

GRAPEVINE

No 119

Winter 2019

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DIOCESE OF BRECHIN

Greetings from Bishop Andrew:

To all my brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Brechin.

It has been over a year now since my consecration in St Paul's cathedral in Dundee and I am delighted to have come and shared worship with you in all the church communities of the Diocese at least twice in that time. It has been a wonderful experience to start to get know you, your priorities and how we can work together as a Scottish Episcopal Diocese in the 21st century.

We are approaching Advent 2019 and the start of a new church year. This year will see changes in the life of our Diocese – a new Provost will be sought after Jeremy and family leave the cathedral after 10 years. Jeremy leaves the cathedral in good spirits and on a sound foundation for his successor: our thanks and prayers go with the Aulds as they move to Oxfordshire at the end of the year. The leadership of the cathedral is a vital part of Diocesan life, so please also keep in your prayers the process for finding who God is calling next to St Paul's. There will also be the start a new sort of ministry in the Diocese: you

will hear more and more about the concept of 'transitional' or 'interim' ministry. This is a ministry where a priest with special skills and/or training is appointed to charges to help them work out what their future will be. The Rev'd David Gordon, currently an NHS chaplain living in Dundee, will be taking on this role along with other duties in the Diocese.

This is a time of some change in the Diocese and in some of our charges. Advent always feels an appropriate time to reflect upon change, new beginnings and what how we prepare ourselves for new chapters of our life as the

Scottish Episcopal Church in this part of Scotland. As we pass through Advent and reflect upon God's plans being grown by Patriarchs (and Matriarchs), foreseen by prophets, very specifically announced by John the Baptist and, finally, being embodied by Mary as she bears the unborn baby Jesus, we can look for our own place in those plans. We are a group of Christian communities, each one unique, who are called to be a sign of God's kingdom in our cities, towns and neighbourhoods. I am looking forward to another year of walking with you as we explore what this might mean, what it might look like for each of churches and what God is calling us to do to live out that vocation.

Have a blessed Advent and, when it arrives, a wonderful Christmas.



Andrew, Bishop of Brechin

Funny you should ask

A Jewish businessman sent his son to Israel for a year to absorb the culture.

When the son returned, he said, "Papa, I had a great time in Israel. By the way, I converted to Christianity.

"Oy vey," said the father. "What have I done?"

He took his problem to his best friend, Isaac.

"Isaac," he said, "I sent my son to Israel, and he came home a Christian. What can I do?"

"Funny you should ask," said Isaac. "I too, sent my son to Israel, and he also came home a Christian. Perhaps we should go see the rabbi."

So they did, and they explained their problem to the rabbi.

"Funny you should ask," said the rabbi. "I, too, sent my son to Israel, and he also came home a Christian. What is happening to our young people?"

And so they all prayed, telling the Lord about their sons.

As they finished their prayer, a voice came from the heavens:

"Funny you should ask," said the Voice. "I, too, sent my Son to Israel . . ."

New Beginnings in the Diocese of Brechin

It has been a wonderful few weeks in the life of the Diocese of Brechin as we have celebrated the start of new ministries. Church life can be a challenge and the work to move towards delivering a Diocesan Strategy continues with the recent Synod: but the beginning of new ministries within the Diocese is a sign of hope and encouragement. Please watch out for news of the Diocesan Strategy and approaches to mission and ministry at every level of the Diocese in future editions.

Transitional Priest in Mid-Angus

At the end of August the Rev'd John Skinner with his wife Linda came to the charges of St Mary's and St Peter's Montrose with St David of Scotland Inverbervie and St Andrew's Brechin. John is the 'priest in charge' of this new linkage of churches and has been specifically licensed as a 'Transitional Minister': a priest with the project of helping the charges work together in shared aspects of their ministry. John will be working to grow a shared team for worship between the charges and helping the joint financial and governance aspects of the churches function well. John's licence is for an initial three-year period while the linkage is established. The start of John's ministry was marked by two licensing services, one in Brechin and one in Montrose, a sign of the different context and character of these communities.



Bishop Andrew with John and Linda Skinner

A New Deacon

At the end of September, on the Feast of Michaelmas, Roxanne Campbell was ordained as a Deacon in the Cathedral Church of St Paul in Dundee. The service was a wonderful occasion with exceptionally good music, superb preparation by the Provost and cathedral team and excellent support from people from churches, Roxanne's family and friends and many, many others. Roxanne originally comes from the Cathedral congregation and has served placements in other churches and secular places during her training with the Scottish Episcopal Institute.



A new Deacon dismisses!

