St John the Baptist
Scottish Episcopal Church
Perth

QUEST



October and November 2026

Editorial

When you read this, all being well Dean Graham should be fully recovered from his eye operation and able to resume his ministry. For several weeks he was incommunicado, to avoid infection. In his absence Bishop Bruce took over some pastoral duties. Mariusz took services as usual. We have welcomed Bishop Ian on one Sunday and on another the Revd Canon Carrie Applegarth. At that service Alice Willington preached. Alice is an ordinand in the Diocese of Oxford and will complete her training in June next year. We thank them for all their efforts in helping to maintain our services.

Farmers in Perthshire have been able to bring in the harvest without the threat of heavy rain. Unlike in the south of England there has been enough rain in past months to bring on a good crop of wheat and barley. Potatoes have done reasonably well and are being lifted. Now ploughing can begin for winter wheat, to turn the soil; a frost would be welcome to break up the heavy clods. Fruits are doing well; the boughs of apple trees are bending with the weight. We must be thankful that farmers have been able to follow the natural rhythm of the farming year. Our Harvest Festival will take place on October 4th.

The international news seems to grow worse every day. Religious fanaticism allied to brute force is a terrible combination. Ordinary people are victims of the insane ambitions of a minority, and this is not confined to well-known conflicts. The same trends can be seen in embryo nearer to home, stirring up hatred between communities. When, in our Intercessions, we pray for peace and that justice might prevail, it might seem a vain hope. But we must not give up, and our efforts will bear fruit, in ways that we cannot grasp now.

The Diocese has begun the process of choosing a new bishop. If you list ten desiderata for someone to attain that position, if a person ‘scores’ highly on seven of them then we will have chosen well. But remember: Becoming a bishop is rather like becoming a parent. Parenting is not an

easy task and it is something we have to grow into, learning by experience how best to perform that role.

Dean Graham thanks you for all your concern and encouragement in his recovery and cannot wait to be back!

David Willington

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

4th October	10.30 a.m.	Harvest Festival
18th October	10.30 a.m.	Presentation of Saint William of Perth Award
25th October	5.00 p.m.	Evensong
1st November	10.30 a.m.	All Saints' Day
2nd November	7.00 p.m.	All Souls' Day
8th November	10.30 a.m.	Remembrance Sunday
22nd November	10.30 a.m.	Christ the King
29th November	10.30 a.m.	Advent Sunday
29th November	5.00 p.m.	Evensong

Where is Hope?

Last year at this time, I thanked everyone for coming to the August Big Brekkie at the North Church, celebrating 80 years of Christian Aid's work, and raising £745 from a FREE event!

This year, I'm reflecting how easily I despair in light of the bad pervasive news, making me view the world more negatively than it really is: wars in Ukraine, Sudan, other African countries; the intractable situation in the Middle East; injustice entrenched in Myanmar and Afghanistan. And the climate – all the more potent by 'drill, baby, drill' and the wider *cooling* over its imminence and severity. All this deafens me to what is encouraging - in these 80 years, global child mortality has dropped from nearly 40% to under 4%: average life expectancy has risen from 46 years to over 73.

Christian Aid may not have totally ended poverty, but it has certainly improved the circumstances of thousands. Originally called *Christian Reconstruction in Europe*, it was set up with a mission to provide relief and support to refugees and communities devastated by the Second World War, when millions had been killed, and millions more displaced, hungry, bereaved and broken.

In 2026, I believe we can find hope in the work of organisations like Christian Aid. God's creation is one of abundance, not scarcity. The God revealed in Jesus Christ offers good, cogent realistic grounds for hope. Not cheap hope, and not straightforward – it demands a great deal of us. God needs us to care for the displaced and hungry, wherever they are.

Hope gives us confidence that something better is possible; that we too can transform the world around us, and so find a way toward a brighter tomorrow. In a world still burdened by inequality, injustice and suffering, I believe we are called to be people of hope.

As I write, I am informed that Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal is not disclosed, but I still look forward to our December Mince Pie Sunday, when your contributions to Christian Aid's work are always very welcome.

Elaine Cameron, St John's Christian Aid Rep.

2027 Calendars Now On Sale

It is that time of year again when Perth Kinnoull Rotary Club in partnership with *Pictures of Perth and Beyond* provide Calendars for charities and voluntary organisations in Perth and Perthshire to sell and support their own work. In previous years we have raised £200 - £250 for St Johns.

