

Tranent Parish Church

Contact



Photo: Laurie Brett

Winter 2025

www.tranentparishchurch.co.uk
www.facebook.com/tranentparishchurch

Church Services

In Tranent Parish Church

The Sunday Morning Service is in the Church at 11am. Children are very welcome. They join in at the start of the service before leaving for their own activities in the J-Club during term time.

Services are held regularly in Tranent Care Home and Crookston Care Home.

Prayer Group

The weekly Saturday Prayer Group meets at 8am in the Church Gathering Area and all are welcome.

A monthly Prayer Sheet is available in the gathering area at the back of the church, on the church website and by email from Douglas Roberts.

Church Family

Deaths

Mr Stewart Thomson

16 November 2025.

The next edition of Contact will be out in March.
Notices about contributions will be in the church intimations and emailed to regular contributors, but anyone is welcome to send us articles at any time.

Robin and Sheila

From our Minister

Dear Friends

As we approach Christmas, we remember that over two thousand years ago a couple of young people were travelling under orders. Mary and Joseph were obeying a command from a distant Roman Emperor. Augustus had no idea of their existence or their circumstances. He did not know that Mary was heavily pregnant, that the baby was due any day, and of the upset, upheaval and worry that his demand caused them.



Mary and Joseph must travel to the town of Joseph's family, Bethlehem, to be registered. The purpose of the registration is to establish control over the population. A list of names is needed to ensure that people pay their taxes. A list of names also allows for conscription. Having to travel under this order doesn't sound like good news. Yet it is part of the story of the birth of Jesus.

In our own times, conscription has become a familiar word again, with the war in Ukraine and recent reports of conscripted men fleeing military training centres. Everyone mobilised, voluntarily or otherwise, must stay in the army until the end of the conflict and so many people are affected by the need to obey orders.

Mary and Joseph obey the order they receive. Yet as they travel, Mary carries within her, hidden from sight, the baby whose birth will change everything. He brings freedom from the oppression of government control. He is the new leader who doesn't issue orders but instead encourages challenge. He doesn't treat people as anonymous figures in a crowd. Rather, he offers personal invitations and friendship. He brings as gifts belonging and hope. He helps us in our growing up to become fully ourselves for our own good, for the good of our lives together as a congregation, for the good of our communities and for the good of the world. This is what we celebrate at Christmas time. This is good news.

So, take a moment. Stop and remember what it feels like to meet a new baby for the first time. Let yourself slow down as the wonder and hope and the sheer miracle of new life sinks in. Remember that despite appearances, God is working in hidden and ordinary places to make all things well. 'The light came in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it', is the message that John, the Gospel writer has for us. May it be so for you and your loved ones this Christmas.

God Bless,

Katherine

Carol Singing

As we have done for the past few years, we are going carol singing round various pubs and other venues in Tranent, and it would be great if you are able to join us- it's good fun and much appreciated by those who hear!

The dates and times are Tuesday 9th Dec 6.45 - 8pm (meet at Asda at 6.40) and Thursday 11th Dec 7.30 - 8.15 (meet at Tower Inn Church St 7.25).

If you would like to join us on either or both evenings, or are interested in learning more, please speak to Murdo or Katherine.

Regular events

Open House - takes place on Tuesday mornings in the Church Hall between 10am and 12 noon. Free tea, coffee and biscuits are served. All are welcome.

Pool Group & Table Tennis Group Both meet on Wednesday mornings, Pool in the Upper Hall, Table Tennis in the main Church Hall from 10am to 12 noon. All are welcome to either / both.

Fair Trade Stall We have a Fair Trade stall on the last Sunday of every month. With supplies from the Fair Trade shop in Portobello, there is an opportunity to buy various goods - cash only.



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT TPC

Sunday 7th December - Church service at 11am, Communion

Sunday 7th December - Church Hall Garden Light Event for
Children from 3.30pm to 5.30pm

Sunday 14th December - Church service at 11am

Sunday 14th December - Local congregations join together for a
Carol Service at 3.30pm in Ormiston Parish Church

Sunday 21st December - Church service at 11am with the Nativity

Christmas Eve - Carol service in the Church at 7pm

Christmas Day - Family Service at 10am

ALL ARE VERY WARMLY INVITED TO ANY OF OUR SERVICES.

