Don't be surprised if God's love will be found in the unlikeliest of people, in the unlikeliest of places in the unlikeliest of circumstances.

My thanks for your support and prayers over the year.

To you and yours

A Peaceful Christmas and blessed New Year

Neil, Jill and family

"There is not enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of even one small candle" - Robert Alden

A note from David...

I just love the Season of Advent - normally full of many different church activities in the run up to Christmas Day - the day of course when we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly, the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have severely restricted our Advent activities this year - but Christmas is certainly not cancelled!

Whilst it has not been possible for us to have a Christingle service in church, we are providing the P6 and P7 pupils at Doonfoot and Alloway Primary Schools with all the materials required to make a 'Christingle' - I have also recorded a video message for the children, outlining the meaning behind a Christingle and providing instructions for making one. I am sure that the children will enjoy this activity - hopefully we will be back in church next year.

We launched our Advent Nativity Trail at the start of advent - and the response has been amazing. At eight different locations around Alloway/Doonfoot, we have placed knitted characters from the Nativity Story - the characters being displayed in a window at each location. All you need to do is find them, identify them, and answer a related question? Entry sheets with clues can be found at the Alloway Parish Church Facebook page, or collected from the Church Foodbank drop-off point each Sunday 10-2. Completed entries must be received by 23rd December 2020. A correct entry will be selected and the winner will receive a confectionery hamper. A huge thanks is due to everyone who knitted the characters - we even had characters travelling from Texas to Alloway!

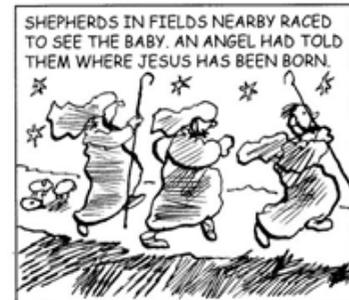
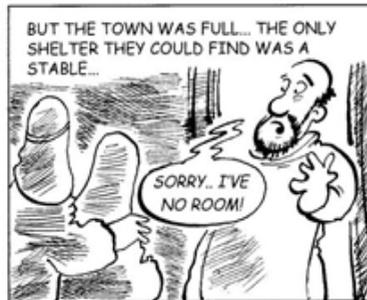
I send you my best wishes for Christmas and hope that you have a blessed Season of Advent - hopefully we will be able to meet in the New Year!

As always, if there is anything that I can do to help you, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

God bless!

David Hume
Church Family and Schools Worker
07858 966367
dhume@churchofscotland.org.uk







Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7:14)

This promise to King Ahaz in 8th century Judah is fulfilled in the coming of Jesus at the first Christmas: 'God with Us' (Matthew 1:23).

Ahaz faced the military threat of Syria invading Israel, but Isaiah tells him not to panic. He can trust God, who is in control of the nation.

For us, Coronavirus brings deep uncertainty as we come to another New Year.

We live with the threat from the virus, economic uncertainty, separation from family and friends, the loss of loved ones and the anxiety that isolation brings. Yet the message of Immanuel brings hope, as it did for Ahaz! Christmas changes everything forever! God has declared in Christ that He is with us and for us, not absent from or against us. His love is larger than our sin, fears or guilt: 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (Romans 8:31).

As we prepare for the most unusual Christmas ever, let's not forget:

God with us means that He is on my side and by my side. In the uncertainties of life, I am never alone.

God with us means that everything will work out according to His plan. My life isn't just a series of meaningless occasions or mistakes.

God with us means that even when others show they are not there for me, God is.

God with us means when circumstances change, He will give me the strength I need.

God is with me: He isn't far away, but has made the journey into my world.

Here is the hope for the future, once we get past the trees, gifts, turkey stuffing and pudding!

Paul Haringham

Christmas Sale for Bandawe Girls School

In the absence of a Christmas Fair this year you will have an opportunity to buy goods at the church halls on Sunday December 6th and 13th. This will take place between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm i.e. during the Foodbank collection time.

All Covid protocols will be observed.

Craft goods will be displayed in the windows of the Fellowship Lounge and plants and bulbs on an outdoor table.

If you see an item which interests you, there will be someone in the lounge to bring it to the door for your perusal. You can pay by placing cash or a cheque in a box. Please bring your own bag.

