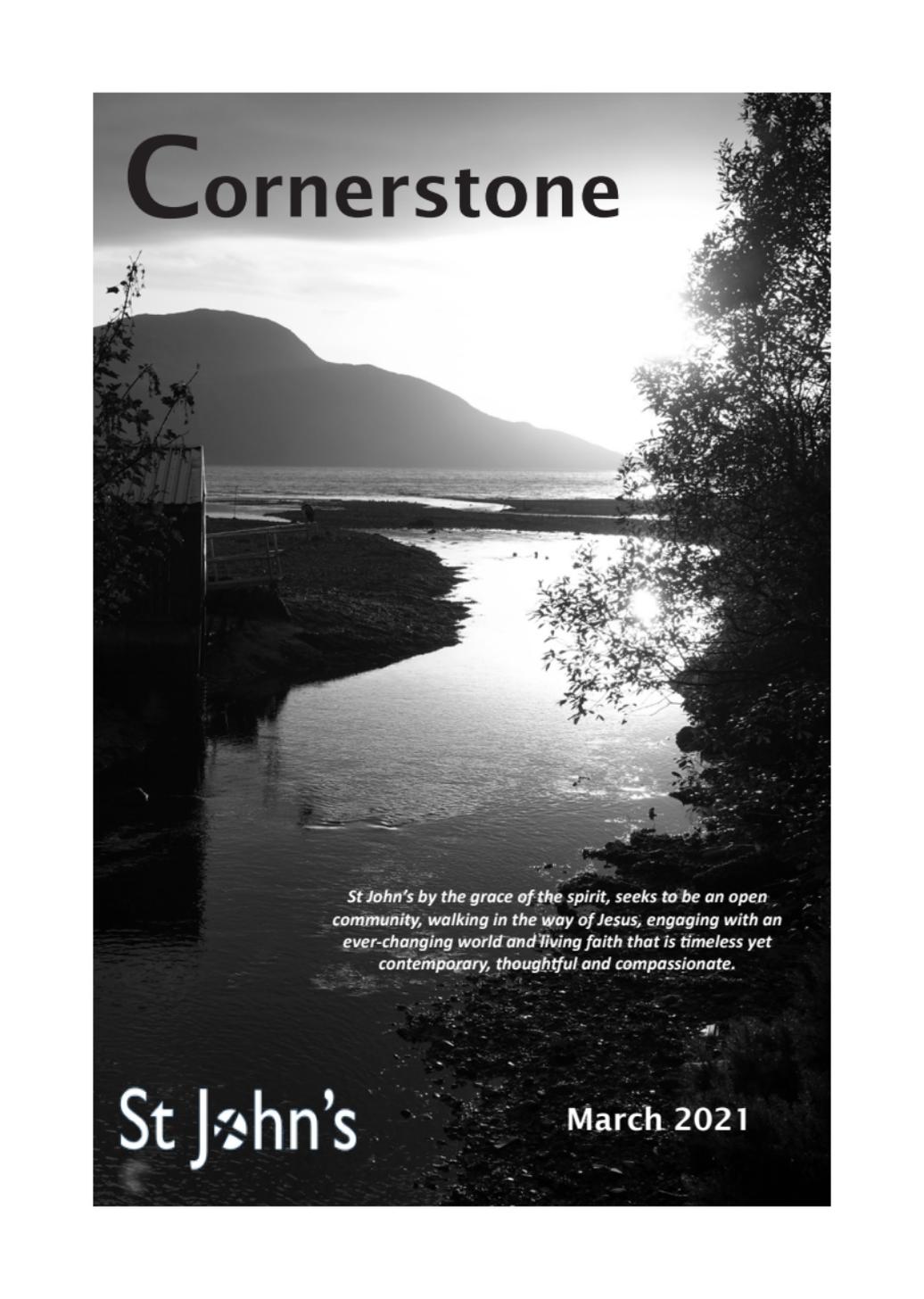


Cornerstone



St John's by the grace of the spirit, seeks to be an open community, walking in the way of Jesus, engaging with an ever-changing world and living faith that is timeless yet contemporary, thoughtful and compassionate.

St John's

March 2021

In This Issue

- ◇ From the Rector
- ◇ From the Operations Manager
- ◇ Peter Brand
- ◇ Working from Home and Home schooling
- ◇ Portraits
- ◇ Thriving in Lockdown
- ◇ From the Archives
- ◇ Obituaries
- ◇ DES

Contacts

The Revd Markus Dünzkofer	Rector	tel: 07962 536817 email: markus@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk
The Revd Rosie Addis	Associate Rector	tel: 07795 225098 email: rosie@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk
Iain Herbert	Operations Manager	email: operations@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk

Editorial



In Lent we have followed in the footsteps of Jesus in the Wilderness, and some of us in St John's will feel we've been through our own wilderness in the past year. Now as we approach the end of Lent, on Good Friday we face the Cross, described in a familiar hymn (inspired by Isaiah) as

*"the Shadow of a Mighty Rock
within a Weary Land".*

And then it will be Easter.

