

Making God's love known through Jesus Christ

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## A year of surprises

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This has been a year of surprises. The Scottish men's football team have made it to a major final for the first time in over 20 years. An American President attempted a coup by ignoring the election result. And there was something else... Something important... it'll come to me in a minute. Oh yes, in the middle of a pandemic, by the power of Zoom, Barclay Viewforth got a new minister.

It's amazing how much fun a child can have playing peekaboo. For an adult to the surprise of being hidden then appearing quickly wears off, but a child has an amazing capacity for wonder. I suspect that we've lost some of the wonder of the Christmas story because we've heard it all before, at least if we ever had anything to do with church we have. Not only have we heard it, we've sung it and possibly even acted it out.

The thing is that the whole story is full of surprises. It's like God playing peekaboo with humanity. Even before this God loved a good surprise: burning bushes that weren't burning; the writing literally on the wall; pregnancy in old age; and, a talking donkey long before animated films.

Then God surprised Mary and Joseph, and an innkeeper and shepherds on that first Christmas. Jesus surprised people by his knowledge of God and by not sticking to his trade but setting off on a different path. He surprised hosts at a wedding by turning water into wine. Blind, lame and sick people were



surprised when he healed them.

It was a surprise to his friends when he was taken away and crucified. It was an even bigger surprise when he came back to life after three days in the grave! They were surprised that he offered to forgive them even although each one had deserted him when he needed them most.

Even his teaching is surprising: Love your enemies; don't resolve conflict through violence but by turning cheeks; go the extra mile and show mercy. He closed one sermon by saying that our lives will be blessed if we put his teaching into practice, if we follow him. That's a bold move.

It's still a surprise when Jesus bursts into our life. This time last year I was amazed not only that I'd applied but that I'd had an interview for BVC. Of course, we have the option to embrace or reject him. The Christmas story is an invitation to get to know him better, knowing that surprises await as we accept his invitation to be forgiven, restored, embraced, and rewarded. Jesus is Immanuel – God with us: with us through Covid and beyond; with us when we can't meet our family or friends; with us when our jobs are in doubt; with us in hospital wards and at home – and we should not be surprised at that.

Because of the restrictions I've not had the chance to meet people in the way I would normally have done – let's be honest, all of us were surprised to find our church buildings closed, and the restrictions have been difficult for all of us - but I hope to get round everyone as soon as I can. Meantime, I want to thank Elaine and the Pastoral Team for all the work they do to support people. Please remember that asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it's a good thing to do. Thanks also to everyone else who has been involved in keeping things going during Covid.

We urgently need people to help with the AV team and hosting our online services. Perhaps you could make that your gift to the church this year.



It looks like 2021 will be better, but we have no idea what surprises God will have in store for us. What we do know is that Jesus was, is and always will be Immanuel. Have a blessed and peace filled Christmas

*David Clarkson*

## Barclay Viewforth Christmas 2020

This year there won't be carols on the steps, or candlelit services. No sharing mince pies and mulled wine. But #christmasisnotcancelled at BVC and here's some of what we can look forward to in the Christmas season.

- 29 Nov-24 December - Elder's Advent Calendar. A series of readings and carols will be revealed every day on YouTube and Facebook at 2.30pm to help get us into the advent mood.
- Sunday 20 December - 11am Live-streamed service featuring the family nativity videos. Pre book by Thursday 17 December at noon. (No early service).
- Tuesday 22 December - Afternoon Fellowship Christmas Zoom (contact Elaine Hogan for details).
- 24 December - Christmas eve church family service - carols, readings and Christingle. Online at 4pm.
- 25 December - 10.30am Christmas morning service. Pre-booking required by Wednesday 23 December at noon.
- Sunday 27 December. No live service. 11am all age service online. (No early service).
- Sunday 3 January. No live service. 11am all age service online. (No early service).
- Sunday 10 January. All things being well, back to the usual rhythm of 10.15am early online service, and 11am live.



## #ChristmasIsNotCancelled: Digital Nativity

Christmas wasn't cancelled 2000 years ago, despite political bureaucracy and persecution and it isn't cancelled in 2020.

