

# Soundings



Portobello & Joppa Parish  
Church Magazine  
September 2016



## ***Portobello and Joppa Parish Church***

**Worship takes place each Sunday at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church with two services – one at 9.30am and one at 11am (10.30am in July and August).**

## ***From the editor***



As I write this, the main Olympics have just ended. I have admit that we're not enthusiastic sports watchers in our house, so we're quite looking forward to television and newspapers which feature fewer alarmingly fit people trying to hurl themselves faster/higher/longer/more accurately than their opponents. On the other hand, it's been cheering to see Olympians delightedly clutching medals, to counter the many distressing accounts of war and other horrible events on news programmes. Stewart gives us food for thought about such matters in his letter.

Do read Michelle's article about collecting items for the Mary's Meals backpacks which the congregation will be filling at the beginning of next year for children living in poverty. It's good to have something simple and practical to do for them. She also tells us about this summer's successful holiday club (well done, Michelle and the other leaders and helpers).

And we have information about our finances , our new finance convenor, our new first aid box and a Assembly Council project called "On the Road". There are ideas about stewardship from Stewart. There's an invitation to the coffee club and the film evening; thoughts about spirituality and prayer from Tom and Harry; and the usual other features.

**P Donaldson**



## ***From the minister***

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

Stories create another world where we can live, interact and perhaps deal with emotions or fears that are otherwise difficult to consider or perhaps too powerful for us. A bit of distance created by that wonderful phrase ‘once upon a time...’.

Picture a refugee camp, perhaps in Egypt or perhaps in Jordan. Refugees speaking 15 different languages gather round the truck delivering water and in this gathering at a modern, makeshift well, stories are what hold them together. Stories told not just by words—impossible in this Babel—but by gestures, dance and drawing. Stories and narrative so very different from the witness statements often taken by officialdom to ensure legitimacy as refugees.

These are only a couple of thoughts that I brought away from a talk given by Marina Warner at the Edinburgh Book Festival. She has done a huge amount of fascinating work on fairy tales, myths, fables and that undergirding of language that has the potential to draw us together.

And I thought about our congregation and our faith.

The stories of old woven into the stories of today. The stories of each one of us woven into this church and into each other’s lives.

The power of these stories is predicated not only on geographical or chronological distance but also on proximity. The Incarnation: God who came to us in Christ. The Holy Spirit: sent at Pentecost to fill and revive flagging disciples. Fellowship and care: the human bonds that tie us with each other. In faith, stories that some people might see as fables become real again as they are manifested in our own lives.

A couple of weeks ago we hosted a group of refugees in the church hall. Most were from Syria and there were a few Kurds. Only a few showed up at first and then some more and then some more. There was conversation, there were

crafts for the children, there were snacks—plenty of mint tea!—and then there was dancing. As I lingered on the outside I was drawn into a dance: arms linked, doing some intricate footwork (I failed miserably) and watching some of the people taking a turn in the middle with a yearning dance and undulating arms.

How do we cross the boundaries of culture when all of God’s children yearn for home, love, security? When language fails, where do we turn?

At the end, an older man shook my hand vigorously, smiled and continued saying ‘thank you, thank you.’

My story is now interwoven with his. His story, and those of the other refugees, are now woven into our collective congregational story.

And the more storylines there are, the greater and richer the variety and colour and texture. And the stronger the cloth that is woven. And the greater the delight of God.

**Stewart**



## **COFFEE CLUB**

The Coffee Club will recommence in the Session Room on Monday 5 September at 10am.

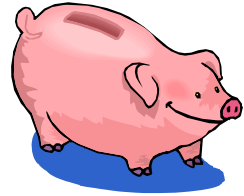
A warm welcome is extended to anyone who might like to join us, for coffee/tea, home baking and a lively chat. New members are always welcome and perhaps, as the Bellfield café is now closed, we might be able to fill the gap, at least on a Monday.

Looking forward to seeing all past and future members on 5 September.

**Pat     Joan**

# **Portobello and Joppa Parish Church**

## **For the period to 31 July 2016**



### **Overall**

#### **Congregational Fund**

Income	£169,077
Expenditure	<u>139,431</u>
Surplus	<u>£ 29,646</u>

#### **Fabric Fund**

Income	£ 86,982
Expenditure	<u>53,694</u>
Surplus	<u>£ 33,088</u>

As you can see at this stage of the year we are doing slightly better than anticipated. The reason being that we drew down £17,500 from the interest received from our funds with the general Trustees towards our property expenses. We have to claim against the interest received within the year.

