

EDINBURGH CHURCHES TOGETHER NEWSLETTER WINTER 2020

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- Christmas Shopping ideas!

And much more....

A FOND FAREWELL TO TIM CHALK'S NATIVITY SCENE

In 2003, Sir Tom and Lady Farmer generously gifted the Nativity scene created by the sculptor Tim Chalk to the city of Edinburgh and Edinburgh churches. Reluctantly, it has been decided that this wonderful piece of civic art can no longer weather the elements and is to be retired. Tim Chalk wrote this piece for the occasion especially for our newsletter:

Thoughts on the Edinburgh Nativity's Final Outing



When I made the Edinburgh Nativity Scene in 2003 the brief was to make a sculpture that would last fifteen seasons. Now, after eighteen Christmases it has been reluctantly decided that this should be its last outing.

2003 was also marked by the Second Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq, and while I was designing the scene the Middle East was being turned upside down and families were being destroyed and forced from their homes. I remember saying at the time "This could be a family in Palestine 2000 years ago or last week in Iraq". Without wanting to be overtly political about it this concentrated my mind on what I felt was central to the Christmas Story; the human story of a family caught up in world events with no ability to influence them but yet carrying the full burden of their consequences. But also, at the heart of the story there is the optimism that accompanies the birth of a child, and the humanity of those reaching out to support others in need.

Now, seventeen years later the world is still in a state of upheaval, people are still homeless and displaced as a result of war or personal misfortune, at home and abroad. But on a positive note, there are still people who care and engage with the issue and I hope my Nativity scene bears witness to this concern.

My aim was that the Nativity should provide a focus for contemplation, and a refuge from the materialism and commercialism of our hectic modern Christmas. When I make an artwork and send it out into the world it is always fascinating to see what happens to it. Some fade back into their surroundings and disappear, others develop a life of their own. It has given me enormous pleasure over the years to see families and individuals stop and spend a few moments or longer, pausing in their busy lives, or even making what sometimes appears to be a special excursion as a family just to visit the Nativity.

Looking to the future I hope the gap left by the departure of this Nativity is filled by another interpretation of the Christmas Story, and, more importantly, the central message of the story is not drowned out by the flashing lights and Special Seasonal Promotions.

TIM CHALK, EDINBURGH, NOVEMBER 2020



The Nativity scene is currently on display in East Princes Street Gardens next to the Scot Monument and is easily accessible, near to the pavement and the path so visitors can view it from close up. Tim Chalk's sculpture was blessed for the last time, this year by the Rt Rev Dr John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh. Sadly, the usual gathering of well-wishers, choirs and carol singing was not possible but a short video of the blessing introduced by Lord Provost Frank Ross is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=At77pqJBpu8>

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2021

Edinburgh Churches Together annual service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will go ahead as a Zoom meeting to which everyone is warmly invited. In this way we will not be hampered by the current restrictions that 'live' church services have to endure. The time and date have been confirmed as 7.30pm on Wednesday 20th January 2021 and a link to the Zoom meeting will be sent out nearer the time. This year, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme that was chosen, "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit", is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community's vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family. You can read more about the Community here <https://www.grandchamp.org/materiel-pour-la-celebration/>



CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS VIRTUAL CAROL SERVICE

You're invited to join Crisis, the charity that strives to end homelessness, for their first ever virtual carol service! Crisis carol services around the country are an important part of Christmas for many members, volunteers and supporters. Join them for a night of music, reflections from members and special guest appearances at 6pm on Saturday 12th December at <https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-involved/crisis-virtual-carol-service/> Although things will be different this year, this event will entertain, enlighten and help us bring an end to homelessness.



ADVENT SILENT PRAYER

During Advent there will be an opportunity to join in times of silent prayer via Zoom. This is an ecumenical opportunity to explore this spiritual practice. Anyone is welcome to join in; no previous experience is necessary. This is a continuation of a group that met regularly over the years at The Church of St John the Evangelist, Princes Street, attracting membership from various Christian traditions. Dates and times are: Tuesdays 1st, 8th and 15th December at 10am, Thursdays 3rd, 10th and 17th December at 8pm. Please email margaretannf@gmail.com or tony.bryer51@gmail.com to receive details of the Zoom link for joining, or questions.



SALVATION ARMY TOY APPEAL

This year more than ever consider giving a Christmas gift to the Salvation Army Toy Appeal. You can either donate money or choose and pay for a gift (more fun!).



**Christmas
PRESENT
appeal**

Could you help us make Christmas special for those who may have little or nothing under the tree on Christmas morning?

Give a money donation via our Just Giving page or choose and pay for a gift from our Amazon Wishlist and it will be delivered directly to us.
Use this link <https://linktr.ee/EdinburghCitySA> or scan the QR code to be taken to both options.
Thank you.

THE SALVATION ARMY

Give a gift and light up a life!

Registered Charity No. 250776 (only) Scotland SC250776 Social Trust Registered Charity No. 202276 and in Scotland SC202276 Republic of Ireland Registered Charity No. 250776-03

ONLINE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

Just Festival and Scottish PEN host a conversation with writers Leela Soma and David Manderson to mark Human Rights Day 2020. Free on-line event but registration needed at:

<https://www.just-festival.org/eventbrite-event/the-right-to-write/>



the right to write? a conversation on writing and rights in scotland today

Date: December 10

Time: 07:00 pm - 08:00 pm



Join Christian Aid Scotland and friends from around the world to mark the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2020.

