

# Ardoch Parish Church

## Sunday 13th December 2020

Rev Mairi Perkins welcomes everyone to our Service  
on the 3rd Sunday in Advent



### Our first hymn is

### It was on a starry Night

It was on a starry night, when the hills were bright  
Earth lay sleeping, sleeping calm and still.

Then in a cattle shed, in a manger bed  
a boy was born, king of all the world.

Chorus: And all the angels sang for him,  
the bells of heaven rang for him

for a boy was born,  
king of all the world.

And all the angels sang for him,  
the bells of heaven rang for him  
for a boy was born, king of all the world.

Soon the shepherds came that way  
where the baby lay and were kneeling, kneeling by his side.  
And their hearts believed again

for the peace of men,  
for a boy was born, king of all the world.  
Chorus: And all the angels sang for him,  
the bells of heaven rang for him  
for a boy was born,  
king of all the world.  
And all the angels sang for him,  
the bells of heaven rang for him  
for a boy was born, king of all the world

## **Prayer of Adoration and Confession**

Our souls reach out to you our God,  
we rejoice in the knowledge of you.  
This week we come before you  
And ask that you,  
look with favour on your  
humble servants.  
We, like Mary the mother of Jesus,  
give thanks:  
for all the great things that you have done for us;  
for your unending mercy, poured out on all;  
for the strength to walk with you  
through the trials of this life;  
for the knowledge that through your grace  
we are your beloved, blessed always.  
We give thanks that in you  
the weak will find strength;  
the hungry will be fed;  
the fearful will know peace;  
the poor will have their needs met;  
the powerful will know their place;  
and all peoples will be united in your love:  
in a world of pain and distraction we may not  
always fulfil your wishes, but we ask today  
for your help as we try to bring this new life ever closer.  
Throughout the ages of our world,  
you have been there,  
protecting your people,  
supporting and sustaining  
keeping and shielding,  
in your mercy, you have shown us undying love

and in that love, you sent your only  
son to be with us forever.  
In this Advent season, as we look forward  
to the celebration of his birth,  
we give thanks for all that you have given us,  
all that we are and all that we can do in your name,  
today and every day.  
Lord It is almost here,  
only a few more sleeps to the big day,  
we are excited,  
we are waiting,  
we want to know what is going to happen,  
but we have to be patient.  
We hear the story of Mary,  
how excited she must have been,  
how scary it must have seemed.  
Thank you, God, for sending  
your son Jesus to be with us,  
the real gift at this time of year.  
Even though we are excited about all the  
celebrations that come with  
Jesus' birthday, we pray that  
you will help us to remember what is  
most important of all  
that we are celebrating the  
same baby that Mary was told to expect,  
all those years ago  
and that he can change our  
lives just as much as hers.  
In the darkness,  
in the long nights,  
in the short days,  
in the noise,  
in the quiet,  
we wait and prepare.  
In the midst of joyful expectation,  
in the midst of painful remembering,  
we reflect on the year that has past  
and look forward to what is to come,  
all the while singing of God's  
steadfast love.  
In a world aching from

division, disease, intolerance, poverty, and war,  
we await his coming,  
to bring peace and unity,  
to nourish our body's  
and our spirits.  
Today we wait and prepare,  
to celebrate his coming  
once again, to heal this world  
to gather us in love,  
and to be with us forever.  
Amen.

## **Heather McDonald reads from Luke Chapter 1 v 26-56**

Heather introduces the next hymn which is

### **“O Holy Night”**

*Words & Music: Adolphe Charles Adam, Bart Millard, John Sullivan Dwight,  
Pete Kipley, Placide Cappeau © Words Public Domain*

### **Mairi's Reflection**

I know it is Christmas and all that, and everyone is busy singing carols and preparing for nativities, though from a particularly novel and peculiar angle this year,

*but I have to interrupt.*

*My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.*

*And as the festivities, and attempts at carol services and Christmas videos are put together for Christmas Eve, and technology is being used like it never has for the Christmas message*

