



A Gift For All Of Time

Can someone tell me; is there a day in the year that isn't marked as 'World _____ Day' or 'National _____ Day' etc? The marking - or should that be 'marketing' - of such days has mushroomed in recent years and if you were to launch one now you'd almost certainly find yourself vying for attention with various other organisations, causes and interest groups on your particular 'day'.

Now of course some of these 'days' are significant and I for one am happy to support them. In the weeks before penning this column we've had World Suicide Awareness Day and World Homeless Day - each drawing attention to a subject of genuine concern.

There are other set-aside days which one would want to support but for somewhat selfish reasons, such as Buy a Priest a Beer Day! Two things to say here. Firstly, I'm sure it extends to ministers and, secondly, I'm open to offers should you be looking for a candidate to buy for!

Other days are frivolous in the extreme. I'm reluctant to single any out for fear of angry letters to the editor, but how about World Bow Tie Day (August 28th) or World Beard Day (September 4th.) And, for the number crunchers among you, yes, there's a World Statistics Day.

Oooops, I've done it now!!! Trouble is coming my way!

And then there are long standing days, many within the Christian calendar and of historical, cultural and theological significance. At this time of year we have, in order, the first Day of Advent, Christmas Day and then the Day of Epiphany. Our forebears have celebrated these days and we continue to do so - and I'd suggest that it's more important than ever that we do so given the rush from some quarters to strip the season of 'religious meaning.'

But here's the thing; none of these 'days' count for anything if it's just a day on its own. What's the point of marking World Suicide Awareness Day if we aren't committed to tackling the causes and supporting the vulnerable through the other 364 days of the year?

Personally, I'd love to see a scheme whereby congregations could work towards some kind of accreditation, similar to 'eco-congregations' and 'fair-trade congregations.' Within such a scheme there would be a number of commitments - tangible steps to ensure as much as possible that the congregation was a safe and supportive community for those who struggle with mental health.

And what's the point of big sleep-outs unless we're going to support organisations which spend the whole year supporting homeless people and campaigning for structural and legislative change? The worst case scenario is that we become nothing more than virtue signallers, nodding in all the right directions on all the right days while doing absolutely nothing.

If there's a day that suffers more than most in terms of being forgotten about the day after then it's Christmas Day. The sweetness and light, peace and goodwill disappear along with the last turkey sandwich.

I guess if we reduce it to glitz and glitter (which is all great fun and not to be jettisoned) and relegate the coming of Christ to a couple of carols then we should hardly be surprised that 'nothing happens'.

And yet the gift of the Christ Child offers so much more - nothing less than life-changing, world-turning, soul-satisfying reality.

And not just for the day.

Today, tomorrow and for eternity.

Martin Fair.

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ST. ANDREW'S ARBROATH**Member Records****November 2020****Baptisms and Blessings** - None**Weddings** - None**Funerals** - None

Parish funerals were also carried out by Ian Gray.

IMPORTANT DATE**FEBRUARY EDITION****Word Processed files, as attachments, should be sent directly to the Editor****Tuesday 19th January (Word-Processed file)****Please NOTE that there is NO January edition of Quest.**

Session Clerk Message

We now start on our journey of Advent, a time of anticipation and Hope for the coming of our Saviour, the Son of God, Jesus. This has been a year which we could never have envisaged; from the high of Martin becoming Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to the low of the global pandemic, lockdown and the doors of churches throughout the land being closed.

The doors of our church have been closed, but the work of the church has continued. We give thanks that all of you have continued to be engaged with the work of the church and have given your support both practically and financially.

There are those amongst us who have suffered the loss of a loved one and many who have known the pain of separation from family and friends during these months of lockdown.

My prayer for everyone is a prayer of Hope and Love – Hope for a reduction in cases of Covid-19, a vaccine which will enable our lives to return to a new 'normal', for Peace in our world; Love for one another, Love for our neighbour and Love of our Lord.

In these uncertain times, there is always the certainty of our Lord the Light on our journey.

I wish you all a Very Happy and Blessed Christmas

Yours in Christ,
Joan
Session Clerk

Christmas Gift Service

As in previous years we will again be supporting Home Start who will distribute Christmas gifts amongst families that they work alongside.

We would be pleased to receive new toys in the 0-5 years age bracket on Sunday, 6th December if you attend the morning worship service that day. Alternatively, gifts can be dropped off on Monday, 7th December between 9am – 12noon at the church.

Please do not wrap the gifts. Thank you for your continuing support.

