

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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**Soooo, Gran..... a
quiet night and a
few songs for just
the two of us.....?**



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ASH WEDNESDAY

14th February

The beginning of Lent – a season of penance and prayer
Start with coming to a church service:

St Augustine's: 10.30am

St Mungo's: 10.30am

7.30pm

JOINT LENT GROUP!

EMMAUS – The way of Faith

This group will meet every Wednesday in Lent – starting Wednesday 21st February – 7pm at the Rectory. We meet to talk and share – and it doesn't matter if you've never been before! We will laugh and learn. The evenings are good fun.

Everyone is welcome!

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. Why not give it a try? We can worship together at any time. As Jesus said: *"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

Fran

GIVING FOR LENT!

At the beginning of Lent there will be Lent boxes which you are asked to take away and fill with coppers, coins and notes.

All money will be split between St Andrew's Lamin who are trying to build a new church; and Motor Neuron Disease Charity – this year's Bishop's Lent Appeal

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER ST AUGUSTINE'S DUMBARTON Friday 2nd March 2.30pm

This important ecumenical service is, this year being hosted by St Augustine's – we need a few volunteers to organise and serve refreshments after the service.

If you can possibly help, please see Maggie Wallace.



Be JOYFUL in hope,
PATIENT in affliction,
FAITHFUL in prayer.

ROMANS 12:12



From Kenny..

January 2018 has passed so quickly in the “Rectory Bubble”. In fact it almost disappeared. Between losing our favourite dog, Archie, being stuck in snow for ten hours overnight on the M74, missing a flight from Manchester, rescheduling everything, and our time in The Gambia, we found ourselves in early February stuffing the one or two bits of Christmas we had forgotten about into the Rectory loft... and I feel that somehow, Ash Wednesday and Lent have just been stuck on to the end of Christmas and Epiphany! I feel as if I’ve been “jumped”!

So, hello, Lent 2018! I didn’t expect to see you so soon.

Lent, of course, is a very important season for us all. It’s a time of preparation for Easter, and our opportunity to examine ourselves, our lives and actions, and make favourable changes that will be acceptable to God. It’s our opportunity to turn our back on sin and turn towards the Risen Son of Easter.

Traditionally, it includes prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Apart from public worship, *which some of us need to return to more regularly*, prayer is an activity that goes on in the secret places of our lives when the audience has all gone home, and we are alone.

Like prayer, fasting has always been part of the spiritual tradition, and is a sign of repentance. If it’s not then it’s simply reduced to the theology of Scottish Slimmers.

However, I might want to say a little more about almsgiving. Having spent some days, recently, in a mainly Muslim country, I was again made aware of the importance of almsgiving. It is one of the pillars of Islam, and is something to be expected, and practiced in daily life, even amongst the poor.

When it comes to giving alms to the poor, Jesus thinks little of those who make sure that everyone

knows about it, and are paying attention as the gift is given.

Jesus gives the maxim: “Your left hand must not know what your right hand is doing.”

In the Temple there was a room called the Chamber of the Silent, where people could atone for their sins by making offerings anonymously from which the poor could be helped secretly. This is the kind of giving approved by Jesus. It is quiet and is of benefit to the poor.

What can we give? We should share the most precious gifts we have received: love, compassion, understanding and forgiveness.

That is what forgiveness is for. It is for giving!!

We are asked to give of ourselves, give ourselves, and in that we have the marvellous example of Jesus himself. He gave generously of himself, and he was at great pains to share with others his time, his energy, and his many gifts. In the end he gave himself away and shares with us his body and blood.

So, the Church asks us at the beginning of Lent to renew our own lives in the great spiritual works of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

I have said often that if you “do” Lent properly, then you will experience a wonderful Easter, and I still believe that to be true.

Yes, Lent boxes will be available to help us with our almsgiving, and this year our Lent giving will be split between helping to rebuild St Andrew’s Lamin in The Gambia and the Bishop’s appeal for research into Motor Neuron Disease. There are plenty of local things we can secretly give to as well, including our own Food for Thought endeavour.

Have a good Lent, and come out of it refreshed and ready to enjoy your blessings to the maximum!

Kenny



Random Reflections

I was relieved when the plane touched down at Banjul Airport a week ago or so - I had made it for a second visit to the Gambia! Having been prevented from flying the

week before because of the terrible snow and the closure of the M74, there had been moments when I didn't think I would make it at all! But at last I had arrived!

Of course, this time I knew much more of what to expect.... the heat (although it turned out to be a cool 28 degrees for most of our time!), the ubiquitous red sand, the friendliness of the people.... but would the country weave the same magic over me as last time?

