



The Cairn



News from St. Anne's Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Church in Dunbar

Letter from the Rector

Dear friends,

I wonder whether, like me, since the beginning of the hostilities between Israel and Gaza, you have heard some of the scriptures and words of hymns we sing in church differently than you did before? I know I have.

This is no bad thing: the Christian faith is a living thing. Both scriptures and tradition are constantly re-interpreted through the lens of experience. Sometimes this is comforting; sometimes disturbing. Either way, when we find ourselves reacting to what we hear or sing or say, these times can be opportunities for growth in faith, hope and love.

One of the debates I have heard in recent weeks has been about whether it's appropriate, in light of the conflict, to sing *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. Some have said not, and I think there will be churches where it does not feature this year.

Inside Update from IoM



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Don't miss the retreat



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Christmas services



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Wondering about what we should do at St Anne's, I did some research into its origins.

The lyrics of the carol date from 1867. They were written by an American priest (who was later made Bishop) Phillips Brooks, as a poem for use in Sunday School in the church of which he was then rector in Philadelphia. In the aftermath of the American Civil War (which ended in 1865) Brooks had travelled to the Holy Land, and visited Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. His reflection on that visit, taken up in the lyrics, highlights the theme of stillness and peace in the aftermath of war.

Today of course, the political reality in the West Bank is far from peaceful. Palestinians there live in cramped conditions behind a



^^Image: Tent City Nativity by Kelly Latimore (used with permission)

towering "separation barrier", and although the West Bank is on the opposite side of Israel to Gaza, tensions and violence there are inevitably heightened in the context of the current conflict.

In that light, lines such as "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie" certainly give us cause for sober reflection. Stillness and tranquility are hardly words that we could use for the lands of Israel and the West Bank today.

At the same time, the words of this much-loved carol invite us to larger-scale reflection. The very fact that they call upon a vision of peace draws our attention to the reason for the incarnation of Christ, that *despite* the brokenness of the world, Jesus is born so that "in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight".

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in one of his Advent sermons that "The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something better to come".

In Bethlehem this year, festivities have been cancelled by a people in mourning. We cannot avoid this reality as we approach the remembrance of the birth of Christ. But perhaps we can sing *O Little Town of Bethlehem* in the spirit Bonhoeffer identifies, tying our lament for the horrors we see in the conflict to our longing for a different future, and the hope of reconciliation and peace offered in God's love, manifested in Christ's dwelling among us.

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diana", with a long, sweeping underline.

Blessing for Waiting

Jan Richardson

Who wait for the night to end
bless them.

Who wait for the night to begin
bless them.

Who wait in the hospital room who wait in the cell
who wait, in prayer,
bless them.

Who wait for news
who wait for the phone call
who wait for a word
who wait for a job, a house, a child
bless them.

Who wait for one who will come home
who wait for one who will not come home
bless them.

Who wait with fear
who wait with joy
who wait with peace
who wait with rage
who wait for the end
who wait for the beginning
who wait alone
who wait together
bless them.

Who wait without knowing
what they wait for or why
bless them.

Who wait when they should not wait
who wait when they should be in motion
who wait when they need to rise
who wait when they need to set out
bless them.

Who wait for the end
of waiting who wait for the fullness of time
who wait emptied and open and ready
who wait for you,
o bless.



Maintenance Report

Thank you for your comments and suggestions about replacing the gable cross. We have also had comments from our architect and conservation architect. All options are being considered and a recommended course of action will be submitted to Vestry. This process will still take a few months.

Some of the prize money from the NCT Maintenance Award (see opposite) will be used for three planned tasks: fitting new front door draft excluders, painting the door and painting the metal gates.

There was an intermittent electrical fault in the vestry which set off the buzzer on the fire alarm, caused by moisture that had seeped into the outside electrical box. This circuit has been isolated and the fault is now being corrected.

The Inventory, which is a requirement of the Scottish Episcopal Church, of all items in the Church, has been completed with the support of a number of members of the congregation. Happily, nothing significant is missing compared with the last time the inventory was done.



We plan to bring the Christmas Tree into the Church on Saturday 16th December at 2pm. Please put the date in your diary and come along to help and enjoy the occasion.

David Robins

We won!

The National Church Awards were announced last month by Hugh Dennis on 6th November at London ceremony.

