



# St John the Baptist Scottish Episcopal Church Perth

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April and May 2023

# Notes From Revd Annie



28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

It's the last day of February and the first week of Lent. Traces of ash from foreheads are gone but the sentiments from the Sunday's Collect linger on. 'As you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save.' The professor at the clergy conference in

Perth, David Noble, (amazingly, he'd been at school with my husband) said the use of 'as and so' is inviting us into 'the ongoing drama of our faith'.

David Noble is a good Irishman and who knows how to use words. I was inspired listening to him. I bought his marvellous book on John's gospel – special price for clergy. Good. He signed and inscribed it in Greek. I only studied Latin at school, but he's offered clues to help with translation. Kind man.

Today, the wind in Crail is from the north bringing mizzle and damp off the North Sea. It's enough to obscure the promised night time Aurora Borealis. But we can't complain. Often the East Neuk is bathed in sunshine when elsewhere is squally. Besides, on my way home along the coastal road, a buck and doe soared over fences in front my car. Their elegance put Nureyev to shame. Breath-taking and a blessing to behold.

The farmers were busy in fields ploughing and planting I know not what, maybe potatoes? One massive machine was a yellow rhino against a grey sea. Then, a dead badger in the ditch, always for me a sad sight. David found an unmarked dove yesterday by the bird feeders, quite dead alas too. Bird flu maybe. Its gentle mate circles and coos, searching.

Lent reflections begin this Thursday followed by a simple lunch. The music is Taize and words from Iona. I hope it's meaningful to those who come along. That thought made me reach for Mary Oliver.

‘Lord, I will learn also to kneel down, into the world of the invisible, the inscrutable and the everlasting. Then I will move no more than the leaves of a tree on a day of no wind, bathed in light, like the wanderer who has come home at last and kneels in peace, done with all unnecessary things, every motion; even words.’ (*Thirst, Coming to God: First Days*)

I love the Lenten season, even when I feel inadequate to its requirements of penitence and forbearance. It's because of all those cheery, tenacious little flowers and the glorious lengthening days. The viburnum at the bothy steps is heavy with blossom and fragrance. But no swim today in icy seas. The tide is right only for a night-time dip. Tomorrow early, yes, when I hope the lonely dove will return, maybe with a new love.

16<sup>th</sup> March. The dip at 8 am yesterday was ferociously chilling. The cold spring air seemed warm afterwards. The nipping fingers, however, needed a hot mug of coffee to wrap around. Our cheery group of friends smiled and praised the glorious dawn and sun's rays we swam in. Some of us think the melting mountain snow has reduced the sea temperature. There seems little chance of the water warming yet as the hills are white again. But in the clear air, adjectives like bracing and optimistic were used to describe the after effect. Many experts on such matters agree the icy plunge is good for the health. We all cling to that.

I was reminded of Cowper's hymn which made me grin, although perhaps I shouldn't:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.



It is now Lent 3. The bishop came last Sunday to licence me as assistant priest at St John's, a church and people I love. The response to the bishop's questions was, 'With the help of God, I will.' It can be no other way. The promise is not only for clergy but for Christians. How else can we navigate demanding Lenten days and find answers to the turmoil of our beautiful, ravaged world? Mind you, when prayer is difficult, there can emerge, thank God, miraculous, unexpected graces. 'Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer utters itself. So, a woman will lift her head from the sieve of her hands and stare at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift.' (*Selected Poems, Carol Ann Duffy. Prayer.*)

At breakfast, a great number of goldfinches swirled into a bare tree by the shed. Stunning. I had forgotten what they are called as a group? A charm. Utterly perfect. But I'm not sure what to do about those magpies, not my favourites. The Isle of May, however, is prepping itself for the arrival of puffins which is cheering. They make people smile. We must try to make the pilgrimage there this year on one of the Anstruther boats. Calm seas please!



Tomorrow is Crail Rowing Club's Cheese and Wine night in the Town Hall. I'm in charge of cheese – a promotion? It will be good to reconnect with friends and acquaintances from the village and beyond. The magnificent Crail Collegiate Church has been scheduled for closure. Perhaps I'll find out more later about this sad tale of the church I came to as a child on holiday. Opportunities for ecumenism perhaps. Watch this space.