Roxanne is serving an innovative curacy, with extended periods of time in different charges in Dundee City. She will be supervised initially by Dean Fay Lamont in St Ninian's Mid-Craigie, but the whole three-year curacy is overseen by the Bishop. Roxanne lives in Dundee with husband Neil and daughter Isabella: she will not be moving house as she makes the transition to full time ministry. Please do look out for the Reverend Roxanne Campbell in Dundee and the wider diocese in the months and years to come!

Please keep John and Roxanne and all who minister in the church in your prayers! †Andrew

.....
• *Apologies for the non-appearance of the summer edition of Grapevine. An unanticipated and enforced spell in hospital for the editor made preparation and publication impossible.*
•

.....
• *The purpose and cause of the Incarnation was that he might illuminate the world by his wisdom and excite it to the love of himself.*
• *Peter Abelard*
.....

Newly Arrived

Always remember the future comes one day at a time.

Dean Acheson

Tomorrow, Linda and I will be jumping in the car and heading for a new chapter with the dear folks of Brechin, Montrose and Inverbervie. Change is always unnerving; it gets the adrenaline pumping ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of a new day.



In 2016 Linda and I unexpectedly returned from Turkey after living there for 12 years. The death of Erdiņ, our best friend and business partner, and a change in the political climate made it impossible for us to stay. It was a shock to the system as we had planned to apply for citizenship and live there permanently. Back in the UK it took us two years to come to terms with the loss of our friend and the life we had built. When we began to look to the future again only two things were clear to us: Move to Scotland. Join the Scottish Episcopal Church.

We were fortunate that †John Armes, †Richard Holloway and †Andrew were very affirming of our distinctive ministry which is a tapestry of church ministry, new-monastic community and social enterprise. (New Monasticism is simply a movement that seeks to find ancient and new ways of being a Christian in a society that feels as if it has experienced Christianity and left it behind.)

We are looking forward to sharing in the life and ministry of Brechin, Montrose and Inverbervie. Our priority will be the pastoral care of our church communities and building on their rich traditions in worship and spirituality. We will also help to transition through the new challenges and opportunities we will encounter as newly linked charges. This will involve training and equipping those who want to be more actively involved in ministry. I am particularly looking forward to sharing in and contributing to the life and mission of the Diocese of Brechin.

Please feel free to pop in and see us at the Brechin Rectory. We would love to greet and meet as many folk as possible before my Induction.

Rev'd John Skinner

(This piece was written for the summer edition of Grapevine which in the event was not published, but it is still appropriate so is printed here. Ed.)

GRACE – CHEAP OR COSTLY?

“Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjacks' wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Grace is represented as the Church's inexhaustible treasury, from which she showers blessings with generous hands, without asking questions or fixing limits. Grace without price; grace without cost! The essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite. What would grace be if it were not cheap?...

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

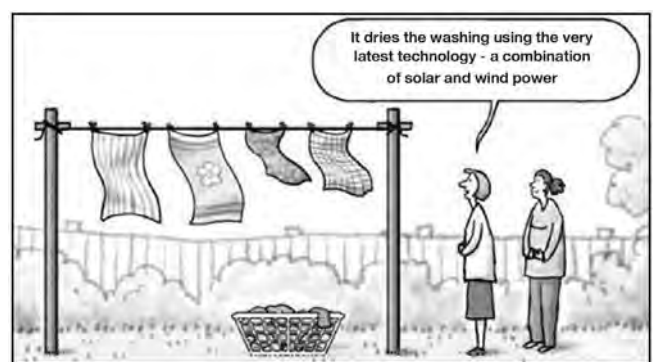
Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock.

Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: "ye were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

from The Cost of Discipleship, 1937



To Boldly Go !

Earlier this year, I was invited to attend the annual Colloquium of the Cochrane Collaboration in Santiago de Chile, 21 – 25 October. Since Cochrane isn't widely known outside the medical field, despite being a global organisation, let me explain. Cochrane is a charity registered in England. It exists so that healthcare decisions get better all over the world. Its aims are to produce high-quality, relevant up-to-date systematic reviews that are accessible and useful to everybody. Plain language summaries of Cochrane reviews are translated into 14 languages, working closely with consumers and patients to ensure their content is easily understandable.

I have been involved in their work for several years as a patient representative, reviewing protocols and research reports and latterly as an active member of several research teams under the auspices of the Cochrane Skin Group. I even jumped through all the hoops to have a paper accepted for presentation at this year's Colloquium, on the UK system of Priority Setting Partnerships, which identify the things that are important to patients, carers and clinicians, to set the priorities for future research funding.

So, off I set to Santiago, via Amsterdam and Panama, on the morning of Saturday 19 October. Whilst sitting at Amsterdam, I received a message from our son, to 'be careful, lots of demonstrations in Santiago', then saw reports of the civil unrest on MSN. But by now I was committed to continue with my journey. By Sunday afternoon, the Cochrane Board had decided with great reluctance to cancel the Colloquium in its entirety.