Expenditure to date is much as anticipated in the budget.

We have an agreement with Presbytery that we will pay our Ministry and Mission total quarterly this year. That require us to pay £35,000 in each of June, September and December.

#### **Fabric Fund**

The Fabric Fund expenditure noted above is the amount spent on the manse windows and the upgrade to the toilets.

We are anticipating expenditure on the Manse roof and outbuildings to get them wind and watertight.

During the Summer a variety of health and safety work will be undertaken on the entrance to the hall and the hall fire escape exit.

The Church East roof and the house roof will also have urgent maintenance work done.

## **D Stocks**



## ***A sincere thank you for your generous support***

We are a relatively wealthy church thanks to your faithful giving throughout the year. As you can see from the latest update from our treasurer (see summary position above), our finances are in a reasonably healthy shape thanks to your support. We have also been blessed by significant additional finance following the sale of the St James' manse, church and halls.

I'd also like to acknowledge the generosity of **Catherine Innes, George Glen** and **Margaret Weir**, who have each made a legacy donation during 2016 towards the continuation of the work of the church here in Portobello and Joppa.

If you'd like to find out more about how you can contribute to the church's finances or are interested in joining the Finance committee, then please speak to our treasurer or myself.

## **M Craig Finance Convenor**

*Find out more about our new Finance Convenor on pages 19 and 20.*

## ***Collecting backpacks as the Portobello and Joppa Parish Church Community***



From January 2017 to April 2017, the Breakfast Club are leading a project to collect backpacks filled with school items for Mary's Meals. We are inviting the full Portobello and Joppa Parish Church Community and Congregation from the toddlers' playgroup to Messy Church, from the Brownies to Company Section of the Boys Brigade, from the Coffee Club to the Junior Drama Group, from the Guild to the crèche all to take part in this project.

Mary's Meals is a non-profit organisation which works to provide a free meal a day for children in poverty at their place of education, which guarantees the children will have had at least one meal a school day and encourages the children to attend school and get the education they need to rise out of poverty. The mission of Mary's Meals is "to enable people to offer their money, goods, skills, time, or prayer, and through this involvement, provide the most effective help to those suffering the effects of extreme poverty in the world's poorest communities."

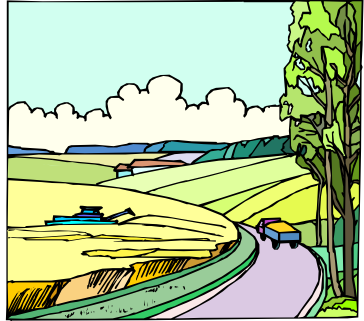
The Backpack project is part of all this. Children at these schools receive a backpack full of the necessities for school to continue, to encourage them to attend school. Items for the backpacks include: a notepad, pencils, pens, crayons, eraser, ruler, sharpener, pencil case, towel, shorts/skirt and t-shirt or dress, flip flops/sandals, small ball (tennis ball), soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, and a spoon.

From 29 January to 23 April, the Breakfast Club will be collecting donations of backpacks full of the items listed above or even donations of some of the items on their own (which can then be used to top up other backpacks as necessary). Our bags will be collected after church on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Even though the collection isn't until the New Year, you may want to start stocking up on supplies now as there are great back-to-school and end-of-summer sales going on in the shops! For more information, please contact **Michelle**.



## ***Journeying***

*This is the text of the talk that Tom Webster gave in church in May - one of an occasional series from members of the congregation about their spiritual journey.*



I was asked to tell you about my spiritual, my religious journey and that's what I'm going to do. It's very much with the emphasis on *the journey* rather than the destination, both actually and metaphorically. There are lots of questions, but not the brattish question of 'Are we there yet?' The questions don't lead to definite answers, just to more complicated questions, to different ways of thinking. Part of this is down to a sense that doubt is an inherent part of faith; faith is always uncertain, in need of maintenance and doubt is part of its vitality.

I was brought up in a Congregational church and I have wandered a great deal, geographically and denominationally, from the United Reformed Church, through an ecumenical congregation, Quakers, time as an unattached Christian-almost independent, on my own - and then I stumbled across the artist formerly known as St Philip's. A recurring theme has stayed from my Congregationalist roots in my understanding of what constitutes a church, of what constitutes communion. A church is much more people connecting than a building or an institution even when these can be a *place* for a church, where a church happens. In the same way my experience of communion is as much horizontal as vertical. By that I mean as experienced through the sharing of the peace, sharing the Holy Spirit, and continuing in conversations over coffee and still connecting, sharing common ground with people well beyond what gets counted as 'religion,' that horizontal sense more than the vertical sense of any 'direct line' to God like Commissioner Gordon's Bat-signal.

