

## RANDOM THOUGHTS DECEMBER 2017

Elsewhere in this edition of the Eagle there are reports of the activities that St John's has been involved with and advance notice of what is to come in 2018. The news of the death of Maggie Crouch overshadowed much of what we did in November. Maggie was an invaluable member of our congregation, she was always ready with a helping hand and ready smile. I offer my sincere condolences to Mike at this difficult time.

Christmas comes but once a year – all to the good – as those extra mince pies and Christmas cake, not to mention the turkey, sausage and stuffing are very tempting. Central to this period in the life of the Church is the celebration of the birth of Christ and I hope there will be a spirit of hope and happiness in all the Services at St John's through Advent and Christmas.

January heralds the New Year and we look forward to the process of seeking a new Rector with enthusiasm and hope. Having read the Parish Profile that has been produced I feel sure there will be a queue lining up to come to Forfar. I must not be flippant as the reality is we must pray for just one candidate who will have the qualities and verve that our congregation at St John's needs to lead us forward.

The congregation of St John's is very important to Margaret and I and we take this opportunity of wishing you a safe and peaceful Christmas and health and happiness in 2018.

ROGER COUSINS

The first two Sundays in November had slightly shortened services – the 5<sup>th</sup> because the Eucharist was followed by the AGM, kindly and efficiently chaired by The Revd. Ian Young, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> several members of St. John's were present at the Act of Remembrance at the Cross. Both of those services that day were conducted as a very fitting tribute to those who were killed and wounded in the various conflicts. It was a bitterly cold day, and for me it was a first to find that St. John's was a really warm haven after the long stand at the Cross!

Dorothy Bruce-Gardyne

## A message from Mike Crouch

Mike Crouch would like to offer his heartfelt thanks to all members of the congregation who contributed to making the service for Maggie on Thursday 23 November such a wonderful farewell. He was greatly moved, not only by the full church, but also by the large numbers who stayed for the refreshments in the hall.

By taking some of the responsibilities off his shoulders you ensured that this was not the ordeal he had expected it to be.

## **GIFT AID**

At the AGM on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, treasurer Roger Cousins stressed the importance of Gift Aid and the associated tax refund by HMRC on donations to St. John's.

It seems an appropriate time to remind everyone who pays Income Tax that they should have completed a Gift Aid declaration form. As far as I know, everyone has, but if you have slipped through the net, please get in touch. The value of donations are increased by 25% with no effort on your part.

HMRC needs to be able to identify donors, so please use Gift Aid envelopes at all times. Numbered green envelopes can be supplied to you with your own personal number. Alternatively yellow Gift Aid envelopes are available at the back of the church. These require you to provide your name, address and signature on the front of the envelope. You can, of course, give by monthly standing order via your bank if that is easier.

Some people may be under the impression that just putting cash in the collection bag now counts for tax refund purposes. This is only partly true, as there is a limit on how much can be claimed under GASDS (Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme).

Envelopes or Standing Orders are better.

Finally, can I mention the amount of money lost to St. John's over the last 2 or 3 years, due to deaths, resignations and the general disillusionment of recent times?

Many of these people were substantial Gift-Aid donors. Now might be the time to review our own giving in the light of this.

**John Webster**  
**(Gift Aid Secretary)**

## FACT NEWS

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of Maggie Crouch. Maggie had served as a representative on the FACT Committee for many, many years, twice as Chairperson. Not only FACT but in many other capacities Maggie served St John's over the years, ably supported by Mike. We miss her so much.

The annual Remembrance Service at the Cross on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> November took place with all members of the Forfar Clergy taking part, and I must thank Ian Young for being present for St John's. The next event supported by FACT is the visit by Bellshill Salvation Army Band on 10<sup>th</sup> December. All money raised during their visit will be donated to FACT's designated Charity for the year, the 'Inspiration Orchestra'. To this end there will a retiring collection taken after Sunday's service for this cause and this money will be added to the retiring collections from the other Forfar Churches. The Band's programme is to visit St Andrew's, Arbroath in the morning; be present at the Christmas Fair at Glamis in the afternoon and to visit Lawson Memorial Church as in previous years for a service/concert at 6.30 p.m. It is always a brilliant evening and we are indebted to the musicians, singers, supporters, and drivers who leave home very early and return very late to help raise much-needed funds.

