

February 2021 Magazine



*All Saints Scottish Episcopal
Church*

Drymen Road, Bearsden



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The cover picture is of an icon of Simeon receiving Christ at the Temple.

Dear Friends

The droplets of rain hang delicately on the sprigs of the leaves, poised and ready to fall when gravity separates them from their resting place.

There is calm after the hours of rain which fell preceding this stillness, shrubs hang heavy with the weight of the water, the untended garden looks sad in the quiet dullness of the day.

A breeze, oh so softly moves the very tips of the trees which reach heavenward to remind us that nothing is ever truly still.

All life breathes, and as it breathes it is filled with the Spirit of God and in the pauses between the breaths, the spirit inhabits every sinew of our being and lights up the soul, which enables an outpouring of beauty and grace which can only come from God.

We who live on the west coast of Scotland have a love-hate relationship with the rain. We hate it when it falls, all too often we might cry; but we love the beauty it leaves behind, lush vegetation and cascading waterfalls. We will soon be back in Lent a time of wilderness when the refreshment of rain seems lacking. You do not need to be reminded that it was last Lent when lockdown first began, and we had already begun the journey with Jesus into the barren season of searching and cleansing our souls. Last Lent when lockdown happened it was almost as if it were a gift; we saw how the air was cleansed, as we gave up those extra things in our lives which we had convinced ourselves were essential. All around us was a parable of how more satisfactory life could be when it was cleaned up a bit. Yet, a year on and with the virus remaining, the things that we really wanted to be cleaned up and out of our lives still linger. Maybe there is a lesson in that for us this Lent.

How many Lents have gone by only for the same, or similar things, to be on our Lent list again? Maybe it is something to give up, or reduce in some way; or something to begin or do more of. Why has that thing never quite worked in the past? Is it something that was always unrealistic to achieve in 40 days, so you lost heart? Is it something that proved too complex? Did other things invade the time you thought you might have? Was it something inconsequential so that when on the 2nd Friday of Lent someone offered you a biscuit; you just thought, one won't make a difference and then, fast broken, one led to two led to three? Things only change when we really put the effort in. We have vaccines because untold effort was put in and was properly resourced to give it the very best chance of success.

Without the rain there are no rainbows, rain and sun are needed. We need more than just the idea of what we might do; we also need the desire to go ahead and give it the effort needed to achieve it.

We begin Lent as always with a reminder that we are mortal yet in the glory of the ash is the hope of Easter. St Paul wrote:

“When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?’

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.”

(1 Corinthians 15:54-58)

May Lent 2021 be one of rainbows, one of steadfast devotion to God and what is required of us. This is our time to be still and breathe before once more. Renewed, we walk the Emmaus Road, eat fish on the beach, and burst forth from upper rooms in joy.

Blessings, Kirstin

FROM BISHOP KEVIN

4th January

“As you will have heard this afternoon, the First Minister has announced that all places of worship must be closed. This is a painful decision, but a sensible decision. We all have our part to play in ensuring that we mix with each other physically as little as possible. May I wish you all the joy of the Magi as they visited the Christ-child before setting off on a different route home. Our route through Epiphany-tide this year is going to be different, and we pray for each other as we listen for the promptings of the Spirit in leading our people on their journey of faith into Spring 2021.”

Provincial Worship will continue online, and you can signpost people to the streamed Sunday Eucharist and Children’s Chapel worship on the Provincial Facebook Page :

(<https://www.facebook.com/scottishepiscopalchurch/>)

and YouTube Channel :

(https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtv9H_4N4c3JKM57zOj7GXw).

CANDLEMAS

The Victorians introduced our modern idea of Christmas, with cards and Christmas Trees, over eating and partying and the novel idea that Christmas ended on 5th January.

On that date the fallacy continues to be spread that decorations should be taken down, with often the additional bit of information that we should do it to hide from Herod, what a load of tosh. The idea of clearing the decks on the 5th of January, 12th night, is a custom introduced during the reign of Victoria.

Up until the 19th century, people would keep all greenery up until 2nd February, Candlemas Day, the end of the Christmas season. Flowers weren't part of Christmas decoration, but lots and lots of greenery and berries and indeed other fruit that was available. That greenery was indigenous species, holly, ivy, box, yew, laurel and mistletoe, until Prince Albert popularised the fir tree which Queen Charlotte wife of George III had previously unsuccessfully introduced as a new Christmas custom. However, fir trees didn't last for 40 days; they became dry far quicker than other greenery, and of course the needles dropped. House fires from the candles wired onto the branches increased and so the idea of clearing the Christmas tree at Epiphany developed. Soon all Christmas decorations went out with the tree, as the idea that it was bad luck to leave the decorations developed, because of the fire risk. There had been a tradition of burning the greenery on Candlemas as an echo of the sacrifice of 2 pigeons or turtle doves had been offered by Mary and Joseph, however while the fir was tinder dry the other greenery was still lush on 5th January and wouldn't burn so that tradition died out. Yet for centuries before the Christmas greenery continued to decorate homes until Candlemas.

On Candlemas Eve is a poem written by Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and mistletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all
Wherewith ye deck's the Christmas hall;
That so the superstitious find
Not one least branch there left behind:
For look! How many leaves there be
Neglected there, Maids, trust to me,
So many goblins you shall see.

