



St John the Baptist Scottish Episcopal Church Perth

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June and July 2021

Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends,

It feels like it has been ages since I've done this and written to you all. I guess it has been ages! While I await word on my final eye operation, I am incredibly grateful to my Consultant and all the staff in Ninewells. We are so blessed and extremely fortunate to have such a place virtually on our doorstep.

I am very grateful also to all the help I've been given in my Church duties and in my personal life over this time. Being off for just over three months has not been easy for me. You will know by now that I'm not the most patient of beings!

Being laid low for that significant time, however, has helped me to reflect and be thankful. I have used the time to deepen my prayer life, to reflect and to learn that when you cannot always read something how dependant you become on the radio, on others and indeed be thankful for our age of technology, we are very fortunate indeed.

Therefore, a huge thank you to ALL of you for all your love, care and support. What an amazing Church family to be belong too!

I hope that you are all surviving through these continuing challenging times. Life hasn't been easy for any of us, as we've had to learn and adapt to lots of new ways. I truly hope now that we all use our common sense as we ease our way out of lockdown. A year with many challenges for us all. I hope you have a great time over the summer months and are able to be reunited with your families and friends, those whom you long to see and be with once again. I personally am looking so much forward to a trip up North to see my folks as soon as I can.

It gives us such hope when we focus on all the promise that is to come. Seeing the trees in blossom before the fruit appears and everything so lush and green in the garden gives us such assurance and a way of looking ahead.

Many lessons have been learned throughout this pandemic, let alone 'looking ahead' and of how the shape of our Church life and faith will be. Many things have changed and there is so much reevaluating for us to do as a community of faith. Yet, at the heart of our faith and hope, the message stays the same. With our wonderful God there is no change, one who promises to be with us to the very end.

I hope one of the significant lessons we have all learned is the value of life and how we must treasure every moment we have been given. In the words of Mother Teresa "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

One thing I have enjoyed over the past year is going out walking once again and getting more fresh air. I'm sure like me you will have noticed a change in society. People smile at you, say hello, and even sometimes stop for a wee chat. This can only be good. This is faith also, asking God to open our eyes, not only to the beauty around us, but also the people we share this earth with, those whom we meet on our day-to-day travels.

Since returning to St. John's I've had the chance to go and have a chat with many of the businesses around us on Princes Street. I ask your prayers there, for people's livelihoods and work. I ask you to support as much as you can the locals who are our neighbours. Surely we must be seen as people of faith and light within our street and community.

Seeing the good in all things, we must thank God for what is past, celebrate the present and look forward with real hope for all that is to come. We must learn to trust, to reach out to our neighbour and be thankful for all that we have been given. 'God is good, his love endures forever.'

I pray a blessing on all that we have learned, on all that we will continue to discover and in love celebrate all that we have been given.

My love as ever to you and yours,

Canon Graham.

Weekly Services

The church building is now open for weekly services on Sundays at 8.30 and 10.30 am. Weekly services are still available via the church website www.episcopal-perth.org.uk or a link on our Facebook page.

There is also a weekly prayer meeting on Zoom until the end of June. For further details please contact Rob Mackay at the church office: 01738 634999.

Gentle Reminder

This is a gentle reminder that Canon Graham's day off is Monday and Rev Annie's is Friday. Please hold back from contact on the days particular to them unless it is an emergency. Thank you.



What is a Senior Citizen?

A Senior Citizen is one who was here before the pill, television, frozen foods, contact lenses, credit cards ... and before man walked on the moon.

For us 'Time Sharing' meant togetherness, not holiday homes, and a 'chip' meant a piece of wood. 'Hardware' meant nuts and bolts, and 'software' wasn't even a word.

We got married first, then lived together, and thought cleavage was something that butchers did. A 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double decker to the bus depot.

We thought that 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea. In our day 'grass' was mown, 'pot' was something you cooked in, 'coke' was kept in the coal house and a 'joint' was cooked on Sundays!

