



# St Andrew's and St George's West February 2017 Magazine



# February 2017 Magazine

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Many thanks to everyone who contributes to the magazine.

Cover Life-size banner of the separation wall at Heart and Soul, 2012

# Four Films and a new Attorney General

Ian Y Gilmour

January is the season for films to be released as the film award season comes into society's viewfinder. I enjoy watching a good picture and I recommend four to you.

Film one is **Silence**, by Martin Scorsese, a challenging and moving view of Jesuit missionaries operating in a difficult environment in the 17th century and the ethical and cultural dilemmas they faced.

Film two, **Billy Elliot**, will be shown at our church on Wednesday 15 February at 7pm for a donation of £1.50 towards refreshments. I expect many of you will have seen it, but you may not have enjoyed a cuppa and a structured discussion with friends afterwards.

Through a simple narrative, this powerful tale reveals two huge contrasting changes in British society, the bitterness at the end of mining industry and the new tolerance emerging through artistic endeavour, dancing in this case. The tensions are unpacked within one 'typical' northern household. The acting, with Julie Walters and Jamie Bell is strong. I look forward to reflecting upon it with all who gather. A date for your diary.

Film three, **Seven Songs for a Long Life**, will be shown at our church on Tuesday 21 February at 7pm, followed by a discussion. Shot in Strathcarron Hospice this documentary grabs life through song. Six patients allow us into tender, vulnerable and funny moments of their lives. Singing unlocks the patients' pasts, guides their dreams and their futures. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to help face your own mortality, making the process of dying itself safe, individual, and as gentle as possible. Amy Hardie, the film director, will lead discussion afterwards.

Film four, **Hidden Figures**, just released in the US, is based on a factual book about African-American women in the early 1960s who lived in the segregated South while working for NASA.

The women were engineers, mathematicians — one, Katherine Johnson, was a prodigy with the facility for calculating numbers in her head. When John Glenn was preparing his re-entry to Earth, he recognised that an urgent adjustment to the calculation was needed. Glenn knew whom to ask for: Katherine Johnson. Sure enough, she gets it right and he returns safely.

Yet for all her genius, Johnson and the other black women were routinely subjected to humiliation and insults, to the condescension that was all too common for black Americans when “Whites Only” signs — and state troopers enforced cruel laws — maintained strict segregation between the races, even in the swinging' 60's.

Despite several white restrooms in the NASA control centre where she worked, whenever nature called Johnson had to run half a mile to the coloured bathroom in another building. She was the only black woman in this particular team and as such was not even allowed to share the coffee machine.

It is a film I will look out for when it appears here.

The film comes at a good time as Jeff Sessions - Jefferson Beauregard "Jeff" Sessions III, is appointed the new Attorney General of the most powerful nation on the planet. As a senator, he is noted for advocacy of reducing legal immigration. He supported the major legislative efforts of the George W. Bush administration, including the Iraq War, and a proposed national amendment to ban same-sex marriage. He opposed the establishment of the Troubled Asset Relief Program and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

According to the respected US political commentator Bill Moyers,

"Sessions would take back all the racial progress. He will now have the chance to turn the clock back, which is probably why Donald Trump chose him."

Moyers continues,

"So much struggle and sacrifice over the years, so many burning churches, mutilated bodies, ticking bombs and bloodshed — so much venomous human behaviour before we finally began to get it right. Racism still remains a powerful toxic stream flowing through American life. Too many people are still unseen."

"Through his career as a prosecutor in Alabama and as a US senator Jeff Sessions has done what he could to frustrate the gains of all the "hidden figures" among us by attempting to disenfranchise or suppress their votes... And he opposed reauthorising the Violence Against Women Act."

"Benign in manner, soft of voice but hard at the core, Jeff Sessions is the perfect figurehead for the resurgent white nationalists who now aim not to make history but reverse it — by a hundred years or more if they can. This is the man to whom Donald Trump is handing the enforcement of US laws from civil and voting rights to environmental protection, antitrust enforcement, housing, employment and all the rest.

Expect new laws but little justice, and be vigilant as America's shadows become ever more crowded with hidden figures of every shade."

A challenging new era is on our doorstep - let us face it without fear. Let us be ready to stand up, speak out and support those who desire fairness in every land no matter our gender, skin colour or sexuality.

