

the Saint Andrew



Church of Scotland - Presbyterian



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FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY



Merry Christmas

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The picture on the front cover is the original St Andrew's Church in Princes Street (now Prince Street), Fort. It was built in 1841 and this picture was taken before 1900.



Christmas Cheer

REV. STEWART AND LARA LAMONT WRITE.....

Lara and I welcome this chance to send Christmas greetings to all our friends at St Andrew's. I will be remembering you in the prayers at the Christmas service at St Ninian's Church, Corstorphine in Edinburgh where I am currently locum, as they look for another minister. My instruction from the Newsletter team was to make this message cheery - so here goes!

One of the harmless rituals of Christmas is the cracker –and the terrible jokes which are contained in them on little pieces of paper.

Or what about this longer version –a sort of shaggy dog version: There was once a great czar in Russia named Rudolph the Red. He stood looking out the windows of his palace one day while his wife, the Czarina Katerina, sat nearby knitting. He turned to her and said, "Look my dear, it has begun to rain!" Without even looking up from her knitting she replied, "It's too cold to rain. It must be snowing." The Czar shook his head and said, "I am the Czar of all the Russias and Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear!"

(If you don't get the joke – say that last part out loud)

It's easy to get po-faced about all the pseudo-stuff that has accumulated around Christmas and get defensive about all the "festabulous" things that the ad-men and big supermarkets get up to. In his Christmas message when he was Moderator, my friend John Chalmers said he had a confession to make. Years ago, he thought it was the role of a Presbyterian minister to be critical of all the excess materialism which pervaded Christmas. So, one Christmas Eve, in front of a packed congregation, he had a go at those people who, in his opinion, didn't pay attention to the real meaning of Christmas and he emphasised it by criticising those who only came to church once a year.

Q: What are people who are afraid of Santa Claus called?

A: Claustrophobic!

That, of course, was half the congregation and it was the same half that didn't wish him a happy Christmas at the door of the Church afterwards.

He went on; "I have repented of such foolishness. Now I believe that those who pack our churches on Christmas Eve do so because the power of Christmas still draws them in to hear the story of God, in the life of a tiny baby, breaking through the darkness to bring light into the world. If you're looking for the real X Factor this X'mas you shouldn't have to go any further than your local church."

In Gibraltar, I remember one middle-aged man being in tears after the Watchnight Service. He had lost touch with his religion (he had once been a Kirk Elder) and he had ups and downs in his marriage. But in the middle of that service, during a hymn, he was mugged by his emotions. They welled up within him and burst out. I would like to say that from then on his life was better and I saw him back in church. I can't say the same, but it leads me to the point I want to make: that emotion is good and right but it is not enough. If we do not build on it, act on it and move on, it will simply be like a snowflake and melt away and we will be the same old person.

Imagine you are there in Bethlehem. It is night, in Judea, over 2000 years ago. Apart from the stars and the glow from the fire, there is no light and you can see nothing. The only sound is the sheep, grazing placidly. There might be no one else left alive in all the world. What are you thinking in the darkness? What are your dreams, your longings, your hopes? And how do you feel when this unbearable light of the angels bursts upon you?

Whoever you are, whatever you do, you can no longer claim to be nothing special. From this moment on you are amazing, extraordinary: Christ the Saviour has been born for you.

God has come among us, born on earth. It is impossible to explain but the sign and sights and sounds are there for all to see. It has happened. It did happen. Christ has come. It is irreversible. And it is for you.

Let us be thankful this Christmas Eve, that God has given us this gift of Jesus, who comes to change our lives, to change the course of the history of the world. For in his birth, God came among us. God is now here and God came to stay.

Tolstoy said: Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.

If the Nativity is not about changing ourselves, it reduces to a wee fairytale unconnected with reality and the good emotions it brings, are wasted.

Minister's Letter

I have enjoyed my visit with you: conducting worship on three Sundays; meeting with the Elders, individually, in Kirk Session meetings and training sessions; meeting with some members of the congregation; holding encouraging talks with those who lead your mission-oriented projects including Helping Hands, the Thrift Shop and Netherlee Cottage; good discussions with the staff of St.



Andrew's Scots Kirk, not least your Church Officer Kanapathy Sandrakumaran (known to us all, I imagine, as Kumar), who is a constant source of support to all Ministers living in the Manse and Denham Pereira, your talented and very collaborative Organist and Director of Music. There have also been positive and encouraging discussions with a number of local clergy from the Anglican and Christian Reformed Churches, who are more than willing to do whatever they can to help and support this congregation during the period of vacancy, whether that be through providing pulpit supply on a Sunday morning or through helping us to develop relationships with other bodies, including governmental agencies if that should be necessary to help resolve current or future issues. I have never before had such a full diary in such a short period of time as during these past two to three weeks!

I had also had very positive discussions with the Moderator of the Presbytery of Lanka and the General Secretary of the National Christian Council, who are both very supportive of St. Andrew's Scots Kirk and who recommitted themselves to help and support us in whatever way they can.