The Nayler Awards for Excellence in Church Maintenance, run in partnership with the Pilgrim Trust, shine a light on the people who look after local churches. They place great importance on good maintenance and the usefulness of a detailed plan to ensure ongoing upkeep of a church building and to help reduce the likelihood of future repair projects.

The 2023 winner for Scotland was St Anne's, Dunbar!

The judges remarked that: "The application of skills towards care and maintenance is an expression of worship and a privilege. Bringing people together to undertake tasks allows connections to be made and strengthened." They were impressed with the way we manage the practicalities of running the church, to great positive impact.

A huge well done to the Buildings Team!



Everyday Joy in Creation

Alison Crowhurst suggests a sensory tonic

The global climate crisis seems at times overwhelming; the world in a perilous state. Now, with conflict in Israel-Gaza grabbing the headlines, climate chaos is relegated to bottom of the news.

So it is easy to feel gloomy, especially as the nights draw in and the days seem a never-ending grey with constant rain. But the Eco-Group was scheduled to meet on 23rd November, and I had offered to lead the reflection at the beginning of the meeting.

I was determined to instil a spirit of joyful thankfulness, almost a spiritual top-up. I looked for ways in which we could be glad and grateful. Focusing on our senses, experiences and memories, I devised a set of questions to answer, describing our immediate responses in a few words rather than complete sentences.

At that morning's Communion Service and Discussion the readings were Psalm 149: 1-5 and Luke 19: 41-44. Ironically, the first is full of joy, encouraging us to be glad in our praise of God, while the latter is its polar opposite: warning of destruction for not recognising the things which make peace. After the service, discussion drew inevitable comparison with the current situation in Gaza: a cyclical pattern of destruction through history?

When the Eco-Group assembled, we started with my *Everyday Joy in Creation* questionnaires. Everyone had different questions, and read their responses aloud. It was lovely to hear what had been produced: they were, in fact, free-form poems, one of which is reproduced below. If you're interested in the questions which elicited these words, you'll find them at the end of this article.

Soaring through the air, wings outstretched, silhouetted against
the cloud

Warm, cool, wet, hard, sharp then smooth

Earthy rustling, shifting damp decay

Sharpness dissolving into sweetness

Soft rhythms, moist splashes of exploding droplets

We ended with a prayer:

Creator God,

We are surrounded by your countless, wondrous creations.

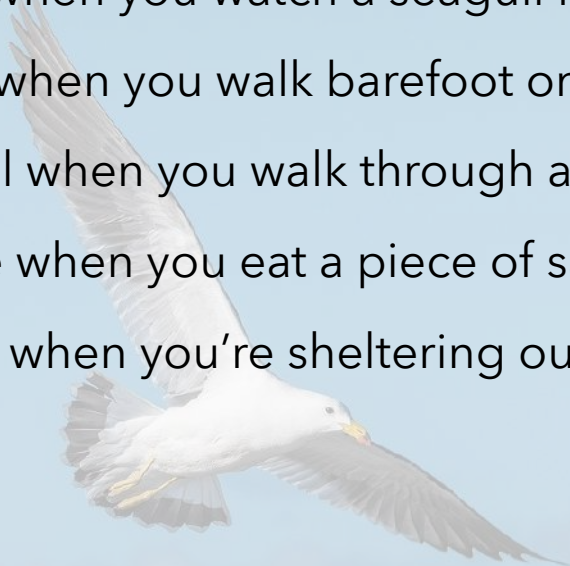
Thank you for the glorious ability of experiencing these in so
many diverse ways.

May we not take these daily joys for granted but remember to
appreciate, share and care for them. Amen.

This activity lifted our spirits in such troubling times. If you feel similarly low and gloomy, try the exercise: use your five senses to be joyful and thankful in the myriad simple things we can experience daily in God's creation.

Alison Crowhurst

- What do you see when you watch a seagull in flight?
- What do you feel when you walk barefoot on a pebbly beach?
- What do you smell when you walk through an Autumn wood?
- What do you taste when you eat a piece of salted tomato?
- What do you hear when you're sheltering outside from a shower of rain?





Christian responses to COP

November 30th - December 13th sees the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change, taking place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

We hope the world's political and business leaders will come together to set ambitious and just targets and actions for phasing out fossil fuels, and to support and make reparation to those already facing the worst effects of climate change.

What can we do during the COP? Here are three ideas:

1. Pray. A really useful prayer guide created by members of three Edinburgh churches can be found at <https://sites.google.com/view/praying-for-cop28/home>.

