



SC005478

December 2019

Where Are They Now?

What a delight it was to have a surprise visit from Susan Macfarlane a few weeks back! Susan was, of course, one of our gap-year Vocational Volunteers and she, along with the others, was a real star when among us and it was a great privilege to watch her grow and develop during her year with us.

So where are they now and what's been happening in their lives? This month, we offer updates on Susan, Matthew and Chris.

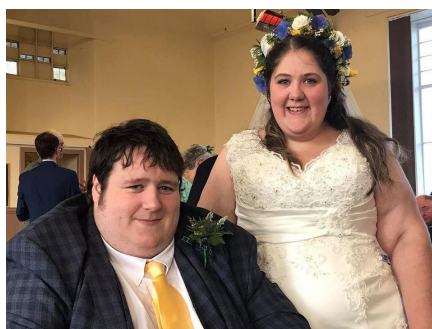
Susan has not had the easiest of times. She lost her mother, suddenly and unexpectedly, and suffered a serious injury whilst playing shinty. But she's shown her strength and resilience and has continued with her theology degree and is progressing well in that.

Matthew is serving as a youth worker in Lochee, Dundee. He's led some great work there, including the building up of a really strong Messy Church and some other innovative family events. But of course most noteworthy was his marriage to Rachel on the 11th October, which our minister, Martin was privileged to conduct. We wish the happy couple every blessing for the years ahead.

After his time in Scotland, Chris returned to the USA where he completed his academic training for ministry. From there, he was assigned to the Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis where he is presently serving as an associate minister. But in the middle of all of that, Chris got hitched to Katherine! Our own Michael, Adele and Scarlett were at the wedding.

Now, the big news is that Chris is being ordained into ministry of word and sacrament, the service to take place in his home town in early January. We're delighted to announce that Martin, has been invited to preach at Chris's ordination and so he will make a very brief trip to Pennsylvania for the occasion.

It's clear to see that for Susan, Matthew and Chris, life is very much on track as they seek to serve God and live to His glory. No doubt their time at St. Andrew's helped in that process of formation and so we will continue to watch with interest to see how things develop further in the coming years.



Remembering

In what has become an important tradition, we'll be hosting a Service of Memorial and Thanksgiving between Christmas and New Year, this year on Sunday 29th December at 6.30pm. While it's true that the service is appropriate for those who have been bereaved in the last year, it's equally suitable for any folks for whom the festive period is tinged, or shot through, with sadness.

The service is a relatively short one – 30-40 minutes – and includes readings, reflections, hymns and opportunities to light candles of remembrance.

CHURCH OFFICE: 431135**ADMINISTRATOR**

Linda Hunter: 431135

Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri : 9 -12noon

MINISTERRev Dr W Martin Fair, BA, BD
07889 982216**PASTORAL ASSISTANT**

Ian Gray: 01674 677126

CLERK TEAM LEADER

Joan Hainsworth: 875409

TREASURER

Heather Black:

CHURCH OFFICER

Janis Clark: 878594

YOUTH WORKER

Carla Ingram: 07931420905

**HAVILAH PROJECT
LEADER**

Tracey McLeod: 434088

**HAVILAH PROJECT
WORKER**

Tammy Stuart: 434088

**HAVILAH SUPPORT
WORKER**

Karen Reaney: 01307 818277

FABRIC CONVENOR

Pending

SUNDAY CLUB

Elaine Fair: 873238

FREEWILL ENVELOPES

Linda Hunter: 431135

SAFEGUARDINGEleanor Jakobsen:
01382 477318**FLOWER CONVENOR**

Margaret McIntosh: 553160

PRAYER PROMOTERSJudy Spink: 872395
Anne Matthew: 876008**SUPPLIES CO-ORDINATOR**

Janis Clark: 878594

BOOKINGS / ROLLKEEPER

Linda Hunter: 431135

MAGAZINE EDITORS

Iain and Amy Scott

Quest@arbroathstandrews.org.uk

ST. ANDREW'S ARBROATH**Member Records****November 2019****Baptisms and Blessings** - None**Weddings** - None**Funerals** -

Ann McIntosh, Allan Todd and Frances Walker

Martin and Ian, our pastoral assistant, conducted other funerals though none were of members of our congregation. Nonetheless, we remember the bereaved families in our prayers.

IMPORTANT DATES**FEBRUARY EDITION**

Handwritten/typed articles should be handed in to the **OFFICE** by the **FIRST** date and **NOT** to Editor.

