



EDINBURGH City
Centre CHURCHES
TOGETHER

St Andrew's and St George's West May - June 2020 mini mag



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Hello!

We're sending this magazine to you as a member of St Andrew's and St George's West Church and we hope you enjoy it. "Normally" you might pick up the magazine at church, or your elder might pass a copy to you. This isn't possible under lockdown so we're sending the magazine by post and by email.

If you receive this magazine by post and you have access to the internet would you consider receiving the next mag by email or reading it online?

If you could do this please let us know. It saves resources and costs a lot less



If you'd rather not receive the magazine at all please let us know that too. Give us a call at 0131 225 3847 or email us info@stagw.org.uk

Thank you and stay safe.

Keeping in touch

Telephone 0131 225 3847

email info@stagw.org.uk

website www.stagw.org.uk

facebook www.facebook.com/stagw

twitter www.twitter.com/stagw1

Please get in touch if you would like to be part of

- **STAGW weekly news email**
- **STAGW Friends and Family What'sApp Group**



The significance of small things

A letter from Rosie

Early on Easter Sunday morning I was walking through the back garden at the manse and my attention was drawn to a rustling noise coming from under the hedge. I looked idly over and couldn't quite believe my eyes when I saw two large foxes looking at me intently. We all froze for a second or two then they broke cover and scaled the back fence. Gone. Afterwards I reflected that I had been closer to those two foxes than I have been to most human beings I have encountered over the past three weeks. I can't speak for the foxes.

How I encounter others is changing under lockdown. I don't mean that in the '2 metre' sense but rather the significance I attach to the points of contact I have. Contact that may not involve direct human contact at all, as with 'my' foxes, and even 'inanimate' objects are becoming more animated. The football I now often find in that same back garden means that the children next door have been having their lockdown kickaround, a new part of their daily routine. I am quick to hurl the ball back over the hedge, a simple act to be sure, but even that feels part of something larger.

“how I
encounter
others is
changing
under
lockdown”

I had no hand in planting the tulips that came into bloom this week in my front garden. The hands that did plant them could have no idea that one day they would brighten the morning of someone who would treasure a sign of new life. I thank them.



My doorstep is now a doorway to joining with others in saucepan clanking and clapping every Thursday night for our NHS. The concept of the doorstep collective has been extended to include a rousing round of 'Happy Birthday' to a woman a few doors down whom I hope to be able to greet in person someday. The wildlife theme continues – the Easter Bunny ran the gauntlet and left a chocolate gift on that same doorstep. Calories have never tasted so good.

“acts of kindness and solidarity fill the void”

At a time when the opportunities to meet in person have evaporated, acts of kindness and solidarity fill the void and become intensely meaning-filled and personal. As has been said, 'we find meaning where we give meaning'. Each of us is crafting home-spun wisdom in our own way, and out of our own particular circumstances. And we build meaning together with each other and with those who came before us.

On the last Sunday we were permitted to worship as a gathered community at St Andrew's and St George's West, I quoted Julian of Norwich who lived through turbulent times, including the plague that swept through Europe. In the midst of a severe illness, Julian experienced visions and of one of these visions she writes of the significance of small things:

“And in this he showed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazel nut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed. And it was as round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, ‘What may this be?’ And it was answered generally thus, ‘It is all that is made.’ I marvelled how it might last, for I thought it might suddenly have fallen to nothing for littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and ever shall, for God loves it. And so have all things their beginning by the love of God.

In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it. The second that God loves it. And the third, that God keeps it.”

Her words from nearly 700 years ago speak into those times when we may feel that we are insignificant or that what we can offer, compared to others, is insignificant. It does nothing to lessen the sacrifice of, and appreciation for, those working in hospitals and care homes all over the world to appreciate the small graces we are privileged to witness and the seemingly small offerings we can make. To the contrary, it serves to add to the significance of what they and others do. Because, to Julian’s way of thinking, it’s all inter-connected, all a part of the same whole.

The Easter story proclaims that love is not a zero-sum game, where one person's gain is equivalent to another's loss. Everyone, and everything, counts. We do what we can to bloom where we have been planted, by hands not our own.

