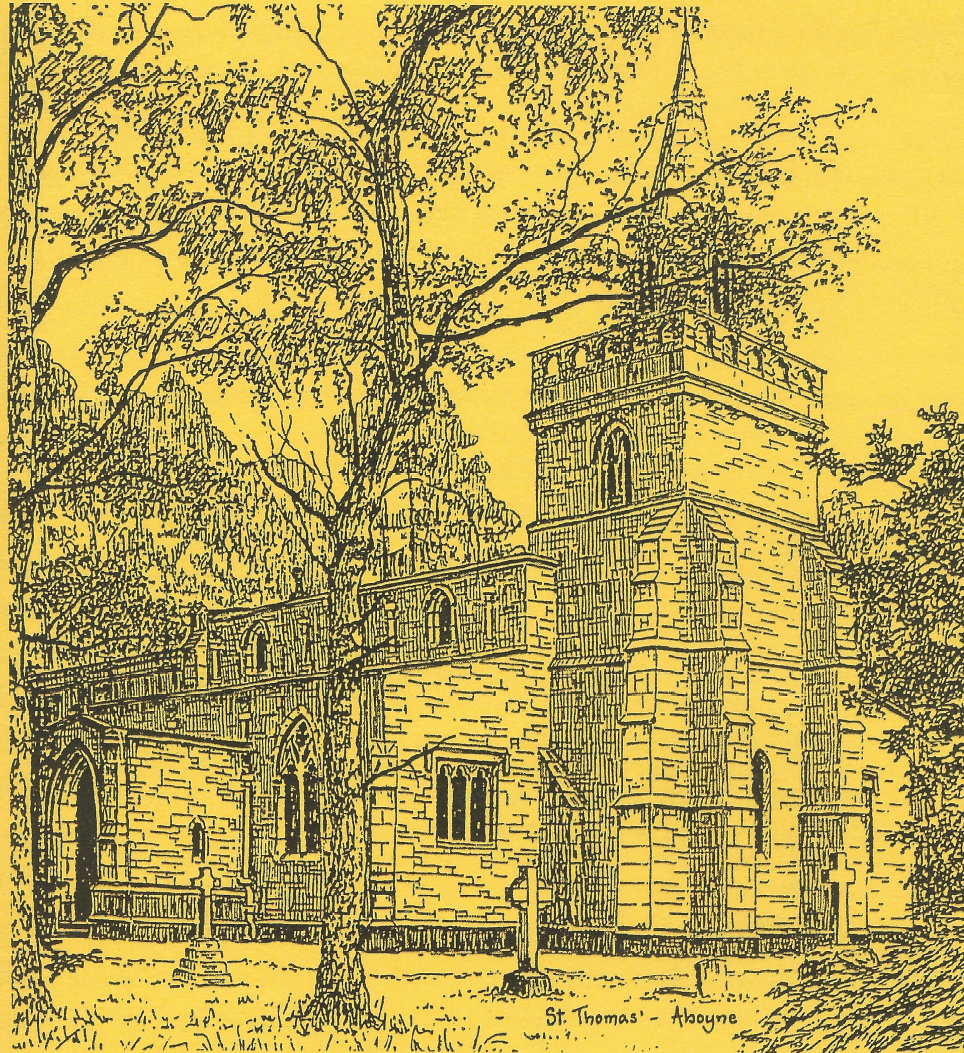


# The Deeside Tattler

December 2025 and January 2026



St. Kentigern's, Ballater, St. Thomas's, Aboyne  
with St. Ninian's, Braemar





**Rector: Vacant**

The Rectory, 7 Invercauld Road, Ballater, AB35 5RP

**Contact: Tel No 07352 750090**

**email: [upperdeesidechurches@gmail.com](mailto:upperdeesidechurches@gmail.com)**

**Lay Reader: Hugh Dawson, Tel. No 013398 87054**

**Dates for the Diary**

Tuesday 2nd December, **11.30am** Mid-week Communion at St Thomas's,  
followed by soup lunch at 12 noon

4th December, 7pm 2nd session of Ken Webb's Advent course on Revelations

Thursday, 11th December, **11.30am** Mid-week Communion at St Kentigern's  
followed by soup lunch at 12 noon

7pm 3rd session of Ken Webb's Advent course on Revelations

Sunday 14th December

3.00pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at St Kentigern's

6.00pm Carol Service with Augmented choir at St Thomas's

18th December, 7pm 4th session of Ken Webb's Advent course on Revelations

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Crib Service at St Thomas's

6.30pm Crib Service at St Kentigern's

11.30pm Midnight Communion Service at St Thomas's

CHRISTMAS DAY Christmas Communion at both churches, usual times.

Sunday 28th December 'Carol-a-long' service at both churches' usual times



**From the Editor:** Christmas is coming! But first we move into the season of Advent, the important beginning to our Church's year, so easily forgotten in all the rush of preparing for the Christmas festivities. It is good to spend a bit of time quietly, waiting for the coming of Jesus, which is what Christmas is all about, being prepared in our hearts, ready to celebrate the big day wholeheartedly. Some of our articles, and poems, this time reflect this. And we are promised a special Advent Course from Ken Webb, to help us to think more deeply.

