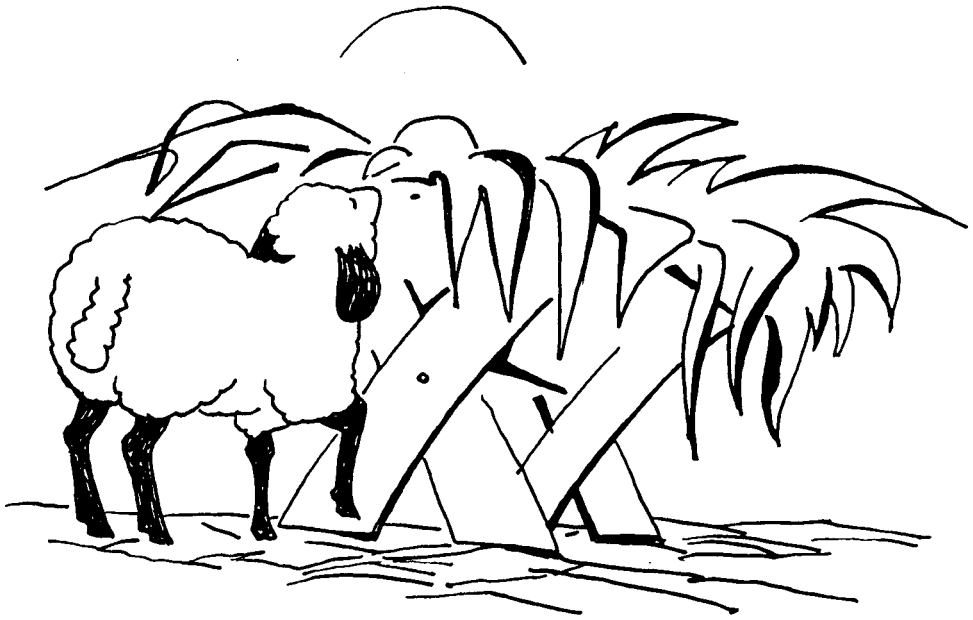
Church of the Holy Cross

DAVIDSON'S MAINS EDINBURGH

DECEMBER 2026/JANUARY 2027



THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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FROM THE RECTOR

As we enter December (and hasten towards January) once again, the importance of our homes as places of refuge might be particularly prominent in our bodies and in our minds. Refuge from the ice, wind, rain and snow, and from the darkness. That moment of closing the door behind you and turning into home is often a moment of deep comfort, of relief perhaps, and of letting go. We are safely home again, and it feels good.

But many people around our world, and in our own communities, do not enjoy a place called home. The place they live is perhaps not safe for any number of reasons, or may be temporary while they search for somewhere to call home. They may have been forced from their home, and even from their country. I recently saw an astonishing documentary film, *Name me Lawand*, about a young Kurdish boy who is profoundly deaf. His family, fearing for his life in Iraq as a disabled child, fled to the UK and were temporarily housed in Derby. Lawand thought he was the only person in the world like him, deaf from birth and unable to communicate. In Derby, attending the Royal School for the Deaf, he discovered that other people were also deaf, and that through sign language he could communicate with them; he discovered that laughing, crying and sharing experiences with others was possible.

When they were threatened with deportation to Iraq, the community around them in Derby began a campaign, gathering over 12,000 signatories to their petition to allow the family to remain. Lawand's story is inspirational. It is a story of challenge, exclusion, threat and fear, alongside one of community and support. Ultimately it is a story of discovering home, a place of safety, friendship and love.

The Holy family knew all about being refugees seeking a place to call home. Joseph and Mary made a terrifying journey in the last days of Mary's pregnancy, and, homeless in Bethlehem, Jesus was born in a shelter shared with animals. Then the family fled Bethlehem in fear of Herod's violence. They must have known, in a very real way, what it meant to long for home.



As we travel through Advent, into Christmas and the beginning of 2027, my prayer is that all people would come to know something of the safety and comfort that is home. Would know themselves valued, beloved, precious. Would have a door they can close on the cold and dark, and be able to turn into their place that is their home.

May God bless all who feel lost and alone this Christmas. God bless all your loved ones, and all those you find hard to love. And God bless you this Christmas.

With my love,
Janet



THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE
Monday 21st December
7 p.m.

This year, on 21st December, Holy Cross will hold a 'Longest Night' service.

