

By the Way Together

The Magazine of:
St Augustine's Scottish Episcopal Church, Dumbarton
and
St Mungo's Scottish Episcopal Church, Alexandria

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**THE CONGREGATION
WONDERED IF KENNY
AND LIZ REALLY
UNDERSTOOD 'CASUAL
DRESS DAY'??!**

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CHRISTMAS SERVICES!



Sunday, 17th December:	St Aug's	6 pm	Carols by candlelight
Sunday, 24th December:	St Augs	9am	Holy Communion
Advent 4		11am	Sung Eucharist (<i>led by +Gregor</i>)
	St Mungo's	11am	Sung Eucharist
Sunday 24th December:	St Mungo's	8pm	Christmas Eucharist
Christmas Eve	St Aug's	11pm	Midnight Eucharist
Monday, Christmas Day:	St Aug's	10.30am	Family Eucharist
Sunday, 31st December :	St Aug's	9am	Said Eucharist
	St Mungo's	11am	Sung Eucharist
	St Aug's	11am	Sung Eucharist

BURNS SUPPER! ST MUNGO'S SATURDAY 27TH JANUARY

Look out for details of time and price!



Scottish Night!
St Augustine's Church
Sunday 28th January
£11 (£10 for Friends)
6pm



NEW CHRISTMAS ALPHABET

- C** is for the Christ Child - who came to set us free
- H** is for the Hope He brings for all humanity
- R** is for His Reign on earth - forever and a day
- I** is for the great "I AM" who came to show the way
- S** is for the Shepherds and the Christmas Star
- T** is for the Thanks we give from deep within our hearts
- M** is for Mother Mary - and the Magi too
- A** is for the Angels singing out their songs anew
- S** is for the Saviour so let us not forget that Jesus is the reason for our Christmas Alphabet

John Russell

Can't do Sunday?

Ever thought about coming to church on Wednesdays?

- *Late start – 10.30 am,
- *no singing,
- *short, reflective service from the 1982 blue liturgy book
- *and good coffee/tea and chat afterwards (if you wish to stay on).

Why do I like the Wednesday service?

It gives me a quiet time with God in the middle of the week, a bit less formal than Sundays, with less buzz than the 11 o'clock Sunday service which I enjoy for its energy.

Think about it. We can worship together at any time. As Jesus said: "Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

FW



Bishop Gregor's Christmas Message

*St John 1.14: and the Word
became flesh and dwelt
among us ...*

We're all familiar with slogans, mottoes, catchphrases, strap lines, by which institutions or political parties or campaigning groups like to promote themselves, their claims, their values among the rest of us. Some of them may strike us as important and even challenging – I certainly, for example, find that to be true of Christian Aid's strap line, *we believe in life before death*. And I've always loved the motto of the University of Oxford, where I studied for my degree in theology: *Dominus illuminatio mea, the Lord is my light*.

Well, I think that the word *flesh* was a kind of strapline for the Christian communities among which the Gospel of St John came to be written, say, in the second half of the first century CE. The most celebrated use of it we hear proclaimed in the gospel every year at Midnight Mass: *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*. But we also find it in the letters of St John, closely related to the Gospel, where it is said that true believers always confess that Jesus Christ came *in the flesh*. Indeed so important was this little word *flesh* to these Johannine Christians that they went so far as to claim that those who would not say that Jesus came in the flesh were Antichrist, just about the worst thing you *could* say about anyone, from a Christian point of view, right up to the present day.

The thing is, though, that this coming in the flesh isn't just important to St John's Christian communities. It's not just a matter of what they thought all those centuries ago. Not at all. It has remained of absolutely fundamental importance to all Christian people ever since and is at the very heart of our Christmas celebrations, every year, which is why traditionally the reader of the gospel makes a deep bow at these words and why people used to kneel for the words *and was made man* in the Creed. Really, Christmas simply isn't conceivable, isn't possible without St John's joyous affirmation that *God the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*.

Why is that so? Why should such a small word matter so very much? Well, for St John and his communities of Christians *flesh* was important because it meant to them our human life, so that when he says that God becomes flesh he wants us

to understand that in Jesus Christ God lives out our human life from the inside. We call this the Incarnation, God with a skin if you like, and it's what Christmas is all about. God so loves us, so wants us to make the most of the lives given us, by drawing us to God's own life, that it is a case of becoming God with us, God one of us, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. God wants to be as close to us as possible and that means beginning life as we do, utterly dependent on other people. Not God commanding us from afar with overwhelming power, but in our midst loving us in the weakness and vulnerability of a human child. This is how much God loves us fleshly human beings and, as the divine life among us unfolds, we know the cost of that love, the height, the depth, the self-giving of that love.