Then comes the excitement of Christmas itself and we are fortunate during the Interregnum that we are able to have a full range of Christmas services as normal. We are very grateful to all the clergy and others who are making our worship possible during this time.

Our thanks to all who have contributed to the magazine this time, we would not have one without you! And we always look for new contributors, the more the merrier! A happy Christmas to everyone - when it comes. **Ed**

**Sheila Maxwell Tel 013398 86740 EDITOR and Aboyne contact**

**Email: [sheilamaxwell@btinternet.com](mailto:sheilamaxwell@btinternet.com)**

**Sabine Muir Contact, St Kentigern's. Email [VestrysecretaryStK@outlook.com](mailto:VestrysecretaryStK@outlook.com)**

**A Pastoral Letter from Rev John Purves**

My dear friends,

Season's greetings! As this Year of our Lord 2025 draws to a close, the prospect of Christmas celebration is much in our minds. And so it should be but I want to begin by looking back on the year which is almost away. Even in my advancing years, there is something new to experience. For me that must be the several opportunities I was given to lead the worship and celebrate Holy Communion for St Kentigern's and St Thomas' congregations during the interregnum. Yes, I had shared worship and concelebrated with my episcopal colleagues in the days before the St Andrew's Declaration but never had full responsibility. This means that, as I write this pastoral greeting to you all, I am not doing so in a vacuum but seeing people and the faces of those of you, young and old, with whom I have had the opportunity to worship. Such moments in time remain special.

And that is the thought which I want to carry forward with you now at this festive time. For as long as I can remember, I have looked forward to what I call "My Christmas Moment" by which I mean some unexpected circumstance in which the reality of the Good News of our Saviour's birth has made itself real in a fresh new way. I can never predict when this will come to pass but, always, it does. It happens in different ways, for example, in the reading of one of the traditional Bible lessons for Advent and Christmas or when the verse of a familiar carol illuminates the truth of God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ in a new way. It can even happen in a sermon! A long time ago, when I was a divinity student, the minister of the church to which I was attached for training began by quoting the opening line from *Christmas* by John Betjeman: "The bells of waiting Advent ring..." These few words opened up the importance of Advent for me in a completely new way, our calling to be the people prepared to wait on God's good timing for what is best in our lives.



And sometimes I have had to wait a long time for my Christmas moment. Again, I can remember one Christmas, when I was in full time ministry, with three parishes to look after. I was on my way home from the Christmas Day service in an outlying church, thinking that, amongst all my busyness, there had been no Christmas moment. Then, as I turned the last corner for home, I saw a child on a bike. Not just any bike but a bright, shiny bike which, it was apparent by the pleasure on his face, he had received that same Christmas morning. Not just any bike but one which had belonged to our son who had grown out of it. We had put it up for sale with a notice in a local shop window. And not just any bike because it was the bike which I had washed and polished, oiling the chain and pumping up the tyres to have it looking as good as new. We had let the bike go but here it was giving the greatest pleasure to its new owner. My heart glad.

So many of our Christmas moments can involve children, for example, when a toddler decides to go off-script during the course of a well-rehearsed Nativity production. All of us smile and try not to laugh too loudly as our hearts and lives are softened by the humanity of it all. And surely this is how it is meant to be. In this world which can prove itself to be so harsh, cruel and uncaring for many, an Almighty God takes us by surprise and gives all of us our Christmas moment, ultimately, a child...an infant...a baby...Jesus. This is the world's Christmas moment. He is our Christmas moment.

No one captures this mystery better than our modern Scottish hymn writer, Rev John L. Bell, when he says: "God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day."

Enjoy your Christmas moment when it comes.

Yours sincerely in Christ.

**John Purves**

### **Crib services**

Following tradition, Crib Service will be held at St Thomas's at 4.00pm on Christmas Eve - 24th December, and at St Kentigern's at 6.30pm. All are welcome to come to these popular services, hear the Christmas story and sing some well-known carols.

If you would like to help, please contact Sue Burgess at St Thomas's or Sabine Muir at St Kentigern's.

### **Advent Mid-week services**

There will be mid-week Communion services with reserved sacrament in St Thomas's on 2nd December, and in St Kentigern's on 11th December - both at 11.30am followed by a soup lunch at noon. People from both congregations or none are welcome to come to these Advent services.

Please contact Sue Burgess at [skbur56@gmail.com](mailto:skbur56@gmail.com) if you would like more details.

### **Sharing Advent and Christmas**

Advent and Christmas are perhaps the most commercialised time in the whole of the church year. How, amongst all the shopping and parties and twinkly lights, do we not only hold on to the seasons, but share them with our families and friends? Here are some suggestions.

Have an advent wreath in your own home, and light one candle each Sunday. Or get a count-down candle to Christmas with the names of Jesus on, and light it each day while you're having your meal together.

Take time as a family to enjoy some carols – you could go singing (wrap up warm), or just stay at home with some hot chocolate and the words.

When you put the Christmas Tree up, use the Christmas Tree Blessing prayer to remind you why we have one:

Holy Creator of Trees, bless with your abundant grace this our Christmas tree as a symbol of joy.

May its evergreen branches be a sign of your never-fading promises.

May its colourful lights and ornaments call us to decorate with love our home and our world.

