

# GRAPEVINE

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**The Bishop of Brechin writes:**

## **TOWARDS A DIOCESAN 2020 VISION**

**Thoughts for the Diocesan Synod 7 March 2015**

Our Diocese is who we are, where we are, under God. When I ask the question, 'where do I hope the Diocese of Brechin will be in five years' time?' 'Visible, vibrant and viable' comes to mind. We are moving away from a survival mentality to something purposefully achievable. *The Growing Church Report* (October 2013) explored our Church life against the five Anglican Marks of Mission. We know we can do better, growing in faith and membership, serving others, challenging injustice and caring for the earth.

At heart I am a principled pragmatist. I believe in doing things properly but God doesn't always work in straight lines and the Church is inherently untidy. Sometimes the right way forward reveals itself as time passes. Appointments, adjustments and changes are made as they become possible. Some approaches have been abandoned, people have moved on and fresh things are under way – finding the right people for the right roles at the right moment.

Enabling partnerships between local churches and the diocese, the province, the Church Army and other agencies have brought about the Cathedral curate, the Pioneer Evangelist and the Centre of Mission at St Luke's. More reinvention of what local churches are and do is needed, particularly in Dundee where our churches are well located in the city but more closely so. Across the diocese we still have some 'sleeping' resources in people, money and buildings which might be used more creatively.

Who we are, where we are, I want Brechin to be an even greater diocesan family to belong to than it already is. Listening to what God may be asking of us I

feel that the time is now right to set out our stall for the coming years. We should put our foot on the accelerator and become more intentional, thinking boldly, prayerfully risking new things.

My hope is that **Towards a Diocesan 2020 Vision** might provide a working document and discussion starter for our strategic priorities and resources allocation over the next five years. It suggests our **Mission and Values, our Vision and our Strategy**. Clergy and vestries and folk around the diocese are invited to engage with these ideas, relating them to local churches and communities – and shaping local vision and strategies. In order to flourish I believe we need diocesan and local initiatives that go hand in hand – a joined up jigsaw puzzle in which the overall picture gradually comes into view. We need a discussion about bringing those pieces together.



Our **Mission & Values** (who we are, where we are) are theologically rooted in being Christ-centred people of God and our Neighbour, as expressed in Jesus's summary of the Law, and may be described as:

**Faithful Christians,  
Serving Others,  
Transforming Lives**

Our values would include trust, integrity, humility, respect, compassion and courage.

Our **Vision** (what we are called to do) reflects the opportunities and challenges of the next five years or so and may be described as:

**Flourishing** in our worship, discipleship and membership

**Engaging** with individuals, communities and issues

**Resourceful** and imaginative in how we do things

**Making a Difference** in people's lives

Our **Strategy** (how we get there) is based on the principle that

**We intentionally create Local and Diocesan initiatives hand in hand**

**Therefore this means:**

- ◆ Vestries and clergy will articulate their local vision and priorities.
- ◆ Local mission and ministry will 'read' the particular context creatively, finding authentic focus for community involvement and congregational life.
- ◆ Our churches will aim to steadily increase congregation size and to build up and diversify revenue streams – a 20% challenge perhaps?

# “Bishop’s House, Iona – A Holy Island”

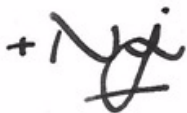
by Edward Luscombe

- ◆ The diocese will maintain as much stipendiary ministry as possible, as well as part-time ministries, each strategically located.
- ◆ We continue to enhance our diocesan ministry team of many talents.
- ◆ We endeavour to keep ministry vacancies short, providing Interim Ministers enabling creative times for congregations.
- ◆ We will encourage vocations, aiming to ordain and licence new clergy and Readers.
- ◆ Re-imagining what particular churches focus on is important, maybe less on Sundays and more in midweek, maybe fewer or quite different services along the lines of Café Church at St Luke’s Dundee, the community activities in church halls at St Martin’s and St John’s, Dundee and pre-school provision in various churches. The diocese is an active partner in these developments.
- ◆ Diocesan leadership will be strategically focused and efficient, friendly and service orientated – a new Diocesan Council will enable this approach.

During 2015 we will explore moving the Diocesan Office to existing Episcopalian premises, and normally hold Diocesan Synods in our own church premises.

Annually the Bishop and Synod will review how the 2020 Vision is progressing.

**More can be added ... what are your thoughts?**



The priest was old, very devout, but sometimes far away during the service. One Sunday just as they reached the Creed there was complete silence, so the altar server went across to him and whispered, "I believe in one God, Father."

"So do I," replied the priest happily, "so do I."

In their retirement Bishops have often turned to writing, but perhaps few so prolifically as Ted Luscombe, former Bishop of Brechin and Primus.

He has produced a range of books – some large and some small – on a variety of themes drawn from the rich history of the Scottish Episcopal Church. His biography of each bishop who has held the office of Primus is the seminal work on the subject, as is his deeply insightful story of the link between the Episcopal Churches of Scotland and the United States.

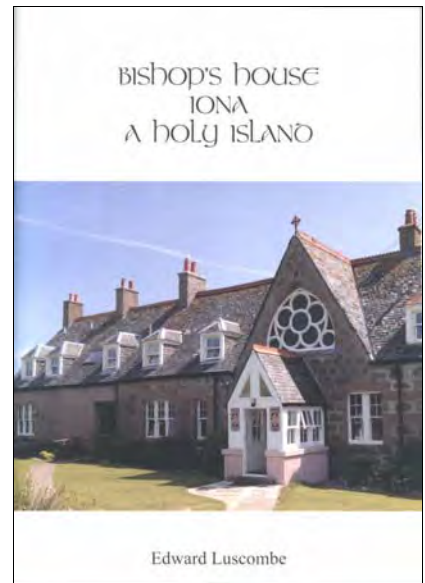
For his first book of 2015 – there are others in preparation – Bishop Ted has fulfilled a need, long felt on the Island of Iona, and written the story of Bishop’s House.

Countless visitors to this beautifully sited retreat house have enquired about its history but until now nothing more than a succession of brief leaflets has been available for them. The Bishop has now provided a very readable 48 page book, complete with historical pictures as well as photographs of Iona and Bishop’s House today.

The story begins with the Celtic monks whom Saint Columba led to Iona in the year 563 and takes it through the first three Bishops of the United Diocese of Argyll and the Isles. It was the third of them, Alexander Chinnery-Haldane, who established what was first known as Saint Columba’s Chapel (but very soon as Bishop’s House) as a place of prayer, study and Eucharist.

The whole building was constructed within a year and opened in June 1894. The Chapel has always been at its centre and, on the first floor there were originally six “cell-like” bedrooms on each side of it. The growing demand for the House has meant that it was extended in 1977, 1986 and 2013. The latest extension, largely funded by a gift from the

Duncraig Trustees, has kept the capacity of the house at 23 guests, but now with more spacious bedrooms – eight twin and seven single – and an extended lounge, with the former common room now a dedicated library and quiet room.



Bishop Ted traces the years when monks from the Society of Saint John the Evangelist (The Cowley Fathers) were in residence and the dedicated Wardens who followed them. He includes accounts of distinguished visitors and links with the church overseas – for instance the first African to be ordained in what was then the Diocese of Zanzibar and Tanga (in modern day Tanzania) was made deacon in the Chapel of Bishop’s House.

The book contains fascinating glimpses into the history of both the island and shores far from Iona, and will be a gem to possess for anyone who loves the Island and its history. Every congratulation goes to Bishop Ted and those who assisted in its production – Stuart Donald from Aberdeen; Joyce Watson from Iona and Jean Sutherland from Perth.

