



CRAIGOWL CHURCH

Loving Jesus • Loving our community

🌿 Magazine: December 2024 🌿

Reaching Out

Notwithstanding the increasing commercialisation of Christmas, it remains a time of year when many across our community will be exposed in some way to the constituent parts of the real meaning of Christmas – angels, nativity, a baby in a manger, shepherds, wise men, Mary, Joseph and of course the wee donkey! It's one of those times in a year when we all have an opportunity to **REACH OUT** to those who might not otherwise engage with the established church and share the whole Christmas story - the joy, peace and hope that comes from the birth of the baby Jesus.



In this edition of our magazine, we highlight our special church services and hope that as many as possible will not only attend themselves but will **REACH OUT** to others and invite them along.

It is of course recognised that the festive season can be a challenging time for many—those who are lonely, grieving, or in need. However, the church's **REACHING OUT** efforts can offer support, comfort, and companionship to those who might otherwise feel isolated. In this magazine you will hear how some in our community and beyond are being supported by the congregation of Craigowl Church through the distribution of gifts via the Larder, by visiting the local sheltered housing complex, by our participation in the Blythswood Shoebox Appeal and gifting to many across Ukraine and by supporting the charity, 'Practical Action.' All of this aligns with the season's spirit of giving and can significantly and positively impact those in need.

REACHING OUT at Christmas does of course help strengthen the bonds within the community and helps bring people together, fostering relationships that can provide ongoing support and fellowship throughout the year.

Over this forthcoming Christmas period and as we **REACH OUT** to our community, we pray that all might be able to encounter moments of reflection, spiritual growth, and come to a deeper understanding of the meaning of Christmas.



GIVING TO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH



The work of the church in spreading the good news of the Gospel is dependent on the generosity of its members, who contribute with their time and financially. The elders are very aware of how the cost of living is affecting everyone and are very grateful to those who give as they are able.

Some choose to give regularly to the work of the church using Freewill Offering Envelopes. If you already do this, you will automatically be provided with a set of envelopes for 2025. These will be available for collection on Sunday 1 December. If you have given this way in the past, but do not want envelopes for 2025, or if you have not used envelopes in the past and would like to, please speak to Gail Alexander as soon as possible.

Many choose to give by Standing Order directly from their bank to the church bank account. This is a very convenient method both for the giver and for the church as it saves the giver sorting out cash, and the Treasurer's team counting it. If you would like to use this method and have not already set it up, please speak to Gail or to our Treasurer, John Ralfe, to find out more. A standing order can be changed or cancelled only by you at any time.

Please remember also that if you are a tax payer, the HMRC Gift Aid Scheme allows us to claim back 25 pence for every pound you give. This makes a huge difference to our income. Speak to Gail if you would like to find out more.

All giving is treated confidentially with only the Treasurer, John, and the Gift Aid Convenor, Gail, knowing the amount you give.

Thank You



A team of gardeners has kept our church grounds neat and tidy over the summer months. So, a big thank you to those who have pushed the lawnmower, cut the hedge, pulled the weeds and generally worked to ensure that the ground surrounding the church is well maintained. The 2024 team comprised, Gordon Cunningham, Garry Duncan, Sandy Reilly, Bill Robertson, Stuart Small (with a little help from Sol) and Liam Wittmann.

Did someone say, "spring is just around the corner!"



Larder @ Craigowl Church

A big thank you to all in the congregation who have made a financial donation enabling small Christmas gifts to be given to those who attend the Larder and their families.

The Larder will be CLOSED on 25th December and 1st January

You may 'double up' (£4) on 11th December and 18th December

From 8th January the Larder will be OPEN with £3 for 10 items

Sidlaw House Christmas Event

This is held in the Lounge at Sidlaw House which is the sheltered housing complex on Turnberry Avenue just west of the Church and Community Complex. This year's event is on **Sunday 8th December from 2 till 3pm**. Young people of the church from Kings Kids and the Youth Club will sing and sign carols in BSL and play the bells and xylophones. Before the celebration, each flat will be visited and gifts made by the youngsters given to all residents. All are welcome to come along.

