



St John the Baptist  
Scottish Episcopal Church  
Perth

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February and March 2020

# Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I know this may seem a little late, but to those of you whom I haven't seen, I truly wish you and yours the blessing of a New Year.

What a lovely time we shared over Christmas this year in St. John's, a happy time of real celebration. It was a joy to see so many folks turning out to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour.

Now we come into 2020, praying that God will bless our faith community with all that lies ahead of us. What a wonderful day to begin and to reflect upon just that at Annie's lovely home for our recent Quiet Day. Margo, a member of the Cathedral here in Perth, ably led us through the day, as we focused together on the Magi and the journey they led. Great feed-back from the day. I found it both refreshing and challenging for myself. It filled our souls, as well as the Curate filling us with a wonderful lunch! We finished together sharing the Eucharist and drawing on all that the Holy Spirit had done for us that day. I'm already looking forward to the next one!

So, I wonder what this New Year bring for us, both individually and as a Church. Thankfully none of us know. All we can do is step out in faith and trust and put all we have into the hands of our loving God.

I therefore urge you, as the body of Christ and family in St. John's, to pray for all that lies ahead of us and where God will take us and want us to be this coming year. We must not stand still, we must move as the Spirit moves and guides us. A year ahead full of hope and promise, knowing that the God of the past will journey with us into the future, into the unknown. All we are asked to do is to trust for all that is to come.

Let me leave you with the words of Joanna Fuchs' *May it bring you deep blessing*:

Dear Lord,  
In the new year, we pray  
that You will guide us each new day  
in paths that are pleasing to You.  
Lord, the new year gives us another chance  
to rededicate our lives to You,  
to study Your Word  
so that we know right from wrong  
and to act in accordance with Your commands.  
Thank You for the sense of  
direction, purpose and peace we get  
from aligning our lives with Your Holy will.  
We pray for the strength and the will to obey You  
each and every day of the new year,  
and when we fail, we pray for Your mercy,  
Your compassion, Your grace and Your love.  
Help us in the new year to be Your faithful servants.  
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

With love to you and yours,

Graham.



# 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*

2 <sup>nd</sup> February	9.30 am	Matins
16 <sup>th</sup> February	6.00 pm	Evensong
26 <sup>th</sup> February	7.00 pm	Ash Wednesday
1 <sup>st</sup> March	9.30 am	Matins
4 <sup>th</sup> March	7.00 pm	Compline
11 <sup>th</sup> March	7.00 pm	Compline
15 <sup>th</sup> March	6.00 pm	Evensong
18 <sup>th</sup> March	6.00 pm	Compline
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	10.30 am	Mothering Sunday
25 <sup>th</sup> March	6.00 pm	Compline

# Café Church

Café Church in January nearly did not go ahead because of the weather, but the team decided that if we did not hold it folk would drop away. Only four tables were laid out but very soon they were full and more chairs were needed.

The speaker was Alastair Cruickshank. He gave an interesting resumé, not of his legal career, but the various people he had met and experiences he had had, some serious, some light-hearted. All these were related with ready wit and self-deprecating humour.

In reply to questions he reported that he had travelled on nearly all the railway tracks in Ireland as well as the United Kingdom. He concluded by getting out his pipes and playing a tune. As you can imagine, the noise dominated the Threshold with its low ceiling, to his evident satisfaction (see photo).

Doreen Kneller



# Quiet Day

*What do you want Jesus to do for you?*

This was the opening question to set our thoughts in motion as we embarked on our very special day at Annie's beautiful home. We had begun with prayers and then contemplation of two biblical passages where Jesus restored sight to the blind. A further challenge was to imagine ourselves as the blind man and consider an answer to Jesus' question *Can you see anything?* There then followed two passages relating to the descent of the Holy Spirit, to which the question was then asked *Has a change in your circumstances changed your perception of things or caused you to doubt, and what reassurance has Jesus given you?*



Armed with these challenges we were then granted the freedom of Annie's house and garden to find our own space to pray and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, either by following the script outlined above or by allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us where it would. There was also the opportunity to create a star with a meaningful phrase or decoration to be hung on the church prayer tree. This Agenda was, however, not mandatory, with the emphasis being on our using the time as we

chose in order to pull back from the trials of our daily lives and use this significant time slot to commune with the Holy Spirit.

