

# **St. John's Parish Church, Kirkcaldy**

## **“Echoes” December 2004**



Dear Friends,

Once again the Christmas season is upon us with the shops full of gift suggestions and busy shoppers. For many, it is a hectic time of year with lots of rushing around. Some will be well organised, others will be making last minute preparations. Will you be one of the crowds?

This time last year, I was surrounded by boxes and wrapping paper, but it had little to do with Christmas. The boxes arrived empty and the wrapping paper was a dull grey. It was a rather different period of preparation- getting ready to move, so instead of bringing out the Christmas decorations, I was making sure that they were all safely boxed up and ready to be moved, yes, even the nativity scene.

This year is different. The cardboard boxes have long since been unpacked and I looking forward to having my first Christmas in the manse and putting up those decorations that have not seen the light of day for so long. I'm eager to hear the choir lead us in the lessons and carols service, and to see the Sunday School nativity.

It will be my first Christmas at St. John's and there is a part of me that looks forward to this particular Christmas with childlike excitement.

All of us will hear a story that is so familiar, one that children hear and act out at school. Even so, for' an increasingly large number of people in Scotland, the account of Jesus' birth is little more than a traditional children's story that is part and parcel of the festive season.

For generations of Christians, the birth of Christ is not just a story, but a miracle, a profound act of love and grace made tangible in the face of a vulnerable new born baby. It is the beginning of a new chapter in God's relationship with humanity: Emmanuel- God with us. This is not just the story of an event that took place 2,000 years ago, rather it is a story of a life that we can encounter every day, no matter the season.

Grace and peace to you this Christmas and always,

Nicola

## Godburst

When the Holy Child is born into our hearts

there is a rain of stars

a rushing of angels

a blaze of candles

this God burst into our lives.

Love is running through the streets.

*Ann Weems, "Kneeling in Bethlehem"*

### Women's Group—Irene Wood, Church Liaison Member

Our 2004/2005 Session began on 7th September with a quiz night. All our meetings are open to members of the congregation and friends. We meet on Tuesday evenings, fortnightly.

On 21st September we had an illustrated talk by George Grainger about his visits to the rain forests. Elizabeth Paterson spoke on the Guild's Project HIV/Aids on 5<sup>th</sup> October. A very enjoyable concert by members of the Glenrothes Amateur Operatic Society and friends raised £170 for Church funds on 19th October. A craft evening on 2nd November had members making birthday/Christmas cards and decorations guided by Mary Stark, who brought all the craft materials, and on Tues. 9th November our guest speaker was Rev. Nicola Frail who spoke of Taekwondo (the way of the hand and the foot) a martial art from Korea, Christianity and studying both while in America, Ladies of the Group 'manned' the body shop stall at the Christmas Fayre on 20th November. Thank you for all the donations of toiletries we received. On 23rd November we visited the Adam Smith Theatre to see the musical "Chess".

We look forward to the Presbyterial Council's Carol Service being held at St. John's on Thursday, December at 7.15 p.m. and to our Christmas Dinner at the Victoria Hotel on 14th December.

The Group has 14 members and would welcome new members. Here is a 'taster' of some meetings arranged for 2005:

4th January — Silent Auction and quiz; 25th January — Burns Supper; 1st February — Line Dancing Demonstration; 15th February — Bowling with the Men's Association, which is always an enjoyable and competitive evening. Our 2005 session ends on 10th May.

We will be very pleased to see **YOU** at any of our meetings. Best wishes for happiness at Christmas and throughout the coming year.

## ***CHOIR***

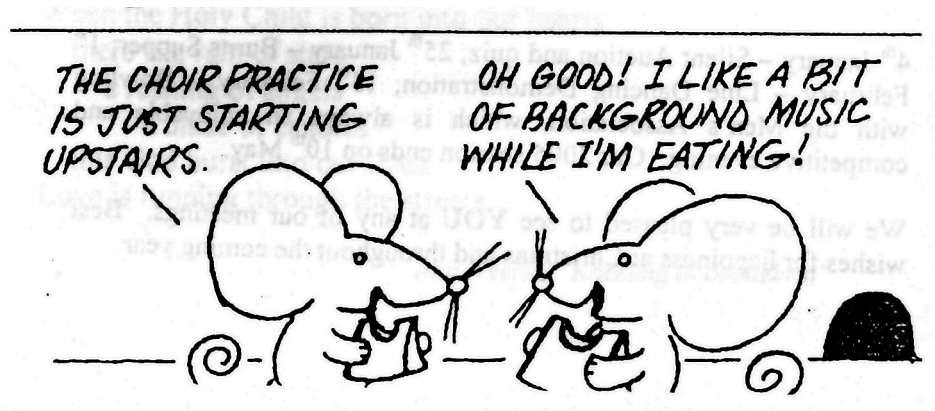
Practices resumed in the middle of September, and since then we have enjoyed the challenge of learning the new hymns and songs recently introduced into our worship. It is encouraging to note that the congregation also appears to find the new items not too difficult to sing.

