



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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*Comments and responses to items in this
issue are very welcome.*

*Cover: The Disrobing of Christ or El Expolio
by El Greco*

From the Rector...



Markus Dünzkofer

Dear friends,

What is life?

This is a question that has been on my mind over the past few weeks since we entered this rather existentialist season of **Lent: “Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return”**. **Lent is a time to think** not just about the moments in our life where we might have failed God, our neighbours, and ourselves – and to seek reconciliation. Lent is also a time to be reminded of the fragile and finite reality of our human life. But how is this reminder helpful?

Unfortunately, this could easily lead to either a morbid over-fascination with death or it could lead to a complete

ignorance of the fact that one day we all have to die. And our culture does both: many of my contemporaries have never been at a death-bed or avoid thinking about how to handle such things as living wills, last wills, legacies, funerals, or burial instructions (and: yes! we should all have all of them – whatever our age! Any of our clergy would be very happy to have conversations with you about these important documents). On the other hand our society has an unhealthy fascination with death.

I never was a big fan of Pope John Paul II. I particularly struggle with his moral theology that wrongly judged many a good Christian, pushed them out, and left them stranded in the dark. And, yet, despite his own blindness to the diverse movement of **the Spirit, he saw and identified humanity’s** intoxication with death. He had experienced the evil of the Third Reich in occupied Poland and spent time under Stalinist oppression. Even societies that supposedly celebrated life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are not immune: Western ideals and Capitalism to John Paul II were not life-giving, but death-inflicting. He saw the toll by which the Western world maintains its way of life: poverty in the Developing World, sweatshops and epidemics around the globe, disregard for creation, wars fought over accessibility of

resources without regard to sustainability, and an egocentric approach to life that fosters an ethics void of clear paradigms. And for once I agree with John Paul II.

Yet, despite all this, the late Bishop of Rome was driven by a passion for life. Even when sickness had taken such a huge toll and when death was lurking in the corner, John Paul II did not give up on life. And I wonder if that really is the challenge of a Christian community in and beyond Lent: to defy death by focusing on and celebrating life.

This is no plea to ignore our finality or distance ourselves from mourning. Far from it! To experience, recognise, and acknowledge the pain of forever losing a loved one is important, necessary and should not be discouraged. Grief is not a mental illness, and everybody will process grief differently. But in organising death-café, grief-seminars, end-of-life conferences, I sometimes wonder if we **give life enough space...**

Yes, we will never be able to fully claim and embrace our true human identity if we avoid Holy Week and Good Friday. But we are first and foremost an Alleluia-**people (yes, I just used the “A-word” in Lent...).** The Christian community is defined by resurrection. We have something to say to the world about life post-mortem and also about the abundance of life that is accessible here and now.

But what is life?

I think life is a most precious gift from God that needs to be celebrated

with gusto. I also think that there is still much to discover about the profound beauty of life in all its diversity both within and outwith the human reality. And I believe that by focusing on and embracing the awe and wonder of life, we can find new avenues into the Divine mystery as much as grasp a more complete understanding of our humanity. But we cannot do so alone.

We need God. We need the community. And we need open eyes for **the needs and concerns of the world.** “No man is an island, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the **maine.**” **John Donne once famously wrote.** We will have to change to a more gender-inclusive language, but the insights of this 16th/17th century divine are still very **much true.** “**Living life**” is not so much about an egocentric self-fulfilment, it is about how life connects us vertically to God. It is equally about how life sets us up for the horizontal interconnectedness with our community and with all of creation.

I believe we have the resources at St **John’s to live into these horizontal and vertical realities.**

What is life?

Let’s find out together.

Yours as ever,

Markus

Development Update

There has been a lot going on as we continue to move forward with the development:

- Conversations with the diocesan trustees (who will have the final say about loan funding).
- Advertising the position of **“Development Manager”** to manage our donor relationships (both old and new) and to communicate progress on appeals and the development.
- Finalising plans for project managers to oversee the tendering process and to manage the building phase.
- Finalising the Canon 35 application.
- Working with our architects to finalise tender documents.
- Asbestos survey and removal.
- Creating a limited company to run the construction of the development.

- Internally auditing and reconciling our accounts
- Removal of floors and other temporary structures in lower terraces.

All but one of these items are not very visible and require a lot of work behind the scene. However, the more diligent, detailed and intentional we are, particularly in the tendering process, the more control we will have over spending and the less likely we will be hit by unpleasant surprises and unplanned expenditures.

From the outside it might not look like a lot is going on, but it does feel very much like we are moving forward!

Please let Markus know if you have any questions or if, indeed, you would like to have a look around the building as it is being prepared for the development.

Staff News

We are delighted to let you know that we have offered George Fyvie the position of Business Manager. He has been with us as Interim Business Manager from last October. George has accepted the offer. This will be a seamless transition and we look very much forward to continue working with George. Welcome!

Congratulations to our Associate Rector, the Revd Dr Stephen Holmes, who can now add FRHistS after his name. Stephen was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in recognition of his historical scholarship. Congratulations indeed!

God and Evolution: Part Two

The second of two articles by Brian Kilbey developed from a talk he gave to the Growth Group.

