

St John's

December 2018 & January 2019



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 a faith that is timeless yet contemporary, thoughtful and compassionate.



St John's Ministry Team

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Cover image: The Virgin and Child with an Angel, c. 1480. Imitator of Fra Filippo Lippi.

Next copy date is Sunday 6th January 2019.

From the Rector



Markus Dünzkofer

Dear friends,

Some of you might have seen me rushing out of church on Sunday, 4 November rather hurriedly. I had just preached the sermon, the final blessing **had been said, and away I was. I wasn't** trying to avoid coffee hour or members of the congregation. But I had received a special invite: a few weeks earlier, the mail had delivered a card from HE the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland. Would I come and join him at the Roman Catholic Cathedral on Leith Walk for a special service to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Polish independence? I was honoured, even if it meant rushing **away from St John's for a 12 o'clock Mass** at the other end of Princes Street.

I was honoured on a few levels:

First of all, I do think receiving these invites is not something self-evident. **Rather, it speaks of St John's standing in**

our city, maybe even in Scotland. We are known not just because of our prominent geographical location, but also because of what we do and how we interact with the world around us. Our ministry reaches beyond ourselves, offering meaning and healing both to the secular and to the religious communities among which we live and work and have our being. The invitation is an acknowledgement that we are not just inwardly focused, because we **remember Archbishop Temple's famous words: "The church is the only institution that exists for the benefit of its non-members."** Yes, whenever I receive such an invitation it is a sign of respect and I believe also of gratitude for our communal **efforts as the congregation of St John's. To** represent you in this is indeed an honour.

I was also honoured to receive the invite, because it was a very Roman Catholic affair. I think I was the only non-RC cleric present. This might have had to do with timing, but I believe it is important to work hard to overcome our divisions within the Body of Christ, particularly as we try to overcome the legacy of sectarianism in Scotland. It was noted that I was there and I think this will open **further doors in the future. St John's is a** congregation that is invested in ecumenical reconciliation. There are many rooms in **God's house (John 14:2), but it is still one** house. As we contemplate spiritual homelessness and how to overcome it, we also must remember we can only call **God's house home for ourselves, if we are** willing to look beyond our room to discover the diversity of the other rooms, **to embrace who else shares God's house** as their home. And I suspect we will be surprised by the amount of rooms and the **kind of people in God's house, if we are**

willing to look, and we will be surprised **how that diversity in God's house will** enrich our own experience and our own faith.

Finally, it was an honour to be invited, because the irony of history did not pass me by. Here I was, a German, celebrating and commemorating the exit of Polish lands from the German Reich, so that Poles could call home their own lands with their own language and culture once again. Poles have experienced horror in the turmoil that is European history for many a century. They were made homeless over and over again. And my national ancestors played a huge part in inflicting pain and death on the Polish people. Even since the regaining of Polish independence in 1918, the story did not stop. During World War II, Poles were murdered, tortured, imprisoned, forced into hard labour, and made homeless by the occupying forces of the Third Reich. Many fled, finding a home not just in Scotland. The Polish pilots of the RAF are legendary for their valour and courage during the Battle of Britain.

My presence at this special service, I believe, is a sign that reconciliation among new generations is possible – even when horrendous horrors have been committed. It is possible, when the culprits are willing to acknowledge the pain they have inflicted and when the stories continue to be told and taught – which is very much the case in Germany. It is furthermore possible when all work hard to learn from the past and commit to creating a different reality – which is the great accomplishment of the European Union. I could not imagine invading France or Poland so that Strasbourg and Gdansk become German again. They are French and Polish cities respectively. Basta! And reconciliation is furthermore possible,

because others were willing to open their homes to the refugees, who came fleeing terror and war. The story of welcome to those fleeing the Nazis is complex. There are stories that should make us weep – like the odyssey of the MS St Louis, which ended for many of its passengers in the gas chambers. But there are also stories that speak of hope and that allowed for all life to flourish and for evil to be conquered. The stories need to be celebrated. And they need to inspire us in our own time, when refugees come knocking at our doors again! There is always room in the **inn...**

Yes, it was an honour to be invited, a real privilege. And I thoroughly enjoyed myself. But it is not all about me. And it is **not all about us as a community either...** But the invite was another opportunity to remember and learn from the past how Advent calls us to open our hearts, our homes, our churches, our society, and our country to Christ: to Christ himself, to Christ in the stranger, and to Christ in those in need.

Yours as ever,

Markus

The story of the nativity figures

St John's is delighted to welcome a new addition this Christmas – not just a baby, but a whole nativity set! These crib figures, which feature on our Christmas card, have been bought with the bequest left to St John's by Liliias Finlay (1918–2016).

Liliias had originally hoped that her gift would buy candle holders for the choir stalls, but when they were deemed **somewhat unsafe, Markus and Liliias' family** agreed to use the money to buy a set of large size crib figures, to replace the smaller ones gifted by Anne Goodwin **(Liliias' daughter) some 5 or 6 years ago.**

The choice of crib figures seemed perfect, as Liliias had always had an affinity with children, and particularly enjoyed the more traditional celebrations of Christmas and Easter. As a child, Liliias lived in Vienna in the run up to the Second World War. (Little known fact: she and her family lived next door to the von Trapps and escaped Austria at roughly the same time.) Perhaps because of that time, Anne remembers her childhood Christmases dripping with Austrian decorations and traditions.

