

St Augustine's Dumbarton



The New Look

Issue 44 May 2010

£1.00

A New Bishop



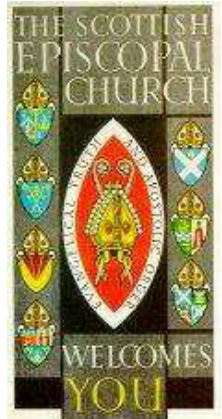
Bishop Gregor was duly consecrated on April 23rd at St May's Cathedral, Glasgow. The Church is always at its best on these occasions, and it was wonderful to be there as your Rector. *(writes Kenny)* The only slight fly in the ointment was that a few bishops could not attend because of a certain volcanic ash cloud!

On the Sunday evening Revd Ian Barcroft was installed as our new Dean by +Gregor, at a Diocesan Choral Evensong at the Cathedral.

We must hold them in our prayers over the next while as they settle into these new ministries. It will be no easy task, especially with a visit to St Augustine's planned by the new Bishop in early June! +Gregor will get to meet you all at the Murder Mystery Night on June 2nd, and earlier in the day at the 10.30am Eucharist. A whole day in St Auggie's? That'll take a bit of stamina!

A Dean - A Bishop - and a Provost

(photos courtesy of Gordon Smith)



Contents

From Kenny
Page 2

Rotas
Page 3

A Parish Walk
Page 4

St James the Less
Page 6

Photos
Pages 8 & 9

Smilelines
Page 10

Wait Till I Tell You
Page 12 - 14

Friends
Page 15

Parish Directory
Page 16

From Kenny....

At the Parish Day in December, I heard you all quite clearly saying that our ministry was a shared one, but that you felt that a bit of training was required, as there were some areas in which confidence needed to be built. I promised then to provide an opportunity for that training, and that little bit of help to those who felt they needed it.



So, in May, we roll out the Diocesan Pastoral Care Course which comes in five modules. Because we were so keen as a congregation to do some of this, I persuaded the Diocese to put the course on in Dumbarton, inviting other churches in the North West Region to participate too.

It is a course which has to be done in its entirety by those who are Pastoral Assistants, Maggie and Tim in St Augustine's, and others who have no inclination to be a Pastoral Assistant will perhaps want to take part in as much as they possibly can.

There are five modules, dealing with listening, visiting, communicating, good practice with vulnerable people, and dealing with loss. Something for everyone, really, and we could all do with honing our skills in one area or another.

This will cover two Saturdays in May, 15th and 29th, with an evening session to be arranged. Two modules will be tackled on the Saturdays, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Because it is a modular course, you can pick and choose which modules you would like to do, if you choose not to go for the full quota! I cannot but remind you that it was you who asked for this, and therefore I would expect you to support it. We cannot expect people to travel here if we are not supporting this heavily ourselves.

The skills and training on offer are not just pastoral skills that can be used in the parish situation, but are life-skills which will help us in our daily lives. Who has not had to deal with the bereavement of someone close, or doesn't come across dementia sufferers on a regular basis, often within our own families? How many of us could do with learning to listen a little more closely, or how best to do handle a hospital visit?

I would therefore urge you all to support this bit of help and training, taking place on your own doorstep.

Perhaps even a friend who is not a church member would like to come along too.

There are certainly many situations where we can tend to feel inadequate, and here is a chance to learn a bit more and acquire the confidence we may be lacking. We even provide lunch!

Kenny

The Mediocre Inn

On the way to the top of the highest peak in the French Alps there is a small inn. This inn provides rest and respite for mountain climbers. It is called the Mediocre Inn, which in French simply means "halfway."

Imagine coming off a day of climbing in the icy, windy French Alps. The cold has seeped into your bones. You're exhausted, and every muscle in your body hurts. At the Mediocre Inn, you find a hot meal and a warm bed. You begin to relax, put your feet up, get comfortable. Who wouldn't like that?

But success is not found in rest and comfort. Success, reaching the top of the mountain, requires going back out into the cold and wind. It requires stretching and straining and working towards the goal.

"About 80% of climbers never go any farther than the Mediocre Inn. Once they've had a day or two of rest and comfort, they turn around and descend the mountain, never reaching the Alps' highest peak. They lose the determination to reach their final goal."

We've all spent time there, haven't we, in the Mediocre Inn? Not the one in the Alps, perhaps, but we have our own Mediocre Inn. And most of us are not too happy about that. Maybe that's why heroes are so important to our lives. Maybe that's why we like hearing about people who pick up where the rest of us leave off and make it the rest of the way to the top of the mountain.

To escape the Mediocre Inn, we need to recognize that it isn't about us. Jesus calls us to a life of service.

Notice these words carefully, "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me." If we think that the meaning of life is primarily concerned with our comfort, our happiness, our contentment, we will never heed the summons of the Master to a life of excellence.

Rotas for May2010

Sunday May 2nd

11am Eucharist.

Readers: David Rowatt & Ghislaine Kennedy.

Intercessions: Maggie Wallace.

Chalice: Sharon Rowatt & Fran Walker.