On Sunday 12th December there will be a Service of Lessons and Carols with the Choir, and on Sunday 19th December, we are again assisting the Sunday School with their Nativity Play at the Gift Service.

When practices resume in January we will be working our way through the Minister's "Wish List of New Songs and Hymns for 2004/2005". Our Choir is committed, enthusiastic, loves singing, and is determined to strive for what is best in helping the congregation in its weekly worship and praise. You are more than welcome to join us on a Thursday evening in the New Hall from 7.15pm to 8.30pm.

Brian A Booth

Organist



## ***A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER***

On behalf of the Finance Committee and the Congregational Board, grateful thanks to everyone who has supported the Church financially during 2004.

The Toilet for the Disabled Building Fund Appeal continues to grow, and at the time of writing stands at £4,446 including tax recoverable on donations given under Gift Aid Declaration. The Gift Day Appeal 2004 was very well supported, and the excellent sum of £4,608, including tax recoverable on donations given under Gift Aid Declaration, has been received.

Again we have been able to meet in full and on time our Ministry and Mission and Renewal Fund requirements for 2004. At present it is difficult to forecast the year-end result for 2004, but hopefully the estimated deficit of £8,770 can be greatly reduced.

Brian A Booth, Treasurer

## **Mens Association Bowling Club**

We have had a successful Outdoor Season played at Gallatown Park Bowling Green. The weather for a change was very kind to us. Only one game cancelled because of bad weather.

Our indoor season has been slow to start, but numbers are improving. A few of the lady members of the Church are attending and we would welcome any men or women who could come along and have a pleasant, no pressure evening at bowls with a cup of tea and a blether.

J. Christie, Convener

## **ST. JOHN'S BOY'S BRIGADE**

Another BB session is now well under way. Mrs. Dianne Waddell has moved from the Anchor Boys to take charge of the Junior Section BB. We still require help for the Anchor Boys and would be grateful for any help. Anchor Boys age from five and a half to eight years.

The Anchor Boys and Juniors celebrated Hallowe'en with traditional parties and the Company Section had a week-end holiday at Mr. & Mrs. Simpson's cottage at Kettlebridge and had an adventurous time.

We had our enrolment service and Founders Day Service in the Church on the last Sunday in October and would like to thank Nicola for her service.

The Company Section boys ages 12-14 years and 14-18 years entered the National BB Football Tournament and both teams won their first round.

Future planning is now taking place for Christmas. We are also planning an Adfast sleepover in February in support of a school in Malawi, and a teacher who taught in that school is coming to talk to the boys about the project. May we thank Church members for their support.

*John Methven*

## **St. John's Guild**

I want to thank all the Guild members for their support throughout the season. There has been a great feeling of friendship at all the meetings.

We had a most successful Coffee Morning on Saturday, October 16th and raised over £230.

The Concert on October 25th featuring 'Limelight' was an unqualified success. The programme was varied and extremely enjoyable. The accompanist, Mr. Robert Gardiner moved from one style of music to another with ease and was as effective as an orchestra. All the members of 'Limelight' said they had thoroughly enjoyed the evening and thanked us for our warm welcome.

Our speakers have been excellent and their subjects were varied, informative and enjoyable. We have travelled to Romania and Egypt and listened to the singing of Mario Lanza. We have been instructed in the History of the Post, mining in Fife and underwear. How varied can you get?

This year is special to St. John's Guild as we are celebrating 75 years as a Guild and there will be a display in the hall.

We enjoy our Guild and anyone who is interested in joining us is welcome to come to our next meeting and see if they would like to join us.