That I've been involved in churches since before I remember means that some of my questions started out as childish realisations leading to questions involving a

lot of reading, thinking and praying, becoming more complicated and leading to different ways of thinking, of living.

The first was the discovery that 'Christ' wasn't Jesus's surname, that it was a sign of what he is to us. This led me to the question of when did he become 'Christ', or 'the anointed', 'the messiah'? Was it when he was conceived, was it through his actions, his teachings? Was it at his crucifixion, at his resurrection, or was it after? This question raises further questions and has consequences. If it was when he was conceived, does that make his actions, his teachings, less important? If his divine aspect came through his life, does that raise the responsibilities of the Christ within us? If it is the crucifixion or resurrection, why is so much of the Gospels devoted to the parables, the campaigning, the healing? If it is after his physical departure, from the piety of human Christology, then what does that mean for the responsibility of Christians to maintain the presence of Christ on earth?

The second question was about what can be the central question for many, the question of salvation. As I learned about, thought about, *salvation* in the sense of life after death, the way I thought changed a lot. A lot of the Gospels that refer to heaven or going to heaven, to a better place, refer to a changed world *here*, to heaven on earth that Jesus envisioned and helped others to see, and to work towards, a world of compassion and love, of care regardless of status, of social rank or gender. It was a shock to come to feel that the centrality of the afterlife, of heaven and hell, was not central to the message of Jesus. If you ask me if I'm 'saved' in that sense, of going to an afterlife of reward or punishment, I would be honest and say I don't know. I don't know if I am 'saved' in that sense and I don't know if there is anything like that Big Rock Candy Mountain. I am tempted to say that I have no interest, but I fear that might be what gets called 'a humblebrag', saying that I'm so humble that my humility is to be admired.

Where these questions about heaven took me was another big question and a different perspective. So much focus on the afterlife encourages us to accept a system that doesn't, for me, sit easily with what Jesus did and taught. Christianity with salvation in an afterlife at its heart encourages us to think about

faith and worship, or the lack of faith and worship, as a system of rewards and punishments. Jesus always talked about spending time with *sinners*, not with people who used to be sinners and are now fully *reformed*. And most importantly, I feel uncomfortable with the system of rewards and punishments as the basis for an ethos, for ethics. How worthy is a good action, dutiful attendance at church or whatever, if its goal is the reward of life after death? A good action, an act of compassion and care is its own reward, is an acceptance of the call to love and to make a better world here and now. That was the model Jesus lived and taught; that's a motif in the parables and in his stropiness; that's what got him into trouble with the authorities. This is an important shift. To see the form of 'salvation' as a reward for faith in this life is an *economy*, an *exchange* economy, a means to an end. To see salvation as an impact on our lives *now*, on our way of living, is to *combine* ends and means. Our lives of care and compassion are an *absolute gift*, an unconditional gift. These lives are our salvation, and our efforts to live these values is an act of worship, a response of inherently inadequate gratitude.

Where I am in my journey is perhaps best captured in a phrase from the Lord's Prayer: 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' The attention in our lives, our actions and our understanding of worship, is right *here*, in our daily lives and demeanours. The emphasis, the focus of my place in this journey is *this world*. My emphasis is on his actions, his parables, his works that we all know. The Gospels have much more of the 'Son of Man' than the 'Son of God' and, to me, that teaches an effort to listen, to love, and to act. My understanding of perhaps an alternative of the Trinity, the relationships of divinity and, literally, of inspiration, that is, full of spirit, is three dimensions that interact, that support each other, and direct each other. The three elements are love, faith, and action. The love is the driving force, the motivation; the faith is the support, the strength and the belief that the communion of love can and will overcome the petty self-interests, the materialities that distract from the common ground of being loved by Jesus; the action is the reflection of the good news of Jesus's presence in the way we are, the way we live, trying to keep the love as the primary criterion for what we do, for who we are.

That takes me back to the understanding of communion I mentioned before. Communion as *koinonia* or sharing in common, as *eucharist* or thanksgiving beyond the physical walls of the building, the institution, can make our lives different. It can make our lives into an attempt, albeit one always partial, at permanent worship, of caring and connecting, as my understanding of salvation here and now and always.