May the gifts that surround this tree be symbols of the gifts we have received from the Tree of Christ's Cross. Holy Christmas tree within our home, may Joy and Peace come and nest in your branches and in our hearts. Amen. *Author Unknown*

### **St Thomas's Christmas Trees**

We have a large number of beautiful Christmas trees, not enormous, but of different sizes, growing in our churchyard, and needing to be thinned out a bit. They make super Christmas trees for anyone who likes real ones. They are offered to anyone interested, for a donation to the church.

If you would like one, please let Warren know by Friday 12th Dec and be available if possible to collect on Sat 13th Dec. If you are able to cut yours down yourself, just speak to Warren Burgess about choosing a suitable one for yourself or your friends.





## Receiving the gifts of God's people – Stewardship – part 4

Individuals give to the church for many different reasons. It is a complex subject. Trying to understand the motivation of people to give may nurture different kinds of gifts. Here are some reasons:

- Emotional connection - Given due to the relationship that an individual has with God, with the congregation family or with the church leaders. Having faith that "God will provide" leads to giving to further God's work in the world.
- Thanksgiving – Given as a thanksgiving in response to all God has given, without expectation of anything in return. Having a grounding spiritually to give thanks.
- Giving to the mission of the Church – given as a statement of belief in the work and ministry of the congregation – including outreach. Having confidence in the objectives set in place by the church leadership.
- Giving back to God a portion of what is God's- Given because an individual receives bounteous gifts and blessings from God.
- Giving as an extension of the self – Given because of a deep identification with the church, the congregation, its goals.
- Reciprocity with a social group – Given as a pledge because peers expect it. Having a sense of obligation especially for special projects.

Which of these resonates with you? Maybe all of them, maybe something else – whichever, thanks for all your gifts – and don't forget, it's not just financial giving that counts.

**Sue Burgess**

*Every generous  
act of giving,  
with every  
perfect gift,  
is from  
above,  
coming  
down from  
the  
Father of  
lights, with  
whom  
there is no  
variation or  
shadow due  
to change.*

James 1: verse 17



## Advent Course

Rev Ken Webb is starting an Advent Course, based on the book of Revelation. It will be on Thursdays at 7pm, and will be Zoom based. To join simply click on the link below, or you can use the Meeting ID and passcode:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89898301498?pwd=nxrRebYguTgv98CZK6kO5Nx1BCeM98.1>

Meeting ID: 898 9830 1498

Passcode: 982106

Ken will be recording the meeting for those who are unable to join live. He aims to be finished in about an hour, but if we need more time it can be extended till 8.30pm

Session 1 (20th November)

Introduction and Outline

Act 1: Letters (1.9—3.22)

Session 2 (4th December)

Act2—Setting the Scene: Christ Central in the Cosmos

Act 2—Sufferings: (4.1—6.17)

Act 3—Setting the Scene: The Sealing of the Faithful (7.1—8.1)

Act 3—Warnings (8.2—9.21)

Act 4—Setting the Scene: The Mission of the Faithful (10.1—11.18)

Session 3 (11th December)

Act 4—revelings (11.19—13.18)

Act 5—Setting the Scene: Harvest Festivals (14.1—15.8)

Act 5—Just desserts (15.9—16.21)

Act 6 —Judgements (17.1—19.10)

Session 4 (18th December)

Act 7—Justice (19.11—20.15)

Act 8—New Beginnings (21.1-22.19)

Epilogue (22.6-21)

## We wait -

The alder cones dangle  
Empty from the branch  
Promise of new life to come  
And so we wait  
With joy  
As we celebrate  
The fulfilment  
Of the first promise.

We wait  
For the second coming  
For the new dawn  
For the future  
In wonderment  
For the alder to blossom  
And bear fruit  
In due season.

*Vittoria Hancock*





## A Reflection on Isaiah 2:3-5 & Revelation 21:1-6a Remembrance Sunday 2025

It was supposed to be the war that ended all wars. Sadly, that proved not to be the case, and World War One was followed by the second world war. And since that time there have been numerous other wars, each costing so many lives, not only of those who fought in these wars, but also of civilians caught up in the conflict.

At times like these, when there seems to be no progress towards a lasting peace in the world, we need a vision of the future. We need something to inspire hope and to give us the courage to persevere in the fight against evil.

Both Isaiah, the prophet, and the visionary author the Book of Revelation were able to see beneath the surface of events in their day and beyond their present reality to a future in which there would be peace. And in both visions, the symbolic representation of that peace was Jerusalem, which means, literally, city of peace.

However, the peace they were envisioning was not merely the absence of conflict. The word for peace in the ancient semitic languages, *Shalom* in Hebrew, *Shlama* in the Aramaic that Jesus spoke, and *Salaam* in Arabic, mean a state of wholeness, a state of healthy well-being, which is only possible when there is justice and wrongs have been put right.

In addition, the root sounds of these words, convey the idea that the world will only enjoy that kind of peace when we return to the very source of our being, the original sacred unity out of which all the diverse human potentialities, personalities, national identities and cultural expressions emerged. At one point in time our small earth-bound self was not here, and at some point in the future it will not be again.

So when the word for peace in these different languages was used as a greeting it was a way of helping one another remember, both our shared origin, and our shared impermanence. For we live in one interconnected universe.

