

February 2016

Ecumenical Endeavours A Letter from Ian Ian Gilmour	3-4
Worship in Winter	5
February-March Diary	6-9
Announcements	9
Notes from the Kirk Session Albany Deaf Church	10-11
Looking Forward to Lent	12
Bellringers update A peal for Jason Wardley	13
A Special Trip Choir tour to Germany	14-17
Malawi Mulanje Matters – A bag of rice can change a life	18-19
Church and Community News	20-22
Workplace Chaplaincy – Peace and Justice Centre – EcoCongregation – General Assembly Stewarding The Church and Refugees Fresh Start AGM	
News from TOGETHER Partners	24-27
St John's Theology Symposium Ecumenical Friends Soul Space – Silent Prayer – Compline – Cornerstone Salt of the Earth	
All things bright and beautiful Pat McKerrow	28-30
A-Z of things to do at St Andrew's and St George's West	31
CONTACTS	32

Cover: Artwork from 9.45 All Age Worship and Bright Sparks children's group.

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Copy deadline for the Easter issue is Monday 22 February 2016.

Ecumenical Endeavours

A letter from Ian

The dictionary defines ecumenical or oecumenical as

1 of or relating to the Christian Church throughout the world, esp. with regard to its unity.

2 a tending to promote unity among Christians. **b** of or

relating to the international movement initiated in non-Catholic churches in 1910 (in Edinburgh) aimed at Christian unity.

3 Rare. universal, general, worldwide.



Sharing in worship in Germany

Local

On Sunday 24 January 2016 we engaged in a joint service with our ecumenical partners in Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together during the week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This is symbolic of the front line ecumenical activity in which we engage with our closest neighbours. The theme was Salt and one key message was “You are the Salt of the earth”.

Continental

At the turn of the year our choir and their groupies, including myself, were on a grand German tour. Photographs and details are given elsewhere in this edition. The choir sang brilliantly in their New Year’s Day concert, but also supported four full Roman Catholic services and were well received by the congregations.

It was really good to participate by reading and praying at two of these services. The key element for us was not the words of the liturgy, but the palpable warmth from the key people who welcomed us and make us feel at home. It struck me strongly that we in turn need to keep working at our warmth of welcome to visitors and to be intentional to greet all those who cross our threshold.

Interfaith

Half a dozen of our elders had a meeting with the Imam from Central Mosque in response to our letter to that Muslim community following

the Paris attacks. He was hugely appreciative of us reaching out to him and his community and he has promised to look for opportunities to work together with us.

As we enter a year which could well be marred by violence of one group trying to kill another, while using beliefs as an excuse, I think it is vital that we are welcoming to all, active ecumenically and fully engaged with our neighbours of all faiths as a model of good practice.

Jesus said, **“Love your neighbour as you love yourself.’ The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments.”**

Unity

Finally I am glad to report that our Kirk Session unanimously agree to unite with Albany Church for the Deaf. More details to follow, but I believe this will enrich both congregations in myriad ways. We will use our building and will have some joint activities.

Life is a gift from God and what we believe and how we behave does affect the whole world, in ways we can scarcely imagine.

Enjoy each day in 2016.
Blessings, Ian



Preparing to read at a service in Germany

Worship in Winter 2016

As we move through the Season of Lent trusting God in our weakest moments and at times when our journey seems too difficult and we wonder if we can go on.



We can find reassurance in the rituals that make up our spiritual practice. *Seasons of the Spirit 2016*

Worship Strengthens and Transforms

Worship is helpful for our growth as followers of Christ, so consider joining us Sunday by Sunday. You can attend Communion at 9.00am, the All Age service at 9.45am or enjoy our progressive pattern at 11.00am or come to all three!

Sunday 11am Morning Worship Themes

God said to Abram

*To your descendants
- your children,
grand-children, great-
grand-children, great-
great-great-grand-
children, to many
generations –
I will be faithful to my
promises.”*

The Book of Genesis

7 Feb	Sharing Bread on Our Journey <i>Deuteronomy 26:1–11</i>
14 Feb	Trusting God <i>Genesis 15:1–12, 17–18</i>
21 Feb	Praise God <i>Psalms 63:1–8</i>
28 Feb	Returning to God <i>Luke 15:1–3, 11–32</i>
6 Mar	God’s Fresh Ways <i>John 12:1–8</i>

February 2016 Diary

Mon 1 Feb	6.30pm AHSS Lecture Nick Haines – Building Scotland's Canals http://www.ahss.org.uk/
Wed 3 Feb	12.30pm <i>Soul Space at St Cuthbert's</i>
Thur 4 Feb	12.30pm <i>Ecumenical Friends at St Cuthbert's</i>
Fri 5 Feb	Sing in the City Concert https://www.choiredinburgh.co.uk/events.php
Sat 6 Feb	7.30pm Georgian Concert Society Wohlgesetzte Melodyen: Music by Bach and Buxtehude http://www.gcs.org.uk/concert5.htm