As we celebrate once more that immense love God has for us and for the whole world, we must know ourselves called to love God in return. And a big part of *that* is to love ourselves and all around us as we are loved by God, to love ourselves and those around us because we are all loved so much by God and so precious to God. This we are called to do in and for a world that can often seem very far away from love, life and hope. We see so much hatred, so much holding of human life not as precious but as cheap and insignificant, so much torn and wounded and abused flesh, so many shattered lives, so much cruelty, so much indifference to suffering, so much pitiless killing of the innocent. Christmas is not about escaping from all of that. Apart from anything else it is all anyhow embedded in our Christmas celebration as it unfolds – after all, on the second day of Christmas we find ourselves commemorating the terrible stoning to death of St Stephen and then two days later the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem at Herod's command. The thing is, of course, that the Word made flesh, Jesus himself, from the very start of his life among us, as his family fled for their lives as refugees into Egypt, faced in the world he loved the same lovelessness and cruelty that we face. He knows what that's like and He is with us in our Christmas celebration and throughout our lives to encourage us always to keep faith, to hold to love, and goodness and truth and beauty, to hold to *God's* vision of the preciousness of all God's children, whose flesh God shares, whose lives God cherishes and whose love God desires, always and for ever.

I wish you all a very happy and blessed
Christmas.

+Gregor



The
United
Reformed
Church

Dear friends,

Having cold weather this December reminded me of

one of the coldest experiences I have had which was being in Jerusalem in the middle of winter. High in the Judean hills it can get very cold and architecture more suited to summer heat does little to keep the warmth in. I recall one winter when it snowed heavily in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. That same winter in Tiberias further north where we lived the snow fell on the upper part of the town which is 200m above sea level and I remember looking up, watching from the roof of the Church of Scotland Centre still wearing shorts in the relative warmth 200m below sea level. We could see Mount Hermon to the north, bordering Israel with Lebanon and Syria, covered in snow for months.

Next time you hear anyone dismissing Christmas Carols that mention the cold or the snow as not being relevant to the bible story perhaps you can offer a meteorological critique. However, the prospect of harsh weather does raise a question about shepherds being outside. Was it in the winter, or maybe it was Spring during lambing? The truth is we don't know when Jesus was born.

What we can do is trace the origins of our current observance of 25th December to the early centuries of the Church. (While the Orthodox Church observes Christmas slightly later than the Western church that we are part of they still observe 25th December, just following a more ancient calendar). As the Roman Empire embraced Christianity so it came to pass that a festival was decreed to celebrate the Incarnation, God coming among us in Jesus. An existing winter festival was adapted (hijacked?) and the rest is history.

In recent years there has been a fair amount of criticism, much of it valid, about the excess of the season. More recently there appears to be criticism of the religious content at the heart of the festival. Whether too commercial or not inclusive enough – we need to remember that a lot of what we associate with Christmas is fairly recent – indeed my father spoke of Christmas

day being a normal working day (The Scots saving their time off for New Year ☺).

While we might blame the Romans for the date some of what has become mainstay perhaps was Victorian, other aspects the result of a successful advertising campaign by a popular soft drink company. How far removed this seems from celebrating the incarnation – yet how close to the popular clamour of festival times ancient and modern. Folk need cheering up and enjoying a good time so it is no accident that in northern Europe we have a whole range of festival events in the cold, dark winter months. In the middle of the winter at its coldest and with the longest nights we celebrate the light of God coming into the world.

There are some who argue we shouldn't mark this festival at all, arising as it did in the Roman Empire and not being biblically based, but that overlooks the reason the Church has throughout the ages built on ancient customs and in many cases pinched the best bits for its own purpose – throwing light on the stories of Jesus in ways people can relate to in their own lives.

As an evangelistic tool and an opportunity to encourage thinking about others Christmas remains a wonderful festival. Yes, we may want to discard the glittery wrapping paper and excess but at the heart we still have a chance to wonder on the mystery of Immanuel, God with us, and the implications on that mystery for our lives and the life of the world.

As we prepare for the feast of Christmas let us be aware that Christ Mass (mass meaning dismissal or sending) can mean Christ sending us out into the world to share His love.



Wishing you all a joyful celebration!

Bungie

*Rev Mitchell Bunting, Dumbarton United
Reformed Church*

Pulpit Supply

17 Dec - Minister
24 Dec - Rev D Laing
31 Dec - Minister

Between two people

When the Scottish Episcopal Church Synod voted to change the canon law to define marriage as being between two people, (rather than between a man and a woman), I was surprised and a bit irritated. Surprised because I didn't see it as being the most important matter for the church to discuss, and irritated because, although I am not as 'black and white' on these issues as I used to be, I did not see how this could be reconciled with biblical passages on sexual behaviour. I also didn't want marriage to be re-defined and would have rather, if we had to, had a different system for same sex couples. I parked the matter in my mind as I felt that I could live with it, but as I didn't vote for it, I wasn't condoning it. The Episcopal Church has always been a broad church, accommodating a wide range of views with tolerance and acceptance, so I figured that as a recently grafted in member, I could do likewise. Unfortunately, it was not so simple! In addition to the Synod decision, each Vestry committee had to decide whether or not their premises could be used for same-sex weddings. As a member of the vestry, I would have to decide – this would be a challenge for someone who regards the bible as the inspired word of God and who didn't want to be guilty of apostasy and also didn't want to lead others astray. I decided that if I had to decide, I owed it to everyone to do some serious research to discover what the Bible actually said on the matter, rather than simply follow my preconceptions or just go with the flow to avoid further division.