There was certainly a tradition of superstitions connected with leaving the decorations up, but it had nothing to do with the Magi – it was goblins not

Herod you were to fear, just as much tosh as taking them down for fear of Herod.

But what of Candlemas? It is three feasts rolled into one: the purification of Mary – a mother went through a purification ceremony 40 days after the birth of a son and 80 after a daughter; also the presentation of Christ at the Temple – Jesus as the first born son of Joseph and Mary is bought back from God by sacrificing 2 pigeons or turtle doves; and Candlemas itself the final declaration of The Light's arrival into the world, as two elderly people, Simeon and Anna, witness Jesus – finally some religious Jews also recognise who he is.

During the season of Advent the Light had been awaited, at Christmas the Light came into the world, but only the angels, the shepherd outcasts and foreigners bowed down and recognised Emmanuel. Candlemas marked the time when the Light of Christ was no longer a hope to those of Abraham's line, faithful Jews like Simeon and Anna.

Simeon was an elderly devout man who had been hoping and praying for God to send a Saviour to rescue the Israelites, and Anna likewise had spent most of her life praying in the temple for the Messiah. Both of them, drawing near to the ends of their lives, are symbols of patient devotion. Luke records in his Gospel that Simeon, foretelling how Jesus would be lifted up at the other end of his life, took the baby up and said:

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

The Candlemas celebration was a distribution of lights, for both Gentile and believer alike, the spreading of the Light of Christ out from the constraints of the temple and into the world at large. The Greater Christmas season comes to an end.

WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY

With the recent announcement that lockdown will continue to at least mid-February, it remains unclear as to when in person worship might resume at All Saints. There will only be in person worship if East Dunbartonshire is in tier 3 or below and that is unlikely to happen during February, therefore we will be continuing with **on-line worship only** during February. The following services will be taking place via zoom. If you don't have an internet connection you can use your phone and dial in to listen.

Sundays - Eucharist with Spiritual Communion at 10.30am.

Tuesdays - Eucharist with Spiritual Communion from the Rectory using 1970 liturgy 10.30am.

Ash Wednesday 17th February, Eucharist with Spiritual Communion at 7pm.

Mondays-Saturdays, beginning on Thursday 18th February, Morning Prayers at 8am.

Wednesday 24th February Compline at 7pm, Compline will also take place on 3rd March.

Should you like to join in with Compline even if you can not be virtually with us via zoom the liturgy is at the end of the resources that follow.

REFLECTIONS FOR LENT

Lent is a time to pay more attention to the inner life, which affects our outer life in the world around us. Christ's life, ministry, and death are remembered during this season. Also, it can be a time to think about our own journey of faith as we prepare ourselves for Holy Week and Easter. The resources are offered to give you a basis on which to build however you would like to make your Lenten journey this year. You might like to make them part of our daily prayer or do them at another time. Use them as personal private devotions, or along with others.

Try and plan a time when you won't be interrupted to follow these reflections. You might like to light a candle, play a piece of music and begin with the collect which is used throughout Lent:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent, create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

17th February - Ash Wednesday - Walking in the Dust

Read Matthew 4:1-11

From baptism we are called to follow Jesus, to follow where he leads, wherever he leads. In Jewish culture, in the days of Jesus, young boys were taught by a rabbi – a teacher – who they often walked and talked with and listened to. The boys were told to stay so close to their teacher, that they were to 'walk in the dust of the rabbi', walking in the dust from the road that the rabbi kicked up behind him.

On Ash Wednesday ash is usually placed on the forehead in the sign of a cross, in some traditions the ash is sprinkled rather than smeared. Either way that ash is a reminder that we are but dust and to dust we will return. The idea of walking in the dust of the Rabbi, introduces the concept of being transformed by his dust, to bring sparkles and glory to our own dust.

What dust sparkles would you like to pick up from Jesus this Lent? How do you think you might go about obtaining them?

Prayer: Holy God, help us to “walk in the dust of the rabbi” through the difficult places in our lives, and to know that the closer we walk to you, the closer you will be to us. Amen.

Week of Lent 1 beginning 21st February - Questioning with Nicodemus

Read John 3:1-21

Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader, comes to Jesus to ask his questions. Lent is a good time to try to be open about our questions. Maybe we can even 'cherish the questions' and 'have patience with all that is unsolved' (Rainer Maria Rilke).

What are your questions? They may be long lasting, they may be new, regardless recognising them is the start of finding answers to them. Questioning is good, all too often as adults we think asking questions is a sign of weakness, while the contrary is true; the weakness is in not asking them. A person who does not ask questions is neither developing what they do know nor making new discoveries.

Once you have identified your question/s think about ways to explore finding some answers, maybe that exploration will form part of this Lent as it progresses.

Prayer: Walk among us, grace of God, teaching us the questions of the kingdom. Grant us the courage and the grace to ask those questions and seek their answers.

Week of Lent 2 beginning 28th February - Drinking with the Samaritan woman

Read John 4:1-42

Jesus is thirsty and asks the Samaritan woman to draw water for him to drink. The woman is unaware that she too is thirsty, she knows her life isn't perfect, but she is doing okay. They speak together for a long time. He tells her about living water – to revive the spirit and bring hope, water to truly thirst after. She believes and others believe because of her.

