

**THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

*A Member of the Anglican Communion*



**ELIE:**

**ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS:**

SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SC0 05954

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Mrs Jan Stacey

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**PITTENWEEM:**

**ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST**

SCOTTISH CHARITY NO: SC0 10982

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**COMBINED CHURCH WEBSITE:** [www.eastneuk-episcopal.co.uk](http://www.eastneuk-episcopal.co.uk)



**Sunday Services (Holy Communion):**

**St Michael's = 9.45am**

**St John's = 11.30am**

**On-line resources can be found at:**

**Sunday Worship from St. John's is currently being live-streamed.**

For details please contact St. John's Secretary.

**SEC Eucharist** each Sunday at 11am [www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship](http://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship)

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## A Seasonal Reflection from Steve

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### IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS .....

By way of a 'follow-up' to my contribution last month, the nights, as they say where I come from, 'are fair draw'n in'. Even in 'normal times' we'd be instinctively hunkering down for a long stretch of winter, and going to great lengths to compensate for the cold and the darkness which will dominate our day to day lives. Keeping warm is a pre-requisite for our species in this part of the world, and we expend enormous resources, privately and publicly to make that a priority. However, *illuminating* our world is arguably a greater priority, because we need it – not only in order to function, but in order to light up our whole being – our interests, our cultural nourishment, our mood, our companionship, and so much else. Of course, there is much to enjoy about the cosiness of winter nights. The Danes are renowned for making an art of it in their pursuit of 'hygge' – this interest with all things cosy is credited as one of the reasons why Denmark is always at the top of the list of the world's happiest countries, despite their infamously miserable winters (Anne-Marie can keep us right about the reality of this!...).

Our circumstances just now, still in the grip of necessary restrictions, mean that many of the things we'd normally do to 'illuminate' our lives at this time of year are missing – visiting friends and family, inviting folk round for a meal, meeting others for a drink, going out to choir practice, going to concerts or the theatre or sports events, or even heading off for a week or two in the sun. Compared with the lockdown experience of the Spring and Summer, it feels much more like being 'the people who walk in darkness' – and perhaps more than ever, we feel the need to 'see a great light'. Nothing can diminish the powerful light of Christ in the story of our world, and in our lifelong personal experience. We are continually impressed by the warmth and light of Christ's teaching and mysterious presence, as week by week we retell and rehearse the stories that are at once both familiar and challenging in new ways.

Jesus knew the importance and power of light in a dark world. Light as a metaphor for the divine, is, after all, drawn from the inspiration provided by the experience of material light. Jesus' identification of himself as the "light of the world" in John 8:12 is delivered against the backdrop of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2). The feast involved the illumination of the Temple from the Court of Women. This area was surrounded by deep galleries of spectators with a view of four great candelabra, which, when lit, were said to light up every courtyard in the city. It is not hard to imagine something of how the effects of this artificial light could have provided inspiration for Jesus' words.

If we try to imagine this scene – say, as it might be filmed for a movie, we might be more aware that a crucial part of the inspiration of light is the beauty in the interplay of light and shadow. No photographer, artist, exhibition curator or theatre director wants to frame an image using bright, overhead or uniform light. Shadow is to be distinguished from darkness, since it comprises a plethora of levels of coloured light of varying intensity and, like light in its material form, should be liberated from its metaphorical association with ignorance, sin and death. There are no simple shadows. Those cast by 'point' sources of light (a bright single source, like a spotlight) will be darker, with sharp edges. This area (the 'umbra') is totally hidden from the point source. Extended sources of light, like the sun, cast both an umbra and a 'penumbra' – a softer, and variable quality of shadow.

