

# **CHURCH OF THE HOLY RUDE**

## **STIRLING**

*(Church of Scotland)*



## **NEWSLETTER**

**WINTER 2018/2019**



## ***FROM THE MANSE***

Dear Friends

I heard recently of a church which has raised two thousand pounds in order to host an 'open doors' Christmas lunch for anybody in the parish who would otherwise be alone or in need on Christmas day – whether young or old, man or woman, housed or homeless, whether Christian or not. It struck me that this is a kind of 'radical' hospitality – welcoming all comers, and giving freely of time and money required – that properly reflects the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Particularly at Christmas-time, when so much emphasis is put on 'family' gathering together to celebrate, we should be aware that for some people this is a time of year when for one reason or another, they feel lonely, or excluded, or homesick. There will be families, too, who will likely struggle to provide food, let alone presents, for their children.

Which makes me think of the Christmas story, and the journey of the young Mary with Joseph from their home in Nazareth to Bethlehem; of Mary, about to give birth to their first child, arriving in the unfamiliar place, unable to find a room anywhere. What might they have thought and felt, so far from home, among strangers, anxious about the coming birth, that first Christmas?

We know how the story goes – space was found for them in the byre, sheltering in the warmth of the straw among the animals, and the birth went well: but it might have gone very differently, and been much more difficult. The young parents were dependent on the good will and compassion of others – which is to say, that Jesus himself was too, as God was born among us, weak and vulnerable.

In Stirling this year there will be many – students, travellers, and also asylum-seekers, who find themselves alone at Christmas, and I wonder what we can do as churches, to offer a welcome, show hospitality, and remind people of the God who came to the world in the infant Christ, to those whose needs are greater than ours, that His light may shine clear in the mid-winter darkness of all our lives.

Wishing you every blessing for this Advent and Christmas,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Alan

## NOTES FROM THE SESSION CLERK

The clocks have just gone back an hour, and with it a realisation that winter is fast approaching. Perhaps hastened by our wonderful summer, the autumn colours are spectacular. Our very recent Harvest Thanksgiving Service was greatly enhanced by the singing provided by Viewfield Young Church during a shared Service, and all the proceeds were donated to Start Up Stirling, both in cash and in kind.

It has been an eventful few months for the Church. Our Minister became suddenly unwell and was admitted to Hospital; we are delighted that he is making good progress, and is hopefully returning to us in early November. During the past 2 months or so, we have been fortunate to have pulpit supply especially from Reverends Dennis Rose and Maggie Roderick, and also Derek Neilson and we are grateful to them for their help. I must also mention Dr Lesley Stanley who arrived on the day of Alan's illness as an OLM Candidate and, at very short notice, did an amazing job!

During the past few months, the Church has welcomed even more visitors than 2017, up by 6.2% and amazing total of more than 68,000! Our thanks must once again go to the Convener of the Friends, Ann Crawford, the Secretary, Brian Morrison, and to the whole Ministry of Welcome Team for coping so ably with this number. The donations to the Friends of the Church are literally life saving and have enabled payment by the Friends of the massive energy and insurance accounts, and also in other tangible ways such as the redecoration of the Angel (Children's) Room; our very sincere thanks for this also.

A considerable number of visitors also attended Sunday worship; recently a group of 38 Americans who travelled from Mull to attend. In August we held a special Baptismal Service, during which there was an actual baptism, and to which we invited children who have been previously baptised by Alan Miller. This was well attended, hospitality was laid on by the Social Committee, and we feel that this is well worth repeating.

In September, we hosted the opening reception and nomination of the winner of the McIlvenney Prize at the Scottish Crimewriters' Festival Weekend. Around 300 people attended, and an elaborate sound and lighting system was installed, including very effective red outside floodlighting. All went very well, and they have asked to return next year!

Regarding the Church's future, there have been 3 meetings organised by Presbytery to discuss the future of the 4 City Centre Churches. The outcome and the decisions made by presbytery are now awaited. Regarding the Holy Rude, and as mentioned previously, the Property Committee of the Kirk Session, is about to publish a short discussion paper to include facts gathered from a recent questionnaire.