It is all too easy to be like that Samaritan woman, to be so busy doing things, even things of faith and be either unaware or ignore our own spiritual needs. What wells do you need to drink deeply from this Lent. It may be something obviously spiritual such as praying or reading our Bible more. So it may be something more akin to faith in actions, charity work, campaigning or exemplifying justice. We all thirst, the challenge that this woman discovered was that we don't always recognise the root of what is causing our thirst and find the right way to quench it.

What are you truly thirsting for this Lent? Do you need someone else to draw the water that will quench that thirst? If so who? Do you need something, as Jesus needed a bucket, you don't have? If so what?

Prayer: O God, we thirst, as you declared your thirst by the well and on the cross. May we recognise drink deeply of the waters of life and quench the thirst of our souls, renewing our lives in all ways.

The notes for the final 3 weeks for Lent will be given in the magazine for March.

COMPLINE

The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night, and a perfect end. *Amen.*

O God, make speed to save us;

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Psalm 31.1-5

Antiphon: Make haste, O Lord, to deliver me,
 for you are my tower of strength.

- 1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;
 deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me;
 make haste to deliver me.
- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
 for you are my crag and my stronghold;
 for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.
- 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me,
 for you are my tower of strength.
- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit,
 for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.

Psalm 130

- 1 Out of the depths have I called you, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice,
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- 2 If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss,
O Lord, who could stand?
- 3 For there is forgiveness with you;
therefore you shall be feared.
- 4 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits for him;
in his word is my hope.
- 5 My soul waits for the Lord, more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning,
- 6 O Israel, wait for the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy;
- 7 With him there is plenteous redemption,
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Antiphon: Make haste, O Lord, to deliver me,
for you are my tower of strength.

Reading

Do not let anger lead you into sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,
and give no opportunity to the devil. (Ephesians 4:16)

Response (Ps. 31.5)

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

For you have redeemed me, Lord God of truth.

I commend my spirit.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Nunc Dimittis

Antiphon: Preserve us, O Lord, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that
awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

- 1 Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace;
your word has been fulfilled.
- 2 My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;

3 A light to reveal you to the nations,
 and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever. Amen.

Antiphon: Preserve us, O Lord, while waking, and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

Prayers

Lord, have mercy on us,
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Do not bring us to the time of trial but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent, create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray;
and in your mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of your only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Conclusion

The Lord be with you;
 and also with you.

Let us bless the Lord;
 Thanks be to God.

May the almighty and merciful God, bless and keep us. *Amen.*

STATEMENTS FROM THE PROVINCE

In the past couple of weeks the SEC has issued statements about two topics that found their way into the national news.

In response to a report in The Times:

The Scottish Episcopal Church would like to make clear that, contrary to what has been reported in The Times newspaper today, there is no investigation into Bishop Anne Dyer over matters affecting the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney.

The investigation referred to in the Times report is a local one, instigated and instructed by the Trustees of St Andrew's Cathedral, "to investigate and provide potential solutions to the current issues surrounding the Director of Music, and subsequent breakdown in working relationships".

In response to various reports concerning churches threatening legal action against the Scottish Government.

Following media reports that church leaders have threatened legal action if the Scottish Government does not reverse its recent decision to close places of worship during the current phase of the Covid pandemic, the Primus would like to make clear that the Scottish Episcopal Church is not part of the group seeking change.

"Having worked closely with the Scottish Government during the pandemic, alongside the Church of Scotland and many other denominations, in a bid to protect the vulnerable by stemming the spread of the virus, I would like to state that we have no part in the move to take legal action against the Government," said the Most Rev Mark Strange, Bishop of Moray, Ross & Caithness and Primus of the SEC.

A group of 500 church leaders – 200 from Scotland and 300 from elsewhere in the UK – have signed a letter to the First Minister calling for her to lift the ban on communal worship. The Scottish Government has been given until 5pm on Thursday to respond, and the group has said it will seek judicial review if the closure of churches is not dropped from lockdown restrictions.

No SEC churches have signed the letter.

The Church of Scotland has also distanced itself from the call for legal action.

CHRISTMAS CRIB

For those of you who where neither able to attend All Saints on Christmas Day or join via zoom, a couple of pictures of our Crib this year.

After those who turned up on Christmas morning had left, the Holy Family had to be moved into larger accommodation. They had been further forward so they could be seen in the lectern stable, however some blokes with gifts arrived early as Nicola had said they had to arrive on Christmas Day or stay away, she was quiet definite about it, no visitors after Christmas Day and the lectern crib was a bit cramped. So off they travelled to their more spacious accommodation or the altar stable.

We didn't sing, anything, but especially we didn't sing 'See Him Lying in a Bed of Shredded Paper', because straw might make you cough and sneeze. Although I was tempted at one point when the fuse in the sound system blew and all the planned music went to pot! Nevertheless, despite the pesky virus it was a particular joy for me to have people in church with me on Christmas morning after having spent Easter in church on my own.