Global theologies of gender-based violence – the role of faith leaders

7 December 2020 17:00-18:00 GMT

A panel of inspirational speakers will discuss the role of faith communities and leaders in speaking out against gender-based violence and share some of the creative ways people are challenging gender-based violence in countries and communities across the world. This event will be held on Zoom and is free but registration on Eventbrite is necessary.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/global-theologies-of-gender-based-violence-the-role-of-faith-leaders-tickets-128839278751>

For more information, contact Fiona: fbuchanan@christian-aid.org

EDINBURGH WOMEN'S AID CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Edinburgh

Women's Aid is inviting companies, churches, families and individuals to participate in their Christmas Appeal. The appeal has been set up to raise funds to ensure that woman and children in Edinburgh who are recovering from the trauma of domestic abuse can look forward to a brighter Christmas and a brighter 2021. As has been



widely reported there has been a global increase in instances of domestic abuse this year. More locally, Edinburgh Women's Aid saw an increase of 78% on new referrals to its helpline and core services between the beginning of June and the end of September this year compared to the same period last year. The charity also saw a 69% increase in demand for support for food and essentials this year since the beginning of March compared to last year. This year, because of the pandemic, an increase in demand for their services and lockdown restrictions, the charity is asking companies and groups to club together to both support women and children to have a brighter Christmas but also to provide food and essentials for women and children with no recourse to other funds during 2021. If you, your family, your church or the company you work for would like to set up a fundraising page to raise funds for this appeal or make a donation please click on the link below or get in touch with Edinburgh Women's Aid on 0131 315 8111 and ask to speak to Kate Tregaskis.

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/EWAChrismasAppeal2020>

DIGITAL SUPPORT FOR ALL



Scottish charity People Know How, have been busy adapting their projects supporting the communities of Edinburgh and East Lothian to online, telephone and socially distant support. Both their Positive Transitions Service supporting children, young people and families, and their Reconnect service supporting adults have moved online, with projects run both via video chat and through a blended model of delivery that combines socially distant support with online sessions.

People Know How's projects are now all

delivered via the phone or online. But with such a drastic move to using technology, it quickly became clear that many individuals simply don't have access to digital devices in their homes. This sobering fact gave way to People Know How's Computer Delivery project. Since April, the charity has been refurbishing donated devices and delivering them to members of the community, with over-the-phone tech support available after delivery. This project allows individuals to access support, home-school children and stay in touch with friends and family. Thanks to donations and the support of their volunteers, they have been able to deliver over 700 devices so far and have enough donations to deliver 1,000 by the end of the year. Leading on from the success of this project, People Know How are now leading a campaign for digital inclusion across Scotland.

Do you want to get involved? The charity is currently looking for volunteers, in particular to support adults to improve social isolation and digital skills within their Wellbeing Calls and Learn Digital projects. As many continue to self-isolate to protect themselves during the pandemic, having a friendly ear to chat has become more important than ever. By volunteering as a Wellbeing Caller, you can support adults experiencing loneliness and isolation through just a weekly telephone call.

Or if you know how to use a digital device, you can become a Digital Guide. You'll provide support to our Digital Learners, helping them to complete basic tasks a computer or phone, improving digital skills and reducing social isolation.

Volunteer with us at: www.peopleknowhow.org/join-our-team/#apply

Additionally, if you know someone in Edinburgh or East Lothian in need of a digital device, you can make a referral through computer.delivery@peopleknowhow.org

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A WEBINAR OR ZOOM MEETING BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?



Just Platform is a new initiative by Just Festival to help our audiences, stakeholders and local community to continue online conversations, events and meetings and promote your work all year round. We welcome third sector, faith, arts, community or activist groups to gather in our virtual meeting space. We can help you to reach a larger audience or just invite special attendees through our Zoom

Webinar facilities. Additionally, we can also provide eventbrite ticketing and promotion plus, if required, technical support and event management for a small fee. For more information email info@just-festival.org

SHOP LOCAL FOR CHRISTMAS

The One World Shop has been a fixture for supporters of ethical, sustainable and fair-trade shopping for many years. Situated at St Johns Church, Princes St, Edinburgh EH2 4BJ it is open for visitors from Mon-Sat: 10am - 5.30pm and on Sundays from 12 - 5pm. A one-way system, hand sanitiser at the door and screens at the till keep shoppers safe. It's rarely busy so there is plenty of room to shop in peace. They are also offering a personal appointment service every Thursday. To arrange your slot, call them on



0131 229 4541 or email info@oneworldshop.co.uk. If you'd prefer to shop online go to <https://www.oneworldshop.co.uk/> You can pay for delivery or you can select Click & Collect at the Payment page and your goods will be ready for you to pick up at the shop. They also offer a gift-wrapping service for a small charge so your gifts can be wrapped and posted to anywhere in the UK with a festive message from you. Confused with on-line shopping? – Give them a call and friendly staff members can help. T: 0131 229 4541



The Cornerstone Bookshop, just next door to the One World Shop, is also open for business. Independent, ecumenical and inclusive it provides spiritual, pastoral and theological resources. It also stocks a wide range of secular titles, cards, gifts and church supplies. Cornerstone has a welcoming atmosphere with space to browse in peaceful surroundings and is run by dedicated staff who aim to provide a friendly and knowledgeable service. If you want to order on-line, however, you can visit their new website:

<https://cornerstonebooks.org.uk/online-shop/> They are happy to order books for you and to post orders to customers who are unable to pick them up in person.

A happy Christmas and Hogmanay to all our readers and supporters. Here's to 2021!

Please email material for the Spring 2021 edition of ECT's newsletter by February 15th 2021 to imogen.gibson.ect@gmail.com

Visit <http://edinburghchurchestogether.org.uk> for information and resources.
Like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/EdinburghChurchesTogether/>
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