



THE RECORD



And they departed into their own country another way (Turn to pages 4 and 5 for a Christmas story from 1944)

Just God, Simply Christmas

Dear Friends,

Christmas is coming, and let me give you a gift! Look up the internet for “alternativity”, and feast on the ideas for Advent devotions, material for group discussions, thought provoking readings, suggested ways of enjoying Christmas without getting caught up in the hype, without being extravagant, thinking about how Christmas is celebrated in developing lands, and how Christmas can be the most difficult time of year for some people. The strap line is “Just God, simply Christmas” and asks when we read Mary’s hymn of praise (ST LUKE 1: 46-51) are we still worshipping the same God.

In some way or another Christmas is going to affect everyone over the next few weeks, and that is good for the Christmas story does not belong just to the church but to the world.

(Continued on page 2)

Just God, Simply Christmas

(From front page)

Somehow, the story captures the imagination. There is something about that first Christmas that touches us all, and everyone feels it. Somehow, we can identify with it, even though it took place in a distant land, long ago: it still seems very fresh, very real.

There's the wonder and the beauty of Mary; the fears and the courage of Joseph; the simplicity of the shepherds, the searching of the wise men. There's the cold calculating cruelty of Herod. So much in the story, and so much in its significance. We find we can identify with Mary in her silent wondering, with Joseph in loyal and trusting support. And sometimes we're like the shepherds, surprised by joy, finding salvation when we weren't even looking for it, and sometimes like the wise men who had to go on a long journey and change direction and seek advice, and go on looking till they find the Christ. Even the evil and callousness of Herod still seem very real in our own time.

The story, of course, is one of God identifying with us, becoming one of us. For the baby born in a Bethlehem stable is Emmanuel - God-with-us, God-for-us, God-in-our-midst. God unites himself with humanity that we might be at one with him, at one with the world, and at one with one another. A fourth-century saint said: "Jesus is everything God understands as human, and Jesus is everything humanity understands as God." If God became human to get his message across then we also want to become fully human, in the likeness of Christ.

God identifies with us, with our joys and sorrows, our hopes and fears. In the word of the carol "And he feeleth for our sadness, and he shareth in our gladness."

That's why the story touches us, because God touches us, and that is why we celebrate Christmas, because Christ has become one of us. He has lived with us and still lives with us that we might live with him forever.

Every blessing to you for Advent, Christmas, and the New Year.

David Lunan

Thanks from Kirstie

I would like to thank everyone in Orchardhill for the very generous gifts that I have been given, both from the congregation and from my mission team, adults and young people. It has been an honour and a privilege to have been involved in Summer Mission for the past 30 years. I am sure that I will miss it next year and wish all the very best to whoever takes over. Thank you all again.

Kirstie Watson

Christmas Services

At any time of uncertainty it is good to retain a level of continuity. The festive season and Christmas give us a chance to reflect on the joy of our faith and celebrate why we come together as a Church, to worship and be grateful for God's gifts to us.

This year we will have our usual Christmas services:

Family Christingle Service	6.30pm	Wednesday 24 December
Watchnight Service	11.00pm	Wednesday 24 December
Christmas Family Service	10.00am	Thursday 25 December

The Christingle Service is a short family orientated service which looks at symbolism of the Christingle orange as a way of explaining God's gift of Jesus to younger members of the family. This will be taken by Fergus Cook for the seventh year.

The Watchnight Service starts with mince pies and mulled wine while the Choir are singing favourite Christmas songs. The service and reflection will be led by Donald Carmichael.

The Christmas Day Service is another short family-orientated service where children are encouraged to bring along a gift they have received. This service will also be taken by Fergus Cook.

It is very easy to get caught up in the business of organising our Christmas celebrations, preparations for friends and family visiting, Christmas meals, presents etc. These services offer an opportunity to reflect on the real meaning of why we celebrate. Please take time to come to at least one of the service and bring neighbours or visiting family or friends. Let's come together as a church family to be grateful that we are all here for one another as a community of faith.

Celebrate Christmas with SoundWaves



SoundWaves will be celebrating Christmas on Sunday 14 December at 6.30pm in the church. The boys and girls have been working very hard preparing for this evening. Everyone is invited to come along to support them and enjoy an evening of Christmas celebrations. Tea coffee and shortbread will be served in the hall afterwards. Make a date in your diary, and SoundWaves hope to see you there.

