



St Andrew's and St George's West Summer 2020 mini mag

ST ANDREW'S &
ST GEORGE'S WEST
EDINBURGH



What's inside? Summer 2020 minimag

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Photos from lockdown project

Huge thanks to everyone who sent photos from lockdown for a "lockdown digital photo" of the community of St Andrew's and St George's West (mag cover and pp 7-8) If you missed the chance please be assured that **there is still space for you in this project.** You're invited to send a photo of yourself, in lockdown, by email to [magazine\[at\]stagw.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stagw.org.uk) and we'll incorporate it into the collage. If you don't have a mobile phone or digital camera maybe you could ask a friend or relative to help?

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**



Born beyond: emerging from lockdown

Rev Dr Rosie Magee

As I write this, lockdown is easing. This morning I walked along George Street, past shops with open doors for the first time in months. I have grown so accustomed to their doors being closed that I was somewhat startled to see staff smiling out at me from behind their masks (at least I think they were smiling!).

Entering lockdown, back in late March, feels like another world. In many ways, it is another world. I recall the day we prepared to close the building for an unknown period of time. Worship@1 marked the centre-point of that day, with the observance of Holy Communion. During the service the following words were said:

‘We reflect on these past days, the hope within the pain, the loving within the loss...

Loving God, help us to be part of your answer to the cries of your world at this time...

These walls are no stranger to disruption yet, through Christ, we can be assured of restoration.’

The service concluded with words of blessing by John O’Donohue:

May we have the courage
To take the step into the unknown that beckons us
Trust that a richer life awaits us....
of all that is about to be born beyond.

These same words were repeated a week ago as we prepared to open our church building for individual prayer and contemplation. They seem just as apt today as they did back in March. We have experienced loving within our losses. We have heard the cries of the world, near and far, and responded in prayer and action.

Throughout this disruption the ongoing care and creativity shown within and beyond our church family has been inspired and inspiring. I look forward to our being able to share where we have most experienced caring and comfort these past months. Make a list so you don't forget. We may not need the aid of a list to call to mind the challenges.

'Emergence' from lockdown will bring its own comfort and its own challenges. The landscape is changed in so many ways, we know that. Yet, it will take time to recognise what those changes mean for us in our particular context. It will require listening and learning from each other and our neighbours. What we know, from the outset, is that our mission is to be part of building God's kingdom where we have been planted. How best can we contribute?

**Our mission is to
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The brave conversations that are required going forward will combine the practical and the prophetic in a way that draws us out of our familiar patterns of being. The good news is that we have already experienced being drawn out of our familiar patterns of being in the most dramatic of ways. I have learned a lot about myself in these past months and I am sure you have, too. We have also learned more about who we are as a community. All of these insights will serve us well going forward.

We can trust that there will continue to be 'loving within the loss' because we have already experienced it. We can trust that creative

ways will continue to be found to work together and make the most of the resources and gifts that God has blessed us with, because that is what we have been doing these past months.

The scale of change can be somewhat overwhelming. Like the small boy offering five loaves and two fish to feed thousands, it may seem like even offering everything we have cannot possibly meet the scale of need. But we are assured that when we put our offerings into God's hands, the people will be fed. We offer our 'small' gifts and graces knowing that it is 'small' gifts and graces that have sustained us these past months.

I am sure you can remember at least one occasion over the past three months when being in receipt of a kind gesture had dramatic beneficial effect. I think of the day I opened my front door and found a small bunch of wild-flowers, wrapped in gold paper, on the front step. I have no idea who left them there, but they could not have been given on a better day. So, going forward, having experienced the power of 'small' gifts, let us not underestimate their potential now.

We have already experienced the grace of God, which has brought us this far. The same grace will sustain us as we discern what God is desiring to 'be born beyond' in and through us in the days ahead!

