

St Augustine's Dumbarton



the new look

Issue 53 June & July 2011

£1.00

Confirmed



We had eight candidates for Confirmation in May, pictured, Steven Prentice, Cheryl Prentice, Faye McKinlay, Jamie-Lee Dick, David Ansell, Brogan Dyer, Margaret Macaulay and Bob Moffat.

The Bishop had a wonderful time, as always in St Augustine's, and the service itself was uplifting, "pure dead brilliant" as someone commented! Bishop Gregor played his part and brought a

level of spirituality into the cacophony that touched the hearts of many.

In the past ten years we seem to manage to present a fair number of people for Confirmation every two years, and long may this sort of growth continue.

It is a sign of a growing, living and outward-looking congregation, and as we pray for those who were Confirmed, let us thank God for that!

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From The Primus..

(The Primus addresses General Synod 2011)



If you haven't been to Iona, you should go. It is part of our heritage in faith. And when you go, take time to go to Staffa - about seven miles away - and look back. Columba's island becomes a low-lying smudge in the middle distance - the Abbey standing up at its edge.-simultaneously the edge of the world and the centre of the world.

Jesus tells the disciples to be girded for action, to live the life of Christ, to prepare for heaven. That's what the Celtic church was good at, it's what George Mac Leod meant when he described Iona as a 'thin place'. On St Columba's Day, we think of that strand of our faith story which is rooted in the Celtic tradition - rooted in its spirituality and its energy for mission.

And there are others. During the year, I found myself in St Giles Cathedral with the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Cardinal at the renewal of baptismal vows as we marked the 450th Anniversary of the Scottish Reformation. That too is part of our heritage and we are shaped by it. For example, we see ourselves as a church of thoughtful, thought-provoking and incisive scriptural preaching.

Two weeks ago, I was in America. I found myself living within that strand of our heritage which is rooted in Samuel Seabury, first bishop of the Anglican Church in the United States of America. That history is the root of our deeply felt Anglicanism. It places us at the centre of what I believe must be the growing search for a post-colonial Anglican Communion.

As if all of that were not enough, I cannot fail to mention the changing times in which we live in Scotland. As churches, we should have no interest in flags or jurisdiction. But we are being called to play our part with our ecumenical and inter-faith partners in shaping whatever new national identity will emerge from the current debate. We should respond warmly and positively to that opportunity.

I have hardly made a start in setting out the strands of our history and I have not mentioned some of the most obvious ones. But I hope I have done enough to remind us that the times are changing around us. We need to draw on all the strands which have enriched our past and made us what we are in the present if we are to respond to the challenges and opportunities which face us.

A Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy invites us to consider how we as a church will live the gospel in our times, and address the society in which we are placed. We have sometimes reached out with passion for things which we thought might answer most if not all of the questions. This new policy - and it is work in progress - invites a more measured - more holistic - more strategic response to the life of our church. It invites us to live out those strands of our tradition which I mentioned a moment ago.

But there is also a question of mood. I sometimes say that we are a 'loaves and fishes' church - people who do miracles with tiny resources. In the recent training programme which I undertook with the bishops of the Episcopal Church in America, one of the characteristics identified for a church in mission is a 'death-defying joy'. Easter people who know death and yet address the world with joy. I think that this means that we are very realistic about our life - and yet bring to our mission buoyancy, resilience, energy and the joy which enables others to recognise the attractiveness of the God we worship and proclaim. It has been a great privilege for me - as a representative of this church - to begin to experience the life of the wider Anglican Communion.

I have seen enough to help me to understand the challenge of living with and being enriched by diversity. And I know that the same challenge and prize faces us within our own and every other Province. We owe it to our internal diversity that we should give measured and serious consideration to the Anglican Covenant. We shall use Indaba discussion which has become the way in which the Anglican Communion structures discussion across difference. We prize our Anglicanism - we have a slight feeling of ourselves as the midwives of the Anglican Communion as we know it. The discussion about the Covenant - whether we ultimately adopt it or whether we do not - is about our part in bringing to birth a new expression of the Anglican Communion.

This is an important Synod and I am looking forward to it. To discuss our mission and to explore the shape of our future relationship with the world church - that's an appropriate pairing for a church which offers itself to be the instrument of God's purposes in this time and this place. As we reflect on that calling on St Columba's day, may we bring to the task that richness of spirituality and missional energy which is the gift of the Celtic Church to us.

*The Most Rev David Chillingworth
Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane and
Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church*

Colour it Celtic - The Sequel!



