

The background image is a night photograph of the East Kilbride Old Parish Church. The church's stone walls and a tall, ornate clock tower are visible. Warm white string lights are strung across the top of the frame. In the bottom right corner, there is a digital illustration of a snow-covered Christmas tree with a gold star on top. A white canopy tent is partially visible on the left side of the image.

# EKO

The Magazine for  
East Kilbride  
Old Parish Church

**DECEMBER 2021**

**EDITION 602**

# Church Calendar



Our church services continue to take place in the church and online. If you are attending the church, please book your place by contacting Louise at the church office by phone or email. Face coverings must still be worn and the usual precautions should be observed for safety.



## DECEMBER

Sunday 5th	2nd Sunday in Advent	11am
Sunday 12th	3rd Sunday in Advent with the <b>Coalburn Band</b>	11am
Sunday 19th	4th Sunday in Advent: <b>All Age Service</b>	11am
Friday 24th	<b>Christingle Family Service</b>	7pm
	<b>Watchnight Service</b>	11pm for 11.30pm
Saturday 25th	<b>Christmas Day Family Service</b>	10.30am
Sunday 26th	Joint Service with the West Kirk in EKOPC	11am

## JANUARY

Sunday 2nd	Morning Worship	11am
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### JANUARY EKO

Please note that the deadline for the January edition of the EKO will be Friday 17th December. *Editor.*

# PASTORAL LETTER



The Christmas shopping frenzy has begun, and with threats of limited stock being available this year, coupled with last Christmas being so different from usual, I fear that people are going a bit mad. I stupidly thought that a shopping trip to Argyle Street in Glasgow last weekend was a good idea. I can assure you it certainly was not. While there is a wonder about Christmas, is there not also a tyranny? Too often, instead of being able to give out of thoughtfulness or love, we often give because it is expected, and I hear of people who have upwards of twenty people for whom they feel they “must” buy for at Christmas which results in gifts being given, even when no one can think of anything that person needs. No wonder the joy of giving falls away to a sort of panicked despair.

Let me remind you of 2 Corinthians 9:7. “Each person should give what they have decided in their heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” Can we give cheerfully this Christmas? Maybe it is only in doing so that we can emulate the gift that God gave to us at Christmas. Was God cheerful on the night he sent his son into the manger of hay? I’m not sure, but I do know that he gave not reluctantly or because he was forced by popular opinion, but because he loved. No shop bought gift would do for those he held dear. So God gave the only thing he could, his very self, a costly gift in the extreme.

And that’s the Christmas message. Maybe it is only by opening that first gift of

love from God that we can really understand the significance in giving and receiving gifts. I hope and pray that this Christmas season it does not capture us in its tyranny but releases us in an eager cheerfulness to give.

Yours in love,

*Anne Paton*



## NATIVITY SPIRIT

Are you ready to get into the nativity spirit?

On Sunday 19th December we will be having our all-age Christmas service. This year we'd love everyone to take part, so you need to start getting your costumes ready. You can be as low key or over the top as you like, but don't be a bah humbug! Come dressed as one of these characters: Angel, Mary, Joseph, Inn keeper, Shepherd, Wise man or even an animal in the stable. All will be revealed on the day.

*Anne Paton*



# PLANNING FOR CHANGE

Our Kirk Session has just begun the process of considering the implications of the decision by Presbytery to reduce the number of ministerial posts in East Kilbride from 9 to 6. These discussions will include consideration of union of our congregation with one or more other congregations, decisions on which buildings should be retained and which disposed of, and a review of all the financial aspects which will arise from the inevitable changes.

Elders are fully aware that this will be a difficult process and will involve a lot of heart-searching and compromise. Many people will have long-standing family attachments and emotional connections with a church and a congregation so may find change upsetting. The Kirk Session will endeavour to undertake its deliberations with sensitivity and fairness. In carrying out this work to the very best of its ability, the Session will seek to faithfully follow Jesus and to listen to the Holy Spirit prompting us to move and travel in fresh directions. An effective implementation of the changes which are needed will require courage, collaboration, and generosity. It will involve an effective sharing of our resources and an ongoing commitment to stewardship.

