

Brechin and Farnell Parish Church

Christmas and New Year's Newsletter



Dear Friends and Families of Brechin and Farnell Parish Church,

As we celebrate this blessed Christmas season and prepare to welcome a new year, it is a fitting time to reflect on the past year and the many ways we have seen God's hand at work in our church and community. This year has been marked by challenges and triumphs. We began the year with a renewed commitment to supporting one another and our broader community, and we have witnessed incredible acts of kindness, resilience, and hope.

Community outreach and support

One of the highlights of this year has been the way we connected with individuals and groups in the community. The generosity of our congregation and volunteers has been nothing short of inspiring. Thank you to every person who worked tirelessly this year, to make our community-focused events such a big success. Thank you too, to every person who contributed in whichever way was necessary to support all our events, initiatives, and projects.



Worship and Fellowship

Our worship services have continued to be a source of spiritual nourishment and community connection. Whether in person or online, we have come together to praise and worship, sharing in the joy of God's love. Our weekly Bible study has provided opportunities for deepening our faith and building strong, supportive relationships.



In Memory

As we reflect on this past year, we remember and honor the beloved members of our church family who have sadly passed away. Their presence among us brought joy, wisdom, and strength, and their absence is deeply felt. We cherish the memories we shared, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends who mourn their loss, and we keep them in our prayers.

Milestones and Celebrations

This year, we celebrated several important milestones. From baptisms to weddings, birthdays and anniversaries, these joyful occasions have reminded us of the continuity of life and faith. We have also had the privilege of welcoming new members into our church family, each bringing their unique gifts and perspectives.

Christmas Celebrations

As we are nearing Christmas, our hearts are filled with anticipation and joy. The Christmas services and carol singing have always been a cherished part of our tradition. This year, we are excited to welcome you to all our Christmas services, where we will celebrate the birth of our Savior with music, prayer, and community.

Looking Ahead to the New Year

As we look forward to the new year, we are filled with hope and excitement for what lies ahead. We have many plans and projects on the horizon, from expanding our outreach programs to enhancing our worship and fellowship opportunities. We are committed to growing in faith and service, and we are confident that with God's guidance, we will continue to make a positive impact in our community.

Christmas: A Magnifying Glass

There is a movie we recently watched. You will find the movie on Netflix. It is an animated film called *That Christmas*. I highly recommend it! In the movie, Santa Claus compares Christmas to a magnifying glass. Christmas, like a magnifying glass, intensifies the emotions, actions, and connections we experience throughout the year. This season magnifies our joys, bringing to light acts of kindness, generosity, and love that often go unnoticed. For Christians, Christmas also magnifies God's love, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the ultimate gift of hope and salvation.



However, Christmas can also magnify our struggles and losses. The absence of loved ones feels more poignant, and challenges seem larger. Yet, this magnification encourages us to seek support and find comfort in community, reflecting the fellowship and care found in Christ's teachings.

In essence, Christmas acts as a lens through which we see the beauty and complexity of our lives more clearly. It brings into focus the values we hold dear and the connections that sustain us, urging us to carry this heightened awareness into the new year, inspired by God's enduring love.

From the Manse

For the Van Tonder family, it has been a massive year. After returning from a holiday in South Africa at the beginning of the year, we soon had to move to Brechin and once we managed to unpack all our boxes, it was all systems go! It has been a very busy year for us, having to settle the boys at their respective nurseries, Sanelle started teaching again and I had to find my feet in the congregation and parish. Not even to speak of all the new Scottish accents we had to get used to! There have been ups and downs, and we want to express our deepest gratitude to each of you. Thank you for your support, kindness, and generosity toward us as a family. We are blessed to be part of this church family, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.



In closing, may this Christmas season bring you peace, joy, and the love of Christ. May the New Year be filled with hope, blessings, and new opportunities for growth and service. Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and a joyous New Year.

With warmest regards, Adriaan