We were then provided by Annie with a substantial buffet lunch, coffee and tea etc. being available on a self-service basis throughout the day.

In the afternoon we contemplated the challenging messages and different interpretations that could be drawn from Peter Bruegel the Elder's painting (1560), *The Fall of Icarus*, and WH Auden's interpretive poem

*Musee des Beaux Arts.* For me, a key message was how easy it is in the hustle and bustle of our daily lives to ignore the, often desperate, needs of others. The afternoon concluded with a Eucharist and special prayers.



Enormous thanks are due to Annie for her hard work, and for the freedom to use her and husband David's, house and garden which provided a special peaceful ambience. Both body and soul were truly refreshed.

Graham Kingsley-Rowe



*The Fall of Icarus* Peter Bruegel

# Ordination Celebrations

2019 was a special year for those of us who were fortunate to be amongst those women in Scotland first ordained as Priests 25 years ago. It was wonderful to have this moment recognised by the team who organised the celebration service for us in our Cathedral here in Perth. More of this to come.

Five years earlier the Church of England invited those women first



ordained as Priests in Scotland to join with them in a celebration event marking 20 years since our ordinations. What a glorious day it was for the small number of us who made that journey. We gathered with picnics at Westminster where I met up with a colleague

ordained with me who now serves in England. We marched with hundreds of other women from Westminster passing the Parliament buildings, along the Embankment and on up to St Paul's. We had brought robes earlier in the day and all changed in time for a photo opportunity with the Archbishop on the steps of St Paul's. I had never managed to visit St Paul's before and my first experience is one I will never forget. Although there were hundreds of us to process in and find our places the congregation continued with thunderous applause until we were all seated. The sound was spine-tingling as it resonated around that incredible building. It was humbling to share with our colleagues in the Church of England along with many friends and family in such a momentous celebratory event.

I had thought this would be the only event which would celebrate my ordination to the Priesthood, anticipating I would quietly remember our



25<sup>th</sup> anniversary myself. But how wrong I turned out to be. I and all of those ordained Priest in Scotland 25 years ago are incredibly grateful to the group who worked so hard to organise the wonderful and moving service in St Ninian's. It was a lovely touch that all of us

ordained 25 years ago were able to wear the same style of vestments. One of the most moving parts of the service was remembering those who have died since we were ordained. Their names were read out and a rose placed in a vase.

A special part of the day for me was having a colleague ordained with me in Glasgow and Galloway stay with us that night. We had a quiet evening reminiscing although we did watch the final of 'Strictly' too! In a way for us the celebrations continued the next day as we had been invited to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary by participating in worship where we were ordained: St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow. I preached on the readings of the day and my colleague led the service and celebrated. It felt very special to be there as for me at least it triggered memories of the significant moments of my ordination.

Thanks are due to all who supported and continue to support those of us in ordained ministry not least being our families.

Reverend Canon Shelley Marsh



# Christian Aid

You will recall that here at St John's we helped celebrate the first Sunday of Advent by singing Kathy Galloway's carol *When out of poverty is born* and by raising over £105 (gift aid to be added) to help mothers break free from poverty. Our Rector, Graham, had a letter from Val Brown, Church and Community Manager at CA Scotland, thanking us for singing the carol, a new initiative this year, as well as for the money. She noted how much they appreciate people being willing to share these stories, and sent thanks to St John's congregation for our year-round support.

## **CA in India**

Aware that some of you have a particular concern for poverty in India, I thought you might be interested to know a little more of Christian Aid's work in that country. Christian Aid has supported local organisations in India for more than 50 years, initially providing relief to people affected by natural disasters. Now they support long term development, which is one of the reasons I am so committed to Christian Aid – they aim to help people to help themselves to stand on their own feet.

