DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 25 November 2023 - 10.30am - Loanhead Parish Church
Family Service followed by a walk, finishing at Straiton at 1pm where there are choices for lunch if you are hungry.

Sunday 25 November 2023 - 2pm - Loanhead Parish Church
Memorial Service for the bereaved

Saturday 02 December 2023 - 10am - 12pm - Loanhead Parish Church
Christmas Fayre and Santa's Grotto (more information enclosed)

Saturday 02 December 2023 - 7.30pm - Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Origin Scotland Christmas Special (more information enclosed)

Sunday 03 December 2023 - 10.30am - Loanhead Parish Church
First Sunday in Advent - Communion

Saturday 09 December 2023 - 9am / 11.30am - Loanhead Parish Church
Breakfast / Brunch with Santa (more information enclosed) - BOOKING REQUIRED

Sunday 10 December 2023 - 10.30am - Loanhead Parish Church
Second Sunday in Advent - Gift Service - with McTaggart Scott Brass Band

Sunday 17 December 2023 - 10.30am - Loanhead Parish Church
Third Sunday in Advent - Scratch Nativity followed by Christmas Party for all ages

Sunday 24 December 2023 - 10.30am - Loanhead Parish Church
Fourth Sunday in Advent - Readings and Carols

Sunday 24 December 2023 - 4pm - Loanhead Parish Church
Christingle Service - it's advised to arrive early for this extremely popular event

Sunday 24 December 2023 - 11.30pm - Loanhead Parish Church
Watchnight Service

Sunday 31 December 2023 - 10.30am - Loanhead Parish Church
Morning Service and Baptism of Finn White

Tuesday 09 January 2024 - 2pm - Loanhead Parish Church Hall
Guild Meeting - Scots Afternoon

Wednesday 24 January 2024 - 2pm - Loanhead Parish Church
Traditional Midweek Service

Friday 09 February 2024 - 7pm - O2 Academy, Edinburgh
Rend Collective (more information enclosed)

Tuesday 13 February 2024 - 2pm - Loanhead Parish Church Hall
Guild Meeting - The Vine Trust

loanhead parish church news

creating a place for everyone

NOVEMBER 2023

from the manse

Dear Friends,

Our last magazine saw us advertising the arrangements to celebrate our union with Bilston and the start of the parish grouping with Roslin. The services to mark those went well as we celebrated our new partnership and we will continue to develop the work and witness of the church in all three villages into 2024.

At this stage, most of the work happens independently with morning worship continuing in all three churches. Similarly, we are planning to continue to produce three magazines, one for each of the churches – so this magazine focusses on what's happening in Loanhead, though we are including some news of what's happening in Roslin and Bilston.

The Autumn also saw us celebrate our Harvest Thanksgiving and our Youth Dedication service – with so many youngsters there that Sunday that many of them were two to a seat. It was lovely to have the church so full and to see the youngsters enjoying being part of the church family.

This edition of the church magazine will catch some of what happened over the Autumn – but also sees us turn our eyes towards Christmas, with lots of information about events, activities and services over the Christmas period. It is always a busy one for us in church life as we celebrate together the birth of Christ - and seek to keep that at the heart of Christmas.

We also though want to reach out and share the good news with others – and Christmas is a great time to do that. One of the things I have been considering is whether we might create a tableau of the Nativity scene with holes cut for people to put their heads through. They then have their photo taken. I could see this working well outside any of the shops up at Straiton in the run up to Christmas.

Here is a picture of one produced by another church.

If we find time we might still do this in 2023 – or we might save it for next year.

The idea appeals to me as it would give us a way of helping people to connect with the Christmas story - and gives an opportunity to interact with people who might never come to church. I could see this leading to some interesting discussions and it would allow us to invite people to come along to some of our services over the Christmas period.

If you are reading this and think "I can help with that," then get in touch and we'll see if we can make it happen this year! It might be by helping to make the tableau or taking a slot to stand with it at Straiton. We might also take it to the schools!

For yourself too, in this busy season I pray you will know God's richest blessings and look forward to sharing with you in some of our services.

Yours in Christ

Graham Duffin

Session Clerk Update

Just a very short note this time around!

November already! Do you, like me, feel the year has gone in very quickly?

