



St John the Baptist
Scottish Episcopal Church
Perth

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Annual Reports 2015



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In partnership with
the Scottish Association of Retired
Anglican Clergy



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Cover image: Balloons released as part of the Pentecost service. Photo:
Lis Burke

The Vestry



The Membership of the Vestry for the past year was as follows:

- The Rev Graham Taylor
(from 30 October)
- The Rt Rev Bruce Cameron Interim Pastor (to 30 October)
- Judy K Norwell Secretary
- David Willington People's Warden
- Mary Emma J Strange Rector's Warden (to May 2015)
- David Roemmele Treasurer
- Jean Hendry PACT Rep and Lay Rep
- Malcolm Moore PVG Officer
- Alan McPherson
- Graham Kingsley-Rowe
- Christine Bracewell
- Joyce Sampson
- Tom Axford

Minutes of AGM 2014

The meeting was chaired by the Rev. Graham Taylor. Accountant Alasdair Brown was in partial attendance.

1. Welcome and opening prayer

Graham welcomed the congregation to his first AGM, asking for their understanding if he was unable to answer their questions as he was new to the job. He then opened with a prayer for the life and growth of the church at the beginning of the new church year.

2. Prayer and remembrance of those who died during the year

The congregation remembered: Laura Henderson and Donald Macpherson.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Lilian Fleming, Ken Miles, Jim and Mabel Carcary, Helen Dowie, Rhiannon Miller, Doris Evans.

4. Minutes of AGM on 1 December 2013

These had been printed in the AGM Handbook which had been available in church for two weeks. They were proposed by David Willington and seconded by Dick Thorman, with no questions or matters arising.

5. Rector's outlook

Graham expressed warm thanks for his appointment as Rector; he felt very blessed to be here. He promised his pastoral care and love for the congregation and was confident that together we could grow. As to future plans, he had various ideas for mission and ministry as the church reached out to the community. His first step would be to offer mince pies and carol singing on the church steps at 11 a.m. on Saturday 21 December, and hand out leaflets listing the Christmas services. He invited volunteers to participate, to provide some mince pies and/or steward the church during the morning.

He reminded the congregation of the Advent Reflections planned for the Wednesdays 3, 10 and 17 November, urging people to attend if possible, and their support for his ideas. We could only go forward together.

6. Finance and budget

Treasurer David Roemmele introduced the simplified annual accounts for year ended 30 September 2014, reporting that financial management would be improved with the reconstitution of the Finance Sub-committee, which would meet before each vestry meeting. He described the online account access procedure, the chequebook signatories and signatory powers. Reviewing the figures: income was £85,765, down by £4,800 from 2013, despite the rectory rent of £8,666 which has now ceased. However, the total expenditure of £86,238 decreased by £5,000 mainly due to the reduction in the cost of clergy because of Patrick Grant's retirement, plus other reductions, resulting in a deficit of just £473, almost half that of previous year. Alasdair Brown added, with reference to the Restoration Fund, that while the income to this fund was £175,789, being donations from various trusts and individuals; expenditure was £205,134 (£189,809 on the renovations, £15,325 on fees) making a deficit for the year of over £29,000, which when deducted from the funds brought forward of £31,308, leaves a balance on the fund carried forward to next year of £1,483.

Mary Emma then spoke on the Budget. She thanked the congregation for their generous giving in the past year including their leaving gifts for Patrick and +Bruce. But based on the 2014 accounts the projected figure that will need to be raised in 2015 is £10,000. The Finance Committee would meet to discuss possible savings in the new year. She invited the congregation to consider increasing their giving if possible; also to suggest more fund-raising initiatives, and to remember the availability of the Threshold for bookings.

7. Elections

As requested beforehand, the congregation agreed that the Vestry would remain the same this year in the interests of continuity for the new Rector. Members of the current Vestry were listed in the AGM Handbook. The Rector reappointed Mary Emma Strange as Rector's Warden. Other re-appointments were as follows:

- David Willington, People's Warden:
proposed by Joyce Sampson, seconded by Alan McPherson.
- Jean Hendry, Lay Representative:
proposed by Bill Bracewell, seconded by Lis Burke.

- Graham Kingsley-Rowe, Alt. Lay Rep:
proposed by Sarah Axford, seconded by Alison Swanney.

