

GRAPEVINE

No 120

Spring 2020

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DIOCESE OF BRECHIN

Greetings from Bishop Andrew:

To all my brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Brechin: as I write to you these are worrying times for Scotland and many, many countries in the world. The Coronavirus, COVID-19, is a problem that is developing and threatening to destabilise the economic and social life of millions of people worldwide. In the Scottish Episcopal Church we are continuing to gather for worship (in early March 2020) but we have already decided to stop sharing the common cup and sharing the peace, all to try and minimise the risk of vulnerable people becoming affected by this potentially deadly virus. The life of church communities goes on, but has to reflect the threats that can exist in the world. Please keep in prayer all those affected by COVID-19 and all who are working to contain and mitigate the effects of this disease.

The life of our diocese has continued despite this very real situation around us. The Diocesan Synod took place in early March with an updating of the Diocesan constitution and reviews and reports on our finances, mission and many other aspects of our church life. New representatives have volunteered for Diocesan Council and for the Provincial General Synod. It is very encouraging that the life of the Diocese continues to develop and change, even as we hold on to the values and worshipping traditions that make us the SEC in this part of Scotland.

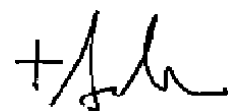
Changes continue to take place in our charges, with the Rev'd David Shepherd and Fr Clive Clapson both retiring in 2020. Both

priests leave with the gratitude of their charges, the Diocese

and the wider SEC for all their years of service. The Diocese is working to support these charges through vacancy and towards new appointments of successors in the future. In the Diocesan Centre there is another change: Mrs Sharon Loudon is retiring as the Bishop's PA and administrator. Sharon also leaves with the gratitude of so many in Brechin for all the help and support she has given. A new PA and administrator will be starting later in March, Mr Elliott Scarfe.

This is the season of Lent, a time when we deliberately adopt a sparse and reflective tone in the life of our churches. At a global level the fear of pandemic viruses and at a local level anxiety over change in our churches can be a challenge for us to face. But the Lenten journey is one when we learn that we can trust in God as followers of Jesus Christ. In all situations of challenges, this message of comfort and hope is one that we can truly rely upon.

Have a blessed and safe Lent and Holy Week: and a joyful Easter!



Andrew,
Bishop of Brechin



Brechin's Loss is Haddington's Gain

In advance of his impending retirement later this year Fr Clive reviews his past ministry, noting that in Scotland he has gradually moved south and this will continue.

I was ordained Priest in St. George's Cathedral, Kingston, Ontario, on 25 March, 1980, the festival of Our Lady Mary's "yes" to God: the Annunciation. Back then, I was at the minimum age for ordination. Forty years on, here I am on the verge of retirement from active ministry.

Fortieth anniversaries of ordination are fairly rare nowadays, as most candidates offer themselves later on in life than I did. I look forward to sharing this important life-event with our people at St. Salvador's and other friends before Katie and I retire at the end of May.

It's been an interesting ride for forty years. Sometimes it's been joyful, sometimes disappointing, sometimes frustrating, and always challenging. I've been encouraged by strangers and betrayed by friends. I've lost count of the number of times my heart has been broken by the depths of human sin, folly, and suffering.

Starting as a Curate in a small southern Ontario town, I moved to my first parish that consisted of three low-church rural charges in the back of beyond. Then I went to a suburban Anglo-Catholic mission station near San Diego. Returning to the UK, I was an



assistant in Farnborough that had an extremely active children's ministry in an Anglo-Catholic context. Then we came to Scotland, serving in a small congregation in Invergordon, where I was also responsible for the training of clergy in the diocese. Next, I was in charge of a large middle-of-the-road city church in prosperous Aberdeen. Having sensed a call to serve in a more challenging neighbourhood, finally we came here to our beautiful church in the Hilltown. For the last fifteen years I've tried to let God do the best He can with

my help in His mission to the least, the last, and the lost around here.

The St Salvador's Food Cupboard started on the very first Sunday after I arrived, and, despite its growth and evolution, has always been a simple response to need. Katie and I have had so much help and support from many of our Episcopalian congregations, as well as from our friends in several other denominations. We are very grateful to all of you. We are also appreciative of the help we have received from so many when we took the step some years ago to forego part of my stipend so that the work of the ministry could continue here in a local, focussed way.

I'm mindful today of how inadequate my ministrations have sometimes been, how damaged I am, and how dependent I have been on God's grace. Sometimes the only thing keeping me going has been the unshakeable conviction that for some reason God called me and has drawn me to wherever I have found myself ministering, and that once, when I was only young – as Our Lady Mary was when God called her – I and she said "yes" to Him.

*Fr Clive Clapson
St Salvador's Dundee*

Election to Fellowship

The Lord Lyon, The Rev'd Canon Dr Joseph Morrow CBE, QC, LLD, DL is among his many roles an honorary Canon of the cathedral in Dundee, Chancellor of Moray Diocese and a long-serving priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church. He has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE).

The RSE is an educational charity, registered in Scotland, operating on a wholly independent and non-party-political basis and providing



public benefit throughout Scotland. It was established in 1783 and since then has drawn upon the considerable strengths and varied expertise of its Fellows, of which there are currently around 1600, who are based in Scotland, the rest of the UK and beyond. The Fellowship includes people from a wide range of disciplines – science & technology, arts, humanities, social science, business and public service – a breadth of expertise that is unique in the UK.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

On 13 March the Primus, the Most Rev'd Mark Strange, wrote:-

"This is a difficult time for many people, some are fearful for themselves or their relatives, while others want to know how to help stem the spread of the virus. Our guidance is given not just to address medical concerns but also with pastoral concern being uppermost in our hearts and minds, particularly the care of the vulnerable in our congregations and communities. Please pray for all those who are unwell at this time, for the fearful and for the lonely and for those who work in the health service as they do their best to respond to the heavy demands at this time."