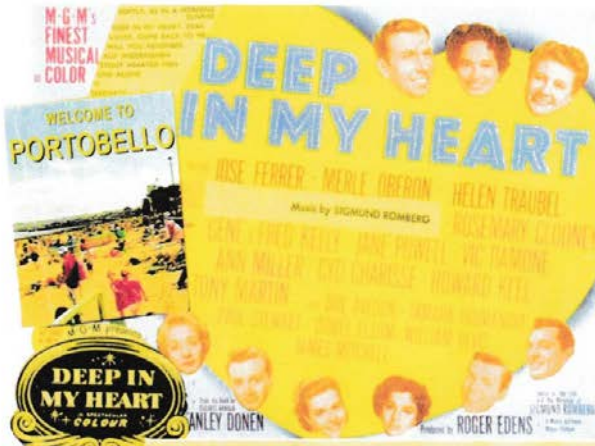
**T Webster**

# Musical Film Evening

Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

September 15th 7.30 - 9.30pm

Tickets £5 Available at the church on Sundays, at the door on the night or by emailing Anne.mckerchar@gmail.com



**MGM'S FINEST MUSICAL IN COLOR**

**WELCOME TO PORTOBELLO**

**DEEP IN MY HEART**

ROSE FERRER - MERLE OBERON - HELEN TRAUBEL  
Music by SIGMUND EDMERG

ANLEY DONEN

Presented by ROGER EDENS

From the producers of 'Duddingston - Village in the City'

**On the same programme!**

**A NOSTALGIC FILM ABOUT EDINBURGH'S SEASIDE**

**WELCOME TO PORTOBELLO**

Welcome to Portobello, producer - Ian Rintoul, story - John Welford.  
Running time 35 min., copyright Edinburgh Films 2012, Edinburgh 0131 552 2939

## **Portobello Holiday Club 2016**



This July we held our second Portobello Holiday Club jointly organised and run by seven area churches: Central's Portobello Missional Community, Portobello Baptist Church, Portobello and Joppa Parish Church (Church of Scotland), St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, St. Mary Magdalene's Catholic Parish, St Mark's Scottish Episcopal Church and St Martin's Parish Church (Church of Scotland). From 25 July to 29 July, 81 children and 43 volunteers filled the halls and garden at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church and the garden of St Mark's. We were also supported by 13 additional volunteers who contributed baking, ran stalls at the parents' night, helped with advertising or clean up. We had an amazing team!

During the week, the children participated in worship, games, arts and crafts, bible study, and gardening with a few extra surprises along the way. Our club ran from 9am to 12:45pm and we used the Scripture Union curriculum called *Guardians of Ancora*. We discovered the treasure of the Bible stories and by learning these stories, we brought back the light to the city of Ancora. This is all based on a game app created by SU England and Wales, which is free to download and provides a fun way for children to learn the Bible's stories. The stories shared come from the New Testament. The *Guardians of Ancora* curriculum looks at who Jesus is. It shows that God had a plan in sending Jesus to earth.

We are already thinking ahead to holiday club 2017 as the children and volunteers have all had such a wonderful time and we are looking forward to doing this again next year.

The planning team would like to thank Portobello and Joppa Parish Church so much for helping us provide an ecumenical holiday club in Portobello through use of the church and halls for the full week. Thank you to the halls groups who took that week off to give us the space for the club. Thank you as well to all of the people who helped us set up and clear up for the week, especially all of the chair moving volunteers! Thank you!

**Michelle**



## ***A call to prayer***

### **WHAT'S YOUR DREAM?**

*“Depend on it: God keeps His Word”  
(Romans Ch 3 v 4 TM)*

Paul writes: “What advantages then hath the Jew? ... much every way ... unto them were committed the oracles of God.” (Ro 3:1-2). God has spoken certain things concerning you. Those things are His *will* and His *purpose* for your life. Your job is to recognise them, believe them, carry them within you and speak them often, because they give you a tremendous advantage.

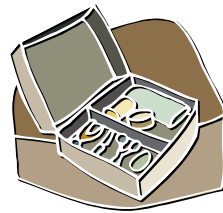
Then Paul adds: “For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid.” (Ro 3:3-4). Get over the idea that the majority has to agree with you, or believe what God said about you. Your dream must be independent of outside support. This is a difficult concept, especially in a democracy where others vote and the majority rules. The Kingdom of God is a theocracy where only one vote counts – God’s!

