

St John's

December 2016 & January 2017

COMMUNITARIANISM



St John's, by the grace of the Spirit, seeks to be an open community, walking in the way of Jesus, engaging with an ever-changing world and living a faith that is timeless yet contemporary, thoughtful and compassionate.

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In this issue

From the Rector

Cornerstone Centre Update

Diocesan Synod

Praying with the Hands: Orantes

Refugees in Scotland

From the Going Down of the Sun (Part 2)

Notes from a Wild Garden

Heartbeat: News of our members

- Guardians visit to James Clerk Maxwell House
- Raymond Bauden, Cameron Abernethy, and Ross Desmond
- Blessing of Pets
- Tribute to Patrick Watson

St John's Garden Group

Green Ginger Group

Mural for October

Together News:

- Creating a New Vision for an Old City
- Note from the Chaplain

Exhibition of Paintings and Silent Auction

Book Reviews

Forthcoming Events

- Quiet Day for Advent
- Symposium
- Lenten Retreat
- Social Committee: Fiddler on the Roof
- Maundy Thursday: Provost Graham Forbes

Service with a Smile

Coffee Rota

Sunday Readings

*The next copy date is 22nd January.
Cover image: Nativity (detail) El Greco.*

From the Rector



Markus Dünzkofer

Dear friends,

A few months ago, I sent you a letter responding to the result of the EU-referendum. I was trying to address the frustration experienced by many and also wanted to assure all of you that you have a **place at St John's, regardless of how you voted** and that we will enter this new future together, respecting the outcome of the referendum. In the letter I wrote:

“I want to also re-commit St John's to the Gospel values of justice and peace... We will not stand by idly if people are excluded or marginalised, because of who they are, what they are, or whence they came. We live in and serve an international city as an international community of faith that celebrates that God has called a people ‘from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages’ (Rev. 7:9).”

Last Wednesday (9/11/16), I woke up to another startling reality: Donald Trump

had been elected President of the United States. And once again I would like to make a few comments:

First, I do not agree with the outcomes of the EU-referendum or the US-election. **While this won't come as a big surprise to most of you, it is probably surprising to read it in a publication of our congregation.** Maybe some of you will take **offence: shouldn't clergy be neutral, even apolitical?**

I have long debated this question in my mind and with colleagues. But in the end, clergy are human beings: flawed, fallen – and often with strong opinions. Thankfully, in our democracy I do not need to fear retribution for expressing my personal opinion (which it is!). Furthermore, I do not believe there is **such a thing as “apolitical.” Silence is a political statement too** (as I have written about in the diocesan magazine).

However, if my opinion ever keeps me from fulfilling my pastoral role, I have failed. As a priest, I strive to minister to all, no matter what your political stance. As a rector, however, I hope to have good debates with you over a cuppa, or a wee dram.

Secondly, I did not have a vote in either of these plebiscites. Yet, the outcome of both will affect me deeply. The disempowerment I have experienced is real and visceral: other people making decisions about my future. It has caused me tremendous internal ache, as well as anxiety and anger.

And this is why I would probably strike a different note if I were to write my post EU-Referendum letter again.

I now believe there are countless people in our society who feel disenfranchised in an alien world. Many

find themselves on the outside of a reality that is global, confusing, and tremendously complex. Identities shift and vanish altogether, decision-making is disconnected from those affected, and many think they are disappearing themselves. A vacuum seems to have appeared, a vacuum that can easily be filled by loud noises, pretending to be the voice of the people. Scared electors, threatened in their identity, vote in favour of these voices. Six months ago, my letter was trying to rally us to stand up to those voices. I think now that I, like **many others, didn't take the question** raised by some about identity and fear seriously.

I am sorry about this.

A day after the US election, I shared on Facebook some random thoughts:

“Those of us who are left-of-centre need to honestly analyse how we have contributed to the defragmentation of society... Maybe we need to stop _talking_ justice, pretending we know what is best for the world, and do justice instead. Let's engage with those on the margins in meaningful ways, i.e. listening to them, forming relationships with them, and celebrating life with them, rather patronising them. We Radio 4- & PBS-listening, New York Times- & Guardian-reading middle class elites need to get off our high horses! (NB: I'm sorry to use us-them language, but I believe the divide is a reality.) Maybe then we can teach one another about humanity in its diversity, our dependence on each other, and our interdependence with the environment.”

I know this might sound harsh. But it came at the end of a raw day. I still believe there is some mileage in it. I continued:

“[This] is also important for mainline churches. Plus: let's talk loudly about Mk 12:29-31. Both parts!!!”

No, I haven't forgotten that this is an ecclesiastical publication! I think that

recent political events have raised serious questions about how we relate to one another in society, but they must also make us in the church ask how we relate to those outside of our community: What assumptions do we make? How much do we know about the stranger that comes through our doors? How does society view us? What do we have to offer? How do we listen to the needs of those who are not part of our community? Do we even believe that our core message is **relevant to the life around us? ...**

These are all questions that need to be asked – not just of ourselves, but of those beyond the limits of our community. And we need to listen to the answers with open ears, and open mind, and a willingness to change and engage.

This might be hard work. But much is at stake and we cannot let populism use fear for destruction and pain. In theological terms, we must also remember this: God is not limited to our community. God is alive **and well beyond our limits. So, let's go and find Him. Let's go and find how He is** already building His reign among all people, whoever they are, and wherever they find themselves on the journey.

Yours as ever,

Markus



Cornerstone Centre Update: November 2016

As I am sure most of you are aware, the major phase of the building development for The Cornerstone Centre has started! John Dennis, the building contractor, began by setting up their site office downstairs and closing off various areas of the building in order to comply with health and safety guidance on building sites. They then quickly set about clearing **and removing ('downtakings' is the technical term)** a huge amount of debris from within the hall, crypt and terrace areas – over 85 tons to be precise!

Further removal works continue as does the infrastructure preparations for the new shops and cafe, with the laying down of gas and water pipes. By the time you read this, the tombs in the crypt that need to be moved will have been relocated – **I'll hopefully share more detail** with you on this in a future issue. And both of the gable ends of the hall will be well on their way to being removed, in



order to prepare for the internal air-ducting, mezzanine floor and fit out. So far, so good. Lots of things are happening behind the scenes and it is reassuring to **hear all the workmen's activities** – even when I am trying to concentrate!

