

**BRIDGES**

**Issue 91**

**DECEMBER 2019**

The Magazine of The Church of Scotland in Cromdale, Dulnain Bridge and Grantown on Spey.

# Joy at



# Christmas

Parish Worship Sunday Mornings

Cromdale Church – 9.30 am

Inverallan Church of Scotland – 11.00 am

Dulnain Bridge Parish Church – 9.30 am or 11 am

***ALL WELCOME!***

Charities registered in Scotland Nos. SCO02884, SCO14015 & SCO10001

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 17 November	<b>Short Communion</b> service takes place at Inverallan after morning worship.
Friday 22 November	<b>Games Bonanza</b> in Inverallan Hall, 3-5pm. All ages getting together for a fun afternoon playing board games. Bring your favourite! Snack and teas on offer.
Sunday 25 November	<b>Holy Communion</b> celebrated at morning worship at all three churches. <b>Messy Church</b> 'Christmas around the world'. Head to St. Columba's Church in Grantown for fun worship for all ages from 4-6pm, ending with a meal.
Sunday 1 December	' <b>A Time to Remember</b> ' 4pm at Inverallan, for anyone to remember a loved one.
Monday 2 December	<b>Light up the Highlands</b> Highland Hospice Service 7pm at St Columba's, Grantown.
Friday 6 December	<b>Cairngorms Orchestra Concert</b> 7pm at Inverallan
Sunday 9 December	<b>Café Church</b> at Cromdale at 9.30am.
Sunday 15 December	<b>Short Communion</b> service takes place at Inverallan after morning worship. <b>Advie Carol Service</b> at 4pm (tbc). <b>Carols Round the Tree</b> in Cromdale at 6pm.
Wednesday 18 December	<b>Grantown Primary Community Carols</b> Inverallan at 7pm. A time for Grantown Primary School and the wider community to gather. All welcome.
Sunday 22 December	<b>Community Nativity</b> with an all-star cast in and around Inverallan Church from 4pm! Come to be counted for Herod's census and hear the best story, ever.
Tuesday 24 December	<b>Carols Round The Tree</b> Dulnain Bridge at 4pm. <b>Family Christmas Eve service</b> Cromdale Kirk at 7pm. <b>Watchnight service</b> at Inverallan Church at 11.30pm.
Wednesday 25 December	<b>Joint Christmas Morning service</b> Inverallan Church at 11am. <i>(bring along one of your presents to show us all)</i>
Sunday 29 December	<b>Joint Service</b> Cromdale Kirk at 9.30am (no services in Dulnain Bridge or Inverallan) Teas, Coffees and Traidcraft stall available after the service.
Sunday 5 January	<b>Joint Service</b> Dulnain Bridge at 11am (no services in Cromdale or Dulnain Bridge) A special joint service of our three congregations and friends from St. Columba's to greet the New Year. With teas afterwards.
Sunday 12 January	Morning worship at all three churches. <b>Café Church</b> at Cromdale.
Sunday 19 January	<b>Short Communion</b> service takes place at Inverallan after morning worship.
Sunday 26 January	<b>Joint Service</b> Cromdale Kirk at 9.30am (no services in Inverallan or Dulnain Bridge) Teas, Coffees and Traidcraft stall available after the service. <b>FLAG</b> (Families Learning about God) family ceilidh, 4pm

### We remember those who have died

Fred Gough	June 2018	Ashes interred in Grantown 8/8/2019
Cynthia Stanway	22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Speyside Care Home, Aberlour, formerly Woodside Court
Shona Munro	5 <sup>th</sup> August	Advie
Audrey Anderson	27 <sup>th</sup> September	Lynemore Care Home, formerly Shankland Court, Grantown
Frankie Gray	28 <sup>th</sup> September	Speyside Care Home, formerly Tormore and Carron
Ewan Cameron	7 <sup>th</sup> October	Dulnain Bridge
Barbara Wheeler	10 <sup>th</sup> October	Milton of Cromdale
Anna Rainy-Brown	24 <sup>th</sup> October	Lynemore Care Home, formerly South Street, Grantown
Peter Graham	27 <sup>th</sup> October	Lynemore Care Home, formerly Woodside Avenue, Grantown
Mabel Paton	5 <sup>th</sup> October	Grandview Care Home, formerly South Street, Grantown

### Wedding

We celebrate the marriage of Cara Hearson and Garth Deppe on 12<sup>th</sup> October at Cromdale Kirk.