Our new nativity set consists of ten figures – Mary, Joseph, Infant Jesus, King Melchior, King Balthazar, King Gaspar, Young Shepherd, Old Shepherd, Shepherdess and Shepherd Boy. They have poseable limbs, changeable clothes, and at **37" high, will be far more visible when grouped under the communion table.**

Anne said: "Mum would be thrilled to be remembered in this way, especially around Christmas time, which she loved."



Photo by Marc Farrimond

Mixed Mode Training in the Scottish

Episcopal Church

I am very grateful to St John's for providing a placement for one of the SEC's first two Mixed Mode students, your very own Beki Cansdale. Mixed Mode is a new approach to training and formation for ordination. I should like to thank Markus for this opportunity to explain a little more about Mixed Mode, its ethos, and the things that Beki will be doing within St John's during her ordination training.

Why ‘Mixed Mode’?

The term ‘Mixed Mode’ is used to emphasise that Beki’s training and formation takes place in a balance or mix of modes. There is the traditional setting of the classroom and study, and there is the placement. Obviously, the use of placements is not new in itself – all SEI ordinands are involved in placements during their formation. But Mixed Mode is used explain a substantial shift in emphasis. The placement is not used to supplement traditional academic learning. In Mixed Mode, the placement is king. The local church, not the theological college, becomes the primary learning environment for the ordinand, and their other studies revolve around that. This is why Beki is spending 20-25 hours each week in mission and ministry within and **beyond St John’s. Her primary learning** takes place here, with her studies in support of that. The approach is iterative, with placement experiences being explored in the classroom and library, and academic learning being brought back to the crucible of ministry each and every week.

A focus on mission

Another distinctive element to the Mixed Mode programme is its focus on mission. In a post-Christian culture, we cannot assume that people will drift into our churches, nor that they will have a good understanding of the Christian faith when we meet them. Recent research from Durham University suggests that priests who are competent and trained in mission and evangelism tend to lead growing churches, whereas those who are not, tend to be managing decline. There will be exceptions to this, but the overall trend is clear.

Mixed Mode students therefore take a

number of compulsory modules with a mission focus (modules which are also offered on an elective basis to other SEI students). The first one of these, which Beki has already begun, looks at contemporary Western culture and the possible responses in mission which the church might develop. In early 2019, a module on evangelism will involve Beki in a faith-sharing project of some kind, and extensive reading and reflection on what it means to speak of and live out the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that others might be drawn to consider doing so themselves. Finally, next year Beki will **take two ‘mission entrepreneurship’** modules and will lead or develop some kind of pioneer ministry project. Pioneer ministry is a much-used but fluid term, and one that can be misunderstood. Putting it simply, pioneer ministry aims to connect with those far beyond the reach of our current churches, and to explore what God is doing there and what church and the Kingdom of God might look like in those situations. A 2016 research project suggested that about 10% of the UK population have some kind of active church connection (i.e. more than just attending a Christmas carol service), and about another 10% would consider attending if invited. But what about the remaining 80%? What are we prepared to do so that they might be willing to consider Jesus Christ for themselves **(because, at the moment, they’re not going to)?**

Learning for the Scottish Episcopal Church

Pioneer ministry has been described as **“the R&D department of the church”**. In the same way, the Mixed Mode programme is an R&D programme for the SEC and the training of its ordinands. Over the next few years, our first cohorts of

Mixed Mode students will help us to work out the most effective ways of training and formation for mission and ministry in contemporary Scotland. Mixed Mode students and placements will learn together, pool their experiences and insights, and share together in risk-taking and experimentation involving students, placements,

and the Scottish Episcopal Institute. I am **delighted that St John's is able to be part** of this, and I look forward to learning with you as we travel this journey together.

*Rev Richard Tiplady
Director of Mixed Mode Training
Scottish Episcopal Institute*

November musings: a history of looking out

Over the years a number of activities have prompted us to look outwards and to consider how we might welcome others into our midst.

The most visible group is the Guardians. Set under way by Desmond Hodges.

Numerous folk have acted in this role over the years, doing shifts from Easter to October, counting visitors and answering questions. The number of people who come through the church doors is staggering. Some take photographs and leave almost at once, others linger and a few join in the weekday services.

The value of the group was summarised by William Reid at one of the annual dinners:

A Guardian for me, a guardian for me;

If you're nae a guardian, ye're nae use to me.

The Vergers look braw in their goonies an'a'

But the kenspeckle guardian's the pride o' them a'.

The second most noticeable group is not strictly outreach, but by their

presence the volunteers for Cards for Good Causes field a number of queries and crises. This pre-Christmas event (October to December) is responsible for bringing many citizens of Edinburgh into the church for the first time.

The advent of 'the Beast from the East' and subsequent all night opening of the church has been well documented, but on a regular basis small teams of cooks and helpers have participated in the night shelters run by Bethany throughout the winter.

In the early 1990s the need for accommodation for young homeless people led to members of the congregation being involved in the setting up of the Rock Trust.

And even longer ago, a team of ladies prepared evening meals for residents of our Abbeyfield House.