Well, I needn't have worried. Yes, of course it was different. No visit to the same place is ever the same. And the Gambia's effect on me was different as well. I've found it to be true that travel changes you- you never return home quite the same.

One of the constant delights of Africa for me is the wonderful wildlife and the beautiful flowers. I have to leave out the mosquitoes from the wildlife category (I got well and truly bitten this time!) – but I found great joy in seeing the pink pigeons (as I called them)... the birds with fluorescent red plumage and distinctive loud cry... the bright orange dragonflies which silently circled our pool... and the graceful skinny lizards which sunned themselves on our garden wall. One afternoon there was much excitement when a family of monkeys came and played 'chase' in our garden... and then there was my 'pet' gecko which shared my room for my entire stay. He was much larger than the outdoor ones with bulbous toes and patterned back. Upon



my entering the room he would quickly run along the wall to hide behind my wardrobe for the night... only to 'gobble' (yes, honestly) at me at times in the dark. I got quite fond of him. And no, I didn't call him anything but 'Gecko'!

How wonderful is God's creation! How we should rejoice in the variety and detail of our animal kingdom whether at home or abroad!

The week also taught me to appreciate in a greater way the privilege and luxury of having access to running water. Last year the water flow was intermittent – but this year only a dribble came out of the sink tap and there was no shower water at all. A bucket and plastic mixing jug of cold (oh yes, very cold!) water had to suffice! I was thankful that somehow the toilet still worked – but it made me think of the thousands who have to collect water and carry it home. It's no fun – and very heavy.



Seeing the children at the school is always the highlight of my week. I think all youngsters give us back so much – and the children loved the bubbles and bouncy balls which Caroline had arranged for them to have. However, for me, the best moment was giving them (for them the first time ever) an ice cream in a cone! A crazy idea, I know, but the money came from St Andrew's, Bellsmyre, who kindly collected 'Coins for Cones'! After giving all the school children one cone each there was some ice cream left so we went out of the school gates to the children who do not get to school. Within a few minutes we were surrounded.

And it was then I was truly humbled: the 7/8 year olds all came with one hand outstretched, and one hand holding the hand of a little brother or sister. As they got some ice cream, they immediately and firmly placed it into the hand of the wee one. No thought for themselves. No grabbing for themselves. Only the desire that their small sibling would get the treat going... they didn't want to receive if it meant a younger one had to go without. It gladdened my heart. Oh, to see this happening so naturally in our own, rich and plentiful country....

Lastly, I was woken every morning by the Muslim Call to Prayer. 6am, just as it was getting light. I found it a comforting sound as I came to and listened: "God is great. There is no god except God. Hurry to prayer. Prayer is better than sleep". What a wonderful first thought to have! I lay there (under my mosquito net!) and began my day with prayer, thankful for a good night's sleep, for just being there and for the events yet to come. The faith of the Gambian people pervades all; the Muslims stop and pray 5 times a day, God features in their daily conversation, and all is entrusted to His care. And our Christian brothers and sisters at St Andrew's Lamin? Their faith and trust in God shines out from them all – young and old. Third world country? Maybe – but there is so much that we can learn from them.

Liz

Who wants to study?

I am excited to be going away to Kinnoull to be on "Team" for the Cursillo weekend being held 1st to 4th March. I was approached by the Leaders of the weekend and asked to give a talk on "Study". I thought you may enjoy to read a summary of that talk:-



"Study" is the second leg of the three legged stool of the Cursillo method. The three 'legs' are - Piety, Study, and Action, and these three things give balance to our Christian lives. After all a stool with just one or two 'legs' would be unstable and of little use!

I wonder what reaction you have to the word Study. Have you already started to yawn? Or does the word make your stomach churn with anxiety at the memory of studying for those dreaded exams we have all faced at some stage in our lives? Does the idea of Study make you feel inadequate thinking "this is not for me"? Or do you think you have already done all the studying you need to do?

One dictionary definition of the word Study states it is: A process, a piece of research, an effort to acquire knowledge, to be engaged in learning.

I would say looking at the first part of that definition that I am not very good at "applying" myself to Study or research. Indeed I found it a little daunting "applying" myself to prepare this talk. However when I look at the second part of the definition "to be engaged in learning" then surely that is something we are all engaged in. I would argue our learning starts in infancy and is a life-long process.

My son Peter, who is now 36, recently astounded my husband by stating how he had learned from his Dad how to handle the basic tools required for woodwork. These skills meant he was streets ahead of most of his class when he started to "Study" Tech in High School. My husband would not claim to be a DIY expert (I can testify to that!) but was able to pass on the basics!

