

From the Rector



Advent and our time of waiting is with us again. Mary and Elizabeth have that joyful moment when Elizabeth is visited by her kinswoman Mary, and her unborn child (John the Baptist) leaps in the womb. Mary recognises that she is a lowly person but understands she is being asked to do something so important and significant for the world. We speak of her name thousands of years on.

During this Advent we'll hear again the story leading up to our celebration of Christ's birth. We prepare. Perhaps you'll come along to our Advent Course and think about waiting and longing and what that might mean for us today. Whatever your own preparations are for Christmas we have church ones too.

There are all the tasks – cleaning and decorating the church, readers to sort out for services, selecting carols, preparing mulled wine – all sorts of things. It is important too to think about where this next year will take us. Later in this edition of 'The Eagle' I have summarised what we have done in our congregational meeting and the subsequent voting on the ideas which have been generated. As we go through Advent, we might take the time to reflect on the life of St John's and how we want 'to do' church.

We have a rich heritage as a worshipping Episcopalian community here in Forfar. Whatever we do we add our own Christian life to its legacy. As we journey through Advent please remember each other in your prayers and for our mission and ministry as a whole church.

With love

Elaine

Advent Course

On Wednesday 12th and 19th an Advent Study group will be held from 11am until 12 noon immediately after the Wednesday Eucharist. Everybody welcome. No preparation needed, but please bring a Bible.

What Direction?

St John's held a congregational meeting on 14th October 2018 when we generated possible ideas for ministry and mission. Thank you for all your ideas and thank you too for your participation in responding to them. Set out below is the analysis of that participation.

Worshipping Together

There was one in the eight ideas suggested for 'Worshipping Together' that received unanimity – to have occasional and special services. Clearly there is nothing controversial in this idea. It gives more variety to our worship and marks points in our liturgical year.

People were generally in favour of a flower rota whilst just over 60% favoured taking out pews at the back and using the space more flexibly. Such an action would require consultation with all the congregation on this specific topic. There was no real desire to introduce a Matins service and we were lukewarm on the idea of more ecumenical services. With regard to a monthly all-age, more participative service, two people did not want that whilst the majority were positive to a greater or lesser extent. The majority agreed greater lay participation in services was desirable. Similarly, most were keen to have some more modern hymns. More people were in favour of stopping singing the psalms although it looks as if we are keen to keep saying the psalm.

Meeting Together

Everyone was keen that our social activities are open and accessible to all. Given that we may like different kinds of things we will want to have a range of activities that appeal to different people. We all seemed to be keen to get a monthly cleaning rota for the church – maybe it was the thought of cake that was encouraging us!

There was a bit of enthusiasm for an art group and for a congregational meeting every few months but no great desire for a pool table.

Reaching Out

Holding more concerts and increasing awareness of St John's were both popular with everyone, as were activities with children and young people.

The majority of people were in favour of working with other charities and helping others remember or celebrate significant events especially through flowers. There was also enthusiasm to generate increased awareness of St John's ministry and mission.

More of the negative responses were received in the 'Reaching Out' category with people generally not in favour of free/cheap meals or soup lunches; refreshments for casual visitors; and becoming more of a community hub. We possibly need to ask a specific question about soup lunches in the future as it may have been unhelpful to include it with free/cheap meals. We were generally less keen to have the church open longer but okay with providing teas and coffees for community events.

Spiritual Growth

People were unanimous in their desire for Bible study groups, discipleship courses in general and retreats/quiet days. There was one dissent to prayer or meditation groups and given people opt in for this it could be avoided by those who do not want to take part.

We were split on the idea of inviting people from other faiths to come and preach and not that enthusiastic about having house groups.

Next Steps

There is such a good number of ideas here that we want to try out. These ideas will be drawn together into an aspirational but achievable plan and presented as a draft to the Vestry. Once agreed, the plan will be implemented over the next 12 months. The Vestry will ensure periodic feedback to the congregation on progress. New things often need to be adapted to get the best possible fit. If, when we try things, you have a comment or suggestion please say to a Vestry member or the Rector.

Rev Elaine Garman, Rector

Vestry changes

"At the AGM on 18th November, Keith Ingram Walker, Madeline Kingston and Albert Shepherd stood down from the vestry. Madeline and Albert were happy to serve another term and Colvina McBay was also elected. Thanks were given to all of the outgoing Vestry members and to the current ones."