Sidespersons: Margot Rhead & Linda Jenkinson.

Sunday May. 9th

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Sharon Rowatt & Gavin Elder

Intercessions: David Rowatt.

Chalice: Janette Barnes & Vernon Perrin.

Sidespersons: Margaret Swan & Ronnie Blaney

Thursday May 13th Ascension Day

7-30p.m. Eucharist.

Sidespersons: Roberta Mailley & Tim Rhead.

Sunday May 16th

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Vernon Perrin & Margot Rhead.

Intercessions: Fran Walker.

Chalice: : Margaret Hardie & Maggie Wallace.

Sidespersons: Tim Rhead & Roberta Mailley

Sunday May. 23rd. Baptism.

11am Eucharist.

Reader: Janette Barnes.

Chalice: Barbara Barnes & Tim Rhead..

Sidespersons: Chrissie Ashman & Vernon Perrin.

Sunday May 30th..

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Barbara Barnes & Yvonne McAlpine.

Intercessions: Vernon Perrin.

Chalice: Fran Walker & Janette Barnes.

Sidespersons: David Ansell & Jean Carr.

Flower Rota:

Week ending May 1st. M. McGown check & water.

" " 15th. Barbara Barnes & Betty Gordon

" " 22nd. L. Macaulay & Rosemary McLeay.

" " 29th. Maggie W. & Moira McGown.

Sunday Rotas:

Readers, Intercessors, Sidespeople

There is always room for more volunteers for Rotas. If you would like to read lessons, lead intercessions or be a sidesperson on a Sunday, please speak to Kenny, Tim or Maggie. There isn't a test or an audition. Just be able to speak clearly, be yourself and smile!

Prayer Time

The church is open for a short midday prayer service, Monday to Friday at 12.30pm for 10 minutes. Please pop in if you are in the town centre at this time.

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THE FIRST CHURCH WALK OF 2010

Today, it feels like Spring as we experience warm sunshine, a pleasant change from the cold days of the long winter. This is the first church walk of the year and eight of us set off from the new church hall in St Mary's Way. We have two transatlantic guests, our former minister, Andrew and his wife Brenda, who are paying a short visit to Scotland from their home in Florida. We also have Archie, the enormous golden retriever who is part of the menagerie at the rectory. We make our way down to the Leven at the old bridge, and walk behind the Health Centre and under the road bridge. Here we meet several of the men who use this area as a base for social drinking. It is a healthy place to come and out of the way, and I have always found them friendly when I walk past.

We continue on our way underneath the railway viaduct and by the side of the Broadmeadow industrial estate towards the golf course. It is high tide and the river makes a fine sight, covering the marshy areas right up to the bank. The path has recently been improved and follows the top of an embankment with the golf course below on the right, and the fast flowing river on the left. Years ago, I used to bring the dogs to the golf course at night ; it was an ideal place for a nocturnal romp with the added thrill of rabbits to chase. Archie is already soaking, having been in the swamp ; his golden coat is flecked with black mud, complete with the aroma of rotting vegetation with a hint of dead fish. I am glad that I am not Barbara, who is looking after him this weekend while his master and mistress are away. Ahead, in the distance Ben Lomond is covered in snow; Andrew and Brenda stop to take photographs as this is not a sight they are used to seeing in Florida.

We leave the golf course and after passing through a belt of trees, come to an area which has recently been landscaped as part of the Lomondgate development. A large pool has been constructed with a sluice into the Leven; I understand that it is a flood prevention measure. I am surprised to see two swans swimming in the pool, the first time I have seen any birds here. Soon we reach the A82, where the path goes under the bridge through a large concrete pipe. Here we leave the river and turn right on to a track, which leads across low-lying fields to join the road to Bonhill, just before the Lion Gate. We leave the path via a kissing gate, which Margot and I demonstrate for the benefit of our American friends, and enter the Strathleven industrial estate. As this is Saturday, there is very little

traffic. The most impressive building is the bottling plant at Kilmalid near the entrance on our left. We head straight on through the wooded estate and soon see our destination, Strathleven House, gleaming white in the sunshine.

Strathleven House was built in 1700 and is one of only three surviving examples of a Palladian country house in Scotland. I had to look up a dictionary to find out what Palladian means ; apparently Palladio was a Venetian architect who designed neo-classical buildings. Strathleven House is very handsome with a main building and two lower wings on either side. For over 250 years it was a private house, then it fell into ruins in the 1950's before being restored by the Historic Buildings Trust and reopened as a Business Centre in 2000. Someone says it is a pity we cannot see inside. Just then a car draws up and an acquaintance of mine gets out and asks if we would like to look inside. He is John Corcoran, Chief Executive of the Dunbartonshire Chamber of Commerce and he has his office here. We have a look inside the entrance hall, and John tells us that once he saw a ghost ; he was working late on his own when he saw a strange lady floating past the door.

