

St John's

Church of St John the Evangelist, Princes Street
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Annual Report 2017

- Looking back on the year at St John's -

Prepared for the Annual General Meeting held on
Monday 13th November 2017 at 7.30pm



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Statistics

Baptisms

Nov 2014 - Oct 2015	9
Nov 2015 – Oct 2016	3
Nov 2016 – Oct 2017	6

Weddings

Nov 2014 - Oct 2015	7
Nov 2015 – Oct 2016	8
Nov 2016 – Oct 2017	8

Funerals

Nov 2014 - Oct 2015	7
Nov 2015 – Oct 2016	6
Nov 2016 – Oct 2017	7

Agenda

I. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 1.1 Prayers and Roll of the Dead
- 1.2 Apologies for Absence
- 1.3 Minutes of AGM held on 14th November 2016
- 1.4 Matters Arising
- 1.5 Minutes of Special General Meeting held on 29th January 2017
- 1.6 Presentation and Adoption of Accounts
 - 1.6.1 St John's
 - 1.6.2 Cornerstone Developments (Edinburgh) Ltd
 - 1.6.3 Carbon Reporting
- 1.7 Annual Report
- 1.8 Together Churches
- 1.9 Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection
- 1.10 Lay Representative's Report
- 1.11 Elections
 - 1.11.1 Vestry
 - 1.11.2 Lay Representative
- 1.12 Thanks

2. NON AGM BUSINESS

- 2.1 Cornerstone Centre Development (Adam Rennie/Markus Dünzkofer)
 - 2.1.1 Progress
 - 2.1.2 Café
 - 2.1.3 Vision
- 2.2 Numbers Mission and Growth (Stephen Holmes)
- 2.3 Bicentenary (Grace Durham)
- 2.4 Just Festival (Tom Lea)
- 2.5 Cornerstone Bookshop
- 2.6 Baptismal Font (Markus Dünzkofer)
- 2.7 Children (Markus Dünzkofer)
- 2.8 The Grace

Introduction from the Rector

Markus Dünzkofer

Dear friends,

There is a tradition in the United States for the U.S. President to set aside a day of thanksgiving every year. Even though everybody knows when Thanksgiving occurs, every President still declares it with a special proclamation.

A few years back I came across one of these proclamations, issued by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, in the midst of the U.S. civil war. While death and war were raging in parts of the U.S., while families lost children, siblings, parents, while the U.S. seem to be swallowed up by the sins of slavery, of racism, of sacrificing people on the altar of profit, and of privilege, Lincoln proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving.

Here is an excerpt:

“The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, [...] order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.”

I am not at all suggesting that we are in the midst of a civil war here at St John's. Quite the contrary! We are not a community in conflict. We are not struggling with one another. And none of us has to deal with the reality of war, as Lincoln described it above. And thank God for that!

But it has been an extraordinary year.

Over the past fourteen months, our life as a community has been interrupted and often turned upside down. There has been dust, noise, lack of space, clutter, frustration and disappointments. (And this does not even include the heartaches and pains many had to experience on a personal level.)

The development indeed has been a major disruptor of our congregation.

And yet, we have celebrated in manifold ways the beauty of the gift of life, we have claimed for ourselves new projects and opportunities in ministry, and, above all, God has revealed to us the extraordinary goodness and power of her grace over and over and over again.

There are a lot of reasons why we should be thankful:

We have witnessed a number of baptisms, both of children and of adults. More and more couples are seeking us out for the solemnisation of their marriages (and young couples (of whatever sexual orientation) do so often because of the Scottish Episcopal Church's change of the marriage canon). We were joined by new residents of Edinburgh and by folk, who have lived here for all their lives. Our worship life (including the splendid work of our choir and organists) is connecting us to the divine mystery in life-giving ways. Concerts and social events have delighted many. The Just-Festival had a successful August. The Bookshop is making new strides in a new location. Generous donations continue to come in. The bond of affection between the Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together has grown stronger and we are embracing innovative ways of being a church in a 21st century city. New forms of nurturing the faith of our congregants and of making new disciples are being implemented. The excellent work of our staff and clergy continue. And lay ministers support who we are - and I want to particularly mention the often untold stories of those lay leaders, who through their unnumbered volunteer hours have made the administrative and financial well-being of our congregation possible: Vestry, the Personnel Committee, the Finance Committee, the boards of the Just-Festival and the Bookshop, and last, but definitely not least, the CDEL-board.