Rotas

Sunday December 2nd Advent Sunday

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Jeremiah 33: 14 – 16, 1 Thessalonians 3: 9 - 13, Luke 21: 25 – 36

Reader Nora Craig

Wednesday December 5th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday December 9th Advent 2

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Malachi 3: 1 – 4, Philippians 1: 3 – 11, Luke 3: 1 - 6

Reader Douglas Burt

Sunday December 16th Advent 3

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Zephaniah 3: 14 – 20, Philippians 4: 4 – 7, Luke 3: 7 - 18

Reader Eleanor Rowlands

Wednesday December 19th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Christmas Services

Sunday 23rd December Advent 4

11 a.m. Sung Eucharist, St. John's, Readings and Carols for Advent and Christmas Service

12.30 p.m. Said Holy Communion – Lady Chapel (at a suitable point following the festive refreshments)

Christmas Eve, Monday 24th December

6 p.m. Family Carol Service, St. Margaret's Lunanhead, - please bring stuffed toy animals, and a small torch, or torch app for your mobile phone - followed by festive refreshments in St Margaret's Hall

11 p.m. Sung Eucharist, St. John's

Isaiah 52: 7 – 10, Hebrews 1: 1 - 4, John 1: 1 - 14

Reader to be determined

Christmas Day, Tuesday 25th December

10 a.m. Family Sung Eucharist – bring your favourite gift along to church!

Reader to be determined

Isaiah 9: 2 – 7, Titus 2: 11 – 14, Luke 2: 1 – 14 (15 – 20)

Wednesday December 26th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday December 30th Christmas 1

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

1 Samuel 2: 18 – 20, 26, Colossians 3: 12 – 17, Luke 22: 41 - 52

Reader Madeline Kingston

Wednesday January 2nd

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday January 6th Feast of the Epiphany

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Isaiah 60: 1 – 6, Ephesians 3: 1 – 12, Matthew 2: 1 – 12

Reader Fay Slingsby

Wednesday January 9th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday January 13th Baptism of the Lord

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Isaiah 43: 1-7, Acts 8: 14 – 17, Luke 3: 15 – 17, 21 - 22

Reader Fay Slingsby

Wednesday January 16th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday January 20th Epiphany 2

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Isaiah 62: 1 – 5, 1 Corinthians 12: 1 – 11, John 2: 1 - 11

Reader Eryl Rowlands

Wednesday January 23rd

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday January 27th Epiphany 3

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Nehemiah 8: 1 – 3, 5 – 6, 8 – 10, 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 31a, Luke 4: 14 - 21

Reader Richard Finch

Wednesday January 30th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday February 3rd Epiphany 4

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Jeremiah 1: 4 – 10, 1 Corinthians 13 1 – 13, Luke 4: 21 - 30

Reader Lee Winks

Wednesday February 6th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday February 10th Epiphany 5

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Isaiah 6: 1 - 8 (9 – 13) 1 Corinthians 15: 1 – 11, Luke 5: 1 - 11

Reader

Wednesday 13th February

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday 17th February Epiphany 6

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Jeremiah 17: 5 – 10, 1 Corinthians 15: 12 – 20, Luke 6: 17 - 26

Reader Nora Craig

St.Margarets, Lunanhead

Is continuing to hold services twice a month at 2 p.m. On the first Sunday, the service is taken by Lowson Memorial Church, and the third Sunday by St. John's.

Provincial Year of Pilgrimage announced

The College of Bishops is designating 2021 as a Provincial Year of Pilgrimage. The Rt Rev Anne Dyer, Bishop of Aberdeen & Orkney, will act as lead bishop in this provincial initiative and says "In this designated year of pilgrimage we will be encouraging as many people as possible to make a holy journey of some kind. This can include taking part in an organised pilgrimage or spending time individually or in groups simply focussing on our own spiritual journeys."

Over the coming year there will be various opportunities suggested to start planning a Pilgrimage in 2021. This might involve:

- walking a pilgrim route, ancient or new, or visiting a holy place
- congregations travelling together to visit another church in their Diocese or in the Province

- taking the opportunities offered in this year to walk the Camino or to visit the Holy Land
- making a spiritual 'journey of the heart and mind' in one's own home

It is expected that most activities will be organised at a local or diocesan level and it is hoped that many activities will be ecumenical.

As the initiative is developed, updates and information will be shared on the Provincial and Diocesan websites and social media. The link to the Provincial website information is <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/2021-provincial-year-of-pilgrimage/>

At a St John's level, anyone with ideas for a local pilgrimage please speak to the Rector or a member of the vestry.

Lunch on October 25th

Welcome Lunch' Any doubts that Elaine and Gordon had about the warmth of our welcome must surely have been dispelled by 'The Welcome Lunch'. Large turn-out, non-stop chat at all areas, the chance to circulate and hear the news from all sides – a happy and convivial event.

