

# Andrew the Saint



Madonna and Child (Benois Madonna) — oil on canvas transferred from wood — widely believed to be by Leonardo Da Vinci, on display at the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia

# **Church of Scotland – Presbyterian**



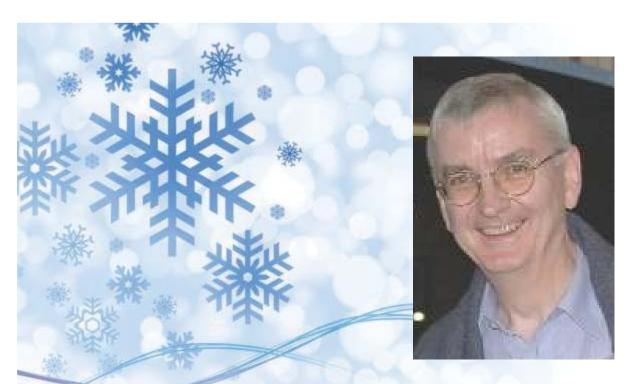
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### Minister's Letter





# Dear friends at St Andrew's Scots Kirk, I send you all my warmest Christmas greetings from my home in Geneva!

It was a pleasure for me to be back with you in Sri Lanka in September, accompanied by Rev. Jimmy Brown. We had a busy few days in Colombo, filled with many meetings and discussions. The primary purpose of our visit was to offer encouragement to your Elders and to the whole congregation as St Andrew's Scots Kirk continues to work towards a stable and happy future. We were delighted to find many signs of good progress being made, as various issues - some of them long standing - are satisfactorily resolved, enabling the congregation led by the Kirk Session, to renew its focus on its mission of spreading the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ in Colombo. (I take this opportunity to thank all the Elders now serving on the Kirk Session and, especially your Session Clerk Chandan de Silva for their devoted leadership and service!)

I'm not sure at this point when I may be back in Colombo, but I do know that Rev. Jimmy Brown, accompanied by some other members of the International Presbytery, will be returning to Colombo for another visit sometime in 2018, when I hope they will see more signs of continued progress

being made. In the meantime, our efforts continue to try to find a Church of Scotland Minister who is prepared to spend some months in Colombo in 2018 as a Locum minister. And it is my hope and prayer that, by the time that Locum Minister leaves St Andrew's Scots Kirk, the process of seeking a new permanent Minister for the congregation will be well underway. In the interim, we remain very grateful for the blessed accompaniment provided to St Andrew's by the dedicated group of local Clergy who lead worship week by week and also serve and support the congregation and its members in other ways.

Christmas is a time for hope for the future. Christmas is about celebrating and remembering the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ whose birth heralded a new era of hope and love for us all. His birth signified peace to all humankind as He Himself is the Prince of Peace. May you feel that sense of hope and peace this Christmastide.

Once again, "Christmas Blessings to you all." And my best wishes also for a happy 2018!

Blessings,

Jim



# News from the International Presbytery



The Mosta Dome

#### Malta

The Republic of Malta, is a Southern European island country consisting of an archipelago in the Mediterranean Sea. The country covers just over 316 km², with a population of fewer than 450,000, making it one of the world's smallest and most densely populated countries. The capital of Malta is Valletta, which at  $0.8 \text{ km}^2$ , is the smallest national capital in the European Union by area. Malta has one national language, which is Maltese, and English as an official language.

King George VI of the United Kingdom awarded the George Cross to Malta in 1942 for the then British colony's bravery in the Second World War. The George Cross continues to appear on Malta's national flag. Under the Malta Independence Act, passed by the British Parliament in 1964, Malta gained independence from the United Kingdom as an independent sovereign Commonwealth realm, officially known from 1964 to 1974 as the State of Malta, with Elizabeth II as its head of state. The country became a republic in 1974, and although no longer a Commonwealth realm, remains a member state of the Commonwealth of Nations. Malta was admitted to the United Nations in 1964 and to the European Union in 2004; in 2008, it became part of the Eurozone.