I approached the matter with trepidation as I felt that I was going to have to compromise what I thought was a clear instruction or I would, like Martin Luther have to say "here I stand, I can do no other" and have to take whatever the consequences were. The key thing for me was to understand what the biblical passages were saying and respond accordingly. It was a difficult journey, but I think I have a better understanding of the issues and what scripture says about the issue, but just as importantly, I discovered the appalling way that same – sex attracted people have been treated by the Church (and still are). I encourage you to look into it yourself, but I set out my findings below, not to try to convince you one way or another, but to provide some "food for thought."

What does scripture say? On marriage:

Gen 2:18-24 The primary function was to have a helper to cope with aloneness and to be a new family together, procreation was secondary. Mat 19:4-6 "Male and Female... leave and cleave... the two shall become one flesh". Clearly the norm is Male and Female, but norm does not necessarily mean normative, i.e. have to, it could mean "usually." "One flesh" is often taken to refer to the sexual union, but it goes much deeper and there is a strong argument that it is talking about "Kinship" – that person becomes family, so it is not to be taken lightly.

On homosexual issues there are seven passages that are usually referred to:

Gen 19:5 and Judges 19: 22-23 These passages are primarily about dominance and humiliation of strangers, rather than primarily homosexual behaviour.

Lev 18:22 and 20:13 This appears to be absolute, but the thrust of this and surrounding scriptures is about keeping Israel pure and distinct from the practices of the peoples around them. There was no concept of equal consensual lifelong intimate same sex relationships. Homosexual behaviour was characterised at that time by older men exploiting young boys (pederasty) and cult prostitution practices, not something that anyone would want to encourage!

1 Cor 6:9-11 These are "vice lists" which have words that are not easily translated therefore the meaning is uncertain, but they arguably allude to sexual abuse or exploitation rather than committed, loving, consensual and equal relationships.

1 Tim 1:10 As with the passage in Corinthians, there are a number of interpretations of the wording that suggests that it is likely to refer to practices of the ancient sex trade, not committed relationships.

Rom 1:26-27 This passage, some argue, lists a variety of vices practiced by the court of emperor Nero in recent memory (who came to a particularly grisly end). This appears to be condemnation of unrestrained hedonism (pursuit of self-indulgent pleasure). When it refers to "nature" there is an argument that this refers to heterosexuals that engage in homosexual activity as a form of excess that violates their own sexual nature. If someone's nature is same-sex attraction then, some argue, it would not be unnatural for them.

Unfortunately, there are no simple answers to the diverse interpretations made on these passages,

but there are deep New Testament principles of love that may well override the traditional legalistic approach. “Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial ... but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Cor 6:12), Paul’s exhortations are less about offering prohibitions than directing devotion to God. This is echoed in Romans 2:1 where we are queried on our judgements of others with our measure, rather than God’s. So what should we do?

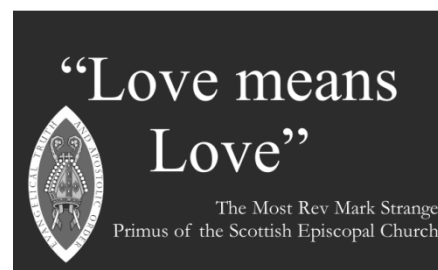
There is a risk of looking at all the Levitical rules as cultural rather than moral, and there are many that we no longer follow for good reason, but this doesn’t mean that they are automatically dismissed because we are in New Testament times. Context is critical and the reason for the rules was for the prevention of worse wrongs. We no longer adhere to many of these rules that are clearly strange to our culture, like mixing fabrics, having tattoos and even the compulsory marriage and fine of a rapist! Even in the New Testament there are passages that would concern us today (Titus 2:9 [slavery], 1 Cor 14:34 [women speaking in church], 1 Cor 11:6 [women covering hair], Rom 13:1 [submit to authorities]). All scripture is “God breathed” but it all requires interpretation. Understanding if something is absolute or contextual can be difficult but is absolutely necessary. That’s why we no longer view as acceptable certain practices that are not overtly condemned, such as slavery. When slavery was abolished devout people argued from both viewpoints, but it was a deeper understanding of the underlying message that turned the tide. Such sea changes are not unprecedented: Acts 10, Peter’s ‘large sheet’ moment, is a good example of such a God inspired radical move against tradition.

