



# St John the Baptist Scottish Episcopal Church Perth

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December and January

# Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

Below you will find my report I have written for our AGM; I do hope it gives you a little flavour of what the year has been for me. None of it of course could be done without the love and loyalty of St. John's. You really are an amazing congregation in so many ways.

As we journey into Advent and Christmas, may you discover once again the love of the Christ Child in your hearts and in your homes.

## **Rector's Report 2023**

I write this report in my ninth year as Rector of St. John the Baptist, Perth, and my second year as Dean of our diocese. It has been a very busy year with services continuing to be held in St. John's at 8.30am on a Sunday with Holy Communion, and a Sung Eucharist at 10.30am. A weekly home Communion service has also been held every Thursday in the Lady Chapel. Numbers have been steady, and good to see some new faces in our congregation. Other special services have been held throughout the year as intimated. Advent and Lent have been marked as usual with services of Compline and a reflection being offered by myself and others. The sacraments of Baptism, Marriage and sadly some funeral services have all been performed throughout the year.

My role as Dean of the diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane has kept me very busy. Visits have been made to parishes throughout the year and registers have been checked and signed off. I have preached at a couple of congregations when asked to, especially when it's been their Patronal Festival. I have attended many meetings with the Bishop, as well as overseen all vacancies and led Vestries through such times. My attendance at diocesan boards and committees, such as Admin Board and Standing Committee have been priority on my list, as well as remaining a full and active member of the Cathedral Chapter.

I continue to enjoy the mixed role of being Rector and Dean, and I am very grateful to those who offer me such support for all of this to happen.

We are blessed with a good number of folks who in both roles demonstrate their skills and abilities to allow the Kingdom of God to grow.

I am full of hope as we step out into a new year with many new beginnings.

Graham S. Taylor.

Rector and Dean. October 2023.

## ***Special Services***

<b>Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December</b>	10.30 am Nine Lessons and Carols
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<b>Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December</b>	9.00 pm Christmas Eve
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<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December</b>	10.30 am Christmas Day Family Eucharist
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# What's the Fuss About Net Zero?

Storm Babet may not have mentioned the changing climate, but she certainly prompted action.

This article is an attempt to briefly answer some of the questions you may have about our journey to net zero. More information may be found on the Scottish Episcopal Church website:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/NZAP-For-GS-2023-Final.pdf>

## 1. What does 'net zero' mean?

Carbon is the chemical backbone to all life on Earth – that's why it is so important. Amazingly, the amount of carbon on Earth now is the same as it's always been.

Nature's way of using carbon and making life habitable, the carbon cycle, worked well for thousands of years, but in the last few hundred years, the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere has not been balanced by its removal. Carbon is mostly released to the atmosphere in greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide, methane and others. Carbon is removed naturally by the growth of trees and plants.

Heat is trapped in the Earth's atmosphere, leading to rising temperatures, rising sea levels, extreme weathers – global warming. The Scottish Episcopal Church is asking us to journey to where *the greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere are balanced by their removal out of the atmosphere*: we have net zero.

## 2. Is this an issue for Christians?

You may well ask why is the church involved? But can we NOT be involved? Are we not called to '*safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the world*' - the Anglican Communion's fifth mark of mission? As Rev David Coleman pointed out, this means caring for all parts of creation: not humans only, but including the variety of all living things, animals, plants and micro-organisms, essential to human



well-being. Without them, we cannot have the healthy eco systems that we rely on for the air we breathe and the food we eat.

The SEC policy is modelled on three Christian values: discipleship, justice and hope. As disciples of Jesus, we are called day by day to question what we do, why we do it, and endeavour to see our actions in the light of Gospel teachings of care and compassion. So we cannot ignore how the unfolding climate crisis is unjustly hitting those who have done least to bring it about, whether we think globally of flooding Polynesian islands, or locally of the poorest and most vulnerable in Scotland. Yet our faith calls us not to be overwhelmed by grief and despair, but to believe through an active hope, taking radical steps day by day to meet the crises of *climate change, nature and biodiversity loss*. Together we aim to create a flourishing future for the whole church. The journey to NZ is a Gospel based journey.

### **3. How do we decide what to calculate?**

At St John's, this will include emissions from on-site use of gas, and purchased electricity, as used in the church, in the Threshold, and in the Rectory. Together these make up all the direct and most of the indirect emissions. A further indirect emission which will be included is clergy/staff work-related travel.