**we are
strengthened by
being in
community
through the One
who hears us,
loves us and
keeps us**

The simple question, ‘How are you?’ can seem the most profound and perplexing enquiry these days. Take your time. We live into the answer knowing that we are part of something far beyond ourselves. Strengthened by being in community through the One who made us, loves us and keeps us. The One who has all the time in the world to hear ‘How **you** are.’

Peace to you and yours, Rosie

Church in the time of Coronavirus lockdown

Church has moved – out of the building, online into the world and inwards into our homes. Here's a guide to what's happening.



Worship

We're still worshipping together

Our main Sunday service has moved online.

You can **listen from home to a service of words and music** from St Andrew's and St George's West every Sunday, or indeed from anywhere, at any time during the week!

You can also **watch services on YouTube** created with our Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together partners St Cuthbert's and St John's Episcopal on the last Sunday of each month. Most ECCCT services are **BSL signed**.

Please see our website home page www.stagw.org.uk for details of services.

No internet access? We're working to make services accessible to everybody by phone or recorded media. Please get in touch - 0131 225 3847 or info@stagw.org.uk – if you would like to know more about this.

Communion

We're still breaking bread together

– in an audio service on the last Sunday of the month. Find the service at www.stagw.org.uk

9.45 Learning Together

We're still learning together

-by weekly email – get in touch if you would like to be part of this

Pause for Prayer

We're still praying together

Jimmy Campbell and Pat McKerrow are running a digital Pause for Prayer initiative of prayer and reflection

through email and facebook. Visit the church on facebook at www.facebook.com/stagw to participate or contact us if you would like to receive the Pause for Prayer email through the week.



Taize Time

We still keep silence together

Our monthly Taize Time has moved online. Our next online service is **Thursday 28 May at 7pm.**

Amnesty Group

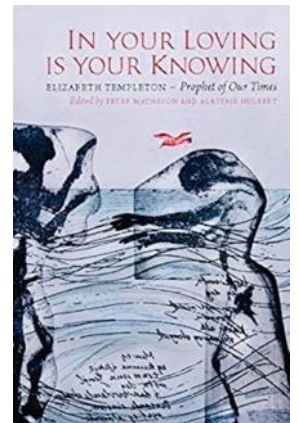
We're still campaigning together

See page 11-12 of the mini-mag for how you can get involved

Book Group/Discussion Group

We're still reading together

Our current book is Elizabeth Templeton's book *In Your Loving is In Your Knowing*. We next meet on Monday 11 May from 10.30am, on Zoom – contact us for login details if you would like to join in.



Creative Together

We're still creating together

Find out how to get involved in our latest projects on page 9

Walking Group

We're still walking, solo rather than together

but sharing experiences on the first Friday of the month. Get in touch if you would like to be part of this.

Let's meet for Elevenses

In the time of 'social distancing' we're trying out a new way of keeping connected. **Elevenses** is a virtual café at St Andrew's and St George's West where you can catch up with Rosie and with friends. You drop into the café from your own home, bringing your own tea, coffee and biscuits. The most important thing to bring is yourself!



When? Saturdays 11am-12 noon, starting Saturday 2 May

What do I need?

- Listen to the conversation and contribute by phone
OR
- A computer, tablet or smartphone with an internet connection will let you see everybody as well



How do I join? Elevenses is an online Zoom meeting, so you need phone-in or log in details. Please contact us if you would like to participate.

Will it cost anything? Zoom is free but you'll have to pay the cost of connecting – so a local call from an Edinburgh landline. From computer, tablet or smartphone probably free, depending on how you pay for internet/data. If you "pay as you go" there will be a cost.

Do I need to do anything to prepare for Elevenses? If you're using a computer, please install zoom at <https://zoom.us>. You don't have to create your own Zoom account. Or download the Zoom app.

Is Elevenses open to everybody? It's for members and friends of STAGW at the moment, so a safe virtual space among friends. We're not sharing log in details on our website or social media pages.