# Prayer Group

We have now decided to hold the Prayer Group on the first Tuesday of each month, as this seems to suit the present members best. Of course we could be flexible when necessary. So the next one will be on Tuesday April 4<sup>th</sup>.

I found this poem in a book of prayers and thought others might like it too:-

I got up early one morning  
And rushed right into the day.  
I had so much to accomplish  
That I didn't have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me,  
And heavier came each task.  
“Why doesn't God help me?” I wondered.  
He answered, “You didn't ask”.

I wanted to see joy and beauty,  
But the day toiled on, grey and bleak;  
I wondered why He didn't show me,  
He said” But you didn't seek”.

I tried to come into God's presence;  
I used all my keys at the lock,  
God gently and lovingly chided:  
“My child, why didn't you knock?”

I woke up early this morning,  
And paused before entering the day;  
I had so much to accomplish  
That I had to take time to pray.

Ruth Harris

# Fair Trade Stall

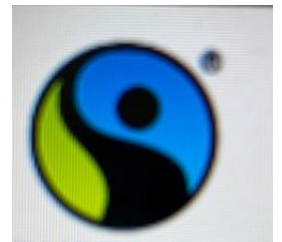
Very many thanks to everyone who supported the eco group's Fair Trade Stall on March 12. We were pleased to sell over £120 of goods.

## **Traidcraft**

Probably many of you previously supported **Traidcraft**. It was the trading arm of a UK-based Fairtrade organisation, selling fairly-traded products. Unfortunately after some difficult years it went into administration in January 2023. Traidcraft reimagined the relationships between producers and consumers, putting justice at the heart of trade. It's no exaggeration to say that the fair trade movement as we know it today would not exist without Traidcraft.

## **Fairtrade Foundation**

The success of the fairtrade movement is part of Traidcraft's legacy: it was a founding member of the **Fairtrade Foundation** ([fairtrade.org.uk](https://www.fairtrade.org.uk)) whose materials we used at our stall. This is the UK organisation which grants a licence to companies for the use of the fairtrade mark on products that meet the Foundation's monitoring and scrutiny standards. Note that this is different from the phrase 'fairly-traded', which refers to products which don't have Fairtrade certification but claim to have been traded in an ethical manner, without scrutiny.



Fairtrade Foundation builds on Traidcraft's pioneering work, continuing to work in partnership with other organisations that Traidcraft helped set up. They work with farmers and labourers to improve their living standards and invest in communities. In this, they also protect our shared environment, contributing to climate justice. As we see this as part of our commitment to Net Zero 2030, the Eco Group may run Fair Trade stalls from time to time. Please speak to either Cath Bodrell or me if you would be interested in assisting in any way.

Elaine Cameron

# Fellowship

At the time the Fellowship report for the February Quest was written, the programme for the February and March meetings was still at the planning stage. Both meetings took place as scheduled with a Games Afternoon being the activity in February with each table playing a different game such that while one table played dominoes another played the word game Boggle. Jigsaws and a board game were also available.

In March there was a good turnout and we were treated to a power point presentation by David and Mary Willington showing photographs of their recent holiday in Costa Rica. Many of us, myself included, realised we were starting with very limited knowledge of Costa Rica which didn't go beyond thinking of it as a central American country in which bananas, pineapples and coffee were grown! We came away realising that it had a similar population to Scotland and landscape just as varied and beautiful as Scotland but in very different ways. It has tropical rainforest, is volcanic but also has areas that are much drier. There is a Pacific and a Caribbean coast but much of the population lives in the middle away from either coast. Clearly for David and Mary a highlight was the exotic and varied wildlife. These photos were a welcome escape from the, unseasonably for March, cold weather we were experiencing in Scotland this year! Thank you, David and Mary, for going to so much trouble, so soon after your return, in putting together such a varied and informative presentation.

Regarding April and May, exact details have still to be finalised but please note that as the second Monday of April is Easter Monday the date of the April meeting has been postponed to the following Monday which is **17<sup>th</sup> April**.

Jean Hendry



# Christian Aid Week

14 – 20 May 2023

Today I read that the President of Malawi says that nearly half his country has been damaged by Cyclone Freddie. It has killed hundreds of people; displaced thousands and become the longest lasting tropical storm. The capital, Blantyre, has suffered devastating landslides.