Responding to the needs of those who were unemployed, Jeremy Wilson and Michael Fass were instrumental in forming **the 'crisis in employment group', which supported those looking for work and coping with the lack thereof.**

The involvement of individual clergy in the Scottish Pastoral Association provided a base for improving pastoral

care and, more recently, the founding of Faith in Older People obviously put a particular focus on that age group.

Hall users include a vast range of groups, many of which have a pastoral dimension. Most recently, The Welcoming – for newcomers to the city – and Souper Saturday, both of which moved on to other premises during the recent development and have now outgrown our hall.

The Charity committee, set to work by David Reid Thomas, charges us to look outwards at different levels – local, national and international, and to collect congregational donations on a regular basis.

The murals and the Make Poverty History march have already been referred to but are possibly the outward face of **St John's as far as the wider world is concerned.**

It is also relevant to mention the contribution of individual members of the congregation who have been involved in numerous groups round the city, not specifically representing the church, but giving their time to a host of charities. To name but a few – **St Columba's Hospice**, (for whom we have hosted several carol services following the lighting up of their Light a Light memorial tree in Advent), Samaritans, Marriage Guidance, Prison

visiting, Refugee Survival Trust, Cruse **Bereavement Care Scotland...**

And finally, because we are approaching the festive season: the choir singing carols outside at Christmas has always made an impact. And over the years we have had Christmas trees, a crib and latterly the willow sculpture of Mary holding out the baby Jesus to the world. Passers-by notice these things.

“One particular memory I had of the church of when I was a child (in the early '50s!). We were not members of St John's and in fact had never been inside the church. But I recall that at Christmas time, the church always had a crib outside in one of the corners facing Princes Street I think. I can't remember if it was only the manger and the baby or if there were other figures there too, but it was something that always fascinated me. We lived on the north side of town and when we came 'up town' often travelled by the suburban railway coming into Princes Street Station opposite the church. I always then asked my mother to take me over the road to look at the crib. I had no idea then, of course, that one day St John's would mean so much more to me.”

Clephane Hume

The Green Ginger Group

You will all have noticed various birds, bats, butterflies, bugs, and the occasional frond appearing in coloured paper around the church. One point of this enterprise was to focus our thoughts, with gratitude, on the multitudinous wonders of Creation. A second point was to raise the question: **“What can we do to slow down the tragic and disastrous reduction in biodiversity?”** Cutting down trees in East Princes Street

Gardens was not an answer. But the third point has been particularly pleasing. The paper cut-outs have only been posted if they have been decorated – however humbly – and almost all of the decoration has taken place on other days than **Sundays. One snail has written on it: “I love this place”.** It is good to interact with visitors in this way.

Our Creationtide Fair this year was

on the theme of Biodiversity. It was a fairly low-key event compared with some we have organised, but it was nevertheless of much interest. I concentrated on our own patch, with photos of sites in the graveyard garden that look pretty good habitat. There were a lot more than I had thought. At some point it would be most interesting to organise a serious survey of the wild life that use the garden. I presume those compost heaps are hotching with bugs. The sale of cards raised £47.50. Purchasers were assured this would be spent on a bird-feeder, and the first few months of food. This will happen, but somehow these things take time.

Our main job is not to stick up bits of paper but to keep reminding the Ministry Team, and everyone else that works in **St John's**, that the issues we care about ought

Many Questions

Recently Markus and I have been to two conferences, the first, an Anglo-Catholic Conference, centred around what mission might look like, and the second a conference on New Monasticism, looking at how we can intentionally go deeper into discipleship, considering how that might **affect mission. I think it's fair to say that we have thought lots, been challenged to broaden our horizons and encouraged to put into action all that we've heard about.** What have we heard and thought? Well, **good question! Here's a brief thought or two on the conferences....**

The first conference had a direct focus on mission and what that could look like in an Anglo-Catholic context. We heard lots about the sacraments (Eucharist, baptism, marriage etc) and I certainly was challenged to recognise their importance within the life of a church and **for the community. As St John's, I believe it is so important that we do not diminish**

to be at the very top of every agenda. There has been much recent news about climate change, about the extinction of species, about plastics, about air pollution. These are not problems for someone else to deal with. We have added the Cornerstone Café to our list of institutions on which we keep an eye.

One or two people give frequently **and generously to the St John's Memorial Grove with Trees for Life.** Here is the link:

treesforlife.org.uk/support/donate/stage1/

You should be able to proceed from **there to a donation to the St John's Memorial Grove.**

George Harris

the importance of our Sunday, weekday and home Eucharists. They are an important time when we, as a community come together to meet with God and be filled up. Yet at the same time, it is such a special opportunity to invite others in, to share with people (whether regular church goers or not) the importance of this sacrament and all the joy, wonder, awe and mystery that surrounds it. It is a setting in which encounter can happen, friendships formed and questions asked. All this, in **theory sounds great doesn't it!? And don't get me wrong, there are lots of AMAZING things that St John's is already doing. BUT... there's always more we can do. I don't believe that we should ever be complacent, that we should ever get too comfortable with what we're doing. So what else can we do? How else can we invite people in to our Eucharist services who may not always find themselves within a church context?**

