

St John's

July 2024



Cornerstone Magazine

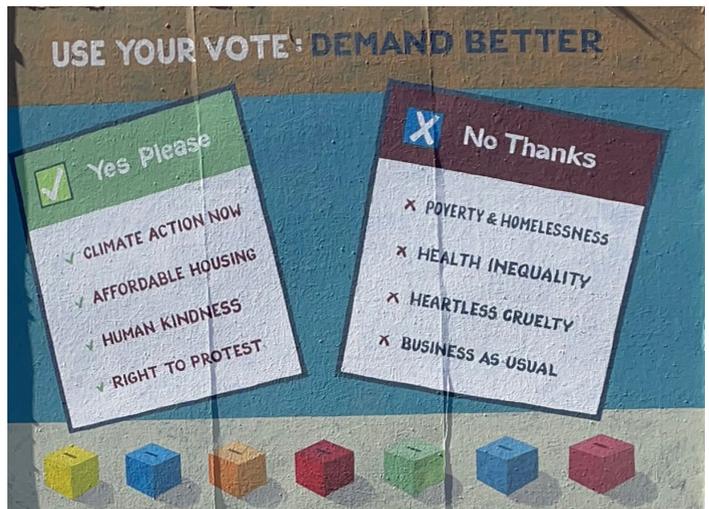
The St John's AMEN-S:
Affirming and Nurturing the faith of our Members
Making new disciples of Jesus Christ
Embracing eco-justice for ourselves and the world
Nursing the wounds of those who are hurting
Speaking truth to power

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Mural:

By the time this magazine comes out, we shall know the outcome of the General Election. The early summer mural urged the electorate to vote and to think about what Scotland needs most.



Editorial

Goodbye.....

The news hit us like a firecracker in the middle of a recent normal-seeming Sunday sermon. By the end of August our Rector will no longer be with us. We rejoice for him that after so many years he will be back in his homeland, near his widowed mother and his sister and brother, but the downside is that we shall inevitably suffer a tangible sense of loss. He is our Rector. We have got used to him, to his sentences that that so often begin with Yes!, to the wonderful clarity of his diction in the wide spaces of St John's, to his mantra of welcome 'Wherever you are and wherever you find yourself on the journey'. We, like all those who just drop into the church, are pilgrims, and these are comforting words. Their inclusivity has been a hallmark of his ministry. His legacy is one that should bring us joy, an enthusiastic, all-age congregation going forward in hope. You will find in this magazine tributes from some of those who have worked most closely with him during the last 11 and a half years, and there will be much more to be said in the next two months. But meanwhile, when the time comes, Markus, God Speed, and may the Spirit be with you.

...and thank you for the Music.

Music is a crucial component of our services at St John's, and the news that near the end of the year our Director of Music David Goodenough is to leave us comes as a blow. He has been quite exceptional in this role, and we cannot hide the fact that when it comes his departure will be a terrific loss. His choice of music for anthems and hymns has been impeccable, and his cheerful optimism and ability to inspire our Choir has been a major asset. There will be much more to be said before the end of the year. Meanwhile, on the subject of hymns, you will find in this magazine an account of how they have developed over the course of 2,000 years and how they enhance worship today, and also the second in our series of "My Favourite Hymn". If you feel you would like to nominate a favourite hymn, do be in touch with a member of the editorial group. Within living

memory, congregational singing in St John's was, it has to be said, not its greatest selling point. It lacked vim, and the stratum of Edinburgh society which made up most of the congregation felt that singing loudly was slightly ostentatious. Today, however, given a good tune, we are capable of raising the roof. Let us do so with enthusiasm and commitment, 'for it is good to sing praises unto our God.'

Robert Philp

From the Rector

Dear friends,

By now most of you, if not all of you, will know that I am leaving St John's. August 18th will be my last Sunday with you, and I will cease to be your rector at the end of the 10:30am service after over eleven years.

And what amazing eleven years it has been!

On some level, I cannot believe that this much time has passed since I stepped off the plane – my “stuff” still enroute from Vancouver. Some of you might remember that I didn't even have a place to move into at the time. It all became rather rushed and a wee bit chaotic (no fault of St John's!), before 1 Ainslie Place became my home. I was inducted on



February 11th, just two days before Ash Wednesday. My first public duty was to attend a fabulous Shrove Tuesday Party by the choir. Kazoos will never quite be the same for me... And, yes, it is not the best idea to start a new ministry with presiding and preaching on Ash Wednesday.

But it worked, didn't it?

This is not to say that it was perfect. I know I made mistakes, upset some and annoyed and even hurt others. For all these moments in my ministry, I am truly sorry, and I apologise from the bottom of my heart. I trust that God's grace will bring about reconciliation in the fullness of time, and I beg your forgiveness.

The last eleven years have been significant in the life of St John's, and we

mastered a number of challenges together: I only want to mention the Cornerstone Centre and the Pandemic – significant and at times scary moments on our journey together. And there is so much more... The ministry we have shaped together has enriched our own family of faith, and it has also enriched the city around us. St John's has a special role to play when it comes to its place in Edinburgh. And over past eleven years, I have indeed been blessed to lead us in claiming that role. We can say: "We did it. Together. With God's help."

There are also all those lovely people we lost during my time as your rector. They will leave holes in many a heart, and they cannot be replaced. In their uniqueness they are known to God and will be forever part of our fabric, of our history. May they rest in peace and rise in glory, and may all those who mourn them be comforted with God's healing love.

The community of St John's is indeed amazing. It is more than the sum of its members. There is indeed "a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place" – to use the words of an old African-American spiritual. I pray that you will continue to be blessed with wonderful, amazing, and lovely people, with wonderful, amazing, and lovely leadership, and with a vision that continues to enrich, heal, and nurture you – as it has me – and that continues to enrich, heal, and nurture the community around St John's so that God can continue to use you as a means to reconcile in Christ people to God's self and to one another.

Thank you!

May God bless you!

Much love,

Markus

Farewell, Markus; Godspeed

When Markus dropped his bombshell at Matins and the 10:30am Eucharist on 23 June that he was leaving, there was a collective gasp. Leaving? Impossible, but leaving he is - to go to the Church of Christ the King in Frankfurt, Germany, an English-speaking congregation within the US-based Episcopal Church.