We will also have our usual table of preserves, being sold for Foodbank funds.

This year we are unable to accept baking or donations for any of our other usual Christmas stalls - only craft goods, preserves and plants will be on sale.

If you have crafts for sale, please contact either Helen or Madge.

Unsold items may be collected on Sunday 13th December at 2.00 pm. Remaining unsold items will be given to charity.

We hope that we will be able to add to our fund for the Bandawe Girls School. However, we also want to use this opportunity to demonstrate that the spirit of Christmas is still alive in our church amidst these difficult times.

Contacts; - Helen Ness (443800) or Madge Irving (442963)



Christmas 2020



Merry Christmas!



Looking for a Christmas gift?

**The gifts on display here will be on sale
on Sundays 6th and 13th Dec.
10.00 am until 2.00 pm**

Full Covid restrictions will be in place for the safety of all.



Limited goods this year but we have -

Crafts, Greetings Cards, Plants, Silk Flowers, and Christmas Items.

Proceeds to Bandawe Girls' School, Malawi.

For additional information please contact either Helen Ness at 443800 or Madge Irving at 442963.

Advent Nativity Treasure Trail

During the advent season we will be having a competition based on an 'Advent Nativity Treasure Trail'.

During Advent, we will place knitted characters from the Nativity Story at specific locations around Alloway and Doonfoot. Through advent, those taking part will be encouraged to visit these locations, take a note of which character from the Nativity Story can be found at each location, and at each location answer a Christmas themed question. Completed entries will then be submitted and a winning entry will be selected from all of the correct submissions - though we have not yet decided on a prize!!

I am so grateful to all the ladies (yes, they were all ladies!!) who volunteered to knit the characters from the Nativity Story to make this possible - we even have someone in Texas knitting for us! We will actually have enough characters to put together multiple Nativity Scenes so I hope to be able to donate a set to each of our local primary schools.

Full details on how to take part in the Advent Nativity Treasure Trail will be available in church, in the December Newsletter, on Facebook and on the Alloway Parish Church website from the 29th of November.

Let's get everyone involved!!

David Hume



The Real Ebenezer Scrooge of Christmas Carol Fame

Charles Dickens described Ebenezer Scrooge as a "squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner." However, Dickens could not have been more wrong about the real Scrooge.

In June 1841 Charles Dickens was invited by Edinburgh Society to give readings of his works.

He took a walk down the Royal Mile to the Canongate kirkyard to view the grave of Adam Smith. When wandering through the graveyard he came across the gravestone of an Ebenezer Lennox Scroggie. [rather than Scrooge] The gravestone inscription recorded that Scroggie was a 'meal man', a reference to his trade as a merchant.

It is suggested that Dickens who suffered from dyslexia misread this as 'mean man' and later wrote in his notebook:

"To be remembered through eternity only for being mean seemed the greatest testament to a life wasted."

There is also a suggestion that Dickens' error may have been due to failing eyesight or even to severe weathering of Scroggie's headstone.

Scroggie was born in Kirkcaldy, his mother being a niece of economist Adam Smith. He became a successful merchant, vintner, and Town Councillor in Edinburgh.

He lived in an apartment above what is now the Beehive Bar/ Restaurant in the Grassmarket.

He held the first contract to supply whisky to the Royal Navy in Leith and was also responsible for supplying the alcoholic beverages for King George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822. [this being the first visit to Scotland by a British Monarch since Culloden]

His family had supplied Captain Cook's ship Endeavour as it charted the Pacific.

Alloway Parish Church Newsletter—December

Scroggie imported wine in bulk and exported whisky in return, building a reputation and gaining royal patronage, and for two years he was the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

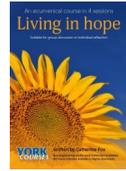
He was a jovial man but could be a rascal at times. He once interrupted the proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland by an indiscretion involving the Countess of Mansfield, of Scone Palace, Perth.

Unfortunately, Scroggie's headstone was lost during restoration of the Kirk in 1932. There are plans to recognise Scroggie and his life by erecting a memorial and drawing attention to his literary influence.

Ian Stewart



York Course



This advent course is a chance to have a think about what it means to live well, and to die well. We are people of history and people of hope. We look back to the Bible to see where we've come from, and we look forward in hope to what lies ahead.