Green Christian are also leading 10-minute prayer sessions on Zoom at 8.00am each day during COP. Find out more and register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtcemopzgvG9DSf9BNclLL84WDiGmBvZn-#/registration>

2. Act. Join the Global Day of Action led by the Climate Justice Coalition on Saturday 9th December. The theme for the day is **Now We Rise**. Christian Climate Action will be gathering with many others in front of the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, at 12.30pm. Bring banners if you want!

3. Chat. Sustaining Dunbar are holding a Climate Café on Wednesday 13th December at 12.30pm in St Annes. All are welcome for a soup lunch and climate conversation.

Introduction to the New Testament Epistles

Stuart Ritchie moves on from the Gospels

Letter to the Galatians

Most scholars agree that Galatians is one of the first New Testament books to have been written (although 1 Thessalonians and James are strong contenders). It was composed by Paul around 48AD. It's a letter and a half! It has been "likened to a sword flashing in a great swordsman's hand". Paul was under attack - his response was swift, and vigorous.

The churches in Galatia (much of modern Turkey) were facing a theological crisis. They contained both Jewish and Gentile converts. Groups of legalistic Jewish Christians were insisting on the importance of the Old Testament Law of Moses. In brief, you must convert to Judaism and keep the commandments to be



>>Image: Pieter Bruegel, 1567. Conversion of Paul. from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

eligible to become a Christian. When Paul learned of this heresy, he composed his Epistle to emphasise Christian freedom and to counter a perversion of the Gospel.

To support the Galatians in their faith, Paul emphasises the importance of "justification by faith". We'll give that tenet a little more attention when we look at the Epistle to the Romans. But I'm personally attracted by the theologian Paul Tillich's encouragement to "accept that you are accepted" as a way of interpreting "justification by faith". Indeed, Galatians stands as a vigorous apologetic for the essential truth that we are accepted by God for trying to be faithful followers of Christ.

Importantly, the basic message of Galatians (and Romans) led to the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther relied heavily on Galatians in his preaching, teaching and writing against the prevailing theology of his day. Indeed, Galatians is often referred to as "Luther's book".

Romans: "Justification by Faith" and "Grace"

Paul's Epistle to the Romans, written around 56AD, has been recognised as the most systematic presentation of Christian doctrine in the whole of the New Testament. It is here that Paul gives us an unequivocal explanation of the Gospel message.

In Romans we find the core of Paul's message ... the theological doctrine of "Justification by Faith". This tenet has floated the boat of many a theologian and has resulted in many an unread academic treatise. But if Martin Luther and John Calvin thought it important, then I can do no other!

>>Image:

Celebration Day,
from Art in the
Christian Tradition,
a project of the
Vanderbilt Divinity
Library, Nashville,
TN.



When Paul speaks of God "justifying" sinners, he means that God treats the sinner as if he or she was a good man or woman. The ideal example of "Justification by Faith" in action lies in the parable of the prodigal son. As we well know, the recalcitrant lad decided to come back and ask to be received by his father as a hired servant. But he never got the chance to make that request. He is welcomed as the son that he is.

The good news is that although we could have expected condemnation and rejection by God for our many failings, amazingly, we are met with welcoming love. The other word for all this is Grace. "Grace" is something which we can never really earn. I repeat what I said about Galatians: the theologian Paul Tillich suggests that we should "accept that we are accepted" through God's "Grace". (Now read Paul Tillich!)

Stuart Ritchie

Letter from the Isle of Man

Dear friends,

Well, here I am in the city of Peel. It is considered a city, because it is home to two cathedrals – the present one and the ruins of the ancient cathedral, which stands within the walls of the old castle. It has a population of about 5,000. The old part of town is a jumble of narrow streets (I still get lost trying to find my way to the Coop!).

Like Dunbar, many of the buildings, including the castle, are built of sandstone and, like Dunbar, it has a busy fishing harbour. It is nicknamed the sunset city for obvious reasons, and on clear days one can catch glimpses of Ireland and Scotland.

My stay here has left little time to walk the beautiful landscape and, to be honest, the weather has not been conducive to outdoor activities. Peel shares with Dunbar a propensity for stormy weather, particularly at this time of year. Much of my time has been spent in the retreat house, learning the ropes. It has been a steep learning curve but a rewarding one and I enjoy being part of a team providing hospitality to the groups and individuals who come to stay. There's a lot of time spent going up and down stairs and fetching and carrying,



so my fitness levels must be improving. The team also have the opportunity to 'sit in' on courses and events that take place here. In so doing I have reconnected with Christian friends from all over the island and I have met some interesting folk from 'across' who have been speakers or leaders of retreats. I love the fact that team members and guests meet daily for morning prayer and share communion together at noon each Friday in our wee chapel.