In India, they have paved way for the implementation of significant policy changes. These have had a direct effect on many aspects of human rights, not least the eradication of manual scavenging and restoration of livelihoods. You will recall in our last *Quest*, I described how Ranjits, from the Dalit community, having been forced into human scavenging as a child, was enabled to start a tailoring business through the community self-help group run by CA's partner ARUN.

Many women collectives and self-help groups in rural India work with marginalised communities to strengthen local governance.

## **An Invitation – Gatherings 2020!**

Christian Aid in Scotland hold annual Gatherings in four venues in February each year – a time when volunteers and staff meet together. The Gatherings are the same in each venue - a way of exploring how Christian Aid responds to communities in crisis across the world.

CA commits almost a third of their total income to humanitarian work, reaching millions of disaster-affected people every year. At the Gatherings, we will find out how CA provide urgent, practical help in times of crisis and beyond. There will be unique session of Just Scripture, CA's international Bible study tool, and a live connection with an overseas partner to explore a passage of scripture together.

The keynote speaker is Nick Guttman, CA Head of Humanitarian work. There will also be a focus on climate justice.

The time is 10am – 1 pm.

The dates are:

**Wednesday, 19 February 2020, Dundee** - The Steeple Church Halls, Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4DG

**Thursday, 20 February 2020, Dunblane** - Cathedral Halls, The Cross, Dunblane, FK15 0AQ

*I would love to have company at one of the Christian Aid Gatherings this year – either in Dundee or Dunblane.*

Phone or email if you would be interested ([elaine.ging@gmail.com](mailto:elaine.ging@gmail.com))  
01738 441172.

Elaine Cameron



# Sunday Lectionary

## **February 2 The Presentation of the Lord**

*Matins* Psalm 34, 1 Samuel 2. 1-10, John 8. 31-36

*Eucharist* Psalm 84 or 24. 7-10, Hebrews 2 14-18, Luke 2.22-40

## **February 9 Epiphany 5**

*Eucharist* Psalm 112.1-9(10), 1 Corinthians 2.1-12(13-16), Matthew 5. 13-20

## **February 16 Epiphany 6**

*Eucharist* Psalm 119.1-8, 1 Corinthians 3.1-9, Matthew 5.21-37

*Evensong* Psalm 10, Numbers 22.21-23.12, Luke 6. 27-38

## **February 23 Epiphany 7**

*Eucharist* Psalm 119.33-40, 1 Corinthians 3. 10-11,16-23, Matthew 5. 38-48

## **February 26 Ash Wednesday**

*Eucharist* Isaiah 58.1-12, Matthew 6.1-6,16-21

## **March 1 Lent 1**

*Matins* Psalm 50.1-15, Genesis 2.15-17;3.1-7, Luke 13.31-35

*Eucharist* Genesis 2. 15-17;3.1-7, Matthew 4. 1-11

## **March 8 Lent 2**

*Eucharist* Genesis 12. 1-4a, John 3.1-17 or Matthew 17. 1-9

## **March 15 Lent 3**

*Eucharist* Exodus 17.1-7,John 4.5-42

*Evensong* Psalms 11,12, Exodus 5.1-6.1, Matthew 10.16-22

## **March 22 Lent 4 Mothering Sunday**

*Eucharist* 1 Samuel 16. 1-13, John 9.1-41

## **March 29 Lent 5 Passion Sunday**

*Eucharist* Ezekiel 37.1-14, John 11.1-45

# Reserved Sacrament

For the last fourteen years both Alastair Cruickshank and I have been authorised by the Bishop to administer the Reserved Sacrament of consecrated bread and wine. Recently we have been joined in these duties by our Reader, Rob Mackay, and by our Curate, Annie Mackay Hughes. We use the booklet “Order of Extended Communion” at the Holy Communion service which has been developed to allow Lay workers to carry out this duty using words from the Scottish Prayer Book. These services take place on Sunday at 8.30 am as part of a rota system, and from time to time at the Thursday morning 11.00 am Holy Communion service when called upon.

