**ST EBBA’S**

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**EYEMOUTH**

**December 2014/January 2015**

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**Times of worship**

Every Sunday: 11am Eucharist in church

OSCR number SC023275

**C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\34GZLM5O\MC900371036[1].wmf Priest’s Letter C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\34GZLM5O\MC900371036[1].wmf**

A joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year to you all.

Perhaps, like me, you find it difficult to set aside any time to reflect on the meaning of Christmas for you and where it belongs in your relationship with God. In all too many years I have bought the latest book of daily reflections for Advent only to find when Christmas comes I have not fulfilled my promise to God to read it every day. Coming to terms with grief and loss has made a profound difference to my need for quiet times and I am beginning to stumble towards a greater appreciation of the value of pausing each day to take time out of the busyness simply to make my heart and mind and soul open to God. I try to sit and wait to see what is being offered by God for my pleasure or instruction. I might read a short Bible passage, a poem or short quotation from one of my favourite writers or just gaze out of the window and wonder at the glory of God’s creation.

There are days when I don’t manage to achieve this space and I have come to recognise that those too busy days are the poorer for what I have failed to do. So this year I have my Advent book ready and am resolved to take what it offers and reflect on it in the light of the Holy Spirit. I hope I will be able to maintain these times and I am also hoping that the Spirit will inspire me to organise my life so that all the necessary preparations for Christmas get done as well.

The Eucharist is at the heart of my prayer and life and I hope that some of you will be able to join us in the Parsonage at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays in Advent. Friendship is at the heart of Christmas so I hope that St Ebba’s will be welcoming hosts to the ecumenical group which will be reflecting together in preparation for Christmas. These meetings will be on Wednesday mornings at 11 a.m. starting on 26th November. Coffee will be available from 10.30 a.m.

I wish you a fruitful Advent, a blessed Christmas and enrichment of spirit at Epiphany.

Yours with love and prayers

**Jennifer**

**DECEMBER DIARY**

**Wed 3rd** 10.00am Eucharist in the Parsonage

**Sun 7th ADVENT 2**

11am Eucharist (1982)

Readings Isaiah 40 vs 1-11

Psalm 85 vs 1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3 vs 8-15

Mark 1 vs 1-8

**Wed 10th** 10.00am Eucharist in the Parsonage

**Sun 14th ADVENT 3**

11am Eucharist (1970)

Readings Isaiah 61 vs 1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5 vs 16-24

John 1 vs 6-8, 19-28

**Wed 17th** 10.00am Eucharist in the Parsonage

**Sun 21st ADVENT 4**

11am Eucharist (1982)

Readings 2 Samuel 7 vs 1-11, 16

Psalm 89 vs 1-4, 19-26

Romans 16 vs 25-27

Luke 1 vs 26-38

**Thurs 25th CHRISTMAS DAY**

11am Eucharist

**Sun 28th Ist after Christmas**

11am Eucharist (1970) WITH HEALING

Isiah 61 vs 10-62

Psalm 148

Galatians 4 vs 4-7

Luke 2 vs 22-40

**INTERCESSORS AND READERS – DECEMBER**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Server** | **Intercessor** | **Reader** |
| Sun 7th | Richard Oldale | Jan Simpson | Irene Morris |
| Sun 14th | Joan Shelmerdine | Simon Furness | Richard Oldale |
| Sun 21st | Richard Oldale | Noreen Thomson | Debbie Higson |
| Thurs 25th | Joan Shelmerdine | Simon Furness | Ernie Cox |
| Sun 28th | Joan Shelmerdine | Sheila Cox | Brian Payne |

**C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TG9EKAUT\MC900435452[1].wmf ADVENT C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TG9EKAUT\MC900435452[1].wmf**

**Diary Dates**

A Eucharist will be held in the Parsonage at 10am on Wednesdays

3rd, 10th and 17th December for Advent.

The Ecumenical Advent Group will meet in the Parsonage at 11am on those dates and also on Wednesday 28 November.

Coffee will be available from 10.30am on all those dates.

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**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS – EYEMOUTH**

Eyemouth’s Christmas lights will be turned on by the Herring Queen on Sunday 7 December

Thank you to everyone who helped and supported St Ebba’s recent coffee morning which raised the sum of £432.70. Well done! 

**Faith in Action for December**



Recent years have seen an increase in new HIV infections in Scotland – the majority within the heterosexual population. There has been inadequate sexual health education for the general population, with the resultant increase in HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. People living with HIV face stigma and discrimination on a regular basis and they need our support and our care.