8. A.O.C.B.

- (i) The Rector presented to Lis Burke, on behalf of +David, a certificate for the successful completion of her TISEC Diploma in Theology for Ministry.
- (ii) The Rector reiterated his thanks to the congregation for appointing him and to his Wardens and Vestry for their support.

Alastair Cruickshank thanked the Rector for conducting his first AGM and the congregation responded warmly.

Judy Norwell
Vestry secretary



Rector's Report

It seems hard to believe that by the time you read this I will have been with you for a full year at St. John's. Where does time go? I am constantly asked the question of 'how I've settled in' and 'how I'm getting on'. Well I must say each time my response has been that it's like 'coming home'. Home to a family that love me for who I am and are open to change and challenge within the life of their church.

What a great community and fellowship this church is to be part of. It is of course all down to you, too many to name individually for all the love and support shown to me throughout the year. I must thank you for your forbearance when I may not have done things exactly as they have been done in the past; however your support through the different things we have tried and done has been greatly appreciated.

Within the sacramental life of our congregation we have seen a rise in our Sunday attendances, as well as the Thursday communion service. It has also been a joy to share with some of you in prayer at the early morning service

on a Wednesday. We have had no baptisms or weddings in my first year here, but sadly three funeral services. We were saddened at losing three devoted members to St. John's; however it was a privilege for me to exercise my pastoral ministry to their families over their time of sadness.

I must thank you for the welcome I have received while visiting some of you in your homes. I still have some people to visit, but I'm getting there. It continues to be a privilege to take communion to those at home who are unable to be with us at church. I must thank my fellow Eucharistic ministers for their help in doing this each month.

As I have said, there are many of you who must be thanked for your help and support over the past year. I would particularly like to thank Bishop Bruce and Lis Burke along with the whole lay ministry team for all your help with services, especially during my absence. I am really proud to tell others of all that's done in St. John's. You know individually who you are and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for whatever you do to enrich God's church here in this place.

My thanks must also go to the diocese for helping me settle in so well and to Bishop David for all his help, guidance and support. I am involved on the wider diocesan scene on its Standing Committee, which supervises diocesan affairs, and in this role lead the Ministry Reflection Committee. I have also been vice-chair of PACT since September. I trust I have your support with these external responsibilities too.

Finally we must look to the future with confidence and hope. We must honour those who have done so much in the past for St. John's and thank God for their faithfulness. We must continue in our prayers to remember our beloved church family, to remember each other, and as ever I ask your prayers for me as your priest as I seek God's guidance and blessing on all that lies ahead.

Graham S. Taylor
Rector

Vestry



The Vestry met six times in the year to conduct the Church's business in the first full year of Graham's incumbency. We are confident that Graham has settled in happily, providing continuity of worship while introducing the Wednesday Morning Prayer service and a number of other innovations, including a new format for the Maundy Thursday service with a congregational Supper. The Vestry are grateful for the continuing presence and support for the Rector of Bishop Bruce, Lis Burke and the lay deacons. Lis has been actively developing our outreach and external partnerships with Giraffe and through various Diocesan affairs.

The church's financial affairs were supervised by a Finance Sub-Committee under the chairmanship of Mary Emma Strange, which reported to the Vestry at intervals. Following its recommendation, a new stewardship campaign was launched after Easter. This had an encouraging response with monthly giving up by over £300 which with other gifts brought a total response by end August of over £8,000. The Vestry records its gratitude to the congregation and their response to the year's fund-raising activities. The Vestry received quarterly accounts from Alasdair Brown and continues to monitor expenditure. With the restoration largely complete, work has consisted of minor maintenance items and enhanced Fire & Safety systems, which are reported on elsewhere. The new sound system in particular, despite a few hiccups now and again, seems to have enhanced the choir's impact and the response to its contribution to worship is gratifying.

It has been a highly sociable year with an unprecedentedly busy calendar of lunches and celebrations, picnic and garden party, all ably and generously managed by Christine and the social committee. The Vestry is extremely grateful for their tireless efforts with the practicalities of shopping, preparation and presentation involved in these activities.

On the personnel side we appointed a new office administrator and new cleaner, both of whom have settled well and are doing a good job. The latter appointment was the result of Raymond's resignation after many years of valued service. Alan McPherson took over as Rector's Warden on Mary Emma's resignation from the Vestry in May. We were sad to lose Diana Glazebrook after a brave battle with cancer, Ronald Darroch and most recently Len Jude this year, and to say goodbye to Susan Moncrieff as she moved south to be nearer her children, ending a long family association with St. John's.