- Advent Study "Learning through the season of light "
Thu 10th Dec 7pm Hope 3—Zoom link via Church Secretary
Wed 16th Dec 7pm Hope 4—Zoom link via Church Secretary

Wednesday Breaks



"A short service and a long cup of digital tea"

- Wed 9th Dec 10.30am - Zoom links via Church Secretary
Wed 16th Dec 10.30am - Zoom links via Church Secretary
Wed 23rd Dec 10.30am - Zoom links via Church Secretary
Wed 30th Dec 10.30am - Zoom links via Church Secretary

Digital Communication



Please remember to return your proforma to the Church Secretary by December 27th if you would like to be kept up to date with Church news.

Kirk Session Update.

In a most unusual year the Kirk Session has had to adapt to conditions set by Government and Church of Scotland and try to carry on with the business of keeping our church open and welcoming in difficult times. When it was first advised that we could not physically meet together we decided to go online, sending reports via e-mail, and asking for e-mailed responses. Since then we have moved on to Zoom meetings which have been very effective and have worked out better than we thought.

Most of the business discussed has had to do with the way we would be able to continue to provide all the acts of worship and other activities that make up the life of the church. At first, we were only able to open for a short time of prayer. Also, with the help of some very clever and hard-working technical people we were able to provide an on-line service and finally we were able to open for services again, albeit with a limit of 50 people. Unfortunately, that has now been temporarily halted. The session has been involved in all those decisions trying to do what is best and safest but also trying to allow the church to maintain some kind of meaningful presence in the community.

As you know most of the elders have districts and we have been trying to keep in touch with as many of our members as we can, and their feedback has been very useful. Hopefully, you have received some kind of communication either by a visit, a phone call or letter. We have all been brushing up on our technical skills and online communication is now a common and useful way of keeping up to date. In fact, Session has just agreed to allow letters to go out seeking e-mail addresses from you in an effort to supply you with more information e.g. newsletters, online.

A few of the other items on our agenda from our last few meetings have unfortunately been tributes to elders and office bearers who have died recently. One of our longest serving elders, John Hutton, one of our chief office bearers, Alex Lamont and another senior elder, Jim Skinner. Neil, as always, gave a fitting tribute to each and all agreed they would be sorely missed. We have also just recently accepted the resignation of another long serving elder, John Easton and have passed on our thanks for all his hard work and best wishes for the future.

Since our committees are less active at the moment there has been little to report. However, we receive updates for our schools and church family worker, David Hume, and from our Presbytery Rep. Bill Duncan, who has kept us up to date with Presbytery business. One Presbytery item concerned one of our previous probationers, Morag Crossan, who has now taken up the charges of Canonbie and Liddesdale.

Although it was confirmed that there would be no Christmas Fair this year it was agreed to allow a Sale of Craft Goods using the Fellowship lounge window as a display. Full Covid restrictions will be in operation.

Eric Ness.

Session Clerk

Ongoing work of the Congregational Board as of 4th November 2020

FINANCE:

Our Financial Position as at 30 September 2020 is currently looking more favourable than was initially expected for 2020, whereby a deficit for the year of £12,500 was anticipated prior to COVID.

Our General Fund Reserves have increased by almost £10,000, largely due to the majority of our donations being received via Direct Debit/Standing Order and remaining largely consistent.

Reduced costs include additional ministry hours, hall, and church closure. There has been a significant reduction in expenditure with young people.

Our proposed Ministries and Mission contribution to the Church of Scotland is currently estimated at £117,552, a reduction of 11.1% from the 2020 figure of £132,195. A reduction was applied across the board when it was obvious that many Congregations were struggling.

Community Fund

The Community Fund was recently created following a generous donation of £10,000 to be set aside for the good of the Community. Given the current situation, ongoing uncertainty, and likely impact on the most vulnerable in our community, the Board has approved that a payment of £2,000 be made to the South Ayrshire Foodbank.

Amazon Smile

The Board agreed that Alloway Parish Church be listed as an organisation on Amazon Smile. Where Amazon customers select APC as their chosen charity, we receive a small donation based on a percentage of purchases. This is at no cost to the Church or customers of Amazon.

PROPERTY

Convenorship of Property Committee

Donald Ross had kindly taken on the role from Philip Gay who was Convener for more than 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ years.