## Letter from our minister

I write this just as a General Election has been agreed by the Westminster Parliament knowing that this edition of Bridges will now be winging its way to members and friends of our churches in the middle of an election campaign, along with party political leaflets. Half way through Advent, a time of preparation as we think about darkness in the world and how God brings light, it's very obvious that we continue to live in a time of political upheaval. Deeply held convictions are being debated and important issues are being aired. Passions, I am quite sure as I look into the future, will be running high!



At a time of great political difficulty, and in the midst of a census that demanded people travel great distances just to be counted, two young people journeyed to Bethlehem. Two, probably scared because of all that they were having to face, young people journeyed in a time of darkness. Even though they had both experienced angel voices telling them not to be afraid and something of the enormity of what God was asking them, it must have been hard for them to believe that because of what they were doing, God was bringing light into their darkness and that of the world.

And they were going to have to face so much more danger and heartache.

With all that is going on today: politically in Scotland and the UK, our relationship with Europe, growing tensions in the Middle East and competing extremism, let alone a climate emergency, how do we focus on the light instead of the darkness?

God brought light. Christ is light. In Him we see into the heart of God. Even in that tiny baby, we catch sight of a love that has no limits. And through his life we get little windows into what the Kingdom of God is and how we can be a part of bringing it about. In his death we see again that there are no limits to His love. And in his resurrection we're given the greatest hope that we are all part of a love that has been there from the beginning, and will be forever.

As we glance at the election leaflets, and watch the party political broadcasts, let's not despair like 'Brenda from Bristol'. Maybe you're excited by elections or terrified for the future or depressed by the turmoil. Whichever, we know that there is light in the world. And it's our job, our calling, to help God shine that light for others to see. Whether that's in the way we cast our vote, the way we treat each other, the words we say, or things we do, we can be today's light bearers in a world of darkness.

With love, and every blessing this Advent, and on into all that Christmas and 2020 holds,

Gordon

## COMMUNITY NATIVITY

Come along to a great community nativity event in and around Inverallan Church on **Sunday 22 December from 4pm**. There will be shepherds and sheep, angels galore, nasty Kings and good ones too! A lovely way to kick off your Christmas celebrations for everyone to enjoy, with refreshments and fun, and the best story ever told.





Christmas is coming and decorating the Christmas tree has always been one of my favourite jobs, so much so that one year we had three in our house! Needless to say I am in my element with the **Christmas Tree Festival** organised by Alison Sparham at St Columba's Church (*see page 10*) as I get the chance to help decorate the Messy Church one and also help the local committee for Macmillan Cancer Support put their one up at this event. This year the festival is open to individuals as well to decorate a tree in memory of a loved one or just because it is a nice family thing to do.

We have an insight into Gordon's summer trips which are very exciting as well as a round up of events happening within our churches. The Inverallan project for refurbishment continues to move forward and is also proving to be very exciting as the 20/20 group work their way through the highs and lows of planning restrictions and funding. We also found a short story on the legend of the Christmas tree for our younger readers and a 'Love actually' article to think about from the Mission and Discipleship Council at the Church of Scotland.

Wishing you all a peaceful and happy Christmas.

Ed



**SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER**  
**4 – 6 PM**  
**ST COLUMBA'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**Christmas around the world**  
**All welcome**

## Board Games Bonanzas

"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."  
George Bernard Shaw

Unfortunately, I cannot claim that it was Shaw's wise words which inspired the Board Games Bonanza sessions, but it is nice to know that he would have approved of my life-long love of Ludo. The Board Games Bonanzas were held on two consecutive Friday mornings in the summer holidays and were open to everyone. It was our hope that the sessions would bring together people of all ages to play classic games like Snakes and Ladders and the afore-mentioned Ludo, as well as some more recent inventions like Labyrinth and the Football Game.

We had a toddler area for those too young to play, a Consolation Corner with paper and pens for anyone needing a breather from the games, and a couple of jigsaws for good measure.

Perhaps most enjoyable of all were the games brought along by some of the children. We had a whole-group game of International Greetings Bingo and we had a go at the fiendish and ancient bead-based game, Mancala. There was something very special about playing a game which has been part of human culture for almost two thousand years. It was a good reminder that one of humanity's most deeply felt instincts is to gather together in the spirit of friendship and fun.