To see what this means for many folks – young and old – join in for a Digital Nativity Service:

- log in on [barclayviewforth.online.church](http://barclayviewforth.online.church) on 20th December at 11 am.

It's going to be different, a family event and at its heart the most important message of all.

*Stefanie Conradt*



## Kirk Session news

At the November Session meeting we discussed our Christmas Services and feedback from the Growing Young Project. There are articles about these topics on other pages, but to also update you on:

- the **ordination of new elders on Sunday 6 December**: Lindsey Anderson, Elaine Coull, Katharine Ellis, Kingsley Nwafor, Elaine Rumney and Andrew Stephenson, and we will also be welcoming David Craigie as he joins Session. Thanks to everyone who has been so patient while this has been delayed during lockdown.
- we will be advertising for a new post of **Worship Team Leader**, to assist with our Music Group and worship within the congregation. If you know anyone who might be interested please drop me a note. We will also include details on the website.
- in the **New Year** we plan some events to help us get to know David and Linda and for them to meet more of the congregation. Still online I'm afraid, but as restrictions continue we felt a chance to better meet the Minister was overdue.
- a diary date for those interested in Missional Communities and Ministries - we weren't able to hold our Autumn **Learning Community** but plan a Spring meeting on the morning of Saturday 6 February.

*John Ritchie*

## BV Creative

The BV creative group has continued meeting weekly via Zoom on Thursday evenings. We enjoy a chat as well as working on various projects, for example cross-stitch sampler, long-stitch embroidery, quilting, drawing and cardmaking. We have enjoyed seeing each other's work progress as well as learning new skills from each other.

During the summer we also started two knitting and crochet projects.

Some of you will have seen the display of poppies falling down the steps at the front of the church building as an act of Remembrance.



Our final project for this year will be a choir of angels. We hope that these angels will find their way into many homes this Christmas to remind us that Christmas isn't cancelled.

A big thank you to everyone who has been involved in these projects.

*Anne McCulloch*



## Pastoral Team

2020 has been an unusual year (how's that for understatement?) and people have had to make all sorts of adaptations to cope with daily living. One group who have excelled at this is the amazing team of Pastoral Assistants. Most people don't know of the work they do behind the scenes, except, perhaps, the recipients of their love and kindness. They have had to find new ways of supporting the more frail and vulnerable members of our church family and they have done so with aplomb. They have called, chatted, shopped, cooked, taken people to appointments (when allowed to do so), supported and cajoled, and so much more.

When you pray this month, please pause to give thanks for this team and pray for God's protection over them as they continue to do His will.

*Elaine Hogan*

## Winter Wedding Anniversaries

Many congratulations to two couples who are celebrating significant wedding anniversaries this month:



Jemima and Harish celebrated their wedding ten years ago in a beautifully snowy covered Barclay and have since then enjoyed welcoming two wonderful children into the church family.

Stewart and Lesley Anderson are celebrating their ruby wedding anniversary (40 years) on 6 December. In the many years since, both of them have given many hours to serving in the church, especially in the less visible roles as convenors of the Fabric and Halls committees respectively. Where would we be without them!



# Growing Young

You may have read about Growing Young from the piece David put in the MailChimp in October, I will copy part of that for those who haven't seen it.

Growing Young is an idea which has been developed from research carried out in the USA among congregations which were 'bucking the trend', i.e. they were growing numerically, spiritually and the average age was coming down. Research identified six key features in each of these congregations (of different sizes, locations and denominations) which they shared (see image).

We have been to a couple of Webinars led by speakers from Fuller Youth Institute as part of a Church of Scotland Group and as well as teaching we have been given time to think about how our congregation can 'Grow Young'. The ideas do not include only the young people, but the whole congregation, we need to look at how the young people are involved, listened to, and given responsibility. We as older people need to listen to them, find out about them and include them, all in the framework of supporting them to take Jesus message seriously.