Study does not require us to dust off heavy technical or theological books. We often find that if we have an interest or love of a subject then Study is not a difficult chore but something we

enjoy. Originally being from the football crazy city of Liverpool I will use footballers as an example. They don't just kick a ball around, they Study game plans and tactics, they take part in endless practice and training. This is not seen as Study because they enjoy what they do and want to improve and try to excel in their chosen subject.

As Christians, Study is part of Piety. It has been suggested it is a kind of prayer. In prayer we speak to God and in Study we hear His word speak to us. We use our minds to hear God, to grow closer to Him and learn how to live as Christians. It helps us to discern God's purpose for us personally. After all St Paul exhorts in 2 Timothy 3:16 that "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Therefore if we wish to improve or grow in our Christian lives then Study is a part of this process. It does not necessarily mean studying theological books, though some find these enlightening. There are still many good books around, the Bible obviously being the main one, and there are lots of different translations so we can find one that we enjoy best. There are various devotional books and bible notes and autobiographies we can use to aid our Christian Study. However information can come from so many different sources these days. We have the internet and all the different devices we can use to access this. We have phone apps, music and films either via CD, DVD, downloading. In our Church we have Study groups at Lent and Advent and at various other times of the year. I would encourage you to become involved in these as you can learn and benefit from the participation of others. All of these things can aid our Study.

Over the years I have used many different aids in my devotional Study. I started off with a simple reading plan contained in a pocket size copy of a Gideon's New Testament & Psalms given to me by a friend. This encouraged me to read a short section each day so that within two years I had read the whole of the New Testament & Psalms. It was small enough to read "anytime, any place, anywhere" as the Martini advert used to say!!

Study does not have to be confined to reading, it can take many different forms. Over the last year I had the opportunity to go on a day trip to Iona,

on another day trip I visited Roslyn Chapel. A group from our Church visited the Largs Labyrinth, and Fran and I went on the Regional Pilgrimage to St Ninians cave. All of these outings were enlightening and enriching.

I realise in order to grow in my faith and understanding then I have to allow myself to be challenged by opening my mind to Study.

I would encourage you to find your niche. Take time out of your busy day, find a Study which suits you, try different methods and explore new avenues. Enjoy all that you discover as the rewards are greater than any Studying you may have done in the past to pass some exam or achieve some grading or certification.

Dot Russell

The Difference *I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day; I had so much to accomplish that I didn't have time to pray. Problems just tumbled about me, and heavier came each task; "Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered, God answered: "you didn't ask!" I wanted to see joy and beauty, but the day toiled on, grey and bleak. I wondered why God didn't show me, God said: "but you didn't seek!" I tried to come into God's presence; I used all the keys in the lock, God gently and lovingly chided: "my child, you didn't knock!" I woke up early this morning and paused before entering the day; I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time to pray. (author unknown)*

I have to confess that I am a rubbish pray-er! ☹ Sure, I *can* pray, and do so from time to time, but not consistently and probably not very effectively. I got to thinking recently about what might the impact on my life (and others) be if I *actually* prayed effectively. I don't just mean the "arrow" emergency "God help me" prayers that we all pray given the right (or wrong) circumstances, but real intercessory prayer to wrestle with important issues. Despite the inadequacies in my prayer life, I happen to believe that prayer is the lifeblood of the church. We are first and foremost a worshipping community and all the other activity should spring from that rather than the other way about.



St. Augustine's is a busy place; there are lots of people in and out every day, both in the church building and community hall. Many have profound needs, both practical and spiritual, and many of those needs are met, every day. That is a big part of who we are and we are seen to be caring of the community we live in, which is great. The church should be loving and giving and it is said that the church exists primarily for the benefit of its non-members. However, the consequence of relegating prayer to the "coo's tail" is that we unplug ourselves from our power source and we can run ourselves ragged. We take on burdens that we shouldn't and we find that we can't give up things that we do to let others have a go as it has become part of our identity or reason for being. An old friend of mine once gave some sage advice: "no-one in the church should have two jobs until everyone has at least one." Sometimes we fail to see the bigger picture and so prevent others from finding their capabilities because we do jobs that they are perfectly capable of – perhaps if we sought God's perspective, we might just recognise these opportunities to grow others rather than exhaust ourselves.

A work colleague had been off for some time due to clinical depression and when he came back, he was brave enough to share his experience to the whole company through an article he wrote. In the article, he referenced a book "Depressive Illness: The curse of the strong." The author, Tim Cantopher, lists the typical personality characteristics of someone with depressive illness: (moral) strength; reliability; diligence; strong conscience; strong sense of responsibility; a tendency to focus on the needs of others before one's own; sensitivity; vulnerability to criticism; self-esteem dependent on the evaluation of others. Yes, the list was not what I expected either! The strong keep going when the weak would have given up long ago. What has that to do with us or prayer? What is prayer anyway and why is it important in the church and to me (you) as an individual?

