



CHRIST CHURCH LANARK  
CLYDESDALE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
DECEMBER '24 - JANUARY '25

## Schedule of Services

### December 2024

Sunday 1

#### **Advent 1**

08.30 am – Said Eucharist

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

Sunday 8

#### **Advent 2**

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

Sunday 15

#### **Advent 3**

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

Sunday 22

#### **Advent 4**

*Holy Trinity Lamington*

10.30 am – Said Eucharist

*Christ Church Lanark*

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

Tuesday 24

#### **Christmas Eve**

**Holy Trinity Lamington**

6.30 pm – Lessons & Carols

**Christ Church Lanark**

9.00 pm – Carol Singing

9.30 pm

Midnight Eucharist

Sunday 29

#### **Christmas 1**

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

### January 2025

5 January

#### **The Epiphany**

08.30 am – Said Eucharist

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

12 January

#### **Baptism of the Lord**

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

19 January

#### **Epiphany 2**

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

26 January

#### **Epiphany 3**

*Holy Trinity Lamington*

10.30 am – Said Eucharist

*Christ Church Lanark*

10.30 am – Sung Eucharist

### February 2025

Sunday 2

#### **Candlemas**

08.30 am – Said Eucharist

## News in the Pews

- The AGM of 2024 passed off without incident. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the AGM Document and Annual Accounts. We hope you enjoyed reading about all the good that is happening in Christ Church Lanark and Holy Trinity Lamington. Pray for our continuing development and prosperity.
- This year's Blythswood Shoebox Collection was a bumper one. We were blown away by your commitment to this wonderful charity and by your generosity. Many thanks to all who completed a box.
- Clydesdale Foodbank in Carluke wrote to thank us at Christ Church for the cheque in the sum of £380 and the bags of easy-open, ring-pull tins that we donated after our Harvest Festival. They were very grateful to us for our generosity.
- In January 2025 the episcopal electoral process moves into the next stage. On Saturday 11 January clergy and lay electors will meet the short list of candidates to hear about their vision for the Diocese and to have the opportunity to pose questions. A week later, on Saturday 18 January the electoral synod will convene again to vote. Please keep the process in your prayers.
- Lanarkshire Regional Council is planning a regional 9 Lessons and Carols Service at St Andrew's Church Uddingston on Sunday 8 December at 7.30 pm. All welcome.
- The First Sunday in Advent (Sunday 1 December) will be a "Soupa Sunday", with various soups on offer over the hall after the morning Sung Eucharist.
- We have a new "Prayer Tree" in the church hall. If you'd like prayers to be said, write your petition on the tickets provided and hang it on the tree. Some of your petitions will be prayed at Morning and Evening Prayer; others will appear in the Sunday Intercessions.



## Clergy Cogitations

Dear Friends

For all of us, privately and publicly, 2024 will have been a mixed year. Years are always like that. Hopes and fears, dreams and nightmares. That kind of mixture is



found in the Christmas story, and you don't have to look too hard to find it. The incarnation of Jesus is never going to be sanitised or made pretty no matter how much tinsel we put around it, or how often we try to hide behind, "Christmas is really for the children." Though there is beauty, awe and wonder in the Christmas story, there is also pain, uncertainty and

despair. All of these we find in the world, so all of these have their place in the stories of Christmas.

As I write, those mixed feelings dominate our news with the result of the American presidential election. For some there is excitement and possibilities. I find myself with the others, perplexed and astonished.

I will not despair, even although I feel the world is turning upside down. I will not despair, even although the hurts are real. I will not despair, even although walls may be built. I will not despair, even although light is flickering. I will not despair, because hope will come. I will not despair, because truth will triumph. In all that has happened in our world in 2024, much of which has saddened and dismayed, faith will give the courage, the strength, the vision and the resilience that is needed. Divisions must be bridged and we who have faith must be the people to do this. I will not despair because, although my hopes and dreams have not always carried the day I believe the arc of God's justice bends inexorably towards mercy. We work steadily to see God's kingdom established in all its challenging discomfort. I will not despair because there is always, always hope.

The story of Christmas has many meanings: it speaks to the elated and the despondent. It also transcends the cares and worries of this present age. That is why the Christmas story shines. It shines in the world, despite everything. It shines in our private lives, despite everything. It shines because it tells of God with us, a light in every darkness, and a hope in every despair.

May the light and hope of Christmas suffuse your lives and your homes now and through the coming New Year.