* Pray for people living with HIV/AIDS
* Pray for all those whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS
* Pray for more effective drugs to combat this disease
* Support charities who work with people living with HIV/AIDS
* Unconditionally accept people living with HIV/AIDS as equal members of the body of Christ

***PRAYER***

***God of all compassion***

*We remember the millions of people throughout our world who are living with HIV. People in the developed world who have access to treatments but who often struggle to manage the regimes. People in the developing world with little or no access to treatment. Families who have lost an entire generation, orphaned children who struggle to bring up their siblings.*

*We pray for all those who are committed to changing this situation.*

*God of love and compassion, hear this prayer.*

*Amen*

**Churches release popular ‘chat show style’ radio ads C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\YKXCP52E\MC900083069[1].wmf**

An award-winning stand-up comic, Paul Kerensa, has teamed up with the Christian communications network – ChurchAds.net – to raise awareness about the true meaning of Christmas.

Kerensa, also a writer for sitcoms like Miranda and Not Going Out, and author of books including So A Comedian Walks Into A Church...Confessions of a kneel-down stand-up, features as a number of character voices on three new ads scheduled to hit the airwaves in early December as part of the Christmas Starts with Christ Campaign.

“For me, Christmas normally ends in a mess but this campaign reminds us it starts with Christ. These excellent ads spoof the daytime tabloid talkshows and hopefully, these commercials will remind listeners that in the birthday party this Christmas, we shouldn’t forget the birthday boy,” said Kerensa.

The campaign, backed by all major Christian denominations, has been making in-roads in recent years, one in three 18-24 year olds remember hearing the radio commercials, according to a ComRes survey.

The ads jog the memory about the nativity story in the style of a confrontational chat show: The Three Wise Men defending why they did not tell King Herod where to find baby Jesus (“We’re the three wise men, Herod, the clue’s in the name”); the Archangel Gabriel facing complaints about waking up everyone at 3am with the Hallelujah Chorus (“We had shepherds and environmental health on our backs, they thought we were having an illegal rave!”); and the donkey, that Mary rode to Bethlehem, trying to get in on the act (“How else were Mary and Joseph going to get to Bethlehem? By shuttle bus?”)

“We believe these radio ads reach out in a creative and imaginative way to young people, many of whom know little of the Christmas story. We hope this will encourage them to find out more about the birth of Jesus and the continued relevance at Christmas in 2014,” said Francis Goodwin of the ChurchAds.Net.

Research has shown that the campaign, now in its 6th year, has resulted in an increasing number of people who say they understand more about the true meaning of Christmas.

**HAVE YOU VOLUNTEERED YET …**

to prepare and serve coffee in the Parsonage after Sunday morning services on a rota basis?

Please contact Sheila on 077885 57102 to add your name to the rota.

**Quote of the Month**

Human nature is like a stable inhabited by the ox of passion and the ass of prejudice – animals which take up a lot of room and which I suppose most of us are feeding on the quiet. And it is there between them, pushing them out, that Christ must be born, and in their very manger he must be laid. Evelyn Underhill

C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TG9EKAUT\MC900360798[1].wmf**Christmas and St Luke’s Gospel**

It is to St Luke’s wonderful gospel that many Christians turn as the year draws to a close and Christmas approaches, for it is to St Luke that we owe the fullest account of the nativity.

Luke alone tells us the story of Mary and the angel’s visit to her, and has thus given the Church the wonderful Magnificat of Mary.

Luke alone tells us the story of Simeon’s hymn of praise, thus giving us the wonderful Nunc Dimmittis. Imagine an evensong without the Nunc Dimmittis.

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. Imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus. Imagine school nativity plays without our children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

What makes it so amazing is that Luke was not a Jew. The man who wrote the fullest nativity story, and indeed more of the New Testament than any other single person, was a Gentile!

**C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\34GZLM5O\MC900241949[1].wmf What’s for Christmas Dinner?**

The risk of hunger and malnutrition within Ebola-hit communities in West Africa is threatening to undermine the effectiveness of quarantine measures and, with it, the wider Ebola response, warns Christian Aid.

As the rate of infection continues to rise, Christian Aid is calling on the international community to address the problem of food insecurity for over a million people in quarantine in Sierra Leone. As Christian Aid explains: “If you are a parent with hungry children, then you have no choice but to think about your day-to-day survival, and in order to survive, families in Sierra Leone are having to break quarantine in order to earn money and buy food.

“Governments and aid agencies must recognise that quarantine will only be effective if those who are isolated are guaranteed a sufficient and constant supply of nutritious food and clean water.” The World Food Programme has begun providing emergency food assistance to over a million people across Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Christian Aid has delivered emergency food and hygiene kits to some of the most vulnerable families under quarantine in two of Sierra Leone’s Ebola ‘hotspots’ in order to prevent families from starving.

Pregnant women, single mothers, people living with HIV, the elderly and young children were among the 2,100 quarantined residents being targeted in the eastern Kailahun district and in the rural Freetown suburb of Waterloo. The kits contain enough food to give a family a balanced diet for two weeks, including oil, tinned fish, rice, onions and powdered milk. They also include essential hygiene materials.

