

THE BRIDGE

Christmas

2024



**Bi-Centenary Thinking Caps
When Young Come To Stay
Lighting Up Learning In Malawi
Kirk And Community News**



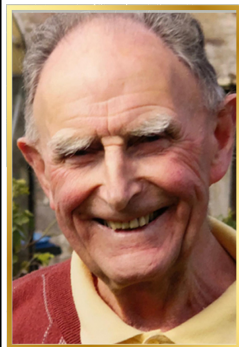
Contents

Title	Page	Title	Page
Christmas Editorial	3	Beat eating Disorders	20
Interim Moderator	4	Soup and Sandwich lunches	20
Community Transport	5	Guild	21
When Young come to stay	6	Community Council	21
Mens Group Advert	8	Other Village Events	22
Bible Bite	9	Remembrance	22
Lighting Up Learning in Malawi	10	Second Church Clean-Up	23
House Groups Advert	11	Christmas Time in Village	23
Community Volunteers	12	Crossword and clues	24
Soup and Sandwich Advert	13	Book Reviews	25
Bi-centenary thinking Cap	14	Sudoku	29
Muthill in Bloom advert	15	Editor's Note	30
God and the Sciences	16	Sudoku solution	30
Bin Collection Dates	17	Useful Telephone List	31
Kirk Session News	18	Crossword solution	31
Shoe Box Appeal	20	Mission Statement	32
		Church contacts	32

Kirk Roll

Death of Alistair W. Lang

It is with sadness that we have to record the death of Alistair Lang on 21 November 2024, aged 93 years. Alistair was a much-loved character both in the church and the village. As well as being an Elder of the Church, he was the church organist for over 50 years. He also did much work with the youth fellowship and edited the church magazine. He always wanted to be a farm worker and worked in several farms around Muthill village. This resulted in him having many fascinating stories of farming in its pre-mechanised days when much work was done by horses. Born in Hong Kong then returning back to Scotland and Glasgow, he moved to Muthill and stayed in Pitkellony Street. His final days were spent at Richmond House in Crieff. He will be much missed for his extensive service to Muthill Parish Church and by the many people whom he knew in the village. May he rest in peace!



Christmas Editorial

Amid the busyness of Christmas time - purchasing gifts, putting up decorations and planning gatherings, the true message of Christmas can so easily be downsized. But for the Christian, it marks the most important event in the world, the coming of Christ. It is a time to celebrate and rejoice for all He means in our lives.



We have undoubtedly had our own hustle and bustle this year in Muthill Parish Church what with the refurbishment of our sanctuary, the development of one or two new outreaches and a steadily growing

congregation eager to strengthen our Christian presence in the village despite our still being without an incumbent minister. Yes, there are many fine memories on which to reminisce and celebrate, but it is also a season for gratitude.

When you think of the difficult times we have recently come through as a village and as families, what with Covid and financial austerity and, to a great extent, we are still experiencing with testing world politics, a changing climate and continuing financial struggles, we have nevertheless much to be thankful for in the freedoms and values which have come down to us over the years. Like all past generations, we have to face some similar and some new fears but it is good to remember the inner hope and peace that comes through knowing Jesus. It is, therefore, with excitement that we in Muthill Parish Church will be welcoming Christmas and giving thanks for all we have done as a Church family over the past year. We may still be smallish in number but we are blessed with commitment, dedication and willingness to serve and these are powerful assets. At this time of new hope when we honour Jesus' birth, we thank you, God, for your guiding hand over us during the past year. We look forward faithfully knowing that you are with us in all our ventures. Bless our village, its diversity and our joint seeking with all our neighbours for the common good!

Editor



Message From Interim Moderator

Dear friends,

Once again we are in the season of Advent. Many times it is referred to as 'the run up to Christmas' and whilst it is indeed that, it is also a season in its own right, looking towards the end times and Christ's coming again. Our Christian faith is one which looks forward and this time of advent emphasises that. Going forward in faith has, in practical terms, shown itself this past year in Muthill Parish Church. Were it not for looking forward and for imaginative thinking on the part of many in our congregation, we would not have found ourselves with the bright and airy worship space with modern and comfortable furnishings which we now enjoy. So whilst we are all indeed running up to Christmas, please enjoy this time of advent for itself.

Any forward looking church hosts new events from time to time. Recently, it was decided to host a minister's tea for those who are unable to get to church services. It was a small gathering this year, as new ventures often are; but it was a chance to share communion together and share one another's company over the tea which followed. Another new venture which we are hosting is a 'Memorial Service' on Sunday 15th December at 3pm when, as we join in the business of the season, we can step back for a moment and take time to remember those family and friends who have gone ahead of us into God's Nearer Presence. This human life which we share is, to those of us of the Christian faith, a time of preparation for a much richer and fuller realm of life in God's Presence. Death at the end of this human stage of life is also a birth into the spiritual realm. Another forward looking aspect of our faith.

I hope that we all enjoy Christmas and all that it entails. It is a great season of the year. Please also remember the old saying 'Jesus is the reason for the season'. May the birth of our Saviour not just be a historical event in history; may He rather be born afresh in the hearts of each and every one of us this year.

With every blessing and good wish for the remaining days of 2024 and may that forward looking spirit go with you into 2025,

(Rev.) Iain F. Paton
Interim Moderator.