The deepest New Testament principle is about Love. Not gushy infatuation, but “agape”: selfless, unconditional, sacrificial, others before me kind of love. Love does no harm to its neighbour therefore love is the fulfilment of the law (Rom 13:8-10). So we must love, but we also must be sure to adhere to Col 2:8 avoiding ‘hollow and deceptive philosophies ... of this world rather than of Christ.’ We also must not judge others or shackle them with burdens that they can’t handle. Given the controversy, some argue that same-sex attraction is ok, but it must be celibate. Paul is clear on celibacy, that it is a gift, but is not for everyone and that it is better to marry than to burn with passion 1 Cor 7:9. Another big principle is

that promiscuity is condemned and so marriage is encouraged to avoid unrestrained passions. Therefore we must follow the principles in Galatians 5:13-14 “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” This abolishes legalism, but prohibits hedonism too.

The purpose of this article was not to convince you, but to provide you with some of the arguments and big principles that may inform your thinking. If you only take one thing from it, take the principle of agape love, which is Christ’s love for the church. When we meet same-sex attracted people, we should display that kind of love and acceptance, even if we find ourselves unable to understand their relationships. For many same-sex attracted people, their experience of the church is not great. Many have been deeply hurt—they may have been denounced, subject of dubious therapies, or expelled. Is this how Jesus would have treated them? We need to accept that we don’t always see things in the same way and, as in the struggles of the early church, we don’t find it easy to accept challenges to traditional views. If we are to move forward on this issue, we must hold one another in love. This means that we should be able to love each other without necessarily agreeing with everything that they say or do – there is more that unites us than divides us, so we need to hang together and learn and develop together. It is easy to look at this approach as lacking in principals or conviction, not so – issues can be felt deeply without manifesting in schism. Families don’t have to fall apart because one member has lifestyle issues that are hard to fathom. Clearly some families do fall apart in these circumstances, but it is not inevitable and reconciliation is possible. John 13:34-35 says it for me: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one

another.” For the Scottish Episcopal Church, “love means love” – I can live with that.



John Wiggins



Merry Christmas to all
at St Augustine's
Love from Roberta



Christmas
Greetings!



Janette says:
Wait till I tell you all to have
a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!"

Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year to all!
From Cathy Hutcheson



Wishing you all a merry
Christmas and a happy New
Year.

Love Cathy McKechnie

To all at St Augustine's: Love and
best wishes for Christmas and the
New Year, from Betty Gordon



To all at St Augs:

Christmas time wishes for
warmth and good cheer,
Happiness now and in the
New Year,

Love Yvonne and Kenny McAlpine

To my dear friends at St Mungo's
and St Augustine's
A very happy and holy Christmas
to you all. God bless you all.
Love Carol



Wishing all our friends at
St Aug's peace, joy and
love at Christmas and
throughout the year.

Tam and Linda Jenkinson



Happy Christmas to all my
friends in St Augustine's -
thank you all for being such a
wonderful comfort after my
accident, from Barbara



Merry Christmas to all at
St Augustine's from
Margaret Hardie



A happy and
Blessed Christmas to all
my friends in
St Augustine's & St Mungo's
from Maggie Wallace



Happy Christmas to all at
St Augustine's! With love from
Cathy Hoatson



Christmas blessings to all our friends
in St Augustine's and St Mungo's,
love from Evelyn and Morag



Happy Christmas to everyone at
St Augustine's,
Best wishes, Chrissie



Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year to all at
St Augustine's
From Margaret Murnin



"O Come Let us Adore Him,
Christ the Lord"
Wishing all our friends at
St Augs a happy Christmas and
blessings in the New Year.
John and Dot Russell



Dancing in the Aisles!

Ghislaine and Ricky organised an evening of well known songs, dancing and brilliant entertainment raising £1,000 for church funds!



Shooley and Shane (left) were an inspired act for the evening with witty repartee, a fabulous Elvis impression which had us all rolling around with laughter!





There's been Murder! It's a Mystery! Whodunnit?!