Refuse to put your dream on hold, waiting for everybody to get on the same page with you. Not only do they not have to support you, they don’t even have to *believe* what God has told you. You can’t wait until others become comfortable with your dream before you pursue it. They can misunderstand you, talk about you, laugh at you, spit on you, ostracise you, alienate you, not even invite you over, refuse to support you, and you can *still* get there without them! Why? Because your God is a covenant making, covenant keeping God, and what He has spoken over your life, He will surely bring to pass: “Depend on it: God keeps His Word.” (Ro 3:4 TM).

**H McNulty,**  
*Prayer Promoter*

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ST6 4JF



## **First aid**

This is just to let you all know that a new First Aid Kit has been purchased for Portobello and Joppa Parish Church. It is fully compliant with latest Health and Safety Regulations, provides easy access to first aid essentials and also includes a comprehensive "First Aid in an Emergency" booklet. The kit is mounted on the wall in the main kitchen.

**S Binnie**

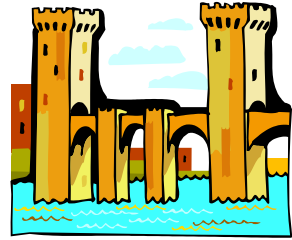
*"By all these lovely tokens  
September days are here,  
With summer's best of weather  
And autumn's best of cheer."*



**Helen Hunt Jackson**



***Stability to strength to inspiration:  
be a part of something bigger!***



Elsewhere in the magazine you will see that our finances are beginning to stabilise thanks to the hard work of the Finance Team.

Thanks too for all the support from people in our congregation.

And so the Finance Team and Session have agreed that now is the time to remind people that their ongoing support is still needed.

That's right: Stewardship.

Why now? Especially if things are stabilising?

Indeed, now is the *perfect* time to think ahead. We are looking forward from a position of stability and strength. We can make commitments and choices now while we have a critical mass of people and resources. We can begin to put into place some ideas on hospitality and deepening our faith.

Now is *precisely* the time to think about our support of the church and pray about it as well.

Think of all that we do and how privileged we are to be a part of it.

Over 30 groups from the community use our halls. We are thus linked into the BB's, Guiding, drama, Guild...over 500 people directly and more than 1,000 indirectly.

Our family and youth programme is one of the strongest in Edinburgh. We hosted 80 children and 35 volunteers at the summer holiday club, over 80 children are on the roll for our Sunday Stars and we host an average of 15 youth at Breakfast Club. What a blessing to be a part of their lives as they enthuse and enliven our lives.

Over 230 people attend worship every Sunday. Baptisms celebrate new life and funerals support and console many in our congregation and community. And Christmas services can see 1,000 people through our doors.

People find purpose, meaning, solace, inspiration and community in our church.

People experience a love that has existed for thousands of years.

People encounter God through us and amongst us as we strive to follow Christ.

We are a part of something much, much bigger.

And it's right here on our doorstep. On *your* doorstep.

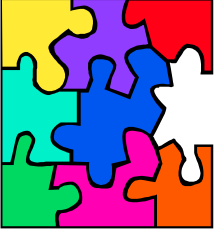
Help us to keep Portobello and Joppa Parish Church strong, healthy and vibrant.

A community of faith from yesterday, for today and striving faithfully into tomorrow.

Watch this space! I, and others, look forward to working together with all of you!

**Stewart**





## ***Brain-teaser***

**This word search features words and phrases (below) inspired by the Festival experience in Edinburgh. Can you find them? They can read forwards, backwards, upwards or downwards – no diagonals. Good luck!**

**Alison**

I	S	Q	E	L	I	M	L	A	Y	O	R
Y	H	F	U	N	C	A	S	T	L	E	H
T	O	U	R	I	S	T	S	H	D	J	Y
N	P	D	N	E	W	T	O	W	N	V	T
W	S	A	H	G	D	V	Z	H	B	A	E
O	F	L	O	R	A	L	C	L	O	C	K
T	B	C	T	I	A	O	U	G	L	T	R
W	R	B	S	H	O	W	S	J	D	O	A
E	J	O	T	U	B	M	A	R	T	R	M
N	P	B	X	C	P	N	M	H	O	S	F
U	K	B	E	O	L	D	T	O	W	N	M
C	R	Y	S	W	S	E	L	I	G	T	S

Floral clock, hot, tram, Royal Mile, shops, Bobby, tourists, shows, actors, New Town, Old Town, St Giles, castle, fun, market



## **Getting to know you...**

This month's interview is with our new Finance Convenor, Michael, who has been a member of PJPC since 2008. Prior to that he was a long-standing member of Viewforth, where he and his lovely wife Wilma were married. A qualified actuary with Standard Life, Michael enjoys singing and has been a long-time supporter of the Alpha course and Christians Against Poverty.