*Gerald Stranraer-Mull,  
Dean Emeritus of the Diocese of  
Aberdeen and Orkney  
and a former Trustee of Duncraig,*

# WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

## *A Short Portrait of a 19th century Brechin Diocesan Cleric*

There is an increasing interest in family and church history. This rich store does not stop with the work of Bishop Alexander Penrose Forbes, and there are others of our Diocesan family who should be remembered for their influence. Such a man is John Woodward.

My first visit to St Mary's and St Peter's, Montrose was in 1980 as a young curate. My eye caught sight of a frame in the corridor between the vestry and the church. It was the Insignia of a Chaplain of the Most Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem. Today we have one holder of this honour in our Diocese, namely the Right Reverend L. E. Luscombe.

When I was appointed Lord Lyon in 2014, this Insignia was drawn to my attention, and I identified the holder as being Reverend John Woodward LLD (1836–1898), who was Rector of St Mary's Episcopal Church, Montrose from 1866 to 1898. St Mary's was built in 1844 and the Qualified Congregation of St Peter's Church united with the Scottish Episcopal Church in 1920. St Peter's was restored in 1927 and re-dedicated to St Mary and St Peter for the United Congregation.

John Woodward was an Englishman who became an eminent Angus Cleric of his time. He was born on 17 January 1836 in the Parish of St Michael's, Bristol, Gloucestershire, and was baptised on 25 June 1837 in the Parish church. In the 1841 census his family were living in the Parish of St Augustine in Bristol and his father was described as an upholsterer. The 1851 census records his mother, Rosina, as head of the household, having been made a widow at the age of 36, and working as a dressmaker.

The first record I can find of John Woodward's activity described him as a chorister, which may explain his lifelong commitment to church music. Before coming to Brechin John had been an Assistant Master at St John's College, Hurstpierpoint,

Sussex. He also was made an "Associate" of St Nicholas College, Lancing, and it was during his time there that he was ordained. He was deaconed in 1861 and priested in December 1862 by the Bishop of Chichester, Ashurst Turner Gilbert. John is described in Crockford's Clerical Directory as being incumbent of St Mary's, Montrose, from 1866.

On 25 July 1867 his marriage to Jane Stuart was conducted by the Lord Bishop of London, assisted by the Rev'd C M Keith, and took place in the Chapel of the Earl of Morton, Dalmahoy Park. His wife's parents, John Stuart of Newhall and Elizabeth Smith Burness, had been married by Bishop Forbes.

John had many areas of interest in terms of his work during his period in the Diocese of Brechin. Among other things, he published widely on the subject of heraldry, focusing in particular on ecclesiastical heraldry.

John Woodward was Precentor and Conductor of the Association of Church Music Dundee (1873–1880) and, when St Salvador's was consecrated in 1874, particular mention was made of him in the writings of the time, where he was described as "singing beautifully". He was named "Honorary Precentor" on 22 September 1877, and this was recorded in the *Courier and Argus*.

During his time at Montrose, John raised two sons and four daughters. Sadly, I found a death notice for one son, Charles Alexander Woodward, who died at the age of 2 years 3 months. His older brother, John Stuart Woodward, had died of diphtheria 12 days earlier on 25 June 1875 after being ill for 16 days, and there is a good chance that both boys had had the disease at the same time.

According to the 1881 census in Scotland, the Reverend John Woodward was living at 4 and 5 Union Place, Montrose, with two servants – a cook and a housemaid (very similar to the life of the Diocesan Clergy today!). In 1891,

the family were at Melville House, which had 22 rooms, described as the Rectory of St Mary's.

He was further recognised by being made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and was mentioned in their AGM Minutes on 30 November 1896. He was a member of the New Spalding Club, founded in November 1886, and was listed as an Ordinary Member of the Council (1889–1890). He gained recognition for his work and commitment to Montrose and broader life in Scotland when, in 1892, the University of Aberdeen conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws. This was a singular honour for a cleric of his generation.

The Diocesan records for 1865 show that he was instituted by Bishop Forbes. In that year St Mary's had 432 souls, of whom 204 were communicant. 12 people were baptised and 3 couples were married, and there were 2 burials. The average number of communicants on a Sunday was 55.

John attended the Diocesan Synod for 23 years and was elected to serve in the National Synod. He was also designated Honorary Vice President at the AGM of Forfar County F.C. .

John Woodward died from malignant disease of the liver on 4 June 1898 in Melville House at the age of 61. At the Diocesan Synod in September, "*His Lordship (Hugh Willoughby) described the life of the Rev'd Dr John Woodward as 'most helpful in all church work'*". He is buried at Rose Hill Cemetery in Montrose, and his funeral took place in St Mary's Church on 8 June 1898. His death is also recorded in the ordinary business of the Asylum and Infirmary Board of the hospital (known in recent years as Sunny-side Hospital), where Provost Mitchell, who presided, referred to the loss they had sustained through the death of the Rev'd Dr Woodward. Since 1866, he had been a manager of the Board.

*Dr Joe Morrow*

# “Dare To Be Different”

It sounds like a slogan designed to sell us sports cars, smartphones or very lurid hair dye, doesn't it? So 'dare to be different' was perhaps an unlikely message for me to bring home from Diocesan Synod on March 7. However, as I reviewed the agenda and events which comprised the day's proceedings, the invitation to dare to be different rang through loud and clear.

Our opening worship firmly set the day's business in the context of the Holy Spirit's boldness, inspiration and grace – very important gifts as we leapt feet first into one of the day's biggest decisions: whether or not to create a single Diocesan Council to replace the Administration Board and the Mission and Ministry Board, both of which had been in existence for many years. The detailed discussion and subsequent passing of this proposal signalled a strong desire to be served by a structure which could respond to needs and innovations with a freshness and timeliness not possible under previous arrangements. It made me wonder ... if diocesan administration can so depart from previous norms and dare to be different, maybe there is hope that we in our charges can learn to do likewise!

Fresh ways of being and working were also reflected in presentations both from Dr Michael Hull (Director of Studies, Scottish Episcopal Institute) and from Elaine Kerr (Manager, St Margaret's Residential Home). Dr Hull explained to us the vision and ministry of the brand new SEI which trains people for public ministry and which is the successor to the Theological Institute of the SEC, whilst Elaine gave us a clear explanation of the rapidly changing context for care of older adults and the distinctively creative and compassionate ethos of St Margaret's Home.

As ever, the Companion Dioceses report challenged us to reflect on our church's call to be visibly different and to walk

practically and prayerfully with our companions in Iowa and Swaziland as they seek to do likewise. Bishop Alan's letter to our diocese, which encouraged us to "look to God for fresh ways" was read to us, and the feedback given by Pat Millar and Fiona McDade from their recent visit to Swaziland highlighted most poignantly and vividly the need to be daringly present and serving in places that many would choose to avoid.

Such a call was underlined by Bishop Nigel's presentation – Towards a Diocesan 2020 Vision (*the 'front page' article summarises this*) – and his subsequent interview by the Dean. Each of our churches was encouraged to imagine bold and new ways of ministering and worshipping in response to the context in which we find ourselves. This may mean daring to think outside the established norms of Sunday Eucharistic patterns of worship if this is what best serves the needs of our local communities. Bishop Nigel was clear that it may be right to stop doing some of the things we do in order to allow other things to flourish, and whilst it is a huge act of imagination to depart from some of our inherited patterns, it is also the case that persisting with 'more of the same' will only in the end result in 'less of the same'. In other words, resources, people and interest will surely dwindle if we fail to be responsive to the needs and times in which we live – if we do not dare to be different.

Bishop Nigel stated clearly that "we need to accelerate" both our imagination and our intention, whilst at the same time acknowledging the difficulty of doing so. He encouraged us to try new things on a pilot basis and offered support from within the diocese to help us. This includes the willingness of the Centre of Mission to put its experience at the disposal of the diocese and help our churches think through the challenges we face as we seek to innovate and reach out.

