

the Saint
Andrew



As we prepare for Christmas, we cannot forget that Sri Lankans have been through tough chapters this year, the most vivid being the Easter bombings which impacted churches in particular and the nation in general. Spreading love among each other is a fundamental Christmas tenet and our cover photograph taken by Shewantha Rodrigo, of mutual love between a soldier guarding St. Andrew's during Sunday service and a happy stray dog, narrates that Jesus came to earth to teach us to give love as generously as we receive it.

John 15:12: *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."*

Church of Scotland – Presbyterian

For private circulation only



SAINT
ANDREW'S
SCOTS KIRK
COLOMBO SRI LANKA



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Letter from the Minister



Dear friends at St Andrew's Scots Kirk (SASK)

As many - but perhaps not all - of you know, since the arrival of Revd Ian Gilmour as your new Locum Minister, the additional responsibility of being Interim Moderator of SASK has been passed on to him. And so, I have come to the end of my term in that capacity.

It has been a special pleasure and privilege to have served as your Interim Moderator over the past few years, since Revd Stewart Lamont left Colombo. But I leave you in Ian's good and experienced hands to guide the Kirk Session, the Nominating Committee and the congregation through the continuing process of trying to find a new long-term Minister.

This does mean that I won't have the need or opportunity to visit Colombo again soon, but I look forward to the day when I do come back, in my capacity as Presbytery Clerk, on the occasion of the Induction of your next Minister. God willing, that will not be too long from now - although there is a lengthy process to be followed.

I wish God's rich blessings on all of you.

In His Name,
Revd Jim Sharp

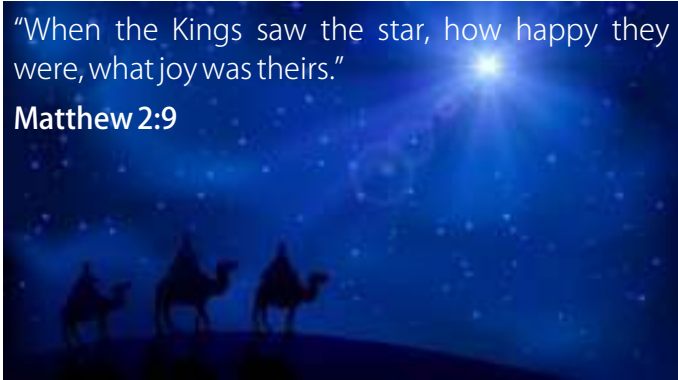


Christmas Letter

Wishing you real Joy at Christmas and for all Sri Lankans, a peaceful 2020.

"When the Kings saw the star, how happy they were, what joy was theirs."

Matthew 2:9



Church people in the UK are very supportive of Sri Lankans at this time. They are praying for all of us who live here and are hoping for a calm and happy Christmas after the tragedy of Easter. One of my friends, Mary Moriarty from Leith, sent me a newsletter which she had discovered. It is a Christmas letter written from Kollupitiya Road (close to our church) in December 1947. I don't need to remind you that that was a period pregnant with possibilities as Ceylon was moving towards independence (February 1948). It was written by the then Methodist minister, Revd Dennis Lansdown. What would someone in his position be praying for in 1947? Let me share some of his thoughts,

*"What a year! It has been full of incident in public and Christian life. Some of the "incidents" have been grave and some have been more gay... I believe that some have learnt more about politics and our place in them as Christians. If ever our land needed Christians in politics it is now. Those of us who are older must study and appreciate modern developments and discard prejudice founded in systems that are (happily) being replaced. Idealistic exuberance must be tempered with **practical** experience but let us get the practical experience by applying our **Christian** experience to everyday affairs."*

He then thanks the men and women of the services who shared fellowship in the Ceylon churches during the World War II, then turns to his experience of church in Ceylon and certainly doesn't hold back,

*"We have progressed in church life but the marks of personal neglect, irresponsibility and Pharisaism are still upon us." **Quite a Christmas letter!***



Personally, I am certainly looking forwards to the unalloyed joy of leading worship at St Andrew's Scots Kirk through Advent and Christmas. I hope you will come to church, bringing family and friends. We will have some pleasant surprises in store. It is good to report that we have run out of Orders of Service at some services recently and will have a baptism and several weddings over the next few weeks. If you have a favourite carol please tell me and we will try to sing it during this joyous spell of worship.

My closing thought is from Luke's gospel which we have been studying in the worldwide church for most of 2019. I hope your experience of Christmas will be a delight. May you be as full of joy as the shepherds after that first Christmas Day.

"The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it was just as the angel had told them." Luke 2:20.

Enjoy,

Ian Y. Gilmour

Locum Minister



Report from the International Presbytery

The Church of Scotland International Presbytery – Ordinary Meeting

11th to 13th October – Auditoire de Calvin, Geneva



Geneva is the second most populous city in Switzerland and hosts the highest number of international organisations in the world. It is also the seventh most expensive city in the world, with a bottle of water in most restaurants costing around EUR 4 to 5. Nearly half the population of Geneva consists of resident foreign nationals and less than half the population of Geneva follow Christianity.



Meetings were held in the Calvin Auditorium, a chapel, which played a significant role in the Protestant Reformation. From 1536, the time of Geneva's Reformation, it became a lecture hall where Calvin expounded his reformed ideology. It became a haven for Protestant refugees from Europe, including the Scottish reformer John Knox who ministered to an English speaking refugee congregation and developed many of the ideas that were to be influential in the Scottish Reformation.



Nearly 70 attended the meetings, which included Presbytery, Business, Education & Training, Superintendence, Appraisal, Mission, Finance & Fabric Committee meetings. Shewantha Rodrigo attended the Fabric Committee meeting where development plans for St Andrew's Scots Kirk Colombo were presented and discussed, while Chandan de Silva was the convenor of the Finance Committee. All the Committee Reports were summarised, discussed and presented.

The Ministers attending included Revd. Lance Stone from Amsterdam/Brussels, Alistair Bennett from Bermuda, from Budapest/Trinidad came Revd. Aaron Stevens, Rotterdam/Costa del Sol had Revd. Derek Lawson, Geneva was represented by Revd. Laurence Twaddle, Gibraltar by Revd. Ewen Maclean, Lausanne by Revd. Gillean Maclean, Lisbon by Revd. Norman Hutcheson, Malta by Revd. Jimmy Brown, Paris by Revd. Jan Steyn and Rome by Revd. Peter McEnhill.



Report from the International Presbytery (cont...)



