



# THE STEEPLE CHURCH

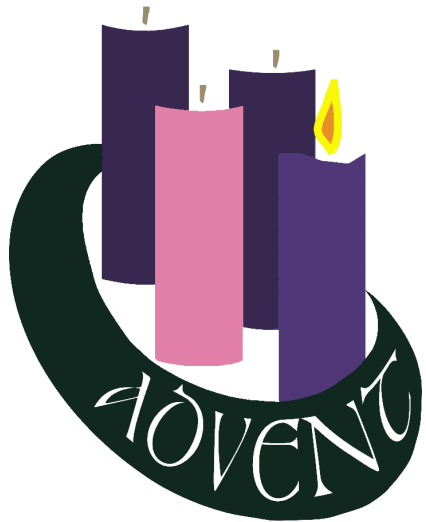
A church at the heart of the city with the city at its heart



On a Sunday morning we have two services (10.30am and 11.45am). A booking system is in operation. If you would like to attend one of the services please reserve a seat by 12noon on the Friday by email to [thesteeplechurch@gmail.com](mailto:thesteeplechurch@gmail.com) or by telephoning the church office. Please give your name, the number of seats you want to reserve, first service or second service and a contact telephone number for Test & Protect.

A recorded service is available online or on a CD for those who are unable to attend church.

Many of our other weekly church gatherings continue using Zoom - see the back page for details. Please contact the church office if you would like more details about any of our events.



The Steeple Church: Dundee (Church of Scotland)  
Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4DG

**Minister: Rev Dr Robert Calvert**

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Registered Scottish Charity SC 014314

My dear friends,

**It has been a**

**very**

**long**

**hard**

**year**

**for all of us. Everyone!**

The arrival of Covid-19 has altered everything. Months of isolation have worn down even the most introverted. At-home everything (work, school, life) has left people frazzled and tired. The virus came during Lent, the first of the two great annual Christian seasons we celebrate, and is now casting a dark shadow – 8 months later – over the other. We speak of ‘the times before’ or the ‘new normal’, and we long for the future, even if it is unknown. Last year when the first concerns about the coronavirus were being voiced in China, none of us expected the coronavirus to become a global pandemic and affect the celebration of Christmas a year later.

So, this year the Steeple offers you:

**Five Advent & Christmas Sundays** – 10.30 & 11.45 services at the Steeple on the last five Sundays of 2020 – please register in the normal way

**Advent reflections** – recorded daily readings/reflections by the minister based on a ‘Wild Goose’ publication on ‘the Jesse tree’ – is available on YouTube or on CD

**Advent Offering** – an opportunity to give to a project concerned with the effects of ‘Climate Change’ (see page 5) and Parish Nursing

**Christmas Nativity** – a professionally filmed ‘*Dundee Nativity - Celebrating a Covid Christmas*’ is for all ages –on YouTube & Vimeo

**Christmas Communion** – we celebrate communion for the first time since March in both ‘live’ and recorded services on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December

**Christmas Eve** – no carol singing in the wards at Ninewells Hospital but think about sharing the drama, music and dance of the ‘Nativity’ film

**Christmas Day** – no Christmas live service at the Steeple but we can make use of recorded Christmas carols & message at home in our ‘bubbles’

**Prayer Walks** – watch out this Christmas/New Year for times & places of ‘self-distanced pray as we go’ walks from Rosalind & What’s App/Facebook

This year the run-up to Christmas seems strangely ‘biblical’ where:

- No November city-centre ‘switch on’ of Christmas lights
- Restricted access and organised queues outside stores
- Advent hymns refer to people walking about in darkness

‘Advent’ strikes a more sober note than the twinkling lights and tinsel to the sound of Christmas music. Advent is more than just a counting down the days until we get to sing ‘Silent night’ and remember a sweet baby in the manger. The Advent season fits more with the atmosphere of despair and weariness. It’s about a deep longing for God’s presence in the darkness. It is about hope for our lives today. It is about joy for those who have ‘reached the end of their rope.’ We, who have hope and joy in Jesus Christ, are Advent people. Call someone to say that you’re thinking about them.