As the new life of the Resurrection breaks out, we can surely hope that at long last our building and our community will start to open up until we emerge blinking and rubbing our eyes into a new, risen light, a light that will clarify our vision of what St John's mission is to be in the future.

Meanwhile, we hope you will find in these pages evidence that though our congregational life may have been out of sight, it's been alive and filled with the Spirit all the time.

Editorial team: Grace Durham, Robert Philp and Jeanette Rennie
Desktop publishing: Andrew Lyons

From the Rector



Dear Friends,

Some of you might know Dorothy L Sayers' work as an author of crime and mystery novels. Lord Peter Wimsey, the stylish, urbane sleuth created by her, allowed Sayers to take her seat in the pantheon of literary greats, next to Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. It also provided a steady income, which allowed Sayers to pursue another less lucrative passion: Sayers was a committed and practising Christian, a warden at St Anne's Soho, and a lay theologian.

In her 1941 book "The Mind and the Maker," she wrote:

"The whole of existence is held to be the work of the divine Creator – everything that there is. [...] Consequently, whereas the human writer obtains his response from other minds, outside and independent of his own, God's response comes only from his own creatures. This is as though a book were written to be read by the characters within it. And further: the universe is not a finished work. Every mind within it is in the position of the audience sitting in

the theatre and seeing the play for the first time. Or rather, every one of us is on the stage, performing a part in a play, of which we have not seen either the script or any synopsis of the ensuing acts. [...]

There is one episode in particular to which Christianity draws attention. The leading part in this was played, it was alleged, by the Author, who presents it as a brief epitome of the plan of the whole work. If we ask, "What kind of play is this that we are acting?" the answer put forward is: "Well, it is this kind of play." And examining the plot of it, we observe at once that if anybody in this play has his feelings spared, it is certainly not the Author."

I do believe there is a lot of truth and insight in Sayers' words. We might think that particularly the past year has confronted us with lines we have never heard before and with stage directions that were unprecedented. Of course, one might argue, we have just woken from a dream, in which our affluence and supposed security in the developed world

have poisoned us. The reality for most human beings still is this: life is uncertain and unsafe. And particularly over the past decades, the rest of creation will chime into that very chorus as well – not the least because in our sleepwalking, induced by the poison of privilege and comfort, we have acted like the proverbial bull in a china shop. There has been a lot of porcelain smashed by us. And we hurt more than feelings. We were incompetent and irresponsible actors, not interested in learning lines or following stage directions, not really interested in playing along with other characters and with listening to the Author.

The pandemic, however, has awoken us from our dream and we are now as if in withdrawal from the poison we have drunk.

No, none of us deserves to be confronted by COVID-19. No, none of us deserves to be faced with mortality and loss of livelihood. And no, the Author of the play did not introduce the virus as a character to bring us back in line. COVID-19, like cancer, heart-failure, a broken limb, diabetes, or HIV is not part of a changed script to punish us for our bad acting. That would anthropomorphise the Author and turn him into a rather puny, selfish troll. No, the Author does not work in such small-minded ways.

In the days to come we will focus on that short episode of this cosmic play, when the Author of it all played the leading part, and had his feelings, his senses, and even his body hurt – to the point of death. And maybe the experience of disconnect, of pain, of fear, of depression, of violence over the past year will allow us to look at the events of Holy Week in a different way. And maybe it will allow us to participate more honestly, more genuinely, more holistically with all that we are in this chapter of the play, which the Author asks us to replay in Holy Week and beyond. And maybe if we engage this chapter more radically, we will be able to claim life – resurrection life – more radically afterwards.

Yours, as ever,

Markus

Moving Forward.....

Public Worship

As I write this, we do not yet know when we will open our doors for public worship. It is not just a question of official guidelines. These guidelines must be translated into our particular context in a way that is fair to all and makes sense considering all our resources. Please stay tuned for more information, which we will publish in our e-news and through snail mail to those without internet access. This will be especially true for Holy Week and Easter. If you do not receive our weekly electronic newsletter, please email office@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk.

Youth Committee

The Provincial Youth Committee invites all youth to this year's summer camp, 1-7 August. Registration for Glen 21 can be found here: <https://glen21.online>

Bishop's Lent Appeal

To find out more about the Bishop's Lent Appeal 2021, please go to <https://edinburgh.anglican.org/2021/02/bishops-lent-appeal-2021/>

Alpha

Alpha has been quite a wonderful and intriguing experience. I cannot speak for others, but the feedback from those who are participating has been mostly positive. It was intriguing to use the tools provided by Alpha and discuss them within our unique St John's session. I especially will cherish the discussions we had triggered by the question "Why did Jesus have to die?"

We will continue to run Alpha and let you know when the next session starts. If you know of somebody who is new to the faith or who wants to explore ultimate questions, please point them our way.

