




# KIRK NEWS

to glorify God ... to proclaim Christ ... and to serve others

**JANUARY 2022**

**No. 831**

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Wishing you a  
happy and peaceful New Year

The Light shines in the Darkness

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## Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Everyone will be aware of the various announcements made by Public Health Scotland and the Government regarding the new Omicron variant of the coronavirus. In the Church we continue to respond to each of these announcements and follow such advice as is provided.

Although there are too many small things we take into account to announce you should know that we are working hard to keep Church one of the safest places that people can visit.

Obvious changes we have made is to cancel all tea and coffee after services and to increase the spacing available for seating. We have also cancelled a number of forthcoming events such as the proposed Burns Supper in January.

Whilst some of these changes have not been mandated it is evidence of the efforts we continue to make to keep everyone safe. At the time of writing this, as a consequence of the changes we have made, no services have had to be cancelled and most will be live-streamed.

Please be aware that arrangements for events intimated in this magazine and elsewhere may have to be changed. Some meetings are again taking place on Zoom.

Please check the church website for updates and guidance.

**TESTING** The Scottish Government recommend that before we mix with anyone outwith our own household we undertake a Lateral Flow Test. This may include visiting individuals or receiving a visit, attending a group or attending worship or a funeral. Everyone is encouraged to follow this guidance in relation to the life of the Church and community.

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## From the Minister

### Mission Districts



Dear Friends,

I had occasion to look back at the first article I wrote for the Kirk News. I wrote it at the very start of the coronavirus pandemic and I commented on the expression - 'the only constant in life is change!'

In commenting on it, I observed that 'change for many can be disturbing, unsettling and a cause of anxiety in itself. For others, it can be welcome, exciting and give a sense of opportunity and hope.'

We are presently in a curious situation. At the same time as many of us will feel there has been little change - we are still restricted in the numbers we can meet, we still have to wear masks at times, we are still concerned about the NHS's capability to cope etc, others will feel that everything has changed - we now have a vaccine and we have adapted to online worship and similar online activities.

January's online edition of Life & Work contains a prayer which focuses on the pandemic. However, many of the sentiments expressed could almost have been written for any time and any situation.

It begins:

***“We stand at that place, betwixt and between the old and the new.  
Looking back to a year now past, and forward to what is yet to be.  
But this is not a normal transition between old and new.”***

By the time you read this most of you, if not all, will be aware of the new Edinburgh Presbytery Plan Consultation Document. Whatever your own personal view of the proposed changes, there are a couple of key facts that everyone in the Church of Scotland has to face. Firstly, we have too many church buildings some of which are poorly maintained and others of which are in the wrong place to best deliver mission. Secondly, we have too few ministers with no prospect of sufficient additional ministers being 'recruited' to replace the existing ones that are retiring.

As a result of the Consultation Document, after all the discussions we have had over the last year as part of the 'West Forth Cluster', we now find ourselves in 'Mission District D – West'. This new grouping sees an increase in the number of Churches we are being asked to work alongside from 6 to 13.

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**From the Minister** continued

It has also resulted in one Church from our old cluster being moved into a new one. There are also a number of proposals surrounding the union of various Churches and the creation of new parishes. Some of these proposals appear obvious and fairly welcome, others are not so obvious and will require greater effort to envisage how they might work. This present consultation draft focuses on ministerial posts and does not yet address many of the issues relating to buildings.

The Life & Work prayer continues:

***“In all our uncertainty  
we come to you, Lord, for you are constant.  
In the midst of uncertainty your love is sure.  
In the darkness of disappointment you never fail.  
In heartbreak and anguish your loving arms enfold us.”***

One thing that is evident in the new plans is that mission is key. This is no bad thing. Even the change of title - to call each of the new areas in Edinburgh Presbytery a Mission District - is geared towards showing the importance of mission to the continuation of the Church. I have spoken previously about mission and, in particular, 'The Five Marks of Mission'. (See *Kirk News - October 2020 edition.*) I commented, in that article, in relation to the Five Marks of Mission, that *'one of the things that struck me was how well the Blackhall St Columba's Mission Statement "To Glorify God.... to proclaim Christ..... to serve others" dovetails with them.'*

As we work together with other churches in our new Mission District, we will continue to adhere to the Blackhall St Columba's Mission Statement. As we work with both the wider group and with those with whom we have been tasked with examining a closer union, this broad mission statement will serve all well, as will a closer look at the Five Marks of Mission.