Your friend and minister,

## SUNDAYS AT THE STEEPLE

29 Nov	Waiting in the dark	Psalm 80	Advent 1
06 Dec	In the wilderness	Mark 1: 1-8	Advent 2
13 Dec	Mystery of the Messiah	John 1: 6-8, 19-28	Advent 3
20 Dec	God’s ridiculous plan	Luke 1: 26-38	Advent 4
27 Dec	The family of faith	Luke 2: 22-40	
03 Jan	(Daniel Spencer to preach and Valentine to be baptised)		

# A JESSE TREE FOR THIS ADVENT

This month, daily reflections on Facebook and You-tube invite you to make or create reminders of Jesus' background by making your own 'Jesse tree'... Isaiah 11 v. 1 says "A root shall come from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." A Jesse Tree is for remembering the people who are in the family tree of Jesus. This year I invite you to listen to daily readings and prayers from Thom Shuman, a poet from Cincinnati. His point is that people who might only be mentioned once in the Bible are part of God's family. They are part of our faith tradition and therefore branches on the Jesse Tree.

## WHAT IS A JESSE TREE?

Over recent years, the Jesse Tree has seen a big increase in popularity with Christian families all over the UK. But what is it?



A Jesse Tree is used during Advent (in modern times, used for the first 24 days of December in the same way a child would use a chocolate advent calendar) to focus on the stories of the Bible leading up to the birth of Jesus. It consists of three things: a tree, the advent ornaments, and the Bible passages.

The idea comes from Isaiah 11:1-2: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

## WELCOME

Nicola Montgomery will undertake part of her placement with The Steeple in the New Year as part of her training for the Readership.

## AUDIO CDs

Although services have now resumed in the church, we still continue to offer an audio CD of the service. The audio CD is ideal if you don't use internet technology with a computer or smartphone. All you need is a CD player and you can leave it playing while you shut your eyes!

# ADVENT OFFERING

A new arrival to Dundee, Cesar Urquizo, is originally from Bolivia. Now he has a Scottish wife and, like her, currently works remotely from their home. Previously he commuted to London for his work with Brooke U.K. It is a global charity which specialises in the welfare of working equines (donkeys, mules, horses). 600 million of these animals support the livelihoods of 200 million people in the poorest countries on earth. But the sad, and all too often, fact is that many working animals are severely overworked, neglected and brutally treated. To encourage our Dundonian friend, Cesar, and support the animal welfare vision of Brooke at a time of year when God-valued donkeys feature in the Christmas story (traditionally) and in Jesus' final journey to the cross you are invited to make an offering that will LIGHTEN THEIR LOAD.



Jim Robertson, World Mission Team Leader.

# TEAR FUND “SESSIONS”



Tearfund Scotland's Christmas concerts will still be going ahead – live from the living room! The virtual performances will be hosted on the Tearfund Scotland Facebook page. They will each highlight a different area of Tearfund's work and help raise money for our partners, bringing hope to poor communities throughout the world. All

the details for the online concerts are below. You can sign up for notifications of the concerts you'd like to attend in the event section of Tearfund's Facebook page... or just head over to Facebook on the dates above and we'll be going live at 8pm. You don't even need your own Facebook account to join in this December!

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8.00 pm – **Yvonne & David Lyon (Hope)**

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> at 8.00 pm – **Ashton Lane (Peace)**

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> at 8.00 pm – **Ellyn Oliver (Joy)**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8.00 pm – **Unoma Okudo & Ifedade Thomas (Love)**



## **FAREWELL LETTER FROM HOWARD & DIANNE STEVENSON**

Dear Steeple family, Dianne and I would like to you very sincerely for the very generous token you gave us, and the beautiful album of photographs and kind comments from so many of our friends, over so many years; we were deeply moved by all the kindness and goodwill which you have shown, and have been reminded of so many happy occasions in the Steeple over the years since we first came to Dundee in 1983. We came to the Steeple shortly after we arrived as a direct result of the very warm and sincere welcome we received from the congregation, and this has always been such a feature of the fellowship within our church; so many friends, so many wonderful memories – we thank you so much for your kindness.

We moved out of Newport last week and are staying with various family members until we move into our new home in the middle of December. We will forward our new address, and hopefully keep in touch with as many as possible. Thank you all again, and we wish you God's richest blessings in the months and years ahead.