Isaiah, the prophet, could see that the Jerusalem of his day would never be at peace so long as the elite rich, who acquired their wealth by oppressing the poor, ruled his nation. So he challenged them to change their ways. And what held him on course was the trust he had in God to bring about justice and peace on earth.

Some 720 years later, Jesus, wept over Jerusalem as he approached it and said, *"If only you had known this day the way that leads to peace! But, no; It is hidden from your eyes."* (Luke 19:42)

And it seems to be hidden from our eyes as well.

Foreseeing the destruction of Jerusalem and the suffering which that would bring, and the way his followers would be persecuted, he said to them, and he says to us, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."* (John 14:27)

The peace that the world gives, and that existed in the Roman Empire at that time, had been achieved by conquest and occupation. The guiding principle of empire is 'first conquest then peace'. But it led to oppression. And empires that arise out of violence always fall in the end.

Whereas the guiding principle of the reign of God, which Jesus proclaimed, is first justice, then peace.

And when Jesus told Pilate after he was arrested that the reign of God does not belong to this world, but belongs to another realm, he was not saying it was other worldly. He was saying that it was an upside down kind of kingdom.

When God reigns power would **not** be exercised by a wealthy elite ruling the masses. And, let's face it, even in so called democracies, it is money that influences both public perceptions and political choices. Instead, it would be exercised by those who, recognising the dangers of power, were humble, compassionate servants of the people and servants of truth; Christ like people.

However, Jesus also warned his followers that they would not escape the troubles that were to come. They would suffer with the world. There would be wars, famine, natural disasters. They would also suffer persecution from the world, by which he meant world domination systems because, by their life and testimony, his followers would challenge the power structures of their day.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, said that our struggle is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers, against spiritual forces of evil in the spiritual dimension of reality. (Eph. 6:12) He was not referring to demonic powers out there, but that there is an inner spiritual dimension to the structures of human society which could become demonic in nature.

It is for this reason, I believe, that although the allied forces won the war waged against the Nazi regime in Germany, the spirit of fascism lived on and is reemerging in different forms today. It seems we have not learnt the lesson of history, namely, that peace is never won just by gaining a military victory over the enemy.

The path to permanent and long lasting peace will never be straight forward. Humanity has yet to evolve and become fully human, a true reflection of our divine source. And there are no short cuts to the process of evolution, which is why we still need our armed forces and all the agencies that are seeking to protect us from danger, both from within and without.

Meanwhile followers of Jesus are called to be faithful witnesses to the one who, on our behalf, suffered and died. His death on a cross demonstrates the fact that God suffers the consequences of human sin with and in us. For, it is not ultimately military might that overcomes evil, but the powerful testimony of Christ's faithful witnesses, both in word and in deed.

And, I believe that the return of Christ that is spoken of in the Book of Revelation, and that will bring about world peace, will not be the return of the historical Jesus appearing as a kind of superman to zap the world. Rather, it is the appearance of the Cosmic Christ incarnated in the followers of Jesus whose consciousness, worldview, motivation, goals and rewards have been transformed.

And what will tip the balance in favour of the Reign of God is when the number of fully awakened human beings reaches a critical mass.

So, I say to you, come, let us live today in the light of the God's tomorrow!

Ken Webb



## Hot Chocolate Walk - October



Our walk this month was to the wonderful **Migvie Kirk** and Pictish Migvie Stone in the Kirkyard.

Sadly there were only three of us but we had a most enjoyable time. The views from this special place are spectacular.

Before entering the Kirk we tried to work out all the symbols on the well worn Stone. It is said that some of these carvings on this stone are quite unusual for such Pictish stones eg shears and a horseshoe. Also in the grounds is an even older item- a Megalithic cup marked stone.



The inside of the Kirk is an unexpected joy of a restoration by Philip Astor, former laird of Tillypronie Estate, in memory of his parents - complete in 2001. Local artists have made art work of stained glass, stone, wood and plaster work- depicting Pictish symbols, Ogham scripts and biblical texts. It is such a peaceful and meaningful place.



For any who have never visited this hidden gem, we can not recommend a visit more. Do not be put off by what looks like a locked door on arrival! It does open and an automatic light will come on once you are inside.

We are having a break from these walks over the following colder months but look forward to you joining us on a walk in the new year. These short walks are a wonderful way to have fellowship and to visit interesting places.

**Carol Birss**



## Autumn Wreaths

The children proudly holding up the Autumn Wreaths they had been making during the service of Morning Worship, encouraged by Susan and Sabine. The Children's Corner at St Thomas's is just the place for crafts and gentle activities, it gives the children their own space, and is well used.



## Aboyne Holiday Club



Here are the Aboyne holiday club children - primary age, learning about Guide Dogs with the help of Quincy.



Guide dogs produce some activity booklets with word searches and crosswords, with pictures to colour in which proved very popular.



Quincy was on his best behaviour and loved having his tummy tickled. The children asked lots of great questions and seemed to enjoy the whole morning.  
**Sue and Quincy**

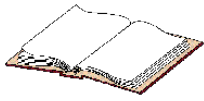


## What she wants for Christmas

A little girl was in the kitchen watching her mother busily preparing for the following day's Christmas dinner. She asked, 'Mum, can I please have a cat for Christmas?'

Her mother replied, 'No, you'll have turkey like the rest of us.'





