



ALLANDER EVANGELICAL CHURCH

FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

Monday, 11th December, 2023

Two Sunday Sermons: Luke 1: 57 – 66; Matthew 1: 18 – 25

Christmas is a time of giving and receiving gifts. While that is a familiar experience, it is good, when thinking of a very different Christmas, to reflect on the unique features of God's "unspeakable gift."

It is marked by wonderful **preparation**, a provision made from eternity appropriate for our current situation and need. In it we see that **God is a God of His word**. He remembers what he has promised, even though we might not always fully appreciate what they are and how they are fulfilled.

Looking at the **nature of the gift** we see that it is **mercy** – forgiveness, "compassionate treatment for those in distress". And it is **grace**, what God alone can provide – the power to make it happen.

Thinking specifically of the Father's Gift in Matthew 1: 18 – 25

That gift, in the form of Jesus of Nazareth, is the **gift of salvation**. He is the one who brought mercy and grace into our world through **identification**. The incarnate Jesus was God manifest in the flesh.

As we recognise and receive Him, it brings **illumination**.

Seeing Jesus, the Father's precious gift to humanity, makes it possible for us to "See the Light" and make this a *very different Christmas*,

**THANKS BE TO GOD FOR HIS
UNSPEAKABLE GIFT**

Joint FM and CEF Prayer Union

Tonight sees the postponed joint FM and CEF Prayer meeting held at James and Allyson Flett's home at 20 Craighead Drive, G62 7DS at 7 30 pm.

This Week

Activities this week will focus on Christmas and the opportunity it offers to proclaim the message of redemption. Toddlers, the Café and Hashtag meet for the last time this year. Our Prayer Times continue on Tuesday at 8 pm and – by Zoom – on Wednesday and Friday morning from 9 00 to 9 30 am.

Sunday Services

On Sunday morning we will have our normal worship service and communion, looking towards Christmas and its meaning. In the evening at 6 30 pm it will be Carols and Cake with the Community Choir helping to enhance the evening with their singing of Christmas music.

Mission of the Month

Our Mission of the Month for December is SAT-7, broadcasting right across Middle Eastern countries and able to cross barriers into people's homes and lives.

Milngavie and Bearsden SU Action Group

A number of events are planned for local SU helpers including: a Quiz Night on 15th December, Volunteers' Meal on Thursday 25th January 2024, Prayer meeting on Saturday 4th February at Killermont Parish Church, and Dunbartonshire schools weekend at Lendrick Muir from 8th to the 10th of March. Our prayers and support are greatly appreciated by those involved

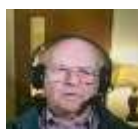
in this key role in our schools in these days. Cammy Swinton, the new SU Worker is available to visit churches. Further details from Moira Shaw at theshaws2@virginmedia.com

Bible Study

The series on Proverbs 1 – 9 came to an end on the last Thursday of November with a review conducted by Manuel. A booklet summarising those chapters is available at the back of the church.

The studies seem to have been well liked by those taking part. Here, Ava writes her appreciation.

I always look forward to the Bible Study on Thursday evenings. Howel, with his drawings, makes life application of Bible passages so interesting and easy to understand. In addition to Howel's unique insights, other participants also bring their contributions to the study after spending time with God's Word in their personal time. We get to know each other better through sharing our stories and our own Christian walk.



'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.' Proverbs 9:10

This year we prayed a lot for wisdom as Manuel took up the elder's role, and without previous knowledge, Howel decided that we should study Proverbs, the book of wisdom! How amazing the way of God! The study has been a blessing. One of the highlights was one evening different people shared their stories of God's protection and intervention which steered them to safety and put them back on the right path. We profited so much through studying together and listening to those with more experience in living a skilful Christian life.

As the New Year approaches make it your resolution to join the Bible study and fellowship around the Word of God.

Newsletter Special Issues

The Allander Newsletter has sought to keep us all informed and focused throughout the year. The next two issues will be special ones. The one published on Monday 18th December will look back at much that has happened at Allander over the year. The one after the Christmas break on Monday January 8th will naturally focus on 2024 and its challenges for individuals, the church and the wider work of the Kingdom.

Finally

A couple of weeks ago I received an email from Tesco. The first sentence read: 'This year, we're helping you become more Christmas'. My first thought was that it must be a misprint, but no it wasn't it continued in their adverts on TV. It really is quite an absurd statement, how can you become more Christmas? It suggests that we are the centre of Christmas and that it revolves around the individual.

Then I remembered the Christmas song: *Christmas isn't Christmas, till it happens in your heart.*

Somewhere deep inside you is where Christmas really starts. So give your heart to Jesus and discover when you do, that it's Christmas really Christmas for you.

Enjoy the reality of the birth of our Saviour this Christmas season.



Ian Baird