Every Blessing,  
Ian



# Sundays at STAGW

## Sunday 5 February First Sunday of the month

*On the first Sunday of each month you are invited to bring dry goods\* to contribute to Fresh Start's Starter Packs. There is usually a simple social lunch of soup, bread and cheese and home baking after the 11am service, for a suggested minimum donation of £3. Proceeds go to local charities.*

**9am Communion**  
**9.45am All Age Service**  
**10.30am Adult Discussion**  
**11am Morning Worship**  
**Letting the Light Through**  
**Matthew 5:13–20**  
**12 noon Fellowship Lunch**  
Bright Sparks for Mulanje projects

## Sunday 12 February

**9am Communion**  
**9.45am All Age Service**  
**10.30am Adult Discussion**  
**11am Morning Worship**  
**Heart-felt Matthew 5:21–37**  
**2pm Albany Deaf Church**

*\* eg pasta, rice, cereal, tinned beans, tinned meat, UHT milk, instant coffee, teabags.*  
<http://www.freshstartweb.org.uk/goods>

## Sunday 19 February

**9am Communion**  
**9.45am All Age Service**  
**10.30am Adult Discussion**  
**11am Morning Worship**  
**Going Beyond Matthew 5:38-48**  
*Today we welcome the charities who are sharing donations from Follow the Star*  
**1pm Sing by signing**  
**2pm Albany Deaf Church**

## Sunday 26 February

*On the last Sunday of the month there's a short Communion at 12*

**9am Communion**  
**9.45am All Age Service**  
**10.30am Adult Discussion**  
**11am Morning Worship**  
**Mystery Matthew 17:1–9**  
**12 noon Communion**  
**1pm Sing by signing**  
**2pm Albany Deaf Church**

## Sunday 5 March

### First Sunday of the month

**9am Communion**  
**9.45am All Age Service**  
**10.30am Adult Discussion**  
**11am Morning Worship**  
**And So It Begins**  
**Matthew 4:1–11**  
**12 noon Fellowship Lunch**  
for International Justice Mission  
**1pm Sing by signing**  
**2pm Albany Deaf Church**



## **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!

## **Words to reflect on**

*The Lord is my shepherd,  
I shall not want Psalm 23*

*When you understand that  
life is a test, you realise  
that nothing is insignificant  
in your life Rick Warren*

*The ultimate measure of a  
man [or women] is not  
where he [she] stands in  
moments of comfort and  
convenience, but where he  
[she] stands at times of  
challenge and controversy.  
Martin Luther King Jr.*

# February – March 2017 Diary

<b>Mon 30 Jan</b>	12.15pm <a href="#">Undercroft Amnesty Group</a>
<b>Fri 3 Feb</b>	<b>Walking Group</b> <i>7pm Christian Aid Quiz (at St Cuthbert's)</i>
<b>Sun 5 Feb</b>	EDGAS <a href="#">Come and Sing HMS Pinafore</a>
<b>Mon 6 Feb</b>	6.30pm <a href="#">AHSS Lecture</a>
<b>Thurs 9 Feb</b>	9am-5pm Private event, Sanctuary
<b>Sat 11 Feb</b>	7.30pm <a href="#">Edinburgh Grand Opera Concert</a>
<b>Wed 15 Feb</b>	9.30am -3.30pm Private event, Sanctuary 7pm <a href="#">Film Night Billy Elliot</a>
<b>Mon 20 Feb</b>	10.30am Book Group, Chapel
<b>Tue 21 Feb</b>	7pm <a href="#">Film Night Seven Songs for a Long Life</a>
<b>Wed 22 Feb</b>	2.30pm Evergreens
<b>Thur 23 Feb</b>	Rev Allison Becker induction, Kilmarnock
<b>Sat 25 Feb</b>	7.30pm <a href="#">Georgian Concert Society</a>
<b>Mon 27 Feb</b>	12.15pm <a href="#">Undercroft Amnesty Group</a>
<b>Wed 1 Mar</b>	Ash Wednesday, Lent begins
<b>Thurs 2 Mar</b>	12.30pm Edinburgh Ecumenical Friends
<b>Mon 6 Mar</b>	6.30pm <a href="#">AHSS lecture</a> Hugh Buchanan
<b>Thurs 9 Mar</b>	12.30-2 Ecumenical Friends
<b>Sat 11 Mar</b>	10am -1pm <a href="#">Messy Church</a>
<b>Sun 12 Mar</b>	11am joint Covenant Service with Albany
<b>Mon 20 Mar</b>	10.30am Book Group 7.30 Kirk Session
<b>Wed 22 Mar</b>	2.30pm Evergreens
<b>Sat 25 Mar</b>	7.30pm <a href="#">Georgian Concert Society</a>
<b>Mon 27 Mar</b>	12.15pm <a href="#">Undercroft Amnesty Group</a>



# Save the date

**Monday 10 – Sunday 16 April Holy Week and Easter**

**Sun 30 April “Push n shove Sunday”**

**Mon 1 – Fri 12 May Christian Aid sorting and pricing**

**Sat 13 – Fri 19 May Christian Aid Sale**

**Sun 21 May Heart and Soul, Princes Street Gardens**

**Mon 29 May Ringing conference**

**Sat 10 June 10-1 Messy Church**

**Fri 16 – Sat 17 June Creative TOGETHER Button Fair**

**Sun 6 - Mon 28 Aug STAGW at Festival Time**

**Fri 3 Nov Luther 500 Celebration**

**Fri 15 Dec Carols at Six**

## News from the Rollkeeper

**Andrena Crawford**

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 the combined congregations of Albany Deaf Church (49) and St Andrew’s and St George’s West Church (285) total **334**, including 20 children. There are 5 adherents.