At its most basic, prayer is talking to God. We pray together through the liturgy and when the intercessions are read we agree with them when we say "Lord hear us" or "Merciful Father, accept these prayers..." Sometimes I think we (I) go "through the motions" without realising the importance or impact that this has. This has nothing to do with whether we pray quietly in our heads or outwardly, nor whether the prayer is

and read or “off the cuff” (extemporary) prayer, but is about purpose and motivation, not how fancy it is. Prayer provides perspective, not ours, but God’s perspective and it helps keep us grounded on what is important. When we don’t have that “other worldly” focus then we increase the likelihood of us taking on too much and becoming overwhelmed and burned out. Others can often see that someone is doing too much and it is often admired until the fuse blows and the person explodes at some (often innocent) victim who just happens to have supplied the “last straw” that leads to meltdown. Do people who pray never have blowouts or depression? Sadly not, but the similarity many of the therapies to prayer-like practices should come as no surprise.

The admirable work that many of the stalwarts at St. Augustine’s do is at risk if we are not “prayer focussed.” We need to remain plugged in to be able to give out, otherwise we will become exhausted and may become nothing more than an unpaid arm of social work. We are a church and need to make sure that what we do springs from that relationship with God and our brothers and sisters in Christ, rather than as a substitute, a salve to our conscience that can mask a neglected prayer life or relationship with others. So the next time you hear something uncharitable said about someone or see an “innocent” get savaged by someone who normally copes, instead of retaliating in kind (especially if you happen to be the victim) try to look beyond the hurt (righteous or otherwise) and try praying about it and for them. We have lists of people in the pew sheet, but do we use them? Do we pray for ourselves, the priests? Who knows, perhaps by doing so we will recognise the support that “the strong” need and be able to provide some of it and also, just maybe, it will boost the spiritual life of the church and maybe the attractiveness of the Sunday and midweek services. Numbers at these meetings have been declining at a time when people have apparently never worked harder at “doing church,” so perhaps we need to re-focus and plug-in, before we savage the next “innocent” when we are at the end of our tether and before it is too late for us and the church. We have so much to accomplish, we have to take time to pray!

John Wiggins

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW ABOUT SUCH THINGS....

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a healthy young wife by the name of Dorothy. And Dot Com was a comely woman, large of breast, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com.

And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?"

And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply asked, "How, dear?" And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. The sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price, without ever having to move from his tent. To prevent neighbouring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew.

It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she also developed a language to

transmit ideas and pictures -- Hebrew to the People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or NERDS.

And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums that no one noticed that the real riches were going to that enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought off every drum maker in the land. Indeed he did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother Gates' drum heads and drumsticks.

And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others." And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or eBay as it came to be known. He said, "We need a name that reflects what we are."

And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators..." "YAHOO," said Abraham. And because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com.

Abraham's cousin, Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) that he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate things around the countryside. It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything. (GOOGLE).

That is how it all began. And that's the truth ☺



Fran went to The Gambia for Christmas and this is (some of) what she did and saw...

Firstly - a surprise visit to Dumbarton London Corner Nursery School to hand over pencils, pens and note books, donated by Theresa. There were plenty to give to every child in the school. On the same day it was running practise as it was nearly the end of term and the weather was cool (for the children and staff, not for me).



The next day was the Christmas Party. This time I was invited. When I arrived there was plenty of activity:

class 1 (4 years old) were learning to lose by playing musical chairs(!), mums had come in to help the cooking staff to prepare lunch. Then there was drumming and everyone took a turn at



dancing in the middle of the circle, including the cooks and me (much laughter). Even the children who didn't attend the school had the chance to come in to watch and enjoy the fun.



Sunday was church day, twice over as it was also Christmas Eve. Hard to realise when the weather is warm and sunny and the church windows open for any bit of breeze that might be blowing. This year the church door was only accessible along

a very narrow path between piles of mud/soil - work has now begun on the new building. The car park is now full of the foundations and Fr Jacob is looking forward to time when all the bricks you've seen in previous accounts begin to be laid, the dust settles a bit and people can



again stand outside the front of the church to chat after a service.

Christmas Eve was also family time, with a big Christmas lunch with roast chicken and Christmas cake, a Christmas



tree with presents underneath and one

little Santa to hand them out.



Rabbie Burns, celebrated in



style!