In terms of fundraising, George Harris held a very successful Art Auction recently that raised £950, a fantastic amount. A new fundraising steering group is forming to discuss ways in which we can reinvigorate this area. If you have a fundraising idea that you would like to progress with, please get in touch as I and others would be keen to help in any way we can.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas.

Kerrigan and the Development Team



Diocesan Synod

Bishop John, in his address at the recent Autumn Synod, pointed out the five hundred years since Martin Luther initiated what became the Reformation. Its emphasis on Bible reading and prayer without intercession remain treasures, along with many aspects for which we

must be penitent. The Scottish Episcopal Church has both Protestant and Catholic identities. We must not succumb to apocalyptic dread (even with more recent developments). God is faithful and good; we are called to the fullness of hope in God. He has chosen us to bear fruit.

After the usual business matters, the Rev Sophia Marriage introduced Sian Harris, the new Communications Co-ordinator. Elizabeth White is in charge of the Adventures in Faith newsletter; she urged us to publicise our own church events in the AiF newsletter, and to take **part in events outside St John's.**

Harriet Harris, of the University Chaplaincy, drew our attention to a series of events for Aleppo: look at

www.alightforaleppo.org.

Finally, just six weeks into her post as **the Bishop's Enabler of Mission, the Rev Annie Naish** gave a lively and amusing talk. Find out more about Annie from the Autumn 2016 edition of The Edge magazine, which also contains an excellent **feature by Markus on St John's Murals.**

Jill Duffield, Lay Representative

Praying with the Hands: Orantes

Why do priests lift up their hands when praying in church, for example at the **Eucharistic prayer and Lord's prayer?**

Growing up in Kent, I often cycled down the Darent valley. At the south end is the village of Lullingstone, near which is an excavated Roman villa. It is unusual as it provides some of the earliest evidence for Christianity in Britain. Above a pagan cult-room, possibly dating from the second century, is a mid-fourth century Christian chapel with Christian frescos including six figures praying standing with their elbows close to the sides of the body, their hands outstretched sideways with palms raised.



This is known as the 'orans' position (plural, 'orantes') from the Latin for praying and was a common devotional

practice in the early church. Early **Christians adopted the 'orans' posture** from pagans or Jews, for whom it signified pleading, and they valued it for its links to the posture of Christ on the cross. It is thus a way of using the body to give visible form to praying in the name of Christ crucified and risen. In Christian art this praying figure, often female, became the symbol of a soul in heaven praying for its brothers and sisters on earth.



Detail from Fresco at Roman villa, Lullingstone, Kent

In the first millennium it seems that the whole congregation assumed this

posture at the Eucharist but praying with hands joined gradually became more common. It then only survived as a posture used by priests when praying at the Eucharist, although more recently it has been revived by charismatic Christians, and others sometimes raise their hands at **the Lord's Prayer**.

In Scotland one such 'orans' figure was found carved on a stone pillar at Over Kirkhope in Selkirkshire and is now in the National Museum in Edinburgh. The figure,

which has a cross on its breast and two circles each side which may represent candle-flames, has been dated between 400 and 700AD, before the Anglo-Saxon conquest of the Borders. Using this posture, we connect with Christ and with our Christian heritage and recognise that we are bodily creatures. As Scripture says, **'glorify God in your body' (1 Corinthians 6:20)**.

Stephen Holmes

Refugees in Scotland

Throughout 2016 unprecedented numbers of men, women and children faced a dreadful choice: continue to live in fear for their lives in countries torn apart by violent conflict, or leave behind their homes and families, in the hope of reaching a place of safety and peace. Syrians, Eritreans, people from Sudan, Afghanistan and Libya were among those desperately seeking safety in Europe this year. Many were risking life itself to flee the horror their homes had become. There are now more refugees and displaced people in the world than at any time since the Second World War.

Around 3500 people seeking refugee protection arrive in Scotland each year. While they wait for a decision to be made on their claim for protection (asylum), a challenging and fraught process which can take anything from a couple of months to many years, they receive basic accommodation in Glasgow and around £35 a week to feed and clothe themselves. This is a very difficult time for people who tend to arrive here alone, confused, disorientated and grieving for all they have left behind. They must try to come to terms with all of this, find their feet in a foreign country and find their way through



the complex process of claiming refugee protection in the UK.

This year Scotland welcomed an additional 1200 people fleeing the conflict in Syria. Today these recently arrived refugee families are making their homes throughout Scotland, from the Western Isles to the Borders.

But while 2016 brought the worst crisis facing refugees in decades, it also saw an outpouring of empathy from people across the UK. At Scottish Refugee **Council our phone hasn't stopped ringing** with people wanting to know what they can do to help. Fellow charities have been inundated with donations of clothes, toys and offers of support. Groups have sprung up around the country to welcome and work with newly arrived Syrians. Churches and faith groups have played a key role in welcoming refugees.

Scotland has shown heart and spirit in its response to the refugee crisis this year. But welcoming people is just the start of the journey. Refugees need ongoing friendship and support to recover from their experiences, to live with the heartache of exile, to find the huge **strength it takes to rebuild one's life in a new country.** At Scottish Refugee Council we help people with day-to-day issues like finding a job, applying for college or training, or sorting out housing problems. We campaign for a fair and just asylum system in the UK and advocate for changes to maintain dignity for people who need refugee protection. And we continue, after 30 years of working with refugees in Scotland, to celebrate the contribution these men, women and children – fathers, mothers, sons and daughters – make to our country. We believe Scotland is far richer now with **these 'New Scots' rebuilding their lives**



Photo by Angela Catlin

here, than it has ever been. And that certainly is something worth celebrating.