It is encouraging to look at the experiences of some other congregations where work on planning reinvigorated models for mission and worship is under way. Many congregations are already meeting the challenges and are looking at the need to adapt, change or rationalise their buildings or even physically move to enable them to focus on worship, discipleship, and mission. For them, change involves developing new forms of management and development. Change is not going to be cost free, either emotionally or financially. It may mean major change to, or giving up, long cherished spaces.

The Presbytery committee overseeing this process has strongly encouraged local congregations to work together to produce ideas and vision “from the ground up” rather than any set of people feeling they are in a contest over and against “them” – because, in the final analysis, there is no them and us. The Committee has urged that local plans are developed collaboratively and are implemented in a spirit of togetherness. A small group of elders from our Kirk Session has opened this process with a meeting with elders from the West Kirk and collectively this group has identified areas of common interest for continuing discussion.

The prayers and support of the congregation will give great support to members of the Kirk Session as they take on the challenges of re-shaping our purpose in taking Christ’s mission to our local community.

*Alistair Walker* Session Clerk

## COMMUNITY LINK GROUP

As with all organisations in our church, the past twenty months have been very difficult and the same goes for the Community Link Group.

As we haven’t been able to support the most vulnerable people in our community (eg. Women’s Aid and First Stop Homeless Unit) we would like to have a monetary collection on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December and all proceeds will be split between the above named organisations. This will also enable us to purchase toys etc for Women’s Aid to give to children in our community who will not have a visit from Santa.

Another charity we would like to support with the help of our church family is Loaves and Fishes. We will place a box at the front door of the church each

Sunday for donations of non-perishable groceries which will be taken to Loaves and Fishes to help replenish their stock. The items Loaves and Fishes are in short supply of are: canned tuna, chicken, salmon, fruits, pastas (eg. spaghetti, ravioli) beans etc. peanut butter also dried pasta. All toiletries, hygiene products and cleaning supplies.

Very many thanks in anticipation of your continued support.

*Norma Penman/ Diana Ramsay*

Joint Convenors



**HARVEST APPEAL**

Thankyou to the congregation for their generosity in responding to the Harvest Appeal. We collected £699. Half will go to Loaves and Fishes and half to Water Aid.



**THE GUILD**

The Guild has been glad to meet again this autumn despite still having to wear masks and sit a metre apart. But we have had a good programme and are happy to meet even for a shorter time.



The ladies have decided to go out for a Christmas Lunch at Brew 74, near Morrisons in Stewartfield. The date is Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December , time 12.30 for 1pm and the cost will be £20 to cover two courses .If anyone wishes to come but has not already registered please phone Mary Smith on 226718 by 8<sup>th</sup> December.

The second half of the programme will begin on January 12<sup>th</sup> at 1.30 when Barbra Campbell will tell us about her life as a policewoman. We will be very happy to welcome any new ladies to the Guild.

