



**St Andrew's and St George's West  
September - October 2017  
Magazine**



EDINBURGH City  
Centre | CHURCHES  
TOGETHER

# September 2017 Magazine

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**Cover:** *Dream, Believe, Imagine* colouring project in the Café

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**Editor:** Alison Bruce. Contributions, comments, news, photos, ideas for features are welcome – email [magazine\[at\]stagw.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stagw.org.uk)

**Copy deadline** for the October issue is Monday 25 September.

**Thanks to all contributors!**



**Jack Thompson with Ian Y Gilmour**

## **Serve God and be cheerful**

**Jack Thompson (1943 - 2017)**

I was looking forward to Holy Week this year. It is, of course, a centrally important period for most Christians, however they may interpret it or try to participate in it. At St. Andrew's and St. George's West I was hoping to attend at least some of what I hoped would be a stimulating programme of meditation and music.

For myself, however, there remained the question of how and to what extent one is able to identify with Christ's suffering during Holy Week. For some this may involve walking the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, following in the last footsteps of Jesus. For a few it may even involve undertaking the onerous four-week Jesuit discipline of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, during which participants attempt closely to identify with the emotion and sufferings of Jesus himself. I had no intention of going as far as either of these. I would have been content with a mild diet of meditation and music.

Unexpectedly and quite suddenly, however, I found myself in very different circumstances. After several months of increasing back pain

on Thursday morning of Holy Week my legs gave way spectacularly under me and I was unable even to stand up. A scan at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary revealed that I had a growth on my back which was pressing on my spine and I was transferred to the Western General for treatment.

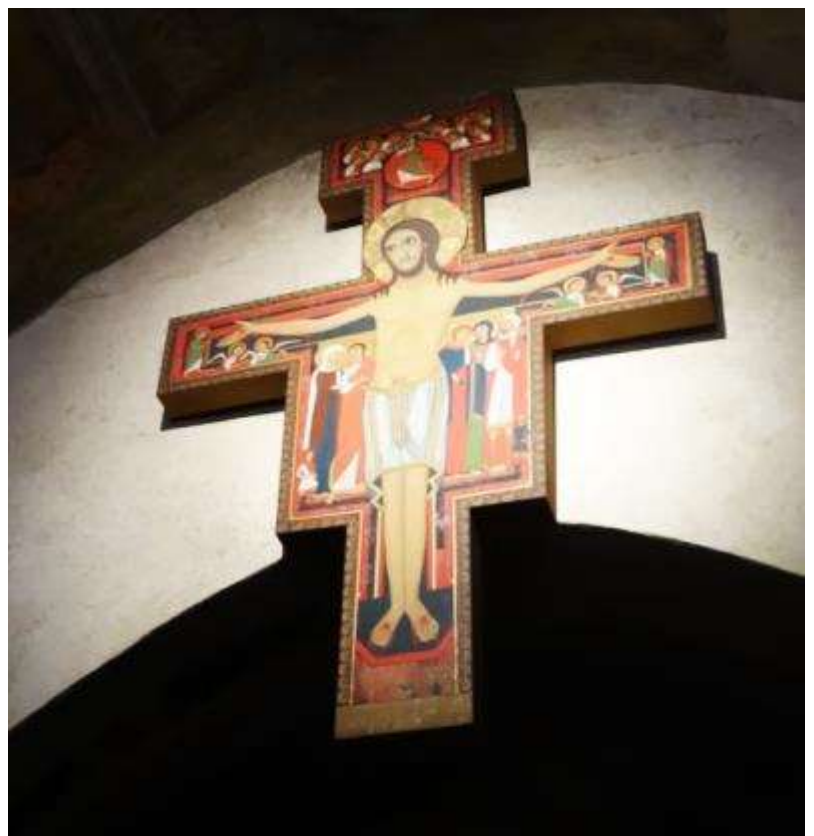
Thus at one fell swoop I was parachuted from what I might call a low-key semi-detached relationship to the physical suffering of Jesus during the last days and hours of his life to an intense few days of suffering for myself which perhaps for the first time in my life enabled - one might almost say compelled me - to enter in a much more direct way into the physical suffering of Christ during the last days and hours of his earthly life.

As darkness fell on Thursday and Jesus went out into the Garden of Gethsemane I was moving into a series of tests and events over which I had little control and whose outcome I could hardly predict.

It was perhaps not unexpected that a phrase which jumped into my mind was **'if it be your will!'** And though this, of course echoed the words of Jesus himself, it was rather in my case the words of a song by the Canadian poet and songwriter Leonard Cohen which specifically sprang to mind.

*If it be your will  
That I speak no more  
And my voice be still  
As it was before  
I will speak no more  
I shall abide until  
I am spoken for  
If it be your will*

I should make it clear that what follows is my own reaction to the sufferings I personally was going through. It in no way tries to undermine the real tragedy of suffering, or to downplay the agony of people in pain and at the end of their tether.



It acknowledges, for example, the barely heard muttered prayer which I overheard in the deepest darkness of the night, asking a friend to help bring an unbearable life to an end: *'I cannot bear to come back into this place one more time: just do it for me. Just do it!'*

It does not forget those who can begin reciting the abandonment present at the beginning of Psalm 122: *'my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me'* - but never struggle through to the glorious ending,

*'All nations will remember the Lord.  
From every part of the world they will turn to him  
all races will worship him.  
The Lord is king,  
and he rules the nations.'*

If my own experience appears to be upbeat then it is a sign of the Grace which accompanied me throughout the experience rather than any attempt to disguise the ugliness of human suffering in all its many forms.

And what of Easter morning? Waking before dawn with some pain, cocooned by the dim blue light of the screen around my bed, some apparently mundane words from a little-known Bob Dylan song<sup>1</sup> jump into my head:

*Serve God and be cheerful  
Look upward beyond  
The darkness that masks  
The surprises of dawn.*

And then, indeed, looking up to my right, beyond the dark curtain, I catch the bright white light of the corridor where 'the stone has been rolled away' as the lights are switched back on. Two eager young nurses are hurrying along in their bright outdoor clothing, just arriving to come on duty - pony-tails flapping, back-packs in place.

A new day has begun.  
Hallelujah!