The Rectory folk (Rectorians?) may have been less prepared for the level of catering and organisational skills demonstrated in the usual (never -to -be -taken -for granted) seamless operation:

Yes: the desserts are always wonderful, and so too are the logistics of it all; the advance co-ordination of food, wine and service, The Setting –up, the Clearing-up, the Washing-up, all involving cheerful co-operation by many individuals who must be exhausted by the time we all stream off home, warmed and fed. A thousand thanks to them one and all.

Madeline Kingston

NEWS JUST IN; ELAINE AND GORDON ARE VERY WELCOME.

Tuesday Club – 9th October 2018

Decisions, decisions!! - Rev. Elaine Garman

After such a beautiful summer, intrigue was clearly at play as Evelyn welcomed a large audience to this, the first meeting of the 2018-19 session of St John's popular Tuesday Club. The speaker for the evening was of course your Rector, the Rev. Elaine Garman and with a title of '*Decisions, decisions!!*', who could fail to be more than a little curious?!

Displaying her Stole, Elaine began her presentation describing the inspiration for and the significance of its symbols. Fashioned on white material, an especially important colour representing a time of high festival was the Stole that she had designed for her

ordination. On the right-hand side there are three people representing patients and a candle representing nursing (the lady with the lamp) but also Christ as the light of the world. On the left, is a representation of her public health career that followed her nursing one with images of more people when her 'patient' was a community or large population and of course a Cross for the church when her vocation took her to ordained ministry.

Elaine talked about those who have influenced her and helped her make decisions. On leaving school a career in nursing beckoned, but rather than the then conventional approach to training, a Latin Teacher suggested University and so it was Elaine left her native Perthshire and headed south to Newcastle. On completion of her degree in General Nursing she returned to Scotland to train as a Midwife in Edinburgh. Whilst there a fellow Student Midwife assisted with the next decision which was to train as a Health Visitor. Elaine moved west to Glasgow and following qualification as a Health Visitor worked in the impoverished areas of the East end, Easterhouse and then in Greenock.

Happily for Elaine, career was not the only focus in her life as around this time she and Gordon married – the number of influential people was increasing!

Throughout her career the desire to help a larger number of people persisted. She moved into management, initially working as a Nurse Manager, then as a General Manager and eventually became a Director of Nursing. She then trained in public health and became a Public Health Consultant, one of the first non-medics to achieve this position. You might be forgiven for thinking Elaine had reached the pinnacle of her career. Not so, and now living on the Isle of Bute, a further chance encounter occurred with an American Priest. The inspiring seed sown this time led to a Theology distance learning degree through Aberdeen University while still carrying out her Public Health responsibilities. Ordination as a Deacon followed and the inevitable happened, Elaine combined both jobs.

Obviously pressure would dictate, and realising the need to focus on one thing, Elaine reluctantly left the NHS in September 2017 followed by a month off and a period of relaxation on the Norfolk Broads.

Shortly after this a vacancy was advertised in Forfar and fortunately for St John's, Elaine and Gordon 'came to view'. It was then that Elaine's fourth person of influence, a Restaurant owner came into play. Encouraged by this encounter she successfully applied for the position and celebrated her Institution as Rector of St. John's on Saturday 14th July 2018. Clearly this signifies the beginning of yet another important chapter in the life of this extraordinary lady.

John Webster gave the vote of thanks. and as always, the evening ended with refreshments, thanks to all involved.

Linda Robbie

Fund-raising events (not in chronological order!)

1st December 2018

An addition to church funds - £754.12 added to the coffers as a result of the annual Christmas Coffee Morning. This was a remarkable result, given that a Saturday coffee morning can be quite weather –dependant in terms of customers, and it was a really dreich December morning. Many thanks to all who worked hard to achieve this result.

Supper with Speaker 16 November 2018

This was the 14th ‘Supper with Speaker’ and Angus Macmillan Douglas OBE was the invited guest speaker. With family connections to Forfar going back to the 1850’s he is no stranger to our town and the surrounding areas; however, his lifestyle has taken him to many parts of the world with the result that his talk was both entertaining and enlightening. The humour in his fine talk was an added and much appreciated bonus.



The evening saw almost 100 guests arrive for drinks and canapes so well organised by Pat and Fay Slingsby and several others, before sitting down to a splendid meal that, of course, included the famous St. John’s desserts. Welcome words from Rev. Elaine and Grace by former Primus Bishop Ted Luscombe preceded the food. This was consumed accompanied by many happy conversations at the various tables, although there was a definite air of anticipation regarding the coming after dinner talk.