We will also before too long start Education for Ministry, which has been delayed because of the ongoing pandemic. I am committed to offering this course in an in-person or hybrid format. Right now, the plan is to aim for a start date in early October, after everybody has come back from holidays. Apologies for the delay.

From the Operations Manager



The last few months have seen us move from a total lockdown to some signs of light with a gradual release on the horizon mainly due to the optimism and progression of the vaccine roll-out. Although this reopening will take some time before we are able to look confidently at a complete end to lockdown, there are promising signs that the summer may bring us some sense of normality. So far, we have not seen the Edinburgh Festivals cancel their programs although we are hearing that they are looking at more open air or open marquee events to reduce the usual confines of packed spaces we have grown used to. Presuming the festivals do go ahead, we can expect the international element to be much reduced and the predominance of visitors to be from across the UK. VisitScotland, Scotland's marketing agency, has lined up a number of Staycation marketing campaigns from which Edinburgh is set to do well.

All of this sets St John's and the Cornerstone to start to open up to meet the demand from visitors and locals alike. Our expectations are that we will reopen the Kiosk towards the end of March on a

Wednesday to Sunday basis, moving to full time as the demand increases.

Running alongside this we are currently in discussions around the future operation of the cafe to provide an appropriate, excellent quality opportunity to help energise the Lower Terrace. We have two operators both very keen to work with us on its development and we will be making a final recommendation during the coming month to allow us to be looking at opening in early June, ready for the summer.

I have included below one photo from one of the operators' farm shop/cafe outlets as an example.



We continue to make our way through a large number of housekeeping and development tasks across all the buildings and gardens, and indeed this time

Continued overleaf

has been a useful opportunity to 'fix' a number of these while we are closed. These range from the installation of fibre broadband which not only includes benefits to the in-house team allowing us to upload services and other materials quickly (averaging 851Mbps for the technically-minded!) but also giving us an excellent sales tool for event organisers who are now demanding this sort of facility. To increase the functionality we have been busy running networking cables from one end of the building to the other to provide wi-fi coverage across most of the buildings. Other tasks are numerous; however, one we have been working on is polishing the floors and presentation of spaces with an example of this shown below in the church.



I would like to thank Fred who has been working very hard in the gardens and also in the corridor under the church painting his way down from one end to the other transforming the space as he goes!

The last few weeks have seen us also confirm a new Craft Fair which will now be held weekly on the Upper Terrace from the end of May onwards, bringing a welcome new income stream as well as creating a new reason to visit. As part of this event we have the opportunity for a 'free' table to use as we see fit - good for raising the profile of our activities.

Sadly, I have to report there has been a spate of church break-ins over the past six weeks in Edinburgh. These have taken place at night and have caused considerable damage including to stained glass windows unfortunately. We have responded by reviewing our own security and adding in motion-detecting cameras alerting us to any unwelcome presence.



Another one of our garden helpers

Finally, I look forward to being able to open up and welcome everyone back to these marvelous buildings, and I am sure you will like the changes and new offers that lie in store for you.

Peter's Journey



Not many people can remember St John's without Peter Brand.

During the past sixty years, Peter has worked with five Rectors. Even though he has spent time helping throughout the diocese, his presence has been integral to our worship. In January he reflected in a sermon, on his life with us. But first, some thoughts from others.

'Peter has an uncanny knack of being able to persuade people to join those who participate in leading worship each week, preparing them carefully for the task. Built on an eye for spotting new faces and greeting them week by week, he has brought many into a deeper discipleship.'

'I have always regarded Peter as one of the constants of the choir. Directors of Music came and went, but Peter remained. He

rarely missed a Thursday evening. Amazing, considering no one could say he was a singer!!

He joined us after choir practice, came to our dinners and parties, and regularly accompanied us on our annual Low Sunday visits to Cumbrae. It was there that we discovered his hobby of embroidery. And he's good!

'Peter was and is the ideal role model for non-stipendiary ministry: a distinguished and learned scientist who preaches with illuminating simplicity and practises pastoral, loving kindness. A pastor in the workplace as well as the church.'

Peter is a highly experienced paleontologist. Still writing monographs. A car journey with him was always an education about the geology of the landscape. He is appropriately named – Peter - the Rock.

Often we take rocks and stones for granted. And yet, without stones there would be nothing. Peter is one of these stones. His ministry has very much held up the community of St John's and brought the good news into areas which might be hard or impossible to access for stipendiary clerics.

As somebody studying rock formations, Peter has been an immense source of knowledge when it comes to the foundation beneath our church. And, of

Continued overleaf

course, this is true both literally and figuratively. For what is at the heart of Peter's life and ministry among us is the one foundation of the church.

Conscientious, with a twinkle in the eye, a family man, who with Sheelagh fostered scores of newborns, and looked out for the youngest at church, a steady, gracious and supportive friend, a trusted confidant, a persuasive man with a clipboard, exercising a communion ministry at the chapel altar, a good communicator, ready in his plimsolls for country dancing, a philatelist using stamps as a different sort of communication. This then is Peter.