New Beginnings

(At a recent Cursillo meeting, Evelyn O'Neill was asked to "tell her story". Perhaps many of us will find familiar echoes in our own lives.)

When I agreed to give this talk I wondered what to talk about. Then I remembered a book I had been given and the message written inside it, "never be afraid of new beginnings". Well, I've had some new beginnings lately, so I decided to see what I could come up with _ and you are the captive audience _ so, if you are all sitting comfortably, I'll begin.

The first new beginning I had I just cannot remember although I am told it is a common experience. I was living in a dark, warm cave.

It was lovely. I could stretch and punch and kick, sometimes accompanied by a loud "ouch" from outside. Then something horrible happened. I was squeezed down a tight, narrow tube and out into a cold place with bright lights which hurt my eyes so I screwed them tight shut and cried "waaa-aa-a-aa". I would have loved to go back in but I had no choice in the matter. I had to make a new beginning.

I think the next few years must have been peaceful – I certainly can't think of much happening- until 1939, and then changes came thick and fast. My father was one of ICI's explosives men, and they decided, very sensibly, that making all your explosives in one place during a war was not a good idea so we moved and we moved and we moved. Over the next few years I lived in 6 different places, and it was fun except when my treasured possessions were firmly put in the bin because "we can't possibly take that with us. It's far too big and heavy".

War over, so back to Saltcoats and 6 years in one school.

Then on to Uni. and that is when I, a well-brought-up Presbyterian, discovered there was a church called the Scottish Episcopal Church and I rather liked it. It was a different story when I went home - "You've no right to change your church. God meant you to be a Presbyterian". After some argument I agreed to go back to the Church of Scotland for a couple of years, and during that time I met my husband.

In 1960 I had another new beginning when we married and set up house in Glasgow. If I had dug my heels in and joined the S.E.C. I would not have met him and something beautiful would have been missed - perhaps I was led into this position? We had a good life together. We two became one, then two, then three, as our

family arrived. Other changes involved family bereavements, but we supported each other through thick and thin. Then he had a stroke, and over the next few years we adjusted to doing less and less as his physical condition deteriorated, until life for him was no longer fun. At his funeral we sang George Matheson's lovely hymn "O love that wilt not let me go" which has the following lines "I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be.", and as we followed the coffin from Dumbarton up to Cardross we saw the most beautiful rainbow I have ever seen. God is Good.

So why should we fear death or new beginnings. We are told "FEAR NOT". We must believe that and grab it with both hands.

This was a completely new beginning - no man to do things like change plugs, fit new tap washers, tighten screws - thank goodness for a daughter; a son in Benbecula isn't much help when an electric bulb goes in a dark winter's night.

Several years later came another large new beginning. I left Riverside Church behind and walked across the road and into St. Augustine's. Changing denominations is much more complicated than you would expect. It's not the big changes. If you've got any sense you expect to find things are run by a managing director, called a bishop, instead of by a committee called a presbytery. It's the little things that trip you up. If Kenny got £1 every time he coped with a conversation which started "Kenny, why.....?" he would be a rich man and the less said about my bank balance the better. I am very happy here, but we all, I think, need to realise that no denomination has a monopoly on the correct things to do or say or believe. We need to learn from each other and ask God's help on how to do this. And why are we so afraid of change in the church? Change is part of life. Without it we die.

At 77 (or should it be 55?) another new beginning will come relatively soon. I'm not afraid of death _ dying, yes. It can be a long, painful affair_ but of death-NO!!!! Death means going through a gate to God. God is love. There is no fear in love. I don't know what being with God will be like, but I am sure it will be wonderful.

Through all these changes God has been with me - sometimes closer than others but always there. So why should we fear death or new beginnings. We are told "FEAR NOT". We must believe that and grab it with both hands.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord".

Baptism:

Baby Grace is being baptised on Sunday 10th July. (Granny Annie) Dyer has a new hat, we hear!

Prayer Ministry:

Ghislaine is developing a wee group of people, some from St Augustine's and some from other churches in the town who hope to keep St Augustine's opened and staffed every day of the week. Vernon has already a very committed ministry on Mondays doing just this, but we have rather haphazard opening times for the rest of the week.

If anyone is open to participating in this in any way, even just to make the tea, please have a word with Ghislaine about what it might entail. Certainly, during the summer months, this sort of ministry has proved invaluable in past years.