Well, here's my twopenny into the discussion. If we want people to be able to come in, we need to make sure our welcome is the absolute best it can be. How are people welcomed at the door? Is there a smile, a word or two of kindness? How about when they arrive into the foyer? Again, is there a smile? A welcome? Are people directing through? What about when they enter the church building itself? Are there people there to help them find a seat? If we see someone sat alone do we go and sit next to them? If someone sits **down next to us that we don't know, do** we say hello and chat to them? What about the worship? Is our worship consistent? Is there a consistent way of worshipping? Are things explained? If someone walked in off the street having never been to a worship service before, would they know what they were doing? What about afterwards? Do we go and speak to people? Is there space to ask questions about why we do worship the way we do it? Is there space to challenge? To explore? To doubt well? While we may be able to answer quite a number of these questions already **(awesome, Go Team St John's), the** important follow up question to each of them is, what more can we do? The second conference focused on discipleship and prayer, specifically within a residential or dispersed New Monastic Community. We spent the day exploring what it means to be a monastic community, to have a rule or rhythm of life, to pray together regularly, to challenge each other, to contemplate, to meditate, to eat together, even maybe to live together! One of the biggest things that came out of it was the power of coming together regularly to pray, worship and challenge each other in our faith, and the effect that can have on our mission. If we as a community are constantly praying for Edinburgh, for Princes Street, for the hundreds of people that pass our doors every day. If we are challenging each other

to put that new found depth of faith into action, what could we achieve? What could become possible? What risks would we be willing to take? These questions are to me intrinsically exciting.

What do we do about it? Well, **although we're not necessarily suggesting** that we start a New Monastic community living together, I think it would be really good for us to take a good look at what our prayer and discipleship practices are. Do we come together regularly to pray for each other and for the city around us? Do we come together to read the Bible and be challenged in what we believe and how we approach our faith? Are we continually seeking to grow? Are we doing all of this very intentionally? Yes, God and faith and the Bible may well come up in everyday chat with our friends, but when in our diary are we putting time aside to come and talk and pray and challenge each other specifically? What might that look like for **St John's?**

All these questions are in many ways **challenging. As I've been typing them out** my insides have squirmed slightly because these questions have challenged me too. I believe that challenge can be an incredibly good thing though. We can shy away from challenge, we can become defensive, or we can allow the challenge to open our eyes **to what we're good at, and what we can do** better. We can rise to the challenge, we can use it to move forwards. To do more to reach out to people who never normally come to church. To welcome people in. These questions are going to be incredibly important for us as a community to answer together as we seek over the next months and year to shape and form our vision, our mission statements and our **identity again as St John's. I've thrown my twopenny into the conversation, who's** ready to join me?

Beki Cansdale

Notes from a Wild Garden

I seem to have been away a great deal this summer and autumn. So it has been a bit of an anti-climax to return to EH11. Wild gardening, however, is for those of us who take delight in the so-called ordinary.

We have no exotic birds just now. But the other morning I saw coal tit, sparrow, dunnock, wood pigeon, blue tit, feral pigeon, starling in less than five minutes. We lack the big trees of our previous garden, which I am sure affects things, but there is a sizeable conifer a few yards away where I know various birds gather.

The obvious place to put a tree in our garden is under a phone line, so that **probably won't happen. I have tried to gain** height with a few trellises. One has an old, scrawny honeysuckle from years past; it may revive. One has a new honeysuckle that I hope will attract insects. One is empty at the moment, but I plan that it should be covered with ivy. This is one of the best wild-life plants, and I hope it will get old enough one day to have berries.

Most of the work so far has been about creating habitats. The log pile is starting to look old; so is the wire netting cylinder full of twigs and leaves. The flowering meadow (about 1 metre by 3 metres) seems to have got well established, ready to bloom in style next year. There are gaps under the fences in case hedgehogs want to get through. The pond is full of plants.

I missed the deadline for the last issue. Over the summer the wild flower **annuals from the Mothers' Day seeds** produced a colourful strip. I think a very small proportion germinated; but not many are needed to make a good show, and to attract pollinators. One of my grandsons discovered that many of the poppy seed-heads were home to families of

earwigs. This is a good reminder not to be too tidy too early in the winter. I do have a **"proper" insect house, mind you. So far I** think only spiders make use of it, but, as I said, one can take delight in the ordinary.

During the summer one of the snails we brought into the pond must have laid eggs, for suddenly there were lots of tiny snails. I hope they like algal bloom, for there is no shortage of that. One of the benefits of a small pond (this one is a mat, as opposed to the carpet I had before) is that I can reach all of it to pull out algae and dead leaves. Too many rotting leaves in a small pond affect the balance of oxygen. Some of the plants that I introduced failed, and so did the pond-edge mixture seeds for some reason, but enough have thrived for there to be quite a show. The purple loosestrife is the most dramatic. The flowering rush may be the prettiest if it does flower – it did not in its first year.

As well as the snails there were lots of water-fleas and all sorts of miscellaneous little larvae wriggling about. There were one or two beetles. In that very hot weather (it seems a long time ago now) the pond was much used by birds for bathing and for drinking. Evaporation and sinking water-levels were a serious problem. I tried to deal with it by bringing jerry-cans of water from the canal. Fresh tap water has things put in it to kill bugs, which is not really the point.