Sun 7 Feb

9am Communion (spoken liturgy)
9.45am Learning Together - all age worship,
10.30am Sunday Discussion Group (adults)
11am Morning Worship
(Bright Sparks for children from 11.15)
today we hand over cheques from SHINE to
Amnesty, Circle and FirstHand
12 Fellowship lunch -**Scottish Refugee Council**

7.30pm EDGAS – Iolanthe Come & Sing
<http://www.edgas.org/home/news.shtml>

Tue 9 Feb	3.30pm <i>Exploring silent prayer at St John's</i>
Wed 10 Feb	ASH WEDNESDAY, Lent begins
Thur 11Feb	12.30pm <i>Ecumenical Friends at St Cuthbert's</i> 7.15pm TOGETHER Pilgrim Course (1)

Sun 14 Feb

9am Communion (spoken liturgy)
9.45am Learning Together - all age worship,
10.30am Sunday Discussion Group (adults)
11am Morning Worship
(Bright Sparks for children from 11.15)
12 noon bellringers

Mon 15 Feb 10.30am (to 12noon) Book Group meets
Wed 17 Feb Sanctuary closed – conference
Creative TOGETHER meets (at Maggie Morley's)
Thur 18 Feb 12.30pm *Ecumenical Friends at St Cuthbert's*
7.15pm TOGETHER Pilgrim Course (2)
Sat 20 Feb 2.30pm Spice It Up Cookery Demonstration and
Afternoon Tea in the Undercroft.

Sun 21 Feb 9am Communion
9.45am Learning Together
10.30am Adult Discussion Group
11am Morning Worship

Tue 23 Feb 3.30pm *Exploring silent prayer at St John's*

Wed 24 Feb Sanctuary closed - conference

Thur 25 Feb 12.30pm Ecumenical Friends at STAGW
7.15pm TOGETHER Pilgrim Course (3)

Sun 28 Feb 9am Communion (spoken liturgy)
9.45am Learning Together - all age worship,
10.30am Sunday Discussion Group (adults)
11am Morning Worship
(Bright Sparks for children from 11.15)
12 noon communion

2pm Albany Deaf Church Visual Service

March 2016 Diary

Thu 3 Mar 12.30pm Ecumenical Friends at STAGW
7.15pm TOGETHER Pilgrim Course (4)

Sun 6 Mar 9am Communion,
9.45am Learning Together; 10.30am Discussion
11am Morning Worship

	12 Fellowship lunch – Bibles for Malawi 2pm Albany Deaf Church Bible Study
Mon 7 Mar	6.30pm AHSS Lecture Anthony Lewis – The Builders of Edinburgh’s first New Town 1767-1795
Thur 10 Mar	12.30pm Ecumenical Friends <u>at STAGW</u> 7.15pm TOGETHER Pilgrim Course (5)
Sat 12 Mar	7.30pm Georgian Concert Society Florilegium – Towards the Enlightenment http://www.gcs.org.uk/concert6.htm
Sun 13 Mar	9am Communion, 9.45am Learning Together; 10.30am Discussion 11am Morning Worship
Mon 14 Mar	7.30pm Kirk Session
Thur 17 Mar	7.15pm TOGETHER Pilgrim Course (6)
Sat 19 Mar	Messy Church
Sun 20 Mar	Palm Sunday
Mon 21-	Holy Week
Fri 25 Mar	evening services with music
Sat 26 Mar	Holy Saturday 12-2pm Gospel of Luke, Sanctuary
Sun 27 Mar	Easter Sunday 9am Communion 9.45am Learning Together - all age worship, 10.30am Sunday Discussion Group 11am Easter Worship with Communion 2pm Albany Deaf Church Easter Communion