Are the points of disagreement between the Church and the scientists I described in Part 1 really very important? I do not think so. Does it really matter where the earth is in the universe or that it might be one of many similar worlds with life on them elsewhere? Does it matter whether God created by means of slow changes or by some cataclysmic activity in a six day period? Surely it just means that we have been using the Bible in **the wrong way. We can't take accounts of creation as literally true and, interestingly, they were not until the 19th century.** But that is not the end of the story: we know much more now about the process itself. The variability between the members of a species (essential for evolution) results from underlying genetic changes and we know now that these arise spontaneously and at random. There is no evidence that they are directed in some way - they just happen. The operation of natural selection is also mindless and these two facts can cause problems for some Christians, especially those steeped in the idea of a Creator who acts to call things into being. For them it is a shock to learn that evolution is an autonomous process. **“What is God doing?” they ask, “He doesn't seem to be doing anything!” And here the atheists step in and say, “We told you so. God's not needed, evolution can do it on its own. It's simpler just to drop**

God”. But to draw this conclusion is to risk falling into the same trap as the **Church did when it espoused Aristotle's** geocentric universe and the evidence of a Great Designer, and then clung to these beliefs in the face of new evidence. Have the atheists thought this through? If, as Christians believe, God seeks love from his creation, a major problem he faces is how to create beings who can love him freely without being biased or programmed to **do so. To be absolutely sure that creation's** love is free and independent, it may be necessary for God to abdicate his responsibility for creation and delegate it to some independent process which can create itself on its own. That may be just what evolution is, a creation which can **occur without God's direction. If this is** true, being unable to find any evidence for **God's involvement in evolution may not be** surprising at all. Furthermore the pain and suffering and even the exploitation which seem to be inevitable parts of evolution, and which worry so many, may represent the risks God is prepared to take to achieve his objective of a freely given and independent love.

Pain, suffering, competition, exploitation: all these words have been used in association with evolution and they bring me to my last question. How does acceptance of the truth of evolution and our understanding of it affect the other things we say we believe in? One of these— an important one - is the question of the Fall and original sin. Most of you

reading this will have grown up with the **belief that God can't have created such a** trouble-laden world as the one we live in. After all, Genesis says that God saw that what he had made was good. Something must have gone wrong. The blame has traditionally been laid at the feet of Adam and Eve who, the Bible tells us, did exactly what God told them not to do. As a result, their relationship with God was broken and the whole of creation has been condemned to suffering and death ever since. Even if you doubt the literal truth of this story, it remains a powerful metaphor. But surely it is unfair that we should be **punished for Adam's sin, whoever Adam was.** St Augustine believed that, through **Adam's sin, man inherited the tendency to** make the wrong choices, the propensity for sin - and we have certainly sinned.

Before you dismiss this story too quickly, remember that we come to it with the benefit of a mass of knowledge about the origins of the universe, the history of our planet and the life we see around us, unknown to the writers of the Genesis account. The story might have been very different if they had known what we know. I do not think the blame for all this pain and suffering would have been pinned on Adam, for two reasons. Firstly, it is impossible to identify some golden age in the history of the earth, a time of perfection before everything went wrong. It has always been like this. It is implicit in the process of evolution that there are winners and losers, exploiters and exploited. Secondly, humankind is an incredibly recent arrival on the scene.

Almost all the pain and suffering which the world has experienced because of evolutionary creation happened before we arrived. As one writer put it, if the age of the earth is represented by the distance **from the King's nose to his finger tips one** swipe of a nail file would wipe us out!

Teilhard de Chardin worried about the Fall and original sin and, more recently, the Jesuit Jack Mahony wrote in his book, **Christianity in Evolution, "It would be** more theologically appropriate now to drop [the doctrine of original sin] as **unnecessary and cumbersome baggage."** So, do we get rid of the Fall? Once that stone is lifted all sorts of questions arise. Where does original sin come from? **What did Jesus die for? For centuries Jesus'** death has been the sacrifice God demanded as compensation for the spoiling of his creation by our disobedience. Not everyone likes that interpretation and if there were no Fall perhaps that reason would evaporate. These and others are things we should be thinking about.

To make a final point, I do not think the findings of science need worry us. New findings open new doors towards truth and I think we are wise enough now to recognise that whether they are truths from a secular source like science or truths from careful attention to prayer and listening to God, we should be glad of them. We and what we believe are both still evolving.

Brian Kilbey

Encounters with God in the Children's Corner

What was your earliest spiritual experience? For young children in particular, spiritual experiences are very often connected to the physical. Perhaps you remember swaying in the middle of a crowd surrounded by music, or creeping down to look at a statue in the grotto. Or perhaps slipping into a Bible story and being able to smell the bread or feel the rocking of the boat.

As a church we want our children to encounter God, and perhaps we feel the need to try to recreate these experiences for them. But that can be a struggle when so much seems to have changed. The drama group no longer runs. Or the children just seem more interested in their phones than church music! Should we force them to engage, or simply conclude that children are no longer interested in spiritual things?

Perhaps your experience is the opposite of this. A close friend of mine **grew up in a Rectory. Her parent's faith** was very real to them, but they were careful not to impose it on her. She never saw them praying, nor was she read Bible stories. Rather than leaving her free to grow in faith, she felt her faith was stunted. Faith became something that was awkward and embarrassing, something she could not talk about and struggled to feel a part of. Going to church as an adult she still feels on the edge of faith, and is unsure how to provide a rich spiritual environment for her own small children.