Congregation Elders present: Amsterdam - Baafi Sekyere, Bermuda - Doug Frith, Brussels - Rhoda Grant, Budapest-Eva Boros, Colombo - Shewantha Rodrigo, Costa del Sol - Lillas Macfarlane, Geneva-Laurent Djamen, Gibraltar - Jeremy Gomez, Lausanne-Cynthia Gunn, Lisbon - Nina O'Donnell, Malta-Christa Wiegand, Paris - Velerie Prieur, Rome-Gloria Cobbold, Rotterdam-Ruud Witze, Trinidad-Margaret Ng-See-Quan.

Equalising Elders present were Chandan de Silva, Alec Grant, David Lloyd, Scott MacSween, John McGhie, Bill Smith and Alice Tulloch.

Meetings for the next year (2020) will take place from 6th to 8th March in Gibraltar and 9th to 11th October in Budapest.

On Friday, committee meetings were followed by the first session of Presbytery. On Saturday, a Communion Service was held in the Calvin Auditorium after which a second session of Presbytery was held. The meetings ended with a well attended Sunday Worship Service which included a Christening in the Calvin Auditorium followed by lunch.

-Shewantha Rodrigo

Summary of International Presbytery (IP) Finance decisions

M&R

The recently introduced M&R contributions, which some thought would bankrupt many of the smaller IP congregations, has reached a state where there is light at the end of the tunnel. Agreement of the Deputy Treasurer of the Church of Scotland was secured to allow the IP to redistribute the Presbytery's total M&R contribution among its congregations in a manner which left each congregation with sufficient income to cover its ministry cost.



Report from the International Presbytery (cont...)



The situation currently is that the larger congregations pay nothing or very little – due to their high ministry costs – and the smaller congregations bear a heavy load.

At the Geneva meeting held in October, the Presbytery agreed to adopt the proposed redistribution principles and methodology with effect from 2020.

IP dues

Each congregation pays a Presbytery due – a membership fee – to the International Presbytery each year. These dues are set according to bands of income and the level of dues is reviewed every three years by the FC- Finance Committee.

As the income of congregations had not changed much since the last review, the FC decided to leave the dues at their current level for the years 2020-23.

Salvesen grants

These are grants provided from a gift left by a wealthy Scotsman to the Church of Scotland, to be used for the provision of religious ordinances to Scots living abroad (ie. outside the UK). Each year,

the FC has the responsibility of reviewing and approving the grant application made by the IP congregations. A set of trustees in the UK make the final determination and in 2018 they granted approximately 50% of the total amount applied for.

Ministry and Locum costs

The FC sets the initial ministry cost for each congregation and it is based on the UK stipend of the minister. This cost is then adjusted to take account of tax differentials as well as the cost of living index of the city the minister has moved to. The latter adjustment seeks to equate the buying power (of a basket of goods and services) of each minister's stipend. The local congregation is allowed to increment the initial stipend by a local inflation factor each year, and it was agreed at the Geneva meeting that stipends would be reviewed by the FC every three years. The FC also agreed to allow congregations to adjust Locum fees by the same cost of living adjustment.

In the decisions made at the Geneva meeting, the FC intentionally moved to standardise practices across the IP.

-Chandan de Silva, Finance Convenor of the International Presbytery

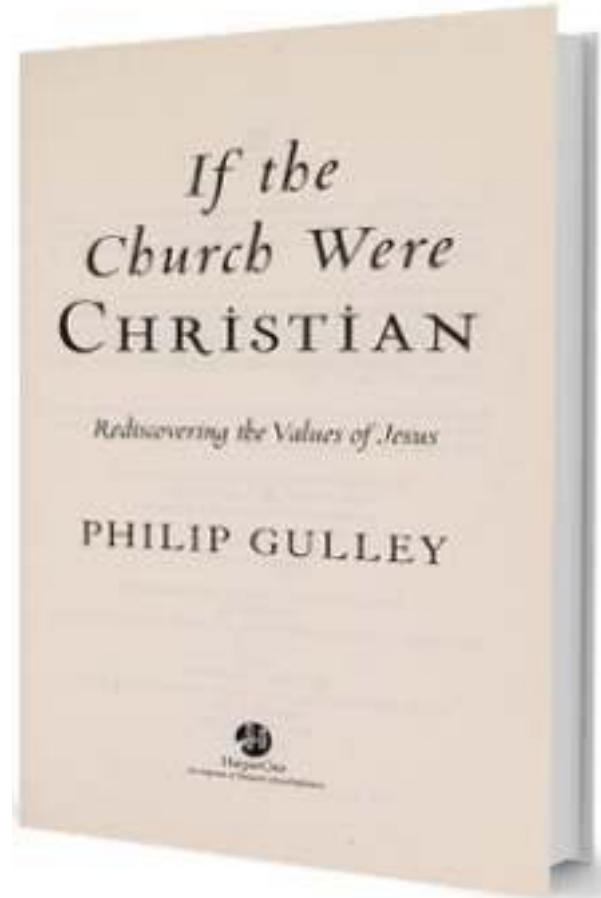


If the Church Were Christian

A well summarised extract of Quaker Pastor Phillip Gulley's book
by Fr. Richard Rohr



Fr. Richard Rohr



How must we rebuild our spirituality from the bottom up?

Here I take the liberty of using my own words to restate his message, which offers a rather excellent description of what is emerging in Christianity today:

Jesus is a model for living more than an object of worship.

Affirming people's potential is more important than reminding them of their brokenness.

The work of reconciliation should be valued over making judgments.

Gracious behaviour is more important than right belief.

Inviting questions is more valuable than supplying answers.

Encouraging the personal search is more important than group uniformity.

Meeting actual needs is more important than maintaining institutions.

Peacemaking is more important than power.

We should care more about love and less about sex.

Life in this world is more important than the afterlife (eternity is God's work anyway).