We are today's Senior Citizens. A hardy bunch when you think how the world has changed!

Contributed by Graham Kingsley-Rowe



Photograph supplied by Mary Willington

The Powerhouse of God

Alastair Cruickshank's Article in April/May's *Quest*, "A Thought for Epiphany", took me back to one of the most powerful sermons I have ever encountered. This was given by a Master at Shrewsbury School in about 1962/3.

To set the scene, this was a time when traditional Church was very much under threat. For us pupils a radical step had been the making of Sunday Evensong attendance voluntary! This was a small step in relation to the hostility of the wider world where churches were accused of getting their priorities wrong. Many churches were losing their congregations or closing (viz: Father McKenzie "preparing his Sermon that no-one will hear" in The Beatles hit 'Penny Lane'). Churches were, with much justification, being accused of looking inward and ignoring their communities and the wider world while desperate for funds to repair and reorder their buildings for their chosen few. Evangelists, such as Billy Graham, were having a huge impact by taking 'Church' outside of the buildings. But there was huge anger in the population-at-large at the seeming disconnect and lack of action and leadership by the 'Church' in tackling poverty, hunger and deprivation on the worldwide stage, never mind in its own backyard. This was the start of the sad era of the Church's 'lost generations', where Church buildings were seen by many as an irrelevance. But this was also the era of the expansion of Nuclear Power as the then perceived answer to all our future energy needs.

The Sermon likened each one of us to a lightbulb bringing a flicker of hope within a world of darkness. As a reflection of each of our personal faith journeys the wattage of each of us would vary, some being a mere 40 watts while others burned brightly at 100 watts. Even at 100 watts, one solitary lightbulb gave light over a limited area of darkness. How much better then that we could gather together to shed our light over a much wider area and reach into those dark corners that might otherwise be left in shadow. But how could we sustain and increase our light in the

darkness? How could our light be re-energised and renewed? Could we find ways to add new lightbulbs to our endeavours?

However much the Church buildings might seem outdated and unfit for purpose, they nevertheless provided the place and opportunity to help each other answer these questions. Renewed and encouraged we could then take our light out into the community and wider world united in strength and confidence. Thus, like a nuclear power station, each church building should be perceived as a Powerhouse of God.

Graham Kingsley-Rowe



Christian Aid

Recently, Wendy Duncan spoke in St John's about Christian Aid. This is a summary of her remarks:

Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

John I.3.18

It was certainly the idea of action that aroused my own interest in Christian Aid over fifty years ago, when I joined my first sponsored walk with a group of school friends. I no longer remember the project we were supporting, only the challenge of walking twenty miles around Norwich and the fun of doing something with others, something that felt really worth while.

Christian Aid's work began in 1945; it was founded by British and Irish churches to help refugees after World War II. Since that time it has provided humanitarian relief worldwide for every kind of natural or man-made disaster. In the 1960s it established the Disasters Emergency Committee to enable agencies to work together. In the 1980s it campaigned, through the South African Coalition, to end apartheid. In the 1990s the themes were Fair trade, the challenge of HIV and the refugees in Kosovo. In the 2000s it campaigned 'to make poverty history', and fed over half a million people after the Asian tsunami. It is important to establish links with local partners to provide the best possible long-term assistance for poor communities. Thanks to its many supporters, in 2021 it is able to continue with its invaluable work, campaigning against suffering, poverty and injustice across the globe.

There are many other active aid charities. Why does Christian Aid feel especially important? Our faith tells us that we are created in God's image and we should use our power, skills and resources for the good of all mankind. It is hard to know how to respond to seemingly ubiquitous and overwhelming problems. But Christian Aid is a good way to fulfil the

aspiration of changing the world for the better. Our task is to keep working and praying for God's will 'to be done in earth as in heaven'.