The tone of this year's meeting was for me best expressed by Fiona McDade, the Synod's youngest speaker, who described her Swazi contemporaries as embodying a "high energy, clearly visible faith ... there was no doubt they were Christians". Fiona had the honesty to wonder if the same could be said of her own life of faith. Perhaps our churches have the clear call and mandate to examine themselves likewise – and then do something about it.

So . . . high energy; clear Christian visibility; daring to be different: the stuff of Diocesan Synod 2015.

Who'd have thought it?

*Rev'd Helen Bridger*

## APPOINTMENTS

Last October Canon Dr Joe Morrow, having been appointed Lord Lyon, resigned from his office as Diocesan Chancellor. In his stead the Bishop has found a successor in Mr Gregor Mitchell, who was born in Bridge of Allan and currently resides in Brechin. Having graduated from Aberdeen University in 1990 and been a partner for 12 years at Maclay, Murray & Spens in Glasgow, he is now a partner at Stronachs in Aberdeen.

Mrs Anne Greybe was Diocesan Secretary for just over a year but resigned in May when after her marriage she was relocated to South Africa. In the interim Mrs Jackie Milton has filled this role as well as being the Bishop's Secretary. Now Synod approved the appointment of Mr Michael Duncan as Diocesan Secretary. Having attended the University of St Andrews Mr Duncan has taught in various establishments and is currently a member of the Court of Directors of the Edinburgh Academy and Chairman of Helm Training based in Dundee. He is Vestry Secretary of St Paul's Cathedral.

## A Sacred Moment Among the Homeless

As one of Britain's most northerly cities winter can be particularly bitter in Dundee, especially when the wind blows icy rain in hard from the North Sea. But even in these sub-zero temperatures a small group of people can still be found on the Cathedral porch, huddled together under dirty old duvets. This is one of the few places in Dundee where the city's homeless can find some shelter from the very worst of the weather and – because it is private property – the police can't move them on. It is here on the steps of the Cathedral that we sit with this small group of street sleepers, to listen to their stories and to try and meet their basic needs however we can: warm clothes, a hot meal or a cup of coffee, help to access medical services, new bedding.

Each one of this group (a handful of men and one woman) has a unique story to tell of how they have reached this place in their lives, but addiction, mental illness and rejection are prominent themes in each of the stories that we hear. Several tell us that they love Jesus but can't get beyond the chaos of their own lives – and yet Jesus died for them as much as for anyone else. The best we can do is to treat each individual with respect, viewing them like Jesus does as precious and beautiful, helping them to connect to God in a deeper way.

In the early hours of Christmas morning I came out of the Cathedral after the midnight service to find 'John' (not his real name) sitting on a pile of old bed covers, crying into his hands.

"I don't want to spend another Christmas like this!" he told me, sobbing.

John is a chronic alcoholic, also on methadone, and he lives on the Cathedral steps with his partner 'Katie'. Her council flat was broken into and trashed while she was in prison, and has been left uninhabitable – covered in human faeces and discarded needles.

I knelt down on the steps and held John for a long time. The smell was hard to bear and I had to remind myself that this is what Jesus would do. But I was able to share my own testimony with John, about my journey to faith from being a troubled youth – and he asked me if I would also help him to find Jesus. It is a sacred moment for the two of us, in the cold and filth of John's bed on the Cathedral steps, as we are both challenged to be more like Jesus.

Weeks have now passed since that night and John has not yet committed his life to Jesus. However our spiritual conversations are continuing and John has now gone into a rehab clinic to help tackle his drinking. While he is away Katie, Craig and I are working hard to get her flat cleaned up and to find new furniture so that they both have somewhere better to live after John's return from rehab. This is not easy work and there are no quick fixes but we do have the great privilege of journeying together with John and Katie, wherever God takes them!

Kerry Dixon

### OLD WORDS – NEW MEANINGS

**Coffee** (n.): the person on whom one coughs.

**Flabbergasted** (adj.): appalled over how much weight you have gained.

**Gargoyle** (n.): olive flavoured mouthwash.

**Balderdash** (n.): a rapidly receding hairline.

**Flatulence** (n.): emergency vehicle that picks one up after being run over by a steamroller.

**Esplanade** (v.): to attempt an explanation while drunk.

**Lymph** (v.): to walk with a lisp.

**Mumbling** (n.): woman dressed up in cheap jewellery.

James Gregory Public Lectures  
on Science and Christianity

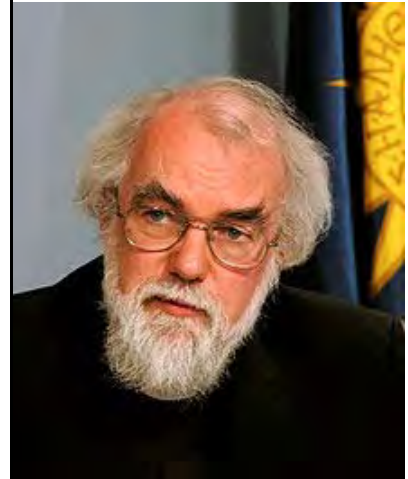
### 'What is Consciousness?'

Dr Rowan Williams

5.15 p.m., 13 April 2015

Younger Hall, St Andrews

(please note change of venue)



Rowan Williams is an Anglican bishop, poet and theologian. Now Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, he was the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, Metropolitan of the Province of Canterbury and Primate of All England, offices he held from December 2002 to December 2012. He was previously Bishop of Monmouth and Archbishop of Wales, making him the first Archbishop of Canterbury in modern times not to be appointed from within the Church of England. He spent much of his earlier career as an academic at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford successively.



Moses' first and last day as a lifeguard

# Templeton Prize Lecture at St Andrews

The winner of the 2015 Templeton Prize is Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, a network of communities where people with and without intellectual disabilities can live and work together. The monetary prize, widely regarded as the "Nobel Prize for Religion" and which will be awarded in London in May, honours a living person who has made exceptional contributions to affirming life's spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works.

Jean Vanier, now 86, is the son of a former Governor General of Canada, who was profoundly moved when, with his mother, he



Jean Vanier with some friends

encountered the emaciated victims of the Nazi concentration camps. Following naval service and a period teaching philosophy at Toronto University he felt called to do "something else" and in 1964 left academia.

Through friendship with a French priest he was shocked to discover a world of intellectually disabled people who were oppressed. He invited two such men to come and live with him as friends and saw them transformed as they realized they were precious. So L'Arche was born quietly in northern France. It has since grown into 147 residential communities operating in 35 countries, and more than 1,500 Faith and Light support groups in 82 countries that similarly urge solidarity among people with and without disabilities.

At L'Arche Vanier found that people with disabilities are beautiful: not people of the head, but of the heart. He realized the importance of meeting people, not just saying "Hi" but listening tenderly and looking with kindness because they are human beings. He found that every person is precious and that each of us has a mission to reveal this. Also, those who are the weakest can transform those who come to help in surprising ways.

After living for 50 years with deeply vulnerable people Vanier has an understanding of weakness and common humanity. He has written more than 30 books,

which have been translated into 29 languages. They contain jewels that speak to a world dominated by success, violence and individuality. He suggests that "To become fully human is to let down the barriers, to open up and discover that every person is beautiful," and "To love is not to do, but to say that you are

important as you are". Making a plea for global peace, he said "Regardless of race, religion or status, we are all human beings with hearts capable of loving."

**The Lecture, entitled "L'Arche: a Road to Peace through Disability", will take place on Wednesday, 8 April at 5.15 p.m. in the Main Physics Lecture Theatre, St Andrews. It will be given partly by John Swinton and partly (using skype) by Jean Vanier himself.**

John Swinton is a Church of Scotland Minister, a registered mental nurse and Professor of Practical Theology and Pastoral Care at Aberdeen University, who set up the Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability.