There were 10 baptisms and 6 weddings during the year.  
28 members died and 2 moved away.

We welcomed 12 new members in 2016.

## December 2016

**Deaths:** Charles Cuthill on 6 December

**Weddings:** Audrey Williamson and David Furness on 10 December

**New members:** Calum Davidson, May Forrest & Rena Sibbald

# STAGW matters

## Sing by Signing

Rosie Addis and Ian Gilmour propose joint practices for all those interested in signing on 1pm on the Sundays of 19th Feb, 26th Feb, and 5th March.

The purpose is to learn to sign some songs for the Joint Covenant Service St AGW with Albany on 12 March at 11.00am. All welcome no prior experience necessary.



## TOGETHER Christian Aid Quiz Margaret McGregor

The next TOGETHER Christian Aid Quiz Friday 3rd February at 7 pm in the Lammermuir Hall of St Cuthbert's church. We hope to see you there - tickets from Margaret McGregor



Rev Allison Becker is going to be minister at St John's, Kilmarnock. Congratulations to her. Allison's last Sunday here will be 19 February. Her induction in Kilmarnock will be on Thurs 23 February at 7.00pm.

If you would like to travel through by private coach please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule, or let the office know - **by 31 January**. It will cost about £20/head, leaving ca 5pm from the church and return at roughly 10.30pm. We need at least 18 passengers to make the bus journey.

If you wish to make a donation to her gift then please pass your money to Mary Margaret Scott or Wendy Henderson, church manager.

# Walking Group

**Mary Scott**

The next walk is on Friday 3rd February, walking part of the John Muir Way - from Longniddry to North Berwick, a distance of around 12 miles. Trains and buses go to Longniddry and then back from North Berwick. To register interest, please contact Mary Margaret Scott.

# Evergreens

**Veronica Crerar**

Evergreens meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm in the Sanctuary to listen to a speaker, followed by tea, coffee and chat in the Undercroft. Everyone is welcome to all meetings which are free, though a small contribution is asked for tea.

22 Feb	Rev Ian Y Gilmour, "Caddie to the Moderator"
22 Mar	Alison Barrett, member of the Embroiderers Guild, on quilting, cross-stitch and lace etc
26 Apr	Rev David Todd, Chaplain to the Arts
24 May	Summer Outing.

# Ecumenical Friends Spring Term 2017

Ecumenical Friends meet weekly on Thursdays in St Cuthbert's. Tea and coffee is provided at a cost of £1.50 – you are welcome to bring a sandwich or packed lunch.

2 Feb	David Hope-Jones	Scotland Malawi Partnership
9 Feb	speaker	The Vine Trust
16 Feb	Elsbeth Strachan	Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme, Palestine and Israel
23 Feb	David Hamilton	The River and the Desert

## **March meetings are held in St Andrew's and St George's West**

2 Mar	Rosie Addis	Deaf Church
9 Mar	Colin Douglas	Lenten Meditation

# Love, joy and learning

Donna Gilmour

Did you know that our congregation has a learning disability representative?

No? Then you are not alone. In discussion with a few members it is clear that perhaps other than elders the majority of the congregation is not aware of this. The Church of Scotland has asked every congregation to nominate someone who will pass on information about learning disability received from 121 George Street to the appropriate committee, person, clergy etc within the congregation. The Kirk Session decided that the Education Committee, of which I am a member, would be best placed to coordinate this and as a result I am the designated person.

Last year I attended the Church of Scotland one day conference on Learning Disability.

The Very Reverend John Chalmers gave a powerful and moving key note address drawing on his personal experience of family members with a learning disability. He noted some of the difficulties a person with a learning disability and their family might experience but also the love, joy, and learning that can be given and received. He spoke of the value of those with a learning disability to society overall.

Some of the key points from the day were:

1. Churches should promote the uniqueness, intrinsic value and self esteem of all and this should include those with a learning disability.
2. Churches should be as inclusive as possible for those with a learning disability.
3. Churches should consider if worship is suited to those with a learning disability. People with a learning disability may have difficulty with written material and reading so alternatives might be needed.

4. Everyone was encouraged to look at the website of Prospects for Scotland, the lead Christian organisation for people with a learning disability and their families, see <http://www.prospects.org.uk/Scotland>
5. Everyone was encouraged to see the TED talk by Dr Karen Gaffney (available on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/HwxjoBQdn0s>)

The day was a mixture of learning using a variety of styles, discussion, a music workshop using different instruments, singing and meeting and engaging with people in small groups.