Most infections will occur through personal contact so care should be taken to avoid potential transmission. However, the virus can remain active on other surfaces such as books and door handles for up to possible 5 days depending on environmental factors, so care should be exercised in what people touch and regular cleaning with disinfectant carried out.

The College of Bishops issued the following updated guidance on 17 March. In a rapidly changing situation, this must be regarded as subject to any public health guidance or direction, which must take precedence.

1. Advice issued last night by the Scottish Government is to the effect that church services should cease. Consequently, the Bishops ask that all gatherings for worship, including small gatherings such as house groups, should be discontinued until further notice.

2. Church buildings can be kept open as a place for people to come and pray. However, if a church is open for private prayer, notices should be clearly displayed asking that visitors wash their hands on entry to the church.

3. The province is working on plans to make worship available online. The bishops encourage participation in the broader Eucharistic life of the church in this way and emphasise the such online involvement is a form of participation in the Eucharistic community, even though participants cannot physically partake of the bread or wine.

4. Clergy and lay leaders must feel free to self-isolate themselves when that is appropriate either to safeguard their own health or the health of others. Again, however, any member of clergy or lay leader needing to self-isolate is asked to discuss the matter with the diocesan Bishop. Where a decision to self-isolate is taken, the bishops expect congregations to be understanding and supportive. Self-isolation, except

in the case of illness, does not mean that ministry and pastoral care must cease. Contact and communication can still be maintained over the telephone, by email or other electronic means.

5. The taking of funerals may give rise to specific concerns. It may simply not be possible for family relatives or friends of the deceased's to be able to attend a funeral service as usual. However, clergy can still take a funeral at the graveside or crematorium, even if those present are limited to clergy and funeral directors.

6. In the light of the public health recommendation that non-essential travel should not be undertaken, it is clearly inappropriate to continue with meetings which would draw people from a wider area – such as regional gatherings. Institutions, licensings etc. will need to be dealt with differently from normal.

7. In some cases, where local income is dependent on regular giving through the weekly collection or giving envelopes, it is possible that congregations might encounter difficulties with cash flow. Churches are encouraged to consider alerting congregations to such potential difficulties and encouraging alternative ways of giving, for example by standing order.

Worship Broadcasts

A group of communications workers within the Scottish Episcopal Church is working on the imminent introduction of regular broadcasts of worship, to be made available to those in our congregations across the country who have decided to self-isolate or who are otherwise unable to attend Church at this time.

Even though places of worship do not have to close their doors, there are people who will not want to attend church during the current crisis despite all the protection measures being taken.

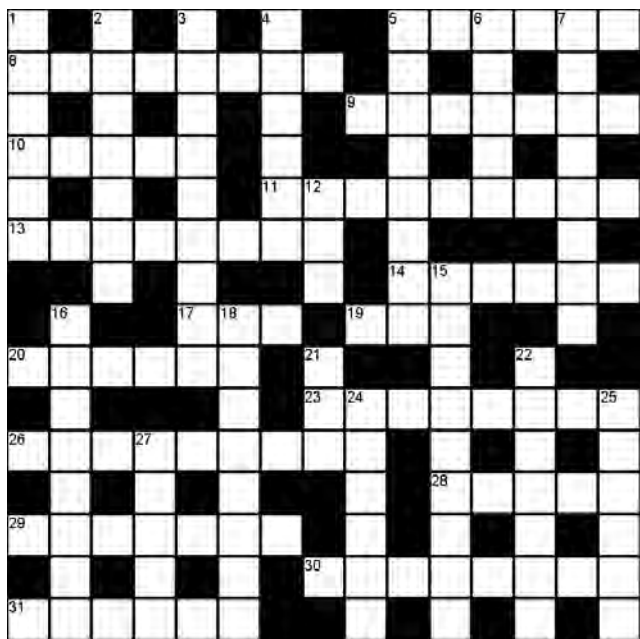
The planned weekly broadcasts will commence on Sunday 22 March and will be made available as widely as possible to as many members as possible, with special considerations made to try to reach and include in some way those who are unable to access the internet and those with accessibility requirements. The intention is to offer worship that directly involves those who are in their homes. We can worship together and pray together, despite the geographical separation.

Aidan Strange, the Provincial Digital Communications Co-ordinator, has intimated that further details of this project would be published before 22 March and anyone who is interested in participating in such a service should contact him by email at: <aidans@scotland.anglican.org>.

Information about this project can be viewed on the Scottish Episcopal Church Facebook site which is accessed at: <https://www.facebook.com/scottishepiscopalchurch/>

CRYPTIC PRIZE CROSSWORD

Twelve answers will be found in the Easter hymn 'Love's redeeming work is done'. Send your entries to the editor at the address on the back page by Friday, 31 July.