By then, there were increasing numbers of demonstrations across the city, some enhanced with petrol bombs and granite setts being lobbed at the police and military. Banks and other businesses were being torched, and several supermarkets had been looted then burned to the ground: we saw the plumes of smoke from one from the roof terrace of a hotel, probably 10km or more from where we were. Five people had been killed in one factory that had been set alight, and two in another building. Vigilante groups were being formed in middle class housing schemes, patrolling with baseball clubs and other weapons, to protect their property. The metro was closed and there was limited public transport. And late on Sunday afternoon, the government announced that the curfew would start at 7.00 p.m. until 6.00 a.m. Monday. Anyone breaking the curfew was liable to instant arrest, with questions asked after.

Fortunately, the hotels being used by delegates were in one of the greenest and most beautiful suburbs I've seen anywhere in the world. It seemed on another planet, compared with the scenes on TV, and I happily walked from, and back to, my hotel to go to a gathering of delegates in another. But made sure I was back well before 7.00 p.m.!

Personally, I never felt threatened, but there was now no reason to be in Santiago. So I called KLM,

who kindly found a seat for me on their departure on Monday morning, straight back over the Andes to Amsterdam, with a short stop in Buenos Aires on the way.

This was the first civil unrest of any magnitude since the end of the Pinochet regime 40 years ago. It started with student protests against hikes in metro fares. It soon spread to other sections of the community with grievances against the cost of living and, no doubt, many other things besides. As I write this a week later, the Foreign and Commonwealth website reports that things are getting more violent, with threats of strikes and other disruptive action.

Chile is the wealthiest country in Latin America. But it also has the largest gap between rich and poor, with several million internal migrants living in shanty towns just a bus ride away from the plush shopping malls, high rise offices and hotels, now airing their grievances. We seem to be living in a world where protest is getting more violent: Chile, Hong Kong, Ecuador, Catalunya. Even here in the UK, the police have contingency plans in case of violence if decisions on Brexit, when made, are not widely well received.

In all my travels to Asia, Latin America, the USA and Canada and across Europe over the past 30 years, I've never been so close to civil unrest. I was pleased to get an early plane out, and I know someone at home was glad too. But what can we do to try to encourage a less violent world, or are we powerless to do nothing other than sit and watch on our TVs?

*Dr Peter Smart, Warden of Lay Readers
and Lay Reader, Brechin, Inverbervie and Montrose Linkage*

Signs of Daybreak

A Rabbi once asked his students how they could tell when night had ended and day was on its way back.

'Is it when you can see an animal in the distance and tell whether it is a sheep or a dog?'

'No', answered the Rabbi.

'Is it when you can look at a tree in the distance and tell whether it is a fig tree or a peach tree?'

'No'

'Well then', the students demanded, 'when is it?'

'It is when you look into the face of another human being and see that he or she is your brother or sister. Because if you cannot do that, then no matter what the time is, it is still night.'

Lay Ministries Training Day at St Drostan's Lodge, October 2019

Eleven people from the Diocese involved in Lay Ministry met together on a lovely Autumn day at St Drostan's Lodge, Tarfside to learn more about Prayer. They had come from the far corners of the Diocese and were all delighted to watch the red squirrels bobbing around, collecting nuts, in the grounds outside.

We were ably led by Carole Phelan, a member of the Epiphany Group, who is on the Lay Team of St Margaret's Church in the Aberdeen Diocese.

We gathered in the wonderfully refurbished kitchen for tea, coffee and biscuits. George brought a tasty "fine piece" that was much appreciated.

Carole opened the day with a short worship session, which set the tone for the rest of the day.

The first session, entitled "Listening to God", was on personal prayer and Carole encouraged us to listen more than speak when praying. She also said we should look out for little instances of joy during the day and give thanks for them. We discussed in pairs examples of a little thing that occurred recently that we could give thanks for.

After more tea and coffee, session two, "Discerning God's Will", looked at Ignatian prayer methods including the Examen at the end of the day and an interesting way of prayerfully making decisions. This consisted of listing the pros and cons of doing

something and then the pros and cons of not doing it. It was done slowly in a prayerful way asking God for his help. We then spent some time doing this exercise with a real decision of our own and then sharing it in groups of three. Most people found this surprisingly useful.

A bring and share lunch followed in the kitchen. As usual there was enough food – soup, salads and risotto – for twice as many people but it was much appreciated by all.



The afternoon session, under the heading "Relationship with God: Personal and in Community", was on Public Prayer, something that all those present led in their churches. Carole shared her experience of leading intercessions in different situations. As well as the content of the prayers, she helped us with advice on delivery, silences and general presentation. We then went on to write our own

short intercessions which were then used in the closing worship.