Drew

## Deacon's Deliberations



Our Memory Lane support group for people with mild to moderate Dementia and their carers provides music therapy for a large group of people. Those who come along every fortnight from 1 pm until 3 pm just love to sing along to memorable songs from their past. One of their most favourite artists to sing along with is dear old Cliff Richard. And one of my favourite songs by of Cliff is "Mistletoe and Wine". I'm sure many of you will know it, or at least the chorus. It goes like this:

*Christmas time, mistletoe and wine  
children singing Christian rhyme  
with logs on the fire and gifts on the tree  
a time to rejoice in the good that we see.*

What a lovely sentiment that is. Unfortunately, not everyone has a cozy fire or even a safe roof over their heads at Christmas, let alone Christmas presents.

I have worshipped in many different churches for well over 50 years. Christ Church in Lanark is the only congregation that I have experienced which donates the collection money from the last Sunday of every month to a charity that has been recommended by members of Christ Church and agreed by the vestry members. I think it is absolutely marvellous.

Every year you fill loads of shoeboxes which the Blytheswood Shoebox Charity sends off to countries abroad, so that children in those countries who have nothing can have at least something on Christmas Day. It's just overwhelming. Not only do you give financially and materially, but you give of your time in volunteering and baking, you make everyone feel welcome and valued, you make them feel cared and prayed for. From what I can see, you, as a congregation show God's loving, caring grace in so many different ways that are real and tangible and heartwarming. How blessed am I to be Christ Church's curate and vocational Deacon.

*Christmas time, mistletoe and wine  
children singing Christian rhyme,  
with logs on the fire and gifts on the tree  
a time to rejoice in the good that we see.*

We have lots to rejoice about in the good that we see this Christmas. So, let us rejoice not only at Christmas time but every day and all of the time.

Jackie

## Monastic Musings



I always feel sorry, particularly at this time of the year, for people “in the preaching trade” because finding something new to say about Christmas year after year must be so very hard. How many different ways can a preacher preach the Christmas message, for instance, or find fresh insights into the birth stories in Luke or Matthew? It’s a tall order.

Somehow, though, the Christmas message doesn’t need novelty from a preacher. The story of the birth of Jesus has its own power and, if we are willing, it works its own purpose in our lives. Each year it surprises me how a fresh insight comes even to me to speak good news from the Gospels at this holy time.

This year the fresh insight that has come to me is that God is not a perfectionist. We are all going to work hard to make sure that Christmas is just right. We will make sure that nothing goes wrong. We will try to buy the right present, say the right thing, get all the arrangements right, tidy the place and put up the decorations. But God did none of that when God sent Jesus into this world. There was no room for Jesus, the arrangements hadn’t been made properly, but he came anyway, just as he was, to a world just as it was.

So, before we all become disappointed by the tackiness of this generation’s commercial Christmas, let’s also reflect on the fact that this is the way the world has always been, and this is the world that God loved so much that he sent his only son Jesus so that he might show us God’s love.

Thank God for his love, which embraces us too, just as we are; a long way from being perfect, but precious in the sight of our non-perfectionist God.

*Gerry Creaney*



## No Room? On the Contrary

*The Ven John Barton considers the Christmas story ...*

All over the world, doors are being slammed shut this Christmas. As the wars in the Middle East, in Ukraine and in Sudan rage on, millions are losing their homes and places of safety. Elsewhere, hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and would-be immigrants are on the road, seeking refuge anywhere they can find it.

Meanwhile, in recent years vast numbers of Christians have been forced to flee from their ancient homelands in Syria and Iraq. They mirror the Holy Family’s escape into Egypt. Every time yet another infant dies violently, it is a reminder of the first century massacre of babies in the Bethlehem region.

So perhaps this year, one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests” and continues:

Yet with the woes of sin and strife,  
The world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel strain have rolled,  
Two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not  
The love song which they bring:  
O hush the noise, you men of strife,  
And hear the angels sing.

The angels’ goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God’s all-embracing and eternal welcome. Whatever is happening on earth, Heaven’s doors are ever open: it is home for everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city: “On no day will its gates ever be shut... the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it.”

Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God’s kingdom is home for every race: “I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” He reassured those anxious about the future: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms...”

No room in heaven? Don’t you believe it!



Advent is a period of spiritual preparation in which many Christians make themselves ready for the coming, or birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Celebrating Advent typically involves a season of prayer, fasting, and repentance, followed by anticipation, hope and joy.

Many Christians celebrate Advent not only by thanking God for Christ's first coming to Earth as a baby, but also for his presence among us today through

the Holy Spirit, and in preparation and anticipation of his final coming at the end of the age.

The word advent comes from the Latin term *adventus* meaning "arrival" or "coming," particularly the coming of something of great importance. Advent season, then, is both a time of joy-filled, anticipatory celebration of the arrival of Jesus Christ and a preparatory period of repentance, meditation, and penance.

For denominations that celebrate the season, Advent marks the beginning of the church year.