Likewise, the colour of shadow will depend on the colour of the light shining into it, the intrinsic colour of the object on which the shadow is cast, and the psychological factor of the adaptation of the eye. In a famous 1933 essay, "In Praise of Shadows", the novelist Tanizaki celebrates the traditional Japanese aesthetic of subdued interiors and argues for its preservation in the face of encroaching commitment to ever brighter illumination. Beauty, he says, "must always grow from the realities of life, and our ancestors, forced to live in dark rooms, presently came to discover beauty in shadows, ultimately to guide shadows towards beauty's ends." There is, he says, a sacredness about the beauty found in the sculpture of shadow against shadow, and the use of material and colours that respond mysteriously to fragile light (as in the impalpable, faltering candle flame collecting in pools against lacquer-ware or gold leaf). In one way I think maybe Tanizaki would approve of our current church lighting... but there are still beauteous enhancements that should be made!

We are undoubtedly living in shadowlands this winter, and my prayer for all of us is that God may grant us the gift of seeing that there is beauty in the shadows cast by the light of Christ this Advent and Christmas.

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### SPECIAL SERVICES AND DATES TO NOTE:

- \*Sunday, 13th December** — Bishop Ian will preside at both our Sunday services
- \*Friday, 25th December** — 9.45 am: Christmas Eucharist at St. Michael's  
— **Christmas Day** — 11.30am: Christmas Eucharist at St. John's
- Saturday, 26th December — St Stephen
- Sunday, 27th December** — St John the Evangelist \*
- Wednesday, 6th January — The Epiphany

*\* = Some years ago it was decided that St John's in Pittenweem would observe their Patronal Festival on a date other than 27th so as to give clearance from the Christmas season. The day chosen for this was 6th May which is the Feast of St John at the Latin Gate (the same St. John the Evangelist!)*

**ADVENT AT ST. JOHN'S:** 29th Nov. = Steve Butler      6th Dec. = David Andrews  
13th Dec. = Bp Ian Paton      20th Dec. = Graham Forbes

The Scottish Episcopal Church will have special services streamed on line for Advent and Christmas. Check the SEC website at: [www.scotland.anglican.org](http://www.scotland.anglican.org)

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### CHURCH NEWS

#### ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS:

**St. Michael's:** After the Sunday service on 6th December.

**St. John's:** Sunday, 13th December at 3.00 pm.

St John's annual meeting will take place by Zoom due to Covid restrictions

The Annual Report will be sent out by email in advance of the meeting and the Zoom details will be sent nearer the 13th.

#### HARVEST AT ST MICHAEL'S:

Thanks must be expressed to the members of St. Michael's congregation who gave £220 to the East Neuk Food Bank in the collection at the service on 11th October.

Richard Wemyss, the food bank co-ordinator, thanked church members for their generosity.

Books, those companions to most of us throughout our lives, affect each of us in different ways. In our early years they give us the jolly nursery rhymes that stick with us seemingly forever plus the classic stories of gingerbread people or even gingerbread houses, wolves in red capes, lost glass slippers, giant beanstalks or families of porridge-eating bears — and we accept them all as perfectly normal. Later, books are greeted with less acceptance as we see them as intrinsically part of our education but hopefully we still continue to find refuge in books of our own choosing and through them we get glimpses into other people's lives, other people's views, discover other ways of living and learn about the wider world outside our own boundaries. Over time, some of those books become precious friends; not all are great literature but are simply small keepsakes that continue to hold their magic over the passing decades as constant companions through life.

One such for me is a little book called "*Round the Swedish Year*". It was a gift from a Swedish friend whom I met when we were both 19 and working temporarily in a boys' prep. school in Perthshire in those far-off days when you could take on a job for a short time and move on to another with comparative ease, with no-one raising an eye-brow or saying you were a time-waster. This little book allowed me a glimpse in to my friend's life when she returned home to Sweden and I still dip into every so often, but have now to remind myself that the Sweden of 50 years ago is likely to have changed a great deal from the cosy pictures the book evokes in me — but I hope not too much. The book takes us through a typical Swedish year via a series of little vignettes of life in a country of summers full of long magical hours of light where the sun never seems to set, then to the other extreme where winters are full of snow, icicles and frosty air and where daily life is lived in almost total darkness. This little book is not a great work of art or a literary classic, nor ever likely to be discussed by a book group, but is for me simply a little book to dip into in those odd quiet moments of repose and offers a small window into gentle escapism — and that is surely something we all badly need just now. The following wee chapter is typical:

### **Advent Candles**

One small candle. A 'living light', as it is so aptly named in Swedish. Such is the simple harbinger of the Swedish Christmas.