Christian Aid had selected Malawi for the 2023 Christian Aid Week campaign before they knew just how devastating Cyclone Freddie would be, for Malawi had experienced a deadly cholera outbreak. Now, as flooding and landslides have swept homes and roads away, access to safe water and sanitation are even more difficult. The government has declared a state of emergency.

They grow pigeon pea crops in Malawi. Apparently pigeon peas are not only drought-resistant and soil-revitalising, but also high-protein and low-cost! And, they bake into delicious bread.

Women like Esther grow pigeon peas, and then bake bread which they can sell to support their children, and ensure their grandchildren have a loving future. But Esther used to struggle to make ends meet. Only when she joined the cooperative programme run by



Christian Aid partner, Nandolo Farmers Association, was she able to earn a fair price for her crop. As the climate grows more and more unpredictable, this becomes increasingly important. See website

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>



Are you up to this year's Big Pea Challenge? Do you recall last year's **Big Brekkie**? Although blighted by covid, we raised an amazing £1500. Here are three possible ways to help raise funds this year:

- ✚ A Cathedral and St John's Sponsored 2023 Walk!  
**Wednesday May 10**, a 5 mile pilgrimage from the Tickling Trout at Almondbank to Barossa Place. Concluding feast with pigeon pea buns at 21.1 Barossa Place – all welcome!  
Sponsorship through Christian Aid envelopes or online Just Giving.  
More details after Easter.
- ✚ There is an annual Christian Aid Book Fair in Edinburgh, raising over £15,000 in 2022. The local Christian Aid rep at Kinnoull Church, Gerry Watson, has offered to collect books and take them down to the Edinburgh Book Fair. Dean Graham has agreed that during the month of April, books may be brought to St John's for collection by myself for Gerry. Please phone me if you have any problems. See poster in Threshold.
- ✚ Christian Aid envelopes will be available in church during the month of May.  
Another £1500?

Elaine Cameron

## From the Registers – Eternal Rest

Helen Jean Simpson Forbes: 11<sup>th</sup> January 1933 – 19<sup>th</sup> February 2023

# Celebrations

Tharindu Seneviratne and Hamish Shankland commissioned as Lay Eucharistic Ministers by Bishop Ian on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.



Cakes for birthday boy and girl, presented by Andrew Kinnon on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.



# Sunday Lectionary April and May

## **April 2<sup>nd</sup> Palm Sunday**

Philippians 2. 5-11, Matthew 21. 1-11

## **April 6<sup>th</sup> Maundy Thursday**

Exodus 12.1-4(5-10)11-14, I Corinthians 11.23-26, John 13.1-17,31b-35

## **April 9<sup>th</sup> Easter Day**

Acts 10. 34-43 or Jeremiah 31.1-6, Colossians 3.1-4 or Acts 10. 34-43, John 20. 1-18 or Matthew 28.1-10

## **April 16<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Easter**

Acts 2. 14a,22-32, I Peter 1.3-9, John 20. 19-31

## **April 23<sup>rd</sup> Third Sunday of Easter**

Acts 2.14a, 36-41, 1 Peter 1.17-23, Luke 24.13-35

## **April 30<sup>th</sup> Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 2. 42-47, 1 Peter 2.19-25, John 10. 1-10

## **May 7<sup>th</sup> Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 7. 55-60, 1 Peter 2. 2-10, John 14.1-14

## **May 14<sup>th</sup> Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 17. 22-31, 1 Peter 3. 13-22, John 14. 15-21

## **May 18<sup>th</sup> Ascension Day**

Acts 1.1-11, Ephesians 1.15-23, Luke 24. 44-53

## **May 21<sup>st</sup> Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Acts 1. 6-14, 1 Peter 4. 12-14;5.6-11, John 17.1-11

## **May 28<sup>th</sup> Pentecost**

Acts 2. 1-21 or Numbers 11.24-30, 1 Corinthians 12.3b-13 or Acts 2. 1-21, John 20.19-23 or John 7.37-39

# HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT ST JOHN'S 2023



## ***Palm Sunday***

10.30 a.m. Eucharist with Procession of palms

## ***Wednesday***

7.00 p.m. Stations of the Cross with incense



## ***Maundy Thursday***

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

7.00 p.m. Eucharist with Feet Washing and Vigil ends with compline at 9.00 p.m.