MUTHILL COMMUNITY TRANSPORT GROUP

For those of you who missed our official launch on 26th October, held in the refurbished Church, I would like to give a little background as to how we came into being. In November 2023 a Men's Club was formed in the village by Sandy Hutchison and after we got to know one another, we wondered what we could do to benefit our local community. It was Douglas Mitchell from Willoughby Street that came up with the suggestion of a "hospital car". We sounded out some of the other organisations in the village and found much support for the idea. Douglas knew some people in Perth & Kinross Council who had been given a fund to support Community Transport and the idea started to materialise.

We had to form a charity and Joe Knowles was instrumental in this task, together with creating a separate bank account. Our dealings with the Council were more drawn out than we had hoped as we were ready to go by end of March 2024 but the "car" did not arrive until Mid-September. It really is a wonderfully practical vehicle with 8 passenger seats and a high seating position which means that we can see over hedges etc. to view our lovely countryside.

The original idea of a hospital car is our essential work but because we have to travel further afield for our provisions, many of our journeys are shopping trips in and around Perth & Kinross. This has been much appreciated by many of our members. This is in addition to much shorter times taken to get members to medical appointments rather than using public transport.

If you would like to become a member of the Group, please speak to any of the trustees, Stuart Campbell, Adrian Davidson, Mike Dove, Sandy Hutchison, Joe Knowles, Mo Thomson or myself. Pay your £5.00 annual fee and you're in!!

If you have a medical appointment, please book your trip as soon as you get it, so that we can get you prioritised. Call 07587 014271.

Willie Bell
Chairman



When Young Come To Stay

In my opinion one of the greatest gifts God gave us (if we are lucky enough to have them) is Kids and GrandKids! I am pretty lucky with



one son and two grandchildren plus 3 step children (whom we brought up) and NINE step grandchildren so Christmas gets pretty expensive!! The problem is, if they come to stay, what to do with them? The older ones are easier now and love golf, hill walking and mountain biking at Comrie Croft.

However what about the younger ones? The other day my 10 year old grandson came on his own for a few days and I was panicking as to what to do with him, especially if the weather was bad, as I wanted him to have a really great time so that he would want to come again. First thing I did was make a list of things we could do and we did do most of them! The first morning we went to Caithness Glass (by the Crieff Visitor glass



makers at work and paint your own glass which can make a great present. We then drove on to Cultybraggan camp and museum which was a former P.O.W camp and had a very interesting time going round there with amazing hills all round. It is all run by volunteers from Comrie and the two we met had both spent many years in the army so had a great understanding of everything. From

there it was home for a quick lunch and then off to Perth Leisure Centre Swimming Pool with flumes etc. which always goes down well and then home again for a couple of rounds of pool at The Commercial and supper. All in all a pretty good day and enough to make the two of us sleep well!

The next few days were filled with similar activities with mini golf at the Hydro play area, learning to fly fish at Orchill Loch (near Braco) where they have great facilities for both coarse and fly fishing and some poor fisherman fell in which just added to the entertainment.....well maybe not for him!

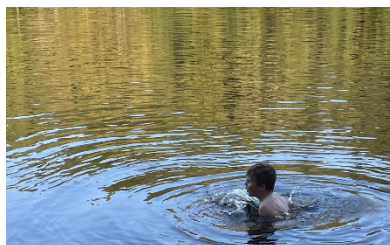


We were lucky that The Enchanted Forest was on at Pitlochry and that made a great evening and is well worth the cost and effort. We didn't do Auchingarrich Wildlife Park this time as we have done it before but it is a good day out with cafe etc. Dundee is about an hour away, so it is well worth making a day out of it, starting with a visit to The Discovery, a steam ship built in Dundee for Antarctic Research and launched in 1901 is moored there and is an extremely well done, interactive experience with a museum, fascinating all round arctic videos, and hands on activities for kids. It is also very interesting for

adults. After a light lunch follow this up with a trip to the excellent Olympia swimming pool (less than 1/2 mile away) another one with flumes but also with a wave machine and a diving pool which caused great excitement!. An evening at the cinema in Perth, plus there was a film on on the Monday in the church in Muthill. A round of football in Crieff with two friends and cutting up and making a pumpkin man. We went 10 pin bowling in Stirling which also has pool tables and game machines plus a visit to the new museum in Perth.

After a week of non-stop entertainment I realised there were still many more things we could have done like Doune and Huntingtower Castles and Scone Palace which has a play area and maze, Blair Drummond Safari Park and of course endless Mountain biking for all ages at Comrie Croft. There are water sports at Loch Earn although I If it is warm you can swim locally in the Earn just 2 miles from Muthill plus some local lochs.

We had so much fun that he stayed for a full week and then he and his sister



came back up for the weekend as I think she felt she had missed out! Back to crazy golf, the cinema, Dundee swimming pool, Stirling for ten pin bowling and lots of pool in the pub. What a great area to live in! I'm sure I've missed out a lot of other things to do like gardens etc. which are gorgeous but that is more for adults.

A great time was had by all for which I'm eternally grateful!