*Agnes D. Slater*

### **Rays of Sunshine**

August has long since gone but something unusual, interesting and happy happened to me on the 15th and 16th which although I live to be 100 years old I'll never forget.

Anyone who was at Church on Sunday 15th will remember we were joined for the service by a big family of coloured people, so when the service finished I along with many others went down the aisle to go for a cup of tea and shook hands with them all — welcomed them and hoped they enjoyed the service — which they said they had and they joined us in the hail for a cup of tea.

When we were all preparing to leave Beth Millar and I had a nice chat with one of them and she told us that there were 10 of them on holiday and they were staying at No. 117 Balfour Street. Beth said, "Oh! Ina stays in Balfour Street" and the "Mama" — that's what I called her - asked what number and when I said No. 91, she held up her finger and said "I shall remember that and ring your door-bell to say Hello". She then gave us both a big hug and left — it was lovely — it felt like being wrapped in a feather quilt.

On the afternoon of Monday 16th had a visit from Jean Montgomery and we were having a nice quiet blether when the doorbell went and when I answered it - Guess what — yes, there they all were, all 10 of them. Being a good hostess I invited them all in — but the men sat on the front garden wall. Again I was kissed and cuddled like nobody's business.

Meantime I was thinking I would have to get out all the cups and saucers, teapots and biscuits and give them all the usual cup of tea. Well I thought that God always helps us in time of need and there was Jean down to visit me and she is a dab hand at making tea — only we didn't have the Church urn.

However when I asked them to sit down wherever they could they said they weren't staying — they just came in to say "Hello". They stayed about 10 minutes and then went away again but not before Jean and I were cuddled and kissed again.

I have always felt that I was such an insignificant person and was so happy and thrilled that these total strangers should come into my humble home just to say "Hello".

When they went away I felt as though 10 rays of sunshine had come into my house. They were such a lovely family with such happy smiling faces. God Bless them all. I just felt I'd like to share this happy story with the rest of the congregation and I hope you all have a very Happy Christmas.

*Ina Michie*

## Isn't it funny ...

..how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, but don't have difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.

### What is Church Without Walls?

You have probably heard the phrase Church Without Walls but what is the thinking behind this term that has caught on in many churches across the country and inspired creative projects from the Highlands to the Borders? Here is some background from the Church of Scotland's website.

*“Church without Walls, a report accepted by the General Assembly in 2001, aims to provide a ‘big vision’ for the Church, relevant to every part of the Church and over many years.*

At its heart, it is about changing mindsets:

*From church focus to Christ focus - following Jesus to see what church forms round him.*

*From settled church to church as a movement - going where people are rather than waiting for people to come.*

*From a culture of guilt to a culture of grace - freeing people to love and be loved while not counting the cost.*

*From running congregations to building communities - working towards a relational reformation.*

*From Isolation to interdependence - encouraging churches to work together.*

*From Individualism to teamwork - seeing teamwork as essential to all ministry.*

*From top down church to upside down church - putting the local church at the centre of the agenda.*

*From centralised resources to development resources - releasing funds to encourage local vision.*

*From faith as security to faith as risk - looking for new courage to break out of old routines.”*

Church Without Walls challenges us to move forward

shaped by the gospel

shaped by the locale

shaped by friendship

shaped by the gifts of the people of God

### **What could it mean for St. John's?**

A few months ago, the minister and kirk session began a process of exploring how St. John's could shape its mission and ministry around the gifts of the people.

The kirk session identified a number of areas of the church's life where it could be beneficial to have teams of elders and members working together. Members of the kirk session were asked indicate their area of preference and below, you will find a list of the teams.

### **What is the next step?**

Several of the teams have had an initial meeting with the minister and already lots of great ideas have been discussed. Next year we will see the expansion of teams to include members and friends of the congregation, with one person acting as team convenor. The convenors will meet together on a regular basis to ensure that the church has a clear vision and a coordinated approach. Hopefully the next step involves you. Maybe you are an ideas person, perhaps you are more practical.

Reflecting on the changes afoot, Nicola says, "I think there is an exciting time ahead for us. We have a multitude of gifts and talents here at St. John's so let us build on our strengths, on our sense of friendship and fellowship, and step out in faith together."

