

GRAPEVINE

No 111

Winter 2016

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DIOCESE OF BRECHIN

The Bishop of Brechin writes:

Sieved by the Night

As the year draws to a close we look back on a disturbing series of events – the shock of Brexit and the unending tragedy of Syria, extremist terrorism, multiple migrations and economic turbulence – which question our sense of identity and wellbeing. It is as though the old certainties, such as they were, have evaporated. The young despair of the direction of travel set by their elders.

We are not at ease with ourselves. Christian faith seeps from social engagement. Our expectations are dashed. We worry and wait. And we hope that things will turn out alright in the end.

The dark evenings at this time of the year lend themselves to reflection and thoughtfulness, to taking stock, and looking forward to the year's turning and a fresh start.

Waiting hopefully underpins the Christian appreciation of Advent. Opening the windows of the Advent Calendar we count down with our grandchildren the number of 'sleeps till Christmas.' And silently we pray that a Saviour will come and sort out the mess we have got ourselves into.

Lighting candles is a hallmark of Advent: the Advent Candle burned daily and the Advent Wreath signposting the four Sundays on the journey to the Birth of the Christ Child in Bethlehem are familiar in church and at home.

Intriguingly, lighting a candle and saying a prayer probably mark the defining spirituality of postmodern culture – for those who affirm a traditional faith,

and also for those who say they have 'no religion'.

The Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy captures this mixture of religious and secular experience in her evocative poem *Christmas Eve*. We imagine the snowflakes in the urban streetlamps, viewed from a child's bedroom. A reflective moment – the thoughtful snow on Christmas Eve – is sieved by the night.

+ Ngi

CHRISTMAS EVE

Time was slow
snow sieved by the night,
a kind of love
from the blurred moon;
your small town
swooning, unabashed,
was Winter's own.

Snow was the mind
of Time,
sifting itself,
drafting the old year's end.
You wrote your name
on the window pane
with your young hand.

And your wishes
went up in smoke,
beyond where
the streetlamp studied
the thoughtful snow
on Christmas Eve,
beyond belief,

as Time, snow, darkness,
child, kindled.
Downstairs, the ritual
lighting of the candles.

Carol Ann Duffy

Collected Poems (2015) Picador



The Rev'd David Elder, R. I. P.

Born in July 1928 David Elder was brought up in Hill Street, Dundee and was a member of St Salvador's congregation. After doing his National Service in the RAF, he became a cinema projectionist for Gray's cinemas. He then became manager of a tyre depot in Lochee Road. He was offered posts in Aberdeen and Birmingham by Dunlop Tyres but preferred to remain in Dundee. He eventually became manager of the Social Work Department in Dundee City Council.

David wanted to stay in Dundee because he intended to marry Betty, who was also a member of St Salvador's. Both of them were Sunday School teachers in the Church. Betty was a trained business woman and an accomplished pianist. She was also a very good dancer; but David had two left feet! They were married in March 1951 and were together for 58 years. They had two sons, Michael and Graham.

Betty and David played a large part in the social life of St Salvador's. He hired coaches to take people on summer outings and also to travel to the Christmas pantomimes in Glasgow every year to see Stanley Baxter. David took a very large group of people to see the passion play in Oberammergau in 1970. His enthusiasm for taking parties to major events was legendary.

He himself was a great lover of ballet. And when he went to Russia, he wanted to see the Bolshoi ballet in action. His party was prevented from going to see them; but David set off on his own – escorted by two KGB men – to go to the theatre. A very brave piece of private enterprise!

During these years, David was Treasurer of St Salvador's. But he also felt a call to be ordained. From 1975-79, he was on a Non-Stipendiary training course. He was ordained as a deacon by Bishop Luscombe in 1979 and as a priest in 1980. He served for 14 years in St Salvador's. But when he retired from the Social Work Department in 1993, he became

full-time priest-in-charge of St Martin's Church in the Hilltown.

He loved that congregation to which he gave 15 years of his life. He raised funds to replace the leaking roof on the church. Later, recognizing that the congregation was getting older, he built an extension to the church and put in a lift. Downstairs there were excellent facilities and the hall was rented out to many organizations.

These were years of happiness and sorrow. His younger son, Graham, died in 1999 after a short illness. This was a terrible blow. And Betty's own health deteriorated and she had to go into a home where she died in 2009. During these tragedies, David was supported by his family and by Ed Creaney, who proved to be a true and dedicated friend.

David continued to go to the ballet at Covent Garden and to shows in London as well as organising visits to pantomimes. He travelled widely and became very interested in the origins and the course of the Second World War. He continued to live a very active life, willing to help out in any Church where he was needed, including at St Mary's, Broughty Ferry during two interregna. Right up to June this year he assisted at St Margaret's, Lochee even though his legs were failing him.

Members from the many churches where he had served attended his funeral on 23 August. People who had loved him and admired him for his pastoral care and personal kindness. He was a dedicated priest who cared for his people, visited them in hospital and took loving services for them when they died. He tried to make our churches warm, kind, friendly places where people would feel at home, where God could be worshipped and strangers were made welcome. As St Paul would have said: "He made full proof of his ministry." May he now have heard those loving words of Jesus: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of your Lord."