Irrespective of what your feelings are about change, some sort of change is inevitable. I think it is worth remembering though that our feelings of uncertainty have been felt by those who have gone before us. Many who have shared our trepidation have captured their insights in scripture and they all point to one thing. The unchanging nature of God's love for us.

[The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.](#) (Lamentations 3:22-23)

[For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.](#) (Isaiah 54:10) / continued

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**From the Minister** continued

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, (Deuteronomy 7:9)

We have just passed through Christmas when we celebrated God incarnate, Emmanuel, God with us. God has been with us through the pandemic. He has been with us through our days of darkness and our days of light. As we move on in our lives, God has been, is now and always will be with us in our laughter and our tears, in our happiness and our sadness and in our times of certainty and uncertainty.

I conclude with the last verse from the Life & Work prayer:

***“Continue to walk with us through these dark days,  
assure us of your light which  
no darkness can ever overcome  
and of your love  
by which we are constantly surrounded.” Amen.***

God bless all,

Fergus

## **Cameo Club** (Come And Meet Each Other)

We are planning to welcome members back to our fortnightly meetings starting Friday 14 January.

We comply with both government and Church of Scotland advice and therefore will have to be flexible in response to guidelines and developments as we go along. It is advisable to have had your vaccinations. Masks will have to be worn until coffee-time.

You will be contacted, as usual, if you receive car uplifts from our volunteer drivers. Anyone new wishing to come along for friendship and refreshments will be very welcome. Please phone one of the numbers below to let us know you will be there. Meetings are from 10am - 12 noon in the large hall every second Friday.

This year we were not able to hold Christmas meal due to the pandemic. Our first meeting will be for tea/coffee/snacks and a chat only. There will be a quiz on 28 January. We hope to start a programme of entertainment in February.

Margaret Brown 332 5957

Fiona Drinnan 343 6762

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## Family News

### **New member admitted by Resolution of the Kirk Session:**

Miss Janet Elizabeth Baird

### **Deaths**

Jeanette Dunn

### **November**

Margaret Brunton

20 Isabella Massie (Blackhall & Aberdeen)

### **December**

11 James Alan Notman



### **Baptism**



Edith Violet, daughter of Charlotte and Jed Case, was baptised on Sunday  
12 December 2021

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## News from the Junior Singers

The Junior Singers, as this magazine is being compiled, will be enjoying a well-earned rest.

The Christmas season proved to be a busy but most enjoyable time for the children. First, they were invited to sing with Blackhall St Columba's Senior Choir at the Edinburgh Nativity Service in St Andrew's Square on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent then, one week later, were being filmed for a Virtual Carol Service organised by the Save the Children Foundation for supporters and volunteers of the charity. Various choirs were filmed singing carols and we were fortunate to be asked to take part.



Our season ended by singing during the church Gift Service on the 12 December and we are now on holiday till Thursday, 13 January '22 when we will again meet in the large hall from 3.45 – 4.30pm. The choir is open to any child in P3 – P7 who enjoys singing.

If anyone would like more information, please contact Amy Donaldson on 332 1354.

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## Kirk Session Report

The Kirk Session met on Tuesday 9 November 2021.

### **Communion Cards**

A decision has been taken to redesign our Invitation to Communion. A group of three has been charged with creating a new design for consideration at a future meeting.

### **Congregational Roll**

Miss Elizabeth Baird, Easter Park Drive, was admitted by Resolution of the Kirk Session.