It is in a way a circular move for Markus: Germany, the country of his birth and young education; Edinburgh for a Masters; a Fulbright Scholarship to Seabury-Western Theological Seminary north of Chicago for another Masters; posts as hospital chaplain on the East side of Chicago and later as associate rector of St Matthew's in nearby Evanston, Illinois, after being deaconed and priested in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago in 1999; eight years as Rector in Vancouver; 11 ½ years as Rector at St John's; now to be Priest-in-Charge at the Church of Christ the King in Frankfurt., Germany. We have asked a few people who worked closely with Markus to write about him.

Markus worked with three Associate Rectors in his time at St John's. Stephen Holmes, Associate Rector from 2014 to 2018, writes:

Two Episcopalian priests were walking down Princes Street and the wife of one of them had to stand between them to stop them hitting each other. When the theological or liturgical argument was finished, they all enjoyed a convivial meal at the New Club. Working with Markus as Associate Rector at St John's for nearly five years had its frustrating moments (for both of us) but was ultimately a very rewarding experience. It is a clergy relationship that rarely works, but it did because of Markus's big and generous heart. In my own life and in those of others I have seen this again and again, not just in the flowers and visits but in the time he spent with those society has rejected. At the altar a priest acts 'in persona Christi', as Christ. Markus is a good priest, and sometimes frustrating, because he is like Jesus. May this continue to flower in his new ministry...

Rosie Addis, Associate Rector from 2018 to 2023 writes about her time with Markus:
Five and a half years with Markus ...

Getting to know one another.
Restructuring the staff team.
Praying together.
Snagging the new building.
Shared jokes and wry smiles.
New people.

Profound theological conversations.
Covid.
Daily walks.
Streaming services from an empty church.
Mastering Zoom.
Stuffing envelopes.
Delivering kids' bags.
Hanging out in the church garden.

Back to the new normal.
Enveloped again in music.
Sunday afternoons watching Grey's Anatomy.
Easter liturgies and silent prayer.
Many shared meals.
Waiting in anticipation for the next sermon.

Go well, Markus.

May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always on your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

David Bagnall writes about his time as Assistant Rector at St John's:

One of the funny things about doing a job like the rector of St John's is that it can be easy, I think, to lose sight of your priestly calling. St John's is a big organisation: alongside the running of a big city-centre church, the rector manages a limited company (CDEL), sits on numerous boards, runs numerous projects, and manages a large and varied staff team. It's for this reason that being the rector of St John's can often feel a bit like being a CEO, but one of things I've always most admired in Markus is his ability never to lose sight of his primary calling, which is to be a priest, and to love and care for his congregation. Although only having worked

with Markus for a year, I've learned a great deal from him, but I think it's his essential priestliness that I'll take with me, and I know will be what will sustain him in years to come.

Austin Reilly was Vestry Secretary during a stressful period in the life of St John's.

I had the privilege of working very closely with Markus while I was Vestry Secretary between 2015 – 2021. It was a very busy period as, among other things, the Cornerstone Centre development reached a conclusion, and the Covid pandemic placed all sorts of problems and challenges in our way. Markus provided strong leadership and guidance to Vestry and the lay and ordained ministry team of St John's. Getting Vestry members involved as leaders of the congregation and not only spending our time on routine things like property or finance was one of his priorities. He was always readily available to talk to me about issues that I was concerned about: we did not necessarily agree about everything, but we did have good constructive discussions before decisions were made!

Tony Falconer worked with Markus for many years when he was on the Vestry.

When I returned to Edinburgh in 2013 Markus was our Rector, a very different but highly effective leader of our church community. Markus is a big man with a very big and generous heart, as I have experienced first-hand like many in the congregation. Sensitivity, kindness, when to step back and when to engage you with that extraordinary smile are skills that Markus has in abundance.

I admired Markus in the way he has shared his experiences of his sexuality and his depression with us, not an easy ask, but again very helpful experiences to many.

Covid and the collateral damage of the pandemic, let alone the financial threat to St John's, was a massive challenge to the survival of our church. We appear to have come through that challenge and our congregation seems secure and larger. Markus demonstrated very clear leadership during this traumatic time, with Vestry zoom calls a monthly feature. Indeed, the administration of our church has been enhanced by the appointment of very strong candidates to key permanent roles within the church.

Individually, we will all have our own memories of Markus, but for most of us there will be significant affection and gratitude, and we will all miss your smile. Thank you, Markus.

Adam Rennie and Alistair Dinnie were amongst the leaders in getting the Cornerstone Centre off the ground. In addition, Alistair was Markus's first Vestry Secretary. During his time at St John's Markus dealt with at least three major issues: the Beast from the East, short lived but intense; the development of the Cornerstone Centre, long term and highly pressured at times; and the Covid pandemic, extremely intense and challenging for Markus, Rosie and many others. My particular perspective arises from my work, with Alistair Dinnie and others, on the development.

Markus played a key role here in two respects. First, at a point when funding for the development was still in the balance, he took the plunge and led Vestry to the decision to borrow money to enable the project to proceed. Second, he empowered and enabled others to get on with things in the knowledge that he would support them when necessary. The result will serve the church well into this century.

These are but two of Markus's attributes – a willingness to be bold and an ability to delegate.

Markus leaves many legacies, one of which is the Wednesday evening Young Adults group. Christian Clarkson writes about this group:

St John's Young Adults group meets on Wednesdays at the rectory for food and good company. Our meetings are unstructured, presenting an opportunity to meet and spend time with Christians of a similar age but different backgrounds and church experiences. We take turns to cook, and just enjoy a relaxing evening in the middle of a busy week. Many of us came to the group when we were new to Edinburgh, or Episcopalianism, or both, and have made fast friends at the group, thanks to Markus's facilitation.

We all have our different memories of Markus. He leaves St John's in good health with a congregation that is increasing at a time when many others are getting smaller.

Farewell, Markus.. God bless you.

From the Operations Manager

As we move swiftly from June to July we are preparing ourselves and the church estate for the summer months with the expected influx of visitors from across the world. This preparation is, of course, most visible as the West End Craft Fair squad start the massive pre-opening build already now into its second week. They are reporting an increased demand for stalls so we are guaranteed a busy four weeks of trade and fingers crossed for some good weather!

