

"We aim to be a reflection of God to the community"

God Incognito

As the writers of Luke and Matthew project back to the birth beginning of the person they know as Jesus God's Anointed One (aka Christ), it's clear that the vast majority of the world of the time did not see through the disguise. No way would God be present in a newborn to an unmarried peasant family. No way born, in Luke's account, in the downstairs area where the animals are kept and in last minute temporary lodgings. No way a family, in Matthew's account, who become undocumented refugees on the run in Egypt.

God incognito, recognised by a very few, and all of them on the fringes. Not the movers and shakers of nation or society.

But those who see, do as Mum Mary does – they treasure it in their hearts. They have hope, hope that the future is God's future, and there will be peace and justice, because they know "God with skin on" is alive among them.

Oh that we could have that kind of hope here and now!



The adult Jesus that we read about in these gospels is clearly God with skin on. How he acted, how he related to others – the values, resolve, unconditional love; the pursuit of justice, the deep peace within, and the vision of kingdom ways becoming fully the world's way – these show the "Godness" of his being and doing. More people managed to recognise this when they met him as an adult.

Cont....



Unsurprising though, lots of people didn't, notably those for whom the economic and political status quo was either obviously to their advantage or they simply couldn't risk letting go of what they did have.



In so far as we know the stories – the adult ones and the birth ones – God is not incognito in Jesus for us. We celebrate, particularly at Christmas, the "incarnation" (Latin for God with skin on), singing carols with words and music that keep hope alive that our world's future can and will be God's future. *Our challenge is at another level. Do we recognise Christ with skin on in our world here and now?*

Or is Christ incognito to us, just as God was back at the beginning with Jesus?

Is our Christ locked into the stories we read and the songs we sing, just as God in Jesus' time was locked in their scriptures and traditions?

Now we recognise the "Godness" of Jesus from the way he lived the kingdom values. Can we use this as a model for recognising Christ-presence even in our messed-up world and society, with so much that is contrary to kingdom values?

For example, when we see right relationships, truthfulness, trust, kindness, caring, helping, peace-making, people striving for justice, we surely see the presence of Christ. So let's celebrate it and name these actions for what they are.



Think too of words that are used – kingdom words like respect, inclusion, welcome, gift, neighbour, and our Advent standards of hope, peace, joy, and love. These are all Jesus words – God words. And, as Presbyterian Moderator Rose Luxford wrote in her Christmas message, "Rather than seeing these as soft and sentimental, we see them as strong and purposeful." The more they are spoken, the more they are embedded in people, in attitude and

expectations. We can use them to do something Ollie Yeoman mentioned in his letter in the 21 November CO News – to *reimagine*. We see the world in all its harsh realities, including the tipping point of earth's capacity to supply human demands, and yet with prophetic imagination see the future through different eyes – God's eyes.

"Do not be afraid" could be the most important words we hear again this year in the Christmas story. If we are not afraid, we can be part of imagining and creating the future as God would have it be. Following the Way of Jesus.

Rev Dr Robyn McPhail



Tri-monthly Newsletter of The Alexandra, Clyde Lauder Union Parish ~ Dec 2024 /Jan//Feb 2025



Advent

In this Issue

- Robyn's Ramblings
- In memoriam
- Parish Mini Fair photo's
- Born Like Me
- Past & Upcoming events
- Meetings & Contacts
- Services and Contacts



Notice of Service for the
Closing of St Mungo's Clyde
2nd February 2025

PLANET EARTH

1. There once was a Bishop of Omagh, James Usher was his name. What he said in 1654 was that The universe began at 6 o'clock on the 2nd of October 4004 BCE.

2. In the nineteenth century a geologist called James Darwin was an observer of nature and travelled by ship to the Southern hemisphere and studied bird & animal behaviour.

3. Darwin came up with a theory of evolution being the main driver in the survival of species and even humans were in his sights as well.



4. On the 2nd October 1971 My child was born into a world whose scientists believed that the universe began at the time of The Big Bang.

5. An expanding universe surrounds us. Humans have not only polluted the planet they have also polluted the atmosphere with Space Junk.

6. How long will it take for new generations to right the wrongs to bring back the equilibrium of planet earth and the surrounding atmosphere?

Creation Prayer

Jesus Christ, teach us to empathise with Earth.
 Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation,
 cries for justice from the land, the seas and the skies.
 Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit in creation,
 groans of longing for a new creation.
 Jesus Christ, make our hearts sensitive to the songs of our kin, songs of celebration from the sea, the forest and the air. Christ, teach us to care.

Amen



IN MEMORIAM

Our thoughts and prayers to the families and friends of...

Nancy (Nan) Brownlie - funeral held on 3rd October 2024 At St Enoch's Church - Alexandra



Alexandra Clyde Lauder
 UNION PARISH

PARISH MINI FAIR 26th October 2024



Springtime snow @ St Enoch's, Alexandra / Photo by Don Melville

Thanks to the Social Action Committee and other members of the Parish for their help before, during and after the Fair. You are Awesome. In spite of the snow it was a success.



Notice the attire of our Customers! They still came and enjoyed the atmosphere, produce and I hear the plants & baking were exceptional.



Indoor photographs taken by Chris Beilby.



'I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day ... a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord.' (Luke 2:10-11)

Born like me

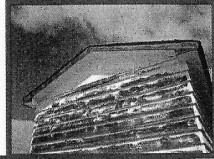
(based on John 21:1-14)

A king is born

Tick the pictures which best show things about the birth of God's Son.



