

# Aberdeen NORTH NEWS

CHRISTMAS 2021



## FROM CLOWNING TO DEVELOPMENT WORK

Is it possible to have such a career change in life? For our new Child and Families Development Worker, Claire van Geete, it has indeed been possible!

Claire says, 'Prior to entering teaching some 16 years ago I was a performing artist and ran my own company called 'The Company of Fools'. Many years prior, as a children's Sunday school teacher, I was handed a bag of clown costume and tricks by our Sunday school leader. She said she felt I could make good use of these.'

What was so amazing about this was that at age 24, despite being faithfully brought up in a Christian church by my mum, I was a lost and seeking soul for many years until the day Jesus opened my eyes.

Having accepted the Lord as my personal Saviour and being born again by power of the Holy Spirit, I had felt everyone knew exactly what their ministry was, except me (not true of course but you know how we can feel this sometimes).

Walking home one evening, I saw a picture of a clown in a shop window, and said with a very sad heart to the Lord, 'see that's me I'm nothing but a clown'. Within a few days Sunday arrived, and the bag was handed to me. How great is our God! Not only this but I was given permission to surprise the congregation with a clown appearance a few weeks later. And so, my clown was born. I began performing with the Christian puppet theatre group 'Hands Christian Puppets' and was asked about my clown name. Their story was of Noah and the rainbow, so I imagined sliding down that amazing arc of promise and colour splashing into God's great grace and love at the bottom. And so Splash! the clown was christened.'

In 2002 Claire was awarded the 'Clowns International Slapstick' award being the first female and first solo Scot to win that.

In her new role, Claire's ability to build rapport with children and adults will be valuable, and her experience as a primary school teacher and an additional support needs practitioner hugely important as she strives to build relationships with local schools. She also has experience at secondary school level with additional support needs and her MSc research focussed on the barriers to learning numeracy and mathematics.

With this wealth of expertise, she is prayerfully planning how to make an impact in the Parish. Already planned is a 'Christmas Christian Extravaganza' with children from the P1-5 and P6-7 clubs at Mastrick Community Centre. Each group will come to church in December to hear the Christmas story, have fun and a snack. Claire hopes to start a Parent and Toddler group in the new year and proposes homework clubs, or support for parents with home learning, and has set up a classroom to be known as the Learning Zone.

Claire says, 'I would love it if anyone in Summerhill or Northfield former parishes could let me know of any community contacts in their areas, as I will reach out there next. I believe it is good that we are here in Aberdeen North Parish with the people of our parish and catchment, and at this time'.

Claire is not phased by the enormity of her task but holds onto her faith for guidance: 'I believe the Lord is our shepherd and He is our helper and that He will lead us and show us the way to follow Him'. A vital aspect of her role will be to support Susan and Michael and her work will include: Messy Church, parish support, supporting parish ministers on school visits and welcoming children, young people and families into church life.

Claire says, 'I felt the Lord stir my heart since I first came to visit with Rev Susan Sutherland and Rev Michael Shewan. I read a sermon by Charles Spurgeon, 'Fields white for harvest' and knew this was my calling'.

We are delighted Claire has joined us and we look forward to the new things God has planned for us all in 2022.

Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to you all

From the Ministry Team



## ADVENT

Advent begins on the 28 November and these four weeks before Christmas is a time to get ready.

For this period we will leave the book of Acts and follow the lectionary readings as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas.

On Sunday 19 December we will have Lessons and Carols. There will be a service in the church at 10.30am on Sunday 26 December (Boxing Day).

## CHRISTMAS CHARITY

The Kirk Session has decided to support Aberdeen Cyrenians this Christmas. This charity provides care and support for vulnerable people and anyone experiencing homelessness in our city.

Retiring offerings will be taken at our service on Sunday 19 December and at our Christingle service on Christmas Eve.