Part of our own preparation has seen some urgent repairs to the cast iron railings and gates, in particular one hinge set which was only held up by a small chain. While this work was underway, we also installed a new handrail leading from the ramp on Princes Street down to the lower terrace giving some welcome support on this well used path. We also are ‘freshen-

ing up’ the main and side doors to the church as well as other activity to entice visitors in and welcome them to St John’s during extended hours across the summer. It was interesting to see the layers of different colours of paint on the doors; however, our intervention has been timely as they were in a poor state with open gaps in untreated wood all now successfully repaired. Thanks also goes to Fred and David for their efforts in the gardens, making the space a haven in the centre of town for all to enjoy.



Iain Herbert, Operations Manager



St John's at long last has a handrail on the steep ramp that goes down from Princes Street to the Lower Terrace, a very welcome addition.

Unity and Naïveté

I was having a conversation with an ordained chum of mine the other day about the sexuality controversies still convulsing the Anglican Communion. During the course of the discussion, my friend articulated a view that has become increasingly common on both sides of the debate during recent years: “Isn’t it naïve to assume that we can hold the Anglican Communion together?”, he said. “Is it not more mature to accept our differences and part ways?”

This idea of the essential inevitability of division indeed extends far beyond Anglican political discourse, and has become a kind of unspoken political assumption of our times. Beloved by both the right and left, the idea that the way of progress is to be found in gathering to yourself people of your own political, national, and ideological persuasion – and sep-

arating from yourself those with whom you disagree – is foundational to late-modern politics. For the right, this is generally articulated in nationalistic terms and centres around questions of borders, migration, and security; for the left, the emphasis is more ideological, and involves questions of belief, dogma, and worldview. Either way, the base assumptions are the same: that there is no point in trying to stay united to people with whom you disagree or from whom you feel fundamentally different, and that you are better off among the ranks of your own tribe.

To my mind, however, even the briefest of acquaintances with human history – and a good dollop of theological anthropology – will suggest that this is to see things the wrong way round. This is because of the essential but unavoidable truth that, as Martin Luther (of all people) prophesied, once you establish the principle of separation it will continue *ad infinitum* and groups will continue to divide and subdivide amongst themselves into ever increasing factions and divisions. It's for this reason that things seem to me the other way round: the naivete here lies not in thinking that we can hold things together, but in thinking that your particular group will ever be pure enough. The endpoint of the politics and theology of division is ever smaller, self-interested groups that grow ever further away from one another. By contrast, it is the work of maturity to work for, build, and maintain unity, involving as it does sacrifice, compromise, and even forgiveness.

For people of faith, too, this is no small matter, for the work of unity is not only politically and ideologically expedient but is actually demanded of us as Christians. In John's gospel, Jesus prays to the Father that his followers 'may be one, even as we are one'. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are an eternal unity, so we as beings created in God's image are to strive for unity and communality, rather than division and fraction. Such, of course, will be hard; it will involve the swallowing of ten of our own interests, the rubbing of shoulders with people whom we dislike, and even the forgiving of sins, but it is the work of maturity. It is the work that we are called to, and it is the hard but glorious way of the Kingdom.

David Bagnall

Notes From the Vestry



On Sunday 22nd, Markus let the congregation know that the Spirit was moving him to take on a new post in the Parish of Christ the King in Frankfurt am Main

It is far too often only when a relationship changes or ends that we pause to evaluate what someone has meant to us. Since learning the news, I have heard some of the qualities of Markus that we most love: his commitment to inclusivity; his desire to challenge supposedly foregone conclusions, in himself and others; his warmth of spirit; his hope for a more just society. And, of course, his Caleb.

For me, Markus's most cherished quality is his unerring hospitality. On Wednesdays for the last few years, Markus has welcomed some of the younger members of St John's into his home. He has fostered an environment which has been seminal in the creation of new friendships, sharing of food and ideas, and I hope and believe, a strong new generation of worshippers at St John's.

If I have any regret as Markus departs from us, it is, only as he is leaving, that have I paused to consider what impact he has had

in my life.

I wonder if you feel the same.

If you do, perhaps you'll join me in a

renewed effort to celebrate and appreciate the community of St John's in the here and now.

A part of our appreciation is sharing a gift with Markus as he moves to his new charge. It is an old tradition for priests as they leave one place, to receive a "purse" (a collection done on their behalf). If you would like to thank Markus and show your appreciation by contributing to this purse, there are three methods you can choose from:

1. By bank transfer to the account name Church of St John The Evangelist, sort code 801130, account number 00217590. Please use "Markus's Purse" as your reference.
2. With cash using the envelopes at the back of the church that are clearly marked "Markus's Purse". You can hand your envelope in with the collection during

services, use the donation box at the back of the church, hand it into the office, or pass it to a member of clergy or staff.

3. By cheque, made payable to St John's Church, with "Markus's Purse" noted on the back and posted to Rector's Purse, St John's Church, Princes Street, Edin-

burgh, EH2 4BJ

If you have any questions about how to make a payment, or need any support, please contact Helen Syme on 0131 229 7565 or by email to events@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk.

Rachael Murphy

A Lay Person's Guide to Anglican Worship

Part 2: HYMNS

Hymns are already there at the birth of Christianity; we read that after the Last Supper, When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Mark, 14, 26). The great power of music to convey feeling is the reason why it appears in worship from the start of our faith story. At first the Church took over Hebrew plain chants but with time they were refined into Ambrosian and Gregorian chant. Hymns tended to be used to project sound doctrine and guard against heresy. The early hymn-writers, though, were reluctant to make them too emotional, in case people got 'entangled in the passions of the flesh by the pleasure of song'. The first hymns were in Latin, and we still have some early exam-

ples, such as *Of the Father's Love Begotten* by Prudentius (5th century). There was no drastic change in the role they played in a service until the Reformation. Of the first Reformers, Luther and Calvin were not that interested in music, but in Switzerland the reformer Zwingli thought hymns were altogether suspect and he banned music in church because it had 'the power to seduce the senses'. He saw it as a kind of idolatry, distracting people from worshipping God. By 1598, though, the congregations of Zurich were bored and frustrated with nothing to sing; they rebelled against their leaders and demanded hymns. Music soon became the secret weapon of the Reformation. They started to make psalms into rhyme and sing them to popular tunes, a practice that spread to Britain, where they were called Geneva Psalms.