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<sup>1</sup> *I Crossed the Green Mountain*, written for a TV series on the American Civil War

# Worship for Creationtide and Harvest

## 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 3 September at 11am

**Old Testament Thoughts: Exodus 3:1-15**

Sunday 10 September at 11am

**The Land: Genesis 3: 14 – 19**

Sunday 17 September at 11am

**Injustice: Exodus 14 19-31**

Sunday 24 September at 11am

**Scripture Speaks: Exodus 16.2-15**

Sunday 1 October at 11am

**Authority: Matthew 21; 23 -32**

Sunday 8 October at 11am

**Harvest Thanksgiving: Exodus 20.1-4, 7-9, 12 -16**

*“To **love** at all is to be vulnerable. **Love** anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements.*

CS Lewis

*Buy, buy, says the sign in the shop window;  
Why, why, says the junk in the yard.*

Paul McCartney

*God restores my soul*

Psalm 23

# First Sundays

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

The **first Sunday of every month** at St Andrew's and St George's West is even busier than a normal Sunday. There's usually a **Fellowship Lunch**, a **collection of goods for Fresh Start**, and **transport to church** can be arranged.

### Transport to church

This is a scheme to provide lifts by car to and from the church on the first Sunday of each month for members who have difficulty in making the journey by their own, or public, transport. Arrival is in time for the 11.00 service, with departure after the Fellowship Lunch which follows the service. Transport is organised by the Pastoral Care Group and is provided by volunteer members on a rota, using their own cars.

**If you would like to take advantage of this service, or to offer to be a driver, please leave a message for Averil Fifer via the church office.**

### Fresh Start

on the first Sunday of each month you can bring donations of packaged, long-lasting food products e.g.:

Tins and jars of beans, spaghetti, soup, vegetables, meat and cooking sauces

Packets of pasta, rice, cereal, porridge and biscuits

Tea bags, instant coffee and UHT milk.

We give these to **Fresh Start** the following week to make starter packs for people moving into new accommodation

### Fellowship lunches

A fellowship lunch is a chance to get to know folk - young, old, familiar and new - from the congregation – and to raise funds for good causes. There's a simple lunch of soup, bread and cheese and home-baking – you make a donation (£3 minimum) to cover costs and to benefit a nominated charity.

So far this year we have raised funds for charities including International Justice Mission, Amnesty, New Caledonian Woodlands and for projects at Mulanje Mission Hospital. The next lunch in October will benefit Mary's Meals.

Everyone is welcome.

# Autumn 2017 Diary

Sun 3 Sep	9am, 9.45am, 11am worship 12 noon Fellowship Lunch for Mulanje Mission 2pm Albany Deaf Church
Sun 10 Sep	9am, 9.45am, 11am worship 2pm Albany Deaf Church
Fri 15 Sep	<b>6.30 Undercroft Fringe Volunteers Party</b>
Sun 17 Sep	9am, 9.45am, 11am worship <i>2pm Deaf Choirs Festival, Glasgow Cathedral</i>
Wed 20 Sep	<b><i>Volunteer Recruitment Fair, Ps &amp; Gs Church</i></b>
Sat 23 Sep	<b>10am-3pm Doors Open Day</b>
Sun 24 Sep	9am, 9.45am, 11am worship 2pm Albany Deaf Church Noon-3pm Doors Open Day
Mon 25 Sep	10.30am Book Group, Chapel 12-1pm Undercroft Amnesty Group
Thur 28 Sep	<b>12.30pm Ecumenical Friends (St Cuthbert's)</b>
Fr1 29 Sep	<b>7.30pm Ayman Jarjour/Choir Concert</b>

## October 2017

Sun 1 Oct	9am, 9.45am, 11am worship 12 noon Fellowship lunch for Mary's Meals 2pm Albany Deaf Church
Mon 2 Oct	6.30pm AHSS Lecture ALISTAIR FAIR – Edinburgh's Unbuilt 'Opera House', 1960 – 1975
Tue 3 Oct	<del>7pm</del> <b>enquire</b> -postponed, likely Jan 2018
Sat 7 Oct	10-3 Treasure Trove Autumn Fayre (Café open)
Sun 8 Oct	<b>Harvest Festival</b> 9am, 9.45am, 11am worship 2pm Albany Deaf Church
Tue 10 Oct	<del>7pm</del> <b>enquire</b> -postponed, likely Jan 2018
Thur 12 Oct	10am What have faith and money got to do with climate change? <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-have-faith-and-money-got-to-do-with-climate-change-tickets-35685901492">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-have-faith-and-money-got-to-do-with-climate-change-tickets-35685901492</a>
Sat 14 Oct	7.30pm Georgian Concert Society
Mon 16 Oct	10.30am Book Group, Chapel
Wed 18 Oct	<del>7pm</del> <b>enquire</b> -postponed, likely Jan 2018 7pm Singalong Sound of Music
Wed 25 Oct	<del>7pm</del> <b>enquire</b> -postponed, likely Jan 2018
26- 28 Oct	<b>CA Art Sale with Scottish Books/Coffee Morning</b>
Mon 30 Oct	12-1pm Undercroft Amnesty Group



Tue 31 Oct	<b>7.30pm Donald Gorrie Lecture</b>
<b>November 2017</b>	
1-22 Nov	<b>Moments in Nature exhibition, Undercroft</b>
Fri 3 Nov	<b>Lutherabend</b>
Mon 6 Nov	6.30pm AHSS PATRICIA ANDREW – To Russia with Love
Sat 18 Nov	7.30pm Georgian Concert Society
Sun 19 Nov	<b>2-3.30 pm Messy Church</b>
<b>December 2017</b>	
9-23 Dec	<b>Joy to the World – Christmas Tree Festival</b>
Fri 15 Dec	<b>6pm Carols at Six</b>

## News and notices

### Deaths

**Miss Christina Kerr** on 3 June

**Dr T Jack Thompson** on 10 August

### Weddings

**Angela Jones and David Williams**  
on Sunday 16 July

**Hilary Neill and Diarmid O’Sullivan**  
on 28 July

**Kerry Harper and Connor Craig**  
on 2 September (Connor is grandson  
of Margaret and Alastair McGregor)

### Congratulations

**Dr Ian MacPhail**, on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday  
on 8 August.

**James Campbell**, graduating in  
History from the OU

**Sarah Forrester**, graduating in BSL  
Interpreting from Heriot Watt

### New members

**Ms Anne Wyllie**

**James Campbell**

## Bells Service

**broadcast as Festival  
Worship**

some lovely feedback  
received by letter and  
email

*“Rev Ian Gilmour  
transformed my thinking  
on bell-ringing”*

*“I was a member of your  
virtual congregation today  
– set me up for the day”*