Many thanks must go to Alison for preparing the all important snacks before the games began, to Sally and the other helpers who were on hand to serve the food and play the games, to Moira for looking after the little ones, and to the parents, children and other members of the congregation who came along to support and participate in the sessions.

Our next **Board Games Bonanza** is on **Friday 22 November** in Inverallan Hall from 3 – 5 pm. Join us for some fun.

Katy Turton

## Coming Soon!

“Family Church”, which is a joint mission between Inverallan Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church will gather on the last Sunday every month at around 4pm, and ALL are welcome to come along, with or without children.

Our first gathering will be Messy Church on 24<sup>th</sup> November from 4pm – 6pm at the Episcopal Hall with Bible based activities and a shared meal at the end.

Our December gathering will be a pushchair and walking stick friendly torch walk in the gloom, followed by hot chocolate and cake, along with some seasonal Bible based activities. There might be a few surprises too! This will be on 29<sup>th</sup> December starting at Inverallan Hall at 4pm.



In the New Year we plan to have some Godly Play sessions (in reality less play, but more of a reflective style of storytelling), more Messy Church, and plenty more besides. Please do check out the notices around town to find out what is happening; AND.....If anyone can bake a cake now and then for us, it would be great!



For further details please contact Sally 01479 873968 or e-mail me: [sallyg@post.com](mailto:sallyg@post.com)

*Sally Gingell*



The last report I wrote for Bridges was in February, and a lot has happened since then! On the fundraising side we have received over £25,000 in that time, with about £13,000 of that coming from the dozen or so people who give generously every month and a number of one-off personal donations. Other notable amounts are:

Pop-up Shop	£5,044
Coffee Morning	£584
Storytelling evening	£800
Funeral Collection	£700

Since 20/20 started we have raised the wonderful total of over £97,000, which is terrific! The above figures include a total Gift Aid recovery of some £8,500.

Of course over the same period we have also spent a lot! Net of LEADER grants we have so far spent in the order of £27,000 towards costs associated with the development stage of our project.

During this phase our plans have been further developed and were presented to churchgoers and the wider public for their views to be made known to us. We are very happy with the way the plans have been received by all, from congregation members, interested members of the public, and in particular a wide range of groups and organisations who would be interested in using the facilities the project will provide.

Taking account of the opinions expressed in these public consultations, we aim now to have a final version of proposed plans in the near future. Identifying and applying for major fundraising opportunities and developing a sustainable business plan are the next priorities for us.

The 20/20 Project Group members are hugely grateful for the support and encouragement we receive from churchgoers and members of the wider community. Knowing that we seem to be heading in the right direction is very encouraging!

*John Wilson  
20/20 convener*

## NEWS FROM DULNAIN BRIDGE

At Dulnain we continue to look for ways to develop the life of our congregation and reach out into our village community.

Our house group is now meeting fortnightly on Wednesdays, and those of us going along to it are enjoying discussing thoughts, questions and ideas about our faith prompted by the Nooma series of videos by Rob Bell. Each video is stand alone, rather than part of a series, so do come along when you can if you'd like to join us. Give Ruth a ring if you'd like more details.

We held our annual Gift Day and coffee morning at the beginning of October. It was very successful, well-supported by local residents who really enjoyed having a chance to meet friends and neighbours in the village, and members of the other two congregations, whose support is always much appreciated. Many thanks to all those who made donations to the Gift Day, and those who helped in any way with the coffee morning.



Looking ahead to next year, we are planning to start a monthly pop-up all-age cafe, in the village hall, held on the first Saturday of the month. The intention is to take the church out into the community, and build links between the two, while providing a much needed opportunity for local folk to meet each other over a cuppa. We hope this will attract all ages, but especially families, so there will be a play corner with one or two simple activities for the children, some with a Christian theme. If the cafe proves to be popular other ways of bringing the church and community closer together can, hopefully, be developed in the future.

*Ruth Coker*

## BIG CHANGES AT CROMDALE KIRK

2019 has seen the biggest renovation to Cromdale Church since 1893 when the whole of the inside was reconfigured.

It became apparent that the nails in the roof had become rusty and unless they were replaced, slates would begin to fall off. This was a huge undertaking and the Church was surrounded in scaffolding for several months. Each slate was painstakingly removed, stacked then replaced by the excellent work of a small team of builders. Meanwhile it was decided to update the inside of the Church to make it a usable space for the congregation and community events.

