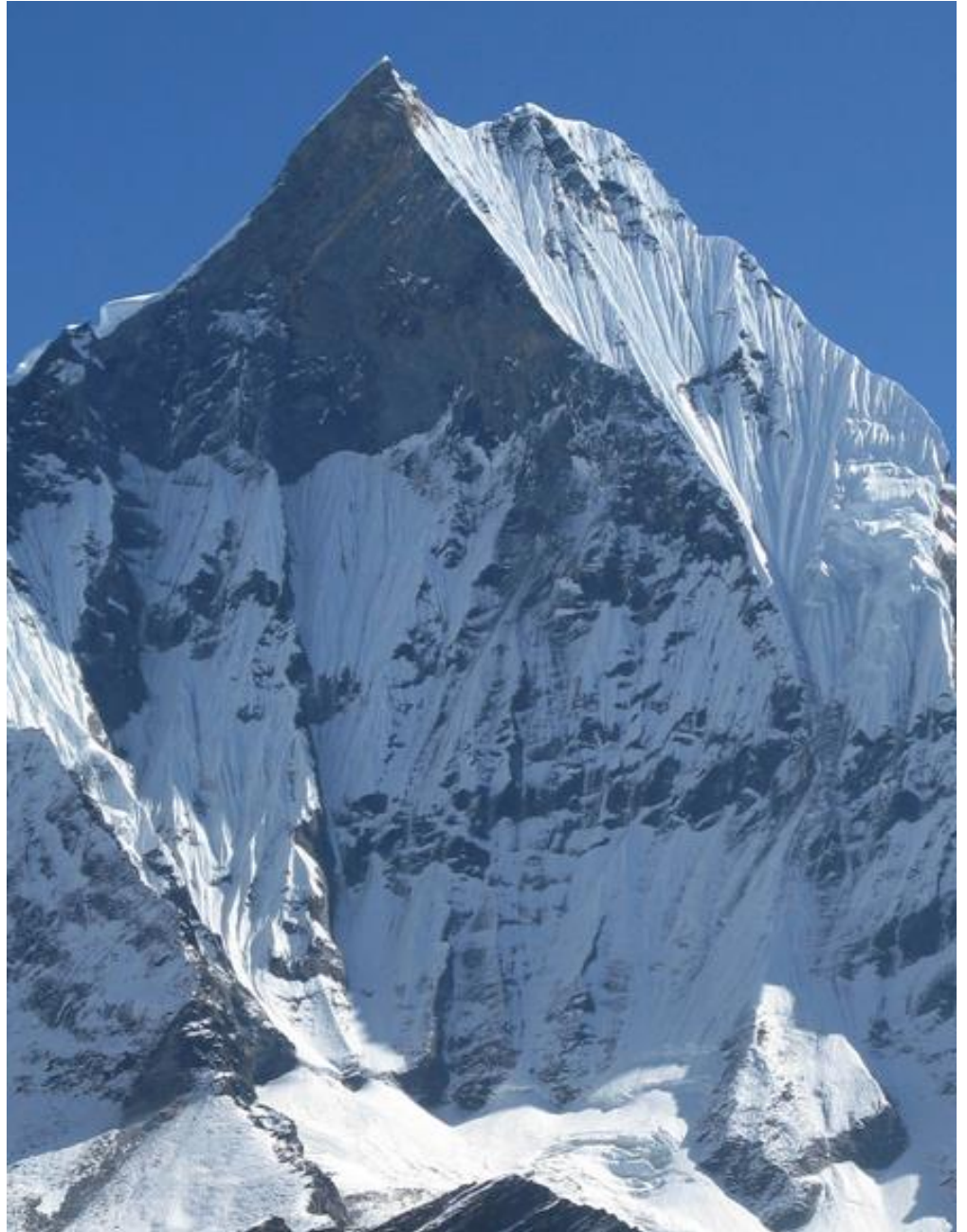




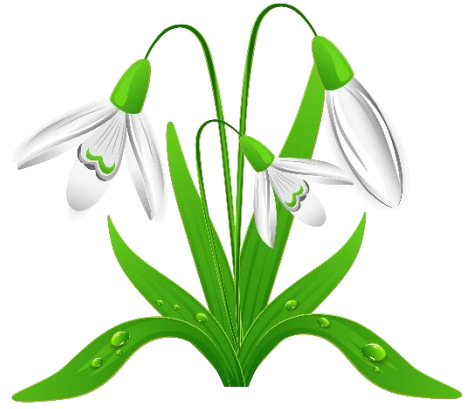
St John the Baptist Scottish Episcopal Church Perth