## ***Good Friday***

12 – 3.00 p.m. Good Friday Devotion and Liturgy of the Lord's Passion with the Very Revd Graham Taylor and Revd Annie MacKay Hughes



## ***Easter Sunday***

7.00 a.m. PACT Dawn Service at Quarrymill

8.30 a.m. Holy Communion

10.30 a.m. Eucharist

# Services

## *Weekly Services*

Sunday	8.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
Every third Sunday there will be prayers for healing		
Thursday	11.00 a.m.	Communion, coffee and a chance to chat

## *Special Services*

2 <sup>nd</sup> April	10.30 a.m.	Palm Sunday
5 <sup>th</sup> April	7.00 p.m.	Stations of the Cross with incense
6 <sup>th</sup> April	7.00 p.m.	Eucharist with feet washing and vigil
7 <sup>th</sup> April	12 – 3 p.m.	Good Friday
9 <sup>th</sup> April	10.30 a.m.	Easter Day
18 <sup>th</sup> May	11.00 a.m.	Ascension Day



# Music and Silence

Hymn singing is recorded from the very early days of Christian Church. However, not until well after the Reformation in England was hymn singing by the congregation a common practice, especially in the non-Conformist churches. The likes of Isaac Watts and later the Wesleys supplied the words. The tunes came from folk songs, for example While shepherds watched sung to the tune of On Ilkley Moor Ba' tat, and tunes derived from German chorales. Churches in the Calvinist tradition had already used metrical versions of the psalms. It may come as a surprise to learn that not till 1820 was congregational singing officially admitted by the Church of England. Hymns and appropriate tunes were brought together in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* of 1861, and their range expanded in *The Church Hymnal* of 1906; the editor and major contributor was Ralph Vaughan Williams. Hymn singing is therefore an essential adjunct to communal worship, and it supposes an accompaniment. In rural areas of England, there may well not have been a keyboard instrument and tunes would be played by a small band comprising whatever players were available. The music was lusty and unrefined. I once sang in a Somerset church where there was a serpent, a bass instrument made of wood with a brass mouthpiece and of uncertain intonation.

I have sung in choirs for at least sixty-five years, and I am deeply embedded in the anthems and settings of the English choral tradition. There is a danger arising from that: I tend to listen to and appreciate the music rather than the words. But in our tradition worship is not merely cerebral. It must appeal to the senses, which is why we also have ritual and priests in robes. I was taught that if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well. In my view we don't worship God well by not using the best of our God-given talents. But strict theologians, going back to Augustine, say that nothing we can do will find approval in God's eyes. Few can reach such a level of asceticism.

There is an old joke:

Barber: 'How would you like your hair cut, sir?'

Customer: 'In silence.'

It is very difficult these days to find silence. Everywhere there is noise, of traffic, lawnmowers, aircraft, police and ambulance sirens. In supermarkets, background music is supposed to provide a jolly atmosphere which will encourage customers to buy. Restaurants play soft music to create an intimate atmosphere. It is as though we should never be left to our own thoughts lest they become subversive. Authoritarian regimes boom out speeches by the Dear Leader, accompanied by martial music. I have a particular *bête noir*, the chatter on the radio such as the *Today* programme on Radio 4. I much prefer to breakfast in silence accompanied by *The Times*. Not even Radio 3 is welcome at that hour.

Quaker meetings are silent until someone is moved to speak. But many people find music, such as a Taize chant, an aid to meditation, because it provides the right setting for their thoughts. I have no quarrel with that. But there is a time during the Eucharist, when we wait to receive the Elements, or afterwards, in which we have a period of self-examination through prayer. Personally I find a hymn then a distraction. I am sure this topic is worth discussing.

David Willington



## Book Corner

Lent is a time for personal reflection that prepares our hearts and minds for Good Friday. I was lent (excuse the pun) a book called *At Home in Lent* by Gordon Giles. At the time of writing the book he was Vicar of St Mary Magdalene's Church, Enfield, where my mum was born and brought up.

In the forty chapters covering Lent, he takes household items and enlightens us as to their provenance and how spiritual lessons can be drawn from them. From curtains to towels, from keys to a piano, each chapter was rich in the item's history and then how it can relate to our own faith journey in the light of the Easter Story. The chapter ended with a thought-provoking prayer.