Howard and Dianne / 11th November 2020



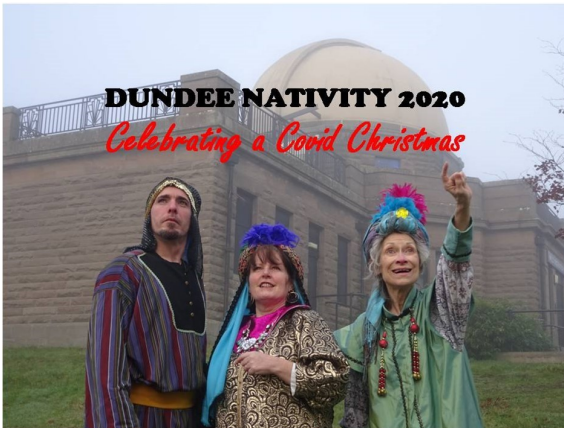
### **Sound desk operators**

We need more people to help operate the sound desk on Sunday mornings. We are few in number and currently two sound operators are required each Sunday. You do NOT need to be technically minded (although it doesn't do any harm).

We are also looking for people to help with filming the services for live streaming. It is hoped that we will be able to start live streaming services early in the new year—but we need help! Training will be provided. If you would like to help please contact the church office.

## DUNDEE NATIVITY – THE MOVIE

People walking in Balgay Park recently were surprised to see three Wise Persons from the East making their way to Mills Observatory. On being approached by a curious dog walker, they told him they were in search of a star, and having travelled to Dundee, the observatory seemed a good place to start.



They had learned that, because of Coronavirus restrictions, there are no live performances of the Dundee Nativity, which over the past ten years has been part of the programme for the traditional Christmas Lights event in the city centre.

However, a professionally filmed version of this year's nativity play, will be available on YouTube and Vimeo from 11th December. It provides an entertaining and relevant slant on the events of the first Christmas. In this year's unusual circumstances because of the pandemic, Dundee Nativity – Celebrating a Covid Christmas aims to bring a message of hope, encouragement and reassurance to all who are struggling with the situation. Through drama, music and dance, it promotes the celebration of Christmas in a way that is funny, thought-provoking and for all ages.

Thanks to a generous grant from Dundee City Council's new Festive Fund, copies of Dundee Nativity – Celebrating a Covid Christmas on DVD are being offered to care homes, hospitals, and others unable to access the internet.

The video will be available to watch on the church website or on YouTube from 11 December onwards. It is also available on DVD. Please speak to Allan Webster if you would like any more information.

# STEEPLE STRETCH SURVEY

## FEEDBACK PART 1

Jim Robertson: leader of World Mission Team

The Survey request was sent out to **79** email addresses.

Responses on behalf of **58** people came back.

My idea was to discover how far our global connections stretched.

According to the official UN stats. Fully recognized countries number **193**

However another 2 sovereign, permanent observer, states exist (The Vatican & Palestine).

There are also 6 diplomatically recognized countries ( Taiwan, Kosovo, S Ossetia, Abkhazia, N Cyprus, W Sahara).

Our **STEEPLE STRETCH** extends to **59** nations, listed below.

This means that through our own life/ work stories or family connections we have an interest in all these nations; their peoples, histories, politics and churches.

The map opposite lets you see how far we reach. Hopefully this may indicate the focus of our global wide prayers.

The countries with no markers indicate a challenge for us to stretch our vision and prayers even further..

Global wide agencies we support also have an encouraging stories to tell. But they will be told in future 2021 Steeple magazines!



Afghanistan, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Zambia.





## REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR FRIENDS SERVING THE LORD OVERSEAS...

Steve & Catriona Bennett with Hannah & Rachel at Gahini hospital Rwanda  
Laura & Adam Gordon with Beth & Sophie in Kampala, Uganda with  
Engineering Ministries International  
Asmita and the team at Chhahari Nepal in Kathmandu



If you would be interested in joining (or forming) an online Steeple Home Group, using Zoom, (from the convenience and comfort of your own home), please let Brenda in the Office know and we can put you in touch with others.



