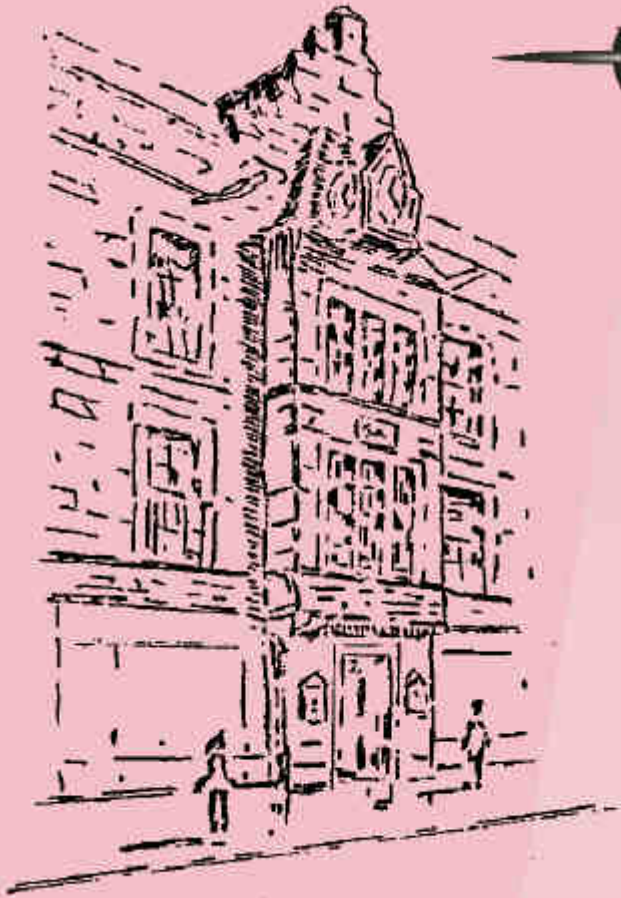


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PORTOBELLO BAPTIST CHURCH

Messenger

December 2006

www.portobellobaptist-church.org.uk

A THOUGHT

As I write this, we are not yet into December and yet, if you only had television adverts and shopping centres to help you gauge the actual date, you could come to the conclusion that Christmas was only a few days away – such is the hype and the pressure. Perhaps you are saying to yourself – “if only we could get back to a more simple way of life and celebration of Christmas.”

Christmas creates a mixed bag of emotions within the life of any church, within any group of Christian people.

There are those who feel that it shouldn't be celebrated in any way what so ever, suggesting perhaps, that it has its origins in a pagan festival rather than in a scriptural remembrance of the birth of our Saviour.

For other, Christmas is a time for remembering, thinking about past Christmases, occasions when folks who are no longer with us, were there sharing in our celebration. There are those for whom this particular Christmas will be the first without a beloved member of the family in the midst.

Then again, for some, Christmas brings chaos and further financial burdens – a time when we spend well beyond our means and suffer for it throughout the incoming year.

Heartache and chaos. Not all that different from the scene in and around Bethlehem on the occasion of our Lord's birth. A census being taken – not a room to be found anywhere. Followed by the heartache of the death of so many children in that needless and cruel killing instigated by Herod.

As we work our way through the period of Advent towards the celebration of the birth of our Saviour, may it be for each one of us – no matter of feelings and emotion – a very special time of preparation and worship, a time when, despite all that may be going on around us, we are able to focus our attention on the main event – a simple celebration and thanksgiving to God for the gift of His Son – for the Word who became flesh and dwelt in our midst.

May you know the joy of the Lord at this special time.

Robert Gemmell,
Pastoral Assistant.

THE PULPIT

December	3rd		Rev. Alan Berry
	10th	a.m. p.m.	Miss Dorothy Nisbet, Thailand Local
	17th		To be arranged
	24th	a.m.	Rev. Alan Berry
	31st		Rev. Robert Gemmell
January	7th		Rev. Alan Montgomery

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

December	24th	7.30 p.m.	Christmas Eve Program of carols, readings, film & mince pies.
January	6th	6 p.m.	New Year Party

PRAYER LINK 2007

Throughout the year, churches in membership or associated with the Baptist Union of Scotland are listed on given Sundays for prayer. While they are remembered in prayer on these dates from the pulpits, the prayers of individual members are requested. Accordingly, they will be named in the Messenger.

January	7th	Cambuslang and Carlisle
	14th	Carluke and Cleland
	21st	Coatbridge and Colonsay
	28th	Cowdenbeath and Crieff

A CHRISTMAS POEM

A carpenter cut the manger's wood,
with chisel and plane, making it good.
A servant carted his master's hay,
and filled up the manger for Christmas Day.

The straw that he used for the oxen's bed,
made a carpet of light, for Angel's tread,
the lantern that lit the stable bare
was hung by a lad from the rafter there.

Just manger wood, and light and hay,
just ordinary things of every day;
*But the Lord of Heaven used such things
to welcome on earth the King of Kings.*

CHRISTMAS CARD BOX

The posting box for friends of the church will be available on the half landing on 3 & 10 December. The cards will then be distributed on 17 December.

A Christmas card for Lynne Brown, our link missionary in Angola, will be in the Centenary Lounge on 3 December for signatures.

TRIBUTE TO MR JOHN NICOL

We pay tribute to a man who was small in stature but who was large in so many other aspects of his life. John Nicol who died on Sunday morning, 5 November 2006, in the residential home in Leamington Terrace where he had been a resident for the past one and a half years.