There isn't a program or set list of things that we are to do as they know that each congregation is different and within it each individual is different. Our goals over the next few months are

1. Carry out a listening exercise by speaking with teens, pre-teens and also families asking them what they like about the church, their hopes for the church and for teenagers anything they think adults won't know about teenagers but they should!
2. Consider how we can facilitate engagement between Session and the teens/pre-teens (and how we can better educate the teens/youth



as to what Session does, perhaps introduce key people and provide an opportunity for ideas to be shared)

3. Plan an intergenerational social event which will coincide with a return to church (and will also act as a “meet the minister”!

I am excited to see what people have to say about our church, one response included the following ‘We love the friendly, welcoming, non-judgemental feeling as soon as you walk in the door. There is a real sense of community where people care.’ which is a real positive but I am sure there will be other comments that give us areas we can improve on.

The ‘Growing Young’ team is David Clarkson, Stefanie Conrardt, Katharine Ellis, Katelynne Kirk, Kirsteen Milne, John Ritchie and Heather Tweedie.

If you would like more information or to get involved then please get in touch with one of us.

*Katharine Ellis*

## **Giving at Christmas**

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I heard a story recently about Christmas giving. As a child, Dawn’s parents worked hard but didn’t have much spare money. She remembers her mum buying food for another local family who she knew wouldn’t be able to have a Christmas dinner. They bought the food, and then went to drop it off on the doorstep anonymously. It was only then that Dawn realised that it was the home of someone in her class at school. Decades later, it isn’t the presents she got given as a child that she remembers, but the generosity that her mother exhibited. Out of little she gave what she could.

In the last magazine I wrote about how our Christmas giving to charities outside the church was going to be different this year. We can’t bring food to church for the foodbank, or make up shoeboxes, and how we help the homeless can’t be the same. But we can still give. Whether we are able to give a lot or a little, we can still do something even if it seems impersonal. We can show the love of Jesus to people near and far through these financial gifts. This year we continue to support Bruntsfield Evangelical’s food bank, Blythwood Care, and Bethany Christian Trust. Take some time to pray and ask God to show you what you can give. And if you can’t give financially at this time you can still pray. Pray for the work of all these organisations and people who work and volunteer with them, that they would be a blessing to those they meet this Christmas season.

The Just Giving page is currently being set up, and details will be in the Mailchimp when we have them. If you want to give by other means please contact the office.

*Ministry Team*



## A day in the life of these strange times

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Light filters through the curtains,  
I blink and wake up,  
Thoughts of more slumber,  
No,--- breakfast beckons  
Is it Classic FM or Radio Scotland?  
I plump for music to awaken me gently.

News on BBC1 Breakfast.  
We are to remain in Tier 3.  
I finish my tea and ponder the day,  
Shopping for food, then a walk,  
and meet a friend for coffee.

Mustn't forget my mask  
It's a bit dreich outside,  
I put up my hood.  
The trees are nearly bare now,  
Autumn is passing, the cool of  
winter begins.

The coop isn't full,  
arrows on the floor guide one around  
Most people wear masks,  
Hidden faces, hidden people,  
The shop assistants are helpful.  
I put pasta, biscuits and yogurt into  
my basket, fruit and veg follow.

Outside the bustle of Tollcross,  
fills the streets and pavements  
We are fortunate some cafes, hairdressers  
and charity shops and food shops are  
open.  
Some are not so fortunate, shops have had  
to close and jobs have been lost.

A walk has become part of the day,  
stretching legs and seeing people at  
a distance,  
Being in a green space or along the canal.  
Breathing fresh air - - -

I meet a friend, exchange news,  
We give each other a helping hand  
whether  
about personal things or practical problems  
somehow we share this situation,  
We are further apart physically yet  
we are closer in other ways, perhaps  
spiritually,

So the day passes,  
Daylight fades and night time comes.

*Lee Gates*

## COVID-19 – what's YOUR story?

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I'm now working as the Statistician in the Church of Scotland National Offices, also known as "121". One of the things I'm involved with is being part of a team looking to learn how the Church is handling the COVID-19 pandemic, both as an institution, and what is affecting members of churches across Scotland. One strand of our work is "The Listening Project" where we want to hear how the pandemic is affecting YOU.