Murder Mystery Dinner



**Well done to everyone involved!
Raising money for church funds whilst having fun!!**



Dear all,

On behalf of the Mission to Seafarers Scotland please accept our sincere gratitude for all of the knitted items

received yesterday and do please pass on our thanks to all who may have contributed in anyway. We do so appreciate all that you do for us, it means so much to the seafarers and I hope that all will have enjoyed knitting these items as much as I know that the seafarers enjoy wearing them, especially so when it is now turning so cold. My house is about 20 yards from the shore and the sea today is so very rough and the wind blowing, but I am so fortunate to be warm and cosy, typing with the cat curled up next to me. Seafarers are not so fortunate, theirs is an inhospitable world but it is their work which helps to make ours so comfortable. Life on board ship has changed over the years. The length of time on board a ship will vary, but with most seafarers being away from home for up to nine months at a time working seven days a week and without much shore leave, and their sacrifice for our needs is as great now as it was when the Mission to Seafarers was founded over 160 years ago . The work of a seafarer today is one of the loneliest, most difficult and challenging jobs in the world. The Mission to Seafarers is there for them 365 days of the year. Your support makes our work possible. Please do encourage everyone to keep the knitting needles clicking again for us whenever they are able,

You all remain, always in our prayers,

Jennifer K Gray. Trustee/Director. Mission to Seafarers, Scotland

SMILE LINES!

Overheard on the wise men's journey to Bethlehem

"OK, we got the gold. We got the frankincense. We got the myrrh. Think we should also get something more practical, like nappies, maybe?"

"I thought this was supposed to be a weekend trip... my wife is going to be furious."

"All this star-gazing from the back of a camel is making me sick."

"What's so WISE about wandering around the desert for three years?"

"You know, I used to go to school with a girl name Beth Lehem."

Why Bethlehem?

A minister asked his Bible class: 'Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem?'

A student replied, 'Because his mother was there.'

Camels

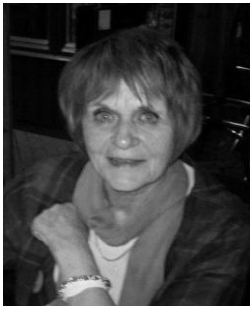
In a little girl's Christmas drawing, two of the camels were approaching the inn, over which was pictured a huge star. The third camel and its rider were going directly away from it. 'Why is the third man going in a different direction?' her mother asked. She replied, 'Oh, he's looking for a place to park.'

Christmas presents

Catching her in the act, I confronted our three-year-old granddaughter. 'Are you opening your little sister's presents?' I demanded. 'No,' she innocently replied, 'I'm just helping her learn to share.'

Virgin mother

A ten-year old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, 'Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? The Virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?'



'Wait Till I Tell You.....'

Janette recalls a night of laughter at the November Murder Mystery, looks forward to all the rush and bustle of the Festive Season and prepares

for 2018 with a traditional Scottish evening of Burns, Haggis and a' that, and a' that!

THE WINTER THAT JUST COULDN'T WAIT!

There we were, moaning about the dull, dreich, dismal, depressing, damp days of November, when it arrived – even before we had discarded our St. Andrew's Day saltires. A blast from the Arctic had turned Black Friday white - cancelling trains and sending us searching for last year's *'semmits and woolly bunnets'* to hit the shops and stock up, not only for Christmas, but for an expected avalanche! Oh, the surrounding hills looked really beautiful in their snowy splendour even when viewed from a draughty bus shelter!

We should have expected its early appearance – the poetry of J B Burges reads *'November leads her wintry train, and stretches o'er the firmament her veil'*. But Dumbarton (and Vale) elocutionists were thrust straight into

*The winter's came, the snaw hus fell
Wee Josie's nose is froze as well.
Wee Josie's nose is froze and skintit,
Winter's diabolic...intit!*

The TV weather forecasters had assured us that the start of meteorological winter was 1st December, even though some couldn't say it, and not to panic – the winter fuel allowance was coming soon. This pensioner perk certainly makes up for the dodgy knees and the NHS hearing aids. Now what shall I spend it on this year? It's definitely not going to Scottish Gas they're rich enough. So, throw another old coat on the bed and use the bus pass to find somewhere else to get a heat!

THE MOON-ICIPAL BUILDINGS.

The super moon decided to linger over our recently refurbished Municipal Buildings on 3rd December and what a splendid sight that was. Did you see it? Maybe you were glued to the telly that night watching the 'Strictly' results while anticipating Kezia's ejection from 'I'm a Celebrity'. Celebrity? Who told her that?

'Listen, hen, politicians are no' a popular species the noo, even in the jungle. You surely didnae expect

us tae phone in fur ye? The cockroaches got merr votes than you did!'

'IT WISNAE ME!' THE 'UGLIES' STEAL THE SHOW.

This year's Murder Mystery had a Panto theme – oh yes it did! It all happened at the final dress rehearsal for St. Aug's annual show when, right on cue, the Fairy Godmother made her entrance on a trolley – murdered! Blood running down her slender neck, she had been the victim of a heinous crime. A knife –wielding maniac had put an end to her thespian ambitions. Did we phone *'the polis?'* Oh, no we didn't! Director, Claris Mudd (me!), declared *'The show must go on!'* and it did! Understudy, Bronwyn McBachle (Linda Macaulay), couldn't wait to get her hands on the wand. Perhaps she had a murderous motive?