John had a long life of 95 years shared with Olive whom he married in 1958. His working life was in the coal trade as a merchant and later in the garage at Niddrie Mill. One can scarcely imagine him filling hundredweight bags of coal and carrying them up two and three flights of stairs, as was the case in these days. It is said he also had a passion for powerful motorbikes.

John was converted to Jesus Christ through the influence of Mr Marshall Shallis of the National Young Life Campaign, an Organisation in which he became very much involved. He was baptised and joined Portobello Baptist

Church on 30 April 1947 -- fifty nine and a half years ago. Much can be said of John Nicol's Christian faith and what this church owes him. He and Olive were very much involved in Children's work. They taught in Sunday School and they ran the Junior Christian Endeavour, the effects of which have been lasting. He also went round other Sunday Schools using flannelgraph lessons of Bible stories of which he had a great collection. He would cut out the figures and paint background cloths. This was all in keeping with how meticulous he was in what he did. This was also true of his devotional life. He studied the Bible and had a very considerable knowledge of its contents. An aid which he used was tapes. He purchased tapes of eminent preachers as well as recordings of broadcasts on television and he would distribute these to people, keeping careful note of where they went! Such was his interest in the Word of God. John was not a preacher himself but he used these means for the benefit of others.

Much could be said of John. His commitment was exemplary and his loyalty was unswerving. John was present morning and evening on a Sunday and at the midweek service on a Wednesday with out fail. His support of the Church and its activities was also very practical and very generous. He was a man of strict integrity. His beliefs were the guiding principle of his life both in business and personally. As has been said of him "he was straight as a die" so much so that he is said to have informed the Tax Man of income tax which was payable.

Paul wrote to Timothy "the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will award me on that day." these words can be attributed to John Nicol.

We thank God for every remembrance of John Nicol. We extend to Olive and Stephen, to his two sisters and other family members our sincere sympathy, love and prayers.

Jack Spiers, Secretary

EMAIL FROM OUR LINK MISSIONARY IN ANGOLA

Hope all is well with you all. We are breathing a bit of sigh of relief as the PEPEs have closed for the holidays. The last weeks went well and our volunteer, Jane, was kept busy visiting them all and taking along craft and counting ideas. All the PEPEs had their end of term parties and not to be outdone, we had one for the missionary educators. We won't be together

again as a group until January so it was an opportunity for us all to say thanks to Jane as she returns to England on 2nd December.

The sigh of relief hasn't lasted long as I am due up in Uige this weekend for a certificate ceremony. Please pray about transport. After difficulties over accommodation we decided that I would fly up alone and stay with the local pastor and his family, rather than trying to get accommodation for 3. However, it is proving difficult to get a flight so we may have to drive up on Saturday after all, and with the recent downpours, the road may not be that great and it will be a shorter visit. We had a good time at the certificate service and PEPE in Benguela last month. It was good to see the children getting a chance to learn there too but there were many around the doorway who would have liked to join in. It is a very poor area of the town, with children in abundance.

In December we will have the first instalment of another training course in Luanda. Please pray for all the arrangements. Then Mary and I leave to spend Christmas and New Year in Namibia.

Please pray for my health, I've been plagued a bit by malaria since I got back and it leaves me feeling very tired. Not what you want when you're about to start an intensive training course. With the rainy season the mossies are out in full force so it's difficult to avoid being bitten.

I may not get the chance to write again before Christmas, so I pray it will be a time to focus again on Christ and what he means to us. Please keep PEPE in your prayers as we look to the future.

Lynne

UPDATE ON NEPAL

It was a privilege to have the opportunity of sharing news of Nepal at the evening service recently. We concentrated on the missionary vision of the Nepal church, and the exciting way God is working through his people to reach out to many others.

I gave a very brief outline of the political situation as it was then, and want to follow that up with the news that November 2006 is a major date in Nepali history, with the signing of a peace treaty between the government and the Maoists at the end of nearly 11 years of civil war resulting in over 13,000 deaths, endless hardship, fear and grief for the Nepali people, and much destruction of the infrastructure of the country. We praise God

indeed for this momentous event, while we need to continue in prayer for His overruling on a rocky road ahead through all the mistrust and suspicion remaining on both sides.

November 2006 also marks 50 years since I sailed for India for a couple of years en route to Nepal. What a joy to be closely linked with that little country all this time, and I am so grateful for this great privilege which God has given to me. The words of our "UMN national anthem" - How great is the God we adore - keep ringing through my mind:

"We will praise Him for all that is past,
and trust Him for all that's to come".

Betty Young

Give yourself a Gift by celebrating
the wonders of daily life,
let the child in your heart
become an explorer again.

Mrs Cathy Whittaker

109th ANNIVERSARY COLLAGE



IN CINEMAS FROM 8 DECEMBER

THE NATIVITY STORY chronicles the arduous journey of two people; Mary and Joseph, a miraculous pregnancy, and the history-defining birth of Jesus. This dramatic and compelling story comes to life in a major motion picture.



The filmmakers are bringing an unprecedented level of commitment to ensure the authenticity not only of the Nativity story itself, but of the film's look as well.

Because the actual locations of Bethlehem and Nazareth have become fairly modernised over the years, the production team decided to shoot in the village of Matera, Italy, which has been virtually unchanged for centuries (and was previously used as a location for THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST.) Additionally, the production team journeyed to Ouarzazate, Morocco where it shot scene's involving Herod's castle and the Temple of Jerusalem.



“This story means so much to people all over the world. I hope audiences can relate to the film on a personal level and find some inspiration to get through their own challenges and difficulties,” says director Catherine Hardwicke.