A wonderful, happy evening – and
£683 raised for St Augs Church



St Mungo's also joined in the



Congrats, Hannah, on being 90 years young!!

LENT CALENDAR – Do something positive this Lent and prepare for Easter properly!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Make this Season of Lent more meaningful by doing random acts of good and loving deeds to God, family, friends, strangers and to yourself.			MARCH	ASH WEDNESDAY 1	2	3	4
			Skip a meal and give what you saved to charity	Talk with someone you wouldn't usually chat with	Do something good to someone in your work place/school	Call a distant relative or a friend in need and chat	
FIRST SUNDAY 5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Spend an hour in the Adoration Chapel after Mass	Ask someone, "How are you?", mean it and listen	Refrain from judging others	Give someone something just to give a cheer	Affirm somebody with the good he/she has done	Buy lunch or dinner for a co-worker (ex. janitor, messenger)	Learn more about God, your faith and beliefs	
SECOND SUNDAY 12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Do something fun & special with your family at home	Offer help to people in need all day	Smile at everyone and anyone all the time	Bring home something special for everyone	Refrain from bashing or saying bad things to others	Pray for your family, the Church and friends	Give away things and clothes that you do not need	
THIRD SUNDAY 19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Treat your family with lunch in a park	Thank someone who helped you become better	Give someone a gift for no reason anonymously	Fast from Twitter, Facebook & internet	Do or buy something special for yourself	Say thank you to people who helped you this day	Spend an hour in the Adoration Chapel	
FOURTH SUNDAY 26	27	28	29	30	31	APRIL 1	
Spend quality time with the people you live with	Be positive, think positive, and say positive words only	Be extra kind to someone you do not like	Reward someone for a good deed that he/she did	Greet warmly every person you meet all day	Embrace your mistakes and shortcomings	Forgive all who had offended you through the week	
FIFTH SUNDAY 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Create a prayer list and spend some time in prayer	Uplift & encourage someone who seems depressed	Bring something to share in your workplace/school	Be earth friendly and encourage others as well	Praise and affirm others even in little the things they do	Be extra generous in donating to charity or Church	Spend some time examining your conscience	
PALM SUNDAY 9	10	11	12	HOLY THURSDAY 13	GOOD FRIDAY 14	BLACK SATURDAY 15	
Reconcile with God through prayer and the Sacrament	Make amends or reconcile with someone	Reach out and relate with a difficult person	Pray for the Pope, Bishops, priests, all w/ consecrated life	Change or quit a bad or unhealthy habit/behavior	Spend an hour in Church and pray for the people there	Watch a movie or read a book on spiritual growth	
EASTER SUNDAY 16	One of the scribes, when he came forward and heard them disputing and saw how well he had answered them, asked him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, "The first is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." MARK 12:28-31 NAB						  i am a catholic by heart

The BBC to increase coverage of religion

The BBC has recently pledged to 'raise our game' on religion by increasing the portrayal of all faiths in mainstream shows.

The corporation said it would 'enhance' the representation of religion on TV and radio dramas and documentaries. It said it would also create a new global religious affairs team, headed by a religion editor, in BBC News. The BBC will also keep Thought For The Day on Radio 4's Today programme

The corporation recently published the conclusions of a review into its coverage of religion and ethics, and Director General Tony Hall said audiences of all faiths and none have said they want to learn more about those topics.

'They recognise that, if we truly want to make sense of the world, we need to understand the systems of belief that underpin it,' he said. He added that he wants the corporation 'to do more about Christianity and other beliefs as well.'

The plans include:

There will be more about non-Christian festivals like Diwali, Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Ramadan and Eid on mainstream programmes like The One Show, The Chris Evans Breakfast Show and Newsround.

There will be landmark programmes to 'explore religion in all its forms', including a major TV series about the world's sacred sites, a Radio 4 series on morality in the 21st Century, and a Radio 2 initiative to encourage young people to discuss issues about peace.

2019 will be 'A Year of Beliefs', with programmes looking at how people make big decisions and where they get their moral values from.

There will be more 'people-led stories that have warmth and depth', such as observing vicars working in local communities.

There will be tie-ins with music and comedy, and more digital-first video and social media content.



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

Janette, on the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage, has her say on a Festive Season of woeful

weather with a greater than average serving of winter ailments and bad news. The Burns Season brightened things up and now, on the threshold of Spring, it's onwards and upwards.

MERRY CHRISTMAS? BAH – FLU BUG!

We should have remembered the warning of Robert Burns when throwing ourselves into the great festive splurge not long after Hallowe'en.

