

Annan United Reformed Church

www.annan.urc.org.uk



Unto us a Child is Born

December 2016 Newsletter



CHRISTMAS CARDS

Sending cards this month is perhaps the only communication we have with folk we have been friendly with in the past, or relatives who have moved away, perhaps even abroad. It's good to keep in touch with Friends.

Friendships keep us going when the pressures of life might otherwise prove too much. We can share with a friend what we do or how we feel, knowing they will understand. In friendship, we can simply share a companionable silence.

So it is with God. We are wise to spend time with God regularly, however briefly. We can tell God everything, knowing God understands and cares. With Him we can share a companionable silence.

Haydn Higton

*What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
And what a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer*

*Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer*

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## WRAPPING THE PRESENTS

God, source of all good gifts, bless this gift and the person for whom I am preparing it. May I learn from you to be generous with my love. Please take care of those I love. Help me and those close to me to be open to receive your most precious gift, the love of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## FIFTY SMILING CHILDREN

A big Thank You to everyone who contributed to the Shoebox appeal this year to send gifts to children in Eastern Europe. Our church family filled 50 boxes, and donated £144 to the costs for transporting the boxes.

It is hoped that these boxes and many like them will bring a smile to the children given the boxes in the Christmas season.

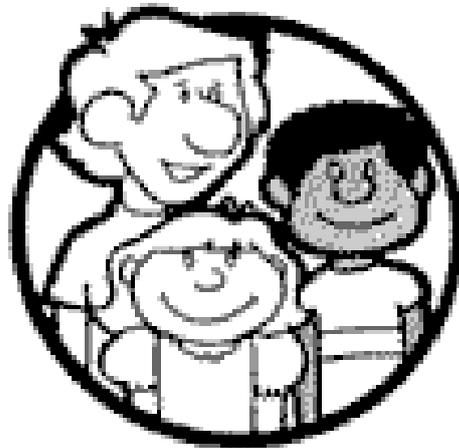
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THE SHOEBOX

At this time of year, with our thoughts turning to children in far-off lands, I found this poem very appropriate –

I'm just a humble shoebox
And not worth very much
But wait and see me in a while
I'll have a loving touch.
I could have been discarded
And simply thrown away
But now I've been recycled
And cared for day by day.

So many little toys and gifts
Are snugly packed within
And when I'm really filled up tight
Adventures will begin.
I'll soon be wrapped up neatly
In paper shiny bright
And I'll be feeling very proud,
So full of love and light.



Then soon I will be travelling
To many distant lands
And children will be waiting
With eager, stretched out hands.
So don't discard your shoebox
Just think what you can do;
God bless those folk who work so hard,
God bless the children too!

Irving Kerr

MAGGIE'S CENTRES

Maggie's is the charity chosen for our extra giving in December. Maggie's offers a program of cancer care to thousands of people affected by cancer across the UK.

Drop-in centres are built near major hospitals providing cancer treatments, and in 2016 new buildings have been provided in Forth Valley, Oldham, Manchester and East London. With help and support from many donations, Maggie's is growing and is able to help more people in more places.

An edition of "Making Maggie's" is on the book rack (near the vestry door) telling about fundraisers who have all done something inspirational to help people with cancer. Read their stories and please give generously to our Christmas charity appeal.

See also www.maggiescentres.org

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## FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP

The first meeting of the Friday fellowship, which was held on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October, was most successful. Fourteen people attended. The speaker was Mr Duncan Ford, Ranger at Hoddom and Kinmount Estate, who gave an excellent account of his job, with a PowerPoint presentation.

After discussion with those present, on what format future meetings should take, it was agreed that meetings be held on the last Friday of each month, with a speaker. A collection would be taken at each meeting to help with speaker expenses.

The next will be held on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January, when Steven and Eleanor Oswald will give a talk on Photography. All are welcome to attend.

Marion Kerr

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GIRLS' BRIGADE

1st Annan Girls' Brigade has commenced this session with an average of 30 girls attending each Thursday evening across the 3 sections. We are well on our way with our badge work in each of the sections, undertaking a variety of activities. The girls who took part in the Division event in Hamilton on the 29th of Oct, had a fabulous day out and also had the opportunity to meet other GB girls and leaders from across the Division. The girls had a sponsored silence on the 17th of November to raise some funds towards the fees that we have to pay each year for each girl and leader to GB Headquarters, which this year is £24 per head. The girls have a couple of weeks left, before the Christmas festivities, of exciting and challenging activities to partake in.