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February to March 2018

February and March



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

4th February, 9.30 a.m. Matins

10.30 a.m. Candlemas Celebration

14th February, 7.30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service

18th February, 10.30 a.m. First Sunday of Lent

6 p.m. Evensong

4th March, 9.30 a.m. Matins

11th March, 10.30 a.m. Mothering Sunday Service

18th March 6 p.m. Evensong

25th March, 10.30 a.m. Palm Sunday



*For Lent Reflections and Discussion
Groups and Holy Week and Easter
Services, see below.*

Letter from the Rector

I feel that Christmas is just over and here I am, writing to you about Lent and Holy Week. Thank you to all who made the festival so special again this year. The church looked lovely and the services were very well attended. We celebrated Christmas in the usual, wonderful St John's style. What a joy it was!

As Lent and Holy Week, approach I hope that you will be able to support many of the events and services that will be happening. We must never forget how important this time is for us as Christians, to not only celebrate Easter Day but before it to walk with Christ in the way of the cross. I hope that the activities during Lent, the soup lunches and Compline services, become a focus for your own spiritual journey throughout this holy time. By doing this we become a reflection of God's pilgrim people.

By request, on Maundy Thursday we will share a Seder meal together, enacting some of the last events of Christ's life. An especially significant time for us again this year will be Good Friday when it will be my joy to welcome Bishop Bob Gilles, my former bishop in Aberdeen, to lead the three hours devotions for us. Bob is a very able person to take us through the approach to the cross. Copies of his new book on which his reflections will be, will on sale before the day. (See more further on in this magazine.) Then, on Holy Saturday we will have the Easter Vigil, a service we started last year. I do hope you will come to experience this ancient service which is traditionally the climax of Holy Week, with its lighting of the new fire, renewal of our baptismal vows and first Eucharist of Easter. The excitement stirs within me even writing about this. It is so important to observe the seasons in our church calendar as we journey with Christ from birth to death and resurrection – our focus and hope as Christians.

During Lent some of us will be going on another journey. Please remember the pilgrims visiting the Holy Land in your prayers as we pray for you in the places that were important to Jesus and his ministry.

In the meantime, thank you continuing love and support to me and also my family.

Peace and love to you and yours,

Graham

Advent and Christmas at St John's



The Advent Reflections on the theme of the Coming King were well supported and enjoyed.

Almost 200 Christmas Angels were knitted and hung outside the church for passers-by to take away as a reminder of our prayers for them.



Santa came to Buggy Club's Christmas Party to the delight of the children and their mums.





The Pop-up Nativity was a great hit with the families who came to church on Christmas Eve. Many dressed up and joined in the telling of the story of the Greatest Journey before sharing in prayers around the Advent wreath.



Thank you to everyone who gave to the special Christmas Appeal to help St John's. Almost half our regular congregation donated. The total received was £1,235 and once Gift Aid is recovered at 25%, we get another £308.75 making a total of £1,543.75.

St John's Fellowship News

Jean Hendry

The Fellowship got into the Christmas spirit in early December with their usual second Monday of the month meeting taking the form of a Christmas party with varied seasonal entertainment provided by members of the Choir. This was largely but not entirely music based and most of it of a more light hearted nature than when they are on Sunday duty. Some traditional carols were also sung and the afternoon's refreshments included Christmas cake and mince pies. All those present really enjoyed the afternoon and appreciated the effort and thought that the Choir members had put into planning and rehearsing their various items.