*The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft agley...*

When December arrived it brought an overabundance of flu germs and other miseries to make staying in bed the most preferred option for many. There were empty spaces at Christmas lunches, the NHS went into crisis, the High Streets were bereft of shoppers and only Brexit persisted alive and well – '*tae dae folk's heids in!*'. We should be living for the moment and, sadly, we're starting all over again with that advert on the telly urging us to prepare us for next year – start now for a Park Christmas in 2018! '*Aye – that'll be right!*'

Now we're in February, the month for cleansing and purification before Spring, so get those woolly socks off. Lent looms and Ash Wednesday is on St. Valentine's Day but you can always conceal your ashes at that romantic dinner behind your red roses!

A TALE OF TWO KITCHENS... (or Haggis on an obstacle course!)

This was the backdrop to Friends' January event held on a dreich Sunday - 28th January. The annual Scottish festival of patriotism was this year entitled 'Wha's Like Us?' and agreed to have been one of our best ever! There was excellent entertainment from AGM (Alistair and Michael less Gina, who had lost her voice in the winter plague). Hope your vocal cords are full recovered, Gina. Alistair and Michael carried on regardless and took us with them On their Way, from the banks and braes o' Bonnie Doon in the 18th century to the hilarious lyrics of today's Lidl-di-Aldi – describing what happens when you send

your man to a multi-product, cut price supermarket.

And there were more songs with Ghislaine who also introduced us to her Gaelic singing granddaughter, Stevie. There was poetry in profusion with Roberta, Sharon and the two Margarets joining me in addressing not only the Haggis, but the mince and the macaroni as well! Fran started the eating off with the Selkirk Grace and more verse followed with Issy Young's mountain daisy followed by TBag O'Neill deserting the bard for a gossip account of a local *eejit* who stole the ladies' underwear from off their washing lines. Culture – *nae problem at St. Aug's!*

Oh, we had a piper – resplendent in enough Highland regalia to inspire a 3rd Jacobite uprising –and Bruce Wallace was his name. Thanks, Bruce for this essential addition to our Burns night and for bringing your clansmen for the photographs! Selfies all round!

We had visitors from overseas, one being a South American priest eager for a *daud* of Scottish culture. He confessed to having just a little English – one wonders how he coped with the Burns speak! And he must have been alarmed when the knife was wielded to attack the haggis! He would certainly have been amused when 70 year old pensioners clambered onto their chairs to extol 'The Star o'Rabbie Burns' and a more vociferous than usual 'Flower of Scotland'.

Then there was the supper – preparation was not easy this year with the soup reluctant to heat in the dolls' house sized Church cooker. This very large pot of soup had been made by Roberta and her son in the hall the previous day. It was delicious. Meanwhile, the haggis and its accompaniments simmered away in the Hall kitchen. Naturally there was confusion over what was where and this meant frequent trips between the two venues along the dilapidated decking, up the slippery stepsand all in the rain! Yes, our catering team mainly consisting of Chrissie, Roberta, Margaret H, Margaret S, Sharon and Cathy Hoatson was superb. They produced an excellent 3-course meal with plenty for all. Only casualties were Sandra who lost the last plate of mince to a visitor and the West Kirk table that could have enjoyed better service. They were too polite to harass our waitresses. But see our waitresses - there were none of your Presidents' Dinner posing bimbos at St. Aug's! Oh no! We had Barbara, Maggie, Caroline (from the band), Christine, Irene and Margaret Murnin to augment the catering team

and Fran also joined in after having set up all the tables cleverly and creatively. James and Roddy helped with the heavy work and some of the same helpers tackled the tidying up. A special mention must go to Frankie, Fran's pal, who willingly got involved in the work. Yes, it was a hard slog all round but everyone went home happy – particularly the exec. members who had realised a profit of almost £700. Apologies to anyone I've missed and thanks to all who worked, entertained and attended.

OUR VERY OWN EARL AND COUNTESS.

Dumbarton has been a Royal Burgh since 1222 and now we are on the threshold of becoming even more royal. At the nuptials of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle in May one of the titles that could be bestowed upon them is Earl and Countess of Dumbarton. In fact our town is the bookies' 2nd favourite to seize the honours. What excitement! The Westcliff bus was awash when the news broke! Oh, we've had Baron Brucehill, Lord Garshake, the Duchess of Dillichip and other such worthies over the past 40 years of DPT Pantomime, but this will be for real. They would have their very own Castle dating from pre-historic times with views of the Clyde, the Leven and the Newton. And the council would do it up now they've finished renovating the Municipal Buildings. Perfect!

