

# KIRK OF KEITH: ST RUFUS, BOTRIPHNE AND GRANGE

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

**Issue No 72**

**December 2015**

**Dear Friends,**

As I write this Guy Fawkes and Halloween have just been 'celebrated,' Remembrance has come and gone and by the time you read this we will be well into Advent.

Most of us spend Advent on the ceaseless treadmill of present buying and stocking up on food. Even in churches, though the duties are different, there is a constant pressure to 'do' Christmas big-time, rather than be 'in' Christmas or let Christmas be 'in' us.

There is precious little point in regaling each other with comments about how material Christmas has become. Christmas was always material – constructed from matter - there are few things more material, more absolutely real, than birth itself; or journeying; or searching for accommodation; or government decrees about a census; or being visited at unsocial hours, when you have no means to offer hospitality, by those who cannot even give a clear account of why they have come.

But Christmas, coming round each year, cradles faith as well as the new-born infant. It holds us deep in renewed promises. It reminds us each time of the materiality of God's goodness – not some abstract idea of goodness, but goodness expressed in seeing friends and close family; goodness expressed in sharing special food; goodness expressed in being remembered with presents and cards; goodness expressed in nativity plays and carols and a desire for the well-being of others. Christmas may be busy, but it is also magical. It is no wonder that when CS Lewis wrote about his other world, Narnia, in the grip of evil, he made a cruel winter where the snow never melted, and with no Christmas. Christmas gives us a magical, material hope in the heart of winter.

This year, our Christmas theme should be 'the foolishness of God, which is wiser than the wisdom of men'. For it does seem folly to us, if we stop to think about it. Our broken world is filled with sorrow and violence and pain. What can one small baby do to turn it around? What can the frail faith of two parents; caught up in the existence and care of their baby, do to lead us to sense? What about those shepherds on the hill at Bethlehem, walking in the cold, believing that an angel, a messenger of God, had promised them a new beginning? What of the 'wise' men who journeyed for months, maybe years, because they believed a single star meant something significant – the sky is full of stars, growing, pulsating with light, collapsing, dying. Of what significance was one more?

But the beating heart of this child became the pulse of faith in the church, which became the fulfilment of all we longed to be. It is in the small things, the seemingly foolish things, that we give ourselves to again and again, trusting, like the principals in the Christmas story, that we will see God at work in Christmas.

**Rev Douglas Stevenson**

### **Nominating Committee Appointed**

The process to find our new minister took a step forward when, after morning worship at St Rufus on November 29, a nominating committee was elected to assist in filling our vacant charge. The committee will meet with the Presbytery Advisory Committee in the coming days, prior to beginning its important work. The members of the nominating committee are: Fiona Simpson (convener); Esther Green (secretary), Nicola Smith, Michael Newlands, Mike Denchfield, Billy Stewart, Peter McWilliam, John Clarke, Diane Morrison, Alex Rutherford and Barbara Robertson.

**Fiona Simpson**

### **Neep Heids Turn-up and Win**

Our annual quiz was great fun. Charlie Simpson was a genial quizmaster, ably supported by his wife Fiona and all present enjoyed an evening of fun and light-hearted challenge. The Neep Heids were the worthy winners with Confused Dot Com a close second. Alison Stewart, a volunteer with the Vine Trust, gave an interesting presentation on the Amazon project. The Amazon Hope Medical and Dental project serves communities living by the River Amazon and brings medical and dental care to them. Volunteer medics give primary care to folk who would otherwise find it difficult to access a doctor or nurse. Elizabeth Runcie gave a demonstration of chocolate making with no shortage of volunteers for the chocolate tasting! The Christmas lunch takes place in the Royal Hotel on December 7th, and two days later the Presbyterial Carol Service is held in Buckie North at 2pm. Christmas blessings to you all from everyone in our Guild.

**Elizabeth Copp**

**Dear all,**

Christmas is round the corner and a new year on the horizon. I've always found the new year to be at a strange time of year. August/September is always the start of the academic year, the start of new beginnings, and then we start again just a few months later.

Well back in August the Youth Group had its new beginnings. A new year ahead of us, some new faces, and a new reign of terror began as I took the helm after Kay's departure. Fortunately for everyone concerned, we still have the likes of Barbara and Fiona and all the other leaders to keep me in check (and to keep me right), and I'm truly thankful to all of our leaders, old and new, for their time, support, and tireless hard work.

We of course had our annual residential to Tomintoul back in September and great fun was had by all. Our trip to landmark was a brilliant day out, with lots of stories and laughs. Particularly that of a certain leader who despite great efforts, still produced an almighty scream on the sky dive. The youth group also split into two groups for the karaoke competition where we saw some impressive singing and dancing.

Which brings us nicely onto the much speculated discussion point, "Is there going to be a production?"

The production has always been a tremendous fundraiser, and is a huge confidence builder for the youth group. It's a real chance for them to overcome any shyness and just go for it! So the answer is yes. There will be a production. It'll be very different from the past ones, it's a new year after all, but all we have to remember is, "Our Youth Group's Got Talent!"

And they really do. They are a talented, respectful, hard-working, fun loving, simply amazing group. We are, as a whole church, blessed by such a wonderful group of young people. I know that in this year, and years to follow, that you will all continue to support our young folk and on behalf of us all, I thank you.

**God Bless, Michael Newlands**

### **It's Beginning To Feel A Lot Like Christmas At Sunday Club**

The children have been busy making nativity story posters to decorate the hall and their party was held on the afternoon of Saturday December 5 when Santa came along to give out presents. We have been rehearsing for the Christmas service which takes place on Sunday, December 20 when we will perform the Christmas Story - please come along and see us! The rehearsals means Sunday Club continues until 12 midday on both the 6th and 13th December. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Sunday Club.

**Beth Inglis**

#### **CHRISTMAS SERVICES – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Sunday, December 20 – United service at St Rufus, 10.15am

Sunday, December 20 – Rotary Carol Service, 7pm.

Thursday, December 24 – Christingle at Grange Church, 6.30pm; Christmas Eve service at St Rufus, 11.30pm

Sunday, December 27 – United service at St Rufus, 10.15am

Sunday, January 3 – United service at St Rufus, 10.15am

#### **Parish Register to 30th November 2015**

##### **BAPTISM**

*"The Lord bless you and keep you...."*

**November** - Finlay Alistair Mark, son of Ashley Inglis and Gordon Mark

##### **WEDDINGS**

*"My beloved is mine and I am his".*

**November** - Rachel Steven and James Barrington

##### **FUNERALS**

*Jesus said, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."*

**October** - Mr Clifford Duncan

Mr John Milne

Mrs Stella McWilliam

**November** - Mrs Helen Bowman

Mr David McWilliam

Mrs Margaret McDonald

Mr Douglas Grant