Regular events at St Andrew’s & St George’s West

Monday – Friday at 1pm: daily prayers – Tuesday Communion

Mon 7.30-9pm Bellringers practice

Tue 10am – noon Circle Scotland Kinship Carers Choir

Tue 7-9pm Edinburgh Choir meets, Sanctuary

Wed 7.30-9.30pm AA meets in the Davidson Room

Thurs 7.30-9pm STAGW Choir, Davidson Room

Thurs 7-9pm Edin Art & Sketching Club meets Undercroft, fortnightly

2016 Diary Dates

Sun 1 May **CA Push n Shove Sunday**

Mon 2 – Fri 13 May **Christian Aid Sorting**

Sat 14 – Fri 20 May **Christian Aid Sale**

Sat 21 – Fri 27 May **General Assembly**

late May/early June **Donald Gorrie Lectures**

Sun 7- Sun 28 Aug **St Andrew's and St George's West
at Festival Time**

Fri 9 – Sat 24 Dec **Christmas Tree Festival**

Fri 16 Dec **Carols at Six**

Information correct at TGP

Find our online diary under the WHAT's ON tab on the website

www.stagw.org.uk/whats-on/

Announcements

New members joining

Ingrid Kovacs Cziberene and Attila Czibere

Deaths

Mrs Isobel (Billie) Fraser at Whitley Bay

Mrs Bridget Wedderburn

Mr Denis C Sutherland

Miss Evelyn Scott

Members leaving

Mr Ian Penman and Mrs Elizabeth Penman

Notes from the Kirk Session

George Burgess, Session Clerk

The Kirk Session met on 19 January 2016.

It noted with sadness the recent deaths of three of our members; and heard about a very positive meeting with the Imam of the Central Mosque.

The Staffing & Management Group reported on the steps being taken to fill the post of Church Manager following Jean Howard's resignation – difficult shoes to fill.

Session also heard about the “Together” away day held in October, resolved to add two new members to our roll, and noted the difficulties being caused by water ingress and the steps being taken to resolve them.

We also agreed a number of recommendations on our patterns of worship, including working on Sunday evening worship with our Together partners; widening participation in worship e.g. through more members being involved in readings and prayers; and providing a permanent focal point for prayers in the Sanctuary.

Session considered the proposal from Edinburgh Presbytery for the Albany Deaf Church, who already worship with us in George St, to become a “Presbytery Mission Initiative” with us as the Supervising Congregation. This will free up Albany from the administrative burdens of being a congregation in their own right, and allow them to concentrate on this important area of ministry. The proposal was unanimously and enthusiastically agreed by Session, and will now go through Presbytery – watch this space for developments.

Elders also discussed pastoral care, seeking to ensure that our arrangements are working well, that we have contact with all of our members and that involvement in pastoral care can spread even further beyond the eldership.



Albany Deaf Church Edinburgh Programme

31 Jan 2pm Visual Service St Andrew's & St George's West

7 Feb 2pm Bible Study, Deaf Action, Albany Street

14 Feb 2pm at Trust House, Montrose Terrace

21 Feb 2pm Deaf Action, Albany Street

28 Feb 2pm Visual Service St Andrew's & St George's West

6 Mar 2pm Bible Study St Andrew's & St George's West (STAGW)

12 Mar 10am -12.30pm Messy Church at STAGW

13 Mar 2pm Trust House, Montrose Terrace

20 Mar 2pm Deaf Action, Albany Street

27 Mar 2pm Easter Communion St Andrew's & St George's West

Follow Albany on facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/albanydeafchurch/>

**Rev Rosie Addis is
Chaplain to Deaf people in
the East of Scotland.**

**raddis(at)churchofscotland
(dot)org(dot)uk
07738 983 393**



Looking forward to Lent



A COURSE FOR THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

Would you like to find out more about Christianity and ask those difficult questions?

If so the Pilgrim Course could be for you. It will be in Lent, on **Thursdays from 11 February to 17 March, 7.15pm to 8.45pm** and we will be looking at the **Ten Commandments** and what Jesus had to say about them.

This is a joint Together event and is open to all. The course will be held in St Andrews and St George's West.

The Pilgrim Course (www.pilgrimcourse.org) was developed as an introduction to Christianity which is also suitable as a 'refresher course' for church people. In six sessions it looks at basic areas of the faith over drinks in a friendly group using Bible study, discussion and videos.

There is no charge but donations can be made to cover costs. It was a great success at St John's last year and is ideal for beginners and those who wonder why some of us are Christians, so bring along a friend. To register or for more information contact **Stephen Holmes**, Associate Rector at St John's on [stephen\(dot\)holmes\(at\)stjohns-edinburgh\(dot\)org\(dot\)uk](mailto:stephen(dot)holmes(at)stjohns-edinburgh(dot)org(dot)uk).

Lent at St Andrew's and St George's West

Ministry student **Ishbel Smith**, who created the Tree of Life Walkway in our sanctuary in the summer, will be working on some Lent installations in our courtyard this year.