Overall it was very worthwhile and enjoyable. I would be delighted to speak with anyone about the day and the role so please feel free to chat to me. **Donna Gilmour**

## A plea from Pastoral Care

James Crerar

### Keep the church office in the loop!

This is a plea to all members and their friends **to tell the church office** if they go into, or come out of hospital etc. The church office is “information central” and can then tell the Ministers and the member's elder as soon as possible.

There have been two recent instances where a member in hospital had been visited by a number of friends but the elder didn't know the member was in hospital.

### Bring us your good causes!

The monthly fellowship lunches are a chance to social and enjoyable event for members and friends, and also raise money for good causes.

Any member can nominate a charity to be the beneficiary of a fellowship lunch. You need to complete some light paperwork available from the office, which goes through Kirk Session, so it helps to plan in advance.

Speak to Cathie Donaldson, Agnes Smith or James Crerar if you have questions



# Reforming the Kirk

— the future of the Church of Scotland

**Rev Dr Doug Gay**

Lecturer in Practical Theology, Principal of Trinity College, University of Glasgow

**FEBRUARY 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017** • 6.30pm • St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh

*In this series of three lectures, Glasgow-based Practical Theologian and Kirk Minister Doug Gay offers a candid, forthright and bold analysis of the state of the Church of Scotland and the choices facing it.*

LECTURE 1

WED 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY

## Walls Without Church?

The first lecture explores 'what just happened?' tracing the decline of the Kirk as a national institution since the 1960s.

LECTURE 2

WED 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

## Call And Response

The second lecture explores the relationship between the church's understanding of its own calling and its response.

LECTURE 3

WED 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

## Grand Designs

The final lecture makes the case for radical structural reform of the Church of Scotland over the next decade.



*Doug describes the lectures as 'hard thinking done with a soft heart' and 'radical thinking offered in a cautious spirit'. He hopes the lectures will both contribute to a broader understanding of the state of the Kirk across Scotland and the international reformed community and to a creative and productive conversation about reform within the Kirk.*





# Reforming the Kirk

## — the future of the Church of Scotland

In this series of three lectures, Glasgow-based Practical Theologian and Kirk Minister, Dr Doug Gay will offer a candid, forthright and bold analysis of the state of the Church of Scotland and the choices facing it.

He will explore what it means to be 'presbyterian' in today's Scotland, in which even kirk members are ambivalent about their identity. Recognising the significant challenges facing the church in the coming decade, he will offer a manifesto for enacting structural reform, including key economic reforms, within the Kirk and will argue that change is essential to address deep seated problems of decline and dysfunction.

### **LECTURE ONE – Walls Without Church?** (*Glory without power...*)

The first lecture explores 'what just happened?' tracing the decline of the Kirk as a national institution since the 1960s and asking about the spiritual and psychological effects of this on those who have lived through it. It also asks 'what's left?' - exploring what the Presbyterian inheritance means in today's Scotland, in terms of values, ideas and concrete presence on the ground across 1 parishes.

### **LECTURE TWO – Call and Response** (*I don't know but I've been told...*)

The second lecture explores the relationship between the church's understanding of its own calling and its response in terms of organisation and resources. Arguing that the economics of the Kirk is a key area for spiritual and theological reflection, it questions how resources are raised and allocated for the work of the Church of Scotland. It also looks at the looming deficits in human resources, as numbers of ministerial vacancies continue to increase and asks what a missional response to church decline might look like.

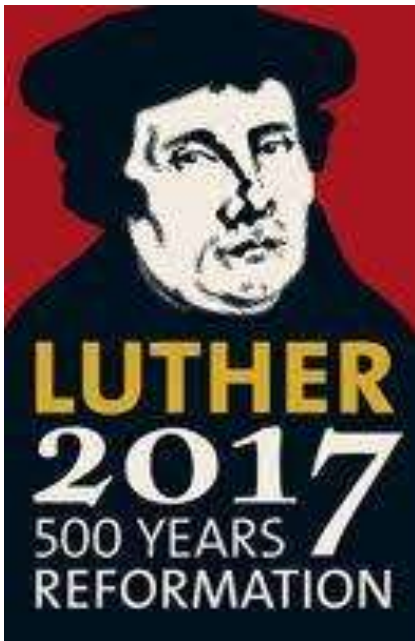
### **LECTURE THREE – Grand Designs** (*the architecture of reform*)

The final lecture makes the case for radical structural reform of the Church of Scotland over the next decade, suggesting that a reformed Kirk should aspire to a creative reinterpretation of reformed identity, rather than hold to a narrowband presbyterianism. It argues that where recent attempts to reform key areas of the Church's life have been unsuccessful, it is because they have failed to address the architecture of the system as a whole. While recognising the limits of what structural reform can achieve, Doug will make the case for a new balance of power and initiative between local, regional and national bodies, arguing that the case for reform should be based on how it will serve the church's mission.