We sit on the entrance steps enjoying a rest; the sun is really warm now and we have had to remove our coats and jackets. Andrew remarks that this is much more pleasant than the scorching heat of Florida summers. We move on towards the river, passing through parts of the industrial estate, which has obviously seen better days. Many of the buildings look empty, but some are still in use. Brenda says that she could do with a cup of coffee and a pee, and amazingly, we turn a corner and see a lady standing at the entrance of one of the units ; she asks us if we would like a cup of tea and to use the toilet. This building is used by the Loch Lomond Quilters ; we are shown round and given tea and coffee and made very welcome. We now make our way to the footbridge over the Leven, which leads to Renton; we come out on the Main Street opposite the Central Bar, an establishment I have yet to visit . From here, a path descends to join the tow-path, which runs from Balloch to Dumbarton. A sign informs us that the cycle track is closed and points to a diversion away from the river. We ignore it and press on, soon meeting some cyclists, which is a hopeful indication that the path is open. There are ducks on the river, a female goosander with a brown head and some mallard, the drakes looking smart in their breeding plumage with shiny green heads.

On our right is a building site, where the mill at Dalquhurn used to be. Cordale Housing Association is developing this area for housing. We cross a narrow

neck of land to avoid a long detour via Dalquhurn Point, where the river executes a wide loop. We soon leave Renton behind and cross an area of farmland, which usually has grazing cattle, though there are none today. We notice ahead that a bridge is being rebuilt and is impossible to cross. Fortunately, the bridge does not cross a burn but just spans some boggy ground, which we can avoid by walking through the field. At the far end, we go underneath the A82 and crossing two cattle grids, head towards Dumbarton. The river is out of sight behind an area of marshland, which extends on both sides of the track. I like this area, where you can imagine creatures like alligators or water buffalo. Leaving the marshland, we pass a vandalized signpost, which points to the possible site of Robert the Bruce's last house. After he died in 1327, his entrails were buried in the chapel located in Levensgrove Park, now marked by a plaque. We pass a crude hut and a smoking camp-fire; there are barriers to stop people camping here, but they can only stop vehicles. The Traveller's site at Dennyston is near here, hidden behind an area of woodland.

We are on the last stage of the walk. A robin sings enthusiastically from an overhead branch. We climb higher to a viewpoint over the Leven, then pass under the railway and beside the new car-park built to serve Dalreoch station. The path goes under the road bridge and past the Westbridgend flats, which are being upgraded by the council. We cross the old bridge, which dates from the 18th century, and return to the starting point at the church hall. It has been a very pleasant afternoon, and Andrew in his sermon the next day mentions the random acts of kindness which we experienced this afternoon.

Tim

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Christian Aid

There will be a special service this year at St Andrews, Bellsmyre at 3 pm on Sunday May 9th. Please come if you can.

Christian Aid Week is from 9th to 14th. See Tim if you would like to help with the door-to-door collection. It raises a lot of money and is an act of witness that we are trying to help needy people throughout the world.

Church Walk

May 22nd at Aberfoyle, starting at 1.30 from the main car park to the Faery Hill. We had 14 plus 5 dogs on the last walk and all got back safely. For more information, see Tim or Rosemary.

Primus in Joint Church call to drop new Trident plan

MOST Revd David Chillingworth, the Scottish Episcopal Primus, wants voters to tell Westminster candidates to invest in the poor and the oppressed instead of a replacement for Trident.

In a joint letter to the UK Government, Bishop David and seven other Scottish church leaders said:

“At Easter, Christians of all traditions express their shared belief that God so loved the world that he sent his son Jesus Christ to suffer and die as a man.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead demonstrates that security comes from faith in the vulnerability of God in Christ and not in any human creation.

“Christian moral reasoning leads us away from violence towards loving relationships with others.

“Violence is expressed in threat as well as in deed. The indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons makes it impossible to justify them as weapons of war as their effect cannot be considered as either limited or proportionate. Therefore, the very possession of nuclear weapons is unjust and thus wrong. Churches have often expressed this concern.

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St James the Least of All..

(We continue to publish our series of letters from Eustace, a wise old Rector to his nephew Darren, Curate in a much more modern, evangelical setting!)

The Rectory St. James the Least



My dear Nephew Darren,

It seems that the basics of parish ministry are no longer taught in theological colleges. Don't you know anything about consulting your diary in public? When you are asked if you are free on a certain date, accepted practice is to open it so that the enquirer cannot quite see. You then shake your head sadly, saying you are committed to blessing a new tea urn, or on some other vital ecclesiastical activity that day. Then you regretfully give your apologies. You do not open the thing in full view of your enquirer, so he can see the blank pages! Really, it serves you right that you are now committed to going on Scout camp.

The last time I agreed to pay the Scouts a visit was when I found that there was a splendid restaurant only a mile away from their camp. I arrived and parked my car by the side of the river where they were all canoeing, wound down the car window and made encouraging noises for some minutes before explaining I had to find a garage for petrol. Several hours later, after an excellent lunch, I drove to where they were now rock climbing, wound down the car window and made encouraging noises for some minutes before explaining that I had a standing committee to return to that evening. It was a splendid day.