### **Correspondence**

A letter was received from Fresh Start thanking the Congregation for our continuing support.

### **Elder Resignation**

It was noted that Bill Davidson had intimated his resignation as an active Elder for health reasons. The Clerk advised that he would write thanking Bill for his long and faithful service to the Congregation.

### **Outreach Committee**

Michael Cockburn, Convener, advised that a ceilidh was planned for March 2022.

### **Roles**

It was noted that Donald Stirling had taken on the role of Health and Safety Officer, taking over from Ruth Laidlaw who had been appointed as Hall Convener.

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## New Presbytery Plan

In earlier editions of Kirk News I have endeavoured to keep members posted regarding progress with the new Presbytery Plan which will basically propose how the number of ministerial posts across the Presbytery of Edinburgh will drop from 78 to 48 within 5 years. This is in line with a decision taken by The General Assembly.

The consultative document has now been made available to Kirk Sessions. This is subject to discussion and the approved document will go forward to Church of Scotland Committees at 121 George Street as the draft Presbytery Plan. / continued



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**Kirk Session Report** continued

This is a voluminous document and in summary, insofar as Blackhall St Columba's is concerned:-

- We would sit in the Mission District D – West that encompasses the Corstorphine churches, Murrayfield, Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse, Palmerston Place, Cramond, Davidson's Mains, Old Kirk Muirhouse, Drylaw, St Stephen's Comely Bank and ourselves.
- It is proposed that Davidson's Mains, St Stephen's Comely Bank and ourselves will enter into a Union to be served by two Ministers. Consequently if agreed there would be one entity encompassing the three congregations and in due course it would be decided which of the two Ministers would be the Moderator of the single Kirk Session. The two Ministers would be of equal status. It follows that there would be one Session Clerk and one Treasurer unless, of course, there is a decision taken by the Kirk Session to go for a different management structure.

There is a special meeting of The Presbytery of Edinburgh in January solely to discuss the consultative document. Prior to that the Kirk Session will be meeting twice to discuss our position and formulate any comments and questions we wish to raise at the special meeting.

Eddie Thorn  
Session Clerk

## Thank You

My father sadly passed away on 20 October in Newton Stewart. I would thank everyone most sincerely for the notes of condolence and flowers received from members of the Congregation. These were all greatly appreciated.

Eddie Thorn

## Church of Scotland announces Principal Clerk appointment

Published on 20 December 2021

The Church of Scotland has announced the selection of Rev Fiona Smith as the next Principal Clerk to the General Assembly.

The appointment will have to be confirmed by the General Assembly in May.

The current Principal Clerk Rev Dr George Whyte retires from the role following the General Assembly in May 2022.

Rev Fiona Smith as Principal Clerk designate will spend a period of time shadowing him prior to formal appointment.

Mrs Smith said: "It is a huge privilege to accept the appointment to become the next Principal Clerk but it was extremely hard telling my congregation yesterday.

"God called me to be the minister of Ness Bank Church in Inverness 12 years ago and it is God's call that is now leading me to new pastures."

Fiona has served in senior roles on a number of the Church's national committees.

She is currently Vice-Convener of the Registration of Ministries Committee, and has previously served as Convener of Assembly Business Committee and its predecessor the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

The [role of the Principal Clerk](#) is to act as the Clerk to the General Assembly, which includes advising the Assembly and the Moderator on church law, practice and procedure.

The Principal Clerk also supports the Moderator throughout the year as well as providing training courses and advice on church law and procedures to Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, ministers and other church bodies.

In these times of change, challenge, reform and restructuring, the Principal Clerk has a key leadership role in supporting and enabling the traditional and emerging practices of the Church of Scotland within our framework of governance and law.



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## Blue Christmas Service

A Blue Christmas service was held in the afternoon of Sunday 12 December. This special service offered a time of reflection, and quiet companionship, for anyone who might have mixed feelings about the upcoming festive season due to the loss of a loved one.