The 'Godfather of English Hymnody' was a congregational minister called Isaac Watts. Among the 750 hymns he wrote in the 17th century, one in particular can be seen as a classic of the genre, *O God, our help in ages past*. In the 18th century, the arrival of Methodism saw a surge in hymn-singing, and they started taking over decisively from Psalms, with their 'glorious tumbles of repeating melody'. John Wesley felt they added richness and vitality to his message, and his brother Charles composed about 6,000 of them. The anthem of the Methodists was *O for a thousand tongues to sing*. Anglicans, though, tended to think there was something excessive and noisy about the Methodists.

When in 1873 the American evangelists Sankey and Moody arrived to evangelise Britain, hymns were a powerful weapon in the armoury of conversion. David Sankey provided the singing, and a newspaper said: 'As a vocalist, he has not many equals. Possessed of a voice of great volume and richness, he expresses with exquisite skill and pathos the gospel message, in words very simple but replete with love and tenderness.' Their signature hymn, *The Ninety and Nine*, composed when they visited Scotland, was full of pathos:

But none of the ransomed ever knew
how deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert He heard its cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die.

He also published a hymn-book which drew together hymns like Rock of Ages and Onward Christian Soldiers.

19th century hymns, like so much else in that sentimental era, tended to be highly emotional, a trend of which Anglicans were slightly wary. Sarah Flower Adams's deeply felt Nearer, my God, to Thee was allegedly played by the ship's band on the Titanic as it was going down, to comfort the dying with the thought that they (including the bandsmen themselves, as none of them survived) might be about to drown but they were also about to meet their Maker.

The Psalms have been so significant in the history of the Church that often they were forced into rhyme and metre to make them singable. This is problematic, though, as the format is something of a straitjacket, making it hard to avoid awkward distortions of word order. Take Psalm 2, 5-6:

Then shall He speak to them in wrath
In rage He vex them shall.
Yet, notwithstanding, I have Him
To be my King appointed;
And over Sion, my holy hill
I have Him King appointed.

Many, though, remain in the Church of Scotland hymn book. Two psalms, however, triumphed over such drawbacks to become icons of the genre: 23 (The Lord's My Shepherd) to Crimond (now almost universal at funerals), and 100 (All people that on Earth do dwell) to the Old Hundredth.

Inevitably hymns become out of date in time. Some rule themselves out because of changes in language. One example is found in the word bowels, - believed in time past to be the source of emotion. Even the great Isaac Watts was caught out by this when penning lines like

Blest is the man whose bowels move/ and melt with pity for the poor.

Other hymns have fallen out of favour because they were too mil-

itaristic, especially after WW2, such as Onward Christian Soldiers, with its stirring tune by Sir Arthur Sullivan. There is a real downside here. The hymns that remain in an expurgated repertoire may be more palatable and politically correct, but tunes like this are sorely missed. A lyricist is much needed to create new words for the great tunes of the past. Other hymns grate when they try to describe the afterlife. The afterlife being by definition indescribable, this almost never works, whether it points to a kind of celestial parade ground:

Where one born in a manger / commands the beauteous files.

Cherubs, too, are best avoided. The book of Revelation is not a good basis for hymns, though the occasional phrase conjures up an eloquent image such as:

Where the songs of all the sinless/ sweep across the silver sea.

In this magazine, though, you will find, in the My Favourite Hymn section, a hymn which makes a valiant attempt to picture the indescribable:

Thou art a sea without a shore/ a sun without a sphere;
Thy time is now and evermore/ Thy place is everywhere.

Today hymns are still being written, and John Bell and Graham Maule have given us some fine examples. Not everyone, though, is happy with the way hymns are going. Former Primate Rowan Williams, who believes that 'A great hymn takes you on a bit of a journey, it tells you a bit of a story, it unfolds,' deplored the hymns often sung at funerals and weddings as 'bland', while Lord Lisvane singled out All things Bright and Beautiful, common at both, as 'saccharine doggerel' with a 'jingly tune'. It can further be seen as non-PC, since God seems to be fore-ordaining the social pecking order, as in

The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate,
He made them low and mighty and ordered their estate.

They are, though, sung on such occasions because so many of the congregation, while not regular churchgoers, remember the hymns they sang in Sunday School.

Random influences have enriched the tradition throughout its history, such as the Negro Spiritual, and today, all in all, we have an immense legacy of hymns to choose from. In St John's we have the advantage of Service sheets, without hymn books, so we can choose from the entire repertoire of Christendom. The Songs of Praise effect has meant that melody is important, as in hymns like How Great Thou Art or It is Well with my Soul, though Anglican churches, other than those on the evangelical wing, are a bit cautious of these, viewing them as 'happy clappy', often because of a belief that worship is as much a matter of the mind as it is of the heart. What is true, though, is that when a congregation is caught up in fine words sung to a powerful tune, it is drawn together in unison in a very special and moving way.

Robert Philp

From the Archive

The SIX MERCIES

When the church opened for worship in 1818, all the windows were of plain glass. Around the middle of the 19th century, though, they were steadily replaced as members of St John's sponsored stained glass windows, to commemorate members of their family who had died. The last window which you pass on your right as you go towards the Chapel along the South Aisle was one of the first in the church to be installed, along with the one it faces in the North Aisle. Along with the window next to it, it illustrates Jesus's words in Matthew 25. When the time comes for the Son of Man to judge the nations, He speaks first to the sheep on His right (vv. 35 – 36)

Then the king will say to those at His right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.



Of Matthew's seven mercies, the two windows illustrate six. On the left-hand window, 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was hungry and you gave me food, I was sick and you took care of me.' On the right-hand

window, 'I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was naked and you gave me clothing, and I was in prison and you visited me.'

It will be noticed in the right-hand window that the main 'naked' figure is in fact not naked but largely covered by a fine robe. The decorum this suggests was fairly typical in the Victorian age, and would certainly have been approved of by the then Rector of St John's, Dean Ramsay. The Dean, when shown the plans for the newly sponsored Ross Fountain in Princes Street Gardens which featured four female figures representing The Arts, Science, Poetry and Industry, thought they were a disgrace. The amount of nudity, he said, was 'grossly indecent and disgusting; insulting and offensive to the moral feelings of the community and to the city.' The fountain finally got built though and is generally felt to be an asset to the Gardens. Since the two windows were put in at different times their design is not the same, but in common with many other windows they are full of colour, and give special joy when the sun is shining and the church is lit up with multi-coloured patches.