You, however, will experience the charms of two days under canvas. Whatever site for your tent you choose will be the one that floods first. The early hours will undoubtedly find you wading about in water in the pitch dark, retrieving your sleeping bag and clothes – which you will then have to wear for the rest of the day. Watch out for the food, as well: all camp food contains grass and usually sheep droppings. This will make you ill, though for some reason Scouts thrive on it.

Whatever the weather and whatever activities you do each day, you will end up wet, chilled

and bruised. At least your evenings will be warm – for you are bound to spend them at Casualty, with youngsters suffering from sprained ankles or dislocated shoulders.

My only advice is to use those hours in Casualty to practise the art of opening your diary in a way that only YOU can see it.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Stephen Goes the Extra Mile

Stephen Prentice ran the West Highland Way for the Scottish Cot Death Charity, at the end of April, and completed it! The hardest thing, he says, that he's ever done! Some of us have sponsored Stephen, but some more cash could still be contributed! He writes:

"I have chosen the Scottish Cot Death charity because it is a cause I hold dear to my heart. A close family friend (Farah Javed) lost her beautiful daughter Tanisha to cot death and as a father myself I can think of nothing worse than the pain of losing a child. I hope whatever money I raise helps this charity and those that it affects.

The Scottish Executive provides a small grant (currently £5,000) each year to the Trust. All other funding comes as a result of donations and fundraising. Without these the Trust would be unable to continue its work. The Trust is the only charity in Scotland working to eradicate Cot Death and support the families suffering this tragedy. I knew that the pain I would endure doing this race would be nothing compared to that of losing a child and that thought is what kept me going.

When I felt like giving up I just thought of Tanisha which gave me the strength to cross the finish line. Cheryl made sure I was wearing her St Christopher to keep me safe on my travels although I think that was mainly because she knows how easily lost I get!

So Far I have totalled £360, which is not counting what is on the sheets at church and some left at work. I am hoping that I will reach the £500 mark but I am extremely grateful for every penny that has been donated as I have seen first hand how this charity supports those that have lost a child.

Stephen has lots of pics which we'll put up in the hall, where you will find his sponsor form. (There is a photo in the middle pages of this mag). It's not too late to contribute, and either Stephen, Cheryl, or May Casey would be more than happy to collect your cash!

DIOCESE OF GLASGOW & GALLOWAY

PASTORAL CARE

A five session Course in the basics of pastoral care

This course is offered as a curriculum for training Pastoral Assistants as well as for congregational members wishing to develop their skills in a particular area.



Sessions:

Saturday May 15th

The core skill of listening –

- Why start here?
- Theology of listening
- Holistic listening
- Qualities and practices of a good listener
- Pitfalls and practice

Visiting in the name of the Church

- Visiting in hospital
- Home visiting
- Faith sharing
- Involving the wider church

Saturday May 29th

The core skill of communicating

- Attitude and acceptance
- Communicating where there is hearing impairment- Rev Lorna Mortis
- Across the generations, communicating with older people
- Confusion and dementia.

Good practice for visitors with Mrs Anne Jones Diocesan Protection Officer

- Vulnerable adults - Code of practice
- Safety, self awareness and self care.
- Authorisation and accountability
- Support and boundaries
- Evaluation of a visit

Evening Meeting –Date to be arranged

Dealing with loss.

- Types of loss
- Understanding grief
- Visiting and supporting those in grief
- Ministry with the bereaved
- Ministry with the dying

Venue: St Augustine's Church, High Street, Dumbarton G82 1LL

Lunch provided.

Further information from 0141-332-2160 or 01389-734-514 or gill.young@ukonline.co.uk

To help with us with catering *please let us know* if you intend to come:

ALL WELCOME



Our Photos this month:

Stephen runs his heart out for Cot Death on the West Highland Way, the Band play for the Spring Praise Service held in St Augustine's, +Gregor is unseen under the "huddle" as he is consecrated bishop, the row of prams tell a story at little Luca's baptism, and the bold boy himself wore a fetching white cap for the occasion.

On the next page, Faye is baptised at the Service of Light on Holy Saturday, and even got flowers from Maggie, the new light of Easter as we baptised Lauren and Stevie on Easter Day, and finally, Marcus makes a big impression as he does a table dance for the congregation on Low Sunday to keep us all amused!





Smile-Lines

With the General Election in mind....

Genesis

A surgeon, an architect and a politician were arguing as to whose profession was the oldest.

Said the surgeon: "Eve was made from Adam's rib, and that surely was a surgical operation."

"Maybe," said the architect, "but prior to that, order was created out of chaos, and that was an architectural job."

"But you forget," interrupted the politician, "somebody had created the chaos first!"

Already well connected

The telephone rang in the church office of the church that the MP attended when visiting his constituency. An eager voice inquired: "Do you expect the MP to be in church on Sunday? If so, I was thinking of coming along."

"That," said the clergyman, "I cannot promise. But we do expect that God will be there, and we fancy that that should be incentive enough for a reasonably large attendance."

A gracious rival

Modern political campaigns might take a lesson in graciousness and kindness from Edward Campbell, the great British statesman of the 1930s. Once when Campbell was opposing Thackeray for a seat in Parliament, the two contenders, in the course of their campaigning, met and engaged in friendly conversation.