So what is the way forward? What **can we at St John's do to help children** experience God?

The good news is that children do still talk about their vivid encounters with God, and they still need a place to belong, **where it is OK to feel spiritual things. It's just that this isn't always going to be in Church on a Sunday morning. At St John's** we will keep our Sunday morning groups going (for children and young teens – see below) but we are also experimenting with new ideas. Look out for the occasional Churches Together Messy Church (Saturday Morning crafts, celebration and **meal at St Andrews & St George's West**), and two-monthly Sunday Morning gatherings at the Rectory for the older children.

We also need to listen, so we are **organising "listening events" such as** Marshmallow Building, which took place on Sunday 28th February. This was an interactive way of thinking about the changes to our building and imagining the **church of the future. I'm also looking to** have individual conversations with anyone who has experience of seeing children growing in faith. Either email me, or we can get a time to meet for coffee.

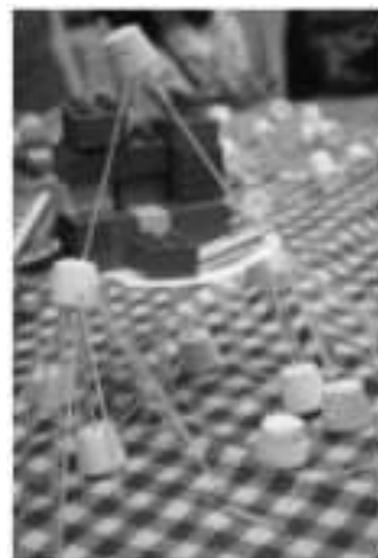
St John's has always been a church where children have been a valued and visible part of our community. It will be really exciting to see what new ways we find of doing church together.



*Imagining the church
of the future*



*Writing letters for
our time capsule*



*Marshmallow
building!*

Children's groups at St John's

Children are welcome at any of our services. There is a carpeted area at the front where **younger children can play. Don't feel embarrassed if they are noisy or full of wriggles** – that is how God has created them!

Families usually choose to come to the 10:30am service on Sunday when children's groups are provided. The children leave early in the service and return in time to participate in the Eucharist.

Creche: for babies and toddlers.

Sunday School: more structured activities including Bible stories, cutting, colouring and play – for pre-school and early primary children.

Godly Play: exploring the sacred with symbols and words – for children in the top half of primary/early secondary stage.

*Reuben Addis (temporary
children worker at St Johns)*

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Safe Families for Children Scotland

God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy. Psalm 68:6

After leaving her partner, Emma* suddenly found herself recovering from heartbreak and parenting her four-year-old son, Daniel*, alone. Daniel kept Emma busy from early in the morning until late in the evening, leaving her little time to manage the household or process her emotions. Soon Emma began losing her temper, shouting at Daniel, and she feared that she **might do something worse. That's when** her social worker referred her to Safe Families for Children Scotland (Safe Families) for support.

We provided a Family Friend to meet with Emma, giving her the opportunity to talk, get out of the house and build on the parenting advice she had received from the local Early Years Centre. One of our Host Families began taking Daniel one afternoon per week and overnight periodically to give Emma a much-needed break. After six months, Emma now feels more able to cope with the demands of everyday life. She is able to see her friends more and has secured a job. Most importantly, because of the generosity of these **volunteers, Emma's relationship with** Daniel has improved. She is less stressed and is enjoying her little boy again.

In the city of Edinburgh, 1400 children are considered looked after (i.e. in the

care of the local authority), and behind every statistic is a person, a name — like Daniel and his mum. Through early intervention, Safe Families for Children aims to prevent children like Daniel from ending up in the care system.

Safe Families recognises the human element in a struggling family unit. Every crisis is different depending on the situation and the people involved, which is why support from Safe Families for Children Scotland is flexible, depending on **the family's needs and our volunteer's** capacity. There are several ways to get involved: hosting children for short breaks as a Host Family, offering emotional support as a Family Friend, or providing useful items and skills as a Resource Friend.

The church is already a natural place of support, encouragement and care and has a desire to reach out to its community; however, as our communities become increasingly disjointed, the people who the church most wants to help are often isolated and hard to find. Safe Families for Children is the bridge – connecting local churches in Scotland with families in need.

We provide the platform for genuine friendships to develop between isolated parents, their children and church volunteers in a safe, supportive environment. Since starting work in Edinburgh in the autumn of 2014, we have

supported over 50 families, and each additional volunteer who signs up allows us to offer support to more people.

What would getting involved with Safe Families for Children mean for St John's? With Safe Families' process and structures, we can help you as you live out Christ's teaching to 'love thy neighbour,' whether that neighbour is in the same street, estate or another post code. Together, we can support each other as we help struggling

families in our communities get back on their feet.

Jennifer Rawson

Safe Families for Children Scotland

Get in Touch:

e: Edinburgh@safefamiliesforchildren.com

t: 0131 603 8430

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Twitter: [SFFCScotland](https://twitter.com/SFFCScotland)

*Names have been changed for confidentiality.