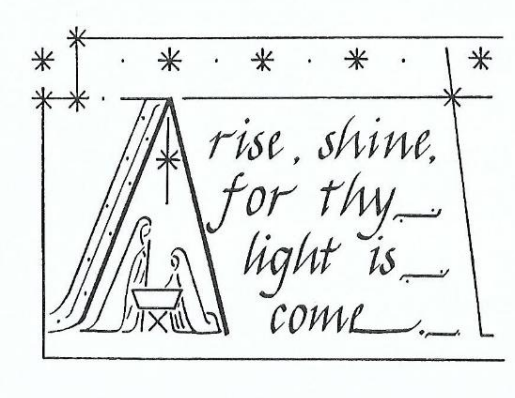
Christmas can be challenging.

Amid the celebrations there is often grief, loss and loneliness. If Christmas feels heavy this year, you're not alone.

Come to this service and find a moment of peace.

This service, lasting under an hour, gives you an opportunity to step aside from the frantic busyness of December, from any sense of pressure to be 'merry and bright', and to spend time in the peaceful surroundings of Holy Cross Church, to hear comforting words and beautiful seasonal music.

Come and join us for this quiet, gentle Longest Night service of reflection, candlelight and comfort. All are welcome, just as you are.





THE WONDER OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT HOLY CROSS DECEMBER 2026



Wednesday 16th December
7.00 p.m. Community Carol Singing in Ye Olde Inn. Join the ad hoc choir from local churches (run-through in Holy Cross at 6.30 p.m.) or just come along and sing. Christmas jumpers optional.

Monday 21st December
7.00 p.m. 'Longest Night' service – a quiet reflective service for those seeking peace at Christmas (see page 4).

Thursday 24th December – CHRISTMAS EVE
3.00 p.m. Christingle Service Family friendly telling of the story of God's love for the world at Christmas. Come and join in building the crib scene! Collection for Pilton Youth and Children's Project.
11.30 p.m. Christmas Eve Midnight Eucharist

Friday 25th December – CHRISTMAS DAY
10.30 a.m. Christmas Morning Eucharist

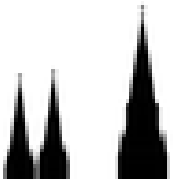
All are welcome!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

There is a list on the church noticeboard of volunteers needed for services not on the regular Sunday duty rota. Please sign up if you can help.

For the Christingle Service we need two welcomers at each door to hand out service sheets, find seats and advise on buggy parking. We shall also need people beforehand to make Christingles (details to be announced) and afterwards to tidy the church ready for the next service.



HOLY CROSS MINI-PILGRIMAGE
SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS
Tuesday 22nd December
7.30 p.m.
at our Diocesan mother church, St Mary's Cathedral

The service will be sung by the St Mary's Cathedral choir, who are exceptional, in the stunning setting of our own cathedral. This is a chance for us to benefit from being part of the Edinburgh Diocese and its riches, and also to enjoy being part of the Holy Cross community. I know that this is a change from the last few years; I hope that we will discover the joy of attending this service in a Holy Cross mini-pilgrimage at Advent.

Booking for the service is now live, and I know that it will sell out quickly. Due to very high demand, attendance is by ticket only, with suggested donations ranging from £17.50 to £10.

Anyone who would like to come along as part of the Holy Cross group, please book your own ticket on the St Mary's Cathedral website at: www.cathedral.net/event-details-registration/service-of-nine-lessons-and-carols-2026 and email me, Janet, at rector@holycrossedinburgh.org to let me know. If you would like to attend, don't delay booking your ticket!

The seating is unreserved, so we will be able to coordinate arriving at the cathedral together closer to the time. From experience, it is well worth arriving very early as it always sells out (and some of the seats are very uncomfortable and have no sight of the choir or readers).

I look forward to entering into Advent with you all, and to enjoying one of the gifts of our Diocese at this very special service.

So far there are 22 of us from Holy Cross with tickets! Come and join us!

CHRISTMAS CAROL QUIZ

Can you work out the names of these Carols from their initials:

1 WSWTFBN
2 OLTOB
3 TVMHABB
4 GRYMG
5 GKWLO
6 PTOC
7 AFTROG
8 THATI
9 JTTW
10 CITMIOM
11 ITBM
12 WWYAMC

Just for fun – no prizes! Answers on page 15.

FLOWERS IN CHURCH

FLOWER ROTA for December and January is on the church noticeboard. Thank you to Ron, Yvonne and Nicole for filling the gaps in November.

There are so many vacant dates that it is not worth producing a list. Please sign up for any Sunday when you would like to be responsible for the flowers. There is a good selection of vases in the vestry cupboard (or bring your own). If you are not a 'flower arranger' a simple bunch of flowers is fine. Why not try?

