St. Columba's Congregational Magazine





Winter 2021

St Columba's Parish Church Old Aisle Road Kirkintilloch G66 3HQ

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Due to coronavirus the Church Office is currently not staffed. However contact can be made via the Minister's details above or the Secretary's email below.

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Charity No. SC008735

From the Manse

What a year it has been!

Our hearts go out to all those who have lost loved ones to coronavirus. We feel for those who are unwell with it. Who would have imagined a tiny virus would have such a huge impact on our lives? And in so many different ways?

Just one of the unwanted effects of coronavirus has been to limit what we do. We are unable to spend time with one another as we did before. Churches, schools, shops, and cafes have had to close their doors or change the way they operate. Our freedom to travel has also been greatly curtailed.

Many of us have found these limitations to everyday life hard to bear. Yet this Advent season, as we consider the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, perhaps we are able as never before to appreciate that in doing so, He willingly endured enormous limitations to His way of life as He exchanged the glory of heaven for the poverty of this earth.

We often think of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our sin and it is right that we do so, but how often do we think of what He sacrificed simply to be born as one of us? One of our more modern hymnwriters puts it so thoughtfully:

> The One who strode among the stars And called each one by name Lies helpless in a mother's arms And must learn to walk again.

Jesus had no need to experience the limitations of being born as a little baby, let alone of being nailed to a cross as a man. But he did so out of obedience to His Father and out of love for us. And as he did so, He gave us an example to follow as even with the hope of a vaccine we continue to face limitations of one kind or another.

One of our older hymnwriters wrote, Jesus *"emptied himself of all but love".* It rather begs the question, what is left when our freedom to live as we want is limited? What is left when we are at our weakest? Is it love? The Apostle Paul wrote in this regard:

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus". Philippians 2:4-5.

May God bless each one of us richly this Advent Season. May we see our Saviour as never before and as we follow Him, may we practice His example of love.

Your minister and friend,

Philip



Deaths

It is with great sadness that we record the deaths of Margaret Black, Jean Robertson, Robert Moore, Seonaid De Bourne, Jean Roger, Jessie Davis, and Billy Reid. We extend our sympathy, love and prayers to all their family and friends. We were also greatly saddened to learn of the death of Stuart Bruce who formerly served as locum here at St Columba's. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants. Psalm 116:15.*

Births

We are delighted by the arrival of a number of new babies in our wider church family: Amelia, daughter of Colin and Kerry, and granddaughter of Morag and John Ball; Alba, daughter of Gillian and Mark, and granddaughter of George and Mary Kidd; Ava, daughter of Elizabeth and Craig and granddaughter of Elizabeth and Robert Marshall; and Evie, daughter of Bethany and Peter, and granddaughter of David and Anne White.

New Members

We are delighted to welcome Maureen Fleming, Louise Huggan and Graeme While into membership at St Columba's Church.

Elders

Sheena Wright and Brian Ashcroft have both retired from being active elders this year. We want to thank Sheena and Brian for all they have done as elders over many years at St Columba's. We greatly appreciate them both and are grateful for their continued fellowship with us.

Thank You.

Christine Moore would like to thank everyone for the flowers, plants and cards she received on the death of her husband Robert Moore in June of this year. She would especially like to thank Philip, Ian and Marilyn Gibb and others in the congregation for their support over the past months, it was greatly appreciated.

Julie, Linda and Gillian Reid would like to thank the Church Family and friends for the many cards, phone calls and flowers when Billy was in hospital. They would also like to thank the Pastoral team for their support - it was greatly appreciated. The family thank Philip for his visits, texts and support during Billy's illness - it meant so much to them all. With love and blessings from Julie Reid.

Achievments during 'Lockdown'

At the end of the summer, churches were asked by Presbytery to provide a summary of what they had been doing while church buildings were closed. Below is a copy of what was sent.

Since the churches have been closed we have recorded services weekly that can be accessed online. These services include an opening welcome and prayer, a reading, a sermon, prayer for others and 3 songs that some of the singing group record at home and send to one of our elders who layers it onto the online service. Various people have contributed to these services. For those of our congregation that cannot access the service online, CD's have been made and delivered to their homes.

In May and June we had a Zoom Bible Study where several groups met online and discussed 'The Story'. This was a great opportunity to share fellowship with each other.

On Sunday evenings there was also a Zoom prayer meeting led by our Minister.