Word Processed files, as attachments, can be sent **directly to the Editor** or **via office** by **second** date.

Please **DO NOT** embed articles in an email as these then need additional formatting work.

Friday 17th January (Written, preferably typed)

Monday 20th January (Word-Processed file)

Service Core Group**Make sure your Christmas lights are
LED**

An easy change that we can all make this Christmas is ensuring our Christmas lights are LEDs and, if they're not, switching them to lights that are.

It'll make a huge difference to the amount of energy used during the festive season.

LED lights use an average of 75% less energy and can last up to 25 times longer, meaning you'll save both energy and money.

Soup Lunches

Dates of upcoming lunches -

26 January	Dementia Café
23 February	Guild
22 March	BB's
26 April	Dalitso
24 May	Havilah

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Organisations will alert members when groups resume after holidays or when changes to venues are made.

SUNDAY

10.15 am – Gathering for prayer.

11.00 am – Morning service (with short communion on the third Sunday of the month) with Tea/coffee after.

Sunday Club – Elaine Fair (873238).

Crèche – up to age 3. Infants – ages 3 to 5.

Juniors – ages 8 and 9. Seniors – ages 10 and 11

6.30 - 8.00 pm – Youth Group - Carla Ingram (07931420905)

Monday to Friday - 12.00 – Havilah: Drop-in Centre – Community Spirit (434088)**MONDAY**

2.00 pm – Dorothy Dobson Over 50's Exercise Class

6.00 pm – Rainbow Guides – L. Hadden (875379)

7.30 pm – St. Andrew's Guild: Fortnightly – J. McPherson (431681)

7.30 pm – Flower Club: Fortnightly – M. McIntosh (553160)

WEDNESDAY

10.30 am – Midweek Meeting Point – M. Fair (873238)

THURSDAY

2.00 pm – Friends Club: First Thursday – N. Watson (875451)

6.00 pm – Anchor Boys – S. Jamieson (431942)

6.00 pm – BB Junior Section – W. Ewart (876114)

7.00 pm – Church Prayer Group

7.30 pm – BB Company Section – M. Clark (437758)

FRIDAY

9.30 am – Coffee morning: Last Friday of month

Intimations, changes of address, hall bookings etc., please contact the Church office, Monday to Friday, 9 am to noon and for 15 minutes after Sunday Service, telephone 431135.

Martin Fair

December 2019

Dear Friends,

By now the dust has settled somewhat following the announcement that I am to be the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland from May 2020-2021. I've been hugely moved and humbled by the flood of warm greetings coming from so many quarters – including letters from people I was at primary school with and haven't seen in over forty years!

During my time of service, I will continue to contribute a page for QUEST magazine so that the congregation can keep abreast of what I've been involved with but to give you a brief flavour even now, the following are examples of what is already in the diary (firmly or provisionally.) As you'll see some engagements are very much 'local' while others are national and international. These are just a few; the bottom line is that it will be a 'full on' year, almost non-stop – exciting, therefore, but daunting.

- Participate in the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer event in Trafalgar Square
- Preach at the celebration of the 400th anniversary of Longside Church in Peterhead
- Attend the General Synod and Assemblies of the Church of England and Church of Wales
- Travel to Nepal and India to celebrate the life of the churches in these countries and to stand with and encourage Christian communities which suffer oppression from other, larger faith groups.
- Preach at the church in Glasgow where I grew up!
- Spend a week at the Scottish Parliament, meeting with the First minister and other government ministers to discuss issues of importance to the church and nation.
- Speak at the annual gathering of The Guild in the Caird Hall, Dundee – I'll be watching for you, ladies!
- Spend a week in London, including preaching engagements and meetings with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prime Minister (whoever that might be!)

But while all of that is going on, the life of St. Andrew's Church, Arbroath, will of course continue. Even now, a planning group appointed by the Kirk Session is working to make sure that everything is ready for my time away, to ensure that everything works as smoothly as possible. The Presbytery will appoint an Interim Moderator and we are working hard on making sure that worship services and pastoral care etc. are all properly covered. For example, a line-up of special guest 'top drawer' preachers is being drawn up to be with us on a monthly basis – preachers who will excite and enthuse the congregation.

Here's the thing; we're planning for a really exciting year for the congregation – not a year of standing still!! It's going to be a year like no other for the gifts of the members of the congregation to come to the fore. The good news is that our congregation has plenty of such people and that just because the minister is away 'on secondment,' there's no need to think that it will be a year of stagnation.

