



St Andrew's and St George's West Easter 2015 Magazine



Easter 2015

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Enjoy the newsletter - many thanks to all contributors. The magazine is published monthly, in advance, to keep our community in touch with what is happening and to reflect its many facets.

May copy deadline: Monday 20 April

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Cover photos by Frances Cooper.

Re:new Commitment

Ian Gilmour, minister

This idea of Covenant was basic to John Wesley's understanding of Christian discipleship. He saw the relationship with God in Covenant as being like a marriage between human beings. Though it may seem rather odd to us three centuries later, his original Covenant Prayer talked about taking Christ as "my Head and Husband, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honour and obey thee before all others, and this to the death".

Wesley was recognising that people needed not just to accept but also to **grow** in relationship with God. He therefore emphasised that God's grace and love constantly prompts and seeks to **transform** us, and so we should continually seek and pray to grow in holiness and **love**. In essence the invitation is to be better disciples of Jesus Christ. Over a number of years Wesley gradually saw the need for some regular ceremony which would enable people to open themselves to God more fully. He looked for some means of helping them to hear God's offer and challenge more **deeply**, and to allow God to enable them to respond.

Wesley created a form of service adapted from the Puritan tradition of pastoral and spiritual guidance. In our congregation we have been working from Epiphany towards Easter Day to deepen our understanding of Covenant.

After a day's "Retreat" for people to prepare themselves in prayer, fasting, reflection and self-examination Wesley would organise the Covenant Service itself, leading to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Wesley urged Christians to put it at the centre of their spiritual life and to share in it frequently. We will be sharing the sacrament on the 29 March at all services and then on Easter Day.

The process did not end with the Covenant Service. People were encouraged to continue to work out the implications for their lives.

What God offers through the Covenant is a loving relationship.

It is not a business contract set up between God and humanity for the provision of certain goods and services. Rather, it is the means of grace by which we accept the relationship God offers and then seek ways to sustain it.

“The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant ... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people”.
Jeremiah 31.31, 33 (NRSV).

Coincidentally this happens to be the designated the reading for Sunday the 22 March! This is the key prayer which will be used in St Andrew’s and St George’s West:

***I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure
and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy
Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. And the covenant now made on
earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.***

The focal point of the service is this prayer. It embraces the whole of life, in all its parts. Most people find it **tough** to say this and really mean it. It is uncomfortable and challenging. It asks questions of our faith and demands that we **examine** our relationship with God.

The Covenant Prayer has been compared by some to a set of New Year resolutions. But more than that, the prayer represents a **commitment** to being a disciple and **putting God first in our lives**: what we do, what we say and who we are. It is both a surrender to, and a trust in, God. The final few words are a gracious reminder:

'You are mine and I am yours'. We don't pray and live just in our own strength – but in God's.

Methodists hold an annual Covenant Service – a celebration of all that God has done and an affirmation that we give our lives and choices to God. It is an invitation for people to renew their covenant relationship with God. Both the Covenant Prayer and Service are regarded as a jewel of Methodism and one of the most distinctive contributions to the liturgy of the world Church in general. Other churches are now discovering it and making use of it in their worshipping life including at St Andrew's and St George's West.

Enjoy the stretch of renewal this Easter, love God and life,

Ian

Worship themes and readings

Sun 29 March (Palm Sunday)	11am Steps towards Covenant Reading Mark 11:1–11
Mon 30 March – Sat 4 April	7pm Music and Reflection for Holy Week on the theme of covenant
Sun 5 April (Easter Day)	11am Victorious Covenant Reading Mark 16:1–8
Sun 12 April	11am Experiencing Resurrection Reading John 20:19–31
Sun 19 April	11am Christ with us Luke 24: 36b-48
Sun 26 April	11am Good Shepherd Sunday Reading John 10: 11-18
Sun 3 May	11am No need to live an impoverished life Reading John 15:1-8

Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life'

Holy Week and Easter

Evening Music and Reflection for Holy Week	
Mon 30 March at 7pm	Covenant and Commitment Reading: Psalm 19 Music: Purcell, Andrew Carvel and Spirituals Sung by tenors and basses from the choir accompanied by Brigitte Harris
Tue 31 March at 7pm	Covenant and Cantata Reading: Genesis 2 Music: Bach <i>Widerstehe doch der Sünde</i> Sarah Lucy Penny, Alto with string ensemble. Directed by Andrew Carvel.
Wed 1 April at 7pm	Covenant with Tears Reading: Lamentations 1 Music by Victoria, Poulenc and Carvel. Sung by sopranos and altos from the choir
Thurs 2 April at 7pm	Covenant with Neighbours Tenebrae service at St Cuthbert's, Lothian Road
Fri 3 April	Cross and Covenant Reading: Mark 15:21-39 Music for Good Friday by Felicio Anerio and Andrew Carvel. Sung by St Andrew's and St George's West choir.
Sat 4 April	Covenant and Quietness Music for organ, played by Brigitte Harris
Easter Day	
9am	Communion service
9.45am	Easter Breakfast
11am	Morning Worship with choral music for Easter

St Andrew's & St George's West Spring Diary

Find online diary under the WHAT's ON tab on the website
www.stagw.org.uk/whats-on/