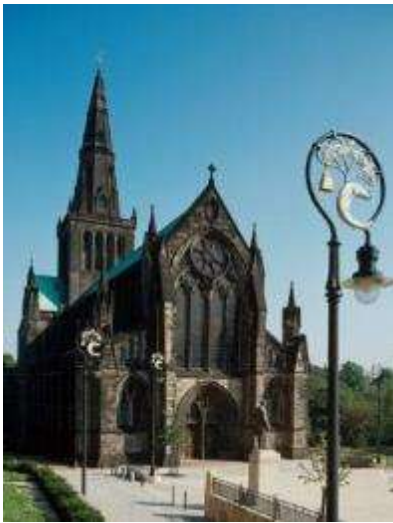
*“Thank you for the very  
joyful and uplifting service”*

*“I no longer have a church  
connection but I did enjoy  
this morning’s message”*

You can listen again on  
BBC iPlayer at  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b091scbs>

# Book Group

The **Book Group** will start again on **Monday, 25 September at 10.30 am** in the Undercroft Chapel. We shall be discussing this Summer's holiday reading - "The Testament of Gideon Mack" by James Robertson. We shall also be discussing our programme for the coming Winter. Suggestions at already coming in, but more are welcome. We are always pleased to welcome new members and this is a very good time to join us. After September we shall be reverting to our usual date of the third Monday in the month **Veronica Crerar**



## Deaf Choirs Festival

**2pm Sunday 17 Sept at Glasgow Cathedral**

**Albany Deaf Church** are organising a bus to this event in Glasgow and invite anyone from the hearing congregations of St Andrew's and St George's West to join them. So if you enjoyed singing, signing, or just experiencing joint worship with Albany in March, why not come along?

## 2017 Donald Gorrie Lecture

**Tuesday 31 Oct 7.30 p.m.**

***'There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in'***

Is the title of John Chalmers' lecture on the theme of the attitudes to disability which permeate society today. The life of the differently-abled challenges each of us to experience the grace and light of God shining through the cracks.

**An event not to be missed - put the date in your diary.**

enquire

/ɪn'kwɪə/

**New here? Wondering about church?**

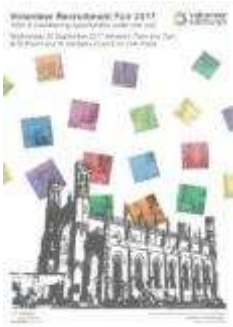
Come and find out what it means to be a Christian today.

Today we will be in a church and by

Tue  
Wed 1st Oct  
All at the church 7- 8pm

# Volunteer Recruitment Fair

Wed 20 September Crispin Longden



Wanted! Enthusiastic advocates to promote a variety of volunteering opportunities within St Andrew's and St George's West at the Volunteer Recruitment Fair at St Paul's and St George's, York Place. The event runs all day: commitment is a 2 hour shift at a time that suits you. Interested? Speak to Carolyn Scott.

## Doors Open Day

23-24 September Alison Bruce

What do Rock House, St Bernard's Well and St Andrew's House have in common? They're just three of 100+ buildings in Edinburgh and Lothian which will be open, free of charge, for Doors Open Day on the weekend. So will St Andrew's and St George's West! We're in this year's programme for Scotland's Year of Art and Architecture and our doors will be open on Saturday 10-4 and Sunday noon -3.



**Could you spare an hour or two to help welcome visitors?** You don't have to be a member of the Welcome Team, or an expert in every detail of our architecture and history – we have great materials available which tell our story. It's fun and rewarding. Interested? Speak to Alison Bruce or James Crerar.

## Christmas Tree Festival

### Call for photos

Do you have any photos that capture the spirit of the Christmas Tree Festival? Would you like to share them with us? They could feature on one of this year's church Christmas Cards, or in a poster or publicity for our Advent and Christmas events.

Please email them to us – by 4pm on Friday 15 September, if possible - c/o magazine[at]stagw.org.uk Alison Bruce and Sally Evans.



# How we love children

Tony Shephard



How we love children...  
continue to love naughty children...  
... love them more... weep over alienation from them...  
... scold, but still love...  
remember, with sadness not blame, tantrums and bad behaviour...  
... forget much or most, or remember with amusement,  
for childish disobedience is part of growing.

We devote ourselves to them... weep with them...  
... teach them to pick themselves up...  
... stand back when they are making their own way...  
... give them space to grow...  
... admire their attempts even when they fail...  
... see their hurt when they let you down...  
... give them credit, love them even more,  
when they try to be good but fail...  
... and know this is just their childhood.  
All their adult life will grow from this.

If love seems to fail... parent turning from child...  
child from parent... the failure is in both.

Parents are also children, babes in eternity,  
we have our failings and our fallings too,  
and a good Parent who loves us  
even more than we love our own children,  
who weeps over us, with us,  
gives everything, even life itself,  
for us.

When we move on from this life we will not be turned away  
because of our childhood failings, because a good parent does not  
cease to be a parent when we grow up. However we tried and  
failed, the great Parent of us all will never fail. He loved the world  
so much that He came among us as his own only Son so that we  
might have life, yet we crucified Him. He even descended into hell  
to rescue us. Such love.

All shall be well, and all shall be well,  
And all manner of thing shall be well

Tony blogs on science,  
religion and the world at  
<https://anthonyinuk.com/>





## **Will you come and follow me?**

**Pat McKerrow's Wildlife Diary**

“Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't go and never be the same?” ...

And so begins John L Bell's famous hymn of discipleship, sometimes referred to as 'The Summons'. The sentiments are strong yet lovely; also the traditional Scottish melody accompaniment, Kelvingrove. Stirring stuff indeed, and those of us who were in church on 27 August, sang the words with gusto.

But what has it to do with nature? The link is probably tenuous (possibly even egotistical – forgive me), but I hereby invite you to come and follow me. Come and follow me as I browse my notes and photographs and re-live some of the marvellous nature experiences I've had over the busy summer months.

I haven't quite traversed the length and breadth of Scotland in the last few weeks, but my 'safaris' have covered the Isle of May, the Scottish borders, the Highlands (including the Black Isle, Falls of Shin, and several Glens), Orkney, as well as the more local Duddingston Loch, Figgate Pond, and the lower stretch of the Water of Leith.