In the near future, we are once again hosting the City Armistice Service, and as it is the Centenary of the end of WW1, will include celebratory bell ringing. In the run up to Christmas, we are also delighted to once again welcome back the Stirling University Christian Union Carol Concert, which last year saw over 100 young students attend.

My sincere best wishes to you and to all your families for a happy and peaceful yuletide season.

Robin McKinlay.

## ***FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC***



The autumn is always a quieter time for concerts at the Holy Rude. This comes after the summer, which is always an extra busy time, with visiting choirs and ensembles enjoying the wonderful setting of the Holy Rude. Things pick up again in December with the annual Christmas concert given by the Stirling City Choir on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December, our own church choir performing the Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December, and Stirling High's Christmas Concert on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December. The Lessons & Carols service is always very atmospheric and it is nice to see some people in the congregation who are not members of the Holy Rude, but enjoy coming to hear this service.

One special event in October that our own choir was delighted to take part in was the Golden Wedding celebration service for Ann & Steve Crawford. It was a lovely event which everyone in attendance enjoyed so much, and was glad to be part of this special day for Ann & Steve.

A date for your diary not to be missed is the return to the Holy Rude of Mezzo-Soprano Frances McCafferty. On Sunday January 6<sup>th</sup> at 4.00pm Frances will give a celebration in song and poetry called 'The Road to Bethlehem' Tickets are priced at £10 and include refreshments afterwards.

We have welcomed a new member to the choir in recent weeks. Aileen McKenzie has joined the Alto section. We hope Aileen will enjoy singing with us at the Holy Rude. We are always looking for new members for the choir, please contact me, or any member of the choir for information.

Ian Boulter



*If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician.  
I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music.  
I see my life in terms of music. – Albert Einstein*



## **DIARY OF SERVICES**

## DECEMBER

Sunday 2nd                                      11.00 a.m.                                      Rev. Alan F. Miller  
***Church of the Holy Rude***  
***Sacrament of Holy Communion***  
***(Christmas Gift Donation)***

Sunday 9th                      11.00 a.m.                      Rev. Alan F. Miller  
*Viewfield Erskine*

Sunday 16th  
***Church of the Holy Rude***  
***Christmas Gift Service*** 11.00 a.m. Rev. Alan F. Miller  
*followed by short Service*  
*for Healing and Wholeness*

***Choir of the Holy Rude*** 6.30 p.m.  
***Nine Lessons and Carols***  
***by Candlelight***

Sunday 23rd                      11.00 a.m.                      Rev. Alan F. Miller  
*Viewfield Erskine*

Monday 24th  
**Christmas Eve**  
*Christingle Service* 6.30 p.m. Rev. Alan F. Miller  
*in Viewfield Erskine Church*  
*(Christingles will be made in the Church Hall from 5.30 p.m.)*

***Church of the Holy Rude***  
***Community Carol Singing*** 11.00 p.m.

<b><i>Watchnight Service</i></b>	11.30 p.m.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
<b><i>Holy Rude</i></b>		

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> December                      11.00.a.m.                      Rev. Alan F. Miller  
*Viewfield Erskine*

## Diary of Services contd.

### JANUARY

Sunday 6th <b><i>Church of the Holy Rude Joint Communion Service</i></b>	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
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Sunday 13th <b><i>Viewfield Erskine</i></b>	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
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Sunday 20th <b><i>Church of the Holy Rude followed by short Service for Healing and Wholeness</i></b>	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
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Sunday 27th <b><i>Viewfield Erskine</i></b>	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
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### FEBRUARY

Sunday 3rd <b><i>Church of the Holy Rude Short Communion Service</i></b>	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
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Sunday 10th <b><i>Viewfield Erskine</i></b>	11.00 am.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
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Sunday 17th <b><i>Church of the Holy Rude followed by short Service for Healing and Wholeness</i></b>	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
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Sunday 24th <b><i>Viewfield Erskine</i></b>	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Alan F. Miller
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## **FLOWER ROTA**

