

Sharing God's Love – Caring for our Community
www.stonelawchurch.org

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**PLEASE EMAIL ITEMS FOR THE FEBRUARY & MARCH MAGAZINE
TO MAGAZINE@STONELAWCHURCH.ORG BY SUNDAY 15TH JANUARY**

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed items for this issue, to Richard and Morag Taylor for printing the magazine, and to Janis Neil, Isobel Wilson and her team for distributing it.

Contributions and suggestions for the magazine are always welcome, by email to magazine@stonelawchurch.com

MESSAGE FROM NEIL



Dear Friends,

I always used to laugh when people said that time would pass more quickly the older you get. However, I must be getting older because it seems like no time at all since I was preparing myself for another run up to Christmas; yet by the time you are reading this we will be very much in Advent.

Advent is all about getting ourselves ready to celebrate the coming of Jesus, God with us, and it is important that we prepare ourselves well.

In saying that, from the beginning of November, adverts on the television, and in my email inbox, have been highlighting all those things we need to go out and buy so we are prepared for the most magical Christmas possible. That may well have something to do with my feeling that it has come round even faster this year! While there is nothing wrong with buying gifts and decorations, the best part is that we don't have to go and buy anything to ensure that our hearts and minds are ready to focus on Jesus' birth and the gift that is offered to each of us.

I imagine that time didn't go by quite as quickly for those first century Jews waiting for Jesus' birth. In the thousands of years that they found themselves waiting, many things happened and, as time passed, there would have been many who had given up all hope of God ever sending Jesus to us. However, there were others who remained faithful to the God that is faithful, and they finally got to experience God being with them in the person of Jesus!

We too have the opportunity to experience God being with us through the work of the Holy Spirit. In the busyness of Advent, never forget the true meaning of Christmas; that God wanted to show his love for us in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago and continues to do that this very day. Nothing that can be bought or sold changes the fact that God offers the free gift of his love to all. It is left up to us whether we receive that gift or not.

I hope you get to spend some time during Advent reflecting on this free gift. I also hope you find, once again this year, that you can answer the question, "My precious child, I have a wonderful gift for you. Do you wish to open it?" with a resounding "Yes!"

May you have a wonder-filled Christmas when it comes.

Yours in Jesus,

Neil

Rev. Neil H Watson

minister@stonelawchurch.org

2 Dryburgh Avenue, Rutherglen, G73 3EG

07871615840



Thanks to the Rutherglen Reformer for permission to use the above photo.

A PRAYER FROM NEIL

Heavenly Father, I come before you to worship you and to thank you for your goodness to me and I offer my faithful service to your Son, Jesus.

Teach me a new way of living in deeper faith and greater love.

You never go away from me but so often I turn away from you. I am sorry for my faults and for the unkindness that causes pain to others. Help me to trust that no wrong I have done, no good I have failed to do, is too great for you to forgive. As I am forgiven and place my hope in Jesus, teach me also to forgive others. May you lead me in a new life where neither grudges nor resentment have a place.

Grant me, Father, to listen for your word with eager faith, with a brimming hope and with a love that kindles knowledge of the Kingdom.

I ask all this in the precious name of Jesus who, when teaching us to pray, said the words...

Our Father in heaven

Hallowed be your name

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done

On Earth as it is Heaven

Give us today our daily bread

And forgive us our sins

As we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from the evil one

For yours is the kingdom,

the power and the glory forever.

Amen

TREAD LIGHTLY: AN ADVENT JOURNEY

*Neil has written a short devotional booklet with the title '**tread lightly**' to help us journey through Luke's Gospel together, looking at one chapter each day from 1st December to Christmas Eve.*

This can be downloaded here: ['tread lightly': An Advent Journey'](#)

DATES FOR OUR DIARIES

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE STONELAW CHURCH BUILDING? (SEE ALSO PAGE 6)

Every Sunday 10.30am Morning Service, with a crèche for children under 3, Discoverers for pre-school and primary children and Connect2 for secondary pupils. The first Sunday of the month is a Communion Service.