As a geologist / palaeontologist,

Peter might identify such words grouped together as a conglomerate.



They come as corporate offering from our gathered congregation and show our love and appreciation for him. Thank you, Peter!

Peter's Sermon

Why some words from Peter? This is the 60th anniversary of my licensing to St Johns as a lay reader, a beginning in a particular style of ministry. It's a long time and in a way it is one person's journey of faith, sparked by a visit to a church on a day off.

That brings me to my first thought- that chance meetings matter and what is said or done when they happen can influence events and people around us.

It took a while before I settled at St John's. My beginnings here were not the most auspicious - I arrived in snowy Edinburgh on

Boxing Day 1956 with the task of finding somewhere to stay and to start a new job on the 27th. I was greeted at the office with chuckles for they were just looking forward to the New Year's break- how typical of the English not to realise that Scotland was different, a theme which has recurred over the years!

And that is my second point - be kind to strangers: you will never know for certain how that will turn out in time.

By 1959 I was well settled into Edinburgh and at St Johns, where I made enquiries about becoming

a Lay Reader and was encouraged by Keith Arnold to apply and be trained.

This was the beginning of the journey we are still in progress with in the church as a whole. Out of that process arose the three year Training for Ministry courses run by the then Rector, Aeneas Mackintosh with Mrs Salvesen, which I joined in its second cohort.

It took some time before I was persuaded by members of the congregation that, perhaps I should look into the ordained path, and I was duly sent to an English ordination discernment course.

One of my memories of that period was the interview with the then bishop, shared with Sheelagh, who warned us both that we might well lose friends as a result of my ordination!

One of my first tasks after ordination was to conduct the funeral of the young son of a colleague at work, from which followed the realisation that the non-stipendiary ministry gave openings which might not be available to the stipendiary clergy. A vocation in whatever subject may lead one into being able to be in a place or position which would not have been possible without self-supporting finance.

And I found myself tasked as Warden to the Lay Readers of the Diocese.

On the way, there have been a number of setbacks and misunderstandings. That too is the nature of journeys. I may have rambled a bit here, but that is also in the nature of a journey, where the process of discovery and change can happen and it has been a great joy to see more and more of the congregation involved in worship.

St John's was and still is a place of prayer, and this is something which is not just exercised by the clergy as an offering on behalf of the people, but something all of us can do for and on behalf of those around us.

Dotted about the church are various examples of commemorative gifts: people matter both in a church community and elsewhere. That means too that keeping in touch is important, something which has repeated itself during this pandemic.

A final word from Peter

'I would like to say thank you to all who have sent such kind words to both of us- and to emphasise the message that people matter in ways we might not recognise.'

Working from Home and Home Schooling

Working from home and home schooling. We have all heard these terms but how many of us really understand what is actually involved? The two accounts that follow will give us a new respect for these parents. Olivia Donaldson describes her experiences first. The second mother asked to remain anonymous.

A Day in the life of a Family in Lockdown

On a few occasions during lockdown I've heard people say, "Oh well, we're all in the same boat."

We're really not though, are we?

One of the striking things about this pandemic is how very, very differently it has affected people's daily lives. Some are bored. Others are run off their feet. Some are frightened to go out. Others are finding it impossible to stay inside. Some are lonely. Others yearn for solitude. But because we don't spend time in each other's spaces these days, it's hard to know what everyone else's experience is. So for the record, here's what life in lockdown is like for us – two working parents, two primary school-aged children and a 10-month-old puppy, all at home.

7am-8am: Ablutions and breakfast.

8am-9am: Rory walks the dog while I take a crash course in simple fractions and food chains.

9am: As the girls open up their computers and start school, Rory and I commute to our home offices. Mine is a makeshift desk space between the bathroom and the laundry cupboard, but at least it's quiet.

9.05am: Put on emergency wash when Isla reminds me she's down to her last pair of socks.

At this point the timetable goes a bit haywire. As a marketing copywriter, my working day usually consists of meetings, concepting and writing. Sometimes I multi-task, crafting a delicately worded email while calling out P6 spellings: "blockade... grenade... motorcade... don't worry sweetheart, unless you're planning to be a journalist you'll probably never write these down in your life."

At 1 o'clock we all break for lunch together. Rory is in charge of meals, which are pre-planned with military precision at the weekend. I just turn up to eat and check in with the latest science project before heading back to the desk.

The school day is supposed to finish at 3.15pm. If I notice, I might insist (unconvincingly) that the girls go outside/play together/do some piano practice/stop watching screens. Otherwise they're left to their own devices, in both senses of the word.

I emerge from my office at around 6.30pm and go out for a walk. This is my one bit of exercise and fresh air for the day. I plug in and listen to an audiobook. No time for reading actual books during the week.