- 28 Blue ones are fine (5)
- 29 Caught with stolen goods; that is a devilish dumpling! (7)
- 30 Two idiots at home with a murderer (8)
- 31 Stick advertisement in this location (6)
- 6 Mrs Basil Fawley an old prophetess? (5)
- 7 Obliterate a tin ladle (3,2,3)
- 12 Suitable last word (3)
- 15 Sailors welcome guidance from a solar trap (9)
- 16 Nepal led production of decorative boards (8)
- 18 Bliss is included in a procession (8)
- 21 Employ some curious effect (3)
- 22 Surpass what the Cockney barber does, we hear (7)
- 24 Acclaim penny increase (6)
- 25 Command not to croon when snooping? (6)
- 27 Notes what the curler slides (5)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1 Battled for stronghold, we hear (6)
- 2 Win a wooden ship (7)
- 3 Nude dancing round an impostor without embarrassment (9)
- 4 Tablet smashed in East Sussex town (6)
- 5 Splendid way to go with King Louis (8)

CLUES ACROSS:

- 5 Mark, for example, acceleration on a fresh slope (6)
- 8 Eastern relation perhaps (8)
- 9 Prohibits disturbance of birds (7)
- 10 Stage entrances? (5)
- 11 What MPs do as a member hasn't turned up yet (9)
- 13 Intimidate the Mad Hatter in French (8)
- 14 Give support to increasing ship's storage space (6)
- 17 Economic Policy Institute (3)
- 19 Pale cognac (3)
- 20 Building for a father embracing a deity? (6)
- 23 Plead during hospital investigation for aerosol (5,3)
- 26 Modern sapper altered daily communication (9)

Name

Address.....

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Retirement

The Rev'd David Shepherd, Rector of St Mary Magdalene's Dundee, will formally demit office and retire after Easter Day, 12 April 2020. David has been the Rector of this charge since 1979,



having built up and maintained this worshipping community and their building in the heart of Dundee through four decades: an extraordinary achievement! David has also been an active and involved member of the wider Diocese of Brechin in all this time, serving on boards and committees. The present bishop is the sixth that David has seen whilst serving as a rector in Brechin Diocese, Bishop Ted Luscombe having instituted him in 1979.

There will be a celebration musical service for David and Patricia on Easter Day, 12 April at 6.30 p.m. in St Mary Magdalene's to which all are warmly invited.

Moving On

Mrs Sharon Loudon, the Personal Assistant to the Bishop and Diocesan administrator, is moving on to a new post elsewhere in Dundee in early April. Sharon has been the PA and administrator for the Diocese since 2016 and greatly helped both Bishops Nigel and Andrew at the end and start of their respective ministries as well as working through the Episcopal Vacancy from 2017-2018. She has also run the Diocesan Office and supported the running of Synods and other Diocesan business.

New Diocesan Chancellor

Sheriff George Way of Plean accepted the Bishop's offer of appointment as the Chancellor of the Diocese of Brechin in January 2020. Educated at the Universities of Edinburgh and Oxford, the Chancellor has been Sheriff in the Sheriffdom of Tayside, Central and Fife since 2009 and presently sits in Dundee. He is an Officer of Arms in the Lyon Court with the

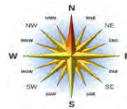


title 'Carrick Pursuivant', the title of which pursuivancy is derived from that of the Earl of Carrick, once held by King Robert the Bruce before his accession. He was appointed Solicitor Advocate 2003 and was President of the Society of Solicitors In the Supreme Courts 2002-2005 and Procurator Fiscal to the Lyon Court 2003-2009. He became an Officer of the Venerable Order of St John in 2018.

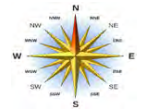
The Bishop thanks the former Chancellor, Mr Gregor Mitchell, for his years of service to the Diocese and the Scottish Episcopal Church and wishes him well for the future.

The Chancellor of a Scottish Episcopal Diocese is a 'discreet lay person learned in the Law' (from Canon 61) who advises the bishop and can act as the Assessor at Diocesan Synods. He can advise on the Diocesan constitution, the Canons and any general legal issues.

His formal installation of Sheriff Way as Chancellor in the Cathedral Church of St Paul, Dundee will take place later in the year on a date yet to be decided.



Brechin Explorers



The Explorers' Club is an interdenominational Group for primary children in Brechin. It is organised by a dedicated team of adults from the main churches within the City, including several from St Andrew's Episcopal Church. The aim is to teach the children about Jesus and Christian values in a fun and caring environment.

Each year several all-day workshops are held, attracting over a hundred young people. A Holiday Club is organised in July and last November a weekly after-school group was launched. Although some funding has been received from the Diocese, further funds were required so in February a Valentine's Pop-Up shop was organised in Brechin High Street. Parents and friends contributed goods to sell, including a large range of books, toys, clothing and baby gear. Some of the older children helped out in the shop alongside the adults. It was a week of hard work but lots of fun and we all agreed it was a great way to recycle things and raise the profile of the Group.

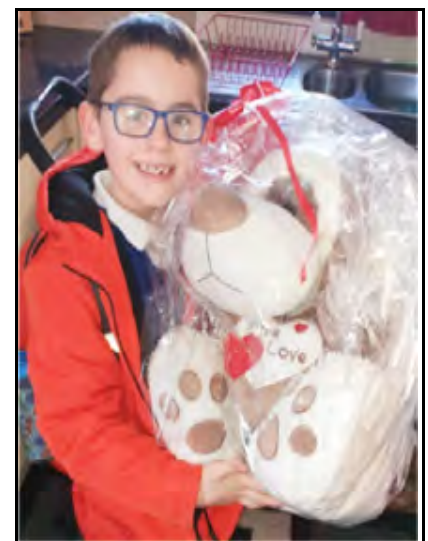


Over £1,300 was made which is a great total and will help fund our next project. On Tuesday, 26 May (Teachers' In Service Training Day) Fischy Music from Edinburgh will be supporting a one-day Explorers' Event in Brechin. This is for any pupils from Primary 1 to Primary 7 and will be held in

Maisondieu Primary School. The day will include crafts, games, teaching on the theme of 'looking after God's world and of course,

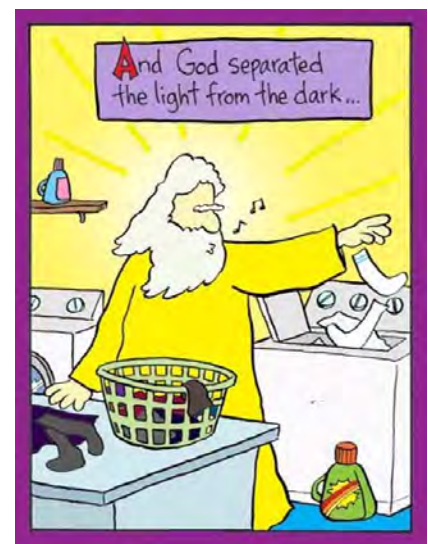


there will be music. The day will run from 9.00 a.m to 3.00 p.m. and will finish with a concert at about 2.15 in St Andrew's Church, led by Fischy Music.



