

Weekly Newsletter

16th December 2025



Reflection: Peace on Earth?

By James Philip (taken from his Daily Bible Readings produced by the Tron Church, Glasgow)

Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. (Luke 12:51)

There is no denying the special atmosphere that prevails at Christmas time. Charles Dickens once said 'There's magic in the very name of Christmas'. The world speaks quite frankly of 'the season of good cheer,' and gives way to a rejoicing and generosity, and even kindness, that it will not show again for another year. It enters, as it were, into a land of 'make-believe', with Christmas trees and fairy lights, for a week or two, then, when all is over, resigns itself to the cold, sullen reality of modern life. The magic has gone, and nothing is left but a rather wistful memory. And withal, there is the disturbing question asked by so many puzzled and doubting hearts, whether there can be any sort of reality in this Christmas message of peace on earth, goodwill to men, or whether, in fact, this also belongs to the realm of make-believe and fantasy. What else can it be in a world convulsed by tension and crisis, with nation wrestling with nation for world supremacy, and everywhere men's hearts failing them for fear?

But there is a simple, and indeed a decisive answer to this. It is that the message of the Babe of Bethlehem is only part of the story.

What we must realise, through the gospel, is that He who once came as a Babe has promised to come again as a King, to usher in the Kingdom of righteousness and peace. As the ancient prophecy puts it, 'The government shall be upon His shoulder'. As a matter of fact, paradoxical as it may seem, the deepest thought about Christmas lies in the future. For us who believe on His Name, the best part of Christmas has not happened yet. And every Christmas season that comes, reminds us that now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed, and that at the last our eyes shall see Him, 'not in that poor, lowly stable' but 'set at God's right hand on high'. Then - but not till then - will all that is spoken of Him in the Scriptures come to pass.

For the Christian, Christmas is the time which reminds him of the great glad day for which, as Paul says, the whole creation waits with eager longing; it is not only a foretaste, but a pledge, of what one day will be; for whereas now He offers peace to men and nations, then He will enforce it, as the King whose right and prerogative it is to do so.

The message of Christmas, then, is a foretaste of that Coming Day, a harbinger of something that still lies in the future, just as the snowdrop is a harbinger of Spring, telling us, as C S Lewis so beautifully points out in his book on Miracles, that we have turned the corner of the year. Summer is coming but it is still some way off, and the snowdrops do not last long. But they prophesy, and even if further snowstorms come - they often do - the signs of coming Spring have been seen in their blooming. We are still living in the frosts and cold east winds of the old order (and what a bitter Winter it is proving to be!), but the everlasting Spring of God's love and grace is on the way, and Christmas is His gracious foretaste and reminder that we do not hope in vain.



Margaret Horsburgh

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Margaret Horsburgh on Sunday evening but rejoice that she is now with her Saviour, who she loved and lived for. Please pray for her family who will miss her incredibly and details of her funeral will follow.

Christmas Appeal 2025

There are four projects that we are supporting this year in our Christmas appeal:

- Women's Workers for Tranent Community Church - funding for Jen and Morag as they provide practical and spiritual care for women in the church and evangelism among women in the community.
- Cross Training Ministries – to invest in inspiring and training men in every corner of Scotland.
- Craig Anderson and the Church Plant in Galashiels – to help with the purchase of their new building and be an encouragement to Craig and his core team. We're looking forward to hearing from Craig at our prayer meeting this Wednesday.
- East of Scotland Gospel Partnership - this partnership is in a relaunching phase and would greatly benefit from having some funds to develop its work.

Tranent Community Church and Cross Training Ministries will each receive 40% of the total raised with Craig Anderson and the East of Scotland Gospel Partnership each receiving 10%.

The Christmas Appeal is open during December and as usual people can transfer money directly into the church bank account <https://holyroodevangelical.org/giving/> or place donations into the offering box marked Christmas Appeal. Thank you!

Carol Services

We're looking forward to our **Carols by Candlelight tonight** from 6.30pm – 7.15pm. The Salvation Army Brass Band will lead us in some carols over the in park (it looks like it will be a dry night!) followed by hot drinks and mince pies in the church. There will also be kids' activities in the church.

We will be having our **Christmas Carol Service on Sunday 21 December** at 6pm followed by light refreshments. There is still time to invite friends along to these two events!

Prayer Meetings

It is great to have Craig Anderson from the Galashiels Church Plant join us at our Prayer Meeting tomorrow (17 December). Please come along from 7-8pm (refreshments will be served from 6.45pm).

There will be no prayer meeting on 31 December and the first prayer meeting of 2026 will be on 7 January.



Women's Discipleship at Holyrood

We are looking forward to starting up our Women's Bible Studies again in the new year. In 2026, we would like to offer both the in person Thursday morning studies as well as a Bible Study Reading Plan for those who cannot attend an in person study. These studies will both commence the week of the 19 January.

Following a reading plan together alongside other women provides a great opportunity to be in God's Word daily, communicate with other women, and increase fellowship rooted in God's Word while providing accountability for one another. The plan:

- Work through Glen Schrivener's *Reading Between the Lines* of the Old Testament for the same number of weeks as the in person study
- Communicate in smaller WhatsApp groups to reflect on the daily readings and share prayer requests
- Follow the daily reading plan (short passages with short reflection...not too big of a commitment!) 5 days a week, Monday-Friday.
- Begin with an in person brunch on Saturday 17 January 10:30am to meet your small group and clarify goals of the study together.

Please let Anna Barnard (Annabarnard@gmail.com) know if you'd like to take part in the Bible reading plan by Saturday 10 January or if you have any questions. The church will provide copies of the book so please let Anna know if you need a copy and we will do a bulk order of *Reading Between the Lines*. Thank you!

Hogmanay Ceilidh

We are looking forward to having a ceilidh together as a church family on **Wednesday 31 December from 7-10pm**. Please save the date and come along!

Liz's Annual Leave

Liz will be on annual leave from Monday 22 December until Friday 2 January. There will be no newsletter for the next fortnight but normal service will resume in January!

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Tuesday: Carols by Candlelight from 6.30pm
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm with Craig Anderson (with refreshments from 6.45pm)
- Sunday:
 - Morning Service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
 - Christmas Carol Service at 6pm – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)