But will they spend much time in their Royal Burgh? Harry, being C of E could be put on the Parish Roll of St. Augustine's - though for Meghan the tea rota would be just a scone too far! And what will they think of our town centre facilities? Meghan, an avid shopper, was recently spotted at a big 'do' wearing a suit costing £575 for the trousers and £1245 for the jacket worn over a £285 Tuxe bodysuit! And this was described as 'dressing down'. *Jings, crivvens and help ma Boab!* In the trendy boutique area of our High Street she would be able to buy a whole shop for £2105 and enjoy a blether with Roberta or Ghislaine while standing in the queue!

Aye, and as Rabbie said when he was evaluating the qualities of man:

*It's no' in titles nor in rank
It's no' in wealth like London bank.*

BIG THERESA'S CHINESE TAKEAWAY.

Our PM looked as though she was really enjoying herself on her recent visit to China when she was offered big deals, pandas and the opportunity to paint a few dragons. Now she's back at the Westminster den she can continue her creativity

with the fire breathing dragons of her own party. She'll need more than a paint brush for that!

BEWARE OF THE TALKING KILLER WHALE!

It could only happen at a theme park in America – a killer whale in a swimming pool being hand fed by its keeper and learning how to speak! Now, the large creature didn't seem in the least menacing – one would have thought it might have tried to bite someone's hand off! As for its speaking, well, its vocabulary is poor and I've heard better articulation in a High Street pub! If it eventually finds the words let's hope it demands its rights to get back to the ocean to swim with its pals! Meanwhile, on the telly this month we have been following animals with cameras in the company of ex Dumbarton man, Gordon Buchanan. Here we observed chimps, meerkats and penguins taking 'selfies' in their natural habitats just like facebook obsessed teenagers. All fascinating stuff but in these days when we're faced with the march of the robots, how long before you and I are redundant?

ALEXA – ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?

Several of my friends have welcomed Alexa echo dot equipment into their homes to ensure that they never have to leave the sofa. '*Alexa – put sugar on this week's shopping list.*' Sorted. '*Alexa, play some relaxing music for me to cut my toenails to.*' Job done. '*Alexa, what's the capital of Belgium?*' *I'm doing my crossword.*' Good old Alexa, today's answer to maintaining total inertia and now on offer at Argos. TBag O'Neil is very keen to get Alexa installed but it can't put the kettle on yet!

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

On 6th February the BBC went overboard for the celebration of the centenary of the Votes for Women campaign in 1918. But over a hundred years earlier our national bard had penned 'The Rights of Woman' after having been inspired by an actress in a theatre in Dumfries. Rabbie listed our rights as protection, admiration and decorum. *Whit?* Nothing about speaking up, voting or running a country. How times have changed! And what a debt of gratitude we owe to our suffragette sisters who struggled for our freedom and won. Decorum? Who needs it?

FRIENDS PLAN FOR THE SUMMER.

Soon the Executive of Friends will have a meeting and plan a programme of delights to tempt you out of hibernation. So pick up next month's 'By the

Way Together' or you could miss an unforgettable bingo night!

SMILE LINES

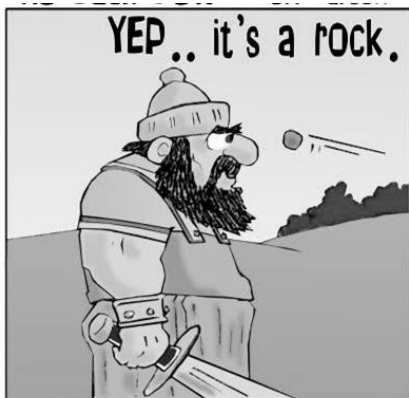
Listen

My wife says I never listen, or something like that...

Insanity

Doctor: 'Has there been any insanity in your family?'

Woman: 'I'm afraid so. My husband sometimes thinks he's the boss.'



Goliath was always known for his keen eye for detail.

Lights

Halfway through a romantic dinner, my husband smiled and said, 'You look so beautiful under these lights.' I was falling in love all over again when he added, 'We really should get some of these lights.'

Love

'Love is when a little old woman and a little old man are still friends, even after they've been married forever.' Tommy - age 6

Know your spouse

While attending a Marriage Seminar dealing with communication, Tom and his wife Grace were told by the instructor that it was essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other. He addressed Tom. 'For instance, can you name your wife's favourite flower?'

Tom leaned over, touched his wife's arm gently and whispered, 'It's self-raising, isn't it?'

Work

First friend: 'Who are you working for these days?'

Back next month.

Janette

Second friend: 'Same people. The wife and four kids.'

Curiosity

A teacher was finishing a lesson on the joys of discovery and the importance of curiosity.