## Readings for December 2025 and January 2026

7th December Advent 2	Isaiah 11: 1-10 Romans 15:4-13 Matthew 3:1-12	Ann Maggs	Sue and Warren Burgess
14th December Advent 3	Isaiah 35:1-10 James 5 :7-10 Matthew 11:2-11	Hilary Mutch	Christopher and Margaret Heald
21st December Advent 4	Isaiah 7:10-16 Romans 1: 1-7 Matthew 1: 18-25	Stanley Ewen	Jill Binns
24th December Midnight Communion	Isaiah 9:2-7 Titus 2: 11-14 Luke 2:1-14	N/A	Michael Bruce
25th December CHRISTMAS DAY	Isaiah 62:6-12 Titus 3: 4-7 Luke 2:8-20	Marcus Humphrey	The Aboyne family
28th December Christmas 1 1	Isaiah 63:7-9 Hebrews 2: 10-18 Matthew 2: 13-23	Maggie Jaffray Ewen	Isabel Wilson
4th January 2026 Christmas 2	Jeremiah 31: 7-14 Ephesians 1: 3-14 John 1 :10-18	Sabine Muir	The Rider Family
11th January Epiphany 1	Isaiah 60:1-6 Ephesians 3: 1-12 Matthew 2: 1-12	Susan Smith	Carol Birss
18th January Epiphany 2	Isaiah 49 :1-7 1 Corinthians 1 :1-9 John 1: 29-42	Sabrina Humphrey	Irene Legge
25th January Epiphany 3	Isaiah 9 :1-4 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18 Matthew 4 :12-23	Hilary Mutch	Christopher and Margaret Heald

### CHURCH SERVICES AT BALLATER AND ABOYNE

	<u>St. Kentigern's, 9.30am</u>	<u>St. Thomas's, 11.15am</u>
1st Sunday	Morning Worship	Morning Worship
2nd Sunday	Holy Communion 1982	Holy Communion 1982
3rd Sunday	Holy Communion 1970	Holy Communion 1970
4th Sunday	Holy Communion 1982	Family Communion
5th Sunday	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer

## Sunday Club St. Kentigern's, Ballater

Children are welcome to attend any Sunday Service, and families are invited to use the materials in the Hall if so required.

The **St Kentigern's Sunday Club** normally meets on the **third Sunday of every month at 9.30am** in the Church Hall. The children are brought back into Church to join their families during the Offertory Hymn.

**These Services will be advertised when they have been resumed.**



## Awaiting

Holy One, we come as lamps of clay who need your oil, your light,  
your burning fire within.  
Come to purify and cleanse the soul, to light the wick of mind and heart.  
And so, create a space within us, a womb of birth, a place to bring life  
to your everlasting word.  
Expectant and in hope, we await the living presence to move within us.  
We are the waiting place of rest, where you are born in us in time,  
and we in you, eternally.

May the understanding of our hearts be illumined  
by the Light that shines within the darkness,  
by the Light that is Christ, the Life of the world.  
This is the Light shining in deep and dazzling darkness,  
in the mystery of the Holy One, All in all.

*"Awaiting" liturgy - Contemplative Fire Way Beyond Religion*

## Young Church at St. Thomas's

Children are welcome at all the services at St Thomas's.

The children's corner contains books, colouring materials and toys for small children, so do make use of them.

### Morning Worship at St.Thomas's (on the first Sunday of the month)

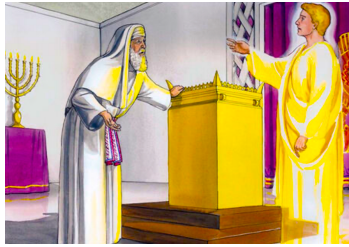
This is normally a non-Communion Service, not specifically for children, but they are of course especially welcome. During the Interregnum, they will be led by members of the congregations of St Kentigern's and St Thomas's alternately.

The next services are:

**7th December** Advent is an adventure  
(led by St Thomas's)

**4th January** The significance of Jesus  
in the Christian faith  
(led by St Kentigern's)

## From the Bible for the young and not so young



### Advent story - the coming of the baby Jesus

The church celebrates Advent for the four weeks leading up to Christmas, and this means the preparation for the coming of the baby Jesus. And the part played in it by the Angel Gabriel makes it all the more remarkable.

St Luke in his gospel (*Chapter 1*) tells the earliest part of the story. He begins with Zechariah, an elderly priest performing the most sacred of his duties, entering the temple of the Lord and burning the incense, while the rest of the people remained outside praying. And suddenly, to his great fear, an angel appeared on the right side of the altar. He told Zechariah not to be afraid, he had brought him news, that he and his wife would have a child! And his name was to be John. Zechariah couldn't really believe this, he and his wife were quite elderly and past having children. The angel, whose name was Gabriel, said he had been sent to tell him, and because he had not believed his message, he would be unable to speak until the baby was born.

The people outside wondered why he was so long coming out, then when he did he was not able to speak to explain. But they decided he must have had some vision. And sure enough, the angel Gabriel was right, and Elizabeth found she was due to have a baby - after all those years! But she was very embarrassed at her age, and hid away from people for another five months.

