

ST NINIAN'S SAYS:

HARK!



Emmanuel – God with us

DECEMBER 2017

Friday 22 Dec

11am

Seaton Primary School Assembly

7.30pm

Music & Readings for Christmas

Sunday 24 Dec

10.30am

Service of Holy Communion, Last of Advent

4.30pm

**At St. Mary's Church of Scotland
Family Christmas Eve Service**

11pm

**At St. Mary's Church of Scotland
Watchnight Service**

Monday 25 Dec

10.30am

Christmas Day Holy Communion

Sunday 31 Dec

Christmas 1

10.30am

Service of the Word with Reserved Sacrament

Dear Friends,

Where will we be this Christmas Day?

.....perhaps we will be on the move, like Mary and Joseph struggling with an unexpected journey at a difficult time, like the shepherds scurrying towards an unexpected surprise, like the wise men deciding to travel after careful planning but again meeting the unexpected.

.....perhaps we'll be returning home or going somewhere new; perhaps we'll be visiting friends and family

.....perhaps we will be the ones to welcome others into our home like the innkeeper

.....perhaps we'll be staying at home welcoming Jesus by the lighting of a simple candle and thanking God for this gift of love

.....perhaps we will be gathering for Christmas services at St Ninian's or in another church far from Aberdeen.

Wherever we are, one question which we might like to think about this year and as we approach 2018 is "How have we changed since last Christmas?" The world is certainly in a different place from December 2016 – disturbing politics, populations on the move, economic uncertainty, the threat of conflict. People talk about the spread of a "liquid fear" – hard to pin down but invasive, something which works in us at different levels. What changes have come our way and how have we reacted?

Every week in church we hear the words "There is no room for fear in love. We love because God loved us first." The source of love and the impetus to love is from God. God cared so much for us that **God came as one of us, to be with us, to show us the way to love.** For us to be loving, following the example of Jesus, can be costly. Much more costly than the hit on our bank balances with the commercialisation of the Christmas season. It can be costly of our time, our patience, our capacity to keep standing when things seem to go against us or when we just want to sink into despair, costly in terms of the need to be humble and forgiving. But it is **only** through this gift of love which comes to us anew at Christmas that our fears can be silenced in an angelic chorus of joy.

I pray that we will continue to join with the angels in praising God this Christmas and in the year to come.

May you discover many blessings this Christmas wherever you are,

Rev'd Joan

To the clergy and people of the United Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney

My greetings to you all in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

This comes to let you know my delight at being elected to be your next bishop, and to thank you for the many lovely and welcoming messages that I have received in the last few days.

As you might imagine, receiving such a friendly welcome from so many folk that I have yet to meet is an encouragement. I look forward to meeting you personally, and getting to know what God is doing in the churches and communities of which you are a part.

From the day of my election you have been in my prayers. I am praying that God will continue to sustain and encourage you, and be preparing you all, as well as me, for the next chapter in the life of this united diocese.

I ask that you would hold me in your prayers as I prepare to leave my current Charge. Please also pray for my family, for my husband Roger and daughter Millie, for whom this will be a huge change, although one to which they are looking forward.

Every blessing in Christ,

Canon Anne Dyer

Bishop-elect, United Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney.

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Craft Group News

As per tradition we will stop meeting in November and organise a post Christmas lunch, which will be open to everyone. This will be on January 16th, 2018 at the Brig' o' Don. We usually finish the summer session with a lunch and start the autumn session with a lunch. All are welcome at our first Craft session on Tuesday 30 January 2018 at 2pm in the church.

Street Pastors

Our Christmas Appeal goes to Aberdeen Street Pastors

Johanna Martin, a member of St Ninian's gives us an account of what they do.....

I've just gotten in after my shift tonight and thought it would be good to share the impact had in Aberdeen city centre this weekend by Street Pastors.

We had a lot of visitors to Safe Space, which is our van based centrally on Belmont Street where people can come onboard for a time to relax and natter, possibly open up a bit, and all often over a tea/coffee and a mass selection of biscuits. I spent a lot of time talking to a first year mechanical engineering student from Spain. He felt uncomfortable after having weed before coming out, and then drinking alcohol on top of that. Therefore he wanted somewhere protected from the weather and passers-by to just stop. He's loving uni so far and has overcome what was basically alcoholism at 16 to be here. He also has a real curiosity in church buildings and so hopefully that translates to questioning the reason for them. He knows there is something more than this life, and I think it's important to remember that for some people they find it really difficult to accept a god which is our God, who is for all. Hopefully my encouragement of him and prayer with him will help him realise.