Isobel Booth-Clibborn is the Programme Director for Safe Families for Children Scotland. We are grateful to her for putting St John's in touch.

Notes from a Wild Garden

I was only allowed two articles in the last edition, so there were no wild garden notes. Fortunately there has not been a huge amount to write about in the way of plants.

Winter is, of course, a great time for bird feeders. Every year seems to be different. This year we have had one very persistent coal tit to go with the plentiful blue and great tits. There have been quite a few chaffinches; and who would have thought a decade ago that goldfinches are now so common as to be unremarkable, except for their beauty. All our regulars seem to have returned, after a summer away. Dunnocks are a special favourite of mine. The visiting migrants have been siskins. For about a month they were dominant, devouring sunflower hearts as fast as the feeders could be filled up. There were also half a dozen sparrows.

Few things enliven digging and cutting back like an attendant robin. We have one of those. Don't be fooled though. In January I saw a fierce battle as a rival was driven off the territory. There was a fierce blackbird battle too, involving six males, while a female looked on.

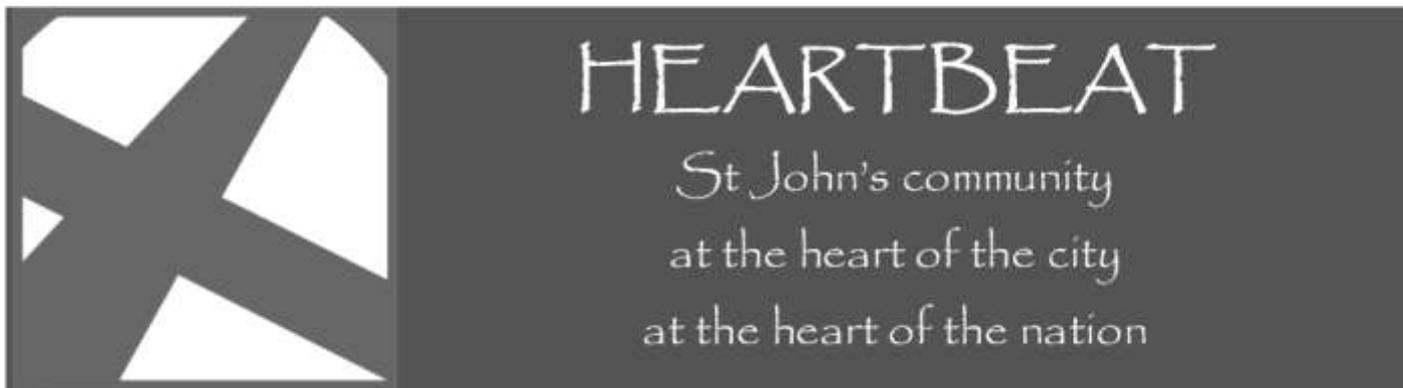
There is ice on the pond as I write, but things should start to move any day now. Frogs will reappear in the next few weeks, accompanied by predatory newts, mallards and a heron. Last year the frogs were fairly successful, to judge by the tiny one hopping around in August. Striking a balance between defending the frogs and

welcoming the predators is an insoluble problem. I have created netted areas, where they can spawn underneath, and also transferred spawn into a nursery pond; I do not want the colony wiped out. On the other hand if a pair of newts eat every tadpole in the nursery pond, as happened last year, well, it is all part of wild nature.

The hedge is not a boundary, but it does enable me to see native trees at every stage of growth. Just now it is buds. The small pimples of hazel are very different from the thin spears of beech or the black buds of oak. The guelder rose seems to have reddish buds. As for the hawthorn, they are already sprouting green.

Incidentally, I have been persuaded to write a blog about the wild-life garden. If you go to mywildgardenyear.blogspot.co.uk you should find many more words and lots of photos.

George Harris



News of our members

Her Majesty The Queen will have a **very special guest at this year's Royal Maundy Service**. Every Maundy Thursday The Queen presents special 'Maundy money' in a UK cathedral or abbey. The recipients are usually people that have contributed significantly to the life of their community and of their church. Our very own Sheelagh Brand will be one of the **recipients when she travels to St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle during Holy Week**. This is very exciting. And it is very well deserved. Sheelagh not only is one of the pillars of our community of faith, she and Peter have been tremendous foster parents over many years. We will send Sheelagh and Peter off with a special prayer on Palm Sunday – and we look forward to hearing about their reports. Congratulations!

Our verger, Billy Wright is volunteering in India with Future Sense Foundation, in July, as reported in the Lent Cornerstone. You can still support his trip at www.virginmoneygiving.com/dalewright.

As already announced, a service commemorating long term member Mary **Macdonald will be held at St John's on March 22nd**. A tribute to her will appear in the next issue.

As many of you already know, Freda Alexander died recently and her funeral took place on Friday 4th March. She spent many years playing a very significant part **in the life of St John's, and was ordained Deacon in our Church**. Freda never ceased searching for a further deepening of her faith and late in her life was received into the Roman Catholic Church, joining her son and his family. She remained an affectionate friend to many **people at St John's. We shall also publish a tribute to her.**

Tributes to Lillas Finlay

A packed congregation at St John's joined heartily in thanksgiving for the long life of Lillas Finlay, a member for over seventy years. This tribute comprises extracts from family memories presented at the service and material gathered by Robert Philp in interviews with Lillas just over a year ago. In fact, an article by Robert from these interviews appeared in Cornerstone in February 2015, but for reasons of space, some paragraphs about her early life were omitted.