As a Church we recognise that the Covid 19 pandemic has affected us all. We feel it is important that as a Church we listen to one another's experiences and share what we have learnt from this difficult and challenging time.

During this season of extraordinary challenges and unparalleled opportunities, we hope that this project will enable us to share our experiences; to hear one another's perspectives and, in doing so, develop a richer and more complete understanding of what has been happening and what we should be learning. By taking some time to reflect and consider, it is hoped that everyone who participates will benefit personally as well as contribute to an important shared venture.



The Project has been carefully designed to ensure that you can share your experiences and insights with confidence, fully assured that your confidentiality will be carefully guarded.

While there's an official web page: <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice/the-listening-project>, you can also phone 07966 286617, leave a message, and someone will be in touch to ask about your experiences. We really want to hear from people who can't access the internet as well as those who can, and to hear from people of different generations and from all corners of the country, but you do need to be 16 or over in this case.

*Fiona Tweedie*

## Adventures at SU camp

John was lucky enough to get the last space on the Scripture Union day camp on Saturday 10th October at Lendrick Muir. It was great that SU were able to offer these days instead of their usual residential camps. John went with Duncan Shiels, a good friend from the Net and they were able to apply for funding from the BV Scripture Union, James Hamilton bursary. This was a fund set up by a former minister and his family.



John says: "I had great fun there and there were loads of really fun activities like archery, king swing and bush craft. The king swing is a harness where two people get strapped in and team mates pull a rope to raise the people. Then when you are high enough you shout stop and you go flying up and down. It is so fun and a bit scary too! We also had a bible story beside the fire and got to toast marshmallows. I would go back again!"

*Katy & John Gray*

## Afternoon Fellowship

6 months ago the folks from the Afternoon Fellowship would have raised an eyebrow, or two, at the mention of zoom (perhaps remembering back to the days of an ice lolly of the same name. Now the techno-wizards of the Afternoon Fellowship have enjoyed their last two monthly meetings using this communication platform. October saw a number of them join us, including some via phone in, for "Grill the minister". David survived that and joined with the group again in November for a quiz. The most interesting fact learned was that you can be arrested for being 'drunk in charge of a cow'.... And David shared that he had actually had cause to do that in his countryside policing days pre-ministry!

### Christmas Week meeting - Tuesday 22 December at 2:00

Sadly, our annual outing to the Golf Tavern for Christmas lunch will not take place this year. However, we have decided to meet on zoom during Christmas week for a catch-up and to share some Christmas joy. Christmas jumpers can be worn or adorn yourself with tinsel/Christmas lights/etc. Bring a cuppa to the call and some nibbles and we'll share our own wee Christmas party.

**If you would like to join us please let Elaine Hogan know by Thursday 17 December** by email or phone (leave a message on the church answer machine if you don't have Elaine's number). Elaine will send out the email link on Monday 21 December and call the folks who will be dialling in with the details. **All** are welcome.

*Elaine Hogan*

## The Nativity Play I will always Remember

It was my first Christmas serving overseas with the church. I was in Aden and the weather was anything but Christmassy. It was hot and humid. It was suggested that we stage a nativity play. Friends in the RAF who were stationed nearby agreed to broadcast the play in the local radio station which they ran. The Arab Christians would be narrating it and playing the main characters and it would be heard by the Muslim community. The play was to be on a larger scale than normal. The Mission compound was situated at the edge of a village and desert lay on the other three sides. It was all used and the audience followed the action, moving from place to place.



Mary and Joseph came with the donkey through the village and entered the compound, knocking on doors of the houses and eventually being directed to an outhouse. The magi rode in from the desert on camels lent by the desert patrol. They followed a star hung from a balloon high in the sky. The shepherds sat in the scrub, caring for the few sheep lent for the occasion. During rehearsals a little boy would run ahead carrying a lamb and exclaim over the baby in the manger. Mary who by coincidence had not long before had a baby, was no



more willing to bring along the baby at night than she would have been to have given birth in the outhouse. A doll sufficed.

