

Girlguiding Christmas - 1 December

The Penicuik and Midlothian girlguiding girls, parents and friends, filled St. Mungo's on Tuesday 1st of December for their annual Christmas Service. The church had been decorated with holly and ribbon so looked very festive. Our minister the Rev Hugh Davidson opened the service.



The nativity had a modern twist, and the guides were sponsoring 'Mission Christmas' a Cash for Kids initiative supported by Radio Forth. All the families were asked to bring toys for presents.

It is always good to start with a Christmas Carol to get into the spirit of the service. Graham McDonald led 'The 12 Days of Christmas' on the piano. Each section of the congregation had a line to sing, and everyone was involved by time we reached the 12 days.



The nativity story was begun using a question and answer narration, starting with what Christmas means to you, and the name of a very special boy? We were told the story of Jesus and how it is told around the world, celebrated in many different ways.

The Guides telling of the story featured our Mary busy cleaning her house (dusting the church grand piano as it happened)

when approached by the angel Gabriel, who told her she was to bear the son of God. She was not to worry about Joseph, as Gabriel would have a 'man to man' chat with him down at the rugby practice!



The story continued as they made their way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Singing 'Little Donkey' was very appropriate. The Inn keeper offered the 'smelly' barn and Mary and Joseph settled down.



The shepherds were then visited by the angels and headed to Bethlehem while we sang 'Away in a Manger'. Our wise men were featured as celebrities on a treasure hunt journey, following a star, collecting rather unusual gifts. Their mission was to find the newborn king. They tried the palace but no baby there. An email then appeared on their iPad stating 'You must follow the star'. Looking up they saw the bright star, which they followed and offered their gifts to the new born king, Jesus.

We sang the 'Calypso Carol', before Hugh concluded with a prayer and a blessing.

But all was not finished. We welcomed a new visitor, Tam the donkey, who was brought into the church. The children's faces were a picture to see and Tam had a good look round too. During Tam's visit we sang 'Silent Night', followed by 'We wish you a Merry Christmas', after which Tam said his goodbye and the service closed.

One of the most unusual tellings of the story I have seen, and a real live donkey in the church is definitely a first.

After the service the collection of toys donated for Mission Christmas was impressive.



Christmas Stamps



I hope you picked up on the requests to save your stamps from your Christmas card envelopes, in fact any stamped envelope. Your church collects the stamps to help the work of the Church of Scotland HIV Programme which supports partners both in Scotland and overseas to support those infected and affected by HIV.



Please remember to leave a ¼ inch of envelope around the stamp to avoid damaging the perforations.

Bible Studies - 28 January

Bible Studies will begin on Thursday 28 January 2016 at 7.15 p.m. in the Church. All members of the Congregation will be welcome. *Eric Marchant*

Church Register

Removed by Death

Mr Jack Hutcheson	Uttershill House	28 December 2015
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Mungo's Diary

6 Jan, 10.45am	Friendship Circle. - 44 Cranston Street. For help with transport call Margaret 672347.
6 Jan, 7.30pm	Housegroup. 21 Mauricewood Bank
10 Jan, 4.00pm	Café Connect - Jean's Place in the Precinct. To 5.00pm
11 Jan, 7.30pm	Guild - All Friends Together - Church Hall
12 Jan, 7.00pm	Congregational Board and Kirk Session Meeting In the Church
20 Jan, 7.30pm	Housegroup. 21 Mauricewood Bank
25 Jan, 7.30pm	Guild - Scots Night - Church Hall
28 Jan, 7.15pm	Bible Studies - Church. All welcome
31 Jan, 4.00pm	Messy Church - in the Church Hall. To 6.00pm
3 Feb 10.45am	Friendship Circle. - 44 Cranston Street. For help with transport call Margaret 672347.
3 Feb, 7.30pm	Housegroup. 21 Mauricewood Bank

Café Connect - 13 December

Café Connect Penicuik met at Jean's Place for the second event on Sunday 13th December in this new St. Mungo's initiative. The smell of fresh coffee tempted the passing Christmas shoppers to look into the Café, but most were busy chasing those last minute presents for their loved ones and friends.



This month Janice Burns from Gorebridge Foodbank spoke to us, using slides to illustrate her work. Supported by Trussel Trust the foodbank offers emergency food boxes with 3 days worth of supplies to needy families. Donations come from individuals and a Tesco dropbox that Janice empties twice a week such is the level of donations in store.

Janice was drawn to the work, risking all by leaving secure employment, after reading Matthew 25 v35, 'I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink.', John 6, 35, and Proverbs 14, 31 'If you oppress poor people you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to the poor is an act of worship.'