Lorna Clarke



MEN'S GROUP

If you are a man
and have free
time on a
Wednesday
morning why not
come along to
our Mens Group

which meets in the North Lounge of the Church. Anyone is welcome. The coffee is good and so is the chat! There is always lots of laughter and the stories are great. We meet at 11 am for an hour

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke chapter 2 verses 1-7

The Roman Empire charged the countries it had invaded taxes, based on the number of people and what they earned.

Emperor Augustus gave orders that all people in the Empire were to be registered so they could be taxed.



This census was before Quirinius became Governor of Syria* (*whose own census started riots - Acts 5:37)



When the order came, Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth.

But Joseph was descended from King David, who had been born in Bethlehem...



so Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem to stay with his family.

Come and meet everyone!



A normal home in Bethlehem.



While they were staying there, Mary's baby was born.



There was no space in the guest room to put a new baby!

So they made a snug bed for Jesus in one of the mangers.





Lighting Up Learning In Malawi

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, has challenged people to support an initiative that has the potential to transform, students' lives in Malawi. During an autumn visit to the country he was struck by the determination of people there and, particularly in the Church, to ensure that education at all levels becomes available and accessible to all. But he also noted that there were barriers to students who wanted to learn. Children without lights in their home could not study when it became dark. And for PhD students at Zomba Theological College, there were also frequent power outages. His challenge, therefore, is to try and help students at both ends of the learning spectrum.



He believes 'light libraries' could hold the answer.

Lighting up homes to allow children to do homework can be achieved by funding a simple 'light library' at their school, allowing them to borrow small solar lights to take home, potentially making a difference to their whole future.



It will also provide solar panels to allow PhD students to study during the hours of darkness. Nestled in the foothills of the majestic Zomba Mountain, Zomba Theological University (ZTU) has high ambitions. To ensure the students can make the most of their time of study, there needs to be a consistent electricity supply for

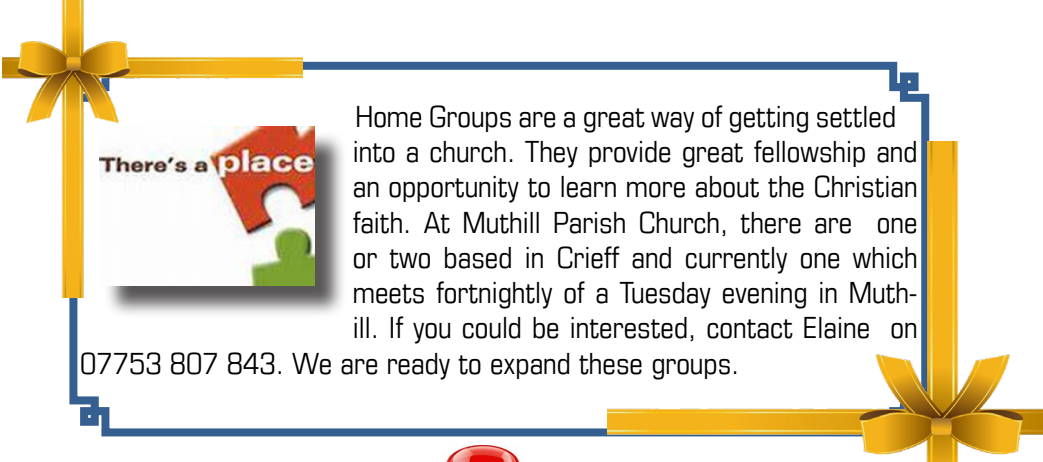
lighting and internet access, something which a state-of-the-art solar energy

system will ensure once installed – and it will also be more economical than buying from the grid. This appeal will help to keep lights shining and give students opportunity

How can churches help?

- Solar lights for light libraries, cost around £10 per light and can be bought locally in Malawi.
- The new PhD Centre needs support to install solar power and a modern IT system which would allow students to study at any time.

The Moderator says that no matter how little you can raise you will be helping to Build God's People in Malawi. Can we help? The Project will remain live until **May 2025**. A full information leaflet is available on the Church of Scotland website and a copy will be placed on the welcome desk at Sunday services.



There's a place

Home Groups are a great way of getting settled into a church. They provide great fellowship and an opportunity to learn more about the Christian faith. At Muthill Parish Church, there are one or two based in Crieff and currently one which meets fortnightly on a Tuesday evening in Muthill. If you could be interested, contact Elaine on 07753 807 843. We are ready to expand these groups.



Christmas Services 2024

**Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24th December, 11.30pm
with mulled wine and mince pies from 11pm**

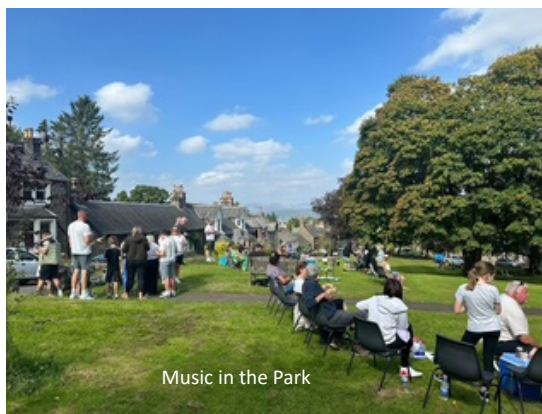
**Christmas Day, Wednesday 25th December, we
join with the congregation of St James at 11am**

Our Community Volunteers

Having recently attended the lighting of the village Christmas tree and the Christmas Fayre, and being a regular at the Parish Church's Soup and Sandwich Wednesday lunches, I was reminded of the support that our village has received this past year from bodies like our Community Council, Perth and Kinross Council and also from the many volunteers who have given of their time voluntarily for others. All this contributes to good community relations. Indeed, for example, it may not be fully known that PKC is largely responsible for funding the provision of our new Community

Transport Service and that the Wednesday Soup and Sandwich lunch at the Parish Church has received a warm space grant which enables the Church volunteers to provide the Wednesday meals free of any charge over the winter season.