All children in the Brechin Cluster will receive application forms as usual but if anyone else wishes to attend / help or bring a child / children along, please contact me on <howsonliz@gmail.com> or call 01356 622009.

Elizabeth Howson



The Diocesan Synod

The annual Diocesan Synod met on its customary day – the first Saturday of March. It was held in the recently reordered church of Saint John the Baptist, Stobswell, the pews having been removed. This enabled chairs to be set around tables: a decided improvement than having to balance sheafs of paper on one's knee.



The Synod in session

As the canons require, it began with a celebration of the Liturgy, but on this occasion, observing the newly circulated instructions in the light of the Coronavirus epidemic, Communion was given in only one kind.

The business of Synod was expedited by the various reports being simply received and not embellished by their authors. It is a good discipline to presume that members had read them prior to the meeting as it gives more time for discussion.

Under the heading of Mission & Ministry Bishop Andrew updated everyone on the Diocesan Clusters, which had gained the names of Northern, Coastal and Tay, moving from north to south. Each were at different stages of development. Although they had got off to a slow start, various meetings had been held and activities taken place in each. He spoke briefly of transitional ministry taking place where appropriate which was a partnership between the diocese and the particular charge(s). So far Brechin/Montrose/Inverbervie

is under way and a similar process is envisaged for Stonehaven and Muchalls, Invergowrie, and Carnoustie. There is a financial cost to this (in the current year £20k) but the involvement of accredited agencies would provide careful monitoring.

A significant topic arose out of the meeting of the Swaziland Diocesan Synod last autumn. Bishop Andrew had attended this together with Patricia Millar, who was made a Lay Canon of the Cathedral at Mbabane – a worthy recognition of her long-standing contribution to our Companionship relationship.

Bishop Ellinah had highlighted four areas of concern and proposed relevant motions at the Swaziland Synod, which were all adopted. That Synod requested that we should also consider these matters. Bishop Ellinah's motions related to:

1. Observance of a Season of Creation;
2. Pollution and damage caused by plastic;
3. Biodiversity harm caused by forest fire;
4. The effect of climate change on so many aspects of life.

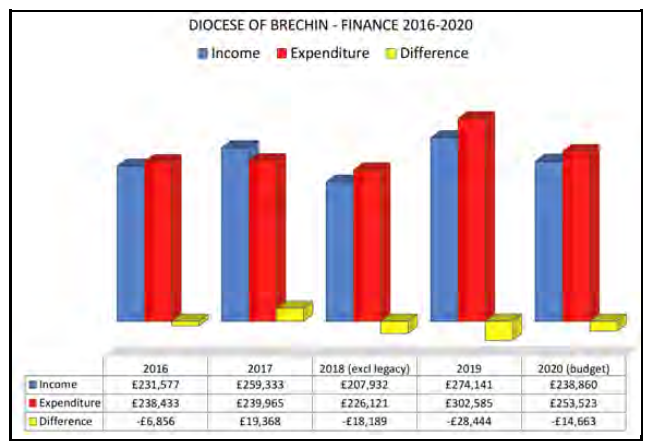
Our Synod endorsed the spirit and substance of these motions and resolved that similar motions, but couched in terms relevant to Scotland, should be put to the General Synod for consideration. (Obviously we do not have the same concern about forest fires.) Synod also agreed that actions should be

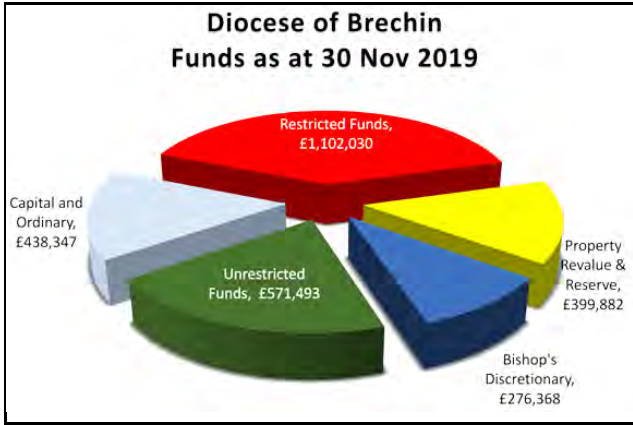
drawn up with reference to climate change, plastic pollution and the general care of creation.

Attention then moved to the Diocesan Constitution. Five years ago there had been a radical change when the Diocesan Council was set up doing away with the separate Administration and Mission Boards. It was written into that constitution that a review should take place after five years. During this period changes had been introduced in charity law concerning trusteeship. It had also become apparent that the Diocesan Council had a preponderance of *ex officio* members over those elected by Synod. A motion to approve an amended Constitution incorporating these matters as well as reducing the term of office from four to three years (thereby not making the commitment as daunting) was put to the vote and passed overwhelmingly.