A dark corridor at the back of the church has been ingeniously transformed into a disabled toilet with baby changing facilities and a tea preparation area. This contains lots of cupboard and work top space, a dishwasher, hob, microwave and an instant hot water boiler.

Several more pews were removed to enlarge the social area. Cushions have been bought for the remaining pews, new carpeting, flooring and wall heaters all add to enhance the interior. These changes have made a huge difference to those who worship and for groups using the Church at other times. This was made possible by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a matching amount from Church funds. The grant does not come without conditions. We continue to strive to give the HLF regular updates of community and Church based activities which as a small congregation we endeavour to develop and create. Some of those currently include: Rhymetime, Craft and Chat, Open Wednesdays and Community Garden on the riverbank. A Church brochure is being devised and an education pack produced to inform children about Cromdale Church, local history with links to Grantown Museum and some insight into the ecology of the area.

We may be a small country Church but there is a huge amount of team spirit and camaraderie. It has been a blessing to be part of this busy year of change and in preparation of the work ahead to keep Cromdale Church a vibrant welcoming place to worship.

*June Cain*

## An interesting summer for Gordon!

After a holiday involving camping disasters, blistering heat and torrential rain, it was good to come home to Grantown in August. But the next few weeks were going to entail some amazing experiences!

On the 25<sup>th</sup> August I had the huge privilege to preach the sermon at Crathie Kirk in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen and other members of the Royal Family. Every year a number of guest preachers from across Scotland are invited to take part in the services there whilst The Queen is staying at Balmoral, and I was incredibly fortunate to get the chance this year.

I'd known since long before the summer but had to keep it a secret from just about everyone until only the week before because not only is it a wonderful opportunity to take part in worship in this way, but Her Majesty also hosts the guest preacher at Balmoral for the weekend. Never have I paid so much attention to my packing or my ironing and I don't think I have ever been so nervous.

The experience of being so welcomed by The Queen and her family is something that will stay with me for a very long time. Seeing Balmoral Estate in the best of summer weathers, and having the chance to get to know, even just a little bit, Her Majesty and some of her family is not something any of us ever really imagine will happen to them.

But I'm very grateful to her for her hospitality and to Rev. Ken Mackenzie for putting my name forward. A once-in-a-lifetime experience.

But there was more to come! A few short weeks later and I was off to Ghana in West Africa as part of a group of Christians and Muslims from Scotland. Following on from a successful trip to Rwanda of young Christians and Muslims two years ago, the Church of Scotland and Interfaith Scotland, along with partners at the Alwaleed Centre of Edinburgh University and Al-Maktoum College in Dundee decided to repeat the experience for a small group of leaders from both faiths. The purpose was to develop relationships between Christians and Muslims in Scotland, and to learn together of the experiences of brothers and sisters living in a very different environment.

The Church of Scotland have long since partnered with the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) and they suggested Ghana as a country nearly unique in West Africa where a substantial Muslim population lives in harmony with a majority Christian population, and both

communities work hard at understanding and relationship.

And, so early on a Saturday morning, 11 people from across Scotland set off on a long day of travelling, getting to know each other as we went.

For me, the trip has been life-changing, and it will take some time to process all that was experienced and learned. We met leaders from a variety of different groups within both faiths, civic leaders, prison and military chaplains, school teachers, lecturers and ordinary people reaching out to each other in love. We learned of how families live together with these faith differences, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers being Christian and Muslim. We learned of the fear that many people have that the extremism and inter-religious conflict that many of Ghana's neighbours experience might somehow spill over. We visited villages where the Imam and the Pastor are the best of friends. We worshipped together in church and mosque. And we reflected together as a group, being honest with each other about the challenges we encountered and the questions we had.

Coming home, 10 days later (a few of us now struggling with a nasty tummy bug!), we were no longer an interfaith group from Scotland made up of disparate people. We were a group of friends of different faiths and different backgrounds who all wanted to help make Scotland a place of living together in love.

What we all do next with our learning and shared experience is still an open question. We all lead busy lives scattered across the country. But we're all determined to do more with our new-found friendship. Watch this space!



