

# St John's

August & September 2018

COMMUNION



*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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*The next copy date is Sunday 2nd September.  
Cover image: Our New Altar Frontal. Photo by Aidan Kivlin*

# Stexit - From the Associate Rector

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*Exploring the cliffs above Harlyn Bay in the parishes of St Merryn and Padstow*

As I write this the Brexit negotiations are in chaos, Donald Trump is making a mess, the Brexit Secretary and Foreign Secretary have resigned, and the England soccer team have just missed a place in **the World Cup final. At St John's we are in** the lull before the creative storm of the Festival, which will be followed by, not a Brexit, but a Stexit – the exit of our Director of Music, Stephen Doughty, and this other Stephen, the Associate Rector. **I am happy to say that this is a 'soft Stexit' as St John's will still keep Stephen Todd in** its fold and choir and there are other Stephens about.

Izzy and I are looking forward to moving to Cornwall in September and to ministry in the united benefice of Padstow, St Merryn, and St Issey with St Petroc Minor, **but we will miss St John's, the Scottish Episcopal Church and all our friends here.** It has been particularly good working with

Markus, as colleague and friend, and I am proud that we have made a success of one of the most difficult ministry relationships in our church: Rector and Associate Rector. I have lived in Scotland since I was 18, am a graduate of two Scottish Universities and have written some Scottish history, and so it will be strange to return to the Church of England after so many years – even if it is to Celtic Cornwall.

Today the CofE is very concerned with growing its churches. Some may find this a bit business-orientated (**"your branch must get more customers!"**) or **aggressively evangelical ("we just wanna thank you Lord for saving all these folks")**, and attribute it to an Archbishop who was formed by the evangelicalism of the Alpha Course and his work in the oil industry, but that is to misunderstand both it and him. Archbishop Welby is a man of

profound catholic and ecumenical spirituality who has founded a new monastic community. This concern for growth may still seem a bit odd. While the crucifixion is admittedly not a good business model, Jesus did order his Apostles to preach the gospel to all nations and make disciples, and, if you read the Acts of the Apostles, you find that the early church was interested in growth in numbers. This is, however, not the whole picture. There must be growth in depth of faith and service to the community - and an embrace of the pain of the cross.

**Here at St John's, at the last AGM, I** presented our attendance statistics for the previous four years and revealed that our worshipping community had actually grown, by about 4%. This is against a national Episcopalian decline in attendance of 11% in the same period. A closer look at our figures was interesting. Numbers at the 8am Eucharist and Matins on Sunday remained the same, there was a slight decline at the 10.30 Sunday Eucharist, but a steady and continuing increase at Choral Evensong and weekday services: daily Eucharist and occasional Sung Compline.

We see here that both traditional and modern language services are growing and that the decline is in our modern language service – **the old idea that 'modernising' is necessary for growth is wrong.** Growth at Choral Evensong shows the importance of our choral tradition and is part of a national trend, especially in cathedrals – **at the centre of a great city, St John's has a cathedral-like mission.** The first record of **weekday services at St John's was in 1846** and in 1931 this became a daily Eucharist which was restored four years ago. This, our ecumenical Messy Church and the occasional Plainchant Compline have built **up new congregations of people who don't attend St John's (or in some cases any church)** on a Sunday but are still part of our congregation, which is a community of

communities.

We have thus seen a growth in numbers and a growth in opportunities for worship. Growth in depth of faith and in service to the community are harder to measure, but the response to the cold weather earlier this year when we kept **St John's open 24/7 as a shelter serving food,** our Bethany night shelter teams and the Theology Symposium, silent prayer group and Pilgrim Course suggest that something is going on here. With the opening of the Cornerstone Centre and the freeing of **energies by the ending of 'the Development', there are many exciting possibilities** for our church which is in one of the best sites for Christian mission in Scotland.

From the days of Bishop Sandford and **Dean Ramsay, St John's has been an exciting church** at the cutting edge of Christian mission in Britain. It has been a privilege to be part of this and to see new possibilities opening up. As Izzy and I move from the land of St Cuthbert to that of St Petroc, I would like to thank everyone for this opportunity, for your support and prayers and to apologise to anyone I may have hurt. Let us pray for each other.

With love in Christ,



*Stephen Holmes*  
Associate Rector

# Two new bishops

The Rev Canon Ian Paton has been elected as the new Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane.

The Very Rev Andrew Swift has been elected as the new Bishop of Brechin.

# Bicentenary Events

Our bicentenary celebrations continue. We hope you will join us for as many these special events as you can.

12 August: Bicentenary Pulpit – The Rt Revd Richard Holloway

9 September: Bicentenary Pulpit – Amelia Sutcliff (theologian, formerly St John's)

29 September: Concert of Music and Readings in Celebration of 1818

14 October: Bicentenary Pulpit – the Revd Anne Dyer, Bishop of Aberdeen

15 October: lecture by David Todd: Music and Theatre in Edinburgh in 1818.

9 November (NB: note change of date): Bicentenary Ceilidh

11 November: Bicentenary Pulpit – Army Padre, the Revd Chris Kellock



# Our New Altar Frontal

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Our new altar frontal was installed and blessed with special prayers by the Rector during the Eucharist service on Sunday 17th June.

It is an eye-catching contemporary design by Meg Arrol, an artist working with textiles. She explained, in conversation with the Rector, how she came to create this unique piece for St John's. She spent several hours in the church absorbing the sense of the colours, and the atmosphere generated by the stained glass windows, contrasting with the darker shades of the chancel area. The frontal presents bright colours which change in the play of light from the windows. The design asks us to imagine the tongues of fire, and the wind of Pentecost, on the water, rocks and sands of Scotland. It represents the renewal of the spirit as the church moves on into new understanding and new action.

The material is a viscose silk-velvet, hand-painted in the artist's studio and mounted by her on its padded wooden frame, and when not in use will be stored with our other frontals.