Wednesday 1st December 2.00-2.30pm

Mid-Week 30-minute Service.

Wednesday 8th December 2.30-4.00pm

Past Times Dementia Café

Monday to Saturday 10.30am-12.30pm

Café@The Meeting Place All welcome!

CHRISTMAS EVENTS IN STONELAW CHURCH BUILDING

Saturday 11th December 2-4pm Christmas Cracker Children's Event See p 6

Sunday 12th December 6.30pm Blue Christmas Service See p 6

Sunday 19th December 10.30am Nativity Service - children and congregation taking part

Friday 24th December 6.30pm Christmas Eve Pyjama Christingle Service

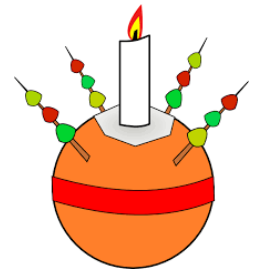
Bring the kids to our fun Christingle service. (Pyjamas are optional!)

Friday 24th December 11.30pm Watchnight Service. Join us as we bring in Christmas Day together.

This service will also be available on Zoom and on YouTube later.

Saturday 25th December 10.30am Christmas Day all-age service, with informal communion

Sunday 26th December 10.30 am Lessons and Carols service



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

On Tuesdays 6.00-7.15pm 2nd Rutherglen Rainbows

On Thursdays 6.30-8pm 131st Boys' Brigade See p.16

On Fridays 6.15-7.15pm 2nd Rutherglen Brownies See p.16

On Fridays 7.45-9.15pm 2nd Rutherglen Guides

Every Friday 9:45-11:30am Stonelaw Toddlers Group

STONELAW CHURCH ON ZOOM

Please see the Stonelaw weekly email for how to log in to our Zoom events.

To sign up, email info@stonelawchurch.org

For more information about our Zoom events, see p.18.

Every Sunday 10.30am Join our Church Service on Zoom. The first Sunday of the month is a Communion Service.

Every Wednesday 7.30pm Prayer Meeting

Thursday 2nd Dec & 6th Jan 10.30am House group with Jennifer Menzies.

Thursday 2nd Dec & 13th Jan 7.30pm House group with Dorothy McTaggart.

Tuesday 7th Dec 7.30pm Session Meeting

Thursdays 2-4pm Coffee and Crafts with Fiona Benson

Fridays 5.30-7pm Grace and Truth Bible Study: Mada & Mirriam

CHRISTMAS CRACKER!



Come and join us on Saturday 11th December 2-4pm to find out about Jesus' birth (the real Christmas) through fun-filled games, crafts, music and food. For children in P1-7. Pre-schoolers are also welcome, if accompanied by an adult.



Jennifer Menzies and Rev Neil H Watson

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

12 DECEMBER 2021
6:30PM



At Stonelaw Church we are aware that these last few years have been incredibly difficult. Many have lost loved ones, and this will be particularly felt in the lead-up to Christmas. Why not join us for a short service of reflection on the evening of Sunday 12th December at 6:30pm? There will be an opportunity to sing carols and to take time to remember the families of those who have lost loved ones.

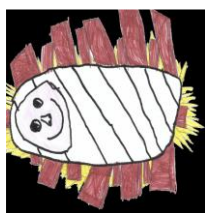
If you would like to be prayed for, even if you are unable to attend yourself, please contact Neil at minister@stonelawchurch.org with the names of those who would appreciate prayer. The names will also be added to the Prayer Tree which will be displayed during the service.

CHURCH REGISTER

Mrs Margaret Rutherford died on 16th November 2021. Our thoughts and prayers are with her son Scott, her daughters Jane and Gillian, and their families.

STONELAW CHRISTMAS CARDS - READY FOR DELIVERY SUNDAY 5TH DECEMBER

Could you help to deliver our church's Christmas cards to local households please? This is our chance to let people know we are still here - and why – because we believe in Jesus and know that He is the real reason for Christmas.