Friends of St Aug's - Minutes

31st May 2011

1. Allocation of Committee Positions:
The following jobs were allocated –
 - Entertainment co-ordinator – Sharon Rowatt
 - Secretary – Linda Macaulay
 - Catering coordinator – Roberta Mailley
 - MAD coordinator – Fran Walker
2. Friends subscriptions – it was proposed and agreed to leave the fees at the current level, this being - Individual £15, Family £25 and Business £50.
Margaret Hardie and Morag O'Neill had prepared the Membership Reminder letter and it was handed over to LM to copy and despatch. (post meeting note – these will sent out with the June magazines where possible)
3. Summer Community Fair
The date of the fair this year will be Saturday, August 27th and will be run on approximately the same lines as last year. With some of the current hall users about to move out of the hall, we will send out invitations to take stalls to the wider community this year.

ACTIONS: LM is to put together a notice of invitation to the hall users and to call together a planning team which will include Barbara Barnes, Kenny, Maggie, Rosemary, Linda Jenkinson and Anne Dyer at the end of June/early July. We are planning to include a bouncy castle on the adjacent car park this year if financially viable.

4. June event: As there is a concert in the church on June 21st which is being run by DCT, it was agreed that Friends would produce a pre-concert buffet to be called T in the Church. This will start at 6pm. JB to do a poster.

5. Other Events:

- September 30th 7.30pm – Quiz night
- October 23rd 6pm – Film and sing-a-long evening using Sister Act as the theme.
- November – Big Event TBA
- December 18th Christmas Party and Carol Service
- January (date to be confirmed) – Fish Supper Bingo with a Scottish theme.

6. AOB – Sharon informed the meeting that she is now able to get a discount from Crown Paints which can be used to help towards the cost of repainting the Community Hall.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 12th July at 7.30pm in the hall.

Wedding:

Mhairi Gordon is to be married in St Augustine's on Friday July 2nd. Congregational members are very welcome to attend the ceremony and help with the singing!

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St James the Least of All..

Here the elderly Anglo-Catholic Rector, Eustace, continues his correspondence to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate recently ordained...

The Rectory

St James-the-Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Since your parishioners live in an area of half a square mile, where their only concern in getting to church is whether to take the underpass, or to risk a dash across the ring road, you may have little understanding of the problems our folk have in travelling miles along country lanes to church, now that it requires a loan from the International Monetary Fund to fill the car with petrol.

Several now only arrive half way through the Service, having underestimated the time it takes to park a pony and trap and the noise they make at the back of church, removing waterproofs, propping up whips and looking for somewhere to stow travel rugs even drowns out "Onward Christian Soldiers".

Those who arrive on horse, leaving them to graze in the churchyard, have had to be reminded that flowers in memorial vases are not fodder; neither were the imitation ones on Lady Metropole's straw hat, left in her open topped car. But having our verger standing outside for an hour holding the reins of half a dozen horses is not, as he loudly points out, part of his job description. Apart from which, restraining his amorous charges from visiting the local stables during Mattins is beyond his strength.

Major Crompton's discovery that the fuel for his sit-on lawnmower is considerably cheaper than petrol has inspired him to travel to church on it. Since he is unable to uncouple the mowing apparatus, the tarmac on his 4 mile drive is acquiring interesting patterns. His drive at 2 miles per hour along narrow lanes means he arrives leading a procession of cars with drivers given the opportunity to exercise their gifts of Christian tolerance and forgiveness. It doesn't help that he uses his stately journey to finish his breakfast of bacon and eggs, with his wife walking by his side with the coffee pot.

The majority, naturally, arrive on foot, having negotiated fields, stiles and assorted cattle. The countryside may well praise God, but one does wish they wouldn't bring quite so much of it into church with them.

Lord Lipton who "is in oil" – which makes him sound like a sun-dried tomato – is apparently trying to come to some private arrangement with a Shiekh of his acquaint-

ance. Should he be successful, while life in your city may grind to a halt, rural Evensong will be able to continue on its serene way, floating on an ocean of cut-price petroleum

Thank you for the kind offer of your old computer, but I do not want it. I know you find it invaluable for keeping in touch with those doing missionary work in remote parts of Africa, but even if I knew legions of clergy on that continent, I would have few pearls of wisdom to e-mail them and would not be overly interested in what they may be yearning to tell me.

I know that our diocesan offices long for us all to have computers, so we can receive at hourly intervals briefings, questionnaires, notifications of meetings and lists of irresistible training days, but I seem to have survived in ministry for the last 50 years without them and suspect I can do so for a little while longer.