This year a team from St John's and the Cathedral is aiming to complete a sponsored walk of almost 150 miles (300,000 steps) during May. Our goal is to raise £2000 for earth dams in Kenya, where the climate crisis is already having a dire impact. In the last issue of *Quest*, Elaine Cameron described the plight of Rose and her community, which arises from the effects of drought and unreliable rains. A new dam, when the rains do come, would help to alleviate the problem and would provide a reliable source of water.

Sadly, we cannot turn back the clock to reverse the environmental damage which has led to climate change and which affects the poorest people in the world. Every online sponsor, every single gift to Christian Aid, can and will make a practical difference.



300,000 steps for water “We did it!”

As you know, the St John the Baptist and St Ninian’s Cathedral team have now completed the Christian Aid **300,000 Steps in May** fund-raising challenge. Wendy Duncan and Pat Butler, the Christian Aid reps at the Cathedral, and myself, St John’s rep, were thrilled to have the support of Graham Kingsley-Rowe, David Willington and Jenny Whittle – through good weather and bad!

Taking all these steps gave us the opportunity to get to know each other better, and resolve that joint fund-raising makes sense both financially and interpersonally!

But it is you, our big-hearted, bountiful donors who have given so very generously that we feel very humbled. Your donations, including gift aid, come to the staggering £3500! This will enable three dams to be built in Kenya: for Rose, and two others caught in the cycle of climate chaos, giving them a reliable source of water, however unreliable the rains.

Setting out:



From rain into sunshine!



Keeping going.....



And the Finish, outside Thimblerow car park!



Cheques made out to Christian Aid are still welcome, and the online Justgiving page will remain open during June: the Justgiving address is: [justgiving.com/fundraising/Perth300000stepsforwater](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Perth300000stepsforwater)

Elaine Cameron

I Took a Tuk-Tuk

“I loved this poem of Dick’s and chose to read it when we ‘said goodbye’.”

Terry Thorman

This was written during a holiday in Sri Lanka in 1997.

A tuk-tuk is not, as you might suppose, a species of brightly coloured hornbill indigenous to the island and threatened with extinction. It is, rather, a species of three-wheeled scooter-mini-cab or motorised trishaw; it proliferates throughout the island, although individuals are threatened with extinction whenever they drive round blind corners on the wrong side of the road.

Anna (the banner) was our tour manager, or Gruppenfuehrer. Her next assignment was a round-the-world tour. The Man Who Knew was Antonio Perera our tour guide. We called him Tony, and he knew everything.

I took a tuk-tuk

So we left the chill of the western shore,
And all through the night we flew,
We flew to the east in a Lankan jet
And arrived when the sun was new.
We woke with the dawn in the land of smiles,
The land where the spices grew,
We'd arrived in the land where I took a tuk-tuk
And you took a tuk-tuk too.

We scaled a rock to the Gates of Heav'n
To gaze on the royal view,
And we rode on an elephant and rode on a horse
Down the trail where the jungle grew,
And sat in the dusk to the song of a flute
And were lost in the sunset's hue,
We were deep in the land where I took a tuk-tuk
And you took a tuk-tuk too.

We toured the temples and we climbed to the caves,
And we learned from the Man who Knew
Of the Kings and the Crimes in the Ancient Times
When civilisation was new,
And we touched the myst'ry of other men's faith
And perhaps of our own anew,
As we roamed in the land where I took a tuk-tuk
And you took a tuk-tuk too.

Then we went to the place where the elephants were,
To learn what elephants do,
And we saw them feed in the heat and the dust
In the shade of the tall bamboo,
And we strolled to the river to watch them play
While we drank a glass or two,
Entranced in the land where I took a tuk-tuk
And you took a tuk-tuk too.

We climbed the hills to a baize of green
Where the tea-pluckers plucked Typhoo,
And they showed us the groves where the tea-bags grow,
(Though I'm not sure that this was true).
Then down to the sea and the sun and the sand
And some days with nothing to do,
Laid back in the land where I took a tuk-tuk
And you took a tuk-tuk too.

