



St John the Baptist Scottish Episcopal Church Perth



QUEST

December to January 2017

Advent and Christmas



Weekly Services

Sunday 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion

Sunday 10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

Thursday 11 a.m. Communion, coffee and a chance to chat

Special Services

Sunday 4th December 9.30 a.m. Matins

Sunday 18th December 10.30 a.m. Carol Service

Saturday 24th December

4 p.m. Christingle Service

11 p.m. Midnight Service

Sunday 25th December 10.30 a.m. Christmas Celebration

Sunday 8th January 10.30 a.m. Epiphany Celebration

Sunday 15th January 6 p.m. Evensong

Sunday 29th January 10.30 a.m. Homelessness Sunday

Advent Reflections

Every Wednesday 7.30 p.m. from November 30th

A breathing space in a busy world

Letter from the Rector

Dear friends,

I hope like me you value the season of Advent, a busy time of preparation in so many ways, not forgetting to prepare ourselves spiritually to celebrate the wonderful Christmas season again. During my recent time away in London it struck me, seeing all the beautiful street decorations and shop windows, that the secular world, by celebrating Christmas too early, misses out on this special season. As Christians, surely Advent is a great opportunity to witness as people of faith what this time is all about. For it is in the preparation that we meet Christ in each other. Scripture reminds us time and time again to prepare ourselves to receive the Christ child in our hearts and in our homes. I hope, along with me, you will take the opportunity over the next few weeks to find a space for peace and reflection through the various services and activities offered at St John's. I cannot stress enough how important it is to support what is on offer in order to travel through this season together.

This will enable us more fully to celebrate when Christmas comes. Can I challenge you this year with a question to consider during the Advent season? Who are you going to bring with you to church this Christmas? I saw this question on the pew sheet of a church I attended while I was on holiday. This struck me too as a great question for myself as well as you. So as we prepare together, may this be in our hearts and in our minds. Seeing others sharing with us in worship at Christmas will add blessings and joy to our family here at St John's.

I hope you have a wonderful Advent using the time to prepare for a blessed Christmas. I look forward to seeing you in church during the weeks to come.

Peace and love to you and yours,

Graham



Choral Evensong

Henry Neil

The choir of St John's Church joined with nine music scholars from Glenalmond College and members of Chansons to sing a Choral Evensong on Sunday 6th November. Tim Ridley, Director of Music at Glenalmond, was the organist and Robin Miller directed the choir. The collaboration with Glenalmond is admirable and we welcome them once again.

Herbert Howells' setting of the Canticles, the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis ('Collegium Regale') are challenging choral works and the choir gave confident musical performances. The choice of John Ireland's 'Greater Love' was so appropriate for the theme of the service, between All Saints Day and Remembrance Day. Once again the singers acquitted themselves, singing with a wide and effective range of dynamics accompanied by an admirable and sympathetic organ part.

David Willington in his reflection gave an excellent and interesting historical account of events during the early development of St John's and Glenalmond College. The organ voluntaries by Howells at the beginning and Carillon-Sorite by Mulet demonstrated the wide choice of registrations in the church organ.

Robin Miller and Tim Ridley should be congratulated for their preparation and performances in the Evensong which was led by Rev Graham Taylor.

David Willington and Robin Miller with soloists Andrew Davidson (tenor) and Katie Bradshaw (soprano).



NiteKirk

Hazel Murch

Nitekirk started in St John's last April. The intention is to create a space where people can worship in a quiet and creative place. Nitekirk lasts from 6pm until 8pm, during this time people are free to come and go as they wish or need.

The church is decorated in a way that is appropriate to the theme. At different times, this has included the use of many candles, stones built into a cairn, a large painted canvas, fairy lights and a lobster pot! Different areas of the church are set up in various ways. There are a number of quiet places in the church with readings, a place for prayer and the opportunity for people to explore the theme in a creative way. During Nitekirk we try to have something to involve all five senses. This has involved chocolate, strawberries and the use of incense. During Nitekirk in October, when the theme was 'Shoreline', we used the sound of waves and seagulls which a number of people found very helpful as an aid for meditation. This was also when the lobster pot was in evidence.