The audience set about unmasking the killer while tucking into a 3-course upmarket buffet accompanied by wine. Of course, there was a superb array of unsavoury characters who each declared their *'ongauns'* with the hapless victim, a visitor from DPT who gets murdered every time she shows face at St. Aug's! Was it Ina Dwalm (Maggie clutching a magic lamp) who was obviously in the wrong Panto, Ghislaine as the ambitious stepmother, Baroness Brexit, a yummy Mummy, originally from the Raploch, or that ubiquitous poser, Prince Charming, played by the legs of Sandra O'Neill. She has never forgotten that Bishop Gregor gave them the episcopal seal of approval last time she donned the fish nets!

Then there was too-good-to-be-true Luke Stunning, (Roddy Dyer) as Buttons, charming and suave enough to get the sympathy vote – did he do it? He was worth the watching!

But it was the Ugly Sisters who stole the show right from their raucous entrance to the chords of 'Here Come the Girls' with their provocative posturing and pirouetting in all their posh paraphernalia. You could expect anything from such characters, played to perfection by Liz and Kenny who were named Verruca and Hernia for the occasion. What pains! But were they also murderers?

That night even the waitresses were suspect. Jane Anne Tonnice (Chrissie), Bess Tinslow (Roberta) and Lucy Dumpling (Margaret Hardie) had many reasons to grab a knife. Even the heroine Cinderella, played by Margaret Swan, was not as holy as the skirt she was wearing.

Fran, as Shuggie Shiftit the Stage Manager, struggled to keep order and assist in the unravelling of the crime – with such an astonishing range of suspects that could have come straight from the

Westminster front benches! Even the audience looked a little unsavoury, especially the ones who had dressed up in discarded Hallowe'en costumes. They added a scary atmosphere as the action heated up over the main course, the highlight of which was a large poached salmon (known as Alex), cooked by Irene Telford. It was fitting that Irene should take responsibility for the centrepiece since we all know that '*a wumman frae Cardross*' deals with delicacies such as salmon and venison and grouse on an almost daily basis. Suffice to say, no one had been put off their food by the sight of the bloody body. After all, there was another wee glass of bubbly to enjoy along with the meringue and ice cream dessert. Sleuthing by the teams was drawn to a halt at coffee time and the winner (correct answer and best motive) was a team named 'The Re - liables'. Preparation was all for this group whose name was a combination of Barbara, Sheila, Isobel, Alec, Ina and Betty. Congratulations to a really observant team who even commented that the absence of the Bishop had been very suspicious. Now that's overthinking!

Soon it was time for the Uglies to be returned to their dog collars, Ricky had finished the dishes – oh, yes he did – all of them, and the dreaded tidying up was beginning. It had been a great wee night with nearly £700 raised. Thanks to Liz's brother-in-law for costume, Ricky for music, Peter Ashman for culinary advice, Friends' exec members plus Maggie and Irene for food preparation and most of all to our wonderful audience for joining in with such enthusiasm. Ohand the murderer was.....Baroness Brexit! *Gaun yersel, Ghislaine!*

WHA'S LIKE US?

Fast forward to Sunday 28th January and come out of post - Christmas hibernation. It's the Friends' annual Scottish celebration with AGM (Alistair, Gina and Michael) plus a few stage struck '*hingers-oan*' in the Church starting at 6pm. There will be a traditional Scottish Supper with Haggis, Neeps and Tatties and a civilised alternative for those who cannot stomach the stomach! Drinks and accompaniments will be included in the £11 cost which is reduced to £10 with Friends' discount. So, look out the tartan and practise climbing on to high ground clutching your stick to sing '*The Star o' Rabbie Burns*'. Notices will be appearing in the Community Hall soon – make sure your name is included.

EATING WITH THE ANIMALS

I loved the radio interview with the staff of the Chihuahua Café in Edinburgh where you can enjoy

afternoon tea while socialising with '*the dugs*' that roam freely amongst the patrons to be petted and pampered to help you unwind. Booking for this pleasurable activity is necessary – such is the demand! Also in our capital city there is a '*Maison de Moggie*' where you can cuddle a variety of cats but again you have to book early since only a limited number is allowed into this feline paradise at the same time. Not to be outdone, Friends offer '*Relaxing with Rocco*' – in the Community Hall every Saturday morning. Have coffee with this delightful canine from St. Mungo's on your knee. Booking is not necessary but it is advisable to have a jammy scone in your hand when Rocco approaches. Every Saturday 10am till 12noon and great value at £2.00 per person. *Nae cats!*

MEGHANOMANIA – FROM NOW TILL NEXT MAY!