[](http://scottishchristian.com/christian-aid-launches-iraq-crisis-appeal/) With the national death rate now exceeding 1,000 and the infection rate rising sharply, Christian Aid is working with local health teams to identify the ‘at-risk’ households in quarantined areas. Since the outbreak began, Christian Aid partners have trained hundreds of local volunteers to reach 1.2 million people in Sierra Leone.

*To donate to Christian Aid’s Ebola response visit* [*www.christianaid.org.uk/ebolacrisis*](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/ebolacrisis)

**We three kings of Orient**

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“A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey, and specially a long journey, in. The way’s deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest off, in solstitio brumali, the very dead of winter.”

It was 1622, and the Bishop of Winchester, Launcelot Andrews, was preaching a magnificent sermon to King James I. Reckoned one of the best preachers ever, Launcelot Andrews’ words were later taken up by T S Eliot and transformed into his wonderful poem ‘The Journey of the Magi’. What a vivid picture – we can see it all! The camels’ breath steaming in the night air as the kings, in their gorgeous robes of silk and cloth-of-gold and clutching their precious gifts, kneel to adore the baby in the manger.

Yet the Bible does not give us as much detail as some people think. Tradition down the centuries has added a great deal more. For instance, we know from St Matthew that the magi were ‘wise’, or learned men of some sort, but we do not know if they were kings or not. The Bible tells us there were several; tradition has decided upon three, and even named them: Balthassar, Melchior, and Caspar (or Gaspar). But the Bible does tell us that the magi gave baby Jesus three highly symbolic gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Gold stands for kingship, frankincense for worship, and myrrh for anointing – anticipating his death.

There is a lovely ancient mosaic in Ravenna, Italy, that is 1,500 years old. It depicts the wise men in oriental garb of trousers and Phrygian caps, carrying their gifts past palm trees towards the star that they followed... straight to Jesus.

**C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\CN5OB3EW\MC900140953[1].wmfCAROLLING IN FROSTY AIR**

Canon David Winter considers the way in which carols proclaim the story…

Christmas and carols go together. You can’t have one without the other. It would require a high degree of ingenuity for anyone to get through the Christmas season without hearing a carol - and probably singing one, too.

They’re on the speakers in the supermarket, they’re on the radio, the brass band plays them in the market place - and, of course, there’s the church carol service.

Most of us could name lots of them: Hark the Herald, Good King Wenceslaus, In the Bleak Midwinter, Away in a Manger, Once in Royal David’s City . . . and so on. Some of those carols are very old, some relatively modern. They’re perhaps the only Christian songs we actually know the words of - but familiarity can breed if not contempt, then at least inattention. Occasionally in those familiar lines we sing absolute nonsense: ‘In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron’ - in Bethlehem? ‘Little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes’ - so the baby Jesus wasn’t human after all? ‘And io, io, io by priest and people sungen‘? No, not a bad case of the stutters, but a medieval carol-writer’s mischievous description of the mumbo-jumbo of incomprehensible Latin in church.

We’ve been spared other bafflement by the work of editors. Charles Wesley’s first line was originally ‘Hark how all the welkin rings’ - no ‘herald angels’. ‘Welkin’ comes from an Old English word meaning ‘heaven’ and has absolutely nothing to do with shell-fish.

But enough of problems. On the whole carols are wonderfully clear in their message and profoundly moving in a simple and touching way. The last verse of ’Once in Royal David’s City’ always moves me:

Not in that poor lowly stable,

with the oxen standing by,

we shall see him; but in heaven,

set at God‘s right hand on high.

Trust Mrs Alexander to get it exactly right.

**Shaped for Service in 2015**

“For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10).

The start of a new year is a good time to think about serving God effectively. As whole-life disciples, this is not just about church, but includes workplace, family, friends and community. We are all uniquely shaped to serve him with everything that we need. These can be described by the acrostic ‘**SHAPE**’: Spiritual Gifts; Heart; Abilities; Personality and Experience.

*Unwrap your* **S***piritual Gifts*: All Christians are gifted by God with spiritual gifts, to build up the body of Christ. The New Testament offers examples of gifts (eg prophecy, faith, mercy, giving), yet there are many others. Ask the questions *‘how is God using me?’* and *‘what are others saying?’* to understand how God is gifting us.

*Listen to your* **H***eart*: The heart represents the core of our desires, hopes, dreams and ambitions. God has given us a unique *‘emotional heartbeat’* that races over certain activities or circumstances. This helps us to answer the question, *‘what do I get passionate about?’*, for God will use our passion to show us where to serve.

*Apply your* **A***bilities*: We are all born with God given natural abilities, which can work alongside our spiritual gifts. To discover God’s will, we should think about what we are good at doing and where we’re not. God has given us abilities not merely to make a living but to do ministry!