### **DECEMBER**



Sunday 2nd

Communion

Sunday 16th

Christmas Flowers



### **JANUARY**

Sunday 6th

Robert and Elma Wyllie

Sunday 20th

Jeanette McEwan



### **FEBRUARY**

Sunday 3rd

Janette Crawford

Sunday 17th

Elma Wyllie

*Thank you to all who have helped over the last year – lots of you. If anyone has discovered a talent for flower arranging and would like a regular spot, just let me know.*

*Alison Dale*  
**Flower Convener**



## DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### CHURCH OF THE HOLY RUDE



### December 2018 – February 2019

DATE	EVENT	TIME
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> December	Stirling University Christian Union Carol Concert	7.00 p.m.
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Music and Carols Stirling City Choir	7.30 p.m.
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	Choir of the Holy Rude Nine Lessons and Carols By Candlelight	6.30 p.m.
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> December	Stirling High School Concert	7.00 p.m.
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	<b>'The Road to Bethlehem'</b> <b>A celebration for Epiphany in song and poetry</b> <b>Frances McCafferty (Mezzo-Soprano) &amp; Ian Boulter (Piano)</b>	4.00 p.m.
	<b>£10 - includes refreshments</b>	
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> January	<b>Viewfield Erskine Church Guild</b> <b>Burns's Night</b>	7.00 p.m.
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> February	Quiz Night <i>and Raffle</i> <i>Tickets £10</i> <i>Including light refreshments</i> Parking available at the Old Jail	7.00 for 7.30 p.m.

## ***PASTORAL***

### ***WEDDINGS***



*Saturday 29th September*

*Julie Louise Don and Kevin Matthew Young*

### ***BLESSING***



*Saturday 6th October*

*Steve and Ann Crawford*

*(Celebration of 50 years of marriage)*

### ***BAPTISMS***



*Let the children come.....*

*Sunday 26th August*

*Beau Gordon Stuart Chalmers*

*Sunday 4th November*

*George William Milne*

## DEATHS



*God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at mine end, and at my departing*

*God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at mine end, and at my departing*

Read more at <http://www.beliefnet.com/prayers/christian/guidance/prayer-for-gods-guidance.aspx#0iUgHFjSgk6mXsSf.99>

## The Guarding of the God of Life

*The God of life with guarding hold you,  
The loving Christ with guarding fold you,  
The Holy Spirit, guarding, mould you,  
Each night of life to aid, enfold you,  
Each day and night of life uphold you.*

*Ancient Celtic poem*

The WILL of God will never take you  
Where the grace of God cannot keep you  
Where the riches of God cannot supply your needs  
Where the Spirit of God cannot work through you  
Where the Love of God cannot enfold you  
Where the mercies of God cannot sustain you  
. Where the peace of God cannot calm your fears  
Where the Word of God cannot feed you  
Where the comfort of God cannot dry your tears.

Author unknown

The Guarding of the God of Life

The God of life with guarding hold you,

The loving Christ with guarding fold you,

The Holy Spirit, guarding, mould you,

Each night of life to aid, enfold you,

Each day and night of life uphold you.

Ancient Celtic poem



### *Christmas Gift Envelopes*

Dear Members and Friends of the Church of the Holy Rude.

Time has come round for our end of year Newsletter and a report on our Finances for 2018, which seems to be flying on!

This year we have “nearly managed” to keep on top of all expenses including our Ministry and Mission contribution. Hopefully by the end of the year we will have achieved paying all that is due for this year. This would not be possible without the invaluable help we receive from the Friends. The Friends undertake to pay the Church Insurance to 121 and this year they have also paid all gas and electricity bills, which grow every year due to ever increasing rate charges! We have also been fortunate in 2018 to have had many weddings, enjoyable fund raising events and concerts which help to boost our income and help with costs.