One final thought. That first Christmas was all a bit of a surprise and mash up, no one much knew what was really going on and what the future held either so this time around maybe we experienced a very special Christmas rather than a very odd one.

Oh apart from God, God knew what the future held then and now; but you knew that didn't you, or at least you knew I would add it.



A NEW DEAN FOR THE DIOCESE

+Kevin writes:

I am very pleased to let you all know that I have appointed the Reverend Reuben James Preston as the new Dean of our Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway.

Reuben will continue as Rector of St John's, Johnstone and St Margaret's, Renfrew. He will work closely with me, the Bishop's Staff Group and the Diocesan Council.

I would like to thank and pay tribute to Canon Gordon Fyfe, who has been acting Dean for the past two years. He has been an invaluable support to the Diocese during the vacancy and to me since my election. Gordon has brought immense energy and commitment to the challenging task of combining the roles of Synod Clerk, acting Dean and Rector of St Columba's, Largs, especially during the pandemic. We all owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. Gordon will continue as Synod Clerk and as a valued member of the Bishop's Staff Group and Diocesan Council.

Reuben will be licensed and installed at the Diocesan Zoom Eucharist from St Mary's Cathedral, at a date to be arranged. He will, however, begin to take on the responsibilities of Dean with immediate effect.

I ask your prayers for Reuben as he prepares to take up this role, and for the congregations of St John's and St Margaret's as they adjust to their Rector also being Dean of the Diocese.

Reuben was born in Stevenage and brought up between Clwyd and Kent. He graduated in Computer Systems and Software Engineering at York University. After serving in inner-city Birmingham as a youth worker in the 80s, he trained for ministry at Westcott House, Cambridge.



Ordained in Birmingham Cathedral in 1991, Reuben served in further outer city parishes before being Team Vicar of Malvern Link Team.

After a period of Diocesan ministry covering multiple vacancies, he was asked to work with the Diocesan Interfaith Advisor as priest at St Benedict's, Bordesley Green, pioneering work with mosques and Afro-Caribbean communities.

Academic work took Reuben to the Diocese of Portsmouth where he served as the first State Secondary School Chaplain in the Church of England, whilst being the priest at St Matthew's, Bridgemary, a Chaplain at Portsmouth Prison and pioneering what grew to become the largest youth project in the Diocese.

He was then called to serve in London and oversaw the rebuilding of the church and site of St Mary of Eton, Hackney Wick. Following this, Reuben went to 'the land of the Vicar of Dibley' in Bedfordshire as Rector of four parishes, before leaving the Church of England to come to work in our Diocese. Reuben is married to Stephen, and they live with their infamous Basset Hound George in Renfrewshire!

Reuben has been a long time Oblate of Alton Abbey in Hampshire and is a trained Ignatian Spiritual Director. He undertook the 30-day Spiritual Exercises

in 2015 with the Cenacle Sisters in Liverpool. He comes to us with experience of leading the international GB&I Thomas Merton Society conferences since 2006 and national retreats with SSM and at The Kairos Centre.

We pray for Reuben and Stephen as they enter a new phase of ministry.

NEWS FROM OUR CANON MISSIONER

Our Canon Missioner, Audrey O'Brien Stewart, returned to work from maternity leave on 5th October.

After arriving in the Diocese and assessing the most pressing missional needs, Bishop Kevin worked with Audrey to redesign the Canon Missioner's role specification to allocate more resources to address Transitional Ministry. Transitional Ministry is a broad term that encompasses, among other things, congregations experiencing a vacancy. The primary goal of Transitional Ministry is to support congregations in using their time in vacancy to prepare emotionally, spiritually, and logistically for the call of a new clergy person. Over the next year, Audrey will take the lead on a pilot project looking at the vacancy process in our diocese and designing ways we can better support clergy and charges in transition. Audrey came to our diocese having already participated in advanced training for Transitional Ministry. Over the past few weeks, she has completed additional training courses and has been connecting with professionals who work in Transitional Ministry around the Anglican Communion. More specific information about this exciting new endeavour in our diocese will come in due course.

NEW DIOCESAN CENTRE

At the Diocesan Council Meeting on 28th November, having examined and discussed the detailed tender proposals of the selected contractor for the new Diocesan Centre at 49 Cochrane Street, the Trustees gave approval for finalisation of plans and for building work to commence in January 2021. An entry date of late spring/early summer is our hope, but – given the events of 2020 – it would be foolish to make firm predictions.

ST MUNGO'S ALEXANDRIA

An online meeting took place on 14th December between Bishop Kevin, members of Bishop's Staff Group and nine of the remaining members of the vestry/congregation at St Mungo's, where it was unanimously agreed by all church members present that St Mungo's should close, and governance would

pass to the Diocese. The final decision on this will pass to Diocesan Synod in March. Although the closure will be a cause for sadness, it is Bishop Kevin's intention to hold a closing service in due time (when fuller attendance is allowed), so that we can celebrate the long and illustrious witness of the church through many years, as well as the valiant attempts of the congregation to maintain that witness for as long as they could.