Sun 22 Mar	Covenant Sunday 9am Communion (spoken liturgy) 11am Morning Worship (Bright Sparks for children from 11.15) Congregational Photo 12 noon Fellowship Lunch
Mon 23 Mar	12.15 – 1pm Amnesty Undercroft Group 6.15-7.30pm StAGW BB & Girls' Association 7.30pm Bellringing practice 7.30pm Kirk Session
Tues 24 Mar	10am-2pm Little Ducks Café in the Undercroft (Parents + Toddlers) 10-12 Sing in the City: Kinship Carers' Choir 3.30-4.15pm St John's Exploring Silent Prayer
Sat 28 Mar	8pm Earth Hour
Sun 29 Mar	9am Communion (spoken liturgy) 9.45am Learning Together - all age worship 10.30am children's craft activity (Undercroft) 11am Morning Worship with Cantarem Choir from Germany, directed by Maria Hartelt. (Bright Sparks for children from 11.15)
Mon 30 Mar	12.15 Amnesty Undercroft Group meets 6.15-7.30pm StAGW BB & Girls' Association (this is the final meeting for the season – we resume 7 September 2015) 7pm Music and Reflection for Holy Week
Tue 31 Mar	10am-2pm Little Ducks Café in the Undercroft (Parents + Toddlers) 7pm Music and Reflection for Holy Week

April 2015

Wed 1 Apr	7pm Music and Reflection for Holy Week
Thurs 2 Apr	7pm Music and Reflection for Holy Week (Tenebrae service at St Cuthbert's)
Fri 3 Apr	7pm Music and Reflection for Holy Week
Sat 4 Apr	7pm Music and Reflection for Holy Week
Sun 5 Apr Easter Day	9am Communion (spoken liturgy) 9.45am Easter Breakfast 11am Morning Worship (Bright Sparks for children from 11.15)
Sun 12 Apr	9am Communion (spoken liturgy) 9.45am Learning Together - all age worship, 10.30am Sunday Discussion Group (adults) 11am Morning Worship (Bright Sparks for children from 11.15)
/Mon 13 Apr	6.30pm Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland Lecture: Who's looking out for our historic buildings? £5/£2.50 students.
Sun 19 Apr	9am Communion (spoken liturgy) 9.45am Learning Together - all age worship, 10.30am Sunday Discussion Group (adults) 11am Morning Worship (Bright Sparks for children from 11.15)
Tue 21 Apr	10am-2pm Little Ducks Café in the Undercroft (Parents + Toddlers)
Sun 26 Apr	9am Communion (spoken liturgy) 9.45am Learning Together - all age worship, 10.30am Sunday Discussion Group (adults) 11am Morning Worship (Bright Sparks for children from 11.15) 12 noon Communion Push'n' Shove Sunday

Mon 27 Apr – Sat 2 May	Christian Aid Sale preparations The church is open for extended hours to receive, sort and price donations of books and other items to be sold. The church will be open Monday-Friday 9am-9pm and on Saturday 10am-5pm.
Tue 28 Apr	10am-2pm Little Ducks Café in the Undercroft (Parents + Toddlers)
May 2015	
Sun 3 May	9am Communion (spoken liturgy) 9.45am Learning Together - all age worship, 10.30am Sunday Discussion Group (adults) 11am Morning Worship (Bright Sparks for children from 11.15) We will be worshipping in The Undercroft today as the sanctuary is devoted to preparations for the Christian Aid Sale
Mon 4 May – Fri 8 May	Christian Aid Sale preparations The church is open for extended hours to receive, sort and price donations of books and other items to be sold. The church will be open Monday-Friday 9am-9pm and on Saturday 10am-5pm.
Sat 9 May	Opening Day of the 2015 Christian Aid Sale throughout the church 10am-4pm
Sun 10 May	9am Communion (spoken liturgy) 9.45am Learning Together - all age worship, 10.30am Sunday Discussion Group (adults) 11am Morning Worship (Bright Sparks for children from 11.15) We will be worshipping in The Undercroft today as the sanctuary is devoted to the Christian Aid Sale
Mon 11 May – Fri 15 May	Christian Aid sale throughout the church. 10am-3pm, late opening Thurs until 7pm.

Announcements

Baptism

Eilidh Rose McGlynn on Sunday 15 March in church.

Death

Jean Brown Miller on Thursday 5 March. (Please see page 13)

2015 Christian Aid Sale at a glance

Preparations

**Mon 27 April –Wed 6 May
(except Sunday 3 May)**

The church will be open
Mon-Fri 9am-9pm and Sat
9am-5pm to receive, sort and
price donations to the Sale

Sale dates and times

Sat 9 May 10am-4pm
Sun 10 May closed
Mon 11 May 10am-3pm
Tue 12 May 10am-3pm
Wed 13 May 10am-3pm
Thurs 14 May 10am-7pm
Fri 15 May 10 am-3pm

Contact

Mary Davidson, Sale Convener
07714 186754

Save the date: Monday 4 May

Two of our musicians
Laura Cioffi (flute) and
Anna Wright (saxophone)
are in their last year at
Napier and working towards
their final recital (big part of
the degree!)