In the sixth month, Gabriel appears again, sent by God to Nazareth this time, to a virgin engaged to Joseph, called Mary. She too was quite alarmed by the visit, and astonished when Gabriel said she was to have a son. She was only engaged, not married, and in those days it was a sin for an unmarried woman to have a baby. And Gabriel told her the astonishing thing that would happen to her. He said the Holy Spirit would come to her, and the child would be called holy, the Son of God. His name would be Jesus. Unlike Zechariah, Mary submitted, saying 'I am the handmaid of the Lord'. Gabriel told her that her elderly cousin Elizabeth was also going to have a child - for with God nothing is impossible.

So Mary went off quickly to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and we are told that when Elizabeth greeted Mary, her baby 'leaped in her womb', and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. St Luke writes of the beautiful words from both women, expressing their happiness and joy to the Lord.

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months then returned home, by which time Elizabeth's baby was due. And sure enough, the baby arrived safely, and there was much rejoicing among the neighbours, who were thrilled for her, having a child at her age. Eight days later came the circumcision, and naming of the baby. Everyone expected him to be Zechariah after his father, but Elizabeth said no, he was to be John, as the Angel had said. There was some argument about this, and they turned to the baby's father, who still could not speak. And he wrote firmly 'His name is John'. And as promised by the Angel, Zechariah's mouth was opened and he could speak, blessing God. And he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and again St Luke writes of the beautiful words he spoke.

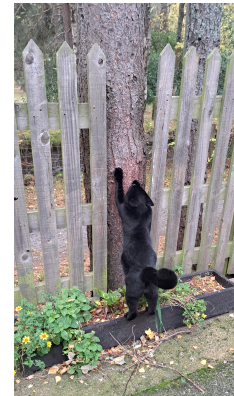
Mary's baby was born a few months later, in dramatic circumstances, but that is another story.

And the two children grew up in their families, becoming strong in spirit. We know them now as John the Baptist, and Jesus of Nazareth, our Saviour.

## Dinnet Cat's adventure!

Well, no - there is no story about Cat's adventure, he refuses to say anything about it. But he was away for two weeks, then turned up unexpectedly in the middle of the night!

However, he really doesn't seem to have been suffering, more like a little holiday - he has put on weight! Look at the latest photos -



Before:

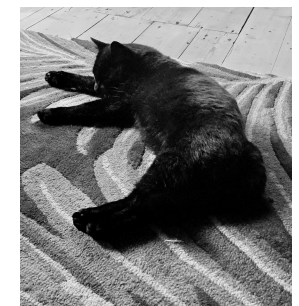
Cat has a favourite scratching pine



After:

There seems to be more of him now!

But all very beautiful.



Winter-time:

Let's get cosy!

And - he has learnt to give Helen a kiss before he takes his meal! Clever Cat!!

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## Oops!

A vicar gave his daughter a puppy for Christmas. An hour later, he found her in the kitchen, looking sadly at a puddle in the centre of the floor.

"Look Dad," she said, "My pup runneth over."



## Pilgrimage Prayer



Carrying a candle  
from one little place of shelter  
to another  
is an act of love.

To move through the huge  
and hungry darkness, step by step,  
against the invisible wind  
that blows for ever around the world,  
carrying a candle,  
is an act of foolhardy hope.

Surely it will be blown out:  
the wind is contemptuous,  
the darkness cannot comprehend it.  
How much light can this tiny flame shed  
on all the great issues of the day?  
It is as helpless as a newborn child.

Look how the human hand  
that cradles it  
has become translucent:  
fragile and beautiful; foolish and loving.

Step by step.

The wind is stronger than this hand,  
and the darkness infinite  
around this tiny here-and-now flame  
that wavers, but keeps burning,  
carried with such care  
through an uncaring world  
from one little place to another.  
An act of love.



The light shines in the darkness  
and the darkness can never put it out.

*from "Candles and Conifers: readings for All Saints'  
and Advent" by Ruth Burgess (Wildgoose Pub., 2005)*

## Castle Woods parkrun - is now established in Aboyne!

The first parkrun was on May 17th, and there have now been 25 parkruns (as of the 22nd November). It happens every Saturday morning at 09:30, starting on the Deeside Way, under the old rail bridge, just along from the Victory Hall. We have all capabilities joining in to do the 5 kilometre route around Castle Woods, from the fast runners, to anyone wanting to have a nice walk.



Here is our own Lara enjoying her running:-

Children can join in too - but have to go slow enough for their responsible adult to keep in sight! Some folk have their wee ones in buggies, and others have their dog. There are usually plenty of photos taken by the volunteers which are posted on

Facebook. The volunteers have great fun too - cheering on the participants while keeping them on the route or time-keeping at the finish.

We had a special dress up day with the pantomime group running the show and they brought a lot of colour!

Anyone can volunteer - the roles are simple and clearly explained by the run director (the one in charge)

on the day. If you'd like to join in the fun, here is the link to our volunteer web page:- <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/castlewoods/volunteer/>

And here are some of the volunteers getting ready for action! -

So far we have had an average of 116 participants every event - bringing lots of visitors to Aboyne - and business for the coffee shops! 260 people have been introduced to parkrun and many of those are local and continuing to enjoy it. So the parkrun has had a fantastic first 6 months and even though it will be a little quieter over the winter, it will only be a few less runners and that will pick up again in the spring.

If you'd like to find out more about our parkrun, just chat to me.