In the light of fairly recent events a previous meeting of the Synod had requested that the Faith & Order Board of the General Synod consider the provisions and terms of Canon 54 Of Offences and Trials. A progress report was given that a review was not simple as it turned out that two other canons were involved as well as secular employment law. However, the matter was being seriously addressed.

After lunch the regular elections took place for positions within the Diocese as well as to the Boards and Committees of the General





Therefore in proposing the amount of Quota receivable from all the charges an increase of 5% on the previous year had been made, which now totalled £133,242. The accounts and Quota calculations were approved.

Synod. With a few posts remaining unfilled these appointments were satisfactorily concluded.

This was followed by the presentation of the Diocesan Accounts for the past year and the budget for the current year. Mr Allan Duffus drew attention to the fact that, although it had been budgetted for, the deficit was less than had been expected which was a pleasing result. In part this had been by a welcome increase in investment income and a healthy increase in the value of these assets. Nonetheless whilst it is necessary to continue budgetting for a deficit, prudence has to be exercised in all areas of expenditure.

Bishop Andrew had shown graphics (reproduced here) showing the gross annual income and expenditure over the past 4 years and a breakdown of the past year's sources of income. He also showed a chart of the comparative contributions of Quota from each charge and drew attention to the fact that St Paul's Cathedral accounted for over 20% of the total for last year and was being asked to increase this to nearly 25% in the current year. All congregations should be grateful to the Cathedral for this share.

The meeting concluded with Bishop Andrew expressing thanks to a number of people, some no longer present in the Diocese. Mr Gregor Mitchell had been Chancellor for a number of years

and had moved away: the Bishop had welcomed his successor, Sheriff George Way, at the start of the meeting. The Rev'd Jeremy Auld had taken up an incumbency in England, having been Provost of the Cathedral for 10 years. Captain Stuart Budden and his wife Mandy had finished his term as Pioneer Evangelist at St Luke's. The Rev'd Ashley Cummins had ceased being Priest-in-charge of All Souls' Invergowrie. The Rev'd David Shepherd would be retiring after 40 years as Rector of St Mary Magdalene's on Easter Day and Fr Clive Clapson would be retiring in 1 June from St Salvador's to reside at Haddington. And finally, with a bouquet, gratitude was expressed to Mrs Sharon Louden who was soon to end her time as the Bishop's P.A. to take up a post in Ninewells Hospital.

With the Bishop confirming the Acts of Synod and pronouncing the Blessing the Synod meeting came to its conclusion and everyone dispersed. It had been an encouraging, even up-beat, gathering and many left with smiles on their faces following a very satisfactory occasion.

BEE AWARE



Please remember Bishop Andrew's Lent Appeal to raise money for Bishop Ellinah's project to establish bee colonies in the wattle forest in Swaziland. Get your contributions to your church treasurer even though services are currently suspended.

Crossword Winner

Unfortunately there were 3 incorrect entries to last month's crossword, but the winner was John Parry of Invergowrie. Congratulations to him. The correct solution was:

S	N	O	W	S	H	O	E	T	T	U	R	K	E	Y
T	P	H	B	N	I	U								
O	N	T	H	E	D	O	T	K	E	R	N	E	L	
L	I	P	E	W	V	G	E							
E	P	O	C	H	S	T	I	M	E	S	L	O	T	
N	N	E	A	T	N	E	I							
C	P	D	T	E	F	R	E							
R	A	R	E	M	O	N	S	O	O	N				
A	O	T	U	S	U	S	M							
C	U	S	H	I	O	N	S	G	R	A	T	I	A	
K	P	N	D	R	T	A	N							
E	V	E	N	S	O	P	A	P	E	R	B	A	G	
R	C	E	T	E	L	E								
S	E	T	T	L	E	R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R	

Better luck this time – especially the self-isolated!

Hard to swallow!

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small.

The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible.

The little girl said, 'When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah'.

The teacher asked, 'What if Jonah went to hell?'

The little girl replied, 'Then you ask him'.

Child Poverty Fund

The Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) is launching a fund targeting child poverty in Scotland. The SEC will provide grants of up to £5,000 for a pilot period of one year for congregational programmes specifically focussed on the alleviation of the effects of child poverty.

The initiative follows discussion on child poverty at General Synod 2018. The church recognises that child poverty is a wide-ranging and complex issue and encourages its congregations to work with other partners whether ecumenically, with other faiths or with secular groups/agencies.

The Right Rev'd Ian Paton, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane and member of the Mission Board, said: "I am delighted to be announcing the launch of this Fund. This is an important way for the SEC to put faith into action. Churches are in a good position to know the needs of their communities.

"Either working with the range of talent that members of a congregation have or through partnership working with others, we can invite people to live Jesus' promise, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness' [John 10:10]."

The Fund will be managed through the Church in Society Committee of the SEC, on behalf of the Mission Board. The Acting Convener of the Church in Society Committee, the Rev'd Elaine Garman, said of the Fund: "We are encouraging a diversity of initiatives to seek funding. We wish to aid those who are in need, enabling them to access resources and opportunities, and empowering them to use their skills and gifts."

The criteria for selection are:

- Identification of a real need in the community.
- Probable impact of the

programme directly improving the circumstances of children and families, and/or indirectly through education and campaigning.

- Probability of the proposers being able to deliver the work envisaged.
- Development of community links, fostering engagement with the broader community.
- Must be led by an SEC congregation or diocese.
- Partnerships with other churches and/or community groups are encouraged.