## ABERDEEN NORTH PARISH CHURCH ROLL

Like all other Church of Scotland congregations, we need to have an up to date Roll containing the names and addresses of all our members; we are currently bringing together the Rolls of the former congregations of Mastrick, Northfield & Summerhill Parish Churches.

Please remember to keep the Church updated with any changes. This is especially important for members living outside the Parish as your newsletters are sent by post—and we do want you to receive them!

Once the single Roll has been prepared for Aberdeen North Parish Church, elders' districts will be organised for the whole congregation.

Thanks for your help!

## Christmas Craft Fayre



Aberdeen North Parish Church  
(Greenfern Road)

Saturday 4 December 2021

10.00 am – 12 noon

**FREE ENTRY**

Plenty of stalls to browse

Enjoy Morning Coffee and something to eat  
for £2



Our Christingle Service is on Christmas Eve – Friday 24 December at 6.00 pm in the church.

Please invite family and friends along to join in celebrating the birth of Jesus .

## WORSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Just a reminder that our Sunday Services are now at **10.30 am**.

We no longer need to book our seats but we do need to keep a note of everyone who attends for Test and Protect purposes. Masks still must be worn throughout the service, unless you are exempt.

Thank you for your co-operation and patience.

## INSTANT NEIGHBOUR

Many thanks to everyone who contributes items of non-perishable food each week; these donations are very much appreciated by Instant Neighbour as there is a growing need to support Aberdeen residents who are facing financial difficulty.



Non-perishable items are welcome—such as milk (UHT or powdered), jar sauces, instant mashed potato, tinned meat & fish, biscuits & snack bars, tinned fruit & vegetables, cereals & basic toiletries.

## DATA PROTECTION

Many thanks to those who have returned their signed Consent Form, which gives the Church permission to use your personal information for purposes related to your Church membership.

If you haven't returned your form yet that is not a problem—please just bring it next time you come to Church, or return it by post, or give it to your elder. If you have mislaid the form there are spares at the door—please just ask for another one.

## **BLYTHSWOOD SHOEBOX APPEAL**

Thank you so much to everybody who supported the Christmas shoebox appeal!

As a new venture for our new congregation in Aberdeen North it was difficult to know how many boxes to source - yet each Sunday, more and more empties disappeared and bags of assorted donations and gift-wrapping paper kept appearing!

Then as October progressed, the stacks of filled and sorted boxes at the front of the Church grew and grew, until by the end of the month we were able to send 169 beautiful gifts, with an even spread across boys and girls of all ages, babies, teenagers and adults.

Christian literature is added into each box - for adults, a calendar with Bible verses, and the children get Bible storybooks appropriate to their age, all in the Romanian language, taking the gospel message along with our love.

I can confirm that our shoeboxes will be heading for Moldova, a former Soviet republic where Romanian & Russian are spoken.

Please pass on thanks to all the friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues who helped in any way, whether knitting, wrapping or shopping. This combined effort is a tremendous result for the new fellowship to achieve - 169 boxes, and over £350 in donations towards transportation costs.

These Christmas gifts bring so much joy - please continue to pray for the wider work of Blythswood, and the journey our gifts will take over the next few weeks, to arrive safely and be delivered to the right people.

On behalf of Blythswood I thank you all, very much. Sybil Anderson



## **Nativity Scene, St Nicholas Kirkyard 29 January 2021 – 5 January 2022, open daily from dawn to dusk**

The Blessing of the Nativity Scene with Aberdeen Churches Together, will take place on Monday 29 November at 10.30am

## **GIFT AID**

Did you know? Gift Aid is good news for the Church because:

- It increases our giving by 25 per cent
- No minimum contribution is required
- No particular amount has to be promised
- There is no fixed term during which contributions must be made
- Tax may be recovered retrospectively.

Gift Aid donors must pay UK income tax or capital gains tax, and give their offerings or any donations through offering envelopes or by a bank standing order.

Donors also need to sign a Gift Aid declaration form, available at the Church, or by contacting Peter Ewen.