My visit culminated at our worship service in St. Andrew's Scots Kirk this morning, Sunday 2 October, when we celebrated Holy Communion and the ordination of five new Elders. There are now 14 Elders in this congregation: Chandan de Silva as Session Clerk, who proved to be a constant source of support to me during my visit, from meeting me at the airport when I

arrived to driving me to many of my meetings held away from the church and guiding me in many other ways and who, I am sure, will be a tower of strength for the Kirk Session in the months and years to come. There is also Shewantha Rodrigo, the Treasurer, who has clearly demonstrated his ability to be on top of the finances of the congregation, Graham de Kretzer one of our long-serving Elders, Gloriana Razeek, Jill Macdonald, Mike Anthonisz, Anna Brochard, Chris Parakrama, Paddy Gridley, Samantha De Saram, Lakshmi Seneviratne, Shalini Wickremasuriya, Rathini Walker and Gillian Mailler.

I am leaving Sri Lanka tonight, quietly confident that the road ahead for St. Andrew's Scots Kirk will be more smooth than rocky. I would be naive if I claimed that all the troubles of the past have been forgotten, far less forgiven. But time is a great healer and, with the right spirit - which is what Jesus taught us - reconciliation can be achieved.

It is my prayer that, in the weeks and months to come, the new Kirk Session will be able to lead this congregation on to new and greater things, turning the page on the past. I will stay on as your Interim Moderator for the time being, until a longer-term solution may be found. I will chair Kirk Session meetings from my home in Geneva (thanks to Skype – oh, the wonders of technology!) and continue to do my best to help and support your Elders, visiting clergy providing pulpit supply on Sunday mornings and the congregation, as you move forward into a new era of life at St. Andrew's Scots Kirk.

I don't have a date in my diary (yet) for a return visit, but I have a feeling I will be back with you again sometime in the next few months.

In the meantime, I keep St. Andrew's Scots Kirk in my prayers and ask God's blessings on all of you.

Your friend,

Revd Jim Sharp

Interim Moderator



Ordination of New Elders

By Chandan De Silva, Session Clerk

During Rev. Stewart Lamont's time as Locum and Interim Moderator, the Kirk Session identified members of the congregation to serve as new Elders.

In the Church of Scotland, a Kirk Session governs each congregation. The Elders appointed to the Session are the ruling Elders responsible for the operations of the church, while the Minister is the teaching Elder and Moderator of the Session. Rev Sharp, in his message for this newsletter has already named those new Elders, which began first with identifying those suitable, providing them with Elder training which Rev. Sharp conducted. This training in fact, included the existing Elders. On Sunday October 2nd, the new Elders were ordained at a service conducted by Rev. Jim Sharp.



There are many aspects of the church's work, which Elders support: Worship & Music; Christian education for youth and children; Mission projects (Helping Hands for the poor living near the church, fund raising and visits to the women at Ward 8 Mulleriyawa Mental Hospital, fund raising and support for the women at Netherlee Cottage, which is run by the church), Finance, Publicity, Property, Safeguarding and organizing the annual bazaar.

The new Elders began receiving exposure to Kirk Session meetings in July and are aware of the issues that the Session is dealing with. Some of them have been serving in church activities over the past several years; others will decide where they would like to apply their talent and time.

Even though the church has been through troubled times in the recent past, I am confident that the injection of new blood and ideas will help the church re-establish its sense of direction and unity and be ready to call a new Minister in 2017.

The story of the birth of this oft sung Christmas Hymn

Once in Royal David's City

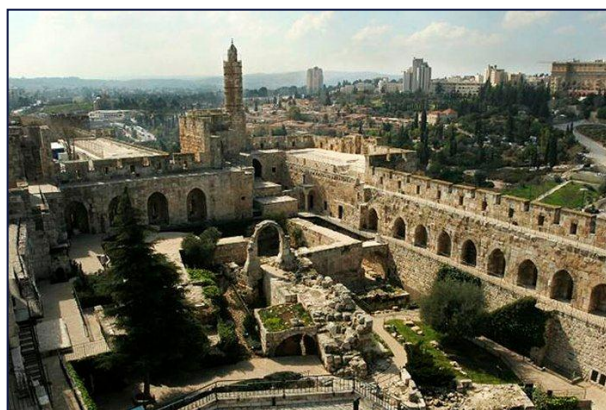
It was in 1848 that Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander, born in Dublin decided to pen the much loved Christmas hymn, Once in Royal David's City. An Anglican Bishop's wife, she took her work very seriously, accompanying her husband around Ireland. She loved working with young children and would always be seen writing hymns and poems for them. Working with children, she had constantly been bombarded with eager questions by enthusiastic bright eyed little beings which drove her to publish a book of verse, Hymns for Little Children that explained the creed in uncomplicated language with just the right dose of cheer and simplicity, in which were published three well known hymns. All Things Bright and Beautiful answered a child's question on who made the world, death was dealt with There is a Green Hill Far Away and the story of the Nativity in Once in Royal David's City.