I'd like to join but I've never used Zoom before That's fine, we're all learning! We'll talk you through the basics at Elevenses. See you then!

Lockdown Therapy

courtesy of Creative Together

Despite the Corona crisis, many church activities continue, but just in a different form, and that's also true for Creative Together. We're still creating, but just not together (at least physically). That means no meeting for coffee and chatter, but still plenty of knitting and sewing at home, and still keeping in touch by e-mail and phone.

We've a few projects that we're continuing to work on. Those who knit are making trauma teddies and squares for blankets, both of these to go to **Edinburgh Direct Aid** for refugees from Syria, and also knitted hats for **homelessness projects** supported by the Together churches. Those who sew have begun to make twiddle cushions for folk with dementia, to go initially to **CrossReach** dementia projects.

All of these not only fill time – lockdown therapy, if you like – but also use up leftover yarn, fabric and bits and pieces, all to the benefit of other folk. And you can join in this activity if you would like to. We have patterns and guidance for all of these projects; all you need to supply is your time and creativity, and what you have stashed away in your scrap store.



Please **contact us** if you'd like to be a part of this.

We'll be delighted to have you working with us – at a distance of course!

Undercroft Amnesty group

Ruth Forrester

Although our Amnesty group can't meet face-to-face we can still send messages in support of people suffering from unjust treatment worldwide.

Write for Rights

We invite you to join us and take action in support of Egyptian human rights lawyer, Azza Soliman. You can write a letter or use the message provided at

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/azza-soliman> Azza faces a lengthy prison sentence on politically motivated charges. She is co-founder of two organisations, the Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance and Lawyers for Justice and Peace, and has dedicated her life to defending victims of torture, arbitrary detention, domestic abuse and rape. For this she has been persecuted by successive Egyptian governments for almost 30 years, labelled a 'spy' and a 'threat' to national security, put under surveillance, smeared and harassed, and her assets have been frozen. Azza now faces trial on charges of tax evasion, operating a civil society organisation without proper registration, and slandering Egypt's reputation by stating women in the country are at risk of rape. It is part of Case 173 (aka the 'foreign funding case'), which targets NGOs and activists.



You can send a letter by post to

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi

Office of the President,

Al Ittihadia Palace,

Cairo,

Arab Republic of Egypt

(postage - world rate: £1.35 for 10g letter or £1.55 for 20g letter)

And / or

Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel

Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt,

26 South Street, London W1K 1DW (normal UK postage rate)

You can use your own wording or copy the following:

Your Excellency,

Azza Soliman is a lawyer and long-standing women's human rights defender. She is under threat of being detained as part of Case 173 for defending human rights.

I urge you to:

- Drop the charges and lift the asset freeze order against Azza Soliman immediately and unconditionally;*
- Drop Case 173 and lift the asset freeze orders against human rights defenders and human rights organisations;*
- Drop the draconian NGO bill and amend the current law so that it is in line with Egypt's international and constitutional commitments to preserve the right to freedom of association.*

Your sincerely,

Amnesty ceilidh

On 7th March we joined other Edinburgh Amnesty groups for a fundraising ceilidh. It was lots of fun and we raised £909 for Amnesty International. Thanks to all who helped and all who danced!

Some more good news from Amnesty

After campaigning by Amnesty International, Joaquín Elo Ayeto was released from Black Beach Prison in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 14th February. Joaquín had been tried for defamation and threats against the President. Although his sentence was never read, he was imprisoned for almost one year. Despite his imprisonment Joaquín is determined to carry on with his human rights work.

Amnesty Scotland conference calls

Amnesty Scotland is organising Thursday evening Amnesty conference calls with a different guest speaker each week. **Contact us** if you would like to know more!



All-Age Quiz

Alison Campbell

Our young folk did really well in this quiz a few Sundays ago. How will you get on?

The Bible is in two parts which are called

- a) Yesterday and Today
- b) God and Jesus
- c) The Old and New Testaments

Jesus was born in

- a) Bethlehem? b) Glasgow? c) Jerusalem?