*Mary Smith*

# PRAYER DIARY



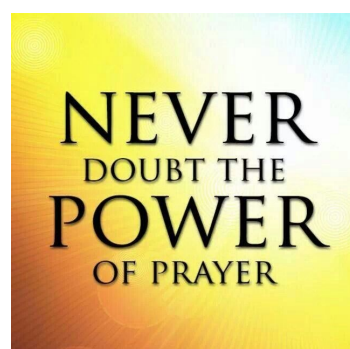
## DECEMBER

- 1st. Lord, guide our church elders in the work they do for our church.
- 2nd. Lord, be with all those in Afghanistan without homes and food. Give them hope.
- 3rd. Dear Lord, we pray for those people at home in distress over the effects of the pandemic. Give them hope and peace.
- 4th. Lord, thank you for everything we have but take for granted. Teach us to value everything we have when others have to do without.
- 5th. Lord, reach out to humanity today to those without faith and help them understand the power and the glory of the Kingdom of God.
- 6th. Dear Lord, we thank you for being our Prince of Peace.
- 7th. Hear my cry for mercy as I call on you for help.
- 8th. Lord, as I travel along the road, help me to be more understanding and less judgmental and to appreciate all that is around me.
- 9th. Thank you, Lord for each new day and for the changing seasons
- 10th. Guide me Lord in all I do.
- 11th. We pray for all children around the world regardless of their faith or colour and ask you to keep them safe.
- 12th. We think of the joy in Mary's heart as she prepared for the birth of Jesus.
- 13th. Forgive our weaknesses and help us to be more appreciative.
- 14th. Lord, help me always to stand still before the race.
- 15th. My day is yours Lord.
- 16th. If you walk with me, I'm on sure ground
- 17th. In your service all tasks are of value
- 18th. Thank you, Lord for the people in my life who make me smile

- 19th. Lord as we look forward to the Birthday of Jesus, may we experience the joy of salvation with love and thanksgiving.
- 20th. Remind me always that I don't need feet to dance or a voice to sing. I have a heart.
- 21st. Lord, knowing that you are in my life, is my blessing.
- 22nd. The first thing to do when faced with a problem, is to knock. You will always answer.
- 23rd. We ask for strength for our Queen during this difficult time and guidance for her family in their supporting role.
- 24th. Help us to simplify our activities so that we can focus our celebration on your birth.
- 25th. On this Christmas Day, we ask you to grant us peace in our homes, in our churches and in our hearts.
- 26th. We give thanks that nations of the world are showing compassion for climate change and addressing issues concerning our planet.
- 27th. We thank you for the loving compassion shown to all people throughout the world.
- 28th. Keep our hearts and doors open to all.
- 29th. We pray that significant changes will be made after COP26
- 30th. We pray for those injured and killed by scorpions after the storms in Egypt
- 31st. We pray for the victims of the bomb blast in Afghanistan and for peace in that country.

## JANUARY

- 1st. Lord, as we enter the new year, fill our hearts with joy, love and compassion.
- 2nd. Pray for the homeless, especially as winter comes in.
- 3rd. We give thanks for all those who served our country in whatever way, in all the conflicts, and pray that they will always be remembered.
- 4th. Give thanks that God is always with us.
- 5th. We pray that politicians make wise decisions.
- 6th. We pray for peace throughout the world.



## KIRK LIFE

### HOGMANAY CEILIDH

After much discussion and soul searching, it has been decided that we really cannot hold a Hogmanay Ceilidh this year. There are so many issues with Covid that it was felt wise not to hold it this year.

Let's hope that 2022 will allow us more freedom in presenting events in a more usual fashion.

Thank you!

*Ken Ross* - Kirk Life Convenor



## UPDATE FROM IAIN SHAW

### Sunday School

We continue to meet every Sunday morning in the upper hall at 11am: our current theme being 'Jesus is the light of the world.'



Our Sunday School Christmas Party is scheduled to take place on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December and we will be in Church for the family service on the 19<sup>th</sup> December. Thereafter we will have a 2 week break on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December & again the following week Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022 and restart on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

## Art Group

The group continues to meet on a Thursday afternoon from 4.30-6pm in our Glebe St Hall and it is going well. We have around 20 primary school aged children registered & a group of dedicated volunteers & young leaders helping out. We will hold our first Art Group Christmas Party on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December and then have a couple of weeks off restarting again on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.



The following all age family services are planned for December: it would be great if you were able to join us for some or all of the following – please note carefully the days and times of each service –

- All Age Family Advent Service – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 11am
- Family Christmas Eve Christingle Service – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm
- Christmas Morning Family Service – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am

At this time of year, during the season of Advent, we reflect on the birth of Jesus and may ask ourselves the question what is our greatest need at Christmas? If our greatest need is for information, God would have sent us an educator, if our greatest need is for more money, God would have sent us an economist, if our greatest need is for pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer but our greatest need was and still is forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour.

As Christmas comes closer let us remember its true meaning and keep Jesus at the centre of our celebrations. Here is a reflective poem for you to consider:-



### The U in Jesus

Before **U** were thought of or time had begun God had stuck **U** in the name of His Son

And each time **U** pray you'll see it's true you can't spell out Jesus and not include **U**

**U** are a pretty big part of His wonderful name for **U** he was born that's why he came

And His great love for **U** is the reason that he died, it even takes **U** to spell crucified

Isn't it thrilling and splendidly grand that he rose from the dead with **U** in His plan?