**Warren Burgess**



## Events at Aboyne-Dinnet

### 30th November, First Sunday in Advent, 6.30pm

Come and join us in **celebrating Advent**. We will sing wonderful Advent hymns and be reminded through Scripture what Advent is all about. The service will be candle-lit and live-streamed!

### Friday 5th December, 8.00pm

**Carol Singing** at the Boat Inn - Our singing at the Boat Inn has become a tradition. For forty-five minutes we will sing favourite Christmas carols. All singers will be rewarded with a glass of hot punch and a mince pie, which the Boat Inn have kindly offered to bring out. We will start singing 'a Capello' at 8pm. Come along for some festive cheer!

### Sunday, 14th December, 12.15-2.15pm

Two of our young members are planning to hold a *Bakesale* in the Church Hall straight after morning worship. Coffee and tea will be served.

Louise Gray and Mairi Walmsley are holding this event for their Duke of Edinburgh Award. All proceeds of the day will be donated to the **Aboyne Food Pantry** which is run by the Aboyne Community Trust. Do come and support them, everyone is invited!

**Saturday, 20th December**, we will be carolling at Bonty Court and Allachburn. We shall be happy for you to come along to support our singing. We will gather at Bonty Court at 2pm and Allachburn at 3pm.

Please let Christa know if you feel like joining in: m: 07899424828

**Sunday, 21st December**, 9.45am - 10.45am, at Cromar Church

The children's nativity play 'The Bossy King' will have its first performance in Cromar Church at their Sunday morning service



## Trussell Trust Foodbank at Banchory

For some years, the Upper Deeside Churches of St Thomas's and St Kentigern's have been donating to the Foodbank during Advent and Lent, and we will be continuing this year. Boxes for donations will be provided at our churches throughout Advent. Do give generously, there is a lot of need out there, and the Foodbank volunteers are excellent at giving practical help for people when in desperate need. But they need the food to give to people, and we can help. All tinned or dried foods, and toiletry are welcome, suitable for use by people who have no extra money to cope with anything fancy.

## Old Santa's gone Glamping

Many moons ago when we ran the shop and post office in Glenkindie. At the end of the summer my husband and I used to go to our wholesalers' Christmas Displays to pick and order some gifts that we thought our customers would like, to save them going miles to buy Christmas presents such as calendars, cards, small toys, gloves, socks, slippers etc.

One year, I think about the middle of the 1960's, Barrie decided to make a Santa to sit in the upstairs attic window of the shop and wave his arm up and down, to attract and welcome customers. I had to help making his coat and he has lasted for years, although his arm doesn't wave any more.



Barrie always loved decorating the place for Christmas, and even after we had retired to our home next door, Santa was always put in our upstairs window, with the garden decorated with a Snowman, Reindeer and Sledge and Christmas tree lights. Unfortunately my Barrie is unable to carry out these duties, so old Santa together with the other decorations have moved to Cairngorm Glamping in Strathdon. It is so nice to think he can still be seen, so one can visit him there.

Well done old Santa and he sends his good wishes to all our readers for a very happy and peaceful time.

**Eileen A. Davies**



The first pair of whoopers have arrived on the loch  
Coming south for warmer climes  
As autumn seems to turn to winter.  
Black markings on each beak naming them.  
Great wings outstretched as they descend on the wind  
Gliding across the water's surface  
Interrupting their own reflections  
Walks will be accompanied by their whoop  
Until spring warms in the air  
And they head north for the summer.

*Vittoria Hancock*



## Institution of Rev Vittoria Hancock



*Vittoria with Upper Deeside supporters  
in St John's Church, Moffat, after the Service*

Vittoria's Institution into her new charge of Lockerbie and Moffat took place in St John's Church, Moffat on Tuesday 14th October. Sabrina and I had a lovely if somewhat long drive to Moffat, where we stayed in the Skye Best hotel which was just a short walk from the Church itself. St. Thomas' was also represented by Warren and Sue Burgess who took Sheila Maxwell with them, and Dave Souter.

The service was conducted by the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, the Right Revd.

Nicholas Bundock, and we were happy to see the church filled with members of both congregations. Vittoria herself looked radiant and confident throughout and I am sure will be much appreciated by her new charges. After the ceremony there was a lovely buffet in the church hall where we had the opportunity to meet and talk to those present, including the Bishop who said he was only five months into his new job, and who seemed very sensible and approachable; we felt that Vittoria would get on well with him.

Next morning we drove the 20 minutes down the M74 to Lockerbie to see All Saints church there, and to see the Rectory where Vittoria will be living; it is a good and relatively modern building next to the church, and will be very suitable and less expensive to run than our Rectory in Ballater.

The church in Moffat was built in 1951 and has a good hall, which is why the service was conducted there. The church in Lockerbie was built about the same time as ours, early twentieth century, of local stone, and has a close association with the MacDonald Bell family.

We drove to the Ship Inn at Elie later that day, to celebrate our 62nd wedding anniversary, feeling assured that Vittoria and her two new charges have a good future ahead of them.

