
Prayers for Peace at Christian Aid Service

Carol service includes update from South Sudan

PRAYERS for peace around the world this Christmas, with messages from aid workers in the Middle East and South Sudan, were at the heart of a carol service hosted by Christian Aid, at New Town Church in Edinburgh.

Prayers and readings were delivered by a range of guest speakers including former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Very Rev David Arnott, and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland, Kirsty McNeill MP. Hymn writer John Bell delivered the address. There were musical contributions from the band Siskin Green and the children of St Peter's RC Primary School, Edinburgh.

After the service, Head of Christian Aid Scotland Val Brown said: "Christmas is the wonderful celebration of the birth of Jesus but we sometimes forget that he was born in a stable in Bethlehem during military occupation by the Roman Empire.

"Today millions of people find themselves displaced by war, conflict or occupation, their lives disrupted by fear and chaos. Our service last night acknowledged these challenging times and how Christian Aid's peacebuilding and humanitarian work is making a difference but how we can all make a difference by calling for peace."

This year Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal is focused on South Sudan. Christian Aid's Country Director for South Sudan, James Wani, shared an update during the service via video.

Speaking from Juba, he described the challenges facing his country, including climate change and conflict. Due to the war in neighbouring Sudan, hundreds of thousands of people have arrived seeking safety. But despite this, he said, 'hope is the lifeline which sustains so many' and he thanked people for their continued support.

Find out more about the Christmas Appeal at: caid.org.uk/Christmas2024 

Welcome to the Life and Work monthly newsletter, a free resource helping Church of Scotland members stay up-to-date with everything going on in the Church and its partners.

Each month there will be exclusive features, news and updates from Church organisations.

The newsletter is free to download from www.lifeandwork.org/newsletter. Feel free to share with church members, friends and family, and get in touch if you have any comments or suggestions.

Inside this month

Page 2

Two rare Bibles, found in a church in Bathgate, have been placed on display.

Page 3

The Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland call on MSPs not to pit vulnerable communities against each other.

Page 4

This month's Life and Work. The Big Picture.

Rare Bibles on Display

Thomas Baldwin reports on how two historic bibles were discovered in a West Lothian Church.

TWO historic bibles, found in a church building that was being closed down, have been put on display in a showcase in Bathgate Partnership Centre, in West Lothian.

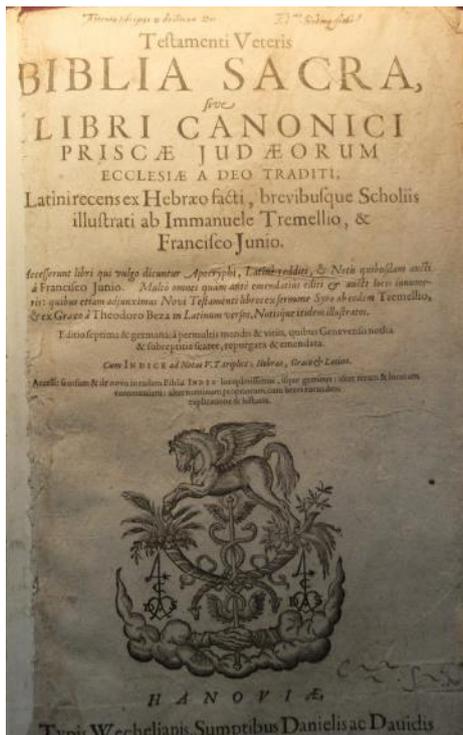
The two volumes, which date back to the 17th century, were discovered in the vestry library in St John's Church, Bathgate, when it closed in April 2024 in a union with Bathgate High Church.

One is a special rarity: a Latin bible published in 1624, containing a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew, and two translations of the New Testament printed in parallel columns: one from the original Greek text, and the other from an early version in Syriac.

The translations were made by Protestant scholars who used Latin, the international language of scholarship at the time. The Bible was intended to challenge the accuracy of the Latin translation of the bible known as the Vulgate, made by Saint Jerome in the late 4th century, which was in use in the Roman Catholic Church.

The other is a 1668 republication of the famous translation of the Bible into English authorised by King James VI of Scotland (James I of England) in 1611 for use in all churches in the United Kingdom. It has a frontispiece (decorative title page) indicating that it was printed in Cambridge by John Field, Printer to the University.

It has been bound together with a book of metrical psalms authorised for use by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and printed in Edinburgh in 1696. The printer was a woman, Agnes Anderson, née Campbell, although this is disguised by

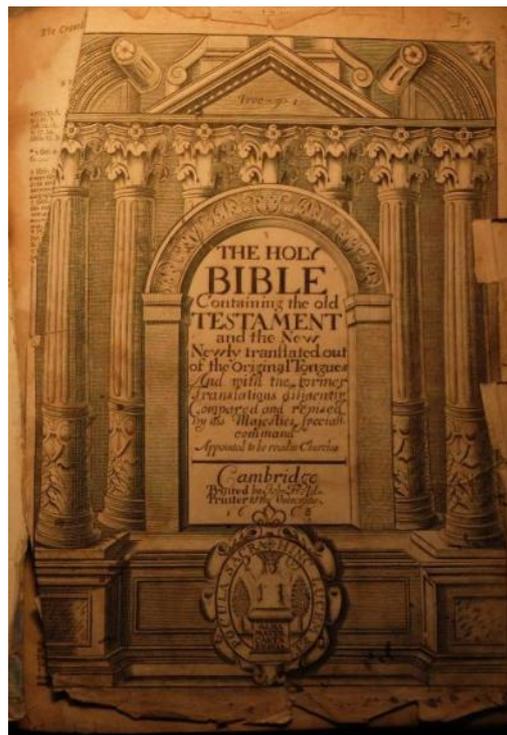


the statement that the book was printed by 'the heirs and assigns of Andrew Anderson'. He had been the King's printer in Scotland until his death in 1676. Agnes, as his widow, took over the office, continuing to own and manage the printing press for many years.