I will be on hand to sell the Calendars for 2027 each Sunday in the Threshold after the 10.30am service from Sunday 4th October; or by direct contact with me at other times.

Cost remains the same as last year at £5 per calendar with a "special offer" of buying five calendars for only £20 - which means you are getting one free!

I look forward to seeing you at my calendar stall during October and November!



Bishop Bruce

Fellowship

The Fellowship started the new season of monthly Monday afternoon meetings that take place throughout the Autumn and winter on 14th September. Ruth, before leaving to go on holiday, had left with me a Bible-/Church-based quiz that had been made up by her sister. This was attempted by members working in two teams and at first caused some bewilderment. However, once participants began to twig that answers to questions consisting of several words, where some of the words were both short and began with either the letter "A" or "T then these words were probably "and" or "the" and they got into the mindset of Ruth's sister when she was making up the quiz. Things fell into place with correct answers suddenly seeming relatively simple and it turned out to be a fun afternoon where there was also a lot of catching up after the summer break over tea and cake.

Regarding our October meeting, this will **not** follow the usual pattern of 2nd Monday of the month but instead will take place at the usual time of 2.30pm but on Monday 5th October. This was following a request from Eleanor. We decided on this occasion it would not be a problem for us and we were happy to be able to facilitate a request from an outside group wishing to make an all-day booking of the Threshold for the 12th October. As I write this, there is a plan that I will speak about where I expect to be going the weekend before the meeting (the last weekend in September). As I haven't yet been there, I don't at this stage want to advertise in a public way that I will be speaking about a place I haven't as yet ever visited!!

Looking forward to November, I believe we are more organised than currently, as Ruth has arranged a speaker who will be giving a presentation on St Kilda, which I think will be of general interest to others who don't normally manage to attend Fellowship meetings. All will be welcome.

Jean Hendry

Where Your Treasure Is …

This was the theme of two evenings spent in the Threshold during the 'Season of Creation'. The material was devised by Operation Noah, a Christian charity working with the Church to inspire action on this crisis. We gathered, perhaps somewhat apprehensively, to debate how our money could be used to help find solutions to the climate crisis.



It was good at the outset to be reminded as we prayed, that God, our Heavenly Father, is a God of compassion, a liberating God who has created and is sustaining a world of wonder which has great potential. We were asked to consider how, as people having the God-given responsibility to care for the rest of creation, we could meet this challenge.

We spent some time over the two evenings talking about the inequalities which exist between rich and poor countries, and the unequal distribution of the earth's resources. Threats posed by Artificial Intelligence and the Big Tech companies were also mentioned.

Ultimately, we are left with the outstanding question of what can be done as individuals, and as a church community, about the reality of climate change. The answer surely lies in believing that we can use our God-given resources to invest in solutions that combat the climate crisis. We can use our money to become part of a movement of people caring for creation. Isaiah 58:1 advises when facing something wrong to *'Shout! As loud as you can. Hold nothing back - a trumpet blast shout!*

Thank you to Rhiannon, Sharon and Elaine for facilitating our discussions so well.

Norman Winter

Ecumenical Walk

On Saturday 12th September, needing a change of scene from my clearing and moving and the ramparts of boxes surrounding me, I joined the Ecumenical Walk arranged by the Revd. Valerie Walker, Ecumenical Community Chaplain.

Forty five pilgrims from several denominations and none walked together between two ancient religious sites in the Lindores area of Fife Eden Tay Parish. We came to celebrate ecumenism, creationtide and reflect on climate justice.



Our pilgrims, from across Fife and beyond, gathered in the old nave of Lindores Abbey. We remembered how the Abbey, built by Tironesian monks in the 12th Century had been destroyed by Scottish Reformers, especially John Knox, during the 16th Century. Our group gathered peacefully, focused on building rather than destruction. Sunlight streamed towards us through the Slype, that William Wallace one rode through, as we set off on pathways the monks once walked to their church of Lindores.

Following an old drover's road, passing through orchards and newly harvested fields, we shared stories of pain and hope, rejoicing at glorious views and the sun's warmth.

Inspired by Fiona Smith from Christian Aid we stopped three times on the two-mile route to reflect on the impact of climate injustice in Nepal, Guatemala and South Sudan.

Our destination was Abdie Old Kirk where the outdoor service was led by Lorraine Fraser (CoS), Pat McInally (RC), Ian Paton (SEC), Rev Linda Rice (URC) and Sue Laidlaw (Quaker).