Well, now that Prince Harry has chosen his bride-to-be we'll be told everything about her, and her family, courtesy of the media. Already Meghan's intimate photograph album has been a freebie in the Daily Mail and speculation about her dress and the content of the wedding ceremony are of great national interest. One question everyone is avoiding, like the elephant in the room, is - will the Trumps get an invite? And could the controversial state visit, impulsively promised by Big Theresa, be done at the same time?

IN A WORD.....

The Collins Dictionary people have nominated Fake News as their word of 2017 – I now it's two words! What does that say about our society? After all, it's just gossip on a magnified scale using today's plethora of communications devices to spread it. And I've heard that even '*the weans*' are being upset by Fake News. Somebody must have suggested Santa was on strike! For me the worst word to appear in our columns and sub-titles recently is re-tweet – or is it retweet? The BBC can't make up its mind about the hyphen. In my opinion, tweeting should only be for the birds – they never need to retweet their sound bites. Tweeting is a pleasant sound reminiscent of spring, Mother Nature and that beloved cartoon character, Tweetie Pie. Now it's been seized by the bird brains and even by 'the Donald' himself who is creating mayhem retweeting rubbish from very suspect sources. *Geeza brek!*

WHO'LL BE SKITTERY WINTER IN YOUR HOUSE?

Scotland can certainly boast of more daft customs

and habits than most – particularly at Hogmanay and other ‘sacred’ seasons. But calling someone Skittery Winter is surely the most ridiculous. I had a school friend whose Mother hailed from Aberdeen. Every Hogmanay when I was looking for a lump of coal to go first footing, she was arguing with her sister as to had been Skittery Winter in their house. And the whole family took the custom seriously. What is it? Well, the last person to get dressed on Hogmanay or the last person to arrive at work would be greeted mockingly with the name of Skittery Winter – certainly not flattering! But I hear this custom is dying out now that Aberdeen is joining the world of the 21st century bereft of flag day jokes, sheep and *mealie puddens*. Maybe it would be fun to revive the old Scottish custom at the 11am Eucharist which this year is on Hogmanay. The last person to arrive that Sunday

Food 4 Thought AGM Coordinators report 2017

Food for Thought has had another very busy year. Our core business is and always has been emergency food aid and in the last 12 months we have provided 1490 people with 3 days worth of food. Over 50 agencies now phone to refer the individuals and families who are in great need to us. We predict that the numbers will grow exponentially in the coming weeks as Universal Credits are rolled out to families in our area.

We added to this provision in May with the introduction of “Community Soup” and to date we have provided 1683 lunches with 222 of them going to children. As many people attend for the “Community” as for the “Soup” and although this



surprised me it also delights me.

Christmas is nearly upon us again and we are already busy in preparation for this. Last year 98 people booked to have lunch with us on Christmas day, each receiving a small gift. We believe that we are the only organisation that

could be greeted by a chorus of ‘*Skittery Winter*’ from the smug who were already in their seats. It would make a change.

BRING ON 2018.

It’ll not be long now till the table is groaning with shortbread and folks at the bus stops are resigning themselves to ‘*I canny wait tae get thae decorations doon!*’ But a New Year is exciting with lots to look forward to – holidays, new faces.....and lots more Brexit! Another ‘By the Way Together’ will appear at the end of January with news of Friends’ events and a whole programme of stuff and nonsense. Don’t miss it!

Janette

provides this service in our area. The week before Christmas we gave out nearly 1000 toys to children who may have had little or nothing from

Santa. Every mother or father who came to collect toys was also offered a wee present for themselves as in times of hardship parents will often go without in order to have something for the children.

We were also able to give all who live in our area in supported accommodation Christmas dinner in a bag which consisted of a 3 course dinner from packets and tins, which could be warmed up in a kettle and microwave if that was the only appliances available.

None of this is possible without grants both large and small. Thanks to St Nicholas Care Fund for supporting us last Christmas. Special thanks though go to those who give to us on a weekly and monthly basis because without that support we would most definitely sink.

I would like to finish off by saying that it has been a privilege to hold this position for the past 12 months, within the most worthy wee charity in the shire and I am incredibly proud to be involved. I would like to sincerely thank my volunteers who will do anything asked of them and laugh whilst doing it.

Merry Christmas!