The next event on the Vestry's agenda is an Away-day supervised by Diocesan Missioner Thomas Brauer to be held in Kinross on 14th November, another first. Thereafter we shall be embarking on the usual preparations for Christmas. Meanwhile, we continue to remember our responsibilities to those less fortunate, at time of writing in particular the possible arrival of Syrian refugee families in Perth: hopefully we shall be ready to help welcome and support them. And we look forward to another year of active worship and fellowship in 2016. Too many people contribute to the running of the Church throughout the year to mention individually, but the Vestry is grateful to them all.

Judy Norwell

Music



Our year started with a slightly depleted choir due to holidays and various health issues, yet as ever the choir being flexible, adaptable and fortunate to have a good set of resources were able to provide music for all services required. We have been delighted to welcome Tim into the Bass section and with many thanks for his years of service to the choir (so far) Raymond has decided to rest his voice for the time being.



Christmas carol singing on the street

In June four members of the choir attended the RSCM course at St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow where we enjoyed an afternoon, singing anthems, new and old, with members from other choirs culminating in a service led by The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth. Later in June I led a singing workshop for anyone in the congregation who fancied singing the anthem at the Patronal Festival. About half a dozen members of the congregation attended joining together with the choir and together we had lots of



David, Sarah and Alison at the RSCM Triennial Festival



Workshop and anthem singing at the Patronal Festival

fun. It led to a rousing sing of a new anthem 'Cantate Domino' by Jean & Dave Parry.

I mention every year that I work the choir hard and no more so than of late when the choir sang through a wide selection of anthems for Doors Open Day and then were launched into music for a full Choral Evensong. At the time of writing we haven't actually performed the service but anticipate welcoming around a dozen choral scholars from Glenalmond College to join our choir. Dr Tim Ridley, Director of Music at Glenalmond College is to accompany on the organ and together I expect the most gloriously ethereal sound to be made. My thanks in anticipation to the Social team, for putting on a lovely meal for the students, between rehearsal and service.

The choir will then be working hard for Christmas! As has become the custom over the last few years some members of the choir are also working on pieces to perform at the Fellowship Christmas party.

St John's has also hosted various instrumental concerts this year. During the summer we had 3 organ recitals given by Margaret Broad, Andrew Forbes & Stephen Clay. Numbers in attendance varied between about 40 & 70 which for organ recitals is a good audience. In October we welcomed the grandson of Henry and Renee Neil, Matt Gough who together with his musical partner Phil Merriman performed a variety of Jazz music including their own compositions on the trumpet and piano. Again, despite the concert being held on a Tuesday, this concert was well attended.

So all in all a busy year musically! My thanks as ever to Robin and all the members of the choir for their hard work, loyalty and enthusiasm... you are a joy to work with!

Alison Grant



The Buggy Club, which is run every Tuesday morning throughout the year is thriving and our current group of under 3s; Obi, Alfie, Sam, Ben, Phoebe, Ruby, Alfie, Mia, Rae, Bethan, Erin, Tilly, Evie, Tom, Mikkel and Ethan, wish to say a big thank-you to the church family for their continued support.



The Threshold is a noisy, fun and happy place to be on Tuesday mornings as you can imagine and brings much pleasure not only to the children mentioned, but also to their various mums, dads, grandmas and grandpas that bring them along.

Last Christmas the children (and carers) enjoyed taking part in our Christingle service in church when we were blessed with a NEW supply of angels! There are often walks around the church and especially during Harvest time. This year the church was awarded with a WOW factor from one or two children - praise indeed.

A regular feature of our club meetings is the 'buttered toast' slot which is very popular. Even Rev Graham was seen buttering toast recently offering mums a warm welcome. Tony often pops in to have his morning coffee and of course to enjoy a piece of birthday cake which is often on the go as you can imagine.

We are blessed with a dedicated team of volunteers from the church who see the club as an essential part of the church's outreach in the community. So a big thank-you is due to Joyce, Irene, Eunice, Christine and Graham (GKR) for all their hard work, and to the church members in general for their financial support.

Now what date does Santa arrive at the club this year?

Eunice McPherson



Social

The St. John's Social Team aims remain unchanged but we feel these should be re-stated.