Tranent Parish Church Guild



It is November now and we are well into our first session of this year.

At our initial meeting we heard a Godly Play story and celebrated communion with Katherine, our Minister. Next, we had a review meeting to discuss plans for the future. This was to gauge how our meetings were going and if there was anything we could do differently.

Two members from the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service based in Musselburgh were our next speakers. This proved to be very informative and gave us some very useful information about safety in the home .

We are looking forward to our next speaker on 25th November; Fiona Waddell from Girl Guiding in East Lothian and also to our Christmas lunch on the 9th of December.

On the 27th October I received an email from Oleg Dmitriev from Sunflower Scotland which he had also sent to Scottish Churches. It said:

We are asking for your help again: when wounded Ukrainian soldiers are brought to hospitals for surgery, their clothes are stained with blood. They are cut off and thrown away. They literally have nothing to wear.

Please help them, and donate bags with hospital essentials. Each bag should include:

- Men's T-shirt (size L preferred) x 2
- Jogging bottoms (size L preferred) x 1
- Toothpaste x 1
- Toothbrush x 1
- Small towel x 1
- Disposable Razor pack x 1

Please put items in a plastic bag. All items should be washed.

I sent this appeal to members of the Guild and congregation. What a response! Once again members of Tranent Parish Church have shown how generous and giving they are.



On the 12th of November Oleg came and picked up the donations that everyone had given. His car was filled with these. He was so appreciative and to be honest I was quite emotional seeing all the donations packed and ready to go.

We managed to gather 38 individually wrapped hospital packs for the wounded.

Sweaters, jumpers, socks, hats, gloves, underwear and toiletries and a cash donation were also sorted and wrapped.

Oleg plans to return again to Ukraine at the end of January. If you have anything that you would care to donate, we will once again be happy to forward donations to him.

Thank you and God Bless you for your support. A quote from Oleg:-Wow I cannot believe it, you are superstars! 💖 😊 ✨ ⭐ ✨

It's truly fantastic, I cannot thank you enough!

Kathleen Gilmer, Convener
Tranent Parish Church Guild



More details on the poster in
the church or online at
sunflowerscotland.co.uk

Congregational Rolls

Each person in the congregation is important and part of the role of Elders is to keep in contact with you so that you know that, even if you are not able to attend services, you still have a living connection to the church.

Every year, the Kirk Sessions in all Church of Scotland congregations have to review this connection through the people noted on what we call the Rolls, the Communion Roll, for those who are members of the congregation and what is called the Adherents Roll, for those who wish to be associated with the congregation but are not members.

The Kirk Session needs to agree that these Rolls are up to date. If you are reading this and are not a member, and would like to be, or if you are an adherent and would like to become a member, please can you contact John, our Session Clerk, or Katherine, our Minister, to take this forward. If you are not sure whether your name is on either of these Rolls, please get in touch with Linda Ingham, our Roll Keeper, who will be able to help you.

John's, Linda's and my own email addresses are on the back page of this Contact.

Katherine Taylor

🎵 I'm dreaming of a greener Christmas 🎵

Later in Contact you will read Fiona's suggestions. Here is one from me - I do try to avoid using wrapping paper. Over several years I have made lots and lots of cloth bags to put presents large and small into. Some fabric is recycled, but most, with various Christmas patterns, has come quite cheaply from an on-line shop (ask me for the link!).

While a few are like the MORS bags that Linda has us making and distributing, most are simpler with just with a draw-string to close them. My close family return them to me after use, those for more distant friends and relatives get a tag saying "Re-usable Wrapping. Please return or use again".

Sheila Strain

Remembering Bill Macarthur

Bill was born in 1933 and was raised in Tranent with his two brothers, Bobby and Alec. He attended Tranent Primary and Preston Lodge Secondary Schools, then did his National Service aged eighteen in the Royal Signals, serving for two years in Egypt.