On taking leave of his rival, Thackeray remarked: "May the best man win!" "Oh, no," Campbell replied, "I hope not – I want to win!"

He won't win that way

As the politician said: "This occasion gives me an opportunity to shake hands with many old faces."

Decisions, decisions

Politician to aide: "About their charge that I'm indecisive – do you think I should answer it, or let it go, or answer it in part, or what?"

Some miscellaneous humour....

The main purpose of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children more awful than your own.

The Sunday School teacher was telling the story of how when Lot's wife looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah, she turned into a pillar of salt. One youngster nodded in a knowing fashion. "My mummy looked back once while

she was driving," he confided, "and she turned into a lamp post."

After the local Churches Together meetings had concluded, the four ministers were discussing the results with one another.

The Methodist minister said, "The meetings worked out great for us! We gained two new families." The Baptist pastor said, "We did better than that! We gained three new families." The URC minister said: "That's nothing – we gained five new families!"

And the Anglican vicar smiled in contentment. "Well, we did best of all. We got rid of our 10 biggest trouble makers!"

Sharing one's faith at work

His local church had done a week of outreach training, leaving the local barber feeling guilty. When had he last shared his faith with anyone? So the next morning he prayed: "Lord, today I promise to witness to the first man that walks through my door."

Soon after he opened his shop the first man came in and said, "I want a haircut and a shave, please." The barber said nervously, "Sure, just sit in the seat and I'll be with you in a moment."

The barber rushed into the back of his shop and sent up a desperate prayer: "Dear God, this is it. Give me the wisdom to know just the right thing to say to him. Amen." Then slowly the barber came back to his customer with his razor knife in one hand. He laid a shaking hand on the man's shoulder, stared at him in the mirror, and said: "I am glad you came to see me this morning...are you ready to die?"

The English language.... It's how you say it....

Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.
A backward poet writes inverse.

In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your Count that votes.

A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.

If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.

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Gambia Update

I am sorry that it has been a while since I sent out an update on the school project which you all support. So this is a short(ish) message to let you know how things are progressing.

Kenny and I didn't get out to The Gambia this year for various reasons, one of which is that Kenny had to go last September to sort out some issues with the building. The landlord had decided that he wished to end our lease and as the agreement time had expired he could easily have done so.

It was the sort of situation that could only be resolved on a face to face basis and we now have an agreement that covers the next three years.

Francis Glynn, our long time friend and Head of GTS (the Gambian charity which has always administered the school for us) decided to step down from this role and Dumbarton London Corner nursery is now administered by an English lady called Helen Touray who held a senior HR position in a Liverpool company for many years and has now relocated to The Gambia. Helen is part of GETS which is the English arm of GTS..

She is exceptionally efficient and hardworking and does a great job for us. The accounts and information flow is the best it has ever been and that is fantastic for me as treasurer of our charity, as OSCR (the Scottish charities regulating body) require not only our audited accounts but also information from the Gambian bank accounts and school accounts. We get really good value from our association with GETS, the £60 a month fee that we pay has not been increased in the five years or so that they have done the work for us. This amount is accounted for in their accounts and pays for Helen's travel and expenses incurred in her work for our school.

The school is doing well, our students graduate to the next level of education and there is never a shortage of new children in London Corner ready to take up the places in class 1. The feeding programme also continues to help the children to be well fed and healthy.

We have had to spend money on building maintenance throughout the last year and have just had to replace the



roof at a cost of £600. I have attached a photograph sent to-day from Helen which shows the new roof.

We have agreed now that the ceiling in Aunty's office can be replaced and the outside of the school will be painted.. You will see in the photo that the Gambian dust and the rainy season has taken its toll on the paint and pictures on the outside wall.

The school has benefited from equipment sent out to The Gambia is several containers organised by Fran Walker and Faye (her husband) including a long awaited desk for Aunty the headmistress, replacement desks and chairs and play equipment for the children.

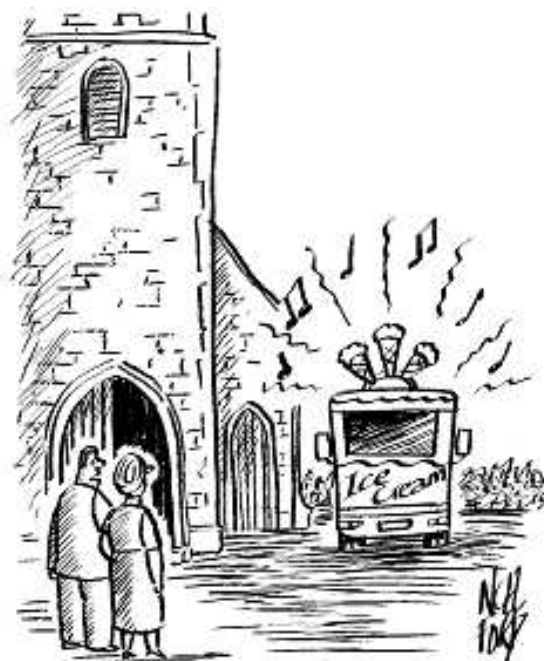
Fran and Faye have both visited the Gambia several times in the past few months and spent lots of time at our nursery school, so we know that things are well looked after and well monitored.. Fran has lots of photos and we will put out a newsheet soon with more pictures and information.