Her work at Gorebridge church also points those in need to other help agencies in the community.

Café Connect next meet on Sunday 10th at 4.00pm when Ruth Aird will speak to us about her work as a nurse and how God helps her. Please come along with a friend to enjoy this alternative form of worship.



You can sign up to an extended "e" version of this newsheet, with full length features, and colour photos which will be delivered to your email each month, saving paper and other resources. Use "eSignup" on St. Mungo's website www.stmungos.freeuk.com

Church mouse

From the mouse of Editor's PC



Christmas was a busy time in your church, while Hugh was helping out at St. Giles in Edinburgh.

December started with the Girlguiding girls presenting the nativity play. Having a real live donkey in the church was a bonus. Tam the donkey had walked from Lidl car park to the church, crossing the zebra crossing in front of a rather startled bus driver.

Cuiken School joined us on 14 December and parents were able to see the wealth of musical and singing talent as the Carol concert unfolded.

St. Mungo's own Nativity service went down well with Sunday school children and supporting adults reliving the age old story.

Add to that Messy Church, Guild Street Pastors, Hope4Penicuik Christmas activities and you will see it was a busy time.

The visiting ministers while Hugh was away was an opportunity for us to experience different styles of worship. Interim Moderator Yvonne Atkins with her student Neil Watson had the children wide eyed with his talk to them,

Andrew Don always brings joy to our congregation and we welcomed him twice in the month.

Your elders led the service of readings and carols to complete the celebrations.

We were all saddened to hear of member Jack Hutcheson's death on the 28th. A regular face at church, he passed away peacefully at Marie Curie.

Jim Paterson
Newsletter Editor
stmungos@freeuk.com

St. Mungo's ministry in December

Andrew Don was welcomed by St. Mungo's congregation to preach to us on Sunday 6th. Andrew always preaches an uplifting message, and this was fully illustrated in his talk with the children when his 'Gospel Illusions' had them wide eyed in wonder.

Showing a series of cards with spots like 'domino' pieces we were asked to say how many spots we could see. One card displayed two spots, but it looked like it should have been a three, and another had five, but it looked like it should have been a six. The message was that not all we see is what is there, as he moved his hand to reveal a sixth spot on the five card. Trying to put God in a box misses most of what He means. You have to think 'out of the box' to appreciate what God is all about. Finishing he moved his hand away from the six card to reveal TEN spots. 'Where did they come from?' he left us with.

His sermon centred around what God wanted from His people on earth. If He had wanted us to have wealth He would have sent an accountant. If He wanted to give us health, a doctor. If He had wanted us to have financial stability He would have sent an economist. For growth, we have politicians. However He sent us forgiveness, in the shape of Jesus a saviour bringing us salvation and forgiveness.

Sunday 13th saw our Interim moderator the Rev Yvonne Atkins lead the service with Neil Watson assisting. Yvonne started by asking us if we had ever heard a tune that got stuck in our heads? She confided to us that she had recently visited the supermarket and heard the popular Christian song, 'I've got the Joy Joy Joy down in my heart' which she now cannot seem to forget, often suddenly singing it while driving along. We all joined her in a rendition, and a few of us took that tune with us when we left after the service, whether we wanted to or not!

Neil took the children's talk and brought along a Christmas parcel all wrapped in paper covered in stars. The Sunday School children worked out that the stars were the stars over the town of Bethlehem. When Neil unwrapped the paper, underneath was a plain brown paper wrapping. This stumped the children. A Christmas present in plain brown paper? Neil explained that Jesus was born in a plain bare stable, just like our paper wrapper. Tearing off the brown paper revealed another wrapper, this time a sheet of newspaper. Why newspaper he asked? Because Jesus brought the good news of God to all of us. Finally with all eyes wide open the newspaper wrapper was removed to reveal.... a tin of 'Celebration' sweets, representing the celebration we all experience with the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

Sunday 20th was our Nativity service, the time when the Sunday School children, this year supported by some of the church member adults play out the age old story of the birth of Christ. You can read the full story inside this issue.



Over 50 people joined the Watchnight service, led by Rev Andrew Don and visitors were treated to hot mince pies and tea/coffee before we started.

Our final December service on the 27th was led by session clerk Sandy Robertson and the elders of your church delivering a service of 9 Readings and Carols. Sandy started the service with a reading of John Betjeman's poem 'Christmas'. The Christmas readings from the gospels of Matthew Luke and John, were supported by Old Testament readings from Isaiah and Micah.

We welcome back our Locum, Rev Hugh Davidson to lead our services in the new year.