Back home, Bill had a successful career in insurance, notably at Scottish Widows. He retired at the age of sixty before computers came in. While working in Edinburgh, he met Janet, whom he later married. Together, they had two sons, Alan and Alasdair. The family moved several times. Janet enjoyed moving and Bill supported this. They finally settled in Tranent at 4 Viewforth Terrace. Bill loved DIY projects and gardening and helped others with their gardens well into his 80s. He grew tomatoes and made jam for the church.

Bill was a sociable person who made new friends throughout his life. He was a regular at Open House, "a place for free tea, coffee, biscuits, and good laughs" (his words). Bill enjoyed attending the Probus Club and the Local History Society, he loved steam trains and owned a model railway. Ornithology was his other love.

In his many years in Tranent Parish Church, Bill served as an Elder, Treasurer and Roll Keeper. He was very meticulous in these roles and contributed so much. Bill was always impeccably dressed for church in his suit and tie. In a throwback to his National Service days, he insisted on men removing their hats.

Bill and Janet organized the Millennium project for the church pew cushions. Bill designed the patterns on canvas and sourced all the materials from local mills and those in the Borders. The church was then made much more comfortable. When the pews were removed, other churches got the use of them.

Bill had a keen interest in life and in other people. He was always ready with a story and insisted on doing things well and with precision, even in how he served his tea and shortbread. He attended worship into his nineties and his determination and perseverance were much admired. In 2025 he was the oldest member of the MacArthur and McCartney extended families and the oldest man on the church Roll. In June, after a brief illness, Bill passed away and he is fondly remembered and missed by all who knew him.

Katherine Taylor and John Greig

Debbie

It's getting chilly! I was wrapped up warm today as I have started supporting Louise of the Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust with litter picking around Windygoul School. This will continue monthly going forward so do say "Hi" if you see us out and about!

I am continuing with monthly Bible story telling at both ABC Nurseries in Tranent and Elphinstone Nursery, as well as the weekly Church Club at the school. I have also been supporting Katherine as she does Godly Play at Windygoul. I was able to attend parent council meetings at both Windygoul and Sandersons Wynd and I was able to support the Sandersons Parent Council at their recent Halloween event. It was lovely to catch up with some of the teachers there that I haven't seen for a while.



Unfortunately, the Elphinstone Drop-In has not been very successful so do pray as I consider what other options and avenues to take with this initiative.

I'm looking forward to attending the dress rehearsal of the children's Christmas show at Elphinstone. I'll tell you all about it next time!

Blessings,
Debbie

Fiona's 2025 Greenish Gift Guide

As we draw towards the end of 2025, you may or may not have started making arrangements for Christmas. I try to minimise the environmental impact of my gift giving where possible, in line with my enthusiastic participation in Tranent Parish Church's eco action group. The greener option is sometimes also the more economic option too. Here are my top ten tips.

1. **Evaluate your gift list.** Does everyone in your list *really* need a gift? While still living out God's call to generous living, what can you reduce in terms of obligatory giving?
2. **Secret Santa.** Is it worth raising with your loved ones the possibility of streamlining your usual gift giving at all? Gifting by household or a draw of names so that everyone gets one quality gift from one person over everyone getting a higher number of poorer quality gifts.
3. **Focus on consumables.** Does your loved one like a particular type of chocolate? Could you pull together a wee bag of nice ingredients to make a slightly nicer-than-usual pasta dish? Why not check out the church's monthly Fairtrade stall for inspiration.
4. **Experience over objects.** So many of us crave quality time with loved ones, which can be far more valuable than a physical object sent in the post. My personal favourites include cinema/theatre tickets and restaurant vouchers and IOUs.
5. **Gift second hand.** Have you got a candle or book lying around that you have no need or use for? Why not pass it on?
6. **Head to the charity shops.** These days many charity shops stock both new and reused items designed to benefit good causes. Make your money work harder.
7. **Get creative.** Can you DIY any of your gifts this year? Those who came to Winter Hub last year may recall the glut of highland cows I stitched up to gift to loved ones and colleagues.
8. **Get baking.** Ok, this is very similar to numbers 3 and 7, but could you combine them to bake a batch of mince pies or Christmas

cookies? Or even add the dry ingredients to a jar as a "make your own" gift?