The Festive Season was rounded off in mid January with our usual post Christmas Lunch. After being so well looked after by the staff at McDiarmid Park when we went there for tea in October it was decided to return there for our January Lunch. A big advantage of this venue is the availability of parking right beside the entrance and ease of access which given that several members have mobility problems is a significant consideration. There was a good turnout at this event and we were, as before, very well looked after by the staff who served us an excellent meal.



For our next meeting on 12th February, Bill Bracewell will be treating us to some more photos of his travels. As I write this, on a relentlessly cold dark January day, I look forward to seeing pictures of somewhere, whether of Scotland or of a visit to some distant country, that remind me of the sort of warm sunny weather that can occasionally be experienced by all of us.

[Bill Bracewell's photo of ?? is featured on the cover of this magazine.]

Christian Aid News

Elaine Cameron

One of the reasons I feel so committed to Christian Aid is because their work aims to tackle not just the effects of poverty but its root causes also. For example, in Bolivia, women spent many hours daily collecting firewood. When climate change brought flooding, this became even more difficult. Christian Aid organised solar ovens to replace the need for open fires using firewood. This was great, and had an unexpected benefit – the women no longer had to spend hours collecting firewood, but had time to learn and to have their voices heard in the management of local affairs.

You can learn more about this work in Bolivia on **Saturday 24th February in the Cathedral Halls, Dunblane FK14 0AQ**, when Christian Aid hold a free Gathering (popular title!) to celebrate the work of their partners there, and explain more of the principles behind their work. It begins at 10 a.m. and will finish at lunch time. Please let me know if you would be interested in joining me.



Lent is almost upon us! I have ordered a number of copies of Christian Aid's **Count your Blessings Lent Calendar** to walk with people who have been forced to flee their homes. Each week has a different topic to learn about, and there's an action to take each day. Do take one, and let me know when they're all gone!



This year it is 13th - 19th May.
Be assured, we will be seeking supporters again!



Bring a candle
to be blessed at our
**Candlemas
Service**

Sunday 4th February
10.30 a.m.
with activities for children



You are invited to a Pancake Party
Shrove Tuesday, 13th February
4 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. in the Threshold
Crafts, games, quizzes for all the family





LENT REFLECTIONS

Wednesdays, 21st February to 21st March
Noon in the Threshold with a simple soup lunch
7.30 p.m. in the Church followed by Compline

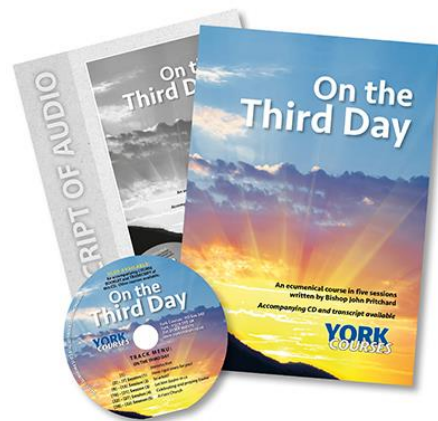
A Book For Lent

Approaching the Cross by former Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney, Bishop Bob Gillies, has just been published. The book takes us on a journey with Jesus from his arrival at the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, through the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, to his arrest, entombment and encounter with Mary Magdalene on Resurrection morning. Significant themes within the book (which follows readings from John's Gospel) are Judas Iscariot, what the Last Supper might have looked like, why the gospels are silent on Jesus in his grave and, imaginatively, why Mary Magdalene did indeed see 'The Gardener' on the morning she went to the grave of Jesus.

Bishop Bob (now a member of St James, Cupar) will be leading our Three Hours devotions on Good Friday. Members of the congregation who wish to purchase his book in advance can do so in church. It costs £6-95, and £2-00 from each sale will be gifted back to St John's Church.

Lent Discussion Groups

St John's Kirk and St Leonard's in the Fields
Monday Evenings at 7 p.m.
starting on Monday, 19th February
in St Leonard's Session Room



World Day of Prayer 2018

All God's Creation is Very Good!

A service prepared by the women of the churches of The Republic of Suriname in the north-eastern part of South America.