*Anne Pankhurst*



*Photos by Marjory Currie*

# St John's Memories

## The ecumenical context

The late 60s saw initiatives towards practical expression of some of the ecumenical dialogue which had taken place during the preceding years. Some of these were ecumenical in a less broad sense. Contact with other Anglican churches resulted in joint house groups and we shared differences within our denomination.

Members of the churches in the centre of the city had been involved in establishing Cephas House, a home for young people with problems. Out of this grew Cephas Cellar, a youth club in the **basement of St George's West, and the Council of West End Churches (CWEC).**

One of the first chairmen of CWEC **was the Rector of St John's and he was** succeeded by Angus Mitchell. Members of the congregation represented the church on the council and in the outreach projects – The Crescent Lunch Club for **the elderly, based at St George's West and The Cornerstone Coffee House at St John's. In the 1970s the latter was a late** night meeting place at weekends, later open during the day and then handed over to CWEC to run, on an ecumenical basis, as a café with various managers, including the One World Shop, prior to being taken **back by St John's and franchised.**

Eclipse Youth Group grew out of the needs of teenagers at Cornerstone so that **the cellar was once again 'rocking'.** Next, Steps, a Sunday evening club, was set up at **St Cuthbert's in response to the problems of single homeless people.** 'The Flat' in Gayfield Place provided a stepping stone for teenagers leaving care institutions. Later, (1980s) this latter was replaced by

the flat in Lothian Road, the base for the Franciscan community in Edinburgh and then to Raven, before the property was sold in 2005.

The formation of the Rock Trust in 1991 was also an ecumenical venture, providing accommodation and support for young people. Outreach to the homeless continues to be a major area of joint work.

**St John's members took key roles in** developing these projects and the practical expression of Christian witness in an ecumenical context is warmly remembered by all involved. From personal experience of **representing St John's on CWEC, I have to** say that it proved an invaluable opportunity to learn about other denominations. It was also a lot of fun!

In the 80s, ecumenical Lenten house groups were established and for a number of years these were run in conjunction with the Tollcross Council of Churches which provided contact with the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches. They still continue today albeit in a reduced form.

**St John's took a lead through Kenneth** Boyd, then Chaplain to overseas students, in establishing a club for international students. This was ecumenical and interfaith. Many were Christians from as far apart as China and Trinidad, several were Muslim or Hindu. This was an enriching exchange for all concerned.

Attention should also be given to **relationships between St John's and the** Cathedral. In 1974, dialogues resulted in the appointment of Norman Wickham, **'shared' between the two. Joint magazines** were mooted, reciprocal attendance at vestry meetings occurred, and the Wiston

Weekends – congregational weekends away – took place. The courtship was cautious and lengthy and a final union was not to be.

**In the late 70s, St Cuthbert's hosted us during the restoration of St John's** (rewiring and dry rot) and this provided a firmer foundation for ecumenical activity. Talks took place, working parties deliberated and gentle progress was made. Christian Aid initiatives were shared and buildings were lent to each other. Joint Holy Week services introduced members **of St John's to the pre-reformation style Maundy Thursday Communion service traditionally held at St Cuthbert's.**

At a different level the Kirk Session and the Vestry considered how real union **might be achieved. By the mid 80s St John's** had two Church of Scotland ministers as associate members of the team (George Shand and Kenneth Boyd). Interchange of staff between the two was, however, **restricted. David Reid Thomas' experience** in the Church of North India exemplified that deeper things were possible.

Official approaches were made to the Diocesan Synod and the Presbytery, which led to discussion at the General Synod and the General Assembly. In 1985 the local ecumenical project was formalised. Much soul searching went on in the vestry prior to this and it is true to say that some members in both congregations had doubts. Nevertheless, joint confirmation services and interchange of clergy were hopeful signs of a new depth of ecumenical understanding.

Receiving communion from Church of Scotland ministers who had celebrated at the Eucharist was a long way from the tentative conversations of the 40s. The appointment of a lady assistant at **St Cuthbert's was an additional challenge!**

But time marched on, and contact **with St George's West also became the**

norm. Clergy met regularly, and it was **decided to invite St Andrew's and St George's to re-join** the group. CWEC, then WECT, carried on and with the union **of the two churches, St Andrew's and St George's West, there was further revision** and the formation of Together – churches together in Edinburgh City Centre, a formally constituted body.

Which brings us to the present day.

Various joint initiatives take place – Creative Together craft group and Amnesty supporters, the annual Christian Aid Book Sale and other fundraising activities / quizzes. And, of course, joint worship with services rotating round the churches and more recently, pulpit exchanges between clergy.

Building on the experience of **St Andrew's and St George's over the years,** outreach to the business community led to the appointment of Tony Bryer as chaplain. This post was later financially supported (partly) by Together and the current Workplace Chaplain, Andy Gregg, continues to work with a range of retail and service organisations, from Lothian Buses to John Lewis. The need becomes ever greater as employers recognise the value of this outreach.

In conjunction with Greenside church, David Todd works with the theatres and arts community.

So the ecumenical scene is alive and well. Now that we have enhanced premises, what else can be developed? Watch this space!!

# Eulogies for Robin Boyd

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**The following eulogies were given at Robin Boyd's memorial service at St John's on 22nd June 2018.**

Born and raised in Belfast, the third of four children, Robin was grounded in Irish Presbyterianism, yet drank in the culture of Gujarat where his parents had been missionaries. India was the air the children breathed, Gujarati the tongue spoken when confidentiality was required. Missionaries and their children were their extended family. Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Mukden in Manchuria were as familiar as Derry and Glasgow.

He was educated at Inst. - the Royal Belfast Academic Institution – showing early his flair for languages. He went on to Trinity College Dublin to study classics, but was scooped out for Intelligence work during WW2, Bletchley Park. Based in London the work proved to be monotonous. To relieve the boredom he volunteered as a part time firefighter at **St Paul's Cathedral and once a week he drilled with Dad's Army, as Gunner Boyd.** Personal sadness came to the family in the death of his brother Jack, killed in active service in Burma.