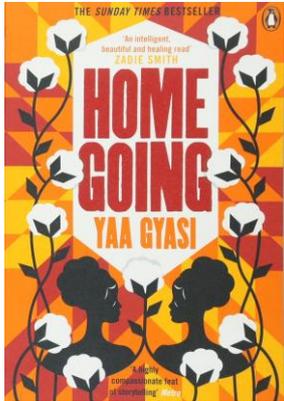
**Above: The group meeting the 100 year-old National Chief Imam who has worked for peace all his life**

## Slavery

One of the deepest experiences that I had in Ghana was a visit to Emina Castle. The West African coast became the centre of the colonial slave trade over nearly 400 years, and Elmina was one of those places where African slaves were held, many dying in terrible conditions, the survivors seeing their last glimpse of Africa disappearing over the horizon.

It was a sobering experience to confront our shared European heritage, and how Christianity was used to justify humanity's most barbaric trade ever. And also to think, as a group, of the repercussions that still reverberate around the world today.

Whilst I was there, I read a novel by Yaa Gyasi called 'Homegoing'. I cannot recommend it highly enough as a way of engaging with the topic of slavery, both then, and how it threads down through the generations.



Beautifully written and researched, yet still a compelling set of stories, harrowing and heartening on every page, it helped me to begin to understand. I'll happily lend anyone a copy, or get your own from our friendly local Bookmark!

## The Olive Tree

Olive trees live for an average of 500 years and many are as old as 1500 years. In the Middle East, olive trees have seen generations come and go, and are often seen as a symbol of peace in a land of war as, regardless of the turmoil around them, they continue to bear fruit.

The Church of Scotland have supported the inspirational Nassar family at the Tent of Nations near Bethlehem for a number of years. Their farm and olive groves have long been under threat from illegal Israeli expansion but, rather than react violently, they have set up a peace initiative in an attempt to build bridges across cultures, opening up their farm to all.

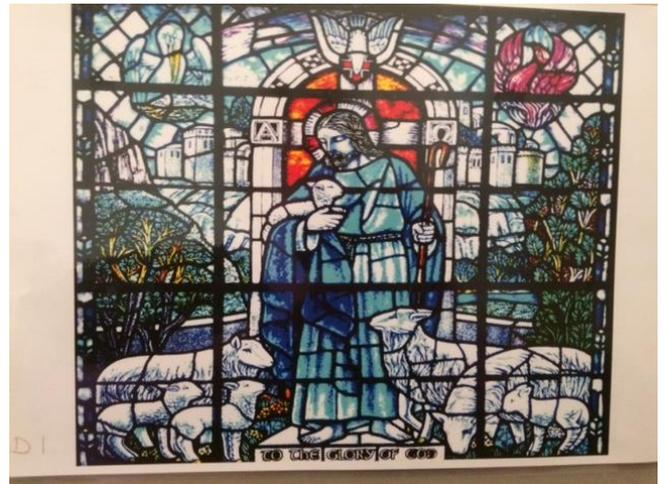
To provide a sanctuary, and to help protect the land from aggression, they aim to create the Olive Grove Chapel, a place of regular worship amongst the olive trees, within sight of the separation barrier.

If you'd like to know more, you can watch a short video here: <https://youtu.be/LnIIWmxwilg>

During Advent, we'll be supporting this project in prayer. The opportunity to donate will also be available, but it is prayer and support that the Nassar family ask for more than anything else.

*Gordon*

## CROMDALE & ADVIE PARISH CHURCH The Stained Glass Window – 'To the Glory of God'



The window was installed in the church in the early 1950s at the bequest of Mrs. Anna Millar, who was the mother-in-law of the then minister, Rev Joseph Grant. She wanted a window that would depict 'the Glory of God'. There was quite a lot of family discussion as to where the window should be in the church. It was finally decided it would go on the wall behind the Communion Table.

The window was designed by Alexander Strachan (1878 – 1954). He and his elder brother, Douglas, both had distinguished artistic careers in designing stained glass windows. Alex Strachan taught at the Edinburgh College of Art. Other beautiful examples of his work can be seen in Greenbank Parish Church in Edinburgh. His older brother, Douglas, designed the windows for the National War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle.

The window depicts Jesus, as the Good Shepherd. The Phoenix and the Pelican, which are portrayed in the window represent Christ's resurrection; the Phoenix, which burns itself to death, but rises on the third day from the ashes, and the Pelican, which sheds its' own blood in order to sprinkle it on its dead young, so that they may live again. Both can be seen as types of salvation of humankind by the death of Christ on the Cross.