- To provide opportunities for church members to meet informally and get to know one another.
- To enable people to feel a sense of belonging to the 'family' of St. John's.
- To encourage and support, as required, a wide range of events which suit all ages and interests.
- To support the work of other committees through social events.

A successful programme of monthly meetings was run by the Church Fellowship.

After the main service each Sunday tea coffee and biscuits are served by a dedicated team. Anyone who would like to help will be more than welcome.

During the last church year we have either helped or organised the making of Christingles and mulled wine and mince pies at Christmas Services. A Burns Supper was organised and from feedback received everyone seemed to have enjoyed the evening.

A Soup and Bread Lunch was held for the start of Lent. Tea and biscuits were served after the Lent Talks. At Easter a Passover Meal was organised on Maundy Thursday and on Easter Day breakfast was served between the 0830 and 1030 Services. After the 1030 Service the annual Egg Hunt took place. In May we had an enjoyable and financially successful Silent Auction. The Patronal Festival Bring and Share Lunch was organised. A Garden Party was held at the Rectory which proved very popular.



Seder meal on Maundy Thursday



Burns Supper



Again we were successful in being included in the official Perth and Kinross Doors Open Day as it was their silver anniversary and we were one of the few buildings that participated on the first occasion. Tea, coffee and cakes were served and well over 100 people visited our church. This weekend also coincided with Harvest Festival when there was a Bring and Share Lunch after the Sunday service.



The August parish picnic in Comrie was much enjoyed by all who attended.

The Social Team provided cakes and refreshments for birthdays, for the three Organ Recitals and following the funeral services of church members.

Parish picnic at Comrie



At the time of writing the catering for a Jazz Concert and Quiz night are being organised.

Again we would like to say a big thank you to all those who have helped and supported our programme throughout 2014/2015. The money raised from the above plus generous donations from members of the congregation has enabled us to buy an altar cloth, blinds for Graham's office, a coat and hat stand for the porch, 36 upholstered chairs for the Threshold,

Garden party at the Rectory

4 large cafetieres and renew the outdoor church notice boards. We've also had glass in the Threshold link and the glass porch in church cleaned.

We would encourage anyone who would like to join the Social Team, has any ideas or would be willing to run future events, which may need help, not to hesitate in contacting us.

We look forward to your continued support and help in the coming year.

Christine Bracewell and the Social Team

153 Club



A pipe-cleaner modelling activity at the Diocesan 'Being Church with Children' event



Christingle service

The pattern of previous years when one of the team of three (Caryl, Joanne and Jean) is available most Sundays to do an activity with any children present, apart from when there is an Alive for Christ service, has continued over the past year. On a typical Sunday there are rarely more than three children present and they range in age from two up to nine although on occasion numbers are boosted by visitors and grandchildren of the St John's congregation.

In September Caryl, Jean and Lis Burke attended a very interesting day in Crieff which was open to all those in the Diocese with an involvement with Children. It was presented by Lucy Moore, the founder of Messy Church who is based in Oxfordshire, on the subject 'Church with Children'. We came away with a lot to think about.

As in recent years more children have been in Church around Christmas time with a number of the Buggy Club families attending the Christingle Service and this year several of them also attended Church on Mothering Sunday.

Jean Hendry

Church Flowers



Flowers have been arranged at all major festivals by a team of arrangers and on these occasions we have received support from members of the congregation with generous donations of time, flowers, foliage and money.

During the year we have arranged flowers for the Burns Supper, the Garden Party, Organ Recitals, Open Doors/Harvest Festival weekend and sadly for funerals of members of the congregation.

A weekly rota of flower arranging/ donation has run over the last year.

We hope members of the congregation will sign up for dates of special occasion or to commemorate loved ones, either to donate and arrange flowers themselves or to have them arranged by one of the team. However help with flower arranging has dwindled over the last few years so if anyone would like to join the team they will be made most welcome. No experience is required as assistance is available.

Again I would like to thank the team of arrangers for their unfailing help and support and all who have given their support with generous donations

Christine Bracewell



Flowers for the Patronal festival



Harvest flowers



Fellowship

In planning the Fellowship programme priority is given to making it appealing and as accessible to as many members as possible. All meetings have been held during afternoons and an effort made to provide transport for those only able to come if it is available and this has included Care Home residents.