Paula Mitchell



WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

A local church should be about

- Believing - grasping something about the wonder of Jesus Christ.
- Learning - disciples are learners or students.
- Sharing - being part of a fellowship of mutual support and love with each other and with God.
- Proclaiming - reaching out to others with the good news of the Gospel and becoming people with a message to share.

Put another way, a congregation is a company of persons (members, adherents and their children) associated in a particular locality for Christian worship, instruction, fellowship and work.

Each local congregation should have a body of dedicated women and men, carefully chosen and properly commissioned, to look after the welfare of the church and its members in every way possible.

Will you volunteer to lead the church family? Speak to the Elders for more information.

Haydn Higton (thoughts taken from a book "Leading God's People")

Several people have said to me how much they enjoyed the article in an earlier edition of the newsletter about my summer holidays, so here is my OCTOBER HOLIDAY STORY.

We have been visiting Jersey for the last thirty years; our first visit was in 1986 on our honeymoon. There is something very special about this beautiful Channel Island that keeps drawing us back to it.

We stayed in St Brelade, one of the twelve parishes; our apartment overlooked the bay. It is such a picturesque place. At the end of the bay is St Brelade's Church, dedicated to St Brelade. In the early 12th century this church became a parish church. It is a lovely small church, with a lovely altar and very beautiful pews. Overlooking the bay, in the church grounds, is the tiny Fishermen's Chapel. It is one of only a few surviving Mediaeval Chapels. There are still services in this tiny chapel. It has beautiful paintings on the ceiling. The lych-gate, the roofed gate into the churchyard, was donated in 1933 by Lady Trent, the widow of Jesse Boot founder of Boots the Chemist who was a Jersey resident.

A visit to Jersey wouldn't be complete without a visit or two to the amazing Durrell Wildlife Park. Gerald Durrell, the famous naturalist and author, began this park in 1959. It is the home to many endangered species who, without the great insight of Gerald Durrell, would not be here today. You could watch the antics of the orangutans, gorillas and Andean bears, to name but a few, for hours.

I also enjoyed an evening at Jersey Opera House where Lesley Garrett was appearing. It was a really enjoyable evening with songs and chat.

A week passes by so fast and there are things that I still didn't get to do; roll on next year.

Fiona Glass.

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## **COMMITMENT FOR LIFE - MOVING STORIES 198**

### **Holding Palestine in the Light**

A month ago academics, church leaders, a rabbi and a retired diplomat spoke at an event in Lichfield Cathedral titled 'Holding Palestine in the Light'. The cathedral's Facebook page was instantly deluged with abusive allegations of anti-Semitism, some accusing it of holding a 'hate fest'. Now the largest Jewish group in the UK that supports rights for Palestinians has partnered with Christian organisations and prominent individuals to commend the event organisers and uphold the right to advocate for Palestine.

They say in [a statement](#):

"We find it disquieting that the Lichfield conference has been seized on by those who seek to silence criticism of Israeli policies."

Jews for Justice for Palestinians (JfJfP) spokesperson Naomi Wayne said: "It is not anti-Semitic to point out when a nation state – in this case Israel – breaks international law and deprives an occupied people of their basic human rights."

The full text of the statement follows overleaf.

## JEWS AND CHRISTIANS FOR FREE SPEECH ON ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

We, Christians and Jews who advocate for justice for Palestinians, would like to put on record our admiration for the Dean of Lichfield, with a group of local Christians from other churches, in hosting the festival 'Holding Palestine in the Light' in Lichfield Cathedral last month, despite opposition from some quarters.

We regret the intemperate attacks to which the hosts were subjected. The language used and the opinions expressed would be rejected by many – including many Jews – in this country.

There were Jews among the members of a group from Liverpool, twinned with the West Bank village of Bil'in, who delivered an exhibition of Palestinian children's photos to Lichfield Cathedral for the festival.

The founding chair of the Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community was moved to send a message of support saying: "Many Jews, including many in religious communities like ours, welcome discussions like this conference."

We find it disquieting that the Lichfield conference has been seized on by those who seek to silence criticism of Israeli policies.

The Israeli government's near half century occupation, with its appropriation of Palestinian land and resources for Israeli use, and its abrogation of Palestinians' basic human rights, is conducted in direct contravention of several international laws including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

All around us there are attempts to equate criticism of Israeli government policies with anti-Semitism. This form of censorship seeks to halt legitimate discourse about the history and politics of Israel and Palestine.

Whether we are Christians or Jews – secular or observant – our core values are ultimately based on the Hebrew scriptures as well as the values of the Enlightenment.

"... let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Amos 5, v 24.

The oppression of Palestinians by a succession of Israeli governments is neither just nor righteous and it is not anti-Semitic to point this out, to speak truth to power. It is our duty as Jews, as Christians – indeed as citizens – to work for a just peace for all in Israel-Palestine.