The aim is to move all energy systems to 'clean energy' by 2030. 'Clean energy' is that which has no on-site carbon emissions as a result of ongoing use. This approach parallels that used by other UK Anglican churches.

### **4. How will net zero be measured and then reported?**

The Energy Footprint Analyser, which St John's completed in 2022, gives a useful 2018 baseline from which to judge future emissions.

From 2024 all charges will annually complete the Energy Footprint Tool, which allows them to enter their utility bills and find their 'carbon footprint'. This should ensure consistency. The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol method, the most widely used greenhouse gas accounting standards, will be used to standardise the Provincial reporting framework.

In order to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, it is important to use targets which are ‘science-based’. The Science Based Targets (SBT) indicate how much and how quickly organisations need to reduce their GHG emissions to meet these goals. They recommend that any long-term net zero target should result in 90% of their baseline emission calculations, with the remaining 10% of residual emissions (those which cannot be eliminated) offset by permanent carbon removal and storage.

### **Net Zero 2030 target equation**

And so, when we add together our buildings’ emissions from oil, gas and electricity, along with staff travel related fuel, then subtract verified 100% renewable electricity, and this equals zero, we will have achieved our goal of ‘net zero’.

Is this not worth making a fuss about?

Elaine Cameron (Eco Group)



The North Inch in October's flood (photo by Elaine Cameron)

# Fellowship

What turned out to be the “craft activity” anticipated in the previous Quest for the October meeting became an appreciation of the creativity of a former member, Helen Forbes, who died earlier this year. She clearly had an interest in photography and also in flowers and had taken many beautiful photographs both of single blooms and of views of flowers in gardens and woods and attached them to pieces of card. After her death these had been passed to the Church by her executor along with boxes of envelopes with the idea that we might be able to make a few pounds for charity by selling them. A pile of these cards and various sized envelopes were placed on each table and members spent a pleasant afternoon matching up cards with appropriate sized envelopes while appreciating Helen’s talent which we hadn’t been aware of during her life time. This was combined with tea/coffee and cake. These cards will be seen by others in the congregation as they are likely to appear for sale at various church activities over the coming year.

In November we again had an activity that involved socialising as we sat around our tables. Members had been asked beforehand to come with any portable object that was special to them and could be put in a bag. These were then taken out of the bags and shown to others around the table and conversation then followed as to the background and significance of the various items to the members who had brought them. The items that emerged from the bags included an Eddie Stobart lorry, a couple of whale’s teeth, an old but beautiful item of clothing, an old well-loved small cuddly toy that must have been about 80 years old, an autograph book that went back to the 1940s, a special framed document and various photos of significance to their owners!

It is anticipated that the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December will have its usual Christmas theme with some form of entertainment and seasonal food.

Jean Hendry

# Be Kind to Pharisees

Our newspapers often have stories in which jobsworths insist on the strict application of rules in defiance of common sense. Of course there must be rules; the alternative is chaos. This can be most clearly seen in traffic regulations, the Rule of the Road. When someone asked on what side of the road they drove in Kenya, the reply came: 'The best side.' Kenyan roads are not for the faint-hearted, as I found out. Civil order protects the vulnerable and weak by placing some restriction on everyone's freedom of action. But when rules become the masters rather than the servants, absurdities and injustices arise.

So were the Pharisees petty-minded sticklers about whom clung a whiff of hypocrisy? They were certainly portrayed as being obsessed with man-made rituals, especially those concerned with purity; they seem to have considered the letter of the Law above the Spirit. But context is everything and a closer look may shed a more sympathetic light upon them.

In the C1 AD there were four sects within Judaism: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes and Zealots. They were a minority; most Jews were non-sectarian. The Sadducees were the aristocratic wealthy and priestly elite. They were associated with the Temple and cooperated with the Roman authorities. The Pharisees – the name derives from the Hebrew word for 'set apart' – thought that religious life could exist apart from the Temple and that ritual should not be monopolised by priests. By the application of Jewish Law to mundane activities, the everyday world was sanctified. Jews should be meticulous in small religious duties as well as large ones.

Remember that Judaea for a century had been occupied by Romans, Parthians, Herods (pro-Roman client kings) and Romans again. True Jewish identity was under threat from creeping Romanisation. For example, look at place names: Caesarea, Tiberias. This process the Sadducees acquiesced in. The Pharisees therefore sought to emphasise



their exclusivity and separateness, not only from *goyim* (gentiles) and only half-Jewish Herods but the Sadducees whom they regarded as collaborators. When the Temple was destroyed in AD 70, the Pharisees emerged as the strongest sect within Judaism; the Temple was replaced by study of the Torah as the focus of religious observance. But they faced the growing band of Jewish Christians.