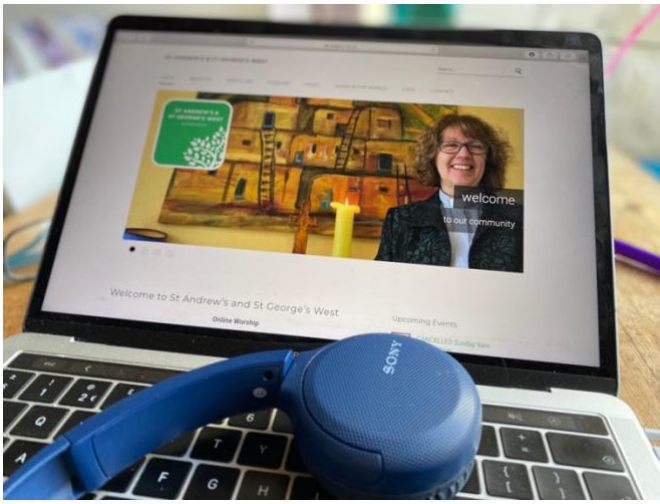
Blessings to you and yours,
Rosie



On-message in George Street



Opening our doors again



Worship at STAGW

Our sanctuary is open for private prayer

Our sanctuary is open as a space for reflection and private prayer. For everyone's safety we ask all who are visiting to observe 2m social distance, to make use of our hand sanitizers and wear a facemask. We have a rigorous cleaning regime in between visitors. At present we're open 11am-2pm, daily except Saturday.

All are welcome to online/telephone worship

Sunday worship find the link at www.stagw.org.uk

9.45 Learning Together – by email

Pause for prayer – by email and on facebook



No internet access?

Use our dedicated phone line for weekly Sunday worship

0131 297 4717

Or get in touch with us for CD's or hard copies of the service.

As lockdown eases we will be working towards opening the sanctuary so that we can gather for communal worship, most likely in September. Online worship will continue in parallel.





News from Kirk Session

Crispin Longden, as at mid July 2020

The Kirk Session has met virtually on three occasions (as at mid-July) since COVID-19 sent us into lockdown. The Zoom video- and audio-conferencing platform was chosen to play host for these meetings as it is easy to use and is very versatile. We have taken to it remarkably well.

Inevitably, a number of items which have come up for discussion are directly or indirectly related to COVID-19 and its impact on the life and work of St Andrew's and St George's West. In this regard, Session agreed to:

- Set up a separate time-limited Group, the Business Continuity Taskforce, to monitor issues arising out of the COVID-19 crisis regarding both Health and Safety concerns and such day to day operations within the church building as may require or may not require the attendance of employed staff and volunteers, and which issues demand prompt action. It was this Group that took the decision to place all of our salaried staff on furlough as soon as details of the UK Government's job retention scheme were known.
- Grant use of the Undercroft kitchen to Bethany Christian Trust for volunteer catering teams to prepare and cook food for the Care Shelter, temporarily located in the Old Waverley Hotel. Providing this service in lockdown is allowed for under both Scottish Government and Church of Scotland guidelines.
- Approve arrangements for opening the Sanctuary for individual prayer and contemplation under Phase 2 of the Scottish Government's route map through and out of COVID-19.

A 'regular' but important item of business considered by Session at our most recent meeting was the Annual Report and Accounts 2019. These were approved subject to audit which has now taken

place successfully. The Report and Accounts will be presented to the congregation at the Stated Annual Meeting, the date for which is yet to be determined. In the meantime, if you would like a copy of the Annual Report, please email or 'phone me. Besides the financial figures, you'll find a comprehensive narrative review of the year's activities. A poignant reminder of the life of St Andrew's and St George's West pre-COVID.

Crispin Longden
Session Clerk



Bethany at STAGW

“We just want to say a massive thank you again for all of the help St Andrew's and St George's West Church have given us.

Our volunteers have praised the individuals that have met them, helped clean and how easy the instructions left in the kitchen were to follow.”

Naomi,
Care Shelter Manager

I would like to thank you on behalf of the team from churches who were catering for Bethany on Friday evening.

The kitchen facilities are excellent and with use of the cafe area meant that we could safely maintain physical distance

Lesley,
Volunteer Caterer

Elevenses virtual café

Saturdays 11am-noon on Zoom

The quickest hour of the week – bring your own coffee and catch up with news and events.



Contact us for password details

Taking a break

The Edinburgh Christmas Tree Festival

Following 10 successful years of welcoming thousands of visitors into the Church to enjoy a sparkling forest of creatively decorated Christmas Trees, we've decided not to hold the Edinburgh festival in 2020. We will contact the charities and people who have supported the Festival in the past two years and we will be reflecting and considering what the future holds for it.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered and supported The Edinburgh Christmas Tree Festival during these 10 years - it wouldn't have been the same without you!