What have I seen? What have I felt? What have I learned? To be honest, too much to give anything like the justice deserved in a few short paragraphs – I will therefore happily pick up on some things again in future diaries.

For now, my overwhelming feeling (again), is one of gratitude; so many creatures, such stunning locations, real connectivity and peace with/in nature and wider creation, and yes, the opportunity to experiment with different photographic subjects and new techniques.

From marvelling at huge numbers of puffins constantly flying and fishing for sandeels to nourish pufflings; thrilling at a family of badgers cautiously emerging from their woodland sett to forage enthusiastically for supper; stalking a solitary young mountain hare high in the mountains seemingly unperturbed by my close proximity; gazing in wonder at a pod of bottlenose dolphins breaching and 'playing' with their prey; spying on a herd of perfectly camouflaged feral goats; admiring herds of red deer sporting their summer velvet-covered antlers (and imagining how their lives and moods will change in a few short months); counting 18 mute swan cygnets between 7 pairs living in various local waterways in the city; to witnessing amazingly determined leaping salmon who, for me, epitomise the 'if at first you don't succeed' ethos.

Do I have a favourite moment from my adventures?

### **For Wild Things**

Thank you, dear God,  
for the wild birds  
And their wild and noisy cry;  
For the wild hills  
and the wild woods  
Where the wild winds  
whistle by; ....

For the wonder  
of all of this wildness  
Where order  
and beauty  
are found.

*Anon*



Without doubt, the badgers, and especially the moment I realised a pair of eyes set within a soil splattered face were fixed upon me, and mere feet away.

In some of what I've described thus far, I am indebted to the renowned Scottish nature photographer Laurie Campbell with whom I've been fortunate enough to spend time lately. Laurie is arguably the finest in his field, and I can truthfully say that he has both inspired me as well as thoroughly influenced my approach to photography. He has also introduced me to the magnified world of macro photography...more of that another time, but for now I will say that in my wildest dreams I never envisaged being excited about seeing, let alone photographing, insects close-up!

Many feature in scripture, some more positively than others, but even that had never stirred my interest....something to do with all those little legs! To everyone's surprise therefore, I enjoyed the macro experience so much that I have added the necessary lens to my camera kit and cannot wait to get back out and let a whole new world open up for me.

Of course all of this has been interspersed with regular checks on my home patch to track my swan family (and I'm pleased to say that the



two cygnets remain well), the swallows who spend the summer in my garage, the two closest fox families, and to marvel at a recent frenzy of kingfisher activity.

I will never tire of spending time waiting, watching, and witnessing what my patch has to offer, particularly sharing in the lives of my swans. I will also always be grateful for that moment almost 18 months ago now, when quite by chance, I first spotted the swans; how they too have influenced me, my life, and yes, I have never been the same since I first began to follow their 'footsteps'.

“Will you come and follow me...  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go,  
where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.”

**Every blessing**  
**Pat McKerrow**

## Dates for your Diary

Pat's next photography exhibition, '**Moments in Nature**', will be staged in the Undercroft Café, St Andrew's & St George's West Church, Mon-Fri 1- 22 November, 10am - 2pm, and Sat 18 Nov, 11am- 2pm. Further details will follow



**Eco-Congregations Scotland** is hosting an event at Craigsbank Church, Corstorphine on Wednesday 27 September. The evening begins at 6.15 pm with a **locally sourced harvest supper**. At 7.30 pm there will be a discussion on the **Good Food Nation Bill** launched for consultation on the previous day.

The discussion will cover the connections between food insecurity / climate change / public health / Biodiversity / workers' rights / animal welfare / food waste.

Food is important to us all and this is a chance to put our views to the Scottish Parliament before legislation later in the year.

Members of eco-congregations like ours are invited to attend the evening. If you are interested, please speak to Arthur Chapman, before Friday 22 September

# A Wonderful Life

A Tribute to Jack Thompson by Rev Dr Jim Campbell

**“When I think of my life I cry, not because of sadness or regret, but because of joy – I’ve had such a wonderful life.”**

Life began for Jack in 1943 on the Shankill Road, in Belfast. He attended Methodist College, a leading grammar school, and Townsend Street Church. He read history and at the same time studied for a Diploma in Theology at Queen’s University Belfast and then taught in Newtownards. He married Phyllis Wright and was ordained as the youngest elder in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland

However, Jack’s God-given gift - the ability to communicate clearly and concisely – meant that he wanted to look further afield. He and Phyllis were appointed for overseas mission service and posted to Livingstonia Secondary School in Northern Malawi. Jack was the star teacher and his students regularly got top marks in national examinations; many went on to University.

Jack developed a particular interest in the role of Africans in bringing Christianity to Malawi, and the methods of pioneer missionary, Donald Fraser, the subject of his PhD at Edinburgh University. Jack and family were next posted to Blantyre, where he was in charge of in-service courses for church leaders.

It is possible that what gave Jack most satisfaction in Blantyre was not teaching but running. Jack had been an outstanding distance runner at school and at Queen’s, and now with Matthew Kabale, an Olympic runner, he formed the Camba Road Running Club (a camba is a tortoise). Jack trained runners to international standard and was the national marathon coach for Malawi. He considered one of the most worth-while things he did was giving his runners a sense of dignity and confidence on the international stage.

After his time in Malawi, Jack developed an international reputation in Birmingham and then in Edinburgh as a historian of African Christianity. He wrote several books, contributed to many

publications and conferences around the world, taught and supervised, and played a full part in university life. He was active in setting up and developing the Scotland Malawi Partnership, and retained contacts with a wide range of ecumenical bodies.

Jack's magnetic personality meant that he had friends from all walks of life and every corner of the world. He was kind, inspirational and a great motivator of others whether school children or athletes, graduate students or academics.

Jack talked of his family, his children, Jenny and Mark, and his grandchildren, often and with great pride. Jack and Phyllis's first child lived for only a few hours and is buried at Newtownards and he wanted her remembered.

Jack was very conscious that he had a wonderful life because of Phyllis. They shared common goals, above all a commitment to Christ and his Church, and while they could differ in their views, their love was rock solid. Jack's work had placed great demands on Phyllis and he recognised that his achievements were due to her support. He was proud of Phyllis and her own work for Christian Aid and Malawi charities. Of his life, Jack said, "Phyllis was the quiet strength behind it all – the oak to my willow."