At roughly the same time, an 18 year old from St Andrews, Anne Forrester, had joined up and was driving ambulances during the blitz. In 1945 she and Robin were both part of the cheering crowd outside Buckingham Palace. They never met!

Around 1948 they did meet, at a wedding, he as best man to his cousin, she as bridesmaid to a friend.

The war over, Robin finished his degree and then studied theology at **Queen's, Belfast and New College** Edinburgh, taking in a semester in Basel with Karl Barth. With his degrees completed he was appointed to the post

of Secretary to the Theological Colleges. Anne also after graduation was working for the SCM (Student Christian Movement) in Scotland and their paths crossed again.

At that time Robin met the Assistant General Secretary, an Australian, Frances Paton, herself from a well known missionary family. They married in 1954 and set off for North India first to study in Language School in Missouri. Posted to Surat he worked as a district missionary and became fluent in Gujarati. There his two beloved daughters, Elizabeth and Clare were born. After their first furlough he was appointed to the Gujarat United School of Theology. He had found his metier. His attention to detail, his patience, his desire for truth and his passion for the gospel came together in teaching and ministerial formation.

Furloughs in Australia with his beloved Frances and the girls allowed him to develop a deep love of that country and eventually he became an Australian citizen.

The family was divided for the last tour of duty, Robin in India, Frances creating a home in Melbourne. When the family was reunited, Robin became part of a ministerial team in Toorak, Melbourne. Later he was called to Wesley Church in Melbourne where his son-in-law is now minister.

Robin was always passionate about ecumenical affairs. He rejoiced that, still a Presbyterian at heart, he had served in the United Church of North India and the Uniting Church in Australia. He loved tapping into the riches of the Methodist, Congregationalist and Anglican traditions. So when in 1980 he was invited to

become director of the Irish School of Ecumenics, he returned to Dublin before retiral to Melbourne.

Sad times came, when Frances became ill. Robin cared for her and nursed her. The whole family, Libby and Miles, Clare and Alistair and the grandchildren mourned her.

Then a series of fairly random events brought Robin and Anne together again. **And in 2000 they were married in St John's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh.** They worked through all the problems posed by distance and forged an amazingly coherent family of 6 children, 16 grandchildren and **to Robin's huge joy one adored great grandchild, Sophie.**

Once Robin told me that if he hadn't been a minister he might have been an engineer. Perhaps that led to a passion for railways. On one trip by car in the Scottish borders, Anne in the front, Robin and my husband Duncan in the back, I carelessly pointed out the remains of a railway bridge.

Several minutes and many miles later we had been informed of the gauge (with an aside on the gauge of Indian hill railways), the date of construction, the stations it had served, the date of closure, the name of the station, and possibly what the station master usually had for breakfast...

Forgive us, Robin, if your mildly pedantic concern for detail, your superior knowledge and encyclopaedic memory caused some of us to glaze over.

In Edinburgh he haunted libraries, wrote books, enjoyed the Scottish Gujarati connection, loved the Retired Ministers Association, Ecumenical Friends and old SCM friends. He also enjoyed outings of all sorts as long as he could hear at least some and see a bit of what was going on.

Perhaps my favourite memory is of a visit to the theatre to see the play

Pressure. It deals with the Scots meteorologist, James Stagg, who gave the date for the DD landings.

In the interval, Anne said in a fairly **carrying voice, (Robin was very deaf), 'I'd forgotten how hot it was that summer.'**

Those around us stopped talking.

**'Yes,' returned Robin. 'I had been given a few days leave, borrowed a bike and was cycling in Berkshire when I received a wire. I ditched the bike, got on a train and returned to HQ.'**

**'Yes,' went on Anne. 'I remember driving the ambulance through the East End and in my wing mirror I saw the first doodle bugs.'**

Those nearest us stared open mouthed, then regrouped to buy their ice creams. I felt I had been sitting in the middle of history. As indeed I had.

**Robin's earthly history is over. And underneath are the everlasting arms.**

We who are left are better for having known him. For his love and care and laughter and faith we give thanks.

*Revd. Dr Margaret R Forrester  
Sister-in-law*



## Eulogies for Robin Boyd (continued...)

Robin Boyd contributed an extraordinary amount to the church and to society in the richest of lives, in Ireland – both north and south, India, Australia and Scotland. Margaret has talked a bit about this.

**I'm here to talk about him as a father** and family man. I am Clare Boyd-Macrae, his younger daughter, and I speak on behalf of my sister Elizabeth and our two families.

There are a few things you might not know about my dad:

- Before google, he was our font of all **knowledge**. **'Ask Grandpa'** was the refrain from our kids whenever an obscure fact was required. Despite this, he could be helpless in the most mundane situations, such as having to phone through an order for fish and chips, which rendered him completely discombobulated
- He was an academic, but also an accomplished handyman. Having lived in reasonably primitive conditions in India for 20 years, he could fix almost anything, and his plumbing, electrical and building skills kept our ancient beach house in Australia upright for decades.
- Dad had a great sense of fun; he often had a twinkle in his eye. He was the most abstemious of men, but he liked the occasional treat. When I stayed with Dad and Anne just last month, he and I indulged our mutual love of cider by sharing a pint each night, trying out every flavour we could lay hands on, until we discovered our favourite, which was Elderflower.
- He loved music, and until the time of his stroke, harmonised effortlessly with the hymns in church, in a melodious bass.
- You will know that he wrote theological books; you may not know that he was an inveterate composer of poems and ditties all his life long. In recent years, he wrote a poem for each of his seven biological grandchildren on their birthdays. Each poem included quirks and interests unique to that grandchild – and he was aware of these because he kept in touch with each of them.
- Dad spoke seven languages – Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, German, English and Gujarati. The aforementioned birthday poems were liberally sprinkled with words in these other tongues. Fortunately, he included meticulous footnotes with translations **for those of us who don't speak seven languages**.
- Dad was obsessed with trains and passionately committed to ecumenism. This could, just occasionally, become somewhat tedious for those of us who **didn't share these passions**.
- We all know that Dad was a darling, a lovely man, one of the most deeply **decent, warm and faithful people I've ever known**. He could strike up a conversation with anybody. But being **his kid wasn't always easy**. **Dad was shaped by the belief that one's 'vocation'** came before everything, including family and we were a long way apart a lot more than we were together. We loved him so much, and we were in no doubt that he loved us, but we never had enough of him. In his later years, Dad acknowledged this grief and his part in it, and that has made all the difference.
- Dad loved words. Some of my memories of the most profound contentment are of him reading aloud to Libby and me – the Psalms and Isaiah

