

Brechin Bulletin

Scottish Episcopal Church, Diocese of Brechin Newsletter. December, 2010. No. 48
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CHRISTMAS PAST, CHRISTMAS PRESENT

"He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being." You may hear this line from first paragraph of the Letter to the Hebrews read out in church this Christmas.

If you are like me, you will have, either in a drawer somewhere or in a computer file, a series of Christmas snaps taken with your old Kodak Instamatic or your newer digital camera. I may not be a very good photographer, but I'm quite fond of my camera, and part of the family Christmas ritual over the years has been to take photos of the children opening their presents. Some of them have been gathered in albums, and some just lie loosely at the back of the drawer; but when I look through them, they give not only a sensation of the moment they were taken, but also the sense of change from year to year - different living rooms, the process of children growing into adults, the ageing faces of the grown-ups, the faces no longer with us. Moments, snapshots, build up into an ongoing story.

Real photographers, who carry their cameras everywhere, speak about moments of inspiration when they must capture on film the scene in front of them. Before the camera, that moment of inspiration might have been captured through the medium of paint. Of course, artists are not limited to painting the present moments. They can represent scenes from any point in history. When we go back 2,000 years, to the scenes which we remember at Christmas - scenes of a baby being born, spectacular scenes of angels and wise men, of shepherds running to Bethlehem - it is not to the camera or painted picture which we must turn to get some sensation of the event. There was no Lord Lichfield or Michelangelo to capture the moment. There are no photographs to be discovered at the back of the drawer to remind us of the sensation of the moment.

What we have is a story - a word picture. Matthew and Luke give us word pictures of stables and shepherds and wise men. John, on the other hand, does not give us a story, but a piece of wonderful poetry which speaks the events of 2,000 years ago, but which also takes us back before the point of creation itself. The human words which take us back to the Word of God spoken at the beginning of creation. In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was God.

The temptation may be to treat the stories of these word pictures like old photos. When one reads the words in the past tense, it is too easy to relegate the story to the past. What I like to do is read the opening of John's Gospel in the present tense, and get the sense of the ongoing story, and the ongoing challenge of the story.

Let me write it in that way:

...All things come into being through Him and without Him not one thing comes into being. What comes into being in Him is life, and the life is the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

...He is in the world, and the world comes into being through Him; yet the world does not know Him. He comes to what is His own, and His own people do not accept Him.

...And the Word becomes flesh and lives among us, and we see His glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

One of the reasons why we come together at Christmas is not merely to remember some past event, but to bring that event into the present. The story of Christmas is a day-by-day living out of our lives in the presence of Emmanuel - God with us. It is not God with them - Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the disciples, the people of the countryside around Galilee. But God with us - in the different living rooms, in the process of children growing into adults, in the ageing faces in the faces no longer with us. Just like a dog - Christmas is not only for Christmas.

If you were to go on and read through John's gospel and read the whole story of the Word made flesh, you would come across other bits of John poetry which capture some of the moments of that life - that life which the writer of the letter to the Hebrews describes as the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being. One such phrase comes during Jesus' last words with His disciples: "I have said these things to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete".

This Christmas time when we remember that the Word came, may you know that complete joy. And may it be yours each day when the Lord comes to you.

Rev. Canon Dr. John Cuthbert, Cathedral Chapter.

Bulletin Deadline - 16th of each month.

Please send news to:

office@brechin.anglican.org

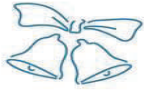
DECEMBER MEETINGS

7th 9.30am Office Business Meeting

17th 10am-4pm Preparatory Committee Meeting



WHAT'S ON AROUND THE DIOCESE



NOVEMBER



St. Paul's Cathedral, Dundee

27th 'O COME, O COME EMMANUEL' a candlelit service of poetry, readings, hymns and carols for Advent with the Cathedral choir, followed by wine and chilli. 6.30pm.

St. Mary's, Broughty Ferry

28th Advent Sunday - You are invited to a Christingle Service at 4pm. Please RSVP to help us prepare. 01382-805088 or e-mail: jonathanbower@clergy.net

St. Mary the Virgin, Arbroath

27th Christmas Fayre in the Church Hall. 10am - 12noon.
28th Choral Evensong for Advent Sunday. 6pm.

St. Martin, Dundee

26th Zumba Dance Class in Church Hall. 6-7pm. All welcome.

DECEMBER

St. Paul's Cathedral, Dundee

12th University of Dundee's Carol Service by candlelight. 5pm.
All welcome.

