

From the Minister's Desk

1st January, 2023

Happy New Year to you all, and I hope you, your family and friends have had a festive Christmas, and for those of you for whom Christmas is a difficult time I hope it was as peaceful as it could be.

In mid December the Pastoral Care Group led our Remembering Service, inviting people who were bereaved throughout the year, and anyone else who wished to come to quietly remember a loved one. A week later we celebrated Christmas Eve at a Family Carol Service in Springfield Church and we were able to enjoy making sticky Christingles as well as viewing scenes from Bethlehem this Christmas, where for the first time in several years the annual Christmas Procession made its way to the C4th Church of the Nativity. The pictures ranged from the hellish scene of the Separation Wall which imprisons Christian and Muslim Palestinians within the towns of Beit Lethem (House of Bread), Beit Jalour and Beit Safafa, to images of Christmas tourists enjoying the decorated tree in Manger Square in Beit Lethem.

At the 8.00p.m. Carol Sing in Ceres Church we missed the late Session Clerk, Simon Weller leading, but our new Clerk David Hughes-Hallett took to the task like an experienced hand - the singing that night from a healthy congregation was wonderful - and loud! I'm sure they could hear us up the Waterless Road? Finally Kemback's 11.30p.m. Watchnight was a quieter but no less happy celebration of Christ's birth; At midnight we all shook hands and wished one another Happy Christmas and celebrated with Nine Lessons and Carols. Christmas morning saw a robust band of worshippers gather in Ceres Church and it was good to see all five candles finally lit on the Advent Ring, as the dark Winter morning gloomed and glowered beyond the windows.

The news continues to be overwhelming and the rising cost of living crisis, the national and global economic outlook, the Virus in China and war in eastern Europe and too many other places combine to be overwhelming. The messages from faith don't hide from the fact that the world is troubled - but crucially they tell part of our story - the other part is hope. The reading for New Years' Day this year includes Psalm 8 which begins like this: *God, brilliant God, yours is a household name. Nursing infants gurgle choruses about you; toddlers shout the songs that drown out enemy talk and silence atheist babble.* A good reading of the Bible never promises that life will be easy and free from heartache, and it calls people of faith to be on their watchtowers for signs of the times. Our Moderator, Right Rev Dr Iain Greenshields has written in The Scotsman calling for action to help people in our country who are suffering, people who are precious to God. He's called for a Wealth Tax to make a start on re-balancing the distribution of wealth, and he's spoken about this with the Prime Minister in November when he and Fiona, the Principal Clerk went to Downing Street. We too need to be on our watchtowers in CKS parish together with our brothers and sisters in Cupar, and as starter for ten will be the After School Film Club in Springfield Church, which we hope and pray will be a warm, safe place for children and families to be. Blessing and peace,

Jane