Caroline Marsland

ROTAS FOR ST MUNGO'S

Sunday Dec 17th

Reader/Intercessions	Pat Brooks
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Carol Meacham

Sunday Dec 24th Advent 4

Reader/Intercessions	Clergy
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Lynne McWhinnie

Sunday 24th Christmas Eve 8pm

Reader/Intercessions	Pat Brooks
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Carol Meacham

Sunday Dec 31st

Reader/Intercessions	Clergy
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Phil O'Ryan

Sunday Jan 7th

Reader/Intercessions	Lewis Kennedy
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Carol Meacham

Sunday Jan 14th

Reader/Intercessions	Carol Meacham
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Phil O'Ryan

Sunday Jan 21st

Reader/Intercessions	Pat Brooks
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Lynne McWhinnie

Sunday Jan 28th

Reader/Intercessions	Lewis Kennedy
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Carol Meacham

Sunday Feb 4th

Reader/Intercessions	Clergy
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Phil O'Ryan

CLEANING

24 rd Dec/ 21 st Jan:	Jean
31 st Dec/ 28 th Jan:	Finella (& flowers)
7 th Jan / 4 th Feb	Iona and Mary
14 th Jan/ 11 th Feb	Margaret

ROTAS FOR ST AUGUSTINE'S

Sunday December 17th

Readers	Maggie Wallace & Evelyn O'Neill
Intercessions	Margaret Hardie
Chalice	Barbara Barnes & Janette Barnes
Sidespersons	Lorraine McCulloch & Linda Jenkinson

Sunday December 24th

Readers	Maggie Wallace & Dot Russell
Intercessions	Linda Macaulay
Chalice	Kirsten Wiggins & Margaret Hardie
Sidespersons	Chrissie Ashman & Roddy Dyer

Sunday December 24th Midnight Eucharist

Readers	Linda Macaulay & Janette Barnes
Chalice	Maggie Wallace & Barbara Barnes
Sidesperson	Roberta Mailley & Kirsten Wiggins

Sunday December 31st

Readers	Margaret Hardie & Ghislaine Kennedy
Intercessions	Dot Russell
Chalice	Janette Barnes & Maggie Wallace
Sidespersons	David Ansell & Barbara Barnes

Sunday January 7th

Readers	Evelyn O'Neill & David Ansell
Intercessions	Maggie Wallace
Chalice	David Rowatt & Margaret Hardie
Sidespersons	Maggie Wallace & Lorraine McCulloch

Sunday January 14th

Readers	Morag O'Neill & Ghislaine Kennedy
Intercessions	Linda Macaulay
Chalice	Kirsten Wiggins & Sharon Rowatt
Sidespersons	Chrissie Ashman & Roberta Mailley

Sunday January 21st

Readers	Maggie Wallace & Barbara Barnes
Intercessions	Sharon Rowatt
Chalice	Fran Walker & Janette Barnes
Sidespersons	Margaret Swan & Barbara Barnes

Sunday January 28th

Readers	Janette Barnes & Roddy Dyer
Intercessions	Fran Walker
Chalice	Maggie Wallace & Margaret Hardie
Sidespersons	Linda Jenkinson & David Ansell

Sunday February 4th

Readers	Kirsten Wiggins & Fran Walker
Intercessions	Dot Russell
Chalice	Maggie Wallace & Kirsten Wiggins
Sidespersons	Chrissie Ashman & Roberta Mailley

FLOWERS

Dec. 23 rd	Maggie Wallace & Moira McGown
Dec. 30 th	Maggie Wallace
Jan 6 th	Linda Macaulay
Jan. 13 th	Margaret Hardie
Jan. 20 th	Fran Walker
Jan. 27 th	Moira McGown
Feb 3 rd	Barbara Barnes

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Music Art Drama (MAD): Fran Walker

Mission Action Planning Group:
 The Rector; Anne Dyer; Morag O'Neill; Fran Walker
 Caroline Marsland
 Freewill Offering: Margaret Hardie

(Right) Good news and sad news! The closing of a local charity which sponsored a school in Africa meant that our Gambian Nursery School received a cheque for £5,000. Be assured it will be well spent and appreciated!



(Above) Moira receives rose wreaths at the Service for those who have died from addiction. A moving service attended by so many.

(Right) Welcome to St Augustine's, Isla, and congrats to Mum and Dad, David and Lydia and proud grandparents, Kirsten and John Wiggins!

(Below) Robert Hamill and Fraser Martin presented the wreath on Remembrance Sunday and read the names of those who died.



(Above) **Fishy Talents:** What a delight it was to watch Kenny and Fran welcome hordes of P6 pupils to our church as part of their St Andrew's Day walk. Kenny held them, rapt to his every word as he explained who Andrew was and related the tale of the small boy's lunch to what happens regularly at Food for Thought... Seemingly small, insignificant things are shared and by God's grace transformed into the feeding of many. As I listened, I was reminded again of the talents and challenged: what small and seemingly unimportant skill do I have which I could offer to God for Him to do something incredible with? Andrew brought that wee boy and his lunch to Jesus.... who could I encourage to look again into their "lunch box"? Who might I bring to Jesus? "Look, here is a small boy with some bread and a few small fish..." Quote from Dr Micha Jazz: "Cooking is serving, hospitality offers welcome and hope. Too often we become obsessive about gifts we perceive to be of a more spiritual nature. We lose sight of the lack of distinction God makes between spiritual and secular. We are after all both mortal and spiritual..."