and the gospels, sure, but also the Narnia books, *Swallow and Amazons*, the *Borrowers*, E. Nesbit and many others. He had a beautifully modulated reading voice. In his last few years, he could not see or **hear much, although you wouldn't have known it from his unrelenting use of his computer!** At the very end, Dad also lost the power of speech. A few days before he died, my step-brother, Eric, held his **mobile phone up to Dad's ear so that I could talk to him, and I poured out my grief, my gratitude for two fabulous weeks I had just had with him and Anne, and my love for him.** He talked back at length, and most of it was unintelligible. But two **sounds kept repeating, and I'm pretty sure**

**they were 'grateful' and 'bless'.** His last words to me summed up his sense of a life abundantly lived, his awareness that he was surrounded by love (from his two families and countless others, all around the globe) and his desire to bless us all, which he did, in countless different ways.

The man of words is now silent to us, but I suspect he is rejoicing with his loved ones on the other side, and with the God who he served so faithfully all his life, the God whose other name is love.

*Clare Boyd-Macrae, Daughter*

## Hope starts here

How Safe Families is equipping the church to support families in crisis.

How do we, as the church of Christ, love our neighbour?

We can do this in lots of little ways through hospitality, acts of kindness and generosity. But what if the church had the opportunity to reach out in love to families in our community who have lost hope and have nowhere to turn? What if 100s of volunteers could be trained up to offer hope to parents and children in really tough situations? What if the church once again became famous for radical hospitality, love of the stranger and compassion for the broken?

This is the vision of Safe Families for Children.

Launched in 2013, Safe Families is now a fast-growing charity seeking to call the church to show love to those who need it most. Working across the Lothians, Safe Families recruits and trains volunteers to get alongside families to befriend parents and/or children, offer short overnight respite for children under 12

and practical goods and services for families in poverty. Safe Families wants to offer hope in desperate situations and help children to make great memories even in tough situations. Our three simple aims are to prevent neglect and abuse of children, to keep children out of care and to stabilise families at a time of crisis. Across the UK, Safe Families has already worked with 6,000 children and recruited 4,000 volunteers.

Stories of family tragedy and crisis are not hard to find in the Bible. Buried deep in the Old Testament is the story of Ruth and Naomi. Having moved to a new area, tragedy strikes and Naomi loses both her husband and her two sons. In a patriarchal society Naomi has no protection, no income and no hope. She arrives back in Bethlehem penniless, traumatised and with nobody but her daughter-in-law Ruth for company. How do the people of God respond? Thankfully for Ruth, the Old Testament laws allowed

for the poor to glean in the fields. Ruth goes out to work. She is offered a place at the table with the other reapers. Suddenly, the two widows have more barley than they can cope with. Ruth is redeemed by a **close relative, a 'kinsman redeemer'**. Ruth starts with death but ends with the birth of Boaz, the great-grandfather of King David. God redeemed and transformed a bleak and hopeless situation into a situation of hope and blessing.

Every day Safe Families is bringing hope into hopeless situations. Inspired by the life and love of Jesus we believe that every child in Scotland has dignity and deserves hope.

Last year Safe Families in Edinburgh received a young dad who was living in a desperate situation with four girls under 8. When the Safe Families worker went to the house the young dad sobbed in utter **despair. He told the worker he couldn't** even afford an ice cream when the ice cream van came around.

Within a few weeks, Safe Families introduced a volunteer who started taking the girls out every week. Incredibly, one of the first trips the volunteer took the girls on was to the beach where she bought them an ice cream. A simple act of kindness gave a few wee girls some great memories and brought hope into a bleak situation. Along with several other agencies we supported the family to move into a new house. Hope gradually came back into a very hopeless situation. The

girls are now thriving and the family has been kept together. This is just one of dozens of situations that Safe Families have been involved in over the last few years.

Safe Families wants to reach out with love and compassion to families who are hurting and turn hopeless situations into situations of hope and blessing. How do we do this?

Safe Families work with local authorities to get referrals for socially isolated families in crisis. We then match these families to trained and approved volunteers. Volunteers go through a process of training, assessment, PVG check and three references before finally being approved at a panel.

Safe Families run training days almost every month and the next training day is on 11th August or 15th September 2018 **at Davidson's Mains Parish Church in Edinburgh.** If you are interested in coming along we would love to speak to you and invite you along to one of our Information Nights at our new office in 63/65 Shandwick Place Edinburgh, EH2 4SD. Please get in touch by email [scotland@safefamiliesforchildren.com](mailto:scotland@safefamiliesforchildren.com) or phone us on 0131 603 8430. Please ask for Don MacMillan or Andrew Murray.



# Safe Families for Children

# Notes from a Wild Garden

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As far as sowing seeds is concerned I seem to have had one success and one gross failure. The strip of flowering meadow, sown in April with a special packet from Scotia Seeds, seems to be working very well. It is all grassed over and is even going to have some wild flowers this year. I am not good at identifying plants before they flower, but knapweed is certainly amongst the tall shoots. It is probable that some perennials in the packet will not get established and show themselves for a year or two.

The failure has been in the bare soil made when digging the pond last summer. **I sowed “Pond-edge Mini-mix” and “Butterfly Mini-mix” during the last week** in August. According to the packets this should have worked all right; late August is when these plants often scatter seed in the wild. I covered the area with netting to **make sure sparrows didn't think it was** bird food. So far nothing seems to have germinated at all. I assume I have done something wrong. But maybe the combination of the very cold spring and the very dry summer has been too much for them. But perhaps they are lying dormant and will surprise me next year.