When pressed why I have still not purchased one, I tell everyone that I am waiting for a few more weeks when I will be able to get an even better one. And as the wretched things continue to improve, there is every reason to defer a decision until they improve a little more. Surely, if I bought one today, I would regret it by tomorrow, as there would be a more advanced model out by then.

Besides, once you get a computer, you will need to buy a telephone connection, then a printer and spare ink cartridges and then equipment to protect you from viruses. The money can far more usefully be spent on claret.

Being without a computer also saves me much aggravation. From what I can gather, most computer owners spend significant parts of their lives trying to get their machine to do something it doggedly refuses to. Once they admit defeat, they then spend another significant chunk of time on what is called by naïve optimists a "helpline", where someone in a remote part of the world who speaks a jargon only distantly related to English tries to tell you that whatever you did, it would have been better if you hadn't.

No, no-one over the age of 25 should be allowed to possess a computer. On those rare occasions you really do need to use one, you should adopt my practice: visit your local primary school and get a 6 year-old to do the job – which they do with effortless efficiency, speed and accuracy.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Rotas for June & July 2011

Sunday June 12th.

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Tim Rhead & Linda Macaulay.

Intercessions: Margaret Hardie.

Chalice: Vernon Perrin & Fran Walker.

Sidespersons: Margaret Swan & Linda Jenkinson.

Sunday June 19th

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Morag O'Neill & Gavin Elder.

Intercessions: Fran Walker.

Chalice: Margaret Hardie & Barbara Barnes.

Sidespersons: Tim Rhead & David Ansell.

Sunday June 26th

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Ghislaine Kennedy & Vernon Perrin.

Intercessions: Evelyn O'Neill.

Chalice: : Tim Rhead & Maggie Wallace.

Sidespersons: Roberta Mailley & Ronnie Blaney.

Sunday July 3rd

11am Eucharist

Readers: Maggie Wallace & Margaret Hardie.

Intercessions: Tim Rhead.

Chalice: Sharon Rowatt & Janette Barnes.

Sidespersons: Chrissie Ashman & Vernon Perrin.

Sunday July 10th

11am Eucharist

Readers: Morag O'Neill

Chalice: Barbara Barnes & Fran Walker

Sidespersons: David Ansell & Linda Jenkinson

Sunday July 17th

11am Eucharist

Readers: Barbara Barnes & Evelyn O'Neill

Intercessions: Linda Macaulay.

Chalice: Fran Walker & Tim Rhead.

Sidespersons: Vernon Perrin & Margaret Swan.

Sunday July 24th.

11am Eucharist

Readers: Linda Macaulay & Vernon Perrin

Intercessions: Fran Walker

Chalice: Margaret Hardie & Maggie Wallace

Sidespersons: Ronnie Blaney & Linda Jenkinson

Sunday July 31st

11am Eucharist

Readers: Janette Barnes & Ghislaine Kennedy

Intercessions: Maggie Wallace.

Chalice: Tim Rhead & Vernon Perrin.

Sidespersons: Chrissie Ashman & R Mailley

FLOWERS.

Wk. ending:

June. 11th. Linda Macaulay.

" **18th.** Rosemary McLeay & Barbara Barnes

" **25th.** Maggie Wallace & Margaret Hardie.

July 2nd. Wedding.

" **9th.** Moira McGown.

" **16th.** Linda Macaulay.

" **23rd.** Maggie Wallace & Moira McGown.

" **30th.** Rosemary McLeay & Barbara Barnes

ROTAS.

We are SERIOUSLY SHORT of Sidespersons at the moment. Those already doing this duty are VERY willing, but a few more are needed desperately! We are currently looking again at the way we greet and welcome people to St Augustine's and there may be new initiatives by the end of the summer.

Meanwhile, if you can help even once every month it would be wonderful. PLEASE.

Vestry Meeting

The next Vestry Meeting is on Tuesday 5th July- at 7.30pm.

CHURCHES TOGETHER SPRING FESTIVAL DATE

21st June Concert by Jessica Weidman
in St. Augustine's.

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS EVENT.



Clockwise on this page: Boab's Baptism, the Allsorts Choir, the Quilting Exhibition, Peanut with her hat on for the Royal Wedding, Neve with her faithful friend, and Kenny shows some style at hushing babies at Baptism.

Clockwise on next page: Our Gambian School receives a gift of slates, Margaret's Baptism, Confirmation practice, lighting the Paschal Candle, and our Richmond Fellowship Group.