The programme has been kept simple as it has been felt that for many those attending the chance just to meet up with friends and chat is important but we did have one outside speaker from the Archie Foundation. Members were very impressed at the simple things that could reduce the stress and trauma felt by the child and family when a child has to spend time in hospital.



Fellowship coffee morning



Fellowship Christmas party

Other meetings had a theme of some sort such as members stories on the theme of Remembrance in November and another Christmas themed entertainment from the Choir in December. We had afternoon tea at the Black Watch museum in October, lunch at the Salutation hotel in January and were treated in April to another presentation of the Bracewells' travels to far away places, this time to SE Asia.

The usual Coffee morning was held in March and made £560 for dispersal to various charities. The current session started in September with Jean Parrot's skill and enthusiasm again managing to get us all making some very presentable looking cards that any recipient would be delighted to receive.

Jean Hendry

Lay Reader



It has been a huge joy and privilege to work with our new rector, Revd Graham Taylor, during his first year at St John's, which has coincided with an increase in my available time following the successful completion of my diploma course last year. I have worked alongside the rector in planning and leading worship at St Johns and have also assisted with pastoral visits. Every Monday lunchtime sees me at the lunch club run by Giraffe in the Threshold, where I enjoy having the time to chat with the regulars there. This allows me to establish links between St John's and Giraffe, where I also work as a volunteer.

My continuing responsibilities within the diocese have included acting as a full member of some groups and providing administrative support for others; I also helped +David lead the Cascade Conversations on human sexuality in various locations across the diocese. More recently I have taken on the additional responsibility of administering the diocesan Facebook page. Other churches in the diocese have invited me to preach occasionally and I helped plan and conduct the Thinking Day service at Kirriemuir.

For my own personal development I recently started a course in Spiritual Accompaniment at the Garden Cottage Spirituality Centre in Kilgraston, which will take just over a year part-time. I regularly meet up with the Listening Group formed at the conclusion of the Effective Listening course I took early this year.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support and encouragement, which is very much appreciated.

Lis Burke



Our Church

By comparison to the immediate past this has been a peaceful year devoted to snagging and implementing maintenance plans. St John's Church continues to look splendid and draws passers-by inside during the day. By night the church glass doors off the pavement show off the lit-up East wall and the altar. This demonstrates the Welcome which St John offers one and all. Snagging problems with the new oak floor boards are being monitored as they settle. The roof is inspected twice annually and after bad storms.

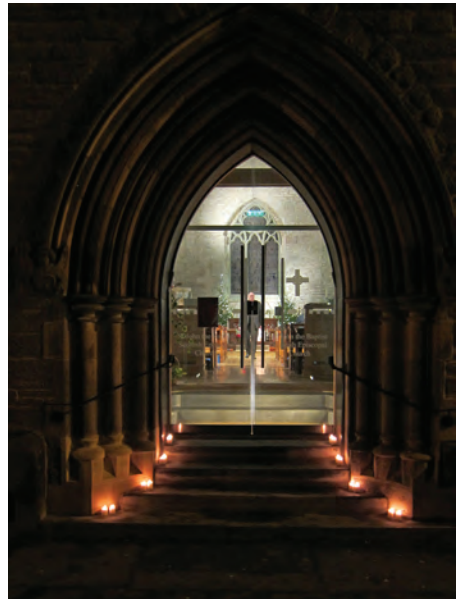
The moisture levels of the Church are monitored on an ongoing basis. The damp in the meeting room walls continues to cause concern. The Vestry are considering the use of Restoration Funds to instruct a detailed inspection and report on the integrity of the external walls against damp penetration. Damp is always a major problem with old buildings and especially those that are used intermittently. This report would inform and prioritise future repairs of the external walls and the meeting room.

The Threshold

This room and kitchen are too often the only area of St John's which visitors experience. It is a practical and versatile space but with a history as a pub



The inside of the church on Doors Open Day



The glass doors off the pavement show off the lit-up East wall and the altar

rather than for worship. It is maintained on an ongoing basis. A significant expenditure is required to overcome an outbreak of dry rot on the common stair. Although the stairs are not used by the Church there is a legal obligation which requires St John's to contribute 25% of the total cost.

The Rectory



The timber decking was repainted before the Garden Party

As with the other buildings there is a maintenance programme in place to keep unexpected repair costs to a minimum. The garage door has recently been replaced, the timber decking was repainted before the Garden Party, and a new garden fence was erected earlier in the year. The garden is maintained by Graham Kingsley Rowe at a high standard. Funds permitting the external timbers are planned to be painted next summer. Given the height and complexity of the roof this will not

be an easy task.