*Mary Duncanson*

*For our younger readers and those young at heart*

## The Legend of the Christmas Tree

There was once a poor woodcutter who worked hard to make ends meet and earn his daily bread. He had a loving wife and two lovely children called Valentine and Marie. All of them helped him in his work. They read the Bible daily, even on days when they had nothing or very little to eat. Once, when they were going about their daily work, somebody knocked on the window. It was a little child suffering from cold and hunger. They pitied him and immediately took him inside their small home. Both the children offered him a place near the fire to keep him warm and a portion of their bread. Since, he seemed very tired, they offered him their bed while they slept on the bench in great discomfort throughout the night. The stranger child thanked them for their kindness and soon fell asleep.

The family prayed for the poor child who did not even have the nice warm room and the comfortable bed that they had. When they fell asleep late that night little Marie was woken up in the wee hours of the morning by sweet musical sound of harps and singing that seemed almost divine. She gently woke up her brother Valentine and, together, they listened to the notes and realized that it was the angels singing for the Christ Child, the child they had played host to a day before. Their hearts leapt with happiness and then they looked through the window and saw the most beautiful dawn breaking and a number of little children holding golden harps and lutes, dressed in sparkling silver robes.



The brother and sister turned around to see the stranger Child standing behind them wearing golden robes and a golden crown. He told them that he was indeed the Christ Child and wandered around to give good things and joy to loving

children. Since they had been so unselfish and helpful, he gave them his blessing and took a bough from a nearby fir tree and planted it in the ground. He then told them, that this branch would soon grow up to give them Christmas fruits every year. The Christ Child then vanished leaving the children

overwhelmed with what they had seen and heard. Soon, the fir branch grew into a high and stately Christmas tree that bore golden apples, silver nuts and lovely toys on every Christmas Eve. Hence, it is said that it is in remembrance and anticipation of the Christ Child that the Christmas tree is decorated every year.

*Christmas Short Stories adapted from the internet*

*A recipe to tempt the tastebuds*

## Chocolate Walnut Fudge

Chocolate walnut fudge is often made for Christmas and Easter. In this recipe walnut is used, as a substitute you can use almonds or pecans.

### Ingredients

800 g of sweetened condensed milk  
400 g of creamed milk  
100 g of butter  
2 cups sugar  
1 cup dark chocolate chips  
1 cup cocoa powder  
1 cup chopped walnuts

- Mix all the ingredients except the nuts into a wide, thick-bottomed pan.
- Heat it on a medium flame.
- Stir frequently, till the mixture becomes thick and fudge like and begins to leave the sides of the pan.
- Turn off the stove. Add the nuts and mix well.
- Grease a swiss roll tin with butter and spread the thick layer of fudge onto the tin with a flat spoon
- Leave it for some time and while still warm cut into shapes of your choice.
- Cool it and place in airtight container.

### Cooking Tips

*I guessed my pepper, my soup was too hot  
I guessed my water, it dried in the pot  
I guessed my salt and what do you think?  
For the rest of the day we did nothing but drink.  
I guessed my sugar, my sauce was too sweet,  
So now I guess nothing, for cooking by guesses  
Will ruin all skill and produce only messes.*

*Joan Steele*

## Love Actually

Every Boxing Day people across the land resolve that next Christmas will be different. In January, when the bills arrive, they promise that next Christmas will be simpler, less indulgent and cheaper. According to Money Supermarket, almost 10% of people will still be paying for Christmas well into next year. Perhaps next year, by refusing to conform to every tradition and everyone's expectations, we will recapture the wonder, the magic and the awe of Christmas and 'remember what it's all about'.

November magazines include articles on how to approach Christmas – 'Twenty Six Ways to Simplify Christmas'; or 'Five Reasons Why I'm Not Simplifying Christmas'. There are some radical work-saving, stress-busting, money-saving strategies out there. One woman recommends leaving the Christmas tree fully decorated all year. Hers has been in the corner of the sitting room, festooned in tinsel, baubles, lights and all, for *sixteen* years. It's true. For most of the year it is wrapped in sheets with the reminder, 'Do not open until December'.