How 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens came to be



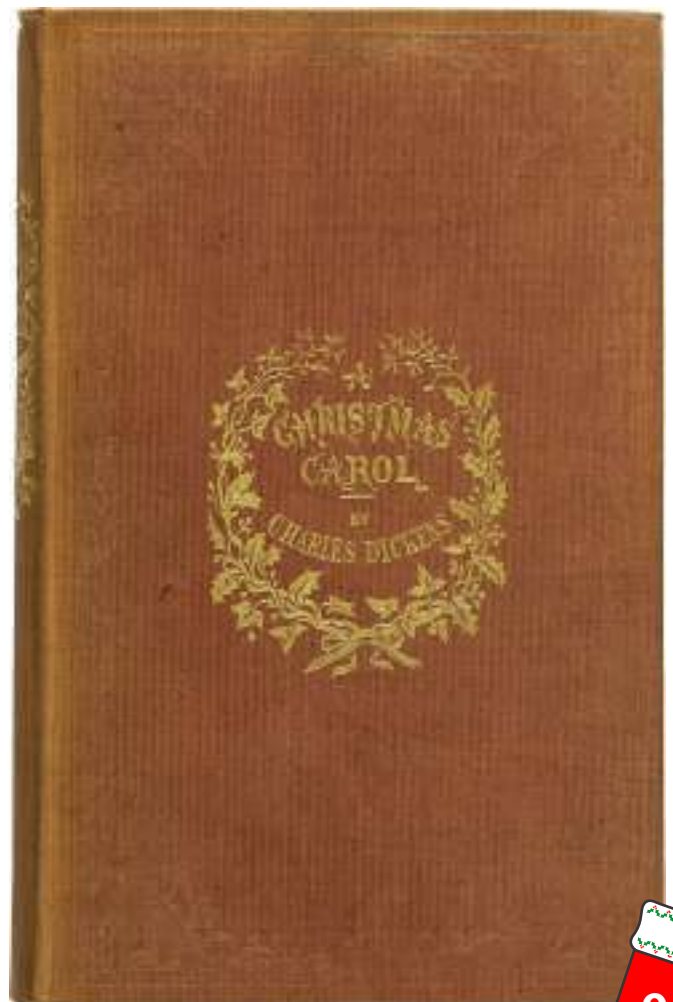
In May 1843, Douglas Jerrold invited a host of wealthy men to a fundraising dinner in aid of the Charterhouse Square Infirmary, which looked after elderly impoverished men. Among the invitees was author Charles Dickens. On seeing the company for the evening, Dickens wrote a contemptuous letter to his friend describing his selection of invitees as, "sleek, slobbering, bow-paunched, overfed, apoplectic snorting cattle."

Dickens, though being wealthy, had a genuine desire to make changes in society. In the same year, he was stricken when he heard about Britain's child labourers and intended to write a pamphlet under his name titled, 'An appeal to the people of England – on behalf of the poor man's child.' However, he figured a pamphlet would have little impact; his idea was to write something that would strike "a sledgehammer blow" on behalf of poor children which would have "twenty thousand times the force" of a pamphlet.

He travelled to Manchester to address donors who had gathered in support of the Athenaeum, an educational charity for working men and women. He stayed with his sister Fanny Burnett who had two sons, one of who, Harry was disabled. Charles saw firsthand the realities faced by impoverished disabled children. Harry Burnett was the seed upon which the Christmas Carol was germinated, the real life Tiny Tim who unlike his fictional counterpart,

didn't survive, despite Charles' valiant efforts to get the best medical treatment for the boy.

Walking around the post-industrial revolution Manchester, Dickens was also horrified to see



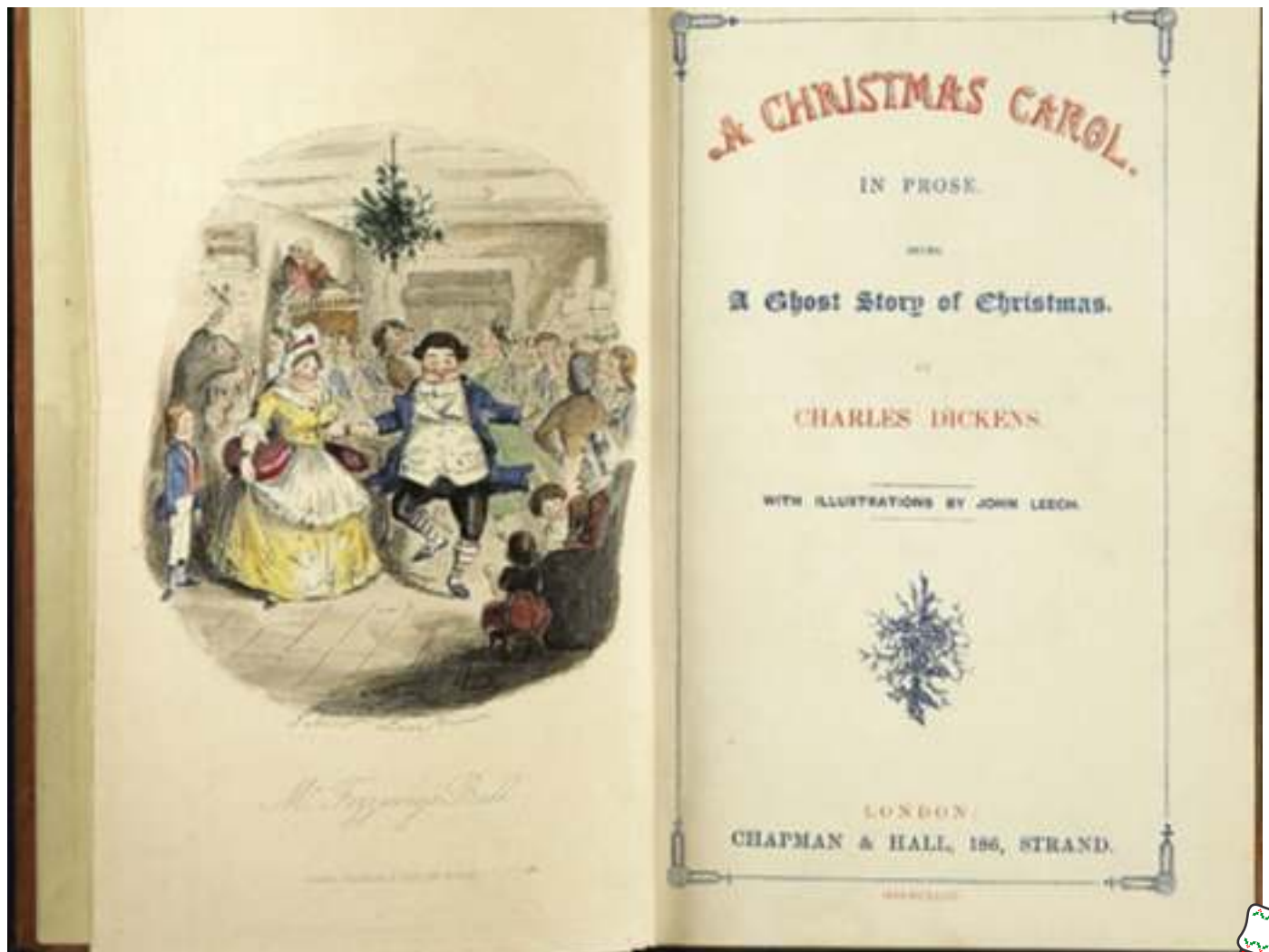
How 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens came to be (cont...)

starving homeless families. His words at the Athenaeum therefore were fuelled with fury, railing against the upper class of wealthy men who never shared their wealth with their disadvantaged brethren. When Charles returned to London, he knew what he had to write.