Altogether it was a lovely peaceful day in tranquil GlenEsk, very uplifting and helpful. Next time we'll need to go for the weekend and then we can really soak in the atmosphere of that truly holy place.

*Linda Walls
Lay Reader Holy Trinity Monifieth*

Burgers and Brainteasers at St Drostan's

On the afternoon of Sunday, 14 July St Drostan's Church and Lodge, Tarfside held their customary annual Diocesan Picnic and Service. A Treasure Hunt with cryptic clues to tax the mind got folk walking around the area and burgers and other usual refreshments were served to revive the body. At the conclusion of the day there was a Service of Songs of Praise.



Food for the body



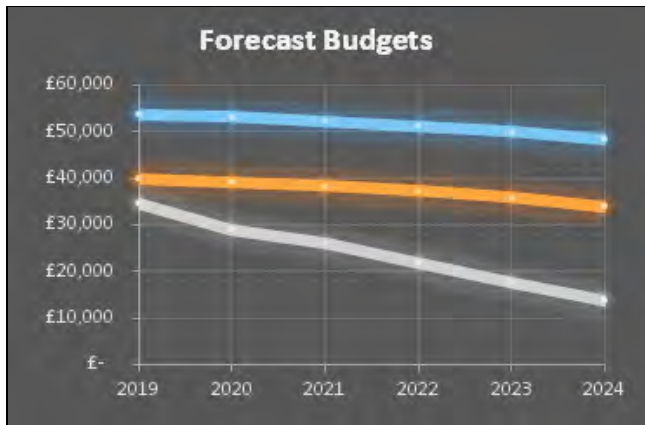
Praise from the soul

THE AUTUMN DIOCESAN SYNOD

Budget Deficit:

The Spring Synod approved a deficit budget as long as Diocesan Council reported back with plans and progress on reducing this deficit. The actions were started with some planning and projections for future budgets, based on different assumptions and cost cutting approaches.

The graph below shows some potential projected budget deficits. The Bishop suggested that even the best line might need to be improved upon.

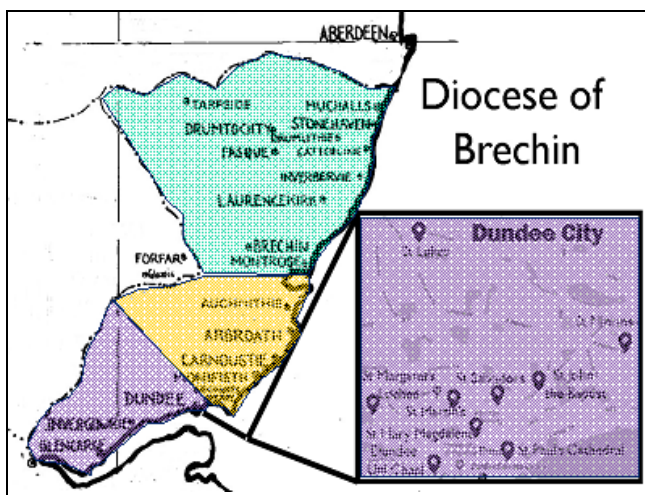


A further report will be made at Spring Synod 2020.

Diocesan Strategy for the Diocese of Brechin:

Not a top-down strategy that tells charges what to do: a strategy to bring health (spiritual & financial) to our churches to let mission grow. Presentations were made on three strands of the strategy:

Clusters – Transitions – Support



Clusters are groups of charges that are invited to meet and, helped by the Diocese, work together for mutual support. This may be in areas such as finance, property, outreach, spirituality. The cluster decides what it needs and what is helpful.

The 'northern cluster' started activities in 2019. The 'coastal' has met once and 'city and west' has a date to meet.

Transitions – helping churches find a long-term future. Churches work in partnership with the diocese to appoint a shared priest for a fixed term to look after the charges and produce firm/agreed proposals for long term future. Priest has special skills/training.

Support – helping ordained and lay ministries flourish. Focus on clergy and lay reader wellbeing, prayer for new vocations and work to help support a variety of lay ministries in every charge.

Discussions round tables and back in the whole Synod explored what this might mean. Clusters looked like some other plans, for example Local Collaborative Ministry or Mission Hubs: it was emphasised that what clusters did would be chosen by the cluster itself.

Motion approved by Synod:

“That this Synod receives the presentations on Diocesan Mission initiatives and will support the Diocesan Council and Officers and others in developing and growing these initiatives.”

Money for Mission – Policy on Using Diocesan Reserves:

Diocesan Resources for Mission such as Transitional Ministries are limited. Deficit reduction planning constrains the finances available from year-on-year finances.