Cards will be located at the back of the Sanctuary from Sunday 5th December. The first events we will be publicising are the Christmas Cracker Children's Event on Saturday 11th December and the Blue Christmas Service on 12th December – (see page 6 for details). So it is really important that we deliver the cards as soon as possible. Please help if you can!

JOSEPH – THE BYSTANDER

Have you ever felt like a by-stander? A person who is in the midst of all that is happening but you feel that no one notices you? You have tried your best but it doesn't seem good enough? I think that Joseph maybe felt like this. Perhaps he felt that he had done all the right things but people were more interested in Mary, the shepherds, the wise men and, of course, the baby.

Sometimes, I feel sorry for Joseph; maybe that's because I've seen so many Nativity plays where Joseph just stands and says almost nothing! However, incidents happened which Joseph would never have thought possible and these events formed his character. Joseph can teach us very important lessons.

The Bible tells us that Joseph was a righteous man whose actions towards Mary showed his extreme kindness and sensitivity. He willingly obeyed God, risking severe humiliation and is a wonderful example of integrity and godly character.

It is not easy to entrust your child to someone else but that is exactly what happened when God entrusted Joseph with a great responsibility – His Son. Joseph had God's trust.

Joseph's leading quality was, without question, his righteousness: his willingness to obey God even though he did not always know the details. He knew that God would lead him to the next step.

Walking in obedience to God isn't always straightforward. We can face problems and struggles as Joseph did, but we can trust God to lead and guide us.

So, next time you see Joseph on a Christmas card or in a Nativity Play, remember - he most certainly is not a by-stander. Joseph can teach us very valuable lessons for life.

Christmas blessings to you all.

Margaret A. Borland

WILL YOU SEND OUR PM A CHRISTMAS CARD?



Tearfund and Christian Aid have together invited us to join many thousands of their supporters across the UK in sending our Prime Minister a Christmas card.

At COP26, Boris Johnson spoke some strong words about climate change– but will the UK government follow through?

When it comes to climate action, the proof is in the pudding!

Some of you may already have signed the Giant Christmas Card online; that deadline has now passed. The giant card, with 50,000 names, has been sent to the printers and will be handed in at No.10 Downing Street on 15th December. You may see some media reports!

You can still join the campaign, by sending your own hand-written card to the PM. Just follow these three simple steps:

1. Choose or create your card. A shop-bought card works fine, or you might like to create a homemade card that represents your message.

2. Write your message

You can use the suggested message below as a starting point, but choosing your own words and keeping it simple will give it more impact.

Dear Prime Minister,

My hope this Christmas is that the UK secures more finance for those hit hardest by the climate crisis. You have said rich countries must find this money, but COP26 did not deliver.

In 2022, please push for more climate finance, stronger national plans to keep 1.5°C alive and a just transition to renewable energy.

I/We wish you a peaceful Christmas

3. Post your card.

Pop your card into an envelope, and send it to this address:

**The Rt Hon. Boris Johnson, MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing St,
London
SW1A 2AA**



<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/proof-is-in-the-pudding>

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/proof-in-pudding>

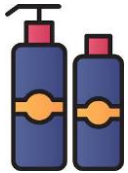
REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

As we did a few years ago, we will again be supporting Rutherglen and Cambuslang Foodbank by asking you to take part in a Reverse Advent Calendar!



WHAT IS A REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR?

Instead of *getting* something each day of Advent you have the chance to *give* something. How does it work? It's easy!



All you do is put each day's item into a bag or box and bring them to the Meeting Place from **26th December to 7th January**. It doesn't matter if you don't manage to donate something on every day of Advent - every little helps. Your gifts will be greatly appreciated by those who need to make use of the Foodbank.

You can [download the Reverse Advent Calendar now](#) or collect a copy from the church on Sunday.



Lesley Nisbet

PRAYER REQUESTS FROM CAMBUSLANG AND RUTHERGLEN REACHOUT TRUST

Over the past few weeks, Ross and Alison have been busy delivering the Boomerang project (focusing on building resilience) in local primary schools. Please pray that this has made a positive impact on the children.