This year, I am sending out our Christmas appeal for 2018 and hoping you will be as generous as you have always been in the past. You will find a special envelope marked Christmas gift enclosed in your Newsletter and I would be most grateful if you can return this in the collection at the service on **Sunday 2nd December**, or to your elder, or posted to `The Treasurer, Church of the Holy Rude, St John Street, STIRLING FK8 1ED.

There is the opportunity to increase your gift by filling out your details on the special envelope, before handing it in and this will enable us to include your donation in our gift aid claim for the Church.

I would like to end by wishing you a peaceful and blessed 2019 and thank you for your continued support in 2018.

Many thanks,

***Kate McIntosh***  
***Treasurer***

## FORTHCOMING SPRING EVENTS

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### **QUIZ NIGHT**

**FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2019**



I am happy to report that Mr Ricki Cassidy has agreed to compère another quiz evening for us. This will take place on **Friday 15th February 2019**, 7pm for 7 30, tickets will cost £10 00, and can be obtained from Social Committee Members, nearer to the time, and to include soft drinks, and nibbles, BYOB. There will also be a raffle.

#### **VALUATION AFTERNOON**

**SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019**

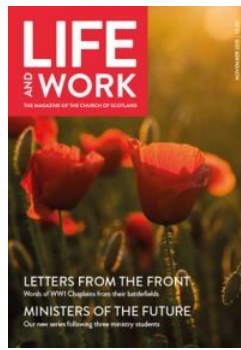


On **Sunday 17th March**, we are planning to have a valuation of jewellery, which will be run by Stuart Campbell, the Jeweller in Friar Street, Stirling. This is planned to take place in the afternoon, with afternoon tea being served. Further details will be in the Spring Magazine.

**Sara McKinlay**  
Convener,  
Social Committee



## LIFE & WORK



### THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

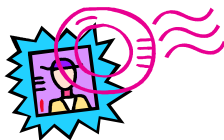
**2019**

Life & Work contains up-to-date news and views on many aspects of life  
... religious... social... environmental ... international ... economic -  
all based on sound Christian principles, and is delivered to you personally.  
Its stimulating style appeals to many readers.

Annual subscriptions are now due at the specially discounted rate of  
**£31**

Your visiting Elder will take payment, cheques to be made payable to  
"The Church of the Holy Rude", or you may send your subscription to  
George Wood, 48 Torbrex Road, Stirling, FK7 9HH

Existing orders will automatically be carried forward to 2019 unless cancelled



**S O S – Save Old Stamps for World Mission**



This year's World Mission Stamp Appeal is raising money for the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia (Ukraine) which helps to run a number of day care centres to provide educational, emotional and physical support for children and young people with disabilities. The World Mission Stamp Appeal will support the young people to live life in all its fullness, and to enjoy opportunities to participate in society and family life.

The sum raised so far this year from the sale of the stamps is £1106. With the Christmas season fast approaching there will again be the annual increase in the "snail" mail using postage stamps.

Please save all your stamps and either place them in the box at the back of the church or hand them to me or to one of the welcoming elders. Your support is much appreciated.

*Myra Gibson*

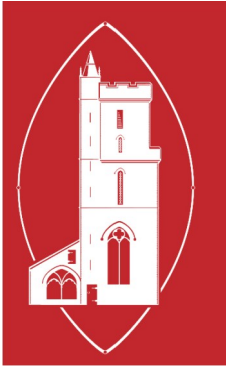
**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD  
VIEWFIELD ERSKINE CHURCH  
2018-2019**



Members of Holy Rude are warmly invited to join the meetings of the Guild which are held in the Smaller Church Hall, on the dates listed below. Please come along and be assured of a warm welcome. Normally, all meetings take place on a Monday at 7.30 p.m.

