



St John the Baptist
Scottish Episcopal Church
Perth

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August and September 2022

Letter from the Rector

Some thoughts on Pentecost, *Acts 2.1-21*

‘...All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.’

The sound was like the rush of a violent wind. The tongues were as of fire. In fact, the Pentecost experience was a creative force that has rippled through space and time as the Holy Spirit has remained active in the world today. Before that morning, the Jesus Movement was relatively small. Although Jesus had preached to thousands on a hillside, he mostly walked and talked with a smaller travelling band of men and women. As a result, they were all in one place on that fiftieth day after Easter. By the end of the day, the total of Christ-followers would never fit into a single room again. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, calls Pentecost something like the Big Bang, as Christianity radiates outward from this moment of creation.

The impact can be seen in the person of Peter. Fifty days earlier he had denied he even knew Jesus. But after something like wind and fire, the timid disciples became bold evangelists and as they proclaimed the Good News of Jesus, people heard the Gospel in their mother tongue. The Holy Spirit reversed the confusion of the Tower of Babel. The Holy Spirit served as a unifying force bringing separate people together so that they were able to understand the same Good News.

That morning of Pentecost, the first thought of those seeing and hearing the disciples was that they had been hitting cheap wine pretty hard. New wine is cheap stuff, and after all these people were from Galilee; they had not waited for later in the day as an excuse to start drinking.

However, the crowd was on to something, in that the Holy Spirit is always appears in a mighty way. When a friend calls you late one evening crying because their partner has left, when you go with someone to hear the biopsy results, when a colleague learns that his son has been killed in a car accident, when a child calls late at night from jail – in all the times

when you need God to be present, recall that the Holy Spirit appeared one Pentecost when it was time to get to work, and God will not leave you comfortless.

There are many kinds of pain, suffering and anguish in our world today, but there is but one source of healing. We know that the Great Physician Jesus Christ can offer that comfort and healing to others. For many of you, before the week is out, even before this day is over, you will run across someone fighting a battle. Remember this sermon and don't hold back. You don't have to get it right. Just trust the Holy Spirit to honour your good intentions. Share Jesus' love in ways small and big, and God will handle the rest.

While the idea of asking God to use you might be frightening, know that you have done this before. You have gone for a walk or sat with a friend or someone in need. You may have shared a meal or offered a listening ear. You may have cut the grass for a neighbour who was sick. The challenge here is to follow the Spirit's lead and these occasions will become more frequent. While you might not have thought much of it, that doesn't mean it was not deeply significant for the person you were with. This is not something we do for God, but it is God's gift to us as we are there for someone else when they are in need. Whenever the Spirit nudges you, just lean in and trust God to be in the midst of the situation, for that creative fierce that changed the world at Pentecost is still blowing through our lives today.

Dean Graham

Services

Weekly Services

Sunday	8.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
Thursday	11.00 a.m.	Communion, coffee and a chance to chat

Special Services

21 st August	10.30 a.m.	Prayers for Healing
18 th September	10.30 a.m.	Prayers for Healing
25 th September	10.30 a.m.	Harvest Thanksgiving

The Glory of the Lord

‘...and the glory of the Lord shone round about them’ *Luke ii 9*.

Thus the angel appears to the shepherds, announcing the news of Christ’s birth. I have often wondered what this glory was. Was it a physical phenomenon such as an anthelion, ‘a luminous halo projected onto a cloud or fog bank by the sun’ (OED)- a ‘glory’, as mountaineers call it? That would be unlikely because it was night. Or was it a halo*, a later symbol of holiness or sainthood? Or was it a product of the shepherds’ imagination? Or was it just an invention of the evangelist? The nativity narratives are probably embellishments to the story of Jesus’ life, designed, as in other hero narratives of the Ancient World, to give a portent of great things to come.

*The halo is not confined to Christianity. The God Mithras, whose worship was contemporary with early Christianity, is often portrayed with the rays of the sun behind him.