Soon the sedge will be withered from the lake. For Christmas reading I suggest **"A Buzz in the Meadow" by Dave Goulson**. Mind you, he was working with 33 acres.

George Harris

HeartEdge: learning to listen

In September, we at St John's were invited to the inaugural conference of the HeartEdge network. This network, initiated by St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, acts to support churches involved in four main areas – Congregation, Compassion, Culture, and Commerce. The Conference was a chance to share experiences and knowledge, as well as a chance to network with other churches practising in these four areas, in order to improve our own involvement.

There were a variety of workshops focussed around these four central beliefs. Many of these addressed the thoughts and processes involved in ministering to and serving with the most helpless in our society. Here at St John's, we have done this in our work with the homeless of the city. Other churches were working with low-income congregations, immigrant communities, and other vulnerable groups. The Rt Rev. Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool, led an inspirational session on the second day, with many of his team working in the centre of the city. The message that came from these sessions was that the most important part of any

relationship with any congregational group is listening and dialogue. That it is only through listening first and foremost to the needs of any vulnerable group that we can get to the crux of what it is that we can provide. From this dialogue, we can find the most appropriate ways that we can serve our local community.

We joined the HeartEdge network in the wake of our work during the Beast from the East in February, with a view to finding other ways in which we could serve and support those who need it most in our city. What we can take away from this conference is that the first step is to strike up a dialogue, and find out where we are best positioned to help. We have been blessed with great gifts, and now, post-development, we are in a position to look at how we might move forward and use them most appropriately for our local communities. We need to listen, research, and innovate. We need to pray, and find the direction God is steering us. And we need to be able to have a heart, at the same time as living on the edge.

Oscar Kelly



Photo by Philip Dawson



Baptism

On 7th October we welcomed Logan Laughland through baptism. Logan is son of Kate and Russell, grandson of Jan and David Hill. The baptism took place during our Sunday Eucharist when we were also celebrating the Feast of St Francis of Assisi.

Welcome to the world

Congratulations to Hilary and Johnny Clelland on the birth of their son, Richard.

RIP Neville Chamberlain

The Right Revd Neville Chamberlain, St John's Rector 1982-1997 and Bishop of Brechin 1997-2005, died on 8 October aged 78. A funeral for the family took place in England, and a celebration of his life is to be held at St John's on 8 December.

We will publish a fuller tribute to Neville in the next edition of Cornerstone. If you have any memories or anecdotes that you would like to be included, please send them to magazine@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk.

Pet blessing service

This year, the pet blessing took place at a special service on the afternoon of Sunday, 7 October. Owners brought their pets (or was it the other way around?) for a blessing, and to offer prayers to furry, feathered and finned friends who have gone before.



Photos by Marjory Currie

Rosie's licensing

On the evening of 1st November (All Saints Day) we enjoyed a wonderful service of celebration as we licensed and welcomed Rosie Addis as our Associate Rector. Bishop John presided, Markus preached and we all enjoyed uplifting music sung and signed by St John's Choir and the combined Choir of Albany Deaf Church & St Andrew's & St George's West Parish.



Photos by Marjory Currie

Who worships when?

We asked a number of members of St John's to speak about their worship experiences. These reflections speak of the diversity of worship and the diversity of our community and celebrate the many blessings so extant within St John's. There are altogether six reflections. We will start with three in this edition of Cornerstone.

WEEKDAY LUNCHTIMES

Alan Perry writes:

"I have been coming to St John's at lunchtimes for a number of years now. I work along the road at St Andrew Square so it is relatively nearby, and a very pleasant walk! I generally make it along once or twice a week, not really for a break from work, although it certainly is that, but more I find that lunchtime worship helps to centre my day, helping me to find God in the middle of all the busyness and activity of the working week.

"Taking part in the Eucharist and perhaps hearing about the life of one of the saints might seem a world away from a day of meetings, emails and phone calls – and in some ways it is – but in quite an opposite way it also reminds me why we do the things we do and for

Christians how our faith is central to our working week and of course our lives more generally.

“Over the time I have been coming to St John’s I have got to know many lovely people – like churches everywhere it is family for us wherever we may go.

“The previous associate rector and I were talking once and he thought perhaps St John's was, in the words of T. S. Eliot, a place “where prayer has been valid” and that would perhaps be one of the most important things for me about St John’s.”

SUNDAY EUCHARIST

Fiona McLuckie writes:

“Formerly a regular at Evensong and Compline, I came to the 10.30 service at St. John’s because I had reached a particular stage in my life. As the parent of three young noisy children, this was undoubtedly the most suitable service for them. Creche and Sunday School gave them interaction with other children and me a nearly quiet hour when I had space to think and take stock. 18 years later and with children long since grown, I am still mainly a 10.30 worshipper.

“I take comfort in the ritual of the weekly communion and lighting my candle at the entrance to the Lady Chapel as a sign of repentance and prayer. The sermon is a time to sit back and reflect on a busy working week. I also enjoy being part of the ‘main’ service for social reasons, giving me a sense of security, community and continuity. It means a lot to me to sit in the pew I sat in with my late father and feel his spirit with me. And, if I am honest, there is a convenience factor – getting out of bed in time for the 8.30 or even for Matins on a Sunday would be a struggle!”