Rev'd David Shepherd

James Gregory Lecture

Lectures on Science, Religion and Human Flourishing

The next lecture

entitled

"The Emergence of Life"

will be on

**Monday, 27 February
at 5.15 p.m.**

in the Main Physics Lecture
Theatre,
St Andrew's University
given by

Simon Conway Morris FRS

Professor Simon Conway Morris is an English palaeontologist who is best known for his detailed and careful study of fossils of the Burgess Shale and of the scientific concept of Cambrian explosion.

He is most popularly known for his theistic views of biological evolution. He has held the Chair of Evolutionary Palaeobiology in the Earth Sciences Department at Cambridge University since 1995.



St Salvador's Church, Dundee

CANDLEMAS

Thursday, 2 February
7 p.m.

All invited

Three Brief Histories

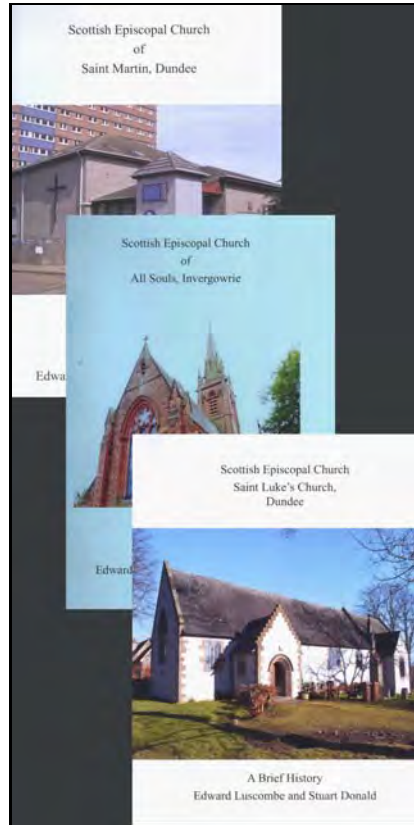
With the publication of booklets on Saint Martin's Church last year and on All Souls Invergowrie and St Luke's this year the Right Rev'd Edward Luscombe in collaboration with Stuart Donald has completed the series of brief histories of the Episcopal Churches in Dundee.

The Smithfield Mission, as St Martin's was originally known, started as an outreach from St Salvador's Church on the Hilltown which was an area of housing development in the latter part of the 19th century. From its inception in 1876 worship was conducted in the Episcopal Church Day School and only in 1904 was a church dedicated by Bishop Robberds.

During these years and for some time subsequently, since it came under the oversight of St Salvador's, it was assistant clergy from there who were variously appointed to develop and care for the growing St Martin's congregation. This had the result of a series of short ministries, several only 1 year, and consequently lent to a sense of some instability.

The new century saw the Rev'd James Boyes appointed as priest of what had become a Mission Charge. During his ten years a handsome church was erected. But tension remained between St Martin's and its mother church of St Salvador's. The latter took the unusual step in 1921 of requesting the bishop to make St Martin's an Independent Mission, but this was declined. It was another eleven years before this change in status was granted.

The earlier years of the 20th century saw a number of relatively short ministries. By the time the Rev'd Harold Duff was instituted in 1962 there had been 20 different priests holding office at St Martin's over the past 86 years. Redevelopment of the area was scheduled and as a result the church was demolished and a new St Martin's was ready for worship in April 1972. In the meantime Duff had been appointed also to be rector of St Salvador's, reviving the earlier dissatisfaction.



But hopes of St Martin's having their own priest again were dashed as a result of the rampant inflation of the late 70s and early 80s which caused a widespread reduction in stipendiary clergy; so pastoral care was put in the hands of clergy on the cathedral staff and others. Once the financial storm had passed the Rev'd David Elder was appointed as non-stipendiary Priest-in-Charge and his ministry of 15 years was the longest of all St Martin's clergy.

Following his retirement and the Rev'd Alison Jones' 4-year tenure, St Martin's became linked to St Mary's Broughty Ferry for a 3-year period under the care of the Very Rev'd Francis and the Rev'd Helen Bridger. Whilst every congregation has its ups and downs in fortune, St Martin's has experienced these in an extreme fashion as the brief history relates.

The account of All Souls Invergowrie could hardly show a more different picture of a congregation to that of St Martin's. Following a brief history lesson of the difficulties Episcopalians experienced in the 17th and 18th centuries and an excursion into the Kinnaird family's missionary

involvement in India, the authors describe the origins of All Souls. Starting with the provision in 1866 of a chapel in Rossie Priory (built in 1817), there was the acquisition of a large plot in Invergowrie on which the present church and former rectory were built. There was no dependency on a 'mother church', only on the vision and the provision of the Kinnairds.

Equally there was no fast turnover of clergy. Indeed, commencing in 1873 the Rev'd William Simons was rector 44 years. And although in the later 20th century some priests served for shorter periods there have been only 11 incumbents.