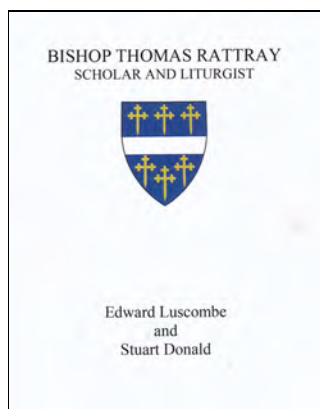
Applications for the Child Poverty Fund are available on the Scottish Episcopal Church website or from General Synod Office.

For further information contact Miriam Weibye, Church Relations Officer, at: <churchrelations@scotland.anglican.org> or 0131 225 6357

Edward Luscombe and Stuart Donald

Bishop Thomas Rattray: scholar and liturgist

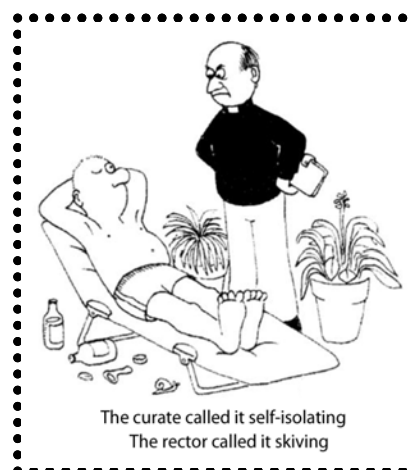
Over the last years, Bishop Ted Luscombe and Stuart Donald, honorary archivist of Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney, have produced a remarkable series of booklets on the history of the churches of the Brechin Diocese. Now they are turning their attention to the outstanding figures in the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The first in the new series is devoted to bishop Thomas Rattray (1684-1743).



Rattray from Craighall in Perthshire lived and worked in what were 'the hidden years' of the Scottish Episcopal Church, a time when the national church of Scotland had become Presbyterian and severe restrictions were placed on the Episcopalians. At this time when the Scottish Episcopal Church was riven with squabbles, Rattray believed passionately that the church needed a heightened sense of worship, and a restored Eucharistic rite through which all could be brought together in unity. For him the Liturgy was all important in church life and Rattray worked tirelessly through ancient manuscripts to discover what he believed was the most genuine and most ancient of the Eucharistic rites – he used the word 'primitive', which was a term of praise, meaning the closest to the early apostolic Church.

Thanks largely to Bishop Rattray the Scottish Episcopal Church has held to its tradition of liturgical worship in forms rather different from those of the Church of England. This beautifully clear and well illustrated booklet may well open our eyes to something precious in our Church history.

Rev'd Dr A.M. Shukman



Sychar – midway between Galilee and Jerusalem

Deep in the heart of the West Bank stands a stone church guarded by a thin, wizened, Orthodox Christian priest with a long white beard. He has been there for decades, despite living under the constant threat of death. Sixteen times has he escaped a death plot. A crumbling chunk of the wall bears witness to the time someone threw a hand grenade at him. This priest, who spends his days writing icons, lived in the church for 14 years whilst surrounded by a hostile army, refusing to abandon the treasure he guards. He once refused a \$1 million grant from Yasser Arafat to continue construction of the church because he did not want any political strings attached to his mission to keep the church open to people of all walks of faith. This priest is the protector of a treasure of the three Abrahamic faiths, and he fights with his simple, quiet presence to keep the site open to Christians, Jews, and Muslims. He is the guardian of the treasure that sits deep at the very heart of the church.



As you enter, hundreds of lovely icons greet the eye, but one stands out from the others. It is simple and plain in comparison to the golden saints that gather everywhere the eye can see, but no less lovely for its simplicity.

This particular icon depicts a man and a woman in conversation, their gaze interlocked. She listens intently as he gestures confidently with assurance and authority. He points to the heavens with one hand, perhaps to her town with the other, as if to declare that there is an inherent tension between the two directions. Or perhaps he sends her to repeat what he has shared in conversation. Either way, the tension is evident in her body turned toward him even as she appears to take a step away. She remains poised on the edge, almost as if she can barely believe what she has heard, yet yearning for it to be true.

This icon is key to the Christian tradition about the site, and perhaps is why the priest guards this treasure so intently. The priest is the guardian of *Be'er Ya'akov*, Jacob's Well at Sychar, a holy site open to people of all nations and faiths. The priest is the guardian of a deep tradition of radical hospitality to the "other," the hallmark of Jesus' life and ministry. This is the site where traditionally Jesus overcame all social mores and boundaries to encounter a woman in a deep, life-changing moment.

God in Jesus makes a radical statement in his meeting with the woman at the well. She is "other" in every way to Jesus. She is a Samaritan: considered heathen and apostate; he is a Jew: considered devout and Chosen. She is a woman: of low status in a man's world, undeserving of notice; he is a man: respected as a teacher, noticed by crowds of people. She has a shameful past that distances her from her community (she comes alone at noon instead of in the morning, as women usually would); he is of

good repute. She is nameless; he is Christ, the Son of God.

But in Jesus' domain, she is somebody worth noticing; somebody worth saving. He invites her into conversation, takes



her seriously, and lodges in her village. He cares deeply about her welfare and about her community.

This is not just a tale about an individual. The story plays on a geopolitical front as well. Jesus approaches the nations, not just individuals. He describes her personal story, but also her nation's story. The gods, traditions, and holy sites worshipped in the past are not legitimate. Legitimacy comes of worshipping the one God in spirit and truth.

This is Good News, but also challenging news for the Jews and Samaritans of Jesus' time, just as it is for Jews, Christians, and Muslims today. We often prefer to leave out the nobodies, but Jesus does not do that.

The example of the priest at *Be'er Ya'akov* may show us what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth. Drinking deeply of the living water of God means having compassion for the other. Jesus reminds us this is at the heart of what it means to live out the Gospel. "There is no greater love than this, that one lay down one's life for one's friends".