One of Lillas' grandsons vividly evoked his own early memories of his grandmother:

“There is a church on the corner, downhill of the Dean Bridge, where I will brace myself for a tight turn. An iron gate and a red gravel path, which leads away to long grass, seesaw and sundial; to walks on the up and down paths, a stone tablet by the Water of Leith. Beyond the gate there are stone steps and a red door, a portraited hall, a bench which is surely just for the small leopard and garden key to rest on. On every tactile surface of this decorated house there rest a few layers of meaning and memory. The fire, the low stool and the glass-topped table speak of what has been and what may be, and the mirror above the fireplace will have imprinted in its chrome the sparkle in my **grandmother's eye as she asks a canny** question which will turn out the heart of the matter.

Downstairs, around the long table,



and through the kitchen overlooked by **dolls' houses most of my Christmas** memories reside. From this central point there have been sheaves of letters offering support, love, thought of home, and asking important questions. The thought required to answer has always been enough.

Within these walls I have been blessed, my marriage has been blessed, my son has been blessed. My decisions, roads taken or not taken, have been blessed and regarded with sympathy and wisdom. So this city has been weakened by our loss. At some point soon, I will find strength in the memories of the past shared today, and in

the knowledge and dreams of the future undertaken for us all by a remarkable **lady: my grandmother.”**

Lilias’ early life is described by Robert Philp:

Lilias was brought up in Paris where she used to go out riding every morning before breakfast and school in the Bois de Boulogne, and where she went to Art School. One of their family customs was family prayers each night. One sign of the atmosphere of goodwill is that when her **father said ‘Let us pray for our enemies’, she didn’t know what an enemy was.** They were a sportif lot, and as well as winning trophies for ski-ing, skating and riding Lilias learnt archery - later to become one of the Edinburgh Lady Archers.

During the Anschluss the family moved to Vienna, from where her father used to drive groups of Jews out under cover of night. In 1936-37, both her parents were briefly imprisoned and then interrogated when their house was seen to be flying the Saltire instead of the Swastika. The British Ambassador strongly advised them to get out. To do this it had to appear that they were **simply going on holiday. They couldn’t** take any money out of the bank, and half of them went by car, half by train to St Moritz. At the border, Lilias escaped the close attention of the Customs by giving way to a nosebleed.

After a year in St Moritz, the family moved to Perthshire, where Lilias taught English to classes of 40 Poles at

Blairgowrie, and (now aged 18) looked after around 30 Glaswegian evacuees with her sister. Later on she worked for the P.O.W. Relatives Association. Her siblings were fully engaged too, with two sisters in the Land Army and one at Bletchley, while her brother was in the Fleet Air Arm. At Oxford meanwhile Lilias met Michael Finlay, and they got married, but in 1942 the Air Force and duties as a Desert Rat took him abroad for a long four years. When he came back to Scotland after a bout of polio, they moved into the top flat of 7, Belgrave Crescent, a house on five floors which was the Finlay family home for 100 years and where Lilias still lives today. Michael was a doctor who taught at the University and worked with children. His consulting rooms in Charlotte Square were shared with dentist (and doctor) Graeme Warrack, father of Bill.

*Another granddaughter presented a **toast she had written for Lilias’ 96th Birthday:***

“My wonderful grandmother taught me that memories need not be preserved in aspic; they should grow within us and inform our daily lives. Life is about moving forward, with the past tucked firmly under your arm. What comforts me is knowing that she passed this on to all of us. We are the ripples that extend from her. Her love of chocolate, her creative way of playing cards and her – well - bossy way of knowing, are all things I **happily continue for her”.**

Also from Liliias' birthday, in November 2014, verses in the form of a toast:

As a permanent fixture in my life that's a mixture

Of moving and shifting across time,

You've always stayed stable, seemed willing and able

To give guidance when I needed to whine.

It is clear and concise, it's the truth and precise,

My love of the arts comes from you.

'Look up when you're talking' you'd say when we were walking

In town for the day, just us two.

You look and you gaze, you admire and amaze

With your skill to inquire and respond,

Your insatiable desire to inform and inspire

Are the elements of you I'm so fond.

Your life seems lived to the fullest amount

To the top of each vessel you use;

It's full and it's hearty with study and party,

As though you have little to lose.

Why are we here if not to appear

That we're grasping each chance to be better?

You do this each day in a passionate way –

Your actions match your deeds to the letter.