<b>Monday 3rd December</b>	<b>Martha's Table</b>
<b>Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Christmas Party with Archie Strang</b>
<b>Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Rev. Alan Miller</b>
<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Burns's Night Tickets £10</b>
<b>Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>To be advised</b>
<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Cookery Demonstration Linda Millar</b>
<b>Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Floral Demonstration</b>
<b>Monday 25th March</b>	<b>Dog Rescue Service Gayle Patrick</b>
<b>Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>A.G.M. and Pot Luck Supper</b>





## FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY RUDE

This Society was registered as a Charity (No. SC042326) in May 2011 with the main purpose of raising funds for the care and maintenance of Holy Rude. Other principal objectives are a) the adornment and furnishing of the Church and providing facilities for the benefit of the Congregation and visitors, b) supporting the performance of music in Holy Rude, and c) the encouragement of research into the history of the Church.

### **Friends 2018 Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends Society was held on Sunday 16th. September in Church of the Holy Rude. Treasurer, Alastair Roy, presented to the Members the Annual Report and Accounts for the year 2017/18, and also reported on the very significant assistance that had been provided to Holy Rude by the Friends since the Society was established in 2011.

The Annual Report and Accounts were then adopted by the Members. By the 3 year rotation of Council Members, Margaret Davidson and Mike Makower, stood down from the Friends Council, and in their place, Janet McNair and Ian Boulter were elected as Members Nominees.

After the meeting refreshments were served in the South East Aisle.

### **Record Ministry of Welcome Season**

The Ministry of Welcome Season that had begun on 1st. May, finally drew to a close on 30th. September, and the annual meeting of the team of volunteers was then held on 16th. October in Holy Rude, when the results for the 23 week season were announced.

*Visitor Numbers* for the 23 week season reached the record high number of 68,803 which was up by nearly 4,000 (6.2%) over the 2017 season of 64,809. The busiest month was August when approx. 21,000 visitors were welcomed into Holy Rude.

*The Visitors Books* were signed by people from 84 different countries of the world, and the biggest number came from North America. Comments given in the books were very complimentary and demonstrated that Holy Rude has a very special appeal.

*Shop Sales* were very healthy with an increased range of items for sale, and the *Candles and Prayer Request Cards* in St. Andrew's Chapel again proved to be very popular.

The *donations* received from visitors are the major source of income to the Friends, and this year totalled approx. £32,000 gross. With a major repair programme of work required on the church, this money is crucial too.

## **Volunteers**

Sincere thanks go to the team of 32 volunteers for giving their time so willingly and ensuring that Holy Rude was open every day over the summer months, and for sharing the history and heritage of our ancient church with the many visitors.

As always, additional volunteers are required for next summer, so if you know of any relations or friends who may be interested in taking part in the Ministry of Welcome, please get in touch.

Brian Morrison  
Secretary, Friends of Holy Rude

Know anyone who is ill or in hospital?

Know any one who is ill at home who would like a visit ?

Please let the Minister/Elder/Pastoral Care team know.



*'Tis winter now; the fallen snow  
has left the heavens all coldly clear;  
through leafless boughs the sharp winds blow,  
and all the earth lies dead and drear.*

*And yet God's love is not withdrawn;  
his life within the keen air breathes;  
his beauty paints the crimson dawn,  
and clothes each branch with glittering wreaths.*

*And though abroad the sharp winds blow,  
and skies are chill, and frosts are keen,  
home closer draws her circle now,  
and warmer glows her light within.*

*O God, you give the winter's cold,  
as well as summer's joyous rays,  
you warmly in your love enfold,  
and keep us through life's wintry days.*

*Source: Church Hymnary (4th ed.) #234*

## **WARNING.....WARNING: ADVENT VIRUS**

**Be on the alert for symptoms of inner HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE.**

The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to this virus and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.