The next date for your diaries – 2018 – is the Lent Lunch on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> March which is St John's turn. Lent Lunches begin on 16<sup>th</sup> February, hosted by the East and Old Church. Once again the venue for all the lunches is the East and Old and they will be held between 12 noon and 1.30 p.m. The proceeds from these lunches also goes to the 'Inspiration Orchestra'. I am grateful to Judy Hill and Fay Slingsby for master-minding 'our' Lent Lunch this year and the help of the congregation is requested and will be much appreciated. FACT will also be running Lent Studies which will be led by Forfar Clergy and will take place each Thursday evening at the East and Old Church, time to be confirmed. The first Lent Study will be on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> February.

Margaret Cousins

FACT Representative

### ***Christmas Card***

***Enclosed with this magazine is the St. John's Christmas card to which many of you contributed. It comes with the greetings from all of us in the congregation to all of us in the congregation with every good wish for Christmas and the New Year.***

## ROTAS

### **SUNDAY DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup> ADVENT SUNDAY**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

Isaiah 64: 1 – 9, 1 Corinthians 1: 3 – 9, Mark 13: 24 - 37

**Reader** Fay Slingsby

### **WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>**

*10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist*

### **SUNDAY DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> Advent 2**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

Isaiah 40: 1 – 11, 2 Peter 3: 8 – 15a, Mark 1: 1 – 8,

**Reader** Lee Winks

### **WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>**

*10. 15a.m. Said Eucharist*

### **SUNDAY DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> Advent 3**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

Isaiah 61: 1 – 4, 8 – 11, 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 24, John 1: 6 – 8, 19 - 28

**Reader** Douglas Burt

### **SUNDAY DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> Christmas Eve**

**11a.m.** Special service of readings and Carols

**12 .15 p.m.** Short Eucharist in the Lady Chapel

### **MONDAY DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> CHRISTMAS DAY**

**10 a.m.** Sung Eucharist Special Christmas Readings

### **WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup> N.B. NO SERVICE**

### **SUNDAY DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> Christmas 1**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

Isaiah 61: 10 - 62:3, Galatians 4: 4 – 7, Luke 2: 22 - 40

**Reader** Eryl Rowlands

### **WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3<sup>RD</sup>**

*10. 15a.m. Said Eucharist*

### **SUNDAY JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> Feast of the Epiphany**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

**Special readings for the Epiphany**

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>**

*10. 15a.m. Said Eucharist*

**SUNDAY JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> Epiphany 2**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

1 Samuel 3: 1 – 10 (11 – 20), 1 Corinthians 6:1 – 20, John 1: 43 - 51

**Reader** Eleanor Rowlands

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 17<sup>TH</sup>**

*10. 15a.m. Said Eucharist*

**SUNDAY JANUARY 21 Epiphany 3 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

*11 a.m. Sung Eucharist*

Judges 7: 1 – 14, Acts 2: 42- 47, Matthew 5: 1 - 16

Readers to be determined

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 24<sup>TH</sup>**

*10. 15a.m. Said Eucharist*

**SUNDAY JANUARY 28<sup>TH</sup> Epiphany 4**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

Deuteronomy 18: 15 – 20, 1 Corinthians 8: 1 – 13, Mark 1: 21 - 28

**Reader** Lee Winks

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 31<sup>ST</sup>**

*10. 15a.m. Said Eucharist*

**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 4<sup>TH</sup> Epiphany 5**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

Isaiah 40: 21 – 31, 1 Corinthians 9: 16 – 23, Mark 1: 29 - 39

**Reader** Fay Slingsby

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 7<sup>TH</sup>**

*10. 15a.m. Said Eucharist*

**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup> Epiphany 6**

*11a.m. Sung Eucharist*

2 Kings 5: 1 – 14, 1 Corinthians 9: 24 – 27, Mark 1: 40 - 45

**Reader** Eleanor Rowlands

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup>** Coffee Morning 10 a.m. – 12 noon

Angus Choral Society Annual Concert 7.30 p.m.