And now we're going our separate ways
With a million things to do,
And Anna the Banner will flash round the world
And be back at a quarter to two,
But we'll leave behind a little bit here,
And we'll take a little bit too
Of this fabled land where I took a tuk-tuk
And you took a tuk....tuk....too.

Dick Thorman



Sunday Lectionary June & July

June 6th Pentecost 2

Acts of the Apostles 11. 19-30

John 15. 12-17

June 13th Pentecost 3

2 Cor.5.6-10{11-13}14-17

Mark 4.26-34

June 20th Pentecost 4

2 Cor. 6.1-13

Mark 4.35-41

June 27th Pentecost 5

2 Cor.8.7-15

Mark 5.21-43

July 4th Pentecost 6

2 Cor.12.2-10

Mark 6.1-13

July 11th Pentecost 7

Ephes.1.3-14

Mark 6.14-29

July 18th Pentecost 8

Ephes.2.11-22

Mark 6.30-34,53-56

July 25th Pentecost 9

Ephes.3.14-21

John 6.1-21

Of Gender and Colour Blindness

'God is our Mother, and she is black. Discuss.' Not a slogan for Feminists and Black Lives Matter campaigners in 2021, but a question in the General Paper of the Oxford Entry exams in the early 1960s. The answer 'I am an atheist' has the merit of brevity but would gain no marks. The object of the examiners is to see if candidates can produce effective arguments for or against the proposition. I did not answer this question myself but I have always been intrigued by it. By attempting to answer it we examine our own preconceptions.

Polytheistic religions have goddesses: ancient religions, such as those of Greece and Rome, and those today, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Native American religions and traditional African religions. Their sphere is usually love, fecundity, childbirth and the Earth; Greek and Roman religion also had goddesses representing wisdom, hunting, and witchcraft. They were invoked rather as female saints are invoked today. However, in monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, 'religions of the book', the Divinity is firmly male, whether in gender or attribute. This reflects the patriarchal nature of society at the time. Whereas 'mother' is seen to represent the source of life, love, warmth and caring – Mother Earth, Mother Nature, mother country, mother hen, 'father' is seen to be distant, powerful and authoritative. Such is the legacy of two and half thousand years of monotheism that it is virtually impossible to escape from these habits of mind and expression. St Paul attempts to counter this attitude by asserting (*Galatians 3.28*) '...there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus'. By extension, therefore, God can be regarded as above gender. Perhaps we should call God 'The Divine Being' to avoid giving offence in some quarters. (But do people have the right not to be offended? That is another Oxford question.)

Present-day humans of every nation in the world share 99.9% of their genes. We share 90% of our genes with Lucy, the fossil hominid found in Ethiopia, *Austropithecus Afarensis*. She lived 3.2 million years ago and is reckoned to be our universal Granny. The entire population of the modern world is descended from a group of people who left Africa about 100,000 years ago. Every human alive today carries the DNA of just one African woman who lived more than 40,000 generations ago; she has been called the African Eve. Of course, she was not the only woman alive at the time, but her descendants, possibly as few as a fifty in number, with, say, six breeding females, left Africa and over the generations pursued their nomadic way across the world. If these emigrants from Africa were black, it is likely that their god, if they had the concept of a god, was black. Whether influenced by portrayals of God such as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or our inherited cultural DNA, it takes an effort of mind to separate the concept of God from gender.

But, when it comes to the point, does it really matter what colour or gender God is? There are more pressing matters to be concerned about. And when people come out with propositions like the one at the beginning, they are usually saying more about themselves than about God.

David Willington

From the Registers – Eternal Rest

Dick Thorman: 22nd February 1933 – 16th April 2021

Adam and Eve, as told in West Africa

...An' de Lawd he call dis man Hadam. De Lawd He say "Hadam." An' Hadam he say "Yessah!" De Lawd He say "Hadam, you see dis garden? Dey callum Paradise. Everyting for dis garden be for you, but dem mango tree that be for middle of garden, dat no be for you. Dat tree be white man chop; dat no be black man chop. You no go chop 'um or you get plenty pain for belly."