Set in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus and His ancestor King David, based on the words of the Creed, "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary." In 1949, organist and composer Henry Gauntlett added music to the hymn and in nearly every carol service around the world, the traditional opening hymn is always this. In fact, this holds the distinction of being the processional hymn for the King's College Cambridge Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and one of the only two carols or hymns which has been played annually. Erik Routley in The English Carol states that the remarkable harmonization of the version played at King's College by organist Dr Arthur Henry Mann is subtle art, transforming "a homely children's hymn into a processional of immense spaciousness."

Cecil, the author of more than four hundred hymns, worked with the sick and poor continually, although the proceeds from her book of hymns funded the construction of the Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Institution for the Deaf and Dumb.



CECIL FRANCES HUMPHREYS ALEXANDER



THE CITY OF DAVID





Session Clerk visits the Presbytery Lausanne, Switzerland

7-9 October 2016

Background:

Every six months, the International Presbytery (formerly the Presbytery of Europe), holds a meeting with members of the fifteen congregations making up the Presbytery. It is usually the Minister and Presbytery Elder who attend these meetings, together with Moderator, Clerk and other invitees.

The Church of Scotland (CoS) has a fairly flat governance structure. Every congregation is governed by its Kirk Session and each Kirk Session is accountable to a Presbytery, with each Presbytery being accountable to the General Assembly. The CoS is also highly democratic, with the Moderators of the General Assembly and of each Presbytery holding office for just one year!

Lausanne:

Lausanne is about 40 minutes by train from Geneva and sits on the shores of Lac Lemman (Lake Geneva). It is a picturesque city with an impressive cathedral sitting atop one of its hills. It is an easy city to walk in, which I did a lot of, even though there is good public transport.

It is a small city with a population of 150,000, of whom a staggering 42% are non-Swiss nationals. This was very evident on the streets and surprisingly I found some people begging. I hadn't expected this of a wealthy country but I gather many of those begging are Roma (gypsies from Romania).

Host congregation:

The host congregation, the Scots Kirk, is nearly 140 years old and is one of a handful of churches in Lausanne offering services in English. The congregation has 133 members and is composed of twenty-two nationalities. The minister, Rev. Ian MacDonald, who visited Colombo (with Rev. Andrew Gardner) in September 2014, is also the chaplain of the Presbytery.

I met an old friend – Rev. Doug McRoberts – who is now retired; this was to be his last International Presbytery meeting. It was good catching up with him and his wife Lesley, hearing about their life in retirement and filling them in on developments in Colombo.

To my surprise, I met a few others with whom I made a connection from the past. One of them is Douglas Frith (the Session Clerk in Bermuda) who, like me, was participating in his first Presbytery meeting. The coincidence did not end there: he remembered meeting me in Budapest in 2007, when both Colombo and Bermuda congregations were given the opportunity to present their case to be invited to become part of the Presbytery of Europe.

The meeting:

The Presbytery sub-committee meetings commenced on Friday morning. Every Presbyter is expected to contribute to one and I decided to join the Education and Training committee. I undertook to lead the work on sharing information on best practice for training Elders. This was topical to me (and our Kirk Session), having recently undergone training under the guidance of Rev. Jim Sharp, which I found to be helpful and the resource material enlightening.

The plenary session of the Presbytery began at 6 pm on Friday and Rhoda Grant, an Elder from Brussels, moderated it. The Clerk was Rev. Jim Sharp, who is currently interim moderator of Colombo and Lisbon. For a non-stipendiary Minister, he carries an enormous workload!

The business of the Presbytery, which was covered over twenty-nine agenda items, was worked through very efficiently and the meeting ended on Saturday afternoon, as scheduled. I was struck by the discipline of the Presbyters, none of whom spoke for more than five minutes each in making their case. There was time for questions and answers and the entire process was moderated very effectively.

On Saturday evening the Presbyters met for a formal dinner over a glass of wine or two, which was an enjoyable way of concluding a fairly intense set of discussions. The formal proceedings ended on Sunday with a service, followed by a finger buffet, organized by the host congregation.

Our hosts were extremely hospitable and I left having enjoyed the experience and having learned a great deal about the matters of concern and interest to the International Presbytery.

Chandan de Silva
Session Clerk and Presbytery Elder

PS: If anyone in the congregation is interested in finding out about the topics of discussion at the International Presbytery, please feel free to contact me on chandan59@yahoo.com

MEET THE ST ANDREW'S TEAM

Kanapathy Sandrakumaran
Church Officer



It was 25 years ago that Kumar, then quite young, came to live in the little house next to the Manse. He later married Kala and with the coming of their two children, Stefan and Michelle, the little house next to the Manse was extended to accommodate his growing family.