There is a lot going on. And there is a lot for which to be thankful. "The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields" could be easily said about ourselves, too.

And people have become curious about this community on the corner of Princes Street and Lothian Road as people remain curious about a God, who continues to reveal himself in surprising ways. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is still good news in our times – if we let it...!

I have been reading Andy Doyle's "The Jesus Heist: Recovering the Gospel from the Church" recently. Here, an Episcopal bishop is offering a challenge to the church he loves: Stop focusing on maintaining the institution, on being all about subsistence. But move beyond yourself to find God waiting for you to help build a new reality in which all life (human and non-human) is reconciled to God and reconciled to one another. It is about replacing self-preservation with using the "bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed" for the sake of the Gospel and for the sake of a world that is searching for meaning and yearning for healing. And sometimes this means taking risks and exploring new and unheard avenues.

The year ahead promises to be exciting: we will claim for our use a new hall, the St John's Cornerstone Centre, and we will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the consecration of our amazingly beautiful sacred space.

It is indeed a time to be thankful: for all the benefactors and donors, for all the unnumbered life-changing encounters and conversions, for the challenges to evil in all its forms, for past and for present congregations and, above all, for God's abiding presence.

I believe and trust that this will lead us to wonderful and amazing celebrations.

But I also think that the coming year will have its challenges, too. Change is never easy and it will take time for the new building to become part of our identity. The fleshpots of Egypt are not just a biblical phenomenon...

Yet, I trust that we will manage what lies ahead of us if we on the one hand remain thankful, appreciating the abundance of God's gifts, celebrating what each of us is contributing to our lives in community, and giving praise, honour and worship to God, from whom all blessings flow. We will, on the other hand, be able to walk the road ahead, also if we do not see it as a challenge. Rather, the Cornerstone Centre is an amazing and unique opportunity for us to grow deeper in the knowledge of God if we utilise it not primarily for our own purposes, but as a way to connect with the world and as a springboard into ministry and mission.

There is both a pastoral and a missional aspect of our identity as we move forward in 2018. And I very much would like to claim both for my ministry with you, too.

Thank you for your ministry in Christ's name.

Thank you for your support of St John's.

Thank you for letting me in my, at times crazy ways, be your rector.

Yours,
Markus

Carbon Budget

George Harris

1. The development and building work has meant that neither 2015-16 nor 2016-17 is typical. Not too much can be read into these figures.
2. GAS: Aug 2016 – Feb 2017: using roughly 2000 units per month more than last year.

Feb 2017 – March 2017: saving roughly 3000 units per month

March 2017 – Present: Using roughly 500 units per month extra.

3. ELECTRICITY: Roughly 1000 per month above last year.
4. WATER: Roughly 200 units per month above last year.
5. RECYCLING: Up 110% on last year.
6. WASTEWATER: up roughly 40 units per month.
7. All suppliers have been changed to ensure that they are more eco-friendly, cheaper and more proactive:

Next year's figures will also be skewed. We should get regular, meaningful results the year after.

Many thanks to the Business Manager for his work on this, and for supplying the figures.

Charity Committee

Pat Boyd

The Committee would like to thank the congregation for its generosity throughout the year and would welcome any suggestions for future collections. These figures do not include Gift Aid which is claimed by the individual charities themselves, rather than by St John's on their behalf, nor any charitable donations made by St John's from a different account.

Elsbeth Yeo

The donations made through St John's Charity Account for the past financial year amounted to £3,935.80. This total does not include Gift Aid, which is claimed by the charities themselves rather than by St John's acting on their behalf. The figure is less than that of the previous year (£8,369), partly because the money raised by the annual appeal for the Care Shelter that year was paid through the Charity Account, and also because fewer Charity Sundays were held this year. The Charity Sunday in January was cancelled because the charity selected was being supported at the joint "Together" service the following week. It was also decided to omit the summer Charity Sunday as it was felt that the congregation had already received more requests for financial help than usual.

The chosen charities work with Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the homeless, the environment, the provision of live music in healthcare, and giving disabled children in Scotland access to sport and outdoor adventure. In the details shown below, the entry for Alzheimer Scotland was a late addition to the collection held in the previous financial year.