But the Diocese has reserves that could support mission initiatives like Transitional ministries and/or to cover deficits while the Diocesan finances are stabilised. Presentations were made on the Diocesan finances, what funds were actually available for general use and what the impact of this use would be. There are significant funds that are available, but which must be used prudently – they can only be used once.

A useful discussion took place on the balance between deficit reduction (which means less ongoing support for some charges) and use of reserves to help other charges to grow and develop long term plans. There was some anxiety about potential loss of support to some charges. The Diocesan Council is the body that acts for the Synod between meetings and needs to be empowered and trusted to deliver Synod's policies.

At the conclusion of the discussion a motion (which had been amended before the Synod convened) was passed to empower Diocesan Council to act and require reporting back to future Synods.

Motion approved by Synod:

“That this Synod authorises Diocesan Council to prudently use reserves (cash and investment) to support mission and ministry projects, subject to the condition that each project must:

- a. Be for a fixed period of time;*
- b. Have clearly identified, measurable and achievable outcomes as agreed by Diocesan Council and the particular charge or charges involved;*
- c. Be supported financially by the particular charge or charges involved as well as Diocesan Council;*
- d. Be outlined in written terms which are submitted to the Diocesan Synod following, and thereafter reported upon annually.”*

The Acts of Synod were confirmed and lunch was shared.



Comings and Goings

The Very Rev'd Jeremy Auld, Provost and Rector of the Cathedral Church of St Paul's Dundee, has accepted the post of incumbent of Woodstock with Bladon and Area Dean of Woodstock in the Diocese of Oxford and will be moving at the start of 2020. Jeremy has been Provost and Rector of St Paul's for ten years and leaves the cathedral in a strong position to plan for their future and will be greatly missed in the charge and the diocese.

The Rev'd David Gordon, currently a senior chaplain in NHS

Tayside, will resume being a full-time stipendiary priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church from early January 2020. He will serve as the half-time transitional Priest-in-charge of All Souls' Invergowrie and half time as Interim Priest in St Paul's Cathedral Dundee during their vacancy.

Gary Clink, who is an ordinand and in the final year of non-residential training at St Mellitus' College in the Church of England and is based in London, has moved home to Montrose and

will also be ministering in the Diocese of Brechin while he finishes his training. The Bishop is issuing him a licence for this ministry, which will be overseen by St Mellitus' College as well as local clergy in the north of the diocese.

Captain Stuart Budden, Church Army Evangelist at St Luke's and the Dundee Centre of Mission is leaving for family reasons. He will be moving with his wife, Mandy, back down south to be nearer family. They will have moved in late November.

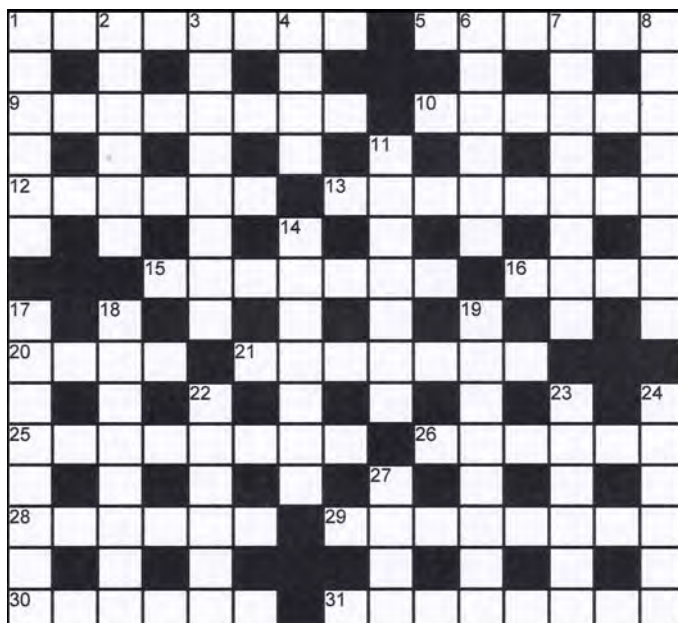
Another milestone



Sunday, 10 November was the 95th birthday of the Rt Rev'd Lawrence Edward Luscombe, known affectionately as Bishop Ted, former Bishop of Brechin and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church. A number of parties were arranged in his honour and at Easter Ogil House he blew out the candles on the cake in just two puffs – no problem there!

CRYPTIC PRIZE CROSSWORD

There is a seasonal flavour to several of the clues and answers. Send your entries to the editor at the address on the back page by Friday, 6 January.