As the Gospels were written after AD 70, they reflect this conflict and set out to portray the Pharisees in a poor light. They appear judgmental about human failings, whereas Jesus talks of God's love and forgiveness. They appear as fall-guys in Jesus' teaching. Whether deliberately or not, the Gospel writers misrepresent some aspects of Jewish Law. For example, a Jew may violate the Law at any time to save a life. There is no Rabbinical source for the injunction against healing on the Sabbath. Maybe the Pharisees were ostentatious in the profession of their faith, for example the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, and no doubt they were self-righteous. This did not prevent them from doing good works, giving alms to the poor and other eleemosynary duties. Who can blame them from wanting to preserve, in adverse circumstances, their identity as the Chosen People in God's covenant originally made with Abraham and refreshed by Moses? They do have a point.

David Willington



Autumn photographs by Joyce Sampson

# Sunday Lectionary December and January

## **December 3<sup>rd</sup> First Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 64.1-9, 1 Corinthians.1.3-9, Mark 13.24-37

## **December 10<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 40. 1-11, 2 Peter 3.8-15a, Mark 1.1-8

## **December 17<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11, 1 Thessalonians.5.16-24, John 1.6-8,19-28

## **December 24<sup>th</sup> Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve**

2 Samuel 7.1-11,16, Romans 16. 25-27, Luke 1.26-38,

## **Christmas Eve 9 pm**

Isaiah 52.7-10, Hebrews 1.1-4(5-12), John 1.1-14

## **Christmas Day**

Isaiah 62.6-12, Titus 3.4-7, Luke 2.(1-7)8-20

## **December 31<sup>st</sup> First Sunday after Christmas**

Isaiah 61.10-62.3, Galatians 4.4-7, Luke 2.22-40

## **January 6<sup>th</sup> Epiphany – These readings to be used on 7<sup>th</sup> January**

Isaiah 60.1-6, Ephesians 3.1-12, Matthew 2.1-12

## **January 7<sup>th</sup> First Sunday after Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord**

Genesis 1.1-5, Acts 19,1-7, Mark 1.4-11

## **January 14<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday after Epiphany**

1 Samuel 3.1-10(11-20), 1 Corinthians 6.12-20, John 1.43-51

## **January 21<sup>st</sup> Third Sunday after Epiphany**

Jonah 3.1-5,10, 1 Corinthians 7.29-31, Mark 1. 14-20

## **January 28<sup>th</sup> Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

Deuteronomy 18.15-20, 1 Corinthians 8. 1-13, Mark 1.21-28





# Christian Aid

## Middle East Crisis Appeal

Christian Aid has a long history of working in the land we call Holy, with Palestinians and Israelis, with Christians, Jews and Muslims; working with people who are committed to building a just peace for all, willing to do the hard work of community building and peace building.

Val Brown, Head of Christian Aid Scotland, had the privilege of visiting Israel and the West Bank several times. She writes, *'I am continually moved and impressed by the resilience and courage of people working under enormously difficult circumstances to build peace: those living under the rigors of daily occupation, water shortages, movement restrictions and everyday injustices who refuse to be enemies and rather put their energy into supporting those living with even fewer social and economic opportunities in order to keep hope alive.'*

Christian Aid's [Middle East Crisis Appeal](#) is providing much needed supplies to the people of Gaza who are living in unimaginable conditions.

## Christmas Appeal

It's difficult to shift our focus from the Middle East, even as we turn our thoughts to Christmas. But there is amazing partner work that needs to be celebrated and sustained.

So this year's Christmas Appeal focuses on northern Bangladesh, where young women are taught to use the internet to market and sell their products, giving them viable sources of independent income, enabling them to stay in education and avoid marrying young.

Kakoli Khatun (21) is one of those to have benefitted. Following training she's now selling beautiful hand-crafted quilts online. She has recruited and trained nine other local women to join her business.



She's passionate about preserving *nakshi kantha*, the centuries-old Bengali art of quilt making.

Kakoli is now earning a regular income: "I didn't have any dreams a few years ago because I didn't have any money to do anything. To do something, I had to ask for money from my brothers and father. Today, I have a dream to grow this business, so I can support my parents."