If you would like to donate the flowers but are not able to arrange them yourself, please speak to Sarah. As she is not always available, check with her before signing up.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Sarah and her team would welcome cash donations in advance towards the cost of flowers. Help with decorating is also welcome – day and time to be arranged.
Contact Sarah.



FROM THE REGISTERS

Funeral:

Jessie Wright (aged 101) on 28th October

Rest eternal grant unto her, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon her.

SANCTUARY LAMP
Remembering departed loved ones

Our sanctuary lamp burns continually before the aumbry containing the reserved sacrament as a sign of prayer and presence. You can sponsor the light for a month in memory of a loved one, at a suggested donation of £15 to cover the cost of candles. Write the name to be remembered on the list on the noticeboard and tell Janet. Payment into the church bank account, or by cash/cheque to the Treasurer, marking your donation 'Sanctuary Lamp'.

The lamp is lit in December for Agnes Cooper, Avril Scammell and Margaret Ross.

ST SALVADOR'S COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVE

We have received a card from St Salvador's to all of us:
Please accept our sincere thanks for the donations that you send to St Salvador's. Without your gifts we would be unable to fulfil the needs of our clients. With your help we are able to alleviate some of the worries of the people who use the Food Bank, especially during the winter months. Thank you so much.
Linda

The big white plastic box near the entrance to the church is always there for your donations. Please be especially generous as the added pressures of cold weather and Christmas approach.

St Salvador's is a non-referral food pantry, open once a week. The customers



– anyone in the local area who is experiencing financial difficulties – receive on arrival a basics bag of milk, tea, biscuits and toilet roll. They can then select other tinned or dry food and household items from the stock, and fresh food provided by the Cyrenians. Pulses, rice, tinned vegetables and coconut milk are popular, as are household cleaning items. It is really the basics that are needed, but something more special for Christmas would not come amiss.

You can find information on how to support the Initiative financially on St Salvador's website at stsalvadors.co.uk/elementor-42773.

MONTHLY MUSIC GIFTS TO ONE ANOTHER

A contribution from a member of the congregation:
Back in the days when I commuted for my work, one Advent stands out. For no significant reason, I decided that, as I drove each day, I would listen to *Messiah!* by Handel. The journey wasn't long enough for all of it, but I managed to listen to it all once or twice each week. Although I say 'listen', those drives saw me singing at the top of my voice, often not quite in tune, but belting out the well-known numbers, while gradually becoming more familiar with the lesser-known sections. Gradually, I came to know the piece, not only as the Christmas favourite it often is, but as a familiar and beautiful summation of so much scripture. I came to view *Messiah!,* my faith, and my commute, differently that Advent. Somehow even in January, after all the Christmas festivities were over, something of Handel's music continued to sing in me.

There are many excellent recordings of Messiah!.



In the New Year, Holy Cross Church will be running a new course for anyone, whether church goers or interested explorers, called 'Being With', where we'll be exploring life and faith together. If you're curious or have questions about faith; if you've been wounded by your experience of church; if you're just not sure what you believe but have lots of questions, then Being With is for you.

This course explores the Christian faith and its relevance to our lives now – but it's not your typical course. It's a space for anyone who is curious about faith, exploring Christianity, or maybe just wondering where they stand with it all. You might be returning to faith after some time away or asking whether what you once believed still holds true.

Or maybe you've had experiences of church that have left you unsure. Being With offers something gentler – a place where you can listen, share and reflect alongside others, with no pressure and no judgement. What makes it special is that we explore faith through real-life stories and honest conversation – not lectures or right answers. Whatever your story, Being With offers a gentle, honest space to reflect. It's not about having the right answers – it's about real conversations, shared experiences and discovering how to live a faith that feels true to you.

There's no preaching. No pressure. No need to pretend you've got it all figured out. Just a group of people talking about faith, life, doubt, meaning – and what it might look like if God is with us in all of it. You won't be told what to believe. Instead, you'll be gently invited to explore what faith could look like when it's built on acceptance, generosity and grace. This is not church as you've known it. This is an experience of belonging before believing, of being truly known yet still welcomed.

For more information email rector@holycrossedinburgh.org, and keep an eye on our Facebook page @HolyCrossEdinburgh for updates.

ADVENT COURSE

A group for any who are interested will meet weekly on Fridays in December during Advent. All are welcome. **Time**: 10.30 a.m–12.00 p.m. **Dates**: 4th, 11th and 18th December. **Place**: The Rectory.