To Love is to Live

This is part of a sermon preached by the Rev'd Alistair MacLean in 1918, during the closing months of the Great War and when the pandemic Spanish Flu struck in the spring and returned worse still in the autumn.

The idea that love is some shining virtue you keep in a box and trot out in the form of sacrifice when King and country need you, or when your son gets into trouble and you have to pay up for him, or when a member of your family gets dangerously ill—this idea is hopelessly wrong, and one of the greatest hindrances to unity and progress and a good spirit that this country of ours is facing at the present time.

*So he died for his faith. That is fine—
More than most of us do.
But stay, can you add to that line
That he lived for it, too?*

*In death he bore witness at last
As a martyr to truth.
Did his life do the same in the past
From the days of his youth?*

*It is easy to die. Men have died
For a wish or a whim—
From bravado or passion or pride.
Was it harder for him?*

*But to live, every day to live out
All the truth that he dreamt,
While his friends met his conduct with
doubt,
And the world with contempt—*

*Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
Never turning aside?
Then we'll talk of the life that he led—
Never mind how he died.*

Ernest Crosby

Searching words that stab the heart wide-awake. And words that make us all feel pretty guilty. For aren't we all a bit inclined to think about love as something that is more for ornament than for use? But that is just what love is not. Love is not an ornament. Love is not a silver teapot to be kept in

chamois-leather cover. For Love is coal, is wood, is water, is bread, is air, is light, is sunshine. It is the one element that you can't do without. It is the breath of your being. It is the breath of your brother's and sister's being; for with it and by its power you and I move forward to what God means our life to be.

And that is the vision, clearer and surer, of course, than you and I can ever have, that lies behind those intensely solemn words of Jesus, "Love one another." You may praise brains and skill, you may cry up work finely done, you may say that progress as you see it in the increase of comfort and the discoveries of science is an achievement that is ever growing from more to more. But when you have said your all, Love is at once the inspirer and cement of life. Love is life. Love is the heart of happiness and the pillow of the world. "This old world of ours," Lord Buckmaster remarked the other day, "is in a bad way, and one asks despairingly, How can we ever get it right? I for one," he added, "have always thought that there is only one way. We must love and we must think."

And this brings me to the core of the business. Jesus turned to these friends of His and said, "Love one another." He said: You love your own homes, and your wives, and families, and friends. You love your own ease and well-being, and you are ready to do almost anything to secure their happiness and yours. But now listen. You must step out of your own door. You must look beyond your own garden. You must let your thought and your imagination go out to every life that is touching your own—at the next desk, round the next corner, at the nearest farm, and you must love them as you love the wife that smiles into your eyes or the child that plays at your knee.

"We are not adventurers in the spirit of love," old Archbishop Temple said in Westminster Abbey thirty years ago, "and therefore we are not winning the world to the way of Christ. We

must be adventurers, and we cannot lose." The justice of these words strikes at every pretence that is in me as with a smiting whip. I feel how small I am. I feel how great I may be. I see the mountain loom before me, steep and stiff to climb. Lovers and thinkers—if there were twelve, if there were six, if there were three genuine lovers of others and strong vital thinkers as to what the true values of life are, I dare to say that within a year they would turn each parish upside down, and make them renowned in every shire in Scotland.

What form must this love take? It must, I answer, take the form of disciplined thought—about your own home and dear ones first of all, and then of your neighbour. I hold it to be an inescapable duty as disciples of Jesus to study our neighbours—their character, their strength, their weakness, their needs, their heredity. I hold it our duty to blaze a trail into our neighbour's heart and to bring him or her the resources of help and friendliness which God has given to you and me. And if you would love your neighbour you must maintain, at whatever cost, a standard of rightness in your own life. He must hear God's tones in your voice. He must see God's thought working through your mind. He must feel God's presence in your gentleness and purity.

In this country at this hour you and I are facing problems that are dark and hard to unravel. There is war. There is unemployment. There is the pull between duty and pleasure. There is the desire for an ampler and more easeful way of living in a world where it seems we have all to work harder, think deeper, and play little. And to us Jesus comes to-day and says, "Have no fear. Play the man. Be the noble woman you really are. Front all your clouds and distresses in the spirit of My love, and you will win through and win your world to God." "I have but one weapon," said Columba. "It is love. I love, and lo, I conquer."

The Rev'd Canon Steve Collis

'Always there for you, never too busy to help.' 'Hands on help, not giving orders from the sidelines.' 'Made everyone feel special – huge empathy with people.' 'Excellent mentor, inspired enthusiasm, delightful sense of humour.' Just some of the many tributes paid to Steve at his funeral at St Kentigern's Church, Irthington, Cumbria, on Friday, 7 February 2020.

Steve was born in Hanley, Staffordshire on 2 September 1947. There were two things in particular from his childhood that he carried with him throughout his life: his love of dogs and his faithful support for Port Vale football club, to whom he was Chaplain whilst in the area.

Steve's first career was in industrial catering. It was during his time working in Pollock Halls in Edinburgh that he met Kath, his wife, who was from Brechin: he was her boss! Steve then worked as Bursar at St Aidan's Durham before moving to Sheffield, where he took charge of the Halls of Residence.

From his late teens Steve felt an ever-deepening call to serve in ministry. So he returned to the University of Durham, to Cranmer Hall, to study theology and graduated in 1982. Steve served

as Assistant Curate at All Saints and St Paul's Crewe and St Bartholomew's Wilmslow. From 1986 to 1995, Steve joined the Royal Air Force as a Chaplain.