Ladies Bible Study

This group continues to meet via 'Zoom' with an occasional 'in-person' time together. The group will not meet on 17th, 24th nor 31st December. Why not consider joining in when it restarts on 7th January. For further information, contact Catherine Coull.



**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
SWITCH ON**

**WEDNESDAY 4TH DECEMBER
AT 4.30PM**

OUTSIDE ARDLER COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Children from the local schools including some from our Youth Club, will be leading carols in BSL, with bells and xylophones.

IF YOU CAN, COME ALONG

Welcome Group

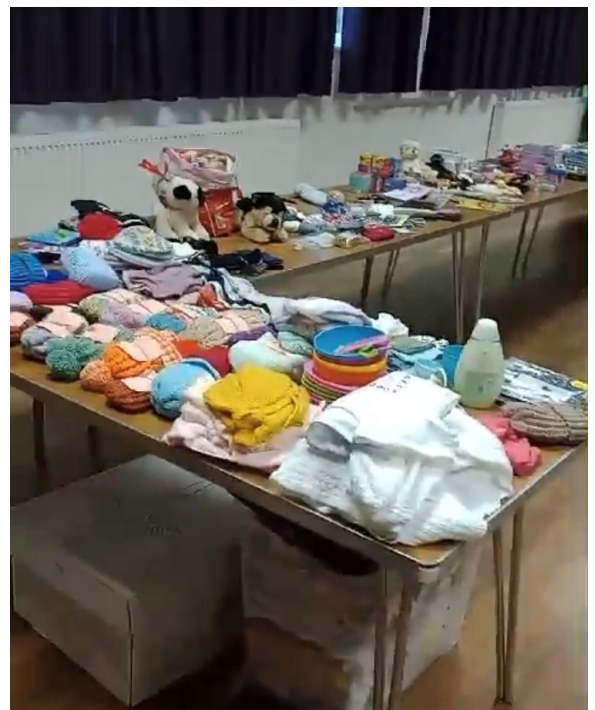
Over the past few weeks, beyond the tea, coffee and fellowship, the focus has been on hearing something of the history of Blythswood Care, and particularly the development of its Christmas Shoebox Appeal (see article below). Additionally, in this 150th Anniversary of the start of the Leprosy Mission, learning more about the ongoing work of this organisation has been of great interest and the group decided to give the "Gift of a Cure from Leprosy" to two people this Christmas. The opportunity has also been given to others in the Church Family to order cards and presents with several taking the opportunity to 'gift' wheelchairs, sight, chickens and the like as an alternative to traditional Christmas presents. Over £1,500 of sales has been achieved.



Blythswood Care started in Glasgow in 1966 with a focus on sharing the Gospel, through witness and caring service. The Christmas Shoebox Appeal with which many are familiar began in 1993 with 300 gift-wrapped, gift-filled boxes given to children in Romanian orphanages. Since then, 2.6 million boxes have been distributed to people in Eastern Europe.

This year, the generous donations of the Craigowl Church family, has enabled 101 boxes to be filled and despatched along with crocheted/knitted blankets, other items and £350 towards the cost of transportation. This is all part of our 'reaching out' and thanks are due to all who contributed as well as those who undertook the wrapping and filling of the boxes.

You can find out more about Blythswood Care by [CLICKING HERE](#) or going to www.blythswood.org



Pastoral Care

There are many differing situations and times in life when you might feel that the church could offer support. Maybe you would appreciate an encouraging visit to help lift spirits during a time of illness or difficulty, perhaps you seek a simple chat or even just the opportunity to have someone listen. It could be that you need help with a funeral or coping with a serious illness in the family.



Whilst we at Craigowl Church don't have a minister in place, we do have people who are willing to visit, listen and pray, with Rev Brenda Elwell-Sutton being available to help with funerals.

If you feel that some pastoral support would help, please do not hesitate to get in touch. In the first instance speak with our Session Clerk, Gail Alexander who will arrange for any approach to be dealt with sensitively and in a confidential way.

The Flower Calendar - 2025



To all who contribute to the provision of the flowers displayed in the sanctuary week by week we say, thank you.