Perth Methodist Church, Friday 2nd March at 11 a.m. with preparatory Bible studies on 1st, 15th and 22nd February at 2 p.m. in the Methodist Church Hall



Anglican Pacifist Fellowship
The Anglican Communion's Movement for Peace

Christianity & War: Reclaiming the nonviolence of Jesus

Saturday 3rd March, 10.30 – 4 p.m. at the Threshold

A day of prayer, study & organising

Tea/coffee provided, please bring a shared lunch

- Is Jesus' teaching compatible with waging war?
- What do the Gospels tell us?
- How do we make opposition to war central to our Christian witness?
- How do we end the Church's support for war?

Speakers to include Revd Dr Clive Barrett, Chair of the Peace Museum in Bradford, Revd David Mumford, Former Dean of Brechin Diocese.

To register or find out more email dmumford@phonecoop.coop

Sunday Lectionary

February 4th Candlemas

Matins Psalm 84, 1 Samuel 1.20-28a, John 8.31-36

Eucharist Psalm 24.7-10, Hebrews 2.14-18, Luke 2.22-40

February 11th Sunday before Lent

Eucharist Psalm 50.1-6, 2 Corinthians 4.3-6, Mark 9.2-9

February 14th Ash Wednesday

Joel 2.1-2, 12-17, 2 Corinthians 5.20b-6.10, Matthew 6.1-6, 16-21

February 18th Lent 1

Eucharist Genesis 9.8-17, Mark 1.9-15

Evensong Psalm 119.17-32, Romans 10.8b-13, Luke 13.31-35

February 25th Lent 2

Eucharist Genesis 17.1-7, 15-16, Mark 8.31-38

March 4th Lent 3

Matins Psalm 40, Exodus 5.1-6.1, Matthew 10.16-22

Eucharist Exodus 20.1-17, John 2.13 -22

March 11th Mothering and Refreshment Sunday

Eucharist Exodus 2.1-10, John 6.1-14

March 18th Lent 5

Eucharist Jeremiah 31.31 -34, John 12.20-33

Evensong Psalm 34, Romans 5.12-21, Luke 22.1-13

March 25th Palm Sunday

Eucharist Isaiah 50.4-9; The Passion According to Mark

The Quest Interview

The aim of this feature is to help us to get to know a member of the congregation a little better. The next in the chain is Alison Swanney.

In what ways are you or have you been involved in the life of St John's?

It would be about 1981 that I first became involved in the life of St. John's and since then have been a member of the choir, helped on the social committee, and served on the vestry as lay rep when Bishop David was elected.

What do you enjoy about St John's?

There is a great feeling of family and fellowship in St. John's. I have certainly felt and welcomed the care, concern and support of the congregation, especially during the last few months when Iain was so ill.

What are your interests outside church?

Apart from playing golf, we love walking by the sea. the East Neuk of Fife being one of our favourite destinations. Live theatre is another interest. From September to May I enjoy singing with Encore, a large mixed choir that meets weekly. Of course having grandchildren quite near and being able to join in some of their interests is an added bonus.



What last made you sad or cross?

I get sad hearing about the many troubled spots in the world. I get mad reading news of old defenceless people being ill-treated. I get cross every time I stand on the bathroom scales.

What last made you smile or laugh out loud?

Last week looking at greetings cards I laughed out loud. On Christmas Day there was lots of laughter, especially playing 'Pie Face' with the grandchildren - and their parents.

Who or what was the greatest influence on you growing up?