**The recital will take place
on Monday 4 May at
7.30pm at Canongate Kirk.**

**Free admission, followed
by refreshments. Everyone
is warmly invited.**

*“The more you pray,
the less you'll panic.
The more you worship,
the less you worry.
You can feel more patient
and less pressured.”*
Rick Warren

Children and Families news

Messy Church Saturday 7 March

Messy Church coincides with an important person's birthday!



A future senior transport official



Abraham and family rest in their tent



Messy Church

Saturday 7 March 2015 was the first Messy Church at STAGW and it went very well! Six children attended with a Mum/Dad/Grandad. A further five families couldn't come and gave their apologies and can't wait for the next one. The children learnt about Abraham and Sarah and there was stars, glitter, sand and paint everywhere! A really good messy time! The children also went on a journey making a tent and fire in the Undercroft. There was good singing in the sanctuary and a lovely lunch was enjoyed.

The next Messy Church will be on Saturday 13 June 2015 from 10am -12.30pm, meeting in the Undercroft.

Little Ducks Café

Every Tuesday from 10am-2pm

There is a 50% discount in the Undercroft Café for all children under age 5yrs and their family/ significant other. There is an opportunity to play and create a craft. Activities are Free. Please note due to s annual leave there is no Little Ducks café on 7/4/15 and 14/4/15.

Boys Brigade and Girls Association

Every Monday evening meeting at the main church doors 6.15pm-7.30pm. For children age primary 2 – primary 6. Crafts, games, fun all following the BB/GA official programme to gain awards. Cost £1 per session. Please note the last session for BB/GA is the 30/3/15. BB/GA will resume on Monday the 7/9/15.

Palm Sunday (29 March) There is an opportunity for children to make palm leaves between services. Meet at 10.30am in the Undercroft.

Easter Sunday (5 April) Children are invited to bring a decorated hard boiled egg to the service it will be lovely to see all the children's designs. There will be an Easter Godly Play in the Chapel for school age children with Ruth and a story and activities for pre-school children in the Davidson Room with Angela. (Parents are welcome for the little ones). Children to meet as normal at 11am in the sanctuary.

Angela Grant

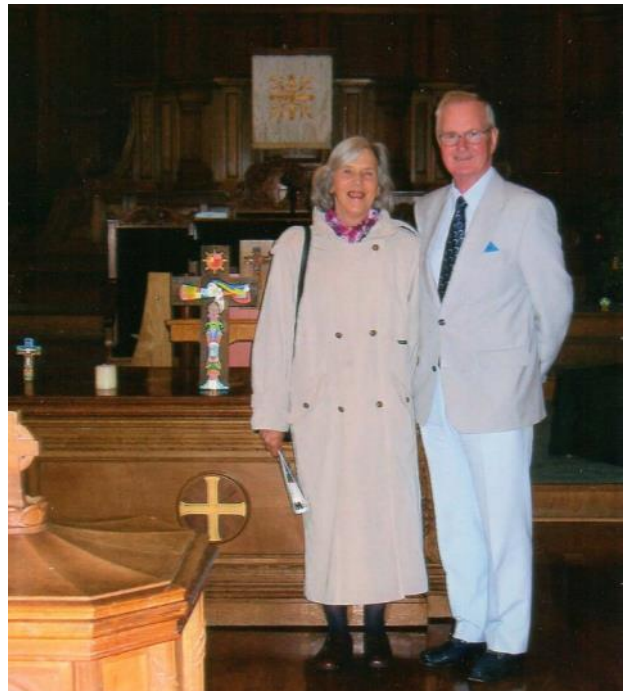
Jean Miller

We learned with sorrow of the death on 5 March of Jean Miller, one of our elders.

Jean was a delight to know – smiling, kind and caring, artistic, elegant and always beautifully turned out. She was a committed elder, supportive of church events, always ready to volunteer when help was required. The organisers of the Christian Aid Book Sale remember her willing help with paintings; the Welcome team and the Christmas Tree Festival team knew her as a frequent and dependable helper on their rotas, even during this past winter, when she already knew that she was losing her long battle with cancer.

Although blessed with much happiness in her life, she had also known the sorrow of the loss of a dear daughter; yet she bore that sorrow with the same grace and courage with which she faced her own illness and death.

A lovely, courageous, gracious and generous lady, she was married to Roger for 54 years. They were a devoted couple, whose many acts of generosity and kindness were performed quietly and without show. We salute Jean and all that she was; she was much loved and we shall miss her and her contribution to the life of the congregation.



Jean and Roger Miller in the sanctuary of the former St George's West, Shandwick Place.



Jean (with Cath Reid) at the 2011 Christian Aid Picture Sale, George Street

News from the North

Sheila Douglas

Having returned to my home town, Buckie on the Moray Firth, I thought you may be interested to know how many churches are here in one small town.

We have two Church of Scotland, a Catholic chapel in a beautiful twin-spired building, Baptist, Methodist and Episcopalian churches, Church of Christ, Salvation Army, Brethren and Jehovah's Witness halls too. An off-shoot of the Baptist church called Riverside Centre is a thriving drop-in for recovering alcoholics and drug users. They can have a plate of soup, sandwiches, tea and coffee. There are group activities for them and one-to-one help too. In September *Keswick in Buckie* takes place for a whole week and is in the North Church as it has the largest hall. Most churches are busy with thriving congregations. There are usually coffee mornings each Saturday in one of them and they are very well attended I must say.