The Reachout team is now preparing for our Christmas Unwrapped project. Please pray **also** that this will be successful and that it lays the foundation for many pupils in coming to know God.

Greg Senior

on behalf of Youth and Schools workers **Ross Murray** and **Alison Kennedy**

Reachout Trust, Cambuslang Parish Church, 1 Arnott Way, Cambuslang G72 7JQ
Tel **07837 193028** Email greg.crrt@outlook.com Website: <https://crrt.org.uk/>

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

I'm looking for volunteers to help man the internal Sanctuary doors at Sunday morning services, on a rota basis.

If you can help, please get in touch on 569 8385 or email morag.richard@hotmail.com.

Morag Taylor

FIJIAN SERVICE IN STONELAW CHURCH DURING COP26

Have you heard? The Prime Minister of Fiji was here in Stonelaw, visiting our church.

“Aye, pull the other one!”

Well, actually, it really happened!

On Sunday 7th November, the Fijian flag flew proudly outside Stonelaw Parish Church in order to welcome Fijian PM, Frank Bainimarama, along with his personal bodyguard, Fijian Ambassadors from London and New York, the Attorney General and several other government dignitaries, who had been attending COP26 in Glasgow. The Glasgow Fijian Association welcomed them to our church for a small service followed by a huge feast.



More than 50 people attended the event, including our own Ann McLintock, while the welcome address was delivered by Vetinia Gorman.

A huge *vinaka vakalevu* (*thank you in Fijian*) to Stonelaw Session for granting the Glasgow Fijian Association

permission to use the church premises and making the Fijians feel welcome so far from home. They were struck by the beauty of the sanctuary and the imposing building that is Stonelaw Church.



Stonelaw Church is now very famous in Fiji. Our church has been mentioned several times in the local newspapers and social media!

Vetinia Gorman



WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

When they were all full, Jesus said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces left over, let us not waste a bit." John 6:12 (Good News version.)

Although the slogan, 'waste not, want not', was used during World War 2, it was, allegedly, first recorded in 1772. There is an even earlier version dated 1576: "wilful waste makes woeful want." So for centuries, society has been aware that waste is not good, and yet we have become a society in which everything is disposable. The appalling results are only too evident in recent images from around the world.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE is the slogan of today for tomorrow. Read about these three Rs at www.reducereuserecycle.co.uk or ask a friend to print the information out for you.

REDUCE means to reduce the amount of the earth's resources you use and the amount of waste you produce.

REUSE means don't just bin it! Could you or someone else use it?

RECYCLE means making materials into something new.



HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF EARTH'S RESOURCES WE USE?

Two simple changes we could make to our shopping habits, which would reduce single use packaging and therefore waste, are firstly, to shop at a zero waste shop and secondly to have our milk delivered in glass bottles.

The Good Choice - 1031 Cathcart Rd, Mount Florida, Glasgow G42 9XJ is a zero waste shop which allows customers to refill their own containers, thus eliminating packaging.

This shop has a very wide range of products.: www.tgchoice.co.uk/

McQueen's Dairies in East Kilbride delivers milk in returnable glass bottles (Mondays and Thursdays deliveries to Rutherglen) www.mcqueensdairies.co.uk

Our last magazine contained a few suggestions of eco-friendly choices we can make to help to reduce our use of plastic in the bathroom. Here are a few more simple changes we can make, this time in the kitchen:

- Beeswax wraps instead of clingfilm to cover bowls or to wrap sandwiches
- Paper bags for sandwiches.
- Clingfilm that contains no plastic and is degradable.
- Degradable bin liners.
- Plastic free alternatives to sponges .
- Plastic free tea bags (yes, there's plastic in most tea bags!)
- Loose tea and paper tea bags or a diffuser

There are many online companies that sell these items, including: www.consumablesupplies.co.uk and www.lifebeforeplastic.com



On 30th November 2021, Stonelaw held its first Eco-Friendly Forum to exchange ideas about how to live more sustainably. If you'd like to find out more about eco-friendly living, why not join in next time?