# REFLECTIONS FROM DUNDEE

NOVEMBER 2020

Piers Bowser had the privilege of getting to know one of his neighbours much better during this troubled year and bringing 'Harry's Story' to light. It is a remarkable tale of Christian compassion, perseverance and courage in the midst of terrible suffering during a time of war.

You can watch Piers and Harry in conversation on November's **Reflections from Dundee** (Dundee's answer to the BBC's Reflections at the Quay). You can find it on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khSjO0rwnaQ>

Harry was born and brought up in the Hilltown area of Dundee. After finishing studies at Lawside Academy at the age of 17 he travelled to St Joseph's college Dumfries where he began his vocational path to becoming a fully fledged Marist Brother. He studied Maths and Astronomy at Glasgow University and in 1953 shortly after completing a teacher training qualification he found himself teaching science at a newly built school in Nigeria.

When Nigeria gained independence in October 1960, Harry was allowed to remain in the country and continue teaching, and in 1965 he became principal of the college. In May 1967 the independent oil rich territory of Eastern Nigeria was declared as the Republic of Biafra and Harry found himself at the centre of what was to become a terrible civil war.

You can watch this and other Reflections from Dundee on Camperdown And Lochee Ministry's (CALM) YouTube channel.

## SCENTED LAMENT

During December, Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will be inviting people to send a sprig of rosemary, to represent their own personal experience of 2020. These sprigs will then be incorporated into a giant rosemary wreath, a symbol of the nation's lament for a sorrow-filled year, so that we can all look forward to happier times.

'Peter and Heidi have come up with what I believe to be a wonderful idea – a way for us all to participate in a collective acknowledgment of the losses and sadness that we've experienced through this most difficult of years,' Dr Fair said. 'This much I'm sure of we've all got something to speak of by way of loss, whether that be the death of a loved one or the cancellation of a special event, or the lack of opportunity to be with loved ones – and there's no loss too great or small that can't be given expression through Scented Lament'. (More details on the Church of Scotland website)

The art installation will be 5ft 9inches (the average height of a Scot) in diameter, will be created by Rev Peter Gardner and Heidi Gardner. A television programme on the installation will also be broadcast on BBC Scotland. Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will be presenting 'Resolutions' on New Year's Day, telling the story of the work of the 'Scented Lament' installation.

**Send us your sprig of rosemary:** We would ask that the cut sprig of rosemary is sealed inside a sandwich bag, then placed in an envelope and posted to:

Gardner & Gardner  
Studio 118  
The Briggait  
141 Bridgegate  
Glasgow  
G1 5HZ

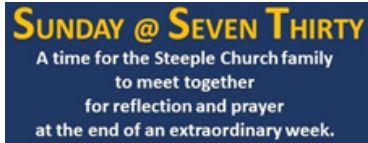


The rosemary should be posted around Thursday 10 December, so that it will arrive at the Gardner & Gardner studio between Monday 14 December and Friday 18 December, as fresh as possible.



As well as our Sunday services at church, a pre-recorded service can be found via the Church website, [www.thesteeplechurch.org.uk](http://www.thesteeplechurch.org.uk), Steeple Facebook Groups or The Steeple Church YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3No73xjivpUfQwdw1vbj2g>



Every Sunday evening at 7.30 pm, we are meeting using Zoom to pray together.



Folk are also meeting to keep in touch and to chat via Zoom, at our regular Thursday Coffee Morning (10.30am) and Tuesday Afternoon Tea Break times (3pm).

The Zoom links for the above events remain the same each week. Please contact the church office if you need the links.



Several of our Home Groups are also using Zoom to continue meeting for bible study and fellowship. If you would be interested in joining one of these, please let Robert or the Office know and we can put you in touch

The Steeple Men Group on Thursday mornings and the Connections Café to support those new to Dundee with learning English are using Zoom. John Clark would be happy to tell you more about these: [johndrummondclark@gmail.com](mailto:johndrummondclark@gmail.com)



We have set up private Facebook and WhatsApp Groups for the Steeple family so that folk can easily and quickly inform others in the Steeple community of any prayer requests or practical needs, in particular if they become unwell or are needing to self-isolate.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities but don't know how to access them, please contact the Church Office.