Malta has a long Christian legacy and its Archdiocese of Malta is claimed to be an apostolic see because, according to Acts of the Apostles, St Paul was shipwrecked on "Melita", now widely taken to be Malta. Catholicism is the official religion in Malta. However, the Constitution also states that all persons in Malta are entitled to the full freedom of conscience and enjoy the free exercise of their respective mode of religious worship.

#### Host church:

The Church is located in the capital city of Valletta and the minister is the Rev. Kim Hurst (from Newcastle, UK). She is a Methodist. The Church alternates between a Church of Scotland and Methodist minister every 5 years. The previous minister was the Rev. Doug McRoberts, who was a member of the Local Church Review in Colombo in 2013 and was our interim moderator before Rev. Roderick Campbell was installed.

The Malta Church is made up of expatriates from many nationalities, has many visitors and is very much mission-oriented. Their mission focuses on homeless destitute women and providing food and medicine for the boat people, who came in their hundreds if not thousands, when Gaddafi was ousted from Libya.

# News from the International Presbytery



The Mosta Dome inside



List of Ministers since 1843



View from the narrow street



Session Clerk Chandan de Silva at the entrance of the Sri Lanka Consulate which is opposite the Church in Malta built in 1843



## News from the International Presbytery





Presbytery Elder Eva Boros from Budapest stands next to the bomb which piereced the Dome's roof but miraculously didn't explode

They claim that the Church is a leader in the philanthropic segment of the community. They have organized a food bank through donations from wholesalers and retailers and the food is given to those in need every week.

It is an elderly congregation and once a month the Church has a "bring and share" lunch. Interestingly, the Sri Lankan consular office in Malta is situated a stones throw away from the Church.

Our accommodation and the venue for the Presbytery meeting was a Jesuit sanctuary called Mount St. Joseph Retreat Centre.

Located nearby was the Mosta Dome, a Catholic church that miraculously survived a direct hit by a German bomb in the Second World War. I walked to the Dome on two occasions and chillingly a Maltese journalist investigating corruption at the highest level of government was assassinated in Mosta less than a week after my visit.

### The meeting:

The Education and Training committee, which met on Friday 6th, discussed a range of topics including:

- 1. The experience of an individual training to become a Reader
- 2. Post ordination support to ministers
- 3. Funding for training

- 4. Study leave for ministers
- 5. Elder training
- 6. Bible Study

A presbytery wide bible study will begin in Advent this year. My recommendations on Elder training was accepted.

The business of the presbytery began on Friday evening and was moderated by Rev. Ewen Maclean.

Rev. Jim Sharp gave a positive report on the Colombo congregation and the Presbytery agreed to renew its efforts to find a Locum, who would pave the way for the calling of a new minister.

A further matter of interest to us is that there would be a Local Church Review in Colombo in 2018 led by Rev. Jimmy Brown. Although dates have not been set as yet June appears to be the likely time for it.

On Saturday evening, the presbyters were driven to 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 church.