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353

[www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)





## Cunningham Lectures

5pm - 14, 15, 16 February 2017

Martin Hall, New College, Edinburgh .

Professor Thomas Kaufmann of Gottingen will mark the Luther anniversary with 3 lectures.

14 Feb: Book Print and Reformation

15 Feb: The Reformation and Europe

16 Feb: Luther's Christ and the other religions and denominations

[www.ed.ac.uk/divinity/news-events/events/cunningham-lectures](http://www.ed.ac.uk/divinity/news-events/events/cunningham-lectures)

## Edinburgh's Georgian Shadows

23 February – 26 March 2017 5.30-8.30pm

To celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the New Town, an early evening light show will bring city centre buildings to life and offer a glimpse into the life of the original residents using projections and silhouette.

<http://edinburgh.org/things-to-do/year-of-history-heritage-and-archaeology/edinburghs-georgian-shadows/>

A promotional poster for a pilgrimage. The top left features the logo of 'The Church of Scotland'. The main title is 'PILGRIMAGE TO ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES' in large white letters on a blue background. Below the title is the date '29 April - 9 May 2017'. A circular badge on the right says 'BOOK NOW!'. The bottom half of the poster shows a photograph of Jerusalem, including the Dome of the Rock. On the right side, there is a blue box with white text providing details about the pilgrimage, including the leader 'The Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan' and contact information for Kenny Roger.

The Church of Scotland

**PILGRIMAGE TO ISRAEL  
AND THE OCCUPIED  
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

29 April - 9 May 2017

**BOOK NOW!**

Led by the Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan, on behalf of the World Mission Council.

This 11 day pilgrimage to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories will take in the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jaffa, and Tiberias, introducing you to local Christians and partners of the Church of Scotland, as well as visiting some of the major Biblical sites. You will be guided by a local Palestinian Christian, with support from the two Church of Scotland ministers based locally.

For further information, including costs and a more detailed itinerary, please contact Kenny Roger: [kroger@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:kroger@churchofscotland.org.uk), or on 0131 225 5722.

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353

[www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)

# A letter from Andrew McLellan



Dear Ian

When you have invited me to St Andrew's and St George's West I have felt uncommonly at home: "uncommonly" because I am one of the few with links to both parts of the union between St Andrew's and St George's and St George's West. If I felt particularly at home at the service on Assembly Sunday with the Boys' Brigade that was mostly because of the warmth of the welcome, and only a little bit because – as I regularly did in St Andrew's and St George's - I kept getting completely mixed up with all the different things that were happening during the service! I appreciate very much your invitation to return on a Sunday in the spring of 2017.

I was very grateful for the invitation to take part with you and with Allison Becker in the thanksgiving service for the life of Cathy Carson: Cathy and Jim, like many others, were very good friends to me. But I think for everyone's sake my participation in funerals in St Andrew's and St George's West should not become an expectation. For your sake, since I do not ever want to be a problem for you; for my sake, since I do not want to pick and choose whose funerals I take part in and whose I don't; and for the sake of those who might feel disappointed if I do not accept an invitation for the funeral of the person they loved. So my hope for the future will be to be present at funerals of those I have known when I can and to share in the worship as a member of the congregation; but to leave the conduct of these services to yourself and the St Andrew's and St George's West ministry team.

I am grateful for the sensitive and helpful way you have discussed this matter with me; and I hope that all my friends in the congregation understand.

Yours always

Andrew





## **All Things Bright and Beautiful, All Creatures Great and Small...**

### **Pat McKerrow's Wildlife Diary**

It feels like only yesterday we celebrated the start of 2017, and yet I can hardly believe I'm already witnessing the early signs of 'spring like' activity on the Water of Leith (WoL). Each day on my local 'patrol', I see ducks pairing up, mallards in particular, with the lads energetically fending off rivals to protect their chosen ladies.

It makes me reflect on positive words from the late American marine biologist, conservationist, and writer, Rachel Carson, "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature...the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter."

In addition, it fills me with hope. Hope for the wonder and magnitude of God's creation, and hope in the day-to-day for what I might have the privilege of seeing and sharing in the months ahead.



You might ask what I have on my wish list?

Well, it's a lengthy list, but includes a wish for a continued healthy waterway, pollution-free, and able to sustain its rich array of wonderful wildlife. Secondly, and more personally, a wish for my swan couple to remain well and to successfully raise cygnets later this year. Thirdly, and again personally, a wish that I can locate the local otter(s)...many folks have shared their otter sightings with me, particularly of a young otter that I'm told has made his home on my local patch; I am utterly determined to find him!

