

*This is an occasional newsletter from Strathmore Parish Church; you are receiving it because you have passed on your email address to the church. If you do not want us to have your email address, or if you don't want to receive these emails, please let us know right away at admin@strathmoreparish.org
Feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested, or to send us the email address of anyone who would like to be added to the mailing list.*

Hello, everyone - and a very happy New Year to you! This is the start of our first full calendar year as Strathmore Parish Church, so it's an exciting time for us as we move into the New Year as one congregation with four church buildings (or 'worship centres' as they are often called now!)

I hope that you had a happy Christmas, whether you were enjoying the day with friends and family or just at home on your own. And I hope you managed to get to one of the special Christmas services in our parish - at Meigle, Newtyle and Glamis on Christmas Eve, and at Kettins on Christmas morning - it was lovely, in the rush and busy-ness that Christmas has become, to sit back for a while, enjoy singing well-loved carols and ponder for a while on what it is that we are actually celebrating!

If you were at one of the services, you'll remember that there was a collection in aid of Shelter Scotland, the charity that is trying to ensure that every person living in Scotland has a home of a decent standard. Here's what they say on their website:

*'We exist to defend the right to a safe home and to fight the devastating impact the housing emergency has had on people and society.
We do this with campaigns, advice and support,
and we never give up.'*



You'll be very pleased to hear that, between us, at the Christmas services, we raised the sum of **£1,085** for Shelter Scotland ! Isn't that great? If you didn't have the opportunity to contribute to that, but would like to donate to Shelter Scotland, you can do so on their website <https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/>
I like that last bit in their statement, 'we never give up', don't you?

By now, most of us will be thinking about getting the decorations down, if we haven't already done so, and although we may not quite be back to auld claes and parritch, we are certainly back to using the everyday plates and (hopefully) getting the last of the left-overs used up!



But, in some cultures, the celebration of Christmas goes on till the Feast of the Epiphany arrives, on the 6th of January (this year, that's a Monday) and Christmas ends with a big Twelfth Night party, on the eve of Epiphany.

Thanks to Wikipedia, I can tell you that that tradition goes back a long time in the church in Western Europe - as far back as the 6th Century! It is on record that, in the year 567 AD, the Council of Tours '*proclaimed the twelve days from Christmas to Epiphany as a sacred and festive season.*'

Epiphany is the church festival which commemorates the revealing of the the infant Jesus to the Magi - the Kings, or the Wise Men, who represent the world beyond Jesus' own nation. And what has the pie pictured above got to do with that, you may be asking? Well, it is a Galette des Rois , traditionally served in France, and many other countries, at the Twelfth Night festivities. It's filled with an almond mixture, and sometimes a dried bean is hidden in the galette - whoever gets the slice with bean becomes 'the King' for the evening and decides which games should be played!

I haven't noticed any sign of the days getting longer yet, have you? But we are already two weeks past the shortest day, so surely it won't be long before we are aware of the difference. Maybe I'm just not up early

enough to be aware of the change!

Lichty nights of a different kind have been in evidence, though! This photo was sent to me on New Year's Day at about seven o'clock in the evening - from Blairgowrie! Of course, we rushed outside to see what could be viewed from Glamis - nothing at all, as it happened!

Have you ever seen the Northern Lights? I've only seen them once, but they weren't coloured at all, more like searchlights criss-crossing the sky - maybe that's actually what they were!

The colours are amazing, aren't they?



Diane Strachan, the Church Treasurer for our congregation, wants to say thank you to those church members who give to the church directly from their bank accounts and who have contacted their banks to change the name on their standing orders to 'Strathmore Parish Church'. The accounts for the three previous congregations have now closed, so the bank can no longer accept cheques, etc, made out to eg 'Ardler, Kettins and Meigle' or 'Glamis Parish Church'. Also a wee reminder for Newtyle folk who give by Freewill Offering Envelopes - as we start the year with the new Strathmore envelopes, please make sure you use these, even if you have Newtyle envelopes left. Only donations in the new envelopes can be credited to you.

If you have any query about giving to the church, Diane is the person to contact; you can reach her at: dianestrachan@hotmail.co.uk

As you'll remember, our final Sunday service in 2024 was a whole-parish service on 29th December, held at Meigle at 10.00am. There won't be another month with five Sundays till March, so we won't worship all together again till Sunday 30th March, when we'll be at Kettins Church, at 10.00am.

Meanwhile, our church services get back to normal from this Sunday, 5th January, that is 10.00am service at Newtyle every week, 10.00 am at Kettins on 1st and 3rd Sundays and at Meigle on 2nd and 4th Sundays, and 11.30am at Glamis every week. After all the excitement of Christmas and the New Year, I quite like getting back to the everyday routine, don't you?

Please remember our minister, Carleen, and Tim, our OLM, in your prayers for the coming year, and take a moment to think of those families for whom this has been a time of anxiety and, in some homes, a time of bereavement. Our neighbours and fellow-members will be glad of our friendship and support while they are going through hard times.

Don't forget to look after yourself, and get out as much as you can in our lovely parish area!

With best wishes for 2025,

Mary Reid