To find out more about our work visit www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk
For information about welcoming refugees in your area visit <http://www.sfar.org.uk/actions-with-my-neighbourhood/>

Pauline Diamond Salim

From the Going Down of the Sun (Part 2)

Sheila Macbeth and the sinking of H.M. Hospital Ship Britannic

Angus Mitchell writes: 21 November will be the centenary of the sinking of this ship by enemy action in the Aegean Sea. My mother, Sheila Macbeth, was aboard as a VAD nurse and was one of many survivors. The outbreak of war in 1914 liberated her at 24 from a sheltered life of golfing and gardening at home with her parents. In 1915 she joined the VAD and had 6 months of nurse training at **St Thomas's Hospital in London, followed by** several months at a military hospital in the Midlands. In 1916 she was posted as a Probationer nurse on HM Hospital Ship *Britannic* at Southampton.

The *Britannic* was launched in Belfast

in 1913 as a sister ship of the Titanic, but never fulfilled her purpose of carrying passengers across the Atlantic. After war was declared, she was taken over by the Admiralty and converted into a hospital ship for over 3000 patients. In 1916 she made 3 successful passages from Southampton to Lesbos to bring home casualties from Gallipoli.

Her fourth trip in November was intended for the same purpose, but disaster struck when she hit a mine on her outward journey through the Aegean. She sank in less than an hour, leaving enough time for all the medical and nursing staff and the crew to board lifeboats. British

and French naval ships soon arrived to take over one thousand survivors to the port of Piraeus near Athens. The only casualties arose when two lifeboats were smashed by revolving propellers, killing fifteen men and injuring 38 more. If the ship had been sunk on her return journey with wounded on board, the casualties could well have been catastrophic. All the survivors were quickly rescued from their lifeboats by naval ships, which took them to Piraeus. As the only nurse who could speak French, Sheila nursed for a short time in a Russian hospital in Athens, before sailing home to Britain with the other nurses. She was then posted in 1917 to a military hospital in France for the rest of the war. She married my father, John Mitchell, in 1920 and lived mainly in India until he retired in 1935.

Back in 1916, British newspapers accused the Germans of sinking a hospital ship by torpedo, in breach of the Geneva Convention. The German Navy denied it; their records showed that a U-boat had

laid mines in the area. Later diving expeditions to the wreck confirmed that the *Britannic* had been sunk by a mine.

Sixty years later in 1976, the huge wreck was located near the island of Kea by the famous diver Captain Jacques Cousteau. When he appealed for survivors, my mother aged 86 volunteered, and was flown out to Greece to spend several days with Cousteau on his ship *Calypso*. She had a remarkably clear memory of the sinking, and was rewarded by a trip round the wreck in a mini submarine. She thus played a star role in the film "Cousteau in Search of the *Britannic*", which has been shown worldwide.

The short life of the *Britannic* is fully described in Wikipedia and in several books such as "HM Hospital Ship *Britannic*, the last Titan" by Simon Mills. A new film about her has been commissioned by BBC2 to commemorate the centenary of the sinking.

The Battle of the Somme, and the War at Sea

Nicholas Grier writes: My grandfather, Jack Martin, in his final year at the Edinburgh Academy, and not long after the Great War started, won a scholarship to **read Greats at St Edmund's Hall at Oxford.** Instead he deferred his place to take the **King's shilling, quickly being commissioned,** initially in the Highland Light Infantry, and later in the King's Own Scottish Borderers. The HLI were one of the most feared regiments in the Great War. The troops were drawn mostly from the Glasgow tenements, tough, nippy and fearless. The Germans were apparently terrified of them, and those of the HLI who wore kilts (which not all the battalions did), were referred to as the dames from Hell. My grandfather received

a Military Cross (M.C.) at the Battle of the Somme. He was stationed by Delville Wood, known as Devil Wood. He climbed into No-man's-land at night to bring the injured man safely back. My grandfather survived the war unscathed, which for an officer, for whom life expectancy at the front was about three weeks, is astonishing. My grandfather never talked about the war, but equally, it didn't seem to have scarred him, despite the extraordinary difference between his comfortable Edinburgh life and the horror, lice and danger of the trenches. Indeed, he joined the Indian Army shortly after the War, partly because he needed the money, having married, and partly because having seen a wider world, the gentle calm of

Oxford no longer appealed.

Jack's wife, my grandmother, who brought me up, came from a similar Edinburgh background. She had two brothers, the elder of whom, George, was early destined for the Navy. George, at the age of 14, became a midshipman with H.M.S. Monmouth. I doubt his voice had broken. In August 1914 H.M.S. Monmouth was despatched to the south Atlantic, initially to protect British merchant shipping, and later, having rounded Cape Horn, to search for the German East Asia Squadron. I still have the photographs of George in his uniform, wearing his jaunty cap, and his ill-spelled letters to his mother, saying how exciting it has been to join his ship and how enormous the waves were in the south Atlantic. He even drew little pictures of his ship for her. The letters were posted from Montevideo, and arrived after his death. In October 1914 he was caught up in the battle of Cape

Coronel, off the coast of Chile, where his hopelessly under-gunned ship was pounded and sunk with all hands by the Germans. Retribution was not slow. The German commander, Admiral von Spee, conscious that he had used much of his ammunition up, knew that his fate would be decided on his way back to Europe - as indeed it was, at the Battle of the Falkland Islands, where he too perished, along with his two sons.

George's death was a terrible loss for my Scots-Italian great-grandmother, and she never forgave the Germans. At this distance one forgets the extreme hatred that otherwise civilised, Christian folk bore towards their enemies. It is hard to find solace in my great-uncle's death, but one positive result was that shortly afterwards it was decreed that boys as young as he were no longer to be sent to sea to fight for their country.

Brothers in Arms

David Young writes: My father and his younger brother were too young to fight in WW1, but his four older brothers were all involved. The oldest brother was in the army and came through relatively unscathed. Another brother was shot and gassed on the first day of the Somme (01.07.18), another shot down flying a spotter plane over enemy lines, left for dead but ended up in a German prisoner-of-war camp and

eventually was brought back home by the Red Cross (both were on disability pensions for the rest of their lives). The second oldest brother, a private in the Canadian Infantry, was killed storming a gun battery in the battle for Marquion, very close to the Somme. My father, still at boarding school, succumbed to flu in the rampant epidemic of 1919, and would have died had his mother not taken him home and nursed him.