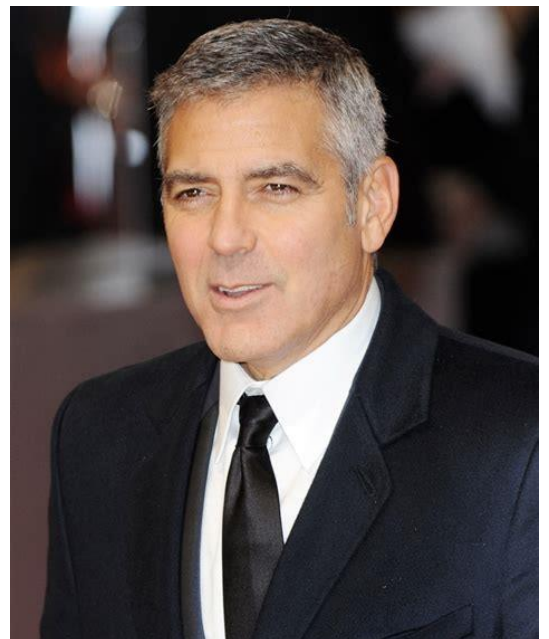
It has to be my mother. Widowed when my sister and I were young, she did an amazing job keeping us feeling secure even though it was a very hard time for her. She has passed on to me her sense of fun, practical approach to life and the importance of family.

Where or when do you feel close to God?

There isn't just one place or time. It could be walking by the sea, in the garden, in church, singing a particular hymn, or just talking to someone.

If you got to host a meal for four people from the present, past or future, who would you invite and why?

My choice of guests could vary from day to day or week by week but they would all need a sense of humour as I'm not the best cook! Michael Palin would give some very interesting and entertaining accounts of his many journeys. Larry Grayson always made me smile with his gentle humour. Perhaps one of my Mackay ancestors could visit and tell how it felt to be moved from the very North of Sutherland further south to Brora during the Highland clearances. Lastly George Clooney - well why not?!



Protestants

David Willington



Five hundred years ago Martin Luther nailed ninety-five theses to the door of the castle church at Wittenburg. The aim of this document was to denounce the sale of indulgences to raise funds for the building of St Peter's in Rome. The Catholic Church was very rich but it had many parishes, priests, churches, cathedrals and monastic houses to maintain. It was also a supra-national entity with its own bureaucracy, claiming authority over the rulers of Christendom. A principal cause of resentment against it was the contrast between the ideal of humble service and the sordid reality of corporate power and wealth, including allegations of sexual and financial scandal at the highest level. Some within the Catholic Church itself, such as Erasmus, urged reform of its institutions. Luther came to believe that an individual could experience, through grace, the love of God for himself without the mediation of the Church. The love of God can be discovered by faith and through the reading of Scripture. The Bible was being translated into local languages and disseminated by the new technology of the printing press, for Everyman to read. As a result, to put it in simplistic terms, instead of being top-down theology became bottom-up.

It didn't stay that way for long. The new theology was high-jacked by politics, for example by Henry VIII. The Church was too closely ingrained in national life and was a useful tool of governance. So he took upon himself, in place of the Pope, the role of Supreme Head of the



Church and Defender of the Faith, which was defined in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Belief in 1562 ‘for the avoiding of diversities of opinions and for the establishing of consent touching true religion’. It is tempting to compare Henry’s break with the Catholic Church with Britain’s secession from the EU.

The Counter-Reformation resulted in the most destructive war to afflict Northern Europe until the twentieth century, the Thirty Years’ War. Peace was concluded in 1648 by the Treaty of Westphalia. At the same time,

Britain was experiencing its own convulsions, not between Catholic and Protestant, but within Protestantism itself – so much for the avoidance of diversity. One aspect, of course, was the conflict between Parliament and the King and the spirit of revolution encouraged a tendency towards democracy in religion. The Civil War threw up a plethora of different sects, each convinced of its own righteousness: Calvinists; Covenanters; Puritans; Presbyterians; Baptists; Levellers; Muggletonians; Fifth Monarchists; Diggers; Seekers; Quakers, and, of course, Anglicans with their bishops.

Cromwell sought to silence the clamour of the sects by proclaiming religious toleration, which he extended to Jews and Muslims, though there were not many of the latter, but not to Catholics. With the return of Charles II the Anglican Church was restored to its former role in the fabric of the state, but not in Scotland after 1689.