These examples of hidden support and the people who tirelessly work to make such provisions possible have made me think of the value



of good collaboration and community spirit, which are so important to a healthy village. I have often heard comments that Muthill needs more cohesion in its approach to community schemes and events. While this has appeared to have been valuable in other locations, let us not denigrate what we have. There are a host of community minded people that give of their time to encourage community spirit in different ways and through different vehicles, and who make our village more attractive to live in. As an incomer of recent years, I am heartened by the community spirit that exists in Muthill and by the friendly image that it portrays to newcomers and visitors alike. Of course, it would be wonderful if we are able in time to develop more commonality of approach and if money were to become

more readily available to advance schemes more quickly. Yet, we are making progress!

It is a fact we have to accept that not all plans come quickly to fruition. The concept idea for a new Community Hub or even noticeable progress in slowly down the through traffic in the village come immediately to mind, yet in the background, we have local people quietly giving their time trying to advance and fulfil some of these schemes for the betterment of our village. At Christmas time, it, therefore, seems appropriate that thanks is generously given to anyone who gives of their time voluntarily in our village and who works in developing community spirit. There will always be critics who know best on quicker and better solutions but who are not prepared to give time to working through any scheme themselves. It is to be hoped, however, that they too will feel it is right to thank those who manage to give of their time to develop and take schemes forward and who are not dejected by slow progress or criticism in social media. It is they who, in my opinion, display true community spirit and who are the heroes with genuine desire to see our village progress. Let's hope that we will see new interest and success in many community efforts in 2025.

Why not join us for coffee and soup and sandwich lunches on most Wednesdays



between 11am and 2pm until the end of March 2025
Thanks to a warm space grant from Perth and Kinross Council we are providing this free of charge in the Bruce Hall of Muthill Parish Church
Anyone is welcome and you can be assured of great village company.

So come along and join in the fun!



Bi-Centenary Thinking Caps

In an earlier edition of the Bridge, I raised the issue that in 2026 it will be the 200th anniversary of our church building. I must admit I was hoping for some response, if for no other reason than to verify that some people read the church magazine, but, sadly to date, I have personally received no feedback or suggestions as to how commemorate this important anniversary. I am including this new article after reading about the 250th anniversary celebrations of a North Ayrshire Church written up in the Church of Scotland website.



If commemoration of any anniversary is to be memorable and appropriate, it needs proper planning and commitment to whatever project is chosen and while holding a commemorative worship service will be important for the church building, I do not think that goes far enough for such a historical event.

Just ponder on the fact that in 2026 we will reach 200 years of continuous faith and service in Muthill Parish Church- what an amazing generational achievement!

My own view is that we should not miss the opportunity to mark this important anniversary for our church and indeed for the village with something longer lasting than a worship service. Some may feel that there is still plenty time to give consideration but in my experience with other institutions, worthwhile projects take time to plan effectively and to engender enthusiasm. Hence the reason, that I am using this Christmas edition of The Bridge to further publicise the issue and to get our thinking caps on.

If we can think of something more ambitious this could enlist the interest and support of the wider village, just as the recent modernisation of our sanctuary has been noticed. I know that there are already plans for modernisation of our kitchen and toilet facilities which could come to fruition in the not too distant future if funding and approvals can be worked

out, but there may be other ideas that can be generated. The important thing to realise is that it will shortly be 2025 and with limited resources time is important.

Sandy Hutchison



MUTHILL IN BLOOM
CHRISTMAS POST DELIVERY SERVICE
WITHIN THE VILLAGE 30 MPH LIMITS

FULL NAMES AND ADDRESSES
ON ENVELOPES PLEASE

POST BOXES

AT

SWEENEYS PETROL STATION
MUTHILL PARISH CHURCH

- STARTING FROM SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER
- LAST COLLECTION WEDNESDAY 18TH DEC AT 12 NOON
- DELIVERY FROM THURSDAY 19TH DECEMBER
- 30P PER CARD





God and the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.



Meditation on the Incarnation

*After the bright beam of annunciation
fused heaven with dark earth
His searing sharply-focused light
went out for a while
eclipsed in amniotic gloom:
His cool immensity of splendour
His universal grace
small-folded in a warm dim
female space*

This extract from Luci Shaw's poem *Made Flesh* captures something of the wonder of the moment when the second person of the Trinity became an embryo. How does a single cell turn into an infant, and what does that process say about us – and God? These are the questions that Professor Jeff Hardin, a developmental biologist, asks himself. Having studied theology as well as science, he has a unique perspective on embryonic development.

A new-born baby is made of around five trillion cells. These cells come in hundreds of different types, each of which must be in the correct place for the child's body to function properly. Every new life is the result of intricate and highly ordered processes. Three things must happen as an embryo develops.