**Q. What is a favourite hymn, and why?**

A. *"Ye Gates, lift up your heads on high"*. I can really exercise my vocal cords!

**Q. In an alternative life, what job would you have chosen?**

A. *Cricket statistician.*

**Q. What are you reading at the moment?**

A. *"Trigger Mortis" – a new James Bond book by Anthony Horowitz!*

**Q. Do you have a hero or heroine? – either real or fictional? Who? Why?**

A. *Roger Federer – the GOAT (Greatest Of All Time).*

**Q. What would be your ideal holiday?**

A. *Relaxing in Vale do Lobo, Portugal. Fab-u-lous!*

**Q. Tell us something that not many people know about you.**

A. I sang in the chorus of HMS Pinafore in 1983. *"I am the captain of the Pinafore..."*.

**Q. What is a favourite quotation?**

A. *“It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known.”* (“A Tale of Two Cities”, Charles Dickens).

**Q. Where would you go in a time machine and why?**

A. Back to 1<sup>st</sup> Century Palestine – what was it really like for Jesus and His disciples?



***“Soundings” by email***

At the moment, we’re printing over 500 copies of “Soundings” for each edition, with 220 people opting to get the email version. Many people still prefer a paper copy – which is fine - but if you’re not on the email list and *would* be happy to receive the magazine in that format, then you might like to consider doing so. Each paper copy currently costs slightly under 10p to produce – and 12 (volunteer) person hours are spent in folding and stapling each month’s supply.

Requests to be added to the emailing list should be directed to the website ([portyjoppachurch.org](http://portyjoppachurch.org)).

## ***'On the Road' – listening, sharing, planning***



I hope you have already received an invitation to be part of the conversation which the General Assembly asked some of its Councils to initiate this autumn.

Whether you have or not, please consider this as **your** invitation! We are going 'On the Road' to 16 venues spread across the UK to listen to the voice of people in the local Church – to hear your views on what we need to do to enable a flourishing Church into the 2020s and beyond.

'On the Road' is a process designed to enable the *national* Councils, who exist only to support the *local* Church in its mission and ministry, to plan well for the future. Like every household throughout the land, we need to prioritise what we *do* and what we *spend* – and we need your ideas and wisdom to do that well.

'On the Road' will take time to **listen** to your thinking. It will also **share** some new ideas which the General Assembly has agreed we should try out, asking how you respond to them. This process of **listening** and **sharing** will contribute to future **planning** – prioritising what we do to be more effective in supporting discipleship, mission and ministry.

'On the Road' is an open invitation to everyone connected with the Church. Whether you are a regular worshipper, or an occasional attendee; whether you take a leadership role in your local Church or simply drop in from time to time – 'On the Road' wants to hear from you. We want to hear from folks from every background and every congregation: don't leave it to someone else – come and have your say!

Already more than 200 folks have signed up to one or other of the 16 venues. We are anticipating significant numbers of people at these events, so it would be helpful in planning if you would book a slot at the event which best suits you. This can be done very simply online using the Eventbrite system and **booking is**

**open now** at <http://churchofscotland.eventbrite.com>. Group booking is available, so please bring others along with you!

The Edinburgh date is Thursday 24 November, 6.30-9.30 pm.  
I look forward to seeing you there.

With best wishes,  
Martin

**Rev Dr Martin Scott**  
**Council Secretary**  
**Council of Assembly**  
**Church of Scotland**

## ***Some jokes that didn't make the Fringe...***

Why didn't Noah go fishing?  
*Answer: He had only two worms.*

Why were Adam and Eve noisy?  
*Answer: They raised Cain.*

What made Adam a famous runner?  
*Answer: He was first in the human race.*

What do Winnie the Pooh and John the Baptist have in common?  
*Answer: They have the same middle name.*

What time of day was Adam born?  
*Answer: A little before Eve.*

**Contributed by Annette**



## ***MAGAZINE/DIARY DEADLINES***

October	Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2016
November	Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2016
December/January	Sunday 20th November 2016

***Scottish Charity Number : SCO11728***



A coastal town at sunset with a beach and a large body of water in the foreground. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, and the water reflects the warm colors of the setting sun. The town is built on a slight rise, and the beach is visible in the middle ground.

[www.portyjoppachurch.org](http://www.portyjoppachurch.org)

Photography by Kim Kjaerside