Despite some of the challenges, my sense of calling has increased during this month and it was wonderful to see the enthusiasm with which the lovely people here welcomed me on board, when the decision was made with the warden that I would be joining the team. So, my next move will be to return to Dunbar on 6th December and make plans to return here sometime in January to begin two years as a volunteer.

The trustees of 'Thie Dy Vea', the retreat house, will be providing me with accommodation but there are lots of practical matters to be sorted regarding my move, which are made more complicated because the Isle of Man is not part of the UK! So, please pray that things might continue to fall in place as I trust in God's enabling and provision, step by step.

Yours in Christ,

Liz



Holy Island Retreat

28th February to 1st March

We have an opportunity to spend two nights on retreat at Marygate House on Holy Island from 28th February to 1st March 2024.

A retreat is an opportunity to "get away with God" - time to slow down, pray, be quiet, enjoy fellowship with others, and listen for the Still Small Voice of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Holy Island is a wonderful setting, with ancient sacred sites, vast skies and windswept beaches. Marygate House is a simple retreat house with comfortable shared rooms, hearty food and a small chapel and library.

The usual cost of staying at Marygate is £90 per night, full board. If you would like to come but finance is a challenge please chat to Diana - no-one will be excluded on the basis of money!



What if the three Wise Men had been three Wise Women?

They would have asked directions, arrived on time, helped to deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, brought some practical presents - *and* there might have been peace on earth!

Supplied by Noreen Thompson



New Year, New Hope

For a long time, Hogmanay was a more significant celebration than Christmas in Scotland.

Hogmanay is a "liminal" or threshold moment. We stand at the end of one year looking back over all that has been, and facing forward wondering what the future will hold.

The ancient Celts identified both liminal places and times as "thin", sensing that these were junctures where the veil between physical and spiritual realms was diminished and the Divine was more readily encountered. Often, thin places become pilgrimage destinations such as Iona and Lindisfarne, where great traditions of prayer have been established over a long time, oftentimes relating to seasonal moments such as the summer and winter solstices.

Hogmanay can be a time of nostalgia, excitement or trepidation. We may be sad to say farewell to the old year, or delighted to welcome the new one. Either way, it's a time of transition and therefore uncertainty. At its best, it's also a wonderful opportunity for a fresh start and hope for the future. Liminal times are full of potential - moments when we can put down things that are no longer helpful for our journey, and identify the things we want to take with us into the future, as we are invited to step into new possibilities.