The financial upheaval of the 1970s however did place a severe burden and for the last 60 years the incumbents have had additional responsibilities (and sources of income) usually as chaplain to Dundee University or to Ninewells Hospital.

As with the Kinnairds at All Souls, St Luke's Downfield came about largely through the generosity of one family, the Ogilvies of Baldovan. A mission was opened in Baldovan House in 1896 and a plot of land was gifted on which St Luke's was built and eventually consecrated in 1914.

There was real growth in the congregation, as for instance in the late 1940s when many of the members of the Catholic Apostolic Church transferred following the closure of their former church. But the years of financial turbulence set back the congregation and the provision of clergy. However closure has been averted as it has become the diocesan Centre of Mission, adding to the variety of ministries which the congregation have experienced over the years.

In recording the histories of these and the other Episcopal Churches of Dundee and their clergy the authors have brought together a wealth of information, some of which might have been lost for good, in a most readable form and for that future generations in the diocese and elsewhere must surely be grateful.

What's A Donkey S'posed To Do?

*A donkey lived in Bethlehem and shared a little stable,
With Ox and Ass and Sheep and Cow – and a dippy dog called Mabel.
And at the end of every day they'd eat, from wooden boxes,
Lots of hay, especially got, for cows and sheep and oxes:
Their master was a friendly man, he shared his house with strangers,
And being quite old fashioned, he called the boxes "mangers".*

*And every creature had its own and ended every day,
Munching, most contentedly, a manger-full of hay.
They never had to share at all, their master quite succeeded
In filling each with just enough – he knew how much they needed.
So how surprised the donkey was, when he came back one day,
To find a little human being lying in his hay.*

*Now donkeys aren't clever, they aren't very bright,
But a baby in your dinner would give anyone a fright!
And Donkey stood and looked at it and flicked the flies away,
It was really quite confusing – how could he eat his hay?
"I'll need to ask a cleverer friend, there's plenty in the stable,
I really am the thickest – except of course for Mabel.*

*So Donkey looked around and, to his right, he spotted Cow;
He trotted slowly over and he made a little bow.
"Cow, I have a problem and could you tell me, maybe,
What a donkey's s'posed to do with a manger full of baby?"
"Goodness gracious, Donkey, such a tiresome beast you prove,
The answer's very simple, tell the baby it should moo-ve!"*

*But Donkey wasn't satisfied and, when he looked ahead,
He saw that Ox was lying down with straw beneath his head.
"Ox, I have a problem and could you tell me, maybe,
What a donkey's s'posed to do with a manger- full of baby?"
"Goodness gracious, Donkey, you're thicker than the roof
The answer's very simple, you kick it with your hoof!"*

*But Donkey wasn't satisfied and saw a woolly heap
Was resting in the corner "I know, I'll speak to Sheep."
"Sheep, I have a problem and could you tell me, maybe,
What a donkey's s'posed to do with a manger- full of baby?"
"Goodness gracious, Donkey, it's time you used your heah'd
The answer's very simple, nudge the baby out of beh'd!"*

*But Donkey wasn't satisfied with anyone's advice,
It didn't seem to Donkey they'd been altogether nice
And as he stood there thinking, a draught ran through the stable
And three big men came tramping in - and patted dippy Mabel.
Their clothes looked quite expensive and they all looked rather clever;
Donkey thought "Too good for here. Oh, presents! Well I never..."*

*And sure enough the three big men had gifts and laid them down
And Donkey watched as every man got close and gathered round
And Donkey had the strangest, strangest, **strangest** kind of feeling
And found himself, with all the men, down by the manger – kneeling.
Ah goodness gracious, Donkey, you're, maybe, not so bright,
But see, **You've done** your "s'posed to do" this starry Christmas night!*

B Gowans 2015

St Mary Magdalene's Church Constitution Road, Dundee

Come and join us at our

Spring Coffee Morning

Saturday 25 March

between 10 a.m. and 12 noon

Admission for adults £1

(children free)

*The admission ticket entitles you to
coffee or tea with cream and jam, as well
as access to various well-stocked stalls.*

We would like to welcome you to our
church.

CROSSWORD WINNER

There were some new people who sent in answers to the crossword in the last edition. The winner was Mr K. Smith of Dundee. Congratulations to him.

The correct solution was:



Another Cryptic Crossword awaits on page 10.



Education for child refugees in Lebanon

The Scottish Episcopal Church Mission Association have been working with Edinburgh Direct Aid for three years to improve life for the refugees who fled Syria to Lebanon for safety. Edinburgh Direct Aid (EDA) remain one of the very few foreign charities helping in Lebanon, which is regarded as too dangerous for Western workers. It is so dangerous



because the Islamic State forces have taken the land right up to the Lebanese border, and are capable of infiltrating and taking prisoners in large areas of Lebanon.

The refugee camps are situated right on the Lebanese border, near the town of Aarsal. When there is an exchange of fire with IS, the rockets fly over the heads of refugees' tents. This doesn't give anyone an incentive to stay there.

In 2015 we assisted with the urgent problem of occupying the teenagers and giving them a future. The Vocational Training Schemes for both young men and women are now established and are working well, producing electricians, mechanics, seamstresses and rug weavers.