Lesley Nisbet

PLAYLIST CHALLENGE 3

Thanks to Neil for nominating me to provide my playlist for this edition of the magazine. I hope you enjoy these songs as much as I do.



- Great are you Lord (Bethel Music)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W88H5aF1eLM>
- How great thou art (Hillsong feat. Lauren Daigle)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-hv11nbS80>
- Goodness of God (Jenn Johnson)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0FBb6hnmwTo>
- The UK Blessing (various)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtll3mNj5U&t=4s>
- Champion (Bethel Music & Dante Bowe)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOK8F9caDic>
- Revivals in the air (Melissa Helser)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9TCQuni5Jw>
- Hosanna (Hillsong)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnMevXQutyE>
- God of miracles (Chris McClarney)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b50tigelzGc>
- Oh how He loves (David Crowder)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCunuL58odQ>
- Who You say I am (Hillsong)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKw6uqtGFfo>
- Turn your eyes towards Jesus (Hillsong)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ka7bVQmbnk>

For our next magazine, I challenge John and Moira Shaw to share their favourite songs with us.

Elizabeth Watson

USED POSTAGE STAMPS

It is heartening to learn just how many of you have been saving your used stamps throughout lockdown. This year, the money raised will go to the Women's Development Centre (WDC) in Kandy, Sri Lanka, which supports women and girls who have survived violent attacks.



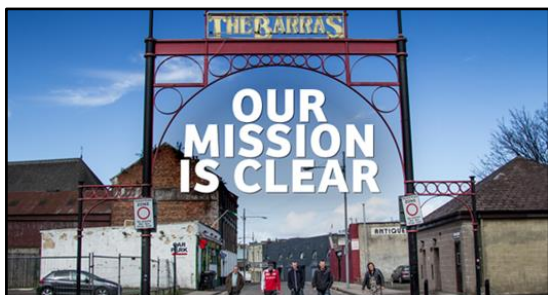
The WDC gives these women somewhere to stay, supports them in caring for their children, helps them return to education if they wish, and trains them in skills they can use to make a living when they leave.

It would be great if you would keep your Christmas stamps and leave them on the table in the Meeting Place. I check each Sunday to see if any have been left.

Thank you!

Leslie Gibson

LODGING HOUSE MISSION NEWS AND CHRISTMAS APPEAL



It has been a difficult year for many, and certainly for our valued service users.

We opened our doors again on 1st July and while we still cannot provide all of our normal services, we can offer a healthy breakfast and lunch to our visitors - and in a new partnership with Social Bite, we are now also providing an evening meal.

Although Christmas Day will again be different this year, we shall continue to share festive cheer by delivering Christmas dinner and a gift for up to 75 individuals. Often, this gift is the only one which our service users will receive on Christmas Day or indeed, all year.

In order to make things as easy as possible in these challenging times, we are asking for financial donations to fund the cost of our Christmas activities. Be assured that we shall provide both the meal and a gift to everyone who arrives on Christmas Day.

Thanks to our sponsors, who will donate some food items, a gift of £7 will cover the cost of a meal. We generally spend up to £10 on a Christmas gift.

Any contribution is gratefully received, and you can donate in the usual way:

WEBSITE: www.lhm-glasgow.org.uk

DIRECT TRANSFER: Sort Code **82-64-31** Account no: **30060385**

CALL the Lodging House Mission on **0141 552 0285** and donate by card.

Finally, as the year draws to a close, it is our prayer that our supporters, staff, volunteers and those affected by homelessness may know peace, comfort, love and the assurance of God's blessings. Thank you for the great support you give to LHM all year.

Gus Smeaton LHM Director (and good friend to many in Stonelaw Church.)

ANOTHER WAY TO HELP THE LODGING HOUSE MISSION'S SERVICE USERS...