On Holy Saturday (26 March) we would like to get together 24 people to read aloud the 24 chapters of the Gospel of Luke over a couple of hours in the middle of the day. If you would like to be part of this please drop an email to [lentproject\(at\)stagw\(dot\)org\(dot\)uk](mailto:lentproject(at)stagw(dot)org(dot)uk)

Peal to celebrate the life of Jason Wardley

On 20 December 2016 the band of ringers of St Andrew's and St George's West completed a full peal to celebrate the life of Jason Wardley who died on 4 April 2014 aged 37 years. Jason was an elder of the Church and held a PhD in Divinity from New College. Many people will remember him for his work every year in support of the Christian Aid Sale.

Eight ringers took part in the successful peal including Jason's wife, Morven Cross. The band rang the full peal of Grandsire Triples in 3 hours and 6 minutes, with Morven ringing the eighth bell, known as the tenor. The peal was conducted by Mike Clay, the Tower Captain and will appear in 'The Ringing World', the UK-wide journal for church bell ringers, with a dedication to Jason.

Jason was not a ringer himself but took a strong interest in ringing activities. Morven commented that he 'would be really chuffed' to know that a peal was dedicated to him.

Anne Leigh-Brown, Tower Secretary



**CHURCHES TOGETHER FOR
CHRISTIAN AID**
"Spice it Up"
Cookery Demonstration and
Afternoon Tea
Saturday 20th February
2.30pm-5pm
St Andrew's and St George's West
Church, Undercroft Café

Tickets £8

**Tix from Margaret
McGregor.**

**The last cookery
afternoon sold out,
so don't hang
around...**



A Special Trip

Recipe for a successful choral adventure in Germany:

Personnel:

20 singers: 2 accompanists
(piano/organ): 1 director: 5 supporters

Itinerary

30th January Edinburgh to Amsterdam by air: Amsterdam to Ahrweiler by coach (driven by a retired NATO staff driving instructor) Evening wine tasting in local winery sets the tone!

31st December Silvestergottesdienst in Rosenkranz Kirche, Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler – followed by Silvestergottesdienst in St. Laurentiuskirche, Bad Neuenahr- Ahrweiler (with a tight turnaround – not everyone was transported in time for the first two pieces!)

New Year seen in amongst the vineyards above the town – complete with rendition of Auld Lang Syne to the accompaniment of fireworks all around.

1st January Open air swimming on offer! New Year's Day concert in St Laurentiuskirche 400+ in the audience, with a standing ovation. Pre – dinner entertainment for guests at Hotel Hohenzollern, after walking up the hill to the hotel in the moonlight

2nd January Travel to Hollage, near Osnabrück (by our friendly coach driver, who became our official photographer) Evening Mass in St Josef Kirche, Hollage. Staying with host families

3rd January Morning Mass in St Josefs Kirche, Belm; Sightseeing in Osnabrück. Evening ceilidh with the Cantorem Choir, in Hollage

4th January Snow! Coach to Amsterdam for the return flight home

Choir impressions

Every day of our trip we were welcomed wherever we performed. Choral music very familiar to us becomes special to the audience. We really were musical ambassadors. (Brigitte H)

Singing to capacity audiences and garnering a standing ovation brought tears to my eyes. (Crispin L)

I'm singing in the Rhine, just singing in the Rhine
What a glorious feelin', I'm happy again. (George B)

What a fantastic way to spend and celebrate New Year; singing in beautiful old and new churches to receptive congregations and audience; the special sense of being included in worship through being offered the Eucharist in both Ahrweiler churches, and the great efforts to translate so much into English in Hollage for us. (Susan McL)

Ten... Nine... Eight... Seven... Six... Five... Four... Three... Two... One...! led to 'fireglow and starlight' (with reference to both John Rutter and New Year celebratory fireworks (Dorothea H)

I enjoyed every part of the trip and felt I got to know everyone better. (Emma R)

A very successful and enjoyable trip that brought the choir closer together and allowed it to grow in confidence. (Joanna S)

Highlights – New Year's Day concert, the ceilidh, the water slide at Osnabrück... most of all, spending time with the choir and getting to know everyone that little bit better was lovely. (Anna W)

Glorious churches

Energetic singing

Rapturous applause from audiences

Many opportunities for laughter

Artistic Christmas decorations everywhere

New friendships, the choir and our hosts; (the)

Year off to a creative start! (Frances C)



Hogmanay/Silvester celebrations: singing at evening Mass in a packed church with beautiful Christmas trees and poinsettias surrounding a large nativity scene; a happy party with German friends; a climb up the hillside among the vineyards at midnight to view spectacular fireworks all over the town of Bad Neuenahr/Ahrweiler and to welcome in the New Year (Mary G)

An antidote to the commercialism of Christmas with four masses and a concert! (Eileen F)

I really enjoyed my first tour with the choir. The New Year's Day concert in the church in Ahrweiler was a fantastic experience, singing in such a beautiful setting and acoustic with a packed audience who were so appreciative. (Jamie L)