Church Garden Maintenance.

Volunteers continue to do an excellent job and are happy to continue in the role.

Quinquennial Inspection

Our properties comprising of Church, Halls & Manse were inspected on 2 Sept'20. We are now awaiting release of reports from Presbytery of Ayr.

Halls

The felt roof covering on the flat roof is blistering in a number of areas. Quotes are being sought from specialist roof contractors to replace the entire roof covering.

Halls Door Entry System.

An electronic key fob system has been installed that will allow leaders of organisations to gain entry at prescribed/programmed times. Due to Coronavirus this will not be rolled meantime

Carpark Security Gates

Twin gates, capable of being securely locked, are soon to be erected on the vehicular access down the side of our Halls. This will help us to control and restrict parking. Unfortunately, there is clear evidence that at weekends in particular, our car-park has proven convenient for car users sharing controlled substances. Police Scotland have been advised. Bill Duncan and others are to be thanked for their efforts in cleaning up the car-park on Sunday mornings.

PUBLICITY

The Publicity Committee has recognised that its traditional aims, objectives, make up and business need to be adjusted to keep in step with church publicity becoming centred on its website and the Facebook platform. It is now reviewing its terms of reference and skills base to reflect these changes.

The Convener, Douglas Thow has indicated that he would like to stand down but as yet a successor has not found. If there is anybody in the Congregation who would like to volunteer, please contact me [443951]

HALLS & SOCIAL

Due to Coronavirus restrictions our Halls are effectively closed. Sadly there are many Organisations who are unable to meet, including Youth Organisations and this seems likely to continue right into 2021.

Ian Stewart

Clerk to the Congregational Board

South Ayrshire Christmas Toy Bank

We are acting as a drop off point for the South Ayrshire Christmas Toy Bank who are appealing for toys and gifts for children of struggling families this Christmas.

They have a specific need for teenagers and age 8+.

For boys they are asking for older Lego, books, mechanic toys, complicated jigsaws, digital watches, aftershave, toiletries, games. For girls, they are asking for makeup, perfume, craft items, complicated jigsaws, art sets and books. They are also asking for non-binary and non-gendered items too.

These can be dropped off at our Foodbank collection point in our Church Halls on Sundays between 10am and 2pm.

For more information please see the Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthAyrshireChristmasToyBank/>



Festive Cheer

Next Christmas

The grandson had just taken a photograph of his grandmother who'd come to stay for Christmas and her 89th birthday. 'Grannie, I sure hope I'm around next year to photograph you on your 90th birthday,' he said tactfully. 'Why not?' his grandmother shrugged. 'You look healthy enough.'

Attention

With several relatives visiting, I was struggling to get my wife's attention. So, I simply sat down and looked comfortable. That did the trick.

Miscellaneous observations during the Christmas season...

Putting on weight is the penalty for exceeding the feed limit.

Christmas: The time when everyone gets Santamental.

Christmas is in my heart 12 months a year, and thanks to credit cards, it's on my Visa card statement 12 months a year as well.

Some of these new toys are so creative and inventive. This year they have a Neurotic Doll. It's wound up already.



Nativity Story - Featuring Confectionery (can you fill in the blanks?)

Long ago in Nazareth a girl called Mary was visited by an angel to tell her she would be the mother of God's son. But Mary was afraid - she wasn't yet married. To have a baby now would be the _____ of conversation in the village. An angel appeared in a _____ to her fiancé Joseph and he heard a _____ that the baby was God's idea. Mary and Joseph were a couple of _____ so they believed in the will of God.

Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted. It was miles away and doing that journey by donkey was certainly no _____. Eventually they made it, but when Joseph tried to find lodgings, every _____ let them down - "No room" they all said.

The only place they could find to stay was a stable filled with animals - cows, sheep, goats, a donkey and even a little _____. The baby was born and his parents named him Jesus. They laid him in a manger and Mary wrapped the baby in strips of cloth - they had no such thing as Babygros with poppers and _____.

That night in the hills it was getting late, it was _____ in fact, and some shepherds were sleeping in the fields with their sheep. Suddenly they saw a _____ of angels lighting up the sky, heavenly _____ singing "Glory to God in the Highest" - there were great _____. The angels told the shepherds to go and search for a special baby lying in a manger. They found the stable where the baby lay and knew that it was just as the prophets had said long ago - this really was God's Messiah - the _____ of Judah.