The aim of Nitekirk is to offer something different, in the hope that it will encourage people familiar with church and those who would like to find out more. One of the encouragements has been that people from other churches and no church have taken part in this event. Nitekirk will take place on the last Sunday evening of each month, except in December, until next summer.



contact in all these areas. Another encouragement was received when Elaine wrote to all our local MPs, MSPs, and MEPs. One of the MSPs, Murdo Fraser, was so happy with the project that he put down a Parliamentary Motion about it and was pleased that it had widespread cross party support.

The project is, for now, drawing to a close, but we shall continue to monitor the situation and see if there are further ways in which we can support and encourage, as well as learn from and be enriched by all those who come to join our local community.



We recently contacted David Bradwell, co-ordinator for Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, to let him know about our project and to find out what was being done in Perth to support refugees and asylum seekers. He was very interested in the welcome postcard and offered to come to speak to us about the situation with refugees in Scotland and about a movement called Cities of Sanctuary. We hope to meet with him in January.

On 8th November he spoke about the postcard at a meeting of Scottish faith leaders with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. He commended the project, describing it as 'our 'trump' card to help defend sanctuary, where ordinary citizens can share their values and to work to build a culture of respect and social action across the whole of society'. His speech can be read in full on the Church of Scotland website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk



At St John's we are blessed in having an unusual number of members in their nineties. This is the first in a series of articles telling the fascinating stories of their lives.

Nan Meiklejohn is believed to be the oldest member of the congregation and she has lived her whole life in Perth. She was born, Agnes Greenhill, at 8 Inchhead Terrace (opposite the prison) in 1920 and lived there until her marriage to James (Jimmy) Howe in 1944. She was an only child, the daughter of a tailor, who worked for Pullars, and describes having a secure, happy childhood. Her primary schooling was at Southern District School in Nelson Street and she transferred to Caledonian Road School for her secondary education. The family worshipped at the East Church where the St John's Centre now is. She left school at age 15 and started work as an office junior acquiring shorthand and typing skills through day release at Ross Commercial College where Alastair Cross (father of Donald) was prominent. She worked in various Perth offices including the Grampian Electrical Company, Matthew Gloag's, where she only lasted 3 months because she didn't like the smell of whisky, and finally the Potato Marketing Board where she worked throughout the war and where she met Jimmy, who was an accountant there. Jimmy was called up and was a Corporal in the Black Watch but never left Perth, remaining there as the Colonel's driver! In conversation with Nan and her daughter Margery it was deduced that anything to do with the administration of potatoes and their distribution during the war must have been considered as a reserved occupation, as Nan was never called up for any other war service although she did help out at the local NAAFI canteen.

Nan and Jimmy were married at the East Church in 1944 but Jimmy had always been a member of St John's so it was on her marriage that Nan joined St John's. Jimmy's mother never married and both Nan and her daughter, Margery, have described St John's as being very supportive of both Jimmy's mother and Jimmy which, given that this was the era of 1920 to 1944, is good to hear. Jimmy had wondered if his illegitimacy would be a barrier to his marrying Nan but Nan's father was not concerned about it. On her marriage Nan and Jimmy set up home in the Old High Street and were still living there when Margery was born in 1949. By the time their son David was born in 1952 they had moved to Nan's current house in Craigie Road. Margery describes being in the Sunday School at

St John's with the children of some familiar names, which included the families of the Holmes, the Kirks, the Hulsmeiers, Margaret Macdonald and the Mahons. Donald Cross was around then and went to school with Nan's son David. Jimmy was a contemporary of the names on the Church War Memorial plaque for the 1939 – 1945 war and there are names there that are familiar to Nan. David Bertie was apparently related to Jimmy and was in the Navy when his ship was mined near the end of the war while returning home and Philip Tuckfield, Nan recalls as being an actor at Perth Theatre. Nan's life was shattered when, in 1965, Jimmy died suddenly of a heart attack in his early 40s leaving Nan with 2 teenage children. At this point she had to go back to work and she became the Matron's secretary at Murray Royal Hospital in 1966 and remained in that post until her retirement in 1985.