Smile Lines

Say again?

Yogi Berra was a baseball star who played for the New York Yankees for 19 years. Unfortunately, he became just as famous for his malapropisms:

- You can observe a lot just by watching.
- I knew I was going to take the wrong train, so I left early.
- Baseball is 90% mental; the other half is physical.
- Half the lies they tell about me aren't true.
- This is like déjà vu all over again.
- Nobody goes there anymore; it's too crowded.
- You should always go to other people's funerals; otherwise, they won't come to yours.
- The future ain't what it used to be.

Sum problem

"Now, James," said the teacher, "If your father gave you £1, your uncle 75p, and your brother a 50p, what would you have?" Jimmy was deep in thought for some time.

"Come, James, that's not a difficult problem," said the teacher.

"It is for me," said James. "I can't make up my mind whether I'd have a large ice-cream or small hamburger."

How many to change a light bulb?

Here is an old favourite...

How many charismatics does it take to change a light bulb? One, since his/her hands are in the air anyway.

How many Calvinists does it take to change a light bulb? None. God has predestined when the lights will be on.

How many Brethren does it take to change a light bulb? CHANGE?!!!

How many Pentecostals does it take to change a light bulb? 10. One to change it and nine others to pray against the spirit of darkness.

How many TV evangelists does it take to change a light bulb? One. But for the message of hope to continue to go forth, we need thousands to send in their donation – TODAY!

How many Roman Catholics does it take to change a light bulb? None: We use candles only.

How many Amish does it take to change a light bulb? What's a light bulb?

How many Polygamous Mormons does it take to change a light bulb? Five. One man to change the bulb, and four wives to tell him how to do it.

How many Jehovah's Witnesses does it take to change a light bulb? Three. One to screw in the bulb, and two to knock on your door and ask you if you've seen the light!

How many Unitarians does it take to change a light bulb? We choose not to make a statement either in favour of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that light bulbs work for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your light bulb for the next Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence.

Cost of preaching

One beautiful Sunday morning, a priest announced to his congregation: "My good people, I have here in my hands three sermons...a £100 sermon that lasts five minutes, a £50 sermon that lasts fifteen minutes, and a £10 sermon that lasts a full hour. Now, we'll take the collection and see which one I'll deliver."

Who I am

An elderly woman walked into the local country church. The friendly usher greeted her at the door and helped her up the flight of steps. "Where would you like to sit?" he asked politely.

"The front row please." she answered.

"You really don't want to do that", the usher said. "The pastor is really boring."

"Do you happen to know who I am?" the woman inquired.

"No." he said.

"I'm the pastor's mother," she replied indignantly

Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"No." she said.

"Good", he grinned.

Cricket

"Well, well," said the old gentleman to some boys who were playing cricket. "I wish I could join your game, but I'm too old."

"You CAN join in," said the 'captain'. "Our ball has just gone through that window. You can go and ask for it back."

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

Janette looks back on events at St. Aug's and beyond in the wettest May since records began and looks forward to June and the holidays.

NUNS HAVING FUN!

Surely the highlight of Ghislaine's 'Colour It Celtic' Concert on the 6th was the surprise appearance of the three Sisters of Hilarity - Roberta, Chrissie and Margaret Swan in a jolly little dance routine audibly choreographed from the wings by TBag O'Neill. The Christian Allsorts Choir was on stage belting out the two numbers that had been rehearsed since January and the whole ensemble brought a very successful concert to a rousing end.

But the preparations, which started in the soup kitchen and ran till the technical rehearsal, were not devoid of drama. The programmes needed to be rerun, the choir repositioned, no one was sure how many ticket holders would actually turn up, the musical instruments were taking over all available space and there seemed to be Irish Dancers adjusting their wigs in every dressing room. Maggie, the Stage Manager, was attempting to control this confusion while the queues were starting to form all the way back to St. Aug's leaving Linda to keep everyone happy until the doors could be officially declared open. One could say *'wan's heid wis nippin'!*

Amazingly, when the curtain went up all fell into its allotted place, a seat was found for every bum and the audience reaction was superb. Best of all we managed to raise £1600 to be divided between our two charities - the Dumbarton Gambian School and Mission Aviation Fellowship.

Full marks to the Irish Dancers who had the audience cheering with their exciting, colourful routines and the Lomond School who changed the mood several times with a very varied programme. Particularly enchanting was their ballet sequence to 'Isle of Mull' accompanied by young Ruaidhri Irvine on the clarsach - a magical moment indeed!