Weeding between the cracks of flagstones at the front of the house has revealed hundreds of ants. I do not know enough about them to say if this is one huge nest or a number of smaller ones. A couple of lady birds also crawled out of

the holes. I have not particularly investigated the log pile or the dead leaf wire net cylinder to see what is there, but they ought to be hotching with bugs. Certainly there are some bumble bees around.

The most exciting sighting was a fox the other evening. I was doing some watering of pot plants at about 10pm when I heard the rattle of something jumping over the fence. It was the other **side of a bush, so I didn't see it clearly and it, I guess, didn't see me. I moved my head** cautiously, and there it was, coolly scratching itself.

In the pond we now have many larvae of I know not what insects, of various sizes; I hope not too many midges. Also a water boatman, and some small beetles. There are also numerous daphnia – water-fleas – which I guess came in on the roots of plants bought.

The bird feeders are dominated just now by sparrows, starlings and goldfinches. I am sure these include families of fledglings, and their appetites are capacious. They explore all over the garden more fearlessly than older birds, too. Every morning and evening the sparrows and starlings bathe in the pond. Dunnocks still appear modestly, and wood pigeons. But no robin that I have seen.

*George Harris*





## Get Well Soon

Our esteemed editor, Jill Duffield, recently had a fall and will be out of action for some time. We send her very best wishes for a speedy recovery. The remaining Cornerstone team will endeavour to soldier on without her, but please bear with us. Future contributions can be sent to the usual email address - [magazine@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk) - or to [olivia@oliviadonaldson.com](mailto:olivia@oliviadonaldson.com)

## St John's tea party 2018

As I struggled through the crowds on Princes Street on my way to St. John's I wondered – what is it that brings me back every year to this tea party? Is it the wonderfully hospitable ladies who bring out tea, sandwiches, cakes and strawberries? Is it the delightful entertainment of songs delivered by our old friend and star singer George Harris? Will it all be just the same as ever, an event for the silver haired of the congregation, loyal to tradition? Or, more excitingly, is it the opportunity to chat with people whom I have not seen for a good while? Or catch up with the state of the development – less controversial this year because it is now finished and in use? Or a spot of controversy about the latest mural? Or a moan about the number of tourists in our streets?

This year was different. For one thing, there was the attraction of the new church hall – oops, we call it the Cornerstone Centre – and wondering how the tables would be arranged and whether this would be as good as in the past. I had already noted, thanks to our bicentenary events, that it could be used as a lecture hall with rows of the comfortable chairs in place, and after church for our stand-up coffee session or even a big party. But tea requires us to sit down, properly, at tables, ready to be served our treat.

So, the new glass door slid open as I approached – no pushing at a heavy church door now. The light colours and the smooth wood of the new floor offered

a welcoming entrance to the hall. Above all, the view from the huge windows was simply stunning. The Castle, the trees, the length of Princes Street Gardens, the spire of St. Cuthbert's – all held the eye. It was so pleasing to sit bathed in light in an ambience far removed from the dear old hall we were so accustomed to tolerating, yet surrounded by familiar voices, known faces, all the traditions of our summer afternoon tea.

Something tells me we will be back next year, and as often as we can before then, to enjoy not just this special event but the many more possible in our amazing new space. Thank you, Social Committee, for taking this first step towards many more years of tea, chat, music and fun in the lovely new environment.

*Anne Pankhurst*



*Photo by Marjory Currie*

# Christian Aid and Solar Ovens in Bolivia

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*During the hottest and sunniest June in Edinburgh that most of us can remember, the idea of cooking in a solar oven seemed absolutely feasible. The exhibition “Inherit the Earth” which Jo Dallas from Christian Aid put up in our chapel here in St John’s showed us how legacies and regular commitments to Christian Aid have made it possible and life-changing for women in Bolivia.*

*For all of us who were inspired by it, and the Skype session with Emma Donlan in Bolivia, and for any who missed it, here is Emma’s blog: an on-the-spot account, and a vision for the future.*

Reflections on the effects of our solar **ovens project and women’s** empowerment and ways forward

We have now been implementing our solar ovens project for nearly three years and during this time the results have surpassed all our expectations in terms of bringing about positive social, economic and environmental change.

I just spent the weekend up in Rurrenabaque in the Amazon region with women leaders who came together from across the Amazon, many travelling for over two days by foot, boat and long bumpy bus journeys to share their experience of receiving and using the ovens over the past year. They were representatives of the 20 communities and over 250 families we have now reached with solar ovens. These women have taken up the role of leadership in their communities to provide technical and moral support to the families who are integrating this new technology into their lives.

On Saturday morning we had a meeting in the local university with municipal leaders and community authorities who joined us to congratulate the women and present them with certificates and the new recipe books that the project has produced – and of course to sample the delicious food that was prepared in the ovens. It was like the Great Bolivian Bake Off as we enjoyed all sorts of cakes, breads, marmalades,

steamed fish, chicken stew, desiccated coconut etc. as well as marvelling at the increasingly innovative ways that they are using the ovens to make handicrafts for drying wood and seed and even for preparing natural plant medicines.

It was a truly celebratory day and very moving to hear the words of each woman as they shared with us the impact that these ovens have had on their lives. I think what most moved me was how they correlate the use of the oven to looking after the environment and the future of their communities. It is very clear that the **ovens are so much more than “a domestic appliance”**; they have come to represent in a very real way that alternative low carbon energy models of development are possible and are being implemented. This is especially relevant in the current context of this Amazonian region where the government plans to build hydroelectric plants and is prospecting for oil and gas which will destroy the livelihoods and delicate ecosystems of the forests, which only two weeks ago were recognised as the most biodiverse place on the planet.\*

We were really impressed by the women, for many it was their first time leaving their regions and their communities to travel so far, and for the way that they spoke out against these threats and the need to develop local solutions to protect their land rights and the environment. They talked about the amount of time they have saved and the

fact that they are no longer tied to the kitchen all morning and this gives them time to spend more time talking with others outside the home. We detected a new confidence in them to speak up and assume this leadership role, which is leading us to consider how we can continue to extend this solar oven project to other communities which are under threat and where there is very low participation of women in decision making processes and public spaces, where **implementing “gender and female leadership” workshops is often difficult** because of the existing domestic burden of women and the suspicions of the men in the community of challenging gender relationships.