For the younger children, basic junior schools were set up soon after the refugees

arrived. The EDA's field officer, Maggie Tookey, assisted by some Lebanese charities, commandeered some space and some portacabins, found and recruited the teachers amongst the refugees, and by making good use of a large photocopier, expanded one set of textbooks to enough for a school. This first school got a large number of the children into education, although it did take two shifts, morning and afternoon.

However, by 2016, there were 9,000 children of school age in the camps who either hadn't been to school since they arrived in Lebanon – or who had never been to school at all.

To address this problem, two further schools have been assembled by EDA. Both will have opened for the first time in September 2016. Mostly what is lacking is the furnishings for each classroom. Providing a whiteboard, desks, chairs, pens, pencils, exercise books, text books and maths equipment costs £650 per classroom.

Maggie Tookey spent time going round the classrooms and explaining to the children what was happening in the



Remedial Class at EDA Aarsal Centre



Teddies also help

Mediterranean. As a result some of them produced placards expressing their thanks to EDA. The organisation aims to make life in the camps more tolerable, so that fewer are tempted to risk their lives by attempting to cross to Europe.



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pictures taken by the Syrian refugee teachers who help to build and run these schools

*God promises a safe landing
but not a calm passage.*

The Call to Go

The Rev'd Canon Kirrilee Reid and her husband Ewan share their reflections on a recent visit to the island of Lesbos, Greece, which has seen 130,000 people arrive on its shores seeking asylum and refugee status so far in 2016.



Patrolling the coast, looking across to Turkey for refugee boats

Ewan and I felt the call of God was upon us when we made the decision to go to Lesbos in Greece in April (and again later in the summer). It had been growing in me for months – probably nearly a year – and when we were planning our 25th wedding anniversary it somehow seemed the only option for us. The plight of so many refugees and the plight of this Greek island was heavy on our hearts.

We didn't know what to expect, but the call to go was strong. We went as open as we could be, to do whatever we could to help.

Before we left, a deal had been brokered between Turkey and the EU – the deal to stop boats leaving Turkish shores. Some still slipped through though, mainly down in the south of the island but also one while I was on shift.

Ewan and I joined with other volunteers to take turns doing shifts patrolling parts of the coastline, looking through binoculars across the strait to Turkey (just 6 miles from the Lesbos coast) on the lookout for boats carrying desperate people –

people like you and me but who are fleeing war-torn countries, seeking a place of safety and peace. Volunteering with the charity 'A Drop in the Ocean' we had our hire car packed with emergency supplies of water, clothing, first aid kit, nappies and emergency blankets so that if we met a boat arriving we could provide some immediate assistance at the shoreline whilst waiting for the larger NGOs to arrive with more substantial supplies and transport. During our shifts we picked up rubbish from the beaches and helped The Light-house Refugee

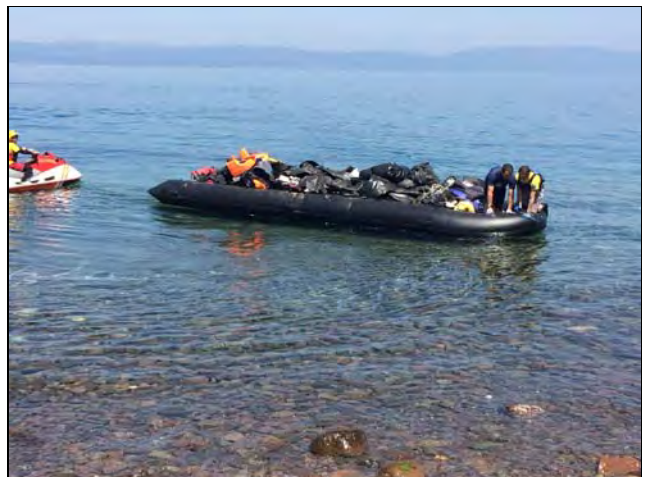
Relief Charity haul in the detritus from the wrecked boats – rubber, wood, children's floating rings and arm bands, life-jackets, etc.

When not on shift, we spent our time at an old hotel newly named 'The Hope Centre' (set up by Eric & Philippa Kempson, a British couple who have lived there for 16 years), plastering, painting and cleaning rooms, ready to house asylum seekers. We worked alongside people from all over the world: Norway, Australia, England, Spain, America, Mexico, Switzerland, Italy and Scotland. They had been moved by compassion to help those in need. They represented many nations and many cultures and faiths or no faith, and worked together for the common good, for a common purpose – to love and care for vulnerable people.

We were able to visit a number of refugee camps in both April and August. At one of the camps, Kara Tepe, just outside the main city of Mytilene we had a surreal and moving experience. It felt like we were standing amidst a television news story; Young children walking on dusty paths through rows of tents, in shoes that were either too big or too small for them; distressed parents begging for help for children who were suffering from shrapnel wounds; a mother trying to communicate her dream of getting to Germany with her 18 month old daughter, sitting on the floor with no possessions to be seen.