Christmas 1944 in the Ardennes

On Christmas Eve 1944, when Fritz was 11 years old, there was a knock at the door of their little cottage in a remote corner of the Ardennes forest, close to the Belgium-German border.

His father had used the cottage when he went hunting. When their home town was being bombed his father sent his wife and Fritz to the cottage for safety. He had to stay behind in Monschau to fulfil his duties as an air-raid warden. But all too soon the Battle of the Ardennes, otherwise known as the Battle of the Bulge, was raging round them.

Here is the amazing, true story of what happened after that knock on the door of the cottage on Christmas Eve 70 years ago – as told by Fritz:

When my mother opened the door, outside were two men wearing helmets. A third man was lying in the snow. She immediately realised that they were Americans – The Enemy. Being armed, they could easily have forced their way into the cottage, but they did not. The wounded man seemed more dead than alive. Finally, Mother spoke: “You’d better come in.” The soldiers carried their comrade in and laid him on my bed. None of them spoke German. But when my mother tried French one of the Americans was able to communicate with her.

Before turning her attentions to the wounded soldier she gave me instructions: “The fingers and feet of the two others are frozen. Take off their boots and massage their feet.” Jim, Robin and Harry had lost contact with their unit. For the past three days they had been wandering in the forest looking for their comrades. Out of their greatcoats, they just looked like overgrown boys! And that was how Mother treated them.

“Go and fetch Hermann, and get some potatoes,” she said to me. Hermann was a great big rooster named after Hermann Göring, who Mother detested. We had been fattening the bird for weeks, hoping Father might join us for Christmas. Now Hermann was called on for a yet more urgent duty.

While Jim and I helped in the kitchen Robin attended to Harry, who had been shot in a thigh. Mother tore a bed sheet into strips and dressed his wounds.

I was setting the table when there was another knock on the door. Expecting to see more lost American soldiers, I opened the door. Outside were four young German soldiers. I stood paralysed for I knew that anyone harbouring enemy soldiers could be shot. Mother’s face grew pale, but she stepped outside and calmly said: “Merry Christmas.” The soldiers responded. They explained that they had lost their unit and wondered if they could stay the night. “Of course, you can,” Mother replied with the assumed composure of a desperate woman. “Come in and join us for a hot meal.” The German soldiers smiled for through the open door they had smelt the fragrance of poor Hermann.

One of our Orchardhill friends discovered this Christmas Eve story among papers which she had not looked at for many years. It was a happy coincidence that it was found this winter, the seventieth anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

Mother said sternly: "We already have three guests here. You might find it difficult to accept them as your friends." Her voice was now stricter than I had ever heard it. "Tonight is Christmas Eve, and there will be no fighting in my house. My guests are Americans." Mother looked firmly into each of their frozen faces. "You could all be my sons," she said. "One of them is wounded and fighting for his life. His two comrades are lost, hungry and as exhausted as you are. On this holy night you will banish all thoughts of killing."

The oldest German soldier, a corporal, stared at her. For a few seconds there was complete silence. The Mother said: "Put your weapons down here on this pile of wood." Stunned, the four soldiers did as they were told.

With a big friendly smile Mother found a place for everyone to sit. Then she resumed her cooking, taking no notice of the tense atmosphere. "Go fetch more potatoes," she told me. "They are all hungry, and on empty stomachs tempers can easily become frayed."

When I returned with the potatoes, one of the Germans was bending over Harry, inspecting his wound. He had been a medical student until a few months before. He explained that, thanks to the cold, Harry's wound was not infected but he had lost a lot of blood. He just needed rest and good food. The tension started to ease.

Before we tucked into Hermann, Mother said Grace. I could see tears in her eyes as she prayed: "Our dear, gracious God, please be the guest at our table tonight." When I looked round I could see tears in the eyes of all the soldiers – German and Americans. They were all boys far from home!

After the meal the Germans made a stretcher for Harry with two long, wooden poles and Mother's best table cloth. Then the corporal bent over Jim's map and showed the Americans how to rejoin their unit. "Follow this stream, and you will find your army again."

Mother now returned all the weapons. "Be careful, boys," she said. I hope you will soon all return where you belong. God bless you all." The Germans and the Americans shook hands.