## ST. JOHN'S TEAMS

### Transport

Brian Fairful  
Doreen Johnston  
John Campbell



### Social/Fundraising

Grace Morrison  
Senga Booth



### Worship

John Wooton  
Jean Aird



### Flowers

Irene Wood  
Senga Booth  
Margaret Docherty



### Gardens

Jack Jarvis  
Helen Lundie  
Rosemary Cox



### Fabric

Bill Whyte  
Roddy Seliars  
Jim Christie  
David Page plus  
current members of  
fabric committee



### Outreach

Walter Simpson  
Scott Gibson



### Children/Youth

Lillian Haig  
Bob Docherty  
John Methven



### Bible Study/Adult Christian Education

Ann Wooton  
Sandra Marshall



### Stewardship/Finance

Brian Booth  
Audrey O'Malley  
plus current members  
of finance committee



### Publicity

Mary Sherrard  
Janet Ferguson



### Visiting/Pastoral Care

Jim Marshall  
Mary Struthers  
Layton Aird,  
Caroline Todd  
Ina Kennedy



## **Off the Wall Café**

On St John's Celebration Sunday (October 24<sup>th</sup>), the congregation heard from the Minister about Church Without Walls, a report accepted by the General Assembly in 2001. The following year, the Off the Wall Café was launched at the General Assembly and is now being rolled out across Scotland. One of the purposes of this café is to prepare us for the national celebration of Church Without Walls in May, 2005.

The Off the Wall Café has now reached Fife! On Sunday evening, November 7<sup>th</sup> it opened its doors in St. Bryce Kirk Centre here in Kirkcaldy. There was a good attendance from churches within the Kirkcaldy Presbytery. Janet Ferguson and I (Mary Sherrard) were there from St. John's. We sat at tables, café style, and enjoyed nibbles and drinks, it was a relaxing evening and there was a welcome amount of coming and going between the tables.

Rev. Albert Bogle of St. Andrew's Church, Bo'ness, and his team were guests for the evening, and they spoke enthusiastically and encouragingly both of what has already happened through Church Without Walls, and of plans for the national celebration in Edinburgh next year. Each congregation in Scotland will be invited to send three members to attend this day-long event. We all applauded the statement that the Moderator and the First Minister would be present but would be in the audience; much of the leadership of the day would be in the hands of members of congregations, many from the Urban Priority Areas.

The bulk of the evening, however, concentrated on what churches can do and are doing locally. Good use was made of videos and other electronic equipment, to entertain and inform us. We learned of the resources available to congregations. There were live interviews too. We heard of elders taking on new roles in order to give assistance to their ministers in the work of the parish, and of the training which that could involve. We were told how much the elders appreciated and welcomed the new responsibilities. We heard from Pam and Alan Cairns in our own Presbytery of their work with the Amazon Ferry project and of the backing they were receiving from church members and others in Fife.

There was music and an opportunity to talk with each other. There are many — some risky — initiatives being launched in Scotland by our churches, and it is hoped there will be many more during the year of celebration, begun on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2004 — Christ the King Sunday — and ending on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2005.

Churches are called through the Church Without Walls report to be shaped by the Gospel, by their locality, by friendship, by using the gifts of all God's people.

An interesting, relaxing, inspiring evening!

## **The Age of the Spirit**

Over the past twelve weeks or so, some sixteen of the congregation have met with our Minister on Sunday mornings for Bible study. We have read and discussed the Book of Acts. We were reminded that this book was written by Luke, and over our weeks of study we have seen how Luke was looking in various directions at the same time. He was looking at the Roman Empire and its authorities, aiming to show that Christianity was not

the subversive movement some thought it. He was looking at the Jewish Christians, with the message that the Gentile expansion of Christianity and the changes it brought were the work of the Spirit. Finally Luke was looking at Christians who might waver in times of difficulty, attempting to strengthen them in their resolve.

Much of the Book of Acts centres on Paul and his journeying, and we have enjoyed taking time to go on these journeys with him. But we have learned that the Book of Acts is not so much about the Apostles and Paul, as about the Holy Spirit. The message of Acts for us is that we too live in the age of the Spirit. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth.”

My deafness I endure,  
To dentures I'm resigned,  
Bifocals I can manage,  
But God, how I miss my mind.