And then meeting and hearing the story of an Orthodox Christian man in his early 20s. Fadee, a well educated young man, was from Aleppo in Syria who knew that if he was sent back he would surely die. As a young man, both sides of the Syrian conflict wanted him to join the fighting, but he wanted peace and not to kill. He told us he wants to live; his dream to work in safety.

In the summer we returned (this time with our 3 adult children). We spent time volunteering at another camp, Pikpa; a small facility supporting refugees who are especially vulnerable (mental illness, pregnant women, etc.). The camp is run entirely by volunteers who deliver language lessons, women's support groups,



Removing the remains of rubber dinghies from the beaches



The life-jacket graveyard near Molyvos

activities for children, a gardening project etc.). We were there to help in any way we could and this included serving meals, playing with children, reorganising a storage facility and picking up rubbish.

During our time away we experienced a roller-coaster ride

musicality of sheep and goats' bells tinkling as you meander down dusty roads.

Then the starkness of shipwrecked boats and a gigantic hill of life jackets that jolts you back to the reality and harshness of the situation and NATO and Frontex ships marauding up and

of emotions, for the Island of Lesbos is also one of the most incredible places I've visited. This is a beautiful Aegean island with its clear waters, tree covered mountains, intoxicating scent of jasmine, delicious food, an incredible energy that bubbles to the surface in hot springs and the

down the coastline ready to intercept refugee boats and 'send them back'.

Beauty and tragedy mingled together.

The call of God can take us to some strange and dark places, but when we answer the call and go, we can be assured that God goes with us and is in fact there before us.

In the turmoil and helplessness of this refugee crisis, I experienced life, goodness, unity and hope. And amid upheaval and sadness, the Peace of God and a peace that defies particular situations.

Jesus said;

"My peace I give to you; but not as the world gives ... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

*Rev'd Canon Kirrilee Reid
Rector, All Saints, Glencarse*

LLD award for Dr Joe Morrow



An Honorary Doctorate of Laws (LLD) has been awarded to Dr Joe Morrow, QC, for his contribution to mental health law in Scotland.

Dr Morrow, the Lord Lyon King of Arms, received the honour from Edinburgh Napier University at a graduation ceremony in the city's Usher Hall.

He has been President of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland since 2008, and previously served eight years as Her Majesty's Commissioner for the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, and three years as President of the Additional Support Needs Tribunals for Scotland.

Dr Morrow said: "I am delighted and honoured to receive the degree of LLD from Edinburgh Napier University for contributions to mental health law in Scotland. It was a privilege to share in the graduation of around 250 students and their achievement. It is important to me to see that mental health law is recognised through the award of this degree."

Dr Morrow was admitted as a member of Faculty in 2000, and he was appointed Queen's Counsel 2015. He holds degrees in theology and law, and has practised in the area of mental health law for over 20 years.

The very first Valentine card a legend

The Roman Emperor Claudius Gothicus (reigned 268-70 AD) needed soldiers. It is said that he suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could – until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death.

While he was in prison awaiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer. The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers she was healed. Just before his death in Rome on 14 February 270, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.'

If this is true, then the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die and a little girl, healed through his prayers.



There is nothing so beautiful among all the gifts that one human being can offer another than a simple heartfelt smile.

A CELEBRATION OF LAY MINISTRIES

On 29 October, around 20 Lay Readers, Eucharistic Assistants, Worship Leaders and other lay ministers met together at St Mary's Arbroath for a celebration of lay ministries through worship, study and fellowship. The event was the first of its kind to be held in the Diocese in recent years. It aimed to reflect and build on the important role that members of the laity are playing in the Diocese, in many cases as a main stay to ensuring that regular worship takes place in congregations in vacancy and also through participation in worship as part of local ministry teams. Bishop Nigel said, "The event offered me the opportunity to convey my personal thanks to those present for the contribution that they are playing in the life of the Diocese. We have become increasingly reliant on those in lay ministries to help ensure we are able to offer a full schedule of worship, especially where there are vacancies."

Peter Smart explained the background to the event. "Bishop Nigel and I were initially planning for a Lay Readers' study day. Very quickly, we concluded that we should extend the invitation to others in lay ministry, many of whom are part of their local ministry team. I know from my own experiences of the interregna at Montrose and Inverbervie 2012 to 2014 and now at Muchalls and Stonehaven just how essential a good local team is. Those present soon formed a cohesive group, sharing a desire to participate in the day's programme." Those attending ranged from several who have been prominent in the Diocese as Lay Readers, Eucharistic Assistants and Worship Leaders over many years, to some just taking their earliest steps on the road of lay ministry.

The day started with a shortened form of Morning Prayer, with a reflection by Canon Kirrilee Reid on Andrei Rublev's icon of the Holy Trinity, encouraging us to allow space to listen to God and one another. This certainly stilled our minds from the animated chatter over coffee. We moved straight into small group discussions during which we were asked to consider the context of worship in what we

do, including trying to write our own definition of worship and discussing a time when we had a profound and meaningful experience of worship.