The first important process is for cells to take on their identity as types of muscle, bone, nerves, and so on. The second is when each cell learns which part of the

body it belongs to. Third, those cells are moved around to form the different tissues and organs. These three are not discrete stages, but they all happen at around the same time, building up gradually like the different aspects of a picture coming into focus.

All three of these processes are driven forward by the movement of cells, the connections between them, and the signals they pass to each other. Jeff studies a sort of cellular glue which is involved in joining cells together. Making and breaking these adhesions can affect how cells move and signal to each other, their identity in the body, how they are organised as groups, and ultimately their survival. This glue is found on the surface of cells throughout the animal kingdom, including the small worms Jeff's lab studies.

For Jeff, peering down a microscope at tiny worm embryos can be an act of worship. It is also an exercise in art appreciation, as he learns to appreciate the created order. Understanding the complexities of development, while also being aware that God knows that process intimately both as Creator and created, fills Jeff with a profound sense of awe, wonder and worship.

Does the minute scale of our early development, compared to the incomprehensibly vast and ancient universe, give us a sense of insignificance? Psalm 8 says, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"

For Jeff and the Psalmist, such feelings can be a positive experience if they serve as a reminder to be humble in the face of a universe that is vastly complicated but also deeply meaningful, made by a God who loves each one of us.

END

Muthill Bin Collection Calendar to Year End (Information from PKC)

No dates are yet available for further into 2025

Green lidded Bin: **Tuesday 17 December 2024**

Tuesday 31 December 2024

Blue lidded bin: **Tuesday 24 December 202**

Grey lidded bin: **Tuesday 07 January 2025**

Brown lidded bin: **Sunday 1 December 2024**

There are rescheduled alternative collection days for any uplifts scheduled for 25-26 December 24 and 1-2 January 25



Kirk And Community News

Kirk Life

The Kirk Session of Muthill Parish Church met again on 19th November from which the following was noted:

- With regard to the Youth Programme and the fact that the retiming of Sunday Worship had currently put a stop to the monthly family services, it was noted that emails sent to families asking for guidance had produced no results. Messy Church had met but only on a 3 monthly basis which was leaving a substantial gap in youth education. The Youth Committee were asked to continue reviewing the way ahead and as a help, the Kirk Session proposed that the Worship Convener and the Youth Committee consider holding intergenerational services on a monthly basis as part of normal Sunday worship.
- The gallery electric organ has been safely transferred downstairs to the chancel area of the refurbished sanctuary with the plan that it will make it easier for the organist to play the electric organ for traditional hymns singing and the electric piano for more modern hymns and song.
- The Kirk Session noted that Ardoch and Blackford congregations had now voted in favour of union, with the congregational vote at Ardoch being split and Blackford voting unanimously in favour. Presbytery will now resolve the issue of church buildings and has already made a decision to sell the Ardoch manse because of its poor condition. Muthill Parish Church hopes that meaningful discussions will be held with the united Ardoch and Blackford churches once Presbytery has resolved the buildings and manse issue. In the meantime, the Kirk Session noted that feedback was confirming that the congregation at Muthill seems content with current preaching arrangements.
- On property, the Kirk Session was given a quotation for the upgrade of the vestry toilet which is the second toilet currently in the building. This would be further considered by the property and finance conveners. It was also agreed that a quotation should be obtained for the north lounge where replacements for the current heating installation could

Kirk Life

no longer be found. A sensor light would also be supplied to the north lounge outside door similar to that newly installed at the south lounge vestry outside door.

- The Kirk Session was pleased to note the installation of a memorial plaque in the sanctuary for Trinity Gask and Kinkell Church and that the war memorial from that church had now been erected in the entrance lobby to the Church. Both had been dedicated on Remembrance Sunday.

- The Soup and Sandwich outreach has now received a grant from Perth and Kinross Council which will enable free lunches to be provided on Wednesdays over the winter period. The Kirk Session was also pleased to note that normal attendance was now over 40 and was likely to achieve 50 shortly. More volunteers to help in the preparation of soup and service, however, were needed

- Both the Mens Club and the Book Club have gained new members. A representative of Mens Shed Scotland will be visiting at the end of November and enquiries are being made to possibly hold a community coffee morning with advice stalls in early February.

- The Ministers Tea with Holy Communion held on Friday 15th November was considered a success even though attendance had been small. Lessons had been learned on the use of the refurbished sanctuary for an event like this and it was hoped that this would assist in the Memorial Service planned for Sunday 15th December at 3pm

- The Kirk Roll currently stands at 195

- Donations coming from the Remembrance Service amounting to £70 had been given to Erskine Veterans charity

- The Kirk Session finally approved that a Christmas gift be given as in past years to those on the Kirk approved list.

Kirk And Community News

Our Grateful Thanks Blythswood Shoebox Appeal

A big thank you to everyone who kindly contributed to the Shoebox Appeal. We are able to donate 17 shoeboxes to Blythswood, which is a fantastic result. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Beat Eating Disorders

Thank you to all those who made a donation for harvest produce after the harvest Thanksgiving Service. £40 was raised for this Guild project charity.