Unfortunately, we had to end the adult education classes last year. While it was good to be able to provide this extra service, we could no longer justify the cost of the extra teacher as we were not convinced that the benefits were worthwhile. Something had to go and this seemed the best option so that we could continue the feeding programme.

I want to thank you all for your continued support and assure you that your contributions continue to make a huge difference to the lives of these children whose families still live in dire poverty. Without your support we would not be able to continue to run the school and give free education and feeding to the children of London Corner,

Many thanks

Linda



"It was the best we could do whilst the churchbells are being replaced – and O Sole Mio is quite a nice tune."

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

Janette looks back on a very busy month of politics, Easter eggs, multiple Baptisms and a brand new Bishop.

AS MARCH MARCHED QUICKLY INTO EASTER....

On Palm Sunday, though we waved the customary palms and processed round the block behind Ghislaine, the thoughts of many of St. Auggie's Friends were drifting to the evening event which was 'We'll Meet Again' - a Forties Night and the brainchild of TBag O'Neill. This event had been given as much preparation, debate and consideration as the Normandy Landings so there were great expectations.

But if the plans for World War 11 had gone as well as this Friends' 'do' we would have lost! TBag admitted to feeling like a 'headless chicken' as she attempted to co-ordinate the action and the main players. She should know that organising the Friends' Exec is a bit like herding cats and to expect them to get a war right first time was indeed a bridge too far.

The kitchen, always the hub of frenzied activity, contained the rations, a giant pot of broth and Ricky. Ricky was doing the sound i.e. getting the sirens right plus the voice of Winston Churchill. The ration books and their associated raffle caused sufficient confusion to baffle even the secret service and the wartime quiz answers could not be verified because TBag had left them at home. But everyone got into the spirit of the era and most came in fancy dress. Surely the ladies of the '40s did not go around permanently in crossover aprons and turbans? I know they needed coupons to buy a new frock and an American toy boy to get a pair of nylons but this forties image is disastrous! And only Barbara could have kept her family's ration books - just in case! She appeared as a Land Army girl and certainly looked the part. Margot and Tim arrived like two 1940's Hollywood stars and Sheila was a primary schoolgirl in what could have been her very own gymslip. Irene was a sweet little evacuee clutching her gas mask in the familiar cardboard box. There was a Nurse, an Air Force and a Navy Officer - the latter looking more like an employee of HM Customs! TBag herself went for the Admiral of the Fleet look - but her killer heels would certainly have got stuck in the sands of Dunkirk.

The hall was packed and the corned beef and spam sandwiches were stoically consumed - there was a war on, after all! Ken Watters, our guest musician

for the evening was superb on the keyboard and it was great to see Jessie Reid giving us a wee tune. 'St. Auggies' Got Talent' - right enough! A poignant moment was Jamie Lee's reading from 'The Diary of Anne Frank'. This reading reminded us that, though things were bad in Britain, life was a whole lot worse in Europe. Jamie Lee, who is the age Anne was when she had to hide from the Nazis in that Amsterdam attic, dressed for the role and read beautifully. 'Jamie Lee - you could be Anne Frank' to use the naff words of today's reality TV shows!

But the main highlights were the memories that were being shared round the tables though a few of the ladies preferred to deny that they had actually been alive during the war!

A VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

On Saturday 16th April there was a good attendance at the Parish Walk when the objective was Finlaystone Estate - the hard way! The preceding week of beautiful Spring sunshine had tempted members out into the open air to shift a few of those apres-winter pounds!

So under the leadership of Rosemary and Tim, the intrepid walkers plus 'dugs' embarked on the first challenging slope. Tim, in Tour Director mode, suddenly announced from the top 'Look over there - a view of Brucehill!'. And it was beautiful in the April sunshine. We soldiered on to explore an old laundry complete with mangles, tubs and other implements of housewifely torture. Great - but we all gave thanks for our 21st century automatic washing machines!. The best part of the day was afternoon tea in the garden with homemade cake and lashings of cream. Oh, about those extra pounds - well they'll keep till next time!

A HAPPY DAY AT THE HUSTINGS.

On Thursday 22nd April the West Dunbartonshire parliamentary candidates were on display at the football stadium. Not to kick a ball - just to persuade the people to vote for them on May 6th. It was a truly depressing evening and I went home craving for chocolate! No one was prepared to impart good news, promise a bright future or even get involved in a worthwhile argument. Tim and Margot were

there because their central heating boiler was burst - they needed a heat! But there was not much hot air on offer - just more of the same.

The man from UKIP had the right idea - he left early! The LibDem woman was 'teacher-like' in her presentation and much too sensible for our home town. The SNP choice struggled to stay awake for the duration of the event - it was all the fault of the London parties after all! The Tory hopeful - the only man in collar and tie - gave the impression that only his party had the right answers but Dumbarton folk didn't ever listen so it's their own fault. The Labour candidate made me feel that she knew something horrible and was afraid to tell us. No one made us laugh. Gloom, despair and depression abounded.