At Christmas all these churches had a joint service of praise for the first time and it was successful. Good to know fellowship takes place.

I have settled very well "back home" after forty-six years in Edinburgh!

I love the sea and the peace and quiet too. Looking forward to the warmer days and lovely clean fresh sea air!

Thinking of all of you and keep up the good work at St Andrew's and St. George's West.

Sheila Douglas

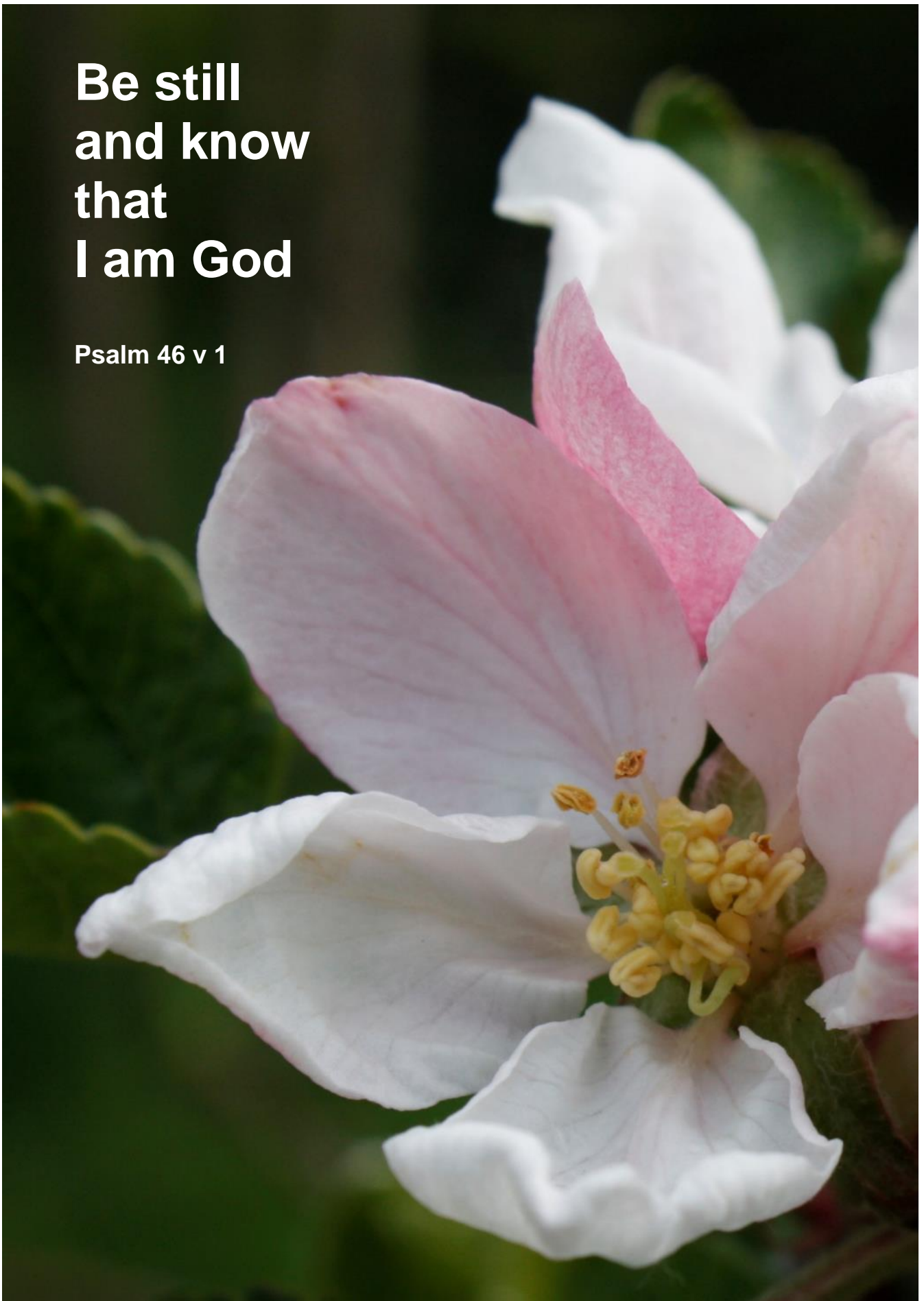
was a longtime member of St George's West and an active member of Friends of St George's West.

After the union with St Andrew's and St George's she joined the Creative Together group.

She moved back to her hometown of Buckie last year.

**Be still
and know
that
I am God**

Psalm 46 v 1



The Wonders of God

A Sermon in Lent

Readings Exodus 20, Psalm 19 and John 2

We have already marvelled at wonders of God's creation in the short talk and now we will think about the wonders of the Law in the commandments and then the visit of a wonderful if very disruptive Jesus on his visit to the Jerusalem temple.

So three points today

1) God's Creation 2) God's Law and 3) God's Son, all in the context of Covenant thinking.