'After all,' she declared, 'Where would we be today if no one had ever been curious?'

One child quietly spoke up from the back of the room. 'In the garden of Eden?'

Long wait

Service in the restaurant was abysmally slow. My husband was getting very tense, so I tried to distract him with small talk. 'You know,' I said, 'our friend Christine should be having her baby anytime now.'

'Really?' my husband snapped. 'She wasn't even pregnant when we walked in here.'

Prayers

My 10 year-old niece says her prayers every night, but instead of 'amen', she says 'click, send.'

Windows

She texted her husband from home on a cold winter's morning: 'Windows frozen, won't open.'

He texted back: 'Gently pour some lukewarm water over it.'

She



replied five minutes later: 'Computer really screwed up now.'

School play

A little boy got a part in the school play and went home to tell his father. 'I'm going to play a man who has been married for 25 years.'

'Well done, that's great,' replied his father. 'And maybe next time, you'll get a speaking role!'

Atheist

Can an atheist get insurance against acts of God?

Cold

ROTAS FOR ST MUNGO'S

Sunday Feb 11th

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

Sunday Feb 18th

Reader/Intercessions	Pat Brooks
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Andrew Baxter

Sunday Feb 25th

Reader/Intercessions	Carol Meacham
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Lynne McWhinnie

Sunday March 4th

Reader/Intercessions	Lewis Kennedy
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Carol Meacham

Sunday March 11th

Reader/Intercessions	Clergy
Sidesperson	Ian Marshall
Music	Andrew Baxter

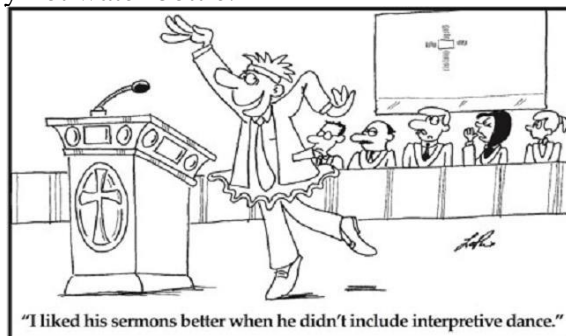
CLEANING

18 th Feb/18 th March:	Jean
25 th Feb/25 th March:	Finella
4 th Feb /4 th March:	Iona and Mary
11 th Feb/11 th March:	Margaret



JUST OCCASIONALLY, REV'D MORGAN WONDERED IF HE HAD GONE TOO FAR IN HIS QUEST FOR PUBLICITY

It was so cold last night, that I put anti-freeze in my hot water bottle.



ROTAS FOR ST AUGUSTINE'S

Sunday February 11th

Readers	Evelyn O'Neill & Ghislaine Kennedy
Intercessions	Maggie Wallace
Chalice	Fran Walker & Janette Barnes
Sidespersons	Roddy Dyer & Cathy Hoatson

Sunday February 18th

Readers	Maggie Wallace & Linda Macaulay
Intercessions	Sharon Rowatt
Chalice	Margaret Hardie & David Rowatt
Sidespersons	Lorraine McC & Maggie Wallace

Sunday February 25th

Readers	Janette Barnes & Fran Walker
Intercessions	Linda Macaulay
Chalice	Kirsten Wiggins & Maggie Wallace
Sidespersons	Margaret Swan & Linda Jenkinson

Sunday March 4th

Readers	Margaret Hardie & Roddy Dyer
Intercessions	David Rowatt
Chalice	Janette Barnes Sharon & Rowatt
Sidespersons	Roberta Mailley & Chrissie Ashman

Flowers

February 11th Maggie Wallace

No flowers during Lent



"I wasn't always as religious as I am now. For years I thought the Ten Commandments were a doo-wop group from the 1950's!"



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Thanks to Richard Germain (See Daniel 6) 08-07-2006

**OH WOULDN'T YOU JUST KNOW IT ... AS
 SOON AS WE START OUR FAST THEY THROW US
 THIS TASTY LOOKING GUY**

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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



(Left) Ian and June Alderdice celebrate in St Mungo's their 55th Wedding Anniversary!



Mirrin is fascinated by the new knitted Nativity in St Augustine's. Hmmm... now where is the baby Jesus?

(far left) John gives Kirsten a last minute pep talk before she takes her first service. No need for nerves – she was brilliant!



(left) Thank you to Helensburgh Youth who sent money to our school for these books!

(Far right) Liz demonstrates how the bubbles work – much to the delight of the children!



(Right) Using up the left overs by giving the children ice cream in their hands! Ooohhh!



(Right) Giving out ice cream cones – the first ones are a bit tentative!

