

The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

Recently, I attended a 'Labyrinth' walk within our church for the first time. I wasn't sure what to expect, but I came away with some reflections which I thought I might share with you here today.

It has been quite a busy time for me of late, with funerals, Advent Bible studies, Sunday preaching and other demands. So I was looking forward to a couple of hours where it would be perfectly acceptable for me to just 'be' in the peace of our sanctuary. My need for this was brought into focus as I walked to the Church. That evening Hearts football club were playing a match against Rangers, and it seemed as if the entire world was trying to move in the opposite direction to me! I felt very ready to 'be still' by the time I had made it through what felt like crowds of people.

On entering the Church, I immediately felt at peace, as I discovered the sanctuary beautifully candle-lit. I wondered if I would struggle to allow my mind not to focus on anything in particular, but I slowly came to realise that God was present in the space, just as it was, without my need to 'add' words or music. In itself, this was an interesting realisation given that I was sitting in Church – a place where words and music usually feature highly on the agenda.

It was once I stopped in the centre of the labyrinth that I began to reflect in a particular way. As I stood still, a number of the other participants continued to walk at various paces. A little thought surfaced in my mind: "It's OK to let others do the walking sometimes." Read that slowly a few times. The movement of others was a kind of metaphor for the movement of the world around me. The fact was, that if I stood still, others were free to continue walking. Even when I am still, the world will still turn.

This is a thought which I hope will be helpful to you as we move through the season of Advent towards Christmas. Whatever message society preaches about the need for 'things' at this time of year, and our need to run around frenetically to acquire those things, God wants us to find our peace through love, mercy and grace – the gifts the Christ child comes to give all who would accept them.

The labyrinth is a non-threatening place to be. There is no preacher, only God waiting to meet you at the point of your need. For this reason, it is a good 'touching place' for those whom you may know who might describe themselves as 'spiritual' but not Christian. As I say, this does not mean that the God of our faith cannot be found as you walk the labyrinth path. So, let me encourage you to make others aware of the labyrinth within our Church, and invite them to visit. As we tell others, we are truly being 'the Kirk on the Canal'.

This time of Advent is a busy time for many of us, filled with anticipation as we look forward to the coming of family and friends among us, and primarily, as we look forward in faith to the coming of our Saviour. If there seems to be little chance for you to stop, and reconnect with God, then I commend the Labyrinth to you as a way to help you rediscover his presence and peace in your lives.



Learning
in
the
light
of
knowledge
Moving in the Love of God



INTIMATIONS Sunday 11th December 2016

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Tuesday 9am–1pm

Friday 2pm–6pm

Saturday 10am–1pm

PRS Licence no.939321 CCL Licence no.494330

MRL Licence no.494347 PPL Licence no.1629764 CVL Licence no. 2313031

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Welcome: A warm welcome is extended to all, especially those who are worshipping at Polwarth as a visitor or returning after an absence. We thank you for choosing to join us today and trust you will be comfortable in our midst and with our style of worship.

Today's Service: The service will be conducted by our minister, **Jack Holt, and Allan Morton**, the probationer minister and members of the congregation. It is the Third Sunday in Advent. We will light the third candle on the Advent Wreath and display more pieces of the Nativity scene. The theme is: **Advent Joy** – . *The Sunday School will present their Nativity and the congregation are invited to share in our annual Christmas lunch after the service today.*

Musical Accompaniment: **Dr Lance Whitehead**, our Director of Music, will provide the accompaniment to our praise as well as enhance our worship with his choices of music:

Organ Prelude: Johann Pachelbel: 'Chaconne in F minor'; **Music for Quiet Reflection:** Johann Christoph Bach: 'How brightly shines the morning star'; **Choir anthem:** 'Nativity Carol', words and music by John Rutter **Postlude:** Giovanni Battista Martini: Toccata.

Invitation to Christmas Lunch: After the service the congregation is invited to the Hall to share in our annual Christmas lunch, lovingly created prepared and served by a wonderful team under the leadership of Elaine Hopley. *Donations will be in support of one of our Christmas projects.*
ALL ARE MOST WARMLY WELCOME TO ATTEND AND SHARE IN OUR FELLOWSHIP.

Murray Aisle (to your right at the front as you sit) The chapel area is set aside for quiet and personal prayer and reflection at any time.

Large print versions of the Order of Service and Intimation sheets are available. Please ask someone on welcome duty if you require one.

Visual Presentation

The service is presented visually on the screen, but some written Orders of Service are in the Vestry for those who wish to take them to our housebound members.

Next Sunday

The service at 11am will be conducted by the minister, **Jack**, and Probationer Minister, **Allan**. It will be the Fourth Sunday in Advent. We will light the fourth candle on the Advent Wreath and display more pieces of the Nativity scene. The service will be **Readings and Carols for Christmas**.