On the first Sunday in Advent, all Swedish families take out a special candlestick. Traditionally, it is an oblong brass container with holders for four candles in a row. The candles are always white and often hand-dipped. Bedded down around their base are moss and lichen from the forest.

One candle is lit on Advent Sunday and allowed to burn down a little way. On the Second Sunday, both the first candle and the next are lit for a while; and so on until, on the Fourth Sunday, the candles look like a small row of organ pipes. Their four-fold light means that Christmas is almost here. And because light is such a precious thing during the darkness of winter, this Advent candlestick is often placed in the windowsill or on the dining-room table to be the focus of all eyes. Many families, too, hang a large Star of Bethlehem in their windows when Advent begins. Its gold or red light throws a welcome glow in the darkness outside. Blocks of flats sparkle with light every evening as the bulbs in these stars are switched on. Country roads seem less lonely with a shining star in a cottage window sending out its sheering beam.

Advent candle and Advent star — these are the special lights of December in this northern land. But they are also the chosen representatives and forerunners of hosts of others; for this darkest month of the Swedish year is brightened by candles. In the Handicraft shops a correspondingly varied selection of candlesticks — of metal, glass, ceramic, wood, tall or low, and nearly always hand-made, are to be had, eloquent symbols of a preoccupation with light.

In October I retired after 35 years as a Sheriff during which time I dealt with a very large number of cases from Serious Crime to Matrimonial Disputes, from Fatal Accident Inquiries to the granting of authority to disinter remains. The scope of the work grew each year as the Scottish and British Parliaments had a convenient place to allow anybody to challenge a decision or to seek a remedy. I dealt with Search Warrants to find drugs, stolen property, illegal stills, (yes they do exist), Bank Accounts, telephone or internet records and even missing children when one parent had "kidnapped" them. Much of a Sheriff's work is done in his or her room before or after the Court sits. Those who suggest that the Judiciary, at best, works from 10 to 4 with an hour+ for lunch ignore all the paper work including undefended divorces which are disposed of in the background.

The majority of my cases were criminal and on the whole they did not give me too much concern. Sometimes I had one that gave me great anxiety. One was a youth convicted of indecently assaulting a young girl. That she had been attacked was never in doubt. She and her 8-year-old friend were honest and straightforward and could not be shaken in their identification of the red headed accused. The problem for me was that they only saw the young man for the first time since the crime, 9 months later when they were playing in a park. The youth had no idea what he had been doing on a particular day 9 months before except to say that he had never seen the children ever, had never been in trouble, and had certainly never touched any child as was alleged.

I believed him; I felt that one girl had seen a red headed boy and pointed him out to the victim and both then became convinced that it was the correct man. The jury convicted by a majority, I had to accept their decision and reluctantly I imprisoned the accused for what was a nasty crime. I, however, still feel that there was a miscarriage of justice.

There were of course cases where in my view Juries cleared the blatantly Guilty. Once I was so angry that I swept off the bench, spoiling the effect totally by knocking over my glass of water and soaking the Sheriff Clerk!

I rarely worried about punishing the wicked; if my sentence was too harsh then the Appeal Court could rectify it. I did however have more difficulty in jailing females. Those who argue that the Courts, and in particular male judges, are unfair to females are, in my perception, wrong. None of us ever got any pleasure from depriving a fellow human of his or her liberty. In the case of women, I believe the punishment is harsher. My view arises from a visit I paid to the then Female Prison at Cornton Vale. I visited a number of prisons and custody establishments to try to understand the conditions etc.