The stones rolled away the gold trumpet blew and the word resurrection is spelt with a **U**

Go into the world and tell them it's true that I love everyone – just like I love **U**

He'd like them to know but it all starts with **U**, will **U** pass it on? – Remember Jesus loves **U**!!

In closing can I thank most sincerely all the leaders, volunteers & helpers who have assisted at any of our activities and events for children, young people and families over the past year - without you and your outstanding contribution none of the above would be possible. Thank you all very much indeed.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and blessed New Year.

*Iain* (Youth & Families Worker)

mobile 07912 295943 / email [iainshaw18@gmail.com](mailto:iainshaw18@gmail.com)



## *Christians face arrests, jail terms for church meetings and printing religious texts - 24 Nov 2021*

A Christian couple in China have each been sentenced to seven years in prison and a fine of RMB 250,000 (approximately £29,240) for “illegal business operations,” after their appeals were rejected.

According to the Chinese human rights site Weiquanwang, Chang Yuchun and Li Chenhui, from Shaanxi province, lost their appeal on 15 November. The report says that the couple’s registered printing company produced a large number of Christian books before being seized by the local authorities on 21 July 2020. More than 210,000 copies of various religious books were confiscated and at least 24 titles were later deemed to be “illegal publications.”

On 19 August 2021, Chang and Li were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and a fine of RMB 250,000 by the Xi'an Gaoling District Court for the crime of “illegal business operations.” They appealed against the sentence, but it was upheld in the 15 November trial.

This is the latest case of Christians being accused of “illegal business operations” in connection with printing religious books.

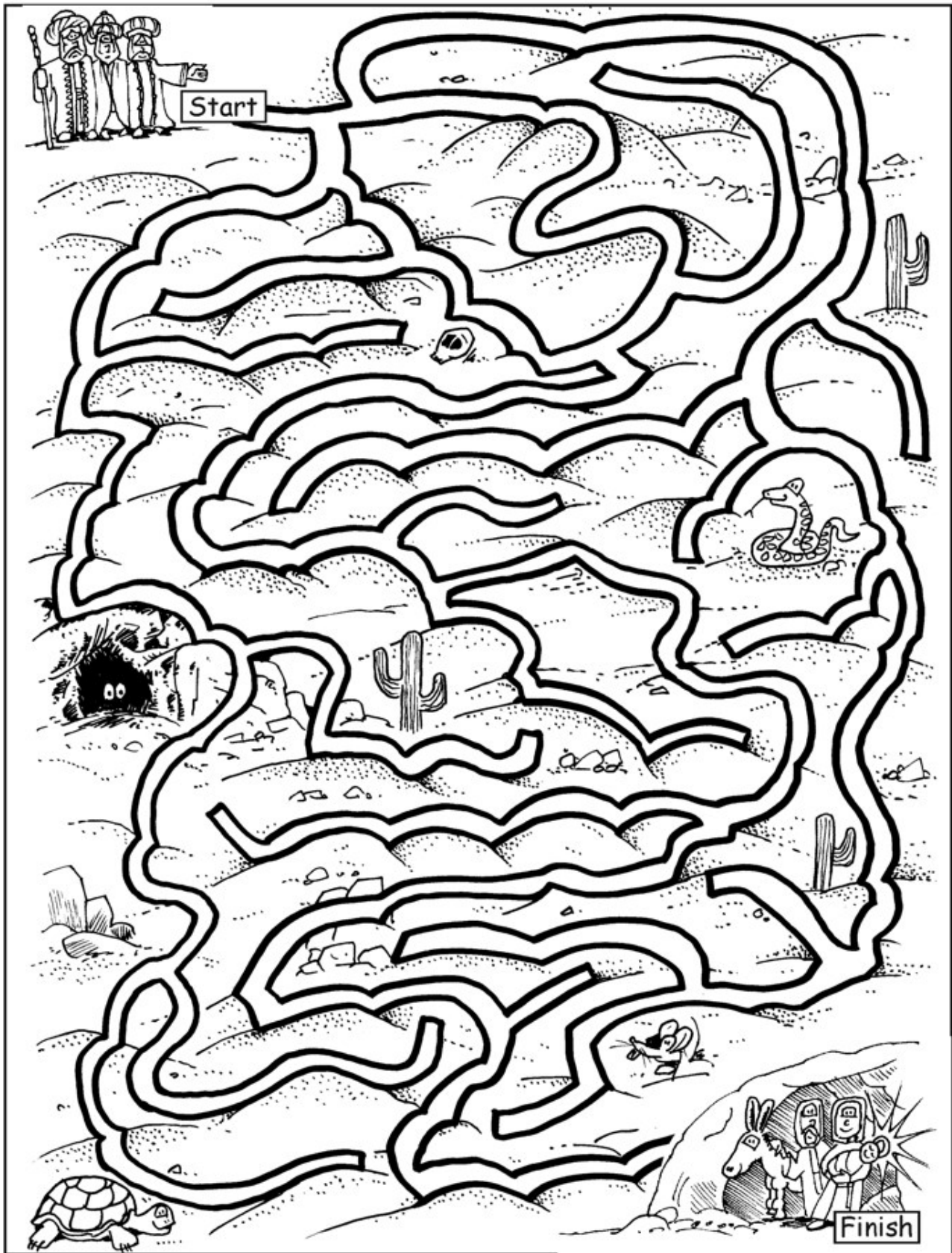
CSW’s Founder President Mervyn Thomas said: *“The sentencing of Chang Yuchun and Li Chenhui is another demonstration of the authorities’ ongoing crackdown on the printing and dissemination of religious books. As CSW’s briefing notes, control over the publication and sale of religious books has increased significantly under the leadership of Xi Jinping. Those who attempt to publish religious literature are paying the price, while the crackdown also restricts religious communities’ access to information. We urge the authorities to reverse this policy, to uphold the rights to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression, and to release Chang Yuchun, Li Chenhui immediately and without condition. We further call on the government to end the harassment and arrest of members of churches across the country facing similar violations.”*