The last lap was very difficult. Jack crossed the finishing line on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

*Paul writes in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy "The time is here for me to leave this life. I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance and I have kept the faith. Now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with God which the Lord, the Righteous judge, will give me on that day".*

Jack had done his best in the race. He had run the full distance. He had kept the faith. We thank God for the life of Jack Thompson.

You can read the full version of this tribute to Jack on St Andrew's and St George's West website at [www.stagw.org.uk](http://www.stagw.org.uk)



## Festival at fast pace

**Joanna Stark**

It was brilliant to work at St Andrew's and St George's West over the festival period; I was given the chance to develop many skills surrounded by an array of brilliant music. Under the guidance of Mary Margaret I learned to make programmes and posters, change the display cabinets, sell tickets, run the box office, display stage lights, and liaise with performers - just about any task that needed doing if MM required it!

It was generally fast-paced and naturally, I had to be disciplined about my time management (which subsided now and then...) and learn to be efficient when handling various situations, whether money-handling or preparing evening refreshments in the cafe. In doing this, I was grateful to work with members of the church team and congregation whom I either didn't know so well, or just hadn't spoken to lately because of all my dashing about on Sunday mornings! This in turn made me more confident in talking with some



Joanna is choral scholar at StAGW

of the thousands of visitors/fringe-goers that passed through our doors, many of whom always commented on how lovely they thought the church was.

From a musical perspective I appreciated all the planning and preparation that is required in organising a concert - not just the music practice. Additionally, I came into contact with many talented musicians who will inspire me to work harder in my studies.

Thank you very much to Mary Margaret, Brigitte, Nick and Sally Evans and the church team for making it possible for me to take up this lovely work opportunity!



## **Ayman Jarjour Choir Concert**

**Friday 29 September at St Andrew's and St George's West**

**Join us for an Evening of Classical Guitar and Choral Music!**

On 29 September, STAGW will be the setting for a concert starring the **Church Choir, led by Brigitte Harris**, and Syrian classical guitarist, **Ayman Jarjour**.

Since his recital debut in Damascus, Ayman has been actively performing in the Middle East, Europe, the US, Africa and the Far East. He received his Bachelor's degree from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Madrid and a Master of Music degree from the prestigious Juilliard School in New York. Ayman performs a wide range of the classical guitar repertoire, ranging from traditional Spanish/Latin American, through Baroque and Classical, to contemporary music. After the concert, a light buffet (including Palestinian food), wine and soft drinks will be served (covered in ticket price). This is a fund-raising event and proceeds will go to Palcrafts (UK), a charity which aims to reduce poverty in Palestine by selling Palestinian goods at Hadeel, its Fair Trade shop at 123 George Street. After expenses are paid, profits from the shop go back to Palestinian artisans and craft workers in the form of small grants to support and develop their businesses. There will be a stall selling Hadeel products at the concert.

Tickets for this event are available in the church office and in Hadeel. They cost £20, £15 (over 60s, disabled people, students) or £10 (under 16s). You can also book on-line at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/an-evening-of-classical-guitar-and-choral-music-tickets-35650618961>



# Lutherabend – An Evening with Luther

Friday 3 November 7.30pm at St Andrew's & St George's West  
James McNeill and Brigitte Harris

Ein Luther Abend will celebrate 500 years since the Reformation in Germany with an insight into Luther's own world. A lover of music, food and talk, we will spend an evening with him, listening to music by Bach, Mendelssohn and by contemporary Edinburgh composer Andrew Carvel, eating the sort of food that he would have enjoyed and hearing some of his own Tischreden (Table talk).

We shall hear Bach's Cantata 137 Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren and a newly commissioned Cantata based on Ein feste Burg. Then we will eat, enjoy orchestral Tafelmusik, and meet Luther through theatrical recitations of Luther's writing from Florian Kaplick.

The Choir of St Andrew's & St George's West, directed by Brigitte Harris, will be joined by a small orchestra led by Angus Ramsay, and with soloists Soprano Frances Cooper and Tenor Stuart Murray Mitchell from Edinburgh, Alto Franziska Markovitsch of RIAS-Kammerchor and Baritone Michael Rapke of Deutsche Oper Berlin. This joint project has been planned by musicians from St Andrew's & St George's West, the German Consulate General in Edinburgh and the German Speaking Congregation in Edinburgh. It has been generously supported by the German Consulate General in Edinburgh.

## Tickets online at Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lutherabend-an-evening-with-luther-tickets-37061383596>



# I was a stranger and you welcomed me

James McNeill



The Trustees of TOGETHER recently met with David Bradwell, Refugee Co-ordinator at Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees to explore how our congregations might better engage with refugees in the City. David sees the principal work of SFAR perhaps moving away from central co-ordination and also sees numerous other specific projects emerging. Here he writes:

Refugees: I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Scotland's main Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Interfaith organisations have set up a joint project to encourage and co-ordinate work with and awareness about refugee issues: **Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees.**

Offering hospitality to strangers is a common requirement of many different faith traditions. All religions teach a form of the Golden Rule (treat others as you would wish to be treated) and that there is an inherent value and dignity to every human being – and that our common humanity transcends national, racial, cultural or linguistic barriers.

Jesus was a refugee; after his birth his parents Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt to escape from King Herod. In his ministry he taught his followers: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Since September 2015 Scotland has welcomed more than 1,800 refugees from Syria as part of the UK Government’s Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme. This has included around 150 people who have come to Edinburgh, thanks to the support of the City of Edinburgh Council.

The arrival of people who have fled from war, fear and persecution to new communities has led to many people wanting to know what they can do to help and support their new neighbours. This is especially true for the language barriers and cultural differences between Scotland and Syria, and so integration requires effort from everyone – new arrivals and the existing community – to make it work well for everyone. That’s what Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees aims to support, but it needs folk working in congregations and neighbourhoods to help achieve.

To find out more:

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

[www.facebook.com/ScottishFaithsActionforRefugees](https://www.facebook.com/ScottishFaithsActionforRefugees)

Twitter: [@WithRefugees](https://twitter.com/WithRefugees)

[Dbradwell\[at\]churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:Dbradwell@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Phone (from UK): 07341 478 174

SCOTTISH FAITHS  
ACTION FOR REFUGEES



# Refugees

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way

(now read from bottom to top)



Brian Bilston, “unofficial poet laureate of twitter.”  
Follow Brian on twitter (@brian\_bilston) or  
facebook @brianBilston or visit his Poetry  
Laboetry at [www.brianbilston.com](http://www.brianbilston.com).