ALL SAINTS FINANCIAL REPORT

Our accounts for 2019-20 are currently with the examiner awaiting approval. As I reported to the Vestry earlier this January, the financial performance of the Church in the first quarter of 2020-21 was largely in accord with the budget approved in November. Giving was a little in advance of expectation, and expenditure slightly lower than anticipated. Tax recovery was less than budgeted, basically because of a reduction in donations which qualify for the HMRC Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme during lockdown.

One other piece of information is worth my passing on to the Congregation. The Diocese has of course been aware of the financial difficulties faced by all congregations during Covid-19 and has taken the following steps. Firstly it has reduced the Quota Payments for 2021, calculated using the usual algorithm, by 20%. Secondly it is using its reserves to make a one-off reimbursement to charges of 20% of quota payments from 2020. These two steps together should lead to a reduction of expenditure for All Saints by approximately £4000 this financial year. The Diocese is to be congratulated on recognising the financial stress among its congregations and reacting so promptly and generously.

Andrew Long

CHRISTMAS APPEAL FOR MISSION SUPPORT

In the December/January magazine, we launched an appeal for Mission Support for the long-standing causes to which we have donated over many years. As I had expected, the All Saints congregation were most generous in their gifts for this appeal and we have so far raised a sum of £4190. This is about 3/4 of what we gave to Mission support in 2019, which is a magnificent total so far.

It was my initial intention to close the appeal in the middle of January, but given the difficulty of communicating with our members in these lockdown times, I have decided to postpone the closure date until Monday 8th February, so that any who had intended to contribute but who had forgotten to do so have a week's grace to act at the beginning of February after this magazine reaches them. Please send cheques made out to Vestry of All Saints Church Bearsden to

me (address at the front of the magazine), and mark them MS Appeal on the back.

Thank you all for your generosity.

Andrew Long

CHRISTMAS GIFTS TO OLDER MEMBERS

A couple of weeks before Christmas, a group of Church members put together some presents for our older members. These comprised a Christmas flower arrangement, some culinary titbits and a suitably worded home made Christmas card. The groups of gifts were taken round and delivered personally by members of the group who put them together. They were much appreciated, as the following notes make clear.

“Many thanks to the team that assembled, cooked, decorated etc the lovely surprises that arrived at our door before Christmas. I was out walking but Megan was looking after Alex and did not know who came to the door!! It was a lovely surprise to arrive home to.

This time last year we were enjoying a church family evening to celebrate Burns, it was a good event and little did we think it would be the last one for a long time. Maybe this time next year we will be celebrating it again. We look forward to some form of normality soon when we will see each other in the flesh!! Thank you again and keep safe. Jean”

“A huge thank you to the group who assembled the lovely surprise gift I received a few days before Christmas. The flowers were the centre of my festive table, the bonbons were yummy but I’m afraid the shortbread was not tasted by me as my four legged friend scoffed it before I could open it! However he loved it! Many thanks again, Sheila Benson.”

MUSINGS OF AN EMBROIDERER

It had been hoped that meetings of the Glasgow branch of the embroiderer’s guild might start again this new year. However, it was not to be, but a few clever members have organised the rest of the season to be on zoom.

This month we had a talk on embroideries in the Burrell collection by a lady who was a volunteer guide there until its closure for refurbishment. We were treated to close up views of samplers done by girls as young as 8, beautifully worked, and kept to show future suitors how well they could sew. Other larger pieces could take years to finish! Then we saw embroidered caps which were worn by

men in the evening once their wigs had come off!! Beautiful jackets and gloves too- often never worn but just made or bought for 'show' and that you could afford them.

Well, I've had all these hours of lockdown and now feel a bit ashamed to realise what I could have produced . However, I have actually finished one or two UFOs (unfinished objects): a cross stitch picture of shore birds, a picture for my brothers golden wedding, some felted cacti and a picture reminding me of a holiday on Harris.

Kate Ross



THE LABYRINTH PROJECT

It's a little while since I've provided you with an update on my garden project. I've spent the last decade or so, well, that's how it feels, though it may have been more like a couple of months in reality, on the current phase of this venture. This is the simple sounding process of preparing the ground within the area the labyrinth will cover, by digging down about 5 inches to allow for the foundation of the path, and to prepare the soil for the narrow beds which are to line the path. Those of you who have ever had to listen to me ranting about the

nature of my garden will be familiar with the problem I encounter when doing this. Once you go down about 3 inches under the grass, you hit rocks (with a lavish admixture of lumps of concrete, old bricks, clay and a few bizarre pieces of not very ancient archaeological rubbish – we found a kitchen tap yesterday).



Now, rocks are good in my game plan (not so much the concrete, clay and what have you). You may recall that the idea is to shelter the finished labyrinth with fairly narrow, inward sloping raised beds, which will be faced with drystone walls. In order to do that I need an enormous quantity of stone, large and small. Before I started this, I assumed that I would

end up having to buy some stone, which would have been annoying, not to mention expensive, given what I know lurks under the turf. In the event I am now fairly confident I will be self-sufficient.

To go back to my 5 inch dig. When the weather is reasonably dry and well above freezing, the process is to bite into the ground with a mattock, removing the small stones and putting them on one side to add to the stockpile. After the first few blows you start to find the big stuff. Some of it is lower than I need to go, but of course, I actually want rocks, so it's always worthwhile going the extra few inches. At first I was laboriously carting away such soil as I met. Now I just chuck it aside, reckoning that when I'm done, I will have removed such a vast quantity of rock and junk that the overall level will have dropped sufficiently. Then I'll just have to go over the area I've dug out and make it all roughly level and smooth (what could be easier?!).