Eco report

While I am confident that improvements could be made to the energy efficiency of our buildings, we have made some progress. Whenever possible the existing lights are replaced with LED lamps. Draught excluders have been installed on the glass doors to the Church. This is not entirely wind tight but is a huge improvement.

The heating of the church is programmed to maintain a low level of heat throughout the year, increased as required for services and events. This heating regime assists the maintenance of the building. The costs will be monitored over a three year period. The Threshold is heated as required.

The best we can report on the eco responsibilities is 'Trying hard but not there yet'.

David MacLehose



Lunch Club and Giraffe

The arrangement made in January 2014 that the Lunch Club, which had been run by the Church for 40 years would instead be run on a slightly different basis by Giraffe, has continued over the past year and its clientele seems to be growing.

What is on offer is a two course meal for £3 which is cooked on the premises by a Giraffe volunteer, assisted by other volunteers and Job Seekers who themselves have support needs and this hasn't changed since Giraffe took over.

There is still a nucleus of the former Church run Lunch Club members who attend but the numbers have grown significantly recently and now there are often about 22 attending. Seven of the former Lunch Club volunteers on a rota basis ensure that each week there is always one volunteer in the team from St John's. This helps strengthen the link between Giraffe, the Church and the Lunch Club. These volunteers usually find that what is most needed is help in the kitchen but there is also a more visible St John's presence in Lis Burke, who attends most Mondays and has her lunch and chats with those attending. This ensures that the clientele feel aware that the Church still takes an interest in them and is providing support.

Jean Hendry



Egg salad made with free-range eggs donated by jobseeker Martin

Giraffe is Perth and Kinross's first not-for-profit community interest company dedicated to offering employment activities to local people with mental ill-health, disabilities and other disadvantages in the workplace. They are based at 51-53 South Street, Perth. For more details see their website: <http://checkin-giraffe.uk/>

Protection of Vulnerable Groups

There have been no incidents reported in the last year.

We have now completed our obligation to the Episcopal Church to have all personnel, approved by the Vestry to work with vulnerable groups, transferred to the new disclosure Scotland scheme. This had to be in place by the end of the year to comply with the latest legislation.

I again take this opportunity to remind our Congregation it is the responsibility of everybody to report any situation they might be concerned about, to myself, social workers or the police.

Malcolm Moore

Charity Bottle

I am pleased to be able to report that the Charity Bottle raised over fifty per cent more than last year; £159 compared with £104. The increase seems to have been due to a larger proportion of 5p and larger coins.

Euros are useful, as the writer purchases them (at a good exchange rate) and he and his family use them on holiday. Other foreign coins are less useful and may be passed on to other charitable collections.

I am hoping that the increased use of contactless cards, resulting in there being less change, does not reduce giving.

Roger Whittle

Note from the Treasurer

This year all the money from the Charity Bottle has been donated to the Christian Aid Refugee Crisis Appeal. This was combined with the donations received at the Bring and Share Lunch (totalling £145), enabling us to donate a total of £304 to this cause.

David Roemmele



Communications and Admin

The Comms team has been ticking over very nicely this year. A warm welcome back to Tim Haynes, who has taken over the church website at <http://www.episcopal-perth.org.uk> and given it a good makeover. Any comments or suggestions on the new look are welcome. We are trying to keep the website updated with notices of forthcoming events including service times, and reports and pictures of events past. We have had a few people contact us through the website, including enquiries about using the church for weddings!

Lis Burke is in charge of the Facebook page with assistance from me and Tim. Lis posts the service times each week and shares photos of church events, along with inspirational images and links to relevant articles and news from elsewhere. Our active presence both on Facebook and our own site helps us to attract visitors and show that we are an engaged, active, prayerful and caring community.

Quest continues to be published bimonthly. It has usually been produced a couple of weeks later than intended this year, and I apologise for this! I'll try and do better in the coming year. Quest is a particularly good way of keeping in touch with those members of the congregation who attend less frequently, and keeping them up to date on the activities of the congregation and forthcoming events. It is also a helpful introduction to the church for newcomers, helping them to understand the sort of church we are and what activities are available. If you have any ideas for items to include in Quest, either as regular features or for individual articles, please let me know at editor@episcopal-perth.org.uk, or speak to any member of the Quest team.