Pastoral Care The Pastoral visiting team can be called on at any time (Margaret 672347)

Cuiken School Carol Concert - 14 December



The choir lines up

The families of Cuiken Primary gathered in St. Mungo's on Monday 14th December for their Christmas Carol Concert. The children read the nativity story with Cuiken's music specialist Elaine Callaghan playing the piano to lead the carol singing. The Rev Ian Cathcart read the lesson, and had a little something extra for the children.

Head teacher Joanna Taylor started off the evening introducing the Rev Ian Cathcart, Keira and Hannah, who started the story with the angel Gabriel visiting Mary to tell her she would bear the son of God. We followed Mary and Joseph on their trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census.

Everyone joined in 'O Little Town of Bethlehem', followed by 'Once in Royal David's City'. We then heard of the Shepherds visit by the angels to guide them to the stable. Silent night and Away in a Manger were then sung, supported by the school choir, and the student musicians playing trumpets, horns, cello and recorders. The story continued with the three wise men following the star, with gifts for the new born King. The story concluded with 'Joy to the World'.

But all was not finished. The Rev Ian Cathcart spoke to the children and, in true 'teacher' mode ran a little quiz, with questions such as who remembered the name of the angel that visited Mary? How long did it take to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem? Ian had the biggest bag of chocolate gold coins to give out as prizes.

The musicians got 'on stage' to lead 'Hosanna Rock, Hosanna Roll' which is a favourite at Cuiken school. We then listened as they played 'White Christmas', followed by the choir singing 'The Holly and the Mistletoe'. The cello's returned with 'Jolly Old Saint Nicholas', and everyone got together again for another school favourite 'Reindeer on the Roof'.

The children displayed their French knowledge singing 'Vive le Vent' (long live the wind) to the tune of 'jingle bells' played by the cellists. After two verses the words changed to 'jingle bells'. The concert closed with 'We wish you a Merry Christmas'. The departing families children each got a bag of chocolate gold coins.

It was good to see such young talented children performing, and playing musical instruments not only well, but so confidently. Penicuik is blessed with such talent, at both the High School and Beeslack. These Cuiken children will be able to extend their musical skills as they progress into secondary education, thanks to the progressive musical departments at both these secondary schools.

Hope4Penicuik Christmas - 29 November

Fabulous evening at the Hope4Penicuik carol event in the town hall this evening. Joan and Neil Cape led the evening supported by Penicuik Silver Band, Penicuik Puppets, Graham, Sam, and Sophie McDonald. Rev Ian Cathcart presented the Christmas story.

Joan and Neil Cape led the proceedings with Joan providing the 'links' between each activity, and Neil on the AV systems. We started with the Penicuik Puppets presenting, 'Always look on the bright side of life', from the Monty Python film 'Life of Brian'. The Grumpy Old Man puppet with the cloth cap eventually got into the swing and soon had us all singing along. The Penicuik Silver Band played the musical accompaniment.

Mo Hayes read the story of how Mary and Joseph had to travel from their home in Nazareth to Bethlehem for the Census as decreed by Caesar Augustus.

We heard about the shepherds tending their sheep, being terrified at receiving a visit from an angel of the Lord. The angel told them not to be afraid, and gave them the good news. We then sang 'It was on a starry night' followed by 'Sing for the baby at Bethlehem', both accompanied by Graham McDonald on piano, daughter Sophie on clarinet, and son Sam on guitar.



Nativity Service - 20 December



Festive cheer welcomed visitors, with the Christmas tree shining brightly and the church decorated with colourful garlands, holly and candles. This was the day the Sunday School children and supporting adult cast presented that age old story of the birth of Jesus. Eileen Marchant provided the music for the carols on piano and organ.



We started with our favourite hymn 'Christmas is coming', with Ruby Sprott lighting the fourth advent candle. After singing 'Love came down at Christmas', the lights dimmed, and the tree lights switched off. We plunged into darkness. The scene for the story was set.

Our narrator told us how the earth was in darkness, with people using candles to make it look like daytime. God saw that the earth was stuck, like a clock at midnight. Our children walked in, led by Angel Gabriel played by Charlie Sprott, supported by Emily and Jessica Ketchen, with candles lit. God knew they could not see and were frightened, so He shattered the darkness with sunlight, in our case the lights switching on again. God also sent his only son into our world.

We sang 'Hark The Herald Angels sing' before hearing about Mary, played by Abby Robertson with child, and Joseph, played by Rebecca Robertson being visited by the angel that Mary would be the mother of God's Son.



After 'O come all ye Faithful' we followed Joseph and Mary traveling to Bethlehem for the census, and how they could find no accommodation, other than a smelly stable.