After family supper – complete with quickfire times tables and an argument about whose turn it is to fill the dishwasher – the girls head for bed. Where I inevitably find myself apologising for not being around much to help with school work. This might be met with a shrug or a few tears, but always ends with a delicious cuddle.



I spend a good chunk of the evening uploading the girls' school work onto Teams. A convoluted process that involves photographing pages from their jotters, emailing them to myself, then uploading the right bit of work to the right assignment on each girls' computer. (Is this really what every other parent is doing? I can't help feeling I'm making a meal of this.) Next I familiarise myself with the assignments for the following day, printing out worksheets and gathering resources if needed.

More often than I want to admit, I then go back to my computer to finish up any outstanding work. My job is deadline driven. The deadlines haven't shifted to accommodate home schooling or working from home. It's a good day if I'm in bed before midnight.

And then the weekends come. Once spent chauffeuring children to netball, ballet and rugby, they're now devoted to house cleaning, social Zoom calls and collapsing in front of Netflix.

So there you have it. That's the boat we're in. Not exactly bobbing about on a pleasure cruiser, but neither are we floundering on a rickety, oarless raft. My days are busy. A bit too busy. But I'm not bored and I'm not scared. At the time of writing, we are still very much afloat.

Olivia Donaldson

P.S. At the start of this year I wrote a blog about the emotional impact of lockdown and some of the ways I found to cope with it. It's here if you're interested: <https://doesmylifelookbiginthis.com/2021/01/01/hello-me-remember-me/>

We asked another mum working from home and home schooling to write something but she replied saying that life was just too 'overwhelming' and that 'it was hard to describe working from home and home schooling to folk who are not living it.

'In one way it's a battle to get the children to engage with their school work, but then it's been great to be able to teach your five year old to read and your 10 year old to learn her times tables. But then your own work suffers as a result and you end up working all hours to catch up.'

She went on to say that she was lucky because her husband is on furlough and can help with home schooling, housework and childcare. Some of her friends were single parents whose lives were even tougher: some had no support from family and friends

Portraits

Anna and Peter Friedrich

We met in Kolkata and have spent the last 40 years living in various cities because of Peter's work with the German Foreign Service: Kolkata, Antananarivo, Harare, Bonn, The Hague, New York, Berlin, Vilnius and now Edinburgh. We have two children and three grandchildren with a fourth expected soon. We moved to Edinburgh last July and look forward to life becoming normal again and to finally meet people, enjoy Edinburgh's cultural life and travel in Scotland.

Our church life has been a mix of Church of England (Anna) and Roman Catholic (Peter).

Anna was born in Piltdown, East Sussex and lived there until her father was ordained and the family moved to Rye. She obtained a B.A. in Applied Social Studies and went to Kolkata to volunteer in a home for disabled children. While moving around the world she worked where the opportunity arose. Her hobbies are walking, travelling, gardening and word games.

Peter grew up near Cologne in Germany. After graduating from the Foreign Service Academy he went on to his first posting in Kolkata. He is interested in world affairs, likes cycling and travelling and looks forward to taking up woodworking in his retirement.

Christian Clarkson



I am originally from Cambridgeshire. I came to Scotland in 2014 for my PhD at St Andrews, but neither it nor Edinburgh were new to me – my father grew up in Edinburgh, and my parents met at St Andrews in the 1970s and often brought my brother (who now also lives here) and me up to visit. Florian and I moved to Edinburgh from Pittenweem in the summer when I got a job here as an architectural historian. In my free time I love cooking, books, and watching almost any sport but especially rugby, gymnastics, and winter sports.

Florian Englberger



I grew up in Germany, specifically in Straubing, a town near Regensburg in Bavaria. I came to Scotland originally in 2012, in order to do a Masters' course at St Andrews, and decided after a stint in Northern Ireland to return to Scotland for my PhD. At St Andrews I attended the university chapel and found it to be a very friendly place, and after moving to Edinburgh I decided to try St John's at it seemed also to have a welcoming atmosphere, which turned out to be the case!

Siobhán McGovern



I have lived in Edinburgh since 1974: it's a wonderful place to live. I have a daughter aged 19 who is reading Geography at Durham. I have been attending services at St John's since summer 2019: after lockdown I mostly dial into the Sunday evening service. I find this both spiritual and very congenial.

I adore learning foreign languages, travelling abroad (when I can!); otherwise I act and direct (in amateur and professional theatre) and attend as much of the visual arts as I can: whether virtual or in real life. I also love musical theatre and sing in Soundhouse choir.

To thrive in Lockdown

Eileen Thompson

Recently, I attended a webinar which looked at the effects of this strange way of life we have had to adopt. It was suggested we used the word 'thrive' as a mnemonic for getting through these days. Here is a digest of the thoughts which were shared in the hope that they might help you. It is part of an on-going conversation in the church and you might want to find your own key words. And apologies to those who are doing it anyway!