The 2025 calendar is now on the notice board in the Hall of Friendship. Should you wish to contribute to this ministry, please record your choice of Sunday on the calendar and in due course give your money donations to Susan Robertson who arranges the purchase and arranging of flowers week by week.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
@CRAIGOWL CHURCH**

6.30pm Tuesday 24th December 2024

COME AND JOIN US

*A time to celebrate
with song and reflection*

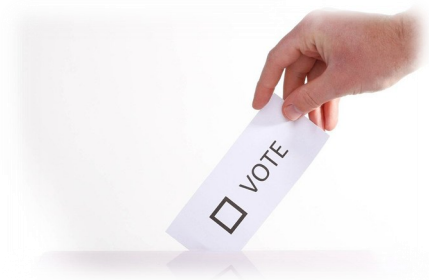
Seeking a Minister – Appointment of a Nominating Committee

We are approaching the stage whereby the congregation will have the opportunity to elect a Nominating Committee. It will be the role of this group to look for and recommend one person deemed to be suitable to be the minister of Craigowl Church.

On Sunday 1st December, following our morning worship, the congregation will be invited to meet for the purpose of electing 11 people to form a Nominating Committee. Obviously, this will take some time, so please be prepared to stay until the process is complete. To help, here is some information regarding how the process works and explaining the commitment involved in being part of the Nominating Committee.

The Process

- The maximum number of members is 11.
- In the event of more than 11 individuals being nominated, a vote will be held. The vote will take the form of a secret ballot with each member or adherent listed on our electoral roll being able to allocate a single vote to up to 11 of those nominated. You do not have to use all the 11 votes available to you. You can allocate only one vote to any of the individuals listed on the ballot paper.
- Any person on our electoral roll can be nominated. However, that person must have indicated that they are willing to put themselves forward for election. The person being nominated is not required to be in attendance on 1st December, but the person nominating and the required seconder does need to be present at the meeting
- Only those in attendance at the meeting on 1st December can vote. There is no option to record proxy votes.
- The 11 nominees accumulating the highest number of votes will form the Nominating Committee. If there is a tie for the last place, a further vote will be taken between or among those tying.
- The names of those elected to form the Nominating Committee will be announced following completion of the voting and counting process and prior to the conclusion of the meeting.



Role and Commitment

- The Nominating Committee operates completely independently of the Kirk Session.
- The Kirk Session has prepared a Parish Profile which offers any prospective minister information regarding the present life, work and witness of the congregation. In addition, this document provides detail of vision and plans for the future together with some information around what we might expect from and what we might offer to our minister.
- Perth Presbytery have in place a Vacancy Advisory Committee who will meet with the Nominating Committee and, along with the Interim Moderator, offer them appropriate guidance and advice.
- Being part of the Nominating Committee does require a time commitment. There will be a need to consider the process for inviting applications, written applications will need consideration, potential candidates will require to be interviewed and there may be a need to visit candidates in their own situation. These are just some of the likely requirements. However, the way the recruitment process is taken forward is in the hands of those who form the Nominating Committee.

Some may feel a sense of inadequacy about undertaking such a responsibility; nonetheless and as The Church of Scotland states in its guidance, the task should be approached with a mixture of humility and confidence.

The Church of Scotland provides much fuller guidance for Nominating Committees which can be accessed by [CLICKING HERE](#) or by going to www.churchofscotland.org.uk



Christmas Greetings



As an alternative to swapping Christmas cards with friends at church, you are invited to use our Christmas Giving Tree in the Hall of Friendship for the purpose of sharing greetings. At the same time, you might wish to consider giving a financial donation which perhaps reflects the sum which has been saved on buying cards. This year, the beneficiary charity will be Practical Action.

For nearly six decades, Practical Action, a UK based charity, has worked alongside communities on the frontline of poverty and the climate crisis. Together with a global network of partners and supporters, they've tackled some of the world's most pressing challenges. From transforming arid lands into fertile farms to converting waste into energy. They commit to finding lasting, locally owned solutions for the world's toughest problems and invite us all to join them on this journey, where every action contributes to a world that works better for everyone.