Singing in the church in Ahrweiler was the highlight of the trip. The building, atmosphere, acoustics and the receptive audience made it a very special evening. (Andrew C)

New Year on the vineyards was a very special moment, the fireworks that lit up the town were incredible. (Drew Crichton)

My highlight of the week would have to be making porridge for my host family after they discovered that was my staple breakfast meal or indeed calling at the ceilidh and watching Michael and Brigitte's hilarious version of Strip the Willow. (Rachael L)

Meeting up with old friends, making new ones, singing in beautiful places, swimming in the open air and enjoying gracious hospitality wherever we went. To have faith and music combined so wonderfully made celebrating the advent of a new year together an absolute delight. (Adrienne B)

For me it was wonderful to see my two worlds of home in Hollage and student life in Edinburgh come together so well! (Katharina H)

Thanks to Frances Cooper, Brigitte Harris and members of St Andrew's and St George's West Choir for their reflections.



Mulanje Matters – how you have helped

Alison Campbell, Malawi group

Over the past year we have raised over **£4,500** to help Mulanje Mission Hospital.

Working with Stockbridge Church, we committed to funding the planting of fruit trees. We also wanted to make funds available so that the Hospital could use the money wherever the need was greatest, and our Bright Sparks children decided to run a lunch to fund a hospital bed (a staffed bed costs £600). With the place mats that the Bright Sparks made as well as their excellent serving and clearing, the lunch was the most successful we have ever had and raised enough for 2 beds!

Jean Mackinlay produced recipe cards to encourage the congregation to use Fair Trade ingredients and the young people sold these as well.



A ceilidh in Stockbridge church was once again a great success with the Innes McNeill Ceilidh Band, and accordion and Gaelic singing from Stockbridge. Dr Shakespeare sent us some soft toys made by local women, a new venture, and we sold these at the Fair Trade Stall.

In August a disturbing email from the Hospital told us about the Government's cut in rations for the prison, leading to severe malnutrition and even death among prisoners, and we and Stockbridge Church had to respond.

So in 12 months we have given £1,884 for hospital beds and orchard planting, and £2,590 towards feeding of prisoners.

Stockbridge has contributed additional funds from their coffee mornings and the ceilidh. Although things remain very difficult in Malawi, we can be thankful for what we have been able to do.

A bag of rice can change a life

Phyllis Thompson

A few weeks ago I attended an event at the City Chambers. It was the launch of Kilombero Rice from Malawi in Margiotta stores throughout Edinburgh. The Lord Provost of Edinburgh attended and gave a short speech endorsing all that the Scotland/Malawi Partnership had achieved as well as the achievements of Just Trading Scotland, who started the Kilombero Rice Project.



John Riches, the founder of Just Trading Scotland, then spoke about the story of Just Trading - its highs as well as its lows. At first it was not easy to persuade the farmers of Northern Malawi to invest land, money for seeds and fertiliser in a cash rice crop, but he persevered and eventually won them over. John thanked all those who had supported the 90kg Rice Challenge including churches as well as schools, community groups and universities in Scotland.

So if St Andrew's and St George's West Fair Trade Stall happens to run out of Kilombero Rice then you can try your local Margiotta store for some! You can also pass the news around family and friends about this wonderful rice and where they can now purchase it. You will be helping the small farmers of northern Malawi to gain a cash income enabling them to feed their families as well as sending their children to school.



Our Fair Trade Stall has now sold 270kg of rice – **enough to send 3 children to school.** The next 90kg bag has just arrived – **let's make it 4!**

News from the Wider Community

Workplace Chaplaincy Training Day: Thursday 11 February
10am-4pm at St George's Tron in Glasgow

Peace and Justice Centre: Conflict Resolution Skills Training Workshop Saturday 13 February, 10am – 5pm

for working with groups of young people, 5 – 12 years old.

Workshop participants may be able to participate in co-delivering the Conflict Resolution Skills for Primary Schools Project. Course fee - pay what you can – recommended donation £30 for 7 hour training workshop including tea, coffee, snacks and lunch. Advance booking required. Places are limited. For more information and to book a place contact the Peace & Justice Centre on 0131 629 1058 or email contact@peaceandjustice.org.uk.

EcoCongregation news: Wildflower painting session on 27 Feb in Lauriston Centre, Lauriston Street, Edinburgh EH3 9DJ from 2 pm to 5 pm. To find out more and book your place, contact Sarah at: greeningourstreet@gmail.com.