Daniel (book of Daniel) was put into a pit of

- a) Snakes? b) dinosaurs? c) lions?

Here are the mixed up names of some of Jesus's friends – can you unscramble them?

Wedanr Terep Honj Hilppi

The early Christians used a secret sign, not the cross. Was it

- a) a fish b) a bear c) an angel

If a cubit is about 50 centimetres, how long, wide and high was Noah's Ark? (Genesis ch 6)

Which mountain is the Ark supposed to have rested on when the floods went down, and which country is that mountain in today? (Genesis ch 8)

What weapon did David use to kill Goliath, the giant warrior of the Philistines?

- a) a knife b) a bow and arrow c) a slingshot with stones?

When Jesus was looking for food for the crowds listening to him, a boy offered him his picnic. What did he have?

- a) Some bread and fish b) Some cheese sandwiches c) Some cold porridge?

How many of the following women are in the bible?

a) Florence Nightingale b) Deborah c) Joan of Arc d) Jezebel e) St Bridget f) Ruth

What did the first 4 friends of Jesus do for a living? They were

a) fishmongers b) fishermen c) carpenters

Who said...?

Fear not, for I bring you good news of great joy for all people (Luke 2)

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want (Psalm 23)

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation (Isaiah)

Hosanna to the son of David! (Matthew 21)

Who had a brother called...?

Abel (Genesis)

John

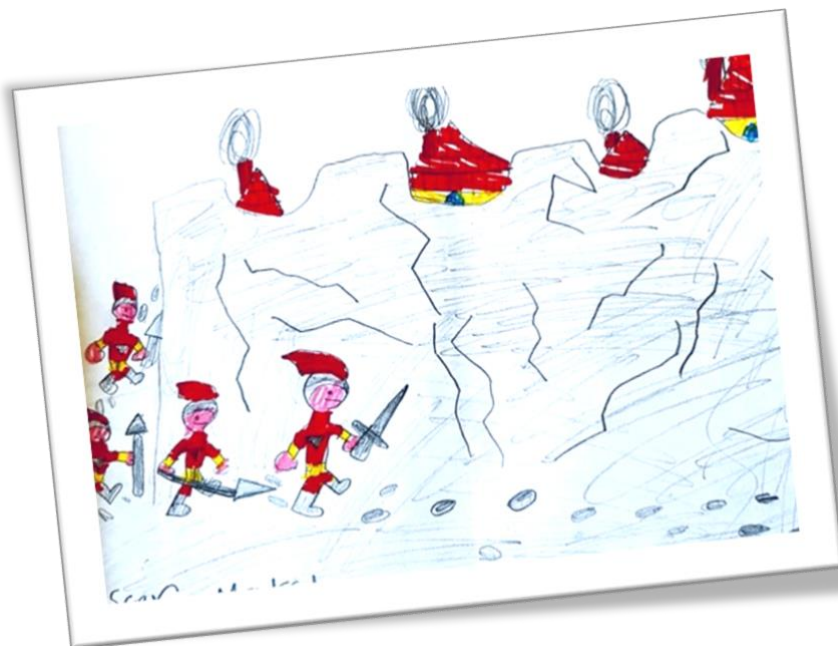
Ham (2 possible answers)

Lazarus (2 possible answers)

Esau (Gen 25)

Peter

Benjamin (Genesis ch 45)



Can you draw or paint?

Paul being shipwrecked on Malta (Acts)

The Good Samaritan rescuing the man who was mugged

Joshua at Jericho (Joshua ch 6)

Thanks to Oscar for the artwork!



Take the HAIKU Challenge!

Pat McKerrow

Over the Easter period we invited our STAGW Facebook followers to write a simple Japanese style poem, a Haiku, on different themes. If you're not a Facebook user but would like to try your hand at a Haiku, then you are very welcome to do so. This can simply be a bit of creativity for yourself, or you can share them if you wish – just email your Haiku to me via the church email account or post them to the church in George Street. Perhaps, and subject to agreement from the authors, we could share the 'public' ones within our congregation at some stage.

New to Haiku?