As in the seventeenth century, so Protestantism has remained fissiparous. As a result of deprivation and persecution at home, America became the refuge for a variety of churches: Lutherans; Congregationalists; Methodists; Presbyterians; Baptists; Anabaptists; Episcopalians white and black; Millerites; True Inspirationists; Shakers; Seventh Day Adventists; Jehovah's Witnesses; Unitarians; Pentecostals; Evangelicals. Despite their diversity, each group shared a conviction of the authority of the Bible and cited chapter and verse to reinforce their beliefs and dismiss their opponents. The Bible has authority because it is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and through reading the Word of God 'with pure eyes and upright senses', Calvin's phrase, we obtain God's grace. Through God's grace the sinner obtains forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

How we interpret the Biblical text is another matter altogether. Protestants have supported, and strongly opposed, slavery in America, anti-Semitism and genocide in Germany and apartheid in South Africa. And since the eighteenth century, scholarship has doubted a literal interpretation, for example, of the story of Genesis. How much of the Old Testament is secular history? The Gospels themselves have many difficulties. Perhaps we could agree that the Bible is inspired but not infallible. Quakers say that we should focus on the Living Word rather than the dead letter. Others have argued that modern science and biblical criticism are not incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel. This has been called 'Christian Realism'. Nevertheless, this supposedly practical attitude is as much subject to differences of opinion as any other. What is the 'spirit of the Gospel'? My own view – Martin Luther has given me the freedom to think for myself – is not to beat oneself up over matters that are unknowable, such as the Trinity, Salvation, the Resurrection of the Body and Eternal Life, but to trust in God and love one's neighbour. Not the highest of theological aspirations, but a good one to be going on with.



Every month in Scotland 150 women are released from prison. Within a year, 47% of them will have reoffended. It costs taxpayers £65,000 to imprison each woman and another £45,000 for every year she remains in custody. Research shows that three things help reduce the rate of reoffending: a home, good family relationships and a job. However, women in particular face additional barriers to finding work. Most live with low self-esteem, poor health and wellbeing, and many have low levels of education with little or no previous work experience and live with issues of alcohol and substance dependency.

Our organisation was established as a social enterprise in 2017 and we exist to create positive social change with all profits being reinvested back into the organisation. We make and sell high end, quality chocolates to support any woman who has touched the Scottish criminal justice system towards permanent employment. We call our range, Grace Chocolates. Grace isn't the name of a person but recognises the grace we all need in our lives. By engaging with us, the women receive support, training, work-experience and the opportunity to raise their self-esteem and build resilience. This helps lower the barriers they face when looking for a job and contributes to lowering the rate of reoffending.

Grace Chocolates are made with the finest ingredients, locally sourced where possible. Each filling has been created for its unique blend of flavours and is encased in the finest Belgian chocolate before being exquisitely wrapped and finished with a hand tied bow. Corporate organisations, keen to display their social responsibility credentials, buy our chocolates for their clients but so do individuals, keen for a delicious treat knowing that they are indulging and tucking into chocolates that are changing lives. If you are interested in knowing more, becoming involved as a volunteer or buying our chocolates, please contact Joyce on 07482670325 or email gracechocolatesuk@gmail.com.

Contact Information

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Flowers	Christine Bracewell	552817	
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Fellowship	Jean Hendry	623603	
Buggy Club	Eunice McPherson	552337	
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From the Editor

Thanks very much for everyone's contributions to this issue and to those who helped prepare it for printing and distribution. Please hand in or email all items for our April/May issue to me by

Sunday 18th March

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In partnership with
the Scottish Association of
Retired Anglican Clergy



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT ST JOHN'S 2018



Palm Sunday

10.30 Eucharist with Procession
and a reading of the Passion

Maundy Thursday

11 a.m. Holy Communion

7.30 p.m. Seder Meal, Foot-washing and
Vigil



Good Friday

10.30 a.m. PACT Walk of Witness
starting at St John's Kirk

12 - 3 p.m. *Approaching the Cross* with
Bishop Bob Gilles



Holy Saturday

8 p.m. Easter Vigil, including the new
fire, renewal of Baptism vows and the
first eucharist of Easter

Easter Sunday

7 a.m. PACT Dawn Service at Quarrymill
with breakfast at Scone Old Hall

8.30 Holy Communion

9 a.m. Easter Breakfast

10.30 Easter Celebration

and Easter Egg Hunt