**Marcus Humphrey  
November 2025**



*A more informal gathering  
in All Saints Church, Lockerbie, next morning*

## Personnel

### Deaths

Jane Brechin died in September

Jean Sowrey died on 4th November

*Please pray for their families as they grieve the loss of their loved ones.*

### Congratulations

Marcus and Sabrina Humphrey celebrated their sixty-second Wedding

Anniversary in October

Rev Vittoria Hancock was installed as Rector of St John's Moffat

and All Saints Lockerbie on 14th October

### Jean Sowrey

Jean died in hospital on 4th November, after a mercifully short illness. But she had lived with disability for a very long time, having had her first operation for removal of a brain tumour at the age of only 37. She was fortunate in having a wonderfully caring husband in Peter, so that she was able to live comfortably at home while he saw to all her needs.

Jean was brought up in Newcastle, and retained her affection for her home town all her life, she was always delighted to hear that I was visiting Gateshead, just next-door to where she was brought up. She kept in touch with at least one of her friends there.

Among other things, Jean enjoyed singing in the church choir, and she remembered the words of the old hymns right to the end.

She did secretarial work for some years, but life got exciting when she married Peter, who was first a marine engineer, then started work overseas, fairly short-term work, so they visited many different countries in Africa and elsewhere. It seems to have been quite an adventurous life, which continued in spite of her disabilities which led to her being largely confined to a wheelchair Both Jean and Peter have written about some of their experiences in the Tattler.

When Peter retired, they came to live in Tarland, and started coming to St Thomas's, Peter pushing Jean along in her wheelchair. They had a special place where they sat, and members of the congregation liked to go and say hello to Jean, and always get a friendly welcome. Jean loved the traditional services, with the hymns she sang when she was young, and the organ to accompany.

Part of her disability made it a bit difficult for Jean to speak, though she managed because she liked to communicate. She was an amazingly warm and friendly person. She liked to tell people of all the many operations she had had, and of not being expected to live at one point, but she was never self-pitying about it, just factual. And she could be very kind. I remember one occasion when I was taking her and Peter to Westhill to the dentist, and my car gave up in the middle of nowhere! Jean was sitting beside me, quite unable to do anything about it, but there was no panic - she put her hand on my knee and said 'poor Sheila' - all sympathy for me, and none for herself. To me, that was Jean - a lovely person, much missed.

**Sheila Maxwell**





## WEB-SITES

St Thomas's Web-site has been transferred and upgraded. It has also been possible to return the photos in the Tattler to their original colour. The link is

<http://www.stthomasaboynne.org>

If you want to get in touch, please email: [stthomasaboynne@gmail.com](mailto:stthomasaboynne@gmail.com) or phone Tel No 07352 750090

St Kentigern's Web-site is: [stkentigernsballater.aodiocese.org.uk](http://stkentigernsballater.aodiocese.org.uk)

Some services are recorded at St Thomas's. The Youtube Link is: <https://www.youtube.com/@st.thomaschurchaboynne>

“Devote yourselves to prayer,  
being watchful and thankful.”

*Colossians Ch 4 v2*

Anyone who would like to be prayed for especially, or has a friend who would like this, please get in touch

by phone **07352 750090** or email [upperdeesidechurches@gmail.com](mailto:upperdeesidechurches@gmail.com)

## Pastoral Cards

### for the sick or bereaved

We have a small selection of very helpful pastoral cards, which are suitable to send from the Church to anyone who is sick, going into hospital, or bereaved. They include appropriate readings and prayers. Recipients have commented on the encouragement and comfort these cards have brought them.

If you would like a pastoral card sent to a friend from:

**St Thomas's, Aboynne**  
Please contact Meg White  
Tel 013398 80034

**St Kentigern's, Ballater**  
Please contact Sabrina  
Humphrey  
Tel 013398 85233

## Important

### The Tattler needs you!

Please send news, articles, stories, fillers, or anything else you can think of to enrich the Tattler. It can only be as good as you make it!

The next Edition is starting now.  
Please give or send all contributions to the Editor,  
or to Sabine Muir at Ballater,  
by January 13th

## CONTACTS :

### ST. KENTIGERN'S

Treasurer	Marcus Humphrey
Secretary	Sabine Muir
Lay Representative	Hilary Mutch
Vestry Members	Sabrina Humphrey
	Margaret Jaffray Ewen
	Sabine Muir
	Susan Smith
	Stuart Wright
Sacristan	Hilary Mutch ]
Organist	Stanley Ewen
Chalice Bearers	Roger Searle. Marcus Humphrey, Susan Smith, Douglas Mutch, Sabine Muir

### ST. THOMAS'S

Secretary	Anne Harper
Treasurer	Sue Burgess
Lay representative	Anne Harper
Vestry Members	Warren Burgess
	Lara Elson
	Sheila Maxwell
	Katherine Rider
	Carol Simmons
Lesley Thomas	
Organist and Publicity	Sheila Maxwell
Child Protection Officer	Lesley Thomas
Sacristans	Carol Simmons, Jo Elson, Lesley Thomas
Chalice Bearers	Warren Burgess, Peter Sowrey, Lara Elson Andrew Wilson, Sue Burgess
Flowers	Jill Binns
People's Warden	Warren Burgess
(Maintenance Officer)	
Patron	Michael Bruce

### ST. NINIAN'S

For information, contact Diocesan Office tel [01224 662247](tel:01224662247)

**Lay Eucharistic Ministers:** Susan Smith, Sue Burgess