My Grandad, John Wilkinson. Born 1900

Pippa Brooks Donaldson writes: A tribute to a truly wonderful gentleman and spectacular grandad, who fought in World War I, when he was 14 years old.

Grandad never spoke about the war.
Mother too won't talk about what

happened, but I learnt The War Poets, plus that there are many true war films; it is not difficult to imagine what these brave people did to save us.

Too much pain, too many horrific scenes, too many dead, too many injured

too many broken hearts, lost brothers-in-arms, daddies, uncles, brothers, sisters, young teenagers.

Strength and determination kept everyone together, a big special family who carried on and rebuilt their lives. One of those was my Grandad.

What amazes me is that from being a soldier in those ghastly times, the most treasured Grandad arose from the ashes, and gave my siblings and me a very strong sense of right and wrong; gardening, cooking, true kindness, patience and never to shout! His softness, love and laughter shone through all the time.



A Link to the Together Churches

Rev. Dr. James Black, Minister of St **George's West Church 1921-49**, served on the Western Front as Chaplain to **McCrae's Battalion at the Battle of the Somme**. At 6.30 a.m. on July 1st 1916, before going into action, the Chaplain and **men sang Charles Wesley's hymn, 'All my trust on Thee is stayed'**. Losses were heavy. James Black, preaching at St Giles Cathedral at the unveiling of a monument to the Battalion in December 1922, said that he had lost count of the times he was

asked, "Where, minister, is my consolation?" He said, "You all fought for God and Country, but these men died for their friends and with their friends, keeping each other company like good comrades, in death as in life."

(From an exhibition at St Giles' July 2016, 'Mapping Remembrance' by Alison King. James Black's maps and trench orders from the Somme were shown with battle artefacts and a report of the 1922 service.)

Notes from a Wild Garden

We have moved house. The pond, the hedge and the meadow are no longer ours. But now we can contemplate our smaller patch in EH11 and wonder what to do with it. The recent report that 81% of fresh-water species have become extinct globally between 1970 and 2012 is a powerful reminder that we should all

garden for wild-life. Once the dilapidated greenhouse and certain other things are removed, turning dreams into action can begin.

There is no need to concentrate on native species; nor will we. But there are one or two thoughts I have already.

1. Never use pesticides.

2. Where shall we put the pond? It will be smaller than the main pond at our old house, but bigger than the baby-bath pond. It will be at least semi-naturalised, so that baby frogs, hedgehogs and so on can get out once they are in.
3. There will not be a meadow, but there must be a small patch of uncut herbage. Mini-beasts of all sorts need a place to hide.
4. There is no room for a great heap of tangled branches, but we can easily have a small log-pile. All sorts of bugs find accommodation here.
5. There needs to be a patch – can be small – for the wild-flower annuals. Pollinators love them, and so do I.
6. I can enjoy growing a few old favourites – harebells and primroses for example – from specialist seed packets.
7. There may not be room for a native hedge, but I would like a small one if

we can manage. Having the annual cycle of buds and leaves and berries right outside the window is a treat.

8. I must get another bee-house. **There's** a good wall to hang it on.
9. The garage roof should be ideal for filling a water-butt.
10. Where to put the bird feeders? Once **the “improvements” are finished on** the house we shall be looking out on the garden while washing up. We should be able to see the pond from the window too.

In the old garden we were fairly close to the canal. Now we will be fairly close to the Water of Leith. I have seen a kingfisher there twice since we moved. None of them (or otters) are expected in the garden, but it will be interesting to see if different species turn up.

George Harris



Guardians visit to James Clerk Maxwell's House and Rectory Lunch

Throughout the summer the Guardians provide a welcoming and information service to the many visitors **to St John's. By the nature of the rota** most volunteers will perhaps only meet their preceding or succeeding colleagues at change-over times. To mark the end of the season and provide an opportunity for the group to be together, a visit to James

Clerk Maxwell's house followed by a lunch at the Rectory was arranged.

We were welcomed to 14 India Street by the Chairman of the James Clerk Maxwell Foundation, David Forfar, who provided an excellent presentation and guided tour of the building. The house has been restored almost to its original state **by the foundation and marks Maxwell's**

birthplace and holds many historical documents and other items owned by the foundation.

James Clerk Maxwell was born 13 June 1831. He commenced his education at home with a tutor before being enrolled at Edinburgh Academy in 1841. It was around this time and scarred for life, after **his mother died and he attended St John's** with his aunt. From 1847 until 1850 he studied at Edinburgh University and progressed to Trinity College Cambridge. Notable accolades included being elected Fellow Royal Society Edinburgh, at the age of 24 and Fellow Royal Society (London) before he was 30.

Clerk Maxwell is considered one of the most influential scientists of all time by understanding the nature of electromagnetic waves. He paved the way for radio, television, radar and mobile phones. A statue, by the sculptor Alexander Stoddart has been erected in his honour in George Street. He was just 48 when he, like his mother, died of stomach cancer. He is buried in the family vault at Parton, Castle Douglas.

Those who haven't yet visited 14 India Street can be forgiven for assuming it might only be of interest to

mathematicians, scientists or engineers. This is not so. There are many excellent oil paintings, watercolours and engravings. (Water colours by his niece Gemima are particularly interesting.)

His grasp on the theories of light and colour will appeal to both painters and photographers. To delight the genealogists, there are well researched family trees. Poetry in two forms by Clerk Maxwell are on display and show a different aspect of his personality, e.g. The Song of the Edinburgh Academy 1848. However, if you need someone to help you with his mathematical poetry may I recommend you have a conversation with David Forfar. Thank you, David, for your knowledgeable and enthusiastic presentation. We then adjourned to the Rectory for lunch. Thanks are due to several people: Markus – for allowing us the use of the Rectory; Mo and Colin for arranging and preparing a delicious lunch. I am sure I speak for one and all – we had a very interesting and sociable day.