While working at Murray Royal, Nan met Donald Meiklejohn, who was a Nursing Officer there and a widower with three daughters, the youngest two being twins who were the same age as Margery. Nan's and Donald's wedding was the first wedding ever to be held in the Chapel at Murray Royal, the service conducted by the St John's Rector, Thurstan Irvine. Both families seem always to have got on very well together and Margery speaks with great affection of Donald and of her step sisters with whom she is always in close contact. Sadly Donald died in 2003.

Between the 2 families there are 10 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren, the youngest being Margery's grandson, Elliot, who was born in October 2016.

Nan is the oldest surviving President of the Royal Scottish Country Dancing Association, Perth Division and was dancing until well into her eighties. She was a founding member of the Moncrieffe Bowling Club and over the years managed to win every Club trophy except the one that had been donated in memory of her husband. She sang in the Madrigal Choir and the Murray Royal Operatic Society. She was keen on Yoga and was always involved in flower arranging at St John's.

Jean Hendry

Sunday Lectionary

Sunday 27th November—Advent 1

Isaiah 2.1-5; Matthew 24.36-44

Sunday 4th December—Advent 2

Isaiah 11.1-10; Matthew 3.1-12

Matins Isaiah 1.1-20; Psalm 9; John 3.1-17

Sunday 11th December—Advent 3

Isaiah 35.1-10; Matthew 11.2-11

Sunday 18th December

Carol Service

Christmas Midnight

Isaiah 9.2-7; John 1.1-14

Christmas Day

Isaiah 9.2-7; Luke 2.1-14



January 1st, The Naming of Jesus

Psalm 67; Galatians 4.4-7; Luke 2.15-21

January 8th — The Epiphany

Psalm 72.1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3.1-12, Matthew 2.1-12

January 15th, Second Sunday after Epiphany

Psalm 40.1-11; 1 Corinthians 1.1-9; John 1.29-42

Evensong Galatians 1.11-24; Psalm 145.1-12; John 1.43-51

January 22nd, Third Sunday after Epiphany

Psalm 27; 1, 5-13; 1 Corinthians 1.10-18; Matthew 4.12-23

January 29th, Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1.18-31; Matthew 5.1-12

Out and About in Perth

Thursday 1st December, **Chidline Christmas Concert** at Perth Concert Hall, 7.30 p.m. Perth and Kinross Youth Orchestras, Bands and Choirs join to provide a joyous evening of Christmas Music, Carols and Popular Classics. Tickets £13.

Saturday 3rd December, **PKVAS Christmas Market and Craft Fair** at the Salutation Hotel 12—4 p.m.



Saturday 3rd December, **Perth Lantern Parade and Nativity Scene** from St Ninian's Cathedral to St John's Kirk with bell ringing, carol singing and unveiling of Perth Nativity Scene, 5-6 p.m. Please bring your own lantern.

Saturday 3rd December, **London Concertante Viennese Christmas by Candlelight** at St Ninian's Cathedral at 7.30 p.m. featuring music by Strauss Tchaikovsky and Schubert. Tickets: £28, £24, £19 available from Box Office: 0333 666 3366 online bookings: www.ticketsource.co.uk/classical

Saturday 10th December, **Twinning Christmas Traditions** at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, 1—4 p.m. Discover how Perth's six twinning countries celebrate Christmas. Decorate Polish gingerbread and enjoy music from the SSE choir.

Friday 16th December, **PACT Carol Service** at the North Church at 7.30 p.m. with guest speaker Elaine Duncan from the Scottish Bible Society.



carrots it will be £10 per head. Visit www.checkin-giraffe.uk for more information.

We have just heard that Santa is coming to Giraffe Café on South Street on the run up to Christmas!! It looks like he'll be available to have late breakfast with the children on Saturday and Sunday mornings in December. To cover the cost of each child's breakfast, mince pies and

Thursdays in Black

Elaine Cameron

Finding gloves to fit my very short fingers is never easy. But, last Wednesday, I unexpectedly found a pair. ‘Try them on,’ encouraged the young sales assistant. ‘Mmm... grey, but would go with black on Thursdays,’ I muttered. She looked at me, questioningly.