#### Chandan de Silva

Session Clerk and Presbytery Elder



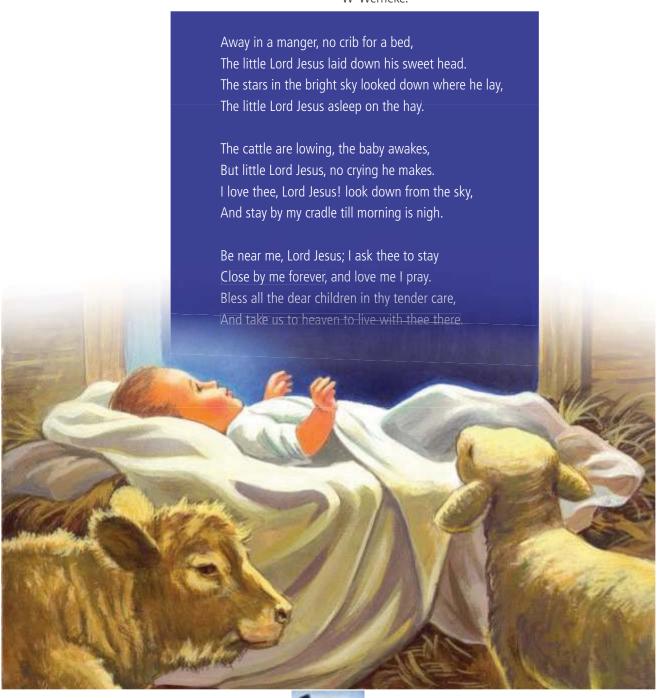
# Christmas Hymn - Away in a Manger

First published in 1887, Away in a Manger appeared in a little book of songs entitled Dainty Songs for Little Lads and Lasses, published in Cincinnati by the John Church Company. However, the origin of this popular Christmas Hymn is shrouded in an almost mythical association with Martin Luther. But this is only because in this book, it was called, Luther's Cradle Hymn, a false premise made by Jams R Murray that Luther composed this hymn and sang it to his children. Hence, to this day, no composer or lyricist has been named for Away in a Manger.

What is factual however is that it's a wholly American product, as suggested by Methodist hymnologist Fred Gealy

but with the original two stanza form birthed from among German Lutherans in Pennsylvania in 1885. This two stanza version appeared in the Sunday School collection, Little Children's Book for Schools and Families published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America. Stanza 3 first appeared in Gabriel's Vineyard Songs in 1892 compiled by Charles H Gabriel.

There is also a suggestion that the only German version of the carol is a clear translation from the English because the metrics of the hymn don't come naturally in German. To add further credence, this version was first included in Christmas Songs and Weihnachts-Leider, a private collection by Herbert W Werneke.



### How Carols became part of Christmas



The birth of Jesus was celebrated with music. Remember: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke2:13-14).

It is historically recorded that from as early as 129 AD, there were specific songs written for Christmas, primarily in Latin. Latin being understood only by the elite churched few, most people were left out of the singing of these hymns. By the middle ages, most Christians had lost interest in singing Christmas carols.

But then along came St Francis of Assisi in 1223, who revived an interest in Christmas by staging musical plays in which the songs were written to be understood by everyone. Most carols are based on light hearted stories and were sung by traveling minstrels who changed the words from town to town to keep the interest going. This music resounded in the streets and homes but not in church. By 1647 however, with the coming of the Puritans to England, the celebration of Christmas and the singing of carols disappeared altogether as they were considered inappropriate. The joy of Christmas and its music however, survived in secret.

William Sandys and Davis Gilbert took the bold step of publishing a collection of Christmas songs, culled from various villages in England. This was in the Victorian era and the singing of Christmas Carols was revived, once more. People began singing in the streets, in homes, in churches and the tradition of carolling was born. In honour of the angels proclamation to the shepherds and the star leading the wise men, the custom of lighting candles while singing on Christmas Eve began and birthed the now popular Candlelight Service.



### Getting to know our Congregation

Ten Qs for Buddhika Chandrasoma

### How would you describe yourself?

I am very determined for the things I believe in and courageous in trying to make things happen. I put these things above my own personal requirements with the exception of my health, food and my clothes.

### What's your family like?

My father is a vegetable farmer near Galle, which is my hometown. I have two younger brothers and a sister. Although we all now live in other places, my mother still manages the family from Galle.

#### What's your day job?

I teach Maths. I see it as a challenge to help those with difficulties and enable them to understand, grow to love the subject and pass their exams.

#### What's your most memorable moment?

When Sri Lanka won the Cricket World Cup in 1996 against Australia in Pakistan

### How do you relax?

I love the beach — feeling the breeze, experience the open space and also the jungle to enjoy the natural beauty. My passion is to watch and get involved in making films and writing scripts, especially for documentaries. I watch a variety of films and documentaries from history, to adventure, romances, fiction and non-fiction and animations. I also read in-depth on philosophy.