*I have to interrupt.*

*Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.*

And as countries compete in new ways as we pull ourselves through the coronavirus pandemic, and we fight over vaccines, and put national economic plans in place, rather than global, and high streets reel in the wake of covid-19,  
*I have to interrupt.*

*He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.*

And as administrations settle in the US and the fallout thereof, and the UK skirts with the lie of the land due to Brexit and China and the West and Russia fall out, and the world shrinks in its vision as people's expectations fall between what they would expect at this time of year and what is in reality possible,

*I have to interrupt.*

*He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;*

And as communities redraw the paradigm of our age in the light of coronavirus and political changes, and injustices arise in their wake that have the potential to be used to redraw how we do economics and neighbourhoods and welfare and church, and the chance is missed,

*I have to interrupt.*

*he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.*

The reality is that in the midst of our world right now—and it so happens to be the legacy of pandemic that has given us the greatest existential experience of a generation—God breaks in with a song. It is a song that interrupts. It is meant to. It is meant to jar and annoy and provoke us. That is what happened first time around to a young woman whose life was pushed into the place of an outcast. And it still must.

This song of Mary has upset and annoyed governments, who have refused to let it be spoken, and people of faith who would rather surrender to the Victorian romance of Christmas, interrupts all of that with the core theme of incarnation.

It is a powerful message because it is a message of hope and hope is powerful when it disrupts the ways of the majority and powerful. It is a vision of another way of organising the world and vision is powerful when it confronts those who have relied on an alternative that is less that

adequate. It is a word of justice and justice is powerful as a motive for those who have lived with injustice.

And so God interrupts Mary's life, a Nation, the powerful, the politicians and the theologians. God interrupts the church, the season and the world as each surrenders to what it imagines is inevitable, post pandemic, with a reminder of what is possible now more than ever before. May we interrupt the season with God's song, God's message, God's word.

Luke 1:46b-55 (Magnificat)

## **Prayers for Others and Ourselves**

Loving God, in your unending love you sent an angel to Mary, telling her that she is blessed and highly favoured; as you were with her, we know today that you are with us and we give thanks.

Knowing your presence and rejoicing in the surety of your love we pray today for your blessing and your guidance.

On this winter's day we remember the gift of your creation, given to us for sustenance and shelter, for us to enjoy and to protect.

Yet we have squandered this gift, and put the lives of future generations in jeopardy. We ask for the strength to make changes now to protect and renew our planet before it is too late.

In this time of uncertain futures, we pray for your church, both world-wide and this community of believers gathered before you today,

Grant us the wisdom to create and support new growth both spiritually and numerically, as we dedicate ourselves once more to your great commission.

At this time of plenty, we give thanks for all that we have, for the joy that this season brings

and the time we set aside to celebrate, but we also remember those among us and those around us with little, who struggle and go hungry, help us to be more generous and more loving this year.

We pray, today, for ourselves, your beloved children, as we seek to follow you.

As Christmas approaches, and expectations of plenty, of

community, of happiness are set,  
we remember that not all people enjoy this time of year,  
that the joy of others can cause pain in some,  
We ask for the wisdom to care for and be sensitive to those  
who need our help at this time of year.

In the midst of fear, swamped by powerful emotions, Mary,  
who became mother of God,  
took courage in both hands and offered:  
Here I am.

Mary acceded not out of meekness or naïveté, but in  
boldness and the fierceness of love.  
As we approach the Incarnation in the midst of pandemic  
with fear all around and emotions overwhelming how can we  
offer our:

Here I am.

Offering not by repressing our fear or denying our emotion  
but, in the midst of those, dredging up a vestige of faith.  
Faith that acknowledges wherever we are, whoever we are,  
God's invitation to us is generous and grace filled:  
to be midwives of God for this day.

In the midst of the trauma in which we live may we muster  
courage, boldness, grace and fierce love, offering to God:  
Here I am.