‘I wear black on Thursdays – in support of women who have been abused,’ I explained.

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I see your badge.’

My badge? I’d forgotten it was fixed firmly to my coat collar. I continued,

‘It’s a sign that we want an end to all violence against women; we want a world where women and girls may walk without fear of being abused, verbally or physically, or raped.’

She asked. ‘Are you a campaigner?’ I was rather taken aback – was I?

The *Thursdays in Black* campaign was actually started by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the 1980s as a form of peaceful protest, especially against rape and violence in war. During the 1990s Balkan Wars, it helped bring about the ‘Women in Black’ campaign, when women protested especially against the use of rape as a weapon of war. Since 2013, the WCC have been trying to revive *Thursdays in Black*, focusing on ways it can challenge attitudes that lead to rape and violence, and standing alongside the many women and girls who bear scars of violence not only in our own country, but all around the world: like my friend Leila in Syria; Mugisa in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and many others.

I am grateful that the WCC are doing so, because I strongly believe the churches need to speak more openly about this issue. For too long, we naively thought that such violence did not happen within church congregations. It is indeed sobering to learn that one in four women in the UK face violence at some point in their lives.

However, after September’s Evensong, when Nerys and I talked about *Thursdays in Black*, I sensed some doubt that such a simple gesture could encourage healthier relationships between women and men. I am bold enough, like the campaign, to believe that it can; that rape and violence against women is not only wrong, but can be ended. Christians believe that each of us, man or woman, is made in God’s image. It follows that to hit or abuse anyone is therefore to abuse God. It is not merely a women’s issue, it is a justice issue.

It is now about six months since I decided to be a *Thursdays in Black* supporter. The experience is beginning to take on the form of a small spiritual discipline, and open up unexpected challenges. I am still asking about what ways attitudes to violence may be challenged.

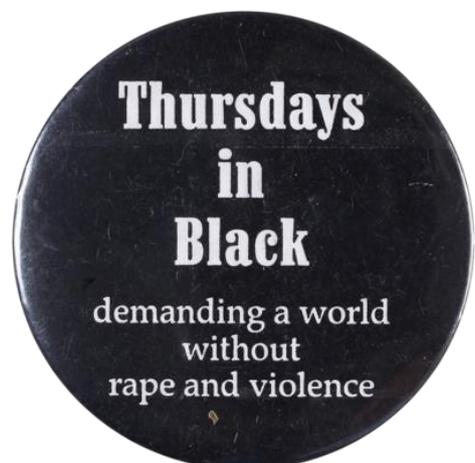
The first challenges were the conversations with strangers, often in a shop - like the incident at the beginning of this piece. After the basics, how much do I say – am I opening up their pain, their knowledge of another’s experience, or is this an innocent inquiry? In August, swithering about the purchase of a black batwing top, I muttered to the saleswoman, ‘It’s just for Thursdays.’ She gave me a long, hard stare, ‘Only Thursdays?’ I found myself explaining about *Thursdays in Black*. She was interested, had questions, indicating that she would tell her aunt, a clergywoman.

And then there was the week when I forgot the day! Half way through the morning, I suddenly realized I was wearing a favourite navy sweater and biscuit coloured trousers , but it was Thursday! My immediate reaction was to trot to the bedroom to change, but at that moment I paused. Did it did really matter whether I changed? Who was going to see, apart from Bruce? Then I reflected that most of those who are victims of violence – whether physical or psychological – have no choice in the matter. They are usually very tightly controlled. But I was lucky enough to have choice. Changing into black was not only a sign of solidarity with them, but a mark of my own commitment. Small, but meaningful.

So , am I a campaigner, as the glove counter saleswoman asked?