Leslie Hodgson and Robert

Philp

The Brebannoch Pilgrimage

I joined the Brebannoch Pilgrimage this year, crossing the island of Mull over three days to reach the island of Iona for St Columba's feast day, 9th June. This is a Scottish and Catholic pilgrimage, but protestants are welcome to join, and even English perhaps! The pilgrimage involves carrying a replica of the Monymusk reliquary, as a vessel for the original relics of St Andrew, St Margaret, and St Columba. The Monymusk reliquary has been identified by some scholars with the Brebannoch of St Columba (Gaelic *Breac Bannoch* – 'embossed peaked thing'), a sacred battle ensign of the Scottish army.

The pilgrimage was arduous and not without peril, but an amazing experience. We chanted and sang as we walked, singing the Rosary in both

Latin and English. The tune and words were not at first known to me, but soon grew familiar. We took turns carrying the reliquary between two people's shoulders. Perils included getting between some highland cattle and their young and needing to carry the reliquary across an unexpected burn where the bridge had gone.



When we reached Iona at last, a Mass was held in the ruins of the Nunnery first (which inconvenienced some tour guides!). Then there was a procession to the Abbey. Crossing the threshold to the Abbey while singing hymns was fantastic, as our voices were magnified by the acoustics.

The pilgrimage's purpose was to pray for the renewal of faith in Scotland. It has helped to grow my personal faith by complementing an Alpha course I had been doing at P's and G's Church.

I made some new friends, had many deep conversations, learnt new and unfamiliar customs, and pushed my fitness.

Catie Gladstone

I would certainly do this pilgrimage again, and I would like to do many more, including the St Cuthbert's way, and the Camino de Santiago.

Catie Gladstone

The Bagnall children are very well behaved on Sunday mornings, but on a recent Sunday, towards the end of the service, Robbie, aged 16 months, wanted his daddy and crawled at great speed to the platform where he was quickly scooped up by his father. Iona, 3, soon followed. David couldn't hold both so handed Robbie to Markus. All four went down the aisle with smiles all around.



It was a lovely end to the service.

My Favourite Hymn – Jean Abbot

Jean Abbot, a member of St John's choir, writes about her favourite hymns.

Whatever may be said about the eccentricities of late 17th century English (and Scots) Puritans, they were at the cutting edge of the new-fangled congregational hymn-writing, and left us some sparkling examples.

John Mason (ca.1646-94), writer of “How shall I sing that majesty?”, took holy orders at the age of 21, and spent the rest of his adult life in the service of the church in Buckinghamshire. He was a man of intense Calvinist piety. He experienced visions, and was troubled by a lot of bad headaches, extreme noise sensitivity and alarming dreams. His lengthy apocalyptic sermon “The Midnight Cry” proved a popular hit when published in 1691, finding in the happenings of the time, urgent and unmistakable portents of the Second Coming, which he believed was imminently about to happen in his parish of Water Stratford.

This line of preaching prompted considerable local millenarian excitement. Expectant followers set up camp close to the rectory, and took to round-the-clock singing and dancing, as it was one of Mason's beliefs that “Christ would have all sorts of Musick to attend Him”. Shortly before his death from infected tonsils in May 1694, fervour was further stirred when the good Rector preached from a window of his house, having had a recent vision of Christ himself. Clearly, he was inspiring and convincing, as the followers proved hard to disperse for a considerable time after his death, the very fact of which many disbelieved until (and in some cases for years after) he was exhumed and exhibited.

I picture the hymn-writer, maybe during a night of holy insomnia and headaches, striving to capture in words what he felt sure lay beyond his own limited glimpses of the divine – vast choirs of angels revelling in their unimpaired heavenly experience of God's brightness and majesty

- something awesome and limitless, “a sea without a shore” and “a sun without a sphere”.

What, for me, wafts the striking turns of phrase and exhilarating visions of a fervid, and possibly fevery, seventeenth century brain into one of the finest and most inspiring contemporary hymns is its setting to the glorious tune *Coe Fen*, composed by a twentieth century schoolmaster.

Kenneth Nicholson Naylor (1931-1991) taught for 27 or so years at the (Methodist) *Leys School* adjoining the eponymous fen in Cambridge. It was written in response to a request from his headmaster for “singable tunes”, which it certainly is.

Just as the Puritans had a good way with a hymn, so it sometimes seems to me that Methodists have all the best tunes.

How great a being, Lord, is thine,
Which doth all beings keep!
Thy knowledge is the only line
To sound so vast a deep.
Thou art a sea without a shore,
A sun without a sphere;
Thy time is now and evermore,
Thy place is everywhere.

(Do you have a favourite hymn that you would like to share with us? If so, please contact the Editorial Team.)

A New Mass for St John's

This year my mass, A Brief Setting of the Eucharist Based on Melodic Material from Be Thou my Vision, was sung by the St John's choir for the festival of Pentecost. This incredible experience was particularly special for me, not only because it was my first chance to share my music in a public space but also, as a member of our choir, it was an immense privilege to contribute in a new way to the worship at St John's.

The setting started as a Christmas present for my mother, Rosie Addis, who has long advocated for the use of her favourite hymn Be Thou my Vision. I originally intended only to write a descant, a decorative additional tune for its last verse, but I ended up writing such an indulgent finale that context was needed to justify its place in worship. The mass itself is based almost entirely on transformed snippets from its titular hymn. Through this, I aimed to give the final full statement of the hymn a sense of inevitability and conclusiveness without putting the cart before the horse. Additionally, I hoped to shift the focus of the service from the act of communion to the blessing and sending out. This shift highlights the importance of the Church's work within our wider communities and empowers us to achieve that work in an appropriately joyous manner.

I would like to take the opportunity in a forum like this to express my gratitude to St John's choir and music staff. Every member engaged with the material with enthusiasm, and it was a pleasure to hear them bring their inexhaustible love of music to the rehearsals. My two soloists, Eleanor Harris and Clarie Goodneough, deserve particular praise, tackling one of the most exposed and challenging sections of the mass with such poise that the Agnus Dei became a highlight of the entire service. This was all brought together through the generous and insightful work of David Goodenough, whose contribution throughout the process cannot be overstated. I cannot thank them all enough.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the congregation present. They were a key part of this mass's success. This day will stay with me for a long time due to the genuine willingness to engage with

this small contribution to the worshipping life at St Johns.