T: Time

Many people say that time in lockdown takes on a different rhythm. It seems to drag, yet at the same time the hours disappear. Look at your time, how you use it. Perhaps set up a rhythm of your own: nothing too rigid but a balance between work and rest, doing and being.

H: Hope

It can feel trite to talk of hope in this present climate but look for signs all around. Already in gardens and window boxes and parks, new shoots are appearing, birds are bustling around and the days are getting longer. And although the daily briefings remind us of the serious and testing times

ahead, we hear too of glimmers of hope. Hold on to them and pass them on to others.

R: Refreshment

Looking after the whole person, body, mind and spirit, is so important. What we eat and how often matters – and, the researchers tell us, treats are important! We are encouraged to refresh our minds. Have you tried a new author or taken advantage of the concerts of all genres on line, TV and radio? It's possible to pay a virtual visit to art galleries and so much more. As to the spirit, some are enjoying the variety of services we can tune into, and if it is your thing, there are online retreats.

I: Imagine

Lockdown limits us in so many ways, and we can get bogged down in the dark side of life. To thrive it is suggested to let our imagination have full sway. What about a virtual walk along the sea-shore or through a favourite town or even an imaginary shopping trip? How about planning a dinner party with all the people you would love to gather together and with no stinting on what to serve? Some people plan a whole new decor or invent new recipes or redesign their garden. ...everyone will have a dream.

V: Value

We can feel diminished by the restrictions and become inward looking. Learn to value the things we have, the people we have, near and far, the people who help us and on whom we rely. It goes without saying to think of and pray for medics, paramedics and all the ancillary staff and carers who keep our health service going, but what about shopkeepers, bus and taxi drivers, posties and so many more. It is important to value ourselves too for each of us is unique and precious. Above all learn to value God and all he gives us, especially his presence with us in the dark moments and in light, through the pandemic and beyond.

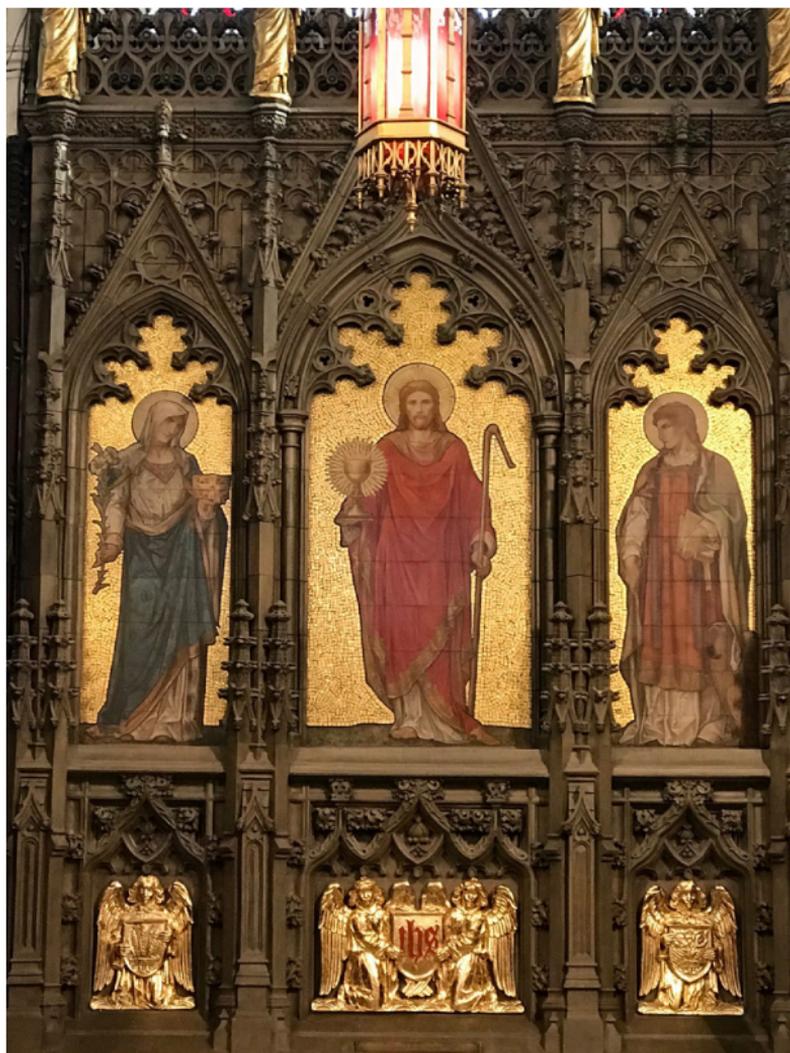
E: Encouragement

This is very much a two way thing. We all need encouragement at times. We all have meltdown days or hours. But we can also give encouragement through phone calls, Zoom meetings, a wave or a card. And perhaps learn to sit and listen to and for God and his supporting love.

The conclusion was if we manage even a few of these, the chances are we really will thrive.