"Church life changes according to the periods of development in Sri Lanka," recalls Kumar. "There was a time when the church had lots of international members in the Congregation prompting numerous foreign events in the Church Hall. There was Scottish country dancing, Montessori groups, the ABR Library which still operates every other Tuesday and Saturday evening was very busy as visitors came to socialize with Rev Tom O'Leary and Morris MacKay the Session Clerk at the time."

Kumar has also worked with Rev. Grahame Muckart, Rev. John Yoo, Rev. Dr. Bruce Gardner, Rev. Alan Main, Rev. John Purves, Rev. Dr. Roderick Campbell and Rev. Stewart Lamont. Having always been a Church Officer, he however observes that the role has changed many times over the years. "I have looked after some of the finance work, organised wedding bookings and been involved in managing some aspects of Netherlee Cottage and the Church staff." His most memorable occasion was his visit to Scotland organised by St Andrew's Scots Kirk and Fenwick Church in Scotland, where he visited and learned about Scottish Churches and had a chance to experience the General Assembly at the Church of Scotland.



S. S. Asirvatham
Janitor

Asiri spends many hours each week cleaning our Church, a task he has been doing for 16 years. Asiri enjoys his family time with his wife and two daughters, while his home, most often, is filled with his grandchildren.



Victor Perera
Gardener

Victor used to work with Morris MacKay at Bywater Company and it was Morris who persuaded him to work for the Church, which he has done since the time of Rev. John Yoo. Victor manages the Church garden, which can be a little challenging given that it's quite a vast expanse to look after by himself. But nevertheless, he enjoys his work. Victor has four children and four grandchildren.



Maureen Genard
Helping Hands Co-ordinator

Maureen began working in the Thrift shop in 2004 along with Ayesha Smith, Monique and two European ladies and in 2006, was part of a team of four who launched Helping Hands. Between 2008 and 2011, she managed a crèche during the Sunday morning service.

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"I cherish the memories of Bible study at Alex and Ian's house and the barbecue to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Scots Kirk held at Mount Lavinia Beach," she says, adding that the Alpha Course held at the Church and the social gatherings and picnics established many lasting friendships. "I always enjoy the Christmas Party for the Helping Hands families and the Netherlee ladies. I have been to the Easter Brunch 13 times and will never miss this wonderful event. I do find the work with the Helping Hands families quite challenging as I never have enough money to give them, but I enjoy my work as it gives me the opportunity to help people."

She married Glynn at St Andrew's in 2004 and hopes to visit Glynn in the UK where he lives, once again, soon. She lives with her mother in Sri Lanka



Janitha Perera
Finance Officer

For 1 ½ years, Janitha has managed the wedding bookings, written all the cheques and issued the receipts for cash receipts in the Church. She states that handling the cash is very challenging and ensuring that the books balance is a huge responsibility. "I still remember my interview for the job. I was very excited as there were so many people present to interview me and they were all men." Married with a son, she is a kind and generous person who confesses that her weakness is indulging in burgers and submarines.

NETHERLEE NEWS



Netherlee Craft in Glasgow

This carpet, a gift made by the ladies of Netherlee Cottage was taken to Scotland by Dorothy, the Scout Leader from Netherlee Glasgow, when she visited Colombo this year.



**A New Chapter
for the
Netherlee Ladies**

The staff and ladies at Netherlee Cottage have been learning many new lessons these last few months, while caring and helping the rehabilitation of Seelawathie who broke her femur in May this year.

Seelawathie was taken by ambulance to the local base hospital where once the damage was assessed, we were requested to buy nylon rope and prepare a 2 kg bag of sand to fix a traction device to her foot. Within a couple of days, Seela returned home.

However, given that she was yet experiencing pain and discomfort, we sought the advice of a surgeon at the National Hospital. He recommended a pin and plate to speed up the healing process and Seela was transported to the National Hospital once more by ambulance. The Netherlee team became well-known at the Hospital over the many weeks that Seela was a patient. Seela is now home and with the aid of a borrowed walking frame is learning to be mobile again.

Following all this activity, we have moved Pathma and Wimala to live independently in a community house with other ladies and welcome two new Ladies from the Mulleriyawa Hospital for rehabilitation.



WHAT DO THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS TELL US?



In England, between 1558 and 1829 during the era of King Henry VIII, it was not legal for Catholics to practice their kind of Christianity. The King who fell out with the Catholic Church, launched his own Protestant Church, now the Church of England. It was around this time that this folk song was written, referring to the twelve day period that begins on Christmas day and ends on Epiphany, the 6th of January. The words "True love" represents God, the true love of the world.



The 'partridge in a pear tree' is Jesus who died on the cross. In ancient times a partridge was often used as mythological symbol of a divine, sacred king.



The 'two turtle doves' are the Old and New Testaments of the Bible - another gift from God. Doves also symbolise peace.



The 'three French hens' are faith, hope and love - the three gifts of the Holy Spirit and can also represent the Holy Trinity.



The 'four calling birds' are the four Gospels in the New Testament.



The 'five golden rings' are the first five books of the Bible also called the Pentateuch, the Books of Moses or the Torah.