S T (Sam) Addis

Two more of S T Addis's sacred works will be sung at Old Saint Paul's during August. They are settings of Psalms 40 and 33.

Christian Aid 2024: The Sharing Project

“How could I be happy when all my friends would be sad? Ubuntu! It is best we all share”

Thus the little African girl explained to the western anthropologist why, when he had promised the whole basket of delicious fruit to the one who could run fastest and get to it first, the children had all turned to each other, held hands and come together, then shared the fruit among them all.

For Christian Aid in May 2024 we decided, not just to raise funds for CA, but to create a ‘Sharing’ Project, recognising the value and necessity of sharing in our everyday lives, and in the cause of global justice and equal human rights. We invited the whole congregation to think of instances of sharing which they experience and are grateful for – from sharing the family kitchen scissors to sharing car commuting journeys, from book groups to concerts, holidays and achievements at work to the joys, challenges and concerns of parenting, from the life support of shared public services like a clean water supply to the thrill of our accessible beautiful countryside: The list is long ... but the most often mentioned was sharing worship and fellowship at St John's .

Giving thanks for all of this took our minds to the many people on the

planet who are not yet sharing these blessings and the need for sharing with them through our support for Christian Aid. The African story of 'Ubuntu', which was enacted by the under-fives, was a further inspiration. The concept's main principles, closely matching those of Christian Aid in its partnership projects, are humanity, care, sharing, teamwork spirit, compassion, dignity, consensus decision-making and respect for the environment. "I am because you are, and you are because we all are." In western thought "No man is an island"; in Christian terms God is 'three in one and one in three': divine reality is diversity in unity and unity in diversity, and we are bid to be 'like God and to love one another as He loves us'. Our final event was on Trinity Sunday, and David Bagnall's brilliant sermon on the doctrine of the Trinity said it all so well.

We invited contributions of stories, poems, pictures etc on the theme, as well as straight financial contributions, and these are collected in a ring binder file accessible on request. Two live experiences of sharing were both a great success. The home-made soups and bread lunches were delicious and the tea and cakes after Eucharist similarly, and these raised c. £200 each, which, with the financial contributions have produced over £600 altogether for Christian Aid. This project is wound up now, but the inspiration and the sharing continue, and so does our support for Christian Aid and its partnership projects, sharing the blessings of the planet and the unity of humankind.

Marion Ralls

Pen Portraits

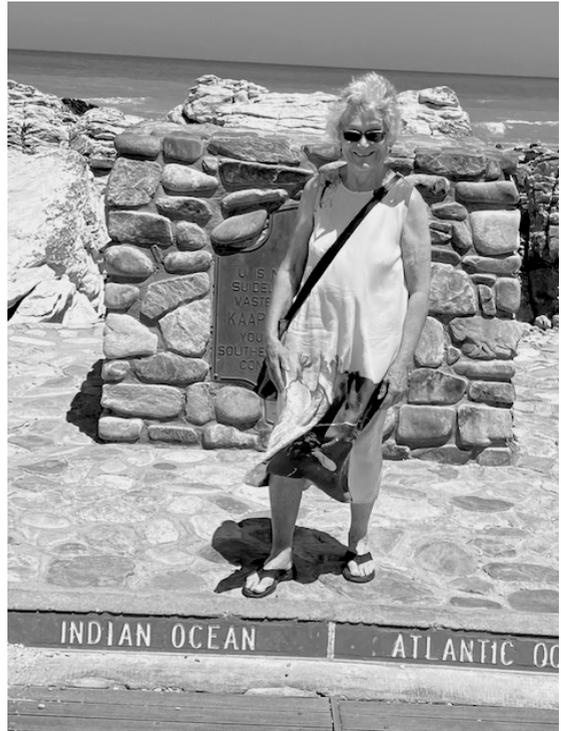
Gwynneth Lloyd

I was born in Johannesburg SA where my father worked on a coal or goldmine. I had three siblings ,and after my mother died one stepsister. Aged 16 I began training as a nurse and midwife. During my training I joined the Church of England Cathedral in Pietermaritzburg. In later churches I taught in Sunday school and became a churchwarden, and Choir member. My faith and attendance at worship have continued to be a vital part of my life.

In Britain I trained at Great Ormond Street Hospital, London and the Edinburgh Royal infirmary. I married and settled in Aberdeen where my husband and I both worked and brought up our two boys but divorced in 1998. I moved to London, specialising in Orthopaedics.

Performing in local and church choirs and listening to music, recently in the Edinburgh Festival, have been important to me.

On retiring I gathered many happy memories spending twenty years trekking around Botswana, Ceylon, Australia, Iran, Israel, Norway, Iceland and Greenland, and Israel and Greece walking in the footsteps of St Paul.



Now is the time to enjoy my family including Simon's wife Kate and grandson, Hamish and keep active by walking and gardening.

Thank you all for the welcome you have given me.

Austin Reilly



I am Edinburgh born and bred and had a 40 year career in banking including almost two decades in England. Mary and I had worshipped in different churches but when we came home to Edinburgh about 12 years ago we decided to come to St John's together. We found the music, preaching and services inspiring so it quickly became our spiritual home.

For six years until 2021 I was the St John's Vestry Secretary, a very interesting and challenging time as the Cornerstone development reached its conclusion. I am currently looking after the Welcomers so if anyone would like to join in, please get in touch! I enjoy music, walking, photography and watching rugby.

Obituaries

Ruth Greig
13th April 1929 – 10th April 2024

Ruth came to St John's at the age of 14 years, 80 years ago. In April 2024 this made her our longest continuous member. She was possibly the longest member we had ever had at that time.



Some folk come and go but St John's was always a significant part of her life; a regular at traditional Prayer Book services.

She and her sister Doreen were 'go to' people for historical information; for example special services celebrating VE Day, and development of the Terrace.

Following on from Guides, and the fondly remembered post war youth group, like so many in the community, Ruth was involved in a variety of church social activities, such as badminton, drama and walking groups.