Happily, the Chairman drew a halt to proceeding at 8.30pm so we could all catch some of the action from the Leaders' Debate on the telly! Aye, that'll be right!

SAVE OUR TOWN CENTRE.

Now we're reading of the latest loony idea to save the town centre - build a multi storey car park!

Great! Visitors will be rushing to Dumbarton from all over the world and prosperity will follow. The bad news is that the Denny Civic Theatre will have to be knocked down and rebuilt in the St. James Centre to stop any more shops opening. Just imagine Dumbarton, ancient capital of Strathclyde as the Car Parking Centre of Europe. No town - just one enormous car park! Visitors could start at the new multi-storey, move on to the Masonic car park, then the new one beside the dual carriageway, visit the spaces to the rear of the Burgh Hall, stop for afternoon tea behind the town centre and finish off with a parking session down the quay! Oh, and if they want to see our magnificent castle they could view it from Morrison's car park and take all the necessary photos. No need to move more than a few yards from one's beloved vehicle.

Fortunately, a council spokeswumman (I knew it would be a wumman) has advised this genius that the Town Centre Master Plan will be adhered to and that the Civic Theatre will stay where it is until a new one is built. The DPT has been consulted and progress is being monitored. Three cheers for WDC!

WIN A SEAT - USE A DOG!

As a follower of 'Over the Rainbow's' quest for a new Toto it occurred to me that the political parties were missing a terrific opportunity to accumulate

votes. A caninedidate would help their candidate greatly in conveying the desirable qualities of honesty, loyalty and friendliness. Just look at how well St. Auggie's doggies would fit the bill!

The Tory candidate could be photographed with **Toastie** a fully pedigreed member of the Kennel Club with royal associations. Yes, the Toastie Manifesto would be read in homes throughout the land. The Labour Party would certainly prefer **Nina**, the Jack Russell. Not accepted by those snobby Crufts creatures, Nina is a basic dog given to much yelling and yapping for fairness and sharing as long as her share is bigger than anyone else's and she gets it first! **Archie**, the Golden Retriever, would surely find his home with the Greens. A friend of the earth who proves it by continually rolling in its muddier sections and removing any offending picnics from the grass. **Peanut**, on the other hand doesn't care about being a doggy aristocrat and would be an ideal soul mate for Nick Clegg with her attractive and pleasing personality combined with all the charisma of a right wee chancer. Now the SNP is looking for a champion and our attractive West Highland terrier, **Keira**, is just the dog for the job. Keira can start a fight with bigger dogs then run off and say it's not her fault!

So, forget kissing those babies and cuddle a canine. Every St. Auggie's Doggie comes with its own WDC supply of Bio(Pooh)Bags with instructions for usage in seven different languages. Gaelic is not yet available but Alex is working on it. Get ahead - get a vote - get a hound!

THE NEW BISHOP'S BIG 'DO' - PUNTERS' VERSION.

'You can't go on the 23rd - that's only for Kenny and Tim! But everybody's welcome on the Sunday night.'

That was how Bishop Gregor's consecration celebrations were sold to me. So, knowing our place in the great autocracy of the Scottish Episcopal Church a few of us ventured forth to the Cathedral on Sunday 25th sacrificing a Dorothy sing off for the occasion.

We arrived half an hour early - we were in Kenny's car - but only restricted viewing seats were available. Indeed, some were not occupied but being reserved in spite of the service leaflet's assurance that the Cathedral was open, inclusive and welcoming!

The clergy were all arriving clutching zipped garment bags containing their vestments. Kenny trav-

elled in his cassock and carried his surplice and borrowed preaching scarf in a poly bag - at least it was an M&S 5p poly bag!

When we read the programme we discovered that we were at a Diocesan Choral Evensong with the installation of the new Dean thrown in as a supporting act and, in small print at the end, the new Bishop's first sermon to the diocese.

Memories flooded back to me of Evensong at St. Auggie's in the fifties and sixties. It always preceded the AYPAs (youth club) meetings and it was almost mandatory to attend. Failure to do so meant a nagging from the righteous so it was easier to go. Why? We had confessed to our sins at the morning service, after all, and what could we possibly have got up to on the afternoon of a Scottish Sabbath to make repeating the process so important?

I recalled my least favourite service - Morning Prayer with *'the Te Deum is on Page 8'*. Oh no - it's not! I now fear that if I ever make it to the Pearly Gates all those Cherubim and Seraphim would confront me for quietly removing the two pages of this dreary canticle!

Meanwhile back at the Cathedral the massed choirs and robed clergy were processing up the aisle. What a crowd! But where were all the women? Oh, some were hitting the high notes in the choir but there was not a female voice raised in prayer, in reading or even officiating. No, they weren't making the tea! This was Kelvinside - famed for *'you'll have had your tea'*. Just as well TBag O'Neill had declined the invitation or she wouldn't have lasted past the introit hymn!