General Assembly 21-27 May 2016

If you are interested in serving as a steward at the General Assembly this year please contact Sandy Gemmill at assemblystewards@churchofscotland.org.uk. People are asked to undertake two hour shifts on one or more days (some people offer to do more than one shift). Duties involve checking passes and directing people to the appropriate places in the building and managing the flow of people at busy times. Unfortunately no travelling expenses are paid. Teas and coffees and light refreshments are provided with a modest lunch allowance for those on duty over lunch time.

Sandy Gemmill, Chief Steward, General Assembly
Principal Clerk's Office, Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4YN

The church and refugees

Two members of the Wider Horizons group met recently with David Bradwell, refugee coordinator for Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees. He is liaising with a variety of different agencies working in this field, including local authorities across the country as well as church and other faith groups. The City of Edinburgh Council has agreed to resettle fourteen Syrian families.



David Bradwell writes:

“There is a lot we can do to make them feel welcome in Edinburgh and there have already been some discussions about how faith groups can offer space, befriending, helping with English and even household basics as people will arrive with very little.

“As Christians we have a particular answer to the question of why we should bother caring for refugees – it is because our Lord commanded it. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, he tells us to love our neighbour; in Matthew 25, he says that whatever we do for poorest and the least, we do for him.

We can also do a lot to help refugees overseas; the principal way the Church of Scotland can do this is to support our partner Church – the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon – by fund-raising through the World Mission Council’s ‘A Place at the Table’. If you would like more information about this or any of the work around refugees, I would be very interested in hearing from you.”

If you have any questions or suggestions, you can contact David through the methods below. He is happy to talk to interested groups.

David Bradwell, Refugee Co-ordinator
Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees
dbradwell(at)churchofscotland(dot)org(dot)uk
Telephone: 07341 478 174
Twitter: @WithRefugees

**The Fellowship
Lunch on 7th
February will be
raising funds for
the Scottish
Refugee Council**

Fresh Start AGM

Alan Mackinlay

I recently attended the AGM of Fresh Start (Scotland), the church's charity supporting the resettlement of people who have been homeless. It provides ways in which congregations and individual church members can do something practical to help such people. Their Mission Statement is 'To help people make a home for themselves'.

The aims of Fresh Start include help with resettlement, the offer of volunteering opportunities, the development of lifetime skills, and the involvement of church members in work to end homelessness. Its services fall into three divisions: the provision of goods; social and practical support, and employability. It works with other agencies to ensure clients get an integrated support package.

Some statistics for the year to March 2015: over 11,000 starter packs were distributed; 87 churches donated goods; over 4,000 small electrical appliances were tested for safety and issued.

On employability, the PAT service (Portable Appliance Testing) creates and funds intermediate employment placements, providing accredited training. Of the 10 trainees who successfully completed their placements, 9 moved on to employment, the other remaining with Fresh Start. £64,500 was generated from the PAT business.

Besides its main premises at Ferry Road Drive, it now operates from a depot in Craigmillar, the most deprived part of the city, where it runs classes in cookery and vegetable gardening.

The Convenor, Revd. Dr J Russell Barr, thanked all present, stressing that without the contribution of the volunteers, the organisation could not function.

<http://www.freshstartweb.org.uk/>

You can help Fresh Start by bringing donations of tinned and dry goods to church on the first Sunday of the month.

We deliver these to Fresh Start to make food packs for people settling into new accommodation.

God, Creation and Providence



The St John's Theology Symposium

A joint event with New College and the Centre for Theology and Public Issues

led by

Professor David Fergusson

Edinburgh University



At St Cuthbert's Church, Lothian Road, Edinburgh

Saturday 23rd April 2016, 10am-4pm - including lectures, lunch, and discussion

All Welcome – there is no charge but donations can be given

To register or for further information contact:

Revd Dr Stephen Mark Holmes, St John's Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh

EH2 4BJ. stephen.holmes@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk



News from TOGETHER Partners



soul space - Wed 3 Feb, St Cuthbert's

12.30 - 2pm and 5 - 7.30pm, drop-in with with short led reflections at 1pm and 7pm. Exploring Psalms 42 and 43,

Ecumenical Friends Edinburgh We gather at 12.30pm and bring our own sandwich lunch with tea and coffee being provided for still only £1.50 (to cover expenses) Meetings are usually held in St. Cuthbert's Church Hall. **Meetings on 25 Feb, 3 and 10 March will be held in St Andrew's and St George's West Sanctuary.**

Feb 04	Margaret Ann Fraser	<i>In the footsteps of St Thomas</i>
11	Carol Finlay	<i>Cuban Connections</i>
18	Fiona Davies	<i>Miscellaneous Adventures</i>
25	Bethany Trust	<i>Bethany's Work with Homeless and Vulnerable People</i>
Mar 03	Marjorie Clark or Elena Sarra	<i>Church of Scotland HIV Programme</i>
10	John Munro	<i>Lent Meditation</i>

Exploring Silent Prayer group will meet from 3.30-4.15pm in the side chapel at St John's, Princes St, on the following Tuesday dates: January 26, February 9 and 23, March 8 and 22. All are welcome; no previous experience of silent prayer is required.