Dean Graham has agreed that we can have a 'Christian Aid Mince Pie Sunday'. This means that Sunday December 10, there will be a Christian Aid focus, with mince pies replacing the usual biscuits and cake; instead of a retiring collection, our coffee donations will go to Christian Aid's Middle East Crisis Appeal, or to the Christmas Appeal. You will be able to choose which you prefer.

Elaine Cameron



# Eco Resolutions



The New Year with its promise of a fresh start always feels a good time to think about making changes in our lives.

St John's has a plan and is moving towards the Scottish Episcopal Church target of being Net Zero by the year 2030 but the hope is that all of us, as part of the church, will be attempting to be Net Zero in our own lives.

The SEC plan has 10 areas for action – the 10 'petals'. They may give a structure to help each of us think about actions we can take when the big picture feels overwhelming.

The first five along with some ideas are listed below:

## 1. Energy Efficiency Improvements

- Have you switched to LED lighting throughout your home?
- Increased loft insulation is also likely to be a cost-effective way of reducing energy consumption.
- Now would be a good time to start researching heat-pumps and/or solar panels.

## 2. Clean Energy

- Is your electricity supplier using 100% renewable sources? It's easy to switch if not. 100 Green, Ecotricity, Good Energy and Octopus Energy have come out on top based on an analysis of their green credentials, according to *Which?* research (Oct 2023).

## 3. Thriving Biodiversity

- Deforestation is happening on a massive scale with an impact on biodiversity. Agriculture is the main reason and particularly beef production. Could you reduce your meat consumption? Try having a few veggie days each week!

- Switching your toilet roll to one made from bamboo or recycled cardboard will also reduce the number of trees cut down.

#### 4. Active Travel

- Cycling may not be suitable for everyone but maybe you could make more use of the bus service or car-share for some local trips.
- Reducing air travel may be a big sacrifice for some but a vital step if we are to reach Net Zero.

#### 5. Zero Waste

- The new 'grey bin' should help us all to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by making sorting easier.
- Buying less stuff in the first place is the most effective strategy especially trying to avoid items with unnecessary packaging.

Cath Bodrell (Eco Group)

## Update on Sales

### CALENDARS 2024

Many thanks to those who have purchased the Perth Kinnoull Rotary Charity Calendar 2024.

As of mid-November, 37 had been sold raising £275 for St John's and its witness in the community of Perth. There are still, however, a number of copies available and they will be at the back of the Church up till the end of the year. Any donations should be given to Bishop Bruce.

Thank you once more to all who have purchased calendars so far.

Bishop Bruce

# Congratulations!

Tharindu moved to Perth with his new wife Achini from Sri Lanka last year to complete his Masters in Management at Dundee University, following a successful career in banking. He then joined St John's congregation and is now an active member. Working and studying while settling into a new country far from home, he met every challenge with his constant smile and easy manner.



He had his graduation ceremony on 17th November and his beaming smile says it all. Well done, Tharindu!