Summary of Charitable Giving through the Charity Account from 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2017:-

Plant Heritage	£234.00
The Care Shelter	£356.36
Edinburgh Direct Aid	£431.68
FABB Scotland	£689.76
The Bishop's Lent Appeal	£1560.00
Music in Hospitals	£614.00
Alzheimer Scotland	£50.00
	<hr/>
	£3,935.80

Cornerstone Magazine

Jill Duffield

Olivia Donaldson

Cornerstone Magazine has had another interesting year, covering the changes to the Canons on Marriage by the Scottish Episcopal Church, Festival Pulpit articles in this 500th anniversary year of Martin Luther's Reformation, and many items of news of St John's members. The progress of the Cornerstone Centre has been longer than we initially hoped, but the magazine has kept members in touch with problems and achievements.

One regular feature, the Book Reviews by Cornerstone Bookshop staff, has had an impact beyond St John's: we have had a number of requests to reprint selected reviews in other publications.

The magazine team has worked admirably: contributors both within the congregation and beyond; the production team, proof readers, photographers and those in charge of distribution. We said farewell with many thanks to Sue Goode as Postal Secretary. Rosemary Denny has now taken over this important task. A special tribute is due to Kerri Kivlin in the office for her excellent work on layout and design.

The editors want to invite all members of St John's to offer contributions, viewpoints and items of news, using the address at the back of the magazine: magazine@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk. Don't wait to be asked!

Fabric Report

Grace Durham

The Fabric Committee has continued to meet quarterly, dealing this year with a number of issues. Constraints of budget have meant that only the most urgent problems have been dealt with. The most serious has been the ingress of water in the roof above the north part of the nave. This appears to be a result of a damaged pipe that is actually within the walls of the building. It has been investigated and we are waiting for prices to repair the damage. There has also been water ingress in to the One World Shop with which the contractors for the Development are dealing. There has been liaison with CDEL on various points relating to the Fabric of the church and the new hall. Sadly, Alasdair MacKenzie is stepping down from the Fabric Committee. His contributions have been invaluable, particularly with his role as a member of CDEL. His experience as a property developer has made his position on the committee significant. He

has given a huge amount of time to St John's in the last year in particular and we are all very grateful to him.

The next Quinquennial Review is due and will be carried out within the next year. This will give a full account of the work that needs to be done on the church. Nevertheless, St John's, the Rectory and the Cornwall Street flat seem to be in good condition.

Finance

Wren Hoskyns-Abrahall

The start of the year saw us needing to have sufficient funds at our disposal to start the development. The yearend has seen us approaching completion of the building work with the funds in place, or a loan agreed, to see the work through to completion

Once again, we have had to run a tight budget with priority being given to the Church mission and ministry ahead of other demands for funds.

One thing that has become clear is that whilst the numbers of people attending services at St John's across an average week has held up over the past two years, despite the disruptions, the number of people committed to our pledged giving programme is slowly declining. This reflects the experience of many voluntary organisations over many years. Our refreshed facilities will create opportunities to engage with even more people, but also to secure significant new, or increased, income from sources other than direct giving. This will not supplant our Christian need to give to and through the Church, but it will enable us to continue to minister to that much wider body of people who need to hear and experience the good news we have to offer. The Church can never have 'enough' money. With our objective being the whole world for Christ as each horizon is approached more tasks come into view. Our development really is giving us a springboard to bring new projects and mission objectives into focus. We must not allow post-development life to be a mirror of what went before, but with better loos. We must make our investment work for the benefit of the community around us – a vibrant, self-financing, addition to our mission and ministry.

It is always encouraging, even if tinged with sadness, when the life-time decision of someone to leave a legacy to St John's is completed after their joining the Church Triumphant. Two such members have left us legacies during the last year: Aileen Moyes and George Ayrton. If you want to consider making such provision in your will, please talk to one of the Ministry Team.

We continue to seek new and more efficient ways to oversee the finances of St John's, including CDEL and our about-to-be-launched new café. In the meantime, I continue to act as Finance Convener, Treasurer and Gifts Secretary, which I could not begin to do without George Fyvie's support and that of the staff and volunteers he leads.

Your Finance Committee may be small (Rector, Business Manager, Mark H-A and myself) but between us we have, hopefully, covered what needs to be done and I am grateful to all the members for their patience and hard work on St John's behalf.

Flowers

Anne Goodwin

This year has been different for every person involved in, and at St John's. Getting into the church to "create" arrangements has been challenging, finding water and a spare space has been possible, only because of the incredibly efficient vergers, always willing (and very able) to rise to an occasion. Thank you to all of them!

So, in the main, there have been silk, rather than fresh flowers used. Watch out for Christmas, all!!

A big thank you too, to all the folk who email me with appreciative words regarding any particular arrangements, large or small. They mean a lot to all the flower girls.