Compline at St John's – Gregorian Chant at 9.30pm every Thursday in Lent.

Cornerstone Bookshop have now reopened after their move. They are in a new, bright, temporary shop on the Upper Terrace at St John's overlooking St Cuthbert's and looking towards the Castle. They are fully stocked with books and cards and have got lots of Lenten materials for individuals and groups.

Salt of the Earth

David Denniston



Jesus said 'You are the salt of the earth'

This is my last Together service after approaching 8 years with you in ministry and mission. In September 2008 when the Together covenant was signed, Rev David Lunan preached and the Together journey began, David's text was another saying of Jesus from Matthew's Gospel . . . 'Go then and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you'. Today, I wonder just how much we have fulfilled that.

'You are the salt of the earth' is the theme for this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It is a striking metaphor. Jesus' followers (and we are they!) can and do have a powerful and positive influence in the world, like salt that preserves and makes a difference. Yet in the context of the Beatitudes, how can the people described by Jesus as 'blessed' have any kind of influence in this world? Will they not simply be overwhelmed by the floodtide of evil? Are they not too feeble and few in number to achieve anything?

Today our offerings go to the Scottish Refugee Council and few of us can have failed to be moved by the plight of refugees. But what can we do? How easy it can be to become despairing! Yet, Jesus said to his ragbag group of only twelve followers, 'You are the salt of the earth.'

Today is also 'Homelessness Sunday'. Perhaps we can feel a little more confident here, with Together's involvement in support and fundraising. And yet numbers of homeless people seem to be rising. Care Shelters this winter have turned people away for lack of space. But we, as salt, can change things. Does that sound slightly ridiculous? What difference can we make here in the City

Centre of Edinburgh in a declining church with reducing national influence?

The whole point is that salt is very little in quantity compared to that which it affects. And Jesus was less interested in quantity than in quality. He said 'If salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?' Think of the threatened church to which Matthew's Gospel was originally written! We make a difference simply because of our . . .

Presence - because we are here and out in the world in so many of our activities. It is also through our . . .

Pastoral Care - the listening ear offered, the church door open to the homeless, the help given to someone in need and all the other things we do. And still more, it involves . . .

Prophetic witness - We talk about 'rubbing salt in the wound'. We may not associate that with Jesus's teaching but are we not meant to challenge power and authority when people are being overlooked or mistreated? Yes, that is part of our prophetic witness to war and violence, poverty and homelessness, the refugee and the asylum seeker, environmental concern and the integrity of creation. The St John's mural is one obvious example of this witness....speaking truth to power, the prophetic word that may upset and disturb.

Here is a fourth and final way in which we can be salt...

Proclamation. Let me make a point which I fear we are too ready to avoid. We are present in many areas of our city centre; we often effectively offer pastoral care and prophetic witness, but when and how do we proclaim the Good News of God's love in Christ to the world around us?

The very first clause of the Together covenant reads . . .

as fellow pilgrims in faith, we wholeheartedly pledge ourselves to work together to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God and nurture new believers through declaring the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in ways that are relevant to the people of our city;

Evangelism may have a bad name, but telling out the Good News is part of our calling and our founding raison d'etre! If we cannot find ways of doing this, then what have we really got to offer? Evangelism is too important and too necessary to be left to those with limited vision, closed minds, and narrow theologies. This is a challenge to Together as you move forward into the future.

You, we, are followers of Jesus on the Way, and the followers of Jesus are the salt of the earth. We make a difference, not because we manoeuvre ourselves into position of power, but because we are humble; not because we use force, but because we pursue peace; not because we peddle a superficial happiness, but because we are prepared to mourn; not because we have learned the cynical arts of spin or manipulation, but because we are pure in heart, and hunger and thirst for righteousness.

We make a difference when we are present wherever others are, when we offer pastoral care to all in any kind of need, when we offer prophetic witness and speak truth to power. And also and inescapably, when we are ready to proclaim the good news of God's love in Christ to the community and society around us.

YOU are the salt of the earth...

David Denniston is minister at St Cuthbert's Church. From Easter 2016 he will take up interim ministry in the east of Scotland. Find the full text of this sermon, preached at the TOGETHER joint service on 24 January at St Andrew's and St George's West <http://www.st-cuthberts.net/crsmn201604.php>

All Things Bright and Beautiful All Creatures Great and Small...