Continuing on this subject, my love for otters is no secret, and I can trace it back to seeing the film version of Gavin Maxwell's acclaimed book 'Ring of Bright Water' as a small child; and I have yet to meet anyone who was not scarred by the tragedy that befell his beloved smooth-coated otter, 'Mij'.

After moving to Edinburgh in the late 80s, I spent many hours at the zoo watching and photographing their Oriental short-clawed otters. In more recent years, Europe's wild otters (Eurasian otters), have captured my heart, and taken me to amazing lengths and places in the hope of catching a glimpse of these elusive creatures. The sudden movement way out at sea; the arch of the back and flick of the tail as it dives; the leap straight up from the water with its catch; and the unmistakable rippling wake which follows it ashore...I will never tire of such moments and sights, nor indeed cease to be thankful for them.

The opening lines of the hymn come to mind "Lord of beauty, thine the splendour, shown in earth and sky and sea, burning sun and moonlight tender, hill and river, flower and tree; lest we fail our praise to render, touch our eyes that we may see".

I am indebted to a couple of renowned otter experts from whom I've learned essential tracking skills; knowledge that has since been invaluable in helping me find and photograph wild otters in various parts of Scotland, including Shetland, Harris, the Uists, and Jura – hopefully I will soon be able to add the WoL to this illustrious list! There is another reason behind my wish to find the local otter(s), and to be convinced of the presence of a thriving local population.

In one word...Mink. Coming face-to-face with an American Mink on my stretch of the WoL late last year prompted a whole range of different and difficult emotions. I had heard of sightings elsewhere on the waterway, but spotting one so close to home brought the issues these mammals pose into vivid perspective for me. This non-native species, part of the Mustelid family (along with the weasel, stoat, pine marten, badger, and yes, the otter), was originally brought to the UK from North America to be farmed for its fur. The mink has long since found its way into waterways where its impact on wildlife, has been devastating.



In terms of the WoL, I don't doubt that the presence of mink along its course has been responsible for the loss of many ducklings, small birds, and possibly even cygnets, in recent years – perhaps the very youngsters I followed last year. Mink is a ruthless predator, much loathed, and many conservationists want all mink trapped.

As a nature lover I find talk of species management challenging – it questions and conflicts with everything I believe about being at one with nature, living in harmony, cruelty, and so on. Strangely though, I feel much less uncomfortable about 'managing' mink on our local river should that ever become reality. Why? Quite simply, I want to avoid a situation where mink is literally the only creature left there. Whether or not anything will happen rests with the WoL Conservation Trust, Scottish Wildlife Trust, and other key stakeholders. Time will tell.

For now, let us all hope that our alleged increasing otter population will continue to thrive and that these most welcome of mammals will help eradicate their unwelcome, smaller, nastier relations in the truly natural way.

Every blessing, Pat McKerrow.

# A complementary trinity

Tony Shephard



A little over a year ago I began a blog, [www.anthonyinuk.com](http://www.anthonyinuk.com). By an odd series of events, although my best subjects and interests were the arts, I came out of the sixth form with science A levels and a hobby interest in quantum physics. I found myself in a scientific career designing and fitting contact lenses for extreme eye defects and working in a hospital environment of clinics, wards and theatres.

Somehow my love of literature, art and language survived. I thought I had a foot in two camps, but from my mother's knee it was one. My faith has ups and downs as with everyone but it will not go away. At its weakest I can quote Saint Peter, 'To whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life.'

You may think this is a foot in three camps but Faith, Science and Art are inseparable. To love God but not His world and how others see it, is to suffer loss; just as to love the world and one another, and not love God, is a loss. They are a complementary trinity that mirrors that of the Father, Son and Spirit. Any true view of the world must be like this; there is no other with which to compare it.

I write of this interplay in my blog: God's love for the world, for us, our love for children, how we read or misread scripture, the wave nature of the universe, its trinity of energy, matter and observation.

This is something of a turmoil I admit, but you are welcome to read the blog. I keep it simple, often in poems, and written from the heart.

# Harmony

Tony Shephard

On a clear still morning beside a pond  
with clouds and trees mirrored in its face,  
and rushes, and a lonely fishing place,  
I watched a single dewdrop fall.

It fell from a leaf tip, back into its element  
like a tiny buddhist soul.

Lost, I thought, lost in its destiny,  
one with its own infinity  
and all is still again.

And yet the surface trembled with its ring,  
spreading, shimmering the clouds, the  
leaves,  
the rushes and the fishing place;  
spreading, reaching for the farthest shore.

And was it felt in the darker depths?  
and echoed in that tiny 'plop' in my ear?  
and in the air, and in the woods,  
spreading forever to the farthest star,  
seeing eternity  
through the eyes of God?