How does this all tie together?

Let me tie the knots at the beginning instead of at the end. We have been thinking about covenant at St AGW as we have been moving from Epiphany to Easter Day with the highlight of a special Covenant service for our congregation on Sunday 22 March.

Of the 7 covenants in the bible 3 of them connect with our readings:

- a) **The Covenant with Adam** found in Genesis made between humankind and God for the benefit of the whole creation. God's creation is very beautiful, never static and is for all people everywhere, it is not conditional.
- b) **The Covenant with Moses** found at Exodus 20 manifest with the giving of the commandments at Mount Sinai. The covenant with Moses was limited to the people of Israel and is one of our passages for today. We are going to pray as a way of marking the differences with the new covenant.
- c) **The New Covenant** between God and his people manifest in the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth.

Almost miraculously Psalm 19 holds two of these covenants in perfect balance – The grandeur of creation and the helpful nature of the law. It is worth reading this Psalm three times. The first six verses are concerned with the creation and the rest of the Psalm is about the beauty and importance of the law.

Listen afresh to the first sentences of the second section,

***The law of the Lord is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.***

This is a conditional covenant, depending on the behaviour of those who receive the law, i.e. whether they obey it or not!

So we have briefly covered riches of the Creation and the Commandments as poetically expressed in Psalm 19. We now move onward to think about Jesus visit to the temple. This has a very different character. If the creation is almost overwhelming in its variety, colour and beauty; if the law is so precise, setting boundaries through its careful phrasing, then Jesus is so full of emotion in this situation. And the emotion is not delight in the law, it is fury, anger.

Why? The law of love, the relationship with God, the covenant with all humanity is being cruelly undermined. Where is this damage taking place? Is it not in the very Temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.

Holy Space or Market Place?

Jesus careers through the temple courtyard like a tornado, leaving a trail of devastation in his wake. This is only the second chapter of John's gospel and according to the writer he has hitherto merely called his disciples and rescued a wedding where the wine had run out. John tells us that when Jesus arrives at the most holy site for the Jewish community, he is infuriated. Gentle Jesus he is not,

making a whip from cords, overturning tables, sending coins cascading and pigeons flying. He upsets the money changers and challenging priests who were making the unacceptable acceptable, corrupting His father's house through making money from the poor and turning holy space into marketplace.

Can you picture it in your mind's eye – feathers flying, sheep running, embarrassed pilgrims crying, angry priests scowling, irritated stall holders faced by an incandescent Jesus who was unleashing verbal volleys, as he vents his rage, “Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!” “Get them out of here!”

John Bell's modern hymn, catches the mood perfectly,

***Jesus Christ is raging
raging in the streets
Where injustice spirals
and real hope retreats
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am angry too
In the Kingdom's causes,
let me rage with you.***

This material may stretch the view some of us have of Jesus, personally I take both comfort and hope from this passage.

It can be (too) easy to be in a beautiful church and simply sing wonderful hymns concerning the delights of a good creation, but this is not the way of Jesus Christ.

It is easy in the UK to become comfortable with the legal framework of our helpful court system but this is not the way of Jesus Christ.

It is important that we never lose Jesus Christ in action. He is a Mr Topsy-Turvy who is always challenging us to think a fresh thought. Inviting us to view our lives through what we do for the poorest and most vulnerable, whether they are teenage girls in care in

Rotherham or infants queuing at an ice cream van in Gaza, be they members of the Russian or UK governments or 'high heid yins' within the Christian church.

The story of the Jesus we follow becomes plain in Lent, not when we 'drop' cream from our coffee, sugar from our tea, or alcohol from our diet for Lent, rather when we reconnect with the most radical person in the history of our race.

When we recommit, our covenant is to be with him and not a vague appreciation of the creation, nor a loose affiliation to the law whose benefits can be limited to an elite.

I close with another hymn written much earlier **in 1741** by Charles Wesley which invite us to receive and live in tune with the invigorating spirit of Christ:

***From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle, and fight, and pray,
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day
That having all things done
And all your conflicts passed
You may o'er come through Christ alone
And stand complete at last.***

To summarise:

The wonder of God

is not just the grandeur of creation,
nor the helpfulness of the law,
but the tornado in the temple who was Jesus Christ

And it is His Spirit I would like us to continue to reveal at St AGW, when we recommit ourselves to God afresh on 22 March.

Thanks be to God. Amen

TOGETHER news

A church presence at the heart of a great city means many things. We focus this time on four of them:

- Do we keep our faith and our work in separate boxes? Tony Bryer shares his latest thoughts.
- Looking beyond the obvious. Frances Cooper looks forward to a walk which will supply a crucial narrative.
- The world is still far from free from Slavery. Ian Gilmour shares some insights
- Just Festival enters a new phase of life. Frances Cooper reports

The Kingdom at Work

Tony Bryer, TOGETHER Workplace Chaplain

Recently I came across the following statement:

It was requested that a corporate spirituality policy be prepared covering employees of the organisation.....this report proposes the approval of an employment policy on faith, religion, belief and non-belief (spirituality).