Amen

**The Hot Chocolate Club members are contributing  
each week to a part of The Story and this week's  
script is for two voices and asks the question**

**Who are you?**

**This can be viewed on the Church Website**

**Our closing hymn is "Christmas Hallelujah"**

I've heard about this baby boy  
Who's come to earth to bring us joy  
And I just want to sing this song to you  
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth

The minor fall, the major lift  
With every breath I'm singing Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

A couple came to Bethlehem  
Expecting child, they searched the inn  
To find a place for You were coming soon  
There was no room for them to stay  
So in a manger filled with hay  
God's only Son was born, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

The shepherds left their flocks by night  
To see this baby wrapped in light  
A host of angels led them all to You  
It was just as the angels said  
You'll find Him in a manger bed  
Immanuel and Saviour, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

A star shown bright up in the east  
To Bethlehem, the wisemen three  
Came many miles and journeyed long for You  
And to the place at which You were  
Their frankincense and gold and myrrh  
They gave to You and cried out Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

I know You came to rescue me  
This baby boy would grow to be a man  
and one day die for me and you  
My sins would drive the nails in You  
That rugged cross was my cross, too  
Still every breath You drew was Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

**This is the Christmas Hallelujah lyrics as sung by Kaylee Rodgers and the Killard House Special School choir. The hymn is derived from Leonard Cohen's song Hallelujah which has been given a Christmas reworking. It is sung here by Kaylee Rodgers and the Killard House Special School Choir**



## **Benediction**

May our souls magnify the Lord,  
may we go from our time of worship  
with our spirit rejoicing in God our Saviour,  
emboldened and challenged,  
to serve the Lord  
and the manifesto of God.  
In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Amen

## **Intimations**

### **Christmas activities**

The Guild's beautifully knitted angels have been safely delivered to Braco school and some are on the Christmas tree in the Church grounds.

Listen for the Christmas carols played on the next two Sundays at 10.30 relayed through our new sound system at the Church.

More details on the Community Carol Walk starting on 18th December will be posted on the web site.

Watch out for the community Advent Number Hunt in windows all over the village.

### **Youth Team, Ardoch Parish Church**

Christingle will be a little different this year!

It will come in the form of a "do it at home" pack, delivered to your doorstep.

The pack will contain everything you need to make your own Christingle [including an orange and instructions] All we ask is that you light your candle around 5pm on Sunday

20th December and let the candlelight remind us all of the coming of the baby Jesus.

Parents and carers, if you would like a pack for your child/ children please email: [ardochyouth@gmail.com](mailto:ardochyouth@gmail.com)

with your name, address, phone contact and number of packs required. [or phone Liz 880307 or Irene 880947]

Liz Paterson and Irene Robertson, Youth Team.

## **The Christmas tree and Nativity scene in the Church grounds.**

Our grateful thanks go to,

Mark Spurway for donating the Christmas Tree,

Jim and Scott Dawson for erecting it,

Tony and Eoghan Perkins for designing and erecting the stable,

Liz Paterson for sourcing and commissioning the Mary and Joseph silhouettes,

Douglas Lindsay for painting the silhouettes.

We have many visitors to the cemetery during the advent season placing holly wreaths on their loved ones graves.

I am sure they will appreciate seeing our lovely tableau.

Well done everybody and thank you

Charles Robertson

## **Used Stamps**

Please keep saving your used stamps, always remember to leave a small border of the envelope round the stamp. Put them in a bag and put them through Liz Paterson's letter box at Drumsheugal, Church Street.

The money raised is used to support projects for the Church of Scotland World Mission, Thankyou.

## **Church offerings**

We have had members asking for the Church's bank details, which for security reasons are not published. As the Church is not re-opening for Sunday Worship in the foreseeable future, it might be a sensible time for us to consider changing our method of giving.

1. using internet banking, transfer directly each month to Ardoch Parish Church..
2. authorising a direct debit mandate in favour of Ardoch Parish Church.

To obtain further details of these methods, please contact Treasurer, Stuart Brannen. Tel.880394 and he will be very pleased to help in anyway.

## **Easyfundraising**

Leading up to Christmas you may be doing a lot of shopping online. Please consider using the charity provider.

It's easy to set up by selecting Ardoch Parish Church as your chosen charity. Each purchase you make will also give the church a small donation too..

More details on the church website; [ardochparishchurch.org](http://ardochparishchurch.org)

Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139

[ardochparishchurch.org](http://ardochparishchurch.org)

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