Finally, many thanks go to our church administrator, Donna McGlashan, for producing the pewsheets each week, managing church bookings, copying and printing, and for the many other administrative tasks she carries out for the congregation and its various groups and teams. We are all very grateful!

Rhiannon Miller

Looking back over the past year in SARAC's life I wonder at the way time flies by. Since my last report our activities have generally followed what seems to have become a familiar pattern. However the amount of work entailed in making it all happen seems to increase as does the time involved. Perhaps it is rather that we are all getting much older and feeling it increasingly?

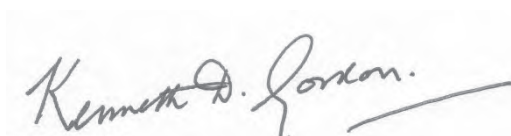
- The familiar pattern was however broken in more than one regard. No Residential Retreat took place this year owing to the temporary closure of Kinnoull Monastery in Perth for further renovation work. Members may wish to comment on any proposal for a Retreat in 2016 and to make relevant suggestions to our General Committee.

Also, the usually much-enjoyed trip to Pitlochry Festival Theatre (ably organised by Geoffrey Hall) did not take place in the popular summer period but, for good reasons, has been transferred to a date in October this year.

And, although our May meeting took place and considered the theme '*Can Christianity survive in the Middle East?*' under the guidance of Sara Afshari, it was blighted by difficulties with technology and misunderstandings within the General Synod Office in Edinburgh. This was extremely unfortunate for all concerned.

- The Very Rev Dr Francis Bridger, Dean of Brechin, along with the Dean of Edinburgh (both appointed by the College of Bishops) convened a Working Group in January this year to tackle their remit to consider the situation and needs of the following personnel throughout the Church: retired clergy, NSMs, and Lay Readers. Geoffrey Hall and I were both invited to participate in this meeting. The agreed outcome was that Francis Bridger would write up a draft report based on the decisions reached in an open and wide-ranging discussion and, after revision, this would be passed to the College of Bishops for their consideration and action. The first draft of the report was circulated to members of the Group in May. I responded with one observation and comment, but am not aware of any other comments sent to Francis Bridger. The report was then to be presented to the Deans' meeting scheduled for June: this was unfortunately postponed until August. I have since heard nothing further, but have asked the Dean of Brechin for an update.

- Our offer to assist with the provision of a provincial course of preparation for clergy who are anticipating retirement has continued to be apparently ignored, as has our request for information from the bishops about clergy nearing retirement.
- During the past year the proposal that a designated representative of SARAC in each diocese should arrange to meet with the diocesan bishop for an extended conversation specifically about retired clergy and SARAC has been taken up in a few dioceses where it has met with ready response. How valuable it has been may prove to be variable, but it is certainly worth extending to all seven dioceses. The General Committee will take appropriate action on this within its membership and, if necessary, beyond that. Developing altogether good relationships with our bishops is something we need to continue to work at and pray for. Part of SARAC's stated aim is to support our bishops in their pastoral care of clergy.
- Our Partnership Agreement with St John's Church, Perth has been warmly endorsed by the new Rector and the Vestry of the church. This is a continuing blessing, both practical and spiritual, for SARAC.
- In accordance with the Constitution the General Committee has met twice in the past twelve months, in December 2014 and September 2015, by tele-conference on each occasion. We continue to seek ways of addressing the need to increase membership numbers significantly and I would encourage all members to use every opportunity for this through personal contact.
- Members of the General Committee always wish to hear of any matters of personal or wider concern affecting retired clergy, and also any suggestions for consideration as part of SARAC's programme for the future.
- We continue to be in spirit and intent a forward-looking association. Our calling from God, as members of SARAC, is to minister to and share fellowship with all eligible Anglican clergy throughout Scotland for years to come. Since its inception, an important objective of SARAC has been and remains 'to be an Association based on and formed by prayer.'



Kenneth D Gordon

Finance and Stewardship

The Finance Committee met several times this year at the request of the Treasurer in support of the Vestry. We have considered the financial aspects of running St John's to examine any areas where savings could be made. In view of an expected shortfall in income, it was decided in the Spring that we should launch a Stewardship campaign to increase congregational giving. We are extremely grateful to the congregation for their generosity in answering this appeal and in raising the money needed. St John's will continue to face financial pressures not least as we meet the requirements of new regulations, and the Finance Committee will continue to meet to support the Vestry as needed and to monitor necessary expenditure.