Our new flower cupboard is a joy, with space for storage and hands on water. Thank you for giving us this store room.

Thank you to Fred Mobeck (chief of the gardeners), for cutting us greenery etc. when needed, usually with a good story too.

Thank you to;

Anne Usher
Merrilee Cameron
Vicky Reid -Thomas
Patricia Walliker
Mary Warwick
Penny Housely
Viv Cameron

If anyone else would like to join the crew, please email me.

Garden Group

Fred Mobeck

We have had a very limited access to the garden due to development and areas such as the Dormitory and parts of the east end have been neglected as a result, but they will be resurrected and we will get them looking good again.

The Vergers have been busy keeping the grass tidy and have done an excellent job indeed, now of course it is time for leaves. I have discussed this with the Vergers and come up with the best way of dealing with the composting of leaves, to produce good quality leaf mould.

During the month of September we have spent time tidying the beds in the west part of the garden, which involves cutting down the previous season's growth as the plants go in to "Winter Mode" also we have moved some plants to another area of the garden in the hope they will grow better. We have been adding some new ones too, of course the Garden is always evolving and changes have to be made.

Over the years we have been planting more bulbs especially in the grass area at east end. We put in *Crocus tomasianus*, which is the best one for naturalising, it has small flowers but a large name. *Narcissus February Gold* has also been planted it blooms early in the year. Now that is done that should complete the work in this area and all we need do is to enjoy them in the Spring.

Once we get the others areas back there will be a lot of restoring to be done, we do need some new members to join us so please contact us.

Green Ginger Group

George Harris

One routine activity of the Green Ginger Group has continued this year. St John's now has a Memorial Grove with Trees for Life, who are extending the area of native woodland in the Highlands. (They are currently concentrating on Glen Affric.) The Group has made regular efforts to publicise the existence of the grove, and to encourage people to make a donation to it. Take-up has been very disappointing - apart from people who are already members of the Group. On the other hand the wild flower seeds that were distributed on Mothers' Day were received with enthusiasm and, I gather from conversations, sown with some success. Let us hope a few of Edinburgh's pollinators have benefited. Next year please do send photos in for display; only a few were received this year.

Our main focus looking ahead has been to consider how to make the St John's site a better one for wild nature once it is no longer a building site. The motto carved in stone at the Botanic Gardens could be our inspiration.

“Food + Shelter + Water = Biodiversity”.

Our most conspicuous activity this year has been the two water displays. In Lent we encouraged reflection on the water of baptism, as a flow of blue paper, variously inscribed, emerged from the font and trickled from pillar to pillar. Then in Creationtide all comers were invited to contribute to a display about the physical aspects of water – life-giving; drought; flood; pollution, and so on. This has been moved to the back of the church.

The Group is about action, not a debating society. If anyone would like to get involved, please do make yourselves known.

Guardians

Colin McEachran

Again the church is blessed by having so many willing guardians. Many of our visitors are greatly appreciative of our welcome and the chance to speak to someone about the church and its history. We have some 45 guardians on our books. Not all are presently active and we would welcome more. It is very interesting and rewarding work for a couple of hours every 2 weeks.

In 2017 we did not manage to fill all of the slots in our roster but the 82% coverage is a pretty good number.

Visitor numbers to St John's, as recorded by the guardians were:-

April	2682
May	2562
June	2771
July	5215
August	5229
September	2069
Total	20,528

Busiest time was always the morning and highest recorded number was 328 visitors on 26th August. Cruise ship???? This total is likely to be far short of actual visitor numbers. Not all guardian slots were filled and it should be remembered that the guardians are only on duty 10am – 4pm July and August and 11am – 3pm in April, May, June and September. There are many visitors to the church outside these hours. They are looked after by our excellent vergers.

Holy Dusters

Marjory Currie

A small group of us meet for about an hour between 2pm and 3pm on the second Thursday afternoon of every month. We hope you notice the effect of our efforts but it was quite hard to clean successfully when the messy bit of the Development work was happening. Obviously the amount we can do depends on how many of us are there. Sadly, for very valid reasons, the number of us who turn up is constantly reducing and if anybody else would like to join us either let me know, or just turn up. We would be delighted to see you!

Pastoral Committee

Phyll Hoskyns-Abrahall

The Pastoral Visitors' Scheme was set up 25 years ago and is an excellent way for members of the congregation to support each other within our widespread church family. At present we have over 80 visitors and their pastoral ministry is much appreciated by the clergy and laity alike. New visitors are always welcome – please talk to Markus, Clephane or me if you'd like to know more.