The solar oven project has succeeded in doing just that, challenging gender relationships, not only giving women more time to do other things outside the home but also it has brought men and women together to learn how to build the ovens and to cook with them. One woman this weekend told me that it would have been unthinkable for her to have left her home to attend an event like this a few months ago as her children would have gone hungry, but now she can leave her husband in charge of the kitchen and he was happy and confident to prepare meals for all the family – something that would never have happened in the past before they had the solar oven.

On Sunday, the women took the ovens to the local market where they prepared food and sold small plates of chicken stew to the lines of people who queued up, eager to try food cooked in the ovens. I looked on as the women explained how they prepared the food, how the oven could work in the sun or on rainy days as a thermal cooker. Within minutes they had sold everything they had prepared and several townsfolk and local businesses were enquiring where they

could buy the ovens as they were convinced not only by the delicious taste but also by the amount of fuel and money they could save, enabling them to recover their investment.

This opportunity to meet the high demand for ovens is being taken up by Christian Aid together with our local partner Inti Illimani. We are currently investing small incubator funds in Inti Illimani to look at options to transform this organisation into a commercial and sustainable enterprise in the future.

*Emma Donlan*

\*Source:

<https://www.livescience.com/23144-bolivian-park-most-diverse.html>



*Photo by Christian Aid/Elaine Duigenan*

## Supporting Christian Aid

**St John’s members are surely inspired to support Christian Aid by the life and commitment of Robin Boyd, which we celebrated so recently, and by this and other examples of Christian Aid’s work. If you would like more information about legacies, gifts in memory of loved ones, or regular direct debit commitments, you can email Jo Dallas ([jdallas@christian.aid.org](mailto:jdallas@christian.aid.org)), or phone me (0131 552 4490) for contact details.**

*Marion Ralls*

# Green Ginger Group

The Green Ginger Group has been concentrating on Biodiversity this summer. In case any readers were wondering, this is not about enabling us to see some nice wild flowers and some pretty butterflies. It is about slowing, stopping, even reversing, the dreadful decline in species of all sorts. Insects, spiders, crustaceans, fish, birds, lichen – all are struggling. Sir David Attenborough has made the problem of plastics in the oceans a headline subject. That is all part of the same issue.

**You might well ask “What contribution can one inner city site make to such a global concern?” I suggest several possible answers.** One is that even if we only help a few sparrows on the corner of Lothian Road and Princes Street, that is worth doing. Actually our garden already provides habitat for a host of bugs that most of us will never see and could not name. They all play a vital part in life on earth – with their place in the food chain, their work as pollinators and their work as scavengers being three obvious examples of this.

A second answer is that if every inner city site with a bit of space tackled the problem seriously it might start to make a serious difference. As one of many

we could contribute to this. A third is that we, as a church, take our responsibilities for setting an example very seriously. If any passer-by - and we are the West End of Edinburgh, don't forget - thinks, on seeing our site, **“That looks good. Why don't I try it?”**, then something worthwhile has been achieved.

At our last meeting we toured the site thinking about these issues. George Fyvie and his team, and Fred Mobeck in the garden, already achieve a huge amount. Their good work needs to be sustained and supported and developed. Nesting boxes, bird feeders, birdbaths, compost heaps, log piles, planters, caterpillar food plants and so on all need some maintenance, and incur some costs.

It has been agreed that Biodiversity will be our theme for Creationtide this year. (That is to say every Sunday in September.) Not the least of the pleasures in having a new Hall is that we can once again have a Creationtide Fair. This will take place after Eucharist on Sunday, September 16th.

*George Harris*



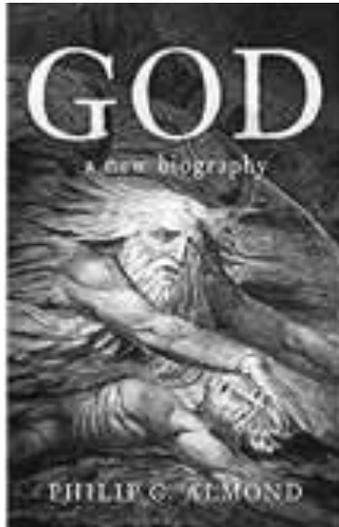
# Cornerstone Bookshop Reviews

## **'God — a new Biography'**

by Philip C. Almond

9781784537654

£20.00



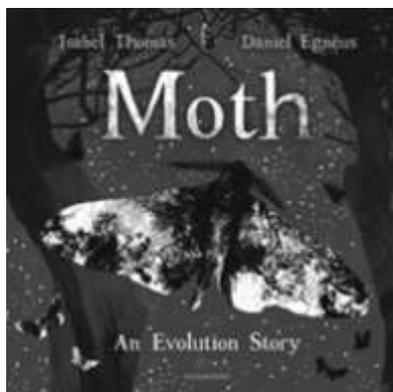
Following on from his much lauded **'biography' of the Devil**, Philip Almond's latest offering is a historical survey of God. Through it, Almond considers how God has been presented and treated throughout the ages, across the world and in the context of different faiths, cultures and philosophies. In doing so, he unveils metaphysical tensions and contradictions while also illuminating widely held shared beliefs in the way God has been **(mis)understood. God is therefore, "The God of the Bible and of philosophers, the God of the prophets and of the mystics, the God revelation and of reason – of knowledge, but also belief."** And, as the enigma of God has pervaded the human **race's quest to understand the meaning of life**, so, Almond contends, any biography of God is also a biography of ourselves. Here we glimpse insights into the unknowable and are provided with the tools to explore the key questions of the first cause and where we fit into the bigger picture.