Maggie moaned that she knew all the music and wasn't getting the chance to sing. Linda said she felt like a spectator and Margaret Hardie devoted her time to guessing what the hordes of clergy were up to at the back. Well, Kenny was punctuating the service booklet - perhaps some of the others were praying! Bishop Gregor, totally at ease in his new role showed the new Dean where to sit and we could then see him better. The sermon followed - short and to the point. He even raised a few laughs. Well done, Gregor! He told us how the disciples, after Easter, were *'all over the place.'* And here we were in this magnificent Cathedral with nothing and no one in the wrong place.

The Choral Evensong had been an organisational triumph and many left enthusing about this wonder-

ful traditional service. Why then was I missing our argumentative Music Group, our predominance of women, our congregational participation and even the Partick Thistle scores?

Happily the Church survives our plethora of tastes in worship - indeed it is enhanced by them and long may this continue.

Footnote: So enthusiastic was the singing of the closing hymn that the gentleman in front of me who had been blocking my view for most of the evening sat down with aplomb and jammed my fingers between his body and the back of the pew. (Don't ask why they were there.) But mindful of the place and occasion, I refrained from yelling out and simply beseeched him *'please can I have my hand back?'* I needed it to write my gossip column!

BACK NEXT MONTH.....

With more news on the Murder Mystery Night, the Sparkle Evening and the Friends' AGM. Oh, and we'll be looking forward to Gregor's visit to the Parish in June, a good shower of rain to expose any hidden roof leaks and the return of the Golden Girls from their adventures in Spain - volcanic ash permitting!

Janette



Relax! I'm not the prison chaplain - I've just been given three months for wearing a crucifix in public!

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I was looking in my computer file to find the Friends logo and began looking at the older documents that are stored away. It made me realise how long the

Friends has existed in its current form.

Long after a group of our ladies started the Saturday coffee mornings raising cash to fill a hole in the church floor, Kenny redeveloped the whole idea of how effective Friends' could be, and we committed ourselves to holding an event 11 months of the year.

In November 2003, for example, we put on Victorian dress for *'an evening in Victorian fashion. High tea, Parlour Games, music and songs galore will make this one to remember. Sit in the newly restored church and dine by candlelight while listening to the string quartet. Sing the songs that your granny used to sing but that we all remember, join in the chat, the games and the atmosphere'*. And we certainly did.

The Events list for 2004 included Strawberries and Cream Bingo, a bus trip to Ayr and a bus tour of Dumbarton. 7 of the Friends Exec 2003 are still on the Exec and no doubt will be voted on again this year, so well done to them and the rest of the members who continue to work hard and come up with brilliant ideas.

Just look at the poster in this mag for the June event and you will agree that ideas have not dried up and are as innovative and full of fun as ever.

If, like me, you have never been on a cruise then an evening on a 'ship' of the Royal Episcopalian Cruise line sounds just the ticket. The only down side may be the chance of being a murder victim or even a suspect. However, as there is chocolate with everything it will be worth taking a chance. Get your name down on the list in the hall and book your berth at what will be a great evening. Our new Bishop will be there too, making it a very special event.

The AGM will be held after church on Sunday 9th May, so please come along and let us know if you have any ideas for events, advice on how to run things better, or would like to help out at any time. If you would like to be part of the Exec please speak to me or any of the Exec members before the AGM.

I am hoping to see you all

Linda

Ministry Celebration

THIS year's Ministry Celebration Service will be at Holy Trinity Church, Ayr, on **Saturday 5 June**. A buffet lunch will be served from noon followed by the service at 1.15pm. This year the focus will be on the ministry of Eucharistic Assistants. All chalice bearers please note!

Flowers, Food & Fun at St Mungo's

AN evening of 'Flowers, Food and Fun' takes place at St Mungo's Church hall Alexandria on **Friday 7 May** from 7.30pm. Local floral art demonstrator Janette Tennant will present 'Floral Delights'. Tickets £5 from Pauline Dow 01389 751046 email: paulinedow@btinternet.com.

Christian Aid is calling on supporters to 'Do the doorstep challenge'. Every time a pollster or member of a political party asks what is important to you, CA wants you to list climate change in your top three issues. A spokesman for Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, which includes Christian Aid in its members, said: "This is vital to our campaign as they will feed this information back to their head offices."

A doorstep challenge leaflet and more information can be downloaded from www.acqscotland.org.uk.

A Special Organist... (Honest He's VERY Good!)

THOSE who have come across Carlo Curley, the world famous organist, will know this larger than life character who not only plays the organ superbly, but also provides great entertainment by virtue of his size and personality. He will be giving a recital at Holy Trinity Ayr on **Saturday 5 June**, the day of the Diocesan Ministry Celebration. The recital is at 7.30pm and tickets (£10) can be obtained from Mackays Music Ayr or Archie Thom (thomarchie@yahoo.co.uk). Carlo will be playing the church's new Allen organ.

Ascension Day.. Which falls on May 13th this year, sees our local Piskie celebration taking place in St Augustine's at 7.30pm. Our music group will be out in force! Please support this! It is important.

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