Six weeks and the novella was complete. His publishers Chapman and Hall however were very unsupportive of this particular work and an angry Dickens decided to fund the project himself. Needless to say, his finances plummeted.

A Christmas Carol was an unmitigated hit, just in time to catch a Christmas renaissance with a plot that showed how Christmas had lost its sole purpose - charitable giving. Six thousand copies flew off the shelves and a reprint was in order. The book has since then, never been out of print.

Dickens was 31 when he wrote A Christmas Carol.



The story behind the hymn - Hark! The Heralds Angels Sing



This is surely an all-time classic and has been performed by numerous artistes over centuries. But it was in 1739, that prolific hymn writer Charles Wesley decided to pen the words. Charles wrote more than 8,000 hymns in his lifetime, each painstakingly by hand, in an era when there were no typewriters or computers.

As with most of Charles' hymns which gained popularity long after it was written, he had no idea how much fame this hymn would gather. It was first named, "Hark, how all the welkin ring." (Welkin is the archaic English term for heavens), a hymn for Christmas day. However, to make it more current, when George Whitefield published it in 1754 in a Collection of Hymns for Social Worship, he changed the first line to, "Hark! The heralds angels sing,".

While the lyrics remained the same, the tune varied considerably remaining with Charles' preferred slow and solemn hue. It was in 1856 that William Cummings decided to combine a Felix

Mendelssohn cantata composed for the Gutenberg Festival in 1840. This composition, "Vaterland, in deinen Gauen" was in celebration of Johann Gutenberg's invention of movable type printing. The irony of this combining was that Mendelssohn never meant the tune to be associated with sacred words, but with the music and lyrics seemingly made for each other, the hymn took on new tones of celebration.

The hymn itself is a study in theology, mentioning the names and titles Jesus is known by: King, Lord, Prince of Peace, Sun of Righteousness, Everlasting Lord, Desire of Nations, Incarnate Deity, and Emmanuel. Once we have praised "the new born King" in the first verse, the next verses celebrate the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the resurrection of the boy and the new birth.

Charles' brother John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, first included this hymn in his collection of Hymns and Sacred Poems in 1739.



Charles Wesley



William Cummings



Revd. George Whitefield



The story behind the hymn - Hark! The Heralds Angels Sing (cont...)



Hark the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled"
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ by highest heav'n adored
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"



The long and winding road to Haputale

Kumar, our helpful church officer and I were invited to attend the 150th Anniversary service at St Andrew's Church, Haputale. The building is still owned by the Church of Scotland, although in practical terms there has not been an active congregation for some years. However it is worth visiting. It is a lovely small church in a beautiful valley sitting on a stunning hilltop. It sits within a town which sits higher than Ben Nevis.



It is no surprise, when you visit that a former minister Revd Andrew Baillie chose to have his ashes buried here. Alongside his resting place is the grave of one of the most respected poets who wrote about Sri Lanka in English. This is the Rev W S Senior (10 May 1876 – 23 February 1938) whose poems are still read. Born in England, he devoted himself to church and education (becoming Principal of Trinity College in Kandy). Here is a stanza from his 'Call of Lanka':

“But most shall he sing of Lanka
In the bright new days that come.
When the races all have blended
And the voice of strife is dumb
When we leap to a single bugle,
March to a single drum.”

The long and winding road to Haputale (cont...)



The service of worship at St Andrew's was trilingual and led by Bishop of Colombo Dhiloraj Canagasabey.

It was a major community event and needless to say, it stopped the traffic with the school's marching band leading the colourful procession, a dance group welcoming us to the location and about 200 participating in the celebrations.

The Church of Scotland still owns the building but it is used for worship and education by the Anglican church and St.Thomas' School.

I was asked to speak and to help serve communion. It was a well attended service with everyone invited to lunch afterwards. Samson Francis, son of the late faithful Sexton Kandiah Francis, made Kumar and I very welcome, requesting us to visit again.

If may be a five hour journey on a long and winding road, yet it is certainly worth the effort as both the view and welcome was exceptional. It would be good to take a small group from St Andrew's Scots Kirk for a retreat there in the Spring of 2020.



THROUGH THE LENS – MISSION PROJECTS & EVENTS AT SASK



The Day the Presbytery of Lanka came to the Manse...

The Presbytery of Lanka is made up of a series of congregations which have Presbyterian affiliations. Hence, Korean, Church of Scotland and Living Christ congregations to name but three are all partners within this presbytery. Meeting twice each year, SASK was asked at short notice to host, but with a wedding already booked in the church, accommodated the seventeen presbyters in the manse. Thanks are extended to Kumar and the team for preparing for the meeting and Shalini for organising a grand lunch.

The meeting consisted of three parts. Revd. Ian Gilmour leading worship and a Bible study on the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). Good Presbyterian traditions were followed with tea, coffee and biscuits. We then continued by reflecting on the contribution of World War II martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Finally in this segment we considered the lively issues in the life of Sri Lanka at this particular time.

The trustees group met immediately after lunch, followed by the presbytery joining in a business session until 4.30 pm. There was a lively discussion on the content of the controversial Christian teaching by Kirby de Lanerolle in Sri Lanka. One of the bigger decisions from the perspective of SASK is that we were chosen to host the Presbyterian Convention in early March which promises to be a large and exciting event. Every congregation contributed an update, the accounts were presented and the moderator, Revd. Saman Perera closed the meeting with an excellent moderator's report.

The manse coped with the presbytery and the presbytery enjoyed the manse, no doubt they may encounter each other again!

Things are happening in 2020 at St Andrew's

A New Course

An Introduction to Worship and Prayer – led by Rev Ian Gilmour, begins on Wednesday 8 January at 6pm at the manse.

Some worship highlights:

Sunday 26 January 2020 –
Revd David Denniston, former convenor of Assembly Council will help us to understand the need for radical change in the Church of Scotland as proposals will reach the General Assembly in May 2020.

Saturday 1 February 2020 –
Revd Iain Goring, who has considerable experience in this field will offer a workshop to help us to better understand conflict, in our lives and in the life of our congregation. Early booking required. Please contact Chandan de Silva.

Sunday 2 February 2020 –
Dr Russell Barr, a former moderator will preach, with Dr Jane Denniston, leading our Communion service.



We will be marking the seasons of Lent and Easter in our Sunday worship with family services at the end of each month and Communion on the first Sunday of each month.

All are welcome.