19th Sung Eucharist for Advent 4 with Young Church Nativity Play. 11 am. All welcome.

19th Cathedral Carols by Candlelight followed by mince pies and mulled wine. 5pm. All welcome.

23rd The Christingle Service - a carol service for the young and young at heart with drama and lighting of Christingles. 4.30pm. All welcome.

24th Midnight Mass by Candlelight with blessing of the crib and favourite carols. Preacher: Rev. Dr. John Bell, Iona Community. 11.15pm. All welcome.

25th Christmas Morning Eucharist followed by champagne and canapés. 10.30am. All welcome.

26th Christmas I. Sung Eucharist. 11am. All welcome.

St. Mary, Broughty Ferry

12th Advent 3 Lighting of the candle on our Advent Crown. 11am.

18th Lunchtime concert. Michelle Cressida, Soprano with Joseph Fleetwood, piano. Including songs by Richard Strauss.

19th Festival of readings and carols. 4pm. Followed by mulled wine.

24th Midnight Mass. Carols from 11.30 until 11.45pm.

25th Christmas Day, Communion at the Crib. 10am.

St. Mary the Virgin, Arbroath

22nd Service of Lessons and Carols. 7pm.

24th Midnight Mass. 11.30pm.

25th Children's Christmas Service and Communion. 10.30am.

St. Peter, Auchmithie

24th Carol Service. 6.30pm.

St. Martin, Dundee

3rd Zumba Dance Class in Church Hall. 6-7 pm. All welcome.
Come along and enjoy the fun **every** Friday.

24th Family Christmas Carol Service. 7pm. Refreshments to follow.

25th No Service.

26th Said Eucharist at St. Margaret, Lochee. 10.30am.

28th No Mid-week Service.

St. Margaret, Lochee, Dundee

21st Bingo in the Parish Room. 2pm.

26th Said Eucharist. 10.30am.



EPISCOPAL ELECTION - UPDATE

The Preparatory Committee held its first meeting on Wednesday, 10th November, to consider the process and to explore the needs of the Diocese.

The Preliminary Meeting of the Electoral Synod took place on Saturday, 20th November at St. James, Stonehaven, starting with a Sung Eucharist. The Primus took Synod through the process of Canon 4, answering questions and giving clarification. Members of Synod were then given the opportunity to put forward their own views on the needs of the Diocese and what they are looking for in a Bishop. These comments will be fed back to the Preparatory Committee at their next meeting on 17th December.

The vacant office of Bishop of Brechin has now been advertised in the Church Times and on the Provincial and Diocesan websites. Anyone can nominate any priest in the Anglican Communion provided they seek the nominee's approval. The closing date for nominations is **15th December, 2010**.

The Diocesan Standing Committee

DECEMBER (continued)

St. Ninian, Midcraigie, Dundee

9th Lighting of the Community Christmas Tree. 4pm. Our guest is Gary Robertson, the Dundee Poet.

19th Carols and Christingle. 6pm.

20th Carol Singers will be around your way - listen out for them.

24th Christmas Eve. 11pm.

26th St. Stephen's Day. 11am.

Please note the next Taize service will be on 30th January at 6pm.

St. Andrew, Brechin

12th Brechin and District Choral Union Carol Concern in church. 2.30pm

18th Making Christingles in the church hall. 10am onwards.

19th Christingle Service - Children of all ages welcome. 4pm.

24th Carols at the Dalhousie Centre. 2pm.

24th Christmas Eve Mass. 11.30pm.

25th Christmas Day Eucharist. 10.30am.

26th Eucharist with Carols. 10.30am.



HEARTFELT THANKS

May I say a very heartfelt thank you to everyone in the Diocese for the very generous gifts we received on the occasion of John's retirement. I know John was very pleased and touched, and so was I. I am delighted with my pretty jewellery and have had several occasions already to enjoy wearing it.

The Cathedral Service was a wonderful occasion - only to be expected, of course, for I have never failed to be uplifted by a big Cathedral 'do'. We were moved by the warmth of the good wishes expressed to us by everyone we had a chance to talk to, though incredibly sad to be saying goodbye.

We miss you all terribly, but we are pleased to say we have already been welcomed back warmly by our local congregation.

We have been blessed by our time with you all in Brechin, short though it was, and send our very best wishes for the future of the Diocese which will always be in our hearts.

With much love,

Gill Mantle.