Finally, Liliás' daughter, Anne Goodwin read an item from a folder of cuttings, sayings, hymns and prayers which Liliás kept and labelled 'Nice things':

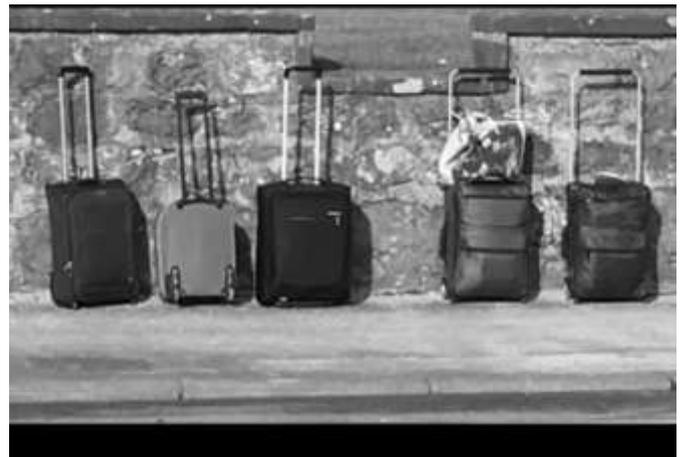
Take time to think, it is a source of power
Take time to play, it is the secret of perpetual youth
Take time to read, it is the foundation of wisdom
Take time to pray, it is the greatest power on earth
Take time to love and be loved
Take time to be friendly, it is the road to happiness
Take time to laugh, it is the music of the soul
Take time to give, it is too short a day to be selfish
Take time to work, it is the price of success
Take time to do charity, it is the key to heaven.



Going Forward in Retreat

“Retreat,” exclaimed the incredulous staff officer to the Russian General, “if we retreat Moscow will fall.” “No,” replied the General, “the weather will intervene.” As in War and Peace we retreated! In our case to the College of the Holy Spirit on Cumbrae, where the weather really did intervene to our advantage.

The journey was by the slow train to Glasgow, then halfway around Ayrshire to Largs, before the short ferry and bus journeys to our destination. As Markus would say, “**whoever you are; wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome.**” Well, by the time we arrived at



the Cathedral of the Isles we had done a lot of bonding as we travelled together and the warm welcome we received set us up for a really happy Spiritual journey. We were on retreat as the weather turned from Winter to Spring – cool,



crisp and sunny. Perfect for walking as part of that journey, or just for finding a contemplative corner in the sun.

Our small group of six, sensitively led by Nicola, shared their thoughts, concerns and hopes over the two days of our stay, around three Gospel texts (Mark 10: 17-31; Luke 7: 36-50; and Matthew 5: 38-46) in our own sitting room, the Charity Suite, in the North College, where we all had ensuite rooms.

Sharing worship in the beautiful if cool (chilly actually!) Cathedral made the wholesome hot meals all the more appreciated. Surprisingly this schedule allowed plenty of free time for exploring our glorious surroundings, with distant views of snow-capped mountains on Arran to the West and the Cairngorms to the North, across the smooth waters of the Firth of Clyde.

An added bonus was seeing Amanda and Andrew settled in their new home and ministries. They sent warm greetings to **everyone at St John's and hope to see many more friends on future St John's retreats.**

This was a first visit to Cumbrae for most of us and we certainly look forward to returning for more faith, fellowship and fun!

Phyll & Wren Hoskyns-Abrahall

The Green Ginger Group

By the time you read this the traditional gift of wild-flower seeds for Mothers' Day should have reached you. We do this not merely to make a point, but because to create a diversity of wild flowers is to help support our insect pollinators, who are suffering a worrying decline. Do sow them according to the instructions on the packet, and send in photos once they are in flower. I gather some sowings were unsuccessful last year; sowing wild flowers may not be quite the same as sowing cabbages.

Before Christmas we visited Florence and travelled by train. Quite apart from the wonderful crossing of the French Alps (going) and the Swiss Alps (returning) there is an important environmental consideration. Precise figures are very hard to calculate but I learn from ecopassenger.org that a train has maybe a quarter the carbon emissions of a plane and a sixth the nitrogen oxide emissions. Every journey is different, depending on gradients, weights of passengers and so on, but the basic point is clear.

Charlotte Bray, flying to Australia (no suggestion of going there by train) is looking into setting up a St John's Grove with Trees for Life, so that we can offset our flights by planting trees. Trees for Life is a charity, and costs something to be a part of. Watch out for fundraising initiatives.

The Green Hustings for the Together Churches will probably take place on April 6th, at St Andrew's and St George's West. Prepare for the Holyrood election by meeting the candidates, asking questions, and hearing where each one stands on environmental issues.

We continue to prepare for Creationide. This year we are working with Edinburgh Living Landscape. One event will be various guided (by experts) walks to see the wonderful variety of life often

overlooked at the West End (lichens in the graveyard for example) and to become aware of places where we, and the Council, could do better. We shall also have our traditional Fair of stalls, once we can work out where to have it with the Development in progress. We shall be encouraging you to design and to post suggestions for how we can house wild-life after the Development. A beehouse and a peregrine platform are two suggestions so far.