During my visit to Cornton Vale I noticed and commented on the view from one of the rooms which looked across the fields towards the railway line where trains going to Glasgow, Edinburgh and the north passed regularly. The assistant Governor explained that this caused distress as the prisoners saw trains going towards their homes. The absence of home generally affects women far more than men. Thus depriving them of their base, contact with their children etc is an additional burden.

Fines are intended to be a measured punishment and often I found that payment took second place to alcohol, tobacco or drugs. Requiring those who willfully failed to pay, to empty their pockets and produce money from hidden sources or face prison had a major effect. On one occasion the Clerk ended the Means Court with more than £5,500 in cash. There is a myth that





## **WE MEET ONE OF OUR ECUMENCIAL PARTNERS, DANIEL POLLIN**

*Daniel, who is the Pastor of the Coastline Community Church in Pittenweem, very kindly agreed to a request to introduce himself, although he perhaps needs very little introduction having been busy working in Pittenweem for the last ten years.*

*My thanks to Daniel for sharing his story with us, — Janis Irvine*

The old John Denver song, ‘Country Roads’ was something that we used to sing a lot at our Primary School discos, except we changed the ending a wee bit. ‘Country Roads, take me home, to the place that I belong, Carrickfergus – Co Antrim – Norn’ Ireland!’ In many ways that is a good summation of me. I am a country lad. I grew up on the family farm that has been in the family for over 300 years. Our roots are deep in Co. Antrim and we live near a town called Carrickfergus, famous for the ballad ‘I wish I were in Carrickfergus’. We have Scottish roots too, like many in Antrim; my mum’s side were hardy Scots settlers called McGookin & Eakin. My name came from Dad’s side; Pollin which hails from Naples. Apparently, we came across with a rebellion and stayed!

I was born in 1988 in the grand old town of Larne. Believe it or not, when I was born I was premature and my lungs didn’t work properly, something that has since been remedied! Thankfully, I grew up at the tail end of the troubles although it did weigh heavily on our family. My dad was a policeman and many on both sides of the family were either in the police or security forces. I say this not as a source of sorrow however as it was life, and we made the best of it. It does give you a different perspective in many ways. When Malin (my wife, who comes from Sweden) and I went on one of our first dates I remember the train being held up. Malin asked what might have caused the delay I responded by saying ‘O, it’s probably a bomb’. ‘A bomb?! What do you mean?’ To which I, perplexed, responded, ‘Sure it’s only a bomb, calm down!’

It was in NI that I got the call to Ministry, the Pastor was preaching from 2 Corinthians chapter 5. ‘Be ye reconciled to God through Christ’ and the latter part ‘Be Ambassadors of Christ’. What gripped me was the overall message of God’s redeeming love for us through Jesus’ death on the cross and the resurrection. And the call to respond to that love with faith and then go out and show it to the world. This has been at the heart of what drives me. I then tested that call with 3 years at Queens University Belfast during which time I did church planting in West Belfast. This was followed by 6 months as an associate pastor in Seattle, USA. Then thanks to a German friend, a piece of paper and the Stena Line, I came to Pittenweem in January 2010.

There is more that could be said but I hope this gives you a brief sketch of my life so far. If you want to know more I am always happy (in these Covid times) to stop on the street for a blether.

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## ST JOHN'S AND THE HORSBURGH CONNECTION ..... PART 2!! — *Janis Irvine*

In November's newsletter I gave details of the Horsburgh family members who were the generous benefactors of the large stained glass window at St John's side altar. As is normal practice, the newsletter went on to our combined church website and, in an extraordinary happenchance, the Horsburgh article was read by a lady from London, Mary Livingston, who, as a direct descendent of Harriet Pote, had done a considerable amount of research on both the Pote, Bruce and Horsburgh families. Mary got in touch with me and most generously offered to give me her research material that I now have to hand. This material fleshes out in considerable depth the article I had been able to put together and gives a truly fascinating picture of the life of many Horsburgh family members of Pittenweem.