Nigel McKnight



Photo by Marjory Currie

Raymond Bauden, Cameron Abernethy, and Ross Desmont

Congratulations and warm good wishes to St John's former members, Cameron

Abernethy, Raymond Bauden, and Ross Desmont. Cameron has started his first term of theological college at Westcott House in Cambridge, Raymond his first term at Rippon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford, and Ross his PhD in theology at Durham.

Blessing of Pets

The Blessing of pets took place on the final Sunday of Creationtide. It was well supported and we marked the occasion by singing this appropriate hymn:

Come bring your cats and guinea
pigs,
Your hamsters and your dogs.
Come farmers bring your woolly
sheep,
Your gimmers, tups and hogs.
Let praise for God's Creation
Resound upon the breeze,
But if your parrot says rude words,
Control it if you please.

Zoo-keepers bring your charges;
Tapirs and wild boars.
North aisle for vegetarians
And south for carnivores.
We love to see the gibbons swing,
And chat to chimpanzees.
But pythons, tigers, grizzly bears –
control them if you please.

All microscopic forms of life
That live in sludgy gloop,
We owe our life to such as you,
In the primaevial soup.
The algae in the duck pond
And plankton in the seas
Shall brithers be for all that
(but don't bring killer bees!)

Come beasts, however humble,
come rats and gnats and mice;
Bless midges, worms and ladybird,
bless ants and bugs and lice.
The glory of Creation
Includes the ticks and fleas.
But if you've brought a virus,
Be careful not to sneeze.

Tune, The Day of Resurrection; Words, George Harris

Tribute in Memory of Patrick Watson

Patrick Watson was a complex person whose laughter was readily recognisable, a rather retiring personality **who gave a great deal to St John's in many and varied ways. Born into a St John's**

family – his father was a vestry-man and the family hosted study groups in the days that was fashionable – he was destined to **follow in his father's footsteps in law. He** studied classics, theology and law at

various universities, and his learning every so often came through when he was involved in any study group, though he wore that learning lightly. He did National Service, which would not have been easy for a sensitive person in any of the armed **forces. He worked in his father's law firm, Lindsay's, and became a Writer to the Signet. In the St John's context he was a** volunteer and team leader at the Corner Stone Coffee House, as it was then called, and it was there that he met Rosemary who was also a volunteer and later became his wife. He was involved in Steps, **the homeless people's project and did** much in that field on an individual basis. The Corner Stone ran weekends at Iona Abbey to produce ideas for the future and he participated in these, and he enjoyed company. He became one of the early members of the team of people who lead prayers at the family service on Sundays. Here, his deeply felt care for the needs of individuals and needy folk led to some highly individual prayer requests, the one on the occasion of the bus-**driver's strike**

remains in my mind as reflecting the importance of immediacy in our praying. He was deeply religious and his prayer life was very important to him. He served as **verger for a spell at St John's** – a task requiring people skills as well as a good memory for multi-tasking. He resolved that particular problem by making multiple lists which he would produce when necessary as an aide-memoir. His skills as a linguist also proved useful when greeting foreign **visitors to St John's. Latterly he was in** poor health and spent a great deal of time away from family and friends in Inverness where he received treatment for cancer. He enjoyed family life and the interaction with Marion his daughter during her schooling, and we will carry Rosemary and Marion in our prayers as they mourn his passing.

Patrick's funeral took place in Inverness on November 17. A memorial service at St John's took place on November 26.

Peter Brand and Clephane Hume.

St John's Garden Group

The garden enjoyed a "rest" from the Craft Fair not taking place in the month of August. The Dormitory Garden is looking fine at the moment, our Palm Tree, *Trachycarpus Fortuneii*, which is hardy in the UK, and the new *Magnolia stellata* are growing away nicely. You will see some bright orange netting has been put up around them and along one of the flower-beds, for protection during the development.

The area around the Dean Ramsay Cross is recovering well after the tree removal and should continue to do so as we add more plants. Grass seed was sown in September near to where the wall was

built. It is now starting to look green again. In the lower part of the garden we have started to tidy up the flower beds cutting back the herbaceous perennials and building up our compost heap with the spent growth.

Our *Gunnera* has been cut down and some of the leaves used to cover the crown of the plant for protection during the winter. The general tidy up of the Lower Terrace will continue for the next two or three weeks. The Vergers are now looking after the grass areas and also will be collecting the leaves for composting. As I said in the Annual Report, the standard of their work is very high.



The picture of the Peacock Butterfly was taken by me in September, on the flowers of “Soapwort” *Saponaria officinalis* which is growing in one of the beds in the Lower Terrace.

Soapwort gets its name from the Latin word Sapon which means soap. It can be used as a gentle soap, procured by boiling the leaves in water.

Method: Obtain a handful of leaves, chop them, boil for 30 minutes in 600 mls of water, strain and you now have washing up liquid. The plant is a member of the Carnation family, Caryophyllaceae. The flowers are sweetly scented so attract bees and other insects.

Fred Mobeck

Green Ginger Group

Since the Blessing of the Animals the Green Ginger Group has had trouble arranging a meeting. We are going to try Sundays after Eucharist as our regular slot. Our main purpose is to keep an eye on everything going on in the Church and remind those responsible of the need to take environmental considerations seriously. We need a brief monthly meeting for this.

Meanwhile, just after the last Cornerstone came out we launched a new post-card campaign. Decision-makers do take note of correspondence when it is hand-written and in your own words. Here are five suggested addressees. There are cards by the entrance to the Chapel. Post-cards do not give room for many words, but things to mention include pollution of the oceans, air quality, climate change, drought and flood, and the extinction of species.

Rt Hon Theresa May MP, 10 Downing St, London, SW1A 2AA

You might congratulate her on her appointment. The main point to make is that, all the important things with which she has to deal have implications for the future of the environment. You hope she will always take these into account and make sure she heeds the best scientific advice.

Nicola Sturgeon MSP, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EH1 3DG

You might comment that you are pleased to see that the Scottish Government takes environmental issues seriously. People in **Edinburgh have “green” issues very much** to heart. You can write a sentence about something that particularly concerns you.

Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP,
Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs.