## Lent Studies

### Open Hands, Willing Hearts

6 week course 5 Mar - 9 Apr  
delivered online and through  
a weekly group based at St  
Martin's Dalry Road,  
Edinburgh. 9 places, book  
by 15 February. £75 (£65).  
Bursary help may be  
available. Facilitated by  
Elspeth Strachan.  
<https://edinburgh.anglican.org/2017/01/13/adventures-in-faith-online-lent-course/>

### The Miracle of Mindfulness

Wednesdays 8, 15, 22 and  
29 March 7.30 - 9pm  
St Philip's Church, Logie  
Green Road, Canonmills,  
Edinburgh £40 (£35)

How does Mindfulness relate  
to the Christian tradition and  
where might this find a place  
in our own lives? Based on  
the practice of Zen master  
Thich Nhat Hahn, we will  
focus on how mindfulness  
can enrich and inform the  
Way of Jesus. No previous  
experience required.  
Facilitated by Peter and  
Elspeth Davey.

<http://edinburgh.anglican.org/2017/01/adventures-in-faith-the-miracle-of-mindfulness/>



# A Musical Welcome

## Concert for Refugees



### Orchestra of the Canongait

Conductor: Robert Dick      Leader: Liz Beeston  
Cello: Lindsay Martindale

Dvořák: Carnival overture

Elgar: Cello concerto

Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade

Sunday 26th February 2017

8pm    Tickets £10/£8 concessions

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral  
Palmerston Place, Edinburgh

**AMNESTY**  
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**TOGETHER**ness

**TOGETHER**news

## **Water and Fire – Hogmanay 2016**

**Ian Gilmour**

The Together churches led the congregation through a journey of **water and fire** at St Cuthbert's on Hogmanay as we entered 2017. Markus Dünzkofer, Allison Becker and Ian Gilmour led the service of worship through a liturgy which focussed on the baptism, captured in this 'Affirmation for a New Year' used on the night,

*Through the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, and raised with him to newness of life... as we leave behind an old year, with all its fond memories and disappointments, with its joys and sadness, with a past we can no longer change, and as we enter a new year with its hopes and fears, with its opportunities and challenges, with a future yet to come, to renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism....*

This was achieved through a short reflection, and a symbolic action which was shared pew by pew, and from person to person throughout the eighty plus congregation. The action was the drawing of a shape in water on the hand of each worshipper, everyone received and everyone gave the sign of the cross. It reminded us of Jesus, the one who in the face of apparent powerlessness always did the honest, healing, and hopeful thing. The invitation was to follow the way of the cross throughout 2017.

The service ended with a blessing drawn from *Micah 6:8*

*God has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice,  
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?  
Remember this and go into this night and into the  
coming year with the blessing of God:*

Having been challenged to reflect and remember our own baptism and reconnect to Jesus, we left the church to a spectacular sky full of colourful flames as 2017 was introduced to Edinburgh in a baptism of **fire**.

## **On the button**

**Creative Together's next venture is a Button Fair, on Friday 16 and Saturday 17 June this year.**

It will be held at St Andrew's and St George's West in George Street, to raise funds for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

The group has already been busy sorting and evaluating many donations of "Granny's Button Box". Keep the date in your diary if you're a button enthusiast – or let us know if you have any old buttons you'd like to donate.

**Dorothy MacKenzie** at St Andrew's and St George's West  
**Maggie Romanis** at St Cuthbert's  
**Sheila Waterer** at St John's