#### Three things you can't do without?

Exercise, friends and travel

### What is your favourite food?

Seafood, cooked every which way - not surprising since I grew up near the sea.



#### What annoys you?

Loud noises especially from buses, people smoking and chewing betel and spitting, irresponsible disposing of garbage.

#### Who is your role model?

My Grandfather influenced me greatly. He served with the British Army and the police during the British Period in Sri Lanka. He always said that the Scots are special people.

#### Why do you worship at St Andrew's?

The friendly environment and mix of nationalities. I have been worshipping at St. Andrew's for seven years. However, I came here accidentally. I used to be a regular at the American Center Library and noticed the church one day and was attracted to the call, 'All are welcome'. And that's exactly what I found at St. Andrew's, which accepted me into its family. I am a member of the Netherlee Team and enjoy the challenging work to improve the lifestyles of the residents there.

### The beginnings of The Church of Scotland

It was in 1833 that Missionaries from The Church of Scotland first arrived in Sri Lanka. The first Church of Scotland stood initially on Princes Street (now Prince Street) in the Pettah in 1841. In 1882, Presbyterians from both the Dutch and Scottish traditions united to form the Presbytery of Lanka. There are several twinnings between Churches in Scotland and Sri Lanka, one being St Andrew's Scots Kirk, which moved to its present location in 1907. Below are some lesser known facts about the beginnings of The Church of Scotland and those who influenced the birth of The Church of Scotland.



Christianity was supposedly birthed in Scotland through the Ministry of St Ninian in A.D. 397.

St Columba in A.D.563 made the next Evangelistic 'thrust' with a Celtic bias.

Until the time of the reformation in November 1517, the Church in Scotland was a part of the Roman Catholic Church.

Patrick Hamilton was the first Scotsman to influence the Christians with Protestant-reformed ideas. He, in turn, while in Europe, was influenced by the teachings of Martin Luther.

Hamilton was burnt at the stake in 1528 and was martyred for the Protestant cause as a heretic, through the efforts of Archbishop Beaton, the Roman Catholic Archbishop at that time in Scotland.

George Wishart was the next great protestant reformer in Scotland. He came under the influence of Huldrych Zwingli, the leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, while a student in Europe.

Wishart was also martyred due to being a heretic in 1546, on the instructions of Archbishop David Beaton who was the nephew of the man who burnt Hamilton at the stake.

The next and perhaps the best known Protestant Reformer in Scotland was John Knox. He was influenced by John Calvin while in Europe and in 1549, was licensed as a Minister of the Church of England.

In 1560, the Scottish Parliament met and passed an Act to break away from the authority of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. The Church of Scotland was now the reformed protestant Official Church of Scotland referred to as the Kirk.

It rejected the office of Bishops and became Presbyterian in its form of church government, accepting all the main principles of the Reformation.

Sadly, many denominations began to be formed, but all embracing the Protestant reformed doctrine and the Presbyterian form of church government.

The Free Church of Scotland, United Free Church, Free church (continuing), Free Presbyterian Church, and Reformed Presbyterian are the major ones.

The Church of Scotland accepts in its entirety the '5 solas', which are pillars of the Reformation. They are to do with Salvation in the Christian Faith.

- Sola Scriptura by the Scriptures alone
- Sola Fide by faith alone
- Sola gratia by grace alone
- Sola Christus by Christ alone



### TEN Little Known Facts About Christmas



- 2. X'mas is abbreviated most often because of ancient tradition. X is the Greek letter 'chi', the abbreviation for the word 'Christ' in Greek
- 3. Christmas is a contraction of "Christ's Mass," which is derived from the Old English Cristes mæsse (first recorded in 1038)
- 4. During the Christmas of 1914 (World War 1), a truce was held between Germany and the UK. They decorated their shelters, exchanged gifts across no man's land and played a game of football
- 5. The people of Oslo, Norway donate the Trafalgar Square Christmas tree every year in gratitude to the people of London for their assistance during WWII
- 6. The nativity story resulted in several wars. In the first few centuries of the Christian era, controversy over whether or not Jesus was divine at birth created political and social unrest that frequently burst out into full-scale warfare
- 7. "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" was originally a threat. The ever-popular song was originally sung, loudly and repeatedly, by crowds of rowdy, lower-class servants demanding booze from their masters... or else. (I.e. "We won't go until we get some!")
- 8. The traditional three colors of Christmas are green, red, and gold. Green has long been a symbol of life and rebirth; red symbolizes the blood of Christ and gold represents light as well as wealth
- 9. The first person to decorate a Christmas tree was reportedly Martin Luther.