My thanks to David Roemmele, Bill Bracewell, Alastair Cruickshank, Alan Macpherson, David Willington and of course the Rector for being so generous with their time and expertise. St John's is also extremely lucky to have Alasdair Brown as its accountant and we all extend our very grateful thanks to him for his hard work and endless good humoured patience!

Mary Emma Strange

Traidcraft



The Traidcraft stall has suffered this year again from a lack of volunteers. Thanks to Elaine Cameron who has recently joined the crew we are able to run the stall a little more often now, but this year once again we have had to write off some stock. To try and minimise this we are increasing the proportion of things that don't go out of date, such as crafts, household items, and Traidcraft's new range of fairtrade soaps and cleaning products. As always, let me know if there's anything in particular you would like us to stock!

I hope to be able to rejoin the stall rota in the new year, but we could still do with at least two or three more people. Anyone who is interested in joining should contact me or Sarah Axford. The work just involves setting out the stall before the 10:30 service, taking people's money after the service, then putting everything away again!

I really do believe that offering the congregation the chance to support disadvantaged communities through fair trade is an important part of the Church's mission. Please continue to support it!

Rhiannon Miller



Ministry & Pastoral

The Ministry Team has now been working a full year with Graham as our Rector and all of us have been struck by his commitment and enthusiasm to the job in hand. He has challenged all the team to extend the boundaries of their own ministry both in terms of greater duties at our services and in pastoral visiting.

The team met regularly throughout the year and these meetings have given an opportunity to discuss any of our own concerns and also in keeping a close eye on the more vulnerable members of our congregation. Home communions and pastoral visiting are given to each of us as a matter of priority. The team were encouraged to partake and lead the weekly Wednesday evening study groups run throughout Advent and Lent. These meetings were well supported and the team would encourage anyone in the congregation who wishes to pursue a more contemplative aspect of their faith to come along in the future during these times in the church year.

I wish to express appreciation and thanks to Lis, our Reader, for all the hard work and effort she has put into her ministry and to Alastair for his faithful and continued ministry. A big thank you is due also to David, our Server and Crucifer, for his devoted commitment at our Sunday Eucharist and to all our intercessors and readers for their support throughout the year.

The Ministry team look forward to Lilian Fleming joining the team soon and also to welcoming Nerys Brown from St Mary's Church, Dunblane, who will join us soon as our Curate. The coming year is going to be a very exciting time indeed.

Alan MacPherson

Health & Safety

Thanks to your vigilance and awareness, I am pleased to report that there have been no major incidents. Well done! Please keep up the good work and continue to alert me to any issues and concerns. Of the reported incidents, these have for the most part been in the Threshold during Lunch club involving cuts and a scald from spilt soup. Lessons have been learnt, in particular to avoid overcrowding in the Kitchen.

In the body of the Church a number of actions have been taken, for example; to remove trailing electrical leads, to stabilise the Communion Rail, to install Emergency Lighting for the South Gallery and to ensure that our Fire Extinguishers are sufficient, of the right type, in the best location and up to date.

My major focus, with particular assistance from David Maclehole, has been to find the best value for money solution to meet our legal obligations to have a Fire Detection System. Having omitted this requirement from the Reordering programme, the initial plan was to find a solution that required minimal intrusion to the new décor. This resulted in competitive quotes for a wire free solution of the order of £6,000 to £8,000. Following negotiations and analysis of a detailed Risk Assessment, The Diocesan Building Committee and your Vestry vetoed this as being unaffordable and too high-tech. We have therefore returned to first principles and, following discussions with Electrical Contractors and Specialist Fire Safety Consultants we have a new quotation of the order of £2,700 for which first Vestry, and then Diocesan approval will be sought. If approved, this system will provide for both manual (break glass) and automatic detection and a signal via phone line to the Fire Brigade. It would also be linked in with the existing installation in the Threshold to provide a single system for the entire premises.

Other ongoing issues at this time are the trip hazard at the rear where the ramp to the Threshold corridor begins and the alignment and ease of movement of the short pews.

Graham Kingsley-Rowe

Our Family

We remember those who have died

Diana Glazebrook
Ronald Darroch
Len Jude

May they rest in peace and rise in glory