Sally Evans, Katie McNeill and Barbara Ross

Deaths

We record the peaceful passing of much - loved members

Jean Brodie

Jean Mackinlay

Rev Alistair McGregor QC



Zooming in on Malawi

One casualty of lockdown was a coffee morning and craft sale planned to raise funds for our partners at Mulanje Mission Hospital (MMH) in Malawi. But our new confidence with Zoom and other digital tools inspired our Malawi group to conjure up a different way of getting together, with twin aims of having fun and raising a little bit of money for MMH.

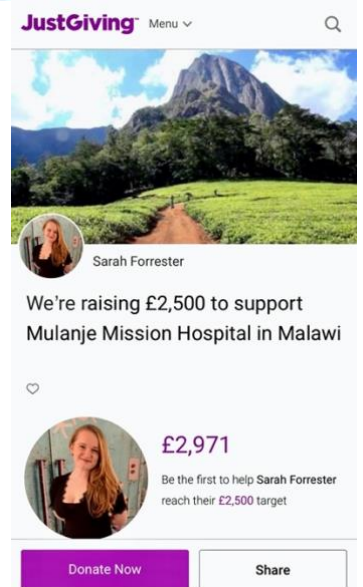
Around 30 folk gathered on Zoom for Afternoon Delights of music, entertainment, chat and the opportunity to make a donation to MMH and/or buy some fabulous Malawi crafts and handmade facemasks.

Film, music and stories transported us to Malawi. We listened to Dr Arie Glas update us on MMH's response to COVID-19, to music written in Edinburgh and music sung in Malawi, and discovered that getting creative with chitenge fabric can bind us to Mulanje friends.

So we had more than a little fun. And raised more than a little money for Mulanje. At the time of writing, Sarah Forrester's crowdfunding page for MMH on Justgiving is approaching £3,000. Thanks and kudos to Sarah, Ruth, Mary-Margaret, James, Alison C and Sally for organising. If you click on the links below you can see some of the crafts and fairtrade products for sale, how to buy them, and even make a donation if you would like.

www.stagw.org.uk/afternoon-delights/

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/mulanjemissionhospitalfundraiser



Arie Glas, Medical Director of MMH, updated us by video on how the hospital is dealing with the COVID-19 crisis.

The economic, psychological and social impact of COVID in Malawi is enormous, far bigger than the reported number of deaths. School children are paying the highest price – schools closed in April, there's no distance learning and girls especially are vulnerable at home.

However, there is a lot we CAN do at the hospital. First of all we're maintaining our normal services – access to safe childbirth, HIV and palliative care.

We invested in PPE to make sure our staff are safe, and in education so that staff understand the virus, can triage and don't infect each other within the hospital.

We have to make sure our community feels it is safe to come to hospital – if people stop seeking medical treatment then this creates more problems for the healthcare system. So we have invested in educating village leaders and village health teams so they have the knowledge they need to manage this situation.

Circumstances and COVID-19 mean that instead of being on the ground in Mulanje I too am "working from home" by Zoom and email from the Netherlands. But we hope to get back soon when flights resume. There will be lots to do – a backlog of surgeries and a need to rebuild after the pandemic. We also have to reflect on how to "build back better" – not just in Malawi but across the world.

Thank you so much for your support, it means a lot and we'll keep you posted.

Final word from John Cowie, Minister of Stockbridge Church, which also has a close relationship with MMH.

"At the moment the world's attention is focussed elsewhere. And the problem is that Malawi is so poor they are dependent on outside donors. We in our communities provide money that keeps the hospital work going. We might think we're not very important giving just a few thousand a year but it makes a huge difference in Malawi."

Learning About Racism and Equality

Dorothy Tarrant and Nick Evans

Recent events and the **Black Lives Matter** campaign have shown how important it is to be well informed about racial equality now and in the past. The issues are important for all of us who are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves.

The following is a short selection of material you could view or read.

An overview of the enduring relationship between Britain and people whose origins lie in Africa is given in the programmes by the historian David Olusoga on the BBC iPlayer.



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b082x0h6/black-and-british-a-forgotten-history>



Phil Vischer

Let's Talk About Race in America...