The problem of course, has been the weather. As you may possibly have noticed by living in Scotland, in winter it is usually either raining or freezing. Or just possibly snowing. If it rains, or has rained recently then my apology for soil rapidly becomes mud, and wherever I have removed a big rock, a puddle. One passer-by not so long ago, most understandably asked if I was creating a pond feature. In case you wondered, it is possible to dig under water, but it's not what you'd call ideal. You do also, whether doing sub-aqua digging or not, get slightly muddy, as does the house afterwards.

Obviously, since Christmas, we've had a fair amount of quite lovely sunny frosty weather, but that does create problems of its own. If you attack the ground with the mattock, you develop the technique of striking multiple times in exactly the same place – with your eyes shut at the last second! The reason for this is that

at every strike a shower of frozen mud and slivers of ice flies up and hits you in the face (and everywhere else, but it's the face you mind!). If you're lucky, this method eventually breaks off a big lump of frozen soil, and exposes whatever lies beneath. If you're not lucky you're in an area of frozen clay and a concretion of, well, concrete, brick and heaven knows what. Even my trusty mattock can't get through that when it's frozen solid. A sensible person would probably say in these circumstances, take a break – wait until the weather improves, but when was I ever sensible? Also, what else is there to do at the moment?

So what actually happens is that I attack the ground with the newer and deadlier of my five-foot wrecking bars. This is a heavy steel rod, armed with a vicious point at one end and a narrow blade at the other. If you smash the pointed end down multiple times as hard as you can in one place, it will eventually get through just about anything. Just don't miss, and hit your own foot.

After the ridiculous amount of time and effort I have spent over the last few months, I would say at the time of writing I'm about three quarters of the way round the circle I'm excavating. Once I've completed that (hopefully by the end of January), I will level it out. Then I start measuring up and marking the exact course of the path and take the very first steps towards actually creating something. I'm sure that will provide a whole new magazine article! (*Great, Ed.*)

Finally, a word about those pesky rocks! First there are the pebbles. They will mainly be useful for rubble for the interior parts of the walling, but can also be used to help fill any really nasty deep holes I create – say



to shore up where the path will be laid and avoid subsidence. Next comes a size I particularly value, which I define as cricket-ball ones. These will be needed for edging the path itself, and as that path is actually quite long, I'm going to need an awful lot of them. I think both the pebbles and the cricket balls could be categorised as stones. Now we're on to the rocks. We start with ones that are just about liftable with one hand, but are more comfortable with two. These are very useful for the walling, to fill in awkward gaps, and possibly to be the main inner facing of the raised beds. After this we have football sized. These are good workaday walling rocks, and have the advantage that they're big enough to make a noticeable contribution, but small enough for me to manipulate (and dig

out unaided). Then come the boulders. We tend to call them magnums, jereboams, reheboams, and I'm dreading the day we find the methusalem! Note the use of 'we' at this point. Niall gets dragged from his desk at irregular intervals, and particularly at weekends, when I usually have some saved for him, to help me lever out these monsters and add them to the collection. They will of course, be excellent main building blocks and feature stones for the walling – if I can actually manoeuvre them effectively.

The next thrilling instalment of this interminable saga will tell of my struggles with the actual path, and possibly the walls.

Mairi Ross

JOHN SHERWOOD – AN APPRECIATION



All Saints members will have been sad to read of the death of John Sherwood last December, some nine months after his wife Margaret passed away, after their having passed over sixty years of happy life together. In his last months John had been staying with his daughter Rosemary, and many from All Saints will have been pleased to be able to be present over the internet at John's funeral service, together with

the family members present in the chapel and others in touch electronically from all over the world. In this appreciation, although I will touch on John's illustrious career in academic Chemistry, I should like to concentrate more on his and Margaret's life outside academia and particularly their long period worshipping at All Saints.

John was a son of Cornwall, but studied for his first degree and subsequent Ph.D. at the University of Durham, where he met Margaret. They were married in 1958, and after a brief interlude in Hull moved to Glasgow in 1960. John was appointed to a lectureship at the Royal College of Science and Technology which was soon to become Strathclyde University. There he founded a group to study the crystallisation of organic materials which became well known internationally, and led to his collaboration with scientists from all over the world. He was rapidly promoted, becoming Professor in 1977, and was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1975. He also served his turn in senior academic positions at Strathclyde, successively as Dean of Science,

Deputy Principal and then Vice Principal. He retired in 2002, but continued to add to his published academic work in retirement; over his full career he authored more than 250 papers.

John and Margaret started to worship at All Saints soon after arriving in Scotland. I first got to know John well when I accepted his offer to return to the sideman's rota to fill a vacancy in 1999. Before this, I knew Margaret rather better, as, during her time at Bearsden Academy, she taught Geography to my daughter Rosemary. John served as sidesman in this stint for the best part of two decades, being always conscientious in performing his duties. In his "retirement" period, he was also persuaded to rejoin the Vestry in 2011. This was the time when All Saints and St. Andrew's, Milngavie were beginning to talk about separation. John was appointed as the All Saints representative *without portfolio* to the Bishop's Committee considering the future of the two charges. It is my belief that his negotiating skills, honed over many years of work on University committees, were a great help in working towards the agreement to separate the charges, which occurred in 2015, the year after John completed his last Vestry term.