I answered her saying that gender based violence is such a painful global issue harming women, children, and men, that we often feel there is nothing we can do about it. But anyone, man or woman, can wear black on Thursdays, keeping this issue in the forefront of people’s minds – even a T shirt can become a symbol of strength and courage!

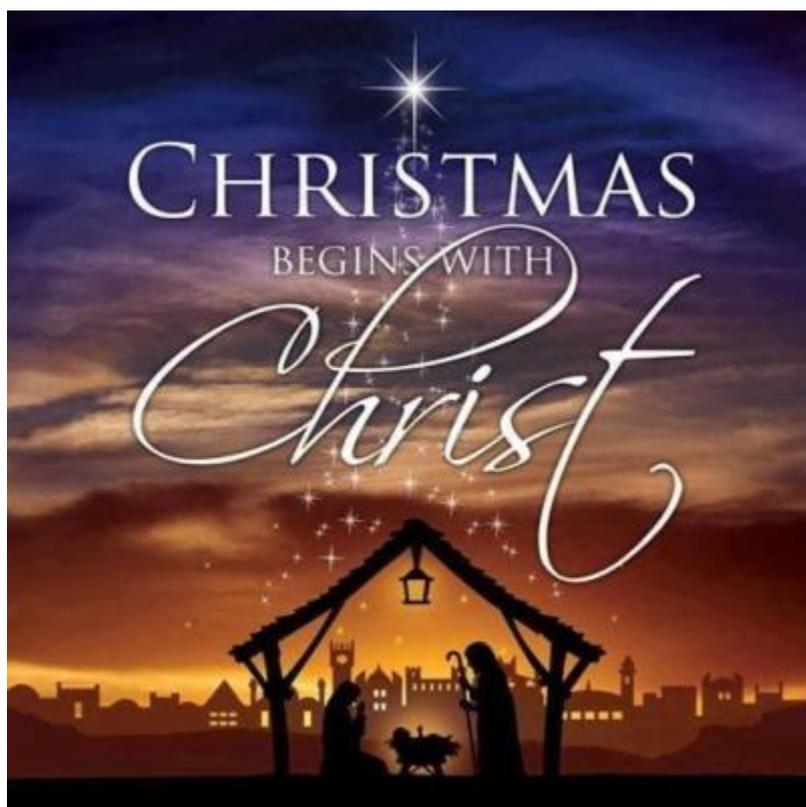
Her astonishing response: ‘If you ever need a volunteer, let me know.’



Perth Christmas Lights Switch-on, 19th November



Members of St John's provide a refuge and refreshments to passers-by.



Chaplains to Jockeys and Mums

During this year Graham and Nerys have been honoured by being appointed Chaplains to two very different historical organisations.



Graham was invited by Bishop David to become Chaplain to Perth Race Course, which in 2012 celebrated 400 years since its founding when Bonnie Prince Charlie took time off from rampaging south with his Jacobite army to go horse racing in Perth. His duties range from meeting with the management and the

trustees to supporting the jockeys and staff. He hopes it will be an opportunity to engage with this community and bring the church to them.

Nerys was invited to become Diocesan Chaplain for the Mothers' Union, an organisation founded by Mary Sumner in 1876. Today the Mothers' Union is a global movement of over four million women (and men) which supports local churches with the prayers and activities of its branch members, local communities through social outreach projects and is an international campaigning charity. As Chaplain, Nerys will pray with and for members, conduct and organise services and build up and support Mothers Union work in the diocese.

You are all invited to a service in St Ninian's Cathedral at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday 13th December when Nerys will be commissioned a Chaplain.



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Homelessness Sunday 2017

We will be marking Homelessness Sunday again this year on the last Sunday of January.

Through prayer and reflection Homelessness Sunday offers an opportunity to listen to what God has to say about homelessness, and to consider what action we as individuals and as a congregation are being called to take.



On Homelessness Sunday we are invited to donate a small 'minding' to Perth Starter Packs. They would welcome donations such as teaspoons, tin openers and cruets or any other small household item.

Perth Starter Packs was founded by Perth Council of Churches in 2004. It is staffed entirely by volunteers and is totally dependent on the support of the local community for funding and donations of used but clean items of basic household goods.