There was an opportunity to write the name of a loved one on a heart to be hung on the Blue Christmas tree and a further opportunity to share coffee/tea and a chat after the service.



## Tribute to Bruce Cannon 1932 - 2021

It was with sadness that we heard of the death of Bruce Cannon, a former stalwart member of Blackhall St Columba's Church until retirement took Bruce and his wife Karen to Perthshire in 1995.

Growing up in Blackhall, Bruce was educated at Blackhall Primary School and the Royal High School and is remembered as an enthusiastic member of the Church Youth Fellowship and a much respected Church Elder.

His strong Christian faith and a keen interest in news led him from copy boy with the Edinburgh Evening News in 1949 to the Church of Scotland at 121 George Street in 1965 where he was tasked with setting up its Press and Publicity Department. In 1974 he became Director of Communications at the Church of Scotland, a role which included responsibility for the 121 Church Bookshop, Life and Work magazine and media coverage of the events and debates of the General Assembly. Somewhere in this busy life Bruce also found time to contribute articles to our Blackhall Bulletin.

His interest in news and current affairs continued after retirement when, living in Perthshire and in Falkirk, both Bruce and Karen became active and enthusiastic members of u3a.

Sadly, Bruce died in hospital on 11 November 2021. Our thoughts are with his wife, Karen, sons David, John and Andrew, four grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.

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## The 'Buon Appetito Club'

### Calling all ladies!

Whether you are a relatively new member of our church or have been at Blackhall St.Columba's for years, it is always good to gather over delicious food for a time of fellowship with friends old or new and to get to know each other better.

There is a Curry Club within Blackhall St.Columba's for the men amongst us and, therefore, it seems only fair that there should be something for the ladies.

Hence, the recently formed "Buon Appetito" Club which will meet every two months on the last Friday of the month. We will mainly enjoy the delicacies of Italy but, twice a year, we may play a wild card and try another culture's cuisine.

Our first outing to Vittoria on the Bridge was highly successful. The next outing is to Giuliano's (opposite The Playhouse) on Friday 25 February 2022. If you are interested in coming along, please contact Shona Cook by email (shonacook505@gmail.com) or mobile (07981 970054) by 11 February.

We will be limited to twenty ladies and we will operate on a first come first served basis. So, don't delay. Get in touch and secure your place.

For details of future outings, please check 'Events' on the church website.

Thanks,

Shona

## Tuesday Topics

We would love to say that we will resume our meetings on 11 January as planned but as the Covid situation has changed again we cannot say for sure that this will be possible.

We will confirm our plans as soon as possible and will inform all members.

Meanwhile we hope you all keep in good health and have a lovely Christmas.

Very best wishes for 2022.

Eleanor Lowrie, President  
Jacky Cowie, Secretary



**Dessert Island Discs**  
**Saturday 26 February 2022**  
**at 7pm**

**After our very successful, inaugural “rescue” of one of our own from a deserted island in 2021, we are planning another mission! Please join us in the sanctuary on Saturday 26 February at 7pm to find out who got themselves stranded this time and what music they chose to enjoy in their solitude. We will finish off the evening with delicious, homemade desserts and a time of fellowship. Put the date in your diary now, and join us for a fun evening.**



**Shona**



The members of the Blackhall Bookclub enjoyed a pre-Christmas evening at Howie's.



## We will remember them

Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Congregation, the City of Edinburgh Council, the Monte Cassino Society and the Scouting organisations.

Memorial Garden



Cross fall and wreath of poppies made by the Knit and Natter Group



Pulpit fall made by Alison Hewat and Lyndy Paton

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## Christmas Wreath-making Workshop

On Saturday 4 December a group of 10 ladies spent a few hours getting festively creative in the Small Hall with Fay Stirling. The morning was spent creating Christmas wreaths for their front doors. Starting with copper hoops, covering them with moss, then adding foliage, cones, baubles and other Christmassy bits and pieces, the results were fantastic.