Soup and Sandwich Lunches



We are once again a Warm Space from 11am-2pm, every Wednesday (except Christmas Day and New Year's Day) until the end of March. We are very grateful to Perth and Kinross Council for the grant which enables us to offer soup, filled roll and tea/coffee at no charge until the end of March.

This is for everyone in the community and all are welcome.

Anyone willing to make soup or/and help make up the filled rolls and serve occasionally would be most welcome as we could do with

Guild

Our Next meetings are :

08th January, 2.30pm

16th January, 10.30am

22nd January, 2.30pm

12th February, 2.30pm

“Tearfund” at St Andrews Hall Crieff

“Coffee & Chat” at The Steading Crieff

“Scot’s Afternoon” at St Andrews Hall, Crieff

“Operation Hope -Egypt” Guild Project at Bruce Hall, Muthill Parish Church

Everyone is most welcome to attend any of the meetings

For more information contact **Helen-May Bayne 07974646872.**

Community Council

Whilst it is disappointing to note that Perth and Kinross Council will not be gritting pavements in Muthill as the village is not designated with category 1 footways, it is good to see that our Community Council is seeking to create a volunteer gritting group which will be supported by the necessary equipment and training by PKC to treat our public footpaths on agreed routes. It is to be hoped that the Community Council will be continuing to try and instigate a Council service, but in the meantime, this will go some way to provide safeguards. There is no doubt that some of our pavements can be treacherous for elderly and unstable residents at times during the winter months especially when there is a need to be out and about for purchase of household essentials. It is, therefore, to be hoped that the Community Council’s appeal to establish such a viable volunteer group will succeed.



Other Village Events

Congratulations also go to the Community Events Team for achieving a now full avenue of Christmas lights along the main route through the village from the beginning of Drummond Street to the end of Willoughby Street. It is a splendid colourful addition and with the traditional Christmas tree at the Toll, it all adds to the festive spirit of the village at this time of year. Thanks go to the many sponsors who make this possible.

Remembrance



It was good to see a fair representation of the village present for the annual remembrance ceremony at the village war memorial on Sunday 10th November. Remembrance is an important honouring event for the many who gave up their lives for the freedoms which our country holds dear and it is to be hoped that ways will be found of increasing the interest paid to this short annual ceremony by the residents. It was a simple sombre ceremony with wreaths laid on behalf of the Royal British Legion, Perth and Kinross Council, the Royal Air Force Police, Muthill Ladies and Friends Group, Lodge of St John Muthill No.192, Community Council and Scouts Scotland.

Second Clean-Up Does Well

Thanks are due to the crew who came forward to complete the clean-up of the church's upstairs premises. A good group attended on the afternoon of the 29th November to dismantle furniture now surplus to requirements. Then, on Saturday morning of St Andrews Day, the exercise was largely completed by a major dusting of the south gallery, the upper reaches of the sanctuary downstairs and a much needed tidying of cupboards around the building. Such major cleaning is never a pleasant task, but it was so good to have a group of people willing to get their hands dirty and the result is that much clutter has been removed and the church now looks tidier. Thanks are due particularly to our Property Manager, Graham Donaldson, who coordinated the exercise and organised the skip.