There's much to look forward to for all of us – and before any of that, the small matter of Christmas 2019! When all else is said and done, there's nothing in any of it if it's not grounded in the truth that God became a little child, born at Bethlehem. As He humbled himself, let us bow down as the shepherds and wise men before us, that we might adore Him in our hearts, lift him high in our praises and remember him in our gift-giving.

With every blessing,

Martin and Elaine

mfair@churchofscotland.org.uk

Ask Theophilus

Question:

Was Mary 'the mother of God'?

Theophilus answers:

This is not a claim that the Bible ever makes. Mark's Gospel begins with these words: 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' In Luke's Gospel the angel says to Mary, 'He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.' A few verses further on, Luke's record continues, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God' (Luke 1:32, 35). So it is only reasonable to conclude that Mary was the mother of the Son of God. More, the obvious implication is that it was through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the Most High himself brought about Mary's conception.

Further, Jesus never said that Mary was the mother of God. Indeed, when 'a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!"' Jesus replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"' (Luke 11:27-28.) The Lord was not contradicting or denying Elizabeth's words to Mary, 'Blessed are you among women,' but was rather saying that all who in faith receive and embrace Christ's truth are also blessed along with Mary who gave birth to Jesus.

Moreover, Scripture teaches that God is eternal and was present even before creation. While this is beyond the comprehension of our human, finite minds, we can grasp a little of God's eternal majesty, poetically expressed in the Psalmist's exclamation, 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God' (90:2). Therefore, we can only conclude that to call Mary 'the mother of God' is not only unbiblical but is also irrational. How could a mortal woman have ever given birth to the eternal God?

The early Christians would have been completely unwilling to give Mary this title, not only because it is never found, nor even hinted at, in the Scriptures, but also because the pagan religions believed that there was a 'Great Mother' who ruled over all the many cults that flourished in the early centuries of the Christian era. It was not until AD 432 that Pope Sixtus III ordered a church to be built in honour of the 'Mother of God'. Alas, it was built beside the site of an earlier pagan temple, erected in honour of Lucina, the Roman goddess of childbirth. Tragically, the Christian religion was being compromised, if not corrupted, by being associated with paganism.

So during this Advent season, let us give Mary her biblical place as the truly blessed virgin who was specially chosen to become the mother of our Lord Jesus, the Son of God, whose birth we celebrate with joyful thanksgiving. A blessed and joyful Christmas to you all!

Mental Health Project

Our community choir – which we call Coisir Sunnd – has been up and running since March. Our Drop-in started in mid August and our well-being garden is good to go too!

All three of these options combine to form our Mental Health project – our sincere prayer being that we might be able to bring a measure of support to folks within our congregation and, just as importantly, to folks from across our wider community.

All of this is only possible because of the commitment and willingness of a whole number of our members who have offered themselves as volunteers. Between the three parts of the project we have between 20-30 volunteers involved. And beyond that:

1. Helen Wallace has done the lion's share of the development work.
2. A team of seven are serving as the management group
3. Val Bledowski is serving as the lead person for the choir, Jenny Burns for the drop-in and Kevin Burns & Max Wallace for the garden.

Though our congregation is undoubtedly blessed in all kinds of ways, the willingness of members to be involved in ministry and mission is exemplary. Without that, only a fraction of what we offer would be possible.

Dementia Café

At our Café on the 6th of November we had the pleasure of a visit from half the P3 class from Ladyloan School along with their teacher, Mr Reilly, and a parent helper. They came along to see what we got up to at our Café and to join in. Before we got busy with our activities the children recited a poem about Flanders Field. Following refreshments the children joined our folks in putting, bingo and Christmas crafts. The children got on well with everyone and we all had a good time.

On Friday 22nd November it was P3's turn to host the first ever monthly Ladyloan Community Café and we were invited. Some of our ladies were able to attend and they enjoyed their visit. We look forward to the rest of the children of P3 coming along early in the New Year.

Guild

On 21st of October we had a Topic Night when, in groups, we worked through a few of the questions from “Conversations in Discipleship” a Church of Scotland publication, asking the question ‘What if life in all its fullness was reflected in how we follow Jesus together?’ The first task was to ‘share a story about a time when your relationship with others shaped your journey of faith’. We then moved on to ‘share a story about a time when you were taught or discovered something that changed the way you see God’. Our final discussion was to ‘talk about something that Jesus said or did which you find challenging to apply to your own life’. The chatter in the groups confirmed everyone had something to share and it was lovely to hear how folk were able to discuss these questions and in doing so were sharing their faith.