  According to legend, he was so moved by the beauty of the stars shining between the branches of a fir tree, he brought home an evergreen tree and decorated it with candles to share the image with his children
- 10. In Poland, spiders or spider webs are common Christmas tree decorations because according to legend, a spider wove a blanket for Baby Jesus. In fact, Polish people consider spiders to be symbols of goodness and prosperity at Christmas.

### Celtic Connections



You could easily be forgiven for thinking that Dollar's connection to Sri Lanka and Colombo started eight years ago in 2009. It certainly was the first visit for the Dollar Academy Pipe Band but the association and the friendships nurtured started long before that.

One may also think the link was established when Rev. John and Patricia Purves moved to Sri Lanka from their Parish in Dollar to start their good work in 2003. John, wearing his other hat as Chieftain of The Caledonian Society of Sri Lanka, certainly was instrumental in inviting the Pipe Band, as well as establishing a connection with Dollar Academy and their charities committee. Pupils walked many miles to raise funds that John so ably directed to the most desperate areas. It is thought provoking how a little effort in the Ochil Hills behind Dollar in Scotland can help others on the other side of the world.

It was when Reverend Andrew Hughes, a Padre in the Army at the time who was posted to Ceylon in 1942 that the link was established. He was Minister of the Church of Scotland that returned to Dollar to preach. His daughter survives him and tells wonderful tales of her father's overseas work. Along the way our stories have also rekindled memories from other former pupils of Dollar, whose families lived and worked in Ceylon even earlier than Rev. Hughes' posting.

Andrew of Galilee, the son of Zebedee and brother of Simon Peter, has a special place in the family of saints. He is known as the protocletos, that is, 'the first called' (John 1 verses 40 and 41). For many years, on or around 30 November, St Andrew's Scots Kirk has celebrated the "feast (=festival) day" of the Patron Saint of Scotland with a bazaar and a service of worship.In more recent years, the distinctively Scottish flavour of these services has been provided by members of the Dollar Academy Pipe Band, the current World Juvenile Champions.

It was back in 2009 that the Rev John Purves, then Chieftain of the Caledonian Society and Minister at St Andrew's Scots Kirk, offered an invitation to the Academy. He was able to do this because, before coming to Sri Lanka in 2003, he had been Chaplain to the Dollar Academy. It was a great pleasure for him to welcome - amongst the first of those to come - two young people whom he had christened as babies back in Scotland. The connection continues through Lt Colonel Craig Stewart, Contingent Commander of the Combined Cadet Force at Dollar Academy and his wife, Gillian.

In November, Dollar Academy was back within the portals of St. Andrew's — welcomed as they were by the congregation who look forward to this annual ritual at the Sunday Service and the revellers who enjoy the merrymaking at the St. Andrew's Ball.

### Celtic Connections



A Week in Sri Lanka by Greddie – The Pipe Major

**1** 

#### Arrival

Leaving Dollar on a dreacht (damp, misty, cold)
Remembrance Sunday morning, we arrived safely in Colombo,
to meet the members of the Caledonian Society of Colombo for
supper in the evening of a very long day.