It is not known who Luke was, but it is generally accepted that he was a Hellenised Jew from Antioch. The word he uses for glory is 'doxa', hence Doxology – 'Glory be to the Father etc'. It can mean many things: notion, opinion, judgment, vision, fancy, reputation (the opinion others have of you), splendour. The cognate verb 'doxazo' means hold an opinion. To a Greek, this last notion of splendour is a rare usage. But I think that Luke was using it to convey ideas contained in the Hebrew word Shekhinah, literally 'dwelling' but most often used for the Immanence of God, exemplified by the Holy of Holies in the Temple at Jerusalem. According to Rabbinical doctrine God is also deemed to be present when someone is studying the Torah, when ten are gathered for prayer, when someone is in need, for example in sickness or exile (always a source of great sorrow for Jews down the ages). The presence of God can be interpreted as holy fire or, as at Pentecost, a rushing wind. In *Genesis* i 2 the spirit of the Lord moved over the waters, and the same word, pneuma, is used at *Psalms* cxliii 10, at *Luke* iii 22 (as a dove) and *Acts* ii 4 to describe what befell the disciples.

So 'glory' in its elevated sense is an indication of God's presence, manifested, in Christian belief, by the Holy Spirit. It is also an example of how much of Christian belief arises from roots in Judaism, and cannot be understood fully without it. This was noticed by the Nazis who sought to erase the Jewish presence in Christianity; the Old Testament was omitted from their 'Bible', which was rewritten to portray Jesus as an Aryan hero.

David Willington

Service of Celebration

Flt. Lt. Ernie Holmes DFC

St John's and Dean Graham were proud and pleased to hold this memorable service celebrating the life of our former member Ernie. Ernie had attended Church for so many years as his sight deteriorated, accompanied by his wife Irene, who was included in both eulogies and whom we also remembered as a regular member of the Fellowship.

As so often in such events, the congregation of 120 – at least the St John's members – learned so much about Ernie that they did not know and may, like me, have wished they did. For instance, we learned that at one stage of his Perth life he was working with young offenders in Perth Prison.

He had served nearly thirty years in the RAF, during the war flying Lancasters with the elite 'Pathfinder' squadron, and afterwards flying transport aircraft in the East and the Berlin Airlift and later Shackeltons out of Kinloss.

He became a flying instructor for many years until failing eyesight grounded him. It was fitting therefore that the congregation was welcomed by six smartly turned out students of the East of Scotland Universities Air Squadron with Flt Lt Paul Cunningham, who read John 15: 12-17.



Other guests included Air Vice-Marshal Ross Paterson the AOC Scotland, Gp. Capt. Alastair Montgomery, who read *High Flight* by John Gillespie Magee, Gerrit Nijenhuis the Dutch Defence and Naval Attaché to the UK, the Lord Lieutenant of Fife and Baillie Chris Ahern, representing the Lord Provost of Perth. In the congregation were descendants of Fons van der Heijden, the farmer who harboured Ernie after he had been shot down over Holland. Members of the family were present, including four perfectly behaved great-grandchildren.

A wide-ranging eulogy was delivered by Ernie's son David, and other members of the family made contributions. There were affectionate and humorous recollections by Don Foley, a former student. Devoted carers of Ernie and Irene at Kincarrathie House were also present. Our organist, Robin Miller, played the Dam Busters' March as a recessional. The flower displays, by Liz Thompson and Maggie Corke, were stunning.

Before the service there was a flypast by a Hurricane and Spitfire of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight up and down the Tay over the bridges, which was watched by a large number of people along the banks, most of them hearing the unmistakable sound of the Merlin engine for the very first time.





Judy Norwell



After *Big Brekkie*

June /July **Quest** appeared before we had the final total from our *Big Brekkie*, which, I am delighted to say, raised over £1500! A huge thanks to you all - not just for the pennies, but for the way in which both the Cathedral and St John's worked so well together.

In April and May, the war in Ukraine was headline news. Our first thought was to focus on that catastrophe. But several folk were concerned that other countries were too easily forgotten. So, aware that Christian Aid was supporting the people of Ukraine through the Disasters Emergency Committee's (DEC) Appeal, we decided that Big Brekkie money would be given as 'open' funds for Christian Aid to use where they considered the need greatest.