Would you like to help Stonelaw's National Mission Team to support some of the most vulnerable people in the Glasgow area this Christmas? A box has been set up in the Meeting Place during the month of December, to collect donations of the following items:

- Men's deodorant
- Snoods (scarves you can pull over your head)
- Boxer shorts (all sizes)
- Men's jogging trousers (all sizes)
- Women's leggings (all sizes)
- Selection boxes
- Full fat UHT milk is also welcome at any time of year, as it can be used as needed.

This is an eclectic list! Let's get donating...

Thanking you in anticipation for your generosity.

Dorothy McTaggart and the National Mission Team

131ST COMPANY BOYS' BRIGADE

The 131st BB is glad to be back in our church building. The boys have enjoyed catching up with craft and, in particular, science projects. These have been a great success, amazing both the boys and their leaders!



We have been substituting football with basketball. Some budding stars have emerged at our practice hoop challenge; one of our smaller boys can effortlessly net a regulation basketball at official height. The boys are enthusiastically perfecting basketball control and passing. The leaders join in the fun basketball match at the end of the evening, but the next day, the older among us are reminded that competing with 6- to 10-year-olds can make for sore muscles!

In the New Year the BB leaders are organising an outing to the Emirates Stadium to watch a professional basketball game. That will be an experience for us all!

Remembrance Sunday gave the boys a project: creating banners. Their fingers, dipped in red paint, (*it washes off...*) produced colourful poppy images. They also learned about the effect of the wartime evacuation and rationing. The boys were astonished that so few sweets were allowed per month!

Boys and leaders alike are looking forward to the December pantomime at Rutherglen Town Hall, which is always great fun.

Walter Smyth,

Lt. 131 Company Boys Brigade, Rutherglen.

Email: walt_smyth@yahoo.co.uk

2ND RUTHERGLEN BROWNIES



It has been a busy month for 2nd Rutherglen Brownies. Our new starts are settling in well and enjoying learning all our songs, games and traditions. We held a party for Hallowe'en and made edible Remembrance poppies (see below) as well as working on our climate badge.

If you are interested in finding out more about Brownies or joining the waiting list (birthdays after summer 2013), then please email Diane and Rachel at 2ndrutherglenbrownies@gmail.com

Diane Wilson 2nd Rutherglen Brownies Leader



INFORMATION FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE MAGAZINE

UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES

1. In order to avoid people having to queue before services there is a system for entering the building. If you are checking in using your Smartphone and our QR code, please enter using the South Door (i.e. the entrance without a ramp). Otherwise, please enter via the North Door (the entrance with a ramp). Of course, everyone who needs to can use the ramp, no matter how they intend to check in.

2. A camera is in use on a Sunday morning so that our service can be recorded and displayed on our website. Please note that the chancel and the area in front of the door to the right of the chancel are in view of the camera and if you are in this area you may be seen and recorded.

CHURCH OFFERING

We are still unable to pass the plate on a Sunday during the service. However, there will be a collection plate available at the door for anyone who wishes to give their offering in this way.

HAVE YOU MISSED A SUNDAY SERVICE?

You can catch up with any service, by watching the video recording on our website at www.stonelawchurch.org/service-recordings. Recordings are normally available at any time from about 2.30pm on the day of the service.

HOW TO GIVE TO STONELAW CHURCH

YOU CAN CONTACT THE CHURCH TREASURER, EUAN CAMPBELL, ON 07413 580 103 or by email at treasurer@stonelawchurch.org

STANDING ORDER/ ONLINE BANKING

Either a one-off payment or a standing order can be set up using online banking. Our bank details are as follows:

Account: Stonelaw Parish Church, **Account Number:** 00465105, **Sort Code:** 80-12-75.

If you wish to set up a standing order but do not have access to internet banking, a Standing Order Form (to send to your bank) can be found on our website at:

<http://stonelawchurch.org/giving> or contact Euan Campbell (see page 22) to ask for one. If you are thinking of setting up a standing order, then please remember you are free to cancel this at any time.