Several more folk joined us for the service and the old church walls, stripped of their roof 200 years ago, resounded once more with prayer, music and hope.

And we finished with an excellent and very welcome tea provided for us by the ladies of Lindores Parish in Abdie and Dunbog Church.

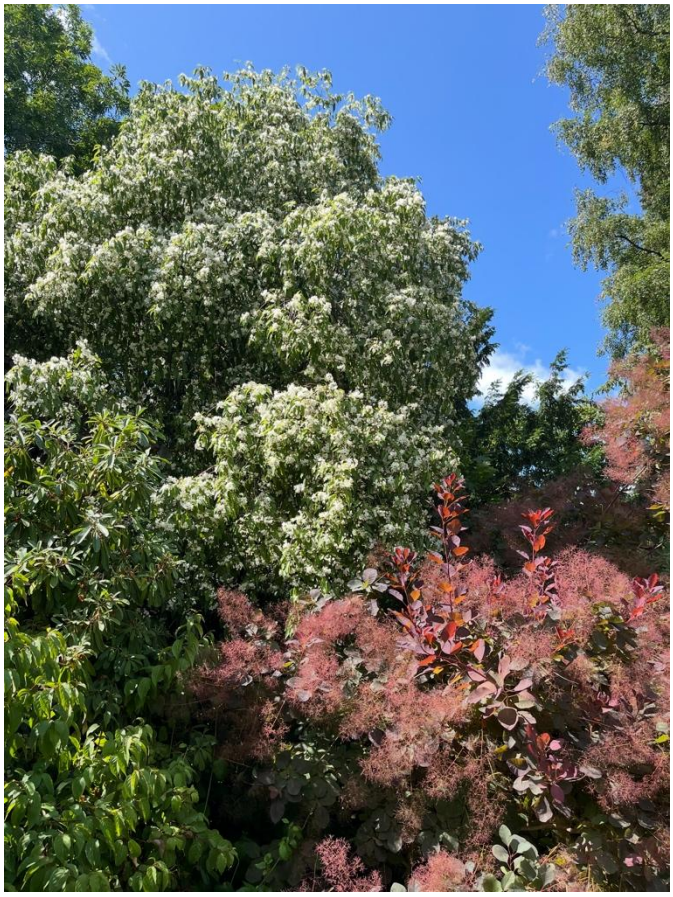
Valerie Walker & Judy Norwell





Flowers







Top left: Hydrangea Vanille Fraise

Top right: Hoheria and Cotinus

Left: Acanthus (Bear's breeches)

Patricia Noel-Paton

Lectionary October and November 2026

October 4th Harvest Festival
Deuteronomy 26. 1-11, 2 Corinthians 9. 6-15, Luke 17. 11-19

October 11th Pentecost 20
Exodus 32. 1-14, Philippians 4. 1-9, Matthew 22. 1-14

October 18th Pentecost 21
Exodus 33. 12-23, 1 Thessalonians 1. 1-10, Matthew 22. 15-22

October 25th Pentecost 22
Deuteronomy 34.1-12, 1 Thessalonians 2. 1-8, Matthew 22. 34-46

November 1st All Saints
Revelation 7. 9-17, 1 John 3. 1-3, Matthew 5.1-12

November 8th Pentecost 24
Joshua 24. 1-3a,14-25, 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18, Matthew 25. 1-13

November 15th Pentecost 25
Judges 4. 1-7, 1 Thessalonians 5. 1-11, Matthew 25. 14-30

November 22nd Last Sunday after Pentecost (Christ the King)
Ezekiel 34. 11-16, 20-24, Ephesians 1. 15-23, Matthew 25. 31-46

November 29th Advent Sunday Year B
Isaiah 64. 1-9, 1 Corinthians 1. 3-9, Mark 13. 24-37



The Creation

Peoples of every culture, all over the World, have had their own creation myth. From the Dine Bahane of the North American Navajo and the Ngai of East Africa to the Ainu of Japan, from the Ginnungagap of the Vikings to the Dreamtime of the Australian Aborigines, societies have attempted to understand the beginning and nature of their world, Cosmogony.

This has come about in various ways: from nothing, from primordial chaos, from divine action, sometimes a combination of all three. They reflect the nature of their landscape; for example, the Viking world is poised between ice and fire. In Greek and Middle Eastern texts, the gods are born from Earth, Sea and Sky. *Genesis* begins with an amorphous mass upon which God imposes order.