Our Guild and Men's Club kept in touch with each other with weekly phone calls and emails as many of their members live alone.

The Pastoral Team sent cards to every member of the congregation and kept in touch with our most vulnerable people.

Our Minister delivered a small plant to elderly and vulnerable people to let them know they were

remembered during the worst of the lockdown.

Our carer and toddler group kept in touch via Whatsapp and Facebook. Plus a small goodie bag containing books was delivered to the homes of each of the children in June.

Our Friendship Club and Following Jesus Group for children and adults with learning difficulties received cards and phone calls from their leaders.

The BB kept in touch every Friday via Zoom where they held several quizzes.

The Sunday Club and Bible Class met each Sunday morning via Zoom where they carried on with their programme, which included Dear Theo which ran alongside the adult bible study of 'The Story'.

Moving forward now the BB are going to continue meeting each week via Zoom as are the Sunday Club and Bible Class for the foreseeable future.

Unfortunately the Guild and Men's Group will not be meeting as they would normally at this time of the year because a lot of their members are elderly.

We are working towards opening the church for worship on a Sunday morning following Church of Scotland and Scottish Government guidelines.

Anne Inglis Session Clerk

FINANCE UPDATE as at 5th November 2020

The Congregational Board are encouraged by the response of those members who give by Bankers Order or through Free Will Offering envelopes.

It is expected that the budget figure of £66,000 for the year will almost be reached.

Members who give through Free Will Offering envelopes would help the budget to be achieved by updating offerings before 31st. December.

Due to the lockdown and the closure of the Church and the Halls we have lost revenue in the form of Open Plate offerings and Halls letting income.

This is estimated to amount to £10,000 in 2020.

The above amount will be offset by an estimated £8000 by the receipt of JRS Grants from HMRC and from some savings in fuel costs.

The cost for Toilet Refurbishment of £16,065 in the current year has had an impact on our bank balances and it is estimated that our balances will decrease by between £7000 and £8000 for the 2020 year.

Neil Bathie Church Treasurer

Sunday Morning Services at St Columba's

Did you know there are three ways to connect with Sunday morning worship at St Columba's?

First of all, you can come in person! So long as government regulations at the time allow, that is. Our Task Group of Anne Inglis, George Kidd, Jackie Ringan and Liz Marshall have done a great job of ensuring that those of us who attend the church building for worship on a Sunday morning can do so as safely as possible. Numbers are restricted so you do need to book in advance. Please email or phone Anne Inglis (Anne's number is listed in the magazine directory) between 9 and 12 on the Thursday or Friday morning before the Sunday Service to book a place. Secondly, you can watch - or listen - online. Videos of all the services are released on YouTube for 10:30am each Sunday morning and can also be accessed via the home page of the church website, kirkintillochstcolumbas.org.uk. Please do be aware there is also an audio only version available on the church website. If you are ever struggling for a good internet connection, then the audio only version can be a good option.

Thirdly, if you don't have access to the web and so long as you live in or around Kirkintilloch, we would be glad to deliver a CD of the Sunday morning service to you each week. Please let the Minister know if this would be helpful to you or to someone you know.

We are really grateful to our IT Team of John Scott, David Muir, Fraser McCallum, Graham Inglis, and George Kidd for all their extra work in enabling us to worship together online and on CD. We also very much appreciate Jean Green and members of the Singing Group for the extra effort they have gone to over these months to make sure that together we can continue to praise God in music and song.

The Upper Room

During lockdown we still managed to order and distribute the May and September issues of "The Upper Room", and 15 of our church families continued to make good use of these short daily bible readings, meditations and a thought for everyday, with each one being contributed by a different person from all over the world. It is now time to send an order for the next issue covering the period from January to the end of April.

These little booklets, for which there is no charge, have been found to be both relevant and encouraging and so can be recommended wholeheartedly. Anyone wishing to sample "The Upper Room" for the first time is invited to contact lan or Marilyn Gibb by phone before 15th December. (Their number is listed in the magazine directory).

Short Prayer

LORD, when life changes, help me to adjust well. Sometimes it is little things, but sometimes they are bigger and life altering.

LORD, I will cling to you and trust you and pray that I may receive your grace for the journey.

Amen



1st Kirkintilloch Company

Anchor Boys

Who would have thought back in March the changes and restrictions to our lives we would be experiencing today. Like every other organisation in the world Boys' Brigade had to stop meeting face to face and realign our programme to meet the new guidelines set by the Government.