During the rest of the morning, we attended one of two parallel sessions, based on personal choice. One, led by Kirrilee, was primarily intended for worship leaders, and included discussion on the roles and responsibilities of guiding others in worship, to create space for experiencing the presence of God. Her workshop also included practical elements, use of resources and an opportunity to prepare a service of our own. David Fleming of St James' Stonehaven, who is new to leading worship, commented, "This really helped to put a proper framework on the developments that we at St James' want to do. We need more sessions like this to make sure our worship doesn't stagnate."

The parallel session, led by Peter, focused on the administration of the reserved sacrament, and particularly how local practices in conducting the service varied from the strict guidelines in the SEC's 'yellow liturgy book'.¹ Differences tended to arise from local traditions and preferences. Peter highlighted that it is unlikely that any of us who is authorised to administer the reserved sacrament will have been watched by or received feedback from a priest or bishop, simply because, if an ordained person is present for a communion service, the lay person must defer to them to celebrate the Eucharist.

We discussed our role, including our relationship with Jesus, when administering the reserved sacrament, and what it is not. We compared what guidance we had been given before conducting a service; and talked through some examples of the different ways in which we might have seen the reserved sacrament administered. We concluded that, as leaders using the reserved sacrament we should take into consideration the congregation in front of us and act as we feel appropriate for them.

Linda Walls, Lay Reader at Holy Trinity Monifieth since 2007, explained, "I find it helpful when leading worship in other charges,

to introduce myself as a Lay Reader, and stress that I am not a priest. I try to follow the guidelines in the yellow book but also take into account the layout of individual churches and the practicalities involved."

After lunch there was a short closing service, during which +Nigel gave a reflection on the key role that lay ministries play in the diocese. He said, "Ministry is the calling of the whole people of God. Beyond personal daily discipleship the Church encourages us to use our various gifts in ministry in local community contexts. Licenced and authorised lay ministries are a key part of 'Team Brechin'. As Bishop I entrust you with the task of enriching the stories of God's people to the best of your ability."

Was the day worthwhile? Peter reports, "Yes. It was a resounding success from the feedback we have received. Kirrilee and I knew that we were setting ourselves an ambitious target when we put the programme together. We both overran on time and by no means covered all we wanted to achieve. The good news is that those present are keen for our discussions to continue and we are currently planning for a follow up day during February, as well as a further day at the end of October 2017."

Liz Howson of St Andrew's Brechin, who has recently become more involved in leading worship, sums up from a participant's point of view, saying, "It was a most encouraging morning. I look forward to next time," whilst Kirrilee adds, "I'm pleased there is enthusiasm for an additional training day in February."

The conclusion we can draw is that there are lay people in the diocese willing to give their time and talents to helping keep the show on the road, and a thirst for learning and fellowship to help all of us do our ministry even better. Now that is something worth celebrating!

Peter Smart

Diocesan Warden of Lay Readers

¹ Communion from the Reserved Sacrament (administered by a Deacon or Lay Person) 1997, Scottish Episcopal Church

About God

The following essay is attributed to an eight year old boy in South Africa. For a homework assignment he was asked to write about God.

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grown-ups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in our town. At least there aren't any who come to our church.

Jesus is God's son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said OK. His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him He didn't have to go out on the road anymore. he could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important. You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time. You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy; and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God. Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely; because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know he's around you when you're scared in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids. But you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you.

I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases. And that's why... I believe in God.

Danny

MISSING: The Guest of Honour

"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2)

There's a story that runs like this: there was a mayor of a small town who had brought in so many improvements to local life that over several years he had transformed the town. And so the community decided it was high time to pay him tribute.

The party was held at the local town hall, and all agreed it was a great celebration. The decorations were superb, the music was loud, the room crowded and noisy. The food was delicious, and the wine flowed. It was the best party the town had ever had.

Over coffee the next morning in the local cafe, someone wondered aloud if the mayor had enjoyed it. No one knew. In fact, as the day wore on, people began to realise that actually, no one had even seen the mayor there that night. Later they discovered that the mayor had been waiting at home all evening, waiting for the lift that he had been promised into town.

But people had been so busy preparing for the party, that no one had remembered him. And so he had missed the party which was being held in his honour. Apparently no one had even noticed his absence.

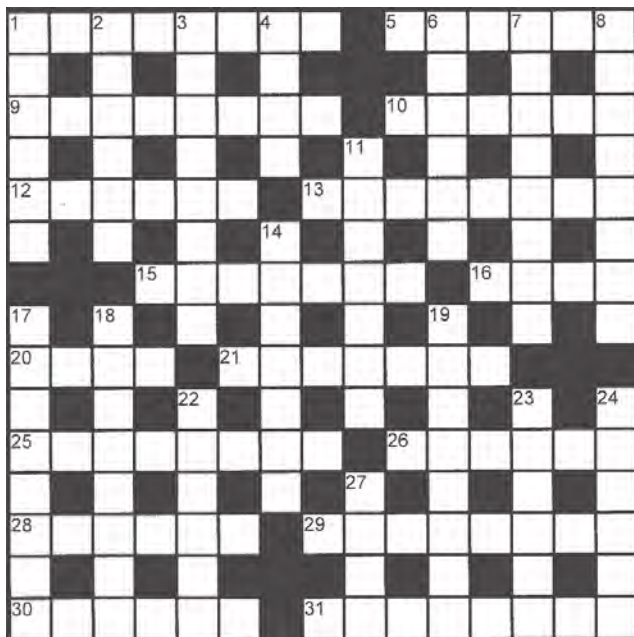
If that sounds a bit like Christmas, think! People get together to celebrate, the food is special, the music warms the heart – but has anyone seen the guest of honour?