### **Some signs and symptoms of The Advent Virus**

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging other people.
- A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- A loss of interest in conflict.
- A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

Please send this warning out to all your friends. This virus can and has affected many systems. Some systems have been completely cleaned out because of it

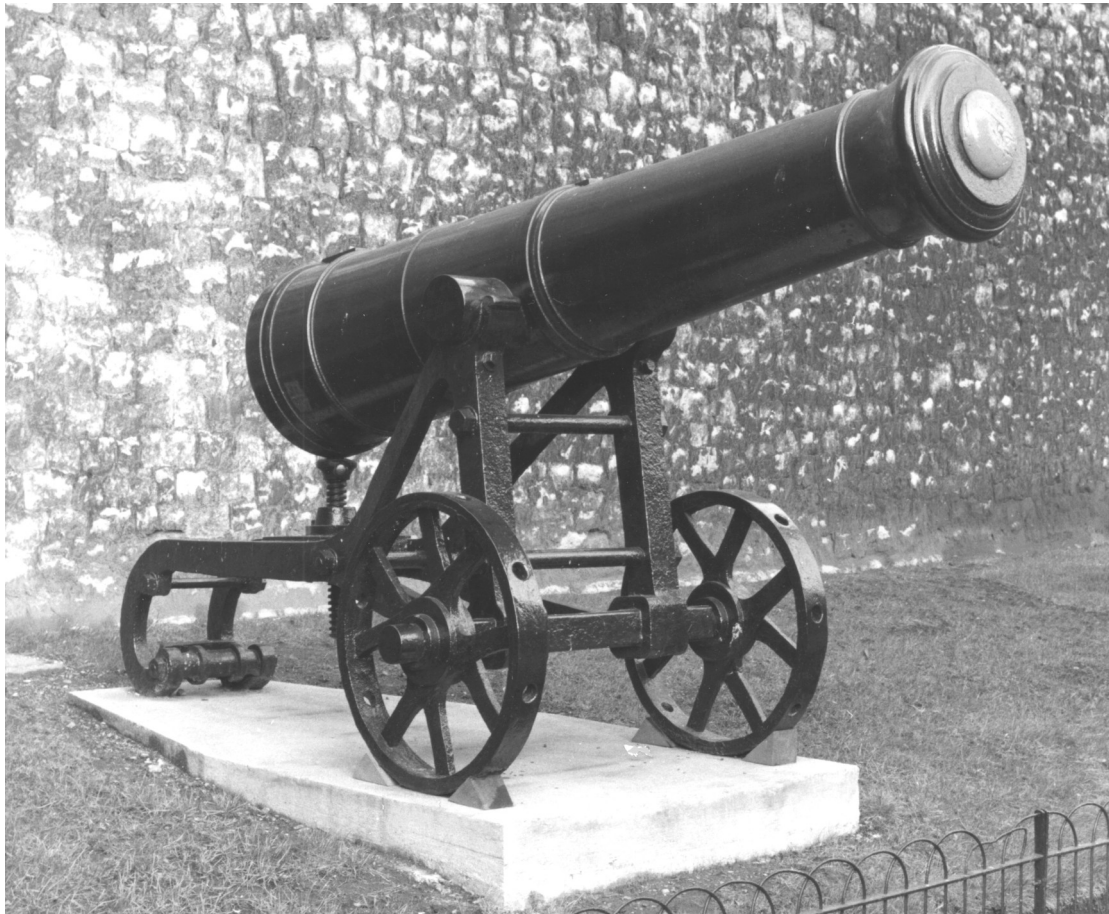
### **IMPORTANT QUESTIONS**

Would other people in your life know that you have the Advent Virus?

Why or why not?

***Is there a person in your life that could really use exposure to this virus?***

## Cannons and Colours - Part 2



In the Autumn Newsletter information was given about the 2 Cannons that overlook the Cowane's Hospital Bowling Green, and how they were captured by the British Army from the Russians in 1855 at the Siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War. It was also stated that research was taking place into the local legend that prior to the war these guns were made by Carron Company, Falkirk, and sold to the Russians. The above photograph shows how the cannons would have looked prior to being placed on the stone plinths at the Bowling Green.

In September a visitor to Holy Rude, with a special interest in military history, was intrigued to learn that the Colours of the Scots Guards above the Choir Stalls showed Sevastopol, and that two cannons captured at the same battle were positioned at the Bowling Green. It transpired he was an ex-employee of the Royal Armouries, Leeds, and after learning of the possibility of the cannons being manufactured by Carron Company, he undertook to investigate and verify where the guns were actually made.