THROUGH THE LENS (cont...)



Remembrance Day in Colombo

Remembrance Day was commemorated in Sri Lanka by several members of St Andrew's Scots Kirk at the site of the Commonwealth War Graves. Wreaths were laid at the memorial by the diplomatic missions of Germany, Japan, Canada, Australia and Great Britain as well as Sri Lanka.



Nomination Committee

The Nomination Committee have been meeting regularly and are now ready to publish an advert to encourage Ministers who are interested in our Church in Colombo and all its activities, to apply for further details. We would appreciate your help to spread the word to all those Ministers looking for a change.



Baptism

Aron Alexander de Silva was baptised on a Sunday morning, supported by his brother Adam and parents Supun and Nicole.



 SAINT ANDREW'S SCOTS KIRK
COLOMBO SRI LANKA

Unrestricted Call

We are an inclusive Presbyterian Christian congregation, faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We look forward to welcoming, working with and supporting a new Minister who is:

- A preacher who will challenge and inspire us, deepening our Christian understanding and faith.
- A leader, able to recognize, encourage and coordinate our individual gifts.
- Supportive of our partnerships locally, nationally and internationally.
- Culturally sensitive and who will oversee our pastoral care.

For the information pack please contact the Interim Moderator

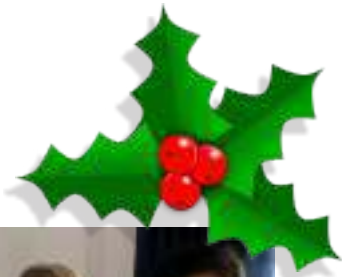
Rev Ian Y Gilmour • St Andrew's Scots Kirk Manse
73 Galle Road • Colombo 00300 • Sri Lanka
Email IYGilmour@churchofscotland.org.uk
Mobile +94 764837779

Our profile is available at www.scotskirk.lk

Early applications welcome for ministry commencing June 2020

THROUGH THE LENS (cont...)

The Lunch Project



A church in need of a pillar or two!

Serving lunches on a Thursday has become a very healthy pattern. It is really healthy for a church to reveal its generous nature by serving food to those who are hungry. Jesus specifically commends this in Matthew Chapter 25. We are busy every week and it is surprising if any food is left over. The number of people receiving lunch is moving up from 130 to 140 and now 150 to 170. We are recruiting new helpers but sometimes the serving team is stretched by the demands. We have two huge pots of rice then normally four tasty complementary dishes.

We would be pleased to have your help if you are able and the best person to connect with is Savithri Rodrigo. The servers are more stretched as two stalwarts are leaving. Anna Brochard, one of our elders, is having a spell out of Sri Lanka, while Maureen Gennard is moving to the UK on a permanent basis to join her husband Glyn. They will be sorely missed.

Maureen was once interviewed for this newsletter concerning her motivation and she said she needed 3 things in her life - God, Money and Wisdom,

“Without God you do not have anything else, you cannot do what you need to do. I include, money so that I have money to give to the poor people. Wisdom because it is much more important than knowledge.”

In Scotland, we say women like Maureen and Anna are 'pillars' of the kirk. Clearly if you take away too many pillars the kirk falls down, but if you add new pillars you strengthen the whole edifice. Help us recruit more pillars like Anna and Maureen and our kirk will continue to flourish and be able to serve the hungry, whatever their background or creed.

Lunch for the needy is served every Thursday from 12.15 pm to 12.45 pm in the church hall.



THROUGH THE LENS (cont...)



Netherlee Cottage

The Ladies were very busy with work for the Bazaar and Shona, one of our volunteers spent a week helping them with the task. Crochet, sewing bags and sachets of lavender, rugs, cards and gift bags were all on the agenda.



The cottage is again working with its full complement of residents. The latest addition to the family is Ashoka who has joined us from the hospital, for training. Unfortunately, Viola is missing from the team photograph as she injured her head whilst at work and was kept in hospital having been given some stitches.



However, when she did return home, we had to celebrate her welcome home with a photograph.



We have identified Ganga and Viola as two residents who can now move on to independent living. But the process is delayed due to the next stage of their rehabilitation being at the community house and the hospital has not yet identified a new location for this house. The previous one is now being used by the owner of the property.

THROUGH THE LENS (cont...)



The Helping Hands Mission Project

While distributing a stipend monthly to needy families, the project also attends to other issues faced by these families. Here are two recent stories that show what an act of kindness can do.

We presented Rs 8,000 to Pathmalatha Gamage to obtain keys for a government flat, which is the charge for the flat to be given over. This is a sum the family did not have. We were present when the keys to her new home were received. Their joy cannot be put into words.



Pushpawathi requested dry rations to support her family. The heavy rains flooded their one room rented home and forced them to move into a relative's, who did not have the wherewithal to feed them. Pushpawathi is almost blind and her husband has tuberculosis. Until two months ago, Pushpawathi was assisted by her son. However, his leg was amputated due to diabetes. We will be assisting Pushpawathi for the next two months with dry rations and hope to provide a prosthetic leg to her son who will then continue assisting his mother.

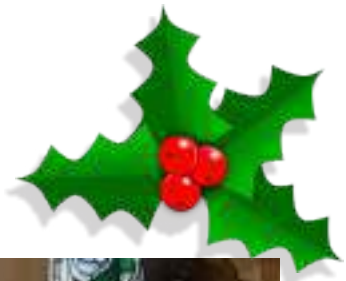
Our role in this mission project is to give love, companionship, attention and financial assistance to the disadvantaged. This is possible, because you, the congregation respond to their needs and our friends abroad including the Livingston Church in Scotland continue to remember the Helping Hands project at Scots Kirk, Colombo. The Livingston Church recently gifted £510 in support of our work.



THROUGH THE LENS (cont...)

Sundays at St. Andrew's

Making it a morning of togetherness



THROUGH THE LENS (cont...)

Sundays at St. Andrew's

Revd. Ian and Donna Gilmour's family visited



Salome shows some great handiwork done by the Sunday School



A cup of tea and a chat after Sunday service



St. Andrew's Christmas Bazaar

The Sunday School Bake Sale



St. Andrew's Christmas Bazaar (cont...)

The Car Wash by the Youth Group and Sunday School



St. Andrew's Christmas Bazaar (cont...)

The Bazaar on Saturday November 23rd



St. Andrew's Christmas Bazaar (cont...)