We sing about him, we act out nativity plays about him, but in reality, the season has become about US. *Our* menus, *our* travel plans, *our* presents, *our* decorations. At what point in the proceedings do we give ourselves time to notice whether he is among us, or not?



CRYPTIC PRIZE CROSSWORD

To give a little help, 12 answers will be found in the Christmas hymn 'O little town of Bethlehem'. Send your entries to the editor at the address on the back page by Friday, 3 March at the latest putting your name and address in the box provided.



CLUES ACROSS:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 They doubt that a hundred penny buns sit awkwardly (8) | 13 Bring a limp orca to public notice (8) |
| 5 Approaching care of a Chinese dynasty (6) | 15 CDs need to be played down (7) |
| 9 Power up so that the east is green (8) | 16 No north-eastern gas (4) |
| 10 Least rupee is less fresh (6) | 20 A thousand eke out a humble manner (4) |
| 12 The she rat raised the bidding in a red suit (6) | 21 Got thin, but not today (7) |
| | 25 Ten sllily change without making a noise (8) |

- | | |
|---|---|
| 26 Small way to tell it differently (6) | 7 Doomed to become flat idle (3-5) |
| 28 Ah! even this is beyond expectation (6) | 8 The font used to advertise Gad Manor (8) |
| 29 The United States drown nothing – amazing! (8) | 11 It rants about being on a journey (7) |
| 30 Set two for a bloodsucker (6) | 14 Do they call for help around the loch? (7) |
| 31 British Rail blames black-berries for the mess (8) | 17 His maths breaks all records (5,3) |

CLUES DOWN:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 I am agitated to see the answer (6) | 19 Smoke hid a Muslim territory (8) |
| 2 Can it really be a seven in the same way? (4,2) | 22 Surely they don't speak English slang? (6) |
| 3 United they got there (8) | 23 Scandinavian dwarfs walk leisurely around (6) |
| 4 Cats made in a mould (4) | 24 He tightens when sent south-east (6) |
| 6 I spot a hundred spirit measures (6) | 27 Flow down or up (4) |

Name

Address.....

.....

The 1 Corinthians 13 of Christmas

If I decorate my house with beautiful bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny baubles, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator. If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of mince pies, roasting a perfect turkey, and lay a magnificent table, but have no love for my guests, I am just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, sing carols in the care home, and give all that I have to charity, but do not have compassion in my heart for those in need, I am just another social service; it profits me nothing.

If I decorate the tree with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes and attend a myriad of holiday parties but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to help one's wife with boring housework. Love puts the Christmas present shopping on hold in

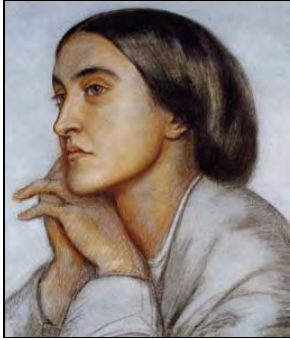
order to run the elderly neighbour to the doctor. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't envy another's home that has more expensive presents, or even colour co-ordinated Christmas china and table linen. Love doesn't yell at the children to get out of the way; love is glad that they are there to be in the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, even irritating relatives. It believes all things, and encourages teenagers to aim high for their future. It hopes all things, endures all things, even a spouse who is depressed about their job prospects. Love never fails other people. Computer games will crash; even cashmere jumpers will wear out; and golf clubs will get lost. But the gift of love will endure forever.

Happy Christmas!

Inspirational Verse

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) whose two brothers were also literary figures, never enjoyed good health and was educated at home. In the course of her quiet life she wrote much verse and prose, mostly devotional. Yet despite her Christian convictions, she manifests a kind of melancholy in some of her work.



There are recurring themes of frustrated or unhappy love arising perhaps out of unrequited affection. Indeed her poetry has been compared to Emily Bronte's limited output in that genre.

Perhaps her best known poem "In the bleak mid winter", which is a literary gem. It has the apparent simplicity of a medieval carol and, as such, without much artistic quality, but in fact the composition of such verses is only possible with the highest art. Gustav Holst's music is a perfect match.

Another gem is the following poem, "Uphill". This is one of the author's earliest published works. It seems just to be a whimsical dialogue about the progress of the soul after death and as such may appear melancholic. However, there is technical virtuosity in the arrangement of the words, and a disarming originality in the use of imagery and in the maintaining

of the question-and- answer scheme. It is, of course, Victorian verse, but that is not to condemn it for it successfully avoids that era's pitfalls of preciousness and sentimentality!