Afghanistan is one such country, echoed last week, when the Scottish Refugee Council outlined how the country is facing major catastrophe. We know about the recent conflict and rise of the Taliban, especially the denials to women. But for me, the sobering fact was the climate impact: the worst drought in 27 years has helped tip the country into a humanitarian crisis. Food prices are soaring, health care on the brink of collapse. Christian Aid, and its partners on the ground, are giving food packages to thousands and medical resources to women and young children.

Today, Monday July 18, the UK Met Office has issued a red extreme heat warning. What was once 'extremely rare' seems to be becoming more frequent, whether heat and drought, or floods and hurricanes. This is worst, of course, for communities on the frontline of the climate crisis, who have done least to cause it.

May God help us understand that, whether giving pennies to Christian Aid or reducing plastic pollution, our actions add up, and together we can make a difference.

Elaine Cameron

A Prayer for our Environment

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,

that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts

of those who look only for gain

at the expense of the poor and the Earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united

with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle

for justice, love and peace.

Amen.

– Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, 2015

Rhiannon Miller

Eco Group (Elaine Cameron, David Maclehose, Cath Bodrell, Rhiannon Miller)

Sunday Lectionary August and September

August 7th Pentecost 9

Genesis 15. 1- 6, Hebrews 11.1-3, 8-16, Luke 12. 32-40

August 14th Pentecost 10

Jeremiah 23. 23-29, Hebrews 11. 29-12.2, Luke 12.49-56

August 21st Pentecost 11

Isaiah 58.9b-14, Hebrews 12.18-29, Luke 13.10-17

August 28th Pentecost 12

Proverbs 25.6-7, Hebrews 13. 1-8,15-16, Luke 14. 1, 7-14

September 4th Pentecost 13

Deuteronomy 30.15-20, Philemon 1-21, Luke 14.25-33

September 11th Pentecost 14

Exodus 32.7-14, 1 Timothy 1.12-17, Luke 15. 1-10

September 18th Pentecost 15

Amos 8.4-7, 1 Timothy 2.1-7, Luke 16.1-13

September 25th Harvest Festival

Deuteronomy 8.7-18, 1 Timothy 6. 6-19, Matthew 6. 25-33

The Great Tapestry of Scotland

I have recently spent a few days in the Borders with my sister and her husband. While there we took the opportunity to see the Great Tapestry of Scotland – and my mind was blown away! It is vast, 160 panels, and 70 metres long, longer than the Bayeux tapestry, although it is not a tapestry as such, but an embroidery.

It portrays Scotland's history from the beginning of the Ice Age to the present day and aims to distil Scotland's unique sense of herself. I do believe it has really succeeded in that, especially because so many Scots have been involved, not only in the embroidery but in deciding what parts of history should be included or which aspects of our culture interests and achievements should be represented.

It started as the brainchild of Alexander McCall Smith who had seen the tapestry of the Battle of Prestonpans, which was created for the Prestoungrange Arts Festival in 2010. This was designed by Andrew Crummy and he was also chosen to design the Great Scottish Tapestry.

Other people gave historical and architectural advice and the embroiderers were led by Doris Wilkie. Embroiderers were sought out by Doris from all over Scotland, including remote islands. A few have been stitched by only one or perhaps two people, others by a whole group including some children. Even though most are female some husbands and male friends also took



part, such as a surgeon, who, though never having stitched on fabric before, reckoned he definitely had the skills for the job!

What was pointed out to us by one of the excellent guides was that the embroiderers were free to add anything they wished round the sides of the panels, or even on the panels themselves and this of course gives added interest, as well as making it truly 'of the Scottish people'. So there might be sites of local interest, wild flowers or animals, the embroiderers' names, or something small but personal to the embroiderers themselves.

The designs were stunning, and the quality of the embroidery incredible. My sister and I were completely engrossed by the artistry and skill, the colours and the enormous variety of stitches used.

If ever you get the chance to go to see it in its new purpose-built home in Galashiels, (and when the trains are running normally you can do the whole journey by train), do go. I can't recommend it highly enough.

But be warned! You need several hours available, with lunch in between for a rest!