## **MONEY MATTERS**

It's good to start with positive news—this year we were able to reclaim £4,899 as our Gift Aid refund from the tax man! Thanks to all who have signed up to Gift Aid & so make this possible.

We've been advised by the Church of Scotland that our payment for 2022 for Ministries & Mission is £62,534; this is based on the average combined income of the former congregations for the past three years. This means that as a congregation we need more than £5000 per month to cover that alone, and in addition we have other ongoing costs to meet—heating & lighting, insurance, cleaning etc. Just as in all our households, these costs are rising which makes our finances even more tight, especially as we still do not have significant income from hall lets.

The Kirk Session continues to keep finances under review, and will report on these to the congregation over the coming months.

## **Christmas Tree Festival**

In the Kirk of St Nicholas,  
On Saturdays 4, 11 and  
18 December 2021  
from 10.30am - 2.30pm



Come along to enjoy trees decorated by different organisations on the theme of a Christmas carol

# WHO'S WHO IN ABERDEEN NORTH PARISH CHURCH

## MINISTRY TEAM

Rev Michael Shewan,	36 Stronsay Drive, Aberdeen AB15 6JL, 01224 324669, <a href="mailto:MShewan@churchofscotland.org.uk">MShewan@churchofscotland.org.uk</a>
Rev Susan Sutherland,	8 Corse Wynd, Kingswells AB15 8TP, 01224 279562, <a href="mailto:SSutherland@churchofscotland.org.uk">SSutherland@churchofscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Child &amp; Families Development Worker</b>	Claire van Geete, 0756 465105
<b>Session Clerk</b>	VACANCY
<b>Minute Clerk</b>	Jean Bell <a href="mailto:bjeanbell15@gmail.com">bjeanbell15@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bill Sutherland <a href="mailto:william.sutherland@sky.com">william.sutherland@sky.com</a>
<b>Roll Keeper</b>	VACANCY
<b>Presbytery Elder</b>	Ian Ingram <a href="mailto:ianingram890@gmail.com">ianingram890@gmail.com</a>
<b>Data Protection Officer</b>	Jean Bell <a href="mailto:bjeanbell15@gmail.com">bjeanbell15@gmail.com</a>
<b>Safe Guarding Officer Interim</b>	Rose Clayton <a href="mailto:roseclayton_mbe@hotmail.com">roseclayton_mbe@hotmail.com</a>
<b>WFO &amp; Gift Aid Co-ordinator</b>	Peter Ewen <a href="mailto:peter.amigo@btinternet.com">peter.amigo@btinternet.com</a>
<b>Property</b>	
Mastrick	Rose Clayton <a href="mailto:roseclayton_mbe@hotmail.com">roseclayton_mbe@hotmail.com</a>
Northfield Deputy	Ian Ingram <a href="mailto:ianingram890@gmail.com">ianingram890@gmail.com</a>
Summerhill Deputies	Bill Laing & <a href="mailto:billaing52@gmail.com">billaing52@gmail.com</a> Linda Henderson <a href="mailto:tarlair227@yahoo.co.uk">tarlair227@yahoo.co.uk</a>
<b>Communication</b>	Jean Bell <a href="mailto:bjeanbell15@gmail.com">bjeanbell15@gmail.com</a>
<b>Christian Aid Convener</b>	Judith Christie <a href="mailto:perth3@icloud.com">perth3@icloud.com</a>



..... to all those who volunteer in any way for our Church — cleaning, serving teas after worship, tending the garden & cutting the grass, donating & arranging flowers, taking on additional roles, counting and banking money, doing door duty, running groups, visiting & all those other wee jobs which are not always visible!

There is always room for more volunteers! So as we enter our second year together in Aberdeen North Church and plan for our future, our Church really does need us all to contribute in any way we can. If you have some spare time & think you could offer some help, please do speak to any member of the Ministry Team.

Happy Christmas & a good new year to all our readers!



[www.aberdeennorthchurch.co.uk](http://www.aberdeennorthchurch.co.uk)

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