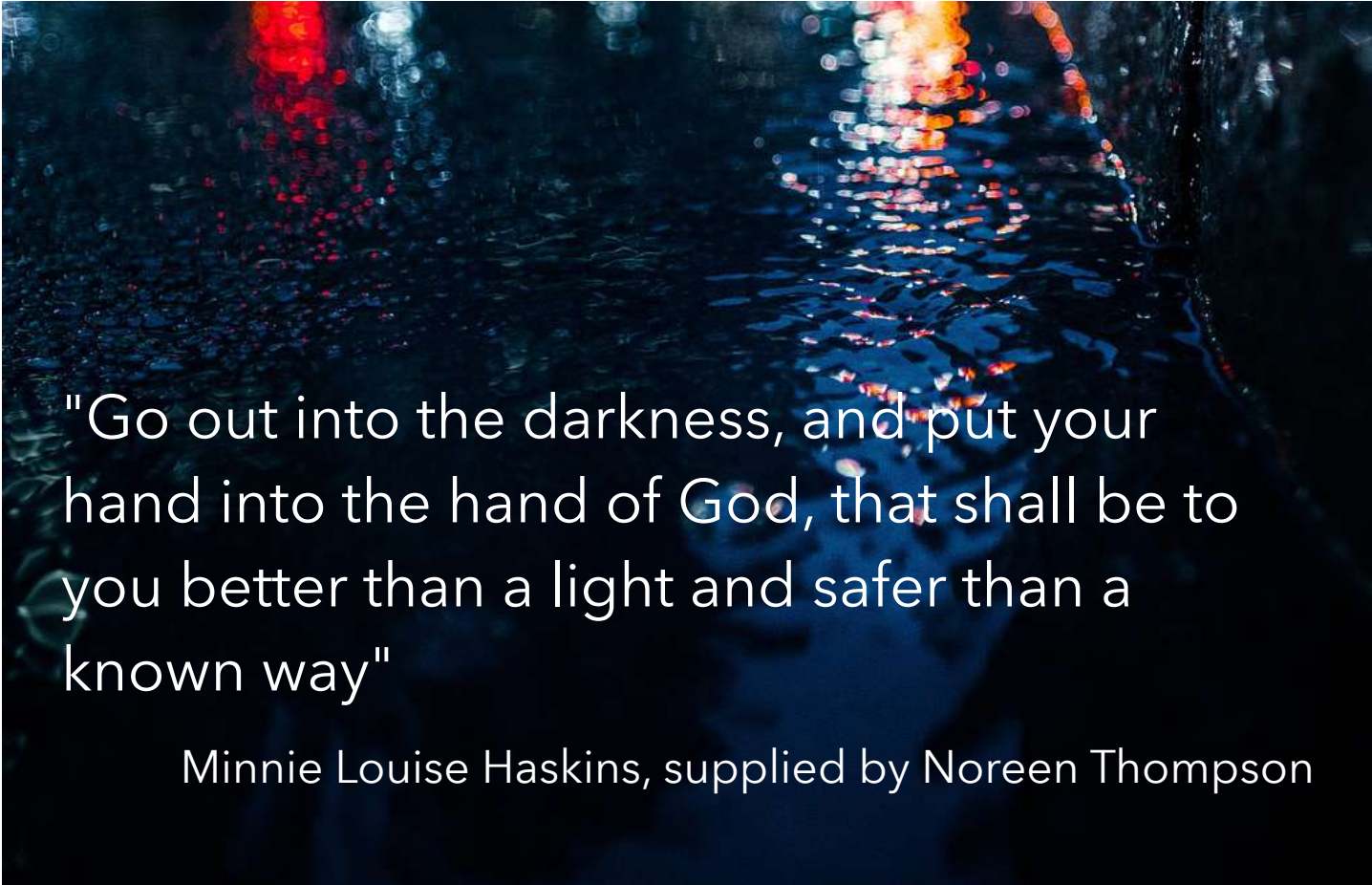
Yet liminal moments, and the hope they can bring, are not only available at New Year or at special physical locations. Richard Rohr suggests that God invites us into a liminal space through contemplation. By inviting us to set aside the constraints of the

world and of our own ego, contemplative prayer invites us to "be with" God. The discipline of this prayer is simply to make ourselves available to be with God. In this way, the Holy Spirit has an opportunity to work in us.

The Good News is described as the hope we have in us (1 Peter 3: 15). Those who persevere in the practice of contemplation say that it results in them becoming more and more aware of the sacred in every moment of our lives. This is a hope we can know not only on New Year's Day, but always.

If you would like to try out contemplative prayer, why not come along to one of the Advent Quiet Mornings in Church? You can also learn more about contemplative prayer at the Centre for Action and Contemplation (www.cac.org).

Diana Hall



"Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God, that shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way"

Minnie Louise Haskins, supplied by Noreen Thompson

Advent Pauses for Prayer

Pause for prayer in the journey towards Christmas

on Saturdays 2nd, 9th and 16th December

at 10.30am for 45 minutes, with the opportunity to stay on for conversation, coffee and festive nibbles

Please join us



Inspire Women's Group



conversations
company
& cuppas

First Thursday 8pm

All women will be made most welcome.

Further information:

Chrissie 01368 862 599

Alison 07823 469 472

inspiredunbar@outlook.com



The Inspire Christmas Craft and Meditation Evening will be held on Thursday 7th December at 8pm at St Anne's Church.

Refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies will be served.

All women will be made most welcome.

For more information, please contact Judy (07747 655626) or Chrissie (07799 607163).



The Belhaven
Choristers lead a
traditional

Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

By Candlelight

At St Anne's Church, Dunbar
Monday 11th December, 7pm

Entrance Free
Retiring collection in aid of charity





CHRISTMAS SERVICES

ST. ANNE'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL & METHODIST CHURCH

1 WESTGATE, DUNBAR EH42 1JL

SATURDAY 2nd, 9th & 16th DECEMBER - 10.30am
ADVENT QUIET MORNINGS

Come and see what 30minutes of stillness can do for you!