George Harris

Cornerstone Bookshop Reviews

'How to be a Mindful Christian'

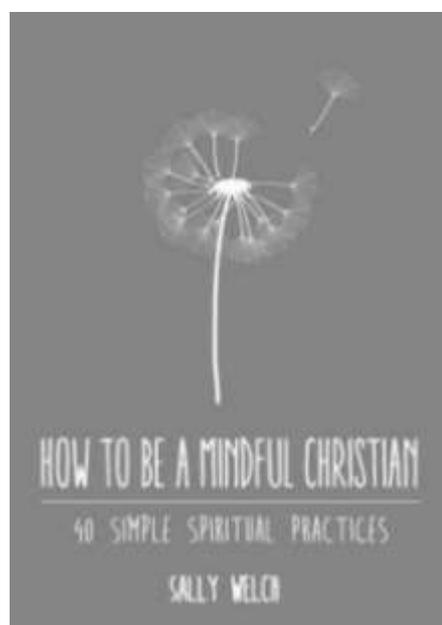
by Sally Welch

9781848258457

£10.99

In this accessibly written book, priest and author, Sally Welch, successfully brings together the popular practice of mindfulness and the spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and contemplation, to offer more than 40 reflections and exercises designed to help individuals enter more deeply into their own faith. Aiming to **bring God's presence into each moment of our lives** and to deepen our awareness of

the sacred in the day-to-day, this is an inviting and practical guide wherever we are on our journey.



'Into your Hand – Confronting Good Friday'

by Walter Brueggemann

9780334054139

£7.99

At 40 pages it may be a slim volume but, as one might expect from Walter Brueggemann, the contents are arresting. Many churches are familiar with the tradition on Good Friday of reflecting on **Jesus' seven last words from the cross**. Here, we are given seven meditations on these sayings, delivered by Brueggemann in 2014, which aim to connect the faith voiced by Jesus in the face of his own death with the reality of faith and its abuse – human suffering, personal grief, etc. – in our contemporary world. By rooting **Jesus' utterances in the context of the psalms**, as he does, Brueggemann also **seeks to engage his audience with "the long passage of presence and absence"** and bring us hope-filled, once more, with the newness of life amidst the evidence of death.

'Life's Great Questions'

by Jean Vanier

9780281075959

£9.99

"What is the nature of reality?" "How can we love?" "What are we living for?" – Just three of the questions the world-famous philosopher and humanitarian, Jean Vanier, considers in this major new work. With

the wisdom and experience which a nonagenarian might be expected to have amassed, Vanier is thoughtful and searching in his response as, through the text, he leads us to a fuller understanding of the questions themselves, encouraging us to look to our own faith and spirituality as, with the passing years, we each grow into the issues raised. Though it does not **come with 'study questions', this would** make an ideal book to read in a group while remaining a text to which individual readers will no doubt return again and again.

'Worm Loves Worm'

by J.J. Austrian

9780062386335

£12.99

"You are cordially invited to celebrate the wedding of a worm... and a worm," so reads the invitation on the cover of this delightfully illustrated story of two worms in love. Their friends want to be involved – **some will be 'bride's bees' and one the 'best beetle'** – but they want to know, **"Which one of you is the bride?" "I can be the bride," says worm. "I can, too," says worm.** Simply told, this heart-warming tale avoids being sentimental to brilliantly explore the idea of love between two beings, regardless of gender (or species!) and despite the pressures of society. Highly recommended – not just for children!

The Mural



Our White Elephant/Michelin Man Trident – dangerous, angry, greedy and absolutely useless – hoovering up its buns/money, appears this month because the debate in Parliament on renewing the Trident weapons system was originally announced for late February. However, it has been postponed until after the European Union

Referendum. So if anyone takes issue with this representation and considers that Trident makes us safer or helps to keep international peace, there is plenty of time to express your views, perhaps at the Festival Pulpit meetings in August, or earlier to Cornerstone and to MPs.

Jill Duffield

Recent Developments

New City Centre Workplace Chaplain

Tony Bryer will be retiring at the end of June this year, and it was announced in February that his successor will be the Revd David Hart. He will overlap with Tony from the beginning of April onwards, thus enabling a thorough induction for him to both WPCS and all that the city centre role involves. A fuller profile of David will be available in the next Together News. A farewell occasion for Tony will be held on Tuesday 28th June at St Cuthbert's; a Choral Evensong at 6 p.m., at which Tony will preach, followed by refreshments.

St Cuthbert's

Rev David Denniston is retiring from **St Cuthbert's at Easter. We should pray for St Cuthbert's search for a new minister.**

New Chairman

Markus Duenzkofer has taken over the Chairmanship of Together from Ian Gilmour.

Chaplaincy to the Arts Industry

David Todd has been working for 6 months in this capacity in central Edinburgh. He reports on what has

happened in recent weeks:

The Greenside Arts Outreach project now incorporates both the Edinburgh Playhouse and the Omni Centre next door.

There are still more irons in the fire but things move slowly in the world of Work Place Chaplaincy and patience and persistence seem to be the watchwords.

My work in Edinburgh Playhouse involves both helping to extend a welcome to visiting company members who might be in Edinburgh for one, two or three weeks and offering pastoral support and practical help to resident staff of whom there are over 150. Thus far I have to confess that I do not feel I have done anyone any good but until I get to know people better I do not imagine that anyone will pour their heart out to me. The fact that I am around and available is important in itself.

The Omni Centre is a very different sort of work place although also with a great number of staff. There are various tenants ranging from car park to gym, cinema centre to bars and restaurants. I am still very new there and getting to know staff and, importantly, getting to know when is a good time to say hello.