- 28 Anyhow, seven zero is just that! (4,2)
 29 Press the shot birds into an environmentally friendly receptacle (5,3)
 30 Stop moving on the bench (6)
 31 Workers engaged in Christmas parcel delivery service (8)
- 7 Shakesperian leader of a large family? (4,4)
 8 Say you'll diet about this time of year (8)
 11 Fake news? it's evidence (7)
 14 Amaze Tory leader with a noise outside (7)
 17 Silly things on the festive table (8)
 18 Outlook damaged by crop pest (8)
 19 Five less! (8)
 22 Decorative item wrapped by aunt in sellotape (6)
 23 Not a shelter for a rocking horse! (6)
 24 Mass with incense is focus of time-honoured scene (6)
 27 Rip up the charge (4)
- CLUES DOWN:**
 1 German Christmas cake left out to be pinched (6)
 2 Ring and point out choice (6)
 3 Pastoral worker is with her in quiet outhouse (8)
 4 Bob and Joe lose their heads as it is played (4)
 6 A French one still not on the level (6)

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 Howe's son treads this under foot (4,4)
 5 Country fare (6)
 9 Pointedly precise (2,3,3)
 10 Sounds as if the army officer is at the heart of the matter (6)
 12 Overhauled Porch not right for ages (6)
 13 New items for the auctioneer to sell within given period (4,4)
 15 A Christmas Carol character in attendance (7)
 16 Sent by an eccentric person at Christmas (4)
 20 It's not well done; some extra rehearsal required (4)
 21 Rain forecast after Sunday (7)
 25 Eases one falling on the settee (8)
 26 A US soldier traps a rat for free (6)

Name

Address.....

.....

St Mary's Church, Broughty Ferry

St Mary's Church, Broughty Ferry has been undergoing significant reordering internally. The pews have been removed thus opening up an unrestricted

space which can be used for a wide range of activities in addition to worship. Ramp access from the street will make it all user-friendly.



The nave looking west



The nave set out for a Service

'Priests and Pipes' Exhibition at St James the Great, Stonehaven

With the work of creating the 'Priests and Pipes' Exhibition in the West End of St James' Church in Stonehaven complete, there was a special dedication Service in the afternoon of Saturday, 16 November. Our Bishop, the Right Rev'd Andrew Swift, presided at the Service. Illness had regrettably prevented the Primus, the Most Rev'd Mark Strange, from participating.



The beginning of the Dedication Service

There was a large congregation for the service, and this included the very many people who have contributed to the Exhibition, including donors, suppliers and volunteers. Some people even fell into all three categories!!

Apart from the playing of the organ the music during the service was enhanced by the hand-bells of the Kilwhang Ringers and the ensemble of the Granite City Brass Band.



Blessing the Exhibition

As the Exhibition covers church history and the role of church organs, the service contained elements of previous celebrations held at St James and some special musical items. These included a specially commissioned work for the organ entitled *A tribute to John Wardle*, composed and played by a local Stonehaven musician, Ben Macmillan. John Wardle was, of course, the builder of the historic Wadsworth organ in St James, and served as Choirmaster and Organist for 58 years from 1882 to 1941.

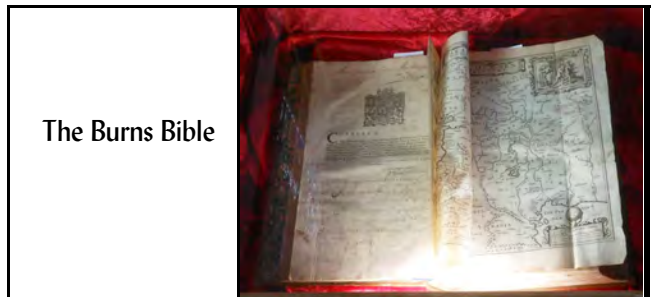
The final hymn was a rousing rendition of *The Church's one foundation*, which was sung at the consecration of the church in 1877, at the dedication of the Baptistry in 1905 and at the celebration of John Wardle's 50 years service as organist in 1932.



Bishop Andrew cutting the cake

After the service Bishop Andrew cut the magnificent celebration cake (made and decorated by the local Cool Gourmet café), and everyone took the opportunity to view the Exhibition.

Full details of the Exhibition are on our web site at <https://www.stjames-stonehaven.org.uk/exhibition/>.



The Burns Bible

The Exhibition is open every day all day (from approx. 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.) and entry is free.

*David Fleming
Buildings Convener and Vestry Member*



Chamber organ and some of the display cabinets

**Companion Links' Exchange
Visits – Phase Three
Young Adults' Visit to the
Diocese of Iowa
Summer 2020**

Phase three of the exchange visits will take place in the Diocese of Iowa in August 2020, postponed from 2019 due to time pressures.

Bishop Alan invites a group of six young adults from each of the three dioceses – Brechin, Iowa, Swaziland – to meet in Iowa, to spend time together studying, worshipping, travelling and enjoying social events. For this visit, Bishop Alan has suggested that three from each group should be within the age group of 18 - 23 and three within the age group 24 - 32. This is planned as a twelve day visit from 6 - 17 August, which includes travel time.