After taking various photographs and details of the cannon barrels and trunnions, he sent the information to his friend, a Curator Emeritus of Royal Armouries, and who is one of Britain's leading experts on this type of artillery. A very detailed response was then received confirming that the cannons were indeed of Russian manufacture, and not by Carron Company.

With a bore of 7 inches, and a length of 9 feet, the cannons were identified as 36 pounder guns, made around 1851, with an effective range estimated to be 2000 - 2200 yards.

## ***Carron Company Link***

In the research a link between Carron Company and Russia was identified, however, as in the 1780's the Russian authorities recognised the need to improve the production and quality of their weapons foundries, and so a contract for a large quantity of cutting-edge plant and equipment was placed with Carron Company. The contract was handled by Charles Gascoigne, Managing Partner of Carron, and in May 1786 he sailed, along with 12 Carron workmen, to Russia to supervise the installation work at Aleksandrovsky Foundry in Kronstadt.

At that time Gascoigne was in financial trouble, having been declared bankrupt, and he was never to return to Scotland, remaining in Russia until his death 20 years later in 1806. In that period he enjoyed a very successful career and improved many existing Russian iron foundries and built new ones, also advancing the Russian's cannon-manufacturing techniques. It is considered probable that he influenced the processes of manufacture, rather than the design, of the cannons at the Bowling Green.

Brian Morrison



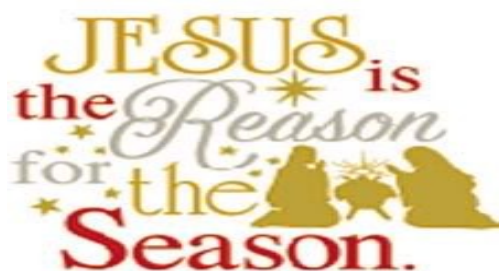
**Come and celebrate  
Christmas with us!**

**Stirling Kirks Together  
All- Age Friendship Lunch is on:**

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**12noon-1.30pm**

**Venue: St Columba's Church Hall, Park  
Terrace, Stirling**



**Carols, Crackers, Conversation  
Soup & Rolls, Tea, Coffee and Home Baking**

**All welcome**

**Future dates for your diary**

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January**

***Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February***



## IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER



This is a favourite carol at Christmas. It describes one of our poorer winters when Jesus was born. Christina Rossetti wrote this song which was brought back to modern use in the 1950 edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern Christina Rossetti, in full Christina Georgina Rossetti, pseudonym Ellen Alleyne was born Dec. 5, 1830, in London . She died Dec. 29, 1894, in London. As one of the most important of English women poets both in range and quality, she excelled in works of fantasy, in poems for children, and in religious poetry.

Christina was the youngest child of Gabriele Rossetti and was the sister of the painter-poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In 1847 her grandfather, Gaetano Polidori, printed on his private press a volume of her Verses, in which signs of poetic talent are already visible. In 1850, under the pseudonym Ellen Alleyne, she contributed seven poems to the Pre-Raphaelite journal The Germ. In 1853, when the Rossetti family was in financial difficulties, Christina helped her mother keep a school at Frome, Somerset, but it was not a success, and in 1854 the pair returned to London, where Christina's father died, in straitened circumstances. Christina entered on her life work of companionship to her mother, devotion to her religion, and the writing of her poetry. In 1871 Christina was stricken by Graves' disease, a thyroid disorder that marred her appearance and left her life in danger. She accepted her affliction with courage and resignation, sustained by religious faith, and she continued to publish. The transience of material things is a theme that recurs throughout her poetry, and the resigned but passionate sadness of unhappy love is often a dominant note in her writing

## IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER

*In the bleak mid-winter frosty wind made moan.  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone:  
Snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow.  
In the bleak mid-winter Long ago.*