## Rooster

**Rooster, rooster,  
golden cockcomb  
wait not for the sun to rise.**

**Crow for Peter  
through the darkness,  
pity him who thrice denied.**

**Rooster, rooster,  
Peter's broken.  
Darkness shrouds all earthly scapes.**

**Time to crow, for  
even Peter  
may just yet be saved by shame.**

Timur Kibirov

## Winner!

An Easter Egg goes to Mr John Hitchon of Inverbervie for sending in the first correct solution to last edition's prize crossword drawn independently (by an airline pilot!).

The complete answer (for those who were flummoxed) was:



## A Perfect Day

Dear Lord,

So far today, Lord, I've done alright. I haven't gossiped, lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, nor over-indulgent. And I'm very thankful to you for that.

But, in a few minutes, Lord, I'm probably going to need a lot more help because I'm going to get out of bed!

## CHRIST CRUCIFIED: A STUMBLING BLOCK

April this year will be marked as the centenary of the Armenian and Assyrian genocide. Enormous evidences indicate that the genocide was centrally planned and administered by the Turkish government, and was essentially an effort to exterminate the Christian population living in the predominantly Muslim Ottoman Empire.



A common scene of the Armenian genocide in spring and summer 1915

That trend of anti-Christian violence continued throughout the 20th century and now in the 21st century we are faced with Islamic State, the murderous movement seizing territory in Iraq and Syria, and destroying all crosses and Christian symbols.

Why? And why the severe hardship and death meted out to Christians under Islamic authorities elsewhere in the world? The reason lies not only in how Islam sees itself but in the Cross of Christ.

At this time of the year, Christians everywhere are commemorating the Easter season. The Apostle Paul spoke of the crucifixion of Christ and by extension His resurrection as being a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. In the divine scheme of things, however, it is the embodiment of the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:22-25).

But what is there in the death and resurrection of Christ that make it so offensive, to the point where those who believe in them are rejected or even killed? Nowhere else do we see this more glaringly than in an Islamic context. Although Christians are severely persecuted under Hinduism, Buddhism and other anti-Christian models, Islam, more than any other, has a precise motive for Christian persecution.

Islam says that Muslims are a superior people with a superior religion because Muhammad was Allah's final messenger to mankind. Islam claims that Jesus did not die on the cross, nor was there a resurrection from the dead (Qur'an, Surah 4:157). From this some Muslims conclude that Christians are inferior and some assert that they are rebellious and enemies of Islam.

It is not very difficult now to see why Christians are persecuted under Islam. It is not economic, political or social but theological. Specifically it is the nature, work and person of Christ, condensed in the most powerful events in history – His death and resurrection. The Apostle Paul, in his defence before the Jews and the high ranking Roman officials, clearly posited that the true reason for his trial lay in his beliefs about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Cross will continue to be a stumbling block for generations to come, but it will also be God's only method for global transformation.

*Paul Mursalin*  
The Barnabas Fund

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## On the campaign trail

*With electioneering well under way and the General Election polling day on 7 May getting close, this anecdote by Andrew Greeley may be apposite.*

Once upon a time there was a candidate travelling frantically around his constituency at the end of a long and difficult campaign. He was under constant and, as he saw it, unfair attack from his opponent who was an unscrupulous man and from the hostile media who reported false stories about him and his family every day. Although he had a long and distinguished history of public service, the polls said the race was too close to call.

Discouraged, battered, worn out, he had lost his usual flair for the campaign and went through the motions as if they were drudgery.

One day after what was supposed to be a passionate speech but actually was just one more dud, as he was walking away from the platform, surrounded by his staff and a handful of well-wishers, he heard an old voice crying out his name. He glanced to the edge of the crowd. An old woman in a wheel chair was shouting at him. "Don't pay any attention to her," said his managers.

He was tired of old women in wheel chairs. Nonetheless he

broke through the crowd and walked over to her. Tears pouring down her cheeks, she babbled incoherently about a husband who had died in the War and held out a ten pound note for his campaign.

Tears pouring down his cheeks, he embraced her, took the crumpled bill, and pledged that he would win the race, just for her if for no one else.

*Perhaps the story is meaningful not just for election candidates, but for anyone who gets tired and despondent from time to time. On the other hand it needed the poor old insignificant woman to re-energise the politician.*

# Companions Under One Tree

## *Reflections on working with Neighbourhood Care Points*

Funds are sent regularly to Swaziland from Iowa and Brechin to buy food, health care items and medicines for the Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) where orphans and vulnerable children are fed and offered a few hours in places of safety and support. These funds also support the Home Based Care (HBC) teams whose volunteers work to offer a basic care for people who are terminally ill, usually with complex AIDS-related illnesses, and who remain at home with little or no family or medical support.

I have been fortunate to visit Swaziland several times in the past eight years as our Diocesan Companion Links' Officer. Whenever I am there, I like to get involved in daily activities with people I have come to know. Accompanied by Fiona McDade and a group from the Diocese of Iowa I participated last December in the Diocese of Swaziland's Annual Youth Conference. At the end we got involved in the programme of food deliveries to some NCPs.



Shopping at the warehouse

The Anglican Diocese of Swaziland's HIV/AIDS Office has had responsibility for buying food, household goods and medicines and for distributing these to the parish NCPs and HBC teams. The HIV/AIDS Office is currently being restructured and we wait to learn how this and other social development responsibilities will be organised in future and hope to

work in partnership with the Diocese in managing the future work of the redeveloped Office.

The Diocese of Swaziland depends on the continuing support of donors and support from their Companion Links has become critical, since in recent times most of the larger donors have ceased to fund provision of food.

Bishop Ellinah made it clear, at the Companion Dioceses' Celebration Synod, held in Brechin in October 2013, that, while financial support is urgently needed and appreciated, it is relationships among Companions across the three dioceses that are of most value. And I was very struck when Swaziland's Archdeacon Bheki said at that Synod:

*"We have much to offer the  
Companionship in time and love,  
but not in treasure."*

Anyone who has visited Swaziland, or spent time with Swazi companions, will know how true that is – and will be clear too that time and love given and received are indeed treasures.

It is a valuable experience to go to the wholesale company to shop for supplies and then help deliver them by truck to the rural NCPs in different parts of the country.

Going shopping for food and medical supplies allows me to see what is available, what is being purchased by other

customers and how prices are changing.

Overall, world food prices have increased greatly, so it becomes ever more challenging for our Swazi companions to purchase all the basic supplies needed.

There is no shortage of goods available to buy for those who have cash to spend. It is

disconcerting to see at first hand just how much is available in the town supermarkets and the wholesalers: shelves are stacked high with foodstuffs and other household and luxury goods.

But when you visit small rural parishes, you find whole communities of hungry, malnourished children and anxious adults for whom every day is a struggle and where people forage in order to find food for just one more day.

I'm sure that over centuries and across continents, wherever women gather to share tasks, they also talk, share their stories and offer advice and news.

So it is in Swaziland and for me this usually happens at the NCPs while sharing the preparation of whatever simple meal is being cooked for the children, while helping to prepare parcels for delivery to those who are sick at home and while simply enjoying the conversation and companionship after the work is done. Many caregivers in the NCPs are grandmothers and, as with all grandmothers, we talk about the everyday things – our families, gardening, cooking, worries, politics and community news.

It's a privilege to hear myself referred to now as a 'gogo', which is Swazi for 'granny'.

These days, when I visit, the conversations are more open and explicit and real issues and concerns are shared in an atmosphere of interest, trust and openness. I learn and gain so much from these times – there is such strength and wisdom among these women.

The daily struggles are evident, the worries clear, but all of life is resiliently underpinned by a deep faith that is openly expressed and by an unshaken belief that justice will prevail and that God walks every step with us.