She played the piano for the Sunday afternoon children's services.

She always took an interest in what was going on, kept a collection of cuttings relating to St John's and last year voiced her hope that the AGM would have a good turnout. She was delighted with her Easter card this year, with its painting of the church.

She loved children and faithfully knitted garments for the children's ward at the Western General and when she could no longer bring things for our annual 'Toy Sunday' she would give a donation for the purchase of items.

She worked for the NHS at Bangour Hospital and Trinity House and at one stage edited the magazine of the Painters and Decorators Association. She could still spot a typo last year!

During the last five years of her life she was cared for at Braeburn and this enabled her to enjoy some of the activities there as well as freedom from domesticity.

Clephane Hume

Jane Kinnaird

Aged 87 died April 26th 2024

Jane was a lively, elegant, kind person and a good friend to many both young and old. She had a wide range of skills. They included outstanding embroidery, knitting baby clothes for Harrods, organising a highland ball, establishing beautiful gardens and cooking for homeless people during St John's turn with Bethany.



Jane was born Jane MacLeod and brought up on a farm in Moy south of Inverness. Living in a mountainous area gave her plenty of opportunity to climb numerous Munros in her youth. She was one of the first participants and leaders of the St John's walking group established by David Reid Thomas in 1985. I first met her on a St John's walk on Ben Vorlich when she and Judith Watson recommended walking the Cruachan Horseshoe. She was a member of the St John's Country Dance group established at the same time.

On leaving school Jane joined the Wrens following which she married James Darling at St John's. They had two daughters but sadly James died and so Jane brought up the girls alone and became more involved with St John's.

After more than twenty years she met Jim Kinnaird at church. After a short while they married and moved to Glenalmond where she briefly worked as a GP practice manager and then to Aberdour where their magnificent garden took up their time.

On Jim's death she returned to Edinburgh and to St John's but increasing problems with her legs meant that she was unable to get into church for the past few years.

She leaves daughters Claire and Caroline and grandchildren Sophie, Mark, Christopher, Cameron and Kyle.

Jeanette Rennie

José Mobbs

José was a familiar figure at St John's, only ceasing to come during the past few years when she became too frail. She would arrive with her beloved Chihuahuas in their push chair and greet all around with her warm and friendly smile. That was a major characteristic of José. She loved people.



Originally from Wales, she came to Edinburgh to train at the Western General Hospital and worked as a midwife and health visitor. She had a keen interest in children's welfare and in the 1960s wrote a paper on childhood obesity. Her love of children led to work as a nanny but this was bitter-sweet. She was hired by a leading concert pianist as a nanny for her son but whilst Josee was travelling to the United States to take up the post, the little boy died. Despite her grief, his mother arranged another job for Josee and she was able to spend a happy time in the USA.

On her return she lived in Well Court where she was vice chair of the Dean Village Association for many years. She had a great love of poetry and drama and enjoyed both performing and going to the theatre. The Edinburgh Festival was always a great joy for her.

She had training in public speaking and gave classes in her turn.

Her friends remember her as an open-hearted person. She cared for all living things and worked for their good. She was an independent person who met the world on her terms and lived her life with joy.

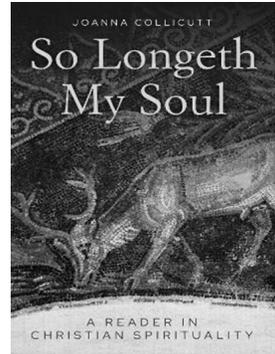
She is missed by her many friends especially Win.

Eileen Thompson

Anne Tidy

Anne died on Monday June 24th. She was a long standing member of St John's and the Cathedral . A small cremation service will be held for her on July 9th but a memorial service will be held later at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral.

Cornerstone Bookshop Reviews



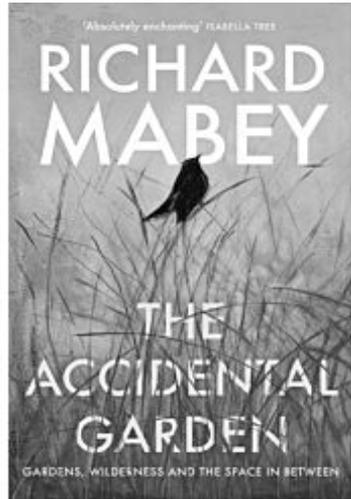
‘So Longeth my Soul’

by Joanna Collicutt

£25.00

9780334063100

This long-awaited Reader in Christian spirituality was born out of Collicutt’s many years teaching spirituality to ministry candidates in the Church of England. What has resulted is a book that has a far wider reach, suitable for anyone wanting to begin exploring classic wisdom texts from the end of the apostolic age to the late nineteenth century. Collicutt’s background in psychology influenced her decision to arrange the readings thematically, allowing a broad range of voices to speak to issues with which contemporary readers can easily engage; therefore, what could have presented as a seemingly ‘dry’ textbook becomes a lively and engaging commentary and a starting point for conversations. Another very helpful aspect of the book is that each piece of writing is preceded by a short biography of its author, an explanation of its genre and a brief guide to the context in which it was written. Covering a broad range of both Eastern and Western writers, this is a rich and rewarding compendium.



The Accidental Garden'
by Richard Mabey
£12.99

9781805220701

Widely regarded as the greatest nature writer of our day, Richard Mabey certainly knows how to capture his readers and draw them both out of themselves and into a world richer and fuller than they might otherwise be aware. The natural dramas in his latest book begin to play out in his own Norfolk garden, “in the climate-driven heatwave of July 2022”, and continue through disturbed seasons, throughout which Mabey observes how plants, birds and hosts of other inter-reliant organisms, were forced to adapt to the elements. In a sense, the garden and its inhabitants are the protagonists in an unfolding tragi-comedy, constantly displaying shows of perseverance and hope against the odds. (Take ants sowing cowslips in parched grass as an example!) A profound and provocative meditation on ‘gardens, wilderness and the space in between’, this is a joy to read.