We heard from Luke 2 v6 and 7 before singing 'O little town of Bethlehem'. As Mary held her new born son the angels visited some shepherds, with John Sprott, who saw the star that would lead them to the new born king. Further readings from Luke and singing 'It came upon a midnight clear' followed by 'Silent Night Holy night' saw the shepherds reach the stable.

We met the 'star-watchers', who we know as the three wise men, with Ruby Sprott. They also found and followed the star. As they gave their gifts to the newborn king we sang 'As with gladness', and 'Once in Royal David's City'. After the blessing we finished with 'Away in a manger'.

A great presentation by the Sunday School children and teachers which was greatly appreciated with a round of applause for the cast.

We watched a video of 'The Christmas Poem' a faithful and fresh retelling of the 'greatest story ever told', from the bible Society, setting Jesus' birth in the context of God's plan to "turn what is sad into glad again". The Rev Ian Cathcart then took the poem as his theme for the story of Christmas.

We finished the evening with 'Show me the way to Shine for Jesus' sung to the tune 'Amarillo' by Tony Christie, with music from the Graham and Sam McDonald, Sophie having joined the puppeteers, and that old faithful Christmas Carol 'O come all ye faithful', with the Silver Band playing a rousing tune to lift our spirits high.

Well done to the Hope4Penicuik team for a great event, and to all those who contributed to the performance.



Graham, Sam, and Sophie McDonald

Guild - Street Pastors - 30 November

Agnes Ovenstone & Jenny Ramage



On Monday 30 November St Mungo's Guild were privileged to have the co-ordinator of the Street Pastors in Edinburgh as our speaker. He told us how the service was first started in London in 2003 by Les Isaacs and the Ascension Trust and how it has spread not only throughout the country but throughout the world. Their slogan is Care, Help, Listen.

The project started in Edinburgh in 2009. Volunteers wear a dark blue uniform with a cap to identify themselves and receive 50 hours of comprehensive training. The aim is to get "Feet on the Street". They go out to meet people on the street at night when they are at risk and vulnerable often due to drug or alcohol abuse.

The Street Pastors work in teams of 8-10 going out in groups of three on Friday nights and some Saturdays. They cover Greenside, Princes Street, Lothian Road and the Cowgate and work in partnership with the police, fire service, NHS and the council.

They have walkie talkies with them when they are out on patrol so that they can communicate with the CCTV control centre who monitor the sites and are able to direct them to any areas where help is needed. Their work is very comprehensive, sometimes just listening to someone who is upset, assisting someone to get home or helping them to use their mobile phones. They even supply flipflops to girls who have discarded their high heels, they pick up bottles which could be used for assault. There are particular crime spots like dark closes on which they keep a close watch. All this helps to make the streets safer and there has been a drop in street crime noted.

They are also supported spiritually by a prayer team and Jason reported that remarkably there have been no violent acts against any of the Street Pastors. He then handed out fridge magnets to everyone to remind us to pray for the team and their work. It was extremely interesting and many questions were asked. Jason informed us that they are always looking for new volunteers and that there is no age barrier.

Messy Christmas - 29 November

Messy Church celebrated Christmas slightly early but with the theme 'Jesus, light of the world' on Sunday 29 November. Despite cold and heavy rain showers a great turnout of children enjoyed a range of crafts and time in the church before their Christmas dinner.



The hall was decorated with a super large nativity scene, and the crafts had a distinctly 'Christmas' theme, including:-

Share the Christmas message – We made a little gift box for someone, with a special gift inside, thinking about the most important Christmas message?

Is Jesus in your house? was making a picture and thinking what it would be like to have Jesus in your home. Iced biscuits, Matchmakers to make houses, sweets to decorate "gardens" and a baby Jesus (Jelly Baby) in the middle of the house.

The prayer activity was to find Penicuik's darkest places and think about how we can be the light in those places. Placing candles to represent our homes on a map.

At 5.00pm we headed over to the church, to be greeted by the puppets, operated by Sophie, Sarah, Joanna, and Zornitca, who gave us their rendition of that favourite from Monty Python 'Always look on the bright side of life', to lighten our world. We then joined with the puppets as they continued with 'Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness' with that ever familiar chorus 'So here I come to worship', with Graham McDonald providing the musical accompaniment on the organ.

Rae Hunter told us the story about Jesus being the light. We finished with a prayer before heading back to the hall. We returned to the hall for a Christmas chicken meal with all the trimmings, followed by sticky toffee pudding, a personal favourite of many.

The first Messy Church of 2016 will be on Sunday 31st January.