It would seem that James Horsburgh (1775-1856), father of Bengal Chaplain, Andrew, had been a friend of Harriet Pote's first husband, Alexander Bruce and, when her husband died, James Horsburgh then married her and took on her children. Going back a generation, and as mentioned in the November article, James Horsburgh's father was Andrew Horsburgh (1745-1827) and is described as a wright and designer/architect of Pittenweem. What I learned from Mary's notes was that this Andrew Horsburgh was the designer of Carnbee Kirk (1793). This fact was of some interest to me as members of my own maternal family were living in Carnbee at that time, right up to the beginning of the twentieth century and some are buried in Carnbee kirkyard. James inherited his family's properties in Pittenweem in 1816 and bought the estate of Firth, Lilliesleaf parish, Roxburghshire.



James Horsburgh was a merchant in India early in his life and returned to Scotland circa 1813. He became a councillor in Pittenweem in 1823, a bailie in 1825 and then provost in 1831. It was James who had the new town hall built on to the existing priory buildings in Pittenweem in 1821-22 and was responsible for clearing the burgh of much debt as well as making many improvements around the town before retiring in 1852. This means that the 'new' town hall will be celebrating its 200th anniversary in 2021. James died in 1856 and a portrait of him was made from a family miniature in 1858 and hung in the Pittenweem council chambers.

The Horsburgh family vault is in the old Kirk yard and next to it are the burial plots of James and of Harriet with Horsburgh memorial tablets on the wall behind them.

One of Harriet Pote's children by her first husband, Alexander Bruce, who became one of James Horsburgh's family after his marriage to Harriet, was Henry Alexander Bruce who went on to study at St Andrews then Edinburgh university, becoming a doctor of medicine in 1829. He had a long and distinguished career in Bengal where he had gone soon after graduating.

By 1881 Henry had returned to Scotland and was living in Midlothian, then by 1891, now a widower, he was living in Collinswell House, Burntisland with a butler, a cook, a housemaid and a kitchen maid. He died suddenly in 1894. His death was registered by his half-brother, Andrew Horsburgh, the Bengal Chaplain who was by then living in Edinburgh and is cited in the wall brass plate to the right of St John's Horsburgh window.

The Times for 10th May 1894 gives the following obituary for Henry Bruce:

*"We have to record the death on May 8 of Dr H A Bruce, Principal Inspector-General of Her Majesty's Forces, and late of the Bengal Medical Service, in his 87th year. Dr Bruce studied at the University of St Andrews, and subsequently at the University of Edinburgh, where he graduated M.D. in 1829. In 1830 he was appointed to the Bengal Medical Service, and he rose by selection through all the administrative grades to be its head. In 1832, when in medical charge of the 24th Regiment N.I., he joined the field force acting against the insurgent Khols. In 1838, when in medical charge of the 35th N.I., he joined the army of the Indus, then assembling at Perozepore, for the invasion of Afghanistan, and he was appointed staff-surgeon to the second division of that army. He accompanied the army on its long march to Cabul, and he was present at the brilliant storming and capture of Ghuznee (Ghazni) on July 23, 1839 for which he received the medal. His regiment formed the garrison of Cabul*

*during the severe winter of 1839 and in September 1840 he crossed the Hindoo Koosh in medical charge of the force under Brigadier Dennie, being present at the Battle of Bamiyan on September 18, when forces under Dost Mahomed were believed to be finally crushed."*

The extended members of the Horsburgh family show a truly remarkable number leading exemplary lives of service to others — and there may yet be more stories to tell from the archive material we have received from Mary Livingston to whom I record my immense gratitude.