During these services the paten and chalice which we use to share the bread and wine is a beautiful, small, tactile, silver communion set which is pictured below. On both the paten and chalice there is an inscription which reads:

*The gift of a few friends to the Rev F.R. Vallings MA on his resigning the assistant curacy of Maddington, Wiltshire, for the office of Resident Secretary at Calcutta to the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel, Easter 1860.*

The Reverend R.F. Vallings was the father of Reverend Canon George Ross Vallings who was born in India in 1867 whilst his father served the church there. George became Rector of St John’s Church, Perth, in 1910, and served in this capacity until his retirement in 1947. We can only assume that the communion set was inherited by George from his father and bequeathed to St John’s on his retirement. It is probable that the paten and chalice have been in continuous use since 1860 to the present time, a period of 160 years.

It is amazing to think how many thousands and thousands of people have shared the Lord's Supper from this delicate set of Silver. If in the future you are privileged share Holy Communion from this plate and cup, take a moment to remember all the people and pilgrims that have gone before, sharing from it the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Alan McPherson*



# Fellowship

The usual Social activities in the Fellowship year that happen on either side of Christmas were once again well attended. Events kept to the well tested format that everyone seems to enjoy.

For our December meeting Judy rounded up the musicians of the congregation who once again showed how versatile and talented they can be with their choice of Christmas music. Mince pies, a beautiful homemade Christmas cake and non-alcoholic mulled wine just seemed to appear from the team in charge of the Fellowship catering! It was certainly appreciated by those attending. The timing of this event, usually about two weeks before Christmas day, is such that I tend to think of it as the start of the celebration of Christmas when it seems appropriate to be singing carols rather than feeling irritated at hearing them played as background music in shops during October and November.

More recently we went back to MacDiarmid Park for our January post-Christmas lunch. The staff were every bit as attentive to us as in the previous two years and they always take considerable trouble to accommodate our



various requests regarding access, seating and diet.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February but as I write this the programme has still to be finalised.

Jean Hendry

# The 1943 Club

This Club exists for those members of the congregation who were born in 1943. Although exclusive, we do not have a written constitution, a uniform, meetings (other than informal) or a Club song. We just know who we are. There are five of us.

Recently a senior member of the congregation (who must remain anonymous, but let's call her Christine) raised the suggestion that there might be a sixth person who would qualify for membership. Because of Data Protection legislation, we cannot use Church records for details of congregational members, such as date of birth, blood group etc, and so it is suggested that if there is a sixth person or even more, he, she or they should tell the Rector and he can act as an intermediary. In accordance with data legislation aforesaid, I give only my initials, to preserve my anonymity.

AHC



# Don't Worry. Be Happy.

A Happy New Year to all our readers and welcome to a new decade. Or is it? Pedants say that the new decade will begin on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, but the Queen in her Christmas message talked about a new decade and what higher authority can there be? As well analysis of the past, the turn of a year gives rise to all sorts of speculation about what is to come. There is even a name for it – futurology. This is almost as much fun as counterfactual history, the what ifs. History would have been very different if Cleopatra's nose had been half an inch longer or if Princip's revolver shot had missed the Archduke.

Futurologists tend to be prone to gloomy prognostications. That is their stock in trade, to terrify us into believing that the world is going to Hell in a hand cart. Never mind that poverty in the Third World is diminishing rapidly, that more and more diseases can now be treated, that we live longer, that generally the world is a less violent place, and that we live healthier and freer lives. Ah, yes, you might say, but there is always a fly in the ointment. We have become over reliant on antibiotics, there is a demographic time bomb ticking away because there are too many old people, and, of course, we will be either fried or drowned by the effects of climate change. Denial of climate change has now become a heresy hunted down with medieval zeal, yet there is still a debate as to whether it is anthropogenic or the result of gradual shifts in the earth's relationship with the sun, about which we can of course do nothing. Or it may be a combination of both factors. The glaciers in Greenland may be receding, but don't forget that in the tenth century people lived, built houses and churches and grew crops there.