For many children, the volunteer caregivers at the NCPs offer the only hope of a basic meal and a place of safety and support. Many young live in insecure and

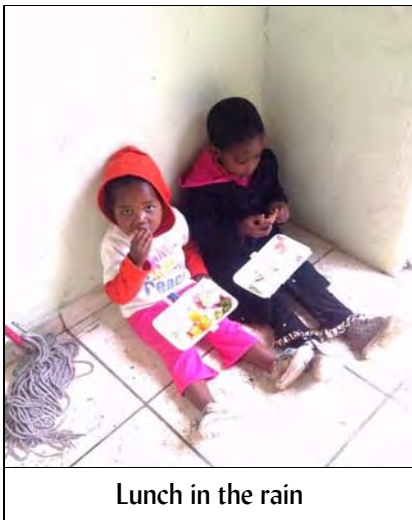


# – Iowa, Swaziland and Brechin

*during my visit in December 2014 for the Youth Conference*

often unsafe circumstances. Child-headed families are particularly vulnerable, since the oldest child may be only ten or twelve and lack the skills and experience to provide for younger siblings.

Many of those who are terminally ill at home would have no meals or even drinks were it not for the dedication of the HBC volunteers, many of whom are past retirement age and must walk long distances over difficult and unsafe terrain to reach the isolated homesteads where their patients live. The care offered by the HBC volunteers, along with parcels of food, medicines and personal care supplies, brings great comfort to those in the final stages of illness.



Lunch in the rain

At times, NCPs have had to close because they have run out of food supplies. If funds are delayed or vehicles unavailable for deliveries, then children go hungry. Caregivers often bring vegetables from their own small gardens and supplies from their own meagre kitchens, but there have been too many occasions when children have walked long distances, only to find that the NCP has closed because no food is left – and the children then have had to turn around and walk back home, still hungry and exhausted.

I think that my young Iowan companions were quite overwhelmed by their first food shopping experience and yet

encouraged as they watched all the sacks of food we'd bought piled up on a huge trolley and loaded into our truck for delivery.

This shopping trip was fairly typical, except that we did not buy medicines, since the group from Iowa had generously taken with them two suitcases full of 'over the counter' medical supplies. So we didn't need to shop for these and could spend more on food.

Just to give an idea, on that one typical shopping trip we spent just over £600 on these goods:–

#### Food:

50kg Mealie meal, 50 kg Rice,  
50 kg Beans, 20 kg Sourghum,  
20 kg Powdered soup (for gravy),  
10 litres Vegetable oil,  
24 tins Oily fish (pilchards) ,  
10 kg Salt, 10 kg Sugar,  
6 bottles Fruit squash,  
6 jars Peanut butter,  
6 jars Fruit jams.

#### Household Goods:

24 packs Green bar soap,  
12 bottles Washing up liquid,  
12 Dish cloths,  
10 packs Steel wool,  
10 packs Pot scrubbers,  
10 packs Matches,  
10 packs Toilet rolls.

These supplies were shared between just two of the NCPs we visited, at Luve and Ekuphikeni. It is difficult to estimate how long the supplies might last, because the number of children coming for food varies, but perhaps around 6 - 8 weeks.

Small parcels of food, medicines and personal care supplies were also made up by the HBC volunteers in these two parishes, to be delivered to the homes of people in the final stages of Aids related illnesses.

For the children, the NCP caregivers usually try cook a fairly high calorie, high carbohydrate, lunchtime meal each day. Typically, it will be a large pot of mealie meal or rice and perhaps another pot of boiled brown beans. To this may be added some foraged wild vegetables. Meat is seldom

available. Cooking oil is often added to the mealie meal porridge or beans to add flavour and extra calories. Soup powder is made into a thin gravy to add flavour.

Some NCPs have basic built kitchens with concrete cooking plinths, but in many rural places all the food is still cooked in three-legged pots, over an open, wood fire, with a tarpaulin wind break. There are concerns about the health risks as the cooks breathe in the smoky fumes every day and there is also growing alarm over the damaging environmental impact of all the open cooking fires across the whole country.

The children at the NCPs eat with their fingers and this habit adds to the problems of tummy upsets, which are so common and so debilitating for children who are already weak from malnourishment and perhaps also from suppressed immune systems and illness. Regrettably I seldom see any of the 300 stainless steel spoons that I handed out some years ago to help reduce infection risks from eating with dirty hands.

The challenges continue – the desperate needs of the poorest people continue to cause heart-ache and anxiety, but their struggles strengthen our commitment to be good Companions and to seek ways to work and walk alongside our Swazi Companions as we all try to make a difference.

If you are already on this Companionship road, please don't get tired: the journey is sometimes challenging but it is worthwhile and rewarding. If you are not already sharing this journey, please join and walk alongside: it is a journey where we all give what we can and we all gain more than we ever could have imagined.

It was a privilege to be part of December's Iowa, Swaziland, Brechin visit to Swaziland. I did feel that we were all truly "Under One Tree" and I hope we will gather there again.

Patricia Millar

# Oh No, Not Mission Again?

"Mission" is one of those words we hear a lot of these days. "Mission-shaped church", "Whole church mission policy", "Mission statement" – they're all part of the ecclesiastical lexicon of the twenty-first century. No self-respecting denomination dare describe itself without referring to mission. It seems we can't get enough of it.

This shift represents a remarkable turn in the way the Church has traditionally thought of itself in the course of my ministerial lifetime. When I started out as a young curate at the end of the 1970s, very few official documents talked about mission except as something that happens to people overseas. Missionary societies such as CMS and USPG existed to make the gospel known to those parts of the world that had not been evangelised. The task of the Church "at home" was to minister to its flock and to do good works.

But the rapid secularisation of western countries changed all that.

The steady erosion of a "Christendom" mentality and the growing distance between organised religion and the vast majority of people outside the churches meant that, by the end of the last century, the choice had become stark – mission or demise.

And so it remains today. The continuing decline of all mainstream denominations in Scotland (and the rest of the UK) makes the task of mission even more urgent.

But as we try to get to grips with this cultural sea change, there are some hard questions we need to ask ourselves. Here are three:

1. Have we truly grasped the extent to which society has become thoroughly post-Christian? This is not just a matter of empty pews where once they were full. It's a matter of the cultural mindset in which we live. Religious ideas and thought forms simply do not shape to any great extent the way people think of themselves, the world around them, or the events that make up their lives. The NHS is more likely to be the place where people look for the meaning of life than the Church.

2. How have we (the Church) reacted to this phenomenon? The temptation for organisations grappling with decline typically takes two forms: either they attempt to retain their core support by battening down the hatches, turning inwards and catering for their existing members, or alternatively, they engage in often frantic actions to find new sources of support through membership drives, offering new products and generally trying to persuade others that they are something different from what went before. In other words, they try to rebrand themselves, supposing that this might revive their support.

3. Is all our talk of mission, therefore, merely a version of secular business practice overlain by a religious veneer? When we speak of "engaging in mission", are we unconsciously (or perhaps

consciously) equating mission with a club membership drive or a business plan to raise market share, in the hope that we will improve our finances? If this is the case, we are falling into a highly dangerous spiritual trap. For mission is not first and foremost about increasing the numbers of those who attend church. It is about making Christ known and making disciples of those for whom Christian faith is something that other people do. The heart of the gospel – of mission – is the transforming love of Christ that changes lives and changes societies (for transformation is not merely an individual thing). If this is not our motive, then we are not a mission-shaped church.

What's more, when we've honestly faced these questions, we shall be faced with yet another: can we be radical enough to imagine the Church differently from our inherited assumptions, patterns of worship and experience? To imagine it not as a kind of holy club, but as an outward-looking, living organism geared to serve those outside its walls, and – the litmus test – ready to face the challenge of change, however painful and hard that may be.

As we all know deep down, without the courage to change, the Church will become an ever diminishing irrelevance in a society that already has precious little time for it. And none of us wants that.