Department for Environment, Food
and Rural Affairs, Nobel House, 17
Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR
Congratulations on her recent appoint-
ment would be appropriate. The main
point is that her Ministry involves issues
that sometimes seem in conflict. When
resolving these conflicts she should bear in
mind that flood, drought, climate change,
pollution and the extinction of species are
all the most important things with which
she has to deal.

Ruth Davidson MSP, M2.04, The
Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh,
EH991SP

She is MSP for Edinburgh Central. She
spoke here in 2015. Since she is one of the

more articulate voices in Scottish politics
we would urge her to make environmental
matters things to which she gives time and
attention.

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP, House of
Commons, London, SW1A, 0AA

One of his main jobs as leader of the
Opposition is to hold the Government to
account. Urge him to do this on
environmental issues (listed above). They
are as important and urgent as any other
matters that face politicians today.

Mural for October



Creating a New Vision for an Old City

Edinburgh has a number of Central Business Districts, each with its own distinctive life, and each with clusters of churches. These churches will have their own opportunity for mission, very different from a normal parish context, which will shape the way the congregation develops its distinctive ministry.

The city centre can be a place of loneliness but also of anonymity. On the one hand there is the need to offer the **stranger 'instant hospitality'**; while on the other there is need to respect a person's wish to be alone. This last, in part explains the growth of cathedral congregations in recent times, alongside a sense of stability and recognised, performed liturgy. Individual churches, too, are often a place of refuge for the broken and outcast; and this can put pressure on the community of faith.

The churches' support for the City is best done through responsible dialogue, ecumenically rather than piecemeal. This raises two issues: interfaith working and engagement with the more entrepreneurial of the newer congregations.

The welfare of the City requires that, in the midst of the ambiguous city, the worship of the People of God is a vital political statement. This is why the Church must not abandon the city centre. The priestly work of the Church looks both upward and outward, exercising the work of intercession. From here we are sent to serve. Worship, therefore, needs to be inclusive, setting the city in the world and praying for the city for the strong, the powerful and the responsible as well as for the needy and weak; the scattered Church as well as the institutional Church.



On 28 September the Centre for Theology and Public Issues and Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together hosted a day conference at New College, led by Dr Eric Stoddart of St Andrews University, with Professor Paul Ballard and Rev Fiona Bennett.

The above article is taken from a reflection on the day's discussions prepared by Paul Ballard.

A Note from the Chaplain

The word “Advent” literally means “The coming” and Christmas is about Love coming to find us, right where we are.

While people wander the stores searching for the perfect present, and the staff (for whom Christmas is often about selling and hitting their targets) serve customers, the story of the Incarnation in the Bible reveals to us the perfect Gift that God chose for each one of us. There is no greater Gift that could be given than this love that heals, forgives, saves, affirms and ultimately changes us - from the inside out.

Five months into the role of chaplain **I find that I’m being recognised,** remembered and welcomed into conversations. I am pleased with the **connections I’ve made and the few** opportunities that have come my way. There are old pressures, like the heavier traffic Lothian Buses and Edinburgh trams experience, but also the new pressures brought on by the final closure of the St James Centre and the falling footfall for

Multrees Walk.

Among the staff in my chaplaincies there are those who are dreading the season because they face the threat of losing their job or because they are feeling lonely and isolated while serving in front of bright magical displays, or indeed the stress that comes when approval is tied to the financial reward of personal success. Right now, for some, these months are proving to be the most difficult of the year. This is why I would value your prayers.

It could be said that a blessing is **God’s love. The Christmas story is the God’s love. The Christmas story is the** most powerful expression of blessing we have in human history and all I want to do is convey these qualities to the people I encounter in the coming weeks so I can offer a hope-filled present and future.

Amid all the celebrations I wish you an amazing Christmas season with family and friends.

David Hart

Exhibition and Silent Auction of Paintings

Some people are really very talented! As I am a proud owner of several of **George’s paintings I was pleased to be able to attend this event at Harry’s, Randolph Place, on a Monday evening in October.** Seventy-one landscapes were effectively **displayed along the walls of Harry’s** allowing for leisurely viewing. Under each was a sheet of paper with a brief description of the painting and space for any potential buyers to write a bid. **George’s hand-painted cards** were also on view.

Members of the congregation, choir, friends and the odd random passer-by had

ample time to browse whilst enjoying free drinks and cake.

By the end of the evening 44 paintings and many cards had been sold, and after expenses £950 was raised for **the development fund. Harry’s had very** kindly given their premises free of charge. It was an excellent evening! I was not the only one who had meant to pop in for half an hour and maybe buy one painting. In the end I stayed three hours, right to the end, and went home with three **paintings...**

Morag Fairhurst

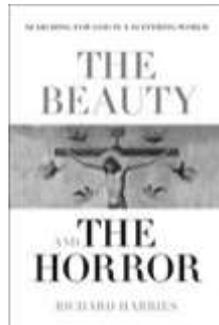
Cornerstone Bookshop Reviews

'The Beauty and the Horror'

By Richard Harries

9780281076932

£19.99



“Life is at once wonderful and appalling, beautiful and horrific. How can we live with this contradiction? And how can we believe in a just and loving God in

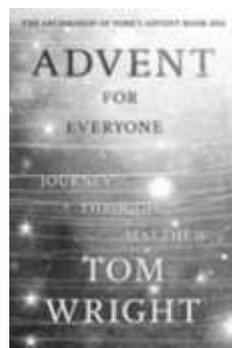
the face of all the evils of the world?” In this heartening book, Richard Harries draws on a wide range of modern literature, arguing that belief in the resurrection of Christ constitutes the **foundation for humanity’s ultimate future**. This belief, he says, not only gives us hope in the face of death, but sustains us in our protest the things which are wrong as it impels us to work for a world as he envisages it ought to be. The result is a **“profound statement of what it means to have faith in the living tradition of Christianity”**.

'Advent for Everyone'

By Tom Wright

9780281076215

£8.99



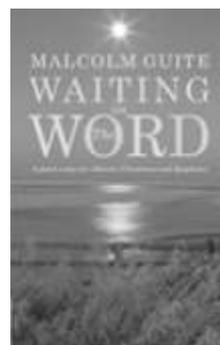
If you are still looking for a book to take you through the season of Advent, two which have proved popular this year are the latest offering from Tom Wright and Malcolm Guite’s poem-a-day collection. **Wright’s book takes the reader on a journey through the Gospel of Matthew, exploring the themes of watching, repenting, healing and loving through daily readings and weekly meditations.** The book also offers stimulating questions for reflection.

