



St John the Baptist Scottish Episcopal Church Perth

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August and September 2025

Rector's Reflections

Dear Friends in Christ,

I hope you have been enjoying the lovely sunshine, these long summer days have been glorious this year. It's been lovely opening up St. John's again over the summer, both to visitors and locals alike. I am incredibly grateful to all of you who have taken part in this. What a lovely reflective space to offer to the community of Perth and beyond.

My grateful thanks to the newly established communications group, they have all been working hard. I'm indebted once again to all of you who have volunteered to help distribute some of the new literature to welcome others to our church.

August is looking like a really lovely month for St. John's. It's been rather a while since we've had any weddings, let alone three! Blessings and much love to the happy couples. May they treasure this special moment in our church for many years to come.

The sound of the organ is back, and so nice hearing such positive comments once again. I am very grateful to all who made this happen, it feels like our worship is enhanced even more yet again.

As I have reflected, given thanks, prayed through some challenges of late, I came across this lovely poem in my collection. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have discovering it once again.

Moonlight, Summer Moonlight by Emily Jane Brontë

*'Tis moonlight, summer moonlight,
All soft and still and fair;
The solemn hour of midnight
Breathes sweet thoughts everywhere.*

*But most where trees are sending
Their breezy boughs on high
Or stooping low are lending
A shelter from the sky.*

*And there in those wild bowers
A lovely form is laid;
Green grass and dew-steeped flowers
Wave gently round her head.*

I hope wherever you have been over the summer months so far, you have been able to bring the love of St. John's family with you on your travels.

Much love,

Dean Graham

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 Service

28th September 10.30 a.m. Harvest Thanksgiving

Front cover picture:

Roses, Patricia Noel-Paton (Gardening Correspondent)

Choosing Hymns for Sundays

With the new organ installed the complaints about the hymns have inevitably started and I thought this was a good opportunity to share a little about the process for choosing hymns.

Graham and I meet about every six weeks to choose hymns for the next period. But it's often a little less regular than that as we find we're both quite busy and things keep coming up!

We have a variety of indexes that suggest suitable hymns for given criteria. The most useful of these is *Sunday by Sunday* from the RSCM which suggests hymns, for a range of hymn books, that fit the Sunday readings.

These are the factors that we consider:

1. Season or special day (Christmas, Patronal Festival, Sea Sunday etc)
2. The readings
3. Requests
4. How frequently have we sung a given hymn recently
5. Balance and position
6. Is it in our hymn book

Let's look at each of these in turn.

Season is the most important consideration. We want Christmas carols at Christmas, but not at other times of year. That seems obvious but applies to a variety of less obvious times of year. Generally seasonal hymns are the easiest to pick, and I have notes, for example, for Easter going back several years that state "as last year". There are also hymns that we consider obligatory on certain Sundays. For example, we always sing *St Patrick's Breastplate* on Trinity and *For The Healing of the Nations* at Remembrance.

If season doesn't apply, or applies more broadly (such as Lent) we look at the readings for the week. Sometimes this produces an abundance of hymns, and many passages of scripture have directly inspired hymns (think of all the versions of Psalm 23!), but for others we have to take the theme of the day rather than chapter and verse. (Some weeks can be very hard to pick hymns for. I think the passage of Jesus drowning the herd of swine is as hard to sing as it is to preach!)

Requests come in next. You can request hymns either by speaking to me or Graham, or by writing the on the sheet at the back of church. We go through all the requests we get and try and fit them in as appropriately as we can. To date we have a 100% success rate of including requested hymns in our worship. Do bear in mind that hymns are picked up to 2 months in advance so if you want something on a specific date please get it in early!

Requests supersede some of our other criteria. We will try to include them even if they are not fully appropriate to the readings. Also, quite a few of the requests we get are for repeat hymns, so if a hymn comes round again sooner than expected there's a strong chance it was a request.

We do try not to sing the same hymn too often. I have a list of all the hymns we've sung going back to 2016 and this is consulted to make sure that we're not singing the same thing over and over again.

How soon we can sing a given hymn again is a bit more of an art. For example, we sang *Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven* on 13 July and the last time we'd sung it before then was 12 January. Over six months is definitely OK. What about 3 months? Maybe. A week? Nope! (This can be quite annoying because often the readings carry on the same theme for several weeks and so our indexes often suggest the same hymns two or three weeks running!). Often frequency will be a deciding factor between two suitable hymns, where we'll pick the one we sang less recently. On the other hand, if we have one hymn that's really appropriate for a given slot then maybe it will come round a little sooner than otherwise.

It's important to note that in assessing frequency we only count regular Sundays. This is because the irregular services often have different attendances and are more strongly themed. So, for example, we sang *When I Survey The Wondrous Cross* on both Palm Sunday and Good Friday. I think that was appropriate.