The 'six geese a-laying' are the six days of creation.





The 'seven swans a swimming' are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. (*1 Corinthians 12:8-11, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4:10-11*).



The 'eight maids a milking' are the eight beatitudes, Jesus' teachings on happiness. (See *Matthew 5:3-10*)



The 'nine ladies dancing' are nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. (See *Galatians 5:22*)



The 'ten lords a-leaping' are the Ten Commandments in the Bible. (See *Exodus 20*)



The 'eleven pipers piping' are the eleven faithful disciples of Jesus.



The 'twelve drummers drumming' were the twelve points of the Apostles' Creed.

How many gifts are there in total in the 12 Days of Christmas?

If you were receive all the gifts in the song,
you will receive 364!

CHRISTMAS YUMMIES



A RECIPE BY SAM DE SARAM

Sausage and Apple Stuffing

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 celery stick, finely chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 x 350g packs sausages
- 1 Bramley apple, peeled and chopped (about 325g)
- 85g fresh white breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh sage or thyme
- 5 tbsp chopped fresh parsley, plus extra to serve (optional)
- 1 large egg
- 10 rindless streaky bacon rashers
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper



Method

Heat the oil in a large pan, add the celery and onion, and cook for about 5 mins until it starts to soften. Tip into a bowl to cool while you remove the sausage meat from the skins. Add the apple, sausage meat, breadcrumbs, herbs, egg and seasoning. Mix well – the easiest way is to knead it together in the bowl with your hands.

Line a 900g loaf tin with 8 rashers of streaky bacon, spoon in the stuffing, lift the bacon over and cover with the last 2 rashers. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and bake the stuffing for 40-50 mins. Can be made ahead up to this point and chilled for 2-3 days. Turn out onto a baking-parchment-lined baking tray and return to the oven at 220C/200C fan/gas 7 for 15-20 mins more to brown the bacon. If chilled, reheat at the lower temperature for 45 mins, covered in foil, then turn out for the extra 15 mins at the higher temperature. Allow to stand, then scatter with parsley (if you like), slice and serve.



Christmas with our Congregation

Zach Smith celebrates Christmas through childhood lenses in Ohio, USA



Christmas in small-town America for me was always about family, friends, and spiritual observance. Having grown up in the US, but since having lived all my adult life abroad, I very fondly remember Christmas there through the lens of childhood. It was a two week break from classes, though we always had school performances for a Christmas concert or The Nutcracker ballet. Local churches would often perform Nativity scenes, send choirs caroling and organize charity drives. The weather was cold, often below zero degrees celcius, which gave us the chance for lots of fun in the snow with our buddies or drive through the streets admiring the lights and decorations.

On Christmas Eve, my family would always do three things: bake cookies, watch "It's a Wonderful Life" (our favorite Christmas movie!), and read Bible stories of the birth of Christ. On Christmas Day itself we'd open gifts first thing in the morning. Our large extended

family from near and far would gather to have dinner at my grandparents' home, after which all the men and boys would join in for the annual family football game. The whole village would be in its own world, and for a time, the cares of daily life were put on hold. It was a holiday that truly felt like a holy day, proclaiming "Joy to the World".



Javaid shares the joy of Christmas felt in Pakistan

We celebrate Christmas with a lot of passion in Pakistan. A month before Christmas we decorate our homes and when Christmas is just around the corner, practices for caroling begin in readiness for the Christmas Carol service. The Church organizes a Christmas drama, Christmas tree and Christmas dinner as well as numerous different activities for the children. A Christmas Fair is added to this fun-filled equation. We all look forward preparing Christmas Cake and special sweets, having them at home, reading and waiting for when friends and family come to visit. Midnight service on Christmas Eve is always very well attended and many people come to our service on Christmas day as well. People celebrate and enjoy the festival with love and look forward to Christmas all year.





Celebrating Christmas in Jerusalem

By SAVITHRI RODRIGO



Who would have thought that the lowly birth of a babe in a stable over 2,000 years ago would impact the world the way it has? When Jesus was born, except for shepherds in a field far away and three Wise men from across the continents, no one except the ox and lamb celebrated this divine birth. Today however, Jerusalem, the land that heralded the Saviour of the world only long after he was executed, celebrates Christmas three times a year.

If one visits Jerusalem during the traditional Christmas celebration on December 25th, the feeling of the celebratory birth is heady. There is a feeling of intense holiness that grips you and one can't but help feel an infectious reverberating energy that zips through the thousands of people who sing and pray with loud praise. That experience is unique and indescribable, knowing that one is standing on the hallowed ground that Jesus was born and the events that unfolded prior and after the birth happened around this area. It is truly awe-inspiring.

Then there's the Greek Orthodox Church that continues to use the ancient Julian calendar, celebrating Christmas on the 7th of January and the Armenian Church, which celebrates on January the 6th, which for us using the Gregorian calendar, translates to January the 19th. January 7th is Christmas day for numerous churches following the Greek doctrine, the Jerusalem Orthodox Church, Serbian Orthodox Church, Georgian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.