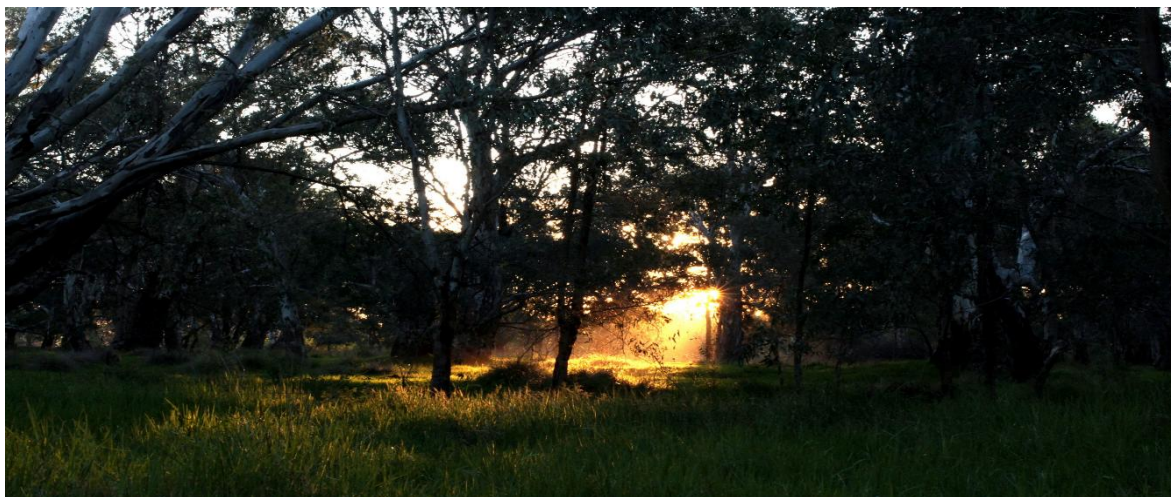
# British Ambassador to Ukraine



Many of you know that Ruth and Fergus's son Martin Harris CMG OBE has recently been appointed British Ambassador to Ukraine. While not, perhaps an enviable posting, it reflects well on Martin that he was selected for what must be a particularly difficult job.

Martin is pictured above with President Zelensky in September.



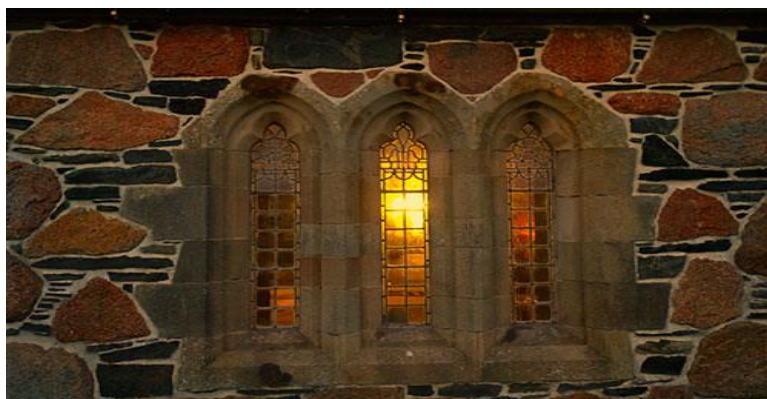


*St John's Episcopal Church*  
*Advent Reflections with Compline*  
*'The Way of Love'*

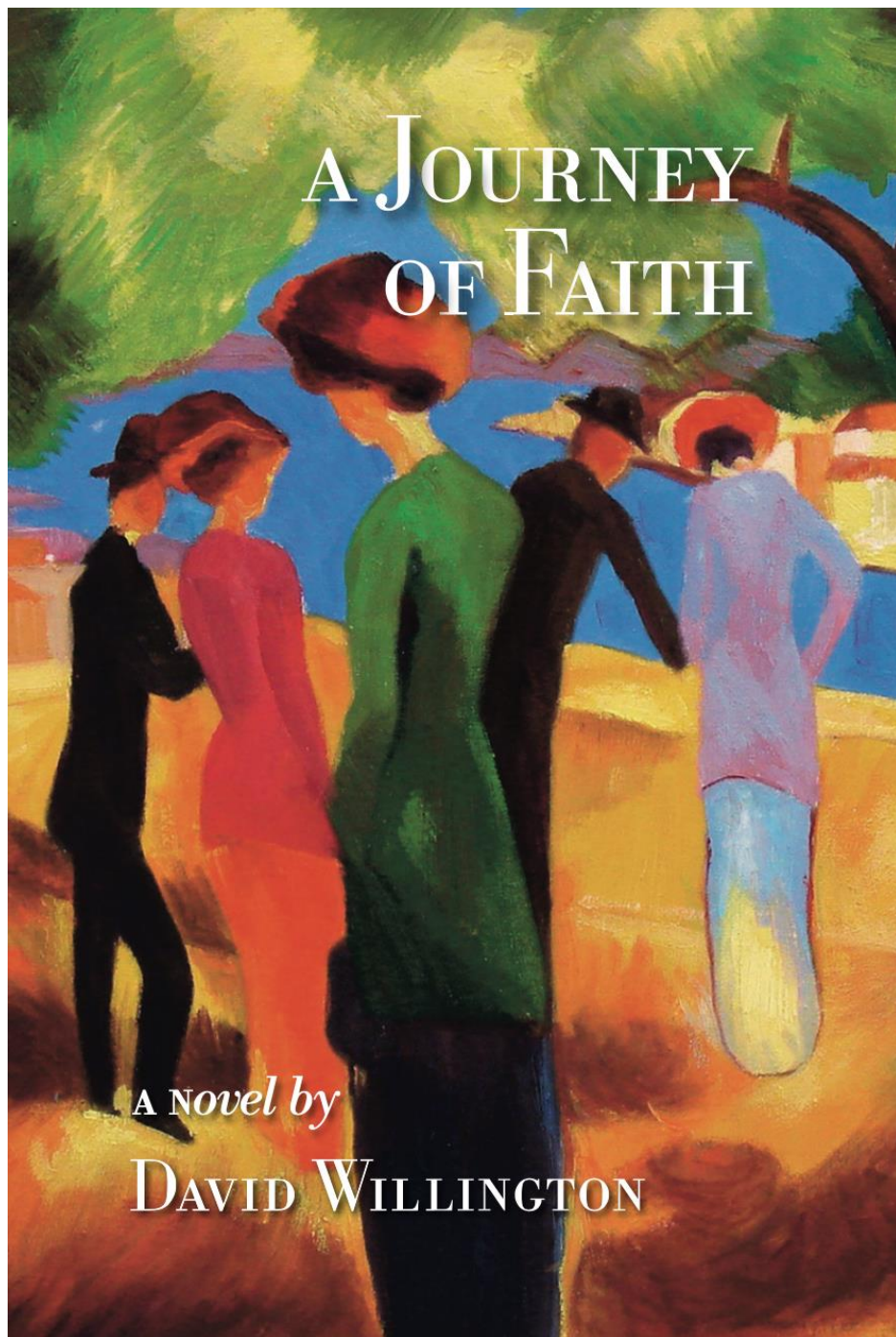
*The Annunciation: Saying "Yes" to the Journey*  
*Mary and Elizabeth: Journeying with Family and Friends*  
*John the Baptist: Journeying with Community.*