**2** 

### **2** Getting British

was all about sharing cultural experiences, as well as entertaining the youngsters at The British Council with our Music. We talked about the instruments and how to wear a kilt. We introduced the children to each section of the Pipe Band. Katy began with the tenor drum showing them a few flourishes as well as the sound it makes; Molly presented the snare drum startling the children with the noise it created; I then played 'Scotland the Brave' on the Pipes. We were all dressed in our kilts, not quite the most suitable attire for Sri Lanka since we were playing outside. Ending the day, we met with the Caledonian Society at the BHC to practice Scotlish Country Dancing with H.E. James Dauris. Our lesson for this day was "not to wear black socks in Sri Lanka as they attract the mosquitoes".



DAY

### 3 Elephants

Despite a rather wet afternoon, our visit to the Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage gave us a chance to enjoy the elephants, watching them wallowing in the mud and even getting a change to feed them fruit. The noise they made even before we saw them, as they called to each other before coming out from the narrow street and getting into the wide river was quite deafening. In ten minutes, the place was filled with elephants, splashing and rolling in the water. We finished the day at Stenart Hotel entertaining the quests with the sounds of Scotland and meeting the Chief Executive of the oldest trading company in Sri Lanka!

DAY

### 4 The British High Commission

We dressed up in full Number Twos to perform for His Excellency James Dauris. We performed for an audience that included members of the Foreign Office, the Association of British Residents and the Caledonian Society of Sri Lanka, followed by lunch. We all thoroughly enjoyed a curry in the company of H.E. and his fellow employees during which we discovered some of the work undertaken at the High Commission and lengthy discussions regarding career paths. This was very much an appropriate topic as all five of us are midway through university applications. It was also interesting to find out that the table we ate on, was in fact, the table the Maldives signed their treaty of independence.



### Celtic Connections

### The link between St Andrew's Scots Kirk Colombo and Dollar Academy



### 5 The Caledonian Society St Andrews Ball

The team worked tirelessly preparing the venue, rehearsing our programme and enjoying and company and entertaining almost 300 quests at the Galadari Hotel. Numerous patrons of the hotel sneaked in to watch our rehearsals, ignoring the importance of their own conference. Many photographs were taken as we chatted with a huge and diverse number of visitors and locals. It was an extremely rewarding day, finishing well after midnight with many happy memories.



### St Andrews Scots Kirk and the Ceylon Motor Yacht Club

We all enjoyed the very friendly welcome at St
Andrew's Scots Kirk, a beautiful Church with amazing
acoustics. We played before, during and after the service
and I also had the opportunity of reading the Lesson.
The visit to the Ceylon Yacht Club is a tradition to
witness the Yacht Race competing for a Quaich (a
receptacle to share a measure of whisky with your
friends) which was donated by the Caledonian Society of
Colombo.



### 6 'Twas a day to chill!





### 8 Safely Home

There is something comforting about returning home. For the duration of last week we did miss the pea soup fog, the ice on the windscreen, the Old Grey School and the fair Green Valley; perhaps, some more than others!! Monday morning was the time for goodbyes and the final day of a most successful trip filled with many happy memories. A very special thank you to everyone that made this trip such a success, particularly our old and new friends in Sri Lanka.



# Hidden meanings behind Christmas songs



White Christmas

Irving Berlin, a Russian Jewish immigrant, wrote "White Christmas" while working in Arizona, or possibly New York, and missing his family. The song, which contains only 54 words and 67 notes was aired on the radio shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and, when performed overseas the following Christmas, it reminded homesick soldiers of their families.

#### Jingle Bells

There is one word significantly lacking in this song: "Christmas." This rather wholesome holiday carol is actually thought to have been written as a drinking song for Thanksqiving, among other possibilities.

#### Carol of the Bells

This song was originally not about Christmas. It was a Ukrainian folk chant called "Shchedryk" that welcomed the spring and described a bird flying into someone's house to tweet about good fortune. Composer Peter Wilhousky heard the chant performed and wrote the English lyrics to the popular fast-paced "Carol of the Bells."

#### The 12 Days of Christmas

This was actually written as an act of rebellion, centuries ago when Catholicism was outlawed, and each verse references religious beliefs. But sung as the carol, it could be performed

in public without fear of persecution. The "True Love" refers to God and the "partridge in a pear tree" is code for Jesus dying on the wooden cross.