Frank McCracken brought comedy with some Scottish parodies which delighted the audience while Emily, Craig Dunsmore and Jamie were warmly appreciated for their choice of popular songs that everyone could sing along with. Ghislaine, Ricky, Stuart and Graham gave us an excellent selection of music that had obviously been well rehearsed. Then the voice of Ken Watters, our intrepid pianist, counted to four and the Christian Allsorts Choir was finally 'live'. This musical group founded by Ghislaine consisted of singers from most of the Churches in Dumbarton. Surely a case of 'all singing from the same hymn sheet' to quote popular business- speak. Their appearance was widely applauded but they only sang two numbers - and then there were nuns! But it was half past ten and sadly the show was over - comments

were excellent and many people now want to come back for more!

NOT THE ROYAL WEDDING.

As we went to press last month the big excitement nationwide was the Royal Wedding on 29th April. And of course 'the any excuse for a celebration' squad couldn't ignore the occasion. St. Aug's Soup was cancelled, the dog was rushed round the park for some early exercise then it was on with the telly! It was decided that Perray's Drive would be the location and soon TBag and Roberta were at the door wearing their wedding hats and clutching contributions to the buffet. Roberta had brought hats for everyone so we could all look like eedyits! Then we settled down to nit pick at the attire of the esteemed guests.

Favourite outfit (apart from the bride's) was the bride's Mammy's. Roberta is wishing she could find out what Charity Shop it will end its days in. The bubbly was opened as soon as the vows were exchanged after which we all became more charitable towards the frocks and even the infamous hat worn by Princess Bea. Earlier in the week we had looked at the M&S catalogue of food to order for special occasions and eagerly selected our preferences. However, on going in to actually place the order, we were told they were full up. No more orders for the Royal Wedding! Our local branch must have been catering for the Buck House 'do' since Dumbarton folk are supposed to be much too poor to be consuming such fare and afford only 'jeelie pieces'. So we had to do our own royal catering - smoked salmon, prawns, strawberries and other such delicacies. Delicious!

AND THE NEXT RECORD BREAKING COFFEE MORNING

Will be held in aid of elocution lessons for poor Cheryl Cole who appeared on the American version of 'The X Factor' and they couldn't make out a word she said. Gee, what does that matter, folks? She's only there to be looked at. She wasn't presenting a lecture on the origins of the universe. This programme is simply Fantasyland masquerading as Reality and apart from her purple baggy trousers she was doing fine. But don't worry, Pet, Barbara and Georgie will get something organised for you down at St. Aug's and you'll be talking posh before you know it! How now, brown cow!

CROWDS ROLL UP FOR CONFIRMATION.

On 29th May, everybody and his dog were there trying to get a good seat for the confirmation of eight candidates by Bishop Gregor. Yes, there was a dog - a wee black

one lying quietly in a blanket unable to be heard above the racket of the children.

The Praise Band was also at full volume and it is reported that they were audible at the Castle. So, it was a lively morning culminating in lunch in the hall prepared by Fran. This gave everyone the opportunity to relax and chat to Gregor who moved happily around the tables. Remember confirmation in the olden days? We had communal veils firmly attached to our heads by our Sunday School teachers (and two ugly brown Kirby grips) and were told to stand still till we were called to kneel at the Bishop's feet. The Bishop did not seem to be human so we did as we were told. There was no lunch, no Praise Band, and certainly no dogs! No wonder we grew up inhibited!

VEGETABLES? NO THANKS!

At last, the typical Scottish eaters who firmly reject the green stuff are feeling so smug! All those healthy meals are poisoning the people. We were right to stick to the Mars Bars, the Square Sliced Sausage and the Chips! This E-Coli is getting worse and I'm sure there's something dodgy about those lettuce leaves!

WAYNE'S THIRTY THOUSAND POUND HAIR RESCUE.

Back in 1746 £30,000 was put on the head of Bonnie Prince Charlie. As we all know, it was never collected. Today it's the sum reported to be paid by Wayne Rooney to put hair on his rapidly balding head - a transplant to allow him to face his adoring public. It's a lot of money for just one head. And think of the future. Will he fear a 'dunt on the heid' more than a metatarsal fracture? And will the famous head no longer attempt to 'heider the ba' into goal? One must protect one's investment, after all!

DON'T CAST A CLOOT.....