Ruth Harris



Our Man Called Uncle



THE MAN FROM UNCLE



OUR MAN CALLED UNCLE

Most, if not all members of the congregation, will be conversant with the Man from Uncle. In St John's we have a Man called Uncle. Whilst the former was obviously a man of principle, who nevertheless was capable of inflicting violence against those who crossed him, the potential behaviour of our Man called Uncle remains a mystery, but please, look into his eyes and make your own mind up.

So when I was asked by our Man called Uncle to write a note about paper £20 and £50 notes which will cease to be legal tender after September 30 this year, I felt it was probably in the best interests of my future wellbeing to comply.

Now it depends on what paper you read as to how many of these notes are still in circulation. Worryingly, the Daily Telegraph, our Man called Uncle's paper of choice, gives two different figures for the number of these paper notes in circulation. In one part it says some "500,000 the number of paper notes thought to be still in circulation" and in another part "There are still more than 300 million paper £20 notes featuring economist Adam Smith, and 160 million paper £50 notes featuring entrepreneur Matthew Boulton and engineer James Watt, in circulation". That would suggest the value of paper notes out there lies somewhere

between an absolute minimum of £10 million and maximum value in excess of £14 billion.

If you are one of the lucky ones out there holding a fortune in soon to become unusable currency, our Man called Uncle is offering you two options:

Option 1 – Freely give it to St John's.

Option 2 – He will discuss an appropriate exchange rate for the new polymer notes with you.

As attractive as option 2 sounds I should point out that from the rumours I have heard the exchange rate he will likely offer will result in virtually no difference between the two options. I should also advise that he is not the kind of person you want to negotiate with, unless of course you do not value your kneecaps highly, and I should know from the Jordanian Dinar note he passed off onto me.

My advice would be to spend your money before September 30 this year on whatever it is that gives you the most pleasure.

Whatever you decide to do please do not be caught out by the withdrawal of these old paper notes.

PM



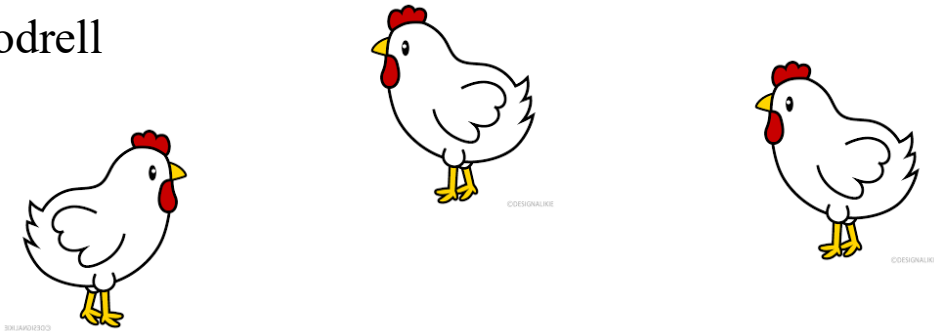
Isebail's Chickens

I have recently returned from a few days on the campsite in Canna – a wonderful island. Having a very small population the residents are versatile people and often fulfil multiple roles. Isebail runs the campsite amongst other things. This puzzle is inspired by Isebail.

Isebail has 15 chickens. She builds 4 runs of various sizes to accommodate them. The 15 chickens are housed so that all 4 runs are used and there are an odd number of chickens in each run. How could this be done?

Note: there are no additional chickens/eggs hatching/chickens eaten for Sunday roast etc.

Cath Bodrell



St John 2.6

A scholarly vicar called Perkins
Used to celebrate wearing white jerkins.
Of the Marriage in Cana
He thought it much saner
For gallons, instead, to read firkins.

DRW

Mission Statement

As a rule, I'm not a fan of Church 'Mission Statements', but this one takes some beating! It is from All Saints Parish Church, Evesham, Worcestershire.

“The Church Today

We meet in the conviction that in Jesus Christ we see the character and passion of God. We gather to learn to see the world as Jesus sees it, to begin to see the image of God in one another and in our community. Our worship is in response to the invitation of God, our mission is to reflect the generosity of God in our town, and to seek the footfalls of the Spirit of God.”

Graham Kingsley-Rowe

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 October/November issue by:

Sunday 18th September



Rockery



Meconopsis



Lily

Cover photograph and photographs of Branklyn Garden
by Joyce Sampson (our Nature Correspondent)

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