SUNDAY EVENSONG

Martin Milmore and Nelson Iley write:

“Evensong was the first service we attended at St John’s and we didn’t really know what to expect given we are both from different faith backgrounds, but what we were met with was kindness, friendship and a welcoming atmosphere. Upon our second visit people already knew us by name and we immediately had a sense of belonging to a community.

“Sunday is traditionally the beginning of the week, however, for two Monday to Friday 9-5ers, for us it feels very much like the end of the week. The Sunday Evensong service brings our week to a close and gives us the chance to reflect within the peace of the Church. The voices of the choir, the wonderful music, the often thought-provoking words of the sermon and the readings, as well as the coming together of the community make it, for us, an experience of the body, mind and spirit.”

T ogether for Christian Aid: S ogetsu - Ikebana

On 29th September the Churches Together Christian Aid committee branched out into a new international event for Christian Aid.

Deborah Hathorn, a St John's member with the rare distinction of **Japan's Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays**, gave a demonstration of her Sogetsu – Ikebana skills at our autumn **event at St Cuthbert's**. Nearly 50 members and friends watched spellbound as she transformed branches, palm leaves, grasses, lilies and Chinese lanterns with various vases and baskets into works of art.

Many of us came away vowing to be more imaginative and self-expressive in future, and to remember to cut the stems of flowers under water. Her brief explanations of the history and philosophy of the Sogetsu – Ikebana school and tradition only whetted our

appetite for more. Ikebana reflects the simple truth in your heart. It can be created anytime, anywhere, by anyone. Asymmetry and space are as important as the flowers and other materials. **“The flower becomes me.”**

Afternoon tea followed, with delicious sandwiches and cakes made by the ECT team and other helpers, allowing members of the three churches to get to know each other better, as well as to pursue further questions and interest with Deborah.

We raised £431 for Christian Aid for the Harvest Appeal for their partnership projects in Ethiopia and Malawi, Honduras and Burkina Fasa, mainly in connection with solar energy. The EU will multiply this by five, bringing our contribution up to £2,155.

Marion Ralls



Photos by Marion Ralls

Service with a Smile by DES

“What is the matter with telling the truth with a smile?” Desiderius Erasmus to Martin Dorp, 1515.

Many thanks to my good friend Martin Dorp for making my apologies in the last issue. (I haven't actually read what he wrote. I hope it was complimentary)

* * * *

Meanwhile, my Homiletic Conversation on the subject **“All are welcome”** has produced a voluminous post-bag in response. The Not Very Reverend Parkin Slipshod (Platitudinarian) said **“on the other hand” so often that even an octopus would have been challenged.** Pittie Slop of Colinton asserted that she could imagine no assembly to which her little brother would be welcome. Victor Strain of the Happy Clappy Trio (Anthem Flo, Amazing Grace and Peterborough Cath) sent me an advertisement for their new CD.

“Thumbscrew” Widget (late of Churnemout High): “You’ve got to draw the line somewhere. People whose whisky consists of a mixture of gnats’ water and treacle are not welcome.” Seth the Preacher went on at some length about **God’s elect.**

I print two in full.

The great Bicentenary Year is drawing to a close. When I recited my verses in praise thereof at the Summer Tea Party several people said **“You ought to send it to ‘Cornerstone’.”** So now I can compile a black-list of people who never read this column. I doubt if there is space for repeat reprints, but here is a link to where you can find the immortal lines in a blog-post:

georgeharris.blogspot.com/2018/03/the-bicentenary-of-saint-johns-parts-1.html

Dear Des,

My great uncle, the Archdeacon, was accustomed to sing around the house those words of WS Gilbert:

*The aristocrat who hunts and shoots,
The aristocrat who banks at Coutts,
The aristocrat who cleans the boots
They all shall equal be.*

“All are welcome” is as unambiguous as Brexit.

Yours faithfully,

Hilda Pew-Bible (Mrs)

My Dear Des,

I have not written to you before. But on this matter my mind is clear. Of course all ought to be welcome, but for two millennia theologians, intellectuals and other witch-doctors have built their careers out of obfuscating the straightforward teachings of Jesus, and erecting barriers in the process.

Best wishes,

Liberal Boomer

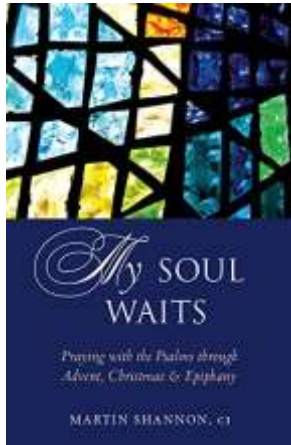
Cornerstone Bookshop Reviews

'My Soul Waits'

by Martin Shannon

9781612619705

£11.99



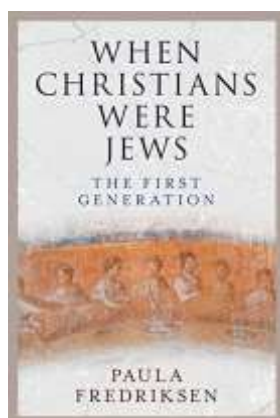
If you follow the practice of reading daily through Advent we have many books in stock to enrich your journey towards **Christmas. One such is Martin Shannon's** new book, which emphasises Advent as a **time of "preparation, getting ready, longing for, making room and not getting ahead of ourselves."** In it he uses the **Psalms as a starting point for reflection.** Each day an excerpt is followed by a short meditation, **a 'word' from the Church Fathers, and a prayer.** At a time when we can find ourselves rushing and busy, this lyrical book offers a chance for quiet reflection, dwelling in the ancient words of the Psalmist.