*Our God earth cannot hold Him nor earth sustain:  
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.  
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty — Jesus Christ.*

*Enough for him whom cherubim worship night and day,  
A breast full of milk and a manger full of hay.  
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,  
The ox and ass and camel which adore.*

*Angels and archangels may have gathered there.  
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air:  
But only his mother in her maiden bliss  
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.*

*What can I give him poor as I am.  
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,  
If I were a wise man I would do my part,  
Yet what I can I give him. Give my heart.*



## Christmas Poem



by Helen Steiner Rice

*I have a list of folks I know,  
all written in a book  
And every year when Christmas comes,  
I go and take a look,  
And that is when I realize  
that these names are a part  
Not of the book they are written in,  
but really from my heart*

*For each name stands for someone  
who has crossed my path sometime,  
And in the meeting they've become  
the rhythm in each rhyme  
And while it sounds fantastic  
for me to make this claim,  
I really feel that I'm composed  
of each remembered name*

*And while you may not be aware  
of any special link  
Just meeting you has changed my life  
a lot more than you think  
For once I've met somebody,  
the years cannot erase  
The memory of a pleasant word  
or of a friendly face*

*So never think my Christmas cards  
are just a mere routine  
Of names upon a Christmas list,  
forgotten in between,  
For when I send a Christmas card  
that is addressed to you,  
It is because you're on the list  
that I'm indebted to*

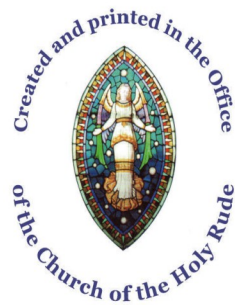
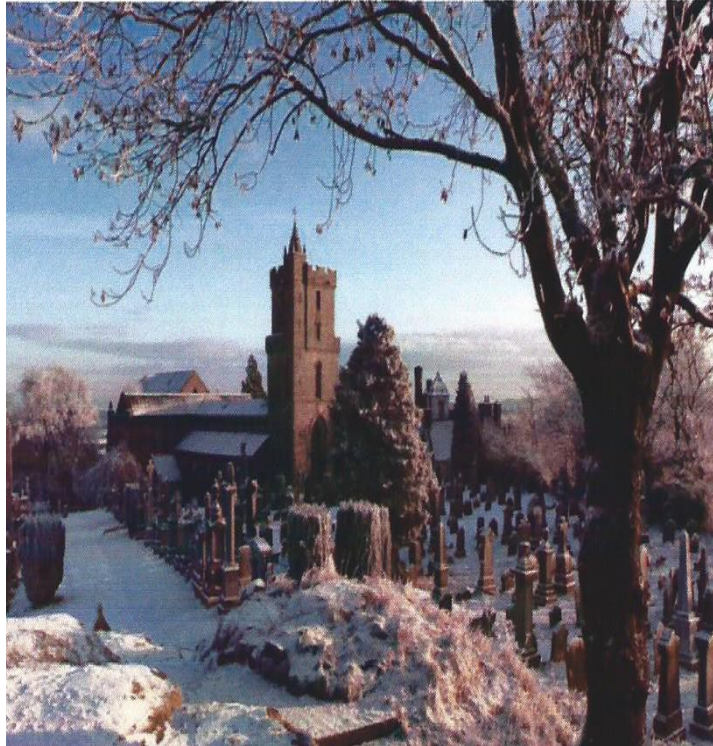
*And every year when Christmas comes,  
I realize anew,  
The best gifts life can offer  
is meeting folks like you.  
And may the spirit of Christmas  
that forever endures  
Leave its richest blessings  
in the hearts of you and yours.*

### **MATERIAL FOR SPRING NEWSLETTER**

The next Newsletter will be our Spring Newsletter covering the months of  
**February, March and April**

Please ensure all articles are available no later than **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> February**  
Please let me know of forthcoming events and any additional material that may be of interest.  
Special thanks, as ever, to all members who have provided articles for this edition.  
Your support, as ever, is very much appreciated.

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