MONDAY 11th DECEMBER - 7.00pm
NINE LESSONS & CAROLS
with the BELHAVEN CHORISTERS

CHRISTMAS EVE - 6.15pm
CRIB SERVICE

For the young and the young at heart, come in PJ's if you like!

CHRISTMAS EVE - 11.15pm
TRADITIONAL CAROLS & COMMUNION

CHRISTMAS DAY - 10.30am
FAMILY CELEBRATION with HOLY COMMUNION
Bring a present to show us!

HOGMANAY - 10.30am
HOLY COMMUNION at the YEAR'S END

www.stannesdunbar.org.uk/

Readings and Rotas

Sunday December 3rd - Advent Sunday

Isaiah 64: 1-9; Mark 13: 24-end

Readings: Alison Crowhurst

Intercessions: Stuart Ritchie

Chalice: Stuart Ritchie

Sunday December 10th - Advent 2

Isaiah 40: 1-11; Mark 1: 1-8

Readings: Alasdair Swan

Intercessions: Noreen Thompson

Chalice: Noreen Thompson

Sunday December 17th - Advent 3

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-end; Luke 1: 46-55 (Magnificat)

Readings: Caitriona Kavanagh

Intercessions: Liz Mitchell

Chalice: Geoff Shutt

Sunday December 24th - Christmas Eve

****Note no morning service****

Christmas Eve Midnight Mass 11.15pm

Isaiah 9: 2-7; Luke 2: 1-20

Readings: Rosemary Ling

Intercessions: David Mumford

Chalice: David Mumford

Christmas Day

Isaiah 52: 7-10; John 1: 1-4

Readings: David Robins

Sunday December 31st - Christmas 1

Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3; Luke 2: 5-21

Readings: Mike Harvey

Intercessions: Anne Harvey

Chalice: Anne Harvey

Sunday January 7th - Epiphany

Isaiah 60: 1-6; Matthew 2: 1-12

Readings: Pippa Swan

Intercessions: Gill Wilson

Chalice: Geoff Shutt

Sunday January 14th - 2nd after Epiphany

1 Samuel 3: 1-20; John 1: 43-end

Readings: Judy Dale

Intercessions: Noreen Thompson

Chalice: Noreen Thompson

Sunday January 21st - 3rd after Epiphany***Week of Prayer for Christian Unity***

Genesis 14: 17-29; John 2: 1-11

Readings: Caitriona Kavanagh

Intercessions: Sharon Morgan

Chalice: Sharon Morgan

Sunday January 28th - 4th after Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18: 15-20; Mark 1: 21-28

Readings: David Robins

Intercessions: David Mumford

Chalice: Stuart Ritchie

Services over the festive period at St Anne's

Saturdays 2nd, 9th and 16th December

Advent Quiet Mornings, 10.30am

Thursdays 7th, 14th and 21st December

Coffee and Conversation about Advent Materials,
11.05am - 12noon

Monday 11th December

Nine Lessons and Carols with Belhaven Choristers, 7pm

Christmas Eve

No 10.30am service

Crib Service for the young and young at heart, 6.15pm
Come in pjs if you like!

Carols and Communion, 11.15pm

Christmas Day

Family Celebration with Holy Communion, 10.30am
Bring a present to show us!

Thursday 28th December

No midweek service

Hogmanay

Methodist Holy Communion, 10.30am

Thursday 4th January

Morning Prayer, 10.30am, followed by coffee and conversation

Services at St. Anne's

Sunday

10.30am - Holy Communion

Note no morning service on December 24th

Young Church 10th December and 28th January

Thursday

10.30am - Holy Communion followed by coffee and chat

Note no midweek service on December 28th

12.00pm - Prayers at the Peace Pole



Rector: Rev'd Diana Hall

St Anne's House, 1 Westgate EH42 1JL

Tel: 07970 105725 - Email: rector.stannesdunbar@gmail.com

The Rector's rest day is Monday

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Event Bookings David Robins: events@stannesdunbar.org.uk

Organ Enquiries Brian Dale: organist@stannesdunbar.org.uk

Magazine Editor Alex Davey: ahdavey@gmail.com

Please send contributions by the last Sunday of the month.

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Rev'd Anne Harvey 07860 181880

Find us on 

www.stannesdunbar.org.uk

St. Anne's Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Church, Dunbar is a Scottish Charity, SC010950, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)