Generally, the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church Theophilos III, attends mass in the Church of the Nativity in Jerusalem, greeted by marching bands in Manger Square and preceded on his walk from Manger Square into the church by hundreds of clergy. Christmas for this denomination is generally preceded by forty days of fasting and

Continues...

abstinence, titled the Nativity Fast which begins on November 28th, ending on January 06th when the first star is seen in the evening sky. This symbolizes the Star of Bethlehem. Christmas Eve, which begins with a special feast features twelve meatless and dairy free dishes, denoting the twelve disciples.

In the Armenian Church, Theophany or Epiphany, meaning the 'revelation of God' remains the Central theme of the season. During this season however, it is not just the Nativity of Christ that is celebrated by the Armenian Church, but also Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan, where a ceremony titled the 'Blessing of water' is conducted as well.

Churches abound in Jerusalem, each as significant as the other, intertwining the stories of the New Testament into stark and absolute reality. Whether visiting the Church of the Nativity, a Basilica which has its origins to 327AD though destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 565AD (and if willing to wait for a few hours in a long queue to venture to the exact spot where the birth took place under an altar marked with a silver star), or standing in front of that church at Manger Square and lustily partaking in Christmas hymns and carols or Shepherd's Field where the shepherds first heard the good news or even walking the Via Dolorosa in Jesus' footsteps on his last few days, Jerusalem is steeped in Biblical history.

While the 4th Century Church of the Holy Sepulchre constructed on the hill of Calvary and the Notre Dame of Jerusalem all hold midnight masses on Christmas eve, one of the most unique services to participate in would be at St. James Church in Jerusalem, where the entire church, is devoid of electricity and is solely lit by colourful oil lamps hanging in the square stone Basilica.



And of course, the magnificence of Christmas cannot be fully comprehended until one indulges in the innumerable concerts being held around the city whether it's the Hallelujah at the Old City or some classical fare at some venues befitting the Christmas spirit, probably a Christmas banquet with a decadent slice of Austrian Studel to finish off or stand transfixed at the Christmas tree at the YMCA while singing Christmas carols.

Merry Christmas





1. When in sorrow,
2. When men fail you,
3. If you want to be fruitful,
4. When you have sinned,
5. When you worry,
6. When you are in danger,
7. When God seems far away,
8. When your faith needs stirring,
9. When you are lonely and fearful,
10. When you grow bitter and critical,
11. For Paul's secret to happiness,
12. For idea of Christianity,
13. When you feel down and out,
14. When you want peace and rest,
15. When the world seems bigger than God,
16. When you want Christian assurance,
17. When you leave home for labour or travel,
18. When your prayers grow narrow or selfish,
19. For a great invention/opportunity,
20. When you want courage for a task,
21. How to get along with fellowmen,
22. When you think of investments/returns,
23. If you are depressed,
24. If your pocketbook is empty,
25. If you're losing confidence in people,
26. If people seem unkind,
27. If discouraged about your work,
28. If you find the world growing small, and yourself great,

call John 14
call Psalm 27
call John 15
call Psalm 51
call Matthew 6:19-34
call Psalm 91
call Psalm 139
call Hebrews 11
call Psalm 23
call 1 Cor. 13
call Col. 3:12-17
call 1 Cor. 5:15-19
call Romans 8:31-39
call Matt. 11:25-30
call Psalm 90
call Romans 8:1-30
call Psalm 121
call Psalm 67
call Isaiah 55
call Joshua 1
call Romans 12
call Mark 10
call Psalm 27
call Psalm 37
call 1 Cor. 13
call John 15
call Psalm 126
call Psalm 19



Emergency numbers may be dialled direct. No operator assistance is necessary.
All lines are open to Heaven 24 hours a day!

FRIENDS OF ST ANDREW'S

CATCHING UP WITH SCOTTISH FRIENDS ||

Livingston Ecumenical Parish, Scotland



Livingston is now home to a population of 60,000. The New Town Church in Livingston started life as a pioneering, multi-denominational "experiment" and indeed for many years was known as the 'Livingston Ecumenical Experiment'. Eventually, in 1984, it became 'Livingston Ecumenical Parish' and operated via six worship centres. From the 1960's to the 1980's, the Church thrived with large and very active

congregations at each of the worship centres with the uniformed organisations – The Boys' Brigade, The Girls' Brigade and big Sunday Schools and youth groups. There was an air of great ecumenical optimism that Livingston was pointing the way for all other Churches in Scotland to follow.

Sadly, ecumenism did not catch on as was anticipated and parent denominations, including The Church of Scotland, finding it hard to deal with and understand a Parish that did not fit into the normal boxes. In 2012, after much deliberation, consultation and prayer it was decided to regroup resources and rather than worshipping each Sunday in six scattered locations across the town, come together each Sunday in one place to worship collectively.