'When Christians were Jews'

by Paula Fredriksen

9780300190519

£20.00



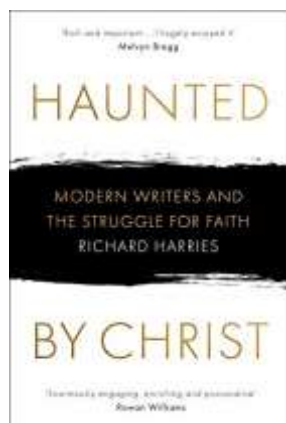
Paula Fredriksen is a writer who never fails to blow life into her scholarship to engage her readers. This is certainly the case in this characteristically compelling **account of the lives of Jesus' earliest followers.** Placing Christianity firmly within Judaism, Fredriksen offers us part-biography, part-social history, charting the early days of the apostolic community (made up of Jews, waiting for what they believed to be the imminent establishment of **God's Kingdom**) in, what she calls, **'a tale of two cities,' Jerusalem and Rome.** **"What should the original 'community' do while they waited for their Messiah's return? Did it have a message to spread and, if so, how and to whom? How should it include ex-pagan gentiles?"** All these questions are explored by Fredriksen along with the convictions which enlivened and sustained the church in its infancy and propelled it into a future we now inherit.

'Haunted by Christ'

by Richard Harries

9780281079339

£19.99



Harries' latest book is a highly engrossing account of how various twentieth century and contemporary writers have grappled with the fundamental questions of humanity and the existence (or not) of God. From Dostoyevsky to Stevie Smith, Emily Dickinson to R.S. Thomas, Samuel Beckett to Marilynne Robinson, and including the Orcadian luminaries – Edwin Muir and George Mackay Brown – Harries introduces each one and explores how, for each of them, their faith, or lack of it, found expression in their work. This is a **'tour de force' from the former Bishop of Oxford** and regular contributor to Radio 4's Today programme; **eminently readable and bound to be on many people's Christmas wish list!**

'The Sleepy Shepherd'

by Stephen Cottrell

9780281078028

£6.99



(And keeping with the them!) I'm sure many of us feel so exhausted by the time we get to Christmas there will be a degree of sympathy for the sleepy shepherd, whose story we take up when he dozes off, missing the visiting angels and the birth of the baby whom they heralded! Rebuked by his friends, all the questions of that night stay with him till, grown up, and with a family of his own, Silas finds himself in a garden with the few sheep and goats he tends. The garden is Gethsemane. Finally, he encounters the bringer of peace **of whom he'd heard the rumours; and, finally, he finds a good reason to keep awake.** Beautifully illustrated by Chris Hagan, this original re-telling of a familiar story is sure to capture the imaginations of the children (and adults!) who read it.

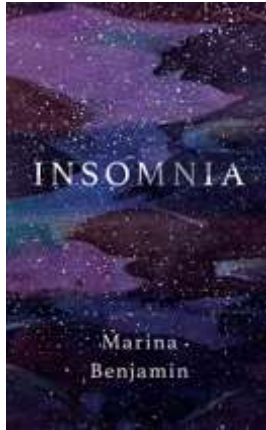


'Insomnia'

by Marina Benjamin

9781911344926

£9.99



Anyone who has experienced insomnia will perhaps find some comfort in **Martin Benjamin's profound exploration of our inability to sleep, "not as a disorder, but as an existential experience that can electrify our understanding of ourselves, and of creativity and love"**. In her tightly written exploration she meditates on time and eternity, love as the result of lack, a realm beyond loneliness and the potential to find light in the dark hours. Referencing poetry and philosophers, this beautifully produced book is a small treasure.

Forthcoming Events

Ecumenical Friends

A reminder of the spring syllabus for Ecumenical Friends. These meetings with talks are **held on Thursday from 12.30 to 1.45pm at St Cuthbert's.**

Jan 10	Alison Burnley	The Quaker Tapestry
Jan 17	David Dixon	Border Bothies
Jan 24	Alex Shuttleworth	Burns
Jan 31	Bill & Shirley Brown	Ecumenical Day Care project (ECUDARE), Kenya
Feb 7	Jock Stein	Books I have Published
Feb 14	Pat Ash	Water
Feb 21	Catherine Booth	A Scottish Suffragette
Feb 28	David Dutton	The Emergence of Dissent in Haddington
Mar 7	Robert Allan	The Falkirk Family Life Centre

Social Committee trip to the Mikado

The Social Committee theatre outing for 2019 will be a trip to the King's Theatre to see the Edinburgh Gilbert & Sullivan Society perform the much loved Mikado. The show will be the matinee at 2.30 on Saturday 16th March. Tickets will be £19.