*Use your* **P***ersonality*: Each one of us has a different personality, which will impact how we use our gifts and abilities.

*Employ your* **E***xperiences*: Our experiences also shape us - eg lessons from family, education, jobs, encounters with God or times of pain and trials. God never wastes our experiences, especially when they are difficult!

*‘Using your shape is the secret of both fruitfulness and fulfilment in ministry. You will be the most effective when you use your spiritual gifts and abilities in the area of your heart’s desire, and in a way that best expresses your personality and experiences.’* (Rick Warren). In 2014 let’s be prepared to say *yes* to who God shaped us to be, and *act* on what God has shaped us to do.

*Extracts from an article by Paul Hardingham reproduced with thanks*

** We saw… and we came **

*We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him (Matthew 2:2)*

**** The visit of the wise men is celebrated on January 6th - the season of Epiphany. These eastern visitors highlight the theme of Jesus as Universal Saviour. They ‘saw his star in the east’; that is, it was from the place where they lived - in the east - that they saw the star.

If ‘the star’ had been simply a combination of, say, Jupiter and Halley’s comet, then these learned men from Mesopotamia might have been interested and even excited – but it would have hardly have signified to them the one, unique and life-changing event that required a three hundred-mile journey! Don’t even try to reduce the star of Bethlehem down to something like a conjunction of planets – or you will never grasp what happened. This was a supernatural event, greater even than the crossing of the Red Sea or the gathering to heaven of a godly man in a fiery chariot.

These were learned men – but also reverent and prayerful. It is probable that they would have read of the future ‘star’ and ‘sceptre’ that would arise in Israel – foretold centuries earlier.

And Matthew 2 has nothing to do with astrology or horoscopes. It connects with the supernatural happenings in nature that highlighted each stage in the life of Jesus – the dove (his baptism), the shining light (transfiguration), the darkness and earthquake (his death), the cloud (his ascension). Hence the star around the time of his birth. So….“We saw… and have come.”

1. There are those who see – but don’t ‘see.’It took Gentile visitors to shame Jerusalem and its leaders. Every generation has to be educated afresh about Jesus Christ, the world’s Messiah!

2. There are those who see - but don’t come. All saw the star, and the local scribes knew the prophecy of Micah 5:2 that the new King would come from Bethlehem – but ironically it was the Gentile visitors who alone made the pilgrimage.

3. There are those who do see - and do come. From Herod onwards – right up to today – murderous efforts are made to wipe out all reminders of the Babe of Bethlehem. But in the current unprecedented and astonishing advance of evangelism world-wide, the international worshippers of Jesus form the widest and fastest-growing family of belief ever.

*Reproduced with thanks to the Rev Richard Bewes*

**C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\YKXCP52E\MC900021362[1].wmf The Everlasting Turkey C:\Users\Pat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\YKXCP52E\MC900021362[1].wmf**

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*You’re sure to find yourself singing along to this one:*

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me

I’ve bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard

As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.

On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,

The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.

On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old

We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,

But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey curried.

On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.

The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince

When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.

On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,

For he’d seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.

On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,

He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.

On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,

Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,

And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.

On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,

The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.

*(Admit it – you did sing, didn’t you?)*

** HELPFUL HINTS? **

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***If you are entertaining relatives this Christmas, be reassured:***

Know that even when you are in the kitchen, our Lord moves amidst the pots and pans. (Teresa of Avila)

*And reflect on these alternative definitions:*

Auntie: one who has stopped growing at both ends, and who is now growing in the middle.

Egoist: the relative who is usually me-deep in conversation.

Handkerchief: cold storage by your cousin.

Secret: something you tell to only one family member at a time.

Toothache: the pain that drives you to extraction, even on Christmas Day.

Tomorrow: one of the great labour-saving devices used by your sibling today.

Yawn: an honest opinion from an uncle, openly expressed.

Wrinkles: something your relatives have gained since you last saw them. You have character lines.

**CHURCH CONTACTS**

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the Revd David Smout 01890 771220

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[www.stebbas.org.uk](http://www.stebbas.org.uk)

***If you are in hospital and would like us to know and/or to visit, under the current regulations you have to specifically ask the hospital to inform us.***

If you want to keep up with what’s happening here and across the Borders, you will find the minutes of our own Vestry meetings and the Borders Area Council meeting in the files at the back of the church.

***EDITOR’S NOTE:***

*Our thanks as always to the Parish Pump website for providing material for our newsletters throughout the year..*

*As you can see, this is a double issue to cover Dec and Jan. Please send all contributions and comments for the February 2015 newsletter to me at* [*info@thebordersdesignhouse.co.uk*](mailto:info@thebordersdesignhouse.co.uk) *(tel 01890 761271) by 15 January at the latest.*

*With very best wishes for a happy and peaceful Christmas and healthy New Year.* Pat

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