Some of the pages in both parts of the volume were damaged, including the 1668 title page, but they have been beautifully restored by RDW Book and Paper Conservation of Falkirk.

A third volume, a grand Victorian illustrated bible, discovered at the same time, will be exchanged in the display with the other two from time to time.

After the bibles were discovered, their importance was recognised by the chairman of the Repurposing Committee. The session of the newly-



formed Bathgate Parish Church was asked for its permission to allow the Bibles to stay in Bathgate. This was agreed, and they were transferred on long term renewable loan to West Lothian Museums and Archives.

The installation and display were made possible by Emma Peattie, heritage manager of the Museums and Archives Service of West Lothian Council, who provided the showcase and set up the display. Bill Weir, chair of the Bathgate Community Centre Management Association, paid for the restoration of the 1668 bible and provided space for the showcase in the foyer of the Partnership Centre.

A display board explaining the significance of the bibles will be provided by Bathgate Churches Together. ■

MSPs urged not to penalise vulnerable groups for political gain

THE Church of Scotland and the Scottish Catholic Church have urged MSPs not to pit vulnerable groups against one another, and to recommit to providing free bus travel for asylum seekers.

Ahead of an opposition budget debate in the Scottish Parliament on December 11, the churches expressed concern that there were attempts to renege on commitments made to people seeking asylum, and that these were coming in the name of older people due to Winter Fuel Payment means testing.

Emma Jackson, Convener of the Public Life and Social Justice Group of the Church of Scotland said: "I would really urge all our politicians to use language which upholds human rights and human dignity for everyone in our society.

"While our political leaders may robustly disagree about particular policies, we look to them to use language that is anchored in dignity, respect and compassion for everyone."

Jill Kent, chairperson, Justice & Peace Scotland (Scottish Catholic Justice and Peace Commission) said: "As we strive to realise social justice for all in our society, (we) remind everyone of Christ's teaching to welcome the stranger and to love our neighbour as ourselves." ■



Christmas OFFER

Life and Work straight to your digital device for three months

SAVE 25% ONLY £6.99

Packed with features, news and opinion on Christian life at home and abroad. Subscribe and stay connected with the vital and vibrant work of the Church of Scotland.

SUBSCRIBE and SAVE
www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe

promotion ends 30.11.24

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store



SCAN HERE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.datadevelopments.co.uk
Or call 01902 714030 for more information



For 40 years we have provided specialised **Accounts, Gift Aid** and **Administration** software to Churches.

Our **accounts** package, *MyFundAccounting.Online*, streamlines double-entry bookkeeping, making it easy to manage your finances and generate reports in compliance with OSCR.

MyGiving.Online manages all your giving, **gift aid** and **GASDS** requirements, allowing you to receive, record, analyse and submit your donations directly to the HMRC.

MyRollcall.Online is a comprehensive **administration** package for storing all of your members details. Handle tasks, skills, groups, rotas and visits with ease.

MyFoodbank.Online is our brand new **foodbank administration** software, designed to enhance donation processing, stock management, and parcel delivery.

In January's Life and Work

Why I Am a Christian

Prominent Christians talk about faith

'The Aim is to Introduce People to Jesus'

Three of the Church's New
Worshipping Communities

Look Again

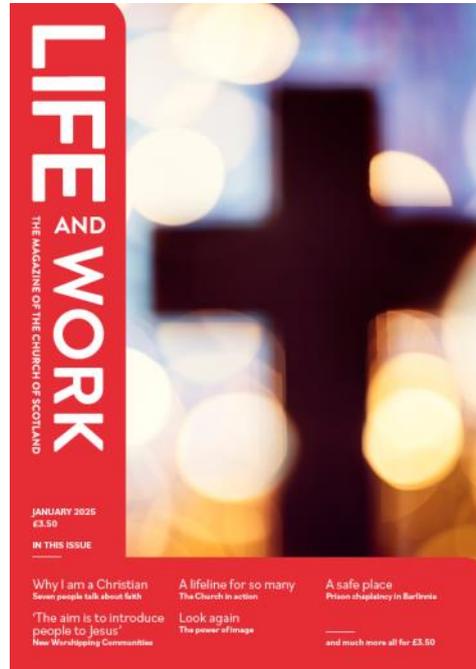
A reflection on the power of image as
Holocaust Memorial Day approaches

'A Lifeline for So Many'

The impact of the Church's work in
Priority Areas

A Safe Place

Chaplaincy at one of Scotland's
largest prisons



By purchasing Life and Work you keep up-to-date with all the latest news on the Church in Scotland and throughout the world, and help to support the Church's work.

From just £2.99 for an electronic copy or £9 for a three-month print subscription at www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe or speak to your church's promoter.

Gift subscriptions are available. New elders and communicants are eligible for three free issues.

www.lifeandwork.org
facebook.com/lifeandwork

Twitter: [@cofslifeandwork](https://twitter.com/cofslifeandwork)

Instagram: [@cofslifeandwork](https://www.instagram.com/cofslifeandwork)

The Big Picture

Edinburgh Castle after snow by Walter McGillivray



Editor: Lynne McNeil. **Deputy Editor:** Thomas Baldwin. **Features Writer:** Jackie Macadam

Business Manager: Dianne Sanderson. **Administrator:** Melissa Grimley

Life and Work, Church of Scotland, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN. Scottish charity number SC011353