Next we consider what sort of hymn we have and want for each slot in the service. This can be complex and here are some of the factors for each position:

Introit: often wants to be a big sing, needs to introduce the service.

Gradual: should be shorter, a good spot to relate directly to the readings.

Offertory: needs to be longer so that we can cover both parts of the offering.

Communion: needs to be much more reflective and often directly relates to communion.

Recessional: another slot for a big sing, something uplifting to end with.

We also try and balance traditional and modern hymns. We weight this quite strongly towards traditional hymns but we do try and include some modern ones. I'm always amazed at how broad our church is in our hymn preferences. I well remember one morning after playing *Shine, Jesus, Shine* a retired member of the congregation coming up to me and telling me it was her favourite hymn, but the astute among you will notice that I try and schedule that particular hymn in on days when I'm away! And I have certainly fielded complaints about other member's requests. But I take the view that **if I like all the hymns I play we're doing it wrong!**

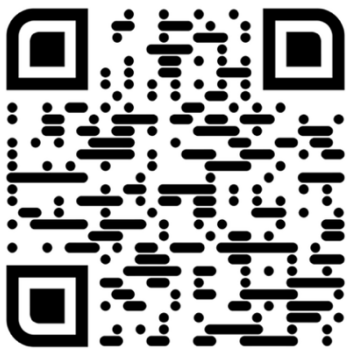
Lastly we do, generally, want the hymn to be in our hymn book. Printing the hymn is always more difficult, as is juggling different bits of paper. In particular we do try, unless we're printing all the hymns, to limit out of book hymns to one per Sunday – and not every Sunday.

Does this always work? No, of course not. We make mistakes and we overlook things, but overall we try to choose a broad range of mostly good hymns which support our worship. However, we always love getting requests so if you do have any suggestions please do let us know!

Robin Miller



Helpful QR Codes



St John's website



St John's Facebook page

“Thy Justice, like mountains high-soaring above”

Justice is a very complicated idea. It took Plato ten books of the *Republic* to define what it is. We hear of Social Justice, Climate Justice, Gender Justice, Restorative Justice and other formulations. When we analyse what is actually meant, we find that the word ‘Justice’ is often used as a ‘hurrah’ word to give moral weight to what is being proposed. It does not add materially to the argument and may well obfuscate clear thinking on very difficult issues. ‘Natural Justice’ is a term of art that denotes specific procedural rights in the English legal system, arising out of Common Law, for example the rule against bias and the right to a fair hearing according to Law. When Trades Unions call for Justice for the workers, they are really asking for more pay. Unless the word is used carefully, Justice leaves many questions unanswered and Justice for one can mean Injustice for another.

It is a very ancient hope that Injustice will not prosper, that sooner or later the gods will punish wrongdoing and that there is an inexorable reckoning for the evil that we have done. This may not be apparent to victims at the time but it is a comforting thought. In Old Testament terms the vengeance of God is much to be feared. However, the word ‘Justice’ does not appear in the New Testament. Instead we are asked to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. How to interpret these two commandments exercises priests and politicians as well as our own consciences. A fundamental belief of Christianity is that Christ died for our sins: ‘And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.’ *Isaiah* 53.6. We often see the poster ‘Christ came to save sinners’. Christians believe that those who genuinely seek forgiveness for their sins will be forgiven. We pray that we are not brought to the time of trial. When the rap sheet of my sins is presented before the Almighty, I hope that instead of Justice I will receive Mercy.

David Willington

Sea Sunday



Dean Graham with Jeremy Hawkins, the Chairman of Mission to Seafarers, Scotland



Congratulations!



Tharindu and
Achini Severiatne
with their son
Jayden Thaveesh,
born 2nd July,
weighing 7lb 6oz

....and visited by Dean
Graham. He had his cross
from Nana in Sri Lanka
blessed before being put on.



Lectionary August and September 2025

August 3rd Pentecost 8

Hosea 11.1-11, Colossians 3.1-11, Luke 12.13-21

August 10th Pentecost 9

Isaiah 1.1,10-20, Hebrews 11.1-3,8-16, Luke 12.32-40

August 17th Pentecost 10

Isaiah 5.1-7, Hebrews 11.29 – 12.2, Luke 12.49-56

August 24th Pentecost 11

Jeremiah 1.4-10, Hebrews 12.18-29, Luke 13.10-17

August 31st Pentecost 12

Jeremiah 2.4-13, Hebrews 13.1-8,15-16, Luke 14.1,7-14

September 7th Season of Creation 1

Jeremiah 18.1-11, Philemon 1-21, Luke 14.25-33

September 14th Season of Creation 2

Jeremiah 4.11-12, 22-28, 1 Timothy 1.12-17, Luke 15.1-10

September 21st Season of Creation 3

Jeremiah 8.18 – 9.1, 1 Timothy 2.1-7, Luke 16.1-13

September 28th Harvest Thanksgiving

Deuteronomy 8. 7-18, 1 Timothy 2. 1-7, Matthew 6. 25-33

The Stranraer Skiffie World Championships

The week 6th - 12th July, the World Skiffie championship in Stranraer welcomed crews from around the world to compete, connect and celebrate the unique sport of St Ayles Skiffie coastal rowing. At the heart of coastal rowing lies a sense of community and connection.