The Bazaar on Saturday November 23rd



Family time at Christmas

Here's a glimpse of how five families within our congregation celebrate Christmas



Annika, Gehan and Arian Fernando

On the first of December, the Fernando's are already in festive spirits. The tree is being decorated, carols are heard around the home and the nativity scene is put together. On Gehan's insistence, Annika places the star on the top of the tree, a family tradition he follows from his childhood when his mum always placed the star atop the tree. Arian's wishlist has been on the fridge for all to take note of. The German tradition of the advent calendar is also in play, so a chocolate a day leads upto Christmas and on Christmas Eve, cookies, milk and reindeer treats are left at the tree prior to reading 'Twas the night before Christmas'.



Gehan models his Christmas socks with some pizzazz

With Annika being on the International Christmas Charity Bazaar committee, the spirit of giving is strong in the home, a habit extended to the St. Andrew's charity bazaar as well. Volunteering at various charity events therefore comes naturally.

Their favourite day of the year is Christmas day – it's a day when everyone becomes a child once more. On Christmas morn, the entire family runs to the tree, shares gifts and heads for Christmas service. Thereafter, it's directly to Annika's mum's for lunch. A visit to the cemetery to remember family passed happens during the day, while evenings are with Gehan's family home where fireworks complete the celebrations.



Arian's treats (and a note) for Santa and his reindeer



Family time at Christmas (cont...)

Andrew, Liz, Katelyn and Lia Davnie-Easton

Christmas preparations in the Davnie-Easton home begins by decorating the tree and setting up a nativity scene made by Liz's grandfather. When growing up, Liz's family tree was not put up until mid-December but given the family's extensive travel involved, it is travel plans that determine that tradition now. But whichever day the tree goes up, it remains a family event associated with many a story being narrated about the various Christmas ornaments.

Another tradition hailing from the Davnie family is that each family member opens one gift on Christmas Eve. A gingerbread house is also baked and put together by the family. However, this used to be done prior to Christmas when Liz was young and no one was allowed to eat the candy until Christmas day. With too many little hands to keep out of the cookie jar, candy is made nearer to



A true Sri Lankan Christmas

Christmas day with the children having great fun decorating them. Each year, the family also watch the original 22 minute 1960s version of 'The Grinch who stole Christmas'.

On Christmas morning, Katelyn and Lia open their stockings as soon as the sun comes up. Gifts are opened as a family and a big breakfast follows. Charlotte always makes Stollen. Andrew and Liz host Christmas dinner for friends and family complete with ham, stuffing and everything else in between.

Christmas this year will be celebrated with Andy's mom and both Katelyn and Lia are hoping for their first ever snowy white Christmas.



Andrew, Liz and the girls at Christmas with Charlotte and Bill

Naveen, Margie and Amara Bopearatchy

Immediately after Thanksgiving in the first week of December, the Bopearatchy home takes on a festive air with the tree, window garlands and stockings all coming into place. Amara takes great pride in decorating a small tree. Naveen's favourite 'All I want for Christmas' and Margie's faves from John Denver to the Muppets make up the Christmas carol playlist that fills the air. Also with Naveen and Margie having been married around Christmas, this is truly a special time of year for them.



Naveen, Margie and Amara

Family time at Christmas (cont...)



Christmas is always spent with family and in past years, the Bopearatchy family have been in Kandy by the river, spending time with Grandad. Margie loves baking cinnamon rolls, a throwback to her childhood and making an advent wreath. The advent candles are lit during dinner to add that excitement of a coming Christmas. With Naveen's

mum having retired to Sri Lanka, festivities will be a little slower but will have the usual festive air.

But as everyone experiences, the Christmas season can be tiring enjoying the season and socializing with cousins and friends, which calls for some R&R time immediately after Christmas.



Amara's own method of opening gifts



"Am I as tall as the tree?"



Baby Amara decorates her tree

Salome and Adina Rosa Senaratne

It's early preps for Christmas for Salome and Adina Senaratne. They have a preliminary chat about what they would like to do for Christmas about October each year, agreeing on one focus project for less-blessed children. Ownership is given to Adina to see it through. This year, it is the Little Feet Project where Adina and her friends will gift their used shoes to the children of Heaven Salvation Army Home in Colombo 10.

But that's not all. Adina and her friends will also be visiting housebound elders, singing carols and spending time with them as they are unable to get about.

Of course, there's also the following of the Advent calendar, Adina's letter to Santa and helping her Grandma make Christmas cake and sweets, decorating the Christmas tree with



The Little Feet Project begins

Family time at Christmas (cont...)

Adina's handmade decorations taking pride of place and putting up the nativity and Charles Dickens' Christmas Village, a collection of priceless porcelain creations hand made by Adina's grandfather. Salome and Adina also enjoy listening to choirs and visiting the hotels and shopping malls to see the Christmas décor.

A 'real Santa' arrives at midnight on Christmas Eve, delivering Adina's gifts. Salome leaves the front door unlocked to allow Santa to enter easily and Adina makes sure she keeps milk and cookies for Santa and a carrot for the tired reindeer. The tree lights burn brightly too but both mother and daughter pretend sleep, peeking through the door whenever possible, sneakily watching Santa as he comes in, leaving his gifts and taking the cookies, milk and carrot with him.

On Christmas day, it's church, lunch with immediate family and dinner with extended family, exchanging inexpensive gifts, listening to carols and enjoying homemade meals including decadent sweets and desserts.



Adina lights up her tree



Posting her letter to Santa



The Charles Dickens Christmas village



Adina and her friends prepping for Christmas

Family time at Christmas (cont...)

Stanley & Rupika Gooneratne

Stanley and Rupika's Christmas celebrations begin on their wedding anniversary, the 15th of December with shopping, putting up decorations and baking of love cake. The family is slowly gaining momentum with their older son Amanda and his wife Piyathma adding granddaughter little Aleena to the family. Ruchinda, the younger son enjoys being an uncle as much as he likes indulging in his mum's favourite cooking.

Entertaining is a priority and many dinners with Rupika's culinary expertise brought into play – different menus for each dinner.

On Christmas Eve it's early dinner, midnight service and heading home to open gifts and indulge in love cake, wine, pies and music. Coffee and liquors form the nightcap just prior to dawn.

Christmas morning heralds a light breakfast and a visit to Stanley's sister's home for family lunch. The Gooneratne's host family dinner with smoked salmon, waldorf salad and Rupika's special leek and potato soup with asparagus and bacon in the spotlight. Other firm favourites include BBQ steak and various pasta dishes followed by blueberry cheesecake and Baked Alaska. Being food aficionados, the Guneratne's ensure their guests are well fed and watered as well with numerous cocktails shaken up and a sangria or two stirred in between.