Pat McKerrow's wildlife diary

I thoroughly enjoyed the Advent and Christmas period, waiting and preparing to celebrate the very special birth, then welcoming the start of a New Year, the period of reflection and annual optimism. My thoughts as a wildlife watcher/photographer are now focussed, with hope and excitement, on the nature that surrounds us.

I already see and hear animals and birds beginning their preparations to welcome new life. In recent years our garden and its environs have played host to a wonderful array of young and allowed me endless moments of joy with my camera. I look forward to having similar experiences over the coming months – I will of course share favourites with you in future magazine editions.

Meantime, I'd like to share some previous moments with you as I reflect on my fox family of 2014, a vixen and her six tiny cubs. I became aware of them by chance; simply hearing noises stemming from the garden one evening as dusk fell. As soon as I looked out, I was enthralled!

From then on, it became a regular pattern, just before 9pm each night. For the first few days I watched from the comfort of our lounge window, four floors up. Then one evening, donning subtle camouflage clothing and just before their usual playtime, I decided to try for some photo opportunities by hiding myself in one of the larger bushes in the garden.

Of course, as soon as the vixen appeared she sensed my presence right away and headed straight towards me. Despite a slightly raised heart rate, I remained motionless, which thankfully she took as a positive sign and duly signalled for her cubs to approach.

Words cannot adequately describe what happened next in terms of the thrill and privilege of being allowed to witness and hear these little creatures having such fun, while all the time the ever watchful mum kept her eye on the goings on.....and the photographer!



Their very energetic and amusing playtime lasted for about half an hour during which I did get some super photos, but more importantly, I experienced that super one-ness with nature I mentioned in my previous article. Plus, I gained fabulous memories that will remain with me forever. Not wishing to overly intrude into their lives, I didn't make any return visits to the 'bush' over the months that ensued; instead, I continued my subsequent observations from our lofty 'hide'.



So many of our wonderful hymns speak of creation and nature, I immediately think of one of our wedding hymns, 'How Great Thou Art', "...O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hand hath made...." ; also, 'Lord of Life', a hymn I came across recently, "...this world is yours – the sweep of sea and land, every living cell proclaims a great creator's hand....nature's bounty is your gift for humankind to share."

I believe all life is a precious part of creation and no single species has greater rights than another. In that, I applaud Dame Jane Goodall's vision of Earth as "a place where people, animals, and the environment exist in sustainable harmony".

Sadly, that was not evident when I later found one of my fox cubs lying fighting for his life in the garden that had served as a playground – he had been fatally poisoned. I leave you for now with a couple of photos from my evening with the fox family, one showing proud mum, and another the smallest cub. Every blessing, Pat McKerrow

An A-Z of things to do at St Andrew's and St George's West

Amnesty Group meets monthly, on the last Monday of the month, 12.15-1pm in the Undercroft Café to write letters campaigning of the release of political prisoners. All welcome.

Ruth Forrester

Bellringers meet twice weekly, practising Monday evenings and ringing on Sunday 12 noon. Beginners and experienced ringers welcome. **Barbara Ross** is congregational contact

Book Group meets monthly, on the third Monday of the month from 10.30am-12 noon. Currently reading Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life Together. Everyone welcome. **Veronica Crerar**

Choir rehearses twice weekly on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings, and sings at 11am Sunday worship and radio and other performances throughout the year. **Mary Margaret Scott** is choir secretary

Creative Together meets monthly, on the third Wednesday of the month, for all kinds of crafting, chat and planning fundraising events. New members very welcome **Maggie Morley**

Evergreens social group (mostly 'older' folk, but all welcome) meet monthly for talks, film visits etc. 2016 programme coming soon. **Veronica Crerar**

Fair Trade Stall welcomes helpers of all ages **Ruth Forrester**

Messy Church meets quarterly on a Saturday morning: provisional dates 19 Mar; 11 June; 3 Sept; 12 Nov **Ian Gilmour**

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Office open Mon - Fri 10am-3pm
Church open Mon - Fri 10am - 3pm: Sat 11am-2pm
Undercroft Café Mon - Fri 10am - 2pm

Sunday worship 9am, 9.45am, 11am
Weekday worship 1pm Monday – Friday

Minister Rev Ian Y Gilmour
0131 225 3847 (church)

Session Clerks George Burgess

Joint Treasurers John Innes
Allan Sim

Director of Music Brigitte Harris
Assistant Director of Music Andrew Carvel

Church manager Jean Howard (Monday-Thursday 8am-5pm)
0131 225 3847
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Church secretary Joyce Garland (Tue, Thurs, Fri 10am-3pm)
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