Dalitso Update

With Christmas only a few weeks away the Dalitso team have been working hard to put together their seasonal fundraisers. With us unable to hold our normal Pamper Weekend, Snowman Drive and Children's Christmas Mystery Party our fundraisers have had to change and we are excited to detail these to you all. Full details are online in our Christmas magazine https://issuu.com/dalitsoproject/docs/christmas_2020_edition_2 or please get in touch if you would like a paper copy.

One to draw your attention to is our Christmas Cake Boxes. Sheila and Doris will be using their baking skills to create tasty treats that can be bought for yourself or as a gift. Each box will contain 12 traybake cakes (mixed) with a bag of fudge or tablet all wrapped up in a cute Christmas box for only £10. These will be delivered 19th/20th December. Get your orders in for these now.

Back again for another year is our Alternative Gift Catalogue where gifts can be bought from £5 that benefits the children and families at our centres. We have Mosquito Nets, School Uniforms, School Fees and Teacher Salaries to name a few. Please do get in touch if you would like a copy of the catalogue.

The container continues to make its way to Malawi, albeit slowly. We are still hopeful it will make it to Malawi for Christmas but, even if it doesn't, plans are in place for our children to celebrate on the day with or without their presents. We look forward to sharing photos in the next Quest magazine.

Let me take the opportunity to thank you all for your continued support throughout 2020 on behalf of the Dalitso team here in Scotland and the children and staff in Malawi.

Charis

Ask Theophilus

Question :

I have heard it said that all the Bible has lessons for us today. So what then is the lesson of that long genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 tracing Joseph's (Jesus legal father) descent right back to Abraham? Frankly, I don't see any relevance whatsoever of that for Christians today!

Theophilus answers :

Good question! In answering, we should first note the format of Matthew's genealogy. Carefully comparing his with OT genealogies we see that he has deliberately stylised it into three groups each of which contains fourteen families, each of which is connected to David. In order, the first group shows the origin of David's family, the second group shows its rise and decline, the third group shows its eclipse. In verse 1, Matthew has opened his genealogy by writing, Christ, the son of David, and in the Gospels, Christ is often called 'the son of David'. This title implicitly conferred royalty on him. Matthew's intention is to show how God's purposes in Psalms such as the 22nd, the 23rd, the 24th and many others is that they foreshadow a greater than David—Christ the King!

Second, comparing Matthew's genealogy with all the Old Testament genealogies reveals something unique in his. For while those in the OT only give the names of men, Mat-

thew's inserts four women's names. For a Jew, that would have been unacceptable. Further, when we note the women's names, for the Jew it becomes shocking! The first is Tamar. Oh dear, was she not the woman who posed as a prostitute and seduced her father-in-law—incest as well as adultery? (Gen. 38.) The second is Rahab. Worse, was she not the Gentile prostitute who was admitted to the family of Israel? (Josh. 2.) The next is Ruth, another Gentile, though a most respectable woman compared to the earlier two (Ruth 1-4.) The fourth is the wife of Uriah (every Jew knew her name—Bathsheba!), but why call her Uriah's wife if not to remind his readers of David's sin of adultery and then of manslaughter, for he arranged Uriah's death (2 Sam. 11).

Matthew's deliberate purpose in introducing these four women into the genealogy of David is clear. First, as the name for Mary's baby the angel gave to Joseph clearly stated, 'call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins' (v. 21). Second, the ethnic barrier separating Jew from Gentile was to be abolished in this Son of David. Third, in Christ there would be 'neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28). Of course, the clue is in the opening words in Matthew 1:1, as we have already seen: '... the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David'! Yes, there is profound, ground-breaking relevance—in even a genealogy!

David Searle

Guild News

It's difficult to believe we are almost at the end of 2020. Usually we plan our Syllabus for the whole "Guild year" from September - April but we only did half a syllabus to December as we were hoping when we planned it at the start of lockdown that things would have improved by January. So committee members are busy planning the rest of the Syllabus. However, the Guild continues as "Guild at Home" with committee members making up the programme for the evening and then delivering them to their homes in time for the meeting.

Our last meeting was on the 9th of November when Anne and Jenni gave us a very informative update on our other Guild project "The Sailor's Society : A Chaplain in every Port". A big thank you to everyone who has been knitting hats and please let us know if you have any to collect so that we can get them to the folk who need them and let them

know we are thinking of them. As one Port Chaplain told us *"There have been a fair number of incidents involving ships having accidents, getting caught in typhoons or having unruly stowaways. There are still 400,000 seafarers stuck at sea way over their contracts; some of them 16 – 18 months, most without shore leave for most of the time and working seven days a week. We're hearing too many reports of people being exhausted physically and emotionally"*.

So let's continue to prayer for the seafarers and the chaplains who help them practically as well as spiritually.