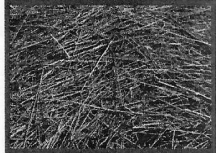
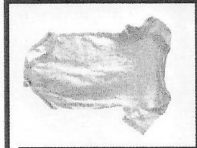
Where would a king be born?



Who would be at the birth of a king?



What would the baby be dressed in?

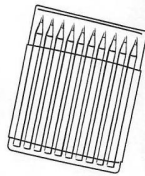


Where would the newborn king sleep?



Getting ready

Colour in the things you would pack for a newborn baby.



Past & Upcoming Events

ADVENT STUDY: Starts Clyde Monday 25th November @ at 2pm at Helen Dunn's home 96a Shields Street Please contact Sheryll Hanning (0271 173 0412)f or copy of study book. Starts Alexandra Tuesday 26th 10.00am in St Enoch's Foyer. Booklets are available in St Enoch's Foyer.




Cantabile Choir presents Sing Gently



Venue: St Enoch's Church & Lounge
Date and Time: Friday 6th December 7pm
Tickets: \$15.00—Cash door sales only

Light Christmas refreshments provided.


ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS BBQ LUNCH
WHERE: St Enoch's Church Grounds
12 Centennial Avenue
12.30pm 25th December 2024



St Mungo's Church Clyde

Saint Mungo's Church Clyde
A Closing service for St Mungo's Clyde will be held on Sunday 2nd February 2025 at 3pm.

This service will be led by Southern Presbytery Moderator the Rev Andrew Harrex. The Service will be followed by afternoon tea under the tree. All welcome.

Note: This will be the only service held on Sunday 2nd February.

Saint Mungo, also known as Saint Kentigern, Cantigernus or Cyndeyrn Garthwys, lived from 528 to 13 January 614. He is the patron saint and founder of the City of Glasgow. Kentigern was given the name Mungo, meaning something like "dear one", by St Serf, who ran a monastery at Culross and took in both mother and son. St Serf then oversaw Mungo's upbringing. At the age of 25, Mungo began his missionary work on the banks of the River Clyde.

REGULAR MEETINGS AND GROUPS

Weekly

Study Group	Will resume in February 2025 Date To Be Advised	3A Mayfair Grove Alexandra
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Monthly

Afternoon Fellowship	4th Thursday of the month 1.30pm Contact: Various	Various
St Mungo's Fellowship	3rd Wednesday of the month 2.00pm Contact: Sheryll Hanning	Various 449 2703
Parish Council	3rd Wednesday of the month Contact: Don Melville	St Enoch's 03 448 9233
Parish Evening Group	4th Wednesday of the month 7.30pm Contact: Linda Armstrong	Various 447 3612



REAPPOINTMENT of call to Rev Andrew Howley

The Congregational meeting followed the, Sunday 24th November service, to vote on the motion as presented.

“that the Alexandra Clyde Lauder Union Parish approves the further appointment of Rev Andrew Howley with agreed terms of call of .5 ministry appointment for up to 5 years from February 4th 2025”

That the ACLUP approves the further appointment of Rev Andrew Howley with agreed terms of call of .5 ministry appointment for up to 5yrs, from February 4th 2025. Peter Griffioen and Sue Melville spoke to the motion and took questions.

The motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

The appropriate notifications to Southern Presbytery, Methodist Synod & UCANZ will be made.

The Rev Anne Thomson, Chairperson of the Ministry Review Committee, discussed the appointment at the meeting.

EDITORS NOTE:: The ACLaim will only be available four times a year. The next ACLaim will be March/April/May 2024 please have any articles to me by **Monday 17th February 2025.** sent to me via email :ggordon@actrix.co.nz or Phone 448 8486 *Gay Gordon.* **CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS TO YOU ALL**

Your Pastoral Visitor Message:

Upcoming Worship Services 2024/2025

Dec 1st Alexandra **10.00am** Advent 1/Communion



Dec 8th Alexandra 10.00am Advent 2

Dec 8th 7pm /Community Christmas Carols /Baptist Church

Dec 15th Alexandra **10.00am** Advent 3

Dec 18th **Castlewood** **10.30am**
Ranui **11.00am**

Dec 22nd Alexandra **10.00am** Advent 4



Dec 25th Clyde Hall 10.00am Christmas Day

Dec 29th **Alexandra 10.00am** **Followed by**
Christmas 1 **Combined Churches** **Morning Tea**

Jan 5th Alexandra **10.00am** Christmas 2
Communion

Jan 12th Alexandra **10.00am** Epiphany 1

Jan 19th Alexandra **10.00am** Epiphany 2

Jan 26th Alexandra **10.00am** Epiphany 3

Feb 2nd **St Mungo's** **3.00pm** **Epiphany 4**
Clyde **Closing Service**

Feb 9th Alexandra **10.00am** Epiphany 5

Feb 16th Alexandra **10.00am** Epiphany 6

Dec 19th **Castlewood** **10.30am**
Ranui **11.00am**

Contact Us

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Visit us on the web at
www.alexchurch.org.nz

Like us on FaceBook

[Facebook.com/alexchurch](https://www.facebook.com/alexchurch)

Worship Times

Sunday:
Alexandra: 10.00am

If you require
transportation to
church please ask!

Telephone:-

Jennifer Bowie:
448 7369

Sue & Don Melville :
448 9233

Chris Beilby
021 449 296