## **'Moth — An Evolution Story'**

by Isabel Thomas

9781408889756

£12.99



A picture book for our times, this is a book to inspire hope for our environment, **charting the survival of the "peppered" moth** despite human interventions. Imaginatively illustrated with a mixture of **watercolour and collage**, **"Moth"** charts how the salt and pepper moths live and die and how, over time and through moth-generations, the colour of their wings has continued to evolve in response to the quality of the air in which they fly. Because they have adapted, they are living to have children and tell their story still. Through this book, they tell their story to us and to our children providing a simple and informative introduction to evolution.

*PLEASE NOTE – THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL OF THE SACRED ARTS will run from AUGUST 12th -18th at ST. VINCENT'S CHAPEL, STOCKBRIDGE in association with CORNERSTONE BOOKSHOP.*

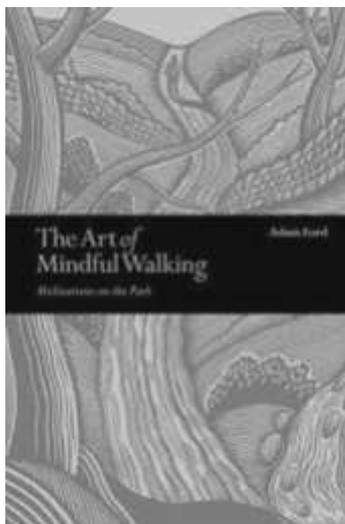
*Visit [www.edinburghsacredartsfestival.org](http://www.edinburghsacredartsfestival.org) for more information.*

## **‘The Art of Mindful Walking’**

by Adam Ford

9781782406662

£7.99



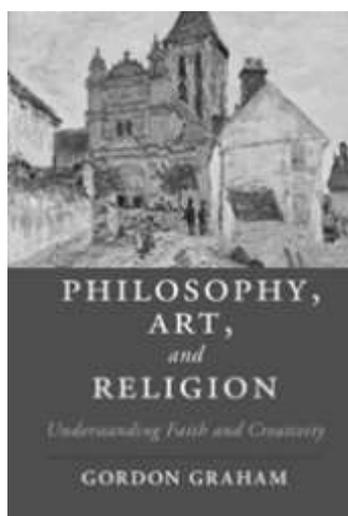
New in paperback, this volume is a welcome addition to the popular series published by Leaping Hare. In it, Ford looks at the ways in which we walk and what we may carry with us when we do; the reasons we walk and how the seasons affect our walking. Walking to work, walking in the dark, walking on pilgrimage all engage us in different ways and Ford provides tips stemming from the simple Buddhist principle of paying attention to **the moment we inhabit and ‘waking up’ to all that surrounds us and lies within us in that moment.** If walking isn’t your thing, the numerous titles in the series provide similar guides to singing, drawing, gardening and knitting, while another strand in the series explores the ways in **which being ‘mindful’** – being attentive – can help in dealing with bereavement, ageing, depression and anxiety. Each volume is beautifully presented and enhanced by striking woodcut illustrations.

## **‘Philosophy, Art and Religion’**

by Gordon Graham

9781107584778

£21.99



Sacred music, painting and iconography, poetry, drama and architecture all have long and deeply established relationships with religion and have been used in that context for both stirring emotion while also giving structure to how bodies worship (both in terms of buildings and **liturgies**). **Focusing on these ‘sacred arts’** (which today, Graham argues, are often marginalised,) he charts their place from the time when the arts were tied up with religious patronage to the point where they gained autonomy to become sources of inspiration in their own right in; objects and pieces of work in which we can apprehend beauty and in which we can delight. Whether the religious element of these sacred arts illuminate our faith or lends artworks a deeper dimension are just two of the questions explored in this fascinating and readable study, ideal for anyone interested in the marriage of theology, spirituality and creativity.

# Forthcoming Events

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## Festival Pulpit

**This year's Festival Pulpit will focus on money and its intersection with society and the spiritual.** The preachers at the 6pm Evensong will be:

- 12 August Josh Littlejohn, Founder of SocialBite  
19 August Eve Poole, Writer & Third Church Estates Commissioner of the Church of England  
26 August Sally Foster-Fulton, Head of Christian Aid Scotland

An invitation from Stephen Holmes, our Associate Rector

I will be instituted as Rector of Padstow, St Merryn and St Issey with St Petroc Minor in Cornwall by the Bishop of St Germans on Thursday 11 October at 7pm in **St Petroc's Church, Padstow.**

**Izzy and I, and our new parishes, invite members of St John's to this – it is quite a long way so if you can't come, be there in spirit with prayers!**

## **St John's Theology Symposium 2018**

Saturday 10 November, 10am to 4pm

**Cornerstone Centre at St John's**

**This year's Symposium will be led by Dr David Grumett, Senior Lecturer in Theology and Ethics at Edinburgh University School of Divinity (New College) and the topic is: Eucharist and the Care of Creation.**

Dr Grumett is an Anglican lay theologian and he has taught at the Universities of Cambridge and Exeter. His interests span theology, ethics and philosophy. He has published extensively on aspects of modern French Catholic theology and has also written on theology and food, in which he seeks to recover and rearticulate a distinctively Christian ethics of eating for the present day. His major book *Material Eucharist* was published by Oxford University Press in 2016.

## Bicentenary events

Please see our calendar of Bicentenary events on page 5.

Just Festival

3-26 August

## St John's Church



The Just Festival is designed to engage everyone in reflection upon vital social justice matters. **This year's rich and far-reaching** programme, which includes performing arts, talks, conversations and exhibitions, explores the theme of 'OUTsideIN'.



'Sounds from Gold Coast' (Music)



Take Note Youth Choir (Music)



'Take Refuge Under My Shade' (Dance)



'bloominaschwitz' (Theatre)



'Where Are You Really From?' (Theatre)



'The Island' (Theatre)



'X-Changing Faces' (Improv)



'Life of a Funeral Director' (Talk)



'Forward to Freedom' (Exhibition)



Eric Robertson, Bishop John Armes and Professor Mona Siddiqui join the impressive panel of speakers at the Just Conversations.