Ruchinda, Piyathma and Amanda with Archer who doesn't want to be left out



The Gooneratne's having enjoyed an indulgent Christmas feast



Amanda, Piyathma and Aleena



Aleena's first Christmas



Ruchinda takes on a pose with Archer, the faux reindeer



Checking on your carbon footprint this Christmas



Looking for a Christmas Gift that will help the planet - why not either plant or buy a tree? Trees really do make a difference. This year I am going to have some planted in Malawi to help my carbon footprint which has increased dramatically due to flying more than in the past. My friend, Dr Ruth Shakespeare, a former Medical Director at Mulanje Mission Hospital in Malawi developed the hospital with sustainability in mind by fitting solar panels, creating their own kitchen garden, reducing waste, while reducing infant mortality with great success.



Dr Ruth Shakespeare, former Medical Director at a Malawian Hospital

In an article she penned, Ruth writes: "These days we are all aware of the global warming potential of greenhouse gases, and most of us try to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' to reduce emissions. If you took a



Ruth's favourite tree – the pod mahogany

flight to your holiday destination you may find that the tonnes of CO₂ emitted by your share of the flight is one of the biggest single contributions to your carbon footprint for the whole year."

She adds that we all have a responsibility to tackle climate change – but no matter how committed we are to reducing our use of energy and keeping our carbon footprint small, all of us will still be responsible for some unavoidable carbon emissions. "Carbon offsetting provides a way to compensate for these by funding an equivalent carbon dioxide saving elsewhere –by supporting more renewable energy production, reducing deforestation, helping to plant more trees to capture and store carbon."

Did you know?

Average CO₂ emissions (MTs) per person, per year

Malawi	0.1
Sri Lanka	0.8
UK	6.5
Netherlands	9.9
USA	16.5

Source: World Bank data 2015



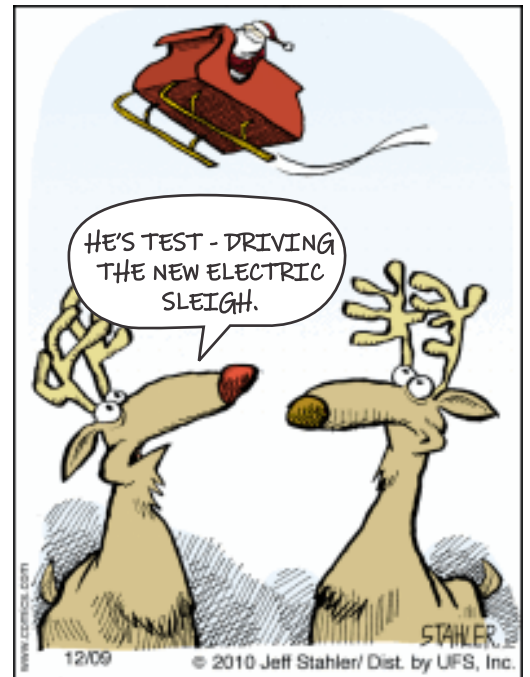
"Forests are natural and economically important 'carbon sinks'. Yet globally, tree cover is reducing. A tree can absorb 20kg or more of carbon dioxide per year - that's about one tonne of carbon dioxide sequestered by the time it is 40 years old. The logging for timber and fuel wood, charcoal burning and overgrazing, has resulted in the drying of rivers and streams, soil erosion, poor crop yields, loss of shade from the hot sun, loss of wildlife, birds and natural landscapes which result in loss of tourism too," she concludes.

So Christmas this year can be green – gift a plant! Reduce your carbon footprint and give the planet that much needed breath of life it needs.

Revd. Ian Gilmour



Xmas LAUGHS



What do they sing at a snowman's birthday party? Freeze a jolly good fellow!

What do Santa's little helpers learn at school? The elf-abet!

Why was the snowman looking through the carrots? He was picking his nose!

What did Adam say the day before Christmas? "It's Christmas, Eve!"

What do you call an obnoxious reindeer? Rude-olph

How did the bauble get addicted to Christmas? He was hooked on trees his whole life!

Xmas LAUGHS



"We can stay home this year. Everyone is getting music, movies, games and apps they can download from my website!"



"IT LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE WILL BE GETTING WHAT THEY WANT THIS YEAR... SOMEBODY POSTED MY CREDIT CARD NUMBER ON THE INTERNET"



"Mrs Claus bought me a smartwatch! It knows when you are sleeping, it knows when you're awake, it knows if you've been bad or good ..."

A Church on our travels

Notre Dame de Lourdes Church, Casablanca, Morocco



It's a busy intersection in the heart of Casablanca – traffic rushing to and fro and people brusquely walking to wherever and whatever beckons them. Behind a copse of trees stands a tall concrete structure – angular and abstract, almost modest and very modern. But what lies within its discreet demeanour is simply extraordinary.

Find that gate, another unobtrusive feature and walk in. You are now standing in front of a giant almost warehouse-looking structure – not quite resembling a church unless you spy that simple white cross standing atop a façade that is impossibly high with equally tall pillars on either side. The flight of steps lead up to a tall wooden door, which when opened, assures a sight of beauty and creative genius.

The Notre Dame de Lourdes is only one of two Catholic churches in Casablanca and is a tasteful example of European modernism. Completed in 1956, it is the impressive eye of Gabriel Loire, famed French artist that narrates the stories embedding



The exterior of the church



The interiors with narrow stained glass panels on either side

A Church on our travels (cont...)



The side wall of the church

the Virgin Mary in all her glory through spectacular stained glass windows. From floor to impossibly high ceilings, all around you whether it's both side walls, the front altar or behind you, the gorgeously unrestrained beauty of stained glass plays with colour and light, pushing beams of light to filter through, casting uniquely beautiful canvasses wherever the eye falls.

Influenced by the unique design found on Moroccan carpets, Loire cut his glass backgrounds using prominent red and blue glass, highlighting an effect that only a genius artist could have imagined. With over 8,600 square feet of stained glass covered



Coloured beams of light coming through the stained glass windows streaming into the interior

window surface, the effect inside this very open and airy church is almost hypnotizing. Spending half a day just walking around and reliving some of the stories including the stations of the cross in all its stained glass allure is awe-inspiring to say the least.

The church welcomes visitors between 8.30 am and 12 noon and 3 pm and 7 pm each day.

-Savithri Rodrigo



The side wall of the church



A Prayer

Revd Dr Doug Gay, a Glasgow University lecturer and prominent Scottish theologian

As the Church of Scotland continues its challenging work on the three-year Radical Action Plan which was approved by this year's General Assembly, we call on those from across the Church to join together in prayer.



Almighty and Eternal God,
we pray for our Church
in this time of great change and challenge,
and in this season of remembering.

Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
we remember those who You called to do a new
thing.