'Waiting on the Word'

By Malcolm Guite

9781848258006

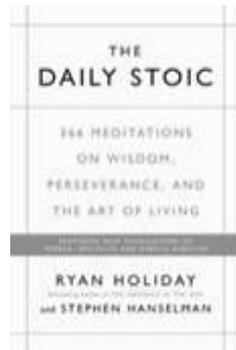
£10.99



'Waiting on the Word' offers material for each day of Advent and Christmas up to and including the Feast of Epiphany. Along with several self-penned poems, Guite reflects on a range of classic poems from the likes of Donne, Herbert and Rossetti, in each instance using their words as the starting point to help fathom the depths **and inhabit the tensions of Advent’s many paradoxes – past and future, darkness and light, ancient and ever new.**

‘The Daily Stoic: 366 Meditations’

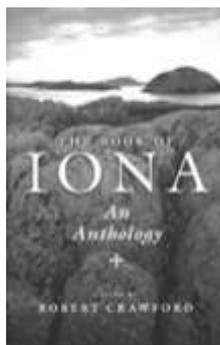
By Ryan Holiday & Stephen Hanselman
9781781257654
£9.99



As a new year approaches, here is a compelling page-a-day collection of practical wisdom for perseverance and the art of living. Featuring new translations of the playwright Seneca, the slave-turned-philosopher Epictetus, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, among others, the authors reflect on their words offering a daily devotional with exercises, historical insights and provocative commentary. Designed to be a spiritual anchor for those who seek a calm, wise life!

‘The Book of Iona – an anthology’

Edited by Robert Crawford
9781846973512
£14.99



This rich compendium of poetry and stories combines newly commissioned work alongside a treasure trove of earlier material which together show how novelists, poets, saints and sinners over the centuries have **written about one of the world’s most famous and best loved islands.** As on the island itself, the sacred and secular rub shoulders giving the collection a wide audience. Here is where a medieval Gaelic speaking monk meets Seamus Heaney and poems attributed to St Columba sit next to amusing accounts of their visits to the island by Johnson, Boswell and Keats. Attractively produced, this would make an ideal Christmas present, not just for lovers of Iona, but all lovers of literature.

‘Penguin Problems’

By Jory John (Illustrated by Lane Smith)
9781406375992
£11.99



Another excellent Christmas present – this time for younger ones – is the brilliantly illustrated tale of a penguin with a lot on his mind! Mortimer has many troubles: his beak is too cold; it gets dark too early; even the ocean smells too salty where he lives. With every new page, a new concern! But one day, the penguin meets a Walrus who helps him to see that **the world he’s in is the only one he’s got and maybe it’s not so bad after all.** Mortimer introduces the book on the **inside flap: “...Oh, you’re going to read this book? Seriously?...” We think you should!**

Forthcoming Events

St John's Theology Symposium: God,

Music, Discord and Sin

With Prof Jeremy Begbie

10th December, 10am-4pm in the church.

Following the success of previous Theology Symposiums, which have each brought together over fifty people from various universities and churches to explore central doctrines of the Christian faith under the guidance of a world-leading theologian, this Advent we will be welcoming Professor Jeremy Begbie, who is a concert pianist and professor of theology, to explore the concept of sin through the medium of music. I heard Jeremy give a similar talk on **the trinity and music at last year's Abbey Theology Conference** in Edinburgh and he is an outstanding communicator.

To register, please contact Stephen

Holmes. More about Jeremy can be read at <https://www.imagejournal.org/article/a-conversation-with-jeremy-begbie/>

The Symposium is a joint project of St **John's, Edinburgh University School of Divinity**, the Centre for Theology and Public Issues and City Centre Churches Together.

Stephen Holmes



Our Lenten Retreat will be at Alnmouth Friary (Society of St Francis) from 17 to 19 March 2017. More details to come.

The Social Committee are organising an outing to see the much loved musical **Fiddler on the Roof at the King's Theatre** on Saturday 8 April (2.30 pm matinee performance). Tickets will cost £15.00 each. If you would like to go please speak to a member of the Social Committee during coffee on Sundays or email Fiona on fiona.mcluckie@btinternet.com – closing date Sunday 22nd January.

Advance Notice: Provost Graham Forbes is to retire in June 2017. There will be a Diocesan Farewell at the Chrism Mass on Maundy Thursday, 13 April 2017 at 11.30am. Bishop John hopes that this will be a truly diocese-wide event in recognition of Graham and his ministry.

S ervice with a S mile by D E S

A Message from Canon Wishwash

I have been asked to explain why visitors to Matins and to Evensong are required to Stand (as they are able) when they are not singing (the canticles) and Sit (whether they are able or not) when they are singing (the psalm). It has even been suggested that this meaningless nonsense

is what gives the Episcopal Church a bad name. I can assure my correspondents that all is well. If we did not provide this sort of thing, people who like their secret societies to contain irrational rubbish might leave us for the Orange Order, or even the Free Masons.

Liturgioloical Controversy

There is a well-known harvest hymn that appears to begin:

“Come ye thankful people, come.

Raise the song of harvest home.”

Clearly this has been misprinted. The failure to rhyme is grotesque, even by the standards of the Hymn Book. The Not Very Reverend Parkin Slipshod (a classical scholar) has posted a blog arguing that the **first line should end “Comb!”**. Many church-goers, he opines, are obsessed with the idea of Sunday Best, and a well tended coiffure is very much part of the appropriate preparation for a Harvest thanksgiving. He traces the origins of this practice back to the famous battle of Leonidas and his 300 Spartans against the

Persian invaders. When they knew that the end was near they prepared for the inevitable slaughter by combing their hair.