There is much use for members of the congregation as lay leaders of worship, outreach and mission activities to function locally and further afield. Some 12 schools, a college and 6 senior citizens' care homes are visited regularly by the congregation and Ministry Team. There are also regular community programmes. The Mission work at Livingston Church reaches as far as Sri Lanka with both financial and gift donations to Helping Hands. Alistair Marquis from Livingston visits St Andrew's Scots Kirk whenever he is in Colombo. Alistair was the Principal of a school in Livingston and became an International Education Consultant, spending time in the Middle East and Sri Lanka with The World Bank to advise Governments on educational reform.

Many of us will remember Norman Hutchinson who retired from his Church in Dalbeattie, just before coming to Sri Lanka for 6 months.

ROTARY CLUB OF DALBEATTIE FUNDS HELPING HANDS

Norman organised a donation from the Rotary Club of Dalbeattie for Helping Hands in 2014 and again this year.

Memories of a former Session Clerk

Peter Hutt speaks of his time in Colombo heading IIT

I arrived in 1990 to set up and direct the first University Institute in Sri Lanka that offers a full British Honours Degree from an English University. The Institute worked and after four years, our first graduates received their coveted British Honours Degree. Last year, by its 25th anniversary, IIT had over 3,000 graduates in top jobs worldwide.

I arrived on my first Sunday in Colombo, with a letter of introduction to St. Andrew's. Soon I was beginning to wonder quite why I had been sent to

Sri Lanka, because on top of my education work, I had also been appointed an Elder at St. Andrew's and then, later, Session Clerk.

I became involved in other aspects of church life, too, including House Groups. Then projects came along. In 1992, we built two houses for displaced families, re-uniting three generations together in each case.

Schools in England, my church in UK and St. Andrew's raised funds for one of the houses located in a village with no electricity, while I knocked on Government Ministers' doors for authorisation and financial backing. To cut a long (and difficult) story short, the Government Minister switched the electricity on in 1994.

I returned for three month visits in 1997, 2000 and 2003 and on each occasion, there were on-going projects I became involved with. I was in the UK when the tsunami hit which galvanized me to arrange a concert which raised £3,000. John Purves used this funding wisely in areas where I knew families whose livelihoods had been ruined, although thankfully, none of their family members had been victims of the tsunami.

Rev. Tom O'Leary was the Minister when I arrived. He was followed by Rev. Graeme and Elizabeth Muckart and later by Rev. Alan and Anne Maine and Rev. John and Patricia Purves. In the last 25 years, St. Andrew's has had high points and challenging times, but has never ceased to be a witness to the community it serves. God has never failed those here who trust Him and continue to serve Him faithfully.



REV ALAN MAINE AND PETER HUTT
UNVEILING THE PLAQUE SIGNALLING THE
NEW ELECTRICITY CONNECTION

BRITISH ART SONG

A REVIEW OF THE CONCERT FEATURING TENOR HARIN AMIRTHANATHAN
ACCOMPANIED BY PIANIST JOHANN PIERIS AT WESTMINSTER HOUSE IN AID OF NETHERLEE COTTAGE



The lounge at Westminster House was transformed into a theatre on the evening of 30th September to herald the rich tenor of Harin Amirthanathan who was accompanied by Johann Pieris on the grand piano, that's quite the centrepiece at Westminster House. Their performance of songs from Shakespeare and the Great War truly lent itself to the grandeur of the British High Commissioner James Duaris' home.



The event, organised by the

Association of British Residents had over 100 people who enjoyed the recital, with canapés, wine and fellowship adding to the harmonious milieu.

The proceeds from this event were donated to Netherlee Cottage, a project run by St Andrew's Scots Kirk to rehabilitate and reintegrate ladies from Mulleriyawa Hospital, who are mentally challenged. Mattresses, pillows and mattress covers will be purchased with the proceeds. The event was sponsored by the London House of Coffee on Gregory's Road.



The Makin Organ Debuts



Denham Pereira playing the organ prelude



Shona Crosbie taking the service at St. Andrew's on St. Andrew's Day



The Congregational Choir readies for the service

Adding lustre to the joyous singing that arose on St. Andrew's Day, the new Makin Custom 3-50 organ was dedicated on November 27th to a church in celebratory mode. Mrs Shona Crosbie dedicated the organ with a special prayer which was followed by Music Director Denham Pereira treating the congregation to an organ prelude, Bach's Now come, Saviour of the Gentiles and Peter Hurford's Paeon. Taking a few weeks for the installation and the tuning process, our Music Director Denham Pereira together with renowned organist Nieranjan De Silva and a number of other well-wishers including Eshantha De Andrado who has sung at St. Andrew's at many services, joined forces to ensure that the installation and voicing of the new organ will be complete within the allotted time span. St. Andrew's is most appreciative to the numerous donors who have contributed over the years to the Organ Fund. St. Andrew's Day also marked the debut of the Congregational Choir which led the singing and also sang the anthem, 'Christ be beside me', the lyrics of which are by James Quinn and music by Malcolm Archer.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing."

