



Dear Friends

As we approach Christmas and look forward to enjoying all the ways we celebrate the Lord's birth and what it means to us that we have a Saviour who knows our human life, we are surrounded again this year by all the tragedy of wars and the devastation that typhoons can bring. We have plenty to eat, sufficient to pay our heating bills and comforts to find rest each day yet there are so many others in our own city, country and overseas for whom this time of year is the same dreary, bleak time when enjoyment is not there and pain, grief and sadness is their experience.

To some there is no hope and the future is a grim prospect. To others, it is a heart-rending pain and sorrow that others cannot know or share in, or an illness and weakness that is so debilitating that each day we long for the night and each night we long for the day just to get it over with.

But the Christian should be different in each of these. Since Jesus shares our human nature we have a saviour who knows our thoughts, feelings and pain. He showed how deep his love for us is when he came to share in our human life. Do you remember the hymn that says, 'Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer.' Well, do you?

One girl who was terribly abused as a youngster and was suicidal because she felt so worthless and hated herself for it, came to know the love of her heavenly Father when she was brought to the cross of Jesus and knew her own unworthiness but received the forgiveness and mercy of God in Christ and his cleansing power in her heart. She was brought to God and she found him to be good in way that no one else she knew had ever been good to her, and loving in a way that no one

else she knew had ever loved her. She became a Christian and her life has been changed and transformed by Christ. The Christian message is one of hope and salvation, of cleansing and renewing, of reconciliation to God who is so kind and good and showed it in Christ's death and resurrection and bringing us to him to find his grace and mercy.

May God grant to each of us this love and mercy, and the opportunities and willingness to share the good news with others.

The words of John Samuel Bewley Monsell are apt:

Rest of the weary,  
Joy of the sad,  
Hope of the dreary,  
Light of the glad,  
Home of the stranger,  
Strength to the end,  
Refuge from danger,  
Saviour and Friend!

Pillow, where lying,  
Love rests its head,  
Peace of the dying,  
Life of the dead,  
Path of the lowly,  
Prize at the end,  
Breath of the holy,  
Savior and friend!

When my feet stumble,  
I to Thee cry,  
Crown of the humble, Cross of the high;  
When my steps wander,  
Over me bend,  
Truer and fonder,  
Saviour and Friend.

Ever confessing  
Thee, will I raise  
Unto Thee blessing,  
Glory and praise,-  
All my endeavour,  
World without end,  
Thine to be ever,  
Saviour and Friend.

May I also thank you for your generosity in the appeal for TEARfund. The amount raised was very moving. May the Lord bless you as you seek to be a blessing to many.

Your friend and Minister

*Richard G Buckley*

**CHRISTMAS GIFT SERVICE (11am 8<sup>th</sup> December)**

Our Christmas Gifts this year will go to help our Christian brothers and sisters in Bible lands through the agency of an organization called 'Embrace the Middle East', formerly known as Bible Lands Society.

Our monetary gifts will be used to purchase a wide range of necessary items for those who are suffering deprivation. The gifts are varied, and include items such as spectacles, goats, chickens, bus passes and surgical procedures!

No tinsel and crackers, but we *can* help those in great need!

*May we take this opportunity to thank everyone in the congregation who has given so generously to the many appeals through the year. The generosity of this congregation has been staggering, and has often been commented.*

*Editor*



# CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2013

## **1st December: First Sunday in Advent**

11am Isaiah 9: 1-7 Rev R G Buckley  
6.30pm Isaiah 42: 1-17 Rev R G Buckley

## **8th December: Second Sunday in Advent**

11am *Christmas Gift Service*  
Luke 1:26-37 Rev R G Buckley  
6.30pm John 1: 1-18 Rev George Mitchell

## **15th December: Third Sunday in Advent**

11am Gal 3:23-4: 7 Session Clerk  
6.30pm Romans 8: 1-17 Clerk to the Board

## **22nd December: Fourth Sunday in Advent**

11am *Family Service*  
Heb2: 10-18 Rev R G Buckley  
6.30pm *Carol Service*  
Rev 5 Rev R G Buckley

## **24<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER: 11.30pm CHRISTMAS EVE WATCHNIGHT SERVICE**

Come and celebrate with us the Incarnation of our Saviour.  
The Service ends in the first minutes of Christmas Day.  
Light refreshments are served in the Large Hall from 10.30pm  
onwards.

## **STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN?**



*Mrs Lamont using the new handrails*

Many of you – especially our older members – will have noticed and appreciated some changes to the front of the building. Firstly the gates have been rehung, the path relaid, and the steps (which had recently been renovated) had to be completely renewed, with new treads, and with the heights adjusted to meet the new path.

You will have noted, too, the two handrails at either side of the main door, which have proved a boon to many. The handrails and their fitting were the gift of Mrs Lamont to the congregation.

We are deeply indebted to her for giving us a 'wee hand up the stairs'!

## **WELCOME**



The latest addition to the Brodie family is little Isaac Stone Brodie. Here he is with his mum Charis, dad Robbie, and elder brother, Ben!

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### **A CHRISTMAS HYMN**

Our little Lord, we give thee praise  
That thou hast deigned to take our ways.  
Born of a maid a man to be,  
And all the angels sing to Thee.

The eternal Father's Son he lay,  
Cradled in a crib of hay.  
The everlasting God appears  
In our frail flesh and blood and tears.

What the globe could not enwrap  
Nestled lies in Mary's lap.  
Just a baby, very wee,  
Yet Lord of all the world is He.

*Martin Luther*



I would like to thank members of the congregation for their prayers, visits, cards and telephone calls following my recent surgery. Knowing so many people were remembering me in their prayers was very comforting. I am now well on the road to recovery and glad to be back amongst you all again.

*Norma McKenzie*



I wish to thank Mr Buckley and the congregation for all the enquiries, cards and flowers I received after my accident.

I am progressing very well and I hope to be back with you all very soon.

Thank you once again for your kindness.

*Myra Girvan*



## **IT COULD NEVER HAPPEN HERE...?**

He was not well-educated and rather rough and crude around the edges, but he was recently converted and now on fire for the Lord. He was constantly pestering the pastor to give him some work that would be helpful to the church. Finally the pastor agreed. He gave the man a list of ten people who hadn't been in church for years nor made any financial contribution. Some of these were quite prominent in the community.

The pastor said, "What I want you to do is get these people back to church, however you can. You can use church stationery if you want, but get these people back to church."

Three weeks later the pastor got an envelope in the mail from a prominent doctor whose name had been on the list, along with a check for \$1,000 and a note that read, *"Dear Pastor, Please excuse my inactivity at church. I really have no excuse. Accept this check as a partial contribution for all the Sundays I've missed, and be assured I will never, by choice, miss worship again."*

*Sincerely,*

*J. B. Jones, M.D.*

*P.S. - Will you kindly tell your secretary that there is only one "t" in dirty and no "c" in skunk?"*

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