Ed.



# Wise Men Maze

Can you help the wise men find their way around the maze  
& give their gifts to Jesus in the cave?



# PASTORAL REGISTER

**Deaths "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."**

David Lafferty  
Richard Thomas  
Violet Muir  
Leslie Paul



# EKO SUBMISSIONS

If you would normally hand write/type material and give it to the editor would you please phone me and dictate it. My numbers are below.

The deadline for submitting all material for the January edition of the EKO is:

**FRIDAY 17TH DECEMBER**

Thank you. *David Kent* - Editor

01355 237275, 07890 262267 or, davidkent28@virginmedia.com



## **EAST KILBRIDE OLD PARISH CHURCH**

In case of illness and bereavement, would the family please contact the minister immediately and directly.

Rev. Anne Paton will be available for consultation in the vestry after Sunday morning worship. Please arrange such consultation with the door duty team.

East Kilbride Old Parish Church, Church of Scotland, Scottish Charity—SC000609

<b>Minister</b>	<b>Rev. Anne Paton BA BD</b>	<b>Tel. 01355 220732</b>
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<b>Pastoral Assistants:</b>	<b>Rev. Stewart Smith MA BD</b>
	<b>and Miss Sheena Bell</b>

<b>Youth &amp; Families Worker</b>	<b>Iain Shaw</b>
	<b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:iainshaw18@gmail.com">iainshaw18@gmail.com</a></b>

<b>Session Clerk</b>	<b>Mr Alistair Walker</b>
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<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Mr Ronnie Niven</b>
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<b>Roll Keeper</b>	<b>Mr Robert Cossar</b>
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<b>Gift Aid</b>	<b>Mr Des Laverty</b>
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<b>Publications Convenor</b>	<b>Janice Gourlay</b>
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**E-mail copies of November's EKO magazine are available from:-**

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