We will need final numbers before the end of the year, so please contact Fiona McLuckie or another member of the Social Committee as soon as possible if you would like to go.

Christmas is coming...

Please mark your calendars for these special events:

2 December 2018, 6pm: Advent service. Start the season with a celebration of light and music taking us into the mystery of Emmanuel – God with us.



5 December 2018, 6pm: European Carol Service. A special celebration of Advent and Christmas traditions from around the continent, in collaboration with the European Union office in Edinburgh and consular offices throughout our city.

15 December 2018: December Christmas Walk.

16 December 2018: Toy Sunday & Mince Pie Sunday (in the Cornerstone Centre after the 10:30am service): Bring toys for struggling families and stay on for some traditional mince pies and great fellowship.

23 December 2018, 6pm: Lessons and Carols. A highlight of the season and one not to be missed!

24 December 2018, 4:30pm: Christingle Service – a Christmas favourite for children of all ages!

24 December 2018, 6:30pm: Carol Service. New this year! A service to sing your hearts out and hear and reflect on the sacred story at the heart of it all.

24 December 2018, 11:15pm: Midnight Mass. Coming home to the Christ Child, breaking bread together and sharing the cup with one another.

25 December 2018, 8am: For early risers, a contemplative and quieter service using the beauty of our Scottish 1929 Prayerbook.

25 December 2018, 9:45am: Holy Eucharist. A family celebration on Christmas Day.

25 December 2018, 11:15am: Lessons and Carols on Christmas Day.

30 December 2018, 8am Eucharist, no Matins, 10:30am Eucharist, 6pm Evening Prayer with Carols

31 December 2018, 11pm: **Ecumenical Watchnight Service at St Cuthbert's.**

St John's Coffee Rota

December

2nd A Usher; P Walliker
9th M Warrack; J MacLeod
16th C Legge; J Rennie
23rd S Brand; S Goode
30th M Currie; W Wyse

January

6th S Brand; E Anderson
13th V Lobban; J Taleyarkhan
20th A Usher; P Walliker
27th C Legge; J MacLeod

Sunday Readings

Sunday Readings - December 2018

Readings for all services each week are available in the *St John's Calendar and Lectionary 2017-2018* available at Cornerstone Bookshop for £5.

Year B	9.30am Matins	10.30am Eucharist	6.00pm Evensong
2 December Advent 1		Jeremiah 33.14-16 1 Thessalonians 3.9-13 Luke 21.25-36	Habakkuk 2.1-14 Romans 11.25-36
9 December Advent 2	Luke 3.1-6 Origen	Malachi 3.1-4 Luke 1.68-79 Philippians 1.3-11 Luke 3.1-6	Ezekiel 34.1-6, 11-16 John 10.11-18
16 December Advent 3	Luke 3.7-18 Origen	Zephaniah 3.14-20 Isaiah 12.2-6 Philippians 4.4-7 Luke 3.7-18	Isaiah 42.1-9 Matthew 12.15-32
23 December Advent 4	Luke 1.39-45 Guerric of Igny	Micah 5.2-5a Luke 1.47-55 Hebrews 10.5-10 Luke 1.39-55	Revelation 22.6-12, 18-20 Matthew 1.18-25
25 December Christmas Day	<i>Midnight Mass</i> Isaiah 9.2-7 Titus 2.11-14 Luke 2.1-14(15-20)	<i>Dawn Eucharist</i> Isaiah 62.6-12 Titus 3.4-7 Luke 2.(1-7)8-20	<i>Day Eucharist</i> Isaiah 52.7-10 Hebrews 1.1-4(5-12) John 1.1-14
30 December Christmas 1	Luke 2.41-52 Origen	1 Samuel 2.18-20, 26 Colossians 3.12-17 Luke 2.41-52	Jeremiah 31.1-17 Matthew 2.13-23

Useful Contacts

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Flowers	Anne Goodwin <i>annedgoodwin@gmail.com</i>	337 3556
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Postal Secretary	TBC - please contact the church office with any queries	
Church Photographer	Marjory Currie <i>photo@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk</i>	337 3833
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Children & Families Ministry	<i>sunday-school@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk</i>	
St John's Terrace	Cornerstone Bookshop Anna Pitt One World Shop Rachel Farey	229 3776 229 4541
Vergers	Ross Hepburn, Marc Farrimond and Kenny Kirkpatrick	

For weddings and baptisms please make contact initially with the Church Office

St John's

St John's is an active city-centre church within the Diocese of Edinburgh of the Scottish Episcopal Church, which is part of the world-wide Anglican Communion.

We welcome people of all denominations or none, firmly committed in faith or doubting and enquiring.

SERVICES AT ST JOHN'S

Sunday

- 8.00am Holy Communion
- 9.30am Choral Matins (not on 1st Sunday)
- 10.30am Sung Eucharist
- 6.00pm Choral Evensong

Monday

- 12.30pm Eucharist

Tuesday

- 12.30pm Eucharist
- 3.30pm Silent Prayer

Wednesday

- 11.00am Eucharist
- 12.30pm Midday Prayer

Thursday

- 12.30pm Eucharist

Friday

- 12.30pm Eucharist



/churchofstjohn

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