It set me thinking, because I find that, from time to time, opportunities to talk about faith, faiths and spirituality do arise in workplace chaplaincy. It may be a member of another world faith, interested to know something about Christian practice; it might be a practising Christian wanting to talk through an issue concerning the relationship between his or her faith and something at work; or it may be someone (of no faith) who is wrestling with a decision about the direction of his or her life, and the values that could shape the choices.

Such conversations are about faith, religion and spirituality – but they are not the sort of conversations we often have in church settings. It seems to me that here there are some challenges for us as the Together churches.

Do those of us in regular employment find that we are able to make the link between our faith and our work, in a creative and liberating

way? Or are they kept in separate boxes? I wonder whether this is something we should try to address jointly. Exploring the idea of how the Kingdom (or Rule) of God relates to the world of business, commerce and service industries is surely an important task for churches who believe that God is present in all of life.

Some organisations do speak of the spiritual care of their employees. Again, what might such care look like? I am presently involved in one workplace with regular sessions set up to explore precisely this issue – through reflection, silence, guided meditation and sharing. Perhaps we too should be looking at what a spirituality of work (and spirituality at work) might look like.

If any of this interests you, please contact me (telephone 07834 748129 or 0131 229 6542 or email tbryer.wpcscotland@gmail.com) If you want to think more about the idea of God's kingdom and work, I can send you copies of a bulletin that is dedicated to the practical and theological exploration of the idea.

Be a pilgrim for an hour in the City Centre

Frances Cooper

For a different view of our city centre this spring, you will be able pick up a leaflet to guide you round the **Pilgrim for an Hour** walking trail from any of the TOGETHER churches very soon! The working group has spent many hours poring over notes, writing a script, refining its content, trying out and mapping the route, seeking advice on design – and now it is time for people to have the opportunity to walk the walk.

What the trail offers is a reflective path between our churches, telling the stories of some of the people and places you pass along the way. All three congregations already engage with visitors and congregational members alike in a multitude of ways, demonstrating our Christian witness from inside the buildings. The trail aims to take people on a journey through the streets, squares and gardens, showing them that amongst the trees, stone, concrete and traffic fumes you can find space to think about change, growth and renewal.

You can of course try out the walk by yourself at any time. There will also be a chance to try it with other TOGETHER friends after the joint service on Trinity Sunday, May 31st, at 10.30am in St John's Church .

Slavery and Song

Ian Gilmour reports on an event at St AGW in February

The goal of the event was to offer a high level summary of the learning from my period of study leave in the USA in 2014. I had excellent support from the St AGW choir, the Edinburgh Signing Choir and from the marvellous African American mezzo soprano Andrea Baker. A dozen slave songs were shared with a large audience.

The talk gave the background to the 250 years of slavery in North America. Five readers helped share some key stories from 1619 to 2014 and in response some people found it both helpful and powerful.

I am delighted to share that the Just festival will continue to raise awareness around 'Trafficking' and 'Slavery' today. They have an agreement from Lisa Kristine, an internationally famous humanitarian photographer whose gallery I visited while in the United States, to speak at Just and show some of her photos. Lisa is a leading voice for the modern abolitionist movement, 'Free The Slaves' in the USA.

I quoted from several books including the work of the respected theologian, Professor James Cone, a native of Arkansas and now at Union Seminary. Cone reflects from his own early experience that slavery and song have a strong relationship, "At Macedonia A.M.E (African, Methodist, Episcopal) Church the melody, rhythm, and style were black; the mood was black; and the people were black. Everything they did was a valiant attempt to define and structure the meaning of blackness – so that their children and their children's children would be a little "freer" than they were. The power of song in the struggle for black survival – that is what the spirituals and the blues are about ... black music was essential for identity."

I am encouraged that so many more film makers and writers are focusing their work on the area of slavery and that Just Festival is raising awareness in August. Personally, I can't wait to hear Lisa Kristine and see her excellent photographs.

just Festival news

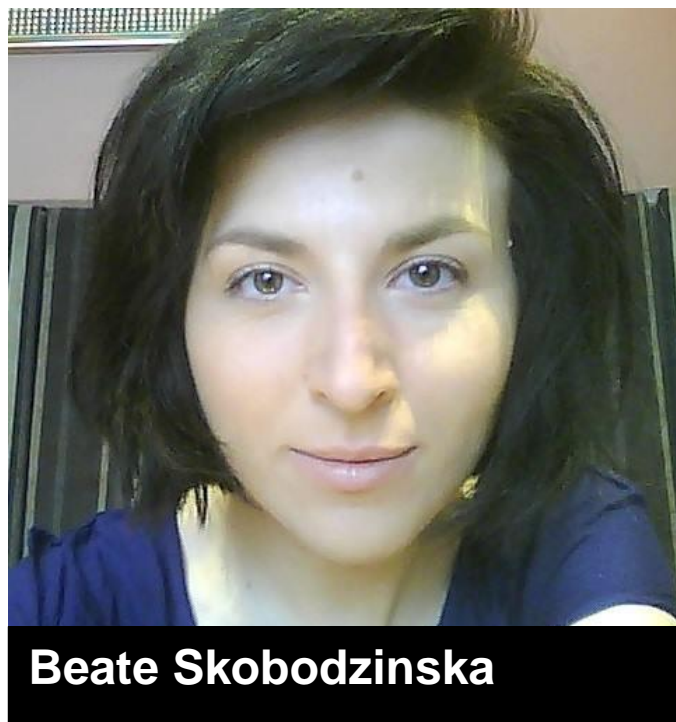
Frances Cooper

just Festivals has had an extremely busy few months.