At the height of the Cold War, in the 1970s, I lay awake at night worrying that our children's lives might be brutally cut short by a nuclear holocaust.

They have survived so far. But, you will say, although Britain is no longer likely to be rocketed or invaded, it is still open to cyber attack, which will throw a huge spanner in the works. Electric power will fail, government will be brought to a standstill and aircraft will fall out of the sky. These disasters will be brought about by a geek in Beijing, or by a teenage hacker in Des Moines, Iowa. Well, maybe. There is nothing you and I can do about it, save buy in a stock of candles and wear an extra pullover to ward off the cold. Oh yes, and keep a can of petrol in the garage, just in case.

Economists notoriously get things wrong. To take a current example, the ill effects forecast for Brexit on the nation's economy, whether in growth or employment, have yet to appear. It seems that we are doing rather better than Germany and France. That could change, or it could continue. But gloom sells more newspapers than good news.

The ultimate terror is, of course, the threat of a meteorite hitting the earth and utterly destroying life as we know it, like the extinction of the dinosaurs. Well, we'll all go together when we go. Or maybe a few people will survive in a remote part of the globe or on another planet to carry on the human race. Or maybe we will be able to deflect the meteorite's course, as in the sci-fi films. Or maybe it won't happen at all.

There is only a certain amount of worry that we can carry about with us. Life is to be lived and, with a bit of luck, enjoyed. It has been reported that people with religious belief are on the whole happier than those without, because they trust in God's protection and mercy. Maybe that is true.

David Willington

# Stewardship

St John's, Perth, is identified as a suitable placement where deacons and curates can train to progress to the ordained ministry. Training lasts for three years, although this can vary, and during this period ordination to the priesthood occurs before the person goes to serve the wider church. This can be either on a part time non-stipendiary basis or into full time ministry.

At present we are lucky to have our Deacon, Annie MacKay Hughes, fulfilling this role and I think you would agree she is an asset to our church life supporting worship, mission and pastoral work. In recent years Diana Petsche, David Campbell, Frances Forshaw, Alison Peden and Neyrs Brown completed this training, and progressed to serve in the ordained ministry.

Our Bishop, Ian, and the diocese as a whole wish for this training to continue in the future and we, as a congregation, should be honoured that the activities going on at St John's are seen in this way. All the people who train are members of the Scottish Episcopal Institute (SEI) which is the theological training college for those preparing for a variety of authorised ministries in the Scottish Episcopal Church. The SEI has a Provincial Office, based in Edinburgh, and a dispersed operation throughout all seven dioceses. Our own Rector, Graham, presently serves the SEI as its Chaplain and the SEI endorses the view that St John's is a suitable location for training.

At present, curate costs incurred by St John's for travel and other out of pocket expenses are met from our own church annual income and the Vestry are keen for this arrangement to continue. On this basis, the benefits of having a curate far outweigh the costs because it increases our outreach and mission locally, and improves our ability to bring people to Christ.

One definition of Stewardship is “An individual’s function in the practical work of the Christian church involving an obligation to give his or her time and goods to others”. We wish to appeal, therefore, that you might consider supporting this ongoing initiative. Perhaps you could increase your weekly, monthly or annual offering to take account of these costs, or give a specific donation for this work. However you do it our Treasurer, Peter Marsh, would be pleased to hear from you or give you confidential advice. Not forgetting to apply Gift Aid if you qualify for this.

But beyond this, to quote our Rector, Graham, “We have to dream the dream”, and aspire to supporting this work even more, so that people who give up their full-time work, perhaps, to enter the ministry can be financially sustained in their calling. This is a significant commitment on a person who feels called by God, and we as a congregation should support this with every penny and pound we can afford.

Please give consideration to this initiative and decide what contribution you can make to this essential work so that the church can continue to go forward in confidence, bringing people to Jesus Christ.

*Alan McPherson, Ministry Team Convenor.*



# 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 to David Willington for our April/May issue by

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

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