We remember those who led Your people
through painful transitions.

We honour those who served sacrificially to
enable a hopeful future to emerge
and we give thanks for those who helped to bring
new life into being.

Lord Jesus Christ,
Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith,
give us the grace to run the race set before us.
By Your Spirit,
help us to see a joyful vision of what You are
calling us to become
and to endure what is hardest in our journey
towards that.

And to You,
one God in Holy Trinity,
be glory in the Church,
to all generations
forever and ever.
Amen



Keeping the spirits up at Christmas



Christmas is an absolute celebration – anywhere in the world really. It's about donning your Sunday best, going to church, wishing those near and dear, exchanging gifts and sitting down to a meal that is remembered each year as the best there was. But with these tables laden with goodies, are equally tall glasses, laden with high spirits. Here are some of the best Christmas beverages of all time!

Eggnog – Luscious, creamy and full of fond memories, the conventional alcoholic eggnog, is now even prepared in non-alcoholic and vegan versions.



Tom and Jerry – Perfect for cold nights but equally yum in tropical isles like ours, this warm milk punch with a shot of brandy or rum is a wonderful social drink.



Mulled Wine – Warm breezy isles like ours may opt for sangria but mulled wine still holds a sweet spot. Mixing is easy – just a bottle of red wine, a hint of brandy and Christmas spices is all it takes.



Wassail – A warm holiday punch filled with aromatic spices with recipes originating from brandy, sherry, rum or beer.



Hot buttered rum – It smells of Christmas and of home and is very comforting. Rum based, this is hard to resist especially if you're away from home at Christmas.



Glögg – Similar to mulled wine and wassail, Scandinavia loves this. Spiced rum or brandy with red wine, a touch of vodka and seasonal spices including whole pods of cardamom, almonds and raisins add to the secret aroma.





Hot Toddy – Hot tea, a dash of lemon and honey and a liberal dose of brandy, rum or whiskey and you've got the ideal drink for social sipping as guests mill around your kitchen while the turkey is roasting.



English Christmas Punch – Yet another mulled wine base but with “oh so English” tea and citrus brightening up the Christmas spirit.

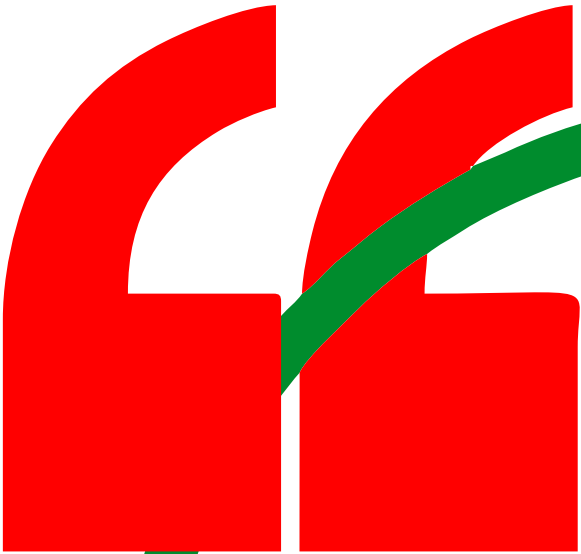


Poinsettia – No it's not the flower but it's all about the sparkly bits found on that Christmas flower. Bring out the bubbly, add some orange liqueur and cranberry juice and you will undeniably see the magic of that shining star.



Brandy Alexander – The ultimate holiday nightcap, this is the dessert spirit which none can say “No” to. Creamy and 'cocktaily', shake up some brandy, crème de cacao, and cream, strain it and your dessert becomes even sweeter.





I am very happy with the latest issue of The Saint Andrew.
Congratulations to the Editorial Committee and all the contributors-
Blessings,
Jim

Scots Kirk has been much in my thoughts after the Easter abominations and I was truly inspired by the efforts of the congregation to support the church In Batticaloa.
Loads and loads of good wishes, from a very dreich Giffnock.
Jan

It is wonderful to read through the words and pictures of the Newsletter - how St Andrew's is prospering and carrying the torch of the gospel. Lara joins me in sending good wishes to you all.
Every blessing
Stewart and Lara Lamont

Thank you so much for the latest edition of the St Andrew's Magazine. Apologies for the delay in getting back to you but we have been in the States for three weeks on a Rotary International Exchange trip - great fun but totally exhausting! We have all thoroughly enjoyed reading the contents of the magazine and we are grateful to all who contribute and compile the copy - no mean feat!
Kindest regards.
Alistair

What they say about the St Andrew Summer 2019 edition



Dates for your diary

Theme:

Joy TO THE
World

“Christmas renews our youth by stirring our wonder. The capacity for wonder has been called our most pregnant human faculty, for in it are born our art, our science, our religion.” **Ralph Sockman**

Dec 1 st	Sunday	9.30 am	Advent 1: Communion Service
Dec 7 th	Saturday	6.00 pm	A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
Dec 8 th	Sunday	9.30 am	Advent 2: Morning Service
Dec 15 th	Sunday	9.30 am	Advent 3: Christmas Gift Service
Dec 22 nd	Sunday	9.30 am	Advent 4: The Sunday School Nativity Service
Dec 24 th	Tuesday	11.15 pm	Christmas Eve Watchnight Service
Dec 25 th	Wednesday	9.30 am	Christmas Day Family service
Dec 29 th	Sunday	9.30am	Morning Service Approaching 2020

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...” **Galatians 5:22**

In the New Year, Sunday morning services will continue each week at 9.30 am. **All are Welcome**



Our Church will also be used for 21 weddings during December and January, the Union Bank Carol Service and a Healing Service.

The Church is used by the Korean Church every Sunday morning at 11.30 am and the Four-Square Church every Sunday evening and on Thursdays lunchtime.

The Church Hall is used by:

The Thrift shop is open every Tuesday between 11 am and 1 pm.

The Association of British Residents English Library once a month on Tuesday mornings between 11 am and 1 pm

Alcoholics Anonymous every Wednesday at 6.30 pm

17th Colombo Netherlee Scout Troupe every Saturday afternoon

Mission work

Helping Hands

Mulleriyawa Hospital monthly visit to Ward 8 every third Wednesday, leaving the Church at 9.30 am
Netherlee Cottage

The Lunch Project every Thursday between 12.15 pm and 12.45 pm. Volunteer servers are urgently needed each week.

St. Andrew's Scots Kirk

Minister: Revd Ian Gilmour – igilmour@churchofscotland.org.uk +94 76 483 7779 or +94 11 2386774
Church Officer: K S Kumar – churchofficer@scotskirk.lk +94 77 997 8870 or +94 11 2323765