*The Very Rev'd Dr Francis Bridger  
Rector of Broughty Ferry  
and Dean of the diocese*

## ORDAINED

On 29 November 2014 The Rt Rev'd Ellinah Wamukoya ordained 8 people in All Saints' Cathedral, Mbabane. Three were made deacon (on the left in the photo) and five were priested (on the right). The cathedral was crammed for the occasion.

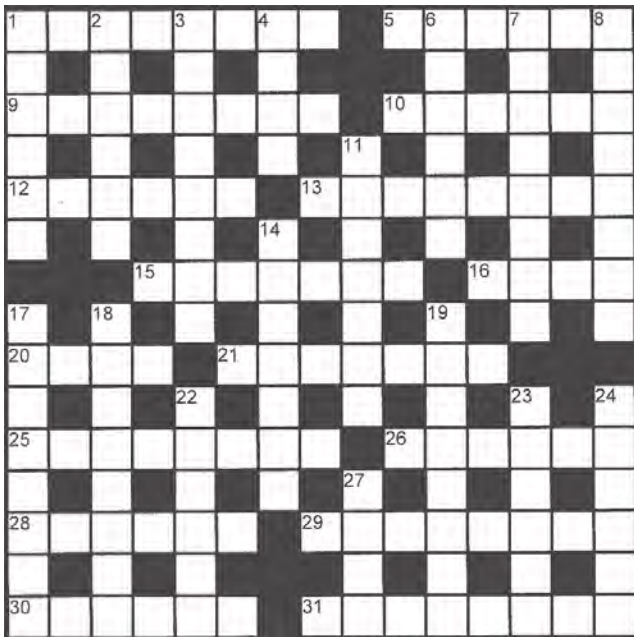


## MINISTRY

It is to be hoped that the Bishops' Lent Appeal will produce significant funds to support the training of people for the present and future ministry in Scotland within the context of the Scottish Episcopal Institute to be officially launched in October in Perth.

# CRYPTIC PRIZE CROSSWORD

To give a little help, eleven of the answers are words found in the Easter hymn "Thine be the glory". Send your entries to the editor at the address on the back page by Friday, 31 July at the latest putting your name and address in the box provided.



### CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 Evidently mad liars are in charge of the fleet (8)
- 5 Shining example of arresting it for grievous bodily harm. Right? (6)
- 9 Snags led to delight (8)
- 10 Come out of a germ in Early English (6)
- 12 Ha! fool of a backscrubber (6)
- 13 Mixed up car tests result in dispersals (8)
- 15 Ned's kin were flayed (7)
- 16 Terror lurks in safe harbour (4)
- 20 Stare at a piece of Lego (4)
- 21 The colour of a German who is doubly worn out (3,4)
- 25 A charge of fascination (8)
- 26 The royal who makes a nice personal representative (6)

- 28 Timely indicator using solar power (6)
- 29 A wise word for those bereft (8)
- 30 Tasty little girl from school (6)
- 31 The sore dean thought things through (8)
- range red (8)
- 8 Is he surer tea is valuable (8)
- 11 You need ace gear to cover this plot (7)
- 14 Interminable smaller bend is headless (7)
- 17 Vinyl log is tended affectionately (8)
- 18 Prof. Malt won't stand for it! (8)
- 19 Magnificent log heads for Brazil's old capital and us (8)
- 22 Brassed off that it's not gold (6)
- 23 See, nun is invisible (6)
- 24 Rented East African Estate in old money (6)
- 27 Will a file enable the convict to escape the ultimate sentence? (4)

### CLUES DOWN:

- 1 Surely they don't speak Eastern slang (6)
- 2 I am owed for the field (6)
- 3 Plunders a triple pole rack (6)
- 4 Lieutenant with an ordinary seaman doesn't know where he is (4)
- 6 The meteor is a long way off (6)
- 7 The cultivator turns the

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....

## LINKS MEETING

The Scottish Episcopal Church Mission Association (LINKS) held a Lunch on Wednesday, 25 February at St Mary Magdalene's Church in Dundee. Thirty-four folk attended from across the southern half of the Diocese and enjoyed soup, steak pie or vegetarian bake and fruit salad with cream.

Following the lunch, Pat Millar (from Holy Trinity, Monifieth) and Fiona McDade (from St Ninian's, Dundee) gave an interesting talk about their visit to Swaziland in December 2014 to attend the Annual Youth Conference which the Diocese of Swaziland holds

as part of its diocesan calendar. Pat and Fiona gave a very vivid picture of life in Swaziland at present, as the people there struggle to have enough food,

medicines for those with HIV/AIDS, schooling and clothing for the many orphans cared for by their grandmothers, aunts or older siblings. Despite all this, the youth and young adults are proud to be Christians and their lives each day show the love of Jesus.

Donations for the lunch and a Bring and Buy stall raised just over £200 for SECMA Funds. It is hoped that during this coming year SECMA will be able to make a substantial donation towards the work of our Companion Diocese of Swaziland.



Judy Robinson

## ***My Iona Experience***

In early August 2014 I was sitting with a friend, whose husband was dying. "When this is all over and things settle down, I would like to go to Iona. Will you come with me?"

So it was, some six weeks later that we set off for Iona. We were booked into the MacLeod Centre and would be living and working as part of the Iona Community.

The Iona Community was founded in Govan and Iona in 1938 by George MacLeod, minister, visionary and prophetic witness for peace. It is now an ecumenical Christian Community of men and women engaged together, and with people of goodwill across the world, in acting, reflecting and praying for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, convinced that the inclusive community they seek must be embodied in the community where they practise.

We left Brechin on a lovely sunny morning, driving to Oban, parked the car and walked across to the Ferry Terminal to catch the 11.30 a.m. ferry across to Mull. A bus ride over Mull lasted about 45 minutes; then a short ferry crossing to Iona. We were met by members of staff and walked up to the MacLeod Centre.

After a welcome cup of tea and a homemade cake we were allocated our accommodation: a dormitory with five bunk beds. Having been widowed for several years, this was quite a challenge!

Guests are requested to work in teams, which undertake household tasks. We were to be members of the Puffin Team. Our chores included setting up, serving and clearing away the lunch time meal and cleaning the bathrooms, showers and toilets.

The theme for the week was *The Pilgrimage of Life* led by Reverend Alastair McIntosh, a Scottish academic and activist.

Sunday: day one and full of enthusiasm. I volunteered to help with the afternoon Church Service, so stayed behind after Morning Worship to be given instructions to help with the Communion Service.

The Abbey was full to capacity as passengers came from a ship that had disembarked for the day.

On Monday a trip to Staffa and Fingal's Cave attracted the hardier amongst us. Alistair gave his first talk entitled *Initiation*, the start of life's journey.

On Tuesday, meeting in front of the Abbey, we set off on a Pilgrimage around the Island. It was overcast and rained from time to time, but we were all prepared with waterproofs and sturdy walking boots. Arriving back at 3 p.m. a van from the Centre served hot drinks and flapjacks.

Many visitors, to Iona, have a reason for being there and have waited many years. One lady from America had lost her 19 year old daughter, twenty years ago. A Glaswegian lady was trying to come to terms with the loss of a nephew who had been stabbed to death aged just 17 years. An Australian lady learned of the suicide of a cousin and would not be able to return home in time for her funeral.

There is something very spiritual about Iona that allows complete strangers to talk so freely and unburden themselves with whatever is troubling them.

The Abbey provided accommodation for other guests. This allowed us to integrate them with those staying at the MacLeod Centre at meal times and we moved around the tables to chat to as many people as possible.

On the first day, a group, from the Abbey joined us at lunchtime. A Minister from Holland sat next to me. He asked me where I was from and I explained that I lived over on the east side of Scotland. He asked if I knew of a place called Brechin. When I said that that was where I lived, he asked if I knew David Mumford and Steve Collis!