Jews for Justice for Palestinians, Kairos Britain, Amos Trust, Friends of Sabeel UK, Bishop Richard Llewellyn

CONTENT © FREE SPEECH ON ISRAEL 2016



## DECEMBER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

|                         |                                                                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thu 1 <sup>st</sup>     | Girls' Brigade – 6pm                                                 |
| Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup>     | Fridays in Faith – 7 till 8:30 pm – the Community Hub, Ednam Street  |
| Sun 4 <sup>th</sup>     | Communion Service – 10:30am                                          |
| Sun 4 <sup>th</sup>     | Rainbow Tribe & Spectrum Concert – 2pm – in URC Church               |
| Tue 6 <sup>th</sup>     | Tea & Natter group – 10am                                            |
| Tue 6 <sup>th</sup>     | Games Afternoon – 2pm                                                |
| Thu 8 <sup>th</sup>     | *Christmas Tree Festival – 10 till 4 pm                              |
| Thu 8 <sup>th</sup>     | Girls' Brigade – 6pm                                                 |
| Fri 9 <sup>th</sup>     | *Christmas Tree Festival – 10 till 4 pm                              |
| Sat 10 <sup>th</sup>    | *Christmas Tree Festival – 10 till 4 pm                              |
| Sun 11 <sup>th</sup>    | Sunday Service – 10:30am                                             |
| Tue 13 <sup>th</sup>    | Tea & Natter group – 10am                                            |
| Tue 13 <sup>th</sup>    | Games Afternoon – 2pm                                                |
| Sun 18 <sup>th</sup>    | Christmas Carols and Readings – 10:30am                              |
| Tue 20 <sup>th</sup>    | Tea & Natter group – 10am                                            |
| Tue 20 <sup>th</sup>    | Games Afternoon – 2pm                                                |
| Thu 22 <sup>nd</sup>    | Last date for contributions to January newsletter to Ruth and Robert |
| Sat 24 <sup>th</sup>    | Watchnight Service – 11:15pm – St Andrews Parish Church              |
| Sun 25 <sup>th</sup>    | Christmas Day Service – 10:30am                                      |
| Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan | New Year's Day Service – 10:30am                                     |

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***CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 8TH TO 10TH DECEMBER**

Church open 10 till 4 each day with soup and sweet lunches 11:30 to 1:30
and refreshments at other times.

Help at any session would still be welcome.



DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR DECEMBER

Date	Old Testament	New Testament
Thu 1 st	Micah 5:2-5a	John 3:16-21
Fri 2 nd	Isaiah 66:18-end	Luke 13:22-30
Sat 3 rd	Micah 7:8-15	Romans 15:30-16:7, 16:25-end
Mon 5 th	Jeremiah 7:1-11	Philippians 4:4-9
Tue 6 th	Daniel 7:9-14	Matthew 24:15-28
Wed 7 th	Amos 9:11-end	Romans 13:8-14
Thu 8 th	Jeremiah 23:5-8	Mark 11:1-11
Fri 9 th	Jeremiah 33:14-22	Luke 21:25-36
Sat 10 th	Zechariah 14:4-11	Revelation 22:1-7
Mon 12 th	Isaiah 40:1-11	Matthew 3:1-12
Tue 13 th	Lamentations 3:22-33	1 Corinthians 1:1-9
Wed 14 th	Joel 3:9-16	Matthew 24:29-35
Thu 15 th	Isaiah 62	1 Thessalonians 3:6-13
Fri 16 th	Isaiah 2:1-5	Acts 11:1-18
Sat 17 th	Proverbs 8:22-31	1 Corinthians 2:1-13
Mon 19 th	Isaiah 11:1-9	Romans 15:7-13
Tue 20 th	Isaiah 22:21-23	Revelation 3:7-13
Wed 21 st	Numbers 24:15b-19	Revelation 22:10-21
Thu 22 nd	Jeremiah 30:7-11a	Acts 4:1-12
Fri 23 rd	Isaiah 7:10-15	Matthew 1:18-23
Sat 24 th	Isaiah 29:13-18	1 John 4:7-16
Mon 26 th	Genesis 4:1-10	Matthew 23:34-end
Tue 27 th	Isaiah 6:1-8	1 John 5:1-12
Wed 28 th	Isaiah 49:14-25	Mark 10:13-16
Thu 29 th	Micah 1:1-4; 2:12-13	Luke 2:1-7
Fri 30 th	Isaiah 9:2-7	John 8:12-20
Sat 31 st	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13	Revelation 21:1-8