Daily Readings for the week beginning 12 December.

Mon: Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17; Psalm 25:4-9;
Matthew 21:23-27.

Tues: Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Psalm 34:2-3, 6-7, 16,
18-19, 23; Matthew 21:28-32.

Wed: Isaiah 45:6-8, 18, 21-26; Psalm 85:9-14;
Luke 7:19-23.

Thurs: Isaiah 54:1-10; Psalm 30:12, 4-6, 11-13;
Luke 7:24-30.

Fri: Isaiah 56:1-3, 6-8; Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 7-8;
John 5:33-36.

Sat: Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Psalm 72:1-4, 7-8, 17;
Matthew 1:1-17.

TWO IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE DIARY!

16 December at 7pm in the Church

For the third year Jack will produce an evening of **Music and Movies for Christmas** but this year in partnership with our Director of Music, Lance Whitehead, who will be arranging the musical programme which this year will include performances from the Craiglockhart School Junior Choir! This is a fun evening for all ages with refreshments provided in the interval, with donations going to our *Float the Boat* Fund.

So please get busy inviting your family, neighbours and friends to join you for a free social occasion at Christmas!

18 December at 4pm, outside in the Church Garden

We again host a community carol singing event, using the carols sheet provided by *EMBRACE the Middle East*. Last year it had limited success, not well supported even by the congregation (why not?). This year can we not get enthusiastic and encourage all our friends, neighbours, all whom we come in contact with, to come and make a crowd that can sing with joy the carols of Christmas?!

The Schools are coming!

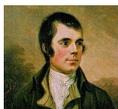
It's that time of year when the staff, pupils and parents of George Watson's College Junior School (P4-P7) and Craiglockhart Primary School assemble at Polwarth for their Christmas services. They will be here on the afternoons 12 December for the former and the morning of 22 December for the latter.

Prayer Tree: In winter trees shed their leaves, and for our prayer tree it is the same. Last Sunday, after the service, Jack removed the prayer leaves and our tree will remain barren until the New Year. Our thanks to everyone who placed a prayer on the tree in 2016 for the encouragement it gave to us all to be a praying community. For the next few weeks our attention moves to the other trees in our sanctuary; our Christmas Tree and our Jesse Tree.

Expense claims: All expense claims for 2016 should be submitted to the Treasurer ASAP for payment before the end of the year. This will ensure that they are all processed before the end of the financial year.

Guild Quiz Letters are now on sale for a donation of £1. All proceeds will go to our own church funds. To obtain your copy see Louise or Morag.

The last choir rehearsal of 2016 will take place in the church on Sunday 18 December, 0930–1030.



Burns Supper on Friday 20 January at 6.30pm 2017 in the Drennan Hall.

Tickets: £15.00 (BYOB) available from Audrey Currie or Margaret Anderson. People participating:

Audrey Currie chairing, Rev. Jack Holt proposing 'The Immortal Memory', Lance Whitehead organising music and song entertainment, Jenny Nex and Allan Morton singing, with Margaret Anderson doing The Address to a Haggis and extract from Tam o' Shanter. **Please get your tickets before Christmas to ensure a place as after that they will go on the website.** - Audrey & Margaret.

Nativity Scenes Exhibition at Craigmillar Park Church

2 Craigmillar Park, Newington, EDINBURGH EH16 5LZ
Sat 17 Dec (2 - 4pm) and Sun 18 Dec (2 - 4pm) Over 200 nativities from around the world will be on display in the church. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served. All are welcome, including children (activities available).

Lessons and Carols in Candlelight at Craigmillar Park Church

Sun 18 Dec, 6.30pm. St Margaret's Singers and the church choir, led by John Cranston. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served afterwards.

Edinburgh Direct Aid supports 70,000 Syrian refugees in bitterly cold, high altitudes in Lebanon. At each event we are inviting financial donations to their work.

Follow the Star - 10-24 December at St Andrew's and St George's West, George Street. Find the real Christmas story in the heart of Edinburgh - everyone welcome. Free entry, donations to Edinburgh Direct Aid, Health in Mind and Richmond's Hope. Find out more at www.stagw.org.uk

SMALL CHANGE JARS: From December 2016 until November 2017 our Small Change Jars will go to support Edinburgh Direct Aid. Jars can be handed to Audrey Downie or Elaine Hopley. Thank you from the Global Concerns Team.

Rowan Alba: This is a local charity that works with the homeless here in Edinburgh. For a number of years they have been collecting used postage stamps and have a venue for selling them on. Now is a good time for us all to save our stamps. They should be cut off the envelope with a good surround. Please leave them in the box on the table in the vestibule or give them to Kathleen Grigor - I'm in church most Sundays. Thank you - Kathleen.