Meanwhile there were three wise men - _____(s) from eastern countries. One night they were busy looking up at the _____, gazing at all the _____, when suddenly they saw a bright light in the _____. It was a special star showing that the new King had been born. The wisemen were _____ and travelled on until they reached the place where the baby Jesus lay. They gave the baby their _____ of gifts - _____, myrrh and frankincense.

AFTER EIGHT

CELEBRATIONS

DRIFTER

GOLD

LOVE HEARTS

MINSTRELS

TOPIC

BOUNTY

CLUB

FLYTE

KIT-KAT

MAGIC STARS

PICNIC

WISPA

BUTTONS

DREAM

GALAXY

LION

MILKY WAY

SMARTIES

Parish Record



"Blessed are those who mourn they shall be comforted"

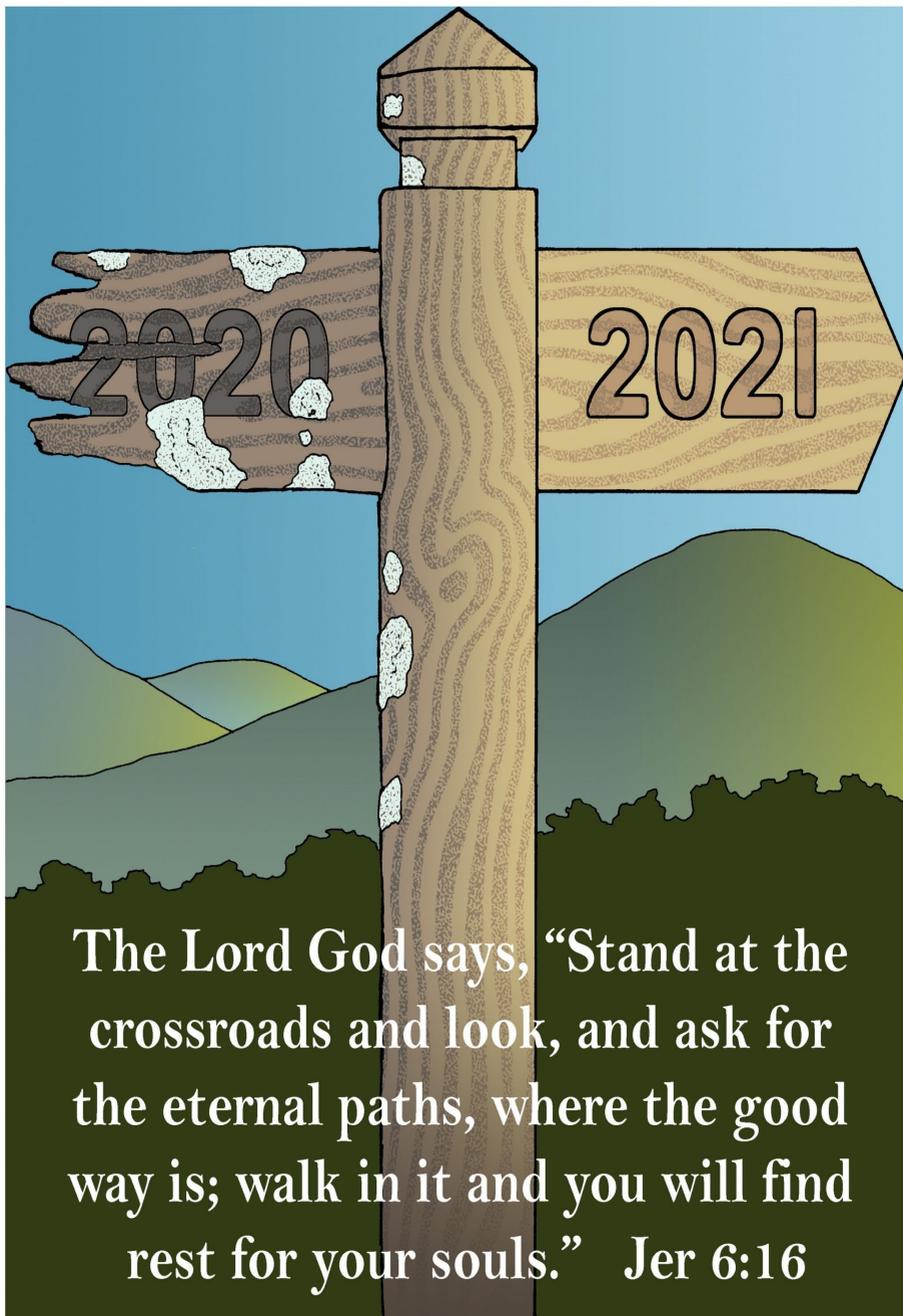
28.10.20	Nancy Thomson	Shalloch Park
29.10.20	Betty Airston	Cregganbhan Nursing Home
1.11.20	Marta Campbell	Corserine Road
3.11.20	John MacPhail	Upper Loaning
15.11.20	Sylvia Weir	Holmston Crescent
20.11.20	Douglas Kerr	Abbots Way
20.11.20	Nancy Perrin	Upper Loaning