As I have said, John cultivated a research group with a strong international character. In particular a large number of academic visitors from India spent time working with him, and this resulted in strong links with the sub-continent. In reverse, John and Margaret paid a number of visits there, where they were entertained by past students and post-doctoral collaborators. They became experts on the faiths, the architecture and also the textiles and other artefacts of India. One of my strongest memories of John and Margaret's time at All Saints was when they took over the Drymen Hall for an evening to give fascinating talks about their latest travels around India, illustrated with superb photos and also with displays featuring some of the many souvenirs they had returned with.

John and Margaret were inveterate travellers in Europe as well as further afield, with their daughters Rosemary and Jennifer in the early days. For this purpose they bought a succession of camper vans, which freed them to move around the continent as they pleased. The last of these was still being driven by them quite recently as the family vehicle, and they were still hoping to get away for a few days more locally, until Margaret's mobility problems became too pressing.

All Saints has always attracted remarkable people who have moved to make their whole careers in this area, and who have worshipped at their local episcopal church. It has been my privilege to have known many within this group and to have counted them among my closest friends. Prominent among

them were John and Margaret, whom I got to know much better in recent years as their church visitor. They will be greatly missed, by me and by many others.

Andrew Long

Rosemary and Jennifer are very grateful indeed for all the kind words and wishes that they have received from the church family at All Saints, following the death of their parents. While they are still coming to terms with the loss of both of their Mum and Dad, they are anxious to write something for the church magazine to reflect upon their Mum and Dad's long involvement with All Saints. They propose to have this ready for a future edition of the magazine.



NOT SUCH A GOOD COOK(ER)

Ann and I decided to make the usual Christmas cake. All went well - apparently - but the cake didn't appear to rise. We rechecked all steps and could not find fault. The final result looked like an omelette with lots and lots of fruit in it! Finally, finally I realised we had not really smelled any cooking cake and then I realised we had

heated the top oven and put the cake in the bottom oven!!!!

Can't really blame the cooker.

So we tried to cook the 'omelette' again and planned to make another cake next day as a safety net. Now I have confessed all, don't laugh too long. The 'omlette' tasted alright and next day's re-run was fine. We are keeping this cake to cut when we can finally travel again and be re- united with family.

David and Ann Wheatley

ANGELS - ANCIENT AND MODERN

For most of us last Christmas was sadly different because we couldn't share it with our families and friends. But one group of friends turned up as always; every year they appear right on time in our Christmas lights, in Christmas cards and almost exclusively on top of the Christmas tree. These are the angels and we all love them. But, who are they, what do they do, where do they come from? Well, if we believe our Christmas cards, they are young men, with blue eyes, fair or red hair, and a pale skin. They all seem to wear blue or white flowing robes with golden haloes, and have snowy white wings in two sizes - short down to the waist, and long down to the ground. There are also some delightful little girl angels with masses of golden, curly hair, and white fluffy wings. These nice creatures bring messages (all in perfect English), sing together or simply pose for pictures. They are the modern version of the angels in the Bible, and for many people are just a lovely part of the Christmas mythology.

But Christian people meet angels all year round in the Bible; they are frequent visitors in the stories of both the Old and New Testaments. 'Angelos', the Greek word translated as 'angel', is the ordinary word for a human messenger, but it can be divine too; it makes no difference what we call them, as angels do more or less what we expect messengers to do, and also much more.

But do they look like the Christmas angels? The answer is that there is no description of the angels in the Bible, so we don't actually know what they look like. Of course, there are many late Roman and medieval pictures showing angels who looked pretty much like the ones we see in the Christmas cards today and even grander, but these came later. What we can be sure of, however, is that the angels of the Bible don't have the north European appearance of the Christmas angels.

As to what language they spoke, we don't actually know, except that it definitely wasn't English! Most probably it would have been some form of Syriac or Aramaic, but in the Bible, for the purpose of the narrative, the angels

speaking the language of the writer: Hebrew in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament.

The biblical angels are certainly all male - 'angelos' has no feminine form, but then no woman in the ancient world would be allowed to be a messenger! And there are no child angels - the Cherubim and Seraphim with their many sets of wings belong to the Old Testament with only a brief mention in the New Testament (Hebrews 9:5), and they are not classed as angels. So, we have no clear information about what the biblical angels look like or wear, but there is a small clue when we are told in Luke 24:4 that the angels in the tomb, who speak to the women after the crucifixion, are dressed in garments which 'shone like lightning'. The other versions of the story confirm that the clothing worn by the angels is shining white. This reminds us of the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:2 where Jesus' face 'shone like the sun' and His clothes are described as 'white as light'. Almost certainly shining white clothing was a symbol of a divine being. White clothing in the ancient world was greatly prized as a sign of wealth and status, and here it is clearly a symbol of divine presence.