### **An Unusual Conference — Mary S. Sherrard**

Why do we visit graveyards? What is significant about them? One Saturday in November I was part of a conference here in Kirkcaldy where such questions were addressed. The Fife Grave Stones Conference was hosted by Kirkcaldy Civic Society and Fife Mining Heritage Society, and it drew on the expertise of several other bodies, both voluntary and professional.

So what were our conclusions? We visit graveyards for burial, for remembrance, but also we visit in the interest of our education, we visit as tourists, we visit to relax; we may use graveyards as thoroughfares, the quickest way from A to B. The significance of the graveyard may be that for us it is a sacred place, or it may be that the setting attracts us, or that we seek to gain information about our family, about the community. We may be visiting the grave of a well-known person or remembering some special event.

This was a conference covering the practicalities of preserving our grave stones, but also reflecting on our present day attitudes towards graveyards. Bereavement responsibilities towards the looking after of grave stones have changed. City and town have to contend with vandalism and anti-social behaviour in their graveyards. Maintenance is a huge issue. Weather, conservation, health and safety regulations have all to be considered. Local Councils in Scotland maintain the graveyards well. (We were told Councils in England and Wales have not such a good record in this respect.) An interesting comment was made that the modern need to have tightly mown lawns was less kind to grave stones than gardening practice in Victorian times.

Cemetery management today faces many problems. Two years ago, a Forum was set up in Scotland for those involved in graveyard management and care of grave stones. There is a need for co-ordination of what is happening. We looked at the symbols on grave stones; the meanings of such symbols varies from place to place. Much of the day was

spent in hearing of and in viewing of slides of graves throughout Fife, learning of the history of towns in the Kingdom, and of the lives and deaths of Fife's miners, and of Fife's sons and daughters who have served in the Armed Forces.

It was a thought-provoking day. I learned a lot.

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Faith is putting your hand out in the dark and finding it held.

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### **St. John's Taekwondo Club**

Kicking, punching, yelling and board breaks — yes, it's all part of St. John's Taekwondo Club classes taught by our minister. Taekwondo simply means the way of the hand and the foot. This Korean martial art is famous for its dynamic kicking, but it is a mental as well as a physical discipline that encourages courtesy, self-respect, perseverance and self-discipline. The club had its first testing in June followed by a family potluck with 25 students advancing from white to orange belt.

New members, both adults and children from 7 years, are always welcome. The two main classes are on Friday evenings: the first from 7.30-8.30 p.m. and the second from 8.30-9.30 p.m. A number of students stay for both classes.

Our next testing takes place in the large hall on Saturday 4th December at 10.30 a.m. Spectators are always welcome and you can stay for the potluck lunch afterwards too!

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### **New! Calling all 20, 30, 40 somethings!**

A new group for young (and youngish!) adults got off the ground in the autumn with dessert and discussion at the manse. After brainstorming, we decided to plan occasional social events, something different every two or three months. The first of these is a bowling bash at the Megabowl in Dundee. If you might be interested in coining along to future events or activities, then speak to Nicola.

## **GRANNY'S BIBLE CAKE - Use King James Bible**

### Ingredients

- 1 Quarter pound Judges 5: v 25 (last clause)
- 2 Quarter pound Jeremiah 6: v 20
- 3 Half tablespoon 1 Samuel 14: v 25
- 4 One large Jeremiah 17: v 11
- 5 Quarter pound I Samuel 30: v 12 (second clause)
- 6 Quarter pound Jeremiah 25: v 1 (chopped)
- 7 One ounce Numbers 17: v 8 (blanched and chopped)
- 8 Half pound Numbers 28: v 5
- 9 Season to taste with 2 Chronicles 9: v 1
- 10 Pinch of Leviticus 2: v 13
- 11 One teaspoon Amos 4: v 5
- 12 One and a half teaspoons Judges 4: v 19 (last clause)

### Method

- 13 Proverbs 23: v 14 —Nos. 1, 2 and 3 to a cream
- 14 Add No.4, still Proverbs 23: v 14 and add Nos. 5, 6 and 7
- 15 Proverbs 23: v 14 again. Add Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 11 (having previously mixed them)
- 16 Add No. 12 Leviticus 26: v 26 in a slow oven for one and a quarter hours.