**Thanks to Sally Evans for contributing this**

# Edinburgh Ecumenical Friends

Murray Chalmers



Edinburgh Ecumenical Friends was formed before the millennium by a small group of interested people. It was subsequently led for a number of years by the redoubtable Anne Hepburn. As its title suggests, it is open to anyone, of any denomination or none, who is interested in Ecumenism in its broadest sense. Anne once wrote: Ecumenism is about the whole inhabited earth, not just about churches cosyng up to each other.

*“Ecumenism is about the whole inhabited earth, not just about churches cosyng up to each other”*

Our annual programmes reflect this wide spread of interests. We meet to make friends and to hear about topics of interest or challenge. We meet on Thursdays,

12.30 – 1.45 pm in St Cuthbert’s Parish Church, Lothian Road. Bring your packed lunch and come to join us. You will be made most welcome.

- 28 Sep **Moira McDonald** *A year in the life of a Moderator’s chaplain*
  
- 5 Oct **David Hamilton** *Engaging with the Word: speaking/listening in church*
- 12 Oct **Malcolm and Cati Ramsay** *Nepal*
- 19 Oct **Pat Ash** *Spoons*
- 26 Oct **Pauline Rambles** *Reaching out from Polwarth Church*
  
- 2 Nov **Ian May** *Castle Community Bank*
- 9 Nov **Catherine Booth** *Further Scottish trailblazing women of science*
- 16 Nov **Sheila Kesting** *My 23 years in ecumenical relations*
- 23 Nov **Helen Alexander** *Harry Guntrip, Psychotherapist: the man and his legacy*
- 30 Nov **Andrew Thackrey** *Advent Meditation*

# Singalong to the Sound of Music

David Todd

**On Wednesday 18 October at 7pm there will be a showing of the film The Sound of Music in St Andrew's and St George's West Church followed by a short discussion.**

The showing will include subtitles and members of the audience are invited to sing along and even dress up!



The Sound of Music is a magical heart-warming story which has become the most popular family film of all time. It tells the story of a spirited young woman, Maria (Julie Andrews) who leaves the convent to become governess to the seven children of the autocratic Captain von Trapp (Christopher Plummer).

**7-9.45pm Film**

**9.45pm refreshments, followed by a short discussion**

The film lasts two and three-quarter hours and there will be refreshments afterwards for which donations are invited. Apart from the obvious issues raised in the film of family values, love and nationalism the discussion will also look at where God is in the story.

*The evening is organised by David Todd through Greenside Arts & Entertainment Outreach in partnership with Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together. This follows recent trips to cinema and theatre and the recent showing of the film The Shawshank Redemption in the Omni Centre led by David Todd. David is Arts Outreach Project Leader for Greenside Parish Church in partnership with Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together.*



# On the button

Maggie Romanis and Dorothy Mackenzie



Almost 2 years ago, **Creative Together**, the craft group of the Together churches, was gifted a box of buttons that had belonged to Anne Hepburn's late daughter Catherine. Anne thought we might be able to use them in our crafting.

On examination, however, we realised we were dealing with 'treasure', and the idea of a button sale took root. Many further donations of buttons and sewing accessories followed, and after months of planning, sorting and carding, we had our sale on 16 and 17 June this year.

The response was amazing, with the sum of over £4,200 raised for Marie Curie. Both Anne and Catherine had received care from Marie Curie in their final days, so it was fitting that this charity benefitted from the proceeds of the sale.

We know the total will rise, as we still have items to sell on the internet and otherwise. Many thanks on behalf of Creative Together to all who donated buttons, who helped on the 2 days of the sale, or who came to buy.

*Maggie Romanis, St Cuthbert's*

**Creative TOGETHER** next meets in October (no September meeting).



# Buttons as small works of art

We knew that button collecting was becoming popular in the UK, as in many things, following trends from across the Atlantic. But with the help of some expert friends, we soon learned just how complex and fascinating a field this is. It's true to say that old buttons really are small works of art, as important in their time as pieces of jewellery. We learned that in the early days, buttons were the preserve of gentlemen's attire, and the fancier the better. Only later did they become widely used on ladies' garments. And the field of military buttons is a whole specialism in itself.

We spent many hours researching, evaluating and pricing – Victorian silver, Arts and Crafts, Art Deco, early plastic, ornate metals, glass, pearl, wood, horn, silk – as well as volumes of everyday buttons. Early on the first day of the sale, all this hard work was affirmed by a very considerate customer. Announcing herself as an antique expert with a special interest in buttons, she told us our prices were "pretty well spot on". This gave us all huge confidence for the rest of the sale, and was just one example of the amazing goodwill and feedback we received from our customers.



Something we were unable to identify, despite our research, was a pair of large, elaborate silver buttons. "Possibly French, possibly Eastern" was the closest we could get, but definitely "interesting" and priced accordingly. They remained unsold among the "specials" until the last 20 minutes of the sale, when they attracted the attention of Elizabeth and

her mother from the Netherlands. We explained that we were pretty sure they were silver, but we couldn't be certain where they were from.

But they knew exactly where the buttons were from – from the traditional gentlemen's costume from the islands of Zeeland, each island having its own distinctive pattern. So despite our failed research, courtesy of Elizabeth and her mother, these buttons have now found their way back to their home in the Netherlands.

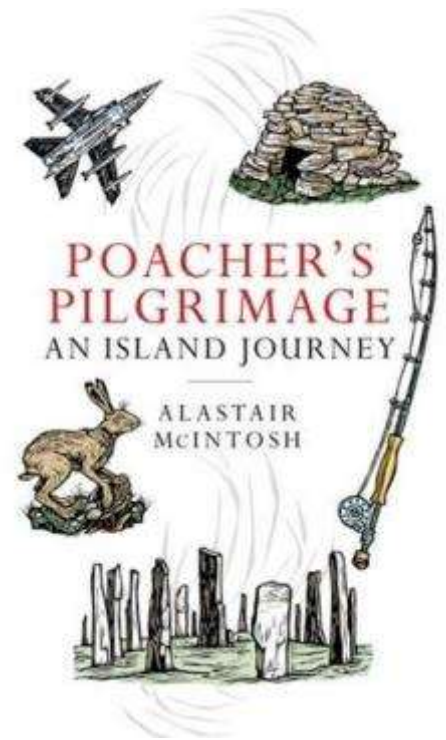
*Dorothy Mackenzie, St Andrew's and St George's West*