Performance of The Messiah directed by Graeme Stevenson

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December** Bellshill Salvation Army Band performance at Lawson Memorial Church as in previous years for a service/concert at 6.30 p.m.

2018

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March** Lent lunch at East and Old church, hosted by St. John's. (Very advance notice!)



### Christmas Coffee Morning

Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup> 2017 10am – 12 noon



The time is here again to get out the wrapping paper\* for the tombola stall prizes, the recipe book for 'goodies' for the produce stall and look through the cupboards for some of those fancy gifts you have been collecting in readiness for the gift stall! Not to mention bottles for the bottle raffle and any other saleable items. The Sewing Group ladies are currently busy making various bead work items to supplement the items on the Craft Stall – any other *crafty* items will be gratefully received. \*(NB The purpose of this is not in order to cover up out of date items!)

The halls will be open on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> from 10am till 2pm for the receipt of your generous donations for the event.

Please don't forget to mention the event to friends & family and bring them along on Saturday!

## FUND RAISING COMMITTEE NOTES

Our 'Annual Supper with Guest Speaker' on November 24<sup>th</sup> was a successful event which raised £1,259. What a wonderfully happy atmosphere there was in the Halls that night!

Our most grateful thanks to Ian for giving up so much of his time to prepare and give us such an informative and amusing insight into his 'musical life'.

As always the FRC are enormously grateful for all the help given by members & friends who supported the event; all those who helped to set up, clear up, wash-up; cleaned the halls, before and after; donated prizes for & did the raffle; provided the magnificent array of desserts and performed all the many other tasks involved.

The committee thank all who supported throughout the year and would be very pleased to receive any suggestions for future events.

## **AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY MINUTES**

The Annual Supper in Saint John's always proves to be an occasion not to be missed, and this year was no exception. On Friday the 24th November we were treated to a splendid meal, gracefully and efficiently produced and served by the fundraising committee and their willing band of helpers. After which we could sit back and pay attention to our "Guest" speaker in the guise of the Venerable Ian Young.

We were musically transported from Cuba to Nepal, from the Sudan to Sri Lanka, with Highland and Lowland Scotland thrown in for good measure. Who would ever have thought of themselves singing a Gaelic song after less than five minutes' teaching? Not only did we learn something about the music, it was equally fascinating to have an illustrated account of how music is taught to a diversity of nations all speaking in different tongues – perhaps music is something of a universal language. Ian was aided and abetted by Douglas Burt at the complicated electrical equipment projecting pictures and music via what looked like a computer. It was an altogether happy and enjoyable occasion and an appreciative audience was indebted to "our" priest and to everyone who worked so hard to make the evening such a success. And – I can never remember seeing as many prizes in a raffle. The finances of Saint John's were £1,250 better off as a result of the evening.

+ Ted Luscombe

### **Tuesday Club**

#### **December 12<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Kirrie the Fit?**

Kirriemuir Rotarians Allan Thomson and Bob Wallace alias Kirrie the Fit? have donated a further £2,000 to Ninewells Cancer Campaign bringing the total now given to a remarkable £11,000. The latest cash represents further proceeds from sales of Allan's book of Doric poems "The Moss o' Rora" and donations from Kirrie the Fit? performances. The pair are natives of Buchan and have performed over 100 times in Angus and beyond with their own poems and sketches of Doric humour. They have now released a C.D. with, again, all proceeds of sales being donated to Ninewells Cancer Campaign.

#### **January 9<sup>th</sup> Jarvis Brothers**

Charles Jarvis will tell of the history of Jarvis Brothers department store – a family business which has been in Forfar for 130years.

## Tuesday Club – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### Thomas Moonlight by Ian Lamb

Finding new and interesting speakers is no mean task, but Evelyn Balfour did it again as the members attending the recent meeting of the Tuesday Club would discover. How many people are aware of '*a great American from Arbroath*'?