Thankfully the headquarters of Boys' Brigade came up with some excellent resources via their **#BB athome**, online resources which have enabled us to continue to meet via zoom and Facebook.

Sadly this year we were unable to have our annual parents night however we were still pleased to present our best boys with their shields by hand delivery to their door steps. This year our best 1st year was Luke Anderson, 2nd year Connor Maclaren and 3rd year Nathan Brown. Well done boys for all your hard work.

Sadly this year we lost a large number of boys to Junior Section leaving our numbers very low. The good news however is there are a number of new recruits who would like to join us once we can meet again face to face in the church halls,

After a short summer break we started back in September with four boys regularly taking part in our weekly zoom sessions, with the other boys not engaging due to them not being comfortable with virtual meetings. Like all organisations zoom is not for everyone and we look forward to seeing them soon face to face. We have held treasure hunts, crafting and our dedication service online with thanks to Mr Wright for leading our service. So far our highlight has to be our first ever virtual Halloween party with the Juniors and I can highly recommend this as a way forward. For once it was the parents who had to clear up the mess from the 'dookin' for apples and not the staff.

We also held our act of Remembrance where the boys learned the story and meaning of the Poppy and they coloured in a poppy template so that they could display them in their window on Armistice day.

By the looks of things we will also be holding a virtual Christmas party so we will be looking for some more messy games for the parents to tidy up after.

Meantime may the boys and staff take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed and safe Christmas even if it does turn out to be very different from our usual celebrations of the birth of our Saviour.

Best wishes to all,

David, Margaret & Fraser

Junior Section

Since the start of September the Junior section of the BB has met every week on Zoom.

The programme has managed to be as varied as it would have been if we had been in the halls, with Bible work, treasure hunts and Zoomersize to name but a few of the activities that we have done.

It's been heartening to have many of the boys joining in each week but we are all looking forward to a time when we can again be in the church buildings.

Lorna, David, Ross and Matthew

Company Section

Our last face-to-face meeting was on Friday 13th March but we were meeting via Zoom every Friday evening from 14th April until 17th July. Following a shorter than usual summer break we were back Zooming on 4th September. Meeting online is not for everyone and our numbers have dropped but we still have a hard core of 8 or 9 regular attenders.

The range of activities has included quizzes (some of which were produced by the boys), treasure hunts, building biscuit sculptures, card towers and Pringles rings, origami, wildlife photography, bike maintenance and a competition to see who could put the most socks on one foot in 30 seconds. It is fair to say, some activities have been more successful than others, but everyone has had fun taking part.

Mr Wright led Friday evening online services for Dedication and Remembrance, which were well received. The Remembrance service was followed up with a virtual walk round various war memorials in Kirkintilloch. The Company also provided a poppy wreath for use at both the online and live Remembrance services.

Unfortunately, Christmas will be quite different this year, no card delivery service, no outing, and no Panto to look forward to. We will just have to organise a big celebration when we are able to meet in person once again.

The BB nationally, has laid down very stringent rules with which we must comply before we can meet face to face. The guiding principle is the safety of children, young people, and leaders. We, as a Company, will not do anything, which jeopardises the health and safety of our members.

Season's greetings - have as good a time over Christmas as you possibly can under the circumstances but stay safe.

Allan Geekie

<u>Christian Aid</u>

It has been a very strange year for all charitable organisations and Christian Aid has been no different. We did manage to get the Spring Fayre held at the beginning of March before the lockdown and the proceeds of that have been sent to the Christian Aid head office in Edinburgh. The lockdown at the end of March meant that Christian Aid Week in May could not be held as usual with no house-tohouse collections or envelopes for donations given out in the churches. It was possible to donate online on the CA website and some donations were made in this way. However, the lockdown has affected adversely the amount of money that CA has been able to raise over the course of 2020. Representatives of the local churches in Kirkintilloch and Lenzie met on Zoom in October and after some discussion it was decided that March 2021 would be far too soon to organise another Fayre. We are hoping that it may be possible to go ahead with an Autumn Fayre in September 2021. As we progress through 2021 and hopefully the vaccine for Covid 19 will be rolled out we should have more information on what fund raising events will be taking place. One result of the lockdown has been that the Christian Aid office in Glasgow has been closed and is not likely to reopen so all information and correspondence will now be through the Edinburgh office.