For centuries, Europeans followed *Genesis*. But by 1500 Nicolaus Copernicus had postulated a heliocentric universe, of which the Earth was merely one planet; this was confirmed by Galileo with his telescope a century later. James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh (1625-1656), a noted biblical scholar, calculated that Creation occurred on the early evening of October 22nd, 4004 BC. This was accepted for some time but from the end of the eighteenth-century scientists began to question this assumption.

Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1833) and *Antiquity of Man* (1863) established that the Earth was many millions of years old and that Man made a very recent appearance in geological time. He was a friend of Charles Darwin, whose *On the Origin of Species* (1859) created a sensation. There was a debate in 1860 at Oxford of the British Association, in which Bishop Samuel Wilberforce ('Soapy Sam') upheld the traditional view, whereas TH Huxley and several liberal theologians subscribed to the Theory of Evolution through Natural Selection. Wilberforce is said to have asked Huxley whether he was

descended from an ape through his grandfather's or his grandmother's side, to which Huxley replied that he would not be ashamed to be descended from an ape, but he would be ashamed to be descended from a man who used his great gifts to obscure the truth. Today, apart from fundamentalists in the USA, few believe in the literal truth of *Genesis*.

Modern theory holds that the Creation of the Universe occurred 13.8 billion years ago where matter expanded from a tiny hot and dense spot to form the galaxies of the observable universe. We cannot know what came before, because Time did not exist, because Time is a measurement between events. If we say that God was the Cause of the First Event, then we are bound to ask what caused God – which, of course, leads to an infinite regress. There are many philosophical points to navigate on this theme, not least the argument from Design, that God is the Divine Watchmaker.

The simplest way out of this Gordian Knot is to assert that God is outside the natural order, that he is not everlasting but timeless. With regard to Creation, it could be said that a timeless God might have a relation with the temporal universe, but it cannot be a causal one, for a cause is a relation between temporal events. The concept of an unknowable God outside the temporal universe is the subject of many mystical writings. But we pray to Him for our temporal needs just the same.

David Willington



Roses of pergola

People Watching

I have become a proper people watcher. Sitting on a bus is a great way to learn how our country operates.

What really prompted me for this interest was watching a toddler in a pram tapping away at a device. Tap tap, and we both see an animal appear. Is it a horse, is it a monkey, or maybe even a giraffe? Will she ever know, I wonder, fascinated as she was? Mummy is on her phone. Something goes wrong with the toddler's device. Mummy gives it another tap to keep her quiet. I think back to the days when it was a rattle we stuck in a child's hand.

The bus is full, of course. In fact it seems more like the school bus at two in the afternoon. Some boys get off wearing long trousers and chewing buns. Some girls get off wearing what looks like curtain pelmets, and also chewing buns. Next stop some men get on, wearing short trousers to display numerous tattoos.

I am about to get off the bus. I see now the little girl's eyes are closing. I shuffle towards the front of the bus as it judders to a halt. I step off. Who sees me? I just disappear.

Raymond King

From the Registers – Eternal Rest

Doreen Bell: 1st December 1938 – 2nd August 2026
Alastair Harvey Cruickshank: 10th August 1943 – 5th September 2026