Practical ACTION

Practical Action state, "We believe where there's action, there's hope. That societies and economies can work for the benefit of all. That we can live within the planet's means. That innovation and cooperation can conquer any challenge. Working



together with communities and our global partners, we're developing innovative real-world solutions to build sustainable lives and livelihoods for people living on the frontlines of poverty and climate change. We're turning surviving

into thriving and overcoming injustice, especially for women and vulnerable groups. Together we're regenerating depleted land into productive farms; repurposing waste into energy; turning surviving into thriving. We're accelerating what works, so solutions that start small can bring about big change."

This Christmas, please consider supporting this work. Further information can be had by [CLICKING HERE](#) or visiting www.practicalaction.org.uk

Friendship Group

The Friendship Group which meets on alternate Mondays at 2pm has got off to a good start with between 26 and 30 men and women attending.

We have enjoyed a variety of talks including a visual presentation on the RNLI and an insight into the role of a Black Watch chaplain.

Our forthcoming meeting on Monday 25th November will feature a talk by the curator of The University of Dundee Museums. On 9th December our talk is about Dundee Heritage Trust and we begin the new year on 6th January when Rev Jean Kirkwood will talk on 'Our Theme of Change'.

Having a Laugh!



I was in church with my friend last Christmas Day and as we walked out the preacher was as usual standing by the exit shaking hands as people left. As she shook my friend's hand, she took him to one side and said to him, "You need to join the Army of the Lord, my son."

My friend said, "But I'm already in the Army of the Lord."

The preacher said to him, "Then why do I never see you in church save for Easter and Christmas?"

My friend replied, "I'm in the secret service."

Carpet Bowling

It's great to be able to report that this activity, which takes place on Tuesday mornings and evenings is proving to be popular. So much so that participation is at capacity.

A nice comfortable (and warm) space to enjoy the bowling and the fellowship.



Financial Report

Our treasurer, John Ralfe writes,



As we all know, on 1st July, Chalmers Ardler and Strathmartine churches joined together to become Craigowl Church of Scotland, Dundee. At that date, the process of combining the funds of both churches began. This process is now nearing completion. The process does take some time to complete as bills still need to be met out of the bank accounts that remain in operation. Both Douglas (Strathmartine Treasurer) and myself have been working closely together to ensure that the transition goes as quickly and as smoothly as possible.

At this stage it is difficult to project with great accuracy what the final figures for 2024 will look like, but suffice to say for now that our combined funds will show a healthy balance as we head into 2025. Our current level of cash and investments stand at £328k.

Since July, we have continued to produce monthly accounts for review and consideration by the Kirk Session and this practice will continue to be followed. We will update you with our closing position and our plans for 2025 in due course.

2025 - The Future

We will shortly be putting together our financial plan for 2025 which is likely to include a provisional estimated costing for the appointment of a new minister. It is highly likely that our planned expenditure for 2025 will exceed our income, but I am confident that the good husbandry that we have shown in the past will result in any deficit being kept to a minimum.

Updating Records

We endeavour to ensure that our membership records are up to date - in this regard we need your help. If your address or telephone number changes, please let us know. It's possible that you haven't given us a note of your telephone number – if you think this might be your situation, please provide us with the relevant telephone number(s).



Many now use email communication and it is a great help to us to be able to issue magazines and any other relevant communication to the congregation by this means. If you haven't yet provided your email address, please consider doing so. Changes can be notified to Gail Alexander or you can email us at info@craigowlchurch.org.uk

British Sign Language (BSL)

This group which meets on alternate Friday mornings continue to attract new members who want to learn British Sign Language and increase their understanding of the challenges faced by those with a hearing impairment. The Group is giving "the Gift of Sight" to someone with leprosy. The BSL Group hope to be signing a carol in Advent worship.



Social Media

If you are using Facebook or Instagram and haven't yet opted to 'follow' Craigowl Church, please do so.



Across the month of December and via our social media platforms, we hope to be able to share some words of encouragement, highlight some new Christmas songs which are out there and maybe prompt people to connect with us over the Christmas period.....and beyond!

Those of you who already follow us, please invite your friends to link up with us – it's a simple way to get involved in reaching out!

facebook

[CLICK HERE](#) to see what's on our Facebook page, you don't even need a Facebook account!