After a soup and sandwich lunch, Alison Hewat took over and walked the group through the creation of beautiful table decorations. It was amazing, with the access to the same materials, how diverse the results were. All were beautiful.

A mince pie and a cuppa rounded off what was a lovely day of fellowship and creativity. Demand for a repeat next year is already building!

Here are the ladies with their wreaths.



Many thanks to Fay and Alison for a very enjoyable day and to supporting cast, Lyndy Paton and Donald Stirling.

# Christmas Tree Festival

We had a wonderful display of trees at the Christmas Tree Festival which were decorated on the theme “**Reduce, reuse and recycle**”.

The creativity and imagination shown was extremely impressive and all the decorations were beautiful.

The winners (chosen by our visitors) were “Knit and Natter” and the “Rainbows and Rangers” in the Junior category. Congratulations to both groups.

Our thanks go to the Guides who arranged for the trees to be donated to families who might otherwise have been without a tree this Christmas.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event such a success, raising around £1,000.

Ruth Laidlaw and Fay Stirling

Above: Blackhall and District  
Rangers and Rainbows

Below: Knit and Natter  
More photos on the ‘Our  
Church’ page of the Church  
website





## Music @ St Columba's with St David's Brass Band



The St David's Brass Band, conducted by Musical Director, John Dickson, (photo inset), set the festive mood with a most enjoyable programme of Christmas music on Sunday 5 December.  
Thank you to them all.

## Nativity Carol Concert at St Andrew's Square

Members of Blackhall St Columba's Choir and the Junior Singers along with Donald Cameron and a Salvation Army Band, led the musical elements of of Edinburgh's Nativity Carol Concert held in St Andrew Square on Sunday 28 November. Other BStC regulars turned out to enjoy the celebration, raising money for Freshstart and the Bethany Christian Trust.  
Well done to all involved.





More hard work in the church garden:



tidying up for the winter,  
and planting more bulbs.

Well done to the team.



We look forward to a colourful display in Springtime.





When I am afraid  
I will **trust** you,  
I praise God for  
His word,  
I **trust** God, so  
I am **not** afraid.

*Psalm 56:3-4*



But I **trust**  
in you,  
O Lord;  
I say,  
**"You are  
my God."**

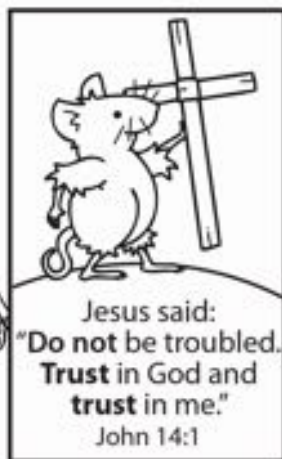
*Psalm 31:14*



*The Lord is good,  
a refuge in times  
of trouble.  
He cares for those  
who **trust** in Him.*

*Nahum 1:7*

"May the God of hope fill you  
with joy and peace as you  
**trust** in Him." *Romans 3:13*



Jesus said:  
**"Do not be troubled.  
Trust in God and  
trust in me."**

*John 14:1*

**Trust** in the Lord with  
all your heart and  
lean not on your own  
understanding.  
In all your ways **submit**  
to Him and He will make  
your paths straight.

*Proverbs 3:5-6*



Cut out and colour these cards to  
help you to **thank** and **praise** God.



BLACKHALL  
ST. COLUMBA'S  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Keep up with news of  
the Blackhall St Columba's Church community,

In-Church services  
our Live Stream Services  
the various Zoom meetings

Coronavirus updates  
and 'live' events

by regularly checking  
our website

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

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## DEADLINES

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**Kirk News - Sunday**  
**17 January 2022**

Please send all items to the Editor:  
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**Blackhall Bulletin - Sunday**  
**30 January 2022**

All items, including advertising  
enquiries, should be sent to the  
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