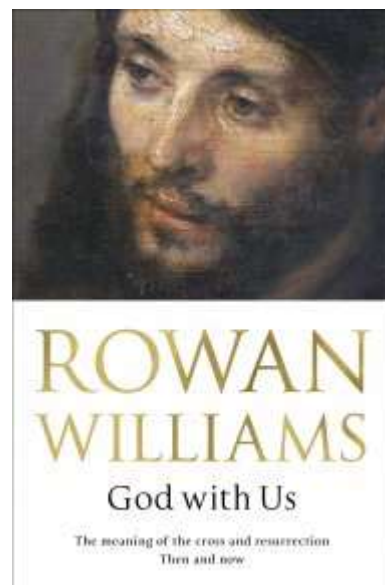
# Cornerstone Book Reviews

Amanda Bruce

## **‘God with Us’ by Rowan Williams**

ISBN 9780281076642 £8.99

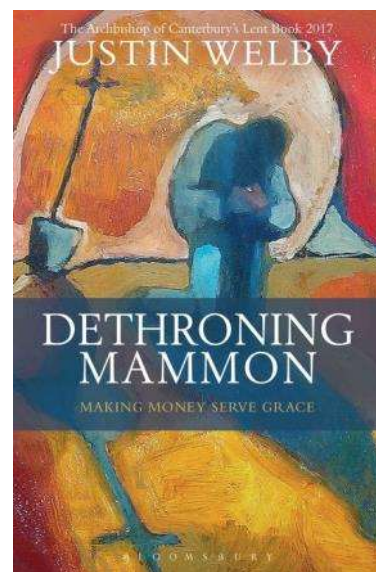
This is the third in a series of books by the former Archbishop of Canterbury providing accessible introductions to topics fundamental to anyone seeking to follow or engage with the Christian Faith. In this timely volume, he explores the meaning of the Cross as a sign of change for those encountering Jesus throughout the centuries, and considers how, in the light of the Resurrection, Christians now must ask how they, themselves, can be signs of who and what God is for others. Designed for personal or group use, each chapter has accompanying questions to help the reader explore these key issues further.



## **‘Dethroning Mammon’ by Justin Welby**

ISBN9781472929778 £9.99

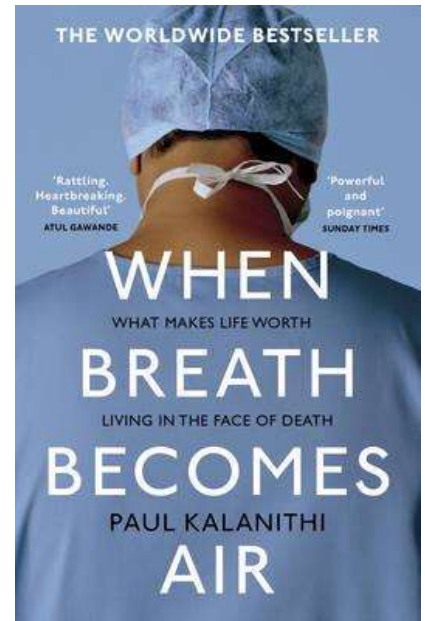
This year’s Lent book recommended by the Archbishop of Canterbury is written by the current incumbent, Justin Welby, in what is his first book to be published. Onto its first re-print already – having been famously pictured being read by the Chairman of the Bank of England, Mark Carney – the book looks at money and materialism. In it, Welby asks, ‘What motivates us?’ ‘What do we value?’ and explores the tensions that arise in a society dominated by “Mammon’s modern aliases, economics and finance, and by the pressures of our culture to conform to Mammon’s expectations.” With themes that are far reaching, this book will surely command interest well beyond the season for which it is intended.



# ‘When Breath Becomes Air’ by Paul Kalanith

ISBN 9781784701994 £8.99

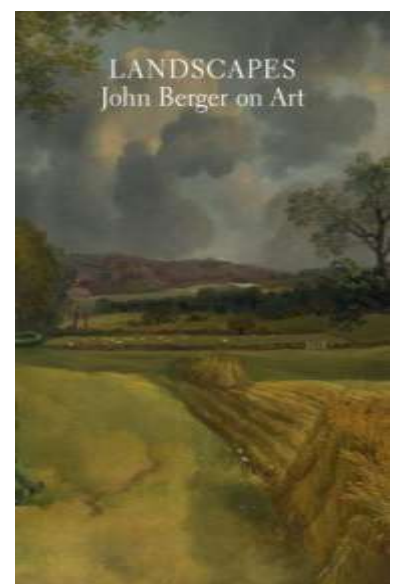
Recently published in paperback, this is the worldwide bestseller which asks ‘What makes life worth living in the face of death?’ Aged 36, its author was on the verge of completing a decade’s training as a neurosurgeon when he was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. Through the course of this extraordinary, lyrical and life-affirming book (published posthumously by his widow) Kalanithi chronicles his journey and reflects with searing honesty on his life in the face of impending mortality. He does so with a startling clarity and profundity which makes his story eminently readable and comes highly recommended.



# ‘Landscapes – John Berger on Art’ edited by Tom Overton

ISBN 9781784785840 £16.99

When John Berger died earlier this year, he did so having made a significant contribution through his life to the fields of literature, philosophy and the arts. This brilliant collection of diverse pieces – essays, short stories, poems and translations – spans many years’ engagement and, through it, Berger reveals how he came to his own unique way of seeing. The words of this master storyteller and thinker are a feast for the reader, paying homage to artistic movements and individuals such as Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht, informing, challenging and nourishing our understanding of the world. It is no surprise the book has already be hailed “an intellectual benchmark for many years to come”.





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EH2 2PA 0131 225 3847**

**[www.stagw.org.uk](http://www.stagw.org.uk)  stagw  @StAGW1**

**Office open** Mon - Fri 10am-3pm  
**Church open** Mon - Fri 10am - 3pm: Sat 11am-2pm (not Jan-Mar)  
**Undercroft Café** Mon - Fri 10am - 2pm  
**Sunday worship** 9am, 9.45am, 11am  
**Weekday worship** 1pm Monday – Friday

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