In 2009, inspired by the theme of community involvement and participating in the historical tradition of Fife miners' rowing and sailing regattas, Alec Jordan and the Scottish Fisheries Museum Trustees in Anstruther developed a boat to engage communities in this way. Although the design was based on the traditional [Fair Isle](#) skiff, today the boats have been redesigned and called St Ayles Skiffs. They are now a 4 oared boat with a cox.



The concept is an enormous success. Over 250 boats have been built mostly by communities around the Scottish coast but increasingly in England, Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, France and New Zealand, many of whom came to Stranraer.

The championship racecourse was 2000 m. out and back on a multi lane course on the changeable waters of Loch Ryan. There were multiple categories based on age and gender which allowed many to participate.

David and I rowed in the 60+ and the 280+ in four races over three days. The categories are based on the total age of the rowers in the skiff. As you can imagine, we were very popular as our combined ages allowed for younger rowers to make up the total number of years in our skiff!! It was the happiest and most rewarding sporting event we've been involved in for many, many years – fun, exhausting and although no medals were won by our club, it was hugely rewarding to have been part of this global sporting community! Let me know if you feel inspired to have a go! There will be a club near you!

Annie MacKay Hughes



Cistus

Patricia Noel-Paton



Celebrating 80 years in style!

As you know from last month's *Quest*, a small group of Christian Aid church representatives are planning an extra special celebration of the charity's 80 years!

Partly to celebrate all the work done in and around Perth for Christian Aid, over many years, you are invited to a Big Birthday Brekkie on Saturday 30th August from 10-12 noon in the **North Church Hall** – where we used to hold C Aid coffee mornings.

Sponsoring walks and cycle rides; enjoying coffee mornings and quizzes, delivering envelopes and signing petitions are some of the ways in which you have fundraised and campaigned generously for Christian Aid, for many years. Our Big Birthday Brekkie is a thanks to all of you, a time to share stories and, much more!

Val Brown, Head of Christian Aid in Scotland, will reflect on their countless challenges to fight poverty and injustice, and offer support to communities in crisis - like the farmers in Guatemala, whom many of you generously supported this year. **Marjorie Clark** and **John Wylie** will share highlights of their time with C Aid, constantly striving to make our world a fairer place, more in line with the world we believe God wishes for everyone.

There will also be stalls: Fairtrade, a second hand book stall, and a display of photos outlining Christian Aid's history, both global and local. Come and see if you can find yourself enjoying our last Big Brekkie at St Ninian's, or walking from Tickled Trout to Barossa Place! And of course there will be a celebration cake!

Do come and enjoy the festivities – bring family and friends, and come and go as you want! The event is free, but donations are welcome.

We'd be especially grateful if you think you could help in any way: welcoming folk; preparing & serving food; looking after stalls – just some of the many tasks on the day to help it run smoothly.

Also, it would help with catering if we have some idea of how many hope to come, so please look out for the sign-up sheet at back of church.

If you have any questions, or ideas for the event, please do speak / phone or email me.

Elaine.ging@gmail.com 07977 416250

Elaine Cameron

Interesting questions – delicious food – prizes – fun

QUIZ NIGHT

7pm Friday 12 September 2025

**Letham St Mark's Church
Rannoch Road, Perth, PH1 2HH**

Who can come along?

Anyone is invited to enter teams of up to 4 people. Friends, workmates, families, study groups, sports teams, or turn up by yourself and make a team with someone you didn't know before.

Price?

£8 per person, including refreshments,
payable on the night.

Bring-and-buy plants / produce



Perth Big Brekkie

Saturday 30 August 2025

10am-12 noon

Perth North Church

PH1 5PB



Amelia, cooling off in the river with her son Lazaro, 8, and Yakelin, 4.

Celebrate 80 years of supporting Christian Aid in and around Perth.

Light breakfast available from 10am... and birthday cake!

Activities from 10:30, including a presentation from

Val Brown, Head of Christian Aid Scotland.

Learn more about the work of the organisation, past and present.

Fair trade stall, photo displays, book stall, prayer wall.

Eco Group – Save the Dates

The Eco Group is planning a couple of discussion sessions on ‘Christianity and Climate Change’ to be held during the Season of Creation. We hope that these will be based on a series of short films produced by Tearfund and featuring talks by the renowned Christian climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe. The dates for these are the 17th and 24th September – you are welcome to either or both.