Sceptics Group

Pat Boyd

The Sceptics Group meets informally to discuss issues raised in sermons preached at St John's or issues arising from the liturgy. The group meets in the chapel after the 10.30am service on the last Sunday of the month, very often with the preacher. We normally have between 10 and 20 people attending and it is always a lively discussion as we bring questions regarding our faith. The Sceptics Group is a vibrant expression of worship at St John's and everybody is very welcome.

Scottish Country Dancing

Sheelagh Brand

We have met during the period of the development in the chapel after evensong once the choir have disrobed, gathering at 7.15pm as the doors and gates close at 7.30 pm for security reasons. We look forward to the time when we can return to the hall for dancing. We began in late September and continue to late May with breaks for Christmas and Easter. We are a small group who welcome anyone who comes to join us to see what all the fuss is about!

We are always looking for others to join us- no experience required - and it is good exercise!

For further details contact me on 0131 339 4406.

Services for Hard of Hearing & Deafened People

Sarah Kilbey

Do you know that wonderful passage in the book of Ecclesiastes which begins, "For every occupation there is a season under heaven, a time to be born, a time to die, a time for planting and a time for uprooting", and so on? It became clear last year that, for the Deaf Service, the time had come for it to finish. Four of our members had died, quite suddenly, and that was hard for us all. In addition, most were frail and often travelling in from some distance, Fife, West and East Lothian and the Borders. Because I no longer teach lipreading to adults who have become deaf in later life, I didn't have any means of publicising the service. It was all done by word of mouth. (Many deaf people struggle to cope with a normal church service especially if there is no good, functioning loop system and often feel terribly left out). We talked about it together and decided rather sadly that we shouldn't go into another winter. Over 21 years it has been a time of great blessing and, I think, spiritual growth, not just for the people who come but, even more so, for me. It was so hard to stop; I love them all! But it's only "au revoir" as I am trying to visit and keep in touch. We ended with a wonderful service followed by a lunch party, at the home of Anne Usher, who has been helping me now for some time, and that was lovely! Thank you all for the support you have given me at St John's.

Social Committee

Fiona McLuckie

Although there were slightly fewer events this year due to the lack of a hall, the Social Committee has continued to work hard to provide a variety of opportunities for the people of St. John's to meet and socialise. Three talks were held in the Church; David & Katharine Hope's 'A Year as Lord High Commissioner' chronicling their experiences whilst David was the Queen's representative at The General Assembly, Mig Coupe's 'Mindroom' on the admirable work of this charity supporting the families of children affected by learning difficulties, and Poppy and David Houldsworth's beautiful pictorial 'A Trip to Antarctica'. All three were excellent and much enjoyed.

The Spring Theatre trip to 'Fiddler on the Roof' was well attended and a very happy afternoon was spent by many of our housebound and elderly members at the Summer Tea Party in the alternative venue of St. Cuthbert's in May this year.

Next year we looking forward to making good use of the new Hall with some additional events and the return of some old favourites – we are particularly hoping for great views of the Festival fireworks through the glass roof! My thanks to all committee members for their hard work and commitment throughout the year.

St John's Bicentenary

Grace Durham

St John's will be 200 years old in 2018, and we are planning a variety of activities to celebrate it throughout the bicentenary year. The actual date of consecration was 19 March, 1818, and because this date falls during Lent next year, we shall have a modest celebration the preceding day, Sunday 18 March, 2018. The big event – and mark your calendars now – is Sunday, 6 May, with Matins in the morning in the style of 1818 and a large Eucharist at 3.30pm (note time) with Bishop John preaching. There will be four lectures during the year: Leslie Hodgson and Eleanor Harris on the history of St John's; David Todd on culture and the arts in Edinburgh in 1818; and Patricia Andrew on St John's: a changing visual presence 1818-2018, looking at architectural drawings, art, photographs and other visual material. There will be a number of displays looking at a variety of aspects of St John's: its history, St John's identity today, its outreach, the Terrace, memories of the past and its future. Each will last a month with a gap of a few weeks between. We hope to have a special concert, and special preachers will be invited to help celebrate the bicentenary. These are only a few

ways that are being planned to commemorate this special year. The congregation is especially asked to contribute their own ideas of how we can celebrate it. We are very aware that the congregation has been asked to dig deep into their pockets to fund the Development and people have been extraordinarily generous. Donations, however, are welcome so the events can be self-financing. If you would like to give and have not yet done so, please put a cheque in an envelope marked Bicentenary and hand it in to the office.