# Alastair McIntosh Poacher's Pilgrimage An Island Journey

Rosemary Kaye

Alastair McIntosh was born in 1955 at Leurbost on Lewis, that northern part of a Hebridean island with two names, two identities. Forty-three years earlier, a certain Mary Anne MacLeod had been born just eight miles away in the village of Tong. The First World War had decimated the male population of the island, leaving little work and few prospects of marriage. Miss MacLeod left the island in 1930, arriving in New York one day after her 18th birthday. In 2016 her son Donald was elected the 45th President of the United States of America. *'The oppressed are often left with no option but to become the oppressors.'*



In conversation with Jane Fowler (BBC Scotland Editor of Speech Programmes) at St Andrew's & St George's West Church, Alastair spoke about his latest book **Poacher's Pilgrimage – An Island Journey**, in which he describes his return journey to the island of his birth, and the walk he took from the far south of Harris to the northern shores of Lewis. It was a walk into history, into politics, into science, into spirituality, and into the imagination. Or, as he describes it; *'a twelve day walk through remote and rugged terrain on the island of my childhood to explore the roots of war and alienation in our times.'*



Alastair is a writer and academic known for his activism, especially in the area of land ownership reform. He was heavily involved in the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust's 1997 purchase of the island, which took place after years of neglect of the land by absentee landlords. In 2006 Alastair was appointed to the honorary position of Visiting Professor of Human Ecology at the University of Strathclyde; he is also an Honorary Fellow of New College. He opposed the building of a superquarry at Lingerbay on Harris, inviting

the chair of Lafarge SA, the quarry company, to visit the island so that he could understand the meaning of the land to its people. He has, says Jane Fowler, an '*outstanding ability to talk openly with those of differing points of view*'.

In planning his walk Alastair especially wanted to study the chapels, or temples (the ruins of pre-Reformation buildings), the 'healing wells' once prevalent throughout Scotland, and the faeries, which he sees as a metaphor for the imagination, a way of engaging with the inner life. But mostly he wanted to think about war, and the resolution of war. What could be more topical?

Just before he set out, Alastair, a peace-loving Quaker, had paid his annual visit to the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, where he's been invited for over 20 years; it was inevitable, therefore, that conflict was still on his mind as he zig-zagged across the island; '*I grew up on an island that has been shaped by war.*'

As he walked, Alastair recognised not only reminders of his own childhood ('*the kipper-scented wisps of smoke*', the wooden poles left over from old ships '*vessels laden full of memories*') but also the signs and remnants of much earlier times. For four days he walked through an unpopulated valley between Harris and Lewis, a land of deer and eagles, the site of the 'Loch of the Cascading Cliffs' – and all around him he saw ancient structures and clues, the brochs and beehive dwellings, the ruins of houses. '*When you know a place you can decode it...it is a landscape populated with stories*'

In his youth Alastair worked as a stalker's pony boy (he approves of stalking; 'traditional stalkers love the land, and the deer') Back then, when he asked about those abandoned houses, he was always told that the inhabitants had left to seek work. '*Had they heck? They'd been cleared*'. As part of his research for Poacher's Pilgrimage he worked for a week with the old stalker's son, finding the very site from which the US President's own maternal ancestors had been evicted. In the 1820s, he explains, all of the villages on the north-west coast of Harris were forcibly cleared by their landlords, and replaced by sheep. The landlords needed the profits of their sheep farming to pay off gambling debts. Some of the orders for the evictions were sent from Barbados – where those very same landlords were running slave plantations; now they evicted the families whose own sons they had shipped off to fight colonial wars.

Alastair asserts that President Trump's ability to connect with the oppressed in 21st century America stems from his Lewis roots. In his youth, he would have mixed with emigrants from the island; he knows how to speak to the

dispossessed, and perhaps more importantly to the evangelical right – and this may have won him the top job in the western world.

Of the current political situation, Alastair regards the division between North and South Korea as a remnant of the Cold War and of World War II. *‘There was a lot of unfinished business – it is our responsibility.’* What we need to do, says Alastair, is talk to one another – just as he talks with military generals in Geneva; *‘They are not warmongers – they see that war has not worked so they are willing to listen to other methods of dealing with things.’* He finds that the military are often more aware than the peace movement of the ambiguities of war. The Presbyterian churches of South Korea have called for US exercises against the North to be stopped; *‘We need to understand the minds of nations who have lost millions of people to war since the 1950s.’* 5 million North Koreans died in the Korean War.

Recalling the Iraq War, Alastair asserts that at least three-fifths of the senior military believed it was illegal, but also felt they had to obey their democratically elected Prime Minister. *‘What do they feel now?’*