When I went back into the house Mother had taken out the family Bible. I looked over her shoulder. It was open at the Christmas story of the Wise Men who came from afar bearing their treasures. She read aloud: "**And they departed into their own country another way.**"

December's Collection Rota

7	Fiona Bissett 638 6394; Dorothy Cartlidge 571 7839; Andrew Flockhart 586 8867; Dave Thomson 638 3289
14	Fiona Bissett; Richard Park 638 0273; Andrew Flockhart; Dave Thomson
21	Fiona Bissett; Richard Park; Andrew Flockhart; Anne Anderson 638 0689
28	Fiona Bissett; Richard Park; Andrew Flockhart; Anne Anderson

Rotas for January and the remainder of 2015 will be advised to collectors later this month.

Thanks from the Guides

Orchardhill's Guides wish to thank the congregation for their kind support in buying biscuits and cakes after the Youth Service on Sunday 16 November. £43.45 was raised for Camfed, a charity which educates women and girls in Africa.

Camfed's prompt acknowledgement included the following message: "Over the past five years Rainbows, Brownies and Girl Guides across the UK have helped to transform the lives of more than 2500 girls in some of the poorest parts of Africa. The money you have raised will help to buy essential items like shoes, uniforms, books and stationery for girls whose families are too poor to afford them – and without your support they would not have the chance to go to school.

"One of the girls Camfed supported is Maltiti, who lives in Ghana. She is one of nine children in her family, and although she did very well at school she was often at risk of dropping out because her family could not afford to pay her and her brothers and sisters' school costs. With support from Camfed, she was given everything she needed to stay at school.

"Maltiti, now dreaming of a brighter future, wants to be a nurse."

Flower Delivery

Thank you to all who have assisted with the flower delivery during this year. If you can, please add your name to a free Sunday over the coming months to help with this valued service.

Communion Roll

NEW MEMBER

We welcome into our Fellowship and Service:

George Robertson, 31 St Anne's Drive, Giffnock (district 18)

DISJUNCTIONS

Catriona Cooper, 16 St Anne's Drive, Giffnock (district 18)

Caroline Stuart, 22 Eastwood Avenue, Giffnock (district 26)

DEATHS

On 23 October 2014 Margaret Cook, Eastwood Court Nursing Home, Eastwoodmains Road, Giffnock (district 17)

On 3 November 2014 Nan Gardiner, Burnfield Care Home, Burnfield Road, Giffnock (district 30)

Deadline for January's *Orchardhill Record*

Sunday 14 December is the deadline for the January edition of the *Orchardhill Record*.

Contributions should be sent by email to record-editor@orchardhill.org.uk before 1.00pm or left in the relevant slot in the rack in the church corridor no later than 10.30am. We prefer contributions to be sent by email, and we cannot accept any handwritten or typed item that does not identify the source.

Any photograph or logo must not be embedded in the article. Please send photos and the like as separate attachments to allow the editor flexibility in laying out pages. The editor acknowledges every contribution. Contact him before the deadline if he has not confirmed that he has received your contribution.

The deadline for the February issue will be Sunday 11 January.

Please note that the editor's personal email address is billmcmurtrie@go-plus.net not one that ends with [.com](mailto:).

Orchardhill Calendar

DECEMBER

Mon	1	2.00pm	The Guild: On the Buses (Mr Alistair Whitelaw)	
Sun	7		Second Sunday in Advent	
		10.30am	Sacrament of the Lord's Supper	Rev Blair Robertson
Mon	8		The Guild's Christmas Lunch	
Sun	14		Third Sunday in Advent	
		10.30am	Service led by the Choir	
		6.30pm	Christmas with SoundWaves	
Thu	18	7.30pm	Big Sing at Giffnock South Church	
Fri	19		Giffnock Primary School Service	
Sun	21		Fourth Sunday in Advent	
		10.30am	Nativity led by Stepping Stones	
Wed	24	6.30pm	Christingle Service	
		11.40pm	Watchnight Service (preceded at 11.00pm with mulled wine and mince pies then carol singing)	
Thu	25	10.00am	Christmas Day: Family Service	
Sun	28	10.30am	Family Worship	

JANUARY

Sun	4	10.30am	Family Worship	
Sun	11	10.30am	Family Worship	
Mon	12	2.00pm	Guild Theme: "A World to Serve"	