There is no mention of wings in the Bible. But, as the angels apparently live up in the sky, they quite reasonably need a means of getting down to the earth and back again. Certainly there are lots of examples of angels flying: in Revelation 14:6 'another angel' is seen 'flying in mid heaven'. In Daniel 9:21 Gabriel 'came in swift flight'. It seems to be taken for granted that the angels get around by flying, for in the Temptation (Luke:4, 9-10) the devil tells Christ to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the temple so that the angels can carry Him on their hands; but the angels wouldn't be able to do this if they couldn't fly. Having said that, in Genesis 28:12 there is also the famous description of Jacob's dream in which Jacob sees a ladder reaching from earth to the sky with angels descending to earth and others going back up to heaven. Well, that's another way to do it, but perhaps less convenient!

There is a hierarchy of angels, and in it the archangels are above the ordinary angels. Two of these archangels, Gabriel and Michael, appear in the Bible, and they are the only angels who have a name. But very often an angel is described as 'the angel of the Lord'; this angel who appears very often seems to have great importance, perhaps indicating the presence of God.

So what do they do? Well, sometimes they just appear, as the angel of the Lord (Exodus 3:2) appears to Moses in flames of fire from inside the burning bush. Very often they bring messages like the angel of the Lord in Luke 2:9 who appears to the shepherds after the birth of Christ, and is joined by many angels who come along to sing praise to the Lord. Sometimes the angel brings a message and is also empowered to answer questions as Gabriel does at the

annunciation in Luke 1:28. They also give instructions as when the angel of the Lord visits Hagar in Genesis 16:7-12 to explain what is happening to her and to tell her to return to her mistress. In Genesis 22:11-18 he also appears to Abraham and tells him not to sacrifice his son.

But they do other things too. There is the famous description (Genesis 32:24-32, Hosea 12:4) of Jacob fighting with the angel, and the lovely story (Numbers 22:22-35) in which the angel of the Lord has drawn his sword against Balaam to stop him going away, while the hero of the story is the talking donkey!

But the angels are not always entirely angelic: in Revelation 12:7-8 when there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. Michael and the angels won the battle, and the dragon and his angels had to leave heaven.

So then, if that is what they look like and what they do, who are the angels, why are they there? Well, one could say they are the divine servants of God. They carry out His instructions, and facilitate communication between God in heaven and man on earth; they perform the duties of divine agents who ensure the working of the world according to God's plan with a loyalty and dignity which command respect and awe. They are in short a kind of divine, airborne civil service, keeping the wheels of the world turning according to God's law.

And what of the Christmas angels? They are the 20th century descendants of the biblical angels portrayed in a gorgeous legacy of mosaics, paintings and sculpture from the late Roman period, through the middle ages and into modern times. They aren't as awe inspiring as the biblical angels and they don't do much to keep us in order, but they are far less complicated, and they turn up every year to bring us joy at Christmas.

Brenda Hadcroft

ADVENT AND EPIPHANY

Throughout these two periods Kirstin has held a daily service at 8am from the Rectory. This has taken the form of a period of prayer accompanied by music appropriate to the season and each day there has been a word with an accompanying biblical text. The meditation has lasted about 15 minutes and for those of us attending it has been a very joyful and calming experience and a wonderful start to our day.

Advent for me reclaimed its real meaning and was a period of quiet reflexion leading up to Christmas in the same way as Lent leads up to Easter. As a child I was never allowed to decorate the house for Christmas until after the 21st December, the winter solstice, and decorations remained until Old Christmas

Day, the 7th January, by order of my grandmother! This year our fibre optic tree which sits on a bookcase in the hall is staying until Candlemas. Some of our neighbours are leaving lights in their gardens we notice, to brighten this dark time of the year.

To return to the 8am service held on zoom, what a blessing we have in this technology! We all attend in dressing gowns and turn off our videos but stay unmuted. There is no need to risk slipping on the ice in a walk to the Church or a need to de-ice the car and I have to admit that I would not do that every morning six days each week for several weeks. Neither is Kirstin risking her safety.

The strength this has given me during this period of continued lockdown to remain calm and patient and to await my call to be vaccinated has been very beneficial and I do hope this will be offered again next year when we are perhaps freed from restrictions. Thank you Kirstin and Amen.

Mary Stott



A VERY DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS

It was a very different Christmas for lots of families. Now we are waiting for our vaccinations.

I do have a my first snowdrop out in the rockery - it certainly lifted my spirits.

Janet Shields.

ROTA FOR THE SUNDAY SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

As far as we are currently aware, entry to the Church building for worship will be not allowed during February, and all services will therefore be on Zoom at 10.30 am.

Date	Celebrant	Reader/intercessor	Reading
7 February	Rev Kirstin Freeman Eucharist	David Simmons	1 Cor 9:16-23
14 February	Rev Kirstin Freeman Eucharist	Louise Benson	2 Cor 4:3-6
21 February	Rev Kirstin Freeman Eucharist	Kirstin Freeman	Genesis 9:8-17
28 February	Rev Kirstin Freeman Eucharist	David Hamblen	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Andrew Long

The Editor for the March edition will be Janet Stack. Please send articles to her at janet.stack@btinternet.com by Friday 19th February, 2021.