POSTING A CHEQUE

We are also able to accept donations by cheque. These should be made out to Stonelaw Parish Church and posted to our **Free Will Offering Treasurer:** Iain Morrison, Flat G/L, 5 Parkhill Drive, Rutherglen, G73 2PJ

TEXT DONATION SERVICE

We have set up a text donation service to allow donations by text for those who are not able to use online banking or cheques. To use this service, text **STONELAWCH** followed by the number of pounds you wish to donate to **70085**. E.g. **STONELAWCH 5** to donate £5. If you are thinking of using this service, then please remember that we will not keep a record of your phone number or use it to contact you for any reason.

GIFT AID

If you are a UK taxpayer, donating to the church through the Gift Aid scheme means that we are able to claim back 25 pence for every £1 that you give – at no extra cost to you. If you would like to give using the Gift Aid scheme, you will need to complete a declaration form (also available on <http://stonelawchurch.org/giving>) which should be completed and returned to Iain Morrison, as Freewill Offering Treasurer, at the above address.

HOW TO JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON ZOOM

To use Zoom, you need a computer, iPad/tablet or smartphone. Download the app and choose Join Meeting.

You need a specific Meeting ID and Passcode to log in to Zoom meetings. These are shared each week in the Saturday Congregational Email.

To sign up to these emails, please send your details to info@stonelawchurch.org

It's always easier if you try to log into Zoom about ten minutes ahead. If you have trouble accessing a Stonelaw event on Zoom, please call Janis Neil on **07808 926067**.

EVERY SUNDAY Morning service at 10.30am

EVERY WEDNESDAY Prayer Meeting at 7.30pm

To join the Wednesday Prayers WhatsApp group - for prayer updates and to ask for prayer for yourself or others - please email info@stonelawchurch.org

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH House Groups, for Bible study, discussion and fellowship. All welcome. To join, email info@stonelawchurch.org

Jennifer Menzies leads the Thursday **10.30am** group

Dorothy McTaggart leads the Thursday **7.30pm** group.

EVERY FRIDAY Grace and Truth Bible Study at 5.30-7pm.

This group is led by Mada and Mirriam Chikumbanje.

Are you young, or young at heart? Let us study the Bible together!

To join this group, please email info@stonelawchurch.org

CATCH UP HERE ON THE SATURDAY CONGREGATIONAL EMAILS

We include here, **in reverse date order**, messages from our minister Neil from the Saturday Congregational Emails, for those who have not already seen them.

If you would like to receive these emails directly, please contact info@stonelawchurch.org or ask a friend to print them out for you.

CONGREGATIONAL EMAIL 27TH NOVEMBER 2021

Dear Friends

I hope this email finds you well, as we enter into the season of Advent.

As I prepare things for the final run in to the calendar year, I have been reflecting a lot on Advent recently which is actually the first 'season' in the new church year. It is, of course, that period of time immediately before Christmas when we get ready to celebrate Jesus' birth.

We will be lighting our first Advent candle this Sunday and then a new one will be lit every Sunday leading up to Christmas. The centre candle is lit on Christmas day and is a symbol of Jesus, who is the Light of the World.

One tradition surrounding the meaning of the candles claims that the first candle is the candle of hope. The second candle is the candle of peace. The third candle is known as the candle of love and the fourth candle represents joy.

Each of the four candles can also represent people who prepared for the coming of Jesus, such as the prophets, John the Baptist, and Mary. It is no surprise that we too use the lighting of the candles to help us to prepare ourselves for celebrating the coming of Jesus.

I have also written a short devotional book*, which will be sent to you all by email at the beginning of next week. This devotional will allow us to journey through Luke's Gospel together. I have entitled this book 'Tread Lightly' and we will read a chapter of Luke each day and spend time reflecting on the questions and prompts that each passage throws up. My hope is that it will allow us not to rush through Advent but to spend a bit of time each day in God's Word, preparing ourselves to celebrate the birth of Saviour on the 25th of December.

May you have your most blessed Advent yet.

Yours in Jesus,

Neil

Rev Neil H. Watson

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* To download this booklet, see the foot of page 4

CONGREGATIONAL EMAIL 20TH NOVEMBER 2021

Dear Friends,

I hope this week's email finds you all safe and healthy.