UPHILL

Does the road wind uphill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow, dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you waiting at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yes, beds for all who come.

Candlemas: a Feast of Vision, Sight and Insight

The candles remind us of the light which has broken into a world of darkness, where sin distorts, and where the goodness of God's creation is blotted out by human wickedness.

A child is taken to the Temple; taken by Mary and Joseph to fulfil the rites of the law. An old man is there, looking, searching, straining to see the promise of redemption being fulfilled and the dawning of the day of salvation. His rheumy eyes search for a sign of hope in a despairing world. He lives at a time of tension between God's promise and a mocking world. And in his longing he is drawn to the Temple, to that place where sacrifice is offered, and where in costly giving men strive to know their Maker. He comes into the Temple, where the great veil or curtain, embroidered with the signs of heaven, guards the mysterious emptiness of the Holy of Holies, the place where God is,

and yet is not, for God does not dwell in temples made with hands. Simeon comes, looking, searching; and he sees a child, and he takes the child into his arms and blesses God. His sight becomes insight. He sees and knows in the child he carries the promise of God fulfilled. Here is no less than the one for whom not only Israel but all nations long. He is 'a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.'

The Feast of Candlemas has many names. It is the Feast of the Presentation of Christ; of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and in the East it is known simply as The Meeting – the meeting of Simeon with the infant Jesus, the meeting of God and Man as the Lord comes to his Temple. Here in this meeting, Simeon sees and knows the Christ of God; and that meeting is both joy and sorrow: joy that the light shines in the darkness and

joy in the promise of salvation; and sorrow at the cost of salvation. If we adore the Lord as the Christ of God, and find in him a love that reaches the heart of human need, then we shall find as we come closer to him to share in his love and compassion that our adoration means a suffering with and alongside Christ. This will be so in many ways: in reaching out to the despairing and the angry and sharing with Christ in receiving and bearing their hatred; in patiently bearing misrepresentation, calumny and slander; in enduring beyond what is reasonable; in wrestling in prayer for those in need, those unloved, and those in pain of any kind. It is in praying deeply, and ever more deeply, that we can come to know and enter this sacrament of sacrificial love, this mystery in which Christ meets us in his Temple with the promise of salvation.

GR

MAKING A DIGNIFIED EXIT

A Reflection for the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Some years ago as an archdeacon I was invited to address a gathering of retired clergy. In my opening remarks I said I wasn't sure why I was there, trying to impart something useful to such a senior group of clergy. "Just remember" said the chairman, "you are in the waiting room."

His comment struck a chord. Of course there are different kinds of waiting: tedious queuing, anticipating a loved one's visit, or a worrying hospital appointment. And the hardest of all – simply waiting on God. But he was talking about the run up to retirement, a position I now find myself in, my last post as a diocesan bishop.

In ministry terms I know that clergy don't really retire, we reinvent ourselves. I have accompanied many priests through this waiting room to the stipendiary finishing line and their moving on. Most clergy find the transition to a degree troublesome: the loss of public status and leaving a community with which they have enjoyed (or endured) a pastoral relationship are common experiences. Clergy may fret about their housing and pension provision, while some are not always listening to their spouse's hopes for retirement.

Retired clergy can struggle to find a retirement role that satisfies – how much or how little ministry to undertake? Before retirement they think they know, only to discover that for a variety of personal or circumstantial reasons, their plans don't turn out that way. A retired priest recently wrote about, 'Why I don't take services now', highlighting the sacramental disconnect between filling in as a retired priest and

actually having a particular cure of souls. He felt that having no bunch of keys and an empty diary were creative and liberating.



The Simeon Chapel stained glass window in St Mary's Church, Arbroath

Certainly the protocol of taking six months or more completely off before applying for permission to officiate in retirement has much to commend it, not least because we clergy are incapable of stopping what is a way of life rather than a job. Politicians crave a legacy, business executives cash in their incentive bonuses, while clergy always have just one more project to complete before leaving. I hope I know my limitations as a Bishop and I am trying to discern what is achievable under God and my leadership in the remaining years, and what must be left for others.

I ponder, how to make a dignified exit? On losing the General Election in May 1997, the British Prime Minister John Major famously left 10 Downing Street saying he was off with his family to watch Surrey playing cricket at the Oval. There is something impressive about leaving well – it's what I hope for myself and have always striven to enable for other people, whether their final time has been positive or painful.

In St Mary's Arbroath, a lovely Victorian church in our diocese, we find the Simeon Chapel with an engaging stained glass window depicting the story of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple as told in chapter 2 of Luke's Gospel. Elderly Simeon lovingly enfolds Jesus in his arms, blessing the child, watched by his adoring parents Mary and Joseph. Together with the aged prophetess Anna, Simeon's eyes are smiling with adoration and relief: light, glory and salvation have come at last to fulfil God's promise for humankind. No more waiting on God, just time to shuffle off-stage, to 'depart in peace'. Now there's someone who knew how to make a dignified exit.

+ Nigel



The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 26 March 2017.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 8 March 2017.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

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