The programme is yet to be confirmed, but is likely to have an overarching focus on issues related to social justice and care for the environment. It will involve travel across the State of Iowa. It is expected that the three Bishops will participate in and lead parts of the programme.

There will be costs for this visit, but there is ample time for personal and group fundraising to help with these.

Anyone interested or who would like more information should contact Pat Millar, the Companion Links Officer, 01382 532972.



The Story behind the Carol

In 1919, Arthur Henry Mann, organist at King's College, Cambridge introduced an arrangement of "Once in Royal David's City" as the processional hymn for a carol service of nine lessons and carols. In his version, the first stanza is sung unaccompanied by a boy chorister. The choir and then the congregation join in with the organ on succeeding stanzas. This has been the tradition ever since. It is a great honour to be the boy chosen to sing the opening solo and is only picked just before the service starts – his is a voice heard literally around the world.

The author of this text, Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895) née Humphreys, was born in Dublin, Ireland, and began writing in verse from an early age. She became so adept that by the age of 22, several of her hymn texts made it into the hymnbook of the Church of Ireland. She married William Alexander, a clergyman and poet in his own right who later became the bishop of the Church of Ireland in Derry and later archbishop. Aside from her prolific hymn writing, Mrs Alexander gave much of her life to charitable work and social causes, something rather rare for women of her day.

"Once in Royal David's City" first appeared in her collection, Hymns for Little Children (1848). This particular text was included with others as a means to musically and poetically teach the catechism. It is based on the words of the Apostles' Creed, "Born of the Virgin Mary," and is in six stanzas of six lines each. Even though this text is included in the Christmas liturgical sections of most hymnals, the narrative painted by Alexander truly relates to the entire "youth" of Christ and not just his birth. This is one of Alexander's most descriptive and vivid texts, shattering perceptions of the picturesque Nativity with the realities of the lowly stable, and the weak and dependent baby. The hymn's controversial nature comes from the language expressing the cultural patronising of children during the Victorian era (words such as "little," "weak" and

"helpless" are ones perhaps found particularly appalling to some people in a 21st-century context).

In the spirit of the Romantic poetic era, Alexander speculates in stanza three that Jesus was "little, weak, and helpless" when there is no biblical account to support this. To the contrary, the one biblical witness we have of Jesus' boyhood in Luke 2:41-52 indicates that he strayed from his parents and caused quite a stir in the temple when teachers "who heard him were amazed at his wisdom and his answers." One could make a case that Alexander's third stanza was more concerned with supporting Victorian child-rearing principles – children as submissive and "seen, but not heard" – rather than providing an accurate account of Jesus' life. On the other hand, the child who is God incarnate surely felt the human and childlike feelings that all children face. The final stanza moves from actual childhood to a metaphorical family in which we are all children of God. The poet explores the paradox that this "child, so dear and gentle" is actually the "Lord in heaven" who "leads his children on to the place where he has gone."

The original final stanza explores another paradox – the journey from the "lowly stable" to a place "at God's right hand." The little child who sings this song then joins the throngs in heaven who will shine "like stars".



Ecumenical Service for North Kincardineshire Churches



On Sunday afternoon, 9 June 2019 – Pentecost Sunday – as a community who live and work in North Kincardine, we celebrated our love of the Lord in worship, and sang praises to his name. Jesus said in Matthew 18: verse 20. “For when two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them”. In this verse, we have his direct assurance that he is with us as a group of people. Over 70 people met that call on Pentecost Sunday at St Ternan’s, Muchalls.

St Ternan’s hosted the Service and supplied the refreshments. Leaders and members of the congregations from eight churches in North Kincardine attended the service. The churches represented were:

St Ternan’s, Muchalls
 Portlethen Christian Fellowship
 Love Citadel
 Newtonhill Parish Church

St Mary’s Roman Catholic Church, Blairs
 House of Salvation, Portlethen
 Portlethen Parish Church
 Maryculter Trinity Parish Church

Representatives from each of the churches either led prayers, Intercessions, Readings, Poems, A dramatic Reading of the day of Pentecost. Love Citadel and House of Salvation led “Praise Songs” with a Gospel Choir. We were swinging in the aisle. The children were encouraged to make a joyful noise with tambourines, drums, etc.

The Dean of Brechin, The Very Rev’d Fay Lamont, gave the address and led the congregation in the Peace.

The service finished with a rousing edition of “When the Saints go marching in”.

*George Masson
 St Ternan’s, Muchalls*



James Gregory Lecture

Lectures on Science, Religion and Human Flourishing
 given in the Main Physics Lecture Theatre,
 St Andrew's University

All are welcome and admission is free

Monday, 16 March at 5.15 p.m.