ANNUAL MEETING 2026

APPOINTMENTS and ELECTIONS

Secretary: Beverley Naidoo *Treasurer and Gift Aid Secretary:* Colin Mair
Independent Examiner: WK Ramage
Protection of Vulnerable Groups Coordinator: Alan Kirkpatrick
Lay Representative: Sally Mair *Alternate Lay Rep.:* David Townhill
Rector's Warden: Sally Mair *People's Warden:* Tricia Stott

BUDGET 2026/27

[Details included in paper and emailed versions.]

FREE MEALS ON WHEELS

LifeCare Edinburgh, based at 2 Cheyne Street, Stockbridge, provides many services for people aged 50+ with health or support needs, and their carers, in north Edinburgh and Leith. Naomi Potts from LifeCare writes:

As the weather officially turns wintery(!), do you know anyone who might benefit from fresh, nutritious, hot meals delivered to them at home? The normal cost is £8 for a two-course meal. Thanks to our funders we have FREE places available to people on low incomes this winter.

Find out more or make a referral here:
www.lifecare-edinburgh.org.uk/services/meals-on-wheels
Tel 0131 343 0940 lifecare-edinburgh.org.uk

Please bring this to the attention of anyone who might be interested.



CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL IN CRAMOND KIRK

This year's theme is 'Our Community Christmas'. The trees are decorated by a variety of local groups and organisations.

The Festival is open on Saturday 5th December from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. during the Kirk's Christmas Fair, and then after the 9.30 a.m. Sunday service until 3rd January, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 5 p.m. during this period.

REGULAR WORSHIP

Sunday **9.00 a.m.** **Said Eucharist**
10.30 a.m. **Sung Eucharist**

Wednesday **9.30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m.** **Silent Prayer**
We meet in the presence of God and in silence, with no more than a few words at the beginning and end, such as a Bible verse or the Lord's Prayer.
10.30 a.m. **Eucharist**

Thursday **7.15 p.m.** **Prayer and a pint** Silent prayer (as Wednesday) in church for about half an hour, followed by social time for those who wish from 8 p.m. in Ye Olde Inn.

First Friday in the month 2 p.m. Healing Eucharist with anointing

We use the 1982 Scottish Liturgy for all our Communion services.

Variations are noted in the Kalendar.

Christmas services are detailed on page 5.

KALENDAR and READINGS

December 2026

Wednesday 2nd December – Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.
Readings: Isaiah 25.6-9 Psalm 23 Matthew 15.29-39

Thursday 3rd December – Prayer and a pint 7.15 p.m.

Friday 4th December – Healing Eucharist 2 p.m.

Sunday 6th December – SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.
Readings: Isaiah 40.1-11 Psalm 85.1-2,8-13
2 Peter 3.8-15a Mark 1.1-8

Tuesday 8th December – Conception of Mary, Mother of the Lord

Wednesday 9th December – Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.
Readings: Isaiah 40.25-31 Psalm 103.1-10 Matthew 11.28-30

Thursday 10th December – Prayer and a pint 7.15 p.m.

Sunday 13th December – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11 Magnificat
1 Thessalonians 5.16-24 John 1.6-8,19-28

Wednesday 16th December – Ember Day **– Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.**

Readings: Isaiah 45.5-8,18-25 Psalm 85.8-13 Luke 7.19-23

Thursday 17th December – Prayer and a pint 7.15 p.m.

Friday 18th December – Ember Day

Saturday 19th December – Ember Day

Sunday 20th December – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.

Readings: 2 Samuel 7.1-11,16 Psalm 89.1-4,19-26
Romans 16.25-27 Luke 1.26-38

Monday 21st December – Longest Night service 7 p.m.

Wednesday 23rd December – Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Malachi 3.1-5 Psalm 25.1-14 Luke 1.57-66

Thursday 24th December – CHRISTMAS EVE – Christingle Service 3 p.m. – NO Prayer and a pint – Eucharist 11.30 p.m.

Readings: Isaiah 52.7-10 Psalm 98
Hebrews 1.1-12 John 1.1-14

Friday 25th December – CHRISTMAS DAY – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Isaiah 62.6-12 Psalm 98
Titus 3.4-7 Luke 2.8-20

Saturday 26th December – Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Sunday 27th December – FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Isaiah 61.10-62.3 Psalm 148
Galatians 4.4-7 Luke 2.22-40

Monday 28th December – The Holy Innocents

Tuesday 29th December – John, Apostle and Evangelist (trans. from Sunday 27th)

Wednesday 30th December – Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.