De Lawd He done go back for heaven to hear Gabriel play dem trumpet, and Hadam he go walka walka for garden where everyting be fine too much. Byme-bye de Lawd He came backfor Earth an' go lookum see Hadam. An' He say "Hadam, everything be all right? You like um?" An' Hadam he say, "Yessah, everyting no be bad, but..." An' de Lawd he say "Wassa matta, Hadam? You done catch small trouble?" An' Hadam he say "No, I get no trouble, Lawd sah, But I get no woman. An' de Lawd he say "Ah-ha!!!"

Den de Lawd he make Hadam go sleep for one place, an' he go take small piece bone from Hadam side (dey callum wish bone). He go breath an' woman be. An' de Lawd callum dis woman Heva. De Lawd he wake Hadam an' He say "Hadam! You see dis woman?" An' Hadam he say "Yes, SAH!!! Lawd, I see um she be past stinkfish!" Den de Lawd He go 'way for Heaven, an' Hadam an' Heva go walka walka for garden where dey go play plenty.

One day when Hadam done go catch barracuta Heva done take small small walk an' she meet Shanake. An' Shanake say "Hello, Heva, Ekabho." An' Heva say "Hello, Shanake, Kushayo!" Shanake he say "Was matta, Heva, why you no chop dem fine mango from middle of garden?" An' Heva she say "Ah ha!!! Dat be white man chop; dat no be black man chop. Hadam done tell me catch plenty trouble, plenty pain for belly, if me chop 'um."

An' Shanake he say "Ah Hadam be Bloo' fool. Dat chop be good chop for black man. You go chop 'um, you go like 'um." An' Heva she done chop 'um and she done like 'um. She put dem mango for Hadam groundnut stew. Dey done be plenty trouble for Paradise one time.

Hadam an' Heva dey done savvy dey be naked. Dey no got cloth, so dey go put 'um hat for head. Byme-bye one man dey call Noah come for garden. Dis Noah he be headman for one Eeda Dempsta boat an' he done take Heva sail on lagoon and dey go make plenty humbug for Hadam.

Den de Lawd done come back for Earth, an' he call "Hadam!" But Hadam not for seat. He go fear de Lawd an' gone bush one time. Again de Lawd call "Hadam!" An' Hadam he say with small small voice: "Yessah Lawd!" An' de Lawd say "Close me, Hadam, close me." An' Hadam close de Lawd. De Lawd say "Wassa matta, Hadam? Why you go for bush?" An' Hadam say "I no get cloth, Lawd, so I no want that you done see me naked." An,' de Lawd he vex too much. "What ting dis who tell you you be naked?" Den He say "Ah! Have you done chop 'um mango tree for middle garden?" An' Hadam say "I no chop, Lawd. Dem woman you done make for me, she put for groundnut stew!" Den de Lawd he make plenty palaver, an' he drove Hadam and Heva from Paradise.

Contributed by David Willington

From the Registers – Baptism

Louie Graham Henderson: Born 25/11/20; Baptised 30/05/21

Only in Japan

In early July 1985, I had an important meeting with the Vice President of ANA, All Nippon Airways, Japan's second airline after Japan Airlines. Two colleagues and I arrived by taxi at ANA's beautiful headquarters building in Tokyo.

While I was squirming my way out of a typically tiny Tokyo taxi I felt a ripping sensation adjacent to my derrière. My suit trousers had split at the back, roughly from my belt to between my legs. Our meeting was in five minutes; what could I do? The only option was to walk slowly with little steps (like David Suchet playing Mr. Poirot) and to say my prayers.

We were not sitting at a table which I thought was a pity but in a semi-formal ring of easy armchairs around a low table with flowers in the middle. We sat more or less on one side while the ANA Vice President and two of his team on the other. Suitable greetings were exchanged. The VP's Secretary sat a foot back and behind him.