I continue to keep in touch with the people of Greenside Parish Church and led a service there at the beginning of the year. Worship at both Greenside and Old Saint Paul's Church, where I am a Lay

Reader, complements the very different ministry in the workplace. The liturgy of word and sacrament with all its ceremony help to sustain the uncluttered ministry in the workplace where one can go for a long time without even mentioning religion.

Religion and faith are always present however, and outside the Omni Centre there are two giraffes made from scrap metal by sculptor Helen Denerley. They are nicknamed Martha and Gilbert and stand in a circle of words by the poet Roy Campbell which I find thought provoking:

"Giraffes! a People
Who live between earth and skies
Each in his own religious steeple
Keeping a lighthouse with his eyes."



Forthcoming Events

Edinburgh Royal Choral Union is giving two performances of the St John Passion by Bob Chilcott, on Saturday March 19th at 7.30 in Morningside Parish Church and on Sunday **March 20th at St Mary's Church,** Haddington at 6pm. Flyers with full details are in the porch. Moira Reekie and Phyll Hoskins-**Abrahall are among the St John's** members singing with the Choral Union.

Please mark your calendar for our next Theological Symposium: Saturday 23 April, 10am-4pm, at St **Cuthbert's. It will be led by the Revd** Professor David Fergusson and the subject is God, Creation and Providence.

All welcome! To register contact Stephen Holmes.

The Eco-Congregation Annual Gathering takes place in April, unfortunately on Saturday 23rd, the same day as our next Symposium. Eleanor Harris (Species Champions) and her colleague Gabrielle (Buglife) are going to be running fascinating workshops!

Eco-Congregation Scotland Annual Gathering 2016: A Space for Nature in your Congregation Saturday 23rd April 2016, 10:00am - 3:15pm

St Ninian's Cathedral,

North Methven St, Perth PH1 5PP

The main speakers will be Stuart Housden, head of RSPB Scotland and Andy Lester of A Rocha UK

Festival Pulpit 2016 on the intersection of Religion, Politics, and Public Life

Following Evensong at 6pm

7 August Julia Neuberger

The Baroness Neuberger DBE; Senior Rabbi to the West London Synagogue; Member of the House of Lords

14 August Elizabeth Butler-Sloss

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE, PC; Chair, Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life; Member of the House of Lords

21 August David Hope

The Rt Hon. the Lord Hope of Craighead KT, PC; Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; Member of the House of Lords

28 August John Hall

The Very Revd Dr John Hall - Dean of Westminster Abbey

St John's Coffee Rota

We would be as well to have a rota in place for the coming two months until we are sure that the hall will be unavailable! So here goes :

April 6th M Currie; E Anderson; S Kilbey

April 13th S Brand; E Bath; J Rennie

April 20th G Edgar; C Legge; W Wyse

April 27th E Yeo; V Lobban; J Taleyarkhan

May A list will be made available in the hall, once it becomes clearer as to the future of the coffee after the 10.30 service



Sunday Readings

Sunday Readings March to April 2016

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 C	9.30am Matins	10.30am Eucharist	6.00pm Evensong
20 March Palm Sunday	Luke 19: 28-40 Cyril of Alexandria	Isaiah 50.4 9a Phillipians 2.5 11 St Luke's Passion	Zechariah 12.9 11; 13.1,7 9 Mark 11.1-11
27 March Easter Day	Luke 24.1 12 Hippolytus	Acts 10.34 43 1 Cor 15.19 26 Luke 24.1 12	<i>Evening Eucharist</i>
3 April Easter 2		Acts 5.27 32 Revelation 1.4 8 John 20.19 31	Acts 1.1-14 1 John 1.1 7
10 April Easter 3	John 21.1-19 Augustine	Acts 9.1 6(7 20) Revelation 5.11 14 John 21.1 19	Acts 3.1-10 1 Peter 1.17 23
17 April Easter 4	John 10.22 30 Cyril of Alexandria	Acts 9.36 43 Revelation 7.9 17 John 10.22 30	Acts 17.1-9 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10
24 April Easter 5	John 13.31 35 Cyril of Alexandria	Acts 11.1 18 Revelation 21.1 6 John 13.31 35	<i>(St Mark)</i> Proverbs 15.28-33 Mk 13.5-13
1 May Easter 6		Acts 16.9 15 Rev 21.10,22-22.5 John 14.23 29	<i>(SS Philip & James)</i> Jas 1.1-12 John 14.1-14

Useful Contacts

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St John's Terrace	Cornerstone Bookshop Anna Pitt	229 3776
Vergers	Matt Newman, Craig Senior, Lee Sutherland, Ryan Dimarco, Yaseen Rana, Sean Last	

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 Mattins (not on 1 st Sunday)
10.30am	Sung Eucharist with activities for children
6.00pm	Choral Evensong

Monday

10.30am	Service for the deaf (first Monday only)
12.30pm	Eucharist

Tuesday

12.30pm	Eucharist
3.30pm	Silent Prayer

Wednesday

11.00am	Eucharist
12.30pm	Midday Prayer

Thursday

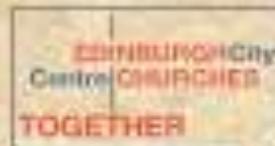
12.30pm	Eucharist
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Friday

12.30pm	Eucharist
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/churchstjohn



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