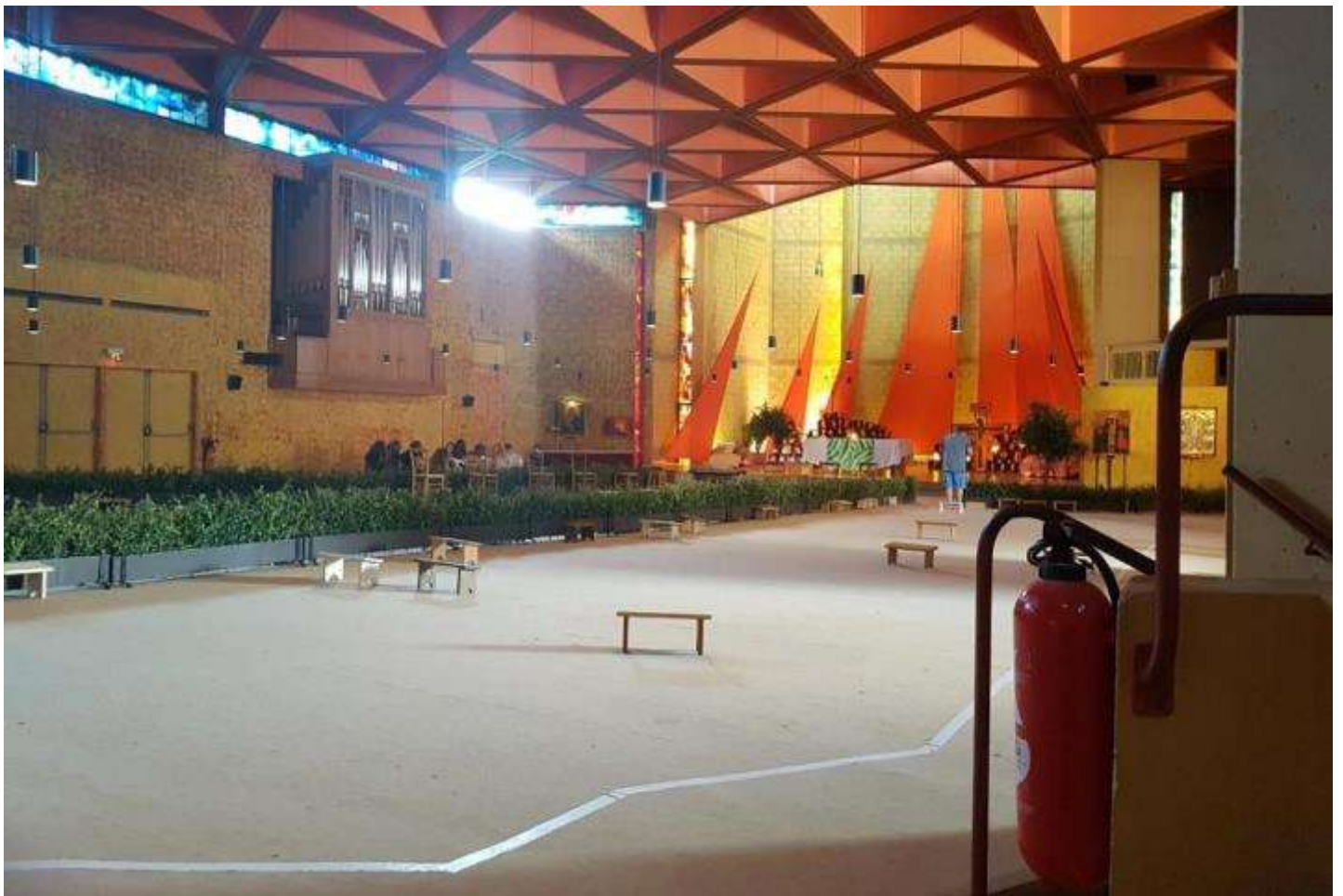
Similarly, although he is a Quaker, Alastair is keen to talk to those of other religious persuasions. Entering a Free Church on a Sunday, he heard a ‘mind-blowing’ sermon on Joab, then was invited to the manse, where theology was debated for hours ‘over a very good lunch.’ The Calvinism introduced by the old Highland landlords may not be to Alastair’s taste, but he meets people on their own terms, saying that modern Calvinism has become the way that spirituality is experienced in the islands; *‘Go into a Free Church, see the real heart of the people.’* Communion – not only with the past, but with our contemporaries – lies at the heart of Alastair McIntosh’s message. He ends his talk with a sonorous reading from part of Sorley MacLean’s *Hallaig*, translated from the original Gaelic by the poet: *‘the dead have been seen alive.....and their beauty is a film on my heart.’*

This unusual hour made me think a great deal about the history of the Western Isles; things I half knew fell into place, or rather, found a new place as Alastair brought them together. It also made me look at the Free Church in a new light. Alastair may be a little eccentric – his own website quotes The Scottish Landowners’ Federation as saying ‘Nobody takes Alastair McIntosh seriously’ – but he is also one of those rare individuals who just keep on ploughing their own furrow, firm in their beliefs but also wide open to others. Alastair McIntosh; a passionate peace-maker for a troubled world.

Thanks to the Edinburgh Reporter for this review.

<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2017/08/alastair-mcintosh-poachers-pilgrimage-an-island-journey/>





## Taizé: a place of prayer and welcome Mary Scott

To avoid having to sit on the floor at Taizé it is best to arrive at least half an hour early for midday prayers. The huge chapel, extended twice to accommodate all who wish to attend, has a few small prayer stools and stone steps round the side to sit on; otherwise it is the floor. The central area is reserved for the Brothers, who stroll in in their white robes, no formal parading.

There are around 100 Brothers – of Roman Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, many living and

working in other areas of the world. The Brothers exist solely by their own work producing wonderful pottery and ceramics; donations are refused and bequests or inheritance given to the poor.

Taizé is different things to different people; to some it is the songs and chants, some of which appear in our own hymn book, to others it is a place of pilgrimage for countless young folk across the world and to others it is the small ecumenical community of Brothers who live a simple, monastic life of work and prayer in rural Burgundy. Founded by Brother Roger in 1940, it is above all a place of prayer and of welcome. Thousands of young people each year stay for a week to pray, for discussion, for practical work and for a searching together for meaning to their lives.

As many as 3,000 come to prayers, held morning, mid-day and evening. My brother and I, along with our cousin and her husband who live 5 minutes' drive away from the community, attended mid-day prayers in early summer. The format is simple – several chants, repeated; a reading in 3 languages, including English; 2 or 3 short prayers; 10-15 minutes of silence for personal devotions, and finally two or three chants again. The experience lasts half an hour.

Some chants are accompanied on a keyboard, while others are led by a cantor and sung unaccompanied. They are easy to follow and all-absorbing - there is no restlessness or talking. I thought I would find the silence long, but it is very easy to concentrate on remembering and praying for people when 3,000 others are doing the same! At the end some of the gathered throng started to drift away quietly while others continued singing.

My cousin and her husband chose their house as it was close to Taizé, and go to prayers there several times a week; it is an experience that is precious to them which I was lucky to share.





When I was a young teenager I attended a church in Folkestone where, when the choir had disappeared into the vestry, the priest would turn at the vestry door and facing the congregation would say the following prayer:

*"Pardon, O Lord, all that Thou hast seen amiss in this our service and grant that as we leave Thy house we may remember that we do not leave Thy Presence."*

I have used that prayer at every service before leaving the church ever since. **Nancie Swan**

**St Andrew's and St George's West, 13 George Street Edinburgh**

**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  
**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)  
IGilmour[at]churchofscotland.org.uk

**Associate Minister** Rev Tony Bryer  
**Pastoral Minister** Rev Alistair McGregor

**Session Clerk** Crispin Longden  
**Joint Treasurers** John Innes  
Allan Sim

**Director of Music** Brigitte Harris  
**Assistant DoM** Andrew Carvel

**Church manager** Wendy Henderson  
0131 225 3847 churchmanager[at]stagw.org.uk

**Church secretary** Joyce Garland  
0131 225 3847 info[at]stagw.org.uk

**Church administrator** Sophie Chalmers  
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