Since our last magazine we have had the two special services to mark our union with Bilston and the Parish Grouping with Bilston, Loanhead and Roslin. Both services were well attended by all three congregations.

Looking at the back of the order of service each week reminds me just what a busy calendar we have, especially over November and December. Hopefully you will manage to attend a few of these services and
social events.

The games/lunch session we had after the last family service was enjoyed by those who attended and I think a few of us may be adding Mexican Dominoes to our Christmas list! A board game Graham introduced us to.

Seeing the Remembrance Garden set up again this week reminded me just how grateful we should be to those who gave their lives for us all these years ago. Let us remember too all those poor families touched by the current situation in Gaza and of course Ukraine. Continue to keep them in your prayers.

May I send you best wishes for the coming Christmas season.

Blessings to you all,
Margaret Hurst

News from the Pews

WFO Envelopes

WFO Envelopes for 2024 will be delivered before the end of the year. If you would like a set of envelopes please speak to Angela Stewart or Margaret Hurst. If you are no longer a UK tax payer, please also speak to Angela or Margaret.

If you would prefer to give to the church by standing order or direct debit rather than the WFO envelope, please speak to Graham Duffin.

Tea and Chat Fundraiser

A tea and chat fundraiser was recently held in aid of MacMillan Cancer Research. £297 was raised on the day and this amount was topped up to £500. Many thanks to those who attended and donated.

The Leprosy Mission

The Penicuik Committee thanks all of our friends in Loanhead who came and supported our recent coffee morning. The event was a social and financial success with over £1,100 being raised.

We hope to hold another event next June and hope to see you all there.

With grateful thanks
Roberta Mackenzie

Midweek Traditional Service

There is no traditional midweek service in December. The first midweek service in 2024 will be held on Wednesday, 24 January. If you need transport for this please speak to the minister.

THE BOYS' BRIGADE

>the adventure begins here

The Boys Brigade have been busy celebrating the 140th year of the organisation.

Our company section boys took part at an event in Glasgow. The boys had a great day as they completed team based tasks, which took them around the city, enabling them to visit the famous landmarks and buildings.

All three sections were in attendance on the actual anniversary date, 4th October at Edinburgh Castle Esplanade. A battalion event which saw Historic Scotland kindly turning the Castle Blue in honour of the Boys Brigade. A photo of the event is below and the boys enjoyed the special cupcakes they got.

Other celebrations have included us having a very fancy anchor shaped cake, a film night for the Junior section and the Anchor boys making picture of what they enjoy at Boys brigade.

The junior section also took part in filming a promotional video for the Battalion to show the activities that we get up too. The boys had a great night learning about how things are filmed.

Finally, 4 of our most Senior boys (Lewis Ralston, Declan Carr, Ioan Jones and Ross Simpson) and Lieutenant Andrew Ralston are travelling to London to take part in the Remembrance parade which passes the cenotaph. This is a huge honour for us and whilst in London it is hoped that our MP Owen Thompson will be able to show the boys and Andrew around Parliament.

We are really encouraged to hear how much the small groups have been enjoying The Bible Course material from the Bible Society. It has been really valuable to explore the BIG story of the Bible and increase our Bible confidence. Most groups will finish the course by the end of the year with the aim of using our new knowledge to explore a particular book of the Bible in more detail in the New Year.

We would love to see more of the congregation taking the opportunity to deepen their faith by joining the conversation and becoming a small group member. Please contact Amy Pickering (amyrichards2424@gmail.com) to let her know which group from below would suit you best. If none of them work for you, please let us know and we will look into forming a new group.

Sunday 9am-10.25am
Amy, Jenny, Hoi, Bronwen (Small hall at church)

Tuesday 11.30am-1pm
Catriona, Lillias, Claire Macintosh
(home in Loanhead)

Tuesday 7pm-9pm
Graham, Martin, Leslie, Campbell (Manse)

Tuesday 7pm-9/9.30pm
Jane, Lorna, Margaret Hurst, Shelagh, Kirsteen, Jean, Alison (Manse)

Evening flexible around availability of the group
Jackie, Tom, Kayleigh, Audrey (home in Penicuik)

Fun and Games After Family Service

Following on from the extremely successful Board Games afternoon we held in October, we are thinking of holding one on Friday 29th December with games for all ages – including adults. It will depend on interest – so please let Catriona or Graham know by email if you would be interested in coming along.