With all the usual hiccoughs that attend such an event Christmas Eve came and darkness fell. All went more or less to plan. Mary and Joseph travelled and were installed, though Joseph was sure he should be on the donkey. The magi came before the shepherds because the camels had to return to camp. The shepherds looked up in wonder at the display of lights. The little boy ran ahead and looked in the manger, and dropped the lamb in astonishment. Mary had brought her baby. Little Ali was heard to shout. 'The baby Jesus has come!'

And isn't that simply the meaning of Christmas. 'God sent his Son'.

*Una Laidley*

## Football Update

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This Autumn the good news is that Barclay Viewforth sit top of the Edinburgh Butchers' sponsored Edinburgh Churches Football league ( website [ecfa.pitchero.com](http://ecfa.pitchero.com)). The not so good news is that this is entirely due to the team's positioning in the alphabet given Covid related restrictions preventing all matches being played.

Before the suspension of organised football Barclay Viewforth had commenced regular Wednesday evening training and practice in Holyrood Park and had played four friendly league warm up matches. Both training sessions and match squads had been well attended following the long competitive amateur football lay off since March.

Aside from a comprehensive 4:0 defeat at the hands of a formidable 'White Lightning' eleven, Barclay Viewforth had been cranking up quite well for the big kick off . A very early and very soft goal conceded against Niddrie Community Church in the opening warm up on 12th September had contributed to a 2:1 defeat: after that while BV's defence had it's wobbles this was compensated by free flowing attacking play at the other end . Two high scoring draws were accrued on consecutive weekends; 4:4 against St Columba's Free Church and 6 apiece against Charlotte Chapel.

Perhaps a match play format in the squad's pre season social, a 'foot golf' outing to Swanston, inspired such cavalier football. Player manager , Dean McBride's allegiances to West Ham United constitute a complementary theory.

Arrangements for floodlit evening training sessions hadn't been finalised before the cut off and the end of British summertime . At the point training and organised team sports can safely resume a suitable training venue will be sought and the ECFA will hopefully finally be able get underway. In the meantime if you have any football related questions or suggestions please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. Your prayers would be very much appreciated for the ongoing direction of the church's football set up and the ECFA.

*Andrew Stephenson*

## Accessing the Sunday Service

You can join our worship in a range of ways

- In person on a Sunday at 11am. You **must** book with the office by Thursday 12:00.
- Join us online live at 10:15 and 11:00 at **barclayviewforth.online.church** for real-time chat, and for after church coffee on Zoom
- Catch up with the service later by going to **barclayviewforth.org.uk** for the latest videos
- Previous services can also be found on **barclayviewforth.org.uk/sermons**
- You can also listen in to a specially curated audio service using Twillo by calling **0131 357 6007**.
- CDs of previous services are also available - please contact the office.



If you would like to join the Sunday evening prayer meeting at 7pm on Zoom, please contact the office to receive the link via email each week.

## Key contacts

<b>Minister</b>	<b>Rev. David Clarkson</b>	<b><u><a href="mailto:dclarkson@churchofscotland.org.uk">dclarkson@churchofscotland.org.uk</a></u></b>
Administrator	Julie Nicholson	<a href="mailto:admin@barclayviewforth.org.uk">admin@barclayviewforth.org.uk</a>
Pastoral Associate	Elaine Hogan	<a href="mailto:pastoral@barclayviewforth.org.uk">pastoral@barclayviewforth.org.uk</a>
Children & Families	Stefanie Conradt	<a href="mailto:children@barclayviewforth.org.uk">children@barclayviewforth.org.uk</a>
Development Worker		
Session Clerk	John Ritchie	<a href="mailto:sessionclerk@barclayviewforth.org.uk">sessionclerk@barclayviewforth.org.uk</a>
Treasurer	Janet Darling	<a href="mailto:treasurer@barclayviewforth.org.uk">treasurer@barclayviewforth.org.uk</a>

### Contacting the Church while the building is closed



If you need to contact the church staff during this time, you can telephone the office on 0131 229 6810 and leave a message. Messages are still being checked regularly.

You can contact all the church staff on their usual email addresses as listed above.