Deadline for January Newsletter—Tuesday 29 December—12 noon

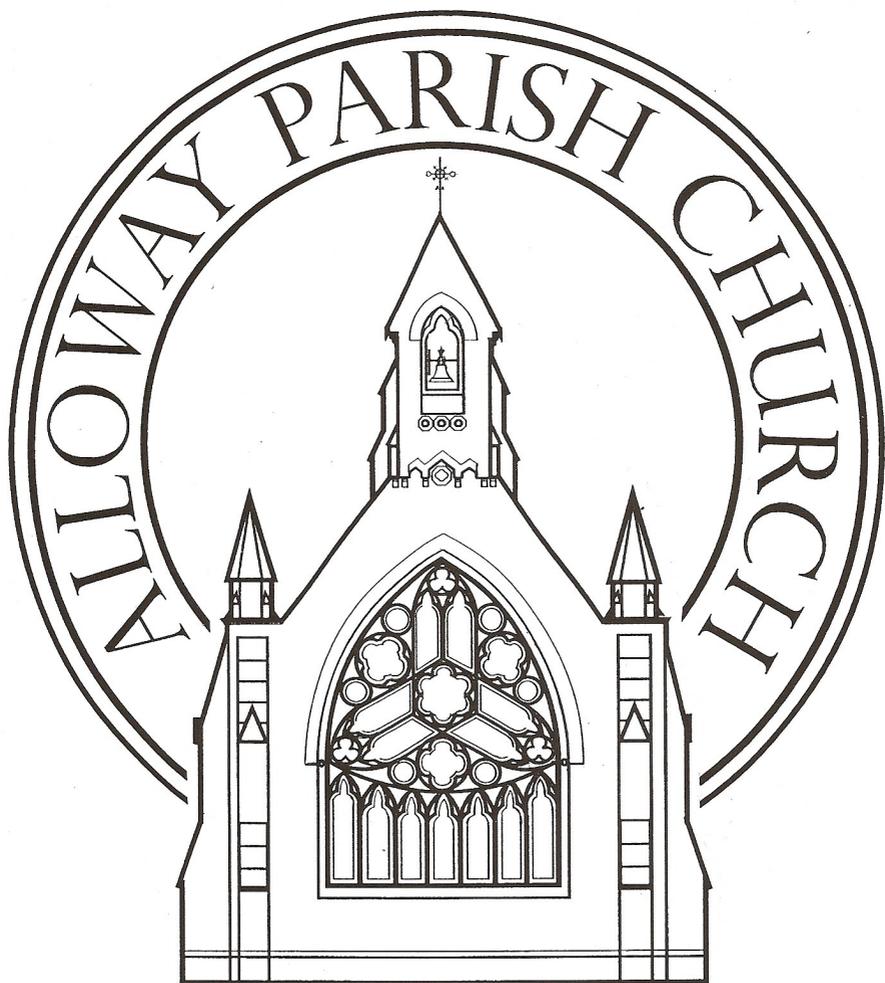
Contributions should be sent to:

allowaychurch.newsletter@gmail.com

Please visit our website www.allowaychurch.org or our Facebook page



The Lord God says, “Stand at the crossroads and look, and ask for the eternal paths, where the good way is; walk in it and you will find rest for your souls.” Jer 6:16



Alloway Parish Church of Scotland
No. 100538

Scottish Registered Charity
No. SC012456