### Winter Wonderland

Richard Smith, who wrote the lyrics, penned them while being treated for tuberculosis at the West Mountain Sanitarium. Some claim the nostalgic song was inspired by his memories of playing in the show, which he saw children do outside his window.

#### **Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer**

The story of the scrappy young reindeer who felt like an outcast but ended up saving Christmas for everyone was actually autobiographical. The song was written by Robert L. May, who, having skipped grades, was younger than his classmates and felt that he didn't belong. He wrote himself into Rudolph, who was first envisioned as a children's book before becoming a Christmas song.

#### Do You Hear What I Hear?

This song, written by Noël Regney and Gloria Shayne Baker, was penned as a response to the Cold War. When sung in a church, "a star, a star, dancing in the night with a tail as big as a kite," refers to the star of Bethlehem, but, in historical context, also describes a nuclear missile.

### Netherlee News

British High Commissioner James Dauris and his wife Helen enjoyed lunch during their visit to Netherlee Cottage to see the new mattresses that had been purchased with the proceeds from a "Recital of British Songs". The recital featured songs from the First World War which they hosted at Westminster House last year.

They were joined by the doctors and nurses of the

Mulleriyawa Hospital, members of the Association of British Residents and the two artistes, tenor Harin Amirthanathan and pianist Johann Pieris. The event was organised by the ABR for Netherlee Cottage.

The Netherlee Cottage Project works very closely with Mulleriyawa Mental Health Hospital to rehabilitate ladies to move to independent living.





**Johann Pieris** 



Harin Amirthanathan



# Bible study with father kokki

Father Lokki conducts an extremely informative (with a little dash of humour thrown in now and then) bible study every fortnight at 6 pm at the Manse. Currently, we are studying the Book of Acts. However, due to Acts being inextricably intertwined with the Gospels, we also refer frequently to the Books of Matthew and Luke.

The Acts of the Apostles is referred to in the Bible as Volume 2 of Luke's work and tells the story of the life of the early Church, the roots of Christianity and how the teachings spread from Jerusalem across the lands.

Please drop in for a vadai, tea and food for thought. All are welcome!

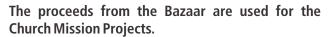




### St Andrew's Scots Kirk Bazaar

Despite the damp weather, unprecedented crowds were in full force to enjoy the festive atmosphere at this year's Bazaar. The tents were brimming, the bargains were amazing and entertainment by our youth group and the Netherlee Scout Troupe, exciting.

The home-made ginger beer, which our bazaar is famed for produced by a member of our congregation, Swiss delicacies by A Baur & Company, crafts from Netherlee Cottage, donations of branded apparel manufactured in Sri Lanka bound for international markets, cakes presented by the surrounding five star hotels and some made by members of our congregation and many unique and unusual gifts donated by well wishers, gave the crowds present lots to place in their gift bags, in time for Christmas. The games stall gave the young ones a chance to show off their skills. Another unique feature was the wholehearted participation of the Korean Church who worship at St. Andrew's every Sunday morning, maximising their contribution towards the Church funds.













# St Andrew's Scots Kirk Bazaar











# St Andrew's Scots Kirk Bazaar

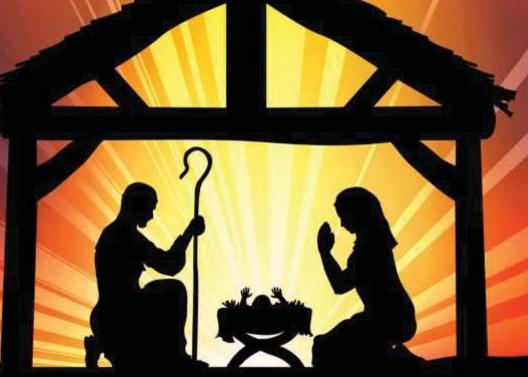






# Upcoming Services at St Andrews







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