In 2015-16 the organisation was asked to provide assistance for 331 people including 79 children. They would also welcome volunteers who are willing to donate two hours of their time each fortnight in order to prepare the packs for distribution. For more information please talk to Jean Hendry.

Perth Christian Aid Group

Our Rector recently discovered that St John's no longer had a representative on the local Christian Aid Group. Helen Worthington used to be our rep.

Graham asked if I would be prepared to do this and I have agreed. I am delighted to say that the local committee have been in touch, and I look forward to next month when Mary Mulligan, the Christian Aid Churches Development Officer, comes to meet them.

Meantime, look out for more local CA news in *Quest*, and at the back of the church. In particular, note that there will be **Christmas Carol Singing at Dobbies Garden Centre, Crieff Road, on Saturday December 17**, half-hour slots between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. See you there!

Elaine Cameron

How can I help?



There are many opportunities to get involved in the life of St John's. What about making a New Year's Resolution to offer a little of your time to help in some way? You are sure to find that it is a great way of putting your faith into action and also of making new friends.

Can you offer an occasional lift to another member of the congregation to the Sunday or the Thursday morning services? If so, please contact Judy Norwell.

Would you be ready to read, lead prayers, be a welcomer or take up the elements at the 8.30 or 10.30 a.m. services? If so, please talk to Tony Mason.

What about joining the church choir? Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings. We also need singers to help out for special services. Please talk to Robin Miller.

We need help to publicise our services and events. Would you be ready to take posters to the library occasionally, or join a group to distribute flyers to local hotels? Would you like to design a poster or write a short piece for the Perth Advertiser? What about looking after a regular feature for Quest or writing an occasional item? If so please have a word with Nerys.

Do you make time to pray? We need people to pray for the life of St John's. You could perhaps use this magazine as a starting point ...

Carol singing



You are invited to join members of St John's Choir for some carol singing in Princes Street between 11 and 12.30 on Saturday 17th December.

Contact Information

Rector	Rev Graham Taylor	245922	rector@episcopal-perth.org.uk
Curate	Rev Nerys Brown	01786 824511	nerysannjones@aol.com
Retired Assistant Clergy	Rt Rev Bruce Cameron Rev Fergus Harris		
Church Officers Rector's Warden People's Warden Administrator Lay Representative Alternate Lay Rep Vestry Secretary Treasurer Health and Safety PVG Director of Music	Mail to be sent to Office Alan McPherson David Willington Beverly Skene Lilian Fleming Graham Kingsley-Rowe Judy Norwell David Roemmele Graham Kingsley-Rowe Malcolm Moore Robin Miller	 552337 813787 634999 632481 248120 248120 639963 625903	@episcopal-perth.org.uk church-warden@ office@ secretary@ treasurer@ hands@ pvg@ music@
Team Convenors Casting the Net Ministry Finance Communications Children Buildings and Eco Social	Hazel Murch Alan McPherson Rev. Graham Taylor Rev. Nerys Brown Jean Hendry David Maclehorse TBA	827034 552337 245922 see above 824511 623603 636147	
Church Activities Intercessors Group Flowers Magazine Editor Fellowship Buggy Club Young Church Links Traidcraft PACT Threshold bookings SARAC	Tony Mason Christine Bracewell Rev Nerys Brown Jean Hendry Eunice McPherson Jean Hendry Ruth Harris Rhiannon Miller Jean Hendry Beverly Skene Rev Geoffrey Hall	627870 552817 see above 623603 552337 623603 621379 625903 623603 634999 636802	office@episcopal-perth.org.uk

From the Editor

Thanks very much for everyone's contributions to this issue. Please hand or email all items for our February/March issue to me by

Sunday 22nd January

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In partnership with
the Scottish Association of
Retired Anglican Clergy



CASTING THE NET
Growing Faith Communities in the Diocese of St. Andrews

Christingle

Christmas Eve, 4 p.m.

*St John's Episcopal Church
Princes Street, Perth*

*Everyone
Welcome*