As a team we were also well placed later on when a girl was being stalked by a stranger. Thankfully we got her away from the man who then became aggressive. Again, the Safe Space came into its element as we could keep her warm and safe as she waited for her boyfriend. Later she kept repeating how grateful she was that we arrived when we did, and that she didn't know what she could have done without us. I just thank God we went out when we did, and that's the route we were taken on to her. I think this really highlights what a difference Street Pastors can make, and if anyone in the congregation wants to find out more, please give my contact details. People often associate us with giving out flip flops, but it is far more than that (and includes School and Retail Pastors). So I encourage more people to get involved in the local community in this way.

Another major point on my heart is mental health, as we had a girl from my current year and university school in pieces about all aspects of her life. In those situations she simply could not work out who to turn to, and so I now really want to get a direct link between Street Pastor referrals and Counselling services supplied by the universities.

Johanna Martin

The Joy of Visiting

There are very few enjoyable reasons for going into hospital, except of course to have babies. No one wants to be there and everyone is jolly glad to get the chance to leave and go home. So when it comes to visiting people in hospital it is usually something contemplated with a degree of anxiety.

Often we are visiting someone we know such as a relative or friend, which should make the whole thing a lot easier but somehow it doesn't. We are naturally concerned for the person we are visiting, we want the visit to go well and try to consider everything, and there is a lot to think about. When should we visit? Should we bring a gift and if so what? How to get there, and what to wear? Hospitals are notoriously hot and stuffy and a long walk through all the corridors and then into the ward can feel overwhelming with usually nowhere to place your coat once you get there. Then how long do we stay and how do we make a decent move to leave? It's interesting to think that we are often considering how to leave the bedside of a sick person before we have even got to them.

So when someone finds out that you visit people in hospital all the time, people you do not know, may never see again, or even those you may follow through difficult and life threatening illness, the first question you get asked is why?

Why would anyone want to go into a place most folks try to avoid and speak with people at the most stressful times in their lives?

Well, as a Chaplaincy Hospital Volunteer, we have some advantages. We have our own ward and so we get to know the staff and hospital surroundings rather well. We carry nothing with us on our visits, no handbags or coats to worry us. We are free to walk about, unencumbered by objects that would distract us from our purpose, which is to visit.

The simplest definition of the word 'visit' is 'to go to see and spend time with socially.' That is what we do, but of course there is more to it than that. We have training which lasts six weeks and it is only if the Hospital Chaplain feel we are suitable that we can become visitors and begin our weekly visits.

It is then that you really find out what it is to be a Chaplaincy Volunteer, what a privilege it is. I admit I had wanted to do this for a long time, but once standing in a busy ward, I thought, what good will I do? Is there a place for me here?

Well there was. I realised one day that I was the calm in the storm of a ward. I was the person who appeared on the same day every week that you could talk to about anything. I was there for everyone, staff and patients.

On one visit I spoke to a patient who was due to go for very serious surgery, they were very worried and we spoke for a while and when I left them I told them I would be thinking of them. I wasn't sure if the visit had gone well or not, but I thought about and prayed for them and weeks later I saw their name outside a room door. I asked a nurse if I was correct and they had had their surgery. They had and it had been a success.

I felt tears come to my eyes and my heart was filled with joy. Joy that this patient had come through their surgery. Joy that Christ had led me to start this wonderful journey and joy that the following week I had the chance to do it all again.

Pamela Shand

Hospital Chaplaincy Volunteer

Our Vestry Members

We welcome Gioia Barnbrook who was elected as a new Vestry member at our Annual General Meeting on 3 December 2017. The Vestry membership is:

Priest-in-charge:	Reverend Joan Lyon
Ex officio:	Secretary, Elizabeth Herlihy Treasurer - vacant
Elected members:	Anne Keenlyside Ian Lovegrove Victor Dongo (also Lay Representative) Jaime Buckingham Pamela Shand Gioia Barnbrook

ST NINIAN'S CONTACT DETAILS

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Church House 01224 487241

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Vestry Secretary: Mrs Elizabeth Herlihy

Email: elizabethmackenzieherlihy@gmail.com

Craft Group: Mrs Janet Lawrence

Email: drpaul.lawrence@btinternet.com

Young Adults' Group: Ms Jaime Buckingham

Email: Jaime@the-buckinghams.com

STEP (Children's Sunday activity)

Mrs Nele Beutels: nele_beutels@hotmail.com

Music: Mr Ian Lovegrove

ian.lovegrove@orange.net

Rota: Mrs Pam Shand

pamela.shand@googlemail.com

Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney

Email: office@aberdeen.anglican.org

Lay Representative to Diocesan Synod

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