Dr. Douglas Burt acted as MC throughout the evening and introduced the speech entitled “Working around the world”, and quickly subtitled by our speaker as “Different cultures – similar problems”, he talked about the “Global Village”. Angus Macmillan Douglas described a working life that has encompassed almost every culture, every continent and every type of organisation ranging from governments through the United Nations and some of the most powerful commercial organisations in the world to his own consultancy business. Amusing anecdotes included mention of a speech of Margaret Thatcher’s in Azerbaijan, barely understood but rapturously applauded; a dinner hosted at great expense for a Russian General who additionally demanded doggy bags for his wife and daughter. The more serious side of the talk included details of the position of UK healthcare in global terms as well as the importance of the English language in today’s world. One example being that apparently more Chinese are studying English as a second language than all others.

The resounding applause at the end of the talk indicated the real appreciation of those who were lucky enough to be in the audience. A short session of questions from the floor was an added extra to a very fine evening.

The raffle draw followed Angus Macmillan Douglas's talk, the numerous prizes being handed out amid much hilarity, after which the evening culminated in a brief vote of thanks by Rev. Elaine to all who made it possible, along with a presentation of a small gift to our speaker. And the icing on the cake was the sum of £1,500 to add to St. John's funds.

Douglas Burt



There are no immediate plans for any fund-raising events in the near future – as the poet says that ‘in the spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love’, maybe the committee’s thoughts, come March, may lightly turn to bright ideas? They need a break – they do so well.

Health and Safety at Christmas

In our enlightened 21st century, Joseph and Mary would have had more creature comforts than they did 2000 years ago, but they might have found quite a lot of bureaucratic hurdles to contend with.....

Away in a Manger - Social Services would have been called without delay

We Three Kings

The Social Service line would be that frankincense and myrrh would be totally inappropriate gifts, exposing the baby to allergic reactions,(Heaven knows what they would have thought of lying in hay,) and the Kings would be much better advised to use the RAC route finder, than rely on navigation by the stars. The RSPCA would most definitely need to be consulted about the welfare of the camels to ensure regular food and rest breaks.

The Rocking Song - No-one should be allowed to rock the baby unless they have been subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Notes from the most southerly capital in the world - Hobart, Tasmania

Despite the next stop on dry land being Antarctica, it was delightfully warm in Hobart, the capital of Tasmania, a lovely city, with an extensive waterfront, situated at the foot of the very sheer Mount Wellington, Bee (my daughter) and I were soaking up the sun in a lazy way along the dockside when we were scooped up by a very persuasive Tasmanian and before we knew where we were, we were perched on the back of a motorbike (an experience long forgotten by me) and whizzed round the sights of Hobart , which involved a lot of up hill and down dale, with definitely over its fair share of hairpin bends – I'm sure it is very attractive but my eyes were anxiously shut a great deal of the time.

We had arrived from Launceston in the north via a spectacular drive, but rather unnervingly encountered two hills, one called Break me leg – the other Bust me gut. We, and the hired car, luckily emerged with both legs and guts intact. An attractive feature of the island is the abundance of lovely potential picnic spots along the coast, most of which had a delightful winery attached to them. It is said to be the most 'British' of the Australian states; it is indeed very green and lush, and one of its beauty spots is a dramatic cataract when the North and South Esks join, and about a mile further downstream they flow into the Tamar, so one gets the point. We, as Scots, were welcomed with open arms at a boutique whisky shop; It was called rather surprisingly the Grumpy Piper - but definitely did not live up to its name.

But despite these fun features, it would be almost wrong to visit Tasmania, without going to Port Arthur, the site of the penal settlement. It is the most beautiful spot – hopefully that was of some comfort to the convicts miles from home and living in horrendous and very cruel conditions. What shook my twenty first century mind, was that despite a very strong religious presence – charming cottages for the Catholic, Anglican and Quaker pastors, compared to the cramped and dark hovels of the prisoners, Divine Service was obligatory for all the inmates, and yet , as though transportation was not enough, the convicts were subjected to severe physical and, worse still, mental cruelty. I know one should not judge the past by the standards of our time, but it certainly gave me pause for thought.

Many thanks to Roger and his team who managed the choosing and printing and distributing of the enclosed Christmas card which comes with every possible good wish for a very happy Christmas and year ahead.

A New Year's Prayer

Written in 1883 by a German Pastor, Hermann Kappen

Lord, set limits to overly high spirits, and let those limits be unnecessary.
Let the people not make false money and let not money make false people.
Take the last word from the wives and remind husbands of their first.
Give to our friends more truth, and to the truth more friends.
Improve such officials, business people and workers who are doers but not good doers.
Give the government good citizens, and the citizens good government.
Lord, take us all to heaven, but not immediately.

Christmas Craft Sale and Coffee Morning raised £784.12