Till May be oot! Yes, we're all familiar with the old adage and this year there was no temptation to cast a single semmit in the face of the dreadful May weather. Then right on cue on Friday 3rd June summer arrived and Scotland was declared hotter than the Sahara. Those of us who weren't suffering with Andy Murray in the Roland Garros Stadium were out in the High Street in strappy tops and bingo wings. Men were in ASDA in shorts with frighteningly pale legs looking for barbecues. But are we at last overcoming our innate distrust of the Scottish weather? No, there are still those amongst us who remember Alastair Reid's famous poem simply called 'Scotland'. It says so much about our character.

*It was a day peculiar to this piece of the planet
when larks rose on long thin strings of singing
and the air shifted with the shimmer of actual angels.
Greenness entered the body. The grasses*

*shivered with presences and sunlight stayed like a halo
on hair and heather and hills.*

*Walking into town, I saw, in a radiant raincoat,
the woman from the fish shop. 'What a day it is!'*

Cried I like a sun struck madman.

And what did she have to say for it?

*Her brow grew bleak, her ancestors raged in their graves
as she spoke with their ancient misery:*

'We'll pay for it, we'll pay for it, we'll pay for it!'

And on Saturday 4th June we did. The Arctic winds rolled in, temperatures plummeted and the central heating went back on.

DUMBARTON CHURCHES TOGETHER PRAISE NIGHT.

A well balanced programme of songs and hymns was presented on Sunday 22nd May and the attendance was very encouraging. We had some beautiful singers and, by popular demand, the Christian Allsorts Choir -this time minus the Nuns who were in retreat at a caravan in Ayr. Serves them right!

NO MIDSUMMER MADNESS - JUST A NICE WEE CONCERT.

On Tuesday 21st June at 7.30pm there will be a concert in St. Augustine's arranged by Dumbarton Churches Together in aid of the International Rescue Core - an organisation that goes into action in areas throughout the world when disaster strikes.

The performer is Jessica Weidman from the USA and her repertoire contains numbers from popular musicals and songs from Broadway hits.. Don't miss the opportunity to welcome Jessica and our friends from other Churches and hear her beautiful voice in the first class acoustical setting of St. Aug's. A collection will be taken for the charity and tea provided in the Hall. And specially for all Friends of St. Augustine's - a special pre concert buffet will be available from 6pm at the amazing price of £3.00.

AND A LOOK TO THE FUTURE.

Well, first of all there's the holidays - off down the Med on the Queen Victoria with the only worry being what to wear should the Captain invite us to join him at his table. Then it's back home in time for the River City Tour on July 23rd - make sure you put your name up now! Oh, and after the Tour we're lunching at the Golf Club. Fully inclusive price is only £8.00.

And don't forget to put Saturday 27th August in your diaries. We're having another Community Fair and this year we hope it will be bigger and better than ever! Our last Home Baking Stall was legendary! Oh, and so was the weather!

Have a good summer.

Janette

Last minute

A minister waited in the queue to have his car filled with petrol just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. "Reverend," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip." The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business."

Is a computer masculine or feminine?

A Spanish teacher was explaining to her class that in Spanish, unlike English, nouns are designated as either masculine or feminine. 'House' for instance, is feminine: 'la Casa.' 'Pencil,' however, is masculine: 'el lapiz.'

A student asked, 'What gender is 'computer'?' Instead of giving the answer, the teacher split the class into two groups, male and female, and asked them to decide for themselves whether 'computer' should be a masculine or a

feminine noun. Each group was asked to give four reasons for its recommendation.

The men's group decided that 'computer' should definitely be of the feminine gender ('la computadora'), because:

1. No one but their creator understands their internal logic;
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else;
3. Even the smallest mistakes are stored in long term memory for possible later retrieval; and
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending money on accessories for it.

The women's group, however, concluded that computers should be masculine ('el computador'), because:

1. In order to do anything with them, you have to turn them on;
2. They have a lot of data but still can't think for themselves;
3. They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they ARE the problem; and
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realize that if you had waited a little longer, you could have gotten a better model.

The women won.

What happens in heaven when you pray?

I dreamt that I went to Heaven and an angel was deputised to show me around.

Our first stop was at a large room filled with angels. They were unfolding, reading and stacking thousands of bits of paper, of all sizes. My angel guide explained, "This is the Receiving Section. Here, all petitions to God said in prayer are received.' I looked around the area, and it was terribly busy. Angels were sorting out petitions from all over the world. Some were long and involved and weighty, others merely a sigh on a scrap of paper.