From the Archives

The Reredos



The Reredos dates back to 1889, when it replaced a plain curtain hanging at the East end. The stone arches with carved angels enclosed panels with figures painted on tile with a gilt mosaic background. These were of Christ with pastoral staff and Eucharistic cup, the Virgin Mary with her lily and Old Testament, and St John the Evangelist, with his eagle at his feet.

The Reredos, however, was, sadly, not universally loved. When Frederick Terry became Rector 20 years later, he took against the 'cold, forbidding painted tiles and flat gold mosaic' and added side curtains to relieve the effect. Further changes came with the church's Centenary in 1918, when the lower panels of the reredos were embellished with carved oak angels. The oak was picked out with gold leaf, and the gold mosaic background of the three figures was dulled down to give it an 'antique' feel.

By 1942 further misgivings had emerged, and people seem to have found the Reredos too bright and obtrusive. The Vestry discussed repainting the gold parts in stone colour, but nothing was done. By 1949 the whole congregation was involved in the fate of the reredos. In May 1949 we read that the Reredos was thought unworthy and distracts

the eye from the altar and the Cross, which should, of course, be the dominating features. The flower arrangers, too, were in despair because their altar flowers hardly showed up against such an elaborate background. The extraordinary decision was made to cover it up. A blue velvet curtain was hung over the Reredos as an experiment, and the AGM that year decided to retain it 'after a lively discussion'. Things had gone right back to the way they had been before 1889. It made "the Cross stand out splendidly and the flowers much more visible."

The Great Uncovering occurred 30 years later. The alterations which extended the Chancel into "the body of the kirk" and introduced a new island altar caused a re-think about the Reredos. The curtain was taken down as an experiment and the Reredos cleaned. At the AGM that year, there was a clear majority to keep it open to view, and the Reredos was reborn, as we see it today. Finally, last year its beauty was enhanced by the fine work of the Church Operations Manager in re-covering the gilded sections with new gold leaf. It is now one of the highlights of our Church.

Leslie Hodgson

Obituaries

The Right Reverend Keith Arnold



News of the death of Keith Arnold, Rector of St John's from 1962 to 1969, evoked a flurry of warm memories. Too many to record them all here, so just a few –

‘I remember Keith as a deeply compassionate man who seemed to feel everyone’s problems even almost more than they did. He always had time to listen and was both interested and interesting.’

‘When we came to St John’s, Keith undertook marriages and funerals in place of the Rector who was Dean of the Diocese. His was a warm, friendly ministry in a place which was in a pattern of change.’

‘A good man, a good priest, and a great encourager of others. He had the gift of making everyone to whom he spoke feel they were the most important person in the world for that moment.

People loved his voice and would ask him to read at every opportunity.’

‘He inspired me, aged 18, to join a group volunteering at the hospital in Nazareth. (Quite adventurous at the time!) A formative experience for which I shall always be grateful. He had an amazing memory for details about his parishioners.’

Keith served in the army during the war, and in Palestine during the Mandate. This latter experience subsequently enhanced his leadership of pilgrimages to the Holy Land – still appreciatively remembered by members of the congregation.

He then went to Cambridge (Trinity College) to study agriculture but transferred to Westcott House to read theology. He arrived at St John’s as curate in 1955, when David Porter was Rector and was himself appointed Rector in 1962. In 1969 he moved to Kirkby Lonsdale and subsequently became Bishop of Warwick.

Services were packed in those days and under Keith’s leadership, a team ministry was established, a pioneering move at the time.

He led a number of changes to the way things were done including, during the eucharist, having the Lay Readers administer the chalice in the chapel, provided they wore the distinctive blue ribbon and cross of the Lay Readers Association.

Following changes in life patterns in the city, the Youth Fellowship withered as did the Rover Scouts, but Keith and Noreen encouraged a Young Wives group, meetings of which moved around households.

He initiated a Men’s discussion group (not limited to members of St John’s) which met monthly referred to as UDOTS - Uninhibited Discussion Of Taboo Subjects, such

as the Wolfenden report.

Keith was interested in social issues and had been involved in working with boys at Borstal while at Cambridge, so he was enthusiastic about a project to create a hostel for them from a derelict chapel on the edge of the canal but planning permission was refused. (This must have been St Kentigern's, still lying unused)

Together with colleagues from other denominations, he was instrumental in establishing Samaritans and Marriage Guidance (now Relationships Scotland) in Edinburgh, so he has left a lasting legacy to the city as well as St John's.

He kept in touch and some of us were able to meet with him on more recent visits to Edinburgh.

Fondly remembered. May he rest in peace.

David Houldsworth



David was a city man and a country man. He was a lawyer during the week and a countryman at the weekend. His role as a partner of Brodies in the Agriculture and Estates private client department fitted perfectly with his love of the countryside. One colleague said he had never heard a bad word said about David, something rare in the Edinburgh legal world.