After a very successful tenure as Festival Director, Katherine Newbigging moved to London in the autumn of 2014. **Beata**

Skobodzinska was appointed as the new Director in November. John Grieve has also joined the staff as the Festival coordinator.

Beata has taken some time out from festival preparations to tell Together News a little about herself and what we can look forward to in August.



Beate Skobodzinska

You have been part of the *just Festival* staff team since 2012, first as events planner and then admin assistant and festival coordinator. What attracted you to working for the Festival in the first place?

With previous experience in managing educational, parliamentary simulation and European integration projects, I was attracted to the Festival by the combination of different events and the ethos behind its activities. Having studied Festival Management at QMU, the opportunity of working for and contributing to an Edinburgh-based festival was a great chance to put my skills and knowledge into practice with a Scotland-based organisation.

What has been the biggest challenge as director so far?

Addressing the need to host more events as part of *just Festival*. With the number of contributors to the programme increasing, we recognised we had to expand to provide more spaces to performers in particular. We will host performances at both St John's and Central Hall in Tollcross this year, with performers from Britain, Ireland, Spain, Russia, Ghana and South Africa, and a great amalgam of genres of music, drama, dance, cabaret and variety. Over 320 events will enhance the festival and increase its visibility in Edinburgh.

What is the theme for this year's Festival?

2015 is our fifteenth birthday. We are lighting up our programme with candles of celebration and reflection; delving into the past to revisit events which have shaped the world today; observing and commenting on current issues; looking to the future with hope that together we can achieve positive change. The conversation programme will shed light on vital social issues, tackle the darker side of society and cherish concepts and ideas which will light our future paths.

What can we look forward to this year?

- a South African musical production, *After Freedom*.
- a Flamenco company explaining God Mathematics (*Matématicas de la Jondo Redux*) through dance.
- a Ghanaian *a cappella* group, *Alabaster Box*.
- Plays including *Letters to Aberlour*, and a series about the holocaust genocide and repeated human hatred patterns (*Denial, Descent* and *Dark Lantern*).
- An interactive cabaret performance *Mad Women in my Attic!* unveiling the twisted corridors of a woman's mind.

The Conversations always provide stimulating discussions.

What are some of this year's topics?

Under the theme of 'A World of Better Understanding', there are 17 conversations in partnership with a number of organisations - Scottish Episcopal Church, Church of Scotland, MECOPP, BEMIS, ACTS, Abolition Scotland, Salvation Army, EIFA, International Justice Mission, Mercy Corps, Weaving Destination and Peace and Justice Centre.

Themes include: modern day slavery, human trafficking, faith and development, aid and development organisations, religious freedom, blasphemy, violence against women, recruitment of minors in the British Armed Forces.

***just Festivals* doesn't only happen in August. What else goes on?**

We host monthly *Death Cafes* (encouraging participants to reflect on death in an informal manner) and *PhD in an Hour* events (showcasing research work in various fields and allowing PhD students to share their work with the public). We also hosted a film festival in partnership with the student-run Gather Festival, *Just Gather*, in March.

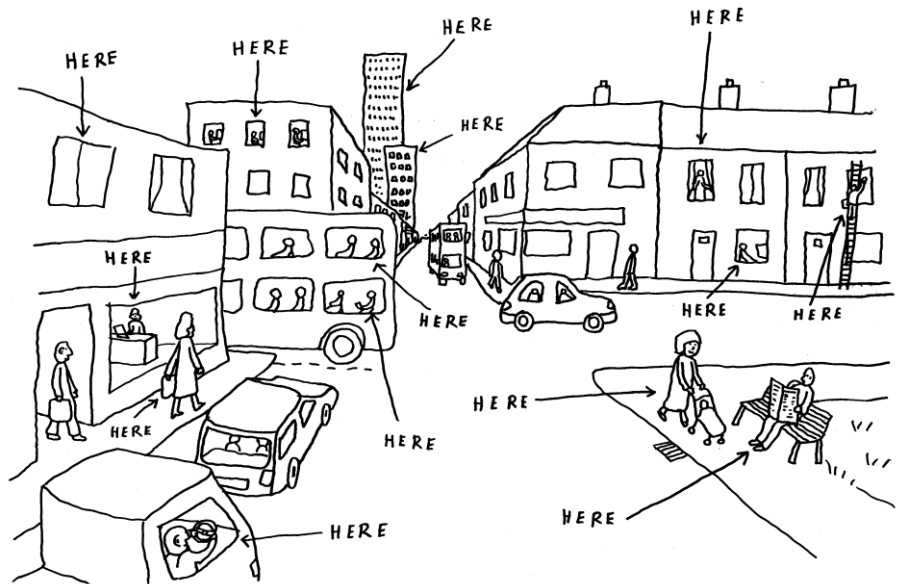
More information about all *just Festival* events at www.justjust.org

Kirk Sessions and Vestry get TOGETHER.