Operation Christmas Child is a new outreach project which we participated in for the first time this year. It is run by a Christian organization called Samaritan's Purse, who send Shoe Boxes to children at Christmas regardless of their religion. In countries such as Romania, Poland, Hungary and other European countries there is a lot of poverty and also many orphan children who are not as fortunate as we are at Christmas. So St. John's has been busy filling empty shoe boxes with toys, toothpaste, soap, sweets, gloves, scarves, hats and many other items which will make Christmas special for these children. I'm sure people must have thought that I bought 20 pairs of shoes at a time when they saw me coming out of Mathieson's the shoe shop — but the boxes were empty and I had other plans for them! They were then covered with Christmas paper and as people who covered their own box will know — it takes a lot of patience - but after the first 10 boxes I was beginning to get to grips with it!

Our congregation was brilliant and the response was overwhelming. We filled 118 boxes which are now on their way to the children in time for Christmas. I hope they have as

much fun opening them as we had filling them. Thank you to all who helped in ally way and a special thank you to all those who filled boxes. Well done St. John's!

Christian Aid works to provide hope, health and the chance of a decent life to the world's poorest communities, whatever their race or religion. During the month of May, one week is devoted to the work of Christian Aid when collectors take to the streets of Britain. We have about 26 collectors from St. John's who distribute and then collect envelopes from the streets within our parish and beyond. More collectors would be a big help, so if you can spare a few hours during Christian Aid Week it would be much appreciated. Our Christian Aid envelopes totalled £1,233.63 this year and taxpayers can increase their giving by almost 30% by filling in the form on the envelope. The Christian Aid Coffee Shop, held in the West End Congregational Church sold £278.29 of home-made soup, baking etc. and also the

Soup and Sweet Lunch in the Church Hall was a big Success and raised £270 for Christian Aid. The Tea/Coffee after the service on Christian Aid Sunday raised £23.60. Some of the Sunday School, Girl Guides and adults did a sponsored walk over the Forth Road Bridge and received £681.73 in sponsor money — very well done! Our total giving to Christmas Aid this year so far has totalled £2,487.25. Again a great result and thank you to all who helped and also to those who donated to such a worthwhile cause.

### **Fairtrade**

In St. John's we hold a Fairtrade stall about every 2 months. The stall consists of dried fruit, cereals, sweets, other grocery items and also small gifts. Many shops in Kirkcaldy now sell goods displaying the Fairtrade logo which guarantees a better deal for Third World countries. Fairtrade can make a difference to the lives of people and the communities in which they live throughout the world. You can also play your part by purchasing from the stall and the shops. To date St. John's stall has been well patronized and this is much appreciated.

#### *An Irish Prayer*

*May there always be work for your hands to do*

*May your purse always hold a coin or two*

*May the sun always shine on your window pane*

*May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain*

*May the hand of a friend always be near you*

*May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.*

## **GET TO-GETHER**

At the moment we are soldiering on, as the high heid yins have gone and left us. So why not come and join us, then our wayward leaders will come home to a big surprise when they see how our numbers have grown.

It seems strange writing of things in the future when most likely by the time you are reading this, they will be past. I'm thinking particularly of our Christmas party, which is always the highlight of the year.

Possibly about the spring we will be holding what has become our "Annual event for others". We have a tea afternoon to which everyone is invited and the proceeds are given to what we consider a good cause.

We are not the old fossils we sometimes appear to be. Bang up to date we are with modern technology. The E-mails have been flying back and forth between here and Australia and it's quite common to receive a text message on somebody's mobile.

On a more serious note, we are always saddened when one of our members is taken from us by death. Our latest loss was Mrs. Kemp, who perhaps was the oldest church member, in years anyway. Another two days and she would have been 98.

We've had a lot of illness amongst our members this year, but hopefully they will soon recover and be back with us, keeping the rafters ringing with their talking and laughter.

### **Isn't it funny....**

.. how people want to get a front seat at any game or concert, but scramble to get a back seat at Church services?

# **St. John's Parish Church**

## **Advent and Christmas Season Services**

Sunday 12th December at 11 a.m.	Lessons and Carols Service
Sunday 19th December at 11 a.m.	Nativity and Gift Day
Friday 24th December at 11 p.m. 11.15 p.m.	Carol Singing Watchnight Service
Sunday 26th December at 11 a.m.	Boxing Day Service
Sunday 2nd January at 11 a.m.	Joint Service with town centre churches