‘Quiet’

by Tom Percival & Richard Jones

9781471173912

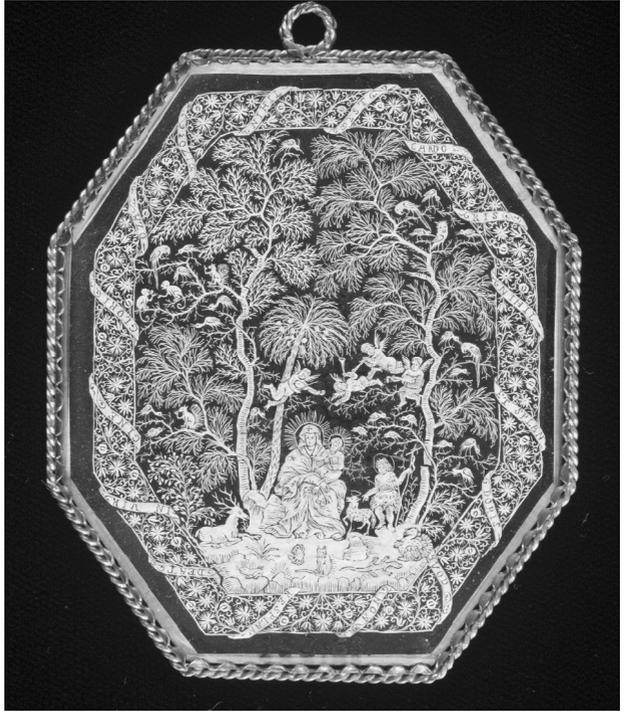
£7.99

This beautifully illustrated picture flat sees acclaimed author/illustrators, Percival and Jones, collaborate for the first time. It tells the tale of a tiny bird, living in a richly inhabited forest, whose little voice is no match for his noisy companions. And so, he spends his time in silence, often flying out into the quiet sky to be alone. But because he is quiet, he has an ability to hear in a way that the other birds and animals don’t and so he is the one to realise the mechanical diggers are coming – to destroy the trees and their home. Suddenly, he has to find the courage to speak out – to warn the others. Once they hear him, they are also prepared to listen to his plan to defeat the machines – for all the living creatures to come together, confront the danger and protest – in silence... Their quiet composure works, and the machines turn around and rumble into the distance. A moving tale, illustrating that “Every voice should be heard, for the smallest voice can deliver the biggest message”.

Joanna Koerten, *Virgin and Child with St John*,

cut paper between crystals, 7 x 6 cm, Victoria & Albert Museum.

Joanna Koerten was born in 1650 in Amsterdam, into a Mennonite family, and was multi-talented from a young age. She grew up practicing embroidery, lace-making, calligraphy, drawing on glass, and watercolours, but became most famous for her paper-cut images. She sold her work for high prices and had



patrons who included Peter the Great, William III, and Emperor Leopold I. She married at age 41 and her husband became her greatest supporter, helping her run a house-museum full of curiosities that she had made, and promoting her artwork during her life and after her death. Koerten's *Virgin and Child with St John* is one of her few surviving works. It shows the titular figures in a bower of feathery trees, surrounded by all manner of creatures: not only the lamb of God and some frolicking putti, but among others some squirrels, a crab, a turkey, and a rather large lizard. Around the edge of the image is a floral band and the words 'Nihil est candoris, nihil est splendoris, quod non resplendeat in Virgine gloriosa': an abbreviation of a quotation by St Jerome, 'There is no part of brightness, no part of glory ... such that it does not shine forth in the glorious Virgin.'

Koerten was, of course, unusual as a female professional artist in seven-

teenth-century Amsterdam: there were few female artists, and those who did make their living this way were usually born into families of artists. The subject that Koerten has chosen, the Virgin surrounded by garlands of flowers, was a relatively common one for artists of the place and period, here copied in paper. Without any opportunity to become a painter or sculptor, Koerten developed skills that were generally past-times or party-tricks for middle-class women and men to a level that encouraged curiosity and wonder. Sometimes we can be inured to the skill that goes into a painting or sculpture, because we see them so often and expect a high standard; Koerten's medium is fresh and allows us to appreciate the skill all over again. The intricacy of the design is intended to impress the viewer, but also draws our attention to the characteristics of the subjects: how fragile the leaves are, details of the birds' feathers, and the rays of the haloes.

Christian Clarkson

"Service with a Smile" by DES

Service with a Smile by DES

"What is the matter with telling the truth with a smile?" Desiderius Erasmus to Martin Dorp, May 1515

A Message from Canon Wishwash

No AGM would be complete without this question: "Why do we magnify our carbon footprint every week by having pages of service sheet, when we used to manage fine with the Book of Common Prayer, and a Hymn Book?" The reason is the simple pleasure given every week by typing errors. Recently Anthony was rendered as "Anthong", and surely no one will forget when Angus was spelled with one letter missing. In these degenerate days all sources of good humour are to be welcomed. Probably the most famous typo came in 1631, when Martin Lucas and Robert Barker published a Bible containing the Commandment: "Thou shalt commit adultery." There was also a reference to God's greatasse (greatness?). They were arraigned before the Star Chamber and fined £300 (maybe £70,000 today)

Postcards from Geneva

For some reason probably involving an Ecumenical Forum in the home of the League of Nations, several of my regular correspondents were recently in Geneva. I have received a flood of postcards and a WhatsApp message.

Dear DES (they all begin)

...Archaeological work below the Cathedral shows that in the 5th century contemplative monks had under-floor heating in their cells. I might have been tempted.

Yours whatever, Brace-Stretcher

... In this edifice, wonderfully free of bells, smells, stained glass, frescos or other frippery, there is, Vanity of Vanities, one relic kept. The Chair of John Calvin. I was pleased to see it was notably uncomfortable. No dozing off in Protestant Geneva.

Duty calls, Seth the Preacher

... One archaeological reconstruction showed baptism in the Early Church. Queuing up before a large basin were many neophytes completely naked. Do you think this could catch on? On the agenda for the next Vestry meeting.

Always up with the times, Trendsetter

Hi DES. Pittie here. I persuaded that Ramrod woman, Pew-Bible, to take me to see the Great Fountain in the lake. She got interested and went out along the pier. The wind changed and she was absolutely soaked. "Thumbscrew" Widget offered to rub her down. Photo attached.

Stop press [A genuine news item]

Paranormal expert and author Dr Paul Lee believes the UK has been running out of ghosts as aging spirits are currently dormant or have moved on "to the other side".

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Come to the Lower Terrace and browse for treats, cards and gifts, then unwind, eat, and meet friends.

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