In Western Christianity, Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, or the Sunday which falls closest to November 30, and lasts through Christmas Eve, or December 24. When Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, it is the last or fourth Sunday of Advent. Thus, the actual season of Advent can last anywhere from 22-28 days, but most commercial Advent calendars start on December 1.

Advent is primarily observed in Christian churches that follow an ecclesiastical calendar of liturgical seasons to determine feasts, memorials, fasts and holy days. These denominations include Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican / Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.

Nowadays, however, more and more Protestant and Evangelical Christians are recognising the spiritual significance of Advent and have begun to revive the spirit of the season through serious reflection, joyful expectation, and by the observation of traditional Advent customs.

According to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, Advent began sometime after the 4th century as a time of fasting and preparation for Epiphany rather than in anticipation of Christmas. Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of Christ by remembering the visit of the wise men and, in some traditions, the Baptism of Jesus. Sermons focused on the wonder of the Lord's Incarnation or becoming a man. At this time new Christians were baptised and received into the faith and so the early church instituted a 40-day period of fasting and repentance.

Later, in the 6th century, St. Gregory the Great was the first to associate this season of Advent with the coming of Christ. Originally it was not the coming of the Christ-child that was anticipated, but the Second Coming of Christ.

By the Middle Ages, four Sundays had become the standard length of the Advent season, with fasting and repentance during that time. The church also extended the meaning of Advent to include the coming of Christ through his birth in Bethlehem, his future coming at the end of time, and his presence among us through the promised Holy Spirit.

Modern-day Advent services include symbolic customs related to all three of these "advents" of Christ.

Many different variations and interpretations of Advent customs exist today, depending on the denomination and the type of service being observed. The following symbols and customs provide an overview only and do not represent an exhaustive resource for all Christian traditions.

Some Christians choose to incorporate Advent activities into their family holiday traditions, even when their church does not formally recognise a season of Advent. They do this as a way of keeping Christ at the centre of their Christmas celebrations. Family worship around the Advent wreath, Jesse Tree, or Nativity can make the Christmas season all the more meaningful. Some families may choose not to put up Christmas decorations until Christmas Eve as a way of focusing on the idea that Christmas is not yet here.

Different denominations utilise certain symbolism during the season as well. For instance, in the Anglican and Catholic Churches, priests wear purple vestments during the season (just like they do during Lent, the other "preparatory" liturgical season). They also stop saying or singing the "Gloria" until Christmas.



Lighting an Advent wreath is a custom that began with Lutherans and Catholics in 16th-century Germany. Typically, the Advent wreath is a circle of branches or garland with four or five candles arranged on the wreath. During the season of Advent, one

candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday as a part of the corporate Advent services. The traditional structure involves three purple (or dark blue) candles and one rose pink one, set in a wreath, and often with a single, larger white candle in the centre. The advent candles and their colours are packed with rich meaning. Each represents a specific aspect of the spiritual preparations for Christmas. The three main colours are purple, pink, and white. Purple symbolises repentance and royalty. Pink represents joy and rejoicing. And white stands for purity and light.

Each candle carries a specific name as well. The first purple candle is called the Prophecy Candle or Candle of Hope. The second purple candle is the Bethlehem Candle or the Candle of Preparation. The third (pink) candle is the Shepherd Candle or Candle of Joy. The fourth candle, a purple one, is called the Angel Candle or the Candle of Love. And the last (white) candle is the Christ Candle.



The **Jesse Tree** is a unique Advent tree custom that dates back to the Middle Ages and has its origin in Isaiah's prophecy of the root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:10). The tradition can be very useful and fun for teaching children about the Bible at Christmas. The Jesse Tree represents the family tree, or genealogy, of Jesus Christ. It can be used to tell the story of salvation, beginning with creation and continuing until the coming of the Messiah.

## *Autumn Ladies*

On the 23rd of October Rev. Liz Cleland stepped in to help us as our original speaker had been admitted to hospital. She gave us an excellent account of her walk with a friend along St. Cuthbert's Way. The hall resounded with laughter as she recalled hilarious and not so hilarious moments on their walk. Thank you very much Liz for sharing with us what appeared for you both, a very spiritual time. By the time you read this the Autumn Ladies will have had a very relaxed afternoon experiencing chair yoga. And on the 4th of December a Christmas buffet lunch will have been enjoyed by all.

On the 30 November we will have taken a table in aid of Church funds in the Church hall. This will help our own fund raising by selling home baking. We have had a host of good speakers this session and will carry this on in the New Year.

We will meet together again on Wednesday 15th of January at 2p.m. in Christ Church Hall after the Christmas holidays.