On the 4th of November we had a Christmas Craft time when we were able to make and take home our creations. This was an enjoyable evening as photos will show.

Saturday 9th November was the day of our Soup and Pudding lunch along with a small Christmas craft table and a beautiful knitted doll to “Guess her birthday”.

A big thank you to everyone who made the tasty soups and delicious puddings and who came to join us for the wonderful lunch. Also to those who had been busy knitting, crocheting and sewing for the craft stall. All proceeds go to our two projects for the year – Malawi Fruits (growing the future with solar futurepumps) and CrossReach ‘Join the dots’ (tackling loneliness and social isolation in Scotland).

On the 18th of November we enjoyed a wonderful evening of song when Carol-Ann and members of the Military Wives choir came along to sing a variety of songs. What wonderful voices.

We are now looking forward to a time of fellowship and fun at our Christmas party on the 2nd of December and later in the week a few of us are going through to Glasgow on Friday 6th December for the Guild Christmas Big Sing at St. George’s Tron. We’ve not been to one before so something else to look forward to!

The first meeting of 2020 will be Monday 13th January when Paul Russell from Tayside Mountain Rescue will be our speaker, hope you will be able to join us.

Because Nobody is a Nobody and Everybody is Somebody

If you were in church towards the end of November, you’d have heard the minister referring to a lady called Frances who had passed away with no circle of friends or family, meaning that the funeral was being handled by the social work department of Angus Council. Martin was asked to conduct a brief graveside service and the expectation was that he would be there with the grave diggers, the undertaker and no-one else.

That was when Martin mentioned it in worship, saying that he would be at the Western Cemetery on the coming Thursday morning and that if anyone was free to join him, they’d be most welcome.

To say that he was taken aback upon his arrival at the cemetery would be a huge understatement! Between forty and fifty St. Andrew’s members were assembled, waiting at the entrance. Among them was David Walker, in full highland dress and with his pipes ready, meaning that when the hearse arrived we were able to process together to the graveside, the strains of Amazing Grace cutting through the damp morning air. And flowers? Yes, several folk had brought floral arrangements and these, along with the flowers that Evelyn Todd so graciously gave, meant that there really was nothing missing by way of a ‘decent burial.’ Eight of the men who had come took cords for the committal and our minister led a short, fitting tribute, which included the singing of the 23rd Psalm.

Some might ask, ‘Why bother?’ After all, the lady was gone and there was no family to offer support to – and none of us who were there knew anything about Frances.

And yet we bothered. And we bothered because everyone matters. Though the world may measure a person’s worth in terms of rank or wealth or intellect, we see everyone as a child of God and, therefore, of infinite worth. The same belief motivates us to reach out to the broken and isolated through our Havilah project and the same belief causes many St. Andrew’s folks to support children in Malawi, through the Dalitso Project – because everybody matters, whether lost souls on our doorstep or severely disadvantaged infants half way round the world.

Friends Club

The Friends Club had a good turnout of members in November. Our entertainers were Musselcrag otherwise known as Ian Ramsay on guitar and ukelele, Albert Cull on accordion and Tom Trusdale on fiddle.

They started with a series of marches, waltzes, jigs and after a few various other tunes ended with a compilation of Scottish songs finishing with the well known Duggie McLean song, Caledonia.

We finished the afternoon with tea and cake and a lot of happy, smiling people.

Our next meeting is our Christmas Party on 5th December at 2pm in the British Legion with music played by Roy Duncan.

Noela

Dalitso Project News

December and January are busy months for the Dalitso Project with lots of opportunities to get involved in supporting the work.

Throughout December we will be selling our Alternative Gifts that start at just £5. Get in touch if you would like a copy or see our Facebook page for this year's gifts. We have new cards and now have the option of buying a bag of maize or fertiliser - new for 2019. As well as the gifts, we are selling our Alternative Gift Christmas Crackers. Inside is the usual Christmas fun but also a gift for someone in Malawi. Crackers are again £2 each or 6 for £10. Get in touch if you would like to order.

On Saturday 14th December from 11am-1pm, we are holding a children's event here at St. Andrew's Church, a perfect chance for the adults to do some Christmas shopping!