The Christmas Appeal features the plight of farmers in Ethiopia who are facing severe drought, which is killing their livestock and causing the harvest to fail. The appeal is entitled 'Love builds hope this Christmas' and donations can be made to caid.org.uk/Christmas and the money raised will go to projects to secure reliable water sources and supply the farmers with seeds that grow in drought conditions. The Christian Aid magazine should also be available on the website and gives more details about the work that has been undertaken this year. I will be able to obtain paper copies of the magazine for distribution once restrictions have been lifted.

In the meantime I wish you all a happy, safe and peaceful Christmas.

Geraldine Fox.

Friendship Club and Following Jesus Group

We have been keeping in touch by text and WhatsApp to remind everyone how important it is to :-

Talk to Jesus in prayer.

Remember "The Father Himself Loves Me" and " Set my Feet on Following You", which are our signature choruses.

Keep smiling as this is the first thing that happens when we come into the hall for our meetings.

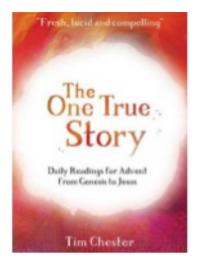
It has been lovely to exchange cards, photos and texts about how we have been passing our time during lockdown. Unfortunately, like most holidays our Prospects weekend at Tulliallan was cancelled but the Prospects Across Scotland Annual Celebration is on YouTube and has been enjoyed by most of the group and the leaders.

For Christmas our group will be sent nativity stickers and card to design a card to send to a friend or relative.

Santa can't visit as usual, but hopefully he will manage to find another way. So keep smiling everyone and remember that we are celebrating the birth of Jesus our Friend.

Pat Muir

Advent Readings



It's not too late to order a copy of 'The One True Story' written by Christian author Tim Chester, the book of daily readings for Advent we've been promoting recently. This is an excellent way of focussing our minds on the significance and the wonder of Jesus' birth this Advent season. Please contact Philip as soon as you can if you wish to buy a copy for only £4.50.

One reviewer writes helpfully, "The good news of Christmas did not begin – or end – with the Christmas story. *The One True Story* explores how the narratives and themes of the Old Testament find fulfilment in the coming of Christ. Tim Chester peels away the layers of familiarity that hinder us from seeing the babe of Bethlehem in all his glory...This book will draw you into the gospel story and help set your heart on Christ during this Advent season."

We're also doing something a little bit different this year as we plan to release a 5-minute video at 6pm each day during Advent (starting Tuesday 1st December). This will be a short thought - based on the verse for the day in the book. Whilst these short videos are standalone, taken together they will help paint a fuller picture of who Jesus really is, and they will also tie together with the material in the book.

Christmas Services at St Columba's

Our Sunday morning services during Advent will continue to be held both online and in the church building (so long as government regulations at the time allow). The service on the last Sunday before Christmas, Sunday 20th December, will be an all age service and may even feature a few members of the congregation in nativity costume! We are also looking forward to some extra services this year at St Columba's as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. We're sorry that this year these extra services will be online (and on CD) only. But please do let your friends and family know about them as we look to share the hope and joy that Jesus' birth brings. We are also planning to have a short Hogmanay service as we ask for God's presence and leading for the New Year. We hope to do a substantial part of the recording for the Carol Service, the Christmas Eve Service, the Christmas Day Service and the Hogmanay Service in the Church Building.

Here are the dates of these extra online services for your diary:

Carol Service	7pm, Sunday13th December
Christmas Eve Service	7pm, Thursday 24th December
Christmas Day Service	10.30am, Friday 25th December
(All ages)	-
Hogmanay Service	7pm, Thursday 31st December

Please note also that at 2pm on Tuesday 8th December we'll be releasing a short carol service online for the residents at Lammermoor Gardens. This will be led by our Minister, Rev Philip Wright and the Minister at Hillhead Parish Church, Rev Bill Finnie. Some of our own members and regular attenders are residents at Lammermoor and you may wish to view the service from your home as they do likewise. We are also making CDs of this service available to all the residents at Lammermoor Gardens.

THE GUILD (Session 2019/20)

Like all the other church organisations, The Guild finished abruptly in early March missing our last Speaker and an 'end of term' lunch including our AGM.