Please contact me if you have any questions or any ideas. All are welcome!

Theological Book Group

Eileen Thompson

Our group meets monthly. Over the last year we have read a variety of books. They have all been challenging in their own way, ranging from the weighty to the popular, from perceptions of God and people of other faiths to attitudes to social justice to fiction, and each has given us the chance to explore faith and life. The books are often just the starting point. We are a 'broad church' as our membership extends beyond St John's and we reflect different ecclesiologies.

Vestry Report

Austin Reilly

The last 12 months have, once again, been busy and eventful for Vestry.

Membership of Vestry was unchanged for the year apart from Romy Langeland having stepped down at the 2016 AGM after serving as Convener of the Personnel Committee. At the forthcoming AGM, Grace Durham, Mo Grant and George Harris will retire having completed 4 years as elected members' although Grace will remain on Vestry in her capacity as Convener of the Fabric Committee as a co-opted member.

The Cornerstone Development has again occupied a lot of our time and energy and at each of our meetings we have monitored the progress of the contract and its financial performance. Connected to the development, we completed arrangements for the loan from CAF Bank which was drawn down in full in October. Careful consideration was given to how the new café will be operated with a decision made in August that we should develop a plan for St John's to operate it directly.

We held detailed discussions on the proposals from General Synod to amend Canon 31 covering marriage and the changes were also brought to the Special General Meeting held on 29th January and a congregational meeting on 11th June.

We continue to receive regular reports covering Finance, Personnel and Fabric and each month we have a report from the Business manager on operational matters, highlighting the success (of which there were many) and difficulties in the previous period. Other topics include the forthcoming Bicentenary of St John's, Together, Charity Committee, Children's Ministry and the Just Festival.

Finally, I would like to thank Markus, Stephen and all members of the Vestry for the help and support they have given me as Vestry Secretary.

Walking Group

Veronica Harris

Each month we organise two walks - a shorter walk on the first Thursday, and a longer day out on the third Saturday. Usually between 6 and 15 people come along, the exception being Christmas when 40 or so walkers get together. This year, this the venue for our Christmas lunch was once again the Flotterstone Inn. To whet our appetites we had a very pleasant walk into the Pentland hills. The walk leader chooses, plans and rehearses the walk, coordinates transport, meeting arrangements and any café stops, and ensures that everyone is comfortable. Where we have a high level Saturday walk we are usually able to organise a lower-level alternative for those who prefer not less uphill. My thanks, as ever, go to all the walk leaders who work hard to ensure that their walk is interesting and safe, and that everyone enjoys themselves.

We have a core of regular walkers who know each other well but we are a loose-knit group and anyone is welcome to come along. Occasionally visitors to Scotland who have read the details in the church porch come along too. It is an opportunity to get to know some of the Scottish countryside and meet like-minded people.

Here are a selection of the walks from over the last year. Local walks included sections of the Union canal, the Water of Leith, the Innocent railway, a circuit around Penicuik, Corstorphine Hill, and the Dalmeny estate. Further away, we walked along sections of the East Lothian coastline, climbed Beinn a'Ghlo near Blair Atholl, Beinn an T-Sidhean near Strathyre, and The Wiss from Tibbie Shiels Inn in the Borders. We also had walks in the Ochils, and from Carfraemill in the

Borders. Each year we aim to put together a varied programme with something to suit everyone.

If you are interested in joining us on a walk please look at the church notice boards or the pew notes, or email or speak to Veronica Harris or one of the walk leaders. You don't need to be exceptionally fit, and don't worry if you don't have a car; several of us have cars and are happy to take passengers. Many of the walks can be accessed by public transport.

walking@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk

Wednesday Church Lunches

Josephine MacLeod

We continue to hold soup & cheese lunches on the first Wednesday of each month. Sadly, Eleanor Bath is no longer able to be with us, she has been a great strength over the years and we miss her very much and hope that she will be able to return once we are in the new Hall. Eileen Thompson continues to help. Hazel is in charge of the washing up, for which we are extremely grateful. We could not manage without the volunteer soup makers Angela Horsfall, Sarah Kilbey, Andrea Stirling, Jean Starr, Phyll Hoskyns-Abrahall, Val Lobban, Anne Goodwin, Sue Goode, Markus Dünzkofer & myself. Thank you very much too all those who make the soup and also those who come to the lunches.