Then we moved on down a long corridor until we reached the second section.

The angel said to me, "This is the Packaging and Delivery Section. Here, the graces and blessings that have been asked for are processed and delivered to the people who need them." I noticed again how busy it was there. The angels were working hard to package and send back to earth all the blessings that had been requested.

Finally, at the farthest end of the long corridor, we stopped at the door of a very small station. To my great surprise, only one angel was seated there, doing nothing much. "This is the Acknowledgement Section, my angel friend said quietly. He seemed a bit embarrassed." How is it that there is no work going on here?' I asked.

The angel sighed. "Well, after people receive the blessings that they ask for, it seems very few think to send back any acknowledgement."

"How does one acknowledge God's blessings?" I asked..

"Simple," the angel answered. "Just say, 'Thank you, Lord.' And mean it."

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Raising Money for St Margaret's Hospice



Or MSP, Jackie Baillie, and MP Gemma Doyle joined in the delicious delights of a Coffee Morning with various helpers!

with such need in the world. This one was for St Margaret's Hospice in Clydebank, a place which many of us are grateful for!

Well done Georgie! Over £700 was made!

Very often we forget local charities when we are faced

DOES GOD LOVE THE POOR MORE THAN THE RICH

The story of the rich young man coming to Jesus for advice ends with him going away sadly, and Jesus saying: "It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven"(Matth 19, 23). Yet he does not say: "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom"(Matth 5.3). He is speaking of the 'poor in spirit', not persons who don't have anything. Not once does he justify or romanticise material poverty, which in the Bible is associated with hunger, thirst, nakedness. Yet we know that the needy are important to Jesus. The Evangelists present Jesus himself as a person without property, like one of the wandering philosophers of the time who did not possess anything but the clothes on their back and who criticized the greed and preoccupation of the rich with gaining ever increasing wealth.

However, we must see that the beginning of Christianity is not associated with an environment of poverty. The first Christians did not live in slums, not were they slaves. Matthew seems to have appealed to a middle class audience, and in the Greek cities the Church spread among the more wealthy groups of society. The Reformation objected to the displays of wealth in the Catholic Church, which did not really disturb the church until the second Vatican Reform Council in November 1965, when a group of Bishops met in the Domitilla Catacomb in Rome and declared that they did not wish to even appear to be rich, nor want to be rich, since this was not consistent with a life according to the Gospel. And that the church again wanted to be a 'church of the poor'. This was and still is the image of the early church. Martin Luther spoke out against usury, as he was concerned with the causes of poverty; he called on businessmen to use their profits for charity, not to give 'hunger alms' like small coins thrown into a hat, but 'true alms' for the fight against poverty. That, he said, was the duty of every Christian. He saw property and wealth as a gift from God, which the recipient must use for the benefit of others. Luther did not go as far as the radical reformers of his time, who proclaimed communist ideas of collective property, nor did he agree with Calvin's idea that economic success was a sign of belonging to God's elect.

The German sociologist Max Weber wrote a famous essay about Capitalism and Protestantism, in which he tried to explain capitalist endeavour with the attempt to prove that you belonged to the chosen people. Many protestant churches in the USA adhere to this idea, especially so the new charismatic Brazilian 'Igreja Universal', the 'Universal Church of the Kingdom of God', led by its super rich founder Edir Macedo. His aides carry out the offerings of the members by the sackful. He preaches, in his theology of prosperity, that money is a symbol for the relationship of the believer with God. God, he says, positively wants us to be rich, and we obtain wealth 'through

the power of faith'. There have been criminal investigations to find out where all the money from the offering goes, the mansions, aeroplanes and businesses around the globe, owned by the leaders of that church. The organisation of the church sees these investigations as persecution and the work of the devil. Do religion and prosperity belong together? Is this what we really believe?

The Bible calls those 'blessed', who are 'poor in the spirit'. That relates to the attitude of the believer, not his material wealth. Poverty does not make him more agreeable to God, nor do good works or give generously. It is now widely agreed among the main stream churches that poverty has economic, political and legal causes. Globalisation has been partly responsible for making whole regions of the world poor. The churches need to direct the charitable giving of their members toward relieve of this poverty. And they need to see this as a justified political task. Nobody is calling the poor 'blessed' - and nobody should call the rich blessed either!

BW.

(based on 2 articles: E.Kopp, Chrismon, May 2011 and K.Hart, Public Forum 3, Feb 2010)



"He was very disappointed not to be selected for our Olympics gymnastics squad."

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