Have a Happy Christmas,

*Isobel*

## *Christmas Trees*

Norway sent a Christmas tree  
It marks the Saviour's birth,  
The incarnation manifest  
As God came down to earth

A babe born to a virgin  
Would grow up as a man,  
Yet still divine, such mystery,  
To implement God's plan.

Another tree was put in place  
A sacrifice was made,  
As on that cross He gave His life  
That all men could be saved.

So celebrate that wondrous day  
When Jesus left His home,  
To bring salvation down to man,  
And claim us as His own.

*By Megan Carter*



## *The Everlasting Turkey*

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me  
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.  
On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard  
As we tucked into our turkey – a most delicious bird.  
On the third day of Christmas people came from just next door,  
The turkey tasted just as good as it had done before.  
On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old  
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.  
On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes scurried,  
But we were nice and warm inside, and had the turkey carried.  
On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died.  
The children fought and bickered – we had the turkey rissoles fried.  
On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince  
When he sat down at table - and was offered turkey mince.  
On the eighth day of Christmas, the dog had run for shelter,  
For he'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of alka-seltzer.  
On the ninth day of Christmas, by lunchtime dad was blotto,  
He knew that bird was back again, this time as a risotto.  
On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,  
Anything to help us face that steaming turkey stew.  
On the eleventh day of Christmas our lovely tree was moulting,  
And with chilli, soy and oyster sauce, the turkey was revolting.  
On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles back on our lips,  
The guests had gone, the turkey too – WE DINED ON FISH AND CHIPS.



## *Christmas Geese*

The story is told of a farmer who didn't believe in Jesus. One snowy Christmas Eve, his wife was taking their children to a service at their local church. He refused to come saying: 'Why would God lower Himself to come to Earth as a man? That's ridiculous!' So, they left him at home.

During the evening the winds grew stronger, and the snow turned to a blizzard. He heard a series of loud thumps on the window. In the field near his house he saw a flock of wild geese. They had been migrating south when they got caught in the snowstorm. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter.

The man wanted to help the geese and so he opened the doors of the barn, hoping they would go inside for shelter. But the geese didn't do anything, despite the man's efforts to move them. He made a breadcrumb trail leading to the barn and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they only got more scared and scattered.

Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn: 'Why don't they follow me?!' Then he realised: 'If only I were a goose and become one of them, then I could save them.' Finally, he understood the heart of the Christmas message. God has become one of us in Jesus. The eternal creator God has entered time and space as a baby, to show us who God is and how we can know Him.

This Christmas, let's celebrate again this amazing truth that we have a God who knows and can meet our needs in Jesus. 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God with us''. Matthew 1:23.



## Seasonal Quiz by Bob Rabagliati

1. What is Scrooge's first name?
2. What is the name of the shortest day of the year?
3. Which famous scientist was born on Christmas Day 1642?
4. In which country did Eggnog originate?
5. In which tin of chocolates would you find the green triangle?
6. Which beverage company has been using Santa Claus in its advertising since 1931?
7. Stollen is a fabulous Christmas confection that comes from which country?
8. What are Pigs' Blankets called in Scotland?
9. What 'must have' item for the Christmas table did Tom Smith invent in the early 1850s?
10. According to the song, what did my true love give to me on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas?

### Answers

1. Ebenezer 2. Winter Solstice 3. Isaac Newton 4. Britain  
5. Quality Street 6. Coca Cola 7. Germany 8. Kilted Soldiers  
9. Christmas Crackers 10. Ladies Dancing



## Laughter is the Best Medicine

### Nativity scene

"Here's a king!" announced the five-year-old as he unwrapped a figurine from the Christmas decorations box. "Here's a donkey!" he added a moment later.

Then he removed the tissue from another figure, finding the infant Jesus moulded permanently into the little manger. The child exclaimed, "And here's Baby Jesus in his car seat!"

### Christmas carols

One night as Christmas approached, some friends decided to go carol singing. A man answered the door of one house, and gasped as they launched into the opening lines of the first carol. Within half a minute, he looked stricken. Soon tears were welling up in his eyes. The carollers sang and sang, and the man looked very moved by what he heard. One caroller ventured: "I understand - our singing reminds you of your happy childhood Christmases."

The man looked at her with misery in his eyes. "No," he whispered back. "It's just that I am a musician!"

### Father Christmas

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy." Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be. "Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."

### Sign for Christmas

An old country preacher wanted a sign that told people driving on the nearby dual carriageway about the miracle of Christmas. So he sent a short message to the general store in the village.

This story picks up at the sign-making company and the astonished clerk who received the message. The message that she read was: "Unto us a child is born, 6 ft long and 3 ft wide."

### You can tell

You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.



"Does anyone have a light, please?"



# CHRIST CHURCH LANARK

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