As I sit down to write this, I am struck by feelings of gratitude for our wonderful congregation and want to say a huge thank you to you all, for those who I have had a chance to speak to many times; for those where our conversations have been brief, and for all those who have offered their support, both prayerfully and practically, to me and Elizabeth since we made the move to Rutherglen;.

We know that there is nothing stronger in the world than God's loving presence, found in all things; that God's presence and love can transform even the toughest situations. Even so, times of challenge and change still bring much uncertainty and anxiety.

We find ourselves looking to see the path ahead and it can still be so clouded with many unknowns. However, as God has done throughout the last few years, I keep reassuring myself that whatever comes, God will lead us through.

While it is sometimes difficult to see a clear path; I take a lot of strength from Paul's words to the Philippian church (4:12-13),

'I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.'

Paul reminds us that even through times of change, God's love and faithfulness does not change. God is always by our side, offering to us strength, guidance, and hope. With that unchanging and empowering love, nothing is impossible!

It is my hope that together we might continue to grow strong in our faith as we continue to spread the hope of God's love and the Good News of Jesus to all around us!

Yours in Jesus,

Neil

Rev Neil H. Watson

CONGREGATIONAL EMAIL 13TH NOVEMBER 2021

Dear Friends,

Following on from this past Sunday and as we prepare ourselves for our Remembrance Sunday service tomorrow, I continue to be grateful to live in a land where we're free to worship our Lord Jesus and preach His amazing Gospel message. However, we need to remember, as someone once said, "freedom is never free". Freedom always seems to come at a cost.

This week we have stopped to remember that the freedom we enjoy in our country today came at a tremendous price - it was bought and paid for by those who have fought in the armed forces, both past and present. Some having made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and fellow citizens.

Jesus told us, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13) and it was because of this great love that Jesus laid His life down for you and me at the cross. And He still loves us today, more than we'll ever be able to comprehend.

Let's never forget the brave men and women who served the cause of freedom in the past, nor those whose service today enables us to continue to live and worship freely.

May we also pray for the day to come soon where humankind finds a way other than violence to resolve our differences. Let us play our part in directing everyone to the path of peace, that they might have their own encounter with the Prince of Peace!

Yours in Jesus,

Neil

Rev Neil H. Watson

CONGREGATIONAL EMAIL 6TH NOVEMBER 2021

Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write this week's email, I am acutely aware that next week we mark Remembrance; the annual stopping to reflect on the sacrifice made by others that we might have freedom and peace. However, it doesn't take very long for us to look around at the world and wonder whether we have learned anything from our years of remembering.

We also read and hear in the news of the many conflicts still going on in our world and we might be forgiven for thinking that God is done with us, and we are indeed in nothing more than a battle with one another. Gone is the sense of real community and it appears that the idea of "being in the same storm as everyone else" has been replaced with the same divisions we saw before COVID-19 took over our planet

The questioning of whether God is still with us is not a new one though and we are able to read numerous times in the Psalms questioning where God is in all different sets of circumstances. For example, Psalm 13 starts:

,"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all day long?"

but ends with,

"But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me."

While King David is questioning where God is during a time of conflict, he continues to place his trust in God's unfailing love. David is able to reflect on the many times that God was in action in his life and holds onto the truth that God will never forsake him. It is important to remember that God is not done with us and that his unfailing love was shown so clearly in the person and sacrifice of Jesus. It is equally important that we turn our remembering into action. Jesus is the Prince of Peace and each and every one of us, as His followers, is tasked with pursuing all avenues to usher more peace into our world. As we come to mark another Remembrance, may we, in our remembering of the sacrifice of others, honour it by pursuing the peace that they sought.

Neil

Rev Neil H. Watson

PLEASE EMAIL ITEMS FOR THE FEBRUARY & MARCH MAGAZINE
TO MAGAZINE@STONELAWCHURCH.ORG BY SUNDAY 15TH JANUARY