Our current theme is '**New Life**' All you have to do is consider the set theme, think what it brings to your mind, build a library of key words, then use your library of words to create your Haiku – ideally keeping to the traditional 3 line and 5-7-5 syllable per line structure.

Here's a sample Haiku to get you started

**Hope centred in faith.
Each new day and each
new life
God's blessings for all.**

Happy 'Haiku-ing', Pat McKerrow.

Check out our facebook page for more Haiku

www.facebook.com/stagw

Wildlife from a Window

Pat McKerrow

Shielding. Lockdown. Self-isolation. Have these words existed or dominated our vocabulary before?



Certainly not in my lifetime, and yet they now roll-off our tongues in an all too familiar way. How coronavirus has taken over our lives in the last month or so. I count myself blessed in many ways, not least in having lovely views from a window that overlooks a 'wild area' beyond the garden, plus a stretch of river. And, although being prevented from leaving the house right now due to coronavirus risk, on an ongoing basis I can still enjoy the local birdlife, hear constant birdsong, and breathe in wonderfully fresh air. It's all a real tonic for the soul and helps keep me connected with Creation in all its glory.

Recently, as a bit of fun, I set myself a challenge of photographing a different bird species each day. All was well for the first few days, then I realised that the great variety of bird visitors from previous months/years was no longer there. However, I'm becoming very familiar with my most regular visitor, a certain Blue Tit I've named 'Mr Fluff'; he pops by several times each day, and often with a smaller (as yet unnamed) female friend! I'm gradually building quite an album of his photographs, eg on different branches; beak open in song; leaping between branches (who knew they could hop as well as fly?!); fluffy or flat feathers; rear, front, side or upside down views... Anyone on Facebook will be able to meet him and find some sample photographs on my page. There the mystery of his name will become apparent very quickly!

**'Oh mother earth,
your comfort is great, your arms never withhold.
It has saved my life to know this.'**

From a poem by Mary Oliver 'The Gift'.

Keep safe everyone and stay connected until we can meet again.
Peace and every blessing, Pat McKerrow

Life under lockdown

“We are in the Netherlands [not the original plan!] but able to do some work from here.

In Malawi, Mulanje Mission Hospital has a trio of doctors who are very committed and are looking after the patients together with the clinical officers and nurses.

MMH has prepared for COVID as well as possible - the team is emphasizing on preventing further spread of infection, and normal services being carried on as usual.

Though we have some provisions for very severe Covid cases, ICU care would not be an option in Malawi, but the risk of losing gains in other areas such as maternity care due to all problems caused by the pandemic is definitely looming and must be avoided.”

Dr Arie Glas, Medical Director of Mulanje Mission Hospital

I'm working from home and as we have furloughed around 150 people and still have a term of education to deliver to students all over the globe now, every day is full!

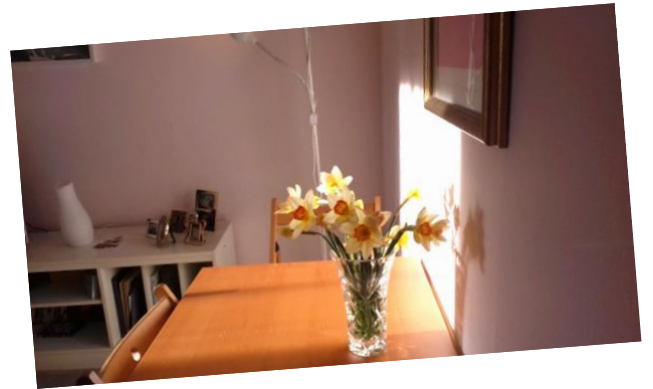


Only difference is I have tidy cupboards and a newly painted study and downstairs loo (courtesy of James and Calum).

Wendy D



lockdown before and after



Our interior photo was taken as the sun came into our west-facing living room for the first time this year. It reminds me of Van Gogh's Empty Chair paintings, sometimes interpreted as studies of loneliness. But I think the image offers hope with the sunlight and also the daffodils are so beautiful.