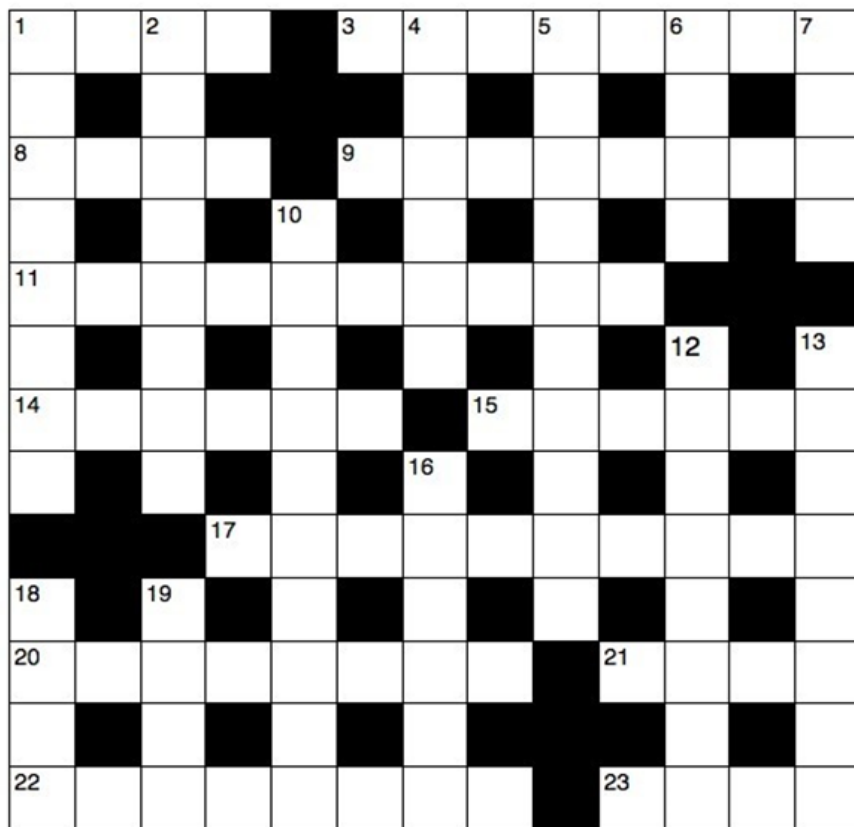
Christmas Time in the Village

There is no doubt that there is an air of festivity around the village what with the lighting of the village lamppost decorations stretching the full length of the village for the first time this Christmas. They accompany the beautiful Christmas tree at the central space next to the Coorie Inn along with the church decorations around the Parish Church depicting the Christmas story. It is also good to see a greater number of decorations adorning individual houses around the village. There are, no doubt, many people behind this good work that deserve our grateful thanks for what is a splendid community effort. As always, it was great to have members of the Community Choir, the Childrens' Choir make the lighting ceremony of the tree all the more special with their singing of carols, the Coorie Inn for the provision of mulled wine and mince pies and the Commercial Hotel for kids treats. There is something so special about villagers coming together to mark the beginning of the Christmas season!





Crossword



Across

- 1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)
- 3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)
- 8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)
- 9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)
- 11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)
- 14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord

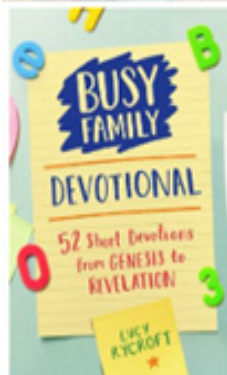
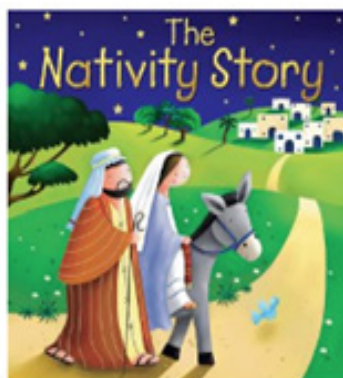
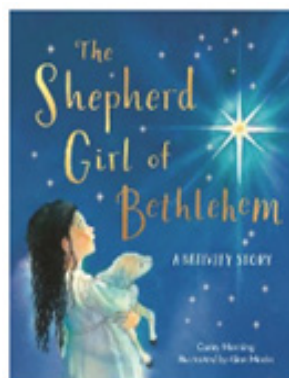
God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)
15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)
17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)
20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)
21 Rite (anag.) (4)
22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)
23 'The eye cannot say to the — , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

Down

1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)
4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)
5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)
7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)
18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)
19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

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Book Reviews



The Moment of Truth - Reflections on Incarnation and Resurrection by Samuel Wells, Canterbury Press, £11.69

This collection of military prayers, has been produced for a wide Christian readership. Each focuses on the central beliefs of Christian faith - that in the Incarnation, God comes among us, and that in the Resurrection, death is defeated and creation is renewed.

In this collection of seasonal reflections, Samuel Wells unpacks the substance of these key Christian doctrines, and explores their practical implications for living as Christians in the world: - Laid in a Manger: Reflections on the Nativity - The Word was Made Flesh: Reflections on Christmas - The Image of the Invisible God: Reflections on the Incarnation - Early on the First Day of the Week: Reflections on Easter Morning - I have Seen the Lord: Reflections on the Risen Christ.

Do Not Be Afraid - the Joy of Waiting in a Time of Fear

The Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2024 by Rachel Mann, SPCK, £10.99

These meditations tell stories of God waiting with us when we're in fear or distress; of coming - bidden or unbidden - to relieve our loneliness; of disconcerting us, desiring us and surprising us with joy... Most of all they remind us that Jesus Christ comes into the world as one long waited for; as the Servant who waits on others; as the One on whom we are, adoringly, called to wait

The Love That Moves the Sun - Advent hope in a time of crisis by Paul Dominiak, Canterbury Press, £10.39

The season of Advent traditionally involved meditation upon the Four Last Things: heaven, hell, death, and judgement. This ancient but nearly lost sacred art of contemplation encouraged Christians to evaluate who they were, what they treasured and how they ought to live in view of the world to come. The Love That Moves the Sun revives this ancient practice and blends it with contemporary concerns such as climate emergency, rise of populism, racial injustice and economic inequality.

Whose Promised Land? - The Continuing Conflict over Israel and Palestine by Colin Chapman, SPCK, £16.99 (revised & expanded edition)

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has profoundly affected the Middle East for almost 80 years, and shows no sign of ending.

With two peoples claiming the same piece of land for different reasons, it remains a huge political and humanitarian problem. Can it ever be resolved? If so, how? These are the basic questions addressed in this revised and expanded sixth edition of Colin Chapman's highly acclaimed book. Having lived and worked in the Middle East at various times since 1968, Chapman explains the roots of



the problem and outlines the arguments of the main parties involved. He also explores the theme of land in the Old and New Testaments, discussing legitimate and illegitimate ways of using the Bible in relation to the conflict.

This new and fully updated edition covers developments over the past ten years, including the war that broke out between Israel and Hamas in October 2023.

Busy Family Devotional - 52 Short Devotions from Genesis to Revelation by Lucy Rycroft, SPCK, £9.99

The Busy Family Devotional is a short and simple way of leading your children through Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. It is a resource that can help them grow in relationship with the God who created and loves them. Each of the 52 devotionals include a Bible reading, some questions to consider, a prayer and a Bible verse to memorise.