We all missed our last get together and it was unsatisfactory to have all the ends untidy, particularly as changes to the Committee would be made for Session 2020/21. However it was good to know that Margaret McCallum would be our new Convener and Janet Brown would replace the Secretary.

It was decided to send a letter to our members outlining other committee changes and detail the disbursement of funds from the Treasurer's Report. We would also keep in regular touch with everyone by telephone. We have all missed seeing each other and look forward to that good day when we can enjoy all we took for granted at The Guild.

Margaret Rogerson

We were saddened by the death of our loyal member Billy Reid and we send our condolences to Julie and the family at this time.

As with all the other church organisations we were unable to start the new session in September. As the church halls are not yet open we do not anticipate starting again until next September with a new syllabus.

We look forward to welcoming back our members and talk to them in person and also welcoming any new members.

Margaret McCallum

An Inspiring Poem for Guilds

We Will Meet

We will meet when the danger is over We will meet when the sad days are done We will meet sitting closely together And be glad our tomorrow has come.

We will join to give thanks and sing gladly We will join to break bread and share wine And peace that we pass to each other Will be more than a casual sign.

So lets make with each other a promise That when all we've come through is behind We wil share what we missed and find meaning In things that once troubled our mind.

Until then may we always discover Faith and love to determine our way That's our hope and God's will and our calling For our lives and for every day.

By Hans -Olav and John Bell

Dear friends,

We now have a ray of hope in the distance with the news of a vaccine but it will still be some time before we are able to get together with our friends in other Guilds.

We should have had our own Carol Service at the beginning of December and sadly this had to be cancelled but the Guild Leadership team are having a Virtual one on Friday 4th December at 3pm on YouTube and hopefully on Facebook. This will replace the 'Big Sing' which should have been in The Tron Church, Glasgow. There is an opportunity to donate to the Projects on the Website and a Virtual Soup Lunch on 14th February when again we can donate.

A Guild Magazine will be sent out in December with lots of information for all your members. We are asked to remember the Gift cards, also for our Projects.

I hope this finds you all coping with our recent restrictions which is not so easy in the bad weather and dark evenings.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and hope you have the opportunity to meet up with family. We look forward to 2021 and hope it is not too long until we can all meet up.

God Bless,

Morag Barron

Convener Glasgow North

MEN'S CLUB

The sudden end to our session happened just on the date of our competition finals night so that was abandoned together with our AGM and Annual Dinner.

With the continuing Covid issues, our 20/21 session will not take place but with the promising news of vaccines possibly becoming available next year our hope is that things will return to some degree of normality to allow the Club to restart next October.

In the meantime our trio of telephone members have been keeping in touch with all the club members. This has been well received especially by those living on their own although it does not make up for the fellowship of Monday evenings and the Tuesday morning coffee meeting at the Leisure Centre. However everyone seems to be keeping their spirits up.

Although we did not have an AGM it was decided to make our annual donation to the Church of £1000.

All our members were sad to learn of Billy Reid's passing. Billy was one of the original members, having been in the Club for 40 years. He was a most popular member and loved by all.

Our thoughts at this time are with Julie and family.

Edward Rogerson

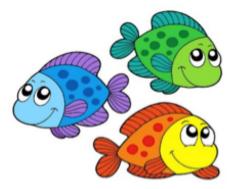
Christianity Explored

Christianity EZPLORED

Have you ever thought of signing up for a Christianity Explored course but haven't quite got around to it? Christianity Explored is a way of sharing the best news ever heard, and gives people space and time to think about the big questions of life. Over 7 sessions in Mark's Gospel, find out more about the life of the person at the heart of the Christian faith - Jesus Christ.

If you would be interested in attending a Christianity Explored course by zoom, starting beginning of February 2021, daytime or evening, please speak to Philip.

www.ceministries.org



Little Fishes Toddler Group

We have so missed meeting face to face over the past months. It has been so nice to bump into the families out and about in Kirkintilloch and see the little ones have grown so much! Many have said how much they have missed the group and we will hope to open as soon as is safe and practical to do so. In the meantime, it has spurred us into digital action and so we now have a Facebook page **@littlefishestoddlergroup** to keep in touch with the families. At the end of the summer term we gave out summer holiday bags with treats, a treasure hunt, a book, some seeds and activity ideas for lockdown. It was a nice chance to see the families and we got some lovely photos as feedback.