Bible Course in 2024
If you aren't part of a small group but would appreciate completing the Bible Course please speak to the minister. If there is enough interest, he will run the 8-week course in the early part of 2024 - possibly in a morning or afternoon instead of an evening.

Courses or Events to explore faith
We are beginning to think through how we create events or courses for those who don't attend church but are interested in exploring faith. If you have ideas or would like to be involved in this, please speak to Amy (contact details above.)

We encourage you to attend two faith events taking place in Edinburgh. The first is the Origin Scotland Christmas Special at Usher Hall on Saturday, 02 December from 7:30 pm.

Led by the Origin Scotland Choir, Band and Orchestra, this will be a night of Christmas music as well as a retelling of the Christmas story.

You can order your tickets by visiting www.originministry.org. We will be meeting for food beforehand so please let Amy Pickering (07815 769184) know that you have booked a ticket so she can organise the table booking somewhere nearby.

The second event is from the Rend Collective, a popular Northern Irish Christian folk rock worship band who are playing at the O2 academy in Edinburgh on Fri 9th Feb from 7 pm. It is going to be a brilliant evening of live worship.

You can order your tickets by visiting www.ticketmaster.co.uk and typing Rend collective in the search box.

If you would like to meet for some food beforehand then please let Catriona Anderson (07961 098208) know and she will be in touch with arrangements.

Loanhead Parish Church Guild

The dates and topics for the first guild meetings of 2024 are shown below.

Tuesday 9 January 2024 at 2pm
Scots Afternoon

Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 2pm
The Vine Trust

Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 2pm
Ian Gardner (Rosslyn Chapel)

You don't need to be a member and our meetings are open to everyone. We do hope you'll come to join us where a warm welcome awaits you.

Mary Millan (Convenor)

Birthday Wishes

Congratulations to Margaret Green (pictured) who recently celebrated her 90th birthday.

Congratulations also to Ruby Stevenson who celebrated her 80th birthday, Jenny Mills who celebrated her 90th birthday and Ella Gilbertson 95th birthday.

Harvest Thanksgiving

Thanks to all who contributed to our Harvest Thanksgiving Service. Gifts of food were given to Midlothian Foodbank to support families through their work and a total of £245 was donated to the Community Outreach Fund - a timely boost to the fund which helps families in times of need.

MOPS

MOPS is going really well with lots of new mums joining. Already we have covered topics such as Money Management, Celebrating Diversity, Good Self Talk, as well as a live Q&A session with a recently retired Health Visitor.

We are looking forward to welcoming a local Organisation and Decluttering expert, as well as our Christmas party, before we break for the holidays. However, with the new mums comes more babies and our crèche ladies need help. If you can spare a couple of hours on a Monday morning, once a fortnight or once a month, to play with babies and toddlers please contact Catriona at canderson.lpc@gmail.com

A THANK YOU FROM PAM & JOHN MACKAY

I would like to thank everyone from the Church, the Guild and the Pastoral Care Group for all the cards, flowers, home baking and gifts I (Pam) received after an emergency operation on my head.

Thank you also to all the visitors I received, both in the hospital and at home, that helped aid my recovery.

Also, a huge thank you to Graham and Jane for the assistance they gave John prior to my departure to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

God Bless You All,
Pam and John

Children and Youth Work Update

Weekend Away

We took 6 young people away with us for the weekend to Teen Ranch. This was a successful weekend with the children really enjoying the activities that were on offer including horse riding, canoeing, BMX, air rifles and archery. At various times in the day the Teen Ranch staff led us in worship and reflection. The children fully engaged in this and it prompted their own conversations at other times during the weekend.

Schools Work

Recently we have visited both Loanhead and Paradykes Schools and worked with 11 classes. We looked at the story of the Good Samaritan and the golden statue. We played games and spoke of how we should stand up for what we believe in and also help others, no matter who they are. We spoke of how we can do this in our lives and the impact it has on others when we care for one another.

Friday Youth Group

We have been running again on a Friday night with increased numbers. Times change and pool, table tennis and FIFA isn't hitting the mark so we are exploring with the older youth how we can develop what we do on a Friday night.

We have also started to meet as the leadership team on the Friday to share in bible discussion and have met once using the same material as the other groups with us going to continue this each week after youth group.