: To appreciate the background to the situation in the USA it's worth looking at a short talk on the Holy Post website. See

<https://www.holypost.com/post/let-s-talk-about-race-in-america>

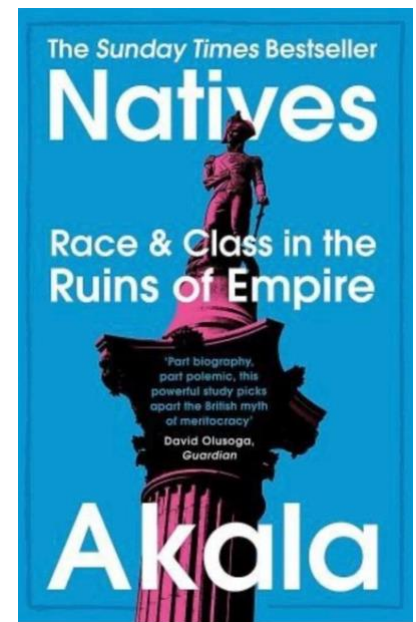
The Holy Post site has a lot of other thought provoking material.

Bookshops are currently displaying a wide range of titles about race. The following two offer different perspectives on the state of race relations in the UK and are widely recommended.

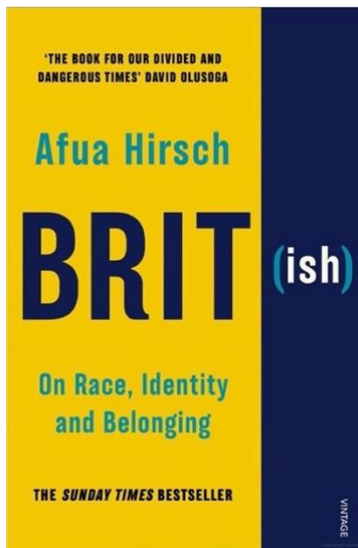
Natives: race and class in the ruins of empire,
by Akala.

A history of racism in Great Britain, that also explains how different races came to be in the UK in the first place. Akala, a BAFTA award-winning poet and rapper, grounds this historic overview in personal experience.

A good introduction to the book is the video of Akala's appearance at last year's Edinburgh Book Festival:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0iiybe5-nA>



Brit(ish): on race, identity and belonging,
by Afua Hirsch

Hirsch is the daughter of a black Ghanaian woman and a white English man; her book is part memoir, part history, part polemic, an interrogation of her own identity and an examination of the roots of prejudice, taking to task those progressives who claim they “don’t see colour”.

There is a good introduction to Edinburgh's part in the transatlantic slave trade on the Historic Environment Scotland website
See <https://blog.historicenvironment.scot/2018/11/edinburghs-part-slave-trade/>

It is hoped that when the COVID-19 pandemic permits we will be able to have a discussion on this important topic

Nick Evans (Education Group)
Dorothy Tarrant (Wider Horizons)

Guest Preacher

Rev Azariah France-Williams is our **guest preacher** (online) at St Andrew's and St George's West on **Sunday 16 August**. You can hear him in our online audio service on 16 August on our website www.stagw.org.uk or listen by phone on 0131 297 4717.

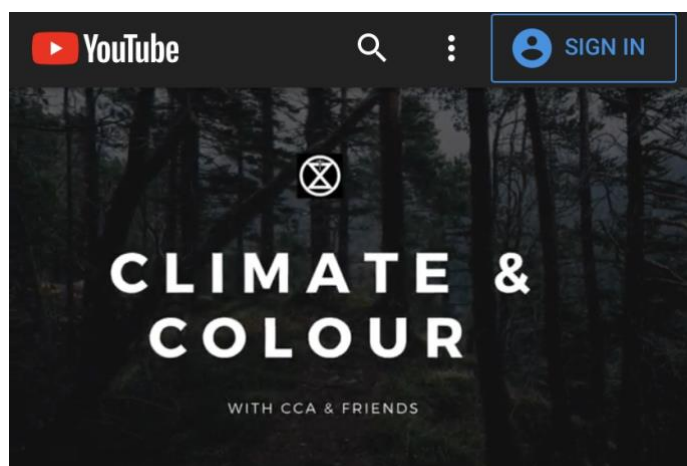


Azariah is developing a new hub church in Manchester as part of the **Heartedge** network.