**Climate Change:
 Facts, Fiction and our Faith**

given by

Professor Katharine Hayhoe

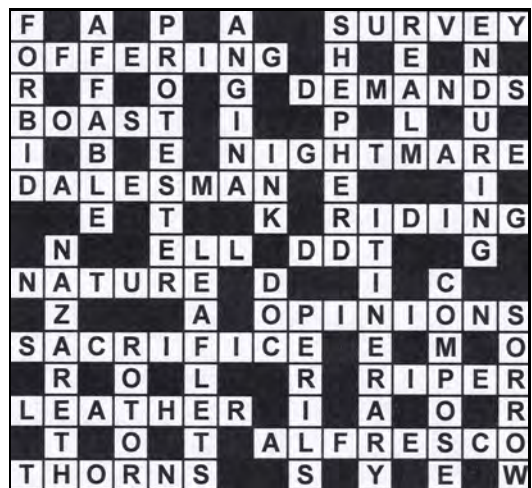
Professor Hayhoe is a climate scientist in the Department of Political Science and director of the Climate Science Centre at Texas Tech University. Her written work is extensive including a book entitled *A Climate for Change: Global Warming Facts for Faith-based Decisions*. In 2014, Time magazine listed her among the 100 most influential people.



Crossword Result

Congratulations to Chris Davey of Broughty Ferry whose entry for the last edition’s crossword competition was the one randomly picked out.

The correct solution (assuming you have still got the previous *Grapevine* after all this time!) was:



The Conversion of Ebenezer Scrooge

A new look at Dickens' A Christmas Carol

We think of the traditional British Christmas as a few days off work, a family get-together and a big meal. In fact, that only goes back to Victorian times. Before that it was a religious event, with church services and carols, but not a great community event. Among important influences on the change was a single story by Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, first published 176 years ago this December. It is in effect a morality fable, with a memorable antihero, Scrooge, and a splendid happy ending.

Ebenezer Scrooge ran his business with single-minded dedication to profit. His former partner, Marley, had died, and now in sole charge he decided to impose a more rigorous regime. There would be no Christmas Day off for his assistant Bob Cratchit, which ruled out the family's hopes of a celebration meal together. Bob's wife Martha was shocked, but Bob valued his job and said nothing. Scrooge, who regarded all such fanciful stuff as 'humbug' remained immovable, despite pleas to the contrary.

That was, until Christmas Eve. That night he had a series of dreamlike visions. The first was of his late partner, Marley, begging him to reconsider his attitude.

There then followed three ghosts. The 'Ghost of Christmas Past' was a vision of his own unhappy childhood. Then came the 'Ghost of Christmas Present' about the disappointment and tears his decision had brought to the Cratchit family. The third was the most powerful – the 'Ghost of Christmas Future', in which he saw his own grave. Was this how he wanted to be remembered?

When he awoke on Christmas morning, Ebenezer Scrooge was a changed man. Bob need not work on Christmas day, and Scrooge himself would furnish a sumptuous meal for them all. The whole day was transformed – tears of joy (Dickens knew all about tears) and finally the junior of the family, Tiny Tim rounded off the whole experience with a cry of 'Merry Christmas, everybody.'

The story captured not only the public mood but also the public's heart. This was the sort of Christmas they wanted. And gradually it began to take shape – holidays for workers, charity for the poor, warmth and love in the family. Eventually the law and the work of trade unions gave the new tradition a feeling of permanence, but there's no doubt Dickens' 'Christmas Carol' story started it all.

Family Reunion

An elderly man in Australia called his son in London and said, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to let you know that your mother and I have decided to separate, 40 years of misery is enough for anybody."

"Dad, I can't believe it!" his son exclaimed.

"We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the old man said. "We're sick of each other and I'm fed up of talking about it, so you call your sister in New York and tell her."

He hung up the phone. Out of his mind with worry, the son called his sister, who exploded down the phone.

"They simply cannot get a divorce," she shouted. "Leave it to me."

She called her father immediately and screamed at the old man. "You are not divorcing Mum! Please don't do a single thing until I get there. I'll call my brother now and we'll both be there tomorrow morning. Until then, don't do a thing, promise me?" And she hung up.

The old man put down the receiver and turned to his wife.

"Okay," he said, "they're both coming for Christmas . . . and they're paying their own fares!"

"Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future but today is God's gift. That is why it is called the Present."

Bill Keane,
cartoonist



The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 29 March 2020.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 6 March 2020.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

The Editor of Grapevine, Beattie Lodge, Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire, AB30 1HJ
(E-mail: <office@brechin.anglican.org> or <mjrturner@btinternet.com>)