9. **Ask people what they need.** It doesn't have to remove the complete element of surprise, but giving someone something they were actually after guarantees a positive response.
10. **Remember what it's all about.** The ultimate gift of Jesus coming to earth as a baby to save the world far surpasses anything we'll be wrapping up in a bow this year.

Fiona MacFadyen

From Our New Elder - Val Henry

Dear Friends

On 30 November I am to be admitted to the Kirk Session. I have been an Elder for over 30 years and I feel honoured and privileged to be asked to join the Session here in Tranent.

Coincidentally, that date also marks three and a half years since we moved from Ayrshire to East Lothian - one of the best decisions I have ever made. We love living here. My children are all within a few miles, and my grandchildren have the run of the house. I wouldn't have it any other way. Being a hands-on Granny brings me nothing but joy.

We feel truly settled here in Tranent, and a large part of that is because of the church. I have felt so welcome and so very much a part of things, and I appreciate that immensely.

Katherine, as you know, is an inspiration and takes our thoughts and faith to places they have never been before. There is a genuine feeling of love for Jesus Christ among us, and people are proud to share their beliefs, thoughts and feelings.

Love and blessings to you all, and please accept my heartfelt thanks for including me in such a precious part of the life and work of our church.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas

Val

Fair Trade Stall

Each month this calendar year we put up a stall in the "Gathering Area" with goods from the Just World shop in Portobello. The products they give us to sell are all ethically and fair-trade sourced. Just World is a community interest company and is run as a co-operative comprising of all the volunteers who work in the shop. For the last Sunday of each month the volunteers in the shop make up 2 large bags with a variety of products for our stall. It is run by members of our Church on a sale or return basis.

Our congregation of Tranent Parish Church have, as always, been very generous and have supported this stall wonderfully. I only have the figures from January to September and the total to date raised by you is £1285.20 for which Just World is very grateful. Our next and last stall for this year will be on Sunday 30th November.

I wish to thank all who support the stall and those who help to man it.

Wilma Raitt.

The Manchester Word Square.

It dates from around 180 AD and was found by archaeologists in a dig in 1978 in central Manchester and is now in the University Museum there.

It has 5 words on it ROTAS, OPERA, TENET, AREPO and SATOR arranged in a square so they can be read forwards, backwards and up and down. One of the world's first acrostics. A translation of the Latin is "Arepo the sower guides the plough with care" but what is even more significant is that the words Pater Noster (Our Father) are hidden within it.

Historians believe it is an early example of a Roman Christian, possibly a soldier, with a secret symbol of his faith from an era when the church still had to stay hidden.



John Greig

WINTER HUB @ TRANENT PARISH CHURCH HALL



All are welcome

WHERE:

TRANENT PARISH
CHURCH HALL,
CHURCH ST,
TRANENT, EH33 1BX



WHAT:

TEA, COFFEE,
BISCUITS, SOUP,
BREAD, HOSPITALITY,
ARTS AND CRAFTS,
GAMES



WHEN: SATURDAYS

20 & 27 DECEMBER

3, 10, 17, 24, 31 JANUARY

7, 14, 21, 28 FEBRUARY

11AM TILL 2PM



WWW.TRANENTPARISHCHURCH.CO.UK



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Joy to the World

Something for all the free time we
have at this time of year!



ADVENT
ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSINGS
CAMELS
FRANKINCENSE

INFANT
JESUS
JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MIRACLE

MYRRH
NATIVITY
REJOICE
STABLE
STAR
THREE KINGS
WISE MEN



Your Contacts

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Treasurer Pamela McGowan

Unitary Team Convenors

Worship & Education Team	Rev Katherine Taylor
Fabric and Finance Team	Chas Spencer
Outreach and Wider World Team	Douglas Roberts
Pastoral Team	

Roll Keeper Dr Linda Ingham

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Your elder _____



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Church of Scotland
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