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## **GOOD NEWS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED ....**

**Pittenweem Craft Group:** This year the Pittenweem Arts Festival may have been cancelled but many of the artists have adapted and shown their work on line. Anne-Marijke Querido and other members of the local craft group who each year produce a wide variety of lovely hand-worked items which are sold to visitors to raise funds for local charities didn't take a break despite the cancellation. The group decided to make face masks which were sold in aid of the East Neuk Community Emergency Planning Team. Anne-Marijke took the task to heart and couldn't stop. Making 8 masks a week she had made 100 by August and 200 by October raising £1,100 for the charity. As of the end of November she had made another 50.

**Pittenweem Hub:** The Hub won a Scotland-wide accolade after being recommended by grateful customers as a High Street Hero for the way they have gone that extra mile since the pandemic began. One of just a handful in Fife to receive a Highly Recommended place, the combined pharmacy, shop, post office and newsagent has delivered medications, groceries, and newspapers, as well as picking up letters and packages for posting, making lock-down that much easier for very many in the community.

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## **CHARITY — AN UPDATE ON MARY'S MEALS:**

A few years ago St. John's raised funds for Mary's Meals, a charity founded by Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow of Dalmally, Argyll, which aims to provide a lunch-time meal every day to school children in countries that face enormous challenges. The simple staple meals of porridge or maize etc. are cooked by local women and the food is, as far as possible, prepared with local produce. The charity started in 2002 with the aim of feeding 200 children in Malawi and now feeds more than a million and a half youngsters in over 18 countries. This meal encourages the children to go to school and gives them the energy to be able to learn. It may be the only meal they have in a day. It is, in essence, a win-win situation but in the simplest of terms but which has quite literally changed lives and even changed the well-being and prosperity of whole communities. Many of the children who were the first recipients of the food programme are now young adults who are playing prominent roles in their villages as teachers, medics and leaders.

This year's pandemic has had a big impact on communities as all the countries served have been affected. Schools were closed and those involved in the running of Mary's Meals had to respond quickly to find ways of continuing to feed each child despite the huge difficulties. In some places food pick up points were installed while in others food was delivered to individual homes. Soap and hygiene information were added to the deliveries. Almost all children have been contacted and fed despite the immense logistical challenges. This has gone on despite Ebola in Liberia, famine in East Africa and conflict in South Sudan.

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow gives the following: *"From the very beginning of this mission we have chosen to work in uncertain, challenging, and even frightening environments. It could be said they are our natural habitat. They are where we want to be because one of the reasons for our very existence is to be a sign of hope for those who suffer in such places."*

*"Delivering Hope"; those were the words we chose to write on the little truck full of gifts that we used to drive into Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war there. Perhaps during this global pandemic, more than ever before, we have a responsibility to be a sign of hope. Through our little acts of kindness we strive to provide evidence of a love that does not give up and that will never rest until it finds a way to keep its promise,"*

You can find out more about Mary's Meals at: [marysmeals.org.uk](http://marysmeals.org.uk)

The web site will also lead you to an inspiring film "Love Reaches Everywhere" with Gerard Butler. The actor joined Magnus MacFarlane Barrow to promote the charity's work in Haiti and Liberia.

Until 31st January, 2021, public donations made to Mary's Meals 'Double The Love' appeal will be matched by the UK Government up to £2million.

If you would like to donate to Mary's Meals you can send a cheque made payable to '**Mary's Meals**' and simply write on your envelope **Freepost, Mary's Meals** and it will get there.

You can also make a bank transfer to:

Account Name: **Mary's Meals**      Account Number: **00609134**      Sort Code: **83-26-24.**

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### Ring Out, Wild Bells

— From 'In Memoriam' by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

1. Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.
2. Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
3. Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.
4. Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.
5. Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.
6. Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.
7. Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.
8. Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Contributions to the Church Newsletter are always welcome and generally invited for the 15th of the month. The next issue will be for February when the Editor will be Anne-Marie Smout who can be contacted at: [anne-marie@smout.org](mailto:anne-marie@smout.org)