His book **Ghost Ship** on institutional racism in the Church of England was published on 1 August. Watch the powerful, passionate book launch here https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=332492844439872&ref=watch_permalink

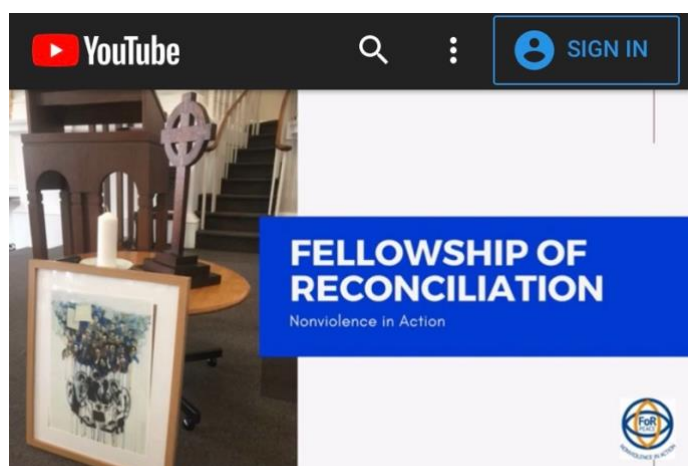
Azariah offers a couple of video recommendations – links below



Climate & Colour



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUSo4ICk28o>



No Justice No Peace



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBpVIWsDrIo>



Wildlife Watching in Pandemic Times

Pat McKerrow

Being now a longish-term ‘shielding’ wildlife photographer might suggest a degree of frustration, desperation even, for release back out into the wild to enjoy the natural glories of the season. But, to be honest, that’s not at all how I have felt. During these pandemic-filled months, I have relished the safe haven of my four walls, and simply maximised access to God’s creation via the scenes from my 4th floor window.

That said, following the slight relaxation in the shielding rules from 18 June, I was truly blessed beyond measure when I took my first, albeit very nervous, steps over the threshold and towards the adjacent Water of Leith – as a dear friend later commented, ‘someone was waiting for and watching over me.’

So, what happened? Well, my favourite swan appeared as if from a dream and proceeded to swim straight towards me! It had been more than 3 months since we'd last seen each other, and in a completely different location in the city at that, yet there she was. My heart was filled to bursting; I had feared that after 5 years together, the enforced separation might have led to us never meeting again – definitely not how I would have wanted our shared journey to end. Our reunion filled me with joy and gratitude; it also provided a vital confidence booster and sense of purpose for my next ventures out into our changed and risk-charged world.

“Give thanks and turn and go back home – for there will only be a few days like this.” From ‘Remember’, by Kenneth Steven.

Keep safe everyone.

Peace and blessings until we meet again.

Pat McKerrow

Life's many unfinished symphonies

Peter Millar

Since I was diagnosed with an incurable cancer in January of 2016, I have thought in a new way about the many unfinished symphonies in my own life.

In one of my earlier books, ‘Our Hearts Still Sing’ I included these words by Ronald Rolheiser which come from his book ‘Finding Spirituality’.

“When we fail to mourn properly our incomplete lives, then this incompleteness becomes a gnawing restlessness, a bitter centre that robs our lives of delight. Because we do not mourn, we demand that someone or something - a marriage partner, a sexual partner, an ideal family, having children, an achievement, a vocational goal or a job – take all of our

loneliness away. That of course, is an unreal expectation which invariable leads to bitterness and disappointment. In this life there is no finished symphony. We are built for eternity. Because of that we will, this side of eternity, always be to some extent lonely, restless, incomplete.”

It took me several years to take on board in a meaningful way that many of life's symphonies remain incomplete. Lesslie Newbigin a former bishop in the Diocese of Madras in South India where Dorothy and I worked for many years, called his autobiography 'Unfinished Agenda' – words which eloquently capture this truth. Many of our hopes and dreams will never come to fruition, which does not mean we should not have them. Even as I near the end of my own life I still have more than a handful of hopes! We all do – even if one of our hopes may be for a relatively pain-free death.

It is good and it is healing that we should mourn some of these unfinished agendas, while at the same time celebrating what we have accomplished. I know that for many people this is a hard task as deep inside they feel they have achieved very little. Yet paradoxically as we mourn all that we have not done in this life, we may also discover that we reappraise the things we did do. Becoming aware of what we have left incomplete may help us to move into a more gentle, and honest, estimation of ourselves. That kind of inner journey can be hugely rewarding and healing.

I remember a friend telling me that life is all about – 'releasing our baggage every day' As the well-known and much loved Australian writer Michael Leunig said' *God, give me the strength to hold on, and the strength to let go.*' That truly is a great prayer for all of us.

From **A Candle in the Window**, a regular reflection by Peter Millar Peter is our guest at our service on Sunday 2 August. Find the service online at <https://www.stagw.org.uk/online-worship-sunday-2-august-2020/>

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Chaplaincy

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