Sunday Youth Group

On a Sunday we have started a new group using some material to look at deepening the faith of some of the young people who have been around church for a while. This has been looking at worship, discussions and prayer time. We are hoping this will be a time of growth for those 11-14 year olds on their faith journey.

Unite

We have been discussing with other churches about youth events for churches to meet together. We have had one evening meeting and have another coming up at the end of November. A great chance for our youth to meet other youth from churches in Midlothian. A great way to meet new people and share together.

Sponsor a Day

From 2024 we will be giving you the opportunity to sponsor a day at the church. The day could be a birthday, a wedding anniversary, a chance to remember a loved one who is no longer with us, or anything else that is of a significant interest to you or your family.

Sponsoring a day will allow us to raise important funds to continue the vital work the church undertakes in our community.

Details of the sponsorship will be displayed on our Facebook page and on the screen on the church the Sunday before the date in question. Equally, if you would like your sponsorship to remain anonymous, that is fine.

There is no set cost for sponsoring the day. We just request a donation that you are comfortable with.

For more information, please email sponsorshiplpc@outlook.com or speak to Paul on a Sunday, either before or after the service.

Bilston and Roslin Update

A grant from the Church of Scotland Seeds for Growth Fund allowed us to pay for Fischy Music to lead a day in both Bilston Primary and Roslin Primary Schools in early October. The days were well received as the children sang some old favourites like Build Up One Another and Welcome Everybody, alongside some new Fischy songs, including Love, Love Love Is Always Going To Be Here. It was great to see the youngsters engaging so well with the songs and to get really positive feedback from the staff as well.

A holiday club was planned for two days over the October break, but ended up being just one afternoon with three youngsters. However it was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon as we shared in a story from the bible, sang some Fischy songs and made gingerbread men. The youngsters who were there thoroughly enjoyed it and it has given us something to build on.

Relationships with Bilston Primary and Roslin Primary are developing positively, with the minister in leading assemblies and others from the church going into the school, to help with supported reading (Roslin) and times to chat (Bilston.)

It had been hoped to appoint a Locum at Roslin as John Mitchell has had to withdraw but that hasn't proved possible to date. The search continues – and meanwhile Sunday mornings at Roslin and Bilston are covered by John Mitchell, David Hogg and Mary Millan.

Both Bilston and Roslin Churches now have Facebook pages which will be updated regularly. If you get a chance, visit the pages and press "Like" or follow the pages.

Loanhead Remembers

As Loanhead's contribution to mark this year's Poppy Appeal, a garden of Remembrance and poppy display was once again created in the grounds of the Church. The display contained almost 2,000 hand knitted and crocheted poppies, the work of many local residents and others with Loanhead connections from as far afield as the south of England and Northern Ireland.

At night the display and church building was floodlit in red as part of Poppy Scotland's "Light up Red" campaign.

The Garden of Remembrance featuring over 150 small wooden poppy crosses bearing the names of those from Loanhead who made the supreme sacrifice in the first and second world wars was open for those who wished to visit and contribute to the poppy appeal.

A two minute silence took place at 11.00 am on Saturday 11th November followed by a short act of remembrance.

Loanhead Parish Church wishes to thank everyone who has contributed the poppy display.

Thanks to everyone who helped us with refreshments at the firework display on Friday, 03 November. Over £400 was raised for the church. Thanks to Joe Gilhooley for this photo.

Praise (and Pasta)

Midlothian Churches Praise Night

The Praise Night in September was a positive evening with almost 200 people attending. It was great to have Rev Pamela Kennedy back sharing with us - and to see the large painting she had brought as she spoke about how worship changes things.

The next praise night is on Sunday 04 February at St Johns, Dalkeith.

Praise & Pasta

We haven't held a Praise & Pasta event for a few months but we are planning one for late afternoon on Saturday 13 January. This gives us an opportunity to enjoy contemporary worship in a more informal setting and then share in a meal together. Do join us if you can.

Pastoral Care Update

We all went on a Summer Holiday!!

On a very wet Wednesday afternoon in September we all came in out of the rain and took a trip down memory lane as we reminisced about holidays in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. We remembered, and chatted about, the places we'd been, the outdoor pools in which we'd shivered, the piers we'd wandered along, the entertainment we'd enjoyed and the accommodation (undoubtedly without en-suite!) we'd had. We remembered our means of transport including the cars in which we sat at the roadside waiting for the radiators to cool down and stop hissing! We also sang along to some of the songs of the time.