For only £4, children can come along and help find Santa's ice cream. Children of primary age will need to solve the clues to find who has stolen Santa's favourite treat and where it has been hidden before it melts! The event will finish with a 2 course meal together. Fun and food for only £4. Sign up is essential for this event so get in touch so you don't miss out!

Finally, looking ahead to January we are having our family Snowman Drive on Friday 10th and a Burns Supper on Monday 20th. Get these in your diaries! Look out for more details closer to the time!

We look forward to seeing you all over the Christmas period and sharing with you the arrival of the container. It is on its way to Mozambique so making good progress. Please do pray for its safe arrival. Thanks to you all for your support throughout 2019.

Charis Bowie

LOOKING AHEAD

December

Sunday 1

11 am - All-age Worship Service, first in Advent - inc. Ordination of Elders and Communion

Sunday 8

11 am - Worship Service

Sunday 15

11 am - Worship Service

Sunday 22

11 am - Worship Service; inc. Infant Blessing

Christmas Eve

6.30pm - Nativity & Christingle Service
11.15pm - Traditional Watchnight Service

Sunday 29

11 am - Worship Service; final service of the year
6.30pm - Service of Memorial & Thanksgiving

January

Sunday 5

11 am - Worship Service; Stepping into the New Year

Sunday 12

11 am - Worship Service

Sunday 19

11 am - Worship Service; followed by a short communion service

Sunday 26

11 am - Worship Service
4 pm - Messy Church

Sunday services are streamed live through our website or can be watched on 'catch up' at our YouTube channel.

Midweek services, take place every Wednesday at 10.30am followed by tea/coffee.

Evening services have been replaced by 'The Big Worship Night In' on a termly basis.

Changes Coming

At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland held in May of this year, a whole raft of proposals were brought forward and agreed which, when taken together, formed the Radical Action Plan. Since then a huge amount of work has been done to bring these ideas into being. At a Meeting in Edinburgh on 21 November at the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh, commissioners gave their support to a report from the Assembly Trustees recommending that various parts of the plan be adopted. These agreements are focussed on:

- Making huge savings in running the central bureaucracy of the Church
- Re-orientating the Church away from the centre towards the local
- Empowering local congregations for 21st century mission.

The following is a report on the meeting of 21st November.

Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, convener of the Assembly Trustees, said: "We have to understand and embrace the fact that change may be the only constant.

"As we have crept closer to this first and very modest change in our structure, it has become increasingly clear that while everyone wants change; mostly, people want change on their own terms.

"Each of us has to be the change we want to see in our Church.

"And we need to adopt a new way of working – a way that is more effective, more efficient and more targeted on the growth of the local Church."

Calling on the Church to embrace cultural change, Dr Chalmers said staff should be empowered to deliver the work they were skilled to do without micromanagement.

He added that staff should take steps to work across departments as a "unified workforce supporting one another" in order to deliver the work of the General Assembly.

The first task of the new agencies will be to take a detailed look at the work currently being done and make recommendations for the future.

This will include what work should be discontinued, what should continue and what might better be devolved to Presbyteries.

The 2019 General Assembly instructed the Trustees to achieve a reduction in central administration costs of 20%-30%.

At the same time the structure of Presbyteries are undergoing reforms with the goal of reducing the number from 45 to around 12.

That work is already underway and overtures on Presbytery mergers are expected to go to the 2020 General Assembly.

The Commission also discussed the importance of devolving responsibilities to Presbyteries, although that work cannot be completed until Presbytery reforms are in place.

"The overall priority is that the centre must serve the local," Dr Chalmers said.

"For the first time the administration of the central agencies of the Church all fall under the management of a Chief Officer so that there will be no licence for work to be done in separate silos and at least twice a year these Forums and the Assembly Trustees, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, the Theological Forum and others who may be involved in the consolidation of our work or in the reforming of our structures will meet on the same day, sharing their work and learning from one another."

Youth Work Update

Over the month of November, Youth Group looked at Remembrance, by creating a wreath which included our handprints and handmade poppies. This wreath sat in front of the communion table on Remembrance Sunday for our church service. We also took part in the Jelly Babies Challenge which gets the young people working in teams and uses skills such as memory, strategy and communication while working together. The first part of this challenge is a set of quiz questions with all the answers being found from an anagram of the words 'Jelly Babies'. The second activity is a memory and delegation challenge where the team has 5 minutes to read a box of sweets and remember as much information as they can by splitting it up between the team members and then answering questions. Finally, the tallest tower must be built using jelly babies and cocktail sticks. All of the activities remind us of the skills used in the armed forces and the team work and motivation they share with one another. All of the young people got involved and worked hard throughout the night enjoying the team work and competition.