WHERE THE CHURCH IS

James McNeill,
TOGETHER Secretary

On 21 February some members of St John's Vestry and the Kirk Sessions of St Cuthbert's and of St Andrew's & St George's West gave up a bright Saturday morning to start exploring an idea of the



Dave Walker, Cartoon Church.
Used with permission

Together Trustees that we should get to know each other's work better. There may well be scope for a more beneficial joint use of resources, and understanding of what we each do is an essential starting point.

There was stimulating worship with a formal liturgy from the Celtic tradition, interesting ways of finding out about our very varied individual faith journeys, and searching quizzes which both exposed some gaps in our knowledge of the different hierarchies within which we operate and also provided us with a firmer understanding of the perceptions which our close friends have of us.

This first meeting was very much an ice-breaker. Many of us knew each other and had an idea of the work which the other did in her or his congregation, but had not sat down to discuss the way in which our individual congregations operated. The trustees of TOGETHER meet five times a year and are chosen because they may have particular insight into the work of the congregations, but this was the first meeting of representatives of the governing bodies.

The meeting seemed to spawn quite a bit of discussion on efforts which could better be tackled together and the trustees hope that these meetings can take place at least once a year and begin to involve both specific focussing on possible joint tasks and spiritual development.

Weekday Services at TOGETHER Churches

There have been changes in the Services our Churches offer during the week, so we list them below. If we want our open-ness to the City Centre to extend through the week, it's important we all know when services are. Some people may be looking for a Healing service, some for a Communion, some for space for Meditation. All these can be found in our list, and everyone is encouraged to try something a little new at a different church.

St Andrew's and St George's West

Monday to Friday at 1pm, usually in the Church itself: Bible Readings and Prayers, Communion on Tuesdays.

St Cuthbert's

Soul Space

First Wednesday of the month, September – May

12.30-2pm, evening 5-8pm.

A sacred space in the heart of the city to explore, to reflect, to pray. Come and go as you please. Optional quiet worship at 1pm, 6.30pm and 8pm for anyone wishing to join with others in worship.

Thursday lunchtime prayers 1-1.30pm in the Memorial Chapel

Tuesdays 1-1.30pm Healing Ministry

St John's

9 am Monday to Friday: Morning Prayer but Communion on Thursday

11 am Wednesday and Saturday: Communion

1 pm Monday and Friday: Communion

1 pm Tuesday – Thursday: Worship at One

5.15pm Thursday Silent Meditation

5.30 pm Tuesday: Communion with Healing

9.30 pm. Thursdays in Lent: Compline

3.30pm every second Tuesday - Exploring Silent Prayer.

Next meetings: Tue 24 March, Tue 14 April, Tue 28 April

1.45pm last Thursday of each month – Service of Healing run by The Healing Trust

Every week at STAGW

Monday

1pm Daily prayers
7.30pm-9pm Bellringing

Tuesday

11-2 Little Ducks Café
(not 7 and 14 April)
10-12 Circle Kinship Carers
Choir sings in the Sanctuary
1pm Communion

Wednesday

1pm Daily prayers
AA meets (Davidson Room)

Thursday

1pm Daily prayers
7.30-9pm Choir practice
(Davidson Room)

Friday

1pm Daily prayers

Sunday

9am Communion
9.30am Choir practice
9.45am Learning Together
10.30am Discussion Group
11am Morning Worship
(including 11.15 Bright
Sparks for children)
12 noon Bellringers

Every month at STAGW

1st Sunday

12 noon Fellowship Lunch

You're also invited to bring a donation of non-perishable food for Fresh Start who help people moving out of homelessness into new accommodation. Wee boxes of breakfast cereal, rice, pasta, tinned soups, tinned veg will all make a difference to someone in the first week of a new tenancy.

3rd Monday

10.30-12 Book Group

3rd Wednesday

10-1 Creative Together
2.30 – 4pm Evergreens

Last Sunday

12 noon Communion

Last Monday

12.15-1pm Undercroft
Amnesty Group

Boys' Brigade and Girls Association company for P2-6 finishes for the season on 30/3/2015. It resumes after the summer holidays on 7/9/2015.

**St Andrew's and St George's West, 13 George Street
Edinburgh EH2 2PA 0131 225 3847 www.stagw.org.uk**

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)

Joint Session Clerks George Burgess
Katie McNeill

Joint Treasurers John Innes
Allan Sim

Director of Music Brigitte Harris

Children, family and youth worker Angela Grant
angela.stocks1975(at)btinternet(dot)com
Church manager Jean Howard (Monday-Thursday)
0131 225 3847

churchmanager(at)stagw(dot)org(dot)uk
Church secretary Joyce Garland (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)
0131 225 3847
info(at)stagw(dot)org(dot)uk

TOGETHER Chair Ian Gilmour

TOGETHER City Centre Chaplain Tony Bryer 0131 229 6542 or 07834 748129
tbryer(dot)wpcscotland(at)gmail(dot)com

TOGETHER Trustees from St Andrew's and St George's West
Christina Bowen, Frances Cooper and James McNeill

**St Andrew's and St George's West Church of Scotland Edinburgh
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