Readings: 1 John 2.12-17 Psalm 96.7-10 Luke 2.36-40

Thursday 31st December – NO Prayer and a pint



January 2027

Friday 1st January – The Naming of Jesus – NO Healing Eucharist

Sunday 3rd January – THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (trans. from 6th January) – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Isaiah 60.1-6 Psalm 72.1-7,10-14
Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12

Wednesday 6th January – Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.

Readings: 1 John 3:18-4:6 Psalm2 Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

Thursday 7th January – Prayer and a pint 7.15 p.m.

Sunday 10th January – THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Genesis 1.1-5 Psalm 29
Acts 19.1-7 Mark 1.4-11

Wednesday 13th January – Kentigern (or Mungo) Bishop, c603 – Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Isaiah 52.7-10 Psalm 16.5-11
1 Thessalonians 2.2-12 Matthew 28.16-20

Thursday 14th January – Prayer and a pint 7.15 p.m.

Sunday 17th January – SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.

1 Samuel 3.1-20 Psalm 139.1-6,13-18
1 Corinthians 6.12-20 John 1.43.51

Wednesday 19th January – Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Hebrews 7.1-3,15-17 Psalm 110 Mark 3.1-6

Thursday 20th January – Prayer and a pint 7.15 p.m.

Sunday 24th January – THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Jonah 3.1-5,10 Psalm 62.5-12
1 Corinthians 7.29-31 Mark 1.14-20

Monday 25th January – The Conversion of Paul, Apostle

Wednesday 27th January – Silent Prayer 9.30 a.m. – Eucharist 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Hebrews 10.11-18 Psalm 110.1-4 Mark 4.1-20

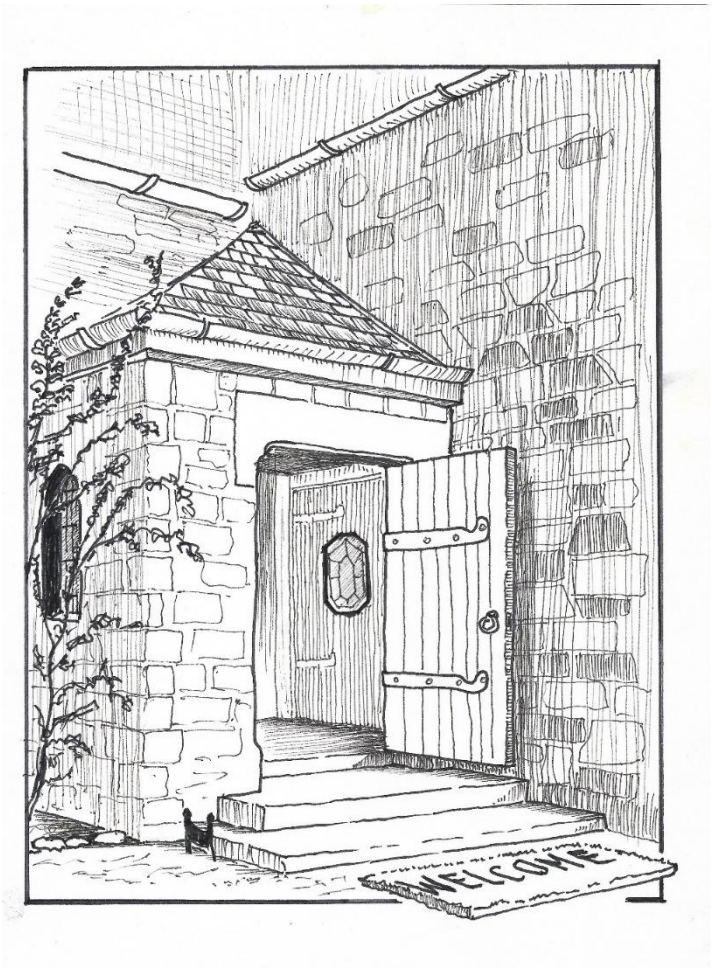
Thursday 28th January – Prayer and a pint 7.15 p.m.

Sunday 31st January – FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY – Eucharist 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.

Readings: Deuteronomy 18.15-20 Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8.1-13 Mark 1.21-28

QUIZ ANSWERS

1 WSWTFBN While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night
2 OLTOB O Little Town Of Bethlehem
3 TVMHABB The Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy
4 GRYMG God Rest You Merry Gentlemen
5 GKWLO Good King Wenceslas Looked Out
6 PTOC Past Three O'Clock
7 AFTROG Angels From The Realms Of Glory
8 THATI The Holly And The Ivy
9 JTTW Joy to The World
10 CITMIOM Child In The Manger Infant Of Mary
11 ITBM In The Bleak Midwinter
12 WWYAMC We Wish You A Merry Christmas


WELCOME