Youth group will also be doing a variety of activities leading up to Christmas, more details of which will be given in the next edition of Quest!

In December, we are looking forward to holding our 'Bubblegum 'n' Fluff' event for the P5's of the Arbroath schools in the town and surrounding area. This will be held on the 10th, 11th and 13th of December. 'Bubblegum 'n' Fluff' is a two hour session of stories, activities and craft which focuses on the true heart of Christmas – Jesus!

While we all enjoy the food, gifts and festivities, it is wonderful to share the message of Jesus with these kids so they have another perspective on their Christmas celebrations.

Please pray for all the logistics of this event and for each child we will welcome into our church over the week.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like more information about our youth work!

Carla Ingram

standrews.yg@gmail.com or 07931420905

Message from our Minister Student, David

Dear Friends,

Christmas is just for the Children – I think we have all heard this expression many times over the years, and there are some elements of truth in it, particularly these days.

We live in a time of and a country of multiple faiths – and with many (though not as many as your might think) of no faith, and sadly it seems that many are not entirely sure what it is we are celebrating.

In earlier times, we would get our early knowledge of Jesus from our parents, from Sunday School and from Nativity plays, perhaps at School, but with a couple of generations of parents who have not been deeply engaged with Christianity, the teaching from parents is lacking, the teaching from Sunday School is lacking, and school teachers have to be wary of not offending those of other faiths – even if those other faiths would not particularly object to the story of Jesus being taught.

So, in a way, Christmas is for the Children – it is much easier to teach youngsters about the birth of a baby who grew up to be a good man, than it is to teach about death and resurrection, the Trinity and redemption. We have to start somewhere with our education, but somehow we have to work out again how we can teach the rest of the story and the wondrous reality that Jesus is God and that God is all around us.

The reality, of course, is that we have to work backwards for the life and death of Jesus to make sense – first of all we have to accept the Love of God for us all to the understanding that because of this Jesus was resurrected so that we too would be part of the our future life with God, after we too die and get raised to life. Only when we get that does the death of Jesus begin to make sense, and, of course, before death there is a birth and life.

I remember my son, while he was still at university studying civil engineering (following in his father's footsteps) saying that he hadn't understood why he had to study all the different modules that were part of his course until he got to the third year, when all the different bits of knowledge and techniques he had had to learn started being pulled together.

It is like that too with our understanding of God, of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit. We have to learn about a lot of the different pieces of the jigsaw before it really starts to make sense – but when we have got enough of the jigsaw in place then we can see what a marvellous picture it is – about how great, loving and gracious God is, that He has done so much for us, that He wants us to be with Him for ever.

Unfortunately, too many people get put off by the complexity of the jigsaw, that they don't preserve to see the full picture.

Just like children however, we need to encourage people to take things at their own story – just as a 3-year old starts with jigsaws with say 12 pieces, and works up to 100 pieces, and then, for some adults up to 5,000 piece jigsaws – each of which shows a complete picture, albeit with less complexity.

Our understanding of the life and death of Jesus, and of all that means, starts with the 12-piece jigsaw version as a child and gradually builds up to the thousands of pieces version for adults – but what is important is that each of these jigsaws does eventually include the full picture.

If we don't teach our children that Christmas, the birth of Jesus, is just the bottom left corner of the jigsaw, and that there is more to come, then they will be left not understanding the reality of Jesus of which His birth is, in many ways the most exciting, but also the least significant.

As we come into Advent and start looking forward in anticipation of celebrating the Birth of our Lord and Saviour, remember it is just for the Children – for all of God's Children, amongst whom every single one of us is counted.

May you all have a Godly Christmas, celebrating God's love amongst all the commerciality, turkey, pudding, trees and decorations.

Blessings to you all

More in pictures



P3 pupils from Ladyloans visiting our Dementia Café



Dr. Guy Consolmagno, the Pope's Astronomer



Martin & Elaine meeting with the present Moderator and former Moderators



Ladies from the Guild at their craft evening



War memorial in church vestibule—names were read at this year's Remembrance Service



Wedding day, Naomi Dunphy & Steven Donaldson



Lots of smiles at the first Mum & Me Christmas Fair