We took a break to savour ice creams (99s no less!) and to nibble traditional puff candy as we strove to remember as many names of the sweeties we used to get. We must have come up with at least 50! We finished with a good old cup of tea and some shortbread.

The 'sun' was shining in the hall that afternoon even if the rain was teeming down outside.

We are now looking ahead to Christmas and hopefully to an afternoon of carols and songs with the local schoolchildren and in the new year we'll seek to arrange another event.

As always, please keep us informed of anyone who would appreciate support from the Pastoral Care Team.

Alison Chalmers

Once again we are planning to provide Christmas gifts for children aged 0-15 years in our community. All donations of toys and gifts are most welcome and we would encourage you to join us at the gift service on the 10th December and leave a gift under the tree. This year we will also have donation drop boxes at The Link, Loanhead Library and The Works at Straiton from the 19th November to the 8th December.

If you prefer to make a monetary donation, that is also very welcome. All the money donated is used to purchase gifts and toys to supplement the other donations and allows us to ensure that all the recipients receive a selection of gifts on Christmas morning.

Last year was our largest outreach so far, and we expect this to continue to grow so all support is gratefully received.

If you would like some guidance to help you buy gifts this year you can collect a gift tag from Caroline Brownsell or Kayleigh Brown.

Thank you for your continuing support,

Community Outreach Team

Don't be alone on Christmas Day

We are planning to host a Christmas Day meal in the small hall of the Church at 2.30pm. Although Christmas Day can be a busy family day for some, it can also be a tough day for others.

Please don't stay at home alone - we would love to spend a few hours on Christmas Day with you celebrating the birth of Jesus and enjoying Christmas dinner, with some fun table games, music and a few laughs.

If you would like to join us, please let Kirsteen, Audrey or Graham know. If you know of someone who would like to come along, please pass on their contact details.

If you would like to help to set up, cook or with transport that would also be greatly appreciated.

Shoebox Appeal

On Wednesday 25 October, thirty-four filled shoeboxes and a bag of additional clothing were collected and started on their way to eastern Europe.

Blythswood Care will add a Bible storybook for children, a book for teenagers or a calendar with Bible verses for adults.

This year, the shoeboxes will be sent to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. Many thanks to everyone who

either filled a shoebox, donated items for inclusion in a shoebox or donated money to Blythswood Care which will help with the cost of transportation.

Your gifts will bring hope to someone in need this Christmas.

Christmas Fayre

On Saturday 02 December between 10am and 12pm we will be holding our Christmas Fayre. There will be several stalls and a Grotto because Santa has confirmed his attendance.

Entry is £3 for adults which includes tea / Coffee and a mince pie- please keep an eye on our social media channels for more information. Santa's grotto will be £2 per child and includes a small gift and an opportunity for you to take photos with Santa in his Grotto.

Stalls will include BBs and Girl Guiding. We would love to see you there to support the stallholders from the local community and the church.

Breakfast with Santa

Despite it being his busiest month of the year, Santa has agreed to visit us again on the morning of Saturday 09 December. for breakfast and brunch. The breakfast sitting will be at 9am and the brunch sitting at 11.30am.

Tickets sold fast last year and are expected to sell fast again this year so please go to our Social Media channels and also the intimations at Sunday services for details on how to book.

Scratch Nativity

Last year we had a script for a Nativity Service and invited people of all ages to come to the service dressed up to take part.

This year, at our 10.30am service on Sunday 17 December we are planning to do the same thing all over again – so come along and join us dressed up as a shepherd, wise man, angel, Inn keeper, Mary or Joseph. Or push the boat out and come as a sheep or donkey.
It gives us a great way of reminding everyone about the story that lies at the heart of Christmas.

Christmas Party

Following our Nativity service on Sunday 17 December we are planning a Christmas Party for all ages.

Join us for something to eat and then some party games – with a visit from Santa to round things off.

Christingle and Watchnight Services

We are back to holding a single Christingle service this year which takes place at 4pm on Sunday 24 December. Our Watchnight Service takes place at 11.30 pm on the same day.

There are no bookings required for the Christingle or Watchnight Services. Just turn up – but come early if you want a good seat at the Christingle service!