*Wednesdays, 6<sup>th</sup>., 13<sup>th</sup>., 20<sup>th</sup>., December 2023 at 7pm*

*All are welcome*







David Willington's latest novel, set around the First World War, is on sale in the church for £10, which will go to church funds. Copies can be signed by the author.

**chansons**

Perth's Chamber Choir

# *Gloria*

**Vivaldi Gloria**

**Haydn Little Organ Mass**

**Areti Lymperopoulou** conductor

**Howard Duthie** organ

**Colleen Nicoll** soprano

**Ulrike Wutscher** mezzo

**Instrumentalists from the City of Perth Sinfonia**

**7.30pm Saturday 16th December**

**St John's Kirk, Perth**

**Tickets £17.50 (inc. £1.50 booking fee) Concessions £5 (U 25)**

**At Perthshire Box Office, [www.chansons.co.uk](http://www.chansons.co.uk) and on the door**



# A warm welcome across Perth and Kinross

St. John's Episcopal Church, Princes Street,  
with Bethany Christian Trust

**WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS 12.30 - 3 P.M.**

Free refreshments, Free Wifi, help and advice.



[www.pkc.gov.uk/warmspaces](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/warmspaces)

## Church Flowers 2022/23

The last year has seen the return to full normality post Covid. As usual there is a list at the back of church for anyone to sign up to provide/arrange flowers to commemorate loved ones, special dates or anniversaries. Donated flowers can be arranged by the donor or one of the 'team'. Regrettably the number of donations has dropped compared to pre-Covid and this will unfortunately have repercussions.

Additional flowers have been arranged for all major festivals, Christmas, Easter, Patronal and Harvest Festival.

The size of the team has increased making major festivals more manageable but anyone who is willing to help will be most welcome.

I would like to thank all the team for their help and support during the year and members of the congregation for their generous donations of time, foliage and money. Without all this help there would be no flowers in church each week.

Christine Bracewell

## From the Registers – Eternal Rest

Eric Thomas Capewell: 13<sup>th</sup> December 1931 – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

## 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 February/March issue by **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024**

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<b>Team Convenors</b> Ministry Finance Communications Website/Facebook Children Buildings & Eco Social	Alan McPherson Peter Marsh Eleanor McGourty Shelley Marsh Jean Hendry David Macle hose Fundraising Group	552337 575040 634999 575040 623603	
<b>Church Activities</b> Intercessors/Readers Flowers Magazine Fellowship Young Church Links Christian Aid PACT Threshold bookings	Liz Thompson Christine Bracewell David Willington Jean Hendry Jean Hendry Ruth Harris Elaine Cameron Jean Hendry Eleanor McGourty	245968 552817 813787 623603 623603 621379 441172 623603 634999	<a href="mailto:office@episcopal-perth.org.uk">office@episcopal-perth.org.uk</a>

[www.scotland.anglican.org](http://www.scotland.anglican.org)

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