Our guest speaker, Ian Lamb, began work as a Courier junior journalist in Forfar from 1968 – 1973. As his career developed, he became deputy features editor and motoring correspondent, and then President of the Association of Scottish Motoring Writers. When Ian reached the stage of retirement, he was the Editorial Manager for D C Thomson's newspaper group. In his spare time he plays guitar in the Folk Group he co-founded '*The Gowries*'. The group have performed in a variety of venues including the Usher Hall with '*The Corries*'. In addition to this and his many pastimes, Ian has researched Thomas Moonlight - our topic for the evening.

The origins of Thomas Moonlight remain a mystery: was he the baby found abandoned on the doorstep on a clear moonlight night or was he the birth child of Archibald Moonlight and Margaret Elspeth Andersone at Boysack Muir in the Parish of St Vigeans? His date of birth is unknown but he was baptised on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1833. The family moved to Gallowden, near Redcastle when Thomas was seven years old. The idea of academia seems to have escaped the boy, though his aptitude for organising 'gangs' came easily. Aged 12 years, he became an apprentice to a draper but this did not satisfy the restless young lad, so a year later, and without any notice, he headed off to Dundee and found himself on board a ship bound for Philadelphia. On arrival, farm work and then the Army provided necessary employment. By 1853 aged 21 Thomas reached the rank of orderly Sergeant fighting in Texas and by the time of the American Civil War in 1861, he had reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the 11<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry. Next, during the Indian Wars, Thomas was awarded a brevet promotion to Brigadier General in 1865, which he was relieved of a few months later as a result of misguided judgement, so he resumed life as a farmer.

The next foray was into Politics and until 1870 our 'lichty' was a Republican before changing sides to become a Democrat. He served as a Kansas Secretary of State and as State Senator. For two years from January 1883 – 85 he was Adjutant General of Kansas. In 1887 Thomas was Governor and finally in 1893 he was the United States Minister to Bolivia until 1897. Sadly two years later on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1899, he died aged 66 years and is buried in Mount Muncie Cemetery, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Quite a life for a boy from Arbroath who fought the Indians, encountered Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid and others in a quest to 'tame the west'.

Liz Barnett gave the vote of thanks and presented Ian with a cheque for Arbroath Rotary's chosen charity, and the evening concluded with a selection of Tea, Coffee and 'tasty bites'. As ever, many thanks to all involved.

Next meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> December – come and have a laugh with Bob & Allan, also known as **Kirrie the Fit!** All welcome.

**Linda Robbie**

## THE GRADUAL

### A BEE IN MY BONNET

Have you ever wondered why the celebrant on a Sunday morning announces the second hymn as “The Gradual hymn is number so and so”?

The word Gradual comes from the Latin *gradus*, meaning a step, and its use came about when the Gospel for the day began to be read from the *gradus*, the chancel step. The purpose, of course, was to make the words more audible to the congregation than they would have been when the Gospel was read from the altar. So the practice began of a small procession of the Gospel book from the sanctuary to the foot of the chancel steps. For some reason the practice has developed of the procession moving further and further down the church, so that the priest or deacon is proclaiming the Good News to the back four or five pews. Most, but not all, the clergy can be heard.

However, my hearing, like so much else, is not what it once was, and there are occasions when much of the Gospel is inaudible to me, and it must be worse for the choir. I have not spoken to any of the clergy about this, but I cannot imagine that I am alone, and will be interested to know what other members of the congregation feel.

Wendy would look just as angelic at the chancel steps!

+ Ted Luscombe

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Two views of Christmas - the sublime and the ridiculous/practical

#### THE OXEN

We pictured the meek mild creatures where	So fair a fancy few would weave
They dwelt in their strawy pen,	In those years! Yet, I feel
Nor did it occur to one of us there	If someone said on Christmas Eve
To doubt they were kneeling then.	‘Come, see the oxen kneel

In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know,  
I should go with him in the gloom,  
Hoping it might be so.

Thomas Hardy

.....  
The vicar was trying to plan ahead and organise a Nativity Play for Christmas but he got very little support. One lady said: ‘Can’t we have it another time when we are not so busy?’

At a Nativity Play - the child given the VERY important part of the Innkeeper’s wife, and being of a hospitable nature, responded to the request of the exhausted Joseph and Mary plus donkey - ‘Plenty room, come along in’. Consternation all round!

With every good wish for happy and ‘not too busy’ Christmas