On completing his term of office in the RAF, Steve initially returned to parish ministry, first as Deputy Rector of St Bartholomew's Wilmslow and then as Priest-in-Charge St Bertoline's Barthomley, from 1997 to 2000. He was also Diocesan Industrial Mission Chaplain during this latter period.

Ever seeking pastures new, in 2000 he took the position of Chaplain in Abu Dhabi, and then moved in 2002 to Cyprus, where he took the position of Dean, St Paul's Cathedral Nicosia,

becoming Area Dean of Cyprus from 2005 to 2009 and Archdeacon of Cyprus from 2006 to 2009.

After 'retirement' from these overseas positions, Steve was appointed part-time Rector of St Mary and St Peter Montrose and St David Inverbervie, a position he held from 2009 to 2012 and, after a 'second retirement', he held the position of Interim Rector Holy Rood Carnoustie from 2014 to 2016. He also held Permissions to Officiate in the Diocese of Brechin and the Diocese of Europe and took on various temporary holiday cover positions in several countries.

Steve died on 26 January 2020. He was certainly well-regarded as Priest and friend during his few years in our own Diocese.

This obituary started with some of the tributes paid to Steve at his funeral. It seems fitting to end with some more. 'Immensely practical.' 'Set a wonderful Christian example.' 'Devoted to Kath, his wife, and family.' 'Above all a lovely person who leaves behind a special legacy in everyone he knew.' In summary, Steve loved his calling, his family, his dogs and his football.

Rest in peace, dear friend.

Peter Smart

REVIVAL

We prayed for wintry Kirkton,
The snowy hills behind:
We prayed where schools sprang up,
We prayed where terraces declined.
We prayed upon the highest point,
Where brambles choked the trees,
We prayed with watery eyes and gave
The wind our salted pleas.
Two aging men, in open coats,
Combined against the chill -
And asked of God no less a thing
Than prayer might be His will.

Bruce D. Gowans

(praying with Kerry on prayer mountain situated in the middle of Kirkton with views to the Sidlaws)

Can you credit it?

These enquiries come from actual correspondence received by the Family History Department, Salt Lake City, Utah.

- 1) He and his daughter are listed as not being born.
- 2) I would like to find out if I have any living relatives or dead relatives or ancestors in my family.
- 3) We are sending you 5 children in a separate envelope.
- 4) The wife of #22 could not be found. Somebody suggested that she might have been stillborn – what do you think?
- 5) Will you please send me the name of my first wife? I have forgotten her name.
- 6) We lost our Grandmother, will you please send us a copy?

An early Christian Chapel?

Mention the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius and most people will think of the destruction of Pompeii on the edge of the Gulf of Naples. That is where the majority of tourists visit. But the town of Herculaneum also suffered desolation as bad, though it is less known. The eruption was later documented by Pliny the Younger who was witness to the 79 A.D. event and whose uncle, also named Pliny, perished in an attempt to rescue friends.



The Bicentenary House

Only about 25 per cent of Herculaneum has thus far been excavated. The removal of a blanket of rock, ash and pumice averaging approximately 75 feet thick is a challenging task. Naturally there was tremendous damage caused by the debris raining down and much of the wood was carbonised if not destroyed by the heat.

In 1938 one archaeologist, Amadeo Maiuri, working on the site of what he named the Bicentenary House made an interesting discovery. This was a two storey building which originally seems to have belonged to a nobleman, but since the ground floor had later been converted into shops perhaps he had fallen on hard times. Because lack of care and upkeep had led to deterioration of the structure the

house was closed to the public in 1983, but after repair work it was reopened in late 2019.

The upper storey has a large living room with several small servants' cubicles. In one windowless cubicle, measuring about 10 by 9 feet, some interesting items were found. On one wall was a stucco panel measuring about 25 high by 32 inches and within it a cross shaped cavity measuring 17 by 14 inches. Near this panel there are the rusty remains of a few nails or hooks. Below there is a wooden cabinet carbonised by the heat of the volcanic ash. This contained two crude lamps, a broken wooden pot and a gaming die. This cabinet has a rim around three sides of the top, making it unsuitable for use as an ordinary table, and there is a low footstool leaning against it.

Maiuri interpreted what he had found as evidence that this had been a place of Christian worship which, because of the volcanic eruption had to be dated before 79 A.D. Others have agreed with his conclusions in general, but some have been sceptical.

Perhaps the most significant point is whether the cruciform cavity, now empty, originally housed a wooden cross. Sceptics have suggested this merely held a wooden bracket supporting some unknown article now lost or destroyed. However, although the wood of the cabinet is carbonised, it remained in situ, but there was no such material in the cross-shaped cavity. In some other houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum pictures have been given a frame by stucco being plastered up to the edges; and this could have been the case for the setting of a cross. So the question arises as to how and why the cross is missing and the stucco largely intact.

One answer could be that it was carefully and even reverently removed so as to hide the fact that Christian worship was taking place in this house. We have ample evidence that the Emperor Nero unleashed a great persecution of Christians in the year 64 A.D. and the occupants of this house might have therefore wanted to keep their Christian faith secret; and so removed Christian symbols and artefacts. It is possible that the rusty nails or hooks had held lamps which were quickly removed and the stucco panel covered up by some piece of material. The cabinet, which might have held other religious items, might have had its use as an altar easily disguised, and it was never possible to reinstate it later.



The cross, cabinet and footstool
(photograph c. 1950)

If this scenario is correct it would provide the earliest example yet known of the use of a Latin cross (which has the upright extending above the crossbar) which many scholars have thought came later. We might also have confirmation of the power of St Paul's preaching after his journey to Italy under guard.

The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 30 August 2020.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 7 August 2020.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

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