The full programme of events is available in the church porch, Cornerstone Centre porch and online at [just-festival.org](http://just-festival.org)

# Service with a Smile by DES

“What is the matter with telling the truth with a smile?” Desiderius Erasmus to Martin Dorp, 1515

A homiletic conversation

DES: Canon, it is, as always, a pleasure to welcome you to this column. What meanings would you elucidate for us today?

WISHWASH: How few of our favourite slogans are free from ambiguity! This month I **would like to address the popular sentence: “All are welcome”.**

DORP: Will this be a waste of time?

WISHWASH: Surely you are aware that theological discourse can take the simplest concept and render it ambiguous, if not meaningless. Was it not CS Lewis who pointed out that one might use in a single page of writing the expressions my wife, my boots, my dog, **my God, my garden, my country and mean something different by “my” every time. Let us first consider the word Welcome.**

DES: I might say to Alpha “Welcome to the pub”, meaning “Let me buy you a drink” and to Omega “Welcome to the pub” meaning “... provided you buy me a drink.”

DORP: I suppose I am cast in the role of Omega.

WISHWASH: Just so. Welcome to donate money, welcome to waste my time, welcome to spoil the party, welcome to sit quietly in a corner, welcome to come on holiday with me: these are very different meanings.

DES: Those who laugh at my jokes are always welcome.

DORP: ...on the fingers of one hand.

DES: But what about “all”? That seems clear enough.

WISHWASH: **By no means. When the Three Musketeers used the slogan “All for one and one for all!” they took “All” to mean four persons.**

DORP: Three surely.

DES: Sit quiet and read the book.

WISHWASH: The French revolutionaries, politically embarrassed by granting the vote to **all, quickly developed the concept “active citizenship” so as to exclude suspect persons** from the political process. Robespierre carried this idea to extremes. Those who did not seem to be part of the General Will were guillotined, or drowned in batches.

DES: Our own democracy explicitly excludes various categories, of which the largest is the young.

**WISHWASH:** If, to take a milder example, a sea Captain shouts “All hands on deck!” he might or might not include those whose duties unquestionably lay below deck, or those of-  
**ficers or passengers who might or might not be considered “hands”.**

**DORP:** Still, wherever you are on the journey...

WISHWASH: But suppose you had not started, and so were not on a journey? Or were on a different journey?

DES: Thank you, Canon. We have reached our word limit. In order to accommodate the line  
**“Most are usually welcome in most circumstances”, someone will have to write a new tune.**

**DORP:** “All are welcome provided...”

## St John's Coffee Rota

### August

5th C Legge; P Walliker  
12th M Warrack; S Jameson  
19th M Currie; S Goode  
26th V Lobban; J Taleyarkhan

### September

2nd G Edgar; J Rennie  
9th A Usher; J MacLeod  
16th S Brand; W Wyse  
23rd C Legge; E Anderson  
30th M Currie; S Jameson



# Sunday Readings

Sunday Readings August to September 2018

Readings for all services each week are available in the *St John's Calendar and Lectionary 2017-2018* available at Cornerstone Bookshop for £5.

Year B	9.30am Matins	10.30am Eucharist	6.00pm Evensong
5 August The Transfiguration of the Lord	Exodus 24.12-18 Luke 9.28-36	Daniel 7.9-10,13-14 2 Peter 1.16-19 Mark 9.2-9	Exodus 3.1-15 John 12.27-36a
12 August Mary, Mother of God	1 Samuel 2.1-10 John 2.1-12	Isaiah 7.10-15 Galatians 4.4-7 Luke 1.46-55	Zechariah 2.10-13 Acts 1.6-14
19 August Pentecost 13; Trinity 12	Proverbs 9.1-6 John 6.51-58	1 Kings 2.10-12; 3.3-14 Ephesians 5.15-20 John 6.51-58	1 Kings 19.1-16 2 Peter 1.16-21
26 August Pentecost 14; Trinity 13	Joshua 24.1-2a, 14-18 John 6.56-69	1 Kings 8.22-30, 41-43 Ephesians 6.10-20 John 6.56-69	2 Kings 2.1-14 Matthew 11.7-15
2 September Pentecost 15; Trinity 14		Song of Songs 2.8-13 James 1.17-27 Mark 7.1-8,14-15,21-23	Hebrews 13.1-8,15-16 Luke 14.1,7-14
9 September Pentecost 16; Trinity 15	Isaiah 35.4-7a Mark 7.24-37	Proverbs 22.1-9,22-23 James 2.1-17 Mark 7.24-37	Genesis 6.5-22 Genesis 8.6-12; 9.8-17
16 September Holy Cross Day	Zechariah 12.8-13.1 John 3.13-17	Numbers 21.4b-9 1 Corinthians 1.18-24 John 3.3-17	Sirach 50.1-24 2 Corinthians 2.12-3.11
23 September Pentecost 18; Trinity 17	Wisdom 2.12-22 Mark 9.30-37	Proverbs 31.10-31 James 3.13-4.3,7-8a Mark 9.30-37	Genesis 39.1-23 Matthew 5.11-16
30 September Pent 19; Harvest Fest.	James 5.13-20 Mark 9.38-50	Joel 2.21-27 1 Timothy 2.1-7 Matthew 6.25-33	Exodus 14.10-14,21-29 Matthew 2.13-21

# Useful Contacts

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Children & Families Ministry	Isobel Armstrong-Holmes, Mig Coupe, Olivia Donaldson, Sue McPhail, Mary Reilly <i>sunday-school@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk</i>	
<b>St John's Terrace</b>	Cornerstone Bookshop      Anna Pitt One World Shop              Rachel Farey	229 3776 229 4541
Vergers	Steve McLaren, Ross Hepburn and Marc Farrimond	

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 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday)
- 10.30am Sung Eucharist with activities for children
- 6.00pm Choral Evensong

### Monday

- 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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Scottish charity number SC012386