The next day we volunteered to have a Meal Exchange at the Abbey. After the meal we were asked to introduce ourselves, say where we were from and describe our favourite walk. Afterwards a lady came across to us and said that she had lived in Montrose, for

ten years, when her husband worked at Glaxo. I took one look at her and said, "Your name is Charlotte." I remembered her because we had both sung together as members of the Montrose Music Society. She now lives in Oxford. What a small world it is!

Following a Service for Healing in the Abbey at 9 p.m. a Ceilidh was organised in the Village Hall starting at 10.00 p.m. What fun and laughter, teaching friends from America, Germany and Holland how to dance the *Gay Gordons* and *Strip the Willow!* We went to bed happy but exhausted.

The next morning Alistair talked about *Returning* – accomplishing things and trying to hold on to objects of our desire. but realising the impermanence of life. His third talk was about *Departure* – letting go of life and surrendering to God.

That afternoon four of us walked to Port Bain, a nearby beach of white sand and turquoise sea. Dawn took a swim in the sea, but I was content to collect pebbles to bring home to friends. The Evening Service was one of Commitment and Peace.

The three Teams (Otters, Puffins and Seals) were challenged to present a Talent Show on the Thursday evening. Our Group composed verses about being a Puffin, sung to the tune *Onward Christian Soldiers*. Others read poetry, played drums and a recording of a pop song that had been the favourite of the 17 year old boy who had died so tragically. The most entertaining act was a Dutch lady who pretended to be drunk and sang "Show me the way to go home". She brought the house down!

Our week was almost over, but my lasting memories are taking part in the Communion Service, singing in the Choir and visiting the beach where St Columba had landed 1,400 years ago.

Leaving Iona my bag appeared much heavier, than when I arrived. I can only say that the extra weight was all the love, hope, healing and friendship, that had been imparted.

*Cheryl Birse*

# St Ninian's Stay and Play Family Support Group

Sunday service is over, Sunday School Room is tidied and still some of the young people are happy to stay and haul out play mats, many soft furnishings, mobile sink and baby chairs, all in preparation for the transformation of the worship area into a play room for 8.00 a.m. on Monday.

Guided by Fay Lamont, St Ninian's congregation has always had a strong commitment to reach out to those in the local community, so it was no surprise when Fay and the Vestry decided to explore the possibility of setting up a Family Support Group for families with children aged 0–4 years. The vision of a Group which showed God's love in action came to fruition in February 2012. A holistic, non judgmental and safe service now functions with two paid workers and 6 volunteers on a Monday and Tuesday with the Wednesday being used for individual case work.

The official start time is 10.30 but families frequently arrive earlier and, after a warming cup of coffee, help in the setting up process of three main areas:

- an extensive physical play area
- a safe area for babies
- an area for art craft, sand, water, home play, dressing up and imaginative play, etc.



Toddlers exploring the activity board

Midday heralds a free lunch for all, which always starts with home made soup made by volunteers. The afternoon continues with play until 1.40 when we have group singing games and rhymes followed by a snack before finishing at 2.30. A well earned coffee break for staff and volunteers allows for a period of reflection on the day's events.

As all parents know, some time for ourselves is always welcome, and this is built into our termly programme. Parents can become involved with drama workshops, art activities, adult literacy, money and budgeting sessions, etc.; while our team ensure that the children are playing happily.

Over the 4 years we have supported individual families in many areas such as family relationships, child development, school placements, mental health, drugs and alcohol abuse, financial and housing

issues. This often happens by inviting a representative of an appropriate agency to visit the Group and meet the parent. Parents, rather than having to go out to meet agency representatives, feel more comfortable meeting strangers on their "home territory".



A splash of summer

One of the most satisfying outcomes to date has been the development of social support network groups forming outwith the Group. Parents with young children and no family support often feel isolated and lonely. By coming to the Group, friendships are made which in turn make parents feel better about themselves.

Fay spends time in the Group, listening to parents, answering questions – often regarding baptisms, weddings, and how older children in the family can access St. Ninian's Girls' Brigade. At Christmas, with the parents' support she led an incredibly successful "pop up" nativity with the children. During this Lent we are wondering what Easter will bring!

A few comments from parents show the value of this Group.

- I was always on my own before
- I just stayed in the house and watched the telly.
- It was hard being alone.
- People listen to you here.
- Nothing seems too much for them.
- I get loads of help.
- I feel rotten when I come in but soon feel better.
- Everyone is friendly and parents help each other.
- Loads of things to do for kids and adults.

Volunteers are scarce. If you could give us even 2 hours of your time on a Monday or Tuesday we would be most grateful. Help in the kitchen, playroom, cleaning and tidying are all areas where assistance would be appreciated and, if you are free at 8.15 a.m. on a Monday and 2.15 p.m. on a Tuesday to help take out and put away equipment you may be given a gold star for service.

If you are interested in helping us please contact Fay or the Group Leader, Kathy Dunn on 07712331124.

## *Some thoughts on The Assisted Suicide Bill*

As MSP Patrick Harvie's Assisted Suicide Bill progresses through the Scottish Parliament, the main concern has been to ensure that there are effective safeguards to ensure that the medical profession is protected and that no unscrupulous person may commit euthanasia or murder. Related issues such as the withdrawal of life-support systems, refusal to eat and drink and the age at which a person might make such a decision are also under consideration.

There seems to be little objection, except from religious organisations, to the principle that a person of sound mind might be permitted to have an act of suicide carried out by a facilitator when that person is physically unable to perform the act for themselves.

Suicidal deaths by people of sound mind have occurred throughout recorded history and attitudes towards suicide have changed over time. The reasons why a person might wish to take their own life vary greatly but mostly the decision is not taken lightly, thoughtlessly or insanely.

By way of example the case of King Saul is relevant to the current discussion of assisted suicide because he asked his armour bearer to put him out of his misery; that is, to assist in his suicide. The armour bearer refused but Saul still had the strength to do it himself. Doing it oneself is sometimes not an available option.

What Saul did – killing himself – is perfectly legal today, though it was not always so. But what Saul asked his armour bearer to do is illegal today. Whether or not it was legal in Saul's day, it would certainly have been against the Mosaic commandment "Thou shalt not kill". Not that that seems to have worried Saul, lying wounded on a battlefield with his dead sons amid a scene of great slaughter.

The Doctrine Committee of the Episcopal Church considered the subject of assisted suicide and published a lengthy report on the subject: The Grosvenor Essay Number 9, "The Art of Dying Well".

Part 1, called "Recovering the Art of Dying", is about how modern

medicine has advanced so far that for many it almost seems unnatural to die at all.

Part 2 is called "Living with Dying". There is a wide ranging discussion of all the possibilities of what to do when someone is dying. Some live with chronic conditions which gradually get worse; others have to live with the possibility of a sudden death occurring. There are interesting sections on living with HIV-AIDS, on the palliative care of children, on dementia and on the work of hospices. The authors recognise that modern medicine offers enormous help to the terminally ill, but that many patients would like to have more control over the process and a few would like to choose for themselves when they've had enough.

The church's attitude towards suicide has softened over the years. A suicide used not to be buried in consecrated ground, since killing was sinful. So, if you killed yourself you had committed a sin for which you were then unable to repent. No repentance equals no forgiveness equals eternal damnation. Now the church is rather more compassionate.

So, what about assisted suicide? The report's authors are quite unequivocal in their total rejection of the idea of allowing assisted suicide under any circumstances. This is not on medical or legal grounds, but simply that the Committee affirms the sanctity of all human life, which is God's gift.

It seems to be basically a statement of Moses' commandment "Thou shalt not kill". Indeed the report's authors seem more concerned about the welfare of the facilitator than about the condition of the patient.

I would have liked to have asked a few questions. For example, How is Human Life defined by the Committee? What things make us human? And if those things are taken away from us bit by bit through some degenerative disease, at what point in the process do we cease to be human and enter into a so-called vegetative state?