We are planning to deliver Christmas gift bags with some chocolate, a nativity story book and a fantastic knitted camel or donkey. We are so grateful to those who have been knitting – some have managed a small herd all by themselves! If anyone would still like to knit please contact Janet for a pattern. Please do pray for all our families that they might know the love of Jesus this Christmas. If you know anyone who would like to come to join us at Little Fishes when we restart (we meet for parents or carers with under 5s on Friday mornings in school term time) please do ask them to contact Gill (07934460752) or Janet in the church office and we can keep in touch with them about arrangements to start back.

Gill Wright

Henry the donkey (see below)





Book review.

Where memories go.

When I was 18 years old I started working as a journalist on my local paper 'The Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser.' I attended town council meetings, police courts, interviewed couples celebrating their golden weddings and sadly there were times when I had to listen to people struggling to cope with devastating news about the death of a child.

Years later aged 39 I was writing a weekly column for the Sunday Post when the editor phoned me at home to ask me would I do an interview for the paper.

"Who with?" I asked.

"Someone you may have heard off" he replied. "Margaret Thatcher our Prime Minister."

I felt my mind racing. "I'm not a political journalist" I stammered.

"Oh we don't want that. We want an ordinary wife and mum's views on our first female PM."

A week later this ordinary mum was in London walking along Downing Street to enter that famous door which opens silently as you approach.

The hour passed very quickly and my last question was "I believe you have problems with insomnia Mrs Thatcher - how do you cope with that?"

"Reading novels" she said instantly.

"And your favourite author is?

"Come up to the flat and you'll see my books" she replied.

I was ushered up that famous staircase lined with photographs of every British Prime Minister.

So amazingly I was soon in her flat opposite Dennis who offered me a gin and tonic, while she showed me a pile of her favourite books.

Years later after interviewing politicians, celebrities, aristocrats, minor royals, authors, actors and musicians I often wondered how a girl from Coatbridge got the chance to do a job she enjoyed so much.

People are endlessly fascinating and one of the nicest I ever met was Mamie Magnusson, wife of Magnus, mother of Sally. At her sprawling family home in nearby Balmore we spent a wonderful day together talking about books, children, husbands, and life.

Recently I've been reading "Where Memories Go" written by Sally about her mum's life and her battle with dementia.

It's a fascinating book and I'd recommend it to you. A story of courage, hope and a family's love for the warm, witty, loving woman who was Mamie.

Dementia is one of the cruellest diseases and steals away the essence of its victims but Sally creates a portrait of a woman of great dignity and courage who faced its challenges with infinite grace.

Dementia is one of the greatest medical, economic, scientific and moral challenges of our time and reading Mamie's story written by a loving daughter throws light and love into an area of darkness.

"Where Memories Go" is currently on sale at £10.99 and is well worth reading.

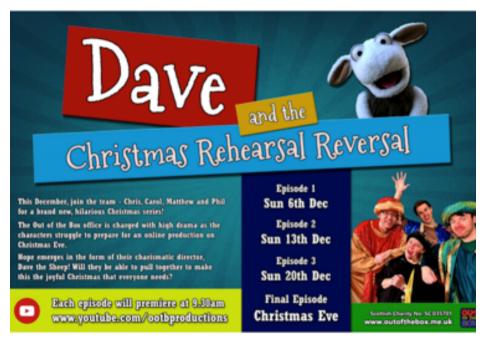
Margaret Clayton

John and I have enjoyed working on the Church Magazine and we would like to thank everyone who has contributed. We wish them and all our readers a very Happy Christmas.

Dave and the Christmas Rehearsal Reversal

Many of really enjoyed 'The Wise Men', put on here at St Columba's last Christmas by 'Out of the Box', a very talented Christian Performing Arts Charity. We're so disappointed that their planned visit to us this year with a new production has had to be put on hold. However, we're delighted that they're releasing online four episodes of 'Dave and the Christmas Rehearsal Reversal'! Families with primary aged children will love this production but we expect older – and younger – viewers will too!

Please pass on the word! Episodes will be released on youtube (<u>www.youtube.com/ootbproductions</u>) at 9:30am on Sun 6th Dec, Sun 13th Dec, Sun 20th Dec and on Christmas Eve!



SERVICES

Sunday Morning Service: 10.30am

Kirkintilloch: St Columba's Parish Church "To know Him and make Him known"