We also plan to have a film evening on 8th or 9th October (date to be confirmed) when we hope to show “2040”. The film looks at the effects of climate change over the next 20 years and what technologies that exist today can reverse the effects.

It would be lovely to see you there!

Cath Bodrell (Eco Group)



From the Editor

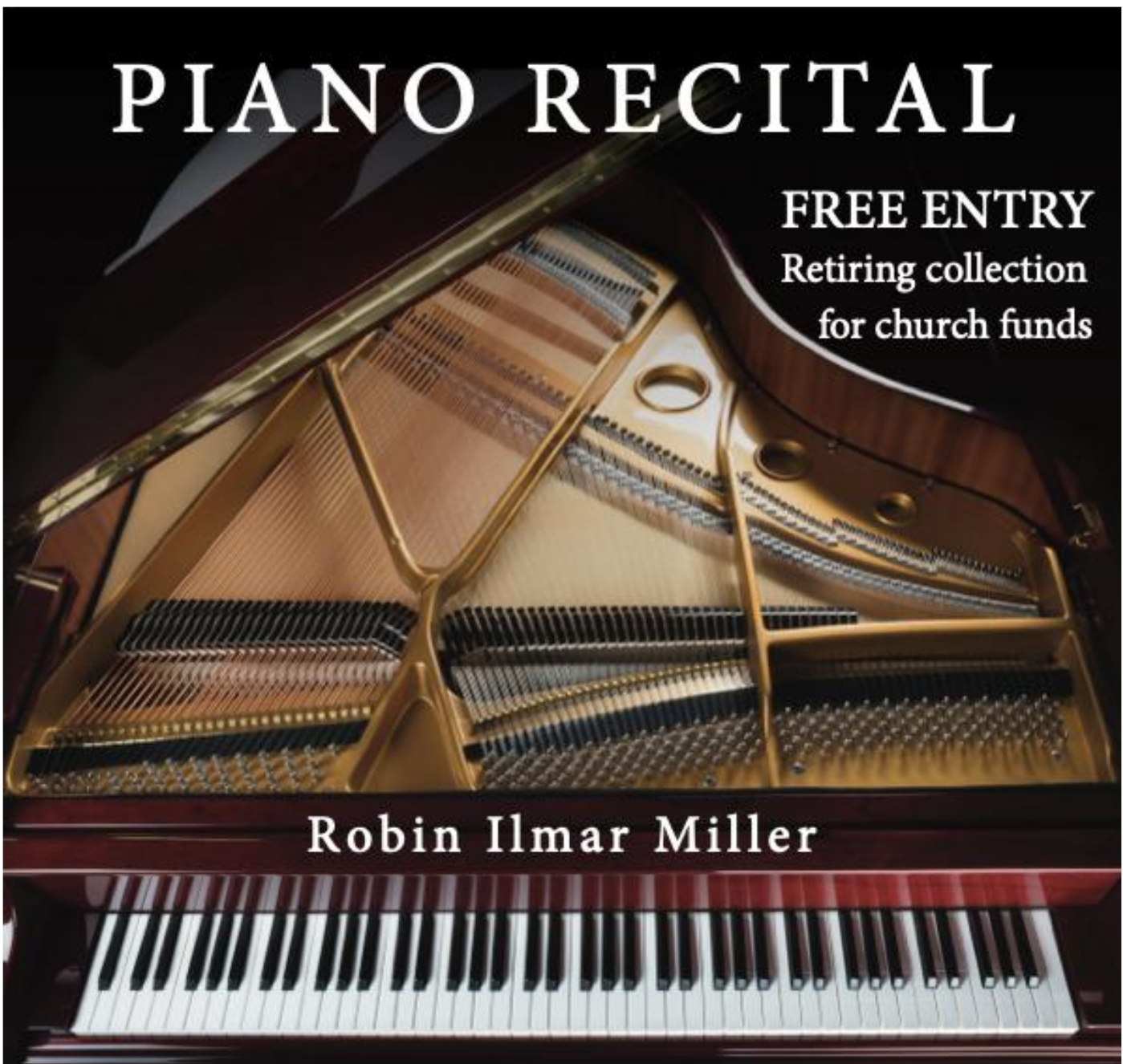
Thanks very much for everyone's contributions to this issue. All entries to the editor, David Willington dwillington@hotmail.com for our October & November issue by **Sunday 14th September**

**Just a reminder that there is a tin at the back of the Church
if you wish to donate towards the costs of
producing *Quest***

PIANO RECITAL

FREE ENTRY

Retiring collection
for church funds



Robin Ilmar Miller

5:00PM SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

St John's Episcopal Church Princes Street Perth

Beethoven

Appassionata

Ilmar

Shadow out of Time
(World Première)

Medtner

Idyll
Prelude (hymn)

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