Professor Gumboil, on the other hand, writes that the second line should **clearly end “Hum!”**. Just as there were those in the early church who took iconoclasm to extremes, by refusing to allow any images whatsoever inside churches, so, he argues, there were those who thought that only those ordained to the priesthood and licensed by a bishop should open their mouths in church. Therefore just as the iconoclasts developed notable abstract arts, so the mouth-shut enthusiasts became notable hummers.

Q uiz

Our collect on October 30th referred to “unspeakable joys”. Thomas Cranmer omitted to explain what these were. The first answer (on a postcard) to arrive came from Vestry person Trendsetter, who is currently milking wild goats on Staffa. The good Vestryperson says that no joy exceeds knitting chest-protectors from home-spun and home-dyed sheep’s wool. Other suggestions are eagerly awaited.

Concert

Victor Strain and the Happy Clappy Trio (Amazing Grace, Anthem Flo and Peterborough Cath) announce their forthcoming late-night show: Sin and Discord.

A dvent, Christmas & E piphany

Sunday 27 November (Advent 1)

All as usual except:

6.00pm Advent Carol Service

Sunday 18 December (Advent 4)

All as usual except:

6.00pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Thursday 22 December

6.00pm Christmas in the City

Christmas Eve – Saturday 24 December

4.30pm Christingle Service and Nativity Play

10.45pm Organ Music for Christmas

11.15pm Midnight Mass with Carols

Christmas Day – Sunday 25 December

8.00am Eucharist

9.45am Sung Eucharist with Carols

11.15am Service of Readings and Carols

Please note that services today are not at our usual Sunday service times and there is no evening service



Monday 26 December *the church is closed and there are no services*

Tuesday 27, Thursday 29, Friday 30 December, Eucharist at 12.30pm

Wednesday 28 December, Eucharist at 11am

Sunday 1 January 2017 (The Naming of Jesus)

8.00am Eucharist

10.30am Sung Eucharist

There are no other services today

Sunday 8 January (The Epiphany)

All as usual except:

6.00pm Epiphany Carols



St John's

Coffee Rota

December

4th M Warrack; J Rennie
11th Mince Pies Sunday!
18th A Usher; S Goode
25th S Brand

January

1st S Brand
8th V Lobban
15th M Currie; E Law
22nd E Yeo; S Jamieson
29th C Legge; E Anderson

Harry's



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West End is back.

Come in and have a look.

Harry's focuses on
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smokehouse grill and now
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Social Enterprise bar group.

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20% off your Sunday meal.

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EH3 7TE
www.harrysedinburgh.co.uk
Tel: 0131 539 8100
Email: info@harrysedinburgh.co.uk

Check us out on Social Media
for more details



Sunday Readings

Sunday Readings November 2016 to January 2017

Readings for all services each week are available in the *St John's Calendar and Lectionary 2015-2016* available at Cornerstone or the shop in the North Aisle for £5.

Year A	9.30am Matins	10.30am Eucharist	6.00pm Evensong
27 November Advent 1	Matthew 24.36-44 Paschasius	Isaiah 2.1-5 Romans 13.11-14 Matthew 24.36-44	Daniel 6.6-27 Luke 23.1-7
4 December Advent 2		Isaiah 11.1-10 Romans 15.4-13 Matthew 3.1-12	Joel 2.12-14, 28-32 Revelation 6.1-2, 12-17
11 December Advent 3	Matthew 11.2-11 Ambrose	Isaiah 35.1-10 James 5.7-10 Matthew 11.2-11	Isaiah 61.1-11 Luke 4.16-21
18 December Advent 4	Matthew 1.18-25 Bede	Isaiah 7.10-16 Romans 1.1-7 Matthew 1.18-25	Luke 1.26-45 (46a) Galatians 4.1-7
25 December Christmas Day	<i>Midnight Mass</i> Isaiah 9.2-7 Titus 2.11-14 Luke 2.1-14	<i>09.45 Sung Eucharist</i> Isaiah 52.7-10 Hebrews 1.1-4 Jn 1.1-14/ Lk 2.1-14	<i>11.15 Lessons and Carols</i>
1 January The Naming of Jesus		Numbers 6.22-27 Galatians 4.4-7 or Philippians 2.5-11 Luke 2.15-21	Colossians 2.6-12 Luke 2.21-38
8 January The Epiphany of the Lord	Matthew 2.1-12 Basil	Isaiah 60.1-6 Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12	Hebrews 2.5-18 Luke 3.1-22
15 January Epiphany 2	John 1.29-42 Cyril of Alex.	Isaiah 49.1-7 1 Corinthians 1.1-9 John 1.29-42	Isaiah 61.1-11 Luke 4:14-30
22 January Epiphany 3	Matthew 4.12-23 Gregory the Great	Isaiah 9.1-4 1 Corinthians 1.10-18 Matthew 4.12-23	Jeremiah 1.4-10 Luke 5.1-11
29 January Epiphany 4	Matthew 5.1-12 Chromatius	Micah 6.1-8 1 Corinthians 1.18-31 Matthew 5.1-12	1 Samuel 21.1-6 Luke 6.1-16

Useful Contacts

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St John's Terrace	Cornerstone Bookshop Anna Pitt	229 3776
Vergers	Ryan Dimarco, Steve McLaren	

For weddings and baptisms please make contact initially with the Church Office

St John's

St John's is an active city-centre church within the Diocese of Edinburgh of the Scottish Episcopal Church, which is part of the world-wide Anglican Communion.

We welcome people of all denominations or none, firmly committed in faith or doubting and enquiring.

SERVICES AT ST JOHN'S

Sunday

- 8.00am Holy Communion
- 9.30am Choral Matins (not on 1st Sunday)
- 10.30am Sung Eucharist with activities for children
- 6.00pm Choral Evensong

Monday

- 10.30am Service for the deaf (1st Monday only)
- 12.30pm Eucharist

Tuesday

- 12.30pm Eucharist
- 3.30pm Silent Prayer

Wednesday

- 11.00am Eucharist
- 12.30pm Midday Prayer

Thursday

- 12.30pm Eucharist

Friday

- 12.30pm Eucharist



/churchofstjohn



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EH2 4BJ

0131 229 7565

Website: www.stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk

Email: office@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk

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