From Darkness to Light

An Advent Celebration

Sunday 29 November 7pm

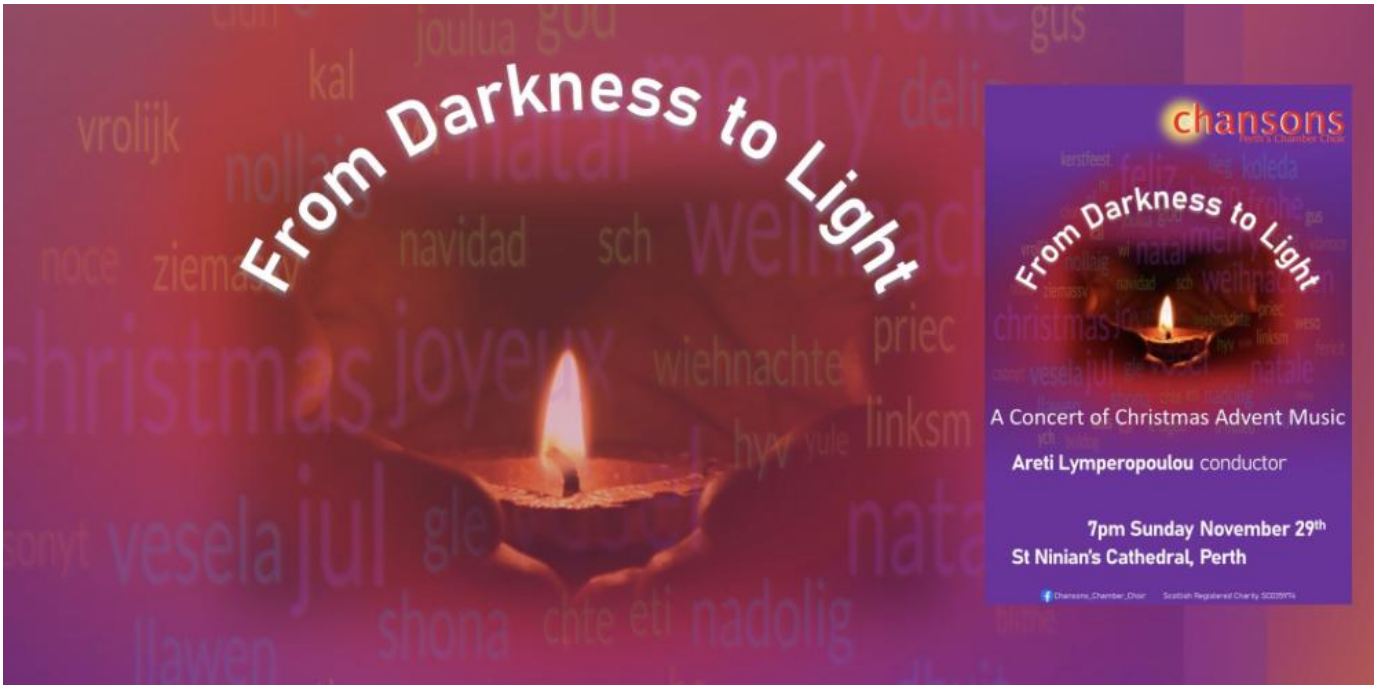
St Ninian's Cathedral Perth

Join Chansons for a concert full of Christmas advent music. The first half features favourite choral carols from the modern *O Magnum Mysterium* by Morten Lauridsen, to *Cantate Domino* by Claudio Monteverdi, music that heralds the arrival of Advent and light to bring us out of darkness.

The second half features the hugely popular St Nicolas Mass in G major by Joseph Haydn. It will be sung with choir, guest soloists, strings and organ continuo.

The mass is celebrated for its rich harmonies and intricate musical structure. It is also known for its spiritual depth reflecting the themes of faith, hope and the Resurrection of Christ.

A concert that perhaps is appropriate for this time in which we find ourselves, and brings hope and light to all ages through the power of the human voice and best of choral chamber music.





Lori Hughes, Foodbank Manager:

‘For many of the households we support, a change of season brings additional pressure. Cooler, wetter weather means heating going back on, higher energy use, school costs, warmer clothing and all the other expenses that have to be squeezed from budgets that are already stretched incredibly thin.

‘Donations are struggling to keep pace with the amount of food leaving our shelves…We want to be ready for every person who comes through our doors – not only with the essentials they need, but with choice, dignity and a warm welcome.’

Hope for Creation Conference

Hope for Creation is a conference organised by the Scottish Episcopal Net Zero team, between 20th to 21st October in Stirling. It will bring together decision-makers, clergy and congregations from the SEC, and other church denominations, to tackle climate change in the Scottish church context. It will provide opportunities for worship, discussion and learning, with contributions from across the SEC, ecumenical guests, and partner organisations. All are welcome!

Accommodation can be booked directly with Stirling Court Hotel using the code 330103.There are also many other accommodation options available in Stirling area. We hope you can join us for both days of the conference, including our conference dinner, after dinner talk and evening screening of the People's Emergency Briefing. You are also welcome to join for either the Tuesday or Wednesday.

We look forward to contributions from eco-theologians, climate scientists, ecumenical guests, grant funders, installers and our Pilot and Pioneer award churches. Further information and registration details*:*
Hope for Creation Tickets, Tuesday 20 October-Wednesday 21 October | Eventbrite



Note for your Diary

Our next Fairtrade Stall will be Sunday 15th November - a chance to find some seasonal gifts and support some of the world's poorest communities.

Cover picture: Autumnal morning view of the Tay. Chris Cook

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 December and January issue by **Sunday 15th November**.

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*.

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Flowers	Christine Bracewell*	552817	
Magazine	David Willington*	813787	
Fellowship/PACT	Jean Hendry	623603	
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