He was a member of the Royal Company of Archers and served as Chairman of the New Club. He was also involved with a Gordonstoun charity to raise funds to allow disadvantaged children from all over the world to have an education at Gordonstoun. His passion for fishing led to his involvement with the Findhorn & Lossie Rivers Trust and The North Atlantic Salmon Fund, organisations concerned with the welfare of both the fish and the rivers.

Travel was another passion, from Myanmar, to the Galapagos Islands to Antarctica. Many members of St John's will recall the memorable talk David and Poppy gave on their trip to Antarctica.

He was a kind man with a dry sense of humour, ideas that were integral to the tribute given at his funeral by a cousin. He pointed out how important David's faith was to him and told a moving story of David as a child, kneeling by his bed saying his prayers, but first asking: 'Can you hear me, God? If not, I'll get a ladder.'

It was at the family estate of Dallas where David felt most at home. He knew the area inside out and under his care and management made it a thriving estate. It was fitting that it was at Dallas that David died. He is survived by his devoted wife Poppy and daughter Romilly.

Obituaries

Charlotte Neilsen

We were deeply saddened to hear of the death of Charlotte Neilson at the beginning of March 2021. She was a gentle and quietly private person whose calm presence made her known to many members of St John's Sunday 10.30 congregation, the Tuesday Silent Prayer Group and others who, like her, chose to pause in church during the week. She especially appreciated the Silent Prayer Group and always commented on how good that time was. Charlotte often shared something she had read with the overall leader, Tony Bryer, or asked for details of the reading that he had used that day. He described her as follows "she was a truly delightful and generous person, and struck me as being deeply rooted in her spirituality."

Charlotte was brought up in the Corstorphine area of Edinburgh along with her four brothers. Their father was an architect.

Her interest in people and her academic knowledge of books came together in her work at The National Museum of Scotland as the Buyer for the Bookshop. On one occasion she is known to have vetoed a book suggestion from a former Associate Rector of St John's as being 'far too expensive' for sale in the shop. Music was also very important to Charlotte, and she was an avid listener of Radio 3.

Charlotte reached retirement age last year and chose to retire from the Museum despite being encouraged to continue her work there. Since then she had begun to volunteer as a befriender with the Cyrenians on three mornings a week. She also helped in the Shelter bookshop in Stockbridge and was beginning to consider other forms of volunteering.

Service with a Smile by DES

"What is the matter with telling the truth with a smile?"

Desiderius Erasmus to Martin Dorp, 1515.

**Lockdown, Moses, way down in Covid-land.
Tell that old virus, to
Let my people go!.**

Profits of Zoom

The Not Very Reverend Parkin Slipshod (Platitudinarian) set up a Zoom Forum to discuss whether Church Services on-line are a step forward or a step back. Not the least interest of this has been to see what backgrounds our more eminent members have selected.

- The Rector of St Herbert's Without, whose new best seller "Profits of Zoom" can be purchased online if you really must, was careful that his background did not indicate in which tax-haven he is currently situated.
- Mrs Hilda Ramrod Pew-Bible displayed a Union Jack. The meaning is unclear, since sharp-eyed observers noticed it was upside down. Does this show that she was in distress, or merely that she hasn't a clue?
- Seth the Preacher, as you might expect, has a large VANITY IS VANITY stencilled on the wall behind him. It was probably unintentional that he once moved his web-cam to reveal a large reproduction of Titian's "Venus of Urbino" a little further to the left.
- Vestryperson Trendsetter has a delightful pastoral scene of sheep and goats. It would be cruel to tell the good Vestryperson that just out of shot there was a cattle-wagon from the abattoir.
- Pittie Slop of Colinton ["Who let her in?": DORP] devised a virtual background into which she kept disappearing, as though she had plunged into a vat of dye.
- Professor Gumboil, of the Council for the Obfuscation of Christian Knowledge, no doubt had a great deal to say. But to the relief of his fellow zoomers he omitted to unmute himself.
- "Thumbscrew" Widget (late of Churnemout High) sat in front of a fine shelf of bottles. He was wearing a tee-shirt emblazoned with the slogan EVERY DAY IS RED NOSE DAY. And his nose did indeed shine out.

Ofbish Latest

Many will remember an episode of 'Yes Minister' in which Sir Humphrey lauded a hospital with no patients, for it had no sick people in it and cost little to run. The Ecclesiastical Ombudsperson, Ofbish, is seriously investigating whether the empty churches we are experiencing might be similarly advantageous, for similar reasons.

CORNERSTONE BOOKSHOP



is closed for now because of the COVID restrictions. Please go to bookshop.org.uk to select and order any books you would like. Select 'bookshop' so that our name appears in the top left-hand corner. Click on CORNERSTONE BOOK SHOP and order from there. We will get a percentage of the profit and the book(s) will be delivered directly to you.

We aren't doing our own on-line sales at the moment due to the logistical difficulties in arranging deliveries.

Please check the weekly e-news for updates about re-opening.