The book says as a result of reading this you might discover that finding God in the normal pattern of life, even the mundane, transforms how you approach each day, moving you from regret and repentance, through resolution and recognition, on to reconciliation, renewal and resurrection.

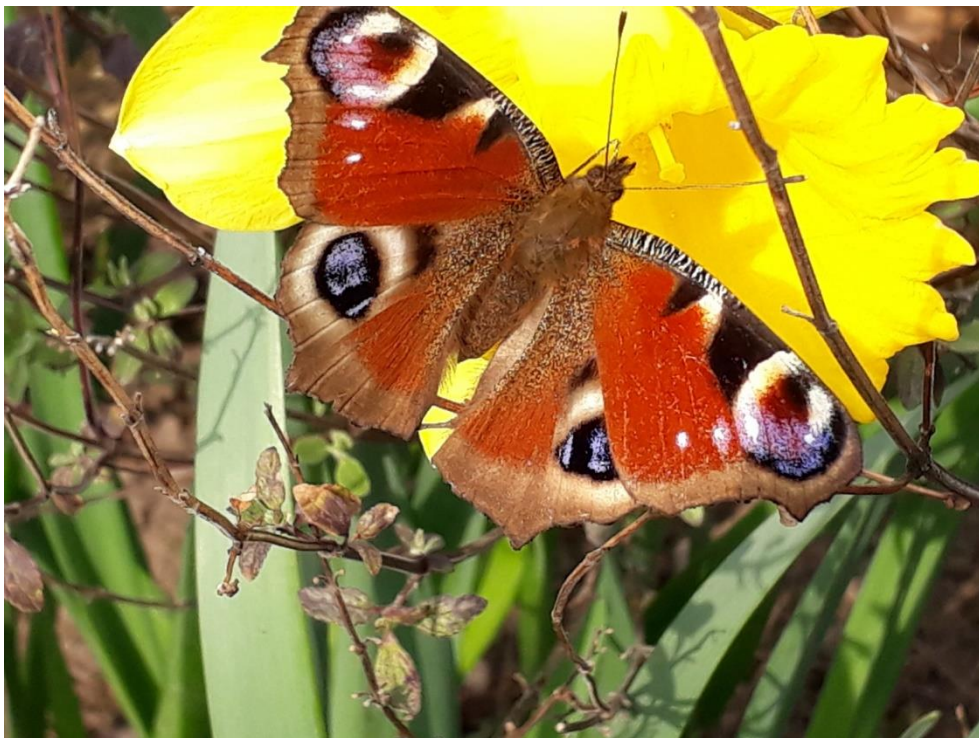
On Easter Day, when we get up and Lent has ended, whatever we gave up we can take up again (wine, Facebook, smoking etc). Whatever we have been reading is at an end, almost. Whatever we took up (giving something or paying it forward), we can lay down (but should we?). The book came at the right time for me and I hope this brief synopsis will encourage you to read it as you continue forward in your faith.

God bless.

Jackie Thomson



# Some nature in Spring



Photographs in this issue by Joyce Sampson

# chansons

Perth's Chamber Choir

## *Chansons des Roses*

Britten, Elgar, Holst, Lauridsen,  
Vaughan Williams, Whitacre



**Areti Lymperopoulou** conductor

**Gordon Murch** piano

**7.30pm Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**St John's Kirk, Perth**

Tickets £16 Concessions £5 (U 25)

At Perthshire Box Office, on the door and online



Buy Tickets

# Contact Information

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<b>Team Convenors</b>			
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Finance	Peter Marsh	575040	
Communications	Eleanor McGourty	634999	
Website/Facebook	Shelley Marsh	575040	
Children	Jean Hendry	623603	
Buildings & Eco	David Maclehose		
Social	Fundraising Group		
<b>Church Activities</b>			
Intercessors/Readers	Liz Thompson	245968	
Flowers	Christine Bracewell	552817	
Magazine	David Willington	813787	
Fellowship	Jean Hendry	623603	
Young Church	Jean Hendry	623603	
Links	Ruth Harris	621379	
Christian Aid	Elaine Cameron	441172	
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In partnership with  
the Scottish Association of  
Retired Anglican Clergy



## From the Editor

Thanks very much for everyone's contributions to this issue. All entries to the editor, Mr David Willington [dwillington@hotmail.com](mailto:dwillington@hotmail.com) for our June/July issue by **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May**