The Doctrine Committee's prescription for dealing with the anguish of a person slipping into such a state is simply the exercise of love towards the patient. But the patient may become unaware of this and the loving care becomes of more value to the carer than to the patient.

To me, the problem of assisted suicide has some similarity to the problem of abortion. In the development of an embryo at what point does it become human? Despite there being many different opinions, the medical ethics and the legal experts have come up with a working definition which seems to suit many people. The difference is that the embryo cannot decide for itself when to end it whereas a sane adult can. The question now is how to safeguard a vulnerable person not wishing to commit suicide and how to legitimise a facilitator.

The ultimate question, however, when faced with a dilemma, is of course – "What would Jesus do?" Strangely it seems to be a question the Committee did not ask. In fact Jesus is remarkably absent from the whole essay. Maybe that is because Jesus could do things that we cannot do. He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear and, most miraculous of all, raised the dead back to life.

But there's one thing he did in every case, and it is something we **can** do. He showed compassion. We all know the shortest sentence in the Bible, and it demonstrates this compassion: "Jesus wept."

One of the most important things Jesus did, when the rules made a nonsense of the two great commandments, was to break the rules. I think Jesus might well look at someone degenerating into an intolerable, inhuman state and question the Rule Book.

The S E C appears to have put the lid on questioning the circumstances under which death might be assisted. I suspect that public opinion will prove to be years ahead of the church which will have to play catch-up; just as it did with the idea of burying suicides in consecrated ground.

*K. Tonge (St Ternan's, Muchalls)*

## Archbishop visits Diocese of Brechin

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, spent some time visiting the new Café Church project at St Luke's Church in Dundee last November, as part of a wider two day visit to Scotland.

Café Church is a fresh expression of church at St Luke's, Downfield where worship and meetings can take place in a relaxed, social setting, and plans are already underway for an after-school club to be opened there.

The Archbishop said, "Here we see a community that clearly has real challenges but it has the capacity to face them which is inspirational.

"I think this is exactly what the church should be doing. This should be emanated around the country, both in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

"I want us to be the kind of church that welcomes everyone. We want a world where it is not necessary for people to sleep rough in church doorways, where it is not necessary to have food banks, and where there are enough resources for everyone."



The Archbishop speaking with local people at St Luke's

St Luke's Café Church is part of the Dundee Centre of Mission, a partnership between the Diocese of Brechin, Church Army, St Luke's and the international development agency Signpost International. It is led by Church Army Evangelists Craig Dowling and the Rev'd Kerry Dixon, who said;

"It has been really exciting to meet the Archbishop, and an encouragement to be able to share our vision for mission and evangelism with him."

During his visit to St Luke's the Archbishop was able to meet with the congregation and members of the local community, including Religious Studies students from the local secondary school and pre-schoolers from St Luke's nursery. Local clergy from both the Episcopal church and other denominations also spent time talking with the Archbishop.



The Archbishop talking with students

## YES,

## we do still collect postage stamps

For a number of years members of the congregation of St Salvador's and friends have carefully snipped off their stamps from snail mail letters, cards, parcels and packets. This is to raise money for the Leprosy Mission.

First we trim the backing paper neatly, leaving a generous margin of paper in order to protect the stamp itself, then sort into UK and Foreign. After that the UK ones are separated into 'special issues' and 'definitives'. The variety amongst the 'specials' is huge, celebrating everything from royal and national events, famous buildings and sailing ships to Alice in Wonderland.

Amongst the definitives it was thrilling to find a few with the head of a young George VI and a number with a young but regal Elizabeth. Even older was a solitary Edward VII.

The foreign stamps come from a vast number of countries and most continents. European countries are well represented as are many African ones. Some come from popular holiday destinations as well as the Indian sub-continent and Australasia. A few from North American countries but, as far as I can remember, none from South America.

Then someone from the Leprosy Mission, perhaps Judy Robinson, takes the sorted bundles through to Stirling for the next stage of processing. Ultimately the beautifully prepared stamps will go to London and the process of marketing proceeds.

Money raised goes totally to the Leprosy Mission who ensure it is used to maximum effect to provide the medicines needed for the treatment of that scourge of leprosy, sadly still to be found on several continents. We all know it is treatable, the problems are to provide professionals to administer the costly drugs and to provide the essential transport often over difficult terrain.

I must confess it is great fun sorting through the miscellaneous collections of stamps and dream of the faraway places from whence many have travelled. Interesting little side lines are the variety of subjects for the designs and what facet of a society they represent. The quality of the printing of most of the natural history ones is superb.

Please let your enthusiasm for saving stamps to give to the Leprosy Mission be renewed, it is harder than ever now that email is taking over from good old snail mail (though I personally would not be without email for all the proverbial tea in China!) but even half a dozen stamps are worth saving.

Perhaps somewhere in an old desk you might even find some old envelopes lurking. Who knows, treasure might be unearthed? Do let us have them at St Salvador's: and thank you from all the leprosy sufferers all over the globe

*Ann Noltie*

## Scottish Episcopal Church Mission Association

The Diocesan Branch of SECMA are holding a Musical Afternoon on Wednesday, 20 May 2015 at 2 p.m. at St Martin's Church in Dundee. We shall be entertained by a group called "Total Recall". This is a choir made up of men and women suffering from Alzheimers together with their partners and/or carers.

As usual there will be a Bring and Buy stall to raise funds, and tea and coffee will be served. All are welcome; you do not need to be a member of SECMA.

### Events at St James', Stonehaven

Saturday, 4 April, 10.30 to 3.00 p.m.

**Book Browse** – thousands of titles, good condition. Free entry and free refreshments.

Saturday, 2 May, 10.30 onwards

**Craft Fair** – many stalls with produce from local crafts-people. Refreshments available.

Sunday, 17 May

**Stonehaven Choral Concert** in St James' Church – details in church or from Vestry members.

Saturday, 30 May, 10.30 to 3.00 p.m.

**Book Browse** – thousands of titles, good condition. Free entry and free refreshments.



Noah regretted allowing the woodpecker on board the ark

## St Drostan's Tarfside The Big Diocesan Barbeque and Family Fun Day Sunday, 12 July

The Bishop and St Drostan's Trustees will be hosting an afternoon of fun, food and festivities at Tarfside on Sunday, 12 July. This is a chance for all of the Churches in the Diocese to get together with friends and families to enjoy themselves in the beautiful surroundings of Glenesk and also see the facilities which are available at St Drostan's Lodge.

There will be activities for the young and young at heart, including a Mini Highland games, (cabers, shot put (haggis hurling), spoon & egg race, welly tossing, and other favourites) and we will be looking forwards to seeing which church can put up the best team!

There will also be a gentle walk and other facilities for some quiet contemplation for those who are looking for some spiritual renewal.

There will be barbeque facilities and food available at St Drostan's or you can bring your own equipment and food. Nearer the time an invitation will be sent out to each church, requesting information about how many may attend and whether they will require food to be provided.

So why not gather a group together from your church and perhaps invite some friends who are not regular attenders to come along on the 12 July. The Lodge will be open from 1.00 p.m. onwards for a time to suit you and your group. Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available throughout the afternoon.

Approximate timetable:

- 2.00 p.m. Spiritual Walk.
- 3.30 p.m. Mini Highland games for young and young at heart
- 5.00 p.m. Barbeque, just come along and enjoy our fare! Or bring your own food and use our facilities, or bring your own barbeque and food!
- 7.00 p.m. Songs of Praise and special service in church.

The Church will be open for meditation for those who need a place of quiet reflection.

Bring a group from your church along with your friends and enjoy an uplifting day in the countryside.

For more information contact the Rev'd Jane Nelson, tel. 01569 730967; Email – [stdrostansbook@btinternet.com](mailto:stdrostansbook@btinternet.com)

The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 30 August 2015.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 6 August 2015.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

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