Magnificat Review

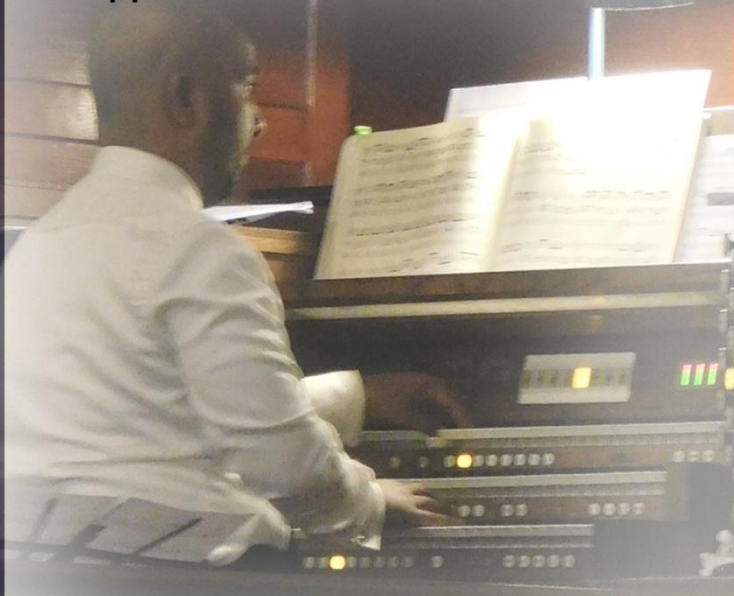


A review of the performance by the Colombo Philharmonic Choir at St. Andrew's Scots' Kirk

The eleven talented musicians of the Colombo Philharmonic Choir accompanied by violin, cello, double bass, timpani and trumpet augmented with the skill of St. Andrew's Music Director Denham Pereira on the organ surely uplifted sacred music in an expansive and challenging repertoire.

Under the baton of conductor Manilal Weerakoon, the programme began with Franz Joseph Haydn's Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo including the distinctive Benedictus with its elegant and expressive Soprano performed by Anagi Perera. Denham Pereira, soloist in Johannes Sebastian Bach's Come down, Jesu, from Heaven to Earth, was followed by Jesu, the very thought of Thee, a relatively modern piece by Edward Bairstow was spiritually soulful. Denham was also skilful in articulating the nuances of one of the 220 compositions by Bavarian born Max Reger's Benedictus.

The programme included Schubert's version of the well known and loved Psalm 23 and O Lorde, the Maker of All Things by John Joubert who is referred to as a British composer as he spent most of his time in Britain but he came originally from South Africa adding to the lustre of the programme. Mendelssohn's Mottete 17, Opus 69, Nr. 1 Nunc Dimittis was written as part of a set of three motets for use in the Anglican Church Services was music to our ears, as was Mozart's Dixit et Magnificat KV 193 which completed the concert to rapturous applause.





ANNUAL BAZAAR



The Annual Bazaar at St Andrew's, held on the 26th of November this year, as always, was a huge success. Everyone, young and old and from near and far enjoyed the afternoon, not only shopping for some great bargains, yummy goodies and lovely craft, but also in watching and cheering the young children who got into the spirit of play with numerous games. The stalls which were overflowing with books, clothes, toys, jewellery, craft, CDs and delicious cakes and brownies, were quickly emptied of their wares, grabbed by the many regulars and even first timers who decided to make their way to the Church.

A team of dedicated volunteers from the Congregation spend weeks planning the Bazaar. All proceeds of the Bazaar go towards sustaining the church projects of Netherlee Cottage and Helping Hands. Various members of the church join in and as always, the Youth Group organised a Car Wash on a Sunday morning, while a Bake Sale after Church on another Sunday donated funds from the children's group. We also gained impressive donations from the Cinnamon Group, A Bours and Arpico, while members from the Korean Church who use the venue for their services on Sunday, made an impressive contribution with some tasty titbits, making for interesting wares on sale at the Bazaar.

The ladies' from Netherlee Cottage too had their stall of arts, craft and jewellery, while the Netherlee Scout Troupe donated plants which were quickly snapped up. Members of the congregation joined in by spring cleaning their homes to offer numerous treasures and apparel manufacturers were also generous with their contributions. The music for the afternoon provided by our very own Church Officer Kumar who donned the cap of DJ for the day, enhanced the festive feeling that permeated throughout.





ST. ANDREW'S SCOTS KIRK CALENDAR DECEMBER 2016/JANUARY 2017

Friday 16th December: Carol Service at 6.30 pm

Thursday 22nd December: Christmas Concert at 7 pm

Saturday 24th December: Christmas Eve Service at 11.30 pm

Sunday 25th December: Christmas Day Service at 9.30 am

Sunday 01st January: New Year's Day Holy Communion Service at 9.30 am

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 **SAINT
ANDREW'S
SCOTS KIRK**
COLOMBO SRI LANKA