Lynne D

A Candle in the Window

Peter Millar

Life is not just a question of getting through each day, although that is important, and especially as we think of millions of our sisters and brothers who face a struggle for food and shelter every new morning. For centuries, all the world's religious traditions have invited us to discover within ourselves a continuous expansion of heart and spirit. We forget this in our often frenetic lifestyles, but these virus weeks have caused us to halt and become aware in fresh ways of our amazingly rich humanity.

Just pause as you read this and listen to that inner voice which tells you that your life is both unique and precious. That you carry within you the possibility of discovering a guiding Light which will not go out.

Befriend that inner strength which enables you to keep searching, to be alive to new insights, to encounter these fresh truths which can change the way you think about everything. Shed any pent-up bitterness. Laugh at your own limitations. Look outwards, phone a friend (you don't need Zoom!) and hear the bird song above the silent streets.

.....

Thanks to Peter for sharing - contact ionacottage@hotmail.com if you'd like to receive his weekly reflections.

Small steps

In difficult times, you move forward in small steps. Do what you have to do, but little by little. Don't think about the future, or what may happen tomorrow.
Wash the dishes.
Remove the dust.
Write a letter.
Make a soup.
You see?
You are advancing step by step.
Take a step and stop.
Rest a little.
Praise yourself.
Take another step.
Then another.
You won't notice, but your steps will grow more and more. And the time will come when you can think about the future without crying.
Elena Mikhalkova

The steps of God:

For every step we take towards God, he takes a thousand steps towards us.


These beautiful words paraphrased from the Koran speak of a God who sits with us where we sit, in all of our uncertainty and muddle and contradiction.

Celebrating 100 years of life!

On the last Sunday before lockdown, we celebrated Elizabeth Mitchell's centenary a few days after her actual birthday on 11 March.

Elizabeth enjoyed a long career as a primary school teacher. The last school she taught at was Flora Stevenson's School, just across the road from the Manse. She was a very keen golfer, a member of Prestonfield Golf Club, also celebrating its centenary this year. She served as Lady Captain there and made a number of good friends in the club.



<  Douglas Corrance Photographer
Monday at 09:25 · 🌐

My dear friend of 32 years and former neighbour, Elizabeth Mitchell, who will be 100 years young this Wednesday came round to my house for a coffee as she does every fortnight, but this time it was to be reunited with Shirley Manson of the band Garbage (June 2018). Elizabeth was Shirley's favourite primary school teacher and they hadn't seen each other for 40 years. Shirley, who lives in Los Angeles was delighted to meet up again, describing Elizabeth as the most inspirational of teachers. I think we were all a bit nervous, not knowing quite how it would go, but both women really cherished the get-together. After ten minutes Shirley plucked up the courage to ask, 'Miss Mitchell, would it be OK if I called you Elizabeth?'



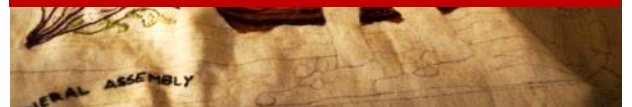
She loved to travel and had many wonderful holidays with friends or family, including a railway journey across Canada to the Rocky Mountains. In later life she joined an Art Club and very much enjoyed painting and sketching with them.

She has always been a regular churchgoer and whenever a volunteer was needed, Elizabeth was there. She was one of the helpers in the very early days of the St George's West Café, serving Campbell's soup, with scotch pies or sausage rolls with baked beans. She was always a keen supporter of Christian Aid events.

Elizabeth is also a very accomplished needlewoman and was part of the STAGW team who embroidered two panels of the Great Tapestry of Scotland in 2013. Elizabeth embroidered one section of the Panel depicting The Making of the King James Bible. At 93, she was the oldest person in the whole of Scotland to take part.



Thanks to Douglas Corrance for this photo



Watch a video of our celebration at https://youtu.be/s7roH0Oa_i8



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Safeguarding **Barbara Finlayson**

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Helen Cox, George Russell, Diana Thurston-Smith

Workplace Chaplain **Andrew Gregg** andrew.gregg@wpcscotland.co.uk

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