The VP, Hagami San, spoke perfect English which was a rare thing but he had been a diplomat and an Ambassador. After a few minutes, I noticed he held out his hand rather elegantly at his Secretary and said something to her. She left the meeting but soon returned. Ten minutes later she left the room again, came back almost immediately and nodded at Hagami San.

Smiling sweetly he interrupted our formal conversation with "Mr Noel-Paton, I believe I am right to say I have noticed that the trousers of your very smart suit have ruptured".

"That is correct, Sir," I said "and I am very embarrassed." He replied "Do not be so. I would like you to go with my Secretary into the next room where a Tailor awaits you. He has a pair of trousers for you to put on so that we can continue our meeting. He will then mend your own and we can change back at the end of our session."

This is exactly what happened. At the end, I regained my own trousers to the clapping and laughter of the assembled company. Hagami San said “I am delighted to have been of service to you so early in our relationship which I know will be very successful.”

It was indeed and the trousers lasted me for years thereafter.

Ranald Noel-Paton

Books Galore

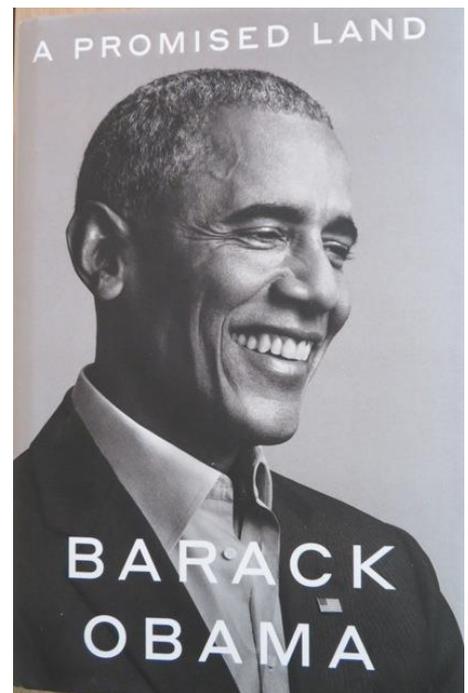
A big book, said the Greek poet Callimachus, is a big nuisance. However, as lockdown seemed to stretch ahead into infinity with bad weather outside, there was comfort in having a large tome to return to each day for reading at length. Since my teens, when I devoured novels compulsively, I have preferred history and biography, as my bookshelf testifies. When I was given Barack Obama’s memoir *A Promised Land* for Christmas, I immediately opened it and finished it at New Year, all seven hundred pages; admittedly there were few distractions.

This is the first volume, which ends with the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011. His baptism of fire as President is the financial crisis of 2008-9, which he tackles resolutely. When he sets out his policies for America, he knows that implementation of them requires all sorts of wheeler-dealing with his own party, let alone the Republicans. (Those who have watched *Designated Survivor* on Netflix will be familiar with the problem.) This is especially true of his tax proposals and Obamacare. To get 80% of his programme through he has to disappoint one group of supporters and surrender 20% to local and sectional interests.

Quite apart from the partisan politics, I found Obama’s account of the mechanisms of American policy and decision making absolutely fascinating. He comes across as very loyal to his staff, whether Cabinet members or domestics, and warm in appreciation of their efforts. He is

generous in his assessment of foreign leaders, even Netanyahu. Michelle and the girls provide a sheet anchor in troubled times. I have read her book *Becoming* and was impressed. The phrase ‘power couple’ fits them perfectly.

Lest he seems too good to be true, he has a pleasing talent for self-deprecation and puncturing his self esteem, for example, describing his weakness for cigarettes. He writes elegantly and maintains one’s interest even when describing the technicalities of taxation. His command of detail is remarkable. He can also stand back and comment philosophically on the demands of leadership. How he will go down in history is another matter. Enoch Powell said that every political career ends in failure and he must be frustrated that he did not achieve more in his eight years of office. He is a person whom in my dreams I would like to meet. I am looking forward to volume two.



David Willington

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 August/September issue by

Sunday 18th July

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