The Nativity Story by Juliet David, SPCK, £4.99

This sturdy and colourful little board book is just right for little ones starting to learn about Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, the shepherds and the wise men who came to meet Baby Jesus. It would make a good stocking filler.

The Extra Special Baby - Story of the Christmas Promise by Antonia Woodward, SPCK, £10.99

A long time ago, a long way away, some very clever men discovered an exciting promise! For in Bethlehem one night, under the quiet starry sky, an Extra Special Baby was born.

This beautiful retelling of the Nativity story will take children back to the excitement of that very first Christmas night, when life on earth would change forever. A helpful picture book to share with a child at bedtime, or with a group of children during the Christmas season.

The Shepherd Girl of Bethlehem - a Nativity story

By Carey Morning, SPCK £5.99

A little shepherd girl loves her father greatly, and adores spending time with him on the hillside, tending his flocks. But one night, he is called away and she can't find him. She anxiously searches high and low, eventually finding him at a stable in Bethlehem, where her journey ends with a most glorious discovery.

Wow! Christmas - Creatively explore stories in the Bible by Martha Shrimpton. SPCK 10.99

Here is a well-designed and colourful Christmas activity book for children.

The stories cover the birth of Jesus, the shepherds, the journey of the Wise Men,



and the giving of gifts. With each story there is a prayer, a craft, and a chance to act out the story, followed by a time for reflection, discussion, and creative praise.

The Big Big Christmas - (That Was Also Very Small) by Emma Randall and Mei Shan Dibble, 10Publishing, £4.99

The wonder of the Incarnation is told here in a fresh, funny and child-friendly way. The book offers a hilarious series of zany comparisons that get bigger and bigger until they help children discover just how big God is and how completely mind-blowingly amazing it is that He became a tiny baby at Christmas.

END

SUDOKU

		1		7			3
			8			7	
		5			6		
1				4		3	
9			7	6			5
	8			3			1
		6			5		
	9			4			
4				8	7		

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*Solution on page 30



"Does anyone have a light, please?"

Editor's Note

The next edition of the magazine will be January/February 2025 edition. The magazine will be published on **Sunday 9th February 2025**, and so the deadline for submitting articles, intimations, letters etc. will be **Friday 31st January 2025**.

Please submit this to macahiph@gmail.com or send to Sandy Hutchison, GreenBrae West, Pitkellony Street, Muthill PH5 2AF.

Please also understand that all articles submitted have to be subject to possible adjustment to suit the balance of the magazine's content and its physical confines. If space does not permit, submissions will be considered for the next edition. All submissions will be acknowledged. It is our Publishing Policy to publish factual clarifications or corrections in the next edition of the magazine.

The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Kirk Session. Editorial comment and signed articles do not necessarily contain the official views of the Church of Scotland which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.

Sudoku Solution:

6	2	1	4	7	9	8	5	3
3	4	9	8	6	5	1	7	2
8	7	5	1	2	3	6	9	4
1	6	2	5	4	8	9	3	7
9	3	4	7	1	6	2	8	5
5	8	7	9	3	2	4	6	1
2	1	6	3	9	7	5	4	8
7	9	8	2	5	4	3	1	6
4	5	3	6	8	1	7	2	9

Useful Contacts

Useful Local Telephone Numbers

NHS 24	111
NHS Emergency	999
Hospitals:	
Crieff Community Hospital	01764653173
Perth Royal Infirmary	01738623311
Ninewells Hospital, Dundee	01382660111
Crieff Medical Centre:	
Blue Practice	01764652283
Red Practice	01764657060
Crieff Pharmacies:	
Boots	01764652310
Davidsons	01764652177
Strathearn	01764654876
Torlum	01764652727
Police:	
Emergency	999
Non-Emergency	101
Action Fraud Scotland	101
Schools:	
Muthill Primary School	01764661466
Crieff High School	01764657600
Crieff Primary School	01764657888
Morrison's Academy:	
General and Secondary	01764653885
Primary	01764657196
Ardvreck School	01764653112
Veterinary Practice:	
Crieff Vets	01764652086
Broadley Vets	01786824400
Struthers & Scott Vets	01786841304
Tower Vet Centre	01738583083

Crossword Solution:

ACROSS:

: 1, Lane. 3, Obtained.

8, Omit. 9, Merchant. 11, Burdensome. 14, Crafty. 15, Please. 17, Blacksmith. 20, Splendid. 21, Tier. 22, Singeing. 23, Hand.

DOWN :

: 1, Look back. 2, Main road. 4, Breast. 5, Accomplish. 6, Near. 7, Date. 10, Pestilence. 12, Basilica. 13, Tethered. 16, Action. 18, Asa's. 19, Clan.



Mission Statement

Muthill Parish Church
aims to be
A place to find peace and welcome
A people growing in Christian faith and love
A presence at the heart and soul of the community

Church Website

www.muthillparishchurch.co.uk

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/muthillchurch>

Email

muthillparish@yahoo.com

Magazine Graphics & Cover Photo

Our cover picture theme is A Snowy December Day. Thanks to Raffie for sourcing the graphics for the magazine and helping in the production.”.

Registered Scottish Charity

Muthill Parish Church - SC004984