Joan gave us a Wordsearch on the Sailors' Society and our inspirational person "going the extra mile" was Gladys Aylward. There was also a lighthouse in the Guild bag, made by Fiona as a prayer reminder for the Sailors' Society but also our other project "Seema's Project" where Seema and her team in Pune, India are showing God's love in action "the light shining in the darkness".

"Whose we are and whom we serve."

7th Arbroath BB

In these strange times we have been unable to meet as a company since March. We have entered our 60th Year as a Company as of September this year. We hope the New Year will bring about better times for us all.

Two of our company boys are working hard to achieve their Queen's Badge under new lockdown guidance as set out by Headquarters. I have every confidence the boys will achieve this great Award in the summer of next year.

The Boy's Brigade launched a BB Active on line activities for all section at the start of the Pandemic and we have

encouraged our boys to take part. As indicated at a Kirk Session Meeting in February we have a number of officers retiring next year. In these uncertain times we have been unable to move forward to recruit new volunteers and as I write this I have received notification of an urgent meeting within the Dundee and Angus Battalion to enlist people for key rolls within the Battalion.

Please keep us all in your thoughts and prayers as we move towards this festive season which will be like no other we have had. Christmas wishes to all the boys and to our St. Andrew's Church Family.

From All Officers at 7th Arbroath BB

Can we help?

As we continue in this period of lockdown and not able to gather in church as we are used to doing, we are aware that there are many times in our lives when we feel the need of some support and care. It might be following a bereavement, during an illness, at a time of worry or stress or because we are feeling a bit low or lonely.

Whatever the situation or need, if you or someone you know, would value a visit, someone to talk to or someone to pray with, or for them, please do get in contact with us at the Church office.

Special December Services

Sunday 6th - Christmas Gift Service - 11am
Sunday 13th - Wear a Christmas jumper at home or at church
Thursday 24th - Christingle Service - time to be confirmed
Thursday 24th - Watchnight Service - 11.30pm

Staying connected....

The Sunday Club leaders are hoping that the entire church family will take part in one of our Christmas ideas! Our plan is for all you lovely people to put our nativity picture in your window. You can just pop the printed sheet in as it is or feel free to let your artistic skills go wild and colour it in if you wish.

During Advent our children and families can look out for

them when they are out and about around town. When they see one they will know that the person living there is part of our church family. We felt it would be a simple but nice way for us all to be connected at Christmas time.

The copy of the picture will be dropping through everyone's letterbox in the coming days!

Louise & the Sunday Club Leaders

O Come All Ye Faithful!

Virtual Christmas Carols- the worship band need YOUR help!!

Greetings folks! I hope this finds you well and safe.

It seems months since we have been able to sing and worship with you all...and of course it has been!

As Christmas approaches we are aware that our usual traditions of gathering and singing Christmas Carols together will not be possible.

We know a lot of our congregation love singing in worship together, and probably miss it as much as we do...so, with that in mind we are aiming to put a Christmas Carol virtual video together and we are inviting members of the congregation, of all ages to take part.

Some of you may have seen on Facebook a couple of videos the band have recorded and put together from their homes-Waymaker, and more recently How Great Thou Art.

We are next going to record "O Come All Ye Faithful"...that great traditional hymn of celebration of Jesus birth...probably a favourite of many of you...I know its one of mine! The great part is, it can be recorded by yourself, at home, with a mobile phone that has video recording facilities (which is most phones these days!)

How does it work?

In the first instance, I will send you, via email, a guide track with piano and one voice singing the tune that you sing with. Along with this, I will send instructions on how you record the song and where to send the finished recording.

The idea is we will have lots of folks from within our congregation singing together again! I for one am excited about it! Please email - worship@arbroathstandrews.org.uk marking the subject as "VIRTUAL" for the instructions and track, or indeed if you have any questions about it.



"My prayer for everyone is a prayer of Hope and Love – Hope for a reduction in cases of Covid-19, a vaccine which will enable our lives to return to a new 'normal', for Peace in our world; Love for one another, Love for our neighbour and Love of our Lord.

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I wish you all a Very Happy and Blessed Christmas."

Yours in Christ,

Joan

Session Clerk.

Guild Gift

How about a Guild Afternoon Gift token as a Christmas gift for friends or family living in Arbroath? We had planned an Afternoon Tea during Guild Week but due to the restrictions this had to be cancelled, so we decided to do home deliveries. We offer After-

noon Tea, donation £6, one Saturday a month. Up until now this was for Guild members but we would like to open it up to the church.

We are limited in the number we can make and deliver but if you would like to order a gift voucher our dates are Saturday 23rd January, Saturday 20th February and Saturday 20th March.



Left - tempting fare for an afternoon tea!

Right - The prayer lighthouse reminder