Perhaps, after all, even on Christmas Day, reflecting on how simple or how lavish it has been is to miss the point. Maybe, as we approach Christmas, we do not need a to-do-list and a credit card so much as a Grinch-like revelation:

'Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!

What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store?

What if Christmas ... perhaps ... means a little bit more!

(Dr Seuss, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*)

A German proverb goes: 'The main thing is that the main thing remains the main thing'. That seems a pretty good definition of simplicity to me: recognising the extraneous and superfluous for what it is and focusing on 'the main thing'. Authentic simplicity has to be an inward reality before it bears the fruit of an outward lifestyle. Attempts to create the outer beauty without the inner actuality are doomed to legalism and frustration.

'The main thing' is to recognise the significance of that first Christmas, the Nativity. The birth of Jesus

Christ was marked by astonishing simplicity. The highpoint of history, the climax of eternity, was not marked with grandeur, pomp and pageant. Rather, a pregnant teenager had no option but to deliver her child in the stark and smelly surroundings of a stable, the only warmth provided by the body heat of sheltering animals. The first visitors were shepherds, who were considered the lowest of the low. Jesus, the Bible tells us, did not come with majesty and opulence, but 'full of grace and truth', to reveal God – a God who is love – and to bridge the gap between us and that lavishly loving God.

Christmas is ultimately about love ... actually. As Christina Rossetti's carol puts it, 'Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine; Love was born at Christmas.' Perhaps, as we make our plans, we should be less concerned with how simple or extravagant our Christmas will be. Perhaps the touchstone of all that we do should be love: and how we respond to the extravagant love of God and how we love those around us.

*Mission & Discipleship Church Without Walls Team*



### CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL St Columba's Episcopal Church

Set up on Wednesday 4 December  
from 3.00-6.00 pm

Open to the public:

5 and 6 December from 3.00pm – 6.00pm;

7 December from 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

8 December from 3.00 pm – 6.30 pm  
with Carols from 6.00 pm.

Trees should be between 3 ft and 6 ft high  
(90-180cms)

All donations will be given to Inverallan 20/20

There will also be a Christmas Hamper raffle

Contact [a.sparham42@gmail.com](mailto:a.sparham42@gmail.com)

Tel. 01479 481151

## CONTACTS

<b>MINISTER</b>	Rev. Gordon Strang The Manse, Golf Course Road, Grantown on Spey, PH26 3HY <a href="mailto:Gstrang@churchofscotland.org.uk">Gstrang@churchofscotland.org.uk</a>	<b>Tel. Nos.</b>  872084
<b>ORDAINED LOCAL MINISTER</b>	Rev. Mary Duncanson <a href="mailto:Mduncanson@churchofscotland.org.uk">Mduncanson@churchofscotland.org.uk</a>	872165
<b>SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR</b>	Rev. Christine Ritchie	07900 565989

<b>CROMDALE AND ADVIE PARISH CHURCH</b> Sundays 9.30 am		SC002884
Session Clerk	Diane Brazier <a href="mailto:dbrazier39@gmail.com">dbrazier39@gmail.com</a>	872547
Clerk to the Board	June Cain <a href="mailto:juneccain@aol.com">juneccain@aol.com</a>	873148
Treasurer	Maggie Dick <a href="mailto:maggiemdick@hotmail.co.uk">maggiemdick@hotmail.co.uk</a>	873793

<b>DULNAIN BRIDGE PARISH CHURCH</b> Sundays 9.30 am or 11 am		SC014015
Session Clerk	Ruth Coker <a href="mailto:ruth.coker@btopenworld.com">ruth.coker@btopenworld.com</a>	851797
Treasurer	Archie Ballantine	872070

<b>GRANTOWN ON SPEY (INVERALLAN) PARISH CHURCH</b> Sundays 11 am		SC010001
Session Clerk	Bill Steele <a href="mailto:WMSteele33@aol.com">WMSteele33@aol.com</a>	870154
Treasurer	Peter Holland <a href="mailto:holland948@btinternet.com">holland948@btinternet.com</a>	872314
Church Officer	Richard Stone	873000
Hall Bookings	David Elder	872260

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[www.strathspeykirks.org.uk](http://www.strathspeykirks.org.